

THE

TEMPLETON TWINNS

HAVE AN IDEA

A.

B.

C.

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

D.

ABIGAIL

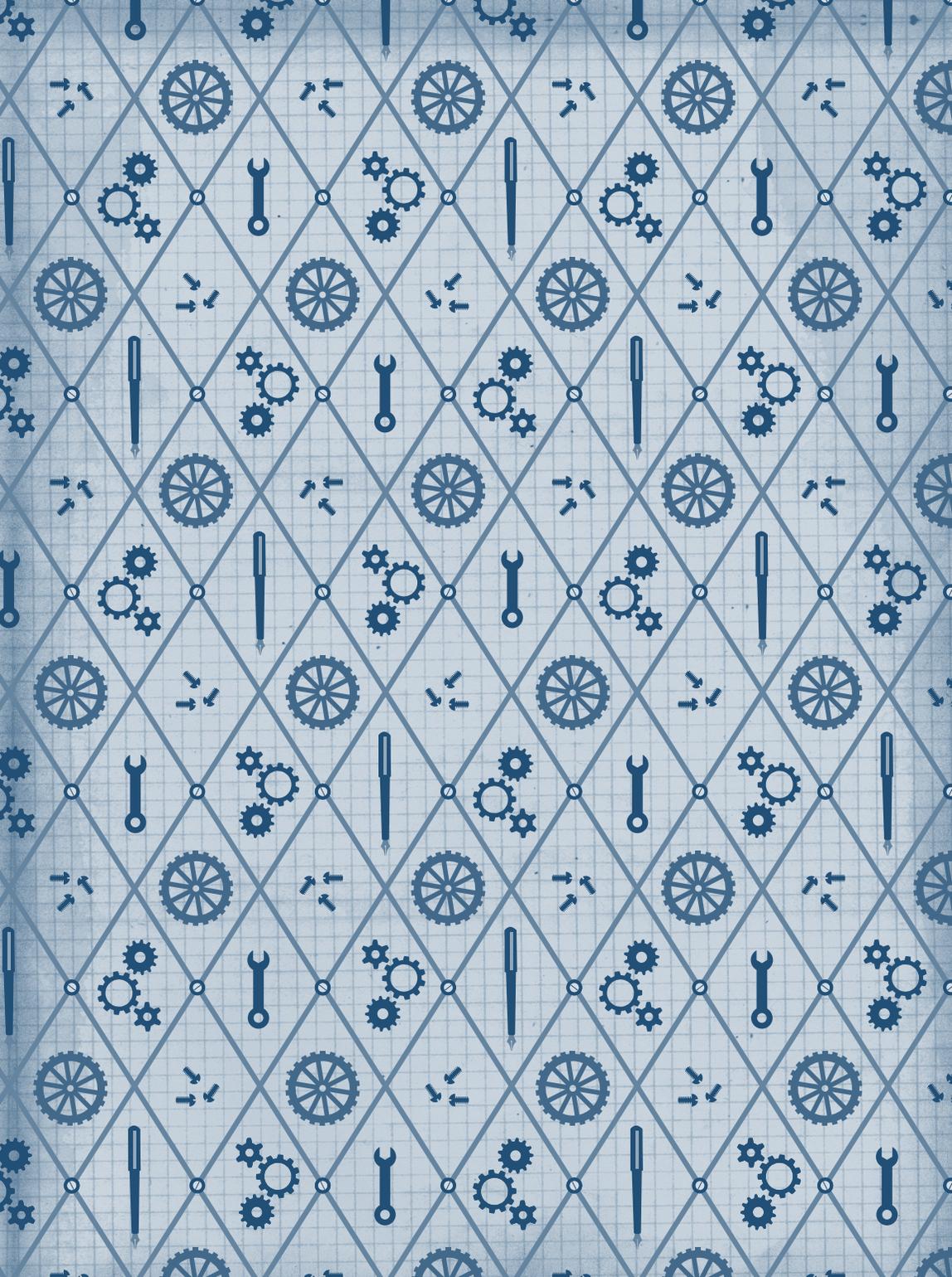
E.

