

Andrés Carrión

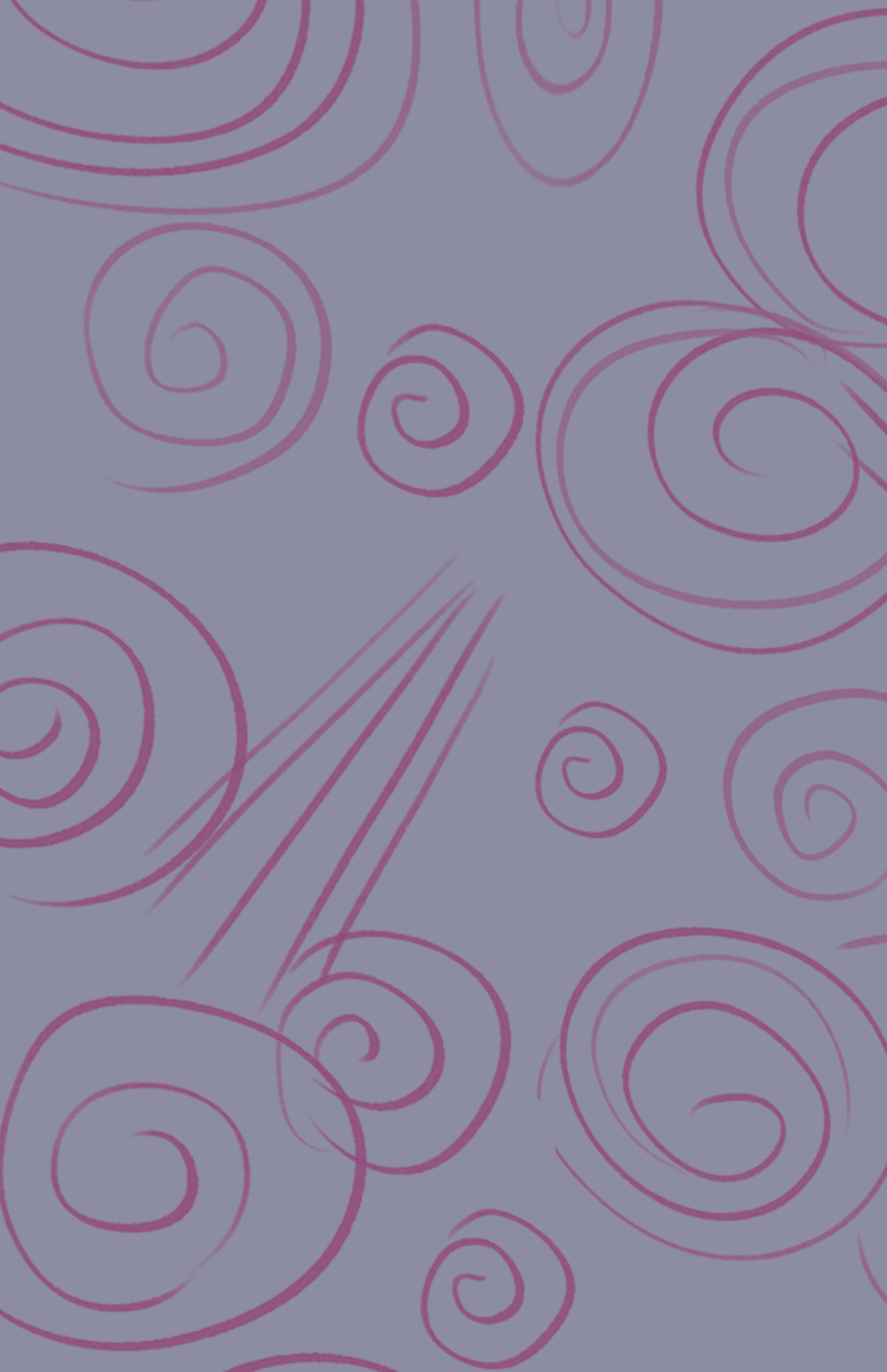
The **BAD**dington

Evil runs in the family



Illustrated by Pablo Tambuscio

LA TIRA







Original title: *Los MALtínez. Maldades en família*

© Text: Andrés Carrión, 2024

© Illustrations: Pablo Tambuscio, 2024

© Translation: Andrew McDougall, 2024

© Edicions Bromera

Av. Areners, 25 (Pol. El Pla) - 46600 Alzira

www.bromera.com

All rights reserved.

