I STOLE MY GENIUS SISTER'S BRAIN

Also by Jo Simmons

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The Dodo Made Me Do It

My Parents Cancelled My Birthday

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CHAPTER ONE

Keith woke to the sound of screaming.

'AAAAAAAAAARRRRRGGGGHHHH!'

It was his sister, Min.

Then more screaming, even closer this time.

'LUCKY SOOOOOCKS!' Min yelled, right in his face.

'Waarrghhh!' Keith screamed back.

Now, even more screaming, coming from downstairs.

Mum.

'Miiiiiiiiiiiinnnnn! Hurry up! We cannot be late.'

This made Min scream more, standing there, mouth open like a tunnel. Which made Keith scream more, staring at her from his bed, eyes wide.

Then, as quickly as it had started, the screaming stopped.

'Wow, that was intense,' Keith said. 'Remind me what we were screaming about?'

'I've lost my lucky socks, which is a disaster, as it's the final of the under-fourteens chess and Irish dancing competition. I have to win!' Min blurted. 'Quickly, help me look, instead of just lying there like a slug. Is that what you're going to do all day?'

'Maybe,' said Keith.

'Oh, for goodness' sake!' Min shrieked.

‘I can’t remember the last time I was allowed to just lie in bed. Get up and help me!’

Keith got out of bed, opened a drawer and began lobbing random socks at his sister.

‘Are these them? What about these?’ he said.

‘Get off, you numpty!’ Min shouted, throwing socks back at Keith.

‘Maybe this pair?’ Keith said, hitting Min right in the face.

‘You little … ’

Min had grabbed a pillow, and was about to bring it down on Keith’s head when their mum appeared, waving a pair of green socks with unicorns on.

‘Found them, they were under your quantum physics textbook!’

Then she suddenly looked stern.

‘Were you two messing around? Min,

there's no time for messing around. Ever. Child geniuses do not mess around. Let's go, go, go. Dad's already in the car. Victory awaits!'

She dashed off down the corridor, then dashed back and popped her head round the door of Keith's room.

'By the way, good morning, Keith. We'll be out until seven p.m. There's some bread in the freezer, I think, for breakfast.'

Then she was gone again. Keith ran after her.

'Wait! Mum! I need to talk to you about the Inventors' Fair in Paris. I've worked out I only need five hundred pounds to go.'

'Not this again, Keith. It's too far away and too expensive,' she said over her shoulder.

'But I could learn so much there. We could all go. A holiday?'

‘I’ve said no once, I’ll say it again. No,’ said his mum, slamming the front door behind her.

‘Bye.’

Keith heard the family car pull away. He went back to bed, where he daydreamed about the Inventors’ Fair in Paris, which he wanted to go to more than anything else. All those amazing futuristic inventions. All those brilliant inventors from around the world. Maybe they’d even take a look at some of his gadgets and creations …

Then he daydreamed about everyone suddenly coming home again right now, saying, ‘We changed our minds, let’s all spend the day together and have loads of fun, and yes, you can go to the Inventors’ Fair, Keith. We’ll book the tickets this minute.’

Keith lay in bed a bit longer. Nobody reappeared. He was still alone. This was not

the first Saturday that he'd been left behind while his parents and sister, Min, had dashed off early to a competition: ballet or fencing or blindfolded hopscotch or Japanese lute playing or tossing the caber or whatever it was Min got up to. Min was a child genius; gifted and talented. Fine. Keith didn't mind. He had his own interests, such as his Extremely Important Experiments & Inventions.

Keith got out of bed and checked on his latest experiment, investigating if toenails can grow if no longer attached to toes. He had some nail clippings in a glass of water, some in a pot of soil and some stuck into a sausage which, since it was full of protein, he thought was the perfect growing medium.

Before this experiment, there had been the one to discover if worms can swim (they can't).

Or if bananas melt if you put them on the radiator (not exactly).

Or if you can freeze custard (oh yeah).

Keith jotted down his findings in his Extremely Important Experiments & Inventions logbook.

Saturday 7 a.m. – no change.

Then something shiny caught his eye. It was the key to Min's room, lying on his bedroom floor. It must have fallen out of her pocket while she was screaming her head off. Min almost always kept her room locked, whether she was inside it or not. Keith hadn't been in it for over two years. He didn't care. He wasn't that interested in Min's life as a genius, although he did sometimes wonder what she got up to in there. And since he had nothing else to do …

The key turned lightly in the lock. He pushed the door open and saw …

‘Holy fog!’

Gold, silver, jewels, cups, treasures, trophies, brightly coloured ribbons, gleaming medals – everywhere. Keith’s mouth fell open like a trapdoor. Min had won everything. Quizzes, competitions, junior championships, galas, more quizzes.

Keith gazed at the medals and trophies and certificates all over her walls, and on her shelves, and in a little cabinet. In amongst them were motivational messages, in Mum’s handwriting.

IT’S NOT THE TAKING PART, IT’S
THE WINNING THAT COUNTS.

SUCCESS TASTES SWEET, BUT MORE SUCCESS
TASTES EVEN MORE SWEET!

IF YOU’RE NOT WINNING, WHAT ARE YOU
DOING WITH YOUR LIFE?


Success tastes sweet but more success tastes even more sweet!
—Mum
WINNER
It's not the takin
part, it's the
WINNING that counts

Keith frowned. The only message his mum had ever left him was a scribbled note saying:

DON'T LEAVE WET TOWELS
ON THE FLOOR.

Then Keith spotted the photos. Min receiving her awards with Mum and Dad in the background, grinning. Then – hang on a minute – in some photos, Min was holding a giant cheque!

'Prize money!' Keith spluttered. 'Nobody told me there was prize money.'

Keith sat on Min's bed and thought: Wow! Min's got it good. Not only did she have Mum and Dad driving her to competitions and cheering her on, it now turned out people gave her prizes and money; *actual* money.

Then Keith had a new thought. A new and very powerful thought.

'What if I won a competition? Then I could trouser the prize money, and Bisto! I'm off to the Inventors' Fair in Paris,' he whispered. 'Mum and Dad won't take me, so I'll take myself by winning a giant cheque. All I have to do is be a genius like Min. How hard can it be?'