

Astrid, the Au Pair from Outer Space

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About the Book

Imagine being looked after by an alien from outer space ...

When Harry's mum says they're getting an 'au pair' from another country, he's not quite sure what to expect. When Astrid, who lives on a planet 500 light years away, decides to work as an 'au pair' on Earth, she's not quite sure what to expect.

What Harry definitely doesn't expect is a girl whose suitcase moves on its own, whose hair sticks out like a dandelion clock and who doesn't know what football is.

And Astrid is very surprised to find that Harry's family has a special gadget for opening tins and that his little brother Fred isn't a girl!

Astrid, the au pair from OUTER SPACE

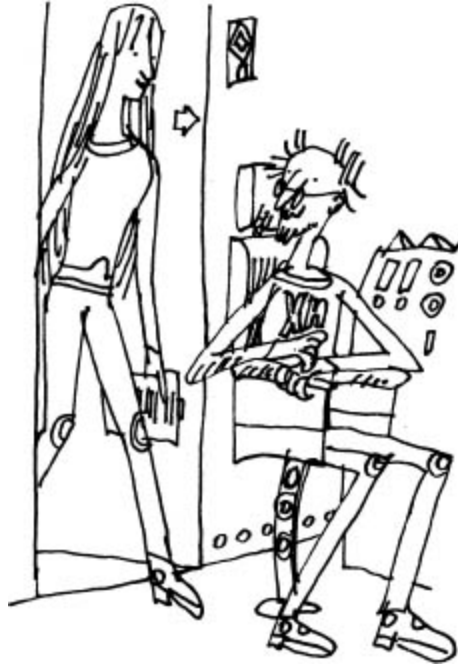
Emily Smith
Illustrated by Tim Archbold



YOUNG CORGI BOOKS

For Kate, Charlotte and Freddie

The Beginning



*Astrid slid open the panel and stepped into the study.
"Ah, Astrid!" Professor Xn turned from his console.
"Come about your research project, have you?"*



Astrid nodded.

"Good!" The professor looked at her. "Tell me what you've decided."

Astrid drew a deep breath. "I'm going for Project 492, the Earth one."

"Hmm," said the professor. If he was surprised he didn't show it. Swinging back to the console, he tapped a few keys on the keyboard.

"Here we are, Project 492." He read from the screen. "The study of home life in a typical Earth family, with particular reference to young humans."

He leant back on his couch and looked at her. His face was serious.

"Studying a family," he said slowly, "is a big project. It's not like working on ... sea-water samples or plant forms."

Astrid nodded. "Yes, I know."

"It would really be best if you studied the family from the inside. Live with them, even."

"I agree." Astrid smiled. "And I've decided on the best way to do it."

"Oh?" He looked at her, eyebrows raised. "And how's that?"

"I'm going to go as ... as an 'au pair'."

Professor Xn's face changed.

A look came into it - a look which she had never seen before.

It was a look of complete and utter surprise.

"A what?" he said.



Chapter One

"A WHAT?"

Five hundred light years away, in an untidy kitchen in west London, Harry Henderson was staring at his mother.

"An 'au pair'," said Mum.



"Well, I don't want one!" cried Harry. "I don't like 'em!" He frowned. "What is an 'au pair', anyway?"

"An 'au pair'," said Mum, "is someone who comes from another country to live with you in your house."

"Live with us?" said Harry.

"Yes," said Mum.

"In our house?"

"Yes," said Mum.

"Here?" said Harry.

"Yes," said Mum.

Harry was silent for a minute. "But what for?"

"Well, it works like this," said Mum, getting out some eggcups for tea. "The au pair gets to learn English and earn some money. And I get some help in the house, and