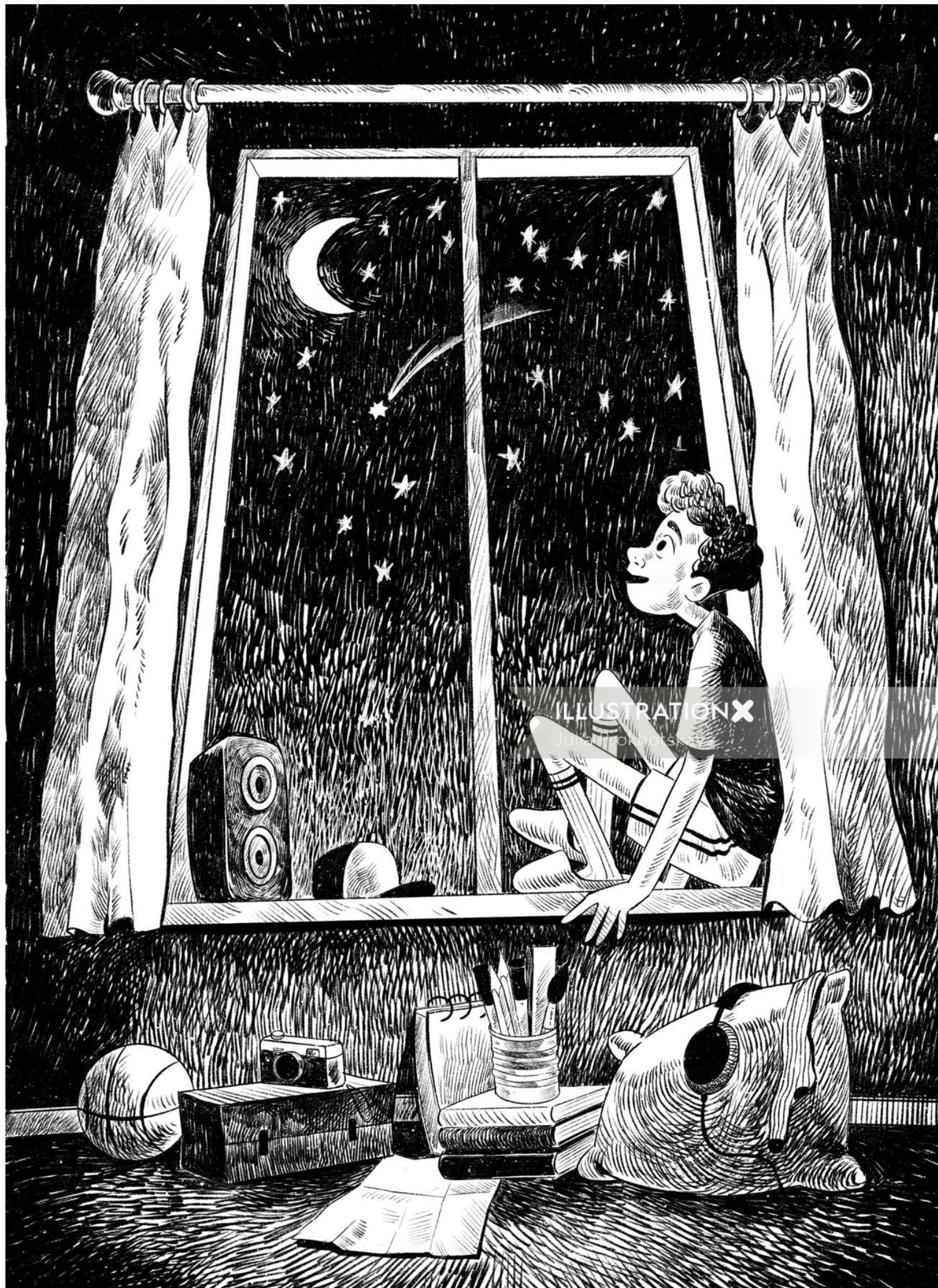


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