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Cally & Jimmy: Twins in Trouble

CALLY & JIMMY

TWINTASTIC



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TTT TWINS





Hi, I'm Cally and this is my twin Jimmy. There are three things you need to know about him: one, he's the most-annoying-brother-in-the-whole-wide-world. Two, sometimes he can't help being annoying because he's got ADHD, which means he finds it hard to concentrate and he usually acts before he thinks. And three, even though he's annoying, I'm pretty sure he's Mum and Yiayia's favourite.

Yiaiyia's our Greek granny from Cyprus. She moved in to help look after us when Mum and Dad split up. It's sad that we can't live with

Dad too but we still stay with him every other weekend and he always comes to any special events that we are going on. I think if Dad was around more, things would be a bit fairer cos I reckon I'm Dad's favourite. We're both good at maths and like marmalade and marmite sandwiches. But now it's just Mum and Yiayia, and when it comes to getting attention and your own way, Jimmy pretty much gets it all if you ask me. Except nobody ever does ask me, cos it's always all about Jimmy in *our* house.

Jimmy's latest obsession is collecting Mega Mash Machines cards. It's one pound for a pack of seven. He's already spent his birthday money on them. Such a rip off. Seven silly cards with pictures of robots that are meant to smash each other up because of their special attachments and turbo-boost fuel points.



Jimmy's got a stack of them so big that when he stuffs them in his trouser pockets it makes him walk funny – like he's some sort of robot himself. To be fair, practically everyone else at school is mad about them too – even my best friend Aisha. I can't understand it myself. But if they want to get all tragic swapping and competing with each other over who's got the rarest card, then that's their problem.

Our teacher, Mrs Wright, isn't a fan of the cards either. 'It'll all end in tears,' she keeps saying. And as for Miss Loretta, Jimmy's teaching assistant, she's been having a nightmare trying to stop Jimmy from getting distracted by them in class. It's hard enough trying to get him to concentrate as it is. I bet Miss Loretta wishes she had a Mega Mash Machine to deal with Jimmy sometimes. They have an arrangement where she looks after his cards during lessons and he gets to take them out at playtimes only. Mrs Wright has a massive





confiscated stash on her desk cos no one is allowed them in class. So loads of the kids keep theirs hidden in their bags and jackets on the pegs at the back of the classroom.

I feel sorry for Yiayia the most, because on our way to school, we can't go past the shops without the usual Mega Mash Machines nonsense. Last week was no different.

'Please, Yiayia. Please can we get just one pack? Please,' Jimmy said, tugging on her shawl.

We? Not as if there's ever anything in it for me or Yiayia.

'No, no. No today, Jimmy mou. Let's be just to go to school,' said Yiayia.

'*Pleeeeeease*. Just one pack. I'm trying to get the Techtronic Titan Trasher.'

I rolled my eyes. 'What's so special about a stupid Trashy Titan anyway?'

Jimmy looked at me as if I'd just insulted God or something.

'What's so *special* about it?! The Techtronic Titan Trasher only happens to be like the rarest card in the whole wide world! I mean, it's the TTT, Cally, don't you even know *anything*? **Turbo Boost**: ten trillion. **Weapon**: the Claw AND the Shredder AND the Incinerator. **Material**: titanium – of course. **Time of Manufacture**: the Apocalypse. And it's GOLD!'

Most Mega Mash Machines cards are normal cardboard, but some have holographic, shiny borders in bronze or silver. The TTT is the only gold one – apparently. *Whoop-de-doo*!



Jimmy was now doing his full-on begging act, clasping his hands under his chin and gazing up at Yiayia with puppy-dog eyes. She was going to cave in as usual. I knew it.

'All right, Jimmy mou,' she said, scrabbling about in her handbag for her little purse and taking out a pound coin.

'Thanks, Yiayia. You're the bestest Yiayia timesed by ten trillion,' he said, giving her a massive hug.

'Just go and get your stupid cards then, and stop making us late for school,' I said.

'You want get something from shop too, Calista mou?' said Yiayia, sorting through the coins in her purse.

'No, it's OK, Yiayia. Thanks, though.'

Jimmy raced into the shop and was back out on the pavement in seconds, ripping open his Mega Mash Machines pack like a maniac.

'*Demon Demolisher* . . . got . . . *Critter Crusher* . . . got . . . *Herculean Hurricane* . . . got . . .'



'So, you've basically got all of them already. Great use of one pound,' I said.

'I can swap them at school though, can't I?' he said, flicking through the rest of the pack.

'I take it the famous TTT isn't there, then?'

Jimmy shook his head.

'Surprise, surprise! Now can we *please* just get to school. Some of us do actually want to do something with our brains, you know.'

'Nerd,' said Jimmy.

Yiayia stood between us, took each of us by the hand, and we walked the rest of the way to school like that.

When we arrived in the playground, I knew something important had happened, because instead of the kids hanging around near their classrooms where they're meant to line up when the bell goes, there was a massive bunch of people all crowding round Year Five.

