



Chloe



Chloe is such a beautiful child. Norman Long's portrait shows the sulky, 'I'm going to get my way' naughtiness that Chloe wears like a uniform. She's a scamp – mischievous, unkempt, wilful, noisy and wilful. Yes, wilful twice over – that's Chloe. But she's also a delight, a hyperactive, kittenish girl whose playful curiosity keeps getting her into trouble and sometimes danger, who grabs your hand and won't let go, who demands all your attention and shouts when she doesn't get it, who causes Alex more bother than the other eight put together. 'You have to watch her at all times. Don't leave a door open – or she'll be off. Don't put anything down – because Chloe will have it. Leave a mobile phone – Chloe will be pressing every button. Leave a glass on the table – Chloe will throw it. You don't leave scissors around because she'll start cutting off her hair. Dynamite. She's Little Miss Dynamite.'



Nathan

Big and bustling, Nathan's whizzing through adolescence as if it's been specially sent to persecute him. He can switch from Mr 'Smily-Full-of-Charm' to Mr 'I'm-Really-Aggressively-Angry' in a single breath, but it's probably a passing phase. Alex treats his nasty moods as juvenile tantrums, as do the rest of them. Sometimes, Nathan tries especially hard to be bad, really bad, spitting out wicked words he's just learned like 'bitch', or crashing a kitchen chair against the table, so Alex calls out, 'you big baby', and sends him to his room; but five minutes later he floats back, smily and cuddly and eager to please again.