

Chapter 9

Negotiation

negotiation (nĭ-gō'shē-ā'shən) n. A method of bargaining so that you can reach an agreement.

Evan looked up from the marble track he was building when Jessie walked in the front door. She looked hot. She looked sweaty. She looked . . . happy. Really happy. Like she'd just gotten an A+. Or like . . . like she'd just won a war.

"What are you smiling for?" asked Evan, holding a marble at the top of the track.

"No reason." Jessie put her hands on her hips and stared at Evan. She looked like one of those goofy yellow smiley faces—all mouth.

"Well, quit looking at me, would ya? It's creepifying. You look like you're going to explode or something." Evan dropped the marble into the funnel. It raced through the track, picking up speed around the curves. It passed the flywheel, sending the flags spinning, then fell into the final drop. When it reached the end of the track it went sailing through the air like a beautiful silver bird.

And fell short.

The marble landed on the ground, instead of in the bull's-eye cup.

Evan muttered under his breath and adjusted the position of the cup.

"Raise the end of the track," said Jessie. "You'll get more loft."

Evan looked at her angrily. The marble had fallen into the cup the last ten times he'd done it. Why did it have to fall short the one time *she* was watching? "Don't tell me what to do," he said. Why was she smiling like that?

"I didn't tell you what to do," she said. "I just made a suggestion. Take it or leave it." She turned

to walk up the stairs. "Grumpminster Fink," she tossed over her shoulder.

Evan threw a marble at her disappearing back but missed by a mile. Well, he hadn't really been aiming anyway; he just wanted that feeling of throwing something. He'd been feeling the need to throw something these past four days.

Grumpminster Fink. That was the name of a character he'd made up when he was six and Jessie was five. That was back when Mom and Dad were fighting a lot and Evan and Jessie just had to get out of the house. They'd scramble up the Climbing Tree—Evan had his branch, Jessie had hers—and wait it out. Sometimes they had to wait a long time. And once, when Jessie was thirsty and impatient and cranky, Evan had said, "Be quiet and I'll tell you a story about Grumpminster Fink."

Grumpminster Fink was a man who was cranky and mean and made everybody miserable. But deep down, he wanted people to love him. It's just that every time he tried to do something nice, it turned out all wrong. Evan had made up a lot of stories

about Mr. Fink in that tree. But after Dad left, there just weren't any more stories to tell.

No one in the whole world, besides Jessie and Evan, knew about Grumpminster Fink. And Evan hadn't thought about him in years.

"Hey!" he said sharply. He heard Jessie stop at the top of the stairs, but she didn't come down.

"Do you want to call this whole thing off?" he asked.

"What?" she shouted.

"This . . . this . . . Lemonade War," he said.

"Call it off?"

"Yeah," he said. "Just say nobody wins and nobody loses."

Jessie walked down the stairs and stood with her arms crossed.

Evan looked at her.

He missed her.

He had spent the whole day—the third to last day before school started—by himself. It stunk. It totally stunk. If Jessie had been around—and they hadn't been fighting with each other—they could

have played air hockey or made pretzels or built a marble track with twice as many gizmos that launched the marble into the bull's-eye cup every time. Jessie was very precise. She was good at getting the marble to go into the cup.

"Whaddya say?" he asked.

Jessie looked puzzled. "I don't know . . ." she said, frowning. "You see, Megan kinda, well, she . . ."

Evan felt his face go hot. Megan Moriarty. Every time he thought of her his throat got all squeezed and scratchy. It was like the allergic reaction he had if he accidentally ate a shrimp.

"You told Megan Moriarty about—*everything*?" he asked, feeling itchy all over.

"No. Well . . . what 'everything'?" asked Jessie. Evan thought she looked like a fish caught in a net.

"You did." And suddenly Evan knew exactly why Jessie had been smiling when she walked in the door. And why she didn't want to call off the war. She had done it. Again. She had figured out some way to show the world just how stupid he was. Like the time he'd come home with 100 percent on his

weekly spelling quiz—the *only* time he'd ever gotten every word right—to find that Jessie had won a statewide poetry-writing contest. He'd thrown his paper into the trash without even telling his mom. What was the point?

Evan didn't know how, but somehow Jessie'd found a way to earn more than one hundred and three dollars. She was going to beat him. And Megan Moriarty knew all about it. And she would tell everyone else. All the girls would know. Paul would know. And Ryan. And Adam and Jack.

Scott Spencer would know. *Can you believe it? He lost to his little sister. The one who's going to be in our class. What a loser!*

"You know what?" he said, pushing past her. "Forget it! Just forget I said anything. The war is on. O-N. Prepare to die."

Chapter 10

MALICIOUS MISCHIEF

malicious mischief (mə-līsh'əs mī's'chīf) n. The act of purposely destroying the property of someone else's business.

Jessie was all in knots. Evan was madder than ever at her, and she couldn't figure out why. He had said, "Do you want to call off the war?" and she had said, "Sure, let's call off the war." Or *something* like that. That's what she'd meant to say. That's what she'd *wanted* to say.

