

'Now, everyone!' she said. 'This is our last afternoon before we all break up for the half-term holidays, and I thought we could do with a treat! Instead of us all reading a story together, we're going to listen to one instead. And it's a very important story, because it's going to be told to us by someone

very special in our class.' Looking over at Ahmet and Ms Hemsî, she waved them over to where she was standing. I didn't know it just then, but I was about to have nearly ALL of my original eleven questions answered in one go!

We all turned around to watch as Ms Hemsî picked up a large pile of papers from the table and followed Ahmet to the front of the class.

'I want everyone to listen extra carefully, and I don't want anyone asking any questions until after Ahmet has finished telling his story. Is that understood?'

'Yes, Mrs Khaaaaaan,' shouted the class.

'Good!' And leaning against her desk, Mrs Khan smiled and said, 'Ahmet . . .?'

Everyone shuffled in their chairs and sat up straight, waiting for Ahmet to speak. I wondered if he would tell the story in English or in Kurdish, but I was so excited I didn't really care.

'Hello. My name is Ahmet. I am nine . . . years old. And I am refugee. I come from Syria.'

As he said this, he pointed to Ms Hemsî, who held up a drawing showing a house and a tree and a car in front of some mountains. And in the front of the car

were four people, labelled, 'Me', 'Mum', 'Dad' and 'Sister' – and a cat.

This was the drawing:



I was surprised because I had never thought about Ahmet having a brother or a sister. I thought he was like me and didn't have any. His sister wasn't at our school. In the picture, she looked smaller than him, so maybe she was in nursery.

'But in Syria, there is big war,' said Ahmet, and he pointed to Ms Hemsî again, who held up another picture. This one showed buildings on fire and bombs dropping from a plane and lots of people lying on the ground and other people holding guns.

It looked like this:



Josie stopped chewing her hair and looked at me and then looked back at the drawing again. And from behind, I heard someone whisper, 'Woah! He's seen a real bomb AND a real gun!'

'Because of war, my family . . . run away,' said Ahmet, as his lion eyes became big and round and watery. 'We went . . . on mountain and rivers . . . and carry bags and cat.'

This time, Ms Hemsî held up a picture showing a family crossing mountains and rivers, and in the sky, birds that were crying. In the picture, Ahmet had drawn himself carrying a red rucksack with a black stripe on it, just like the one he had now. That was when I knew why he loved it so much, and why he cried when it had been filled with Brendan-the-Bully's horrible baked

beans. He had carried it all the way from his house and over a mountain, which meant it was lots more important and lots more special than any of our bags.

This was the picture:

