



CRABTREE  
SCHOOL

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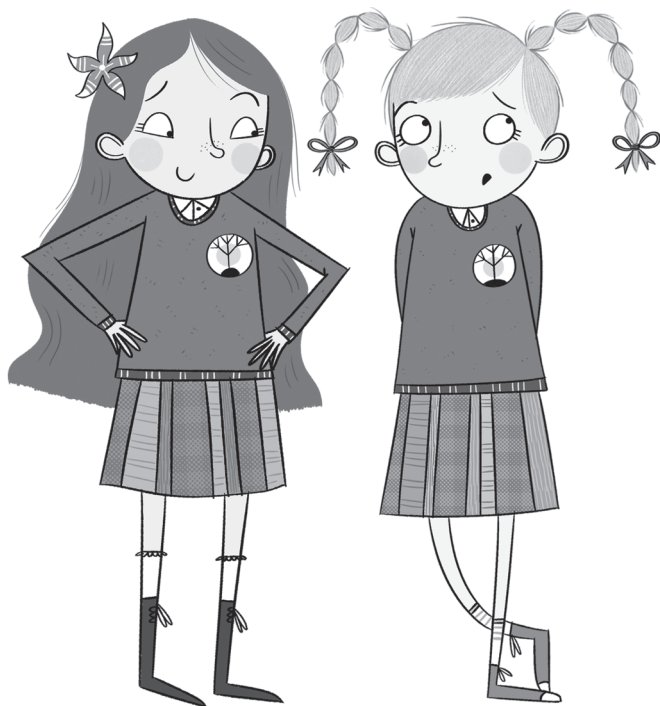
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# CRABTREE SCHOOL

The Girl Who  
Stole the World




Lauren Pearson  
Illustrated by Becca Moor

 SCHOLASTIC



For all the Mums and Dads,  
especially mine, who try their best  
to teach us right from wrong

And for my little sister, too,  
who is nothing like the Reds





# Chapter



# 1

## The Greenest Girl in the World

Isabel Donaldson was going to save planet Earth. There was nothing that could stand in her way. Especially not a five-year-old Reception girl called Lucy Lu Miller.

Lucy Lu had just finished eating a very special ice lolly. It was the kind of ice lolly that is green and pink and white with loads of pink sprinkles on. The kind that tastes like watermelon bubblegum. The kind that you win when your class at Crabtree School for Girls gets lots of golden tickets for being good.

Lucy Lu was walking through the ground

floor hallway of Crabtree School. Her shiny school shoes went *squeak, squeak* on the marble floor. Her curly bunches, tied with red ribbons, went *boing boing* as she made her way towards the kitchen. In one chubby little hand, Lucy Lu held the empty wrapper from her lolly. In her other hand, she carried the stick. She had licked it clean.

Isabel knew just where Lucy Lu was going. She followed Lucy into the school lunch room. Mrs Crunch, the dinner lady, was setting out some freshly baked bread on the long tables. Isabel's stomach growled, but she carried on after Lucy Lu, who had stopped in front of the huge bin in the corner.

Lucy Lu was just about to drop the wrapper and the stick from the ice lolly into the bin when Isabel sprang into action.