But what had she *really* said? She'd mentioned Megan. Oh! She'd almost spilled the beans about Megan giving her the \$104. But she hadn't! She'd kept her mouth shut, just in time.

Jessie smiled, remembering that.

So why had Evan acted like that? What was the matter with him?

Jessie lay down on her bed. The world was a confusing place, and she needed Evan to help her figure it out. If this is what fourth grade was going to be like, she might as well just give up now.

And there was something else that was tying her up in knots. That two hundred and eight dollars—it wasn't *really* hers. Megan had given it to her to make a donation. She hadn't given it to Jessie the way Evan's friends had given their money to him. (That still made her so mad when she thought about it. Oh, she wanted to get even with him for saying she didn't have friends!) So even though it looked like she had two hundred and eight dollars in her lock box, only half of that was money she could honestly call her own.

Still . . . if push came to shove and she needed it all to win—

Sure, she'd use it all! This was a war!

But if she pretended that all the money was hers—

Hey, what if Evan has even more than that?

So if she lost, even *with* Megan's money—

Gulp!

Jessie hadn't thought of that. If she lost, even with two hundred and eight dollars. If she lost. *Oh my gosh. Winner takes all.* She would lose all of Megan's money to Evan. How could Jessie explain that to her friend? *You see, I took all the money you earned to help rescue animals and I lost it to my brother, who's going to buy an iPod.* Megan would hate her. All the girls who were friends with Megan would hate her. And Evan already hated her. So that was that. Goodbye, fourth grade.

She couldn't use Megan's money to try to win the bet. It was too risky. But did she have enough to win on her own?

Jessie felt desperation rise in her throat. How much money did Evan have? She had to find out.

Jessie tiptoed upstairs to the attic office. She listened at the closed door. Her mother was on the phone. Then Jessie snuck downstairs. Evan was watching TV in the family room. Like a whisper,

she crept back upstairs. And into Evan's room.

There was a strict rule in the Treski house: No one was allowed in anyone else's room without an *express invitation*. That was the term. It meant that Jessie had to say, "Evan, can I come into your room?" and Evan had to say, "Yes," before she put even one toe over the line.

So even though Evan's door was wide open, just crossing the threshold was a direct violation that carried a fine of one dollar. But that was the least of Jessie's concerns.

She snuck over to Evan's bookshelf and picked up a carved cedar box—Evan's chosen souvenir from the family summer vacation. The orange-red wood of the box had a scene etched into the top: a sailboat sailing past a lighthouse while gulls flew overhead. The words "Bar Harbor, Maine" were painted in the sky. The box had brass hinges and a clever latch. What it didn't have was a lock.

Jessie flipped open the lid, immediately smelling the spicy, sharp scent of the wood. She couldn't believe her eyes.

Her hands started pawing through the bills. Dozens of them. There was a ten and a bunch of fives and more ones than she could count. She sat on Evan's bed and quickly sorted out the money.

Evan had one hundred and three dollars and eleven cents.

Eighty-nine cents less than she had.

Eighty-nine cents. He could sell one lousy cup of lemonade tomorrow and beat her. And there was nothing she could do about it because she'd be at the beach.

I can't let him win, she thought. *I can't*. She had gotten to the point where she couldn't even remember what had started the whole war. She couldn't remember why it had been so important to win in the first place. Now she just had to win.

She messed up the money and stuffed it back into the box.

That night in bed, she lay awake trying to think of some way to stop Evan from selling even a single glass.

Sometimes in the dark, dark thoughts come.
Jessie had a very dark thought.

The next morning was Sunday, and the rule in the Treski house was that everyone could sleep in as late as he or she wanted. But Jessie awoke to the sound of the electric garage door opening. She sat up in bed and checked the clock: 8:00 a.m. Then she looked out her window just in time to see Evan pedaling away on his bike, his backpack on his back. She quickly dressed and hurried down to the kitchen.

Her mom was making scrambled eggs and toast. "Hi, Jess. Want some?" she asked, pointing with her spatula at the pan of sizzling eggs.

"No, thanks," said Jessie.

"I washed your blue bathing suit last night. It's hanging in the basement. What time are the Moriartys picking you up?"

"Nine o'clock," said Jessie. "Mom, where did Evan go?"

"He went to the store to buy some lemonade

mix." Jessie's mom scooped the eggs onto a plate and put the pan in the sink. When she turned on the faucet, the pan hissed like an angry snake. A great cloud of steam puffed into the air and then disappeared. "What's going on, Jess? What's with all the lemonade stands and you and Evan fighting?"

Jessie opened the pantry cupboard and pulled out a box of Kix. "Nothing," she said. She watched the cereal very carefully as she poured. She didn't want to look at her mother right then.

Mrs. Treski got the milk out of the refrigerator and put it on the counter next to Jessie's bowl. "It doesn't seem like nothing. It seems like there's a lot of bad feeling between the two of you."