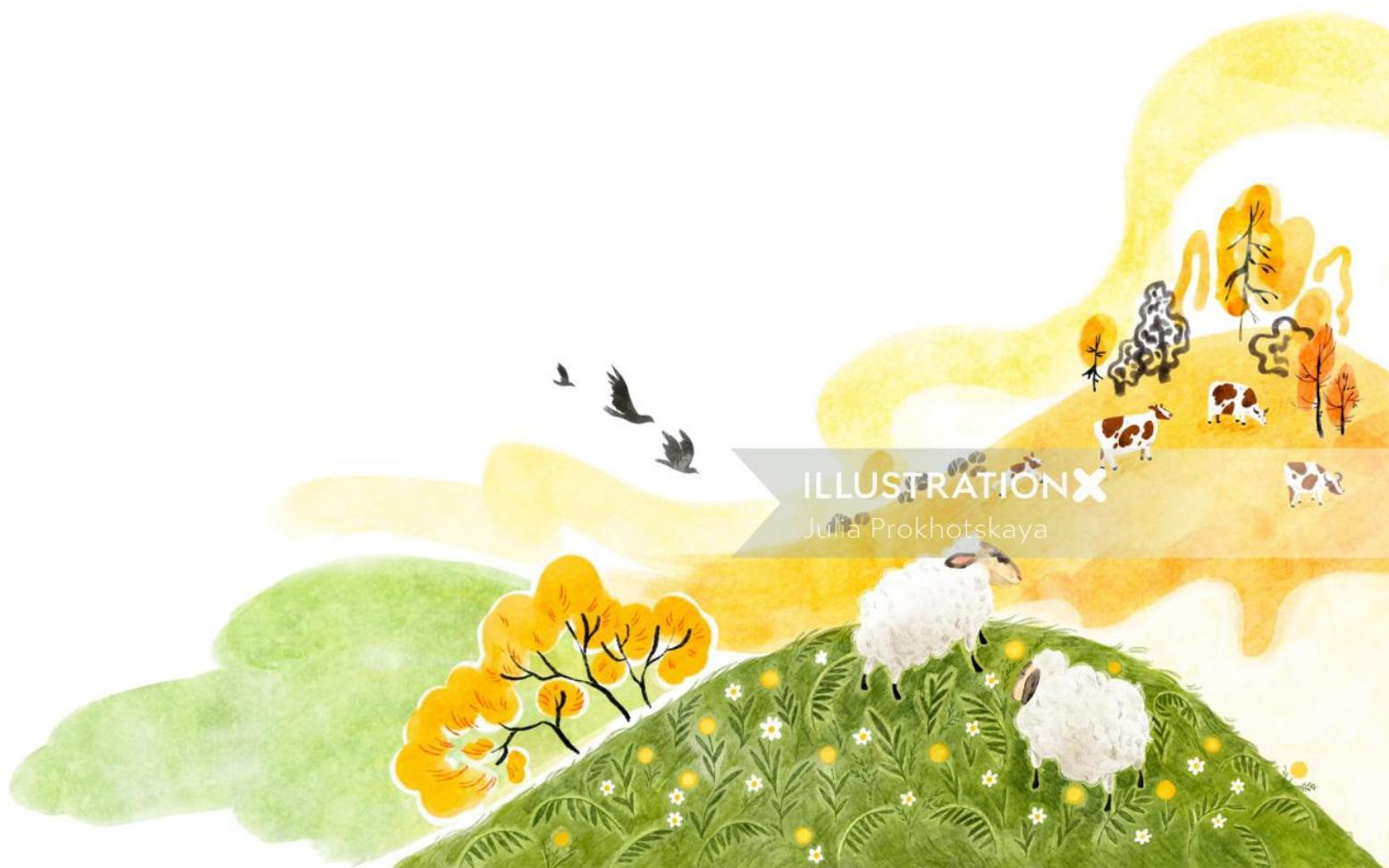
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