

DAY FOURTEEN

Broccoli does not by rights belong in a muffin. You would think that would be obvious.

I think they believe me about the beer being for my hair, but I'm not certain. Still they told me that it's a very busy time, their first year at the farm, and they need me to keep out of trouble.

I was in a full-on strop after that, but I smiled and didn't let them see. I'm sick to death of being nice no matter what, so I stayed away all day, with a serious amount of cheese crackers in one pocket and some grapes in the other.

I headed straight for the Hazel Wood and it was so weird, there was this note hanging from one of the branches of the first big tree. It said 'To the Hazel Wood Girl', and I wanted so badly to have a look inside, but was afraid that the Hazel Wood Girl would catch me at it and be angry, so I just left it and went back to

OH MY GOD! I am such an idiot. It might be for me! There are no other girls around now that Mindy's away and we own the wood, so it must mean me. I'm big-time ridiculous, I'm so slow, just like when they called me 'The Farmer', only this is better if it is me. It's only just getting dark so I'm going to run out and see if it's still there. Why am I still here writing this? Oh my God!!!

It was still there!! It says,

Please don't be so sad, Hazel Wood Girl, there are lots of good things around you. Your mission (should you choose to accept it) is to 1) find the newest animal in the farmyard 2) find the strangest-looking creature on the farm 3) find one thing that reminds you most of when you were really happy.

I'd think Mrs Hooper left it, except that from the handwriting it seems to be from a teenager. It's no one's handwriting from our house and it can't be the

Grangers on the Egg Farm because they are biologically incapable of being nice or interesting, and if they did send a note it would be to yell at you on paper.

I just showed the envelope to Mum and she said that seeing as it was in our bit of woodland that it must be for me and that we know everyone in the area so it must be a friend of the family. Of course she thinks it's Barbara, not knowing that she's left already. I'm glad Mum wasn't that interested as it still feels like my own secret. I'm psyched now about getting up and finding out those bits of info asked in the note. It's not the most thrilling thing to do when you compare it to what Mindy and Barbara are up to, but hey, at least it's something.

DAY FIFTEEN

All morning I snooped round the farmyard and the farm (getting under people's feet apparently, even if they were yards away). By lunchtime I was sure of the answers and ran down to the Hazel Wood. My note read,

1) The newest animal is a black calf that was born a month ago. I think there might also be some baby mice in the tool shed in the kitchen garden because I heard tiny, tiny squeaking, but couldn't see them. 2) The strangest-looking creature on the farm is dad's Cousin Adam, no contest. 3) I haven't found anything that reminds me of when I was happy because anything we brought with us makes me feel sad. Sorry if I failed the last part of the mission.

I left it on the tree where I found the original and put

'To The Watcher' on the envelope, as I guess they must have been watching me hang out in the wood. I have been forcing myself not to go back and look again until tomorrow.

Adam was getting dressed up all fancy again (which for him means no welly-boots) so I just asked him,

'Which teacher are you going out with?'

He said, 'Liza' as he walked out the door, which is no help at all seeing as I don't know any of the teachers' first names.

Mum is annoyed because the geese are not laying so many eggs this week. Dad pissed her off more when he said he'd have a word with them about it. Then he made her a coffee and she calmed down. I wish my life was that easily fixed.

DAY SIXTEEN

I saw Barbara's ridiculously beautiful friend Emma-Jo in town again today.

She was talking to this cute guy with dark eyes and dark hair who is *really* tall and a bit gangly, like he hasn't quite grown into himself, and wears a leather jacket and nods a lot when he listens. He has this *amazing* smile, which I know sounds like a cliché, but he really does. Emma-Jo was so into him, talking his ear off about God knows what. I'm just jealous that it was *her* talking to a guy, and that she could think of things to say. I would have just stood there like a lemon. Which reminds me, I put the lemon in my hair yesterday and it has sort of worked a bit, but not so as you'd notice.

Dad said we had to get rid of the rabbit as it ate all the carrots in the kitchen garden. I told him we didn't have a rabbit and he was all surprised. Dads are not good about pets, ages, clothes, birthdays or friends' names. I suggested that maybe Adam was giving bunches of carrots to his new girlfriend instead of bunches of flowers.

I found out that it's Miss Dobbs the supply teacher he's seeing, so it's almost like she's not really a teacher at my school because she was only there for two weeks this term, and then was at other schools further away when their versions of Mr Hackett the history teacher got their versions of ulcerated hernias.

I have been writing this to stop myself running down to the Hazel Wood in case there is no note for me and I'll be all disappointed like some starving puppy with a rubber bone. But now if I wait any longer I will rupture my head, so I *have* to go see.

Cool, brilliant and excellent, and not necessarily in that order. There was a note and it said that I carried out the mission *admirably*. I like that. My new task is 1) make something for someone, 2) have a conversation with someone new, 3) fix something I

have broken.

I am going to make a welcome card for Mrs Hooper, talk to little Sammy-boy (who is now hanging out around the farm every day), and maybe fix the handle back on the mug I broke when I tried to make gravy in it on Mum's birthday.

I called JL again and hung up again. One more time and I'm on track for a criminal record.