Jessie poured her milk slowly. "Evan's mad at me." *And he's going to be a whole lot madder after today,* she added in her head.

"What's he mad about?" asked Mrs. Treski.

"I dunno. He called me a baby and said I ruin everything. And . . ." Jessie felt it coming. She tried to hold it back, but she knew it was coming. Her shoulders tightened up, her chest caved in, and

her mouth opened in a howl. "He said he hates me!" Tears poured out of her eyes and dropped into her cereal bowl. Her nose started to run and her lips quivered. With every sob, she let out a sound like tires squealing on a wet road.

For the whole time Jessie cried, her mother wrapped her in a hug. And then, like a faucet turned off, Jessie stopped.

She had told the truth; she really *didn't* understand why Evan was so angry. Even before the Lemonade War he had been mad, and Jessie still didn't know why.

"Better?" asked Mrs. Treski.

"Not much," said Jessie. She wiped her nose with her paper napkin and started eating her cereal. It was soggy, but thankfully not salty.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to find out what he's mad about?" asked Jessie's mom. "You're never going to stop being mad at each other until you both understand what the other person is feeling."

"I guess so," said Jessie.

"It can be hard. Sometimes it's even hard to know what you're feeling yourself. I mean, how do you feel about *him*?" asked Mrs. Treski.

Jessie didn't have to think long. All the insults and anger, the confusion and fighting, seemed to converge in a single flash of white-hot feeling. "I hate him! I hate him for saying all those mean things. And for not letting me play. I hate him just as much as he hates me. More!"

Mrs. Treski looked sad. "Can we have a sit-down about this tonight? After you get back from the beach?"

"No," said Jessie, remembering the spit vow. Evan would be mad if he knew that she had worried Mom with their fighting. And then he'd spill the beans about the terrible thing she was about to do. Jessie didn't want her mom knowing anything about that. "We'll work it out ourselves, Mom. I promise. Evan and I will talk tonight."

"I'm sorry I've been working so hard," said Mrs. Treski. "I know it's a lousy end to the summer."

"It's okay, Mom. You gotta work, right?"

"Yes. No. I don't know. I promise I'll be finished

by dinnertime tonight. That way we can all go to the fireworks together." Jessie's mom looked out the window. "I hope they don't get canceled because of weather. They're saying scattered thunderstorms this evening."

Jessie and her mom finished breakfast without saying much else.

"I'll clean up," said Jessie. She liked to do dishes, and she wanted to do something nice for her mom.

While she cleaned, she thought about the terrible plan she had come up with last night. It was mean. It was really mean. It was the meanest thing she had ever imagined doing.

I'm not going to do it, she decided. I hate him, but I don't hate him that much.

She was putting the last glass in the dishwasher when Evan walked in. His backpack was bulging.

"I thought you were going to the beach for the whole day," he said.

"Megan's picking me up in half an hour." She thought she saw Evan stiffen up. *Good.* "What's in the backpack?"

"Not much," he said, dumping out the contents

onto the kitchen table. Cans of lemonade mix rolled all over. Jessie tried to count, but there were too many. Fifteen? Twenty?

"Holy macaroni! How many cans did you buy?"

"Thirty-two." Evan started to stack the cans in a pyramid.

"But, but, you don't need that much. Even to win, you don't need that much. That's, that's—" She did the calculations in her head. "That's two hundred and fifty-six cups of lemonade. If you sell them at fifty cents apiece—"

"A dollar. I'm going to charge a dollar apiece."

Jessie felt like her head was going to explode. "You'll never sell it all," she said. "There isn't a neighborhood in town that will buy two hundred and fifty-six cups in one day." *Too much lemonade. Not enough thirsty people*, she thought.

"I'm going to roll! Like the ice cream truck! I'm going to mix it all up in the big cooler and wagon it from street to street. The high today is going to be ninety-four degrees. It might take me all day, but I'll sell every last drop. *Two hundred and fifty-six smackers!*

And then tonight, Juicy, we count our earnings. Don't forget: Winner takes all!"

"But you don't need two hundred and fifty-six dollars to win!" she shouted.

Evan stood tall and said in that gravelly voice that all the boys imitated, "I don't play to win. I play to *pul-ver-ize*."

Oh! What an idiot! Jessie couldn't believe her brother could be such a jerk. She watched as Evan put together his rolling lemonade stand in the garage. The big cooler was something Mrs. Treski had bought a few years back when she was in charge of refreshments for the school Spring Fling. It looked like a giant bongo drum with a screw-off top and a spigot at the bottom. Evan loaded it into the wagon, then poured in the mix from all thirty-two cans. He used the garden hose to fill the cooler to the top, then dumped in four trays of ice cubes. With a plastic beach shovel, he stirred the lemonade. The ice cubes made a weird rattling noise as they swirled around in the big drum. Using the shovel like a big spoon, he scooped out a tiny

bit and tasted it. "Perfect!" he announced, screwing the top on tightly. Then he went into the basement to make his Lemonade-on-Wheels sign.