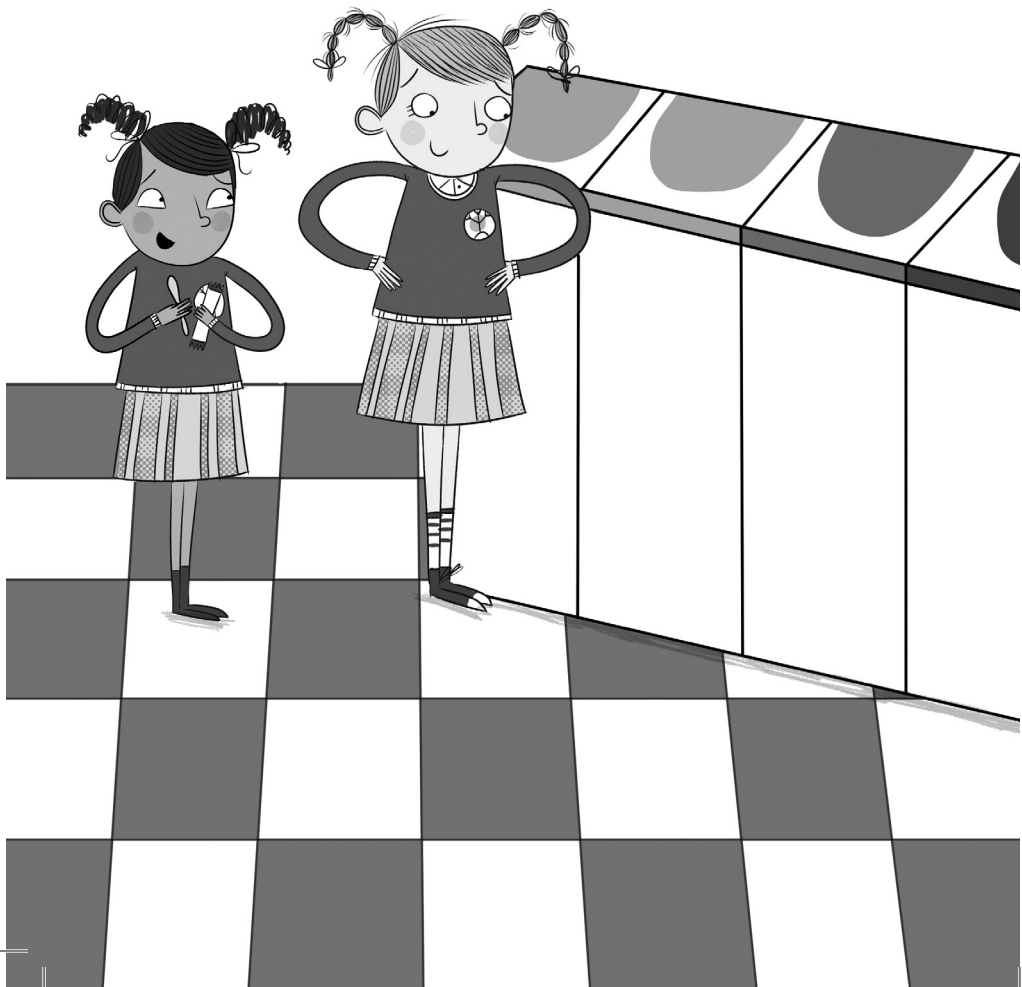
“STOP!” Isabel cried. Lucy Lu nearly jumped out of her shoes. So did Mrs Crunch, who

dropped a whole tray of dishes on the floor with a *crash!*

“YOU MUST STOP NOW TO SAVE THE PLANET!” repeated Isabel. Lucy Lu froze. The lolly wrapper and the stick hovered above the bin. Lucy Lu looked like she might cry at any moment. Being shouted at by a Year Three girl like Isabel was very scary indeed.

“Lucy Lu,” said Isabel gently, taking the younger girl by the elbow, “we can recycle that wrapper!” She led Lucy Lu round the corner into a little hallway off the school kitchen, where there were more bins. These bins were brightly coloured.

“Look,” said Isabel. “That wrapper is plastic. We can put it in this *blue* bin and then someone can make it into something else. That’s what recycling is – did you know that?” Isabel spoke very slowly. She herself was already eight years old, but she had two little sisters. Isabel knew





just how to explain things to much younger children.

“The wrapper is dirty,” said Lucy Lu. “Yuck. It goes in the yucky bin.” She turned back towards the big bin in the lunch room.

“No!” cried Isabel. “If you just throw everything away in the normal bin, soon the whole world will be filled with rubbish. Then we will have to live on big piles of rubbish, in houses filled with rubbish. We will walk on pavements made of rubbish, drive cars made of rubbish. Everything will be stinky and sticky and—”

Lucy Lu giggled. But Isabel wasn't laughing. She pointed again to the blue bin. She crossed her arms and tapped her foot.

“Lucy Lu,” said Isabel. “We have to take care of our planet. Crabtree School is a green school, and we recycle!”

“Crabtree School is RED!” said Lucy Lu,

“not green!” Really, Lucy Lu was correct: Crabtree School was made of red brick.

Isabel sighed. “The COLOUR of Crabtree School is red,” she explained to Lucy patiently. “But being a *green* school means that we take care of the planet. We want to keep the planet green.”