We kissed Yiayia goodbye and raced over to see what was up. Pushing our way through the crowd, I realised it was actually my best friend Aisha who was at the centre of it all. She was clutching something tightly to her chest and looking a bit panicked as everyone scrambled over each other to get to her.

'Is it true?'

'Aisha's got the TTT!'

'No way!'

'For real?'

'The Techtronic Titan Trasher?!'

'Let's have a look! Let's have a look!'

'I'll swap ya!'

'I'll give you my whole complete collection for that one card, Aisha, what do you say?'

My poor friend Aisha. She looked terrified. I had to do something. 'Mrs Wright's coming! Mrs Wright's coming!' I said.



And then everyone was whispering, 'Mrs Wright's coming! Mrs Wright's coming!' and scattering back to their classes and getting into line and acting as if everything was all normal, cos we all knew what Mrs Wright would do if she saw that card and the fuss it was causing. She'd confiscate it, of course. And then no one would even get the chance to try and do a swap.

So we all lined up as good as gold. Even Jimmy. And he's rubbish at lining up. He has his own special lining up place at the front because he always pushes everyone accidentally-on-purpose. Mrs Wright looked a bit suspicious – especially as we'd all managed our line up order so perfectly before the bell had even gone. Aisha tucked the super-rare card into the inside pocket of her jacket. Mrs Wright would never know.

But *we* all did. I could feel the news rising in the air and buzzing through the line. Like some sort of secret raging hunger that everyone had

for that card. And no one more so than Jimmy, cos even though he was at the front of the line with his back to me, and I couldn't see his face, I could just tell, that he, my twin Jimmy, wanted that card the most.

★

When it was playtime, Aisha left her jacket on the pegs in class with the TTT safely hidden away in it. Wise move. At least she wouldn't get ambushed again.

But even though she didn't have the card with her, it didn't stop everyone coming up and pestering her anyway. *So* annoying. We were sitting on the benches and I was doing Aisha's hair. Well I was trying to, if people would just leave us alone. Aisha has the longest, silkiest hair ever. Mine's all bushy and sticky-outy and not long at all. So Aisha lets me do plaits on hers.

Jimmy was the first to come bouncing over:



'Hey, Aisha, show me the TTT. I just want to have a look.'

'Go away, Jimmy,' we both said at the same time. We're besties, so that often happens.

Then came Mitch Moran. 'Is it true, Aisha? Have you really got the TTT? What's it like? What's it like?'



'I haven't got it,' said Aisha. ' . . . Well, I have, but not here, right now,' she explained.

Next was Candice Solomon. She's our friend at least, so Aisha told her and me all about the moment when she discovered she'd got the TTT. She'd bought the pack from the corner shop yesterday on her way home from school.



'Wow!' said Candice in awe. 'I can't believe it was right there in that shop. Like literally down our street. Any one of us could have got that. You're well lucky, Aisha.' Candice was being a good sport. I could tell she was jealous, but at least she had some dignity. Unlike Jimmy, who was bounding across the playground to bother us – again!

'Pleeeeeeeaaaase, can I just have a little look?'

'We said go away, Jimmy!'

Then Jackson Boyle came over. 'I'll give you ten pounds for it,' he said.

'You haven't got ten pounds, Jackson,' I said. I feel sorry for Jackson sometimes. His parents never come to Sports Days or the Christmas plays or anything like that.



He hangs around after school with his big cousin, Dermot, all the time. Dermot's a teenager, and quite scary. And he doesn't wear his trousers properly – he has them a bit down so you can see his pants – and not even by accident.



Jackson put his hands in his pockets, hung his head and wandered off quietly.

And then Jimmy was back again, hopping from one foot to the other. 'I only want to see it. Come on, Aisha. It's not fair.'

'She hasn't even got it on her!' I yelled at him. 'She left it inside.'

Jimmy went running off. We didn't see him again for the rest of the playtime. Must have found someone else to annoy after that. At least it wasn't us.

When we got back into class, Aisha went straight to her jacket to have another look at the precious TTT. She slipped her hand into the inside pocket. And gasped. Then she turned her jacket inside out and shook it. Panic was written all over her face.

'What is it, Aisha?' I said.

'It's not there!' She looked like she might faint.

'Aisha Khan,' came Mrs Wright's voice from the other side of the classroom. 'What are you doing there in the coat area? Hurry up and sit down. We've got work to do.'

Aisha staggered over to the 'top table', where we sit next to each other. Her eyes had welled up.

'Don't worry,' I whispered. 'We'll find it.'

Aisha didn't reply. She just sat there, staring down at the desk in deep shock.

Mrs Wright began the maths lesson. Maths is my and Aisha's favourite. I don't want to sound like a show-off but we're both pretty good at it and sometimes Mrs Wright has to get us worksheets from Year Six even though we're only in Year Five.