Any means of reproduction, distribution, public communication or alteration of this work is only permitted with the authorisation of its owners, unless exempted by Law. Please contact CEDRO ('Spanish Reproduction Rights Centre') if you need to copy or scan any part of this work (www.conlicencia.com; 917 021 970 / 932 720 447).

Rights license assigned by Edicions Bromera, SL (www.bromera.com).

Andrés Carrión

The BADdington

Evil runs in the family

Illustrated by Pablo Tambuscio

Translated by Andrew McDougall



LA TIRA
bromera



1

THE BADDINGTON FAMILY

People think having superpowers is cool...and that's true. But what isn't cool at all is when it's your family that has them. For example, in the kitchen there, that's my dad, Evilio, making our snacks: a cheese sandwich with strawberry jam and no crusts for my little sister and a serrano ham baguette for me. However, at the same time, he's also on the floor below, working in his science laboratory while one of his other clones drives to the shopping centre and another is working at a petrol station. I say goodbye to my dad (the one in the kitchen) and I repeat the goodbye when, going downstairs, I see him again in the lab.

'Have a great day, kids! And, as always: don't burn the school down or anything like that,' he says without looking up from his current experiment (miniaturising things).

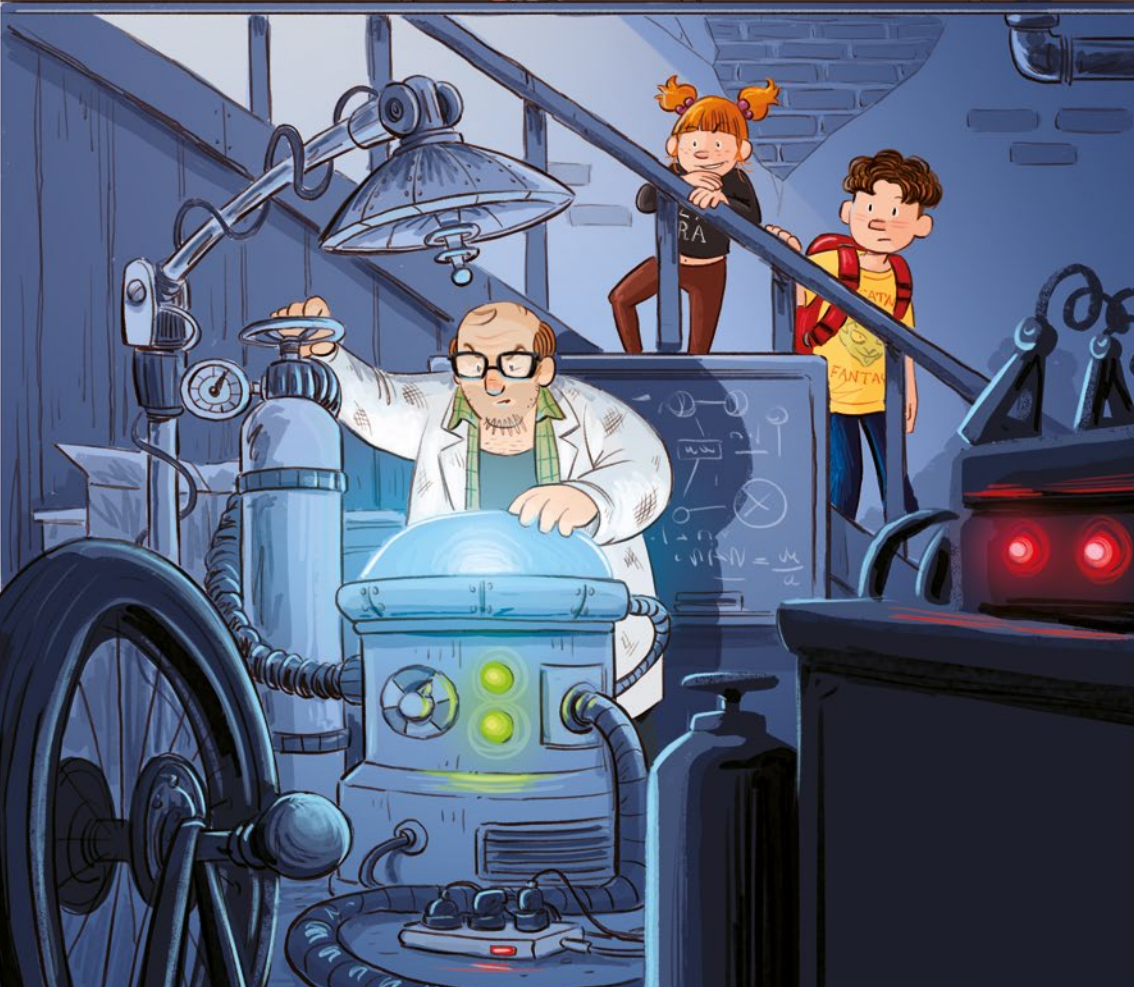
Before, when I was an only child (how little that lasted...), it was teletransportation and, long before I was born, invisibility. Apparently that was the reason why they fired him from the university he worked at: he

