

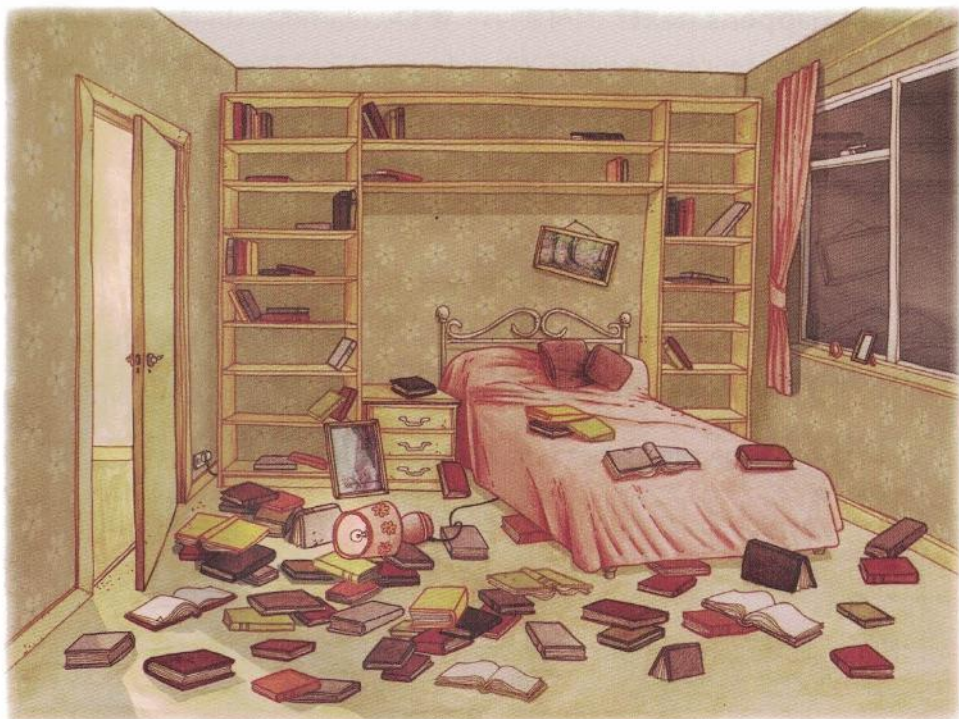
A New Friend?

There is good in his heart. Perhaps he can help me
and I can help him. Then she smiled.

‘I’m Bailey,’ the boy said. ‘I was with the boys ...’ Rose was quiet. ‘The police car came and I was in here. I went to the door, but the policewoman was with you. I stayed ...’ He looked down at the floor. ‘I’m sorry. It was wrong of us.’

‘But why?’ Rose said very quietly. Her heart was slow now. One, two – one, two. She listened to the boy. He was young and unhappy. He wasn’t bad.

‘It’s difficult,’ he said. Rose waited. He looked at Rose. His eyes were red now. ‘I’m different too ...’



‘Crazy?’

Bailey smiled. ‘You’re not crazy. You’re different ... and I’m different. I like to be **alone**. I stay in my room. I work and I read books. I don’t go out often. The boys at school laugh at me.’

‘I understand that.’

Bailey looked away. ‘But I don’t want to be different.’

‘I know. You do bad things with those boys because you don’t want the laughs and the bad names. But it isn’t the answer.’

‘I know that.’ Bailey looked at the books on the floor. Then he looked at Rose. ‘Can I help you? Can I stay?’

Bailey’s face was friendly and there was a light in his eyes.

Rose didn’t answer. *There is good in his heart. Perhaps he can help me and I can help him.* Then she smiled. ‘OK, Bailey. You can put the books back.’

‘Thank you.’ The boy took a book from the floor. He opened it and then he looked at Rose with big eyes. ‘This book ... the writer, it’s Rose Randall. Is that you?’

‘No,’ Rose said. ‘That was me.’

