

## A Simple Love Story

Long ago and far away, in a place not at all like here, there was a small village. It was an almost completely ordinary village.

Almost.

Like many small villages, it was surrounded by vast stretches of land containing nothing that even vaguely resembled a city (or, to be honest, anything like a medium-sized town). In fact, no one in the village had ever visited a city. I never heard of anyone from a city ever visiting *it*, either. Why on earth would they want to? It was small and, as I said, almost completely ordinary.

The village's only visitors came from the dark forest surrounding the almost completely ordinary village. To describe the forest as the suburbs of the village would, if it were not so utterly ridiculous, be considered either a shameless exaggeration or an outright lie. The kindest thing I can say about the forest is that it was not really a part of the village. Still, the people who lived there didn't mind.

Much.

They liked being able to visit the village whenever they felt like it. The surprising thing was that they felt like it so often. They were very easily pleased.

Among them was a girl who positively loved visiting the village. Anyone from a city, or even a medium-sized town, would have noticed instantly that she was not a beautiful girl. I don't mean to suggest that she was ugly... she was just, well, not quite almost completely ordinary.

However, as no such outsider ever came to the village, no one noticed.

It was not the girl's fault, of course, that she was not beautiful. Nor was it her fault that she didn't know that she was not beautiful. No one in the village knew that she was not beautiful. They were idiots. Every one of them.