made a whole building disappear. Although he didn't really make it disappear, he just turned it *invisible*.

When his head of department said to him, *okay, well done, Evilio; now, please, make it visible again*, my dad didn't know how to. In the end, they had to demolish the building and, since then, all the universities have barred him. They placed him on some kind of blacklist, along with other crazy scientists, and that's why now he works doing anything he can or that he's allowed to. But even so, he still dedicates himself to science in the homemade lab he's set up in the basement.

We pack our snacks and go downstairs. On the way, we see our pet, who's called Flashback and has the weird habit of walking backwards. *Is it a dog or a cat?* you may be wondering. The truth is, not even I am sure. He's certainly a mammal. My mum, who is also a scientist (of course), has a doctorate in genetic manipulation and, apparently, Flashback was the result of one of her first experiments. According to her, Flashback has 40% dog DNA, 40% cat DNA and 20% unidentifiable DNA from...other animals (such as rabbit, hamster, squirrel, ferret, etc.).

On the few occasions people come round to our house, they are amazed when they see him. Especially when he walks backwards like it was nothing. You could say...that's his superpower!



POF!

When we go out the door, our mum, Eva, appears. She teleports as if it were the most normal thing in the world (and for her it really is). There she is, ready for another day; her hair is wet because she is just out the shower and she didn't have time to dry it.

'Don't forget your jacket, Zara,' she reminds my sister. Yes, I know, her name is the same as a well-known clothes shop.

'Ugh, mum, I'm not cold!'

'Put it on, just in case...'

And my mum wraps it around her, even though she doesn't want it.

'Marco, have you done your maths exercises?'

'Of course,' I reply. 'Aren't you coming with us?'

'I start later today and I want to take advantage of the silence to finish marking some exams...'

My mum is a teacher...at our school! *How lucky*, you say. Not at all. Because our teachers are her friends and they tell her everything.

She hasn't always worked in education. Before, she worked in a major science lab, but she left because she felt like she was turning into a test tube. She needed more human contact. So now she's a teacher. Although, as she often says, jokingly, no one warned her she'd be working with animals. Adolescents, but animals nonetheless.

Zara and I go out the door. Outside, it's a bit cold; you can tell Autumn has arrived and Summer is but a fleeting memory.

'Have a great day! And Marco, look after your sister.'

'She doesn't need looking after,' I protest.

'That's true,' she replies with a mocking glare. 'But don't worry, mum. If anyone picks on Marco, I'll stick up for him.'

So rude! How can she have such a temper when she's so little? It's as if they had combined the girl from *The Exorcist* and the doll from *Annabelle* into just one person.

'I've already told you...'

'I know, I know...' And she repeats what our parents tell her every day: 'No using my powers in public!'

That's right: Zara, my eight-year-old little sister also has superpowers. Although she can't control them yet, and that's why she set my tenth-birthday cake on fire (she says it was an accident; yeah, right...)



As soon as we're out of earshot of my mum, my sweet little sister changes her tone, just like a politician after getting elected.

'Relax, Marco. If anyone punches you, I won't get involved. I don't want to embarrass you...' she smiles evily. 'Anyway, mum doesn't want me to use my powers at school. What a shame!'

That's more like her.

We walk towards our school, which is just a few metres away from home. I'm so lucky, aren't I?

And now comes the big question that everyone asks: *What about you, Marco, what superpowers do you have?*

The answer is...I don't have any! So cool, right? (Sarcasm mode on).

You see, there's an explanation: my parents weren't born with superpowers. Everything was caused by an accident (*the incident*, as we call it) which happened when they were carrying out a scientific experiment in the basement.

