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Moyra Irving is a writer, storyteller, and Creative Writing teacher who lives in Central England.

Her writing career began with a collection of short stories, one of which led to the creation of The Extra Guest end-hunger charity which is partnered with Oxfam and SOS Children's Villages.

She has also published two non-fiction books: *Take Me to the Mountain* and *Fiery Love*. However, it wasn't until *Amelie Trott* came into her life that she discovered the unparalleled joy of writing for children.

Moyra also loves cats, starry nights, days by the sea and, more than anything, writing stories for the child in us all.

This is her debut children's novel.

Amelie Trott & The Earth Watchers

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Amelie Trott and The Earth Watchers

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The Voice of the New Age

For Amelie, my best little friend

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Chapter One
August 2018: The Story That
Won't Go Away

'So, Amelie,' the reporter began with a smirk, 'when did you first meet these, er... little green men?'

A murmur of laughter rippled through the hall and Amelie Trott, aged ten years and eleven months, rose to her feet. 'Kindly don't insult my intelligence!' she replied, eyeing him sternly. 'Don't forget, these are my friends...'

A tiny figure amidst the gaggle of newsmen and women, she commanded immediate attention, not least for her bright poppy-red hair caught in little bunches at the side of her head. 'They deserve our utmost respect. And remember,' she said, her eyes still fixed on the errant reporter: 'Earth Watchers are a civilisation far more advanced than our own.' And as she spoke she appeared to grow taller, more radiant, as though lit from within by a thousand suns. She shone like a beacon at sea.

Five hundred journalists looked on, mystified; some shifted in their seats, others scribbled in notepads. Was this really the voice of a ten-year-old girl?

'Is it true they're abducting people?' one asked.

'Not entirely...'. Her sombre young face broke into a mischievous smile. 'However,' she added, amused by some private thought, 'there is one case I know of; let's just say, someone who needed to be taught a lesson.'

A woman in a snazzy red suit leapt up from her seat. 'May Curley, Sky News... Those lights we saw in the sky, are you really telling us they're *aliens*?'

Amelie's green eyes flashed. 'Aliens? No, Ms. Curley, I'm not, so kindly don't use that word! And may I suggest you watch my video on YouTube? Next question, please...'

'Jeremy Loudly, BBC News. Only ten years old and here you are, addressing this International Press Conference.' He paused to brush a stray tear from his eye. 'You've already written a book, organised a global campaign, and now have the world at your feet... How on earth did that happen? And what would you say to other aspiring young children like yourself?'

'Just this...' she said gently and the light in the centre of her chest glowed. 'You can achieve absolutely anything if you remember this one thing:

There is an amazing Invisible Power running through each one of us...' She glanced around at the surprised faces before her, her voice clear as a bell. 'Yes, through you too... You are never too small, too young, or too old to make a difference.'

'So, what's next then, Amelie? Any more missions planned?'

She smiled mysteriously. 'Oh yes, there's still much to be done. The adults of the world can no longer be trusted to safeguard the future of our planet. You see, Jeremy, this is a story that won't go away...'

Chapter Two

July 2018: The Approaching Storm

Two small figures, a boy and a girl, raced through the rain-soaked streets that morning. 'Amelie!' the boy shouted over his shoulder, 'we're late now, all thanks to you!' He jumped the puddles with ease, zig-zagged his way deftly between cyclists and pushchairs.

Way behind him his mud-splattered sister was struggling to keep up. 'Sorry!' she gasped, dodging in vain the spray of a passing car. 'I had to go back for my lucky rainbow pen. Not that it's brought me much luck so far today. Mum says we're going to be homeless...'

As they neared the school gates Tim paused briefly to catch his breath. 'Homeless? What on earth do you mean?'

'I heard her talking to Dad.'

Tim dug his hands in his pockets. 'Dad's dead,' he said flatly. 'You can't talk to dead people.'

'Well, Mum does.' Amelie stared him out defiantly, her wild red hair caught by the wind. 'She told him our house is falling apart and we'll finally be *detsachute*...'

'Destitute,' Tim corrected, climbing the steps ahead of her.

'That's what I said.' She pictured them both, huddled together in some draughty shop doorway with only their woolly hats and sleeping bags for comfort, while her tears

fell unnoticed in the rain. 'I don't know how I'll get through today,' she said dramatically, clutching his arm.

'Don't worry, there's always the old playhouse,' Tim joked, shouldering his sister through the main door. 'Or my tent...' He grinned but his mind was racing. 'No way are we losing Hadleigh House. Anyway,' he added sensibly, 'we can't do anything now. Why don't you talk to your friends?'

'What friends?' she snapped. 'They all think I'm mad. You know I've only got Storm and Isla. And you, I suppose.'

'At least you've got Maths,' he said, suppressing a smile. 'That'll take your mind off things for a bit.'