JOHN

BOOK 1

WRITTEN BY
ELLIS WEINER

ILLUSTRATED BY
JEREMY HOLMES



THE **TEMPLETON**
TWINS
HAVE AN IDEA



TO BARBARA DAVILMAN. —ELLIS WEINER
TO PAXTON AND CHARLIE HOLMES. —JEREMY HOLMES



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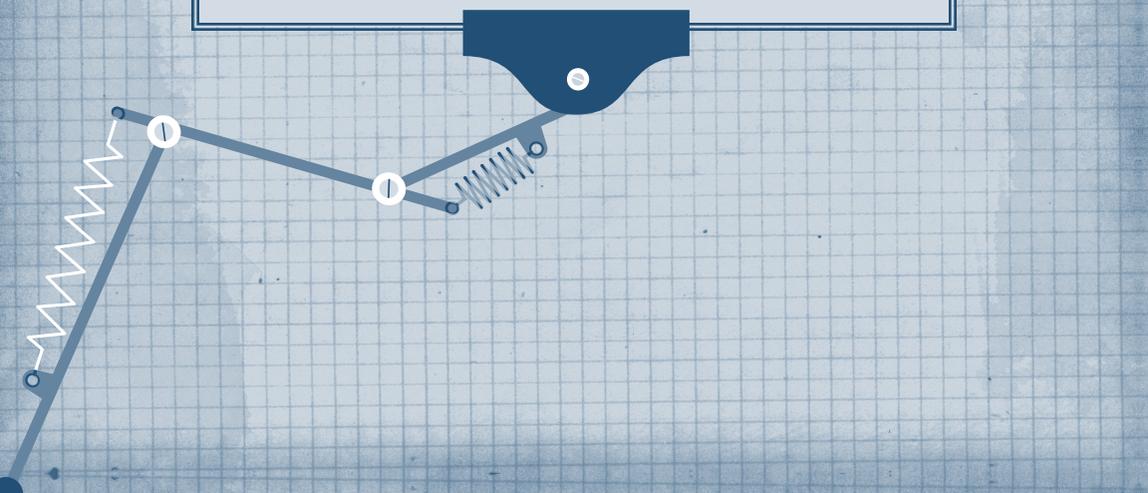
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THE TEMPLETON TWINNS

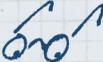
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BOOK 1




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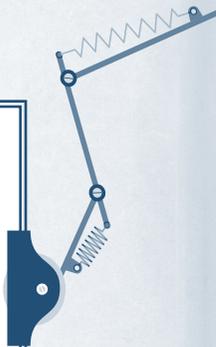
The

End.



QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Did you enjoy the Prologue?
2. Do you think it makes the slightest bit of difference to me whether you did or not?





ACTUAL PROLOGUE:
**TRYING TO GET
STARTED**

The Templeton twins, Abigail and John, were blah blah blah, et cetera, and so forth.

Yes, I admit, the above sentence isn't very good. Well, too bad.

You will have to bear with me, Reader. I have never done this sort of thing before—written books, told stories to complete strangers who, frankly, I may not particularly like. Yes, I am referring to you. Would I like you if I met you? I'm not so sure I would.

Of course, you can say, "Well, maybe I wouldn't like *you* if I met you, Narrator." While that isn't likely, it is indeed a *possibility*. And yet when I contemplate such an occasion, I cannot help but ask myself, *Do I want the Reader to like me? Do I care?*

I think we can all agree that I don't care. Believe me, I am not writing these words because I want to. I am writing them because I am compelled to. That is why I wrote *The End* in the Prologue. I had hoped you would read that and be fooled into thinking you had read an entire book, which I would then not actually have to write.

I had hoped you would look up and say to your parent or guardian or sibling or bodyguard, "My, that was a short book. I'm not sure anything actually happened in it, but it says, 'The End,' so something must have."

However, I can see by the fact that you are reading this now that I was wrong. I was unable to fool you. You must be smarter than I thought. Very well. If you are so terribly, terribly smart, why don't *you* write this book? Just fill it in right here:

I see you have failed to fill it in. It's not as easy as it looks, is it? Fine. **LET'S MOVE ON.**

ONE DAY, THIRTEEN YEARS EARLIER—

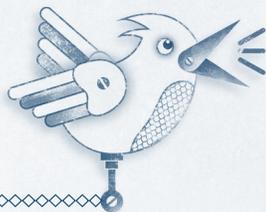
HOLD IT,

you may be thinking. “‘Earlier’ than what? Nothing has happened yet, so how can anything be ‘earlier’ than nothing?”

In reply, I can say only that it seemed like a good idea to write, “One day, thirteen years earlier,” but now I am having Second Thoughts. I shall try writing the Prologue again.

But wait. First, let us all agree on what a “Prologue” is. A Prologue is the part of the story that happens before the events of the main story itself. (“Pro-” means “before,” and “-logue” means . . . whatever it means. Look it up. Why do I have to do everything?) The purpose of the Prologue is to establish something important that will have consequences later.

There. We all agree on what a Prologue is. That is, I have told you what it is, and you agree with me. Now, at last, finally, here, is the actual Prologue.





ACTUAL PROLOGUE:
**GETTING STARTED
AGAIN**

One day, thirteen years earlier, Professor Elton Templeton was in his office at Elysian University, talking with a student. Normally the Professor enjoyed meeting with students in his office, but today he was distracted by the fact that his wife was about to give birth to their first baby.

However, he had been told that the baby would not be ready to be born for some time, so he had decided to conduct his usual office hours. He had met with all the students who wished to speak with him except this one.

