Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Helping you choose books for children

0-5 5-7 7-9 9-12 12+

opening extract from

My Sister's a Pop Star

written by

Kimberley Green

published by

Usborne Publishers

All text is copyright of the author and illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Chapter 1

Click click click, clack clack click.

Sam's fingers were flying around the old laptop keyboard. She was way too focused on her writing to hear her mom yelling at her from the other side of the apartment. After the third "Samantha" (each one a little louder and more intense), Rose pounded forcefully on her daughter's purple bedroom door.

Sam was so jolted that she flew out of her chair. She landed on a pile of T-shirts she had yet to put into the moving box with the words "Sam's Stuff! Important Clothing – Don't Even Think About Touching" written in big red letters.

"What? What?" she yelled out.

Rose opened the door and popped her head in. "I said we have to leave for the concert in exactly fifteen minutes. Honestly, Sam, when you're at that computer, it's like nothing else exists."

Sam, having heard this many times before, rolled her eyes. "I got it, Mom. Fifteen minutes. I'll be ready."

Rose leaned in a little more. "I'm not kidding, Little Bit. Finish your blagging and get ready to go."

Rose turned and closed the door without seeing Sam's face scrunch up in annoyance.

"It's called a 'blog', Mom!" she yelled out. "A blog! I'm a blogger! I do blogging! Blog, not blag, *blog*!"

There was no response, only the clicking of Rose's heels on the wood floor as she hurried off. Sam mumbled to herself, "And now that I'm twelve, everybody needs to recognize that I'm almost a teenager and stop calling me 'Little Bit'."

Sam sighed. Lately, it felt as though nobody had time for her. She was used to being ignored and overlooked by lots of people, like Mr. Wattabee, the grumpy manager of the stables where she worked, or

Inga, the snotty little sister of Sam's best friend Olga, but the lack of attention from her mom and her sister had really become a super sore spot for Sam over the past weeks. Oh, well. She had to finish tonight's blog before leaving for the big show. Sam jumped back into her chair, cracked her knuckles, and got back to her thoughts.

This has to be the most exciting night of my entire twelve-year-old life! Danni's tour is finally ending, and it's our last night here in the apartment! I'm excited about moving, but I'm also kind of sad

Sam froze. She thought for a moment, came up with a better word, deleted "sad", and resumed typing.

melancholy, I'm very melancholy to be leaving this place.

Sam stopped typing. She took a massive slurp of orange cream soda from the bottle on her desk. As she looked up at a photo of herself and her big sister Danni,

Sam let out a little burp. She giggled in embarrassment, until she remembered she was alone in her room; no sense being embarrassed when there's nobody around to laugh at it. She returned to her typing.

This will be a short blog entry 'cause I have to get ready for Danni's concert, her last one! I'm so happy that

Sam stopped again; since anyone anywhere with access to the Internet could read her web-log, she always had to use the most interesting words. She thought, deleted the word "happy", and resumed typing.

ecstatic that my big sister is finally coming home! One year may not sound like a big whoop, but it feels like for ever. I've missed having Danni around. I know that it's totally not cool to say, but it officially stunk not having her home. At first it was fun getting letters from all the different places she visited, but the last couple of months she's been too busy and I've only gotten one stinky postcard. And I can't even remember the

last time Danni called just to talk to me. Who knew I would actually miss her snoring and her making fun of me? Anyway, starting tomorrow, we get our normal life back; no more tours or TV shows (after that stupid interview thing later tonight), no more Mom flying off to make sure Danni is doing her schoolwork, just our little family, and our amazing new home! I borrowed Olga's cellphone (remember Olga – my best friend – I've blogged about her before) because it can take pictures (how wicked is that?). So, my next blog entry will have a bunch of cool photos of the new house, my HUGE new room, and me and Danni.

Sam looked up again at the photo taped to the top of her laptop. She smiled as she remembered her and Danni posing in front of the cruddy old tour bus with that ugly yellow banner that read *"Danni Devine's Malls Across America Tour"*. Hard to believe that had been a whole year ago. Sam took another sloppy slurp of soda and let out a bigger burp. She thought about how completely not normal it was to

have her sister suddenly be famous. She began typing again.

