

## THE SMILE OF FORTUNE

Methuselah just couldn't do anything right.

In spite of all the jibes, the suffusing hate that seemed to always weigh him down, Methuselah was Fiona's role model. It might not have been entirely true, but Fiona insisted. Fiona was Methuselah's younger sister, and she loved to tease him, tickle him, tackle him onto the mat; anything to see him smile. When he smiled, which he barely did, it was a beautiful smile, discreet, wee, but brilliant. Fiona loved it. She hated the moments her brother sat sulking, planting his sorry body in the settee, chin dug into his palms, pondering deeply.

"Methu, look!" Fiona rushed in shouting one chilly December evening as Methuselah sat adjacent the mantelpiece, staring blankly at the burning logs of wood. He lazily turned to face his excited sister. She was waving a letter in her hand, and immediately he saw the logo, his lips puckered into a little, lovely smile.

Windfall School, his dream school, had accepted his application and he would be joining their candidate class at the start of the following year. The gloom suddenly lifted and although he did not waltz into excited chatter, he was vis This is not the complete story. To read further, please either Methuselah gave him a reluctant hug and register as a new reader or login now if already registered py when they saw Methuselah unusua e cleared his plate.

"Well done, Methu," his mother remarked, smiling from ear to ear.

"An apple now to keep Fiona away," his father joked, as Fiona had always insisted she wanted to be a doctor when she grew up. A tray of fruits was brandished and Methuselah happily joined in.

Fiona giggled in ecstasy, for nothing gave her joy like the sight of a happy Methuselah. The boy spun in his chair, reveling in the electrifying mood that had engulfed everyone. He even offered to clear the table after dinner.

But as he carried the plates to the kitchen sink, he felt his knees suddenly go limp, and he teetered. He tried to stabilize his body, but the plates slipped out of his hands and plummeted to the floor. One after the other, the crockery shattered with blood-curdling noise as Methuselah watched helplessly, the broken pieces spinning upon the tiles in all directions. His dazed family stood behind him, watching silently, looks of empathy eminent on their faces.

When the noise had died down and Methuselah stood over the mess, ashen, Fiona sprinted forward and threw herself into his arms.