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Maddy Yip's Guide to Life

MADDY YIP'S GUIDE TO HOLIDAYS

STORY and PICTURES by
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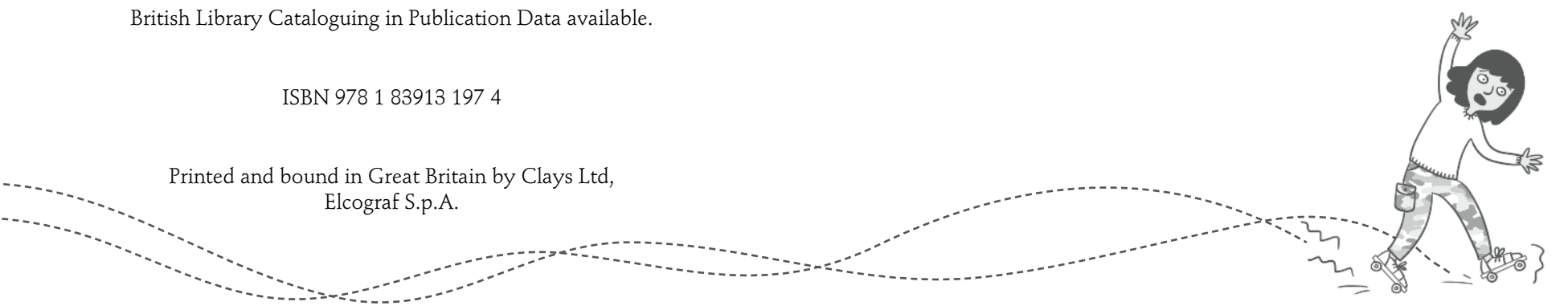
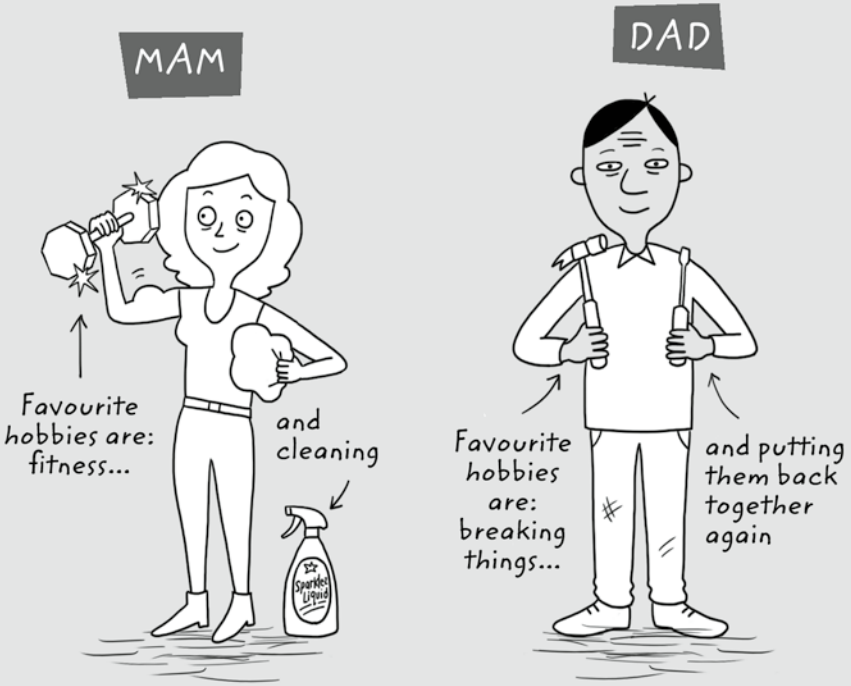
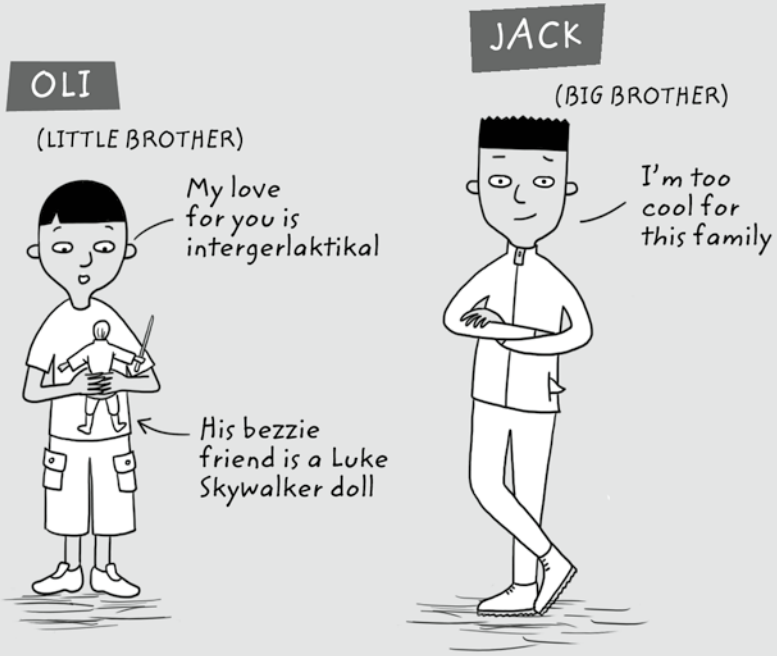
To Rhian,
who I imagine to be Maddy
in a parallel universe, and if
that's the case, then I am Dev.