This young man, who was quite good-looking, had come to the Professor's office to protest the grade the Professor had given him in a course entitled "Introduction to Systems Dynamics." Do you know what that means? Of course you don't. And yet I do .

Fortunately for both you and me, what it means is irrelevant to our story. For now, just bear in mind that the Professor was a renowned engineer and inventor, and so he taught courses in things like systems and dynamics.

The grade the Professor had given this student was an F, which is the worst grade you can possibly get. The Professor had never given anyone an F before (and, in case you are interested, he never would again). He didn't like giving anyone an F, and he didn't like arguing over grades. He was uncomfortable with the entire discussion.

But, as he explained, the good-looking student had left him no choice.

"Look here," the Professor said. "You left me no choice. You cheated on all your exams."

This made the student even more upset. "But I came to all your lectures!"

"Yes, but you slept through them," the Professor said. "And you handed in reports that were proven to have been written by someone else."

The door to the Professor's office opened. Standing there was the secretary of the engineering department. She was very excited.

“Professor!” she said breathlessly. “The hospital called. The babies are coming!”

“Oh, my goodness,” the Professor said. As he got up from his desk, he said to the young man, “Now you will have to excuse me; the babies are coming. . . .”

“But we’re not finished!” the young man said. “You have to give me at least a C or I’ll flunk out of college!”

“I cannot give you a C,” the Professor said, hastily stuffing papers into his briefcase and grabbing his hat.

“You can’t go!” the young man said. “You have to listen to me!”

“Our meeting is concluded,” the Professor said. “The babies are coming, and I must be at the hospital.”

The Professor was about to hurry out of the building when something occurred to him. He stopped at the secretary’s desk.

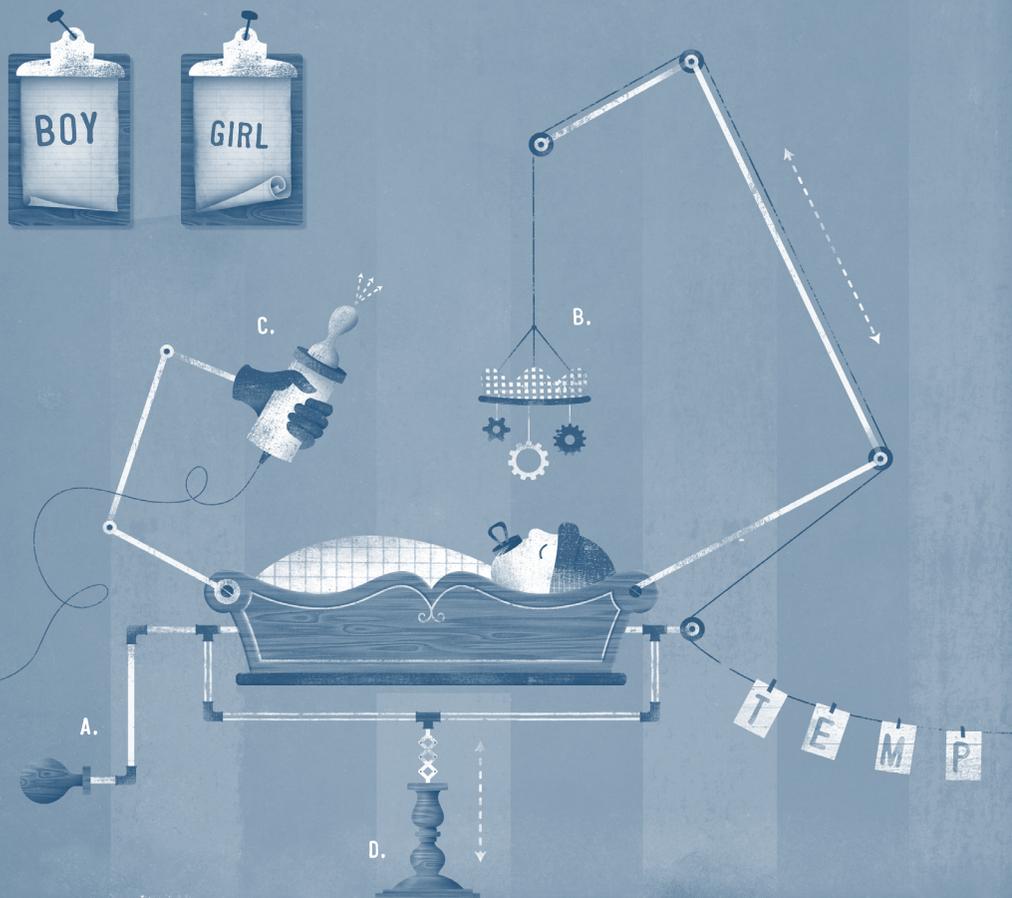
DID YOU SAY ‘BABIES’?

