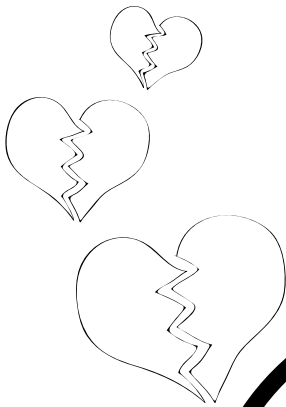




Stolen Treasure

Anne Schraff



MEET THE



Isa

Age: 12

Favorite Artist: Vincent van Gogh

Dream School: Harvard University

Future Goal: to join the Peace Corps

Best Quality: compassionate

CHARACTERS



R A F E

Age: 16

Favorite Athlete: Nyjah Huston

Future Plans: have a great job, a nice family,
and live in a neighborhood like Isa's

Favorite Skating Music: punk rock

Best Quality: loyal

1

GONE

It was early Sunday morning. Isa Rodriguez heard her mom scream. Mrs. Rodriguez was downstairs.

Isa ran to her. “Mom! What’s wrong?”

Her mom stood in the living room. She looked pale. “It’s gone!”

Isa shifted her gaze to a wall. She gasped. The wall was empty. A painting once hung there. “Grandma’s portrait! Where is it?”



← the family’s
frame for over
150 years!



She thought of the beautiful painting. It was from many years ago. Isa's grandparents were much younger. Her grandma's birthday had come. Then her grandpa hired an artist. The artist painted her grandma. That portrait was a gift from Isa's grandpa to his wife.



Isa is named after
her grandmother.

Mrs. Rodriguez stared in shock. "It has been ten years." She turned to Isa. "You

were just two years old. That's when your grandma gave it to me."

Isa shook her head. "It was here last night. My friends loved looking at it."

Her mom sobbed for a while. Then she took a deep breath. "Your grandma had always kept it. But she wanted me to feel her joy. My mom entrusted *me* with the portrait. The youngest daughter. Now I've failed her." She started sobbing again.

Isa hugged her mom. "We'll fix this. Somehow."

Her dad arrived home. He worked at night. "What's going on?"

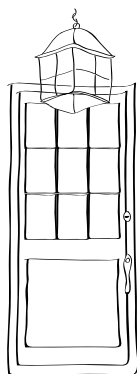
"Oh, Rick," Mrs. Rodriguez cried. "Someone stole my mom's portrait!"

"Stole it?" Mr. Rodriguez looked at her. "Really, Maria?" Then he saw the empty wall. "Who would do this?" He quickly



started checking all the doors in their house.

“I don’t see signs of a break-in.”



← double
locked!

“But it’s gone,” Isa’s mom said. “That portrait. It was the most prized thing in our family. My dad gave it to my mom. He died in the war shortly after.”



Isa knew the sad story. Tears welled in her eyes. *How could it be gone?*

Only a nail was left on the wall. The portrait had not been secured. No one thought it had to be. It wasn't worth any money.

"Oh, wait." Isa's dad was at the patio door. He opened it. "This was left unlocked."

"It's *my* fault!" Mrs. Rodriguez wailed. "I can't believe I did that." She burst into tears again.

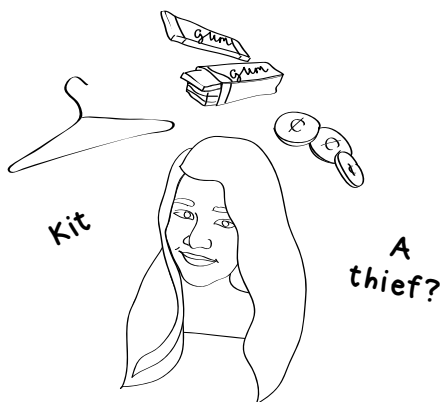
Isa's nine-year-old brother came into the room. "What's happening?" Eddie had just woken up. He rubbed his eyes.



Eddie,
sometimes
a pest

“Someone stole Grandma’s portrait,” Isa said.

