

ME,

MY Twin,

and the

BIG

MIX

UP!



CHAPTER ONE

It can't be true, it just can't be. All these years and they finally tell me: I HAVE A TWIN! I'm lying here in my leaf-bed, I'm tired, I'm sad and I'm angry. I HAVE TO FIND MY TWIN!

CHAPTER TWO

Okay, I guess I'd better start from the beginning. I'm Kiara and I'm a monkey. I'm 13 years old (it was my birthday yesterday) and I have always wanted a twin sister, or even a brother. Now you see I'm really desperate! Well anyway, today at lunch we were sitting down and Dad had found bananas for us to eat (there's a banana tree a couple of trees away from our tree; aren't we lucky?). I had just finished my daily thing of "Will you PLEASE adopt a sister, a twin or even a brother?" and Mum and Dad were looking guilty, but they said firmly, "NO!" and sighed. I was wishing I had the gift of somebody around my age, when Mum said, "Kiara, we think there's something very important that you should know, now that you're old enough to understand." Oh dear, I thought, she only calls me 'Kiara' when she's worried, angry, sad or something like that. "I'm ready," I said. "Well, first of all," Mum said, "your father isn't really your father." I gasped. I could feel tears of anger, sadness and grief swelling in my eyes. "No, no, NO!" I yelled. I ran out of the man-made tree house and climbed the vines to my room. I lay there on my bed, sobbing. Dad's not Dad? It's too horrible to think of, all these years of calling Mark 'Dad'; all those years thinking my 'Dad' was there to protect me. It's just too much for me. I know that I'm a teenager now and I should be able to handle things like this, but inside me *I'm just a kid.*

CHAPTER THREE

As I climbed along the vines above the tree-tops, I breathed in the cool, fresh air and thought about my birthday. It really just wasn't much of a birthday without a sister, a twin, a brother even, or a friend *around my age*. It just seems so, *boring*. Well you see it is, like no one to play with, no one to tell secrets to . . . it's like taking a handful out of a girl's childhood. I wish most of all that I had a twin. Someone so much like me that no-one could tell us apart . . . it would just be so great.

I climbed along the vines back to the man-made tree-house.

"Sorry," said Mum.

"Sorry," said Mark.

"No, sorry," I said.

"But you . . ." began Mum.

"No, I'm a teenager now and I should be able to handle things like that, I guess," I said, shyly but firmly.

"Well then, I think that my big girl is ready for the next part of the secret," said Mum.

"You didn't tell me there was another part to *the secret*," I gasped.

"Well, you should know the full story," Mum said.

I put on my listening cap (I do have one; it's black, with 'Listen, Man' written on it in big yellow letters) and turned silent.

CHAPTER FOUR

"A long time ago, when you were just born, something happened: your twin was born after you," said Mum. I didn't dare interrupt, I wouldn't dare. This was a sacred moment for me and I didn't want to spoil it.

"Your father was there too; he was a fine man," continued Mum. "We decided to name you Kiara, and your twin, Kara. At the same time, another little baby girl was born to a pretty young girl; her name was Lizzie Star. The mother's name was Lucy Star, and the father that used to be John Star, was dead," Mum said quietly.

I gulped, but didn't say anything; I didn't know what to say.

"Technically, your twin belonged to your father, and you belonged to me. Then it happened: your father took one look at Lucy and *dropped me*," Mum said.

I could feel myself wanting to cry, but I didn't, I kept myself together and went on listening.

"So Michael — your father — sent to live with Lucy and I heard that three years later they had a baby girl called Lisa," Mum said.

I saw her eyes beginning to get wet and sad.

"It's ok Mum," I said quietly and reassuringly. Mum took a deep breath, gulped, and continued.

"By then, I'd found Mark, and you and Kara were three. From then on, I promised myself I would tell you all this when you were thirteen, and so I am now," Mum said. "I never heard of Michael again but I know that he, Kara, Lisa, Lizzie and Lucy are now living in Africa. So that's how your twin got separated," Mum finished.

That was when I couldn't hold it in any more. I burst into tears. I climbed out of the tree-house.

"Wait, Kiara, wait!" came the voice of my mum.

"No!" I shouted back.



CHAPTER FIVE

So here I am. As I said, I'm tired, sad and angry.

"Lights out" whispered mum.

"Mmmm" I murmured. "Huh?" I suddenly yelped with surprise.

"Oh sorry mum, I didn't see you there" I said.

"Goodnight Kiara" said mum.

"Night mum" I said.

I didn't feel tired anymore but as soon as my head touched the flowers I fell asleep.

CHAPTER SIX

"Wake up!" yelled the birds. Well that's what it sounded like! I wondered why they were so loud this morning.

"Wake up!" yelled Mum. Yes, she really did yell "Wake up".

