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It's the twins' birthday! Cally wants a fashion party. Jimmy wants a football one. Can they bear to spend the day apart?





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CALLY & JIMMY



TWINS IN TROUBLE



ZOE ANTONIADES

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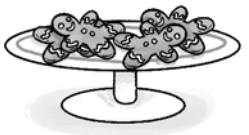


ILLUSTRATED BY KATIE KEAR

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DOUBLE TROUBLE





I have a twin brother. Everyone calls him Jimmy, which is sort of the English version of Dimitri, his actual Greek name. Our mum's Greek, you see, because our grandparents are from Cyprus. Dad's not Greek. He's from Clapham.

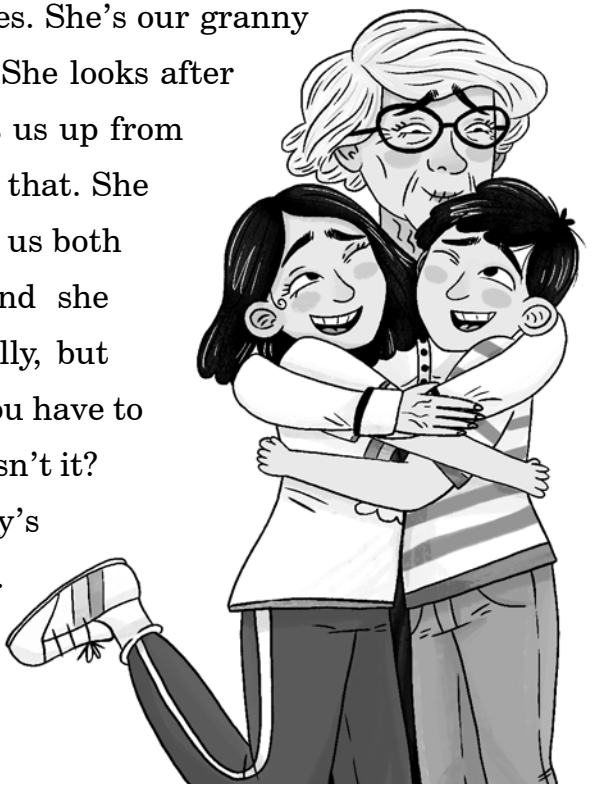
I'm Cally, short for Calista, which means, and I don't want to sound big-headed or anything, but it means 'most beautiful'. I'm not sure about Dimitri, but if Dimitri means most-annoying-brother-in-the-whole-wide-world, then that's him.

Because we're twins, I hardly ever get a break from him. I mean, we're even in the same class at school, cos it's one of those one-form-entry ones. Luckily, we don't have to sit next to each other. Jimmy has his own special table at the front, right next to the teacher's desk. I'm on the 'top table' at the back. It's not actually called that, but we know it is because we get the maths extension sheets and are all on the Independent Readers' books when everyone else is on Orange, Purple or Blue labels. Except for Jimmy. He goes out with our teaching assistant, Miss Loretta, to get his books from The Centre.

Even though we sit at total opposite ends of the classroom, I'm never allowed to forget he's there. Our teacher, Mrs Wright, calls his name out all the time to keep him on track. And if I'm not having to hear his name every five minutes, he's dropping his pencil on the floor, like, literally a hundred times an hour.

I mean, how hard is it to hold onto your pencil and just get on with your work? Very, if you're Jimmy George, is the answer to that.

He gets all the attention at home too. Not that either of us get that much attention from Mum anymore. She's always so busy working. She has two jobs now. It's not easy being a single parent, she says. But we don't only have one parent really, we still have Dad, it's just he doesn't live with us since they split up. But Yiayia does. She's our granny from Cyprus. She looks after us a lot, picks us up from school and all that. She says she loves us both very much and she loves us equally, but that's what you have to say to twins, isn't it? I know Jimmy's her favourite.



And Mum's too. Because whatever nonsense he gets up to, he always gets away with it, or somehow manages to get me in trouble as well. Double trouble, that's what people always say twins are. But it's not fair.

Mum's favourite thing to say to us is, 'You're both as bad as each other.' She said that last Sunday when everything went wrong . . .

There's this fix-it man who comes over to do jobs around the house. Mum likes him. I don't. He's called Grant and he thinks he's really cool and funny, but he absolutely 100% isn't. Me and Jimmy don't agree about many things, but we definitely agree about that.

Sunday is the one day when we all get to be at home together, but Grant had come round to do some painting. We had to go through the embarrassment of watching Mum giggling and flicking her hair when she opened the door to him.

He winked at her and said, 'Hallo, Treacle.'



Mum laughed, even though he hadn't said anything funny. Why was she being like that?

Yiayia wouldn't have liked it, I'm sure. Luckily she'd been spared this cringe moment. She was asleep over her knitting in the front room. She's making a blanket for someone's brother-in-law's, auntie's cousin in Nicosia. Yiayia makes a lot of blankets.

