

SECTION ONE

Episode ONE

Back to school



Kat My name is Katarzyna but I call myself Kat so people don't ask me stupid questions. My dad chose my weird name because he's Polish. He chose my brother's name too, Aleksy, but everyone just calls him Lex.

I am just thirteen and very tall for my age. I hate being tall and I wish I had dark wild, curly hair like my best mate Jodie; mine is flat and straight and pale. I get it from my mum; she's not Polish, she's English.

We have just moved to this new town and this new house and today I have to start at a new school. I miss my friends, especially Jodie; I miss my room and our old house, and my grandparents who lived just round the corner. They are Polish too and so are loads of my dad's friends. I don't

see why we all had to move here just because Mum had to move her job. She says we're lucky she's got a job at all the way things are (dad was managing this café but then it closed down and he can't seem to get another job) but it doesn't feel lucky to me. Lex doesn't mind, he's been over the moon with excitement ever since they told him we were moving, but he can get excited watching grass grow. He's ten years old and deaf and he's the happiest kid you ever met. He's just started at this school for deaf children. I hope he'll be OK. I wish I could be happy like him.

Dionne



I'm Dionne, some of you will know me from year 7 but things are different now. My mum has come home to live with us and that's great because she's nowhere near as strict as my gran, and it's so cool to have my sister, Chantelle, back home. I can talk to her about anything. She's got a job temping for a TV company so I'm hoping she'll meet loads of celebrities. I'm planning on being a celebrity one day like Beyonce.

Everything feels different now I'm in year 8, like I was a silly little girl before and now I've grown up. I've stopped doing football, I couldn't hack it with all that training, and I've stopped hanging out so much with Rosie. She's OK but when we came back from holiday I think we both knew we'd kind of moved on. While we were away she told me how much she still likes Eddie. I wanted to tell her that she's wasting her time but I didn't have the heart. All he ever thinks about these days is running and computers and now he's starting hanging out with keeners like CJ. I can't even believe I almost fancied him for a while.

I've started going round with Daisy and Izzie from a different tutor. Izzie is OK but Daisy is like the coolest girl in our year; I couldn't believe it when she started talking to me. She's been going out with Brad in year 9 for three weeks now; he's got a really bad reputation but she doesn't care. Most girls with boyfriends never stop going on about it but with Daisy it's like this big secret; she says she'll kill anyone who tells but I'd never say a word.

The only boy I like is Scott in Daisy's tutor; I see him in Maths and English and I can't believe I never really noticed him until now. He is so, so lush. I go weak when he walks past me. Daisy says she's sure he likes me. I hope she's right. He did look over at me in Maths.

We've got this new girl in our tutor. She is so stuck-up I can't believe it. Thinks she's so it. I just think she's weird: long and thin and pale like a stick insect. I saw Scott staring at her. I expect he thinks she's weird too.



ep



I reckon the reason I feel different from most of the other kids is because until last year I didn't even go to school. My mum taught me at home for the whole of primary school. It was my dad who told Mum it was about time I went to school. I think she'd have kept me at home forever if he hadn't. She gets scared when she's on her own. My dad's been away in Iraq for ages training the Iraqi army or something but he'll be home soon, thank goodness.

At first it was petrifying being one of eleven hundred kids but now it doesn't bother me. I go round with kids who are nerds like me, like Li and Rafiq and sometimes Eddie. Being nerdy doesn't bother us. While the other boys are going on about Gears of War or how many goals United scored on Saturday, we talk about what's happening in the world. We know we're not the coolest but we're smart.

I'll tell you something - this whole tutor group has got worse over the summer. Now they're in year 8 most of the kids act like complete dorks - the boys go on and on about football and computer games; the girls go on and on about boys - not this boy though, they take no notice of me. But I don't care what girls think. My mum has warned me to stay away from girls and she's right. They crack me up the way they strut around fiddling with their hair and plastering themselves with make-up until they get told to go and wash it off. Plastics!

Scott



Hi, I'm Scott. I've been in London most of the summer. Me and my sister Natasha went there to stay with my mum's sister so my mum and dad could set up this new leisure place they've taken over. We went on The Eye which I thought was cool but it freaked Tash out; she likes animal stuff like the zoo and the aquarium. The last week I was there I went to the Beckham Football Academy. That was well safe; we did loads of practice with dribbling and passing and I scored eight times. I got free kit and everything.

I already play for the junior team at school but I'm hoping they'll play me in the seniors when I get back. It'll be the first time anyone from Y8 has made it. This kid Ollie Davis is captain. I don't know what he's like but I've heard he favours his own mates instead of playing the best players. Well I hope I can show him how good I am. I'd do anything to get in that team.

It's OK being back at school but rubbish being back at home with Mum and Dad. Since they've taken over this new business we hardly ever see them. They've got this girl, Fiona, who's a total waste of space, to look after us while they are working, even though I tell them I'm old enough to be left with Tash on my own. I'll be thirteen in two weeks and I could do a lot better than Fiona. All she does is cook endless soggy pizzas, polish her nails, squeeze her zits and talk for hours on her phone.

One good thing at school is this new girl; the minute I saw her I couldn't take my eyes off her and I don't even

know why. It's not like she's that good looking or anything; she's tall with this dead straight blonde hair. I think it's just the way she stands there like she doesn't care if loads of kids stare at her, like she doesn't even notice, like she can take care of herself. Wish she was in my tutor. I'd like to get to know her.