



Extract 1: *The ANIMAL WORLD*



Extract from 'A Special Child' – pages 1–2

“Once there was a girl called Evie Trench. Evie was not a normal child. She was a ‘special’ child. That’s what her dad said. Special.

Evie often thought it would be a lot easier to be a normal child than a special child, but there you go. She was *special*. And the reason for this was . . . Well, it was complicated. Evie didn’t really understand it herself. Before we get on to her specialness, let’s start with a simple fact. Evie liked animals. Of course, lots of people like animals. But Evie liked *all* animals. Not just the cuddly ones.

She liked dogs and cats, yes, of course, but also cockroaches, snakes, bats, vultures, hyenas, sharks, jellyfish and green anaconda snakes. She liked every animal. Well, apart from the Brazilian wandering spider – the deadliest spider in the world – which even Evie found hard to love, for reasons that will become clear. But, as a general rule, if it lived, she liked it. And she knew everything about the animal world. As much as anyone. There were probably professors of Animal Biology at extremely clever universities who knew less than her. By the time she was six years old she had read more than three hundred books on the subject.’

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is your favourite animal and why? Which are the most popular animals in your class?
2. Which animals does Evie like? Why is this unusual?
3. Why might Evie find it ‘hard to love’ the Brazilian wandering spider? How is it described?
4. Why is it important to care about all animals, not just cats and dogs?
5. How does Evie know so much about ‘the animal world’? Why is this impressive?