“What is a planet?” asked Lucy Lu.

This was going to take a long time.

Isabel explained everything to Lucy Lu: the Earth and the moon and the sun and the stars. She explained the universe and the galaxy. Then she told Lucy Lu how the earth was getting poorly and full of rubbish. She described what happens to rubbish when you bin it, and how things are recycled. Isabel talked all about rainforests and endangered animals and dolphins caught by accident in fishermen’s nets.

Lucy Lu listened and listened. She asked a million questions. Then she listened some more.

Isabel had begun to lose her voice from talking so much when Lucy Lu heard shouts from the playground. The rest of her class was outside and she was missing playtime.

At last, Lucy Lu shrugged and dropped the plastic wrapper and the stick into the blue recycling bin.

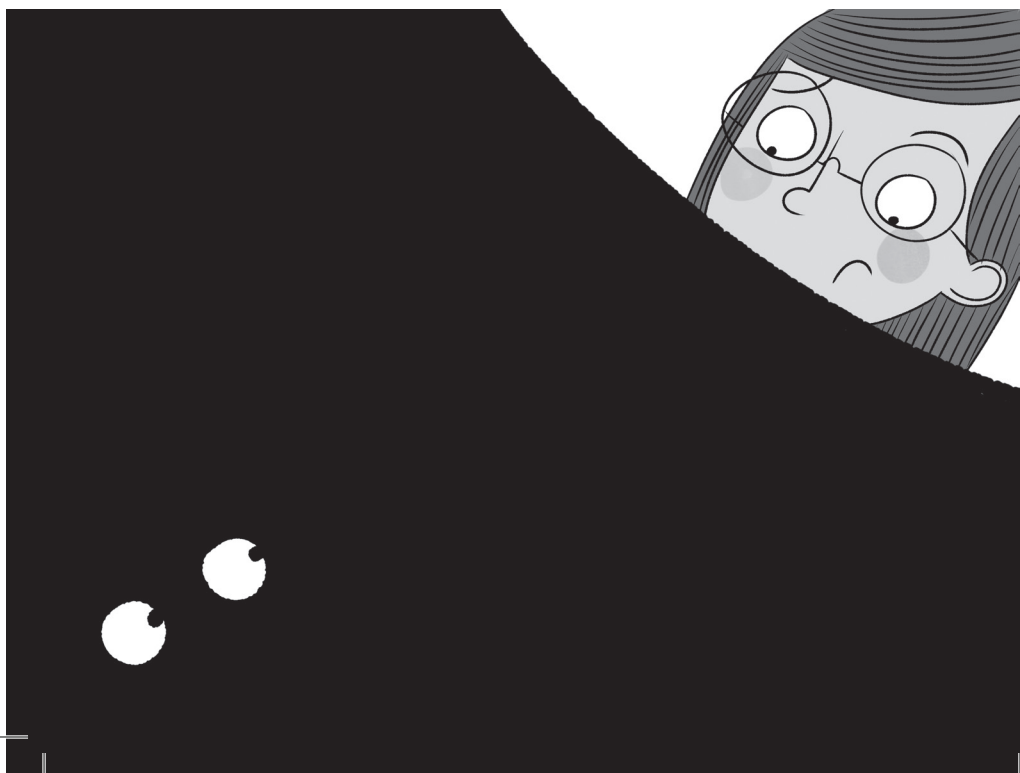
“WAIT!” screeched Isabel. “The stick is wood! It doesn’t go in with the plastic!” Isabel had planned to teach Lucy Lu all about the different bins, but Lucy Lu had already turned to walk away.

Isabel reached into the blue bin to retrieve the stick. The bin was mostly empty, so Isabel had to lean down to get the stick at the bottom. Suddenly, the bin tipped forward, and then back again. Isabel lost her balance. Her feet came off the ground and before she knew it, she was upside down at the bottom of the recycling bin.

At that very moment she heard a muffled voice above her.

“Why, Miss Lucy Lu,” said this voice. It was Mrs Peabody, the headmistress of Crabtree School. “Look at you recycling! What a good girl! Now let’s get you back outside with your class.” Isabel heard their footsteps fading away together.

