

## THE SLIPPERS

## Jumblecat by Archie Kimpton

Do you ever think that something isn't quite right? That the people you live with, your *family*, may not be your family after all? That maybe, just maybe, there was a colossal mix-up in the hospital when you were a baby and you ended up living with a bunch of revolting oddbods who couldn't possibly be related to you?

This is something Billy Slipper thought about every day.

He looked across the breakfast table at his twin sister, Mindy. How on earth could she be his sister? She was practically a different species, let alone his twin. For starters she didn't even look like him, with her blonde hair and a nose so flat and wide it resembled a mushroom clinging to the trunk of a damp tree. Also she was tall, much taller than Billy, and unfortunately much stronger; if ever an argument grew out of hand, she would put him in a headlock and burp loudly into his ear, leaving him half deaf for hours on end.

Billy poured cereal into his bowl and reached for the milk. If Mindy really was his twin sister, then surely they should have some kind of special connection. If Mindy was in pain, would he feel it too? For a moment he thought about kicking her under the table, just to see if it hurt him as well, but something told him that wouldn't be a good idea. As everyone in the Slipper household knew, Mindy's temper was ferocious.

And then it came to him. It was obvious! If she really, really was his twin sister then they should be able to communicate using just the *power of their minds*. Telepathy. He would telepathise her. He put down his spoon and stared hard at Mindy, concentrating, calling her with his mind.

'Mindy,' he telepathised, 'can you hear me?'

Mindy was busy. Her doll, Tina Tippytoes, was not eating her breakfast properly. Every time a tiny piece of cereal fell out of her dolly mouth, Mindy whacked her around the head with a spoon.

Billy tried again. 'Oi! Mindy! Moose face! It's me, Billy!'

But the Slipper Telepathy Line wasn't working.

Eventually Mindy looked up. 'Why are you staring at me? You're such a weirdo.'

'Moose face,' he repeated, but this time he said it out loud.

Predictably, Mindy called for reinforcements. 'Muuuum!' she wailed, grinning wickedly. She knew she was getting her brother into trouble and she loved it. 'Billy called me moose face.'

Ah yes. Mum. Also known as Phillipa Slipper. Also known as Phillipa Slipper Kitty Kicker after her habit of kicking cats that lazed about on the neighbourhood pavements. She hated them. Actually, she hated all animals, but she really had it in for cats.

'Billy!' she barked, shivering with disgust, 'You are not to talk to your sister like that. How you can compare Mindy to a filthy, dirty moose is beyond me. They roll in their own poo, you know.' And she turned back to what she was doing, which was washing carrots, drying them with a hairdryer, then putting each super-clean carrot into its own miniature plastic bag.

Billy said nothing, even when Mindy stuck out her tongue at him. He was used to being told on

by his sister and told off by his mother.

That is, if she really was his mother.

Phillipa Slipper was very tall. As tall as any woman Billy had ever seen, and certainly way taller than his dad. She always wore her hair in a bun, coiled tightly on the top of her head, which of course made her look even taller. Like Mindy, her nose was flat and wide, though it looked more like a boxer's squashed nose than a mushroom. But the main thing about Phillipa Slipper was that she *couldn't stand dirt*. Not a speck, a mote nor a microblob of dust escaped her beady eye. If ever a smidgen of filth found its way into her house she dropped to her knees and got scrubbing straight away.

For example, last winter, after a particularly mucky meter reading by the gas man, she insisted on covering her house in plastic sheeting. First she covered the floors, then the skirting boards, then all the walls as high as she could reach.

'At last,' she said as she sat down on the sofa with a cup of tea, 'my house will never be dirty again.'

But that wasn't the end of it. As she sipped her tea she noticed a tiny stain on one of the cushions. It was a microscopic stain, invisible to the normal human eye. But not to Phillipa Slipper. From that moment she started to cover everything in plastic sheeting. The

sofa and cushions were first, then the television, the table, chairs, ornaments, even her prized collection of Victorian spatulas, were all covered top to toe in plastic. The kitchen was next, followed by the hallway and the laundry room. Three days later the whole downstairs of the house (apart from the oven and the toaster) was totally swathed in plastic sheeting.