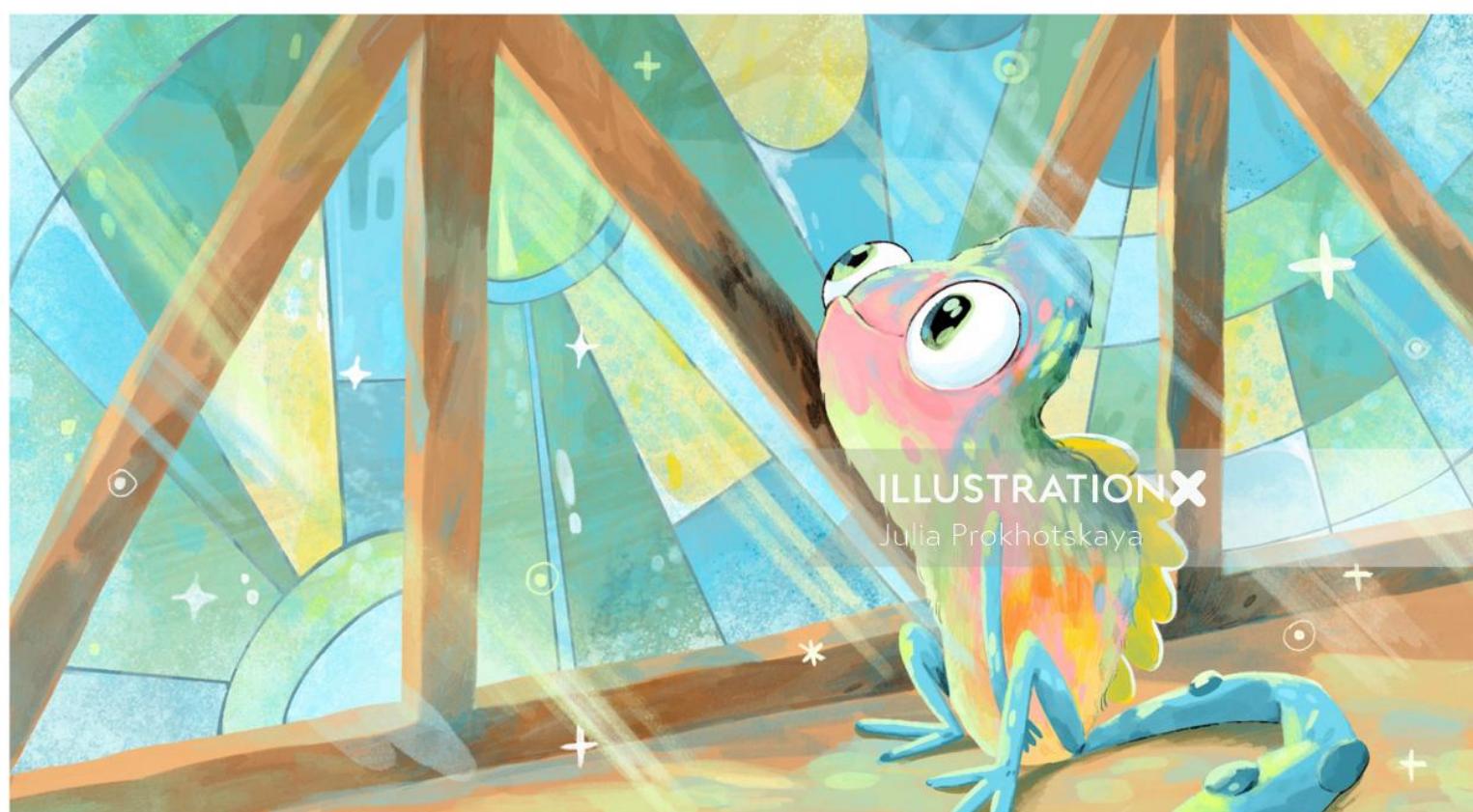
