Praise for

ADAM WINS THE INTERNET

'I started reading this with my ten-year-old son ... until he decided the book was so good he had to carry on without me' – Val, NetGalley reviewer

'I loved this book. I did NOT see that ending coming. Five stars and if I could give it more I would' – Amanda W., Amazon reviewer

'A superbly funny debut comedy story ... A wonderful read, full of fun but, above all, heart and a clear message to not give up on your dreams. Perfect for young comedy fans of books by David Baddiel' – Karla, NetGalley reviewer

'This book is great for readers around ten years old, as it has exactly what we like in it' – Toppsta reviewer

'Brilliant, enticing and leaves you wanting more' – Kirsty, Amazon reviewer

'This is definitely a must-read book, just don't expect hot drinks to stay hot cos you'll be so absorbed in what you're reading that the time will just slip by' – Amanda G., NetGalley reviewer

'A really good read for someone who is starting to navigate the internet themselves' – Ejwal, Toppsta reviewer

'It was one of those books when all the children laughed at the same time' – teacher review, NetGalley

'This is a touchingly human story, tremendously funny, glittering with authenticity and a wonderful thing to connect with' – Tesse, NetGalley reviewer

'This is the best book I've ever read in my life' – Andrew, Amazon reviewer

ADAM DESTROYS THE INTERNET

Books by Adam B

Adam Wins the Internet
Adam Destroys the Internet

ADAM DESTROYS THE INTERNET

ADAM B

Illustrated by **JAMES LANCETT**

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To my little brother, Callum –

my constant source of inspiration, joy and pent-up-frustration-so-much-so-that-you-always-get-away-with-everything-because-you're-the-little-brother-and-I'm-the-big-brother-and-how-that's-so-not-fair-and-I'd-really-like-to-challenge-the-societal-norms-of-today-but-now-is-probably-not-the-best-time-but-sometimes-you-get-me-angry-grrrr. But no matter what, you're worth it, and may these pages bring as much wonder to your world as you do to mine

1

Flying Ski High

It was a regular Saturday afternoon, just like any other. Not too hot, not too cold, just … you know, *normal*. And Adam was just a regular thirteen-year-old boy. Not blessed with superpowers, but not totally evil or intent on taking over the world either, just … you know, *normal*. And currently Adam was in a normal pair of skis, racing down a normal glass roof on one of London's tallest normal skyscrapers. For Adam – Internet Sensation Extraordinaire – this was a fairly normal day.

But it wasn't going to stay that way for much longer.

'WOO-HOO!' Adam cheered as he picked up so much speed that he nearly caused a peregrine

falcon to have a heart attack as he zoomed past. 'I have no idea how fast I'm going,' Adam bellowed at the camera that was attached to his helmet, 'but I would estimate that I am travelling at a speed of, approximately … *very, very fast!*'

Then just up ahead he saw something that caused his eyes to widen in alarm. His heart began to race. His visor began to fill with sweat. And his voice trembled as he announced to the millions of viewers who were watching him live on YouTube –

'Erm, guys? I can see the edge of the roof now and … I don't think I can stop!'

Adam was right. He couldn't. At the speed he was pelting down the slope, not even a brick wall would have been able to stop him. But stopping wasn't part of the plan. Adam knew that better than anyone! After all, this whole video was *his* idea. But *planning* to ski off the top of a skyscraper and *actually doing it* are two very different things. And Adam was beginning to wish he'd never come up with such a stupid idea.

'I'm beginning to wish I'd never come up with such a stupid idea!' he screamed at his helmet-cam.



It wasn't even the 'skiing-off-the-top-of-a-skyscraper' thing that scared Adam the most. That was the *easy* bit. It was what was going to happen afterwards that had him quaking in his ski boots. But it was too late for a change of heart now. It was a matter of seconds before he would be hurtling off the edge.