Mrs Peabody hadn’t seen Isabel fall into the bin, but someone else had. After a moment, two



huge brown eyes peered down at Isabel. It was Lottie, Isabel's best friend. Isabel wasn't at all surprised to see her. Lottie always seemed to be everywhere at once, poking her nose into everyone else's business. Or into their bin.

"Are you recycling YOURSELF?" asked Lottie, as she tipped the bin over so Isabel could climb out. Lottie was definitely going to record this incident in her purple notebook; she had already taken it out of her pocket. Lottie wrote everything down in it, like a proper spy. Isabel liked the idea that Lottie made lots of lists, for Isabel loved a list. But Lottie's handwriting could have been better, she noticed. Isabel herself had perfect penmanship.

"Good thing the bin was empty!" Isabel stood, holding up the wooden stick from Lucy Lu's lolly. "This was easy to find and it's perfect for my collection!"

"You sure are good at recycling," said Lottie,

as Isabel tucked the lolly stick into her dress pocket. “You must be the greenest girl in all the world!”

“Yes, probably,” said Isabel proudly. “Now we’d better get to class, or we’ll be late.” Isabel had never been late for school or to class, not a single time in more than three years at Crabtree School, and she wasn’t about to start now.



## Chapter



# 2

### Which Colour Bin Should Little Sisters Go in?

Isabel had a little-sister problem. She had two of them, actually. Their names were Ruby and Scarlett. They were three-and-a-half years old, and they were twins. Isabel's daddy called them the Reds. He called them that because of their names, which both meant red, and not because they had red hair. The Reds had yellow hair, and huge blue eyes and sweet little pink mouths. They looked like two tiny angels.

Except the Reds were not angels. The Reds were the naughtiest little sisters in the whole history of little sisters. Anything that you can

think of that naughty little sisters did, the Reds did it naughtier. They pulled hair. They threw food. They hid the TV remote so Isabel couldn't watch anything but *Peppa Pig*. They filled her wellies with mud pies. They dipped her toothbrush into the toilet and put their socks in her spaghetti.

The Reds especially loved everything that was Isabel's. They dressed up in her clothes and made them all messy. They played with her toys and lost all the pieces. They left the tops off all of her markers so they dried out.

In fact, the Reds were downright dangerous with markers. They'd once coloured Isabel's pet rabbit bright pink. It had taken four baths to make Cottontail white again. Even worse, the pink marker had got all clogged up with rabbit fur. It had had to go in the bin.

Even Isabel's friends were scared of the Reds. Not long ago, the Reds had scribbled all over



Lottie's secret notebook and ruined years of her spy work.

Everyone knew it was best to steer clear of Isabel's little sisters.

