

THE  
**ONLY**  
**CHILD**  
CLUB



Mr Adulewebe



Ryan



Tasha

Oliver

Jade

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*Nag Club*

*How to Cross the Road  
and Not Turn into a Pizza*

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*The Jamie and Angus Stories*

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# THE ONLY CHILD CLUB



ANNE FINE

Illustrated by Arthur Robins



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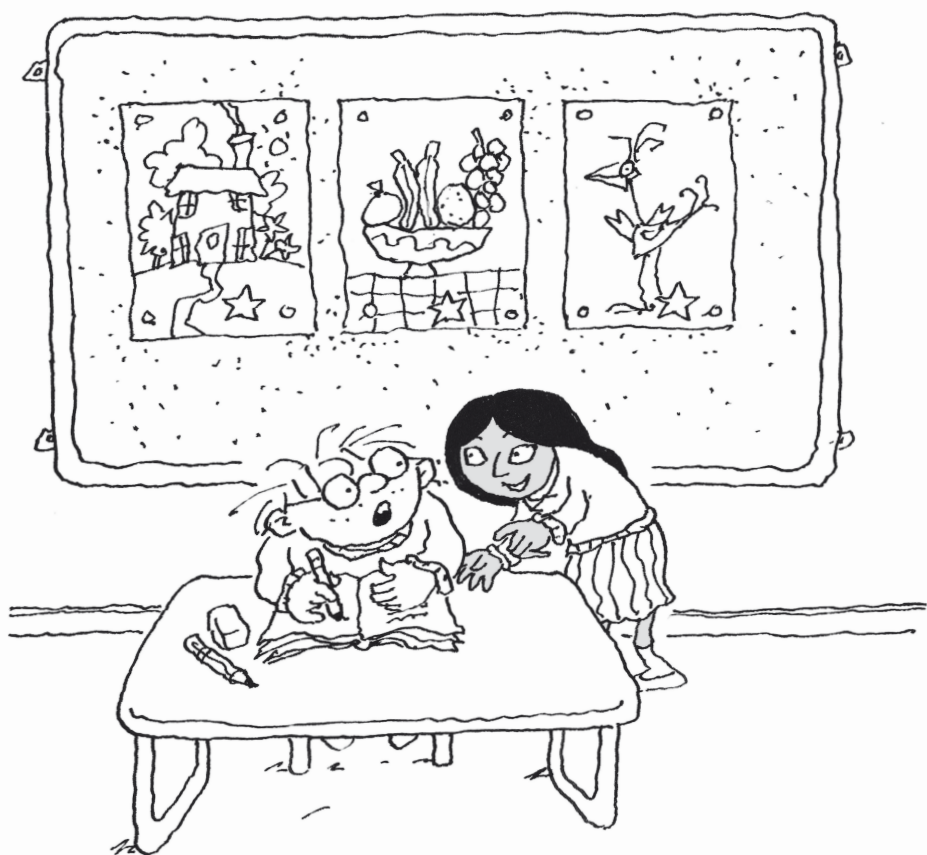
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For Johnny

A.F.

For Izzy, then along came Bessy

A.R.





## ~Chapter One~

### The List



Ryan sat at his desk in the classroom.

He was writing very carefully and neatly.

Surina leaned over to look. "Why are you putting down all our names?" she asked.

"I'm making a list," said Ryan. "A list of everyone in our class."

"Why?"

"Because I'm going to start a club."

"What sort of club?"

It's going to be  
the Only Child Club,

Ryan told her.



Can I join?

she asked him.

I love  
clubs!



"No," Ryan said.

Surina pointed to her name. "But I'm on your list."

"Everyone's on the list," said Ryan, "because I need to make sure that I haven't forgotten anyone in the class. But lots of them will be crossed off. And you will definitely be crossed off."

"Why?" asked Surina.

~~Surina~~

"Because you have brothers and sisters," Ryan explained. He ticked them off on his fingers. "You have a brother in the next class up, and two sisters in the nursery. So you can't join, because this is the Only Child Club. It's for only children."

“Well, boo to you!” said Surina.

Ryan shook his head. “I’m sorry,” he told her, “but you’re not an only child. So you can’t join. And you won’t be the only one to be crossed off.”

Surina wasn’t pleased. She stuck out her tongue. “Well, double boo to you,” she told him.

Ryan pretended that he hadn’t heard and just carried on with his writing.



## ~Chapter Two~

### Crossing People Off



As soon as the buzzer went for break, Ryan picked up his list and went round the playground, checking to see who could join his club and who would have to be crossed off. Most people got crossed off. Tyler had a sister. So did Teddy and Gurdeep. Nathan had two brothers. Sian had two sisters, two stepsisters and a half-brother. Susie, Emily

and Mandy all had one brother. Matt had three.

Do babies count? I want to join but Mum just had a baby. He doesn't do much except eat and sleep. So can I join?

asked Zachary.



"No," Ryan said.

"Oh, go on!" wheedled Zachary. "Just for now. Just till he starts crawling about and

snatching my stuff, and being a proper brother."

"No," Ryan told Zachary firmly. "It wouldn't be right."

And he put a thick black pencil line through Zachary's name on the list.

~~Zachary~~

Zachary shrugged. "Oh, well." He looked at all the crossed-off names. "Good luck in finding someone."

"Thank you," said Ryan, and he carried on round the playground, holding his list, looking for the rest of the people in his class.

Patrick wanted to join.

"I'm sorry," Ryan said. "You can't. You're not an only child. I know you have a sister."

“But I’m adopted,” Patrick argued. “And I can’t remember back that far, but maybe before I was adopted I was an only child.”



“Well, you’re not an only child *now*,” Ryan said sternly. “You have a brother and a sister in the big school who pick you up every day. So you are definitely not an only child.”

Patrick stared at the list. It was plastered with thick black pencil lines. “Who’s going to join?” he said. “You’ve gone round the class and crossed out everyone.”



"Not *everyone*," said Ryan. He counted up. "There are three people not crossed out. Jade, Oliver and Tasha. And then there's me."

"Four altogether?" scoffed Patrick.  
"That's not much of a club."

"That's all right," Ryan said. "We only children are used to not being in a crowd."

