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opening extract from

Iggy and Me

written by

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Iggy and me

My name is Flo and I have a little sister. When she was even smaller than she is now, my little sister changed her name. One morning she woke up and she just wasn't called it anymore.

It was very confusing.

We were sitting up in my bed making snowflakes. She woke me up early to make them. My sister often comes into my bed in the mornings, before I am quite ready for good news or making things. There were tiny bits of paper all over the sheets and the floor. That's how she got me to sit up, by sprinkling them on my face.



My sister had only just got good with scissors and she found it very exciting.

We were supposed to make snowflakes out of old magazines because we're not allowed to use new paper for stuff unless we have a very good reason, like a birthday or a sorry or a thank you letter. Snowflakes were not a very good reason andeven though I told my sister that more than twice, she was using new paper because she so wanted them to be pure, bright white with no writing on them.

"Look at mine," she said, holding up snowflake number twenty-seven.

"Very good," I said. "Can I have the scissors now?"

"I'm using them," she said.

"You're not."

"I am in a minute."

"Sam," I said, because that was my sister's name. "You have to share."

"My name's not Sam," she said.

I didn't say anything, because I thought it was just her annoying way of not sharing. I didn't realise she was serious. And I had to wait ages for the scissors.

Later, we were all in the kitchen in our pyjamas. On not-school days we always eat breakfast with pyjamas on, sometimes even lunch. Mum and Dad look funny in their pyjamas in the mornings, all creased and sort of puffy. Mum's hair was wild and frizzy, and Dad's stuck out more on one side than the other. And they had no slippers on even though they are *always* telling us to wear ours.

My sister had stuck all her white snowflakes on to the fridge until it looked like it was wearing a wedding dress. Every time you opened the fridge

door, the snowflakes fluttered in the breeze like lace.

I said, "The fridge is getting married."

My sister said, "To who? To Daddy?" and laughed at her own joke like crazy. She loves her own jokes.

"Sam," Mum said. "Toast or cereal?" My sister didn't answer.

"Sam," Mum said. "Hello? Earth calling Sam?"

She still didn't answer. She turned her face away and her forehead went all smooth like it does when she's pretending not to hear you.



"Sam," Mum said again. "What do you want for breakfast?"

Nothing. Not a peep.

"Sammy," said Dad,

putting his arm round the fridge and kissing it. "Mum is talking to you."

"No she's not," said my sister, and then she pointed at him and laughed. "Mr and Mrs Fridge."

"She is," Dad said. "You heard her. We all did."

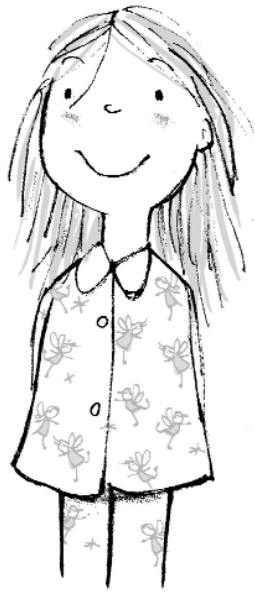
"She's not talking to me," my sister said. "She's talking to *Sam*."

Nobody said anything for a minute. It was very quiet in the kitchen. I could hear the kettle bubbling and my cereal landing on itself in my bowl. I looked at Mum, and Mum looked at Dad, and we all looked at my sister. She still looked like Sam to me, twiddling her hair and wearing her pyjamas with the fairies on.

"We thought *you* were Sam," said Mum.

My sister looked behind her, both sides, as if Mum was talking to someone there. "Who, *me*?"

she said, "Who, ME?" Like we were the dumbest people on Earth.



"Yes, you," Mum said.

"I'm not Sam," my sister said all matter-of-factly. "There's no one here called that name at all."

Dad started looking under the table and in the cereal boxes and in the bin. "There's a Sam around here somewhere," he said. "I know she was here a minute ago." He made a big show of it, checking in his armpits, looking in her hair like a monkey at the zoo, calling, "Sa-am, Sa-am!"

My sister giggled. "She's not here," she said. "Sam's not here."

Mum said that there used to be a little girl in the family called Sam. She said, "I'll be a little tiny bit annoyed if somebody has gone and lost Sam because I was starting to quite like her, thank you very much."

My sister shrugged. She said, "I don't know where she is."

"So who are you?" Dad said.

And I said, "What's your name?"

She looked at us and smiled, like it was about time somebody asked.

"My name's called Iggy," she said. She looked so proud of herself that she made me think of a peacock with its tail all fanned out behind.