> Robert (Danni's agent, I've blogged about him before) keeps snidely telling me I have no idea how popular my sister has become, and not just here in the United States, but all over the world! I can't imagine folks in Canada or Mexico or China talking about Danni. I never realized how freaky it would be to have everyone on Planet Earth know my sister. Seriously, it seems like everybody knows WHO she is, but they don't know HER, the everyday, nail-chewing, bulldozer-snoring person.

Sam smiled at her witty writing, but suddenly a flash of thought hit her hard. She bit her lip and scrunched up her forehead the way she always did when she was worried about something. She began typing again very slowly.

> I wonder if I should erase everything I've written here over the past year. Maybe all the personal stuff I've shared on this blog is going to cause

trouble. This is a very strange situation. Before Danni was famous, I had no problem putting anything in my blog because it was just another online journal by just another nobody. Don't get me wrong, I know that I'm still just another nobody, but now that my sister isn't, is it bad to have so much stuff about us (me, Mom, and Danni...and Robert) open for the whole world to read? Of course, I'm making a pretty big, fat assumption that people are actually reading all this. For all I know the only person who's ever seen this has been Olga (Hi Olga!).

Sam heard Rose's heels clicking down the hall, coming towards her room again. She couldn't go now, not when she was in the middle of such an important blog entry. Sam ran to her bedroom door and stuck her head out into the hall.

"I'm exactly ten-point-two minutes away from being ready to go, Mom!"

Rose opened her mouth to respond, but Sam had already slipped back inside her room and closed the door.

Sam leaned against her door with both hands covering her mouth. If Rose heard her giggling, she'd be busted and forced to leave immediately.

Rose yelled back, "Sounds good. Don't forget your hat and jacket," and clicked back to the other end of the apartment.

Sam leaped back into her chair, focused on the computer screen, and frantically looked for the button that would let her search the list of all her old blog entries. She found it, clicked it, and a huge list of dates appeared on the screen. As she scrolled through the long list, Sam gave herself a mental pat on the back for using such entertaining titles for her entries. She smiled at some of her wittier writing, "*Somebody Please Tell Me I Was Adopted*", "*My Family is Nuttier Than a Snickers Bar*", and her favourite, "*I Vote Robert Ruebens off My Island*".

Sam drew in a sharp breath as she spied one of her earliest entries, entitled, "*The Facts of My Life*". She gritted her teeth as she remembered writing a lot of personal stuff in that particular blog. Her hand trembled as she reached out to click on that link.

The page popped up and the very first line made

Sam cringe. *Oh, man, I'd forgotten I wrote that*, she thought as she read her entry from a long time ago.

Sam Devine's Blog
Entry #2: The Facts of My Life
After having a very frustrating argument with my sister last night (not even worth mentioning...but she was wrong!), I hunkered down and reread one of my favourite books (*The Diary of Anne Frank*). It got me thinking that my blog might not be very interesting because I haven't told you anything about me, and it's hard to be interested in a story when you don't know the main characters, so this might be a long blog, but it should be a particularly memorable one!

I am Sam, Sam I am (LOL). Seriously, my name is Samantha Sue Devine. I love to read and I love to write. Someday I will be a great author, but for now I'm happy to practise writing by keeping this online journal. In this blog, I plan to write about my life, my dreams, and (at least for the near future) how much I wish Robert Ruebens would

get a clue and quit being so evil to me (more about that later).

I love horses and plan to also be a famous equestrian. My family nicknamed me Little Bit (a name I used to love but now I'm thinking is way too "little kid") because I used to run around the house pretending to be a pony. I've been working my whole life (okay, since I was eight) at the SuAn Stables, over in the fancy part of town. Mucking out stalls is pretty gross, but each wheelbarrow of horse poop I remove gets me a whole hour of riding time. For a kid with no money, that's been a great set-up.

But I'm not a kid with no money any more. This is where I need to introduce you to the rest of my family, my mom Rose and my big sister Danni.

My mom is beautiful. Sometimes it's hard to believe that she's so old (she's, like, thirty-seven) because she looks so young and wears clothes

you'd never expect somebody's mom to wear. I don't look a thing like her. Mom has shiny dark hair; I have average brown hair. Mom has blue eyes; I have green eyes. Mom adores the colour pink; I despise it; I love purple. Mom is very petite and graceful; I'm always tripping over my own two feet. Mom tells me all the time how much I look like my dad, but he died a long time ago, so I can only try to find the resemblance through a bunch of old pictures.