At that time, my parents were working on a prototype teleportation booth. When the accident occurred, my dad was outside the booth, and my mum, who was helping him at that moment, was inside; apparently, there was an overload in the electricity network (it was a stormy afternoon, thousands of lightning rods fell across the city) and that caused...both their molecules

to be affected. Since then, my dad has been able to multiply himself, generating exactly identical copies, while my mum can teleport from one place to another at will.

But how did Zara get hers? I hear you ask. Well, because at the time of *the incident*, she was inside my mum's tummy! So lucky, right? So she WAS born with superpowers. At least she can't multiply herself (imagine dozens of Zaras!) or teleport (goodbye privacy in the bathroom). Her power is controlling fire (which is a complete mystery), but she can't create it from nothing (thank goodness). That's why, whenever she goes to a birthday party, we try to keep her well away from the cake when it's time to blow out the candles...

Even Flashback, our pet, was affected by *the incident* and that's why he walks in such a peculiar way.

Do you know where I was when *the incident* changed our family forever? Well, that day, at school, we had an extra-curricular activity: a visit to a soft drinks factory. I was hoping that, at the very least, they'd give us a free one, but no! They just explained the process: *the drink comes out here. Thousands of bottles are filled. The tops are put on. They go in the trucks and then they are sold.* Thrilling stuff. Meanwhile, my family's DNA was being irreversibly altered.

The only exciting thing to happen in my house and I go and miss it. Destiny is so cruel.

Now, Zara teases me every day for being a loser with no superpowers. Although my mum keeps saying, *the nail that sticks out, gets hammered down*. She thinks that will console me. Ugh, I want to be special, too!

But I haven't told you the best part yet. You'll be thinking that, as they have superpowers, my family are superheroes, right? Well no. Wrong. To top it off, they are a gang of...supervillains!





2

THE GOODMAN FAMILY

As we leave the house we bump into our neighbours: the Goodman family. They are the typical perfect family. *Why couldn't I have been born across the street?* I asked myself sometimes. Although, in that case, their daughter, Alicia, would be my sister and that would be a little...weird.

She is...how can I put it? Per-fect. She has it all. Beautiful, friendly, intelligent, sweet, etc. Okay, I'll stop. You can tell I like her, right? But just a bit.

'Look,' Zara gives me a nudge which almost breaks one of my ribs. How can an elbow be so pointy?' There goes your giirlfrieend...aren't you going to say something?'

Then she bursts out laughing. She knows I like her and teases me about it.

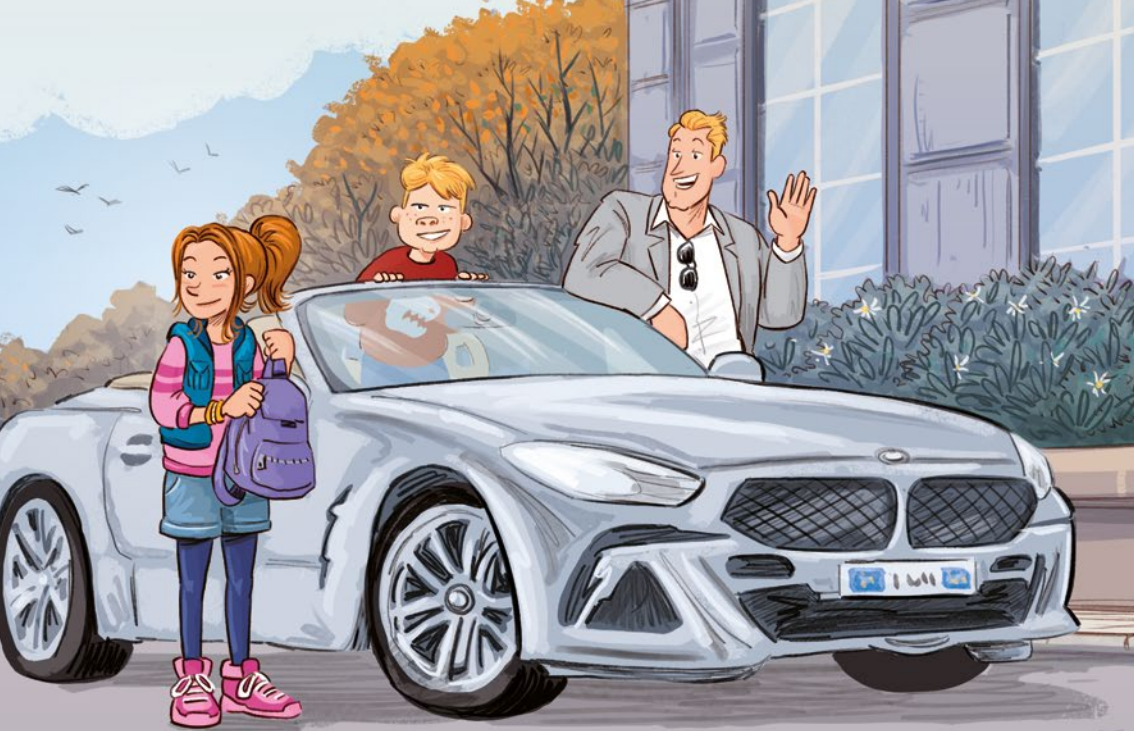
'Well, there goes your boyfriend!' I counter-attack, pointing out another neighbour, Daniel, Alicia's little brother.

