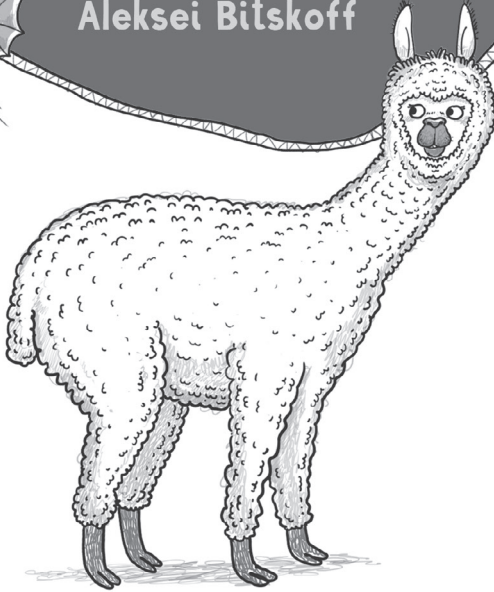


WHAT'S NEW

# Harper DREW?

*Illustrated by*  
Aleksei Bitskoff



**KATHY WEEKS**

**h**  
Hodder  
Children's  
Books

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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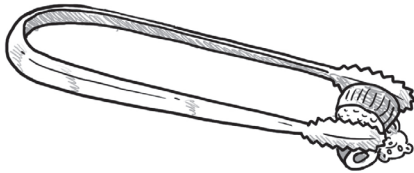
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**For Evie and Teddy.  
You Are Awesome.**

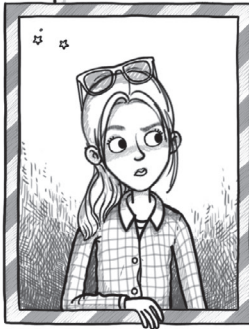


**THE**  
**DREW**  
~~FAMILY TREE~~  
~~WEED~~  
**PICK 'N' MIX**



MY MUM'S BROTHER  
**UNCLE PAUL**  
**PICK 'N' MIX:**

gold chocolate coin  
**MOVIE PRODUCER. FLASH. LOOKS SHINY. A DEFINITE FAVOURITE.**  
 But (a bit like his movies) nobody has ever seen one (in a pick 'n' mix).

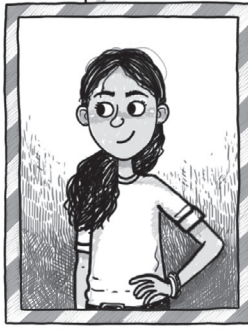


MAYBE A FRIEND, DEFINITELY IN THE COOL CREW

**MAISIE FELIX**

**PICK 'N' MIX:**  
 refresher chew  
**VERY POPULAR. LIKED BY EVERYONE. POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS.**

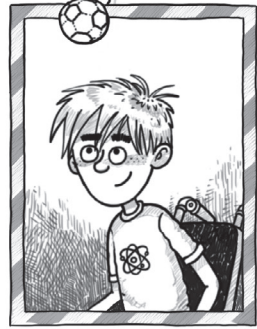
You might dislocate your jaw.



BEST FRIEND FROM NEXT DOOR

**PRIYA**

**PICK 'N' MIX:**  
 gummy bear  
**BRIGHT. CUTE. SOFT.**  
 Won't lose its head, even if stretched.

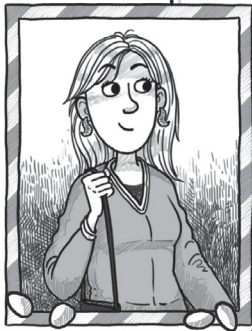


BEST FRIENDS SINCE WE WERE BORN

**EDWARD**

**PICK 'N' MIX:**  
 chocolate football  
**BRILLIANT. RELIABLE.**  
 Always makes you feel better. First choice.

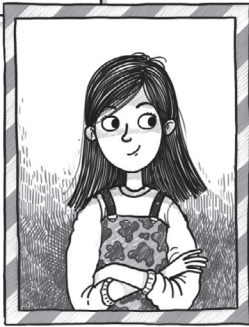




**MY MUM  
PICK 'N' MIX:**  
chocolate Brazil nut  
NICE. GOOD FOR YOU.  
TOTALLY NUTTY UNDERNEATH.



**MY DAD  
PICK 'N' MIX:**  
popping candy  
SEEMS QUITE NORMAL.  
But without any warning causes chaos  
and mayhem and explosions. Everywhere.



