



My name is Jackson Stander. I'm twelve, and I know a secret.

You don't have to ask. I'm going to share my secret with you. When I tell you what it is, you might laugh at me.

My sister, Rachel, laughs at me. She rolls her eyes and groans and calls me a goodie-goodie.

But I don't care. Rachel is in trouble all the time, and I'm not. And that's because of my secret, which I'm going to share with you now:

*It's a lot easier to be good than to be bad.*

That's the whole thing. You're probably shaking your head and saying, "What's the big deal? What kind of crazy secret is that?"

It's simple. Let me explain. I try hard to do the right thing all the time. I try to be nice to everyone, and work hard in school, and be cheerful and kind, and help people when I can, and just be a good dude.

This makes Rachel sick. She's always poking her finger down her throat and making gagging sounds whenever I say or do something nice.

Rachel is a real sarcastic kid and a trouble-maker. She likes to argue with her teacher, and she gets into fights with kids in her class. She hates it when the teachers say, "Why can't you be more like your brother, Jackson?"

What does she call me? She calls me *Robot*. She says I'm some kind of goodie-goodie machine.

You've probably guessed that Rachel and I don't get along that well, even though she's just a year younger than me.

We both look a lot alike, too. We're kind of average height. We have straight brown hair and brown eyes, and we both have freckles on our noses and dimples when we smile.

Rachel hates her dimples and her freckles. She says she *hates* it that she looks more like Dad than like Mom. Of course, that doesn't make Dad very happy. He calls Rachel "Problem Child." Mom scolds him every time he says it.

But she *is* a problem child. Mainly, she's *my* problem because she's always in my face. And she's always testing me, teasing me. Trying to make me lose it, blow up, get steamed, start to shout, or fight.

Rachel's mission in life is to get me in trouble with Mom and Dad. She's always trying to make

me look bad. But she's so lame. There's *no way* she can win.

A few weeks ago, she was doing an art project in her room and spilled red paint on her floor. She went running to Mom and said, "Jackson was messing around with my paint, and look what he did."

Of course, Mom didn't believe her for a second. Why would I be messing around with *her* paint?

Last night before dinner, Rachel was helping Mom carry the food to the table. She tripped over Sparky, our cat, and dropped a platter of chicken — and it went flying all over the floor.

"Jackson tripped me!" Rachel told Mom.

I was standing all the way across the room. How lame was that?

But Rachel keeps trying.

Now, please don't get me wrong. I'm not perfect. If I told you I'm perfect, that would be obnoxious. Besides, no one is perfect.

I just try to do my best. I really do believe it's easier to be good than bad.

It's something I knew from the time I was a tiny kid.

And then something happened.

Something happened, and I turned bad. I turned very bad. No. Let's tell the truth. I, Jackson Stander, became *evil*.

And that's what this story is all about.