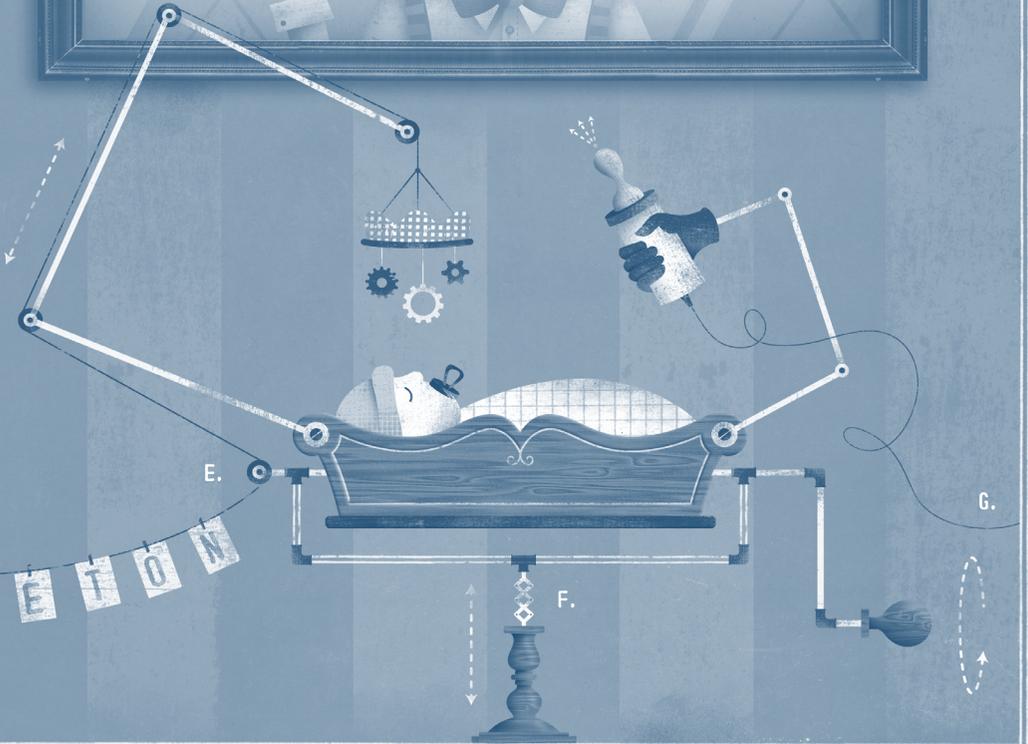
he asked.

She had. As Professor Elton Templeton discovered upon arriving at the hospital, his wife had had *two* babies, which, as you may know, is twice as many as one. Somehow, when the doctors had given Professor Templeton’s

wife her checkups, they had not seen that there were two babies, one boy and one girl.

Professor Templeton was amazed and delighted by this news. After visiting his wife to make sure she was all right (she was), he went to the nursery, which is a special room in the hospital where newly born babies sleep during the time they are not with their mothers.





LETTON

E.

F.

G.

TEMPLE

The Professor found a spot among the other adults looking through the big glass window at the various sleeping babies. Each one slept in a little shallow bed hung with a card showing the mother's last name. A long card reading TEMPLETON stretched across two beds in which two babies slept side by side. One wore a blue cap and the other wore a pink cap.

(As you may be aware, when it comes to babies it is not obvious who is a boy and who is a girl. For this reason, some people make sure that boy babies wear blue clothes and girl babies wear pink clothes, to signal who is what. If the color-coded clothes make the babies look fabulous, all the better.)

The Professor did what all new parents do: He tapped on the window and made silly little cooing noises in an effort to get the attention of his just-born, deeply sleeping babies. The Professor was wearing his customary clothes, which included a pair of baggy white pants and



E

T

O

N

a billowy white shirt. He looked as though he worked for the hospital. Maybe that was why, when a man standing next to him saw the Professor tapping on the window, he became curious and asked, “Who are they?”

“They?” the Professor replied.

WHY, THEY ARE THE TEMPLETON TWINS.