'Not funny!' replies Zara, visibly annoyed. 'One day I'll make a barbecue with his head and then I'll...'



She carries on saying awful things. I remind her she can't use her powers in public (especially on the neighbours).

Sometimes, when I look at the Goodman family, I think they are like us, but...in a cool version. To begin with, their dad, Víctor, is really nice, has an athletic build and perfect hair, the opposite of my poor dad, whose head looks like a shaved coconut (he says it's from so much thinking. Yeah, right...) Also, he has a good job: he appears on television, specifically on the news. Well, he's not actually the news presenter, he's the...weatherman! My dad says



it's not like you need three degrees to do that job. I suspect he's jealous of Víctor because he's on television and, sometimes, he even signs autographs for some of the mums at school.

Also, our neighbour always takes his kids to school before going to the studio. Meanwhile, my dad, who can multiply himself, doesn't. Couldn't he use a clone? It'd only take him ten minutes. To be fair, sometimes, when her timetable matches ours, mum comes with us. However, most days we go and come back by ourselves.

Once I asked my dad about it and he said he

doesn't want us to become dependent and that I am too old to be accompanied now.

It's true that I'll be thirteen soon.

Alicia waves at me. Unable to avoid it, I turn red and wave back.

'Stop looking at her all dreamy like that,' says Zara.

'What do you...? I'm not...' I babble.

'Come on, I'm going to tell her you like her...'

'What?!' The possibility that she might makes me go pale and start sweating. 'Are you crazy? Don't you dare!'

'Ha, what a loser you are! It was just a joke...'

'Hi, guys! How's it going?' Víctor greets us.

'It's...good,' I reply.

'The other day you said it would be sunny, but then it rained,' quips Zara, by way of a greeting.

'Well, even with satellites it's hard to make predictions, because there are so many uncertain factors, and with the depressions...'

'Sure, whatever you say. I'm off!' replies my sister, leaving him mid-sentence to go and join her friends.

'Is she always like that?' asks our neighbour, surprised.

'Yeah, don't take it personally. Today Zara is having...a bad day,' I try to excuse her. However, she is exactly like that, and sometimes even worse. It's just a question of time before everyone finds out.

‘Well, good luck in the exam,’ Víctor says to his daughter before getting back into his convertible sports car and disappearing from sight. The television set awaits him.

Alicia comes towards me. Her hair smells like shampoo. Is that coconut or pineapple? Even her shampoo smells better than ours!

‘Are you sniffing my hair?’

‘No, of course not...’

I use my famous tactic: changing the subject.

‘How are you finding Spanish class?’

‘By going into the classroom.’

‘I mean...’

‘Yeah, I know what you mean, Marco. Have you revised the irregular verbs? I’m so nervous, I don’t think I know all of them.’

I smile because she always says that and then she gets an A. It’s part of her charm.

‘I’m sure you’ll pass,’ I say, convincingly.

‘What about you? How are you finding it?’

‘Fine, I reckon I’ll pass, too.’

It’s true: I don’t get great marks, but I never fail

I look at her and think about how I would like to be part of that family, who all get along so well. No crazy experiments, no secrets, no superpowers, no weird pets who get tangled up between your legs because they walk backwards. Where what you see is...what

you get: normal, everyday people with a quiet life. Please, just adopt me already!

We go into school. Zara and her friends head towards their class, and Alicia and I carry on towards ours. She sits in the front row. I go to my seat, at the back of the class.

