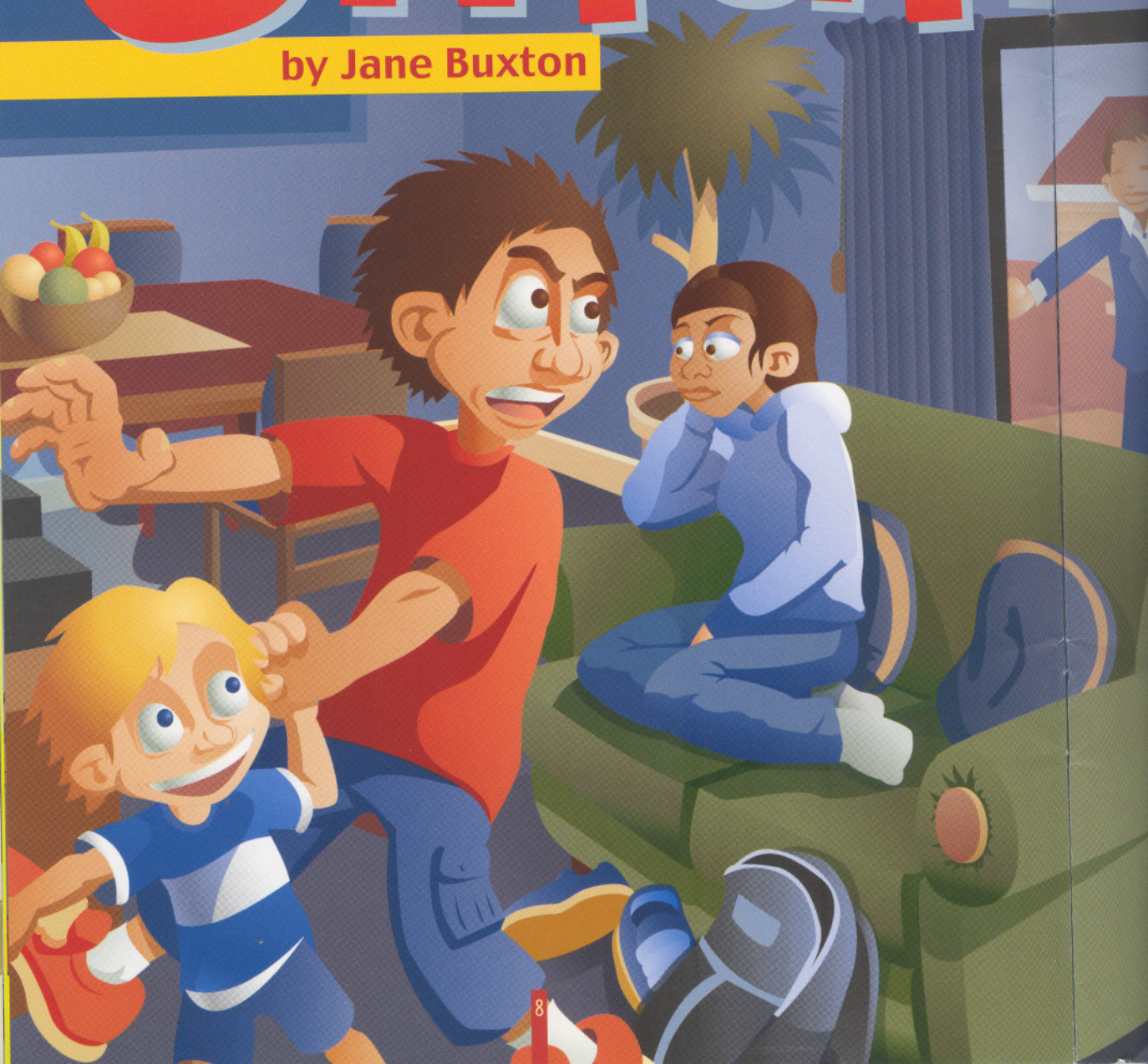


Unfair

by Jane Buxton





My big sister put the phone down and came back to the dinner table. “Mrs Teague wants me to babysit Daniel tonight. I said yes. I hope that’s all right.”

“No, it’s not!” said Mum. “I’m going to a meet-the-teachers night at your school this evening, Hannah, so you’ll have to stay here and look after Jamie.”

I groaned. “I don’t need looking after.”

“I’d rather babysit Daniel than Jamie,” Hannah said. “You don’t pay me for babysitting Jamie.”

I was furious. “You do not babysit me! I am ten years old! I am not a baby!”

Mum looked at her watch. “Hannah, you’ll just have to take Jamie with you. And Jamie, you can take your homework. That’ll give you something to do.”

“Unfair! Unfair!” I grumbled as Hannah and I walked up the road to the Teagues’ house.

“It sure is!” Hannah grumped back. “I’m having to babysit two kids for the price of one!”

As soon as we arrived, little Daniel grabbed my hand. He didn’t even say goodbye to his mother. “Come in my room and see my car!” he said.

