



MEET THE



Ellie

**Age:** 12

**Favorite Subject:** art history

**Likes:** playing the piano

**Dislikes:** practicing the piano

**Best Quality:** is not jealous of her friends

# CHARACTERS



## Nana and Poppa

**Combined Age:** 132

**Favorite Hobby:** flipping houses

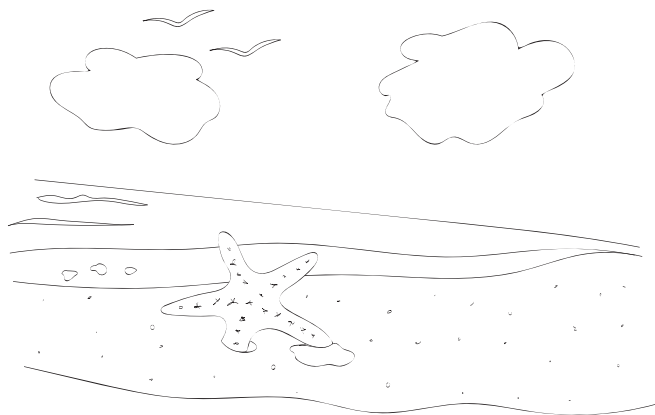
**Biggest Secret:** went to Woodstock

**Special Talent:** calligraphy

**Best Quality:** believe in free-range parenting

# I STORM WARNING

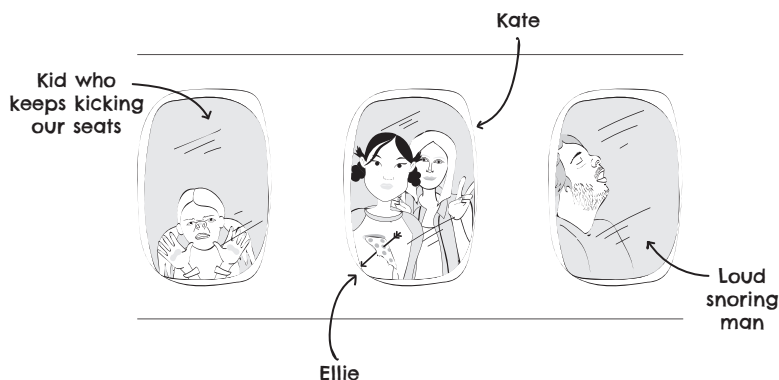
Ellie looked out the living room window. Her grandparents' cottage was right on the beach. The window faced the sand. The blue ocean was past that. Seabirds painted the sky. Puffy clouds hung to the west.



It was ten in the morning. The beach was already crowded. Ocean Grove was a great place to come in the summer.

Ellie and her friend Kate flew in the day before. They lived in Texas. It was Ellie's first trip without her parents. She had begged for years to visit her grandparents by herself. She would begin seventh grade soon. So her mom and dad said she was ready.

The girls would be there for a week. They got in after sunset. This was their first real day.



“Hey!” Kate called.

“What’s up?” Ellie asked. “Want to go to the beach?”

“Not yet. Check this out. Jordan just ‘liked’ our pic from the plane. We have 95 ‘likes.’ That’s the most ever!”



Ellie turned and grinned. She and Kate loved social media. They texted all day long. Both girls had smartphones. Kate even slept with hers. She checked it first



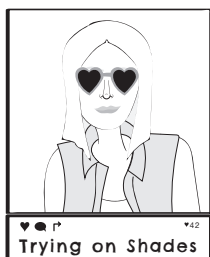
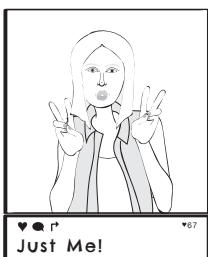
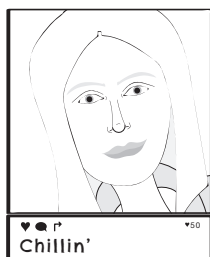
thing in the morning. Last thing at night too.

“That’s great,” Ellie said. “Can you find him on chat?”

“Let me see. It’s two hours later back home. Got him!”

Ellie joined Kate on the couch. Kate held up her phone. There was Jordan. His grin filled the screen. He was a fine guy. Ellie knew that Kate liked him. Like, *liked him*. They were an epic pair.

Ellie thought Kate was perfect. She had blonde hair and blue eyes. She looked super pretty in all of her selfies. She took *a lot* of them.



“What’s up?” Jordan asked.

“Nothing much. What’s up with you?”  
Kate asked him.

“Not much. Hanging out. Maybe going to the waterpark with Pete. It’s hot here.”

“That’s cool,” Ellie said. This was not a very fun talk. She hoped they would go to the beach soon. She came to Ocean Grove to swim. Spend time with her grandparents. Not to chat with boys back home.

“Um, girls?” Ellie’s grandma stood in the doorway. Everyone called her Nana. Ellie’s grandpa was called Poppa. “Can I have a word?”

“Sure, Nana. Kate, try Jordan later. Okay?” Ellie asked.

“You got it.” Kate clicked off. They sat with Ellie’s grandma. Nana was a great lady. She had more energy than a lot of kids.



Poppa was cool too. He loved to read. He could build stuff. In the garage there was a woodshop. There was every tool ever made. Lots of old stuff as well.

“Two things,” Nana said. “First I want you girls to go outside. It’s too nice to be inside.”

“But there are no bars!” Kate moaned. “I checked when we got here.”



Nana looked at her oddly. “Bars? You can’t drink. You’re twelve years old!”

Ellie smiled. Her Nana didn’t get it.



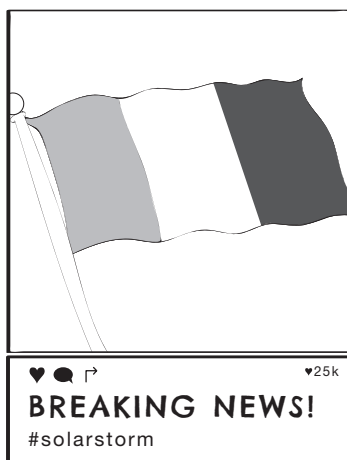


“Kate means bars on her cell phone. So she can use it.”

“You’re at the beach,” Nana said. “Forget the phones. Go have fun.”

“Phones are fun,” Kate said.

Nana shook her head. “You both are too young for those darn things. When I was your age—oh, forget it. One more thing. I heard the news this morning. There will be a solar storm today. It may hit in France. Be glad it’s not here.”



Ellie knew what a solar storm was. She had studied them last year. The sun had dark spots. Those spots sent out waves. Not ocean waves. Energy waves. If the waves were too strong, they could knock out power. There had been a bad solar storm in Canada. That had been some years ago. It had knocked out the power in some big towns.

“I’m glad we’re not in France,” Ellie said. She was ready to swim. “Come on, Kate. Let’s go to the beach.”

Kate smiled. “What? And not get texts?”

Ellie bopped her with a pillow. “You’ll live.”

Kate fell back against the couch. Then she looked sadly at her cell phone. “Goodbye, dear phone. I’ll miss you!”