Without a moment's hesitation, Jessie sprang into action.

First she got out a large Ziploc bag from the kitchen drawer, the kind that you could freeze a whole gallon of strawberries in if you wanted to. Then she held it, upside down and wide open, over the fruit bowl. She gave the bowl a solid knock. Jessie was surprised how easy it was to catch the fruit flies that floated up from the bowl. It was like they wanted to die!

She filled that bag and two more with flies, then hurried to the garage. She unscrewed the top of the big cooler. Holding the first bag upside down, she unzipped it, expecting the flies to fall down into the lemonade. They didn't. They stayed safe and dry in the bag. It was like they wanted to live!

"Too bad for you, you stupid flies," said Jessie as she plunged the bag into the lemonade. Under the surface, she turned the bag inside out, swishing it

back and forth so that all the flies were washed off into the lemonade. She emptied all three bags of flies into the big cooler, then hunted around until she found two green inchworms and a fuzzy gypsy moth caterpillar. She tossed them into the cooler. Then she threw in a fistful of dirt, for good measure. She was just about to screw the top back on when she heard Evan coming up the basement stairs. There wasn't time to get the top back on! He would see the bugs and the whole plan would be ruined!

Jessie ran to the steps and shouted, "Evan, Mom wants to see you in her office. Right away!"

"Aw, man," muttered Evan as he started to climb the second set of stairs.

Jessie quickly screwed on the cap, grabbed her blue bathing suit from the basement, then went upstairs to her room. On the way, she passed Evan coming down.

"Mom did *not* want to see me," he said, annoyed.

Jessie looked surprised. "That's what it sounded like. She yelled something down the stairs. I

thought it was 'Get Evan.'" Jessie shrugged. "So I got you."

From her bedroom window, she watched Evan rolling down the street with his Lemonade-on-Wheels stand. He was like one of those old-time peddlers, calling out, "Lemonade! Git yer ice-cold lemonade here!" as he walked. For one lightning-brief second, Jessie felt a stab of regret. She could see how hard he was straining to pull the heavy cooler. She knew what it was like to stand in the hot sun selling lemonade. But the feeling was snuffed out by the hurricane of anger she felt when she remembered Evan's gravelly voice: "*pul-ver-ize.*"

Jessie switched into her bathing suit, packed up her beach bag, and said a quick goodbye to her mother as the Moriartys pulled into the driveway.

"What a great day for the beach," said her mother. "Have fun. And be home in time for the fireworks, okay?"

The fireworks. Yep. Jessie imagined there would be some fireworks tonight.

Chapter 11

A TOTAL LOSS

total loss (tôt'l lôs) n. Goods so damaged that there's no point in repairing them (or they can't be repaired at all).

The first cup was an easy sell.

The second cup, too.

It was on the third cup that a little girl, about six years old, said, "Ew, there's a bug in my drink."

Then her brother said, "There's one in mine, too."

"Gross," said an older boy on a skateboard. "There are, like, three in mine. I want my money back, man," he said, dumping his lemonade on the ground.

The mother of the little girl and boy looked into

their cups carefully. "I think you need to check your lemonade, honey," she said to Evan.

Evan unscrewed the cap and everyone looked in. The surface was swimming with dead bugs: fruit flies, worms, and a soggy brown caterpillar.

"Oh my goodness," said the mother.

The boy started spitting on the ground like he was going to die. The girl started wailing. "Mommy! I drank bugs. I have bugs in my tummy!"

Evan couldn't believe his eyes. How did this happen? Did they crawl in somehow? They couldn't have. He had screwed the lid on tightly. He was sure of it. And anyway . . . one or two bugs crawling in—maybe. But fifty dead fruit flies and two inchworms and a caterpillar? It just wasn't possible.

Evan was burning with embarrassment as everyone looked at him and his buggy lemonade. Frantically, he reached into the cooler and started to scoop out the dead bugs with his hands.

"Uh, sweetheart," said the mother, "you can't sell that lemonade."

"I'll get them all," said Evan. "I'll get every last one out."

"No, dear. You really can't. You need to dump it out," she said.

Evan looked at her like she was crazy. Dump it out? *Dump it out?* He'd spent forty dollars of his hard-earned money on that lemonade and another dollar for the cups. He wasn't going to dump it out.

"I'll do it at home," he said.

"No. You should do it here, I think. I need to be sure it's all disposed of properly."

Evan looked at her. He didn't know her, but he knew her type. Boy, did he know her type. She was the kind of mother who thought she was the mother of the whole world. If you were on a playground and she thought you were playing too rough, she'd tell you. If you were chewing gum in line at the 7-Eleven, she'd say, "I sure hope that's sugarless." Mothers like that never minded just their own business. Or just their kids' business. They thought they had to take care of every kid in the kingdom.

