



MY NAME IS  
**SUNSHINE  
SIMPSON**



“A book as warm and radiant as sunshine itself!”

Lisa Thompson, author of *The Goldfish Boy*

“An utterly brilliant book that had me laughing and crying in equal measure.”

Tolá Okogwu, author of *Onyeka and the Academy of the Sun*

“A beautiful, heartwarming hug of a book about the power of self-acceptance. I defy anyone not to fall in love with Sunshine!”

Hannah Gold, author of *The Last Bear*

“A delightful story that manages to be both sincerely heartfelt and sparkingly funny in equal measure.”

L.D. Lapinski, author of *The Strangeworlds Travel Agency*

“A huge, uplifting hug with a message that says: be yourself; be proud of who you are.”

Jen Carney, author of *The Accidental Diary of B.U.G.*

“Sunshine lives up to her name – she's charming and hilarious.”

Aisha Bushby, author of *A Pocketful of Stars*

“This is a very special book.”

Serena Patel, author of *Anisha, Accidental Detective*

“Powerful and poignant, hilarious and heartwarming.

I'm just so in love with this book.”

Rashmi Sirdeshpande, author of *How To Be Extraordinary*





*For my children,  
and in loving memory of my parents,  
Lester and Rena.  
Without you, this book would not be.*



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**G.M. LINTON**

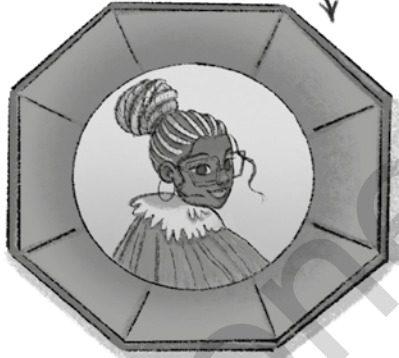
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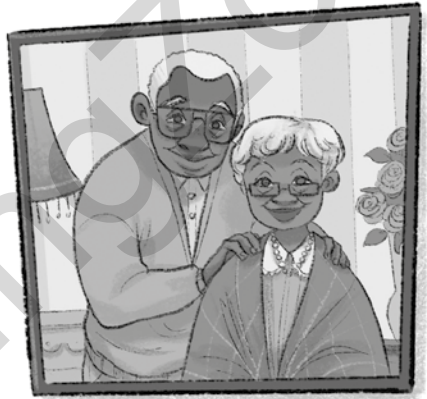
USBORNE



Auntie Sharon



Dariuszkz



Granny Cynthia &  
Grampie Clive



Mum & Dad





# Meet my family – and welcome to my rollercoaster life!



Me (age 6)



Grandad Bobby



The Twinzies (Lena & Peter)

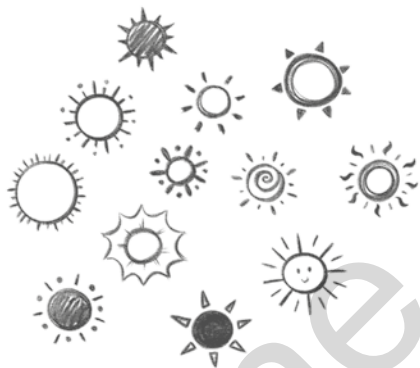


“Only when it is dark enough can you see  
the stars.”

*Dr Martin Luther King Jr*



ReadingZone



Hello.

**My name is Sunshine Simpson and I'm very pleased to meet you.**

I don't entirely know why I'm starting the story this way, it just seems like a proper introduction. Polite.

Actually, I do know why I'm starting the story this way. I want to ask you a question and I didn't want to launch into it by throwing myself at you too quickly. That seemed rude.

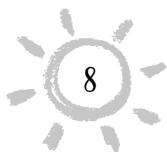
But now I've got the good manners part done, here goes...

Have you ever wished you had a **magic button** that you could press to play back all the best bits of everything that happens to you, but then delete all the bad bits that you don't like as much? I have, but no magic button has ever appeared. If it had, maybe my life would be different now.

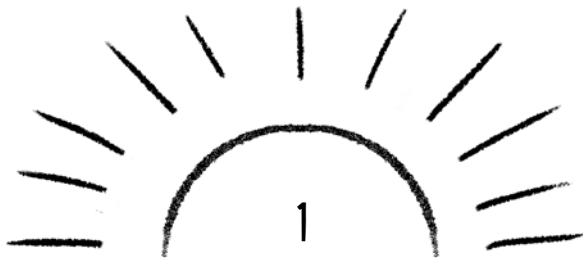


I must warn you: there are no wizards or any **magic** fixes in this story to make everything better – although there are a few unicorns and a dragon (sort of). And there are things you'll find out that have changed my world for ever. I know that sounds a bit dramatic, but it's true – I've been through **big-time drama** of the highest order lately.

I should let you judge for yourselves really, so I'm going to get on with telling you what actually happened. It's always best to start a story at the beginning. Well, that's what my teacher, Miss Peach, tells me. She says a good story always has a beginning, a middle and an end. Miss Peach is very wise, despite being named after a fruit, so I'll follow her advice, and take you back to the beginning of last summer term, when everything started to go horribly wrong.







## HORSEY OLD LADY FACE

**Focus. Power,** I chanted under my breath. **Focus. Power.**  
**You've got this, Sunshine. You've. Got. This.**

Near the start of every summer term, each class at my school takes part in a skipping fitness challenge. All the kids gather in their classes on the school playground and playing fields, kind of like a mini sports day, and have to do as many skips as possible in one minute, using posh skipping ropes with in-built counters. The top skippers from each class get to have their photo and name displayed on the **Wall of Fame** in the school hall.