**HARPER DREW  
PICK 'N' MIX:**  
fizzy cola bottle  
STRONG. BUBBLY.  
Mostly sweet, but  
sometimes a bit too  
fizzy to handle.



**MY YOUNGER BROTHER  
THE PRUNE  
PICK 'N' MIX:**  
midget gem  
HE'S SMALL BUT AWESOME.  
I think he'll be the full  
wine gum one day.



**MY OLDER (& ANNOYING) BROTHER  
TROY DREW  
PICK 'N' MIX:**  
sherbet flying saucer  
LOOKS GREAT ON THE OUTSIDE.  
LOVED BY EVERYONE. BUT  
DISAPPOINTING IN THE END.  
Sherbet fizzles out too quickly.  
And the rest tastes of cardboard.



25 July



## MY BIRTHDAY



### AND THE FIRST DAY OF THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS

5.30 p.m.

Edward says that it wasn't a *total disaster*.

But I think he is only trying to be nice. It was a **COMPLETE disaster**. A **GINORMOUS** hash-up. And that is me trying to look on the bright side.

I had been looking forward to my birthday for weeks. Because for the first time **EVER** my mum and dad agreed to a party that didn't involve my dad making **balloon sausage dogs** in our back garden. No, this year I was allowed to invite three whole friends to Laser Force at the shopping centre in town.



**Maisie Felix** had her birthday party there in January and it was **epic** (apparently). But I didn't end up going . . . Although I did try my best. I'd spent ages getting ready



*(new camouflage outfit and full combat face paint)* and my mum dropped me off on **Sunday** at 2 p.m. Which was when I found out that the party had been on **Saturday** at 2 p.m. I had to wait in the gift shop talking to a shop assistant called Bernard until my mum came back to pick me up.

I'm not entirely sure how that happened *(although a week later, my dad turned up a day late to meet his boss at work. He said he'd been using his calendar from last year to save money on buying a new one. So, I have my suspicions . . .)*

I told Maisie that I missed her party because there had been a family emergency *(which was totally believable knowing the Drew family)*. But I was pretty disappointed. Especially when it was all anyone could talk about at school – like the party had been the **best** day of their lives. **EVER**. It didn't help that the combat



paint hadn't washed off my face quite as well as the bottle had said it would. I looked a muddy shade of green for about a week. After that, my brother Troy kept leaving his figure of *The Hulk* on my pillow every night.


So when Dad first suggested that I could have my party at Laser Force, I think he was feeling **SORRY** for me (either that or he was feeling **GUILTY** about being a cheapskate with his calendar, which made me miss *Maisie's birthday*). But whatever the reason . . . this was **HUGE** because:



1. It was Laser Force. Everyone (except me who had only ever been to the gift shop) **LOVED** Laser Force.

2. Not having to deal with the **balloon animal thing** I already mentioned.



My dad started making them when  we were toddlers and just can't seem to let them go.

At last year's party Dad **burst 14 balloons** trying to make a chimpanzee. One balloon **exploded** right in Douglas Joiner's face.



He had to wear an eye patch for  
three weeks.



**3.** I could invite Maisie Felix. (I am *desperate* for an *invite* to her *summer glamping party* this year and after my no-show at her birthday, I need something **BIG** to get me back in her good books.)

I **wanted** to invite the whole class like Maisie had. But according to my mum and dad, that would cost the same as a new downstairs carpet, which we are seriously in need of. So that was ruled out straight away and I had to make do with **three** people.

This is what happened:



**10.30 a.m.**

**TODAY** was the day. I would have another go with the camouflage outfit, saved from last time (*minus the face paint*).

I was ready from about **6.37 a.m.**

My dad had borrowed the school minibus so we could

all get there together. Which was **lucky**. Because the school (*where my dad teaches*) hadn't been willing to lend it to him for more than a year after an **INCIDENT** when he last borrowed it to take my grandad fishing. He parked up the minibus, and then couldn't remember where. It took him **TWO WHOLE** days to find it again. 🐸  
The school had to cancel **three football matches** and the biology field trip to a **frog farm**.