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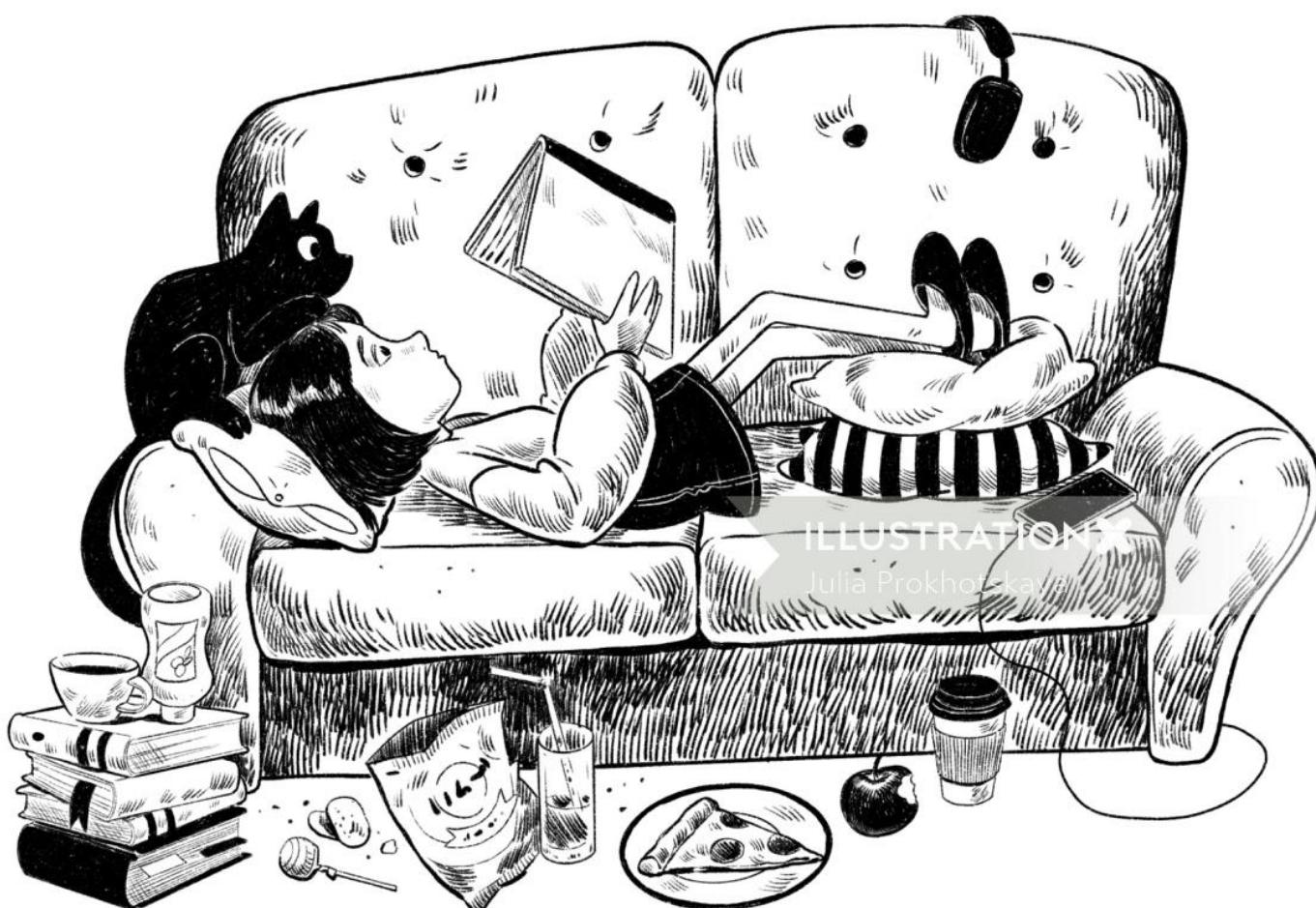