ME
D'OH! Not again
SQUISH
Doggy doo-dah

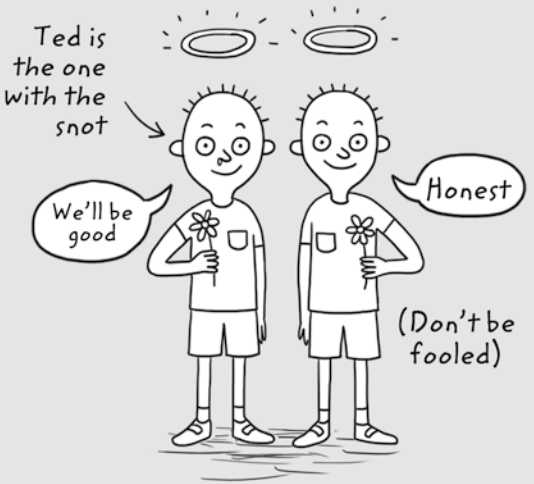

MAM
DAD
Favourite hobbies are: fitness...
and cleaning
Sparkle Liquid
Favourite hobbies are: breaking things...
and putting them back together again


OLI
(LITTLE BROTHER)
My love for you is intergerlaktikal
His bezzie friend is a Luke Skywalker doll
JACK
(BIG BROTHER)
I'm too cool for this family

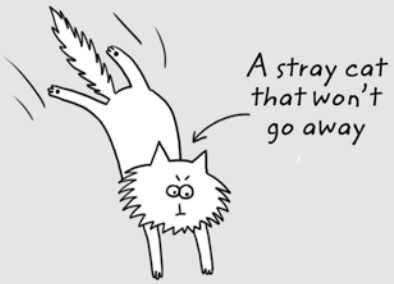
AGUNG
(GRANDAD)
Eats tea coasters (don't ask)

