

Bear's awake, playing in a different bit of carriage. It's daylight already. I've slept later than usual, more protected from the cold than we've been for ages.

For a while I lie there, listening. Bear's pretending to be all the birds and animals we've seen or haven't seen. All the ones he's still looking for – the badger, the otter, the beaver, and more lynx.

I look for lynx all the time. I look obsessively. It's mean of me – everyone needs their own kind – but I'm relieved we haven't seen any. If we find other lynx, maybe Ghost will leave us.

"Ju," Bear says, sensing me watching him. "We could stay in our carriage today. Have a rest."

"We have to keep moving, Bear," I say automatically, already starting to fold up my sleeping bag.

Bear clasps my hand. "Please, Ju. Just one day."

I pause. "We're running out of water."

"Check the GPS," he pleads. "Maybe there's a river. There must be."

I look at Bear's little fingers, tangled through mine. His fingernails are covered in mud. Mine too.

Next is going to be the hardest stretch of all, for from here the uplands really begin. It's hills first, mountains later on. Plus it's getting colder – day by day, you can feel it and see it in the glaze of frost that's painted on everything.

There are still more than a hundred miles to go and we're covering less distance each day. Not just because we're tired – the days are running out quicker. The sun's falling earlier and earlier.

We shouldn't stop, not really, but we could do with a rest.

"OK," I say, smiling at him. "Let's stay here today, then tomorrow we'll start afresh."

We spend some time roaming through the rest of the carriages. The carriages are joined up with gangways and we can walk from one right into the next. We're freed from the weight of our rucksacks and the grind of the journey.

"We're not travellers today," Bear says happily. "We're explorers."

"Archaeologists," I add.

"What are we looking for, Ju?"

The metal has held back some of the plants and there are