

"A Tale of Two Kiddies"

Written by Shaun Eli Breidbart

They were the best of friends, they were the worst of friends.

Buddy and Sally were best of friends, and twins.

They ate together, they played together, they even sang and danced together. They drew even closer when their parents were killed two years ago in a tragic anvil accident. Now they're being raised by their legal guardian Mr. Ward Winkles, CPA.

This year they turned seven, and that's about the age when Buddy's friends were picking on him for being friends with a girl, even if, especially if, it's his sister. So one day when Sally came riding past on her bicycle, Buddy pushed her over.

She ran home crying. Mr. Winkles was in St. Louis on a business trip, and their babysitter Mumford T. Manatee didn't know what to do. When Sally called me in tears I rushed over. She had a skinned knee and a scraped elbow but I realized that what hurt most was her pride. Her brother, the most important person in her world, had turned on her.

I explained that it didn't mean that he didn't love her, but that he succumbed to peer pressure. She didn't quite understand. Regardless, Buddy needed to be punished. I called Mr. Winkles and we worked out a plan. Simple punishment wouldn't be enough. We needed to do something that would make Buddy empathize with Sally's pain.

I took Sally aside and when Buddy was eating lunch we put the training wheels back on Buddy's bike. And made him go ride it down the street to his friends. Who, of course, picked on him, calling him a baby for needing training wheels at age seven.

While Buddy was out I showed Sally how to use a wrench and a screwdriver to remove training wheels. She practiced several times on her bike, attaching and removing them. And when Buddy returned home, shamed, Sally took the training wheels off his bike and they went out riding together.

Buddy's friends made fun of him once more for being friends with a girl. But this time he knew who his true friend was. He simply said "You would be too, if you had a sister as super as Sally. She can't be your sister but she can be your friend too." And then all the kids went riding down the street together.

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