

and it was a rule she followed. But was the boy a stranger? Not really. He was staying at Owl Hall too. So Kara decided to climb the gate and follow him into the wood.

They walked quickly between the trees. It was much darker in the wood. Sometimes the sunlight passed between the trees and lit up the ground beneath them.

'Come on!' the boy shouted and he started running.

Kara ran after him and then suddenly they were coming out on the other side of the trees, back into the daylight.

'Wow!' Kara said.

They were standing at the top of a hill looking down at a lake. The water in the lake was calm, reflecting the sky above it. There were hills all around the lake which hid it from the outside world.

'Wow!' Kara said again. 'It's amazing.'

'I know where there's a boat,' said the boy. 'Come on. I'll take you to the island.'

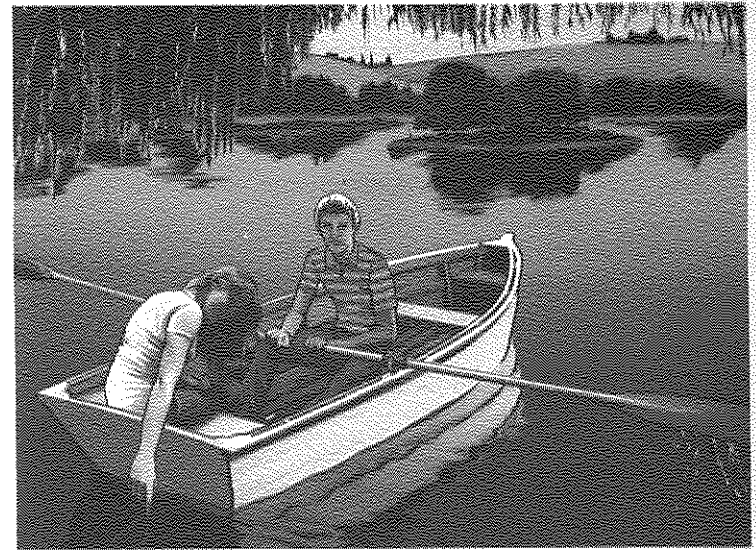
Kara followed the boy down the hill. There were some bushes by the lake and hidden in the bushes there was a rowing boat⁷⁶, lying upside down⁷⁷.

'Help me turn it over,' the boy said.

They turned the boat over and pulled it into the water. Then the boy went into the bushes and came back with two oars. Kara got into the boat first and the boy followed her. He sat down in the middle of the boat, put the oars in position and started rowing. Kara sat at the back of the boat and looked down into the water. It looked dark and deep. She put her hand in the water and it felt cool and fresh.

They did not speak for the rest of the journey. The boy rowed while Kara looked up at the sky. She felt as calm as the water in the lake. She felt good – very good.

The island was near the other side of the lake. It was smaller than Kara had expected. There was just enough space for a few trees, for the boat, and for Kara and the boy.



After they had pulled the boat onto the island, they sat down on the ground and stared across the water.

'How did you find this place?' Kara asked.

'Last week when I was out walking I found the boat and rowed it here,' the boy said. 'Now I come here every day. It's my island.'

'You're strange!' Kara laughed.

'You are too,' said the boy.

They sat in silence for a while and then the boy looked at Kara.

'Do you ever feel like someone or something is chasing you?' he said.

'No,' Kara said, too quickly.

The boy stood up and started throwing stones into the water. 'I do,' he said.

'Why are they chasing you?' Kara asked.

'Because I'm different,' he replied.