'I hate you,' Amelie said, shaking her umbrella in his face.

The rain continued and by afternoon purple clouds had gathered and the first rumble of thunder heralded the approaching storm. Amelie wriggled uncomfortably, her feet still damp from the puddles.

Miss Snarkey, head teacher of Havenbridge School, swept into the room and greeted her class with an armful of end-of-year test papers and a malevolent stare.

Amelie shrank back in her seat and clutched her lucky rainbow pen. How wonderful, she thought, to be invisible at will!

'Amelie Trott, make yourself useful for once and give these out...'

Amelie stifled a yawn and glared at the old black clock on the wall, willing its stiff little hands to move: *Tock! Tock!*

'Get a move on then, girl!'

'Okay, okay...' She scrambled out of her seat, scraping her shin on the table leg.

When she returned to her place by the window she was surprised to see an unfamiliar boy already seated at the table beside her. 'Fractions and decimals!' she groaned, nursing her bruised shin. She handed him the last of the test papers. 'You might as well have this as I haven't a clue.'

He glanced at it briefly and laughed. 'Hah! That's-easy-

enough...'

Amelie watched in surprise as he filled the page with neat little squiggles. 'There-job-done!' he said, pretending to dust off his hands. 'Go-on-then-write-your-name-at-the-top.'

Amelie frowned. Judging by the way he spoke he wasn't from around here. But there was something else about him, a brightness that made everything else look dull. Which of course it was, she sighed, her eyes drawn back to the old black clock on the wall. Its hands definitely hadn't moved since the last time she'd checked. 'Hey, you did that in no time at all!'

'That's-right,' he said in his strange mechanical voice. 'No-time-at-all...'

'My great-grandfather's ridiculously clever too,' Amelie said earnestly, looking out at the rain and the trees, buffeted by the squall. 'His name is Storm. He entered the world on a wild and blustery night ninety-four summers ago when the streets were full of horse-drawn carts and gas lamps, and everyone wore hats...'

'Wow...!' The boy began to clap. 'That's-pretty-cool-you-know!'

Amelie eyed him, half-curious; what a funny kid he was with his big round eyes, and unusually large hands. Weird too him turning up here on the last day of term... 'You see,' she whispered, aware of the head teacher's warning scowl, 'his first cry was so *thunderous* it woke all the servants and frightened the dogs.'

'You-really-*must*-write-a-book.' His face shone like it was lit by a hundred watt bulb.

'Maybe,' she grinned. 'I'm pretty rubbish at everything else...'

'You-can-tell-a-great-story-though...' When he smiled it was as though he'd switched on a lamp in the centre of his chest, all orange-gold like a flame.

Amelie frowned. 'Did you really mean it, about the book?'

'Of-course! Amelie-Trott-best-selling-author...'

A sly Voice of Doubt harrumphed inside her head. *Best-selling author? You can't even spell!*

'Take-no-notice,' the boy laughed, just as though he had heard her thoughts.

Her small, freckled face shone with pleasure. Suddenly, sleeping in doorways no longer seemed to matter so much. 'Then I suppose I'd better get used to signing my name,' she said lightly. She picked up her pen, filled it with rainbow ink and carefully wrote her name.

Amelie J. Trott

BEST-SELLING AUTHER AUTHOR

'Now-make-it--a-bit-more-flamboyant...'

'More eye-catching, you mean? I will...' She nodded and placed a small star over the 'i' in place of a dot and crossed the 't's with spirals like tangled string. 'How's that?' Laughing, she spun round to show him.

'Talking to chairs now are we, Miss Trott?' Miss Snarkey lowered her spectacles and viewed her suspiciously. 'Perhaps you'd care to share with the class, hmm?'

Amelie frowned at the empty chair beside her. 'Where is he, Miss Snarkey, that new kid next to me?'

'New kid?' Miss Snarkey sighed irritably. 'Don't be ridiculous! There's no one next to you, nor will there be. You have thirty minutes to finish. Stop mind-wandering, girl, and get on with your work!'

Bewildered, Amelie propped her chin in her hands and gazed wistfully into the distance. In her mind she was already home; warm and dry in their big, steamy kitchen where the sweet smell of baking pervaded the air. Not that this was very likely today with Mum so upset about the house. She lingered there awhile like a hungry ghost

before drifting into the cool, tiled hallway that led to Great-Grandfather Storm's private study: the perfect place for a mind-wander.

William Storm Trott, whose turbulent nature lived up to his name, knew everything from the capital city of Madagascar to who had won the 1938 FIFA World Cup, and a great deal more besides. He could even count up to one hundred in Tibetan and was a firm believer that mind-wandering was the greatest of human gifts since it had the potential to *unlock doors to hidden worlds*. And Amelie was about to find out just how true this actually was...