

One filthy wet Wednesday morning, the world stopped making sense. I wish I could say I'd been expecting it, like those clever people who smell thunderstorms or feel tidal waves before they hit, but that wasn't quite how it happened.

We'd been eating breakfast, Mum and me, bumping knees under our tiny kitchen table as we polished off the last of the bread and dripping. I'd be hungry again within the hour: I always was. I was also dreading school. So you could say the day had started as grim as any other. Until, that was, I saw the headline in the morning paper:

'HUMAN FEET FOUND IN BLOOMSBURY TOWN HOUSE.'

'Is it *true*?' I asked, baffled.

Mum was scanning the inside pages for the death notices and horoscopes, which were the bits she always read first. 'Is what true, pet?'

I pointed to the article: 'Can I see?' because it was

just the sort of queer story that'd stick in my head all day if I didn't read it.

Mum turned to the front page with a frown.

'Your dad wouldn't think much of you filling your brain with this, Lil,' she said, once she'd read it herself.

No, he probably wouldn't.

Dad wanted his daughter to be quiet, hard-working, with her nose always in a textbook. And I *was* like this, but I could be fierce if I had to be and wasn't good at niceties or looking neat for school. Which was why when Mum cut my hair off with the dressmaking scissors, Dad didn't object. Better a daughter with boy-short hair than one whose plaits were always unravelling.

Meanwhile, across the kitchen table, Mum was still holding the newspaper.

'Oh come on, let me. Dad's not even here,' I pointed out.

He'd gone to work early, as usual, selling carpets door to door. Mum said he was lucky to have a job when, since the war, times were hard for everyone. She worked in Woolworths, and no amount of lipstick could hide how tired she always looked. But at least we had a roof over our heads – a sloping attic one, because our rooms were on the very top floor, which was all

1) How do you think Lil, the main character, feels about school? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

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2) What are your first impressions of Lil from this extract? Give 2 impressions.

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3) How does Lil feel about her dad? Give evidence for your answer.

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1) How do you think Lil, the main character, feels about school? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

She doesn't like it as it says that she is dreading school. Dreading means that she is really not looking forward to it.

2) What are your first impressions of Lil from this extract? Give 2 impressions.

She doesn't like her school.

She is curious about the world/the news.

She can be quiet and hard-working.

She can be fierce and strong.

She isn't good at looking neat and tidy.

She isn't good at behaving in the socially acceptable way. (niceties)

3) How does Lil feel about her dad? Give evidence for your answer.

She thinks her dad wants her to behave differently. He wants her to be quieter, neater and only focus on her school work because it says he would not like her to be filling her head with the story in the newspaper. He would prefer her always 'with her nose in a text book'.