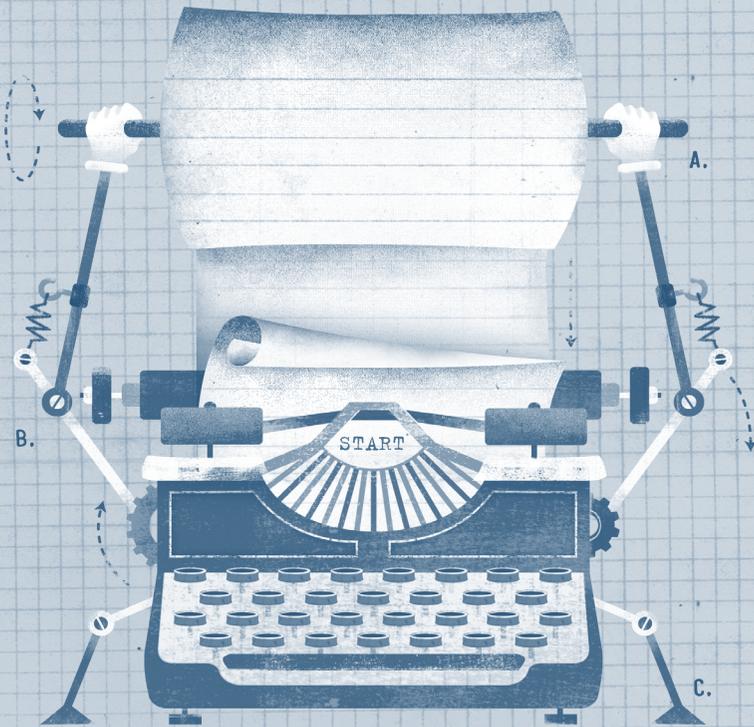


QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. The author has succeeded in writing an actual Prologue. Aren't you proud of him?
2. What do you mean, “no”?
- 3 Explain, in fifty words or less, why you believe the story will actually get started, and why it will be wonderful.

CHAPTER 1

THE STORY
ACTUALLY *DOES*
GET STARTED



The Templeton twins, Abigail and John, were twelve years old when their mother died. The woman had been quite ill for some time, and her death was not unexpected. Still, it was a very sad event for the twins, and for their father, Professor Elton Templeton.

THERE. WE HAVE BEGUN.

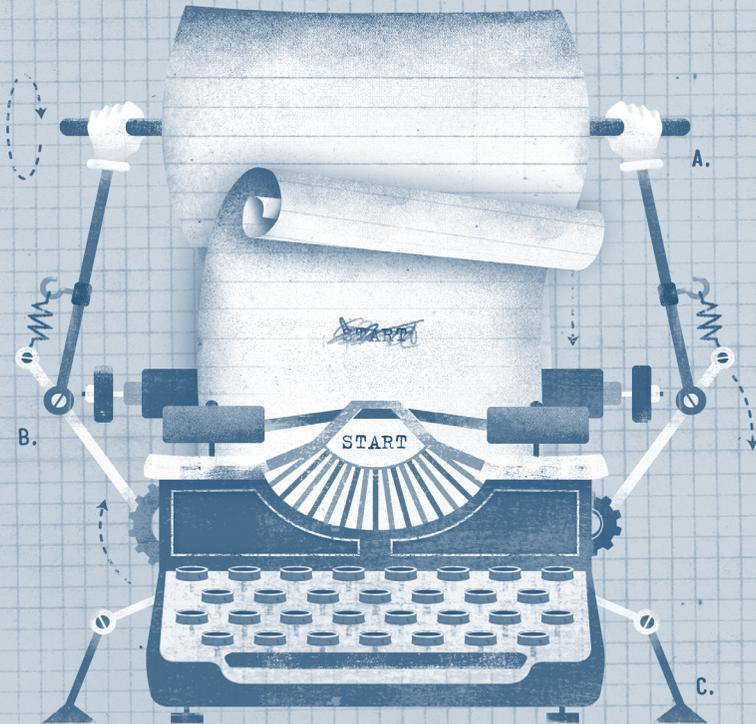


QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What were the names of Abigail and John, the Templeton twins?
2. Bonus Question: There is no Bonus Question. Proceed to Question 3.
3. Isn't it a splendid thing that we have begun?
(Hint: No. It isn't. It means I must write some more. **LET'S MOVE ON.**)

CHAPTER 2

YOU MAY STOP
COMPLAINING,
BECAUSE
WE HAVE BEGUN



The Templeton twins' mother, as we have discussed *as recently as one page ago*, died when the twins were twelve years old.

Now, if I were you, I would not want to read about how sad the twins and their father were. In fact, if I were me—which, I can assure you, I am—I would not want to read about it, either. And I certainly would not want to have to write about it.

But I *am* going to write about it. Why? Because, as I believe I have already explained, I have to. I am being forced to tell the story of the Templeton twins. Why am I being forced, and who is forcing me? Well, perhaps I will tell you later. Or I may decide not to tell you at all. For now, that doesn't matter.

What matters is that I'm telling you their story, and the only proper way to tell the story of the Templeton twins is to talk about their hobbies and, a little later, their dog. Their hobbies, as you will see, will turn out to be very important to what the twins did and why they did it. And their dog, as will be plain to every eye, was completely ridiculous.



A.



B.



E.



D.

