

THE



HOUSE

M.G. HIGGINS



THE LOST HOUSE



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MEET THE



Tiggs

Age: 13

Family Life: just her and her mom

Secret Wish: to win a gold medal in soccer at the Olympics

Favorite Movie: *Bend It Like Beckham*

Best Quality: determination

CHARACTERS



Sampleless

Age: 13

Family Life: just her and her dad

Career Dream: to be a graphic designer

Favorite Meal: spaghetti with a chopped kale salad

Best Quality: cooperative

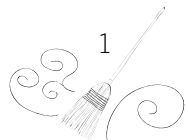
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BROKE

Josh Reed is so dreamy. I can't stop thinking about him. The other day he gave me a note in math class. It was just a question about homework. But why a note? Why didn't he ask me in person? Is he shy? Does he like me? My heart flutters a little. He's so cute.



A movement catches my eye. The ball is



coming! I leap for it. My fingertips skim the leather. *Shoot!*

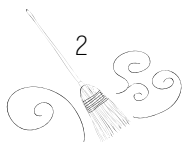
The ball sails into the net. I get to my feet. Then I glance at the sideline. Coach Sims shakes her head. She gives me a look. It says, *You blew it, Tiggs.*



My head is back in the game. But now it's too late. The match ends. We lose by one point.

Jess, my best friend, runs up next to me. She punches my arm. "That was a laser kick. It wasn't your fault."

"Yes it was," I say. Coach Sims always says soccer is a team sport. It takes a whole



team to win or lose. But I lost this one all on my own.

Coach gives us her usual pep talk. Then she says, “See you at practice.”

The team begins to walk off the field.

“Tiggs,” Coach Sims calls.

I take a deep breath. Jess stays with me.

“Sorry, Coach,” I say.

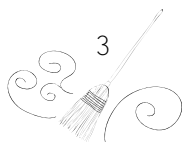
“Do you like being keeper?” she asks.

“Yes.”

“Then you’ve got to find a way to stay focused.”

I’m not sure what to say. She’s right. My mind wanders during games. I don’t know what to do about it.

Coach sighs. “Look, there’s a soccer camp in August. I know the coach. He’s a soccer expert. The camp fills up fast. But he owes me a favor. I’m sure I can get you in.”



“Really?” My mood picks up. I’ve always wanted to go to soccer camp.

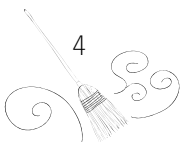
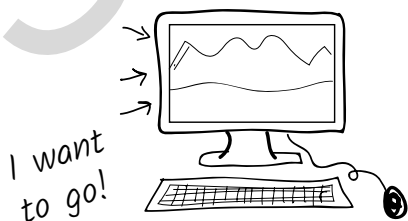
“Can I go too?” Jess asks.

Coach Sims smiles. “I’ll see what I can do.” She gets out her phone. “Let me text you the link. Check it out. Talk it over with your parents.”

“Okay. Cool,” I say. “Thanks, Coach.”

After the game, Jess walks home with me. I live in a small apartment with my mom. Jess sits at my computer. Together, we look at the website.

“Oh, wow,” Jess says. “It’s an overnight camp. Five days. The coach was a pro. He even played on an Olympic team.”



Photos of the camp are beautiful. It's in the mountains. I look over at Jess. Huge smiles are on our faces. Then we look at the price.

It's \$700. We both groan.

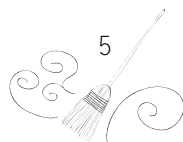


“No,” Mom says after Jess leaves. She’s heating leftovers for dinner.

“But—”

“Sorry, Tiggs. I’m working overtime as it is. The rent is still barely covered. Set the table, please.”

I grab two plates. Mom works so hard. It was unfair to ask. But I thought maybe



she had some hidden cash for emergencies.
Soccer camp counts, I think.



Mom dishes up our food. We're both quiet. She must notice how sad I am. A few minutes later she looks up. "I'll tell you what. The camp is three months away, right?"

I nod.

"You earn one half. I'll pay the other."

"Really?"

She sighs. "Sure. Why not? Just check your ideas with me first."

I give her a hug. "Thanks, Mom."

This is so cool! Earning money can't be all that hard. I have three months. Coming up with half should be easy.