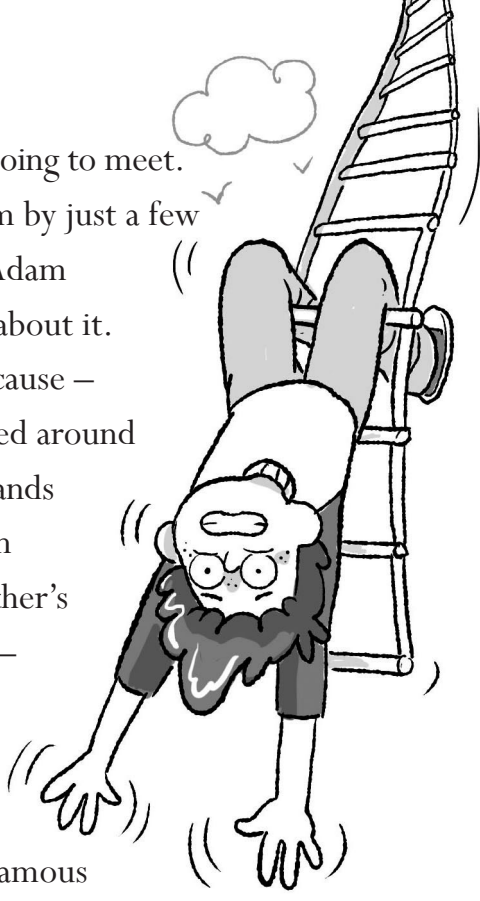
Adam looked directly into the camera and addressed his viewers like a man who was speaking at his own funeral.

'Before I do this, I just have one last thing to tell you. To my mum, to my little brother, Callum, to all of you who have supported me as a YouTuber, I'd just like to say … WHOOOAAA-ARRRGHHH-EEEEEEEE-YEEEEUUUURRRRGHHHH-MMMMUUUUMMMMYYYY!!!'

Adam shot from the roof.

He soared through the crisp blue air.

He flew towards the helicopter that hovered ahead, towards the rope-ladder trapeze that dangled below it, reaching out towards the outstretched arms of Callum, who was dangling upside down from the ladder by his knees, and Adam knew, without a doubt,



that their hands were never going to meet. He was going to miss Callum by just a few millimetres, and then … ! Adam couldn't even bear to think about it.

But he didn't have to, because – SMACK! Adam's hands closed around Callum's wrists! Callum's hands closed around Adam's! Adam looked up into his little brother's eyes and screamed with joy – 'CALLUM! WE DID IT!'

And that's when Callum's legs slipped and Adam and Callum Beales, stars of the famous B-Boys YouTube channel, plummeted towards the cold, hard concrete of the London street far below …

But the brothers didn't scream or cry, or go an alarming shade of green, they just stayed like that – arms linked, eyes locked, breathing as one, in perfect unison as they fell. Then together they shouted –

'Three … two … one …'

Like a meticulously rehearsed dance, they released each other's arms, drifted apart from one another, pulled at the handles that dangled from their chests, and – *WHOOOOMPH*! Their parachutes deployed, and calmly and peacefully they drifted down to the street below, where they were met by the cheers and screams of the thousands of fans lining the pavements, all clamouring to get over the barriers that separated them from the paramedics, security teams and reporters who were rushing to meet Adam and Callum as they removed their parachutes.

But someone else got to the brothers first.

'YES!' whooped Ethan, Adam's floppy-haired best friend, as he congratulated them with a pair of almighty high fives before breaking into one of his million-mile-an-hour speeches. 'You should have seen yourselves up there! It was amazing! Adam, you were like "*WHOOSH!*" and Callum, you were like "I got this!" and then it was like "Whoa!" and "Nooo!" and then I thought for sure that you were both gonna die, and then it was like "Yes! They're alive!" and then it was like "No! They're gonna

die again! It's gonna be so gross and sticky!" and then it was like "Ahhhh" and then it was like "ARRRRGHHHH!" and then it was like "Doo-di-doo-di-doo, we're just here, floating around in our parachutes like a pair of absolute LEGENDS!" and then it was like "Touchdown!" and then I was like running over to you and I was like "YES!" and "High five!" and "You should have seen yourselves up there! It was amazing!!" And I was like "Adam, you were like 'WHOOSH!'" And then …'

'Ethan!' Adam interrupted. 'We get it! It was amazing! Thank you! We couldn't have done it without you!'

A peanut flew through the air then bounced off Adam's forehead. They all ignored it.

'Seriously?! You mean that?' Ethan said. 'Because I didn't really do anything, to be honest. I just kind of stood around and watched, and then I ate some of those crisps over there, where that guy dressed as a cheetah is handing them out for free, but I don't recommend them because they're *way* spicy, so then I went over to that lady dressed as an alligator to get one of those blue drinks that she's handing out, and

it wasn't bad, but probably a bit too blue for me. Do you think it'll make my pee blue? Because—'

'Ethan!' Adam interrupted again as another peanut hit him. On the nose this time. 'Ouch! Look, Ethan, just knowing you were down here supporting us was all we needed.'

'You actually mean that?'

'Of course I mean that. Now, please can you do me a favour? You see over there? Bruce Kilter, the biggest bully the world has ever seen, standing on top of that bin? Holding up a sign that says *ADAM BEALES IS A MORON*? Well, would you mind asking security to take it off him? Or if they could make him get off the bin? Or ask him to leave or something?'

