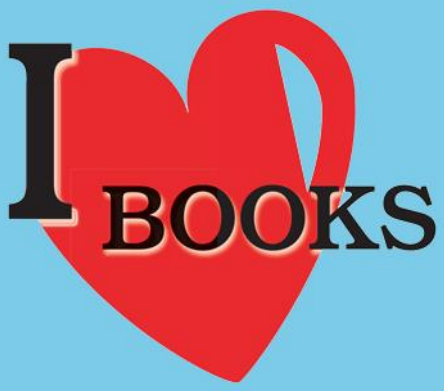


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Opening extract from

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Tiger Days loved tigers. She often wore tiger-print pyjamas, socks and slippers and used to spend all her time indoors drawing pictures of tigers. Ever since she'd been to stay with her grandmother, May Days, at her new house, Tiger was beginning to be more adventurous. May Days used to live on a wildlife reserve in Africa but now lived in a large old house in the countryside,

called Willowgate House. Even now, she sometimes looked after animals that were in need of helping hands. There were lots of repairs to be made at Willowgate, and while the house was being fixed up, May Days and Tiger slept in a tent in the great, unexplored garden.

It was spring, warm and bright, and Tiger was on her way to visit her grandmother but there was a long journey in the car first. Tiger was eager to arrive and see May Days again, as there was still so much to find out about each other.

Excitement swirled in Tiger's tummy as she thought about her grandmother and her new friend Tom, who often stayed

with his grandfather next door. Tiger was also looking forward to seeing Holly Days – a white cat who had made her home at Willowgate even before May Days had moved in. She was the kind of cat that did as she pleased and Tiger thought of Holly as belonging to the house, rather than to anyone in particular. Holly had a mind of her own and was quite in charge of herself, but Tiger and the cat had become firm friends during Tiger's last stay.

The car pulled up at the end of the drive, where Tiger had last seen Holly. Obviously Holly wasn't still sitting there, but when Tiger jumped out of the car to open the gate she looked around, hoping

the cat was nearby. There was no sign of Holly, but May Days was already jogging down the drive to greet them. Tiger smiled and ran to meet her grandmother, while Dad drove up the drive.

"May Days!" said Tiger as the two of them flung their arms round each other.



"I'm so happy to see you all over again," said May Days, planting a big kiss on Tiger's cheek. The garden smelled of new grass and warm breezes and Tiger hoped she'd find everything else just as before.



In the kitchen, Mr Days had lots to talk about with his mother over gallons of tea, which Tiger didn't mind too much as she was now desperate to find the cat.

"Where's Holly?" she said.

"That cat is still a bit of a mystery," May Days said. "Why don't you go and see if you can find her?"

Holly was not in any of the rooms

downstairs, or hiding in any of the chimneys, or behind any doors. She wasn't upstairs in the bath, or in the bedrooms, or inside the cupboard with the lift in the wall where Tiger had first discovered her. Outside, Holly was not in the porch, nor sitting on the windowsills, nor in the tent.

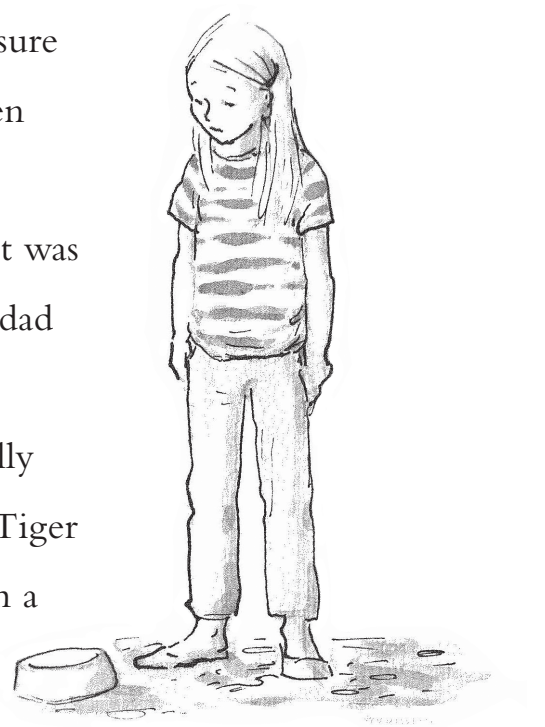
Tiger called and called but no blossom-white cat came padding through the garden. Tiger anxiously went to her grandmother with empty news and worrying fears.

"What if something terrible has happened to her?" Tiger said, in the comfort of her grandmother's arms.

Every day May Days left out a bowl of food for Holly and the next day it would

be empty, even though May Days didn't always see the cat.

"You know what Holly is like," May Days reassured Tiger. "She suddenly turns up, just like that, looking quite content. That cat certainly knows how to look after herself and I'm sure she'll come when she's ready."



Before long it was time for Tiger's dad to return home.

"What if Holly doesn't come?" Tiger said quietly, with a tremble.