DEV

EVIL TWINS

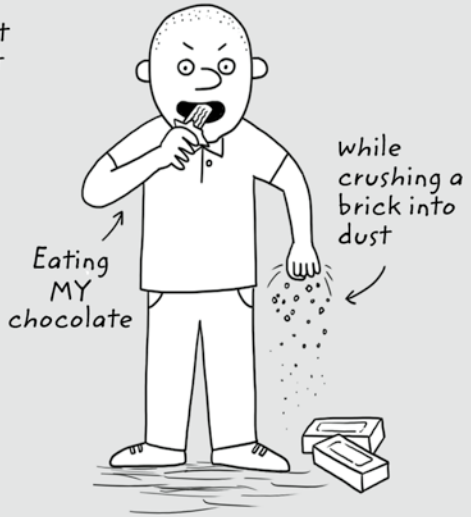


FUZZFACE

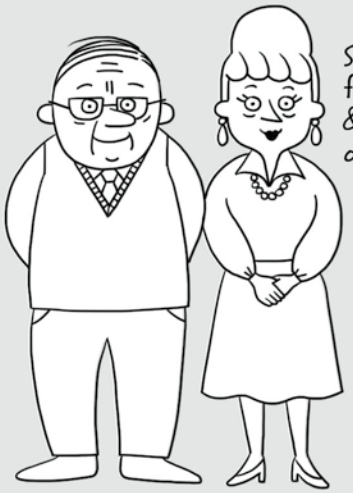


HULK

GED SPONGER

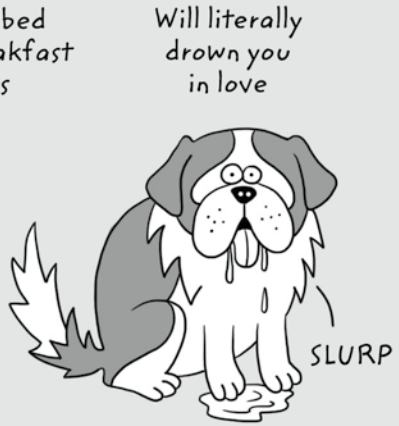


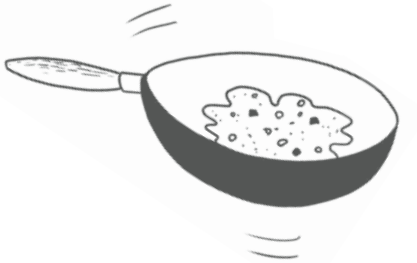
DEREK AND WENDY



PRINCESS

(THE B&B's DOG)





Sunday

School **Easter** holidays had only just begun and I already wanted to stick my head in a bucket of frogspawn.

Correction, a *wok* full of **frogspawn**. Because unlike other families who might have a proper frog pond, we have one made out of a Chinese frying pan. Dad doesn't like chucking anything out, so he had a **brainwave** to reuse the wok after I ruined it burning an omelette.

He says he likes saving nature, but we all know it's really the pennies he's trying to save!

The Easter holidays were boring but I didn't complain out loud because if I do Mam always thinks of chores for me, normally involving bins, and I wasn't doing that *rubbish*! **(HA! HA!)**

I went upstairs to hide and my little brother Oli was in our bedroom (because we share, worst luck).

'What are you doing?' I said.

'Counting my Easter eggs,' he replied.

He only had four, I could see that as soon as I walked in. **BLIMEY**, he must have been more bored than I was! He was prodding the eggs with his **Luke Skywalker** action figure's hand as he counted. Then he recounted just to make sure.

UGH.

I don't care which comes first but *pleeaase*:

1) Can I have my own bedroom?

2) Can the holidays be over so I don't have to put up with this madness?!

I headed back downstairs but my big brother Jack heard me **shriek** outside his room as I trod in a lump of homemade slime Oli had dropped on the carpet.

'OI, NUT, COME HERE!' he shouted.

I wish he would stop calling me that. That 'peanut up my nose' incident was over six years

ago. I am not that person any more. I am now intelligent, mature and fully aware of the correct hole food goes into. I opened his door and huffed, **'WHAT?'**

'You got any snacks?' he said, staring at his computer screen.

Anyone who blatantly insults me then asks for snacks without saying 'please' can go for a naked jog in a cactus field as far as I am concerned.

'Ah no, sorry I haven't,' I lied.

Dev, my bezzie mate who goes to drama club, taught me how to look sorry by thinking of something tragic. So while lying to Jack I thought

about that family picnic where I accidentally trod on the hem of my skirt as I stood up and ended up **faceplanting** in the soft cheese swirl. Nobody came to my rescue as I lay suffocating in a stinking lump of **curdled gloop** because they were laughing so much. **CRETINS.**

YAAAH!

'Ask Oli if I can have one of his eggs,' said Jack, making a banana **KUNG FU KICK** a guava on his computer game.

I said, **'ASK HIM YOURSELF, WASSOCK!'** and scarpered downstairs before he could catch me. It was the most fun I'd had all morning.

Grandad was in his converted garage room doing a thousand-piece baked bean jigsaw without his specs on. He is as **blind as a bat**, so I had no idea how he'd already completed half the puzzle. We call him Agung which is 'Grandad' in Chinese, well Hakka, to be specific, as Dad says there's different dialects. He's the only one in our family who can talk to

Agung properly because he speaks Hakka too. I helped Agung with the jigsaw for thirty seconds before realising that sitting in a bath full of actual baked beans would be less torturous.

I had run out of rooms to mope about in, so I ventured out to the back garden. Our mangy old cat **FUZZFACE** was having a wee on Agung's freshly dug veg patch ready for planting his pak choi. I think I will pass on the pak choi when it ends up on my plate.

