

A Migrant's View

This chapter introduced readers to two key characters, Arim and Mira, migrant birds who had faced a lot of hostility from the native wildlife. In many ways, it was supposed to reflect the attitudes towards immigration and the struggles people from other cultures have in settling in the UK and making it their home. In light of topics like Brexit, not much has really changed but this chapter could be shelved as the characters are introduced when Mag attacks their nest to steal their chick.

Every year the Redwings made the gruelling journey to Greenacres with the sole purpose of settling down to breed. They had stumbled upon the area by accident, after severe Siberian winds had blown them off course from their original migratory route. It was how Arim and Mira both met, at this very place, and they had remained together ever since. However, their arrival was met by some resentment from native wildlife; Mira was ignored by the other songbirds and Arim found work hard to come by.

In the seasons they had spent together at Greenacres, the pair had only yielded one egg. But for some inexplicable reason, the egg never hatched. The pair never quite recovered from their ordeal. This year the Redwings were more hopeful. The couple had their egg, but life in the woods had changed for them and every other bird. They were tormented daily by the squirrels or heckled regularly by magpies.

Food was scarce and there were often scuffles between other birds and mammals around them. Mira was stressed, and worried that she would be too weak to raise their fledgling, if it were to even hatch. Arim worked his hardest to support her, but had to travel further to find food, leaving their nest open to attack.

The Redwing's story was just a snippet of the misery and pain affecting all the inhabitants of Greenacres, but like the migrant birds there were other creatures who persevered nonetheless. Many sought refuge underground, to avoid aerial attacks or a good kicking and biting from the feral squirrels that patrolled the woods. It was here that a resistance movement was formed.

Baldwin, whose prediction had come true, began planning a counter attack. But the badger's numbers and resources were limited against the sheer might and magnitude of the magpies, who had brought reinforcements from other woods and enlisted the support of the swift and agile jackdaws. His last remaining hope was that a message would get through to Queen Eliza so that she could instruct Hercules to forcefully remove Big Mag from power, but with Mag's army monitoring the skies and the squirrels watching the forest floor, no communication could get through.