

Big Sis Never Cries!





My big sis is the coolest kid in the whole world. She lay on a branch way up high in the big oak tree, one arm dangling down like she didn't even care. She just swung it back and forth, humming a little song. I grabbed the low branch with both hands. My fingers went white. My legs kicked the air. 'How do you do that?' I yelled up at her.

Big Sis stood right up on that branch, like it was a path and not a scary drop from that dizzy **height**. She held her toy plane up to the sky and squinted at it.

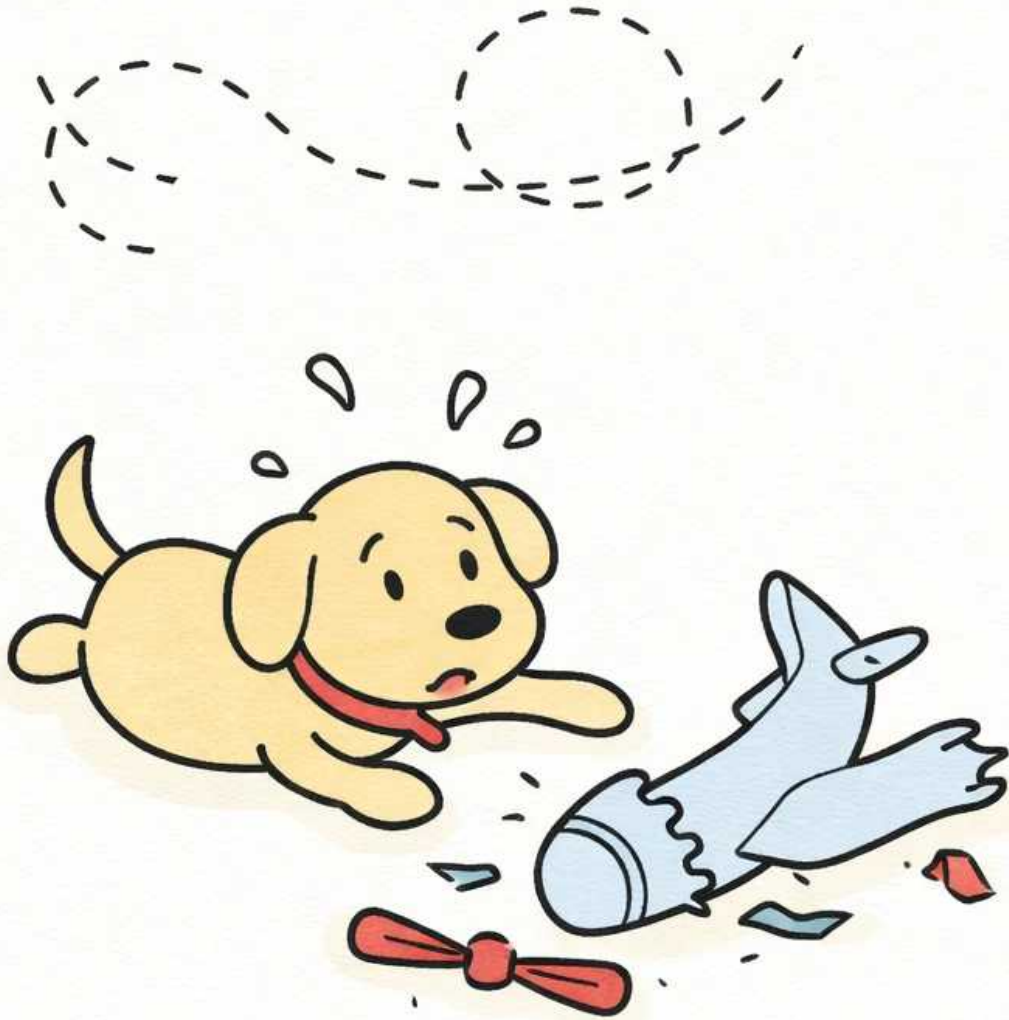
'Watch this,' she said. 'Best launch ever.'

