

Keep out!

Written by Margot Bertelsmann

Illustrated by Natalie and Tamsin Hinrichsen

Luke's base is at the bottom of the garden. It's made of wood and has real glass windows. Mom keeps her rake in there for gardening. Mom's boyfriend, Trevor, keeps his seedling trays in there, for planting vegetables.

But they are both only renting space. The shed is just for Luke. He keeps all his best secrets in there. On one shelf, he's arranged his building blocks and action figures. In a bag in a corner are his marbles. There's a space for Sally the dog on one of Luke's old blankets.

Luke is making a sign for the door: KEEP OUT!

Everybody has to ask permission if they want to go into the shed, except for Luke and Sally. Mostly, everybody obeys – except his older brother, Felix.





“Luke, the poop scooper is in the shed,” says Mom. “May I go fetch it?”

“I’ll get it!” says Luke.

“Anything you can do, I can do better,” says Felix, but that’s not true. Luke cleans up every last piece of doggy-do, all by himself.

Trevor needs some petrol for the lawnmower. He also keeps it at Luke’s base. “I’ll get it!” Luke shouts.

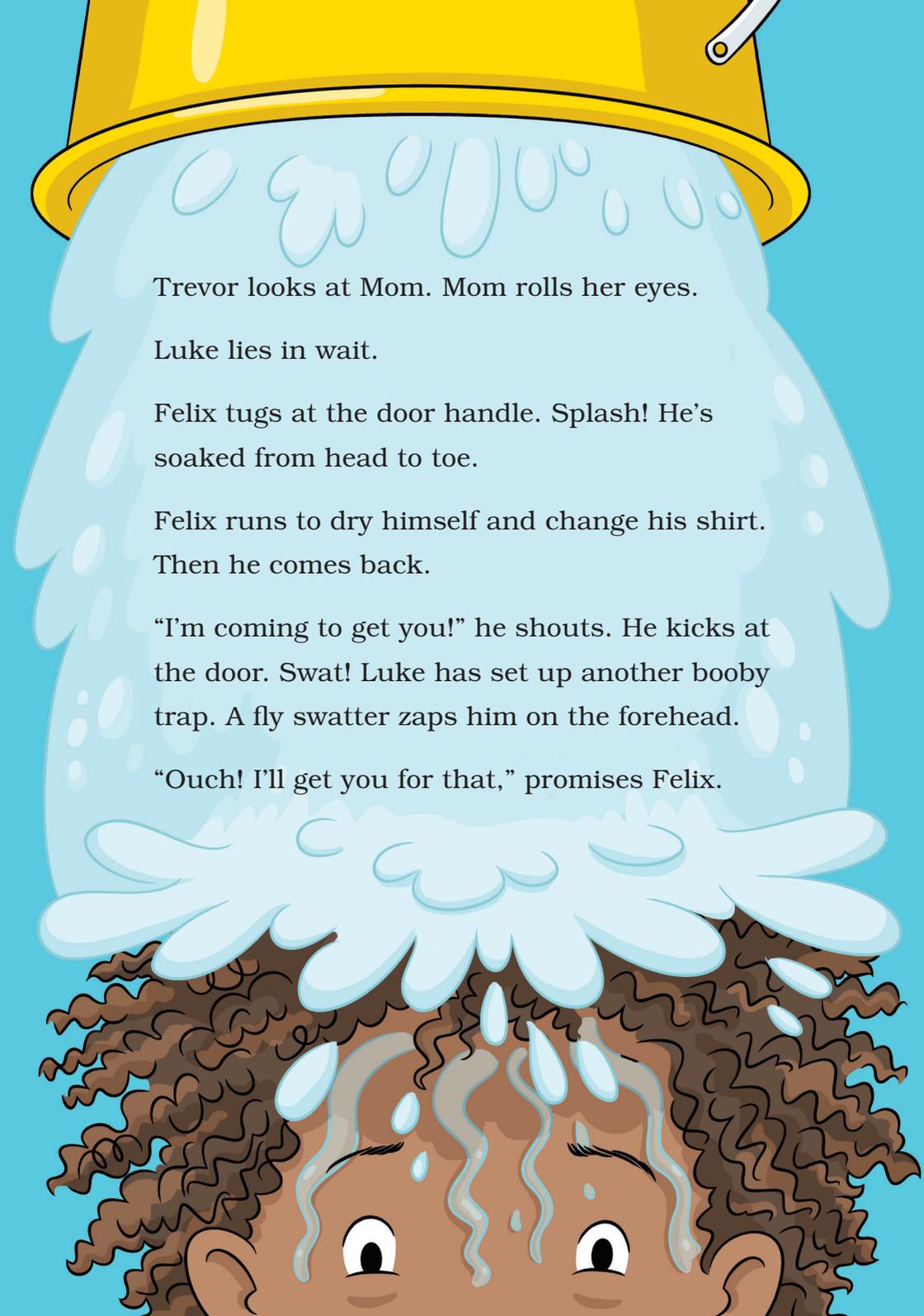
He brings the jerrycan out, and Trevor shows him how to fill up the lawnmower. Trevor pulls the cord, once, twice, three times. It catches! Vroom. Trevor lets Luke mow a strip after he’s put his takkies on, all by himself.

Felix wants a turn too.

“Look how much grass I’ve cut,” he brags. “And much better than you.”

Luke’s face is red with rage.

Felix is bored. He walks up to the shed door. “I’m coming in,” he announces. He doesn’t even knock.



Trevor looks at Mom. Mom rolls her eyes.

Luke lies in wait.

Felix tugs at the door handle. Splash! He’s soaked from head to toe.

Felix runs to dry himself and change his shirt. Then he comes back.

“I’m coming to get you!” he shouts. He kicks at the door. Swat! Luke has set up another booby trap. A fly swatter zaps him on the forehead.

“Ouch! I’ll get you for that,” promises Felix.



Felix plots revenge. He is busy with something outside the door.

“Come out, Luke!”

“Why?” asks Luke. “Do you think that anything I can do, you can do better?”

“Maybe,” says Felix, chuckling to himself.

Luke sneaks out of the window on the side of the toolshed. He tiptoes in a wide arc around Felix and comes to stand behind him.

“Well, I don’t think that’s true,” says Luke from behind his shoulder, pointing at the sign on the door.

“YOU can’t even read a sign.”



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Ideas to talk about

Luke has his own special place. Do you have a special place at home? If not, where could you make one for yourself?

What do you think of the way that Felix and Luke behave towards each other? What could they do differently?



Visual

Draw a picture of one of the tricks Luke plays on his brother.



Reading

Look closely at the first picture. Read the text on these pages again and then find the objects that belong to Trevor and Luke in the picture.



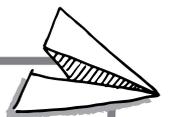
Writing

Make your own "Keep out" sign.



Craft

Use an egg carton as a seedling tray and plant some seeds in it. Label the seeds by drawing small pictures of how each type of plant will look when fully grown. Paste these pictures onto small sticks and place them next to their seeds.



Performance

Make a special "cave" to play and read in by putting blankets over chairs. Take your favourite books and toys into your cave. Put the "Keep out" sign you made on the outside of your cave.