"How do you think I could be asleep with all these birds chirping SO LOUDLY?!" I shouted back.

"I don't know what's wrong with them, but just remember, it's Monkeyscah today," Mum yelled.

"Alright Mum," I shouted again. 'Monkeyscah' is a monkey version of er, what do you call it? Oh yeah, school. So anyway, I got my breakfast — bananas *again*.

"I do get bored with bananas you know," I told Mark.

That was then I remembered 'The Secret'; well it wasn't really a secret any more . . . I slowed down while I was thinking about it, but then I thought:

"Oh well, I'd better just get on with life." But inside me I knew I just *had* to do something, and *fast*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I decided to take the lift. A monkey's lift is *very* different to a human's one; I'll explain: At the bottom there's a very large leaf, attached to two vines, which are attached to two large branches at the top, which are kept down by really strong vines, which are kept down by extremely large rocks with a branch underneath so that if you sit in the leaf and step on the branch, the branch will lever the rocks off the vine, which will let go of the branches, which will bring you up. Also, if you want to get off, you have to grab the rocks (all the places that you can get to by the lift have rocks and a large, strong branch — they replace the rocks every half hour) hold onto the big branch, tie the rocks onto the vines, and the leaf will go down for the next person. Then you just swing yourself into your room, and you're ready! It's great fun. So anyway, I did all this, and then went to sit down.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"Today, my little monkeys, we will be learning about getting around when we grow up," said Mr Maccel. Mr Maccel is my teacher. He's thirty years old, had brown eyes (of course), orangey brown fur, and is great.

"You, Kiara, should especially listen, because you have just turned thirteen," said Mr Maccel.

"Ooooh!" exclaimed the class.

"How does Mr Maccel know?" I wondered. Maybe Mum told him.

"You know, I could tell you some tips about going out into the Big Wide World," he said.

"Oh alright then," I snapped. I had a feeling he was trying to embarrass me, which is very unusual.

"Well, first of all, you should have a goal in life.

Secondly you should always have enough S.B. to feed your family — if you make one — and lastly, you should start making some S.B of your own," he finished.

The class laughed, while I stifled a giggle. Then I suddenly realised, Mr Maccel wasn't Mr Maccel; he looked like him, but to tell the truth, I think that Mr Maccel was a bit uglier! Also, Mr Maccel didn't make jokes; he was more the kind and caring type. The 'new teacher' must have guessed what I was thinking.

"Finally you noticed!" he said. "No, I'm not Mr Maccel," he said. "I'm Mr Star." "But I used to be Mr Fire," he mumbled, and look away. I didn't really think much of this. Then suddenly I just made up my mind that that very night, I was going to buy some tickets to Africa, to find my twin — and my father.



CHAPTER NINE

That afternoon when I came home, Mark was waiting for me with dinner — BANANAS AGAIN!

“Don’t you know I get sick of bananas sometimes?”

“Alright, so I *like* bananas, but not when it’s all I get to eat; how about a change Mark? I bet Dad wouldn’t do this,” I yelled. Mark suddenly became very interested in the floor, and I stomped off. I was going to tell Mum that I was leaving, or at least, I was going to *try* . . .

CHAPTER TEN

"But you've got to let me go, you've just *got* to," I whined pathetically.

"But you just aren't *ready*," Mum replied sternly.

"Yes I am," I said matter-of-factly.

"Oh alright then," she said. "But on one condition: always go by these words," she said, and then began a rhyme:

"Unexpected things will happen
wherever you go

But always go along with them
for what they might do, you never know."

There was silence for a moment, then I suddenly said:

"Okay Mum, I will."

"Here's some money to start you off my dear," she said.

We hugged each other, said goodbye, then . . . Hello
Big Wide World from Kiara Fire!



CHAPTER ELEVEN

It's really scary, just thinking about all the bad things that could happen, but then I think: **BUT YOU CAN DO IT!** And then I think: *Can I?* Because really, once I leave, I'll probably never come back again, and I don't think that anybody can see exactly how scary it is until they're actually there. I mean, it's probably really boring, me ranting and raving about how scary it is, but to me it really is, well . . . **EXCITING**. Because, well, anything could happen really! I could become rich and famous, and totally forget about The Old Days, or I could grow old and be lonely and always think about The Good Old Days . . . The thing is, I don't know whether I *can* do it or not, and if I can, *how* can I do it? Well, I guess I'll just stick to one solution now, and that is:

I'm a teenager now, so I **CAN DO IT!** Well, wish me luck, **HERE I GO!**



CHAPTER TWELVE

By the way, did I tell you it's night? And that it's raining, it's cold, and it's dark because there's no moon. Oh, why did I have to leave on a night like this? It's just so . . . SPOOKY!

