

It's Not Fair

My sister Penny came into my room without knocking, even though there's a sign on the door that says: *This is Stella's Room. If You Are Not Stella Then Please Knock*. I made the sign myself. It's on yellow construction paper. We have a package of construction paper in all different colors. I always pick yellow until those sheets run out.

Penny isn't a good reader yet because she's only five, but she knows what my sign



says because I've told her.

"Guess what! My tongue is purple!" Penny announced.

"You have to knock first," I reminded her.

"I forgot," Penny said. She turned around and walked back out. Then she knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" I asked.

"It's me, Penny," Penny said.

"Thank you for knocking," I said. My parents get mad if Penny and I don't say *please* and *thank you*. "You can come in." So Penny came back in. She was carrying Belinda.

Belinda's not a person, she's a stuffed animal. A duck-billed platypus stuffed animal, if you want to know. It's Penny's favorite toy because the boy named Maverick who lives next door gave it to her, and Penny always calls Maverick her boyfriend.

Right then Penny was in her pajamas. She gets ready for bed before I do because her bedtime is a half hour before mine.

"My tongue is still purple from the Candy Marker," Penny said.

Candy Markers are a new kind of treat from Batts Confections. Dad brought them home so Penny and I could test them out at dessert. They come in all different flavors—each flavor is a different color. Purple is grape. You can paint your tongue with them, and then your tongue tastes really yummy. I had a cherry one, which made my tongue red—super red, not just regular red like tongues usually are.

"What are you doing?" Penny asked.

"I'm writing a book," I said.

"Neat-o," Penny said. "Let me see."

"No," I said.

“Why?” she asked.

“Because it’s my book,” I told her. “I don’t want to show it to anyone until I’m finished. Like when you go into a bookstore, you don’t get to see the books until they’re already written.”

“It’s not fair,” Penny said. That’s what she says whenever I don’t include her in stuff.

Penny stomped out of my room. I knew she was going to tell on me. That’s what five-year-old sisters do. And I was right, because she came back in with Mom.

“I didn’t do anything wrong,” I told Mom



right away.

Mom sat down on my bed. Penny stuck her purple tongue out at me, but Mom didn’t see.

“Mom!” I said. “Penny stuck out her tongue! That’s not allowed.”

“I was just showing you it was still purple,” Penny said.

So then I stuck my tongue out at Penny.

“Oh, Stel,” Mom said.

“I was just showing her mine was still really red,” I explained.

“All right, enough of that,” Mom said. “Penny says you’re writing a book.”

“That’s right, I am,” I told her. “I want to be a writer.”



“Me too,” Penny said. “I’m going to be a princess, and a candy store owner, and a writer.”

“That’s too many things,” I said.

“No it’s not,” Penny said. “Right, Mom?”

“You’ll be very busy, but I’m sure you can do it all,” Mom told her.

“She didn’t want to be a writer until I said I wanted to. She always copies me,” I complained. Sometimes I like Penny to copy me, but sometimes I don’t.

“Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery,” Mom said. She says that whenever I get upset

about Penny trying to be like me. Imitation is another word for copying and flattery is like saying something nice about someone.

“But I can’t write as fast as Stella can,” Penny whined.

“Maybe Stella can help you tomorrow,” Mom said.

I shrugged. “Maybe,” I said. I was still mad about Penny telling on me and then sticking out her tongue.

“Why don’t you make Stella help me now?” Penny asked.

“Because now it’s time for you to go to bed,” Mom told her.

“I don’t have to take a bath so I still have time,” Penny told her. Mom’s rule is that Penny and I have to take baths every other night.

“You’re right about the bath, you’re wrong about the time,” Mom told her.



“Okay, but I have to go to the bathroom first, and you have to flush,” Penny said. Penny is afraid to flush the toilet. She thinks maybe she’ll get sucked in if she stands too close while the water is going down. Mom says I was the same way when I was little, but I’m not sure because I don’t remember that at all.

“Okay,” Mom said. “And then you have to brush your teeth and then pick out a story.”

“Hey, Mom, guess what,” Penny said.

“What?” Mom asked.

“I can brush my teeth and dance at the same time,” Penny told her.

“I can’t wait to see,” Mom said. Then she turned to me. “And you, my little writer, have ten minutes left before you have to change into pajamas.”

