Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

The Silver Unicorn

Written by

Jessica Ennis-Hill & Elen Caldecott

Illustrated by

Eric-Jane Waters

Published by

Hodder Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

First published in Great Britain in 2017 by Hodder and Stoughton

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Text copyright © Jessica Ennis Limited, 2017

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All characters and events in this publication, other than those clearly in the public domain, are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978 1 444 93439 7

Printed and bound in Great Britain by

The paper and board used in this book are made from wood from responsible sources

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C104740

Hodder Children's Books
An imprint of
Hachette Children's Group
Part of Hodder and Stoughton
Carmelite House
50 Victoria Embankment
London EC4Y 0DZ

An Hachette UK Company
www.hachette.co.uk

www.hachettechildrens.co.uk

Chapter 1

'Evie!' Mum called up the stairs. 'We'll be heading out in fifteen minutes, are you set?'

Evie Hall was sitting on the end of her tidily made bed. She was staring at her carefully laced school shoes – and she was totally panicking.

What if her new school was full of bullies

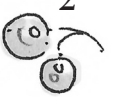
and monsters? What if the teachers were meaner than a crocodile with a cold? What if all the other pupils ignored her?

Worse. What if they noticed her?

Her heart thumped like a brass band in a washing machine.

'Evie! Are you listening, love?'

She had to be brave. She had to pick up her book bag and stand up. Even though her legs felt like they'd turned to warm plasticine. There was no way she could just stay on her bed for the whole day, however much she wanted to. She had already double- and triple-checked that she had her pencil case and Nana Em's phone number in case of emergencies. She was set. Except for



the plasticine leg problem, of course.

Luna, Evie's silver-grey cat, meowed loudly, and leapt on to her lap. Her claws dug like needles, prodding Evie to move.

'Ow! OK, OK, I'm going,' Evie said.

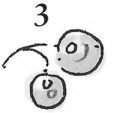
Luna gave a happy purr and stepped on to the bed, where she promptly curled up into a ball. She clearly considered her job done.

'It's all right for you,' Evie said. 'You can spend all day snoozing, you don't have to start at a new school.'

Luna shut her eyes. Snoozing was her favourite.

Evie picked up her book bag and tramped downstairs.

Mum was in the hall, pulling a brush



through her hair. Evie could hear Dad trying to get her little sister Lily to eat-her-breakfast-not-play-with-it. Lily was mithering as usual.

There were still cardboard boxes piled beside the front door. They hadn't been unpacked from the move.

Evie was about to ask Mum one last time whether she really, really, really had to change schools, just because they'd moved house, and her old school was miles away, and they-had-been-through-this-already, when the doorbell rang.

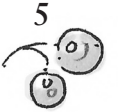
The postman stood on the doorstep. 'Welcome to Javelin Street!' he said cheerfully, as he handed a parcel to Mum.

‘Thanks!’ Mum replied brightly. ‘We love it here, don’t we, Evie?’

Evie said nothing. She *liked* it here, because they were much closer to Nana Em and Grandpa – next door, in fact. And she had her own room in the attic and didn’t have to share with Lily. Which was good because Lily was annoying: she was five and thought the sky was blue because it had rain in it. But *liking* it here wasn’t at all the same thing as *loving* it – the one huge, ginormous thing it was missing was her old friends.

‘Oh!’ Mum looked at the wrapper on the parcel. ‘It’s for you, Evie.’

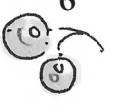
For her? She never got parcels. Except on her birthday, which wasn’t for ages.



Her tummy did an excited flip, instead of a terrified one. She took the parcel from Mum and cradled it curiously. What was it? Who was it from?

Mum was still chatting to the postman, so Evie slipped into the front room. It was the good room, with the red settee that Myla the dog wasn't allowed to sit on and shed her fur all over. She wanted somewhere quiet – which meant away from Lily – to open the parcel.

It was square, and fitted comfortably between her palms. Pink wrapping paper was held in place with jewel-coloured blue and green ribbons. Her name was written in looped handwriting across the



front. Handwriting that Evie recognised – Grandma Iris! She lived a long way away in Jamaica, but she often wrote letters and cards to her granddaughters. Today she had sent something really special.

Evie tugged the ribbon free and let the paper fall. Inside was a box, made of white card with a red lid. She lifted the lid, her fingers tingling with excitement.

There, nestled inside soft tissue paper, was a bracelet. Evie's breath caught. Grandma Iris had sent her a present, just when she was feeling low. She lifted it out carefully. The bracelet twinkled in the dust motes that danced in shining sunlight. Tightly plaited silks criss-crossed in colourful

streams. There were beads too, exactly the same silvery-grey colour as Luna's fur. It was beautiful. Evie noticed a small card resting on top of the tissue paper, written by Grandma Iris. 'Good luck at your new school,' it said. 'Have a magical time!'

Magical? School? Ha! There was more chance of pigs putting on an acrobatic aerial show than of having a magical time on her first day. Still, Evie felt warm knowing that Grandma Iris was thinking of her.

She slipped the bracelet on – it fitted perfectly, as though it had been made just for her. For a second, Evie could almost feel Grandma Iris' arms around her in a tight hug. The sun seemed to shine more brightly

through the lace curtains. She felt a tear in her eye, and the sunbeam shattered into kaleidoscope shards of gold sparkles.

'Evie,' Mum stuck her head into the room, 'I'll walk you and Lily there. All set?'

Evie blinked and pulled her sleeve down quickly. She knew Mum wouldn't let her wear jewellery to school, but she wanted to keep the warm feeling with her for as long as she could. She pushed the bracelet high up her arm.

Myla bounded into the room. She was

panting and her tongue lolled. It looked exactly like a big grin. She woofed excitedly.

'Myla wants to walk with us,' Evie said, sure that she was right.

Mum laughed. 'Does she now? Well, I'm not stopping every thirty seconds to sniff lamp-posts. We're in a rush! Perhaps tomorrow, Myla.'

Myla stopped grinning. She looked the way Lily did when she got mardy and stuck out her bottom lip.

'Sorry, Myla,' Evie said. She patted the dog's head. 'But what Mum says goes.'

'That's right,' Mum agreed. 'And this mum says it's time for you to start your new school. Let's go.'