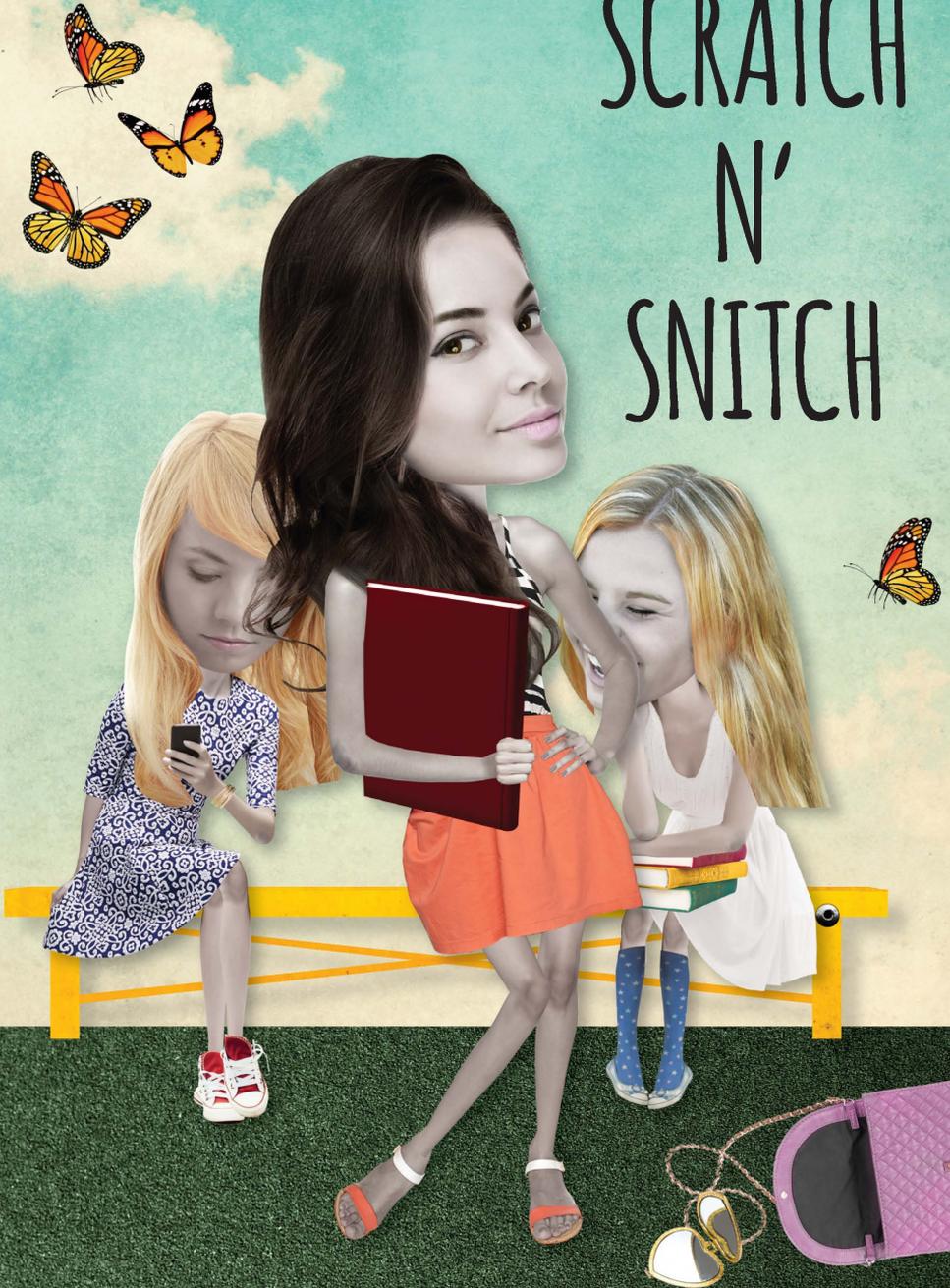


EVAN JACOBS

SCRATCH N' SNITCH

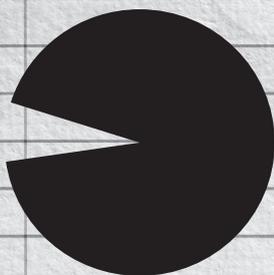


DLE SCHOOL



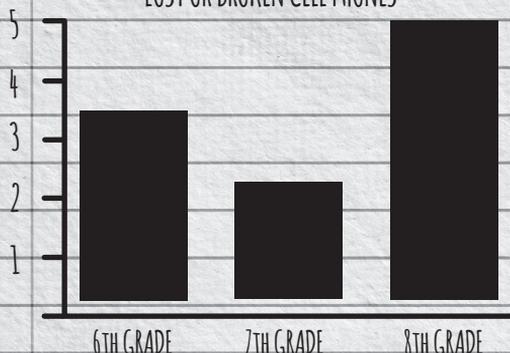
STATS AT MARINA MIDDLE SCHOOL

93% OF STUDENTS HAVE CELL PHONES

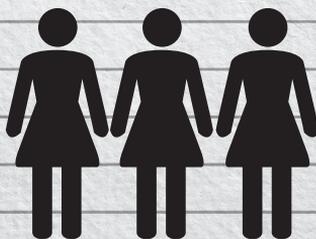


7% DO NOT HAVE CELL PHONES

LOST OR BROKEN CELL PHONES



3 GIRLS SIT ON
THE "COOL BENCH"





EASY REPAIR

HARD REPAIR



CHAPTER 1

ME, ME, AND ME

Mia Gonzalez walked over to the “cool” bench. You had to be cool to hang there. She saw Cassidy and Nicole. They were her besties at Marina Middle School. The cool bench was in the center of campus. The girls stood there so everybody could see them. They were picture-perfect. Always.