I **SO** wanted this day to be the best. And there had been **no** disasters so far. My best friend from next door, Priya, brought **FOUR** bags of **FIZZY** cola bottles (*the best of sweets, if you ask me*) on to the bus, and Edward, my best friend since we were born, was pouting at his reflection in the bus window. He was spiking his hair to look like my older brother Troy using Maisie Felix's orange juice, squeezing drops on to his hands out of the carton



and sweeping his hair in upward motions to make it stick. I knew Edward would regret using the orange juice later. Two flies had flown into the bus and were already circling, checking out his head. And I had a bad feeling it was only a matter of time before several other members of this fly family arrived and started to swarm him.

Edward thinks Troy's hair routine is **ABSURD**. A full 10 out of 10 on a scale of **RIDICULOUS** things to be doing. Troy gets up 50 minutes earlier than me every day (*58 minutes earlier on a Saturday because of the extra wash*). If you add all this time up, Troy is losing out on **38.88** whole nights of sleep. **EVERY YEAR**. Edward loves a lie-in. So he thinks Troy has totally **LOST THE PLOT**. And I have to agree with him.

Troy spends more time on his hair routine than a movie star probably does for a night out at the Oscars. Except the Oscars happen once a year. **Troy does it every day.**

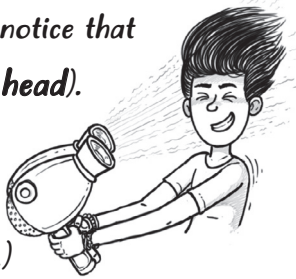
## The (hair) routine:

1. Wash twice. Three times on a Saturday. (Why would it be dirtier on a Saturday?)



2. Condition (using my mum's expensive bottle she gets especially from the hairdresser and seems not to notice that it mostly ends up on Troy's head).

3. Blow dry. (Why use one hairdryer when you could use two? One in each hand.)



4. Comb.

5. Brush (apparently 4 and 5 are **TOTALLY** different and both **VERY** important).



6. Comb again.

7. Gel.

8. Wax.

9. Twist. (I mean . . . what?)



10. Look lovingly into the mirror. For eight whole minutes (at least).

This is how the **DREW DIAL OF BIZARRE BEHAVIOUR** was born – with Troy’s hair routine (**DREW DIAL RATING 10/10**). I started scoring other **ODD**, **WEIRD**, and totally **RIDICULOUS** things that seemed to go on around me. I didn’t even have to look very hard. This stuff was happening **ALL THE TIME AND ALL OVER THE PLACE**. Most of the time it was like it was **ONLY ME** that could see it.


### **RATINGS ON THE DREW DIAL**

Some examples:



**DREW DIAL RATING 9/10:** Our nativity play this year had been called *Elves Ruin Christmas*. Everyone was asked to come to school in **ELF COSTUMES** on the day of the show. Douglas Joiner’s mum had read the instructions wrong and he came in dressed as **ELVIS**. The singer. Who had died like forty years ago. Is it just me? But . . . How did she not think she might have got this one wrong?

What on earth did she think *Elvis* had to do with the nativity? Me, Priya and Edward were laughing so much we couldn't go on stage for the first song. Miss Chester (*the music teacher*) made us clean the triangles at lunchtime as punishment.

**DREW DIAL RATING 11/10:** When my dad tried to **PULL OUT** my grandad's tooth with the front door. My grandad had had toothache for two weeks but refused to see an actual dentist because it was going to cost him **£62.10** to get the tooth taken out. Grandad said he '*wasn't going to pay that much money to come out with fewer teeth than he went in with*'. So my dad agreed to tie some plastic wire round the *dodgy* tooth, attach it to the front door and **SLAM** it. They thought the tooth would just pop out painlessly. It didn't. The wind blew the door closed at the wrong moment. The tooth **CRACKED** and my grandad covered the downstairs carpet in blood. 

Which is why we are now saving for a new one (*carpet I mean, not a new grandad*). It cost him double to fix the tooth at the dentist after all that.



**DREW DIAL RATING 10/10:** Priya's mum's cat royal family. This started at **8/10** when she got a Maine Coon cat called Prince Charles to go with her collection of plates and teapots with the Queen's



face on them. But it is now a full on **10/10** since she added a very scratchy Prince William and then Kate Middleton to the cat family.

