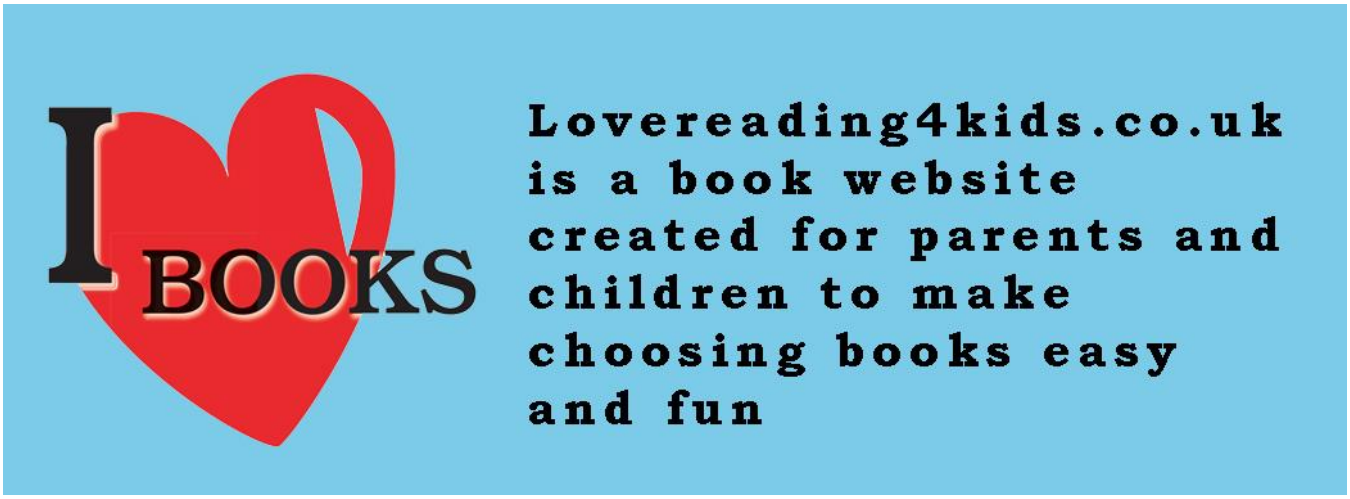


Opening extract from

Perijee & Me

Written by

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My best moment with Perijee happened when we were lying out in the cove. There weren't any clouds that night, not one. If you opened your eyes wide enough you could see all the stars together, looking down on us like a city in the sky. It was just me and Perijee and the waves coming in and nothing else for miles and miles. The sky had never looked so big to me before.

I tried to find one of the stars that Dad had told me about, so I could show it to Perijee. He was still about my size then. This was before he tried to take over the world etc.

'Perijee,' I said, pointing up. 'Look.'

Perijee looked at my finger.

'No,' I said, pointing harder. 'Look *there*. At that star.'

Perijee grew a finger on his hand and tried

to show it to me. I groaned.

'*No*, Perijee.' I pulled his head down to my arm. 'That star, at the end of my finger, is called *Sirius*. It's the closest one to Earth – that's why it's so bright. See?'

Perijee nodded.

'Maybe that's where you came from,' I said.

Perijee glowed, like a candle in a jar. He grew more fingers, tens of them, wrapping round my hands and wriggling.

'Home,' he said.

I smiled. 'That's right, Perijee! *Home!*'

(I felt a bit bad, actually, because right then I realised Sirius was way off in the other direction and I'd been pointing at the wrong star the whole time. It might have even been a plane. I don't think Perijee noticed, so it's no big deal.)

We stayed like that for hours, him with his head on my shoulder and the waves hissing at the stones by our feet and his whole body glowing and fading like a nightlight, while I made up the names of the stars.

'That's the Jam Tart. And that's the Angry Horse. And that's the, er . . . Flying Fish.'

Perijee listened until he fell asleep, and when it

was properly late I carried him back across the beach in my arms and laid him in the hut by the jetty and tucked him under the nets.

It was my most special moment out of all the times we spent together, easy. Because as I stood there in the middle of the cold, dark hut and watched him sleep, I realised for the first time how *small* he was. Even though he was my size.

He didn't look like an alien at all. He looked like a baby.

And right then I knew that no matter what happened to Perijee and me, no matter how much we changed, it was my job to make sure that he was always safe and always loved and always happy.

Otherwise, what's the point of being a sister?