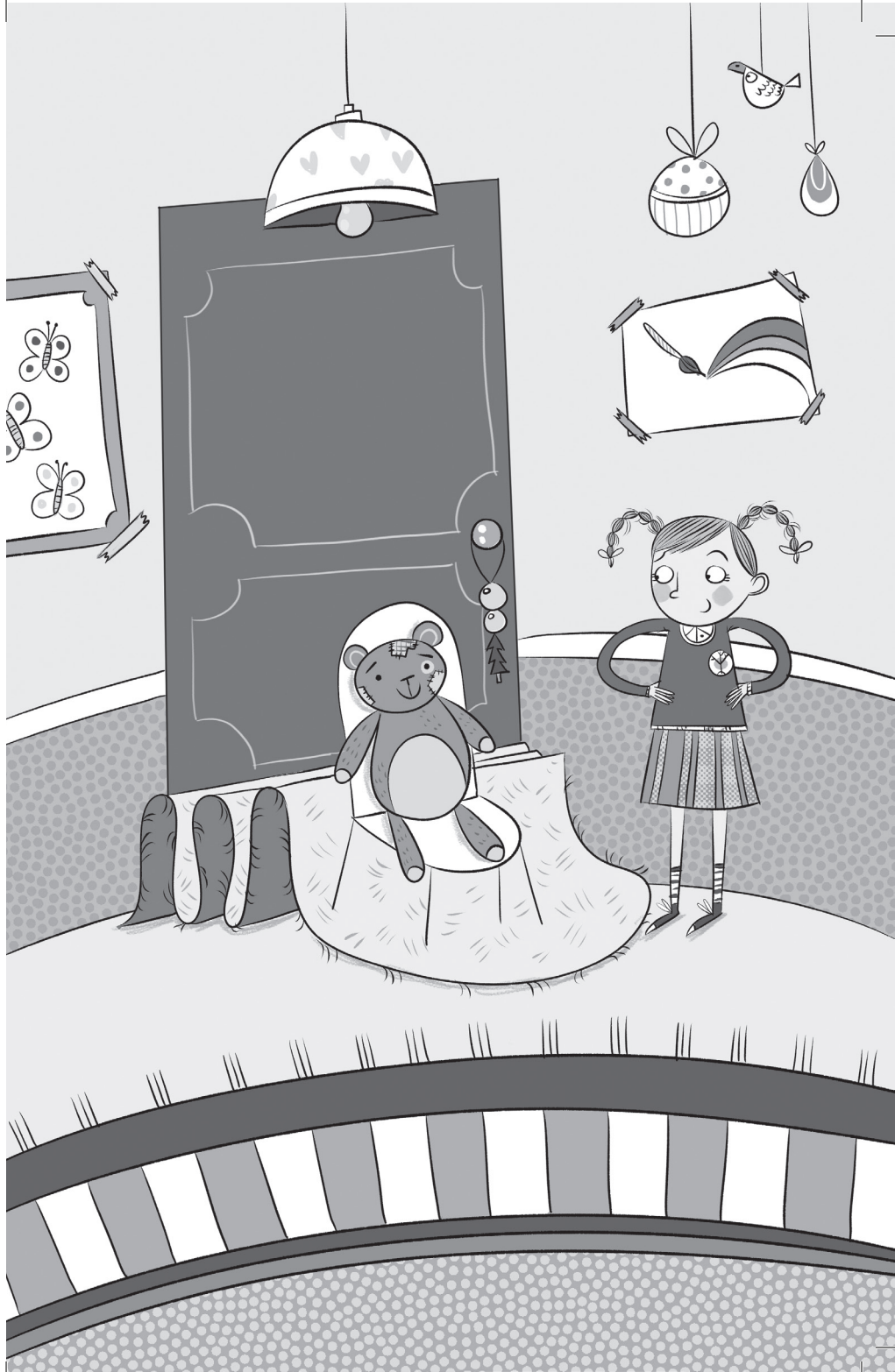
So when Isabel got home that afternoon with Lucy Lu's ice lolly stick, she went straight to her room. It would be more difficult for the Reds to bother her there.

Even though she was eight years old, Isabel was not allowed to have a lock on her bedroom door. Locks can get stuck and trap you inside. They can make people feel left out. They can even be dangerous if there is a fire. For all these reasons, Isabel had to agree with her mummy that a lock on her bedroom door was not a good idea.

Besides, Isabel didn't need locks. She had come up with her own way of keeping the Reds out. When she left her room each morning, Isabel put a piece of tape on the outside of

her door. The Reds couldn't reach it. Even if they could, they weren't allowed to take it off. Isabel's mummy had told them that if the tape was broken or peeled off or moved or breathed on, then the Reds would have no sweeties FOREVER. This was scary enough that, although they spent a lot of time staring at the tape on Isabel's door, the Reds had never dared to touch it. As long as she remembered the tape, the Reds did not go in Isabel's room when she wasn't there.

Isabel pulled off that morning's tape and closed the door behind her. Then she hung a jingle bell from last Christmas over the doorknob. This was so she could hear if the Reds tried to break in. Next, Isabel pushed her fuzzy pink rug right up against the bottom of her door, which made it difficult to open. Then she took one of the chairs from her craft table and put that on top of the pink rug; the



Reds were still small and the chair was too heavy for them to push out of the way. Finally, Isabel put her heaviest teddy on the chair. He added extra weight and also kept watch.

The Reds could hardly be blamed for wanting to get into Isabel's room. There were so many amazing things in there that even the best-behaved little sisters would have been pounding down the door trying to get inside.