'What's up?' asks Lucas, my best friend, while finishing a drawing on...my desk. It's a dark elf wearing a necromancer tunic and with rune tattoos on its face. As usual, he's used permanent marker. Great! Why he can't he decorate his own desk with his art?

'At least my dad hasn't blown up the basement yet,' I answer. 'Ready for the exam?'

'Was that today? Seriously?' He thinks a bit and then adds, 'right...What's it on?'

He shouldn't spend all day playing videogames, but his dream is to become a professional gamer and drop his studies. Although, judging by his artwork, he might have more of a future in some dimly-lit tattoo salon. As long as there is someone who's into evil elves, and rune tattoos, of course...

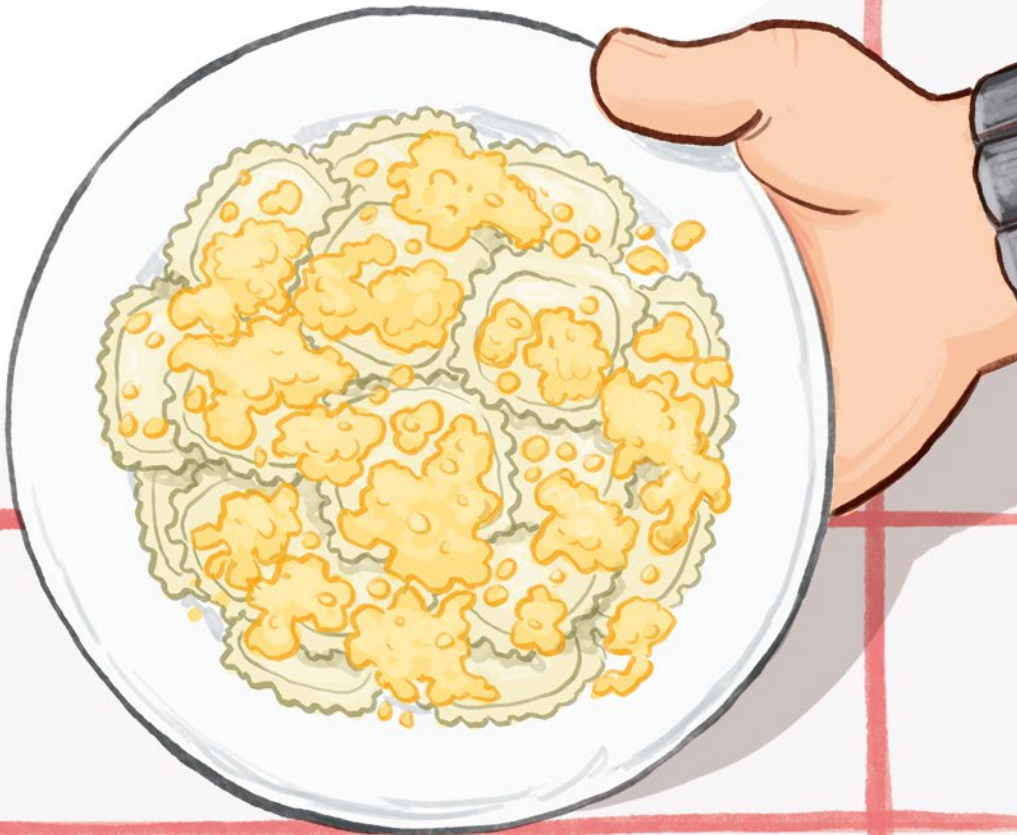
The bell rings. Another boring day awaits.

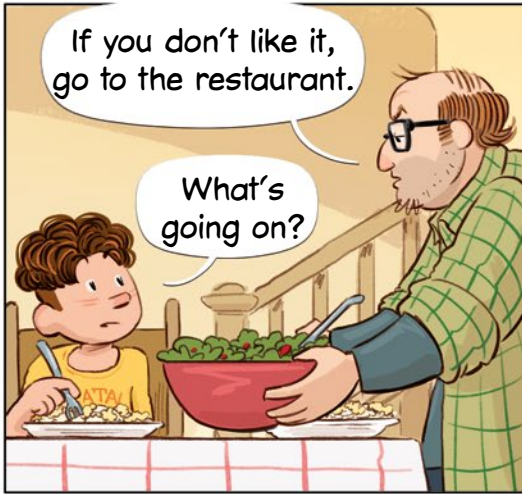
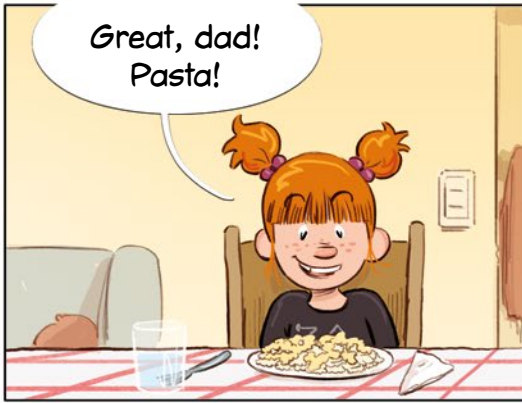


