

Brat!

1 I don't think I'll ever meet anyone as bizarre or infuriating as my younger brother, Trent. He's two grades below me, and when we were at the same school I constantly had kids running up to me with stories about his antics. It drove me insane! I'm convinced that when Trent was a baby he was replaced with an alien or something. Surely no one could really act like my brother does and get away with it.

2 Most of the time Trent lives in his own imaginary world, a place where there are no bad consequences. One time at school, Trent wanted to test out his theory that the fire alarm wasn't real. Unfortunately, it was. The entire school had to be evacuated, the fire marshal was called and class was interrupted for about forty minutes. Any other kid would have been suspended instantly — but not Trent. By some unknown stroke of luck, he had the principal commending him for his diligence in organising a surprise fire drill. As a reward he was allowed to ride in the fire truck.

3 Now, that's Trent in his natural habitat. Can you imagine the ecological disaster he'd become if he ever left the country? Well, guess what ...

My parents had the brilliant idea of going on an around the world trip. In most circumstances, this would've been great, but I knew that I'd have to deal with the strange universe located between Trent's ears. The first warning sign occurred on the plane over to Los Angeles. Somewhere between the boring in-flight movie and the soggy scrambled eggs, Trent went missing. Mum went absolutely mental. Dad asked everyone in economy if they'd seen Trent. No one had.

4 Finally, I managed to convince an attendant to let me up into first class. Every vein in my forehead popped out as I caught sight of that little brat sitting in an absolute throne of a reclining chair. Somehow, he had managed to sweet talk his way next to an old woman. She chuckled as he told her stories about how he was going to Hollywood to become a big movie star. Furious, I walked up and grabbed his arm, dragging him back to economy. As he left he waved at the first class passengers and said, "Don't worry, she's just my agent. I guess I've landed a gig on the in-flight film!" Everyone applauded as we passed. Oh, I wish I had been allowed to chuck him out of the plane.

5 Don't think for a moment that such antics are isolated to the skies. My family decided to take an ocean liner from England to Cairo, and all Trent could talk about was the lifeboats. He had been reading up on the *Titanic*, so he wanted to make sure there'd be enough for everyone. That's the problem with Trent, he sometimes means well. But, while normal kids would've just asked to speak to a steward about their concerns, Trent turned to a more hands-on approach. When no one was looking, he climbed atop a lifeboat, peeled back the red tarpaulin cover, and climbed inside. If that wasn't bad enough, Trent's casual safety

inspection of the boat turned into a full-blown imaginative game. Suddenly he was the captain of a ship on a pirate-hunting expedition. Everyone on board the liner could hear him shouting out orders to his invisible crew.

6 That was when he hit the lever. What looked like an innocent, naval prop was actually the lever that controlled the boat winch. With a squeak and a metallic bark, one side of the lifeboat slipped down and Trent tumbled into the ocean. Almost. Luckily his jacket got caught on the front of the lifeboat, so when the crew came running with life preservers and ropes, they didn't have to go too far to save him. I could've fried an egg on my face with the embarrassment. The deck was covered with passengers, all worried that someone had drowned, and they all had front row seats to watch my brother be hauled back on board by his trousers. Admittedly, it was pretty funny seeing the look on his face when he was yanked towards the Captain's cabin. At last, I thought, he was going to finally be reprimanded for one of his annoying pranks.

I don't know how this happened, but Trent returned an hour later, wearing the Captain's hat. It turned out that he'd had a lovely time. He did, however, promise Mum and Dad that he wouldn't cause any more trouble on our holiday.

7 Those incidents were both small slices compared to our time in Cairo; that was when Trent really took the whole cake. What is the first thing that everyone has to do in Egypt? That's right, my family went on a tour of the pyramids. It's amazing the kind of feelings you get while exploring a building that's thousands of years old, especially when it's as big as the Great Pyramid of Giza. I was so dumbstruck with the pyramid tour that I forgot about my brother's habit for mischief.

