

THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY

10.44 a.m.

Since Bella turned one, she has also turned quite bitey. It's particularly concerning because Mum goes back to work soon and Bella is going to start at Happy Teddies Nursery, where she will be free to inflict her vampirish reign on the other unsuspecting babies.

She has eight teeth now, and I know this because I counted the number of indents she left on my arm this morning!

You see, I was just minding my own business . . . watching TV on the sofa . . . and she waddled over, clamped her jaws on my left arm and **WOULD NOT** let go.



I tried to pull her off, but unfortunately she has a super-firm grip, and the more I tried to prise her mouth open, the harder she chomped down. I might add that she was also squealing with delight!

Eventually, Mum appeared to find out what all the commotion was.

‘Awww,’ she said, looking at us lovingly.

‘What do you mean, *awww*?’ I said. ‘It’s not at all awww. She’s trying to take a chunk out of my arm, and it actually REALLY hurts!’

‘Oh, I see . . . I thought she was kissing you. Bella, it’s not very kind to bite, is it?’ said Mum.

‘EEEE!’ squealed Bella.

‘Mum, she doesn’t understand you – just get her off!’

‘I’m trying to practise gentle parenting, Lottie.’

‘What does that even mean?’

‘It means staying calm and rational,’ Mum explained. Then

she turned to Bella and said in a really gentle voice, 'We don't bite, do we? Because biting is -'

'EEEEEEEEEEEE!' squealed Bella again.

‘– not very kind and it can –’

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'EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!'
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'Muuuuuuuum, it's hurting!'

Mum sighed and tried (and struggled) to remove Bella from my arm.

'She's got quite a firm grip here, you know . . .'

‘Yes, I’ve noticed!!’

'OK, I'm going to count to three and then I'm going to pull her. Ready?'

'Owww, yes . . . Do it quickly!'

'One . . . two . . . three . . .'

Mum managed to pull her off, but Bella must have been

having a lovely time biting my arm as she started bawling her eyes out.

'Oh dear, poor darling!' soothed Mum, bouncing her up and down on her hip.

'Poor *darling*?! I'm the one who got bitten!' I said, rubbing my arm. 'Look! She's left teeth marks and everything.'

'ME BITEYYYYYY!' shouted Bella.

Instead of being concerned about me, Mum actually looked quite proud.

'Did you know that most babies can't put two words together until they're eighteen months old?' she said.

WHAT?!

'And also, most babies only have four teeth by the time they reach one,' she said, completely ignoring my pain and suffering. 'It's very impressive to have eight!'

'It's not that impressive if you're using them to commit GBH on your siblings!' I said.

Mum laughed and muttered something about reporting it to the police.

'You won't be laughing if she bites someone at Happy Teddies!' I told her.

She stopped laughing and looked at Bella. 'You wouldn't do that, would you, my sweet baby?'

'**MEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE BITEEEY!**' shouted Bella again.

I spy trouble ahead . . .

1.34 p.m.

Just been chatting to Poppy on the phone. She's so super sad about the Amber situ – I know this because she told me about a million times.



In case you've forgotten all the DRAMA from my last diary, here is a little recap for ya. Strap yerself in because it's a liiiittle bit complicated . . .

- ★ Me and Daniel got together at Theo's NYE party, and all was good for a bit . . . until Amber started being all weird with me.
- ★ By weird, I mean not very nice . . . Stuff like leaving me out of plans and saying that I'd rather hang out with Daniel than The Queens of Eight Green (NOT true).
- ★ Amber decided to hold X-Factor-style auditions for a boyfriend (yes, really).
- ★ I began to suspect that Amber was well jel that I had a boyf and she didn't . . .
- ★ The auditions worked (sort of) and she got together with Casper, who is in Year Nine!
- ★ But it turned out that Casper was only doing it for a dare, and he humiliated Amber by dumping her in front of everyone (mega cringe).
- ★ Meanwhile Amber had got us all tickets to the hottest gig in town: the Bad Pancakes. It was meant to be a girly night out to cheer her up . . . but the problem was that Daniel had also got me and him tickets as a surprise #awks.
- ★ Being the GREAT friend that I am, I decided to go with my mates. #FriesBeforeGuys, remember!

- ★ The gig was brilliant, and we were all having the best time (Dad is now a mega fan after he came along as our chaperone).
- ★ I've got a really itchy shin.
- ★ Ignore that – it's actually unrelated.
- ★ Things started to go wrong when I bumped into Daniel, and he asked if we could dance together for a bit. I said no as I didn't want the girls to think I'd left them, but Amber reassured me that I should, and we organized a place to meet later on.
- ★ When I tried to meet TQOEG, they weren't there, and I couldn't find them anywhere!!
- ★ I lost them for the rest of the gig 😞
- ★ After the Bad Pancakes had played their final song (which was EPIC), Daniel and me made our way to the exit and finally found TQOEG, but they were really upset with me!
- ★ Basically, Amber denied she'd made a plan to meet me and told the girls that I'd just gone off with my boyfriend because I clearly liked him best.
- ★ It was all LIES!
- ★ I thought I'd lost ALL my friends! It was soooooo awful!
- ★ Shin is itching again.
- ★ Luckily, the truth all came out when Daniel backed up my story.