I looked at the video Hannah was putting on. It was called *Holiday of Love*. Oook, puke! “All right, Daniel,” I said. “Just for a little while. Then I have to do my homework.”

Daniel's remote control car sure was awesome. He only let me have one turn with it, which wasn't fair at all since I made all the roads and bridges for it.

Then we played card games. I tell you, it's totally boring playing with a four-year-old who can't count properly and wants to win all the time.

While Daniel was laying out the cards for a game, I sneaked away to see what Hannah was doing. She was watching the video with chocolate cake in one hand and a glass of fruit juice in the other. "You greedy pig!" I said. "That's not fair!"

I cut some cake for Daniel and me. Daniel was a messy eater, so I found a wet cloth and cleaned him up. Then we played memory. Daniel cheated on every turn.

Soon he was yawning a lot, and his eyelids were drooping. "If you go to bed, Hannah will read you a story," I said.

Daniel shook his head. "No. *You* read me a story."

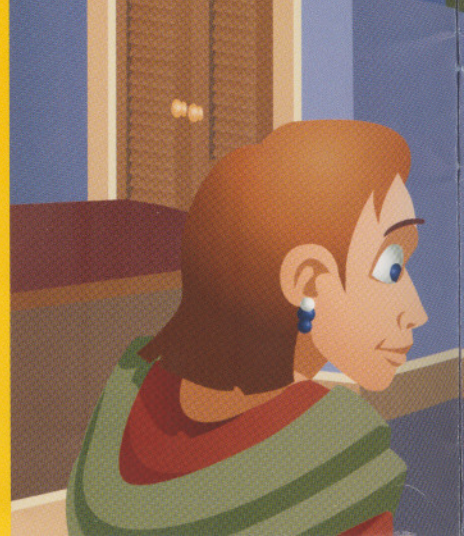
"Hannah's the babysitter, not me," I said.

I went through to the lounge. "Hannah, Daniel needs to go to bed, and you have to read him a story."

"I want *you*, Jamie," whined Daniel close behind me. His bottom lip was wobbling.

"See?" Hannah said. "It's you he wants."

"Too bad! You're the babysitter – not me. You're the one who's getting paid! And I have to do my homework, anyway."





“Don’t be mean. You’ll make him cry!” Hannah said. “Go on, Jamie. Do your homework later.”

“You just want to watch your disgusting video!” I said. “What a useless babysitter!”

“Come on, Jamie,” Daniel said, pulling at my shirt.

It didn’t take me long to put Daniel to bed, and he went to sleep halfway through the story. When I went through to the lounge, the video was still going and Hannah was asleep on the sofa.

“I can’t believe this,” I thought. I was like – well, who is the babysitter here? I sat down at the kitchen table and spread out my homework.


Soon I heard Mrs Teague’s car pull up. “Ha ha! My sister will catch it now,” I thought. Sleeping on the job. Not a good look!

But the car door slamming must have woken Hannah because suddenly there she was, smiling and nodding as she opened the door. “Yes, Mrs Teague. No worries! Daniel had a story and went straight to sleep.”

“Hannah, you’re wonderful,” said Mrs Teague. “Is your mother picking you up?”

“Yes. After her meeting,” said Hannah. “I’ll just carry on helping my brother with his homework till she gets here, if that’s all right.”

“What a kind sister,” smiled Mrs Teague. “And thanks for looking after Daniel so well. I’ll drop your babysitting money in to you tomorrow morning.”



I was furious. I waited till
we were in the car. Then I let
Hannah have it. "You liar!
You cheat! You useless,
hopeless, *lazy* babysitter!
I looked after Daniel and
put him to bed.

I read him a story!"

"I never said you didn't,"
said Hannah. "What's the big
deal, Jamie? I just said ..."





“Hannah,” Mum interrupted excitedly. “I talked to your teachers tonight and they all think you’re wonderful! Mrs Brady said you’re a ...”

“Blah, blah, blah ...” I muttered. No one ever listened to me. My whole life was totally unfair.

The next morning when I went into the kitchen, Mum and Hannah were at the table. Mum smiled at me. “How’s the champion babysitter this morning? Mrs Teague was very impressed with how kind you were to Daniel. She said she’d like you to babysit again some time, you and Hannah.”

“No way!” I exploded. “I’m not doing Hannah’s work while she gets paid for watching a video and going to sleep! That is just absolutely and totally ...”

“Fair!” finished Mum, with a grin. She handed me a brown envelope. “Here’s your babysitting money, Jamie.”

I opened the envelope. “Ten dollars! Cool!”

“Hannah got ten dollars, too,” said Mum. “She usually gets the whole twenty.”

“But that’s fair, though,” I said. “Isn’t it, Mum? I did all the work.”

I could feel a big smile beginning to spread over my face as I looked at the ten-dollar note. I shoved the cereal packet back in the cupboard. “I’m off to the shop,” I said.

“Hey! You have to help me with the dishes!” said Hannah. “Come back, Jamie! That’s not fair!”

“That’s life, Hannah!” I said cheerfully as I went out the door. “Sometimes it’s fair, and sometimes it’s not!”