"Aaargh!" I screamed, then quickly covered my mouth with my hand. "It's not a King Brown snake — it's just a vine." I started walking at twelve o'clock midnight, and it's now about two thirty in the morning (we learn to tell roughly what time it is in Monkeyseah as well). I took the Jaess (pronounced Jae-Ess — a word made up of 'Jump and Slide'), which is an amazingly wide branch that you get a vine, tie it around the branch and yourself, then slide down. Usually it's really fun, but somehow it just seemed a bit scarier than usual because the rain had made the branch slippery, which caused me to take on speed.

Oh my God, it's already four o'clock! Now where can I find some tickets to Africa?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I've travelled two hours since I last wrote, and I've found someone to get the tickets from.

"How many do you want?" asked a large, filthy man.

"Two, please," I answered.

"Butcha don't got nobody with ya," he said. This guy was really starting to get on my nerves.

"One for spare," I answered politely.

"Okely-dokely," he said as he lit his dirty looking leaf-pipe. "Come back next week an' it'll be two hundred bucks," he said promptly. The price was okay, because Mum had given me \$350; it was the *time* that was bothering me: A WHOLE WEEK!

"What?" I shrieked, "I HAVE TO WAIT A WHOLE WEEK?"

"Yep," he said, as he sucked his big, dirty, furry finger. (I don't understand why some monkeys like the taste of 'finger' so much). I stomped off without a word, when suddenly:

"What's wrong?" asked a monkey who looked about the same age as me. I sighed, then began my story.

"I just recently turned thirteen, so now I just left home to accomplish my goal, which is to find my twin called Kara, and my father called Michael — which I found out about after my birthday — and they live in Africa so I finally found some tickets to go there, but I have to wait a whole week until I get them," I gasped. The monkey's eyes were getting rounder and rounder and bigger and bigger as she stared at me. Then, without warning, she fell to the ground, eyes closed. She must have fainted. I looked around, but there was nobody. Even the big, dirty monkey had gone.

"Help!" I yelled. No answer. "Help, Help, HELP!"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Then I remembered: Monkeyscah was on today; I could get Mr Star to help me. I knew the way from anywhere. I ran and ran — I never knew I could run so fast. I raced over rocks, over sticks; I even skipped over a few other animals. I quickly took the lift up and jumped in.

Everybody turned to look at me, but I just ignored them, and turned to Mr Star.

“Mr Star, Mr Star,” I gasped, “There’s a young monkey about the same age as me and she’s fainted,” I said.

“Calm down, calm down Kiara dear,” said Mr Star gently.

“Now that you’re here, meet Lucy — my wife, Lizzie — my daughter, and Lisa — my other daughter,” he said.

For the first time I noticed three very pretty girls standing in the far right corner of the room.

“Hi Lucy, Lizzie and Lisa,” I said.

“Hello,” they chorused.

“Alright class, Monkeyscah is dismissed, for an emergency,” said Mr Star.

“Girls, Kiara: let’s go!” he said.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Once we got there, Lucy, Lizzie and Lisa stared at the monkey. Mr Star looked at her, then at me.

"It can't be," he whispered. "It just couldn't be," he said, now with a bit of excitement in his voice. "Kiara, I know why she fainted; I'll explain when she wakes up," he said. Almost as soon as he said this, she woke up. "Kara dear, are you okay?" asked Mr Star gently. Then it came to me; it was like a jig-saw puzzle with all the pieces finally in the right places: this girl was Kara — my twin, Mr Star was my dad, Lizzie was my step-sister, Lisa was my half-sister, and Lucy was my step-mum!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"Kara!" I yelled. I leapt forward and hugged her, then did the same to Dad. I knew what had happened now; it all went like this:

Remember how Mr Star said he used to be 'Mr Fire'? Kara Fire! Remember when Mum told me the story — the three girls' names were Lucy, Lizzie and Lisa! Kara must have been told about me, and left Africa with her family to find me, and was probably going to get some tickets to go back because she'd given up! Well anyway, I'd found them all, and to me, that's all that really matters.

Well, now I suppose I'll tell you what happened after that:

Lizzie, Lucy, Lisa, Kara and Dad came to stay with Mum and I. Mark found someone he thought was pretty in Africa, so he ran off to find her. I got to know Lucy, Lizzie, Lisa, Kara and Dad, and began to make up this whole sort of club with Lizzie, Lisa, Kara and I. I'm now sixteen (and so are Kara and Lizzie). Lisa's thirteen, Lucy's forty, Mum's forty-three, and Dad's forty-five. We're a happy family and now that Lisa's finished with Monkeyscah we go on holidays *heaps!* I'm loving life and we call ourselves 'The Big Happy Family' . . . which we *are!*