"It's too heavy for me to dump," he said. "I'll take it home and my mom can help."

"I'll help," said the busybody mother of the world. "All we need to do is tip it a little." She

grabbed one handle of the big cooler. Evan had no choice but to grab the other handle. Together they tipped and the lemonade poured out of the top of the cooler.

They poured and poured and poured. The lemonade sparkled in the sunlight, like a bejeweled waterfall, and then disappeared without a trace, soaking into the parched September grass. As the last sluice of lemonade slipped out of the cooler, a slick of mud poured out.

"Oh my goodness," said the mother.

Evan couldn't believe it. He couldn't believe how quickly his victory had turned to defeat. It was just like the lemonade. It had disappeared into the grass, leaving nothing behind. A total loss.

The mother smiled sympathetically as Evan returned her two dollars. The skateboard dude had already skated off with his refund. There was nothing to do but go home.

Evan walked slowly, dragging the wagon with the empty cooler rattling inside.

With every step he took, the wagon handle

poked him in the rear end. Step. Poke. Step. Poke. He felt like someone was nudging him forward.

"Evan, Mom wants to see you in her office. Right away!"

That had been weird. His mom had had no idea what he meant. "I didn't call you. I didn't call anyone," she had said. "I've been on the computer."

"Evan, Mom wants to see you."

He had been coming up the stairs. Jessie had been in the garage. She had looked anxious. *"Right away!"* she had said.

Evan stopped walking. He stared at the empty cooler. Then he started to run. The wagon bounced crazily along the uneven sidewalk. Twice it tipped over. *What did it matter?* thought Evan angrily. *There's no lemonade to spill.*

By the time he got home, he had it all figured out. He looked in the kitchen trash and found the three Ziploc bags, inside out and sticky with lemonade. He shook the fruit bowl and noticed how few fruit flies took to the air. If he'd had the right materials, he would have dusted the cooler for fingerprints. But there was really no need for that.

He knew what he would have found: Jessie was all over this one.

"That RAT! That lousy rotten stinking RAT of a sister!" he shouted. He went back to the garage and kicked the wagon. He knocked the cooler to the floor. He tore up his Lemonade-on-Wheels sign into a dozen pieces.

He was going to lose. She had a hundred dollars (he was sure of it) and he had just sixty-two left. Tonight, before the fireworks, when they counted their money, she would be the winner and he would be the loser.

Winner takes all.

Loser gets nothing.

It was so unfair.

Evan stomped upstairs to his room. He slammed the door so hard, it bounced open again. When he went to close it, he was staring across the hallway, straight into Jessie's room. He could see her neatly made bed covered in Koosh pillows, the poster of Bar Harbor from their trip to Maine this summer, and her night table with *Charlotte's Web* at the ready.

Evan crossed the hall, then paused at Jessie's door. There was the rule about not entering. Well, *she'd* broken the rules first. (Even though there wasn't really a rule about fruit flies and lemonade, it was clearly a dirty trick.) Evan walked in and went straight to Jessie's desk drawer.

There was the fake pack of gum. Inside, the key. Did she really think he didn't know where she hid it? He'd seen her slip the key inside the box when he was passing by on his way to the bathroom. Jessie was smart, but she wasn't very smooth. He'd known for months where the key was hidden. He just hadn't bothered to use it.

Until now.

It took him a while to find the lock box. He checked the bureau drawers first and then under Jessie's bed. But finally he found it hidden in her closet. Again, not very smooth.

Evan carried the key and the lock box back to his room and sat on the bed. He put the key in the lock and opened the top. Then—the moment of truth—he lifted out the plastic change tray.

There were a whole bunch of scraps of paper on top, and there was a folded index card, too. Evan moved these aside and found a ten-dollar bill paper-clipped to a birthday card. Under that was an envelope labeled "Pre-War Earnings" with four dollars and forty-two cents inside it. That was the money Jessie had had before the Lemonade War began. She'd kept it separate, just like she promised. Next to it was a fat envelope labeled "Lemonade Earnings." Evan opened the envelope.

Inside, the bills were arranged by ones, fives, and tens. All the bills were facing the same way, so that the eyes of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Alexander Hamilton were all looking at Evan as he counted out the cash.

Two hundred and eight dollars.

There it was. The winning wad.

Evan thought of how hard he'd worked that week, in the blazing sun, in the scorching heat. He thought about the coolerful of lemonade pouring into the grass. He thought about handing over his sixty-two dollars and eleven cents to Jessie and how

she'd smile and laugh and tell. Tell everyone that she had won the Lemonade War. The guys would all shake their heads. *What a loser.* Megan would turn away. *What a stupid jerk.*

Evan slammed the lid of the lock box shut. He stuffed the envelope in his shorts pocket. He was *not* going to let it happen!

He wasn't planning to keep the money. Not for good. But he wasn't going to let her have it tonight. When it came time to show their earnings, he'd have sixty-two dollars and eleven cents and she'd have *nothing*. He'd give her the money back tomorrow or maybe the day after that, but *not tonight*.

