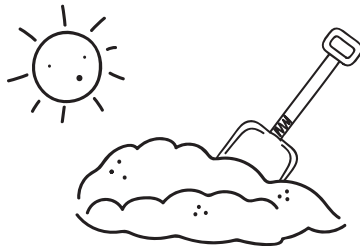


1

CLANG!



Maddie dug the spade into the earth. Her dark hair stuck to her neck. Her pale skin was dirty. She and her bud Lori were behind Lori's house.

They had a sixth-grade service project. They chose to grow food for the poor. To do it they needed a good place for a garden. Lori's parents said it was okay to plant one out back.



Making a garden was hard work. It was very hot for May. Maddie had sweat running down her face. So did Lori.



Lori was breaking up the soil with a pick. Maddie turned the soil over. It would be a great garden when they were done. But they had a long way to go.

“It’s a good thing Trevor can’t see me now,” Maddie told Lori. “I’m a mess.” She brushed dirt from her face. Then she fixed her ponytail. She normally wore her hair down. It was long and curly. But right now she was just trying to keep it frizz free.

Trevor was the boy Maddie liked. There



was a school dance in a week. She hoped Trevor would ask her. He hadn't yet.

"Same thing with Nick and me," Lori agreed. She had short blonde hair. Today it looked like it was glued to her head.

Lori liked Nick a lot. But Nick had not asked Lori either. There was still a little time left for the guys to ask. But not much.



The dance would be outside. Under the stars. The girls had great dresses. Maddie hoped it would not be as hot as it was today. That would be a bummer.

"Want to get a cold drink?" Lori asked. "I need a break."



“Five more minutes,” Maddie told her. She knew how to make a garden. Lori didn’t. The work would not do itself. The garden would be small. All the plants had to grow well. So the ground had to be soft. Plants liked soft dirt. “Give me the pick.”



Lori gave Maddie the pick. Maddie swung it. Hard dirt split into clumps. She swung it five more times. It was tough work, but the earth softened. Then she swung once more.

*Clang!*

Huh? It sounded like the pick hit a big