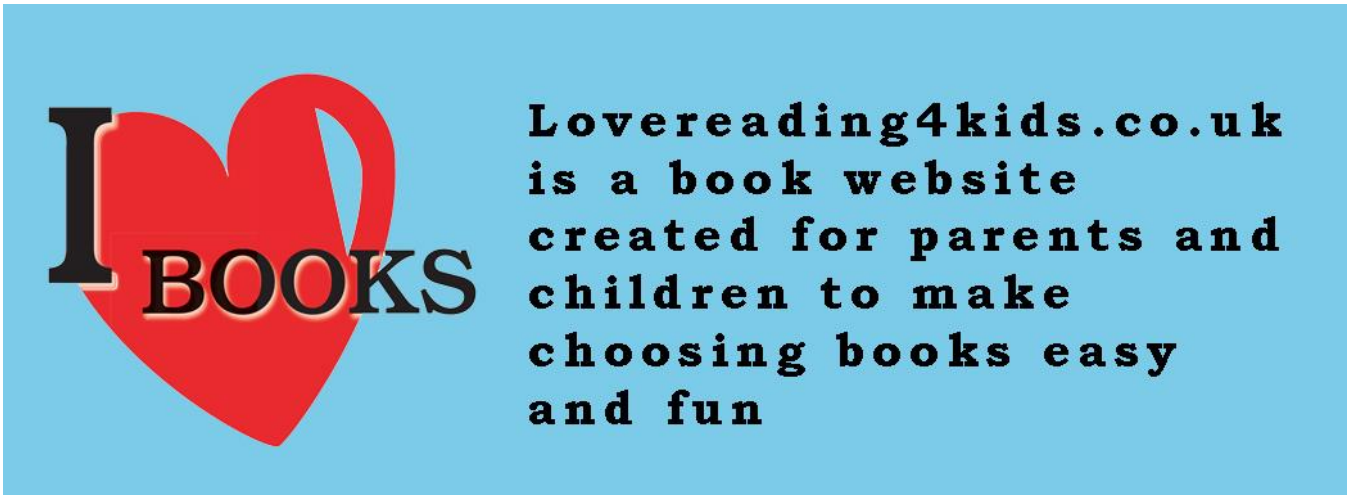


Opening extract from

They Didn't Teach This in Worm School!

Written by

Simone Lia

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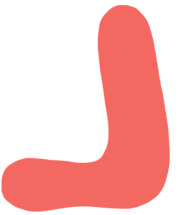
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Chapter One



My name is Marcus.

I am a worm and this is where I live.



My favourite colour is brown.
That's because mud is brown and I really,
really, really like mud.
My favourite things are other worms.



And my hobby is digging holes in the ground. There is nothing I enjoy more than making a complicated underground tunnel system.

But when I met Laurence, everything changed.

Let me tell you about how I met him...

I was digging a hole, like I usually do (like all worms do), but I must have fallen asleep because the next thing that happened was that I was flying a spaceship in outer space.
The spaceship was made
out of potatoes.



Then, I dreamt I fell out of a can into a cereal bowl. Staring at me was a scruffy, fat bird who looked a lot like a chicken. It was a really good dream until it got to the bird part. The bird had intense and menacing eyes.

The worst thing was that the last part of the dream wasn't a dream at all. I really had been in a can and there really was a big, fat bird staring at me!

What would you do if you were a worm and there was a bird two centimetres away from your face looking at you with his beak open so wide that you could see his tonsils?

Maybe you would do what I did. I smiled a big smile and said in my most cheerful voice,



The bird looked confused. He mumbled "Good morning" back and then opened his beak again with his head tilted at a slightly different angle.

Before he could eat me up, I shouted very loudly and quickly,



"MY NAME IS MARCUS. MY FAVOURITE COLOUR IS BROWN, AND MY HOBBY IS DIGGING HOLES IN THE GROUND. WHAT IS YOUR NAME, AND DO YOU HAVE A HOBBY, PLEASE, SIR?"

I added a "sir" at the end to be polite.

The bird seemed taken aback. He closed his beak.

"My name is Laurence," he said.

He was about to open his beak again. "AND WHAT about hobbies?" I asked. "DO you have a nice HOBBY, Laurence?"

Laurence sat down, looked at his fat belly and then looked at me again. "No one's ever

asked me that question before," he said.

"Really? WELL take your TIME and make yourself COMFORTABLE," I said, encouraging him to lie down on the sofa. I positioned myself a little bit closer to the window. "I'd love to hear all about your hobby. It is very, VERY interesting."



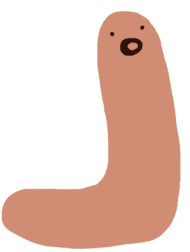
I didn't mean to keep shouting, but I was scared and I didn't quite know what I was doing. Laurence didn't seem to notice. He obediently put his feet up.

"My hobby is travelling," he said.

"How fascinating!" I said, trying not to shout as much. "And where have you been to?"

Laurence thought for a while. "That's the problem," he explained. "I haven't been anywhere. I'm terrible at map reading. I'd love to visit Kenya in Africa, but it's such a long way to fly, I would definitely need a map to get there."

I paused to try and give the impression that I was thinking deeply about what he was saying.



"Why ... Kenya?"

Whilst he was thinking of his answer, I looked out of the window.