'Why can't school bullies just stay in school?' Ethan lamented. 'Why do they have to bully us from other places too? Like street corners, and car parks, and … bins.'

'Yargh!' Adam yelped as a peanut flew directly into his ear.

'Also, Ethan,' Adam added before Ethan could depart on his mission, 'if you could get him to stop

lobbing peanuts at us, that would be a really good thing!'

'On it.' Ethan saluted, did an about-turn and marched towards a pair of burly security guards. 'Attennnnn-tion! Officers! I have a mission for you!'

Adam and Callum could hardly contain their laughter.

'We did it!' Callum exclaimed.

'We so did! And we did it by *ourselves*,' Adam added. 'We did it using our own skills, Callum! I told you we wouldn't need any help from Popularis Incrementum! There is no way the little AI friend who lives in your phone could have made that video any better than it was! Just remember, Callum, if you do ever try to use that Popularis thing, it will not …'

'Yeah, yeah, I know, I know – *Popularis will not solve any of my problems. Popularis will only create MORE problems. Popularis made your life a nightmare last year and* blah, blah, blah! I got it the first time you warned me, *months* ago! And I got it when you warned me every day since then! I got it this morning, when

you told me at breakfast! I got it when you warned me at lunch! And I get it *now*. Adam, trust me, I will never try to use Popularis Incrementum. I'm fed up of *hearing* about Popularis Incrementum. And to be honest, I still don't understand what Popularis Incrementum even is! OK?'

Popularis Incrementum – or 'Popularis' for short, or 'Pop' for even shorter, or 'P' for so short it sounds rude – was a bit like one of those voice-activated virtual assistants that do all those random tasks when you tell it to, like 'Play my favourite songs' or 'Tell me what the weather's going to be like tomorrow' or 'Tell me a joke about aardvarks', except Popularis was SO much more than that. Popularis didn't do pointless little tasks, Popularis did HUGE, life-changing tasks. It could literally do the impossible – sometimes when you didn't even ask it to. And nearly always when you least expected it to. And so far it had only revealed itself to one person in the entire world – Adam Beales. Until now. Now Adam's brother, Callum, knew about it too. And Adam was terrified that Callum might try to use it for all the wrong reasons, and mess up their lives, just like Adam had once done.

Adam first realised that Callum knew about Popularis a few months earlier, when, from Callum's room, Adam had heard the strange noises and saw the flashing lights that always came just before Popularis would appear.

'Your computer started squealing, right?' Adam panted when he had arrived in Callum's bedroom doorway and found him sprawled across the floor, looking extremely confused. 'Like BEEEEEEEEP! And then the screen started getting brighter and brighter, and then FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! It felt like it kicked you in the brain, and you found yourself on the floor, right?'

'How did you know?' Callum had replied as he sat himself back at his desk.

'Because the same thing happened to me once, Callum! A message came up on my computer, promising to make all my dreams come true, like there was some kind of magical genie living in the internet – it called itself "Popularis Incrementum". But what it didn't tell me was that it would also make my worst *nightmares* come true!'

'But … like … are you saying that it *did* make some of your dreams come true? Was it like a competition? And you won?'

'No! Callum! You're not listening! It's nothing like that! It was like *magic!* It gave me this riddle, it was written in a boxy old font that looked like it had time-travelled direct from the 1990s, and that riddle led me on a quest, and I thought it was so cool! And every now and then, without any warning, I'd hear that high-pitched BEEEEP again, and see flashing lights from my phone, or a camera, or a TV, and then something *impossible* would happen! And, at first, it was awesome! But then things started to go wrong, and then I wished I'd never gone anywhere near it in the first place, so that's what I'm telling you to do – stay away from it.'

'I don't get it,' Callum had muttered. 'Are you explaining a *dream* you just had?'

'No, Callum! This was real, this was … forget it. You don't need to understand it. All you need to know is to stay away from Popularis Incrementum. It doesn't mean any harm. It really is only trying to help. But it *will* mess things up. It will ruin your life!

And … at some point … you will probably dance around in a nappy, with thousands of people laughing at you.'

'OK!' Callum had quickly agreed. 'I'm convinced! I'm never going anywhere near it!'