Did I mention, Priya's family is almost as unusual as

mine? I heard Priya's mum talking about getting a Princess Beatrice and Prince George the last time I was over there. I am worried that she isn't going to stop until she has the full line of succession. At which point, let's be honest, the **DREW DIAL RATING** will be off the charts – **A SOLID 17/10**.

In the end I was rating things so often in my head that I couldn't get much else done. The ratings were in **DANGER** of taking **longer** than Troy's hair routine. So I decided it would be easiest to give everyone their own individual **DREW DIAL RATING**. Like an overall score. A bit like the way you score gymnastics at the Olympics. You only get **one** mark but it covers the **whole** performance. The somersaults, how well they can do the splits and whether or not they **conk** their head when landing the final backflip.

The **DREW DIAL RATING** is sort of the same I guess. One mark out of ten. Looking at the whole performance ... but at **LIFE** (*instead of gymnastics*). On a scale of **0**

to **10**, how likely is someone to **SAY** or **DO** something that would be less sensible than *(for example)* . . . *an out-of-control camel?*

## CURRENT DREW DIAL RATINGS:



**TROY: 9.9999/10.** His hair remains a full **10/10**.

**THE PRUNE: 3/10.** My younger brother is six years younger than me and he is really **sweet**.

He has a **massive** head and he **smiles** all the time and he seems *(so far at least)*



to be the most **sensible** member of the Drew family. But he is still pretty young so there is time for that to change. But I hold out high hopes for him.

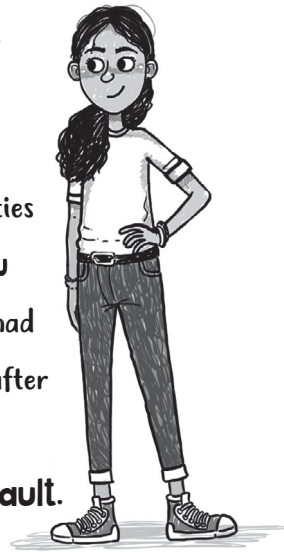
**EDWARD: 0/10.** I met him *(apparently)* when I was two days old and we have been **best friends** ever since. He is just **awesome**. No **chaos**. No

drama. No **mayhem**. He is just **funny**. And *(sometimes stupidly)* **kind**.

**PRIYA: 2/10**. Priya is **BRILLIANT** too and I feel a bit responsible for her **DREW DIAL RATING**.

It is mainly not **0/10** because she ends up involved in my **HAVOC** and **MESS-UPS**. She lives next door so there's a lot of opportunities for her to get roped into the **Drew family mayhem**. like when we had to be rescued by the fire brigade after we got locked inside my bedroom.

It was **her idea**. But it was **my fault**.



**MY MUM: 6.5/10** *(BUT IT MIGHT BE CREEPING UP)*.

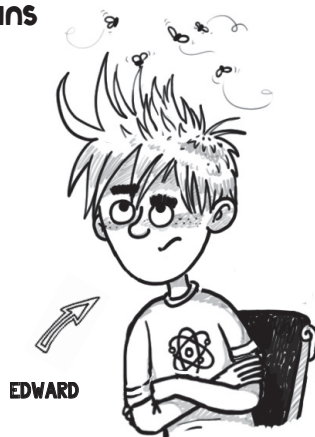
She is mainly **brilliant** but likes **THREE** things way more than I think she should. **Maths, bleach** and **supermarkets** *(but more on those later)*.

**Not necessarily in that order**. We were late

setting off for Laser Force because Mum hadn't finished bleaching the minibus. She was inside it **bleaching her bleach bottle (SERIOUSLY)** and we were all waiting outside, ready to go. She wasn't even coming with us (*to save money for the downstairs carpet*). Although she did **try** her best to get a times-table competition going for the journey, but my dad just drove off, leaving her shouting, **'Six times seven?'** after us from the pavement.

**MY DAD: 9/10.** Dad is a whole new level to my mum. He always **means well** but seems to attract **MAYHEM** at the same rate as Edward's hair was now **attracting flies**.

