

EMILY DEMPSTER

TOTALLY NORMAL



MEET ELLIE:
WEIRD,
WONDERFUL
AND
ONE OF A KIND!

ILLUSTRATED BY
LAURA WOOD



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WALKER
BOOKS

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First published in the UK 2026 by Walker Books Ltd
87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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Illustrations © 2026 Laura Wood

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This book has been typeset in Bembo Book MT Pro

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: a catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-5295-3333-0

www.walker.co.uk



For Drew - ED

**To all the *totally normal* people
in my life: you know who you
are and I love you for that - LW**

SATURDAY 20 JULY

Mum once said that children are like pancakes – the first one is always a bit weird. You know that first pancake that has a funny shape and is a bit burnt at the bottom?

Well, the first pancake in my family is me.

Wow, thanks Mum! Great parenting! High five!

For the record, I think the first pancake is the best one. Flavoursome, chewy, with a crispy edge. ***chef's kiss***

And I guess I should explain that my parents aren't actually evil. They think that being weird is a good thing.



They love it when I come up with a character and do a funny voice, like when I hunch over and do an impression of my grandma: ‘Hello daaaaarling, would you like a cup of tea? You look tiiiired.’ That always gets my mum laughing so hard that she has to wipe tears from her eyes.

And my parents love my conversation starters. For some reason, I find it hard to do ‘small talk’ with someone I’ve just met, and I’ll blurt out something wacky, like ‘Did you know that marine worms can grow hundreds of butts?’

Mum and Dad always agree that a discussion about marine worms and their butts is much more interesting than talking about the weather.

If I can get Mum and Dad laughing, that’s when I feel like they get me.

Most of the time though? I feel like they don’t.

At least once a day (sometimes twice if I’m lucky!) Mum or Dad will ask (shout) in that exasperated tone that they use just for me, **‘Ellie, WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!’**

And honestly? I don't know the answer to that.

All I do know is sometimes I find it hard to focus on boring stuff, like brushing my teeth or doing my homework. But who doesn't? I'm sure there are plenty of people out there like me, but unfortunately, not in our house ...

Because you know who doesn't find it hard to focus on boring stuff? My eight-year-old brother, Stewart. He just loves to brush his teeth on time and complete his homework as soon as he's asked. I think he does it just to annoy me, but Mum and Dad don't see it like that.

And by the way, don't get me started on my four-year-old sister, Beatrice (we call her Bea). She is an absolute menace, but Mum and Dad just think she's adorable.

Basically, I feel like Stewart and Bea can do no wrong in my parent's eyes.

But as the oldest child I feel a constant pressure to be ... how should I put this ...

not myself.

Because here's the thing, 'Society' (and therefore my parents) subconsciously (that means deep down in the brain where you don't even know thoughts are happening) thinks that oldest children should be all-round excellent people who never put a foot wrong.

This is seriously true!

Oldest children are meant to be responsible and conscientious with combed hair and shiny shoes and leadership awards from the principal every week and an A+ in everything.

Oldest children turn in their homework one week in advance, then they cook breakfast for their siblings and then they save the little old lady next door from a house fire. And this all happens before the first bell rings for school.

Being the oldest child, only makes my non-perfect, messy, late, **weird pancake self** more of a ... disappointment.

Well, I'm sick of it!

I have seriously been considering adopting

myself out to a more understanding family. A family who accepts the real me and who appreciate all of my unique gifts and talents – of which I have many.

Or, changing my name to Francine Grindlemeyer Schneedleburg and moving to Siberia.

But actually, I have an even better plan. And it is a truly excellent, fool-proof plan.

I am going to become a famous teenage pop star, like Billie Eilish. Listen to this logic, which in my opinion, is **water tight**.

Does Billie Eilish have anyone telling her to brush her teeth and get in to bed on time and pack her water bottle in her school bag? Does Billie Eilish have to vacuum the lounge room every Thursday in order to get her iPad on the weekend? Is Billie Eilish constantly being compared to her perfect little brother or told to be a better role model for her little sister?

OF COURSE SHE'S NOT!

And why is that?

Oh, that's right, because she's too busy being **unbelievably cool** and making millions of dollars!

If I was a famous pop star like Billie Eilish, I would sleep in til 9 am every morning, then eat a bowl of rice bubbles, compose music til lunchtime, take a nap, order pizza and then play *Roblox* til my bedtime, which would be midnight. I would have a professional tooth-brusher to take care of all of my dental hygiene needs, a cook, a maid and a personal assistant to take care of all the things that I always forget, which is basically everything except composing music.

When I'm famous, Mum and Dad won't care that I still can't get out of bed at 7 am, or finish my homework on time, because I'll be a millionaire! They'll want to visit me in my mansion and swim in my pool and my little brother and sister will want to play with all my puppies. (Because of course I will adopt a load of puppies when I'm rich!)

But unfortunately for them, I will probably be too busy to see them ever again.