'Thought I'd drop round and give the outside that coat of paint you've been wanting doing,' said Grant, like he was some great superhero.

'Ooh, bless you,' said Mum.

'Probably need to do something about in here too,' he said. Grant was looking the hallway up and down, frowning and shaking his head.

'Yes. I suppose the wallpaper does look a bit old-fashioned,' agreed Mum.

Actually, it didn't. Dad had decorated the hall not that long ago, just before he had to move out. There was nothing wrong with it.

'Who put that up for you, anyway? Must have been a right cowboy.'

Cowboy! That's my dad he was talking about.

Grant finally noticed me and Jimmy watching from the stairs. 'Hallo, kiddiewinks,' he said.

Kiddiewinks???



‘Say hello to Grant,’ chirped Mum.

‘Hello, Grant,’ we mumbled. Then we turned our backs and plodded up the stairs to our rooms. Jimmy went on his Xbox and I buried myself into my *Unicorn Diaries* while Grant went outside to paint the side wall of the house – like he was the greatest fix-it man the world had ever known. He was there all morning on his stupid ladder. And at one point he was at my window whenever I looked up from my book. So annoying.



After lunch, Mum hollered up the stairs, ‘I’m just off out, kids. You’ll be all right with your Yiayia now, won’t you?’

I came out of my room and looked over the bannisters. Grant was standing there with Mum, he had his leather jacket on and his van keys in his hand.

‘Where are you going?’ I asked.

‘Grant’s taking me to DIY Express to pick out some new wallpaper for the hall.’

I didn’t say anything. I just went back to my room.

What a boring, rubbish day it was turning out to be. I suddenly really missed my dad so I tried giving him a call, but there was no reply. Such a rubbish day.

I heard Jimmy get up from his gaming chair and cross the landing to the toilet. I was so bored, maybe it was time for a bit of fun. I decided to make Jimmy jump when he came out. Now I know that might make *me* sound

like the troublemaker, but it wasn't like that. He always does it to me too. It's just a game we play sometimes. We hide round corners, behind doors or under the furniture, then we spring out and yell, 'Raargh!' Once the shock wears off, we crack up – it's pretty funny.

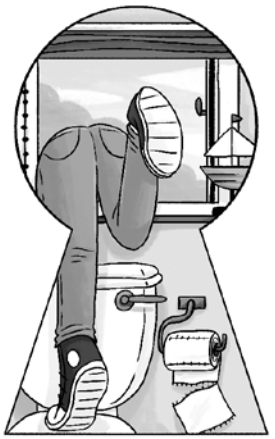
Our toilet's one of those really tiny cupboard-like ones, separate from our bathroom. It's next to the stairs. So, I tiptoed over and lay in wait.

I waited and waited outside the toilet for him to finish but he was taking *ages*. This was going to be one of his long visits, if you know what I mean. He can sit there for ever sometimes, singing silly songs to himself.

So, there I was, silently waiting behind the wall, and there was Jimmy, on the other side, sitting on the toilet and yes, singing some stupid song Dad had taught him, on and on. When was he ever going to finish? I was getting a dead leg and pins and needles too. I was

begging him to hurry up and shush up. Only in my head, of course. I didn't want him to know I was hiding out there, obviously. But it was as if he had some sort of sixth sense or something because, just at that moment, he stopped singing.

At last! He must have finished. I waited for the toilet to flush and poised myself, eyeballing the door, ready to pounce as soon as the handle turned. But the toilet didn't flush. And the door handle stayed still. What was he doing in there? It was beyond ages now, even for him. Ever so slowly, and ever so quietly, I edged my way round to face the door. One foot had gone totally numb so I balanced on my other foot and peered through the keyhole. The door still has one of those locks from the old days, but now we use a sliding latch thing from the inside instead and the original key is long gone. The actual keyhole is empty though and you can just about see through it if you want to.



So, I peeped in, hoping that I wouldn't see Jimmy's . . . you know what.

But you'll never believe what I actually saw. Jimmy wasn't in there sitting on the toilet at all. He was climbing out of the tiny square window at the back. So, what I saw was just the soles of his trainers disappearing outside. He must have realised I was waiting to make him jump and had tried to outsmart me. Well, much as I hate to admit it, he pretty much had.

I guessed he was scrambling down the drainpipe. He's a bit of a monkey when it comes to that sort of thing. Always scaling trees and diving off things.

I was two things at once then. Firstly, I was scared he might hurt himself. But mostly, I was annoyed that he'd got the better of me. Well, two could play at that game.

I bolted down the stairs and out through the back door. And there he was with his back to me, shinning down the last leg of the drainpipe. When he landed and turned round and saw me standing right in front of him, he jumped out of his skin.

'Raargh!' I went.

'Aaaaaaagh!' went Jimmy.

We froze for a second, then fell about laughing.

'Tricked ya, though, didn't I?' he grinned, super pleased with himself.

'Tricked ya back.'

We turned to gaze up at the tiny toilet window which Jimmy had escaped from. And that's when our smiles were wiped off our faces.