Getting around the house was a noisy business. *Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch* every footstep. Scrunching from the kitchen table to the sink. *Scrunch, scrunch* into the living room. *Scrunch, squeeeek* as you sat down on the sofa. But Phillipa Slipper wouldn't have it any other way. Her house was immaculate and that was all that mattered.

Billy finished his cereal as fast as possible. When his mother and his sister were around, he spent as little time as possible at home. It was just better that way, and besides, there were far more interesting things to do outside. He put his bowl in the sink and started to make a cheese sandwich for later. Sometimes he spent the whole day wandering in the nearby hills and woods and he didn't want to go hungry.

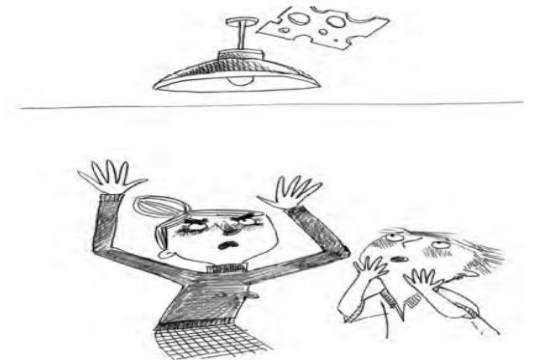
Picture this. Just as Billy was putting the cheese in between the bread, a solitary crumb rolled off the plate. It fell and landed on the plastic-covered floor, making a sound no louder than an ant fainting on a hot day. Of course Billy hadn't noticed, Mindy hadn't noticed, but . . .

'BILLY!' bellowed Phillipa Slipper.

In an instant, she was on her knees searching for the crumb. Billy stepped back far too quickly and tumbled over her, sending the cheese flying out of his hand. All three watched in horror as it shot up into the air and, SPLAT, stuck to the ceiling, the only place that wasn't covered in plastic sheeting.

This time it was a roar. 'BILLY!'

He scrambled to his feet, grabbed the bread and darted out of the front door, heading for Tumbledown Hill.



# DAY 1

**V**ocabulary  
**I**nfer  
**P**redict  
**E**xplain  
**R**etrieve  
**S**ummarise



# WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT...?

## Cleaning



## Brothers & sisters





## THE SLIPPERS

## Jumblecat by Archie Kimpton

Do you ever think that something isn't quite right? That the people you live with, your *family*, may not be your family after all? That maybe, just maybe, there was a colossal mix-up in the hospital when you were a baby and you ended up living with a bunch of revolting oddbods who couldn't possibly be related to you?

This is something Billy Slipper thought about every day.

He looked across the breakfast table at his twin sister, Mindy. How on earth could she be his sister? She was practically a different species, let alone his twin. For starters she didn't even look like him, with her blonde hair and a nose so flat and wide it resembled a mushroom clinging to the trunk of a damp tree. Also she was tall, much taller than Billy, and unfortunately much stronger; if ever an argument grew out of hand, she would put him in a headlock and burp loudly into his ear, leaving him half deaf for hours on end.

Billy poured cereal into his bowl and reached for the milk. If Mindy really was his twin sister, then surely they should have some kind of special connection. If Mindy was in pain, would he feel it too? For a moment he thought about kicking her under the table, just to see if it hurt him as well, but something told him that wouldn't be a good idea. As everyone in the Slipper household knew, Mindy's temper was ferocious.

And then it came to him. It was obvious! If she really, really was his twin sister then they should be able to communicate using just the *power of their minds*. Telepathy. He would telepathise her. He put down his spoon and stared hard at Mindy, concentrating, calling her with his mind.

'Mindy,' he telepathised, 'can you hear me?'

Mindy was busy. Her doll, Tina Tippytoes, was not eating her breakfast properly. Every time a tiny piece of cereal fell out of her dolly mouth, Mindy whacked her around the head with a spoon.

Billy tried again. 'Oi! Mindy! Moose face! It's me, Billy!'

But the Slipper Telepathy Line wasn't working.

Eventually Mindy looked up. 'Why are you staring at me? You're such a weirdo.'

'Moose face,' he repeated, but this time he said it out loud.

Predictably, Mindy called for reinforcements. 'Muuuum!' she wailed, grinning wickedly. She knew she was getting her brother into trouble and she loved it. 'Billy called me moose face.'