He suddenly felt a desperate need to get out of the house as fast as he could. He shoved the lock box back into Jessie's closet and the key back into the fake pack of gum.

"Hey, Mom," he shouted, not even waiting for her to answer back. "I'm going to the school to see if there's a game. 'Kay?"

Chapter 12

waiting period

waiting period (wāt'ting pīr'ē-əd) n. A specified delay, required by law, between taking an action and seeing the results of that action.

Jessie wanted to have fun. She really did. But it seemed like the more she tried, the less she had.

First, the drive to the beach took two and a half hours because of traffic. Jessie felt the car lurching. Forward, stop. Forward, stop.

"Memo to myself," said Mr. Moriarty. "Never go to the beach on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend. Especially when there's been a heat wave for more than a week."

In the back seat, Jessie and Megan played license

plate tag and magnetic bingo and twenty questions, but by the end of the car ride, Jessie was cramped and bored.

Then the beach parking lot was full, so they had to park half a mile away and walk. Then the beach was so crowded that they could hardly find a spot for their blanket. Then Megan said the water was too cold and she just wanted to go in up to her ankles. She kept squealing and running backwards every time a gentle ripple of a wave came her way.

What fun was that? Sure, the water was cold! It was the North Shore. It was *supposed* to be cold. That's why it felt so good on a hot day like this. When Jessie and Evan went to the beach, they would boogie board and bodysurf and skimboard and throw a Screaming Scrunch Ball back and forth the whole time. They loved to stay in the water until their lips turned blue and they couldn't stop shaking. Then they'd roast themselves like weenies on their towels until they were hot and sweating again, and then they'd go right back in. Now *that* was fun at the beach.

Megan liked to build sandcastles and collect

shells and play sand tennis and read magazines. *That's all fine*, thought Jessie. *But not going in the water? That's crazy.*

The ride home was itchy and hot. Jessie had sand in all the places where her skin rubbed together: between her toes, behind her ears, and between the cheeks of her bottom. And somehow she'd gotten sunburned on her back, even though Mrs. Moriarty had smeared her all over with thick, goopy sunscreen twice. Jessie didn't even have the patience for ten questions, let alone twenty.

But Megan didn't get that Jessie didn't feel like talking. She kept trying to get her to take a quiz in a teen magazine. If Evan had been there, he would have kept quiet. Or maybe hummed a little. Jessie liked it when Evan hummed.

As they turned onto Damon Road, Megan asked, "Are you feeling sick?"

In fact, she was. For the past half-hour, Jessie had been imagining walking in the door and facing Evan. And she'd been feeling sicker and sicker with every mile that brought her closer to home.

Chapter 13

crisis management

crisis management (krī'sis măn'ij-mənt) n.
Special or extraordinary methods and procedures used when a business is in danger of failing.

"Sucker!"

"Oh, man. You were *schooled!*"

"*Pre-school*, baby!"

For the third time that afternoon, Scott Spencer had gotten the drop on Evan, dribbling around him and then hitting the easy lay-up. So the guys were giving him the business, even the ones on his own team. It was Evan, Paul, and Ryan against Kevin Toomey, Malik Lewis, and Scott. Evan wished that

Scott hadn't shown up, but he had, and they needed the sixth guy for three-on-three since Jack had gone home to ask his mom if they could all swim at his house. So what was Evan supposed to say?

Anyway, Evan was three times the ball handler that Scott was and everyone knew it. So it was all in fun.

But it didn't feel like much fun to Evan.

"What's up, man?" Paul asked.

Evan dribbled the ball back and forth, left hand, right hand, and then through his legs. "Hey, it's hot," he said.

"Yeah, it's hot for all of us," said Paul. "Get your game on, dude."

But Evan couldn't get his moves right. He was a half-step behind himself. And every time he moved, the envelope slapped against his thigh like a reprimand.

"Speaking of hot," said Ryan. Everyone turned to look. Jack was coming up the path, running at a dead-dog pace.

"Oh, please, God," said Paul. "Let her say yes."

As soon as he was in range, Jack shouted, "She said yes!"

"What's up?" asked Scott.

"Jack asked his mom if we could all go swimming in his pool," Kevin said.

"Hey, Jack," shouted Scott. "Can I come, too?"

"Yeah, sure," said Jack, who'd stopped running toward them and was waiting for them to join him on the path.

Oh, great, thought Evan. But he wasn't about to turn down a dunk in a pool just because Scott Spencer would be there.

Nobody wanted to go home for suits and towels. Kevin, Malik, and Ryan were wearing basketball shorts anyway, so they could swim in those. "We've got enough suits at the house," said Jack. "My mom saves all our old ones."

At the house, Evan changed into one of Jack's suits. He wrapped up his underwear and shirt inside his shorts and put the bundle of clothes on the end of Jack's bed next to all the other guys'

piled-up clothes. It felt good to drop the heavy shorts with the envelope stuffed in the pocket. Then, just to be sure, he put his shoes on top of his pile of clothes. He didn't want anything happening to that money.