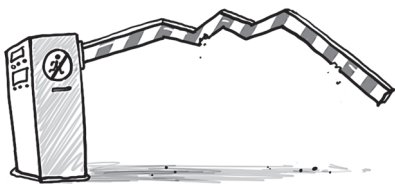
What I mean is, in a **LARGE** quantity.



10.45 a.m.

It turned out that today, my birthday, was going to be no exception. We rounded the corner to the shopping centre car park and were going down the ramp . . .

Apparently **Dad** had **forgotten** he was driving a minibus and thought he was in our family Nissan Qashqai. Which meant he **misjudged** the size of his



**rear end**, hit the curb and sent us **skidding**. We **crashed** into the ticket barrier and it

**bent backwards**. Dad began trying to reverse out of the disaster (*as if it wasn't already bad enough*).

**Alarms started sounding** – the barrier had gone through the passenger window.

*'That police officer appears to be heading in our direction,'* Edward pointed out.

Maisie Felix looked the most excited she had looked all day. Priya looked a **bit sick**.

*'Hi, how are you? I'm Steve,'* my dad said **breezily**

to the officer. As if he hadn't noticed the disaster he was sitting in. As if he thought he was talking to Priya's mum over the back fence at home about the progress of their courgette plants.

*'Sir? I am not sure now is the right time to be talking about me,'* said the officer dismissively. *'Let's focus on you. And how you appear to have made a metal kebab out of a minibus and a car-park ticket barrier.'*

*'I do love kebabs,'* my dad shouted with a totally **inappropriate** level of enthusiasm, and it echoed around the car park. He got louder and carried on, *'Chicken usually, but spiced lamb is also . . .'* His voice tailed off, probably because he'd noticed a fire engine pulling up behind us and finally realised that now was not the time to be discussing his ideal barbecue menu.

**'SIR!'** It was the police officer's turn to shout. Totally **appropriately**. *'Attempting to avoid paying to park your vehicle is a serious offence. Add in reckless driving, endangering the lives of four*

children – not to mention the damage to the ticket barrier – and I think that this is something we should be talking about down at the station.’

‘The station?’ came a voice from the fire engine somewhere behind us. ‘You’ll be waiting a while. It’s going to take us hours to get him out of this mess. We’ll have to use the laser.’

**YOU HAD GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!**

*And so it was all over.*

We missed our time slot at Laser Force while we waited for the fire brigade to use a **LASER (REALLY?)** (As if I needed reminding) to cut the barrier out of the minibus. It **took three hours**. And one of the fire fighters recognised us from the locked bedroom incident. If I still had the time to be rating every disaster on the Drew Dial . . . this one might have broken the scale.

**During the wait** my dad did manage to convince the police that it was **JUST AN ACCIDENT** and that he wasn’t trying to pull a stunt to avoid paying the £4.55 cost of parking. Which was good. **But, also**

during the  
wait, Priya  
threw up 13  
fizzy cola  
bottles mixed  
with orange juice  
on to Maisie Felix.



I had to give Maisie  
my camouflage outfit to change into. It was the only  
thing I could think that might save my invite to the  
glamping party.

**2.45 p.m.**

I got back home. Four hours later. **Smelling** of puke.  
**Wearing** my dad's jumper.

And I **STILL** haven't been to Laser Force.

*'That wasn't a **complete disaster**,*' Edward said,  
when he came over to mine for the birthday cake. 

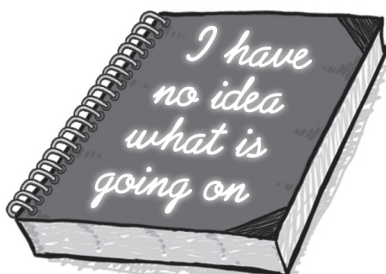
But I think he just felt sorry for me. He even tried to  
convince me that the minibus journey had been fun,

which was when I knew he was **trying** to be nice (*the bit where we all nearly got skewered by a massive hunk of metal was definitely **not fun***). But he did stay to watch me open my presents, which I am pleased about.

So I opened the perfectly wrapped gift box from Maisie Felix. Everything about Maisie Felix is (*annoyingly*) perfect.



And inside it was **THIS** journal, which has these words in neon orange letters on the front:



I am not exactly sure what Maisie is trying to say about me.

But . . . she *might* be right.