



MEET THE



Ellie

Age: 12

Favorite Subject: art history

Likes: small dogs

Dislikes: practicing the piano

Best Quality: never jealous of her friends

CHARACTERS



Nana and Poppa

Combined Age: 132

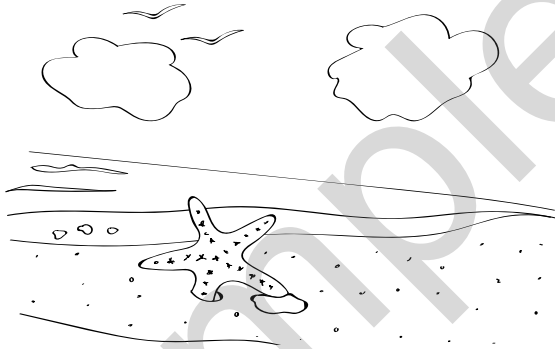
Favorite Hobby: flipping houses

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. Beyond that was the blue ocean. Birds soared across the sky. Puffy clouds hung to the west.

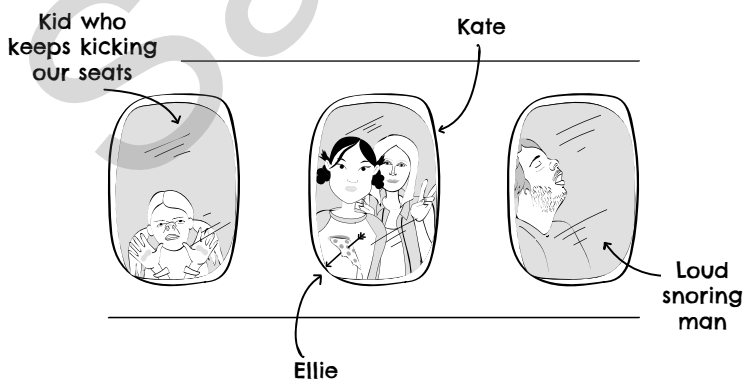
It was ten in the morning. The beach was already crowded. Ocean Grove was a great place to come in the summer.



Ellie lived in Texas. It was her first trip without her mom and dad. For years, she had begged to visit her grandparents by herself. She would begin seventh grade soon. Her parents agreed she was ready. But there was one catch. Kate had to go too.

This was a great idea! Kate was Ellie's best friend. They did everything together.

Their parents got them plane tickets. That was a few weeks earlier. It felt like a year ago. Waiting for the trip had been so hard. But now the girls were finally in Ocean Grove.



“Hey!” Kate called.

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

“Not yet. Check this out. Jordan ‘liked’ our pic. The one from the plane. We have 95 ‘likes’ now. That’s the most we’ve ever gotten!”



Ellie grinned. The girls loved social media. Both had smartphones. They were on them all the time.

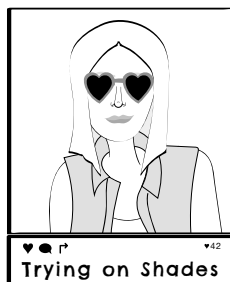
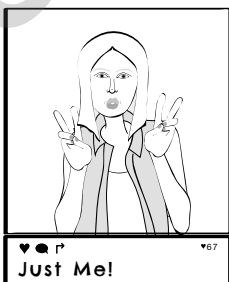
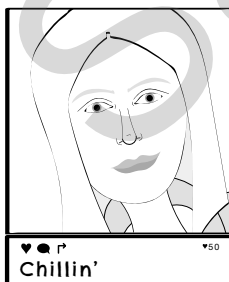


“That’s awesome,” Ellie said. “Is Jordan on chat?”

“Let me see.” She scrolled through her phone. “Got him!”

The girls sat together on the couch. Kate held up her phone. There was Jordan. His smile filled the screen. He was a great guy. Ellie knew Kate was into him. She *really* liked him.

Ellie thought Kate was perfect. She had blonde hair and blue eyes. All of her selfies were pretty. That was part of why she took so many.



Jordan sent a message. “What’s up?”

“Not much. You?” Kate responded.

“Just hanging out. Might go to the water park. It’s hot here.”

“That’s cool,” Kate said.

This was not a very fun chat. Ellie hoped they would go to the beach soon. That was why she came to Ocean Grove. She wanted to spend time with her grandparents too. It was silly to chat with boys back home.

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

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

“You got it.” Kate clicked off.

The girls sat with Ellie’s grandma. Nana was great. She had more energy than a lot of kids. Poppa was cool too. That’s what



everyone called Ellie's grandpa. He loved reading and building stuff. In the garage, he had a woodshop. It had every kind of tool.

"Okay," Nana began. "I want you girls to go outside. It's so nice out. Don't spend all day in here."

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



Nana gave her a funny look. "Bars? You can't drink. You're twelve years old!"

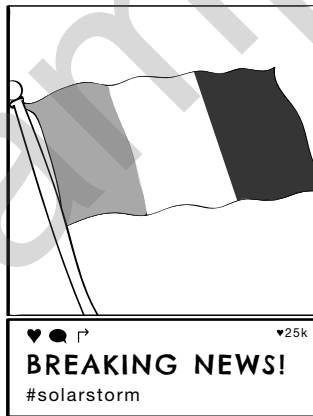
Ellie smiled. Nana didn't get it. "Kate means bars on her cell phone. She needs them to use it."



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

“Phones *are* fun,” Kate said.

Nana shook her head. “Cell phones. When I was your age—oh, forget it. Just get outside. Sunshine is good for you. Oh! And speaking of the sun. 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. These spots sent out energy waves. If the waves were too strong, they could knock out power. There had been a bad solar storm a few years ago. It was in Canada. Some big towns lost power.

“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.”