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'You Made Me Lie'

FICTION BY MARIONNE HERING
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JULIA PROKHOTSKAYA

When someone uses your whole first name instead of your nickname, you know you're busted.
"Genevieve?"
This was the second time in less than 12 hours I'd heard it. Last night it was my parents splitting out my name as if they'd eaten something sour. This time it was my neighbor and best friend, Lili, her angry voice carried across the high school parking lot.
I turned and stood in the middle of the drop-off line. Her come straight toward me, her blond head pitched forward against the wind. She had the posture and intensity of a horse about to ring. That was bad. Her brown hair turned into a full swirl, going for a fish-mouth pony. That was worse.
"Lili?" I managed a weak smile as she came nearer. I would have to offer an apology soon, but it stuck in my throat like too much chunky peanut butter. Her frown wasn't all my fault.
Suddenly, a black Toyota turned down the U-shaped driveway and sped up. I grabbed the sleeve of Lili's puffer jacket and hustled her to the sidewalk. Her brother—covered in calligraphy—wrote Bible verses—flew out of her arms and slid across the cement.
The driver—a sophomore—blasted the horn for a good five seconds.
After Lili picked up her brother, I hugged her, so glad I hadn't watched her get flattened.
I opened my mouth to apologize for last night, but other words flew out instead, like soda pop from a shaken can. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to the store to get ice cream?"
It's not that I'm a control freak, but Lili usually acted me about everything, except using the bathroom and maybe popping pimples. Did she have to be at the check-out counter at the exact same time my mom had gone to buy groceries? Mom always grocery-shopped on Thursdays. If Lili had scared me that evening, I might have been able to avoid the disaster.
She looked me straight in the eyes. "Um, why did you tell your parents you would be at my house?"
"I had to tell them something," I said. "Otherwise I couldn't have gone to a movie with Max. And I know you wouldn't care for me. So I kept it a secret."
Then, Lili said it. My mom was partially her fault for always acting like an angel. But she didn't even pick up on the implication.
"Maxine! Maxine! You isn't be Lili's boyfriend!"
I shook my head, and memories of the previous evening seemed to shake loose too.

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The dimly lit hallway was jam-packed with wiggly kids and their parents. Max and I were as far away from Lili and her friend Camille. But I watched them disappear into the darkness over there that led to the theater seating. The sign above the entrance said "Snow White".

That's our movie too, I thought. But Max wouldn't go out with me for the first time to a movie he knew his ex was going to see. It must be a coincidence. After all, it's opening night, and all the Disney fans will be here.

Once we were inside the theater, I second-guessed Max. To a couple of seats at the front, where he could watch the movie and not the back of Lili's ponytail. Sure, Max and I had to crane our necks at a 45-degree angle to see the wicked queen and the dwarves, but it was worth it.

We even joked, "Um, go in Lilo & Stitch as we don't have to sit so close to the screen next time."

After the credits rolled, I made sure we left the theater before Lili and Camille. Then I took hold of Max's hand—it felt so good and tight in mine—and pulled him away from the other kids from our school who were hanging out in the lobby while they waited for the second show.

"Hey, Max," Max said, "there's Anton and Jerome. I want to..."

"I gotta get home fast, remember? We promise think I'm at Lili's."

ILLUSTRATION X

"What did your parents tell you about the dinner?" Lili asked.

"They ambushed Lili," Julia Prokhotskaya says off-camera. "They gave the usual lecture. No phone. No laptop. No car." I sighed.

I didn't share the details. The smile on Dad's face was bright red, and his voice converted as if a peach pit had lodged in his Adam's apple. Mom had looked as if she'd been kicked in the stomach.

I said, "Even though I explained everything calmly and reasonably, they just couldn't see it was their fault that I had to lie."

Lili tilted her head to the side. Her long silver earring swung like a pendulum. "Their fault?"

"You know they won't let me date till I'm 18. They said I wasn't a good enough judge of character. And if I wanted to be treated like an adult, I had to act like one."

The five-minute bell rang, and we headed toward the building.

"Fact," I announced. "If parents are too strict, there's no other choice but rebellion."

Lili shook her head. "The Bible says that's not the way relationships work."

I smiled. "No, that's the only way they work. I need to assert myself and follow my own path."

"So I sat up the steps, with massive numbers of students rushing past us. I didn't see Max and wanted to text him. 'Can I borrow your phone?'"

Lili turned toward me, her eyebrows swinging in unison.

"I did. I use my phone prettysafe am."

"Why? You didn't do anything except buy ice cream."

Lili struggled. "Unintended consequences. Your parents called my parents. And my parents thought I was lying about not knowing that you lied."

She turned toward her classroom, and about 15 steps later, I realized I'd never said I was sorry.

After school I had to stay in the library and wait for my dad to pick me up. Not my favorite way to spend a Friday afternoon. Plus, the weekend would be dreary. I was low-key sad that Max wasn't there with me, but I wasn't worried he'd be with Lili because he said he'd be at work, running hours at the local coffee shop.

I finished my math homework (icky) and jammed the book into my backpack. Then I took out the floor-to-ceiling windows at the horseshoe-shaped driveway. Would Dad lecture me again when I got in the car? If he did, I was ready for it, see?

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