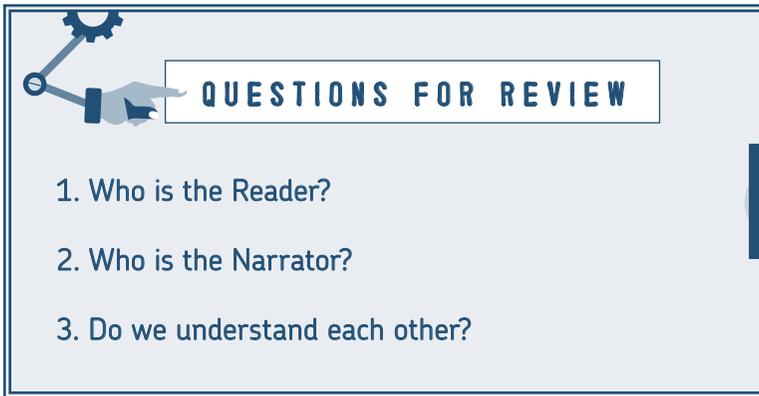


How is this possible? How can hobbies be so important? How can a dog be ridiculous?

Please, kindly stop asking me all these questions. You do your job, which is reading, and I'll do mine, which is narrating. You are the Reader. I am the Narrator. Do we understand each other?

However, I just realized that the one asking the questions is really me. I am therefore in the position of having to ask myself to stop asking questions. Will I do so? Yes, I will. I will what? Ask myself to stop, or stop asking?

All right, I hope you are satisfied. I am now completely confused. I would say, "Let's move on," but I don't even know where we are. **LET'S START OVER.**



QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Who is the Reader?
2. Who is the Narrator?
3. Do we understand each other?

CHAPTER 2 (AGAIN)

THE STORY,
IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING,
AT LONG LAST, REALLY
DOES GET STARTED



The Templeton twins **BLAH BLAH, VERY SAD, ET CETERA.** At first friends and neighbors and students came to their home to cook meals, to help out, and to offer comfort. And the Templetons were very grateful.

Then some time passed, because it always does. And while the Professor told his friends that he no longer needed their help, he remained very sad. He could not bring himself to resume teaching or to get back to work on his inventions. He spent most of his time in his study at home, reading and sighing.

Abigail and John, meanwhile, went back to school. They caught up with the material they had missed, and took a test for which they had been absent (they each did pretty well on it). They began to see friends again and to do the things that twelve-year-olds do.

They also went back to pursuing their hobbies, which we will discuss in magnificent detail very shortly.

During this period, it was quite common for the twins to not see their father at all from the time they arrived home from school until dinner. He remained in his study, while they were to be found either in the kitchen, making snacks, or in their rooms.

And so it was . . .

“And so it was.” Isn’t that wonderful? This is something we normally don’t say in ordinary conversation but which I, as a Narrator, am allowed to say without seeming “strange” or “odd” or “weird.”

And so it was that, after school one day, having enjoyed a snack of frozen waffles and honey, and having washed the dishes, the twins headed up to their rooms. While chatting *en route* (which means “on the way”), they decided to devise a Plan to convince their father to get them something they had wanted for a long time.

I refer, of course, to a dog.

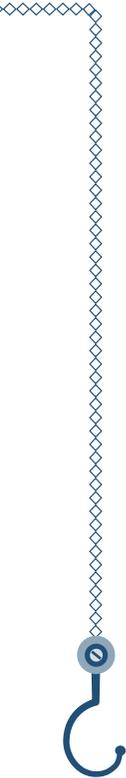
The Templeton twins had been asking their parents for a dog for at least a year. Now, the drama of children asking for a dog is as old as the human (and dog) race. I would not be surprised to learn that Cain and Abel, who, as you may know, were the children of Adam and Eve, asked their parents for a dog, too.

And I expect Adam said, “When you’re older,” and Cain said, “It’s not fair!” and Abel said, “You won’t have to walk it or feed it or anything! We’ll do all that!” Then, I’m sure, Eve said, “We’ll think about it,” and Cain said,

“That means no!” and Adam said, “You do not talk to your mother that way,” and Cain said, “I’m sorry. But we really want a dog!” and Eve said, “We’ll see,” and Abel said, “PLEEEEEEEASE?” and Adam said, “Drop it. We’ll talk about it later,” and so on—all of it in Aramaic or Hebrew or whatever it was they spoke in biblical times. (This scene, of Cain and Abel asking Adam and Eve for a dog, is not in the Bible, no. But that doesn’t mean it didn’t happen.)

Professor Templeton and his wife had kept putting off the matter by saying, “Yes, but not now. When you’re older.” This, as every child knows, is an outrageous and insulting “reason” for not doing something, and the twins were as indignant and offended as you would expect. Then, of course, came the family’s tragedy, and no one mentioned the subject for some time.

Lately, though, the twins had begun to feel that a more normal life was returning to the household. So after the waffles they went to Abigail’s room to discuss the matter. They discovered, as they usually did, that they agreed with each other completely. They still wanted a dog.



Abigail was sitting on her bed, wearing blue jeans and a gray T-shirt. She had brown eyes and long, dark hair that she usually wore in a ponytail. She looked much like, but not *exactly* like, her brother.

