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Opening extract from

# The Smile

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This book has dyslexia friendly features

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## Chapter 1

# The Howler

Josh dragged the covers up over his head. His baby brother's howls still pierced through his bedroom wall. They even made it past the pillow Josh had tunnelled himself under.

"Waaa!"

"Not again," Josh moaned.

"Waaaaa!"

Josh switched on his torch to look at the clock beside his bed.

It was 4.20 in the morning.



It had taken Josh nearly an hour to drift back to sleep after the last bout of wailing. He groaned. This was what torturers did when they wanted to get vital information from their victims. People needed sleep. Josh would have told anybody anything they wanted to know a long time ago.

The torturer in Josh's house was only 17 days old.

‘If I don’t get some peace soon,’ Josh thought, ‘my baby brother will be lucky to live to his 18th day.’

He stuck his nose out over the blankets.



It was still as black as pitch outside.

The bedroom door next to Josh's room opened.

The howl rose in volume and then faded as the door closed. Josh heard his father pad along the landing to the bathroom. Dad was on the morning shift

at work that week. It was his first week back after the baby's birth.

Josh wanted to join his dad for a chat, but he knew his dad would have got up at the last minute so that he could have an extra five minutes' sleep. Not that he had much chance of that with the Howler.

For three hours Josh had listened as his parents took turns with Charlie. They had walked up and down the creaky floor, singing to him and talking to him. But it made no difference. Still he howled.

They were so desperate that they started yelling and blaming each other for the fact that the baby was awake.