Ah yes. Mum. Also known as Phillipa Slipper. Also known as Phillipa Slipper Kitty Kicker after her habit of kicking cats that lazed about on the neighbourhood pavements. She hated them. Actually, she hated all animals, but she really had it in for cats.

'Billy!' she barked, shivering with disgust, 'You are not to talk to your sister like that. How you can compare Mindy to a filthy, dirty moose is beyond me. They roll in their own poo, you know.' And she turned back to what she was doing, which was washing carrots, drying them with a hairdryer, then putting each super-clean carrot into its own miniature plastic bag.

Billy said nothing, even when Mindy stuck out her tongue at him. He was used to being told on

by his sister and told off by his mother.

That is, if she really was his mother.

Phillipa Slipper was very tall. As tall as any woman Billy had ever seen, and certainly way taller than his dad. She always wore her hair in a bun, coiled tightly on the top of her head, which of course made her look even taller. Like Mindy, her nose was flat and wide, though it looked more like a boxer's squashed nose than a mushroom. But the main thing about Phillipa Slipper was that she *couldn't stand dirt*. Not a speck, a mote nor a microblob of dust escaped her beady eye. If ever a smidgen of filth found its way into her house she dropped to her knees and got scrubbing straight away.

For example, last winter, after a particularly mucky meter reading by the gas man, she insisted on covering her house in plastic sheeting. First she covered the floors, then the skirting boards, then all the walls as high as she could reach.

'At last,' she said as she sat down on the sofa with a cup of tea, 'my house will never be dirty again.'

But that wasn't the end of it. As she sipped her tea she noticed a tiny stain on one of the cushions. It was a microscopic stain, invisible to the normal human eye. But not to Phillipa Slipper. From that moment she started to cover everything in plastic sheeting. The

sofa and cushions were first, then the television, the table, chairs, ornaments, even her prized collection of Victorian spatulas, were all covered top to toe in plastic. The kitchen was next, followed by the hallway and the laundry room. Three days later the whole downstairs of the house (apart from the oven and the toaster) was totally swathed in plastic sheeting.

Getting around the house was a noisy business. *Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch* every footstep. Scrunching from the kitchen table to the sink. *Scrunch, scrunch* into the living room. *Scrunch, squeeeek* as you sat down on the sofa. But Phillipa Slipper wouldn't have it any other way. Her house was immaculate and that was all that mattered.

Billy finished his cereal as fast as possible. When his mother and his sister were around, he spent as little time as possible at home. It was just better that way, and besides, there were far more interesting things to do outside. He put his bowl in the sink and started to make a cheese sandwich for later. Sometimes he spent the whole day wandering in the nearby hills and woods and he didn't want to go hungry.

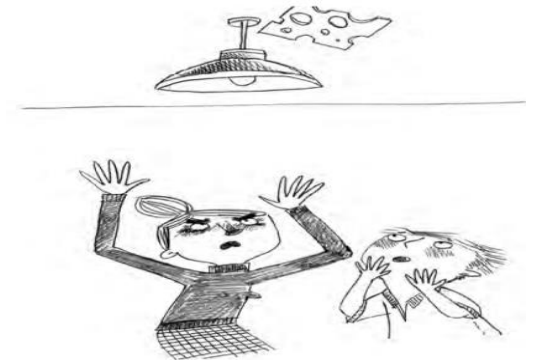
Picture this. Just as Billy was putting the cheese in between the bread, a solitary crumb rolled off the plate. It fell and landed on the plastic-covered floor, making a sound no louder than an ant fainting on a hot day. Of course Billy hadn't noticed, Mindy hadn't noticed, but . . .

'BILLY!' bellowed Phillipa Slipper.

In an instant, she was on her knees searching for the crumb. Billy stepped back far too quickly and tumbled over her, sending the cheese flying out of his hand. All three watched in horror as it shot up into the air and, SPLAT, stuck to the ceiling, the only place that wasn't covered in plastic sheeting.

This time it was a roar. 'BILLY!'

He scrambled to his feet, grabbed the bread and darted out of the front door, heading for Tumbledown Hill.



# VOCABULARY



**oddbod** – a strange or eccentric person

**resembled**– have a similar appearance

**telepathy**– being able to read someone's mind or understand their thoughts

**microscopic** – really tiny in size

**solitary** – completely alone

What other words were unfamiliar?

