



Section 1: Using good examples

Extract 3: The Whisperers

‘Come away from the window,’ my brother said. He knew what I was looking for. He had heard the stories. ‘Dad’s been gone so long!’ As I said it I felt my mistake sending me cold. When you’re in the spookiest cottage in a woods in darkest Buckinghamshire, you don’t say things like that. If you say things like that you start everyone thinking. And there was a lot to think about. We both remembered last night. We remember waking in the night and hearing the noise outside, the sound of a grown man screaming loudly, then stopping.

‘What was it?’ I had shouted out.

‘Quiet’ my dad had whispered sharply.

It felt like we sat there all night, waiting, listening, wanting it and not wanting it to come again. Eventually my brother said, ‘What was it?’

What does my dad do? Suddenly he turns back into Mr Isn’t-this-fun. Suddenly he just brushes the fears away with,

‘Probably a fox. They do that, you know.’

That was not a fox. That was something out there, something that vented its rage and grief in one long howl. It was out there, and dad, who had just gone to use the phone at the neighbour’s farmhouse, was out there too.

‘Come away!’ my brother said again, this time insistent. His voice was trembling. He may be ten years older, but I heard him sound small. So I drew the curtains and sat beside the fire, and that’s when it began. The whispering. Back there at the very window I had just left, a voice, whispering. It was as if the hushed tone seeped through the gaps in the pane, and what started as a shuffle of hush became words:

‘This is not your home! This is not your home!’

One voice, then another. A man, a woman, a child.

‘This is not your home!’

My brother stared at me. Neither of us could say a word, and then... the door thundered with a banging that shook the room.