- ★ It also came out that Amber had been PURPOSELY not asking me to come along to gang meetings and pretending to the others that she had – exactly like I'd suspected!
- ★ Just call me Detective Inspector Brooks.
- ★ Amber was not happy about being exposed and she tried to make the girls choose between me and her.
- ★ They chose me (although TBH they didn't want to have to choose at all).
- ★ Amber left the WhatsApp group in a mega strop and started hanging out with Izzy G and Candice AKA TUMGG (The Ultimate Mean Girl Gang).
- ★ She's been ignoring us ever since!



So yeh, that's it – in a (rather large) nutshell. Hope you kept up, cos my brain is a bit fried from having to write it all down.

Oh, one more thing – Amber's parents are getting a divorce. She's always said that she doesn't care, but we think it's affecting her more than she's letting on. It would certainly help to explain a lot of her behaviour lately.

We'd been trying to be understanding and help her through it, but she never wanted to talk about it – and now she won't

Speak to us full stop. I guess we all kind of assumed she'd just reappear and pretend nothing had happened . . . but nope. She's gone totally AWOL.

We are all feeling upset about it (yep – even me!), because no matter what Amber's done, I can't forget the good stuff, like the time she stood up for me against Phoebe Pointy Nose at Camp Firefly, how excellent she was at drawing eyebrows on when I had forehead baldness, and how funny she can be (sometimes). Our gang doesn't feel quite the same without her.

It's understandable that Poppy is finding it the hardest. She's been besties with Amber since they were four years old, so she's really missing her. I think she was hoping I might have some advice, but as Amber's not been returning any of our messages or phone calls . . . what else are we meant to do?! Her leaving the WhatsApp group just felt so . . . final.

2.31 p.m.

Shin still itching. I remembered that when I had an itchy ear, Dad said it can be an omen that 'someone is talking about you'. I decided to google 'itchy shins omen' and apparently it means 'you will have an unpleasant surprise'.

Brilliant! But I guess my life is already unpleasant surprise after unpleasant surprise, so what difference will one more make?

7 p.m.

OOOOH, EXCITING NEWS!

TQOEG WhatsApp Group:

MOLLY: GUYS, I've got a REALLY brilliant surprise!

POPPY: OOOOH this sounds intriguing – tell us more!

ME: Does it involve us??

MOLLY: Of course!

ME: Does it involve needles, because I'm scared of needles?

MOLLY: No 🙄

ME: Does it involve cockroaches, because I'm scared of cockroaches?

MOLLY: No!

ME: Does it involve plastic cutlery, because I'm scared of plastic cutlery?

MOLLY: What the?! Look, Lottie, if it involved plastic cutlery, cockroaches or getting injections, would it be a 'REALLY brilliant surprise'?

POPPY: Good point well made 😊

ME: Depends on who you ask though, I guess . . .

JESS: Molly, ignore Lottie – are you gonna tell us or what?!

MOLLY: Well, I've been trying to . . . SO there is a new escape room place in town and apparently it's really cool and I thought we could go check it out tomorrow. I googled it already and they have space – my mum said she'd treat us 😊

POPPY: OOOOOOH that is a good surprise!

JESS: Nice one, Molls (and Moll's mum)!!!

ME: YAY! I've never done an escape room before!

MOLLY: Glad you're all up for it – it's going to be so much fun 😊

POPPY: Um, Lottie – one more thing, please tell us why you are scared of plastic cutlery??

ME: Well, it's the combination of it being bendy and also pretty useless. I still have flashbacks of the time I had to cut a pizza with a plastic knife – horrendous! It makes me shudder even thinking about it.

JESS: Mmmm, that does sound a bit terrifying.

ME: Told you.

MOLLY: I think she was being sarcastic.

ME: Oh.

I must hand it to Molly – it was one of the best ideas I'd ever heard, plus it was the perfect distraction to keep us all from worrying too much about what was going on with Amber.

When I put my phone down, I was feeling quite smug with myself, firstly because we had a great plan for tomorrow, and secondly because my shin was wrong, and I told it just as much.

Shame it was at that exact moment that Dad walked past.



8.29 p.m.

Arm still hurts quite a bit – have applied a thick layer of Savlon to the bite mark. Bella puts all sorts of nasty stuff in her mouth, and I don't want it to get infected.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY:

If you don't manage to escape the escape room, do they let you out?! I hope so, as that wouldn't be very fun if not.