I peered through the shed window. Dad was at work but I wanted to check how his latest hobby project was going. He is building a bicycle-powered potato chipper and intends

to make millions. Yeah, *millions* of customers angry about the **mess** it makes!

He will never leave his job as a warehouse manager at the car metal parts factory though. I once asked him why he stays in a job he doesn't particularly like and he replied, 'It gets me out of this madhouse, doesn't it?!' Then it occurred to me – so THAT'S why parents go to work.

Something brushed against my foot and when I looked down, **FUZZFACE** had deposited half a chewed worm on my shoe. I was thinking how much worse Easter holidays could get when Dev appeared in his back garden, one over from ours. Well, at first I thought Mr Sharma had planted a gigantic rose bush, until I realised it was Dev swathed in a floral shawl.

'Hey Maddy, what's up?' he said.

'THIS!' I said, holding my shoe aloft and pointing to the offending slime. 'And this!' I picked up **FUZZFACE** and pointed at her face, which turned out to be her backside. (She is so shaggy it is hard to tell which end is which sometimes.)

Dev invited me over to his and when I got there, it turned out he was going *insane* with boredom too.

'There must be loads of stuff we can do,' he said.

'Let's do a brainstorm,' I said. 'What do you think of when I say the word Easter?'

'Fluffy chicks?' he said.

'We could visit the petting farm?'

'I can't, feathers set off my asthma,' said Dev.

Well that put an end to that. I thought about Oli's Easter eggs and had an idea.

'Hey, remember that great granny who broke the Guinness World Record by cramming all those marshmallows into her gob?' I said.

'Yeah?'

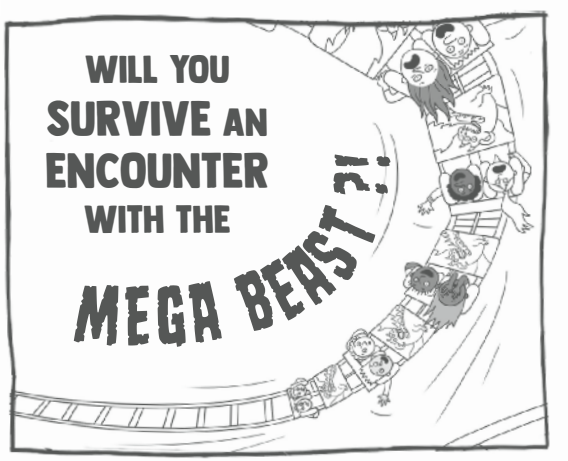
'Well, why don't we invent The Plunkthorpe World Records and eat as many **Easter** eggs as we can in one go?'

'**Eggs-cellent** idea! Any *eggs*-cuse to scoff stupid amounts of chocolate,' said Dev.

'At last, the **Easter** holidays are getting *eggs*-citing,' I answered, overdoing the *egg* joke ever so slightly. The only problem was we didn't have any eggs, so we scraped together some pocket money to buy some.

We caught the bus into town and went straight to the **NINETY-NINE PENCE SHOP.** There was a choice between small

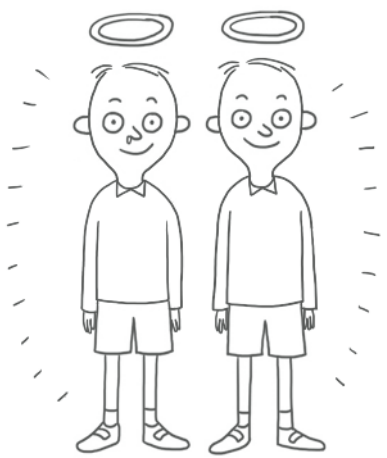
luxury eggs or the more inferior gigantic ones. We plumped for five giant ones as we weren't fussy about eating products made from the sweepings-up off the factory floor, plus this was all about quantity not quality. While waiting in the queue to pay, Dev did one of his overly dramatic gasps and pointed to the wall behind me. **'NO . . . WAY!'** he cried out. I turned to see a poster advertising a new ride at Sudmouth Amusement Park with the words:



'We have to go!' Dev squeaked, jiggling up and down.

I sighed. 'Don't be daft, our parents won't shell out for a trip to Sudmouth. They won't even pay for quilted bog roll.'

