

Rain's small fingers tickle my leg. She's crying big bubbly tears. I try to put an arm around her shoulder, but she stiffens. I hold her hand instead.

'It's OK,' I say. 'They argue like this sometimes.'

'I don't like it,' Rain says.

'No,' I say. Neither do I. But that's what happens every time Mum and Nana are together.

'They don't love each other,' Rain says.

I'm not sure that's true. 'They love each other, but I don't think they like each other very much,' I say.

Rain frowns. 'That doesn't make sense.'

'Do you love Mum?'

She bites her thumb.

'Doesn't she ever get on your nerves?'

'Like, *always*.'

'It's a bit like that. I have this dog called Derry, who's really sweet. I love him like mad, but sometimes he pukes on the stairs or farts when we're eating, and then I could really kick him.'

She smiles. 'Do you actually kick him?'

'No! I love him too much to kick him.'

And finally she laughs, just as Mum appears around the door. 'Nana's heading off now, if you want to say goodbye, Apple,' she says.