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Children of Another Planet sample
NOT FOR SALE

CHILDREN OF ANOTHER PLANET

Level 3 - A2/B1 Intermediate (1) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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Children of Another Planet
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1. The strange drawing

My name is Ai Hayashi. I'm 17. I go to high school. In my class there are 20 boys and 17 girls. I know all the girls, but I don't have a special friend.

Friends belong to the same sports club, or go to the department stores after school, or study in the library together. I don't do those things, so that's why I don't have a special friend.

Girls in my class don't talk to the boys. The boys don't talk to the girls. There's a girls' circle and a boys' circle. That's the way it is.

I'm not pretty, but I think I look OK. Except for my nose. My nose is different. I say my father is American. I say 'he is American' but maybe he 'was American'. I don't know if he is alive or dead. I don't know his name. Maybe my mother knows, but she doesn't want to talk about him. I don't ask her questions anymore. She never answers. He went away before I was born, so, I pretend he was an American.

When I started at this school I was teased about my nose. People said, "Eagle nose!"

I lied. I said that my father came from the north of Japan. I said he was a businessman. I said noses like mine are common in the north. I said I had my father's nose.

Every day, when classes finish, I go home. Sometimes other girls ask me to go shopping with them, or to Starbucks for a coffee. I always say, "Thank you, but not today. I have something to do."

I walk home. I bring in the laundry. I cook something for my mother and me to eat. I do my homework. Most days I can finish everything by 7:00pm. I eat dinner with my mother when she comes home from work at about 9:30pm. Until then, I have two and a half wonderful hours to myself. I read, or I play my cello. My mother doesn't like to hear me play my cello. Maybe it's because I play so badly. So I only play it when I'm alone in the apartment.

Sometimes I have something else very special to do. I will tell you about that later. I don't need a special friend. I have no time. My life is full, and I am happy.

This semester we have a new teacher. He likes students to change desks every week. This week I am sitting at the back of the classroom. I am sitting next to Mori-kun. He is very tall. His hair is a little curly. He only came to the school this year. Everyone likes him, but he has no special friend. As soon as classes finish, he leaves school very quickly on his bicycle.

It is a math class. Mori-kun is not listening to the teacher. He is looking at a piece of paper. I put my textbook up in front of my face so that no one can see me, and I look at him. He seems very tired. His face is pale.

Mr Kimura likes to ask students to write their homework answers on the blackboard. I have my homework in front of me. Mori-kun only has the piece of paper on his desk.

“Mori-kun,” says Mr Kimura. “Please come and show the class how to solve question number three.”

Mori-kun doesn't hear him. He seems to be asleep. I hit him on the arm. He blinks and shakes his head.

“Mori-kun!” Mr Kimura is getting angry. I give Mori-kun my homework.

“Go on! Quickly!” I say. “Write the answer to question three on the blackboard.”

He takes my book and goes to the front of the room. He looks like a sleepwalker. While he is gone, I look at the piece of paper. I get a shock. Mori-kun has drawn eight black dots. The dots make a circle but the circle is not finished. It needs two more dots to make a perfect circle. It doesn't look like anything special, but I have seen it before!

2. Flying

I said that sometimes I have something very special to do after school. This is true. My mother and I live in an old apartment. It has two balconies. One is outside the kitchen and living room. We hang the laundry out there. The other balcony is outside my mother's room. It is very narrow. There is a wall at the edge of the balcony and then a tall iron fence above it. She never goes out there. There is an old chair. It looks like one of those chairs with long footrests that you sometimes see in movies or TV shows. They are next to swimming pools, and beautiful people are sitting on them.

The wall of the apartment is next to this chair on one side, and the balcony fence on the other. I am the only person who sits in this chair.

Let me tell you what happens.

It starts a few years ago. I'm still in junior high school. It's summer vacation. My mother is at work, so I'm home alone. It's very hot. It's so hot in the apartment, I can't breathe. I decide to take my book and sit on the chair on the balcony. It's dirty, so I take some old cushions and a towel.

I think, *I can imagine I am a beautiful person by a swimming pool at a luxury hotel.*

I sit on the chair. I start reading, but something very strange happens. I'm flying through clouds. My clothes are different. I'm wearing a blue body suit, with long sleeves

and legs that come down past my knees. I'm travelling very quickly, and I'm looking for something.

Then, suddenly, I'm back in my normal clothes. I'm sitting on the chair and holding my book. *I fell asleep*, I think. *What a crazy dream!*

I often sit on the chair on the balcony during the summer. Sometimes nothing happens, but sometimes I have the flying dream. It's always the same. I'm wearing tight blue clothes, and I'm looking for something.

I start to worry. It's not normal to have the same dream many times. I never have the dream when I'm in bed, only when I'm sitting on the balcony chair.

I stop sitting out on the balcony. When summer vacation ends, I go back to school, and I forget about the strange dreams.

A few months later, I'm playing my cello when I get a strange feeling. It's like a voice in my head. The voice tells me to go out onto the balcony. It's cold, so I put on my coat and take a blanket. I hurry. It seems to be urgent.

-----END OF SAMPLE-----