

IF MY FATHER SAID HE
WAS GOING TO COME AND
TAKE ME OUT, IT WAS AS
LIKELY AS NOT THAT HE
WOULDN'T SHOW UP. I
WOULD SAY TO THE OTHER
BOYS, I HAD A WONDERFUL
DAY OUT, WHEN I HAD REALLY
BEEN SITTING IN A
FIELD SOMEWHERE.

- DAVID CORNWELL

To my mom, who wasn't happy that the last dedication she got had
only two words. This one has 22!

Love,
Mac

To my favorite humans: Katrin, Allister, and Oskar
—ML

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KID

SPY

MAC
UNDERCOVER



By **Mac Barnett**

Illustrated by **Mike Lowery**

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ME AS A
~~KID~~
SPY!



A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:



MY NAME IS MAC BARNETT.
I AM AN AUTHOR. BUT
BEFORE I WAS AN
AUTHOR, I WAS A KID.
AND WHEN I WAS A
KID, I WAS A **SPY**.

AN AUTHOR'S JOB IS TO
MAKE UP STORIES. BUT
THE STORY YOU ARE
ABOUT TO READ IS TRUE.

THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENED
TO ME.



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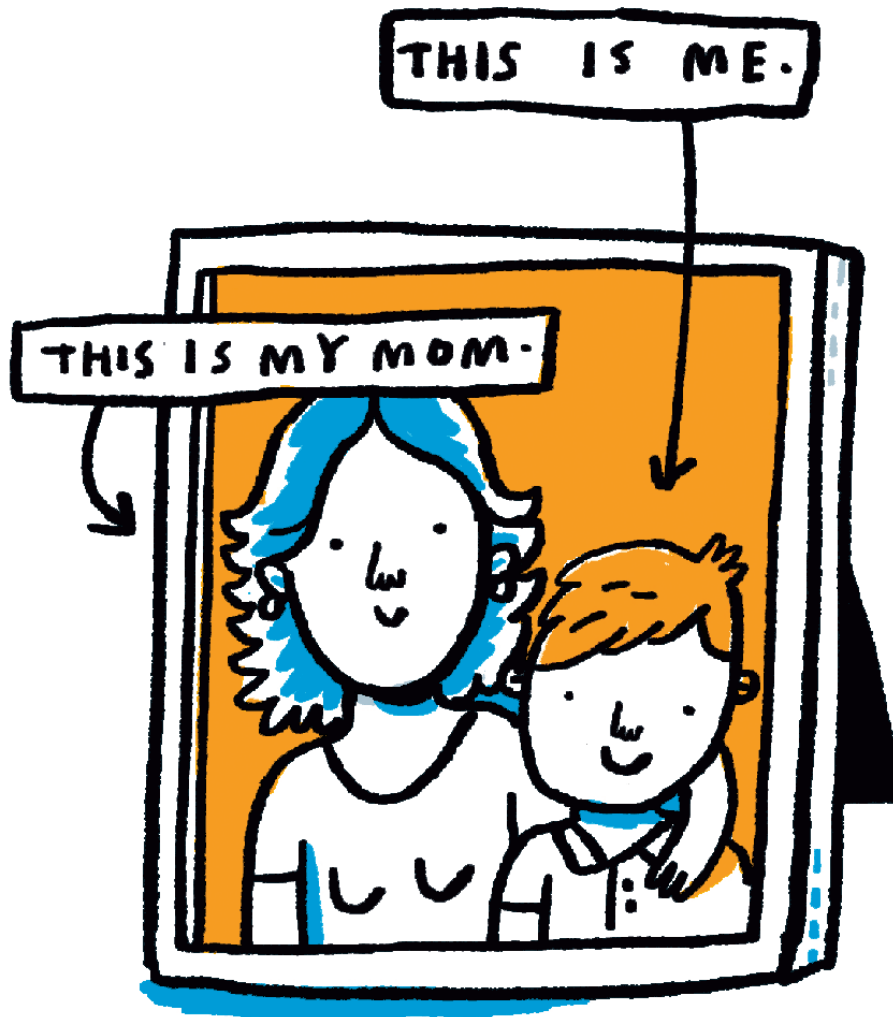




This is the house I grew up in.

It is on the top of a hill in a little town called Castro Valley. That's a real place. You can look it up.

This is really what my house looked like.
My mom and I lived there.



