KAREN McCOMBIE



MY PERFECT COUSIN

ILLUSTRATED BY SOFIA MILLER SALAZAR

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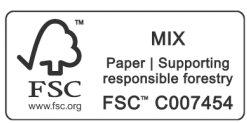
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For Issy, my dancing buddy!

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RUBY'S STORY

JUNE

Chapter 1
No More Exams

The final exam was over.

Ruby's very last GCSE exam.

She zoomed past the other students as they all came out of the school hall.

"Hey! No running!" a teacher yelled.

Ruby grinned and kept going. She burst into the playground and into the sunshine.

"Hey, Ruby-Roo!" someone shouted.

It was her best friend, Kam. His last exam was a few days ago, but he'd promised to meet Ruby when all her exams were finished too. They were going to get bubble tea and sit in the town square. Just to feel free. Free! No more schoolwork, no more nagging teachers. At least until the end of the summer.

Ruby waved to Kam. He was wearing his favourite cut-off denim shorts and a yellow crop top.

“Yay! Let’s go have some fun, Roo!” Kam yelled.

“Don’t call me that, Kam!” said Ruby. “Roo sounds like the name of a bunny on a kids’ TV show!”

“But it’s cute, like you!” said Kam. He grabbed Ruby and spun her around.

When he let go, Ruby looked back towards school. Her heart sank when she saw who was walking across the playground.

Her cousin Yasmin.



Yasmin's glossy hair hung down her back like brown satin. Her boyfriend Max had his arm around her.

"Wow, he is so lush ..." Kam sighed.

"What are you like?" Ruby laughed.

All Ruby wanted was to get away. Yasmin always made Ruby feel as if she was rubbish at everything.

Ruby wasn't sure she'd even pass today's exam. But whatever exam Yasmin had just finished she'd get top marks. Everything *always* went Yasmin's way.

When she was with her perfect cousin, Ruby felt small and hopeless.

And Ruby could tell that Yasmin got a kick out of that. In fact, Yasmin was staring over at Ruby right now and sneering ...