

by plastic were stuck in her head and refused to go away.

Because she was so interested in the environment, Greta had once entered a competition run by a Swedish daily newspaper, the *Svenska Dagbladet*. She did some research and wrote an article. Her entry was judged to be the best and she won the competition. The article was published and several activists (people committed to protecting the environment) contacted the young writer, curious about such a well-informed schoolgirl.

Thanks to the newspaper, Greta was able to get to know people who shared her concerns. They were trying to draw the rest of the country's attention to the issue, by starting discussions and searching for solutions. Unfortunately, none of their many ideas convinced enough people, and nothing happened. But Greta was not ready to give up.

Greta's mind worked in another very special way: she would focus intently on something that interested her. Asperger's syndrome makes people determined and capable of extraordinary commitment. For years, Greta did in-depth research into climate change, build-

ing up a wealth of information, which was unusual for a girl her age.

She knew as much about it as an adult expert might. During a school outing to a museum, she noticed that some of the information about carbon dioxide written on the wall panels was wrong. She became very angry about the error – so much so that she left the class group, dropped out of the tour and went and sat by herself near the entrance to the museum.

The more she read, the more her discoveries worried her. She wondered what her future would be like if the temperature of the planet continued to increase. Her thoughts were dark and terrifying, and difficult to face without being overcome by depression.

Unfortunately, Greta had never been a talkative girl, so she kept her turmoil to herself until she became so sad and depressed that she could no longer leave the house in the morning to go to school.

Then, at the age of 11, the sadness became an illness. It was as if something inside her had suddenly cracked. The doctors called it depression.