

## Maggie and the Gate

Maggie is 8 years old. She is tall for her age with long, dark brown hair and golden skin with a dusting of freckles. She looks very like her mother, Sally, who walks her to school every morning. Sally is smartly dressed and has an efficient air about her. It is Maggie's Grandmother who collects her at the end of the day.

Maggie always speeds up when she passes the last house before the school boundary. She moves closer to her mother, tightens her grip on her hand and looks intently at the toy she is holding. It looks like she is in a hurry to get to school but doesn't look around to greet her friends like many other children are doing

When they get into the playground, Sally passes Maggie's hand to Miss Bird as if she was giving her a precious object.

"Any problems this morning?" Miss Bird asks Sally.

"No. We've had a good morning haven't we Maggie?"

Maggie brings her toy closer to her face.

"Come on then Maggie. We are going to go into the classroom, hang up your things, then have a look at a book about Sierra Sloth that I found in the library!"

As Maggie walks into the classroom with Miss Bird, she glances briefly back at the school gate where her mother is hurrying off to work.

It's time for school and my mum is calling me downstairs. I hold her hand as she opens the door and we set off down the road. As we get nearer, I start to worry about if I'll be alone at break time again today and having no friends. We arrive at school and I see the wall and gate which isn't tall enough and I get even more anxious about someone breaking in the school. I hold my mum's hand even tighter and try not to make eye contact with the wall and gate. I go over to Miss Bird with my mum because I have no friends to talk to. Miss Bird speaks with my mum and I hide myself behind my elephant toy. After their conversation, Miss Bird tells me about a book which I'm excited about; my mum hands me over to my teacher and I look down because I don't like looking at people's eyes or mouths. We walk into school and I look back at the dangerous wall and gate and I think 'that is the reason why I don't feel safe in school'.

## Questions/Talking points

1. What kind of an impact does worrying about friendships have on Maggie?
2. Feeling safe at school is really important. Were there any signs in the story that Maggie didn't feel safe?
3. What assumptions might we make about Maggie from the narrative that we might change when reading the first-person account?