8 While the tour was busy checking out some hieroglyphics, Trent started talking to himself about

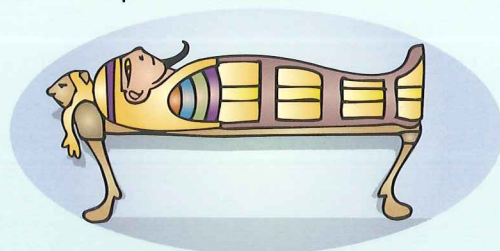
“finding the treasure of the Pharaohs”. Somehow or other, he snuck away from the group and down a side tunnel that led deep into the pyramid. The tunnel ended in a large burial chamber, covered in beautiful images of the River Nile, hippopotami and Egyptians on boats. In the centre of the room was a small sarcophagus. It was open.

- 9 Apparently, Trent climbed inside the sarcophagus and made himself comfortable, closing his eyes and crossing his arms across his chest, as if he were about to be buried alive. That was when he heard us coming into the chamber. The tour guide was telling some tourists a story about the mummy’s curse. It is believed that anyone who disturbs an Egyptian mummy will die a horrible death. The tourists gave some appreciative “oohs” and “aahs”, joking about how scary it would be if a mummy jumped up and cursed them.
- 10 Here’s where the story gets tricky, and I’ll leave it up to you to decide just how much of a brat my brother Trent is. As the guide spoke of the mummy

jumping up, I’m not sure if Trent panicked, and realised he was going to get in trouble for being in the sarcophagus. Or, perhaps he thought about the promise he made to Mum and Dad. Possibly, the story about mummies and curses triggered his imagination again. Regardless, as our tour group closed in on the ornate sarcophagus, Trent leapt out, smiling and waving.

Cameras dropped, filling the chamber with wild flashes. Tourists screamed, some falling to the ground moaning, others fleeing in a mad scramble for the outside world. My face erupted in the most crimson of rages. Trent’s lips cracked in a sheepish grin.

“Umm ... surprise?” he said.



Questions

- Trent’s imaginary world
 - doesn’t lead to bizarre antics.
 - is quite normal.
 - had no bad consequences.
- Which form of transport didn’t the family take?
 - train
 - ship
 - plane
- The lifeboat slipped when Trent
 - pushed a button.
 - turned the wheel.
 - hit a lever.
- What caused the narrator to be dumbstruck?
 - Trent’s behaviour
 - the pyramid tour
 - Trent wearing the Captain’s hat
- What African animal is mentioned in this story?
 - elephant
 - hippopotamus
 - crocodile
- Why does the narrator say ‘here’s where the story gets tricky’?
 - She can’t remember what exactly happened.
 - She finds it hard to tell this part of the story.
 - She isn’t sure about what motivated Trent.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- Annoying or irritating (1)
- Lying back or stretching out (4)
- The opposite of guilty (6)
- Chastised or told off for misbehaving (6)
- Highly decorated or elaborate (10)

Grammar

The words in **BLUE** appear in the text. Match them by writing the correct synonym shown in **RED**.

E.g. *under* / *below*

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| 12 fleeing | permitted |
| 13 habit | pranks |
| 14 allowed | escaping |
| 15 antics | routine |

Back To The Text...

- Who was most affected by Trent’s actions on the plane?
 - Mum
 - Dad
- Which of the following best describes Trent?
 - Can be resourceful and persuasive in awkward situations.
 - Can be very easily coaxed into disastrous situations.

- Another good name for this text would be:
 - Misadventures With My Brother
 - Tremendous Travels With Trent

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- Trent tested the life boat on the ship.
 - Trent charmed his way into first class on the plane.
- Trent pretended he was hunting pirates.
 - Trent hit the boat winch lever.
- Trent saw the images of the River Nile.
 - The tour group saw the images of the River Nile.

Think About This

- The illustration on the front of the card is described in section
 - one.
 - two.
 - three.
 - four.
- Which words would best explain how the narrator was feeling?
 - Proud and angry.
 - Upset and disadvantaged.
 - Frustrated and exasperated.

Challenge Option

Writing: What have you done wrong, that other people thought was good?