

# *Angles, Devils, Rabbits, and People*

By Autumn Borthwick

*Layla and Baxter, they're like my guardian angels. Mind reading guardian angels. Beings. Magical little people with horns and wings. Whatever. They have sat on my shoulders since I was born. Helped me through the good and bad. I don't think anyone else has a Layla or a Baxter, and no one else knows about them, not even my little sister, Holly. And no one ever will. I hope. I mean, think of what could happen if anyone should find out...STOP DOWNWARD SPIRALING! Go to sleep. Go to sleep. I tell myself this every night, though it rarely helps. Go to sleep. Go to sleep. Go to sleep.*

Around midnight, just as I'm dozing off, Baxter starts talking.

**"I can't sleeeeeeeep."**

"Shhhhh."

**"I will not!"**

"Baxter. Go to sleep."

**"Nope!"**

"*Huh? Wha—?*"

Great. Now Layla's up too.

**"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8—"**

"Baxter, WHAT IN LAYLA'S NAME ARE YOU DOING?!"

"*Hey!*"

**"I'm counting sheep."**

"Ugggggggggggggggggggggggggggggh!"

**"—9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17..."**

When I came downstairs, I find a note on the kitchen table saying that my parents are at work and will be home before dinner. I sigh, but then get a good idea: I'm gonna snoop. I haven't snooped in my parents stuff since I was little, but I'm bored and didn't get a lot of sleep last night.

**"Yahoo! Let's go snooping!"**

"*Are you sure we should do this?*"

**"Hell yeah! Our parents aren't home, we can do WHATEVER WE WANT!"**

I head up to their room, and slowly open the door. I head straight to their filing cabinet, where they keep all their important files. I try all the drawers, but none of them open, so I search for a key.

**"Look in the medicine cabinet."**

"Ok."

"*Hmph,*" Layla says disapprovingly.

I look in the medicine cabinet and find the key.

**"Yes!"**

Layla just shakes her head.

I try all the doors again, but only one unlocks. I slide it open. Inside are tons of papers. I pick one out at random and read it over, and am so startled that I almost faint. This is all so crazy! How could my parents be ...but maybe it's all wrong, or...or out of context? Maybe-

**What is it?! We can't read, and all your thinking is 'I can't believe this, my parents...**

**O.M.Geezeys! Tell us already!"**

"My parents, no, our parents are murderers."

**What do you mean?**



"ENOUGH!" I say loud enough for them to both jump. They shut up instantly. "We're staying and that's final. We can't leave Holly here, and we can't take her with us either. We're staying here until we have permission to go, and until we know Holly will be ok without us here."

**"Fine."** Grumbles Baxter. Layla brightens.

*"Does that mean I won the argument?"*

"Sure." I shrug.

**"What! No! How come she always wins!?!"** Complains Baxter. **"I want to win sometimes!"**

I just roll my eyes and sit up. As I stand, something punctures my foot. I limp back to the drain pipe, and climb slowly and painfully back up, my hurt foot dripping blood. Once I'm back in my room, I turn on the light and look at my foot.

**"Oh, that's gotta hurt."**

*"Oh my gosh, Sophia!"*

There's a rusty tack sticking out of my foot. With great difficulty I pull it out, and it hurts like hell. I know I should get a tetanus shot, but then I'd have to explain to my parents how the tack got in my foot, and I don't really want them to know that. I'll just wait and see.

For now, I hobble into my bathroom and bandage my foot. Then I hobble back to bed, and don't fall asleep until morning.

When I wake up, my foot feels better, so I try to stand on it. That makes it hurt, so I hobble down the stairs to breakfast: cereal and milk, sausage, and orange juice. Right as I sit down, Holly starts talking.

"Mommy?"

"Yes Holly dear?"

"Can we get a bunny?" At this my orange juice erupts from my mouth and goes blasting right into my cereal.

**"Wow Holly, just WOW."**

"Sophia!" My mom says, surprised.

"Sorry." I mumble into my cereal.

"So? Can I get a bunny?" Holly asks hopefully.

"No, sorry sweetie." My mom answers.

"That's not fair!"

