

Helping your children choose books they will love



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

Opening extract from **The Forever Whale**

Written by
Sarah Lean

Published by
HarperCollins Children's Books

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

Please print off and read at your leisure.



First published in Great Britain by HarperCollins Children's Books in 2013
HarperCollins Children's Books is a division of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd,
77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London, W6 8JB.

The HarperCollins website address is: www.harpercollins.co.uk

1

Copyright © Sarah Lean 2013
Illustrations © Gary Blythe 2013

ISBN 978-0-00-751222-5

Sarah Lean asserts the moral right to be identified
as the author of the work.

Gary Blythe asserts the moral right to be identified
as the illustrator of the work.

Printed and bound in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc.

Conditions of Sale

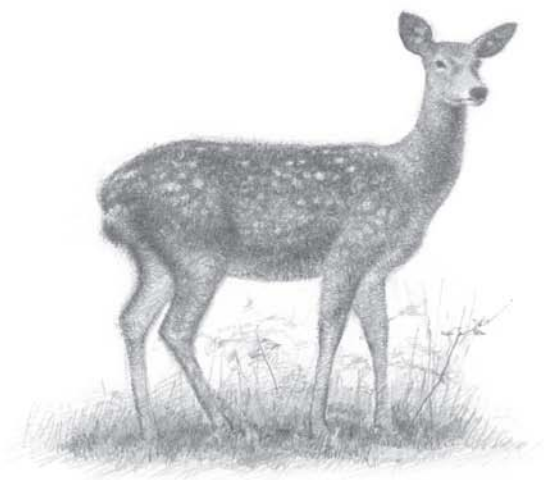
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form, binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser. All rights reserved.



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C007454

FSC™ is a non-profit international organisation established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations, and other controlled sources.

Find out more about HarperCollins and the environment at
www.harpercollins.co.uk/green



1.

GRANDAD DRAWS THE OARS INTO THE BOAT as we coast on the glassy water until we nudge into the bank. We both have our fingers over our lips, not to tell each other to be quiet, because we are, but because we think alike. I don't know what Grandad has seen, I only know to trust him.

"Can you see it, Hannah?" Grandad whispers.

The dappled and striped shadows are barely moving in the golden September evening and I can't see anything in the jumble of grasses and reeds. I shake my head.

"Keep looking," Grandad whispers.

I follow his eyes, but it takes me a long while to spot the fawn, curled up and waiting. Its skin is hardly any different from the landscape around it. I can see the glisten of its black nose, but it knows to stay still, to be safe. Once I see it, it stands out a mile.

I whisper, "Is the fawn all right on its own, Grandad?"

He nods his head towards another curve of the bank. A deer is looking at us, anxious because she doesn't want to draw attention to her fawn, who is separated from her by a channel of water.

Grandad smiles to himself. "Will you stay or

will you swim across?" He says it as if he and the deer have a history together. We've seen deer here many times, but he's never said that before.

"I didn't know deer could swim," I say, keeping my voice low and soft like his.

"That's how they came to live on..." Grandad hesitates and looks over his shoulder. His eyebrows are crushed into a frown. He's looking towards the island in the middle of the huge harbour, even though we can barely see it from here. But I'm not sure why.

"Furze Island?" I ask.

"Furze Island," he repeats. "A long time ago a herd of deer swam over from the mainland and settled on the island."

Grandad is still looking far away towards the harbour entrance, maybe for the billow of

sails, to see if any broad and magnificent ships have blown in today.

We are quiet for a few minutes until Grandad speaks again. "It's your turn to row now," he says.

We change places in the boat. I see him stumble. He must be tired today. Grandad and I have taken a thousand journeys like this out in the quiet inlets of the harbour. Here we are just specks, tiny people marvelling at the changing sea and all the ordinary everyday things. These are my favourite days. I feel the familiar tug in my middle as the oars knock in their sockets and I row, pulling, rolling and lifting like Grandad taught me. The paddles splash like a slow-ticking clock.

"Hannah, I want you to remember something for me," Grandad says. "Something important, in case I forget."

I wonder why he would ever forget something

important, but I want him to tell me.

“Anything for you,” I say.

“August the eighteenth,” he says. “You’ll remind me, won’t you?”

“That’s a long time away, nearly a year. Are you going somewhere?”

I only ask because I know that Grandad has spent all his life here in Hambourne, working with wood, rowing the inlets with me, and watching from his bedroom window for schooners and square-riggers in the harbour.

Grandad leans against the side of the boat and scratches his white beard and the bristles crackle under his fingernails. His eyes are warm and brown like oiled wood.

“Some journeys need us to travel great distances. But others are closer to home, like today when our eyes see more than what’s in front of us.”

“You mean like finding the fawn in the grass?”
I see his face folding like worn origami paper into
the peaceful shape I’ve always known.

Grandad slowly puts his gnarly old hand on the
bench between us. My hand is still smooth like a
map without journeys and I put it on top of his.
We pile our hands over each other, his then mine,



his then mine, like we always have. He pulls his huge hands out and gathers mine like an apple in his. And, just like always, that feeling is too big to keep inside me and bursts out and makes me laugh.

“Yes, great journeys like this,” he says. “Those great days that live in our memories and make us who we are.”