The three girls were the coolest eighth graders at school. Mia was a goddess, with her long brown hair and tanned skin. Cassidy and Nicole

made her shine. Both had blonde hair and fair skin. Mia “popped” in between.

The three girls got straight As. They didn't have to study hard. Or work much.

Mia was the most popular. Kids envied Cassidy and Nicole. But Mia had a way about her that went beyond them.

Mia knew she was cool. And that wasn't a good thing.

She was spoiled.

She was self-centered.

She was selfish.

She was just about every bad “self” word you could be.

She had been popular since first grade. Nobody challenged her. Everybody accepted how she was.

Mia got within a few feet of the cool bench. Deemed cool by her, naturally. She saw something that made her jaw drop. Two boys were standing next to it. Her bench! They were too close for comfort.

“What’s up with the losers?” she asked Cassidy and Nicole.

As usual, the girls had their phones. They were always holding them. Always taking selfies. And posting. They *were* their phones.

“We thought we’d let you handle it.” Cassidy grinned. Then she checked her phone.

“Yeah, you’re better at dealing with losers than we are,” Nicole said.

“I know.” Mia smiled smugly.

She walked over to the two boys. They wore hoodies. Skinny jeans. Vans. They had long hair. And they held skateboards.

All Mia saw were two kids who were less than she was.

Less good-looking. Less popular. Less smart. Why? Because she thought they were.

“Gross,” Mia said when she got closer. “Why don’t you two take your discussion somewhere else.” It wasn’t a question.

They both stared at her.

“You’re too close to the cool bench.” She pointed to it. Rolled her eyes. Cassidy and Nicole giggled.

“We’re not even near—” one boy started to say.

“Listen,” Mia snapped. “I’m a person. You’re a person. But I’m a *better* person. Everybody knows this bench is ours. So, why don’t you two go somewhere else? Sit at the lunch tables with the other skaters.”

The boys had no reply. They stared at Mia. Then they walked away.

Mia sniffed. Mission accomplished. She noticed some posters for the Zombie Dance that Friday. The school hosted the dance the week before Halloween every year. Mia and her boyfriend, Neil, hadn’t talked about going. They didn’t have to. She knew he would take her.

Neil went to Ocean High School. He was one of the few sophomores on the varsity football

team. He was tall. And he looked like a surfer, with a muscular build and wavy blond hair.

Mia turned to Cassidy and Nicole. She was grinning as her phone buzzed with an incoming text. She knew it was Neil. He always texted her first thing in the morning.

NEIL: (Hang out later?)

MIA: (Maybe.)

She figured they would hang out. She wanted to. But she didn't want to seem too eager. Mia knew guys liked girls more when they had to work for it. Chase them.

“Who was that?” Cassidy asked.

“Neil.” Mia shrugged. She liked not caring. Or at least looking like she didn't care.

The bell rang.

“Time to be bored.” Mia rolled her eyes.

The girls followed her. They had classes in

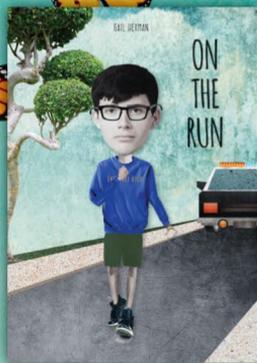
the opposite direction. But they always walked Mia to her first class.

As they went, it seemed like all eyes were on them. Students moved out of their way. The girls liked parading around the campus.

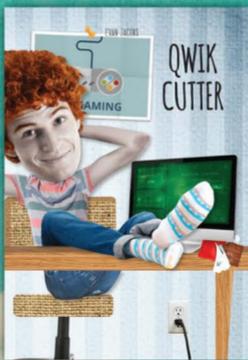
They did get smiles from Rand, Donovan, and Jeff as they passed. They were eighth graders too. They liked to dress preppy—1980s all the way. They wore topsiders. Polo shirts. Dress pants. They even combed their hair like guys did in the '80s. They were as popular as Mia, Cassidy, and Nicole.

Then the Scabs walked by.

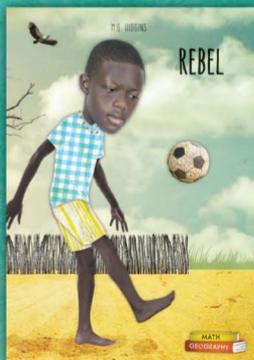
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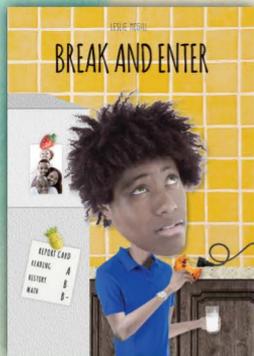
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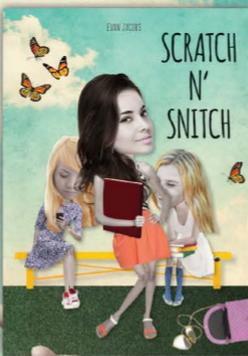
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SHOPPING, CANDY CRUSH,
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POSERS, PE, PEPLUM SHIRTS

MIA AND HER TWO BFFS RULE THE SCHOOL. THEY DECLARE WHAT'S HOT. AND LOSERS ARE DEFINITELY NOT. ESPECIALLY THE LOSERS WHO SCRATCHED MIA'S PHONE. SHE FREAKS OUT. BUT BEING THE REIGNING QUEEN CAN CHANGE IN AN INSTANT. ALL IT TAKES IS A FAKE PHOTO. AND A HACKED ACCOUNT.



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