Mom grew up winning all the beauty pageants her mother entered her in, and there were a lot of pageants! In fact, Mom was supposed to be in the Miss America contest, but she ran off and got married instead. This is why I've never met my grandparents; they weren't too happy about my mom "throwing her life away", so they disowned her. Mom didn't care, she was really happy being married to Mr. Daniel Devine. He was a soldier, so he and Mom got to go and live in Guam (it's a tropical island that's owned by the United States — but since it's only a territory, the people who

live there can't vote for president!). That's where Danni was born.

My big sister Danni (Danielle Ann) was a pretty, blue-eyed, bald, baby girl who grew up to be a beautiful, blue-eyed, blonde kid (she did eventually get some hair). Today, my sister is a wicked gorgeous sixteen-year-old! She's the girl other girls seem to want to be...at least, that's the way it looks from my perspective. Danni isn't brain-surgeon smart, but she's not dumb, either. She just has a tough time thinking things through and making decisions for herself. I've never understood that. If somebody tells me something, I don't immediately accept it; I take a minute to consider if it makes sense. Danni pretty much believes whatever you tell her. I worry that if she does become famous, this will make it easy for people to take advantage of her.

Anyway, back to my life story. So my mom is living in Guam with my dad and sister, when she finds out she's going to have another baby (me).

This is where the story gets sad.

My dad told my mom that she should make up with her parents, so he bought a ticket for her and Danni to fly back to the United States mainland to see my grandparents. He took Mom and Danni to the airport and kissed them goodbye. That was the last time they saw him. He died in a car crash that night. Mom got the news when her plane landed. She says she sat down in the middle of the airport, hugged Danni, and cried for about two hours.

After she stopped crying, Mom decided she wasn't going to run home and let her parents rule her life again. She opted to stay on at the local army base until I was born, but she had no idea what she would do next.

See, my mom had graduated high school, but she hadn't gone to college. She could ride a motorcycle (that was how she and my dad met) and she could look pretty, but neither of those

things could lead to a well-paid job. Mom decided that, once I was born, she would become a model – not one of those skinny, fake-looking models strutting down a runway, but the smiling mom model you see in washing powder ads.

So I grew up on that army base. Mom got a job in the daycare centre there, so we got to live in one of those cute little base houses. Between her widow's pension, her daycare salary, and the little extra she brought in with those "smiling mom" modelling jobs, Mom made sure that me and Danni grew up never knowing how tough things really were, money-wise, I mean.

Danni was always bugging Mom to let her go on one of her modelling shoots, but Mom didn't think it was a good place for a kid to be hanging out. Finally, when Danni was ten, Mom caved in and took her to her next modelling gig. The photographer took one look at Danni, with her big blue eyes and long blonde hair, and demanded that she be in the pictures, too. Mom

protested, but Danni made it clear that she wanted to do it, and the photos were really amazing!

Danni began to get her own modelling jobs and made enough money to enter a small beauty pageant. Mom was none too pleased with this, but she figured that one good loss would end Danni's fascination with the whole pageant thing. Besides, Mom had always told us that "you don't know if you don't try", so she wasn't in a position to tell Danni not to try.

And wouldn't you know, but Danni wins that pageant! Along with a trophy and a tiara, Danni received a cheque for five hundred dollars! Danni begged Mom to let her enter another pageant, then another, and soon Danni was the reigning beauty queen in her age range. Even better, Danni was bringing in enough money to allow Mom to quit her job at the daycare centre and focus on helping Danni continue in the pageant world.

I never gave a hoot for any of that beauty stuff. One time Danni dragged me along to a class at a beauty salon where I managed to irritate the instructor so much that he whipped a handful of curlers at me and kicked me out of the class and the salon – for ever.

Here's the part of my life where I have to talk about Robert.

Robert K. Ruebens is a music agent. He has made a lot of money helping other people make their musical dreams come true. Robert is okay-looking, but he spends so much time and money on his hair, teeth, and fancy clothes that he seems more handsome than he really is. I think Robert is a rat. Mom says that Robert is not a bad guy; it's just that he's so focused on his job that if you aren't directly related to what he's doing (making money), then he doesn't see you, hear you, or acknowledge your existence. In other words, he's rotten to me.