Since it was just the two of us, I had a lot of responsibilities: I did the dishes, packed my lunches, cooked our dinners, washed the laundry, dusted, vacuumed, and cleaned out our rabbits' litter boxes.

(I wanted a dog. We had rabbits instead.)

It was also my responsibility to answer the phone. I liked answering the phone, even though it was never for me.

One afternoon the phone rang, and it was for me.

It was the Queen of England.



“Hello?” I said.

“Hullo,” she said. “Can I speak to Mac?”

“Speaking,” I said.

“Mac, this is the Queen of England,” she said. “I would like to ask you for a favor.”

“OK,” I said.

Whenever somebody asks you for a favor, it is a good idea to ask them what the favor is before you say OK.

But I had never talked to a queen before.

So I said OK.

“Wonderful,” said the Queen. “I will tell you a secret. Last night, somebody stole the Crown Jewels!”



“No!” I said.

“Yes!” said the Queen. “This is the favor: You shall find the missing treasure and bring it back to me.”

“Wow!” I said.

“Yes!” said the Queen.

This was very exciting.

But I had a question.

“I have a question,” I said.

“I hope it is a quick question,” said the Queen.

“Why me?”

The Queen of England sighed. “That is a stupid question.”

“My teacher says there is no such thing as stupid questions.”



The Queen of England frowned. (I could tell she was frowning, even over the phone.)



“That is just something teachers say in America. But I am not a teacher from America. I am a queen, from England.”

“Oh,” I said. “OK. But still. Why me? I am just a kid, and I don’t even live in England.”

Castro Valley is in California. You’d know that if you looked it up.



“Mac,” said the Queen. “You are the smartest kid in your class. You have straight As in every subject, except handwriting.”

“I’m working on that,” I said.

“Then it’s settled. You shall take the next flight to London.”

“But tomorrow is a school day.”

“I shall write a note,” said the Queen.

“But my mom will be worried about me,” I said.

“I shall write another note,” said the Queen.

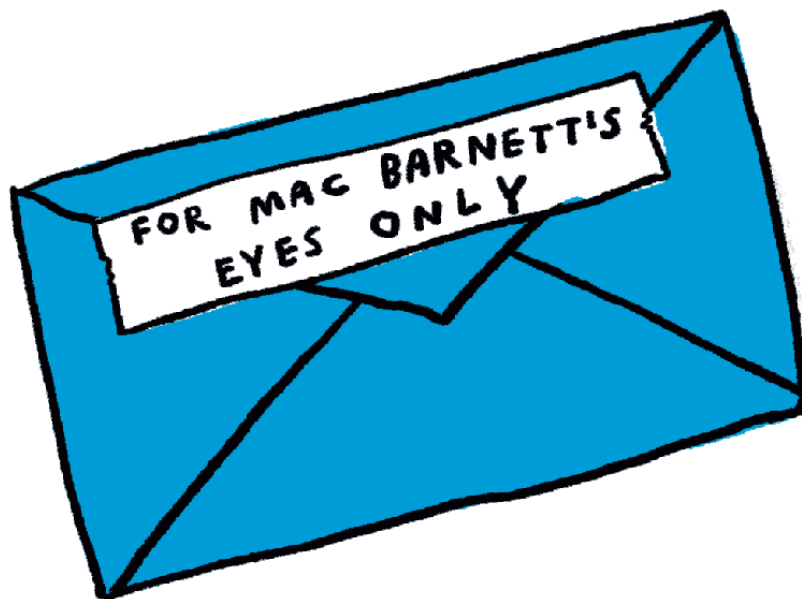
“Good-bye.”

She hung up.

There was a knock at the front door.

When I opened it, nobody was there.

But an envelope lay on our welcome mat.



I opened it, because I was Mac Barnett.
(I still am.)

Inside the envelope was a plane ticket and a
stack of colorful British money.



It seemed like a lot of money. I couldn't tell for
sure, because I wasn't British.

(I'm still not.)

I went upstairs and packed.

Like a good spy, I packed light.

I laid out some things on my bed.

My Game Boy.