They played pool basketball all afternoon, even though the teams were uneven. Mrs. Bagdasarian brought out drinks and cookies and chips and sliced-up watermelon. Every time one of them went into the house to use the bathroom, she shouted, "Dry off before you come in!" but she did it in a nice way.

Then, just when Evan thought the afternoon couldn't get any better, it did. Scott had gone into the house to go to the bathroom. A few minutes later he came out dressed, his hair still dripping down his back.

"I gotta go," he said, jamming his foot into his sneaker.

"Did your mom call?" asked Ryan.

"Nope, I just gotta go," he said. "See ya." He ran out the gate.

"Great," shouted Evan. "Now the teams are even." And they went back to playing pool hoops. Evan didn't think about Scott Spencer for the rest of the afternoon.

He didn't think about Scott Spencer until he went into Jack's bedroom to change back into his clothes and noticed that his shoes were on the floor and his shorts weren't folded up.

Chapter 14

Reconciliation

reconciliation (rĕk'ən-sīl'ē-ā'shən) n. The act of bringing together after a difference, as in to reconcile numbers on a balance sheet; resolution.

"Come on, you two," Mrs. Treski called up the stairs. "If we don't go now, there won't be any room on the grass."

"We're coming," shouted Evan, sticking his head out of his room. Jessie was sitting on his bed, and he was trying to get her to go to the fireworks. She had her lock box on her lap and a mulish look on her face.

"Just say it's a tie," said Evan. "C'mon, Jess. This

whole thing is stupid and you know it."

"It's not a tie unless it's a tie," said Jessie, knowing she sounded like a brat but not able to stop herself. "How much have you got?"

"Mom's waiting," said Evan. "Put your dumb box away and let's go to the fireworks."

"How much have you got?"

Evan tensed up his fingers as if he were strangling an invisible ghost. "Nothing! Okay? I've got nothing. Look." He turned the pockets of his shorts inside out.

Jessie looked skeptical. "You can't have *nothing*. You must have made *something*."

"Well, I had expenses. So I ended up with nothing. Okay? Are you happy? You win." Evan sat on the edge of the bed, looking at the floor.

Jessie felt her heart sink. "You spent *all* your money on mix for your Lemonade-on-Wheels stand?" Jessie asked. "All of it?"

Evan nodded. Jessie felt like crawling under the bed and never coming out. "It didn't pay off so good?" she whispered.

"There were a few bugs in the system," said Evan. *That's a joke Jessie would have loved*, he thought. Before the war. Now it was all just money and numbers and bad feelings. There was no room for laughing.

"Oh," said Jessie, her voice the size of an ant. She stared down at the box in her lap. "I've got—"

She opened the lid of the lock box, took out the change tray, and pushed aside all the scraps of paper she had collected and the comment card from Megan. She stared. "Wait a minute. This isn't my money." She picked up a handful of wrinkled, bunched-up bills. Evan lay down on the bed and covered his head with his pillow. Jessie counted the money quickly. "Sixty-two dollars and eleven cents? Where'd this come from?"

"Imamummy," said Evan from underneath the pillow.

"What?" said Jessie. "Take that dumb pillow away. I can't understand what you're saying." She hit the side of his leg for emphasis.

"It's my money!" he shouted, still through the

pillow. "It was a hundred and three dollars, but then I spent forty-one dollars for the Lemonade-on-Wheels stand. So now it's just sixty-two."

"Your money? But where's my money?"

Evan pulled the pillow away from his face. His eyes were closed. His nose pointed at the ceiling. He folded his arms across his chest like a dead man. "I took it."

"Well, give it back," said Jessie. This time she hit the side of his leg for real.

"I can't. It's gone." He lay as still as a three-day-old corpse.

"Gone? Gone where?" Jessie was shrieking now. Never in her life had she worked so hard to earn money. Never in her life had she had more than one hundred dollars in her hand. Never in her life had she had a friend who trusted her like Megan had.

"I don't know. It was in my shorts pocket. And then I played basketball with the guys. And then we went to Jack's house to swim. And I took off my shorts and borrowed a suit. And when I went back to change, the money was gone." He sat up

and faced his sister. "I'm *really* sorry."

In a real war you fight. You fight with your hands and with weapons. You fight with anything you've got because it's a matter of life and death. Jessie felt the loss of her hard-earned money like a death, and she ripped into Evan with all the power in her body. She punched him. She kicked him. She threw her lock box at him. She wanted to tear him up into little pieces.

Evan didn't try to pin her, though it would have been easy to do. Part of him just wanted to lie on the bed and take it. Take it all. For being the one who started the whole thing by saying, "I hate you." For making Jessie feel so rotten about herself just because Evan felt so rotten about himself. For taking Jessie's money and losing it to Scott. Just for being so stupid.

