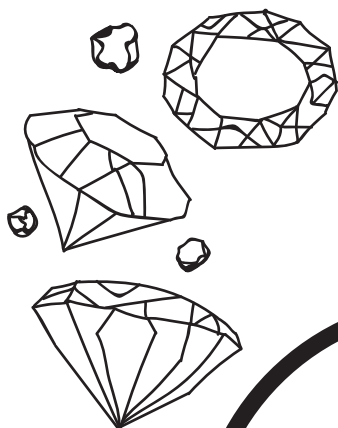


Vicki C. Hayes

STONES







MEET THE



Jan

Age: 12

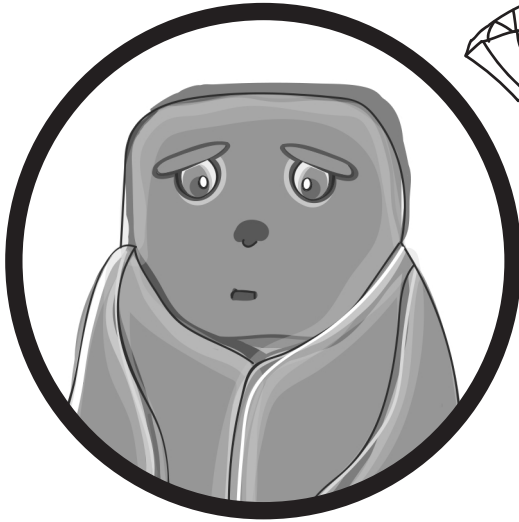
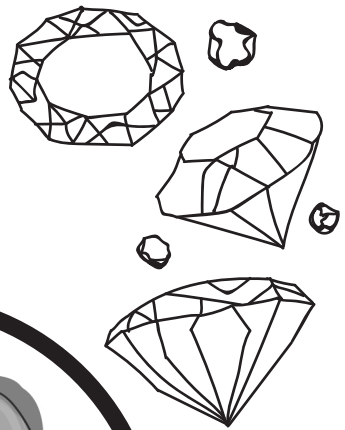
Biggest Secret: her real name is January

Favorite Vacation: the Girl Scouts
father/daughter campout

Career Goal: to be a grief counselor

Best Quality: learns from her mistakes

CHARACTERS



MICA

Age: 10

Hobby: gem hunting

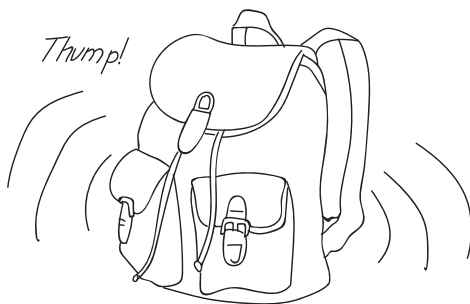
Favorite Meal: fish and chips

Secret Wish: to visit New York City

Best Quality: never complains

1 NO FAIR

Jan was mad. She opened the back door. And walked into the kitchen. Her mom was there. She was cooking dinner. Jan dumped her backpack on the floor.



Her mom looked up at the loud thump. Emma was there too. She was stacking blocks.

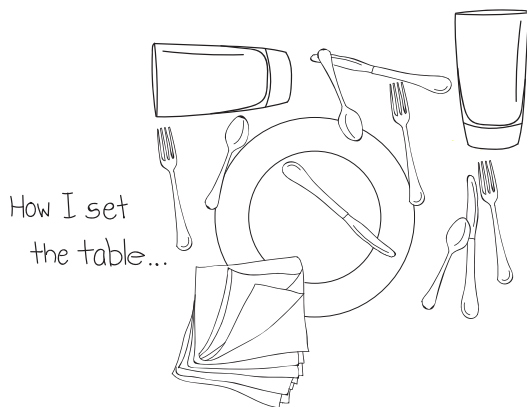


“Hi, sweetie,” her mom said. “You’re just in time to set the table.”

Jan pulled her long hair into a bun. “Do I have to?” she asked. “I’m tired.”

“It would be helpful,” said Mom.

Jan grabbed three plates and three glasses. She put them on the table. She scooped up some forks. She dropped them by the plates. Then she plopped down into a chair. She took out her phone.



“How was school today?”

Jan read some texts on her phone. Her



mom stirred a pot on the stove. Jan didn't look up. She didn't talk. Mom got milk from the fridge. She looked at Jan.

“How's Abby?” her mom asked. “Did you make plans for the weekend?”

Jan tapped on her phone. She didn't look up. Her mom poured milk into two glasses. She glanced at Jan.



“How was the math test? Sixth grade can be pretty hard.”

