

and not this one?

How could everyone go on calmly about their business while the world was being threatened with an environmental catastrophe?

Greta couldn't find an answer to these questions. She ended up feeling very, very sad. The adults might not have been worried, but she was.

There was something else about Greta that set her apart from her schoolmates, other than her strong interest in the environment.

At the age of 11, the doctors had diagnosed her with Asperger's syndrome.

People who suffer from Asperger's often become interested in a particular issue and think about it obsessively without being able to let go. This is exactly what was happening to Greta.

Most of us are overwhelmed every day by lots of different stories, information and news. They have an impact on us, they affect our feelings, they worry us, but pretty soon – almost always – we forget about them, because we are so caught up in the things we're doing. We might be really worried about pollution, but

then we end up moving those thoughts to a tiny corner of our minds, we hop in the car or on a scooter to drive over to visit our best friend, without thinking about exhaust fumes and how they poison the air. For Greta, it wasn't so easy. Her brain works in a slightly different way to most people's. For her, the world is black or white, there are situations that are right and others that are wrong. You can't just decide that pollution is terrible and then keep on polluting the planet in your everyday life.

At school one day when Greta was still little, the teacher showed the class a documentary on plastic pollution in the ocean.

The film showed starving polar bears and other animals in distress. Like all the other children in the class, Greta was very moved and worried by the story. She cried all the way through the film. However, when the lights were turned on at the end, her classmates started thinking about other things: recess, what to do after school, tomorrow's homework. But Greta found she couldn't do that. The images of the planet polluted