

## Chapter 1

There are days in your life when you wake up and from deep down in your heart you know that everything is in the right place, that your future looks bright and the challenges<sup>1</sup> you are facing are promising<sup>2</sup> and cheerful<sup>3</sup>.

This morning definitely did not belong to one of those days.

When Pat opened her eyes she knew at once that she was not at home in London, not in her cuddly<sup>4</sup> bed, that there was no tasty bacon with French toast waiting for her in the kitchen, prepared by her so called parents Rachel and Daniel, who wanted to celebrate the beginning of the summer holidays together with her. Pat knew very well that these times were gone and would never come back.

She looked around and shivered<sup>5</sup>. She was cold and puzzled<sup>6</sup>. And she knew that the goose pimples<sup>7</sup> on her arms had nothing to do with the coldness that surrounded<sup>8</sup> her. She closed her eyes again and for one short moment she wished she was in her room with the childish Harry Potter wallpaper, with the German flute<sup>9</sup> she had got three days ago as a present for her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. It should keep her busy over the summer and at the same time this gift should calm down<sup>10</sup> her so called parents' bad conscience<sup>11</sup>. Rachel and Daniel had to work during the holidays and could not travel with Pat as they had done all the years before.

Pat rubbed her eyes. She had hated that home since Rachel and Daniel had told her that she was an adopted<sup>12</sup> child, she had hated her adoptive parents and their latest selfish<sup>13</sup> idea to make Pat learn to play such an old fashioned instrument like the German flute.

But right now she was not quite sure if she had made the right decision, if it had been a good idea to run away to find out the truth about her real parents.

On the other hand she was grown up<sup>14</sup> now and she needed to find out what was wrong with herself, if she wanted to lead a normal life like all the others from her

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<sup>1</sup> challenge – Herausforderung

<sup>2</sup> promising – vielversprechend

<sup>3</sup> cheerful – heiter

<sup>4</sup> cuddly – kuschelig

<sup>5</sup> to shiver – schauern

<sup>6</sup> puzzled – verwirrt

<sup>7</sup> goose pimples – Gänsehaut

<sup>8</sup> to surround – umgeben

<sup>9</sup> German flute – Querflöte

<sup>10</sup> to calm down – beruhigen

<sup>11</sup> bad conscience – schlechtes Gewissen

<sup>12</sup> adopted – adoptiert

<sup>13</sup> selfish – selbstüchtig

<sup>14</sup> grown up – erwachsen

school. Pat was fed up with<sup>15</sup> feeling different from everybody else without knowing why she was different.

Pat opened her eyes and turned her head from the rocks that formed the ceiling<sup>16</sup> of the huge cave<sup>17</sup> to the direction from where bright daylight fell in.

Massive iron bars separated her part of the cave from the smaller part which opened to the sea. Pat couldn't see the water, only blue sky. The cave had to be high up in some cliffs on the Eastern coast. When she had arrived at this hidden castle in the back of beyond<sup>18</sup> of the Scottish highlands the day before she had had to climb up a steep hill, even her Labrador Tubby had had to struggle.

Tubby! Pat sat up.

They had left him and Hermione, her rat, behind in the small stable room. It was situated close to the paddock<sup>19</sup> where she had met her real mother Heather for the first time in her life since she had left Pat as a baby.

Pat had to feed her pets<sup>20</sup>!

But Pat was distracted. She closed her eyes and remembered last night's situation too well.

She had arrived on top of the hill and stood in the paddock in front of the rotten castle, which she had thought was deserted. But then Tubby, her black Labrador, had spotted the horses and started chasing them. Pat had tried to stop him. And suddenly, out of the blue, the woman had appeared from inside the rotten stable that belonged to the castle. Pat had recognised her at once: She looked exactly the same as on the photo Rachel had given her with the remark that Heather Corby, her younger sister and Pat's mother, had died in a riding accident 13 years ago. But Heather was alive, and she looked as if no time had passed: young and wild and free with her long red hair flying in the wind and her pale<sup>21</sup> face. Pat opened her eyes again and looked to the place where her mother was still sleeping.

Rachel and Daniel had adopted Pat at the age of about one, and Pat had taken them as her real parents. She had always been Patricia Shaw, gifted<sup>22</sup> daughter of Rachel and Daniel Shaw, class winner<sup>23</sup> and popular with everybody<sup>24</sup>.

When she turned 13 they had told her the truth. Obviously Heather had been a single parent, nobody seemed to know who Pat's father was. And Pat had hated her so called parents from that day onwards for betraying<sup>25</sup> her for so long.

And she had changed, had become a rebel in dark outfit and with dark thoughts. And an illness that had caused more problems.

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<sup>15</sup> to be fed up with ... – es leid sein zu ...