Isabel loved crafts. She loved building things, drawing things, sewing things, colouring things, sticking things, folding things and melting things. Her room was full of the wonderful art that she had created. There were little people made out of conkers living in her doll's house. There were crazy eggshell heads with bean sprouts for hair lined up on her bedside table. Her windows were covered with leaves that Isabel had painted red and orange and sprinkled with red glitter. The glitter

sparkled in the sunlight.

Isabel also loved tidiness. Everything had its place: the shelves and bins around Isabel's craft table held jars with markers (new ones, to replace all the ones the Reds had ruined), crayons, fancy oil pens and moulding clay. There were empty boxes of all shapes and sizes, toilet-paper rolls, strips of newspaper for papier mâché, all different colours of elastic bands, stones and rocks and conkers, sticks, pipe cleaners, paper clips, empty bottles, bits of thread and ribbon and wire, folded crisp wrappers, dried flowers and leaves. . .

It would actually take a whole day to write down all the things that Isabel saved. (Lottie had tried it once. She wanted to make a list in the **ISABEL** section of her purple notebook. She had given up after two hours when her hand got tired.)

Isabel took Lucy Lu's ice lolly stick and

added it to the jar that held loads of other ice lolly sticks. When winter came, Isabel was going to glue the sticks together and cover them with glitter to make snowflakes. She'd done a few snowflakes last year and they had come out really twinkly and lovely.

With the lolly stick tidied away, Isabel opened her school bag and took out her spelling homework. She always did her homework as soon as she got home from school, because that was the right thing to do. And it worked, too. Isabel had never got a single word wrong on a spelling test, ever.

When she'd finished practising the final bonus word from her spelling list (it was *hideous*, which means very ugly), Isabel set to work on her latest craft project.

By far, this was going to be the greatest thing Isabel had ever made. In one corner of her room, Isabel was building a giant, playhouse-

sized igloo out of plastic milk containers. Right now, she was about halfway through gluing the containers together in a big circle. It took ages, because you had to hold each container in place for a long time whilst the glue set, but Isabel didn't mind. She loved watching



the walls get higher and higher. They were at knee height already. She worked away at her gluing until the bell on her bedroom door began to jingle.

“Izzy!” shrieked Scarlett. “Let us in. Can we play with you?”

“Please, Izzy, please!!!” cried Ruby.

The bell jingled and jingled and the door began to shake on its hinges. The teddy fell from his chair.

Isabel sighed. She got up and moved the chair and the rug. The Reds bounded into the room and stood before Isabel’s igloo.

“Wow!!!” They gasped. For a minute, the Reds stood still, admiring it. Then they went back to causing trouble.

“Let’s make it pink!” suggested Ruby, looking round for Isabel’s markers.

“No!” cried Isabel. She scrambled around trying to grab the markers from them.



“We want to help you!” pleaded Scarlett. She picked up the tub of glue, spilling some on the carpet. She began to spread loads of glue on a milk container.

“That’s too much glue!” shrieked Isabel. “I told you, puddles are for ducks, not glue!” But Scarlett had already made an ocean of glue, and it was running down her arms and on to the igloo. This was too much for Isabel to take.

“I don’t need any help!” screeched Isabel. “And you are doing it all wrong! The containers have to line up properly or the igloo won’t be right!” The side of the igloo was dangerously close to collapsing. She’d have to start over! Isabel wondered how much trouble she would get into if she glued the Reds together.

Luckily her dad came to the rescue before Isabel had to break any rules.

“Izzy, that is quite an igloo!” he said, popping his head in the door. “A whole family of

Eskimos could move in there!”

Isabel’s daddy had just come home from work. When he saw that the igloo was under attack from the Reds, he put one twin over each shoulder and carried them out of Isabel’s room. Ruby still had a marker in her hand. Isabel watched as she made a long pink scribble across the back of their dad’s white shirt. His hair was covered in glue from Scarlett’s sticky hands.

When they were safely gone, Isabel looked at the drippy igloo, which was now leaning to one side. For the millionth time that week, she wondered how any two three-year-olds could be that naughty. Isabel certainly never had been. Her mum was always saying to other grown-ups that Isabel was born well-behaved. Then she would laugh about how then she got her naughty twins, to make up for having such an angelic daughter. Isabel couldn’t understand

why her mummy smiled when she said this.  
There was nothing funny about being naughty.