

Too Good To Be True: Deb Bisley-Lewis

A short story for 7-9 year olds.

It was wrong again.

‘Stupid! Dumb! Piano!’

Ben thumped the keys and stormed off to his room, slamming the door behind him. It wouldn’t be so bad if it were his room but he’d moved out of that for his cousin James. It wasn’t even the spare room. Aunty Sue was in that. This was the box room, a large cupboard with dusty boxes and piles of things that made him sneeze.

Ever since James and Aunty Sue had come to stay, it had been the same.

‘James works so hard.’ ‘Look, Ben, James has tidied his room.’ ‘James is so helpful.’

Something would have to be done.

Later, at bedtime, Ben had an idea. James was cleaning his teeth. Ben knew this would take longer than usual as James had a wobbly tooth which he was trying to pull out.

Mum and Aunty Sue were watching TV. Ben took a \$20 note from Mum’s jar in the kitchen and stuffed it under James’ pillow. Mum would find it in the morning when she made the beds.

It took Ben ages to get to sleep. He kept thinking about what he’d done and what a mean trick it was, really.

He woke to see James poking his head round the door.

‘Ben! Guess what? My tooth fell out last night.’ James pulled down his bottom lip to show the gap. ‘And look. The Tooth Fairy left me twenty dollars.’

Ben sat up. ‘It wasn’t the Tooth Fairy,’ he said in a small voice. ‘It was me.’ He took a deep breath. ‘I took it from Mum’s jar and put it under your pillow so Mum would think you stole it, and it’s the meanest, horriblest thing I’ve ever done, and I’m really, really, sorry.’

James looked at Ben and frowned.

‘Why?’ he asked, finally.

‘I’m always doing everything wrong,’ said Ben, ‘or I forget things, and everyone shouts at me. And you do everything right, and I just wanted them to be cross with you for a change. I really am sorry.’

Here, you’d better put this back before anyone finds it,’ said James.

‘Thanks,’ Ben smiled with relief. ‘Can I do something for you in return?’

'Well,' said James, grinning. "You could teach me to play chopsticks on that stupid, dumb piano.'

