Helping your children choose books they will love

I ♥ reading

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

Opening extract from

The Night Sky in my Head

Written by

Sarah Hammond

Published by

Oxford University Press

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

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk


the night sky
in my head



SARAH HAMMOND

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and in certain other countries

Text © Sarah Hammond 2012
The moral rights of the author and illustrator have been asserted

Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 2012

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 Oxford University Press,
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN: 978-0-19-273319-1
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Printed in Great Britain
Paper used in the production of this book is a natural,
recyclable product made from wood grown in sustainable forests
The manufacturing process conforms to the environmental
regulations of the country of origin

For my parents and for Shawn



Prologue

I'm going to sit very quietly and wait: that's what you do with animals so they're not scared of you. The mother-dog is watching me from her bed at the other end of the living-room. I'm miles away from her babies but she's still worried.

'Are you all right in there, Mikey?'

It's the dog-lady. She's in the kitchen with Mum. They're worried too because I came out of hospital today.

'Yes!' I shout back quick so they don't come in and check on me.

It hurts behind my eyes when I speak. Little stars everywhere. I put my hands up to my head but then I stop—I don't want to touch the skin because of all the stitches down the back.

Mother-dog whines. I hold my breath. The puppies are waking up.

A little black nose sticks up out of the basket. Little paws. A black puppy rolls down onto the carpet. My legs are so whizzy I want to run about but I stay still. Pup's legs are wobbly—he can't walk straight. Falls over. Wags his tail. Stands up again. I don't move. He snuffles the edge of the blue rug.

Here's the next one! Bigger. Fatter. A bit brown and a bit black. Jumps on the black one. They roll over and over. Paws and ears and open pink mouths. I'm fizzing all over but I stay still, I stay still.

Mother-dog shuffles around. She's got more room in bed now. The dog-lady said there were three, so where's the other one?

The big one has got a ruler in his mouth. He's chuffed to bits, trotting round the chair with it. King of the Ruler. He goes stumbly when he gets to the newspapers on the floor and drops it. He cries and scratches the carpet. He can't pick it up again.

I lean forwards to help him. Mother-dog gets up, growls. Uh-oh. I sit back down quick. My neck cricks. Lightning shoots up my head and I scrunch up on the floor. The carpet smells of dog. My ears are under water. My scar aches. My head is black black black.

Breathe slowly, Mikey. In and out, in . . . and . . . out . . .

There's something wet on my cheek. I open one eye. A little furry face. He licks me again and sits down on the carpet. I open the other eye. It's the last puppy. He's all brown except for one black ear. He's watching me with his head on one side. His baby-ears flop over, can't stand up properly yet.

Mother-dog growls again. I don't move. The puppy snuggles up against my shoulder. Warm and cosy. The black in my head is going. He's guarding me—the dog-lady said

there was a bit of German Shepherd in them, like real guard dogs. His fur tickles my cheek. I still don't move but I can't stop my mouth from smiling.

I've found him. This is the one I'll choose.

This is my puppy.

He can come home to look after us now that Dad has gone.