

New Beginnings

Leah tightened the straps of her backpack as she walked steadily towards school. The familiar route looked almost the same as it had only a few weeks before, yet something felt different. The morning air carried a gentle coolness that brushed against her cheeks, replacing the warmth of the summer holidays. She zipped up her cardigan and took a deep breath. It smelled fresh, with a faint hint of damp grass and earth.

As she wandered beneath the line of trees, Leah noticed that a handful of leaves had begun to change. Most were still bright green, but here and there, flashes of gold and amber peeked through the branches. A single leaf drifted lazily to the pavement in front of her. It seemed far too early for autumn to arrive completely, but the season was quietly announcing itself.

Leah smiled to herself. September always seemed caught between two worlds. Summer had not entirely disappeared, yet autumn was patiently waiting in the wings. It reminded her of how she felt. She was no longer one of the youngest children in Key Stage 2, but she was not quite one of the oldest either. Year 5 felt like standing on a bridge, leaving one chapter behind while stepping confidently towards another.

As she approached the school gates, she noticed groups of children laughing together. Some were catching up after six long weeks apart, while others clung nervously to parents who offered reassuring smiles. Leah recognised a few familiar faces and waved, although her stomach fluttered with a mixture of excitement and uncertainty. She wondered whether her new teacher would be strict, whether the work would be more challenging and whether she would make new friends in her class.

Her mum had reminded her that change often feels uncomfortable at first because it asks people to grow. Leah had thought about those words several times that morning. Perhaps feeling slightly nervous was not a sign that something was wrong. Perhaps it simply meant that something important was beginning.

A breeze swept gently through the playground, carrying another golden leaf across her path. Leah watched it spin through the air before disappearing beneath a bench. Somehow, it did not make her think about endings. Instead, it reminded her that every season brings opportunities that the last one could not. Without autumn, the trees could never prepare for spring.

The bell rang clearly across the playground. Leah straightened her shoulders, took one last look at the changing trees and walked through the school doors with quiet determination. Just as the season was beginning to shift, so was she. Neither transformation would happen overnight, but both had already begun.