Let's use a dictionary or thesaurus to define them.

Can you see any clues within the word to help us work out what they mean?

# **SUMMARISE**

**Can you summarise three points we learn from this text**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**



# DAY 2

**V**ocabulary  
**I**nfer  
**P**redict  
**E**xplain  
**R**etrieve  
**S**ummarise



# DO NOW



Choose the correct word for each sentence:

**microscopic**

**solitary**

**resembled**

The beautiful birthday cake \_\_\_\_\_ an incredible swan.

Out in the middle of the field, there stood one \_\_\_\_\_ sheep.

“The speck of dirt on your top is \_\_\_\_\_,” said Mum. “Don’t make a fuss!”



## THE SLIPPERS

## Jumblecat by Archie Kimpton

Do you ever think that something isn't quite right? That the people you live with, your *family*, may not be your family after all? That maybe, just maybe, there was a colossal mix-up in the hospital when you were a baby and you ended up living with a bunch of revolting oddbods who couldn't possibly be related to you?

This is something Billy Slipper thought about every day.

He looked across the breakfast table at his twin sister, Mindy. How on earth could she be his sister? She was practically a different species, let alone his twin. For starters she didn't even look like him, with her blonde hair and a nose so flat and wide it resembled a mushroom clinging to the trunk of a damp tree. Also she was tall, much taller than Billy, and unfortunately much stronger; if ever an argument grew out of hand, she would put him in a headlock and burp loudly into his ear, leaving him half deaf for hours on end.

Billy poured cereal into his bowl and reached for the milk. If Mindy really was his twin sister, then surely they should have some kind of special connection. If Mindy was in pain, would he feel it too? For a moment he thought about kicking her under the table, just to see if it hurt him as well, but something told him that wouldn't be a good idea. As everyone in the Slipper household knew, Mindy's temper was ferocious.

And then it came to him. It was obvious! If she really, really was his twin sister then they should be able to communicate using just the *power of their minds*. Telepathy. He would telepathise her. He put down his spoon and stared hard at Mindy, concentrating, calling her with his mind.

'Mindy,' he telepathised, 'can you hear me?'

Mindy was busy. Her doll, Tina Tippytoes, was not eating her breakfast properly. Every time a tiny piece of cereal fell out of her dolly mouth, Mindy whacked her around the head with a spoon.

Billy tried again. 'Oi! Mindy! Moose face! It's me, Billy!'

But the Slipper Telepathy Line wasn't working.

Eventually Mindy looked up. 'Why are you staring at me? You're such a weirdo.'

'Moose face,' he repeated, but this time he said it out loud.

Predictably, Mindy called for reinforcements. 'Muuuum!' she wailed, grinning wickedly. She knew she was getting her brother into trouble and she loved it. 'Billy called me moose face.'

Ah yes. Mum. Also known as Phillipa Slipper. Also known as Phillipa Slipper Kitty Kicker after her habit of kicking cats that lazed about on the neighbourhood pavements. She hated them. Actually, she hated all animals, but she really had it in for cats.

'Billy!' she barked, shivering with disgust, 'You are not to talk to your sister like that. How you can compare Mindy to a filthy, dirty moose is beyond me. They roll in their own poo, you know.' And she turned back to what she was doing, which was washing carrots, drying them with a hairdryer, then putting each super-clean carrot into its own miniature plastic bag.

Billy said nothing, even when Mindy stuck out her tongue at him. He was used to being told on

by his sister and told off by his mother.

That is, if she really was his mother.

Phillipa Slipper was very tall. As tall as any woman Billy had ever seen, and certainly way taller than his dad. She always wore her hair in a bun, coiled tightly on the top of her head, which of course made her look even taller. Like Mindy, her nose was flat and wide, though it looked more like a boxer's squashed nose than a mushroom. But the main thing about Phillipa Slipper was that she *couldn't stand dirt*. Not a speck, a mote nor a microblob of dust escaped her beady eye. If ever a smidgen of filth found its way into her house she dropped to her knees and got scrubbing straight away.

For example, last winter, after a particularly mucky meter reading by the gas man, she insisted on covering her house in plastic sheeting. First she covered the floors, then the skirting boards, then all the walls as high as she could reach.

'At last,' she said as she sat down on the sofa with a cup of tea, 'my house will never be dirty again.'