"That's how it is. No exceptions." My father states.

"Plus, we don't need anymore things to clean up for." My mother adds.

"What do you mean?" Holly asks dubiously.

"Nothing!" Hisses my mother.

"But I'm your daughter!!! Doesn't that count for SOMETHING!?!?" My sister continues to whine.

"I don't care that you're my stupid daughter!" My mother yells.

"But -"

"I said NO!" My mother bellows

**"BURN! Oooh! Your mother's evil alright! I mean WOWZA! I knew she was mean, but not like-"**

*"How can we just go and leave Holly with a monster like that!"*

**"How can we stay with a monster like that!"**

"Oh shush your mouth, both of you." I whisper, wanting to hear what happens next.

"But mommy please. Will you lis -"

"You shut up right now Holly Smith or I'll lock you in your room."

"Okay." Whimpers Holly. "Shutting up now."

"Good. Now finish your breakfast."

I look from my mom, to my dad, and back to Holly. Then, I make a decision.

I rush through my breakfast and hobble upstairs. I want to see if there is anything else my parents have been hiding from me for 16 years. I sneak up to the door to my parents room as the rest of my family finishes their meal. I appoint Layla to listen for signs of someone coming upstairs, and Baxter to help me search through the files.

My hand closes around the cold brass knob of my parents room. I open the door, and walk straight across the room to the bathroom on the other side. Once again, the key in the medicine cabinet. I open the filing cabinet drawer and start to rifle through the papers. I don't see anything new, so I get up to leave.

**"Hey look! A tool from the Stone Age! Look at the rust on that thing! I bet it came straight from a museum! That was from, like, 600 million years ago! It's like, even older than YOU!"**

"What are you talking about Baxter?"

**"That thing! Over there."** He says pointing.

"You mean the flip phone?"

**"Yeah, I guess you could call it that."**

*"Should we look in it?"*

"Well there's no harm trying" I sigh, and grab the flip phone. Luckily it isn't passcode guarded, so I get on easily. I go straight for the texts. I click on the first and most recent text from when Holly was three.

"She's just so stubborn."

"But Holly is just so young."

"Exactly. Sophia has already developed her own sense of things. she's 2 old."

"Where are you right now anyway?"

"Testing lab."

"A recently found reaction to our makeup remover shows eyes may blister over"

"O and if u eat our dry Shampoo it could cause cancer"

"Nice :) Sophia has already been taught and u say Holly is 2 young."

"Someone needs to take over."

"....."

"Holly then."

"We just can't let her know."

"Yha i agree"

That was the end of that text, so I tap the next one, which was less recent- from about 11 months before I was born:

"People are getting suspicious."

"I can tell. What should we do?"

"We need something that will make us seem innocent, like.....kids!"

"Kids? ;("

"I know, I know, but just think about it! No 1 is going to suspect 2 kind loving parents with 2 innocent little kids"

"2?"

"To keep them both entertained. A older and a younger."

"I guess ...you've been thinking about this for a while, haven't you?"

"Yeah."

"but what to do with them?"

"Just give em some junk like "i love u" and a tv and they'll be set."

"How long will we have to fake that we "love" the little brats  
Besides what if they find out."

"Trust me...they won't."

Before I could read any more the phone dies and I am left staring at my own reflection in the blank dead screen

**"Wow. So it turns out that not only are your parents monsters, but the never actually LOVED YOU AND JUST HAD YOU TO LOOK NICE!?! Damn!"**

*"Well, I'm sure they don't actually mean that.."*

**"Look! For once can you just admit that something is not right in your 'oh look at me everything is so sunny and happy and wonderful' little idea of the world!?! Could you stop romping around in the daisies for once in our life! They hate us! H-A-T-E HATE US!!!!"**

At this point in their argument, I start crying, as in bawling, as in my entire face crumples and I start sobbing like a baby. I run into my room, slam the door, and smooch my face into my pillow and cry as Layla tries (and fails) to comfort me. I haven't cried like this since I was like six, so I guess she was a little out of practice. That or I would rather cry right now than have to do something. Once I've gotten ahold of myself, I go downstairs to find Holly. I'm gonna tell her everything.