But today, Aisha wasn't answering a single question. She didn't put her hand up once. She wasn't even writing on her whiteboard. Great big tears started to drop onto the desk.





'Aisha?' said Mrs Wright. 'Is anything the matter?'

Aisha shook her head. She still couldn't speak.

'Aisha? This isn't like you. What's wrong?'

Aisha buried her head in her arms on the desk and started sobbing. I could see her shoulders going up and down. She was devastated.

Mrs Wright turned to me. 'Cally? Do you know what's upset Aisha?'

'Someone . . . someone's taken her TTT card!'

The entire class gasped in horror.

'Her TTT . . . ?' said Mrs Wright, looking a bit confused.

'It's the rarest Mega Mash Machines card ever. And Aisha had it,' explained Mitch Moran.

Mrs Wright put her hand to her forehead, like Mum does when she's got one of her

headaches, and she sighed a very deep sigh. 'Those . . . silly, *silly* cards,' she said.

The maths lesson was clearly not going to happen now, so she went on, 'OK, then, let's get to the bottom of this . . . So, when did the card go missing?'

Aisha took her head up off the desk. Her eyes were red raw and her face was all puffy. She still couldn't speak.

'It must have been at playtime, Miss,' I explained. 'Because she had it this morning and it was in her coat, but when we got back it wasn't there any more.'

'I see. So, someone must have been inside during break, then.' Mrs Wright frowned.

We're not meant to come in, unless we've got a special pass for Chess Club or Choir or something.

'Did anyone see anyone coming into the classroom?' Mrs Wright folded her arms and scanned the room for suspects.

Nina Wilinska raised her hand gingerly. 'Please, Miss. It was Jimmy. I saw him come back in through the door by the toilets.'

Jimmy glared at Nina. Everyone glared back at him. *Aisha* glared at me!

No way. It couldn't have been my twin Jimmy. Aisha, my best friend, would hate me for ever if it was.

'Jimmy, is this true?' said Mrs Wright.

'It wasn't *me* . . . it wasn't me . . .' he stammered. He'd gone bright red.



'Well, did you come inside at playtime, or not?'

'I . . . I . . . well . . . I *did*. But it . . . it was for my fruit. I'd left my snack behind. It wasn't to get Aisha's card . . .' Jimmy was looking all stressed out. 'I didn't do it . . .'

I believed him. He's my brother. And he might be the-most-annoying-brother-in-the-whole-wide-world, but he's not a liar. I know that. I had to believe him. The rest of the class didn't, though. *Especially* not Aisha. She looked up at Mrs Wright and said, 'Please, Miss, see if he's got it.'

'OK, Jimmy. Stand up and turn out your pockets,' said Mrs Wright.

'But . . . but . . . I didn't . . . I haven't . . .'

'Just, do it, Jimmy. Now. Please,' said Mrs Wright, trying her best to control her temper. She's one of those lovely teachers who hardly ever shouts or anything, but I could see even *she* was losing her patience now.

Jimmy stood up, shaking. He emptied out his pockets. There was a bit of fluffy Blu Tack – he's always peeling it off the back of Mrs Wright's displays, so she wasn't too pleased to see that. But she didn't say anything because now it was all about the TTT. There was a small toy car and a handful of his own Mega Mash Machines cards which he'd managed to sneak away from Miss Loretta – *she* didn't look too pleased about that either. But no TTT card.

'Now let's have a look in your tray please, Jimmy. And, Miss Loretta, if you could search Jimmy's coat and book bag, thank you.'



Jimmy started to cry. 'I didn't . . . it wasn't . . .'

Still no TTT card.

‘OK, sit down please, Jimmy,’ said Mrs Wright. ‘Don’t worry, Aisha, we’ll get to the bottom of this. But what was a sensible girl like you doing bringing such a thing into school? I said it would all end in tears.’ Mrs Wright was shaking her head. She looked really fed up. She must have been, because she gave up trying to teach us in the fun way she normally does and gave us all a boring, easy maths paper and made us work in silence for the rest of the lesson.

When Mrs Wright wasn’t looking, I whispered to Aisha, ‘You didn’t have to make them search him like that. You know how Jimmy gets upset so easily.’

‘And *you* know how much he wanted that card,’ she said.

‘Aisha, practically *everyone* wants that stupid card. Why would it have to be Jimmy?’

‘Cos he was inside at playtime, wasn’t he?’

‘But he was getting his fruit . . .’

‘How do you know that though?’



‘I just do. Jimmy’s a lot of things, but he’s not a thief.’

‘Well you *would* stick up for him, because he’s your twin.’

‘And you’re supposed to be my best friend. So I don’t think it’s very nice of you to be so horrible about my brother. Anyway, they’ve just gone through all his stuff, haven’t they? Jimmy hasn’t got your dumb card.’

Aisha shifted her chair away from me. It scraped the floor and caught Mrs Wright’s attention. So we couldn’t say anything else to each other. I didn’t think we’d be speaking to each other after all that anyway.