But Adam wasn't sure that Callum did understand. And he also wasn't sure that Callum was telling the entire truth, because every now and then Adam could have sworn he saw Callum on the internet, searching things like '*Popularis Incrementum, send me on a holiday to Disneyland*', or he would be on his phone, sending emails to someone, and giggling to himself and whispering things like 'I've always wanted to be able to fly!' Adam even once caught Callum crouching in front of the TV, saying, 'If you can hear me, I want you to do my homework for me!' Of course, Callum insisted that Adam was being ridiculous, and that he had been asking the TV to play a show called 'Do My Homework for Me.'

But Adam had been pretty sure that Callum was lying. He had a sneaking suspicion that Callum was still trying to get Popularis's help with

something. And he had a horrible feeling he knew exactly what Callum would be asking Popularis to do for him …

A team of people were helping to get Adam and Callum free from their parachute harnesses, when a huge grin spread across Callum's face.

'Hey, Adam, do you think this could be the one? Do you think this could be the video to get us up to ten million subscribers? I mean, we already got our Silver Play Button award for reaching a hundred thousand subs, and our Gold Play Button award for reaching one million, but do you think it could actually push us all the way to *ten million*? Think about it, Adam – we could actually get a *Diamond Play Button award!*'

Adam didn't share any of Callum's excitement. He took a deep breath and put a brotherly arm around Callum's shoulder.

'Callum, how many times do I have to explain to you – it's not about how many views or how many subs we get. It about *having fun*. If all you think about is the numbers, you will become obsessed,

and that will *not* be fun. Trust me, I've already been there.'

'I know, I know, but I'm not getting obsessed, honestly!' Callum insisted, still bouncing with excitement. 'But you have to admit, it would be cool, wouldn't it? I mean, a *Diamond Play Button*, Adam! It's, like, the ultimate prize! Well, no, I suppose the Red Diamond Play Button would be the ultimate prize. But I'm not being fussy! The Diamond one would be *amazing*! It would be a dream come true! My ultimate wish!'

Adam's arm dropped away from Callum's shoulder, and his expression became so serious his face almost turned to stone.

'Dream come true? Ultimate wish? Callum, you have to promise me you will *not* try to use Popularis to mess with our B-Boys channel! We cannot risk messing it up! It has to be just the two of us! No one else!'

'Ugh, Adam, just because I said "dream" and "wish" doesn't mean I was thinking of summoning your weird internet fairy! They were just words! Not everything is about Popularis Incrementum,

OK? I'm beginning to think *you're* the one who's obsessed!'

Adam's stony expression finally cracked, and a smile shone through.

'You're right. Sorry, Cal.'

Adam and Callum were just about to make their way over to meet some of their screaming fans when someone else caught their eye – a very wobbly, green-tinged somebody, who looked as though they needed a lie-down and a cup of tea.

'Mum! You OK?' asked Adam, rushing over to her.

'Oh, me? Erm … Of course! Never better!'

'Are you sure?' asked Callum. 'Because you look like you might be *sick*.'

'Me? Sick? Sick with *pride* over you two, maybe!'

'Did you see us? Did you see it *all*?! Did you see the bit with the helicopter? I wish Dad could have seen us too,' said Adam, suddenly going misty-eyed.

Adam and Callum's dad had died a few years earlier, and they missed him every day. But they missed him EXTRA on special occasions like birthdays, holidays and skiing down London's tallest skyscraper days.

‘Do you think he’d have been proud too?’ Adam asked his mum.

‘I *know* he would be! He always was. Knowing my luck, he would have probably wanted to join in!’

Adam and Callum both laughed at the thought of their computer-nerd dad skiing down a skyscraper, but then something his mum had said stopped Adam, mid-laugh.

‘What did you mean when you said “knowing my luck”?’

‘Oh, nothing, just, you know, well …’

The rest of Mum’s sentence was cut short by a chant that the fans had begun, and which was getting louder and louder with every call.

‘B-Boys! B-BOYS! B-BOYS! B-BOYS!’

‘Go on!’ Mum chuckled, shepherding Adam and Callum towards the fans. ‘I think a few people over there might want to meet you!’

So Adam and Callum cheerfully headed over to meet their fans, pausing on the way for some press photos and doing a bunch of silly poses for the cameras.

Adam gave Callum a celebratory high five.

‘Here’s to making the impossible possible, all by ourselves!’

‘Definitely!’ agreed Callum. ‘And who knows, maybe a Diamond Play Button award might be the next impossible thing we win!’

Adam gave Callum the beady eye.

‘But you really *won’t* try to use Popularis, will you?’

‘No way, Adam! Of course not! A promise is a promise! Not for this, not for trying to win the Lottery, not for *anything*!’



But as they made their way over to meet the fans, Adam could have sworn that, behind Callum's back, he saw his fingers looking a tiny bit … extremely … completely … *crossed*.