We paid for the eggs but the prospect of guzzling them didn't seem so appealing after seeing that poster which showed us what **REAL** excitement was all about. To add to the misery we bumped into Ted and Tod, the horrid toddler twins, outside the shop with their mam. I said 'Hello', but all I could think



of was shielding the contents of my bag. If **EVIL TWINS** found out I had a tonne of chocolate eggs in there, they would crowbar my bedroom door off to get at them. Mam, who is their childminder, says they won't go in my room, but I found their jammy fingerprints all over my old **Etch A Sketch** just last Friday.

Ted had a sly snoop in my bag and shouted, 'Choc-let!'

Then Tod screeched, 'Gimme!'

BRILLIANT.

I said, 'Sorry, can't stop', then edged away while dragging Dev behind me.

As we were waiting at the bus stop another nightmare appeared around the corner.

'Oh no, it's Ged Sponger and he's flipping seen us!' Dev whispered loudly.

Ged is always trying to take stuff off us.

'Hey, Yip, what's in your bag?' Ged grunted as he approached.

I thought quickly and babbled, 'Horse excrement for my grandad's pak choi.'

It worked because Ged looked baffled then disgusted, then stomped off in a huff. **HA!** It's so easy to outsmart the biggest plonker in Plunkthorpe.

During the bus journey home me and Dev discussed how many ways we could find to go on **THE MEGA BEAST**, but the pathetic conclusion we came to was **NONE**. The next most important topic was how to keep the eggs away from the thieving twins.

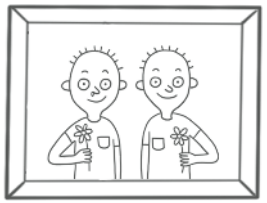
'Can you store them at yours?' I said to Dev.

'Er hello . . . Canine Hoover?' he replied.

Dev was referring to his dog Graham, who gets taken to the vet at least once a year with 'intestinal obstruction' i.e. he mistakes things like dental floss and elastic bands for tasty treats, which then bung up his insides. Last time it was an entire pack of Dev's little sister Heena's plasticine and he did **Technicolored poop** for a week. Heena said only unicorns poop rainbows, so Graham

must be a 'magical wonder'. Not at three hundred pounds per vet's bill he's not!

I took the eggs back to my house in the end and hoped by some miracle that EVIL TWINS didn't get their grubby little mitts on them.



Monday – way too early

Mam burst into my room at seven o'clock this morning. I was appalled! Doesn't she know that growing kids need twenty-three hours of sleep a night in order to develop into well-adjusted adults? (Unlike her!) I read that in a magazine last month. (It was someone else's magazine, and I was two bus seats behind them, so there could be a chance I got that wrong.)

Mam said she was cleaning. The woman is **POSSESSED**! Actually the real reason for Mam's erratic behaviour was because the childminding inspectors were coming and the house needed to be immaculate. I reminded her they weren't due till after the Easter holidays, which was ages away. She ignored me, drew the curtains back and snapped, **'What are your pants doing on the windowsill?!'**

'They need airing,' I mumbled, from under the pillow that I had placed over my head to drown out the noise of dusting.

Really, I'd had to find somewhere to put the Easter eggs me and Dev bought yesterday. So I'd emptied a clothes drawer and put them in there.

'The neighbours don't want to see your **disgusting undies**,' said Mam. 'They'll think we're a **bunch of scruffs**!'

Well if they were 'disgusting' then I blamed it on the knackered old washer (not Mam, the washing machine). I got up to clear them away and spotted the rusty cement mixer and bashed-up scooter that Dad couldn't fit into his shed sprawled over the lawn. I pointed them out to Mam. 'Now that's what I call a pile of pants!'

'Don't worry, I've already had words with Dad about *that* eyesore!' said Mam.

Oli woke up and started whinging about the noise, which ironically just added to the

existing noise. (I have decided that when I get my own room I will have a huge party and invite everyone . . . except Oli). I opened my drawer and stared blankly into it. I was having a dilemma about how to fit my drawers into my drawers! **HA! HA!** Then the doorbell rang.

'Who's got the nerve to go bothering people at this ungodly hour?' said my mother, who came into *my* room at *seven* in the morning to polish the radiator pipes with a cotton bud! **'Go and see who that idiot is and tell them to do one!'** she said.

I went downstairs and answered the door. It was Mrs Tatlock dropping the **EVIL TWINS** off early for childminding.