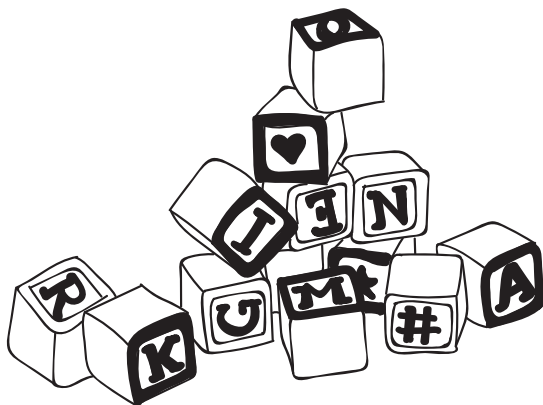
Jan banged her phone down on the table.



“It doesn’t matter,” she said loudly. “Nothing matters. Just leave me alone!”

“Jan,” said Mom. “You don’t need to be so angry. You’re not the only one who misses Dad.”

There was a crash. Emma’s block tower had fallen. The blocks were everywhere. Jan kicked some blocks near her foot. Emma looked up at her sister. She looked sad.

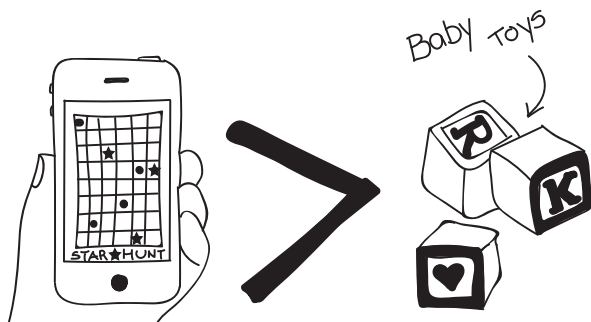


“Pick them up,” said Jan.

“Will you help me?” asked Emma.

Jan looked down at her little sister.

“Blocks are for babies,” she said. “Play by yourself.” Jan picked up her phone again.



“Please?” asked Emma. She smiled at Jan. But Jan wasn’t looking. Emma went back to her blocks.

“You could play with her a little,” said Mom. “You don’t play with her anymore.”

Jan banged her phone down on the table again. She looked at her mom. “Stop telling me what to do!” she yelled. She stood up fast. Her chair fell over.

“Jan—”

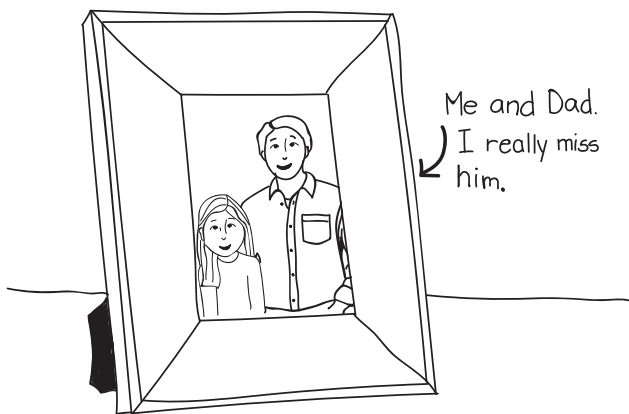
“No! Everyone always tells me what to



do. My friends tell me. My teachers tell me. Emma tells me. You tell me,” Jan said. “No one thinks of me. No one thinks of my feelings. They just boss me around. Dad *never* bossed me around.”

Jan grabbed her phone. She got her backpack. The kitchen was too stuffy. She tore off down the hall. Why was everyone so awful?

She was angry. Her room was quiet. She went inside. Then slammed the door. Life wasn't fair! Why did her dad have to die?



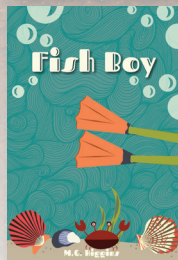
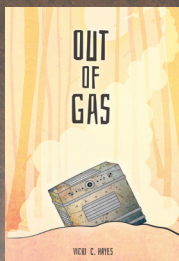
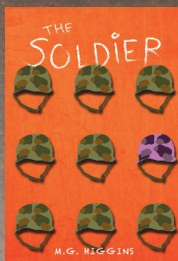
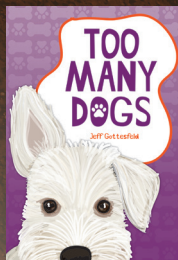
Jan sat on her bed. She threw her stuffed bear against the wall. She fell back onto the soft covers. Turning over, she put her face into her pillow.

Nobody came to get her. Nobody said sorry.

Soon she was asleep.



red rhino books®



STONES

My family is awful.
It was never like this
when Dad was alive.
I miss him!


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