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Opening extract from

Candy Girl

Written by

Karen McCombie

Published by

Barrington Stoke Ltd

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Candy Girl

by

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First published in 2010 in Great Britain by
Barrington Stoke Ltd
18 Walker St, Edinburgh, EH3 7LP

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

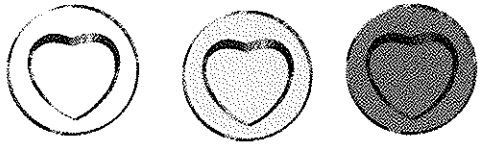
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ISBN: 978-1-84299-875-5

Printed in Great Britain by Bell & Bain Ltd

In memory of Louisa (the real Miranda!)



Contents

1	Sleep? No chance!	1
2	OK, take a deep breath ...	8
3	Not as great as all that	15
4	What's the problem?	19
5	Giggling and grumbles	26
6	Looking good! (Sounding bad ...)	30
7	Spilling the gossip	38
8	A not-so-nice surprise	42
9	Ella's no show	49
10	The party	53
11	Sweet enough	65



Chapter 1
Sleep? No chance!

Is my dad crazy?!

I mean, sometimes he really acts like it.

"What's up, Dixie?" my dad asks, as he puts his head round the door of my bedroom. "Can't sleep? Need Daddy to read you a story?"

Yeah, *right* ...

Dad has to be crazy. And this is why.

First of all, I'm thirteen, and no one reads me stories in bed any more.

Also, he's nuts if he thinks it's funny to joke around at a time like this. (But, you know, he's *always* joking around.)

I mean, how can I ever fall asleep tonight, when tomorrow will be THE most exciting day of my life so far?

As Dad stands there grinning, I feel like I might throw something at him.

But then in my hands is the latest *Candy* magazine, and that's *way* too special to chuck at Dad's head!

Luckily, he plods off – but then it's Mum's turn.

"Dixie, you've really got to get some sleep," she says.

"But I need to read this. I'm doing research!" I tell her. I've flipped *Candy* magazine open at *'Share it with Sharron'*, the page where readers write in with their problems.



Sharron Ford is the problem page editor. She looks so warm and friendly in her photo. You feel like you could tell her *anything* and she'd make it OK.

Wow, I can't *wait* to meet her for real ...

"Dixie, do I have to come and *make* you stop reading?" Mum says in a cross voice but I know she's not really mad at me. She's the same as Dad – she likes joking around.

I giggle, and make like I'm snuggling down, just to please her.

Mum goes, but I'm not left alone for long.

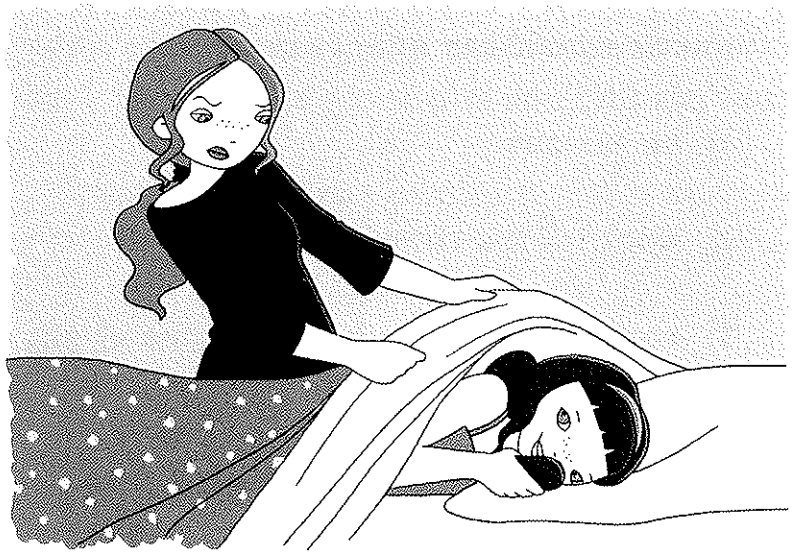
"You're *texting* under there, aren't you?" I suddenly hear my big sister Tess say.

I can't hear her very well, but that's 'cos I'm under my duvet. And I have to reply to my friend Ella's good luck message.

All Ella's written is *"U R SOOOOOOOOOO LUCKY!!!!!"*, but I get what she means.

I peep out from under the duvet. "No," I lie.

"Dixie, I can *hear* all the clicking!" says Tess and she pulls the duvet off me with a *whoosh*.



"I'm just finishing!" I moan.

"No, you're not," she snaps and she grabs my phone off me. "You promised Mum that you'd go to sleep, and you haven't. So I'm taking *this*."

"Tess! Give that *back*!" I shout after her, but she's already gone.

In case you haven't worked it out yet, Tess is *nothing* like me and our mum and dad. She *never* likes to goof around.

Here's what Tess likes to do:

1) be serious

2) work all the time

3) have a go at me when I get one of my giggling fits.

But here's something that me and Tess both do have in common – we *both* read *Candy* magazine.

And here's something *else* I'm pretty sure of – Tess is *jealous* of me.

But *I* can't help it if I'm chatty. And how is it my fault that I was chatting to our new neighbour Rachel who works in the same office block as *Candy* magazine?

And I can't help it if Rachel got me some work experience at *Candy* for this half-term.

The thing is, I feel totally sunshine-y inside, and I'm not going to let my sister act like a big, fat rain cloud and spoil all my fun.

'Cos *Candy*, here I come!