

## End

‘Shirts?’

‘Yes.’

‘Socks?’

‘Yes.’

‘Pants!’

I look up and see Chloe grinning next to Mum.

‘Well, you’ll need pants,’ she adds.

I try to glare but end up smiling.

It’s hard to glare at Chloe. Also, this time tomorrow I will be gone. I turn back to the wooden trunk, my possessions piled within, including pants.

No one else will have a trunk like mine. There is an entire section of ROOM devoted to school kit. Especially luggage. Luggage which weighs itself, keeps itself cool, keeps warm, transports itself. I am almost relieved that I have no choice in the matter.

Mine opens and closes. That's it. I lower the heavy lid. It doesn't quite match up with the rest of the trunk, so I put my foot on top and press down. It still doesn't close. I guess it just opens then.

'That's an heirloom,' Chloe reminds me.

'I thought you had to be dead before your things became heirlooms. Dad is in the kitchen making pancakes.'

On cue, a disembodied voice calls, 'Does someone need me?'

I sigh. 'I just wish this trunk wasn't so—big. Or grey.'

'We could paint it!' Chloe cries. 'Purple! With yellow stars.'

Mum is watching me. She puts down the list. 'Come on, Chloe, let's go out and pick some lettuce for lunch.'

Chloe hops up and grabs Mum's outstretched hand. 'Rainbow stripes?' she shouts from the kitchen.

I take the list from the arm of the chair where Mum left it. We've been through it a thousand times. Once was enough. I know there's nothing missing. Even so, I scan through one last time, then sit in the chair and stare at the trunk. I should be making the most of every last second with my family. For some reason I want to be on my own.

I've looked forward to this day for fourteen years. Now that it's here, the butterflies in my stomach

have gone, leaving behind a strange, empty feeling. Instead of wondering who I'll make friends with first, I find myself thinking about Chloe. About whispering goodnight from the top bunk. About crating up the apples and harvesting the honeycomb. About herding the goats to their pen in the low evening sun. Mum brushing my hair from my eyes. Dad brushing his hair from his eyes when we play chess. About Finn.

It's annoying.