But that wasn't the end of it. As she sipped her tea she noticed a tiny stain on one of the cushions. It was a microscopic stain, invisible to the normal human eye. But not to Phillipa Slipper. From that moment she started to cover everything in plastic sheeting. The

sofa and cushions were first, then the television, the table, chairs, ornaments, even her prized collection of Victorian spatulas, were all covered top to toe in plastic. The kitchen was next, followed by the hallway and the laundry room. Three days later the whole downstairs of the house (apart from the oven and the toaster) was totally swathed in plastic sheeting.

Getting around the house was a noisy business. *Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch* every footstep. Scrunching from the kitchen table to the sink. *Scrunch, scrunch* into the living room. *Scrunch, squeeeek* as you sat down on the sofa. But Phillipa Slipper wouldn't have it any other way. Her house was immaculate and that was all that mattered.

Billy finished his cereal as fast as possible. When his mother and his sister were around, he spent as little time as possible at home. It was just better that way, and besides, there were far more interesting things to do outside. He put his bowl in the sink and started to make a cheese sandwich for later. Sometimes he spent the whole day wandering in the nearby hills and woods and he didn't want to go hungry.

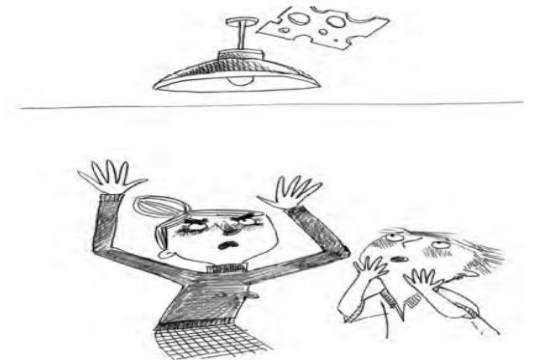
Picture this. Just as Billy was putting the cheese in between the bread, a solitary crumb rolled off the plate. It fell and landed on the plastic-covered floor, making a sound no louder than an ant fainting on a hot day. Of course Billy hadn't noticed, Mindy hadn't noticed, but . . .

'BILLY!' bellowed Phillipa Slipper.

In an instant, she was on her knees searching for the crumb. Billy stepped back far too quickly and tumbled over her, sending the cheese flying out of his hand. All three watched in horror as it shot up into the air and, SPLAT, stuck to the ceiling, the only place that wasn't covered in plastic sheeting.

This time it was a roar. 'BILLY!'

He scrambled to his feet, grabbed the bread and darted out of the front door, heading for Tumbledown Hill.



# **RETRIEVAL QUESTIONS**

**WHAT DO THESE MEAN? HOW CAN WE ANSWER THEM?**



1. Why did Mindy not look like Billy?
2. If Mindy was really Billy's twin, what did he think they should be able to do?
3. What was Mum doing when she was interrupted by Mindy?
4. What happened after the gas meter man came?
5. Why did it make a noise when you walked around at their home?
6. What sound did the crumb make when it fell?

## **Challenge:**

What would mum have said about the cheese if Billy has stayed around?

# DAY 3

**V**ocabulary  
**I**nfer  
**P**redict  
**E**xplain  
**R**etrieve  
**S**ummarise



# DO NOW

1. Find and copy one word in the first column which means the same as 'clear to see'.
2. Find and copy one word in the second column which means the same as 'revulsion'.
3. Find and copy one word in the fourth column which means the same as 'fascinating'.

Challenge: Write your own Find and Copy questions.





## THE SLIPPERS

## Jumblecat by Archie Kimpton

Do you ever think that something isn't quite right? That the people you live with, your *family*, may not be your family after all? That maybe, just maybe, there was a colossal mix-up in the hospital when you were a baby and you ended up living with a bunch of revolting oddbods who couldn't possibly be related to you?

This is something Billy Slipper thought about every day.

He looked across the breakfast table at his twin sister, Mindy. How on earth could she be his sister? She was practically a different species, let alone his twin. For starters she didn't even look like him, with her blonde hair and a nose so flat and wide it resembled a mushroom clinging to the trunk of a damp tree. Also she was tall, much taller than Billy, and unfortunately much stronger; if ever an argument grew out of hand, she would put him in a headlock and burp loudly into his ear, leaving him half deaf for hours on end.