'Oh, hello, Mrs Tatlock, I forgot you were coming early today!' Mam puffed, racing down the stairs.

She was doing one of her weird toothy smiles. The Tatlocks are the best employers Mam's ever had, so she becomes uncharacteristically nice whenever they are round. The twins are also oddly well-behaved, right up until the very second their parents leave, then they turn our house into the **Chester Zoo chimp enclosure**.

As soon as Mrs Tatlock had left and Mam had disappeared into the kitchen to make breakfast, **EVIL TWINS** were straight onto me.

'Gim-me choc-let!' snarled Ted.

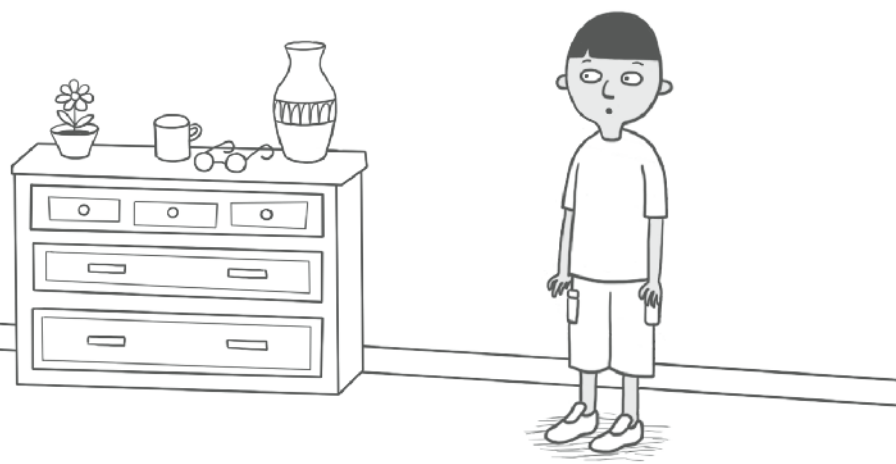
It is quite unnerving to be cornered by a three-and-a-half year old. Dev said the twins are like Chihuahuas. Their bark is normally worse than their bite. But what Dev doesn't know is that I have had a terrifying Chihuahua phobia ever since Jack told me that they have the ability to leap on you from their lairs (normally bins) and gouge your eyes out with their secret chin tusks.

I put my bravest face on and replied, 'What Chihuahua . . . I mean . . . chocolate?'

'Easter eeeggs!' squealed Tod.

'Oh **THOSE!**' I said. 'Sorry, I've given them away to the naked mole rat charity. Mole rats can only eat chocolate like pandas can only eat bamboo, you know.'

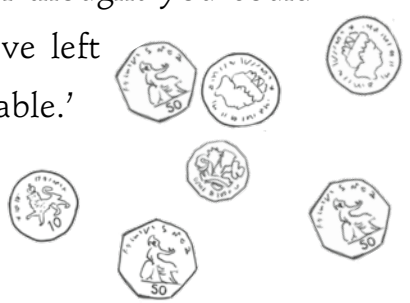
For a moment I thought I'd succeeded in flummoxing them, because they shut up for a few joyous seconds.



Then Oli blabbed, 'But I saw your Easter eggs in your undies drawer just a minute ago!'

AMAZING.

Maybe my Easter egg money would have been put to better use if I'd paid to get Oli's mouth clamped. And as if the morning hadn't got off to a bad enough start, Mam shouted from the kitchen, 'Maddy, Agung wants to go to the garden centre today so I thought you could take him on the bus. I've left money on the hallway table.'



FANTASTIC.

I was about to moan about it when she added, 'Oh, and take Oli too!'

UGH.

I was thinking I'd rather be out of the house than have to put up with EVIL TWINS so I answered, 'Well all right, but make sure the twins don't go in my room!'

'They won't, I've warned them,' said Mam.

That means nothing. A couple of weeks ago, I finally managed to persuade Dad to put a bolt on my door after they'd blatantly rummaged through my bedside drawer. I know because every single page of my ***Little Book of Staying Absolutely Calm in Any Situation*** was smeared with Ted's unmistakable luminous green snot.

Dad thinks I exaggerate about their evilness. He said, 'They're only wee pipsqueaks, what harm can they do?'