“I was thinking,” she said. “If we just ask Papa the way we usually do, it’ll be kind of tedious and grim.”

Now, if I were you, I would immediately think, “Just a moment, Narrator. Do you seriously expect me to believe that a twelve-year-old child would use the words ‘tedious’ and ‘grim’ in private conversation with her brother? Wouldn’t she be much more likely to say something along the lines of ‘But, like, John? If we ask Dad the same old way, won’t it be, like, boring and sad and stuff?’”

Normally you would be right to ask that. But Abigail Templeton was—well, I won’t say she was a genius with words, but I will say that she was very, very smart when it came to words. At the age of twelve, you or I might not use the words “tedious” or “grim,” but Abigail did.

John was seated cross-legged on the floor. He, too, had brown eyes and dark hair, although his hair was short. He wore gray jeans and a dark blue T-shirt. John,

of course, was accustomed to hearing his sister use interesting and expressive words. When she made her comment, all he said was, “Really? Why?”

“It’ll be tedious because it will remind him of all the times we’ve asked before. And it will be grim because it will remind him of Mama.”

John nodded. Then he said, “Hmm. Yeah. Right. Wow. Okay.”

Do you see—as I’m sure you do, and as I’m sure *I* do—the difference in the way the twins spoke? “Tedious and grim” versus “Yeah. Right.” They were twins, these Templeton twins, but they weren’t alike in every way. You will see more of this sort of thing as we proceed.

Abigail said, “We need an exciting and a *commanding* way to ask him. We need a way that will really get his attention.”

John agreed, and so the twins discussed various exciting and commanding ways of asking their father for a dog. John suggested writing a song about it. Abigail suggested sending their father a telegram. John suggested writing a note in “invisible ink” (lemon juice), which they would then “miraculously” make visible.

None of these ideas seemed quite right. Both twins were silent in thought. Then John had an idea.

“We can’t ask him in a way that *we* think is excellent. It has to be a way that *he’ll* think is excellent,” he said. “We need some kind of *device*.”

John said “device” in a manner that was just like the way the Professor said it when referring to his inventions. It was a kind of Templeton family code word or private joke. Professor Templeton would come up from his basement workshop, or arrive home from the university, looking preoccupied and vexed. If the twins asked what was bothering him, he would say, “I’m having trouble with the *device*,” or “The *device* isn’t quite right yet,” or even “I have come to believe that the reason the device does not yet work is that it needs a certain kind of *device*.”

Abigail now said, “Yes! Great! *And* we shouldn’t just ask for a dog in general. We should ask for a specific dog. Because then he’ll know we’ve really thought about it.”

In fact, they had thought about it, and they did have a specific dog in mind. And so they conceived and refined their Plan.

The next day, when the twins came home from school, they flew into action. Note here that I do not mean that they lifted off the ground and started zooming around the house. I mean they got very busy.

Abigail dug out of her desk drawer an old magazine with a photograph of the dog they both wanted. The twins had been carefully storing it for a year. She cut out the photo and pasted it onto a piece of cardboard.

John, meanwhile, spent some time walking between the kitchen and the dining room with his head tilted back, looking up at the ceiling.

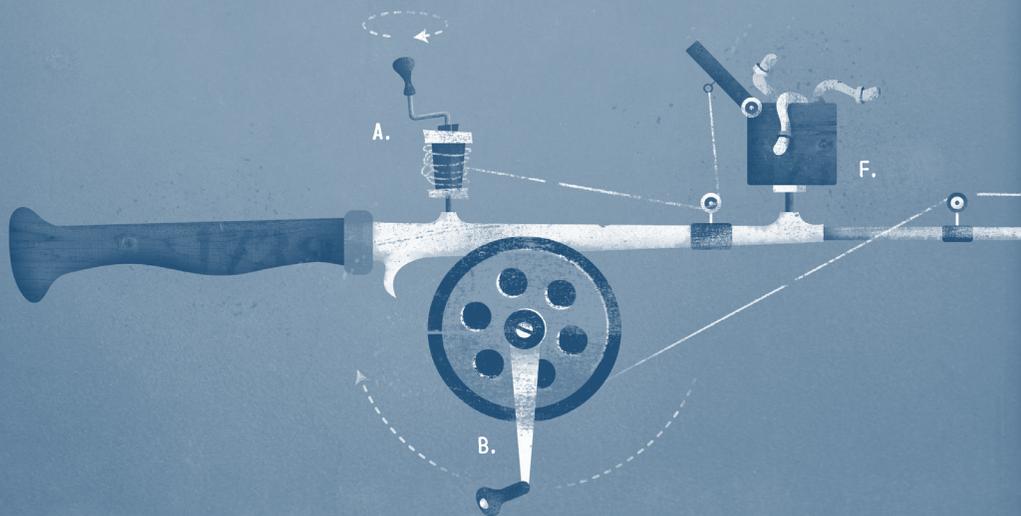
If Abigail was quite clever when it came to words (which she was), John was extremely clever when it came to doing things, to devising plans and putting them into action. His favorite thing to say was **“LET’S DO IT AND VIEW IT!”** He thought he had heard someone say this on a pay phone in the lobby of a movie theater once, and John decided it was a good, brisk way of saying, “Let’s try this idea out and then examine it and see if it works.”