Billy poured cereal into his bowl and reached for the milk. If Mindy really was his twin sister, then surely they should have some kind of special connection. If Mindy was in pain, would he feel it too? For a moment he thought about kicking her under the table, just to see if it hurt him as well, but something told him that wouldn't be a good idea. As everyone in the Slipper household knew, Mindy's temper was ferocious.

And then it came to him. It was obvious! If she really, really was his twin sister then they should be able to communicate using just the *power of their minds*. Telepathy. He would telepathise her. He put down his spoon and stared hard at Mindy, concentrating, calling her with his mind.

'Mindy,' he telepathised, 'can you hear me?'

Mindy was busy. Her doll, Tina Tippytoes, was not eating her breakfast properly. Every time a tiny piece of cereal fell out of her dolly mouth, Mindy whacked her around the head with a spoon.

Billy tried again. 'Oi! Mindy! Moose face! It's me, Billy!'

But the Slipper Telepathy Line wasn't working.

Eventually Mindy looked up. 'Why are you staring at me? You're such a weirdo.'

'Moose face,' he repeated, but this time he said it out loud.

Predictably, Mindy called for reinforcements. 'Muuuum!' she wailed, grinning wickedly. She knew she was getting her brother into trouble and she loved it. 'Billy called me moose face.'

Ah yes. Mum. Also known as Phillipa Slipper. Also known as Phillipa Slipper Kitty Kicker after her habit of kicking cats that lazed about on the neighbourhood pavements. She hated them. Actually, she hated all animals, but she really had it in for cats.

'Billy!' she barked, shivering with disgust, 'You are not to talk to your sister like that. How you can compare Mindy to a filthy, dirty moose is beyond me. They roll in their own poo, you know.' And she turned back to what she was doing, which was washing carrots, drying them with a hairdryer, then putting each super-clean carrot into its own miniature plastic bag.

Billy said nothing, even when Mindy stuck out her tongue at him. He was used to being told on

by his sister and told off by his mother.

That is, if she really was his mother.

Phillipa Slipper was very tall. As tall as any woman Billy had ever seen, and certainly way taller than his dad. She always wore her hair in a bun, coiled tightly on the top of her head, which of course made her look even taller. Like Mindy, her nose was flat and wide, though it looked more like a boxer's squashed nose than a mushroom. But the main thing about Phillipa Slipper was that she *couldn't stand dirt*. Not a speck, a mote nor a microblob of dust escaped her beady eye. If ever a smidgen of filth found its way into her house she dropped to her knees and got scrubbing straight away.

For example, last winter, after a particularly mucky meter reading by the gas man, she insisted on covering her house in plastic sheeting. First she covered the floors, then the skirting boards, then all the walls as high as she could reach.

'At last,' she said as she sat down on the sofa with a cup of tea, 'my house will never be dirty again.'

But that wasn't the end of it. As she sipped her tea she noticed a tiny stain on one of the cushions. It was a microscopic stain, invisible to the normal human eye. But not to Phillipa Slipper. From that moment she started to cover everything in plastic sheeting. The

sofa and cushions were first, then the television, the table, chairs, ornaments, even her prized collection of Victorian spatulas, were all covered top to toe in plastic. The kitchen was next, followed by the hallway and the laundry room. Three days later the whole downstairs of the house (apart from the oven and the toaster) was totally swathed in plastic sheeting.

Getting around the house was a noisy business. *Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch* every footstep. Scrunching from the kitchen table to the sink. *Scrunch, scrunch* into the living room. *Scrunch, squeeeek* as you sat down on the sofa. But Phillipa Slipper wouldn't have it any other way. Her house was immaculate and that was all that mattered.

Billy finished his cereal as fast as possible. When his mother and his sister were around, he spent as little time as possible at home. It was just better that way, and besides, there were far more interesting things to do outside. He put his bowl in the sink and started to make a cheese sandwich for later. Sometimes he spent the whole day wandering in the nearby hills and woods and he didn't want to go hungry.

