

ELLIS WEINER has written funny articles for magazines, funny television scripts, and co-written a lot of funny books with Barbara Davilman (e.g., *Yiddish with Dick and Jane*). He has even written several funny books all by himself (e.g., *The Joy of Worry*), but this is his first book for kids. It is also very funny. He lives in California.

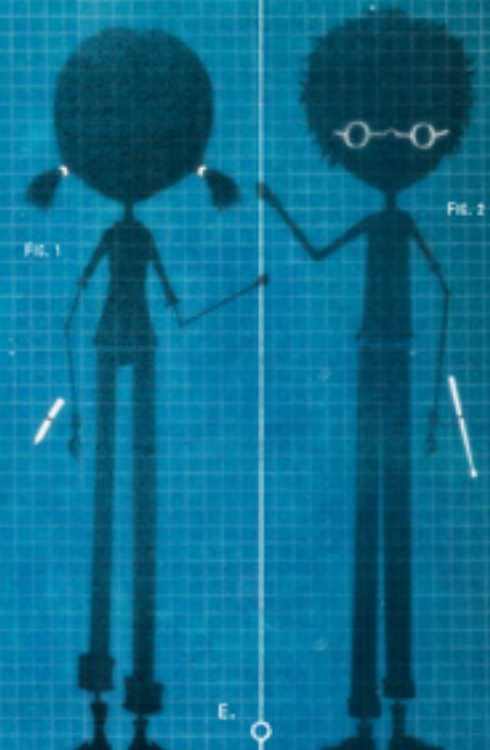
JEREMY HOLMES is a designer and director of his own design studio, Mutt Ink. His debut book, *There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*, was hailed as “striking” and “wonderful” by the *New York Times* Book Review and received the prestigious BolognaRagazzi Award, given annually at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair. He lives in Pennsylvania.

THE NARRATOR is in no mood to share facts about his—or her!—life. He’ll tell you what he wants you to know when he feels like it. Well, there you are. He has already accidentally revealed that he is a male. But that’s it. He’s not saying anything else. This is his first book, so naturally—all right, he has just revealed that this is his first book. But believe him, that’s all you’re going to get for now.

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LUCKILY FOR YOU, THIS IS JUST THE FIRST IN A SERIES PERFECT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS WHO ARE SMART, CLEVER, AND FUNNY (JUST LIKE THE TWINS), AND ENJOY READING ADVENTUROUS STORIES (WHO DOESN'T?!).

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WEINER/HOLMES

THE TEMPLETON TWINS 1

chronicle books

THE TEMPLETON TWINS

HAVE AN IDEA



ABIGAIL

JOHN

BOOK 1

WRITTEN BY ELLIS WEINER

ILLUSTRATED BY JEREMY HOLMES

SUPPOSE THERE WERE 12-YEAR-OLD TWINS, A BOY AND GIRL NAMED (RESPECTIVELY) JOHN AND ABIGAIL TEMPLETON.

Let’s say John was pragmatic and played the drums, and Abigail was theoretical and solved cryptic crosswords.

Now suppose their father was a brilliant, if sometimes confused, inventor. And suppose that another set of twins—adults—named Dean D. Dean and Dan D. Dean, kidnapped the Templeton twins and their ridiculous dog in order to get their father to turn over one of his genius (sort of inventions. Yes, I said kidnapped. Wouldn’t it be fun to read about that? Oh please. It would so.

Luckily for you, this is just the first in a series perfect for boys and girls who are smart, clever, and funny (just like the twins), and enjoy reading adventurous stories (who doesn’t?!).

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To Barbara Davilman. —Ellis Weiner
To Paxton and Charlie Holmes. —Jeremy Holmes

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THE TEMPLETON TWIN S HAVE AN IDEA

BOOK 1

BY ELLIS WEINER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEREMY HOLMES





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 .

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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."

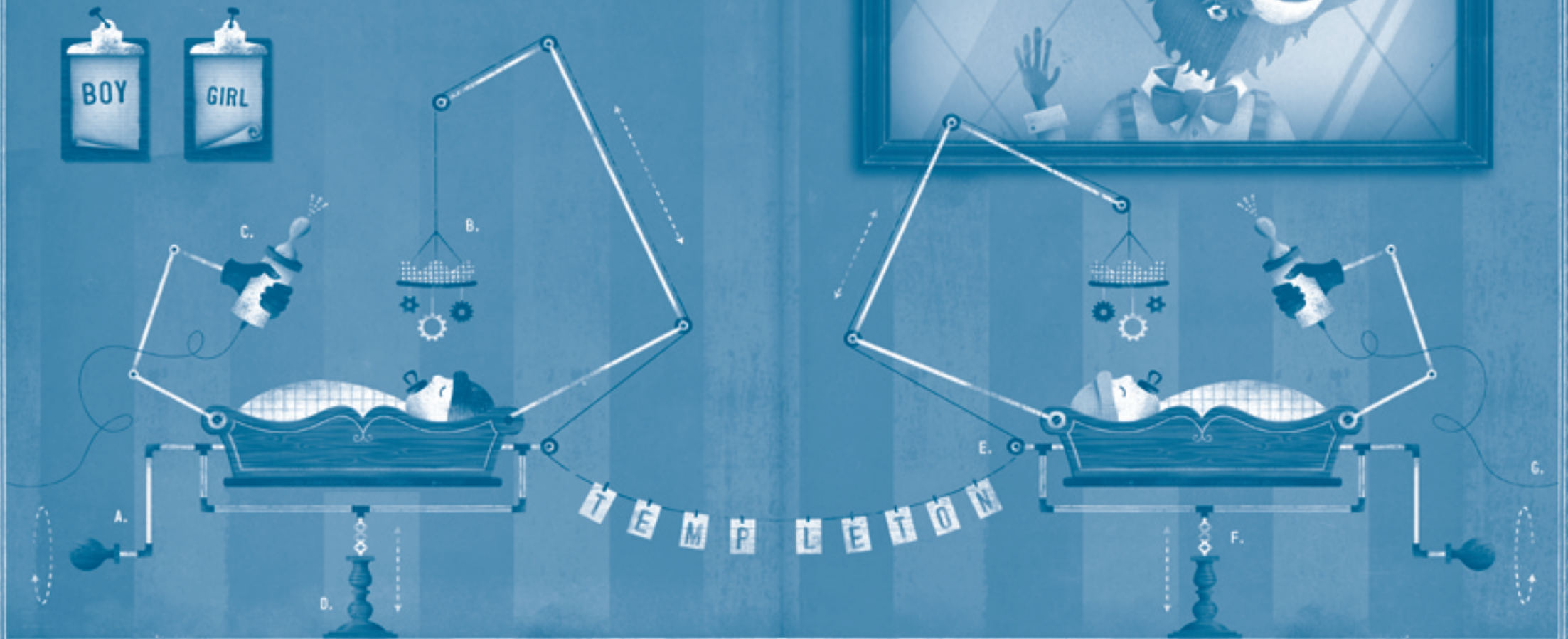
The Professor was about to hurry out of the building when something occurred to him. He stopped at the secretary's desk.

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.



TEMPLETON

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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

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.