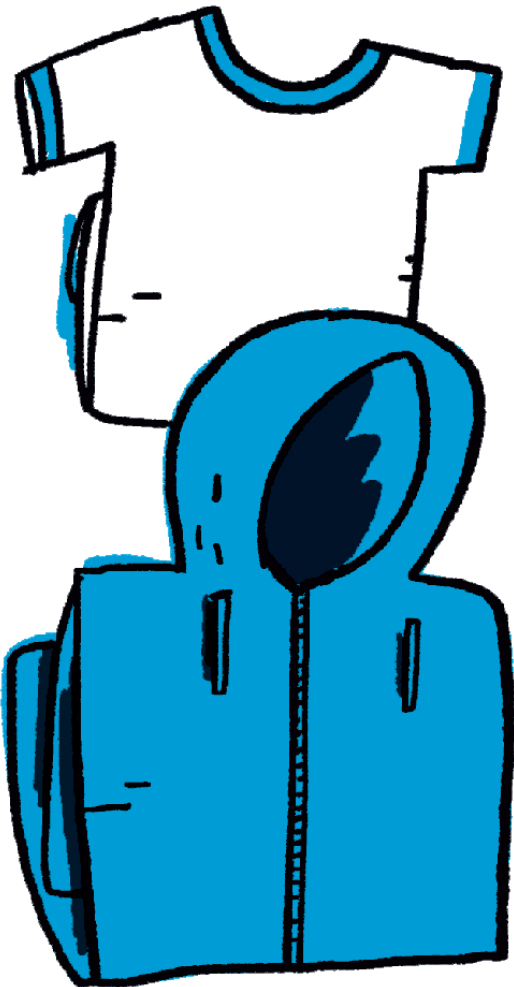
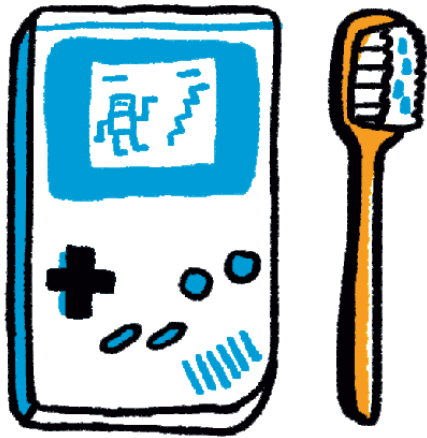
Three books.

A toothbrush.

A hat.

A shirt.

A jacket.



And:



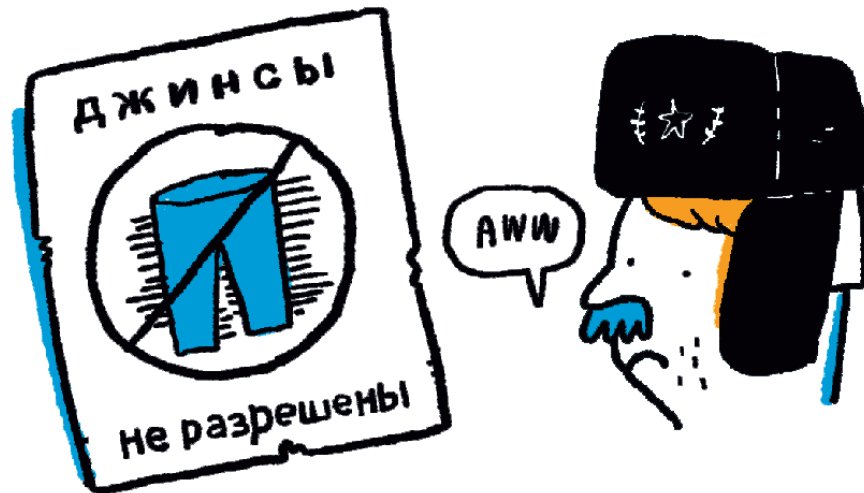
Really, they were my only blue jeans.

My mom bought me one pair at the beginning of every school year. Most kids in my school had many pairs of jeans, but my mom didn't like it when I told her that.

"Just be glad you have any jeans," she would say. "In Russia, jeans are banned."

"Banned?"

"Against the law."



“Is that true?” I would say. “That doesn’t seem true.”

But my mom insisted that it was true. And she only bought me one pair of jeans.

I put on my jeans, picked up my suitcase, and went downstairs.

When I was walking out the door, the phone rang.

Again.

It was the Queen of England.

Again.

“Hello?” I said.

“Hullo,” she said.

“Can I speak to Mac?” she asked.

“Speaking,” I said.

“I forgot to tell you one thing,” said the Queen.

“Be careful. This mission is extremely dangerous. Good-bye.”