I watched from the bottom of the tree. One day, I thought, I will be just like her.



The plane looped up, up, up... then sideways... then very, very down.

Crash! It hit the ground and bits of red propeller went flying everywhere. Right in the middle of the mess lay our dog Rex, looking **weird** and dazed, like he'd been hit by a tiny storm.



Rex was not happy. He jumped up and barked his biggest, loudest, most **feisty** bark. The kind of bark that says I will remember this.

I grabbed the branch tighter. My knees wobbled.

But Big Sis? She just leaned on the trunk and crossed her arms. 'Oh, shush,' she said. 'It barely touched you.' Nothing scares Big Sis. Nothing.





'I need **eight** good rocks,' Big Sis said, on her knees, digging in the dirt with a little spade. 'And some sticks, and maybe a **weird** shell or two.'

I sat next to her, not sure what to dig for, so I just watched.

Behind us, Rex **seized** a rope and leapt into the air, shaking it **weirdly** hard. Nobody ever tells Rex to stop.

On the way back, Big Sis stopped to pat Rex on the head. 'No hard feelings, yeah?' Rex wagged his tail so hard his whole bum wiggled.

I stood behind Big Sis and held on to her arm. Rex's tongue was big and wet and **weirdly** close to my face. 'He likes you,' Big Sis said.

'He likes eating me,' I whispered.



Then Big Sis caught her foot on a root
and... whoops!

Down she went. Her **weight** pulled me right
along with her. We rolled through the dirt
and the leaves went flying. Rex just watched
us like we were the silliest things he had
ever seen.

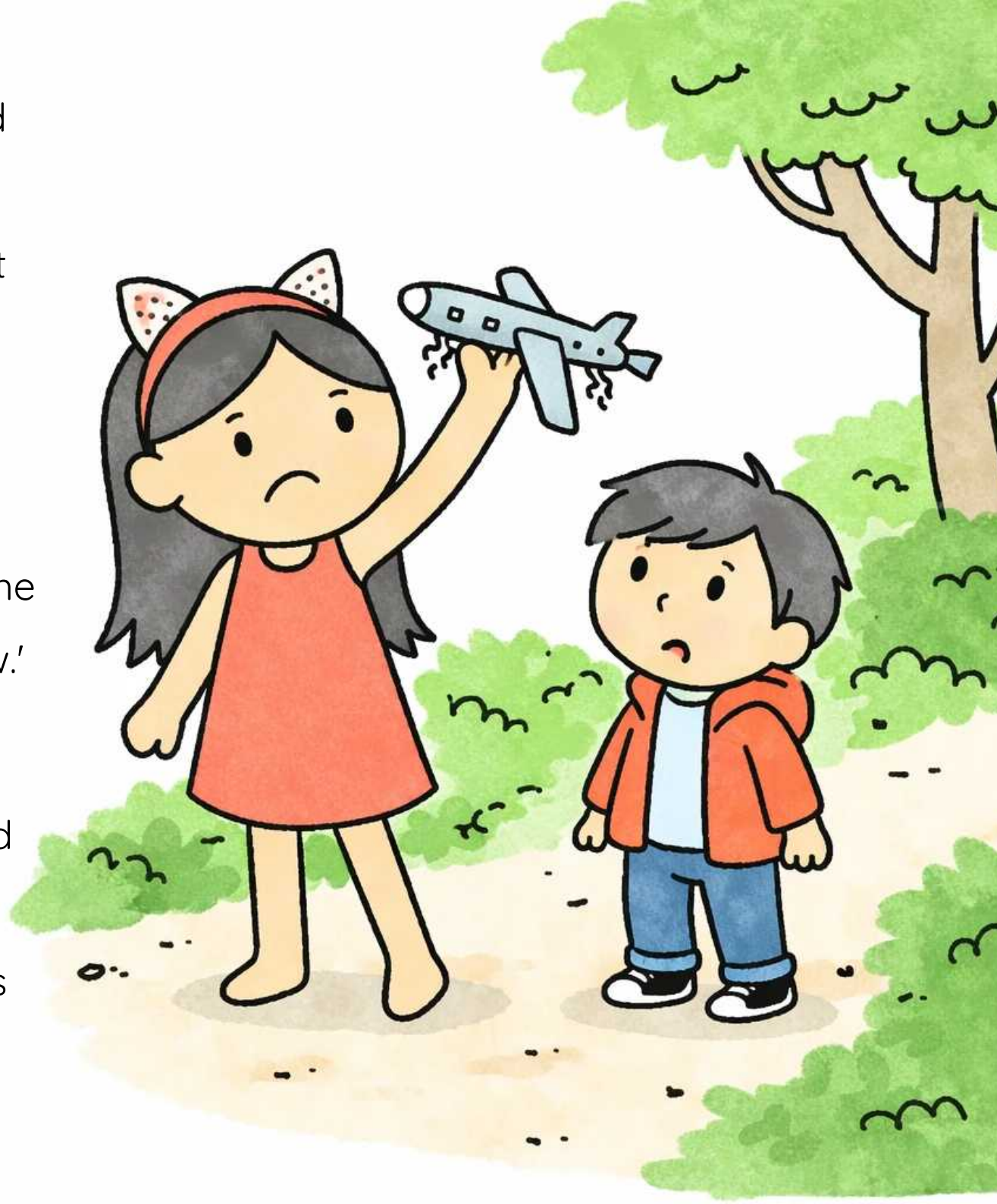
But did Big Sis cry? No way. Not even close.