The Wall of Fame is really called “**the celebration wall**”,



and you get to be on it whenever you do anything great at school, but us kids have always called it the Wall of Fame to pep things up a bit. Give it a bit of **star quality**. Being good at skipping was my claim to fame. Maybe it was a small claim to fame, but it meant a lot to me.

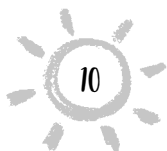
Even though the teachers always said, “It’s not a competition, it’s the taking part that counts”, I’d won the “it’s not a competition” skipping challenge for two years in a row – so this time I was going for the hat-trick of three wins. But this time, as it turned out, was different.

You see, I have a friend called Evie Evans. She started at our school at the beginning of the school year, last September. And Evie is brilliant – at *everything*.

Evie was skipping next to me and my heart heaved in my chest as I desperately tried to keep in time with her. I could feel my pride and my title literally skipping away from me.

**Pocus. Fower**, I told myself again. Huh? My focus was un-powering or my power was un-focusing. Whichever one it was, this wasn’t a good sign.

I kept stealing glances at Evie. Watching her as she



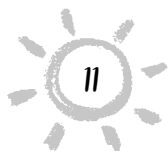
jumped effortlessly, leaping like a gazelle, with her ponytail of dark, bouncing curls bobbing beautifully behind her; not even the tiniest bead of sweat on her forehead. My forehead looked like someone could dive in and take a swim in it.

When the minute was up, I'd got dead-on one hundred skips – five skips down on last year. But Evie had got 106 skips – the most in the whole class (the most **EVER**). I was the washed-up runner-up. Evie had won.

“Don't worry, Sunshine, you mustn't be down in the mouth about this,” said Miss Peach, as she took a photo of a beaming Evie for the Wall of Fame. “It's not a competition, it's the taking part that counts.”

Right.

“It's those long legs, Sunny. You're very gangly, aren't you.” Evie told me (she wasn't asking). “**You need to focus.** Keep it all together so that you're not flopping about all over the place. Keep your back straight like I do.



**DON'T** raise your legs too high. And **DON'T** look down at your feet.” Evie was giving me lessons, like she was the teacher and I was her pupil. If only she knew how hard I *had* been trying to focus. There was virtually smoke coming out of my ears.

My best friends, Charley and Arun, rolled their eyes, obviously very offended on my behalf. Charley and Arun always have my back. It’s a shame they couldn’t have held the skipping rope to help me go a bit faster too.

“I’m just not great at skipping any more, I guess,” I said, realizing that I was now holding on to a bucketload of hurt as well as the useless skipping rope.

I mopped at my brow and then held my hand out to shake Evie’s hand, fair and square. Evie made a squirmy face as she saw my sweaty palm approaching. And then, right on cue, accidentally proving the point that I wasn’t great at skipping any more, I tangled my legs in the rope, tumbling to the ground like a chopped-down tree.

Evie’s face lit up. “But you’re really good at being silly! I love that about you,” she laughed. “And your face goes all **crinkly like an old lady’s** when you’re concentrating



on something. You almost put me off my skips! I'll have to start calling you **Silly Sunny.**"

"Oh," I said, and then laughed a ridiculous, exaggerated laugh back at her.

I wasn't sure if I was meant to be offended or not. Crinkly old lady? I go to primary school!

And, yes, even though I am taller

than a lot of other kids at Beeches

Primary, and maybe because of

that seem a bit older, I was sure I

didn't need to buy a trolley load of

wrinkle cream just yet. Or maybe I did?

I decided to check in with my Grandad Bobby after school.

I could talk to my grandad about anything, even about

looking like my own grandmother!



"Aww, and the way you throw your head back so I can see all your teeth and down your throat...**you're kind of like a cute horse** when you laugh.

I'm so glad that Miss Peach asked

**BEECHES**



**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

you to be my school buddy,” said Evie.

I immediately shut my mouth. **A cute horse? Hmph!** Next she'd lead me to the playing fields and start feeding me a bag of apples and a few carrots.

But instead of saying anything, I raised my hand to wave Evie off as she happily skipped over to Miss Peach (this time without a skipping rope). I assumed they were both about to skip off together into the school hall and remove me from the Wall of Fame.

“You would have beaten Evie if you didn't keep looking across at her,” said Arun, helping to free me from my ropey prison, and lifting me to my feet.

“Yes,” said Charley. “You're a great skipper. You're good at lots of things, especially school stuff and gymnastics. Don't let her put you off.”

I know you have to accept defeat as graciously as victory or whatever, but I'd been proud of being on the Wall of Fame. I'd never been the true champion of anything before. And, yes, Charley was right, I like school stuff – English and geography, even maths. But I had never been special, never particularly interesting. Even my gymnastics



skills were basic. I could do the splits, one-handed cartwheel and a backwards walkover – which Charley seemed to think made me an Olympic champion like Simone Biles – but that was it. And now it was just a matter of time before I'd be erased from the Wall of Fame, replaced by Evie's angelic, smiling face.

I stamped my foot, not meaning to seem bad-tempered; it was more to remove the remaining rope, which had now seemingly come to life and was snaking its way back up my leg. “I don't let her put me off. I just need to raise my game,” I said.

My friends shrugged. And that was what I was going to do – shrug the whole **horsey, crinkly-old-lady-face** thing off and start all over again. Or so I thought.