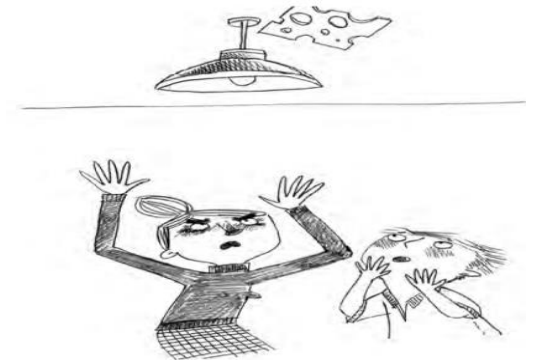
Picture this. Just as Billy was putting the cheese in between the bread, a solitary crumb rolled off the plate. It fell and landed on the plastic-covered floor, making a sound no louder than an ant fainting on a hot day. Of course Billy hadn't noticed, Mindy hadn't noticed, but . . .

'BILLY!' bellowed Phillipa Slipper.

In an instant, she was on her knees searching for the crumb. Billy stepped back far too quickly and tumbled over her, sending the cheese flying out of his hand. All three watched in horror as it shot up into the air and, SPLAT, stuck to the ceiling, the only place that wasn't covered in plastic sheeting.

This time it was a roar. 'BILLY!'

He scrambled to his feet, grabbed the bread and darted out of the front door, heading for Tumbledown Hill.





# **INFERENCE QUESTIONS**

**WHAT DO THESE MEAN? HOW CAN WE ANSWER THEM?**



1. Why did Billy decide not to kick Mindy under the table?
2. Why does Mum hate animals and cats in particular?
3. What did Billy think about Mum's obsession with cleanliness?
4. What 'more interesting things were there to do outside'?
5. What happened to the cheese?

## **Challenge:**

Is Mindy as clean and tidy as Mum? Explain your answer.

# DAY 4

**V**ocabulary  
**I**nfer  
**P**redict  
**E**xplain  
**R**etrieve  
**S**ummarise



# DO NOW



**Place these events in the text in the correct order:**

- 1. Mum heard the crumb fall to the floor**
- 2. Billy gets himself breakfast**
- 3. You can't move around the house without the sound of plastic**
- 4. Billy tries telepathy with his sister**
- 5. Mum tells Billy off for calling his sister a moose.**

**Challenge: Write your own retrieval questions.**

## THE SLIPPERS

## Jumblecat by Archie Kimpton

Do you ever think that something isn't quite right? That the people you live with, your *family*, may not be your family after all? That maybe, just maybe, there was a colossal mix-up in the hospital when you were a baby and you ended up living with a bunch of revolting oddbods who couldn't possibly be related to you?

This is something Billy Slipper thought about every day.

He looked across the breakfast table at his twin sister, Mindy. How on earth could she be his sister? She was practically a different species, let alone his twin. For starters she didn't even look like him, with her blonde hair and a nose so flat and wide it resembled a mushroom clinging to the trunk of a damp tree. Also she was tall, much taller than Billy, and unfortunately much stronger; if ever an argument grew out of hand, she would put him in a headlock and burp loudly into his ear, leaving him half deaf for hours on end.

Billy poured cereal into his bowl and reached for the milk. If Mindy really was his twin sister, then surely they should have some kind of special connection. If Mindy was in pain, would he feel it too? For a moment he thought about kicking her under the table, just to see if it hurt him as well, but something told him that wouldn't be a good idea. As everyone in the Slipper household knew, Mindy's temper was ferocious.

And then it came to him. It was obvious! If she really, really was his twin sister then they should be able to communicate using just the *power of their minds*. Telepathy. He would telepathise her. He put down his spoon and stared hard at Mindy, concentrating, calling her with his mind.

'Mindy,' he telepathised, 'can you hear me?'

Mindy was busy. Her doll, Tina Tippytoes, was not eating her breakfast properly. Every time a tiny piece of cereal fell out of her dolly mouth, Mindy whacked her around the head with a spoon.

Billy tried again. 'Oi! Mindy! Moose face! It's me, Billy!'

But the Slipper Telepathy Line wasn't working.

Eventually Mindy looked up. 'Why are you staring at me? You're such a weirdo.'

'Moose face,' he repeated, but this time he said it out loud.

Predictably, Mindy called for reinforcements. 'Muuuum!' she wailed, grinning wickedly. She knew she was getting her brother into trouble and she loved it. 'Billy called me moose face.'

