

Suddenly Danny was wide awake. He lay staring into the shimmering darkness of his bedroom, listening to the sound of his own breathing. The only other thing he could hear was the familiar ticking and creaking of the water pipes up in the loft. Why had he woken up? And where the heck was his duvet?

Not that he needed a duvet anyway. It was a stupidly hot night and the air hung still and muggy around him. His bedroom window was open but not even the slightest breeze stirred the half-open curtains. Waking up was annoying because he'd taken ages to get to sleep in the first place. As he turned over on the bed the sticky sheet clung to him, wrapping him into a giant sweaty burrito. He tossed and wriggled for another few minutes, trying to bully pummel his brain back to sleep.

But it was no good. With a grunt Danny hauled himself out of bed, wondering if opening the window a bit wider might help. He got only two steps before tipping over the duvet this feet caught on something on the shadowy floor, and he landed on a heap on the duvet, which he must have kicked off in his sleep. Muttering, he stumbled up to the window and pushed it open. But all he felt from outside was a slow hot puff of air that smelt of wet grass. The thunderstorm earlier in the evening had been fun but it hadn't cooled things down at all.

He gazed out across the back garden towards the trees beyond. They that looked as if they were cut out of black card. It was so dark here in countryside. Then he looked upraised his eyes and gasped. What he saw was totally awesome.

The clouds had cleared and the sky was bursting with stars – a few big and bright, some small and twinkling, others clustered together in little sparkling knots. It was just like some ginormous toddler had used a brush to hur had hurled tiny flecks of white paint with a bursh across the black heavens. Danny had to admit that living in the middle of nowhere did have its good points after all. He still missed the city, but there the glary yellow street lights blanked out the night sky and made the stars hard to see. Here in Brampton there were no street lights near his house and the night sky, when it was clear, was just brilliant.

It would have been cool to share it with someone though, and he found himself wondering whether Sam was looking up at the same stars from his new home in Scotland. Danny's best friend Sam Jones had moved away with his family in the summer, and since then life had seemed very quiet. Brampton was hardly the liveliest place in the world as it was; without Sam it was basically dead.

Danny sighed and leant a bit further forward (keeping his feet on the floor, remembering what Mum would say) and craned his neck to see more. There was the Milky

**Comment [W1]:** Bookgirl queried this description and I wasn't sure about it, so I cut it.

**Comment [W2]:** I liked this sentence – but the problem was that (1) it needed re-writing because as it stands it contradicted the previous one (because Danny can also hear his own breathing, so clearly the pipes are NOT the only thing he can hear, and (2) it's not necessary. So I cut it.

**Comment [W3]:** Added a hint of Danny's mood, i.e. annoyed / irritated.

**Comment [W4]:** I know it's generally deemed OK these days to start sentences with 'But ...', but I still try not to do so too often. Maybe I can still feel the ghost of my English teacher leaning over my shoulder ...

**Comment [W5]:** Originally 'With an exasperated sigh ...' but I think this reads better.

**Comment [W6]:** Still not sure about this sentence. Seems a bit clunky, and 'on the shadowy floor' probably unnecessary.

**Comment [W7]:** Shorter, simpler sentences.

**Comment [W8]:** Shorter, simpler sentences.

**Comment [W9]:** Cut because seems unnecessary. The previous sentence establishes that Danny is impressed and/or surprised, by the fact that he gasps.

**Comment [W10]:** Slightly re-worded to be clearer / less clunky.

**Comment [W11]:** This is a new paragraph, based on a passage in the second chapter. As advised by the Writers' Workshop reviewer, it's put here to give some background about Danny at an earlier point, to introduce the fact that he misses his friend and is feeling lonely, and therefore hopefully help the reader to identify with him.