3

PROBLEMS IN PAIRS

The good thing about living so close to school is that we can have lunch at home every day. Hooray! (Sarcasm mode on). Today, as it's Monday, we have pasta bake. It's the only thing my dad cooks. He does it in all its varieties, though: spaghetti, macaroni, fettuccini, tortellini, cannelloni, gnocchi...





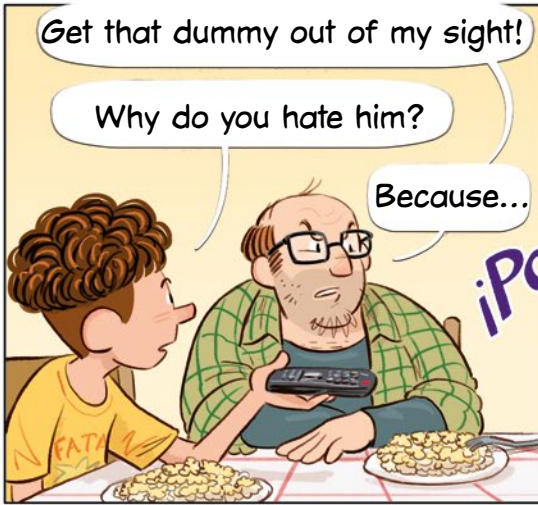


Mum's working late today.
Shall we wait for her?

I don't think she'll be long.
Start, or it'll go cold.



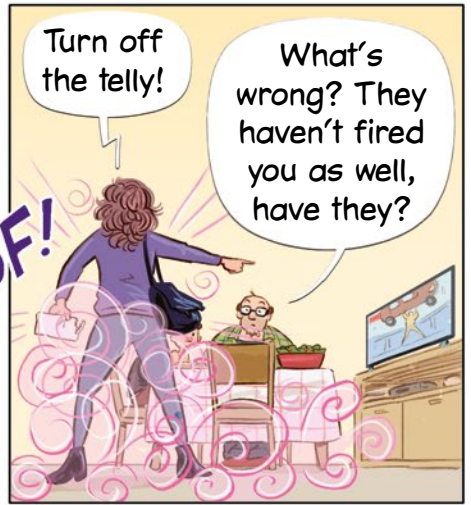
Amber, our local superhero,
has prevented a multi-car
accident on the motorway...



Get that dummy out of my sight!

Why do you hate him?

Because...



Turn off
the telly!

What's
wrong? They
haven't fired
you as well,
have they?



What? No! Wait, they fired
you? Well, you'll explain that
to me afterwards...

This letter says we didn't pay
our taxes last year. That's not
true, is it, Evilio?



Oh, no... Tell me you filed
our tax return!

My love, you
know I...don't
believe in taxes!

Well, it seems they do
believe in you.

'Don't worry. I'll think of something...'

My dad's ideas terrify me. He's mad enough to start printing fake money in the basement.

'Well be quick about it, dear, because every day late is punished. And now tell me about your firing...'

'It's true, Eva...today they let me go from the appliance store in the shopping centre.'

'What did you do this time?' she asks him; she still remembers when they dragged him out of the mobile phone shop for warning customers about the danger of microwaves for the brain.

'Seriously, nothing! I've got nothing against dishwashers. They were simply looking to cut staff and, as you know...'

'...the last one in is the first out,' we all repeat in unison.

'How are we going to pay our taxes now? With my wage we barely make do. These two,' she looks at Zara and I, 'are in the habit of eating three times a day.'

'We'll have to get them to kick that bad habit,' jokes my dad. 'Fasting is character-building.'

'No, not at all, they're still growing. We have to find a solution!'