(Actually, what the person on the phone had said was “Let’s do it and then review it,” but John misheard his

snappier version. It's just as well, don't you think? Don't you believe, as I do, that things should be as snappy as possible? Oh, please. Yes, you do.)

John said it about everything, no matter how important or silly. Would peanut butter be good on pizza? "Let's do it and view it!" If your shoes had no laces, how far could you run before they came off? "Let's do it and view it!" On a hot summer's day, could you really fry an egg on the sidewalk? "Let's . . ." et cetera.

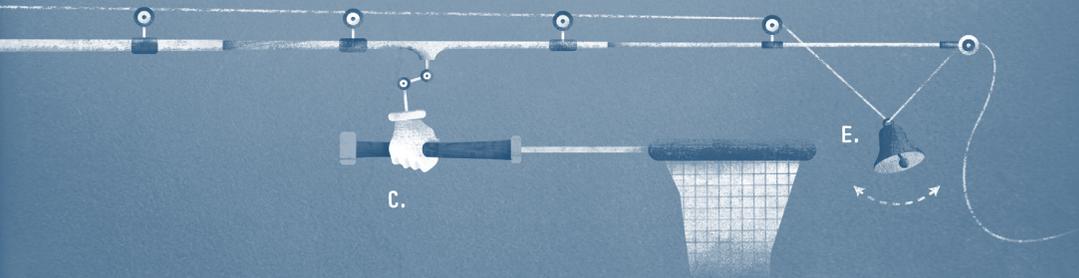
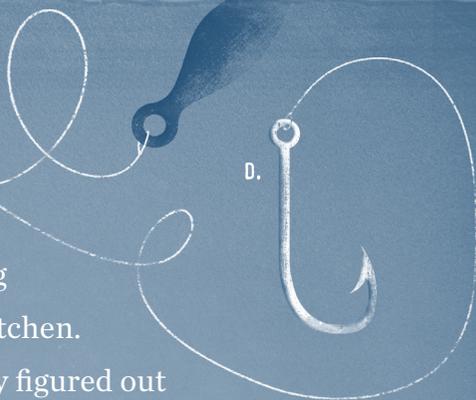
Before you could do and view anything, though, you first had to "figure out what's what." This meant that, in addition to figuring out *what* you wanted to accomplish, you also had



to figure out
how to accomplish
it. That's what John did
now as he surveyed the ceiling
in the dining room and the kitchen.

When he had successfully figured out
what was what, he went to the garage and got a
fishing rod that the family sometimes took on trips to the
lake. He made sure a hook was attached to the end of its
line, got a small sinker out of the box of fishing supplies,
and tied that to the end of the line, too. He took them into
the kitchen.

What? What is a sinker? You're joking, surely. Clearly,
a sinker is a lump of heavy metal,



usually shaped like a big teardrop. Its only job, obviously enough, is to sink—to carry the hook and the bait (which are both usually very light) down into the depths of the water. Why? Because that is where the fish are.

John, you see, was quite clever when it came to mechanical things, and connecting little thingies to other thingies, and to various doodads, in order to solve certain problems. In this he was much like his father.

Abigail brought the photograph of the dog into the kitchen and joined her brother. Then the twins did a few other things, and voilà!*

The device was ready.



QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. When Cain and Abel asked Adam, their father, for a dog, and he said, “No,” what was their response?
 - a. “Very well, Father. You know best.”
 - b. “But Mom said we could!”
 - c. “Please!? Please!? Please!?”



2. Which pair of words is most like the opposite of “tedious and grim”?

- a. Lively and cheerful
- b. Lettuce and tomato
- c. Lewis and Clark

3. Is this it? The twins ask for a dog and the book is over?

a. Yes, and I am extremely upset about it, because I want to continue reading. Although of course I sympathize with the Narrator for not wanting to write any more.

b. No, and I have no idea what will happen next, so I will happily continue reading, perhaps pausing for a moment to praise the Narrator for his superb narrating.

c. Maybe. I shall have to see if the pages that follow are completely blank or if they have printing on them. If they do have printing on them, I shall without hesitation proceed to read it with the greatest pleasure.

**Voilà!* is French. You pronounce it “vwah-LAH.” It means “Behold!” or “There you have it!” Other French words you may find yourself using in your daily life include “restaurant,” “turquoise,” and “France.”