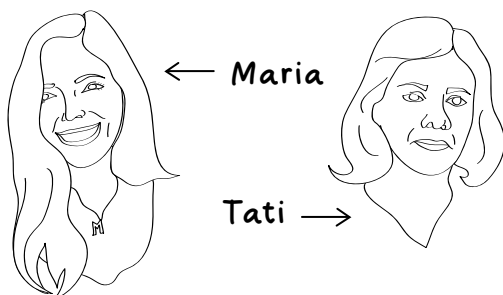
“Why?” Eddie asked. “It’s old.” He scratched his head. Then he looked at Isa. “Your friends were here last night. Maybe one of them took it. Ask Kit. Kids at school say she’s a thief.”



Isa gasped. “Eddie! That’s not true! A girl made up that lie. She was jealous. Kit is my best friend. I know she’d never steal.”

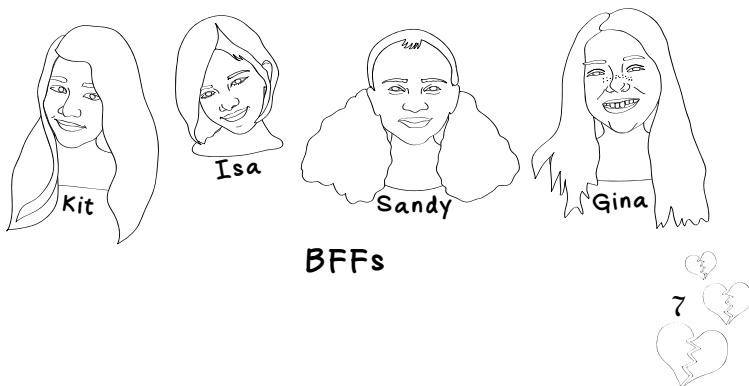
“How will I tell my mom?” Mrs. Rodriguez wiped her eyes. “She’s going to be so hurt.”

My sister will be furious. Tati has been angry with me for years. Mom had thought of giving the portrait to us. I was there when she decided. Tati wasn't. So I got it. That made Tati bitter."



Mr. Rodriguez sat next to his wife. "I know, honey." He looked at Isa. "Who were the girls here last night?"

"Just my friends," she said. "Kit, Sandy, and Gina. None of them would steal."



Isa started thinking of Gina. She was often jealous of Isa. They both did well in school. The girls were good artists too. Still, Isa usually got better grades than Gina. That always made Gina upset.

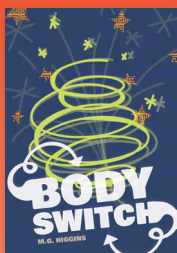
Then Isa thought of Sandy. She was Isa's kindest friend. Her family didn't have much. They made Sandy share clothes with her sister. Sometimes the clothes didn't fit well.



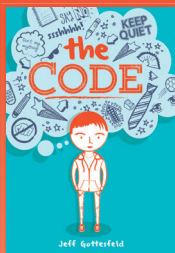
Isa continued to think. *Gina wouldn't get that jealous. She doesn't steal. Sandy may need money. The portrait looked expensive. But Sandy is too kind.*

This worried Isa. Her mom gave her a curious look. Maybe she was thinking of Isa's friends too. Did her mom believe one was guilty?

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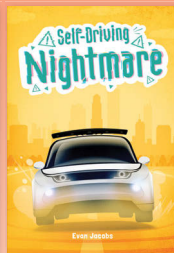
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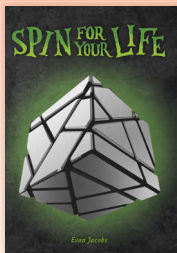
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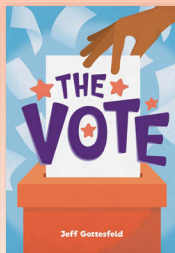
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Stolen Treasure

I can't believe it's gone. Who would've taken something so precious to us?



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