<sup>16</sup> ceiling – Decke

<sup>17</sup> cave – Höhle

<sup>18</sup> the back of beyond – am Hintern der Welt

<sup>19</sup> paddock - Pferdekoppel

<sup>20</sup> pet – Haustier

<sup>21</sup> pale – blass

<sup>22</sup> gifted – überdurchschnittlich begabt

<sup>23</sup> class winner – Klassenbeste

<sup>24</sup> popular with everybody – überall beliebt

<sup>25</sup> to betray – verraten, betrügen

The whole situation now was so strange, so frightening! She had wished to meet her real parents for such a long time, the last year had been so sad and painful. Now she had found them, a letter from her real mother Heather, hidden under Pat's adoptive mother's bedside table drawer had led her to Scotland and finally to this hidden place in the Highlands, and Pat was full of doubts<sup>26</sup> and fear. Her heart was aching<sup>27</sup>. She could see her mother's back moving slowly with her breath<sup>28</sup>. And she felt it was difficult to call her "mother" even in her thoughts.

Pat turned her head and looked into the background of the cave, where Heather and herself had come from the night before to meet her real father in a safe place. Safe for Pat as she seemed to be the problem for her father Cyril. Somewhere back there her peaky <sup>29</sup>rodent<sup>30</sup> Hermi, her cutie<sup>31</sup> with her silky black fur, and Tubby, that old yellow-belly<sup>32</sup>, were waiting for her to be fed<sup>33</sup>. But they had to be patient a bit longer. Pat had to talk to her parents first.

Heather was still sleeping, while the sun was rising.

Pat had been used to call her adoptive mother Rachel "mother" for so many years. And now Pat started to understand, why Rachel and Daniel hadn't told her the truth about her real parents. Maybe they had only known a little part of the truth. And even that little part was frightening enough, even for grown-ups. So why should they have told little Patricia as a kid? Perhaps it had been an act of protecting her soul from the dark knowledge of the horrible truth.

Pat shook her head. No, she couldn't stop now, she had come too far, there was no way back into a childish state of innocence<sup>34</sup>. She had to face the truth, even if she didn't like it.

Pat watched Heather. Her shiny red hair, which was only a bit lighter than Pat's natural colour, before she had dyed her hair pitch black the year before, lay spread around her head on the dark brown horse blanket. Heather was lying close to the iron bars.

They made this cave a safe place, Heather had said the night before. And then Pat's father had appeared.

Pat's heart started to stumble<sup>35</sup> when her look followed her mother's outstretched arm. It reached out through the iron bars and firmly held the hand of a giant on the other side of the cave. He was lying wrapped up in a dark cloak<sup>36</sup>. He didn't move, lay still as if he was dead or sleeping. Pat could not see if he was breathing. But his eyes were wide open and fixed upon Pat.

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<sup>26</sup> doubt – Zweifel

<sup>27</sup> to ache – schmerzen, weh tun

<sup>28</sup> breath – Atem

<sup>29</sup> peaky – angeschlagen, kränklich

<sup>30</sup> rodent – Nagetier

<sup>31</sup> cutie – Süße

<sup>32</sup> yellow-belly – Hasenfuß

<sup>33</sup> to feed – füttern

<sup>34</sup> innocence – Unwissenheit, Unschuld

<sup>35</sup> to stumble – stolpern

<sup>36</sup> cloak – Umhang, Mantel

She didn't know what to think of the expression the giant's face showed: Was it amazement<sup>37</sup>? Was it befuddlement<sup>38</sup>? Or was it rage and voracity<sup>39</sup>? Did he watch his prey<sup>40</sup>?

"Good morning, my daughter," he finally said in a low voice. Pat had expected the same roaring sound that she had heard when he appeared out of the dark the night before, when they had met for the first time. The sound had frightened her, together with his whole appearance<sup>41</sup>. The more astonishing was his voice now, he sounded peaceful.

Cyril O'Brian was her real father. And Pat's biggest wish at the moment was to trust him and to throw herself into his arms like a little child.

Now he stood up and Pat instinctively leaned back a bit. He was really tall and his eyes were of a clear and somehow icy blue. His forehead was high, his hair was black, even darker than the colour Pat had chosen to dye her hair with, and too long, and his skin looked pale like a fish belly<sup>42</sup>. But it did not sparkle as the sunbeams touched his skin as Edward's in Stephanie Meyer's Twilight novels.

Heather's warning from the night before was still ringing in Pat's ears: "Mind my words. We have to be very careful."

„Good morning, Cyril," she replied, instinctively avoiding<sup>43</sup> the words "father" or "Dad", and tried to smile while she made some uncertain<sup>44</sup> steps into his direction.

When her father smiled back at her she saw his teeth. They were shining like steel.

The corner teeth looked like fangs of a carnivore<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> amazant – Erstaunen

<sup>38</sup> befuddlement – Verwirrung

<sup>39</sup> voracity – Gier

<sup>40</sup> prey – Beute

<sup>41</sup> appearance – Erscheinung

<sup>42</sup> belly – Bauch

<sup>43</sup> to avoid – vermeiden

<sup>44</sup> uncertain – unsicher

<sup>45</sup> carnivore – Raubtier