Ah yes. Mum. Also known as Phillipa Slipper. Also known as Phillipa Slipper Kitty Kicker after her habit of kicking cats that lazed about on the neighbourhood pavements. She hated them. Actually, she hated all animals, but she really had it in for cats.

'Billy!' she barked, shivering with disgust, 'You are not to talk to your sister like that. How you can compare Mindy to a filthy, dirty moose is beyond me. They roll in their own poo, you know.' And she turned back to what she was doing, which was washing carrots, drying them with a hairdryer, then putting each super-clean carrot into its own miniature plastic bag.

Billy said nothing, even when Mindy stuck out her tongue at him. He was used to being told on

by his sister and told off by his mother.

That is, if she really was his mother.

Phillipa Slipper was very tall. As tall as any woman Billy had ever seen, and certainly way taller than his dad. She always wore her hair in a bun, coiled tightly on the top of her head, which of course made her look even taller. Like Mindy, her nose was flat and wide, though it looked more like a boxer's squashed nose than a mushroom. But the main thing about Phillipa Slipper was that she *couldn't stand dirt*. Not a speck, a mote nor a microblob of dust escaped her beady eye. If ever a smidgen of filth found its way into her house she dropped to her knees and got scrubbing straight away.

For example, last winter, after a particularly mucky meter reading by the gas man, she insisted on covering her house in plastic sheeting. First she covered the floors, then the skirting boards, then all the walls as high as she could reach.

'At last,' she said as she sat down on the sofa with a cup of tea, 'my house will never be dirty again.'

But that wasn't the end of it. As she sipped her tea she noticed a tiny stain on one of the cushions. It was a microscopic stain, invisible to the normal human eye. But not to Phillipa Slipper. From that moment she started to cover everything in plastic sheeting. The

sofa and cushions were first, then the television, the table, chairs, ornaments, even her prized collection of Victorian spatulas, were all covered top to toe in plastic. The kitchen was next, followed by the hallway and the laundry room. Three days later the whole downstairs of the house (apart from the oven and the toaster) was totally swathed in plastic sheeting.

Getting around the house was a noisy business. *Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch* every footstep. Scrunching from the kitchen table to the sink. *Scrunch, scrunch* into the living room. *Scrunch, squeeeek* as you sat down on the sofa. But Phillipa Slipper wouldn't have it any other way. Her house was immaculate and that was all that mattered.

Billy finished his cereal as fast as possible. When his mother and his sister were around, he spent as little time as possible at home. It was just better that way, and besides, there were far more interesting things to do outside. He put his bowl in the sink and started to make a cheese sandwich for later. Sometimes he spent the whole day wandering in the nearby hills and woods and he didn't want to go hungry.

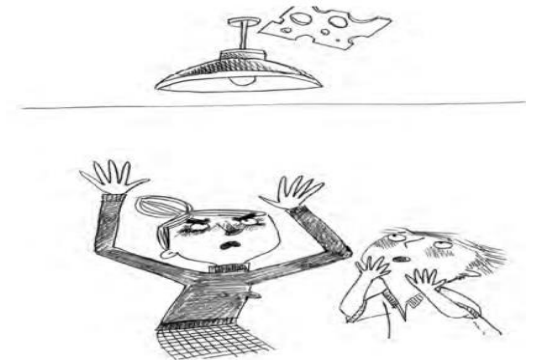
Picture this. Just as Billy was putting the cheese in between the bread, a solitary crumb rolled off the plate. It fell and landed on the plastic-covered floor, making a sound no louder than an ant fainting on a hot day. Of course Billy hadn't noticed, Mindy hadn't noticed, but . . .

'BILLY!' bellowed Phillipa Slipper.

In an instant, she was on her knees searching for the crumb. Billy stepped back far too quickly and tumbled over her, sending the cheese flying out of his hand. All three watched in horror as it shot up into the air and, SPLAT, stuck to the ceiling, the only place that wasn't covered in plastic sheeting.

This time it was a roar. 'BILLY!'

He scrambled to his feet, grabbed the bread and darted out of the front door, heading for Tumbledown Hill.



## EXPLANATION QUESTION

### THE BIG QUESTION

Should people be so worried about germs that they react like the Mum in the story?

Explain your answer.





# PREDICTION QUESTION

What happens next in the story?

Explain your answer.