They had already done the following in the space of an hour this morning:

1) Squished their breakfast out of the letterbox, which caused all our post to arrive covered in raspberry fromage frais.

2) Inserted a sock into the DVD player tray which has activated a permanent DISC ERROR message.

3) Stuck a sheet of *Fun time with pets!* stickers all over **FUZZFACE**, which we are still in the process of unpeeling.

Dad's normally at work when **EVIL TWINS** are around so he misses most of the carnage. Even though I made sure he put the door bolt high up where they couldn't reach, it was a **massive FAIL**. The other day Jack went home from school at dinnertime to fetch a textbook and caught them undoing it. Ted was standing on a

footstool on top of a toy crate on top of a chair, and was prodding the bolt loose with a cucumber. They are **SHOCKINGLY** enterprising master criminals (the twins, not cucumbers). When Jack asked what they were doing, Ted flung the cucumber at him and screamed, 'BIG BOY NASTY!'

Mam went to see what all the commotion was about and it was Jack that got into trouble, for wasting good vegetables! Apparently Mam hadn't even realised the twins were gone. One minute she was washing up and they were colouring at the kitchen table, the next minute they'd disappeared. Well, if they were going to play games, then I had no other choice than to use the same tactic back. But first I needed to call Dev and tell him the situation.

'I've got to take Agung and Oli out and the twins know the eggs are in my room. What shall I do?' I said.

Dev paused for a moment then replied, 'Remember that film we watched where they used booby traps to catch intruders?'

'Yeah?' I said, recalling it vaguely.

'One of the traps was a bucket of water balanced over a slightly open door,' he continued. 'And when the intruders tried to enter, the bucket tipped over and totally soaked them!'

'**GENIUS!**' I cried. 'What else could I do?'

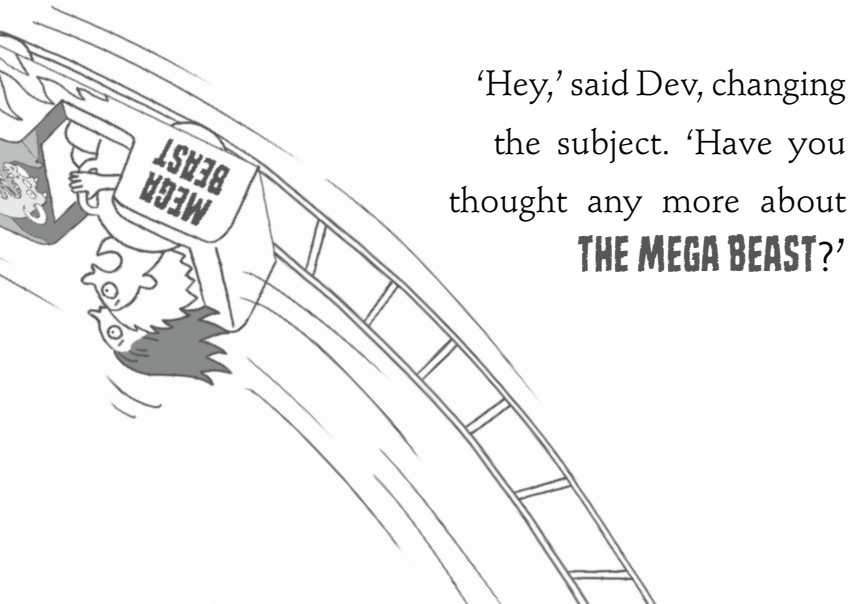
'Don't you think that's enough?' said Dev.

'NO! Come on, this is **EVIL TWINS** we're talking about!' I said, getting into the swing of it.

'OK, another trick is to put a load of flour behind the door so when the intruders break in, they leave a trail of footsteps and that way you know they've been.'

'*Eggs*-cellent!' I replied.

I couldn't wait to set the traps. **EVIL TWINS** needed to be taught a lesson for once.



'Hey,' said Dev, changing the subject. 'Have you thought any more about **THE MEGA BEAST**?'

'What, about how we're NEVER going to go on it? *No*, don't be a divvy, Dev.'

'Yeah, I suppose you're right,' sighed Dev. 'We might as well forget about it.'

I thanked Dev for his cunning input, hung up and went straight to the kitchen to get a bucket of water and bag of flour. If **EVIL TWINS** fall into my traps, the thrill of it would more than make up for not going on **THE MEGA BEAST**!