

realized we weren't in school.

The river's the obvious place for them to look. They know we need water to survive. They'll have sent drones out in both directions.

I hear it behind us. The drone of it, just like its name, mirroring every move we make. Chasing us. This silver-grey orb with metallic legs. Loud. Louder. The churned-up air touches the back of my neck like fingers.

"Faster, Bear!"

It's just a machine. But you don't think about that when you're running, you just run. Fast, faster, and then some. Even if a drone can't actually hurt us, someone, somewhere, back in the city, in one of their control towers or their bunkers, is seeing everything that drone sees. They know where we are. They know we're alive and that our bags are big enough to contain supplies. Which means someone helped us. This totally contradicts what Annie Rose had been going to say. Her surprise when she found the broken glass. Her despair that she'd lost her grandchildren, because there's no way we'd survive out here with just the clothes on our backs.

"Bear, take my hand!" We have to change direction.

We swerve right and then left. This zigzag pattern through the trees. My head swirling, dizzy, but we keep going. Right, then left, then right again.

The drone keeps after us for ages. Someone's got good

reflexes — the controller, the pilot, has practised this — and the machine flies like the dragonfly does. Fast. Precise.

But eventually I realize the sound is only in my head and when I look back I can't see it. "Stop! Let's stop a minute."

Bear collapses to the ground, his lungs heaving. I've never seen him so out of energy. "Did we lose it?"

"I think so." I have to catch my breath too. We've been running for ages — ducking under branches, jumping over roots — through the trees and the thorny scrub.

"You think it hit a tree?"

"Maybe." They'll send another though. They'll send whatever they can spare if Abbott has anything to do with it.

"Have you got the water, Ju?" Bear asks.

I pass it over, sick inside suddenly. This is the bottle I'd been refilling, the one still in my hands when we saw the drone. I left the other one on the bank.

"Where's the other?" Bear asks, seeing my face freeze up.

"We'll have to make do with this one."

"We can go back." He gets up and starts walking back the way we came.

"No! No, Bear," I say. "They'll find us. We just have to keep refilling this one. But more carefully now, and quickly, and maybe when it's dark."

"Will it be OK?"

There's only one answer I can give. "It'll rain soon. We'll catch rainwater. We'll drink that."