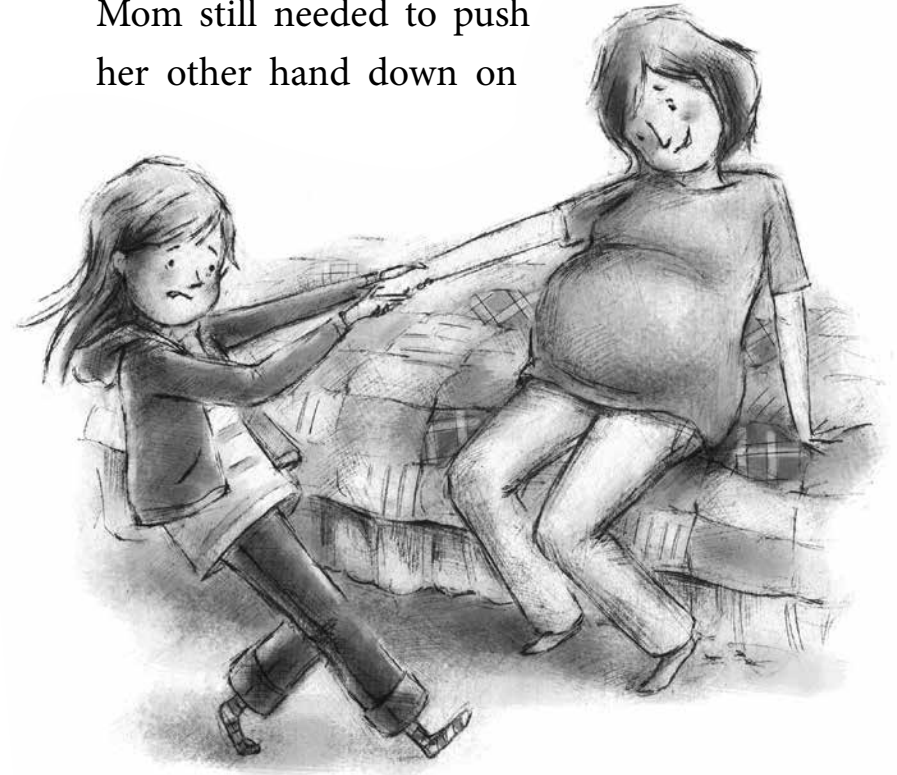
“Maybe I’ll take a bath,” I said.

“Oh honey, you really don’t have enough

time,” Mom said.

“Are you sure?” I asked her. “I think I might need one.”

“You took one last night,” Mom said. “You’re still clean. Here, help me up.” She held out her hand. I stood up and grabbed it. Even with me helping, Mom still needed to push her other hand down on



the bed. She stood up very slowly and said “Ahhh.” Then she and Penny walked out of the room, and I sat back down at my desk.

The reason why it’s hard for Mom to get up is because she’s pregnant. Mom and Dad say the baby will be born in a month and a half. They also say it’s going to be a boy named Theodore. We are going to call him Teddy for short. Teddy is a nickname for Theodore, even though it doesn’t really sound like it is.

Penny is a nickname, too. Her real name is Penelope.

I don’t have a nickname. Sometimes people call me Stel, but that’s not the same thing. It’s not a real nickname. Smella is definitely NOT a nickname.

Okay, I’ll write about what happened on the nature walk, but not the whole thing. Our teacher, Mrs. Finkel, told us to hurry up,



so then I did, but I tripped and fell over this branch. I don’t even want to say what I landed in, it was too gross, so I’m going to leave out that part. Then Joshua was laughing and that’s when he started calling me Smella. I’m not a smelly girl, or anything like that. But I thought maybe I should take a bath tonight, just in case.

I hate that he can make up something like

that about my name. I hate that Stel rhymes with Smell. I don't really like the name Stella at all anymore.

I think it would be good to have a name that had a real nickname. Penelope is a way better name—it sounds kind of sing-songy, and Penny is the perfect nickname for it. But Stella isn't a sing-songy name. It only has two syllables, and it doesn't have any good nicknames. I got to be the older sister, but Penny got to have the best name.

It's not fair, I said when Mom and Penny had left the room. But I said it in my head, not out loud like Penny does. Then I stood up and clicked my heels together three times. That's what I do if I'm making a wish. I got it from the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. In the movie, the girl named Dorothy clicked her heels together when she wanted to go home.

I think that trick might work for wishes, too.

After that, Mom came back in my room and said it was time for me to get ready for bed. I was done with my first chapter so it was a good time to take a break anyway.