'I have an idea. I'm going to go back to doing something I've not done for a long time.'

'Do you mean having hair?' asks my sister, very intrigued.

I can almost see her brow wrinkling from the effort of imagining our dad with a fringe (or any hair at all).

‘What? No!’

‘Zara, stop picking on your dad. Alopecia is a genetic trait.’

‘So, what do you suggest?’ I ask.

‘Let’s rob a bank!’ He looks at my mum. ‘Will you come with me? It’ll be like old times...’

‘Ugh, I’m sorry. I’ve got a staff meeting this afternoon. But Marco can help you and that way he’ll learn...’

What?! Seriously? As I can see I’ve got no way out, I improvise...

‘I’d love to, but...one: I don’t have superpowers; and two: I don’t want to end up in jail!’

‘That’s the good bit!’ he replies. ‘Even if they catch you, you’re underage. You won’t go to prison!’

I hadn’t thought about that. Nevertheless, I don’t want to be a criminal. I’ve not even done my GCSEs!

‘I’ll go with you, dad,’ my sister offers.

What a suck up! She’s worse than toothache and stomach ache joined together. I’m sure that, if she could, she’d blow the bank to smithereens and then laugh like an evil supervillain.

‘What a good idea! Yes, that’s it, Zara can go with you,’ I second the motion, to see if it passes.

‘No, Zara, you’re too young still,’ intervenes my

mum. 'Anyway, you can't control your power yet and you stand out...too much.'

'Are you saying that because of the thing at the zoo? It was those monkeys' fault for getting involved. If not, no one would have been hurt!' Zara exclaims.

Want to know what she did? She set fire to the gibbons' bums! Now everyone thinks they're mandrills, poor things! Since that day, my family has been banned from entering the local zoo...for life.

While my mum continues talking to Zara, my dad turns to me.

'Relax, Marco. You won't have to do anything, just keep watch from outside. It'll be very easy.'

'But I have a lot of homework today. You wouldn't want me to fail, would you?'

'You never fail. Anyway, for one day that you don't do your homework, it won't matter...'

'Come on, Marco,' mum butts in. 'You're always saying you want to do more things with your dad, aren't you? Well now you have the chance!'

'I meant going to the cinema or doing an activity together...not robbing banks!'

'Well, it'll be father-son bonding. Go on, say yes!' My mum puts on puppy eyes. She knows I'm so obedient that... 'In exchange, I'll make that cake you like so much!'

She's so manipulative! She knows chocolate is my weakness.

‘Okaaaay. But on one condition,’ I demand. ‘No weapons!’

‘What do you take me for? I never use them. I’m a pacifist! Antisystem, sure, but pacifist. It’ll be enter, steal the money and leave. They won’t even see us,’ he concludes, smiling. What is he planning?

‘Go on, Marco, give him a hand. Then we can pay the darned bills and they’ll leave us in peace.’

‘Okaaaay.’

I’m weak, I know. They always get what they want. My mum, as well as being a teacher, is a master of the subtle art of emotional blackmail.

‘Right, time to eat. The pasta’s going cold!’

I pierce my fork into the crispy ravioli. Too much greasy cheese for my taste.

Now we have a family activity for the afternoon: bank robbery! Just the kind of extra-curricular activity that any normal adolescent takes part in.

I haven’t asked, but...will I need to cover my face?



INDEX

The Baddington Family	3
The Goodman Family	11
Problems in pairs	17
Circling the perimeter	24
Invisible	32
Instructions for robbing a bank	36
Where's the money	41
Back home	48
GCB (Great Central Bank	53
Superproblems	59
Surrounded	65
On the way home	69
Avoiding Captain Amber	75
No news from Doctor Jellyfish	82
Alicia's room	87
A complex criminal mind	93
Following the trail	99
Family rescue	108
Supervillains vs. supervillains	115
Chased	124
Home, sweet home	130
The old normality	136
Epilogue. The barbecue	139





People think having superpowers is cool...and that's true. But it's not cool at all when your family has them and you don't!


Marco is an apparently normal 12-year-old boy, apart from the fact that his family possesses something special: his parents, his sister and even his dog have superpowers. And they intend to use them to become supervillains. Their first step is to rob a bank, but nothing will go according to plan.





**Get ready for an epic adventure
with the BADdington Family!**


bromera

www.bromera.com

 @Bromera

 @bromera

 @bromeraed

 Emociona't amb la lectura

