

Trapped

Extract from a story by Zoe Green

The storm howls all night. You wouldn't be able to hear anyone call for help. From the kennel entrance, Jan – awake again – watches the road, but no blue lights come, no sirens cut through the tattoo of the rain. Perhaps they don't know the way. He does hear a hare scream, once, just after midnight, during a lull, but no other noise flies above the storm. Daybreak brings grey, frowning light and the chestnut and walnut trees around the house toss restlessly, like horses in the stables when something's not right. Nobody comes to the forest when it's raining like this, not even the forestry workers.

In class before the holidays, Mme Peplin asked them a strange question. If a tree falls in the middle of a forest and nobody hears it, did it even happen? Today he sits on his bed and writes a line in pencil in his class book: 'If a boy shuts a door in the middle of the forest, and nobody hears it or sees it, did it even happen?' He sits on his bed and ponders it. When she asked the question in class, he said it was a stupid question. Of course it still happened – because he's seen trees that have fallen in the forest, even if nobody heard them. He turns his pencil the other way and rubs out the question in his exercise book. *If Jan writes a line in his book, and nobody ever reads it, did he ever write it?*