

C H O I C E S

broken promise

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 **SADDLEBACK**
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chapter

1

Josh stood in his driveway. He was washing his car. His dad was helping him.

Josh sprayed some water on the car. He put the hose down. Then he picked up a cloth. Josh started to wipe the car with it. He asked his dad, “Do you know what next week is, Dad?”

His dad laughed. Then his dad said, “Yes, Josh. I know. It will be six months since you got your driver’s license.”

Josh said, “It’s been a long six months. I can hardly wait for next week to get

here. Then Kate can ride with me.”

Kate was his girlfriend. They had been dating for four months.

Right now only a member of Josh’s family could ride with him. Kate couldn’t ride with him. And they had to ride with someone else when they went out.

His dad said, “Next week one of your friends can ride with you. But only one friend. Don’t forget that, Josh. You can’t have more than one friend ride with you.”

“I know, Dad,” Josh said.

All of Josh’s friends were under 21. And only one friend under 21 could ride with him at a time. That was the law.

“Don’t forget that, Josh,” his dad said.

“I won’t,” Josh said.

“Don’t let more than one friend ride with you at a time. Or you’ll take a big chance. The police might stop you. Then you’ll be in big trouble,” his dad said.

“I know,” Josh said.

“And that’s not all. The police might not see you. But you know how people talk,” his dad said.

Josh knew that was true. People liked to talk. They liked to tell what they knew about other people.

His dad said, “Don’t let more than one friend ride in your car. Someone might tell me. Then you’ll be in big trouble with me.”

Josh knew what that meant.

His dad would take his car away from him. Josh wouldn’t get to drive it. It would be a long time before he got his car back.

For a few more minutes Josh and his dad washed the car. They didn’t talk. Then his dad said, “You’ll still have to be home before midnight. Don’t forget that, Josh.”

“I won’t,” Josh said.

That was part of the law. Drivers his age couldn’t drive between midnight and 6 a.m. Josh and his dad washed the car a while longer.

Then his dad said, “You know you can’t double date. And you know your friend, Cooper, will want to double date with you.”

Cooper was Josh’s best friend. And Cooper did want to double date with him. Cooper had already talked to Josh about it. But Josh had told him that they couldn’t double date.

“Yes, Dad. I know. I told Cooper we can’t double date,” Josh said. Josh and his dad didn’t talk for a few minutes.

Then his dad said, “I want you to promise me something, Josh.”

“What?” Josh asked. But he was sure

he knew what his dad wanted him to promise.

“Promise me that you’ll only have one friend in your car at a time,” his dad said.

“I promise,” Josh said. And Josh meant it.

His dad said, “Don’t break your promise to me, Josh. Or you know what will happen. I’ll take your car away from you. You know I’ll do it. And it will be a long time before you drive your car again.”

“Yes, Dad. I know,” Josh said.

Josh didn’t have any doubts about it.

chapter

2

It was the next Monday. Josh was at home. His teachers had a meeting. So Josh had a day off from school. His dad had a day off, too.

Josh said, “I thought this day would never come. I’ve had my driver’s license for six months. Now Kate can ride with me. I can hardly wait to take her for a ride.”

His dad said, “Don’t forget, Josh. Only one friend can ride with you at a time.”

“I know. I won’t forget,” Josh said.

“Just don’t forget you made a promise to me, Josh,” his dad said.

“I won’t forget, Dad,” Josh said. He knew he had made a promise. And he would keep it.

“Is it okay for me to go over to see Kate now? I’d like to take her for a ride.” Josh said.

His dad said, “Yes, Josh. But don’t stay out too long. You promised you would help me with some yard work.”

“I know I did, Dad. I won’t be gone long,” Josh said. Josh hurried outside, and got in his car.

Before starting the engine he sent Kate a text message: “RU home? Do u know what today is?”

Kate called him back right away.

Josh said, “Do you know what today is?”

But he knew Kate already knew.

Kate said, “You know that I do. You’ve had your driver’s license for six months today. Now I can ride with you. And we won’t have to ride with someone else when we go out.”

Josh said, “Yeah. And I won’t have to worry about finding someone to drive us places.”

It had been hard to find someone to drive them places. Most of his friends were his age. And they couldn’t let a friend drive them.

Josh asked, “Kate, do you want to go for a ride now?”

“Oh, yes, Josh. Can you come and get me right now?” Kate asked.

Josh said, “Yeah. I’ll be over there in a few minutes. But I wanted to speak to you first. Just to make sure that you were home.”

“I’m home. And I can hardly wait to

ride with you,” Kate said.

“I’ll be there in a few minutes,” Josh said. Josh hung up. His phone chirped. Josh had a new text message from Cooper: “Been 6 months. Take me for a ride.”

Josh texted back: “Can’t.”

Cooper texted: “Why?”

“Taking Kate.” Josh texted back.

Cooper texted: “Then when?”

Josh wrote back: “Don’t know. Later. Need 2 help Dad.”

Cooper wrote: “K. Call me.”

Josh said: “K.”

Cooper wrote: “I’ll be glad when I can drive Nikki. “

Nikki was Cooper’s girlfriend.

Josh texted: “Not 2 much longer.”

Cooper answered: “2 months is 2 long.”

Josh wrote: “GTG. Can’t text and drive. Call u later.”

Cooper texted: “K.”

Josh started his car. He could hardly wait to get to Kate’s house. Josh would take her for a ride.