Mum laughed and my little sister told her not to, so she pretended to drink her tea instead, but I could see she was still smiling. Dad said Iggy

sounded like a piglet, or a puppet of a piglet, or a knitted egg-cup with a piglet's nose.

"Or a girl," my sister said, and she frowned at him. "Because it's my name and I am one."



"What, a piglet?" said Dad.

"No, silly, a *girl*."

"It doesn't sound like the one we bought," Mum said. "The little girl we bought was *definitely* a Sam."

My sister shook her head and pointed at herself and said, "Well, this one is *defilately* an *Iggy*."

"I like it," I said. "It suits you."

My sister said, "Good," and then, "Of course it suits me, it's my name." Then she said, "You didn't buy me really, anyway, did you?"

My cereal spluttered when I poured the milk

on it. My sister said, "Please can I have some?" so I passed her a bowl and a spoon and the box and the milk, and she said "Thank you, Flo."

I looked behind me, both sides, and I said, "There's no one called Flo around here." I was just joking.

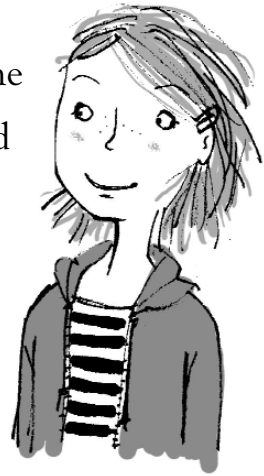
Mum and Dad's mouths opened and laughed, but my sister's mouth stayed all closed and deadly serious. She was not pleased.

After that we didn't want her to be cross because when my sister gets cross she can be very boring and we all have to listen. So we played the Iggy game all breakfast to avoid it. We said, "Pass the butter please, Iggy" and "Drink your juice, Iggy" and "Stop kicking me, Iggy" and "Put your chin over the bowl, Iggy" and "Ow, Iggy!" and "Iggy, behave!"

In fact, we played it all day because we

thought that maybe if we said Iggy enough she would get tired of it and want to change back. That was the idea anyway.

When we were getting dressed I remembered to call her Iggy.



When she refused to help me tidy up the snowflakes on my bed I called her Iggy, even though she was annoying me and I might easily have forgotten.

When she asked me to do her name in bubble writing on a sign for her door I remembered to write Iggy so I didn't have to do it again.

Mum and Dad remembered to use her new name too. They said, "Iggy this" and "Iggy that."

They said, "Iggy, eat your lunch by half past

or there's no pudding."

They said, "Iggy, don't cheat at Snap."

They said, "Iggy, when did you last clean your teeth?"

They said, "Iggy, Flo is trying to read. Stop jumping up and down on the sofa."

Even when my sister came down from her room with a box we didn't say anything. In the box she'd packed all the things she could find with SAM written on them. Socks and pencils and a plastic cup and a key ring and some Post-it notes and a green teddy bear and a purse, and a tiny car licence plate from California that our Auntie Kate had sent her, and a painting that I did when she was born that said her name in my writing before I was very good at doing it. My sister loved that painting.

"This is for Sam," she said.

Dad said, "Where do you want me to put it, Iggy?"

My sister shrugged, "In the rubbish."

Mum said, "Don't you think Sam will come back for it?"



My sister shook her head. "Nuh-uh," she said. "No way."

I said, "I thought you liked that painting."

She said, "I do. Can you do another one for Iggy?" And I said I would.

My mum and dad put the box in the cupboard under the stairs when she wasn't looking, just in case. And they said, "Goodnight, Iggy."

And, “Sleep tight, Iggy.”

And, “Mind the bugs don’t bite, Iggy.”

And I said, “See you in the morning, Iggy. We can make more snowflakes.”

We didn’t go wrong at all. We thought we were being so clever. We nudged each other and winked at each other all day long.

When we woke up next morning we said, “Is Sam back yet?”

My sister said, “Nope.”

And the morning after that she said, “Nope.”

And the morning after that she said, “Who’s Sam?”

We soon worked out who was in charge. It was definitely Iggy. Because Iggy’s her name and it’s been her name since the morning she said so. The

Iggy game turned into something real and after a while we all got used to it.

Iggy has a new plastic cup and some pencils with her name on, but no key ring yet or Post-its, and definitely no licence plate from California. Mum sewed IGGY on to a teddy and I did a new painting for her which was much, much better than the first one.

I can't imagine calling her anything else. It's always Iggy and me now.