She got right back up, brushed off her dress, and picked up the broken plane. She turned it over. She squinted at the cracked wing. She tapped it twice.

'We can fix this,' she said. 'Some wood, some glue, good as new.'

I had a scratch on my elbow and a leaf in my ear. I wanted to cry a little. But if Big Sis wasn't crying, then **neither** was I.





Mum wasn't home yet, and my tummy felt **weirdly** empty.

'I'll cook,' Big Sis said, pulling a big recipe book off the shelf and slapping it open on the counter. 'It's Mum's special soup.'

I sat at the table and watched her stir. She didn't **weigh** the flour or read the recipe, and my tummy gave a **weird** little flip.

I put one foot on the stool and peeked over the bench. And then I saw something **weird**.

Something impossible.

Big Sis had tears rolling down her cheeks. Real, actual, wet tears.

My mouth fell open. My big sis. The coolest kid in the world. Was crying?





It made no sense. I shook my head and put my thinking finger on my chin.

Big Sis didn't cry way up on that branch. She didn't cry when she reached out to pet big, scary Rex. **Neither** did she cry when she fell smack on her face in the dirt!

So what could possibly make Big Sis cry?

I crept closer. Closer. Clooooooser.
Big Sis looked down at me,
grinned, and pointed to half an
onion sitting on the counter.
'Onions,' she said, and shrugged.
I laughed so hard I nearly fell
off the stool. Of course it was
onions. Because Big Sis doesn't
cry. Not if she fell off a
mountain. Not if **eight** dinosaurs
bit her toes. Not if the moon
itself came crashing down.

Big Sis never cries.





Big Sis Never Cries!

Big Sis is the coolest kid in the whole world. She climbs to dizzy heights, laughs off a feisty dog, and never, ever cries - not even when she tumbles smack into the dirt! So when her little sibling spots real, wet tears rolling down her cheeks in the kitchen, what on earth could have finally cracked the bravest kid around? This decodable reader practises the 'ei' phonogram in words like 'eight,' 'height,' 'weird,' and 'neither.'

Reading Skills: <ei>

eight, feisty, height, neither, seized, weigh, weight, weird, weirdly

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