But Jessie was really going at it, and if he didn't protect himself at least a little, he was going to end up in the emergency room and that would upset his mom. So he kept his hands up in front of his face, just enough to keep Jessie from gouging out his

eyes. But he never once tried to hit her back. He was done fighting.

Finally Jessie ran out of gas. She lay down on the bed and tried to make her brain work. Her body was so worn out that her brain felt like the only part of her that *could* work.

"One of your friends stole my money?" she asked.

"I think it was Scott Spencer," said Evan. "He went upstairs to go to the bathroom. And then he came down all in a hurry and said he had to go home. After that, I went upstairs and the money was gone."

"He's such a jerk," said Jessie.

"The biggest," said Evan. "If he gets an Xbox, I'll *know* it was him."

"It was a lot of money," said Jessie, feeling tears start to spring from her eyes and run down her face.

"It *was*," said Evan. "I couldn't believe how much when I saw it. You're really something, you know that? Earning all that money selling lemonade."

Thanks, thought Jessie, though she couldn't say the word. "Why'd you do it, Evan?" she asked. She

meant *Why'd you take the money? And why'd you act so mean? And why'd you start this whole war in the first place?* There were too many questions.

"I was mad at you for putting the bugs in my lemonade," he said.

"Well, I was mad at you for saying you wanted to pulverize me," she said.

"I only did that because you were hanging out with Megan and I felt totally left out."

"Well, how do you think I felt when you wouldn't let me hang out with you and stupid Scott Spencer?"

"Well, I was mad at you because . . . because . . ."

Jessie sat up and looked at Evan. Evan looked at the wall.

"Because I don't want you in my class this year," he said.

"Because I'll embarrass you," she said solemnly.

"Because I'll embarrass *myself*," said Evan. "I never have the right answer in math. And I read slower than everyone when I read out loud. And I make mistakes. All the time. And now with you in

the class, it's going to be worse. They'll all say, 'Wow, he's even dumber than his little sister.'" Evan's shoulders slumped and his head hung low.

"You're not dumb," said Jessie.

"I know you don't *think* I am," he said. "And that stinks, too. That you're going to *see* how dumb I am in school."

"You're not dumb," said Jessie again. "You made a hundred and three dollars and eleven cents selling lemonade in just five days."

"Yeah, but you made two hundred and eight dollars! You see? You're my little sister, and you're twice as smart as me."

Jessie shook her head. "Half that money is Megan's. She just gave it to me to give to the Animal Rescue League. I only made a hundred and four dollars."

Evan unslumped. "Really?" Jessie nodded yes. "So you made a hundred and four and I made a hundred and three?"

"And eleven cents," said Jessie.

"So it was really a tie?" said Evan.

"No," said Jessie. "I won. By eighty-nine cents."

"But, I mean, c'mon," said Evan. "After all that, it was *practically* a tie."

"No," said Jessie. "It was close. But I really won."

"Wow, we pretty much tied," said Evan.

Jessie decided to let it go. For the first time in four days, she didn't care about who had more and who had less. Besides, she was waiting to see how long it took before Evan figured *it* out.

Not long.

"Holy crud!" he said suddenly. "I lost Megan's money, too? A hundred and four dollars of her money? Oh, CRUD." He threw himself back on his bed and covered his face with both arms. Neither of them said anything for a long time. Finally Jessie broke the silence.

"I'm really sorry I put the bugs in your lemonade."

"Thanks," said Evan. "I'm sorry I took your and Megan's money."

"We shouldn't have done any of this," Jessie said, waving her hand at the money on the bed.

"It ruined the end of summer."

"Yeah, the whole summer's been crud," said Evan.

"Not the *whole* summer. Just the last five days. Remember we went to Bar Harbor? And we swam at the pond?" Jessie couldn't stand Evan thinking their whole summer together had been crud.

"Yeah, but I think the last five days kind of cancels all that out," said Evan. "I can't believe I have to tell Megan Moriarty—"

"She likes you," said Jessie.

Evan sat up, surprised. "Really?"

"Yeah," said Jessie. "I don't get it either. But she's always asking what you're doing and if you can play and stuff. Why do you think she does that?"

"Cool," said Evan, smiling. "So you guys are friends?"

"Yeah," said Jessie. "We're good friends."

"Okay then. So she'll be coming over here to play and stuff. Right? That's cool."

"You're weird," said Jessie.

"Yes, I am," said Evan.

There was another long silence. The late-

summer light in Evan's one-window room had faded to black, but neither one of them wanted to turn on a light. It was nice sitting there, just the two of them, in the cooling darkness. An afternoon breeze had kicked itself into a gusty wind, and the shade on the window tapped out a steady beat that was pleasant and reassuring.

"This war was stupid," said Jessie.

Evan nodded in the dark.

Just then they heard the sound of thunder booming in the distance. Then more and more until the whole house shook.

"The fireworks!" shouted Jessie.

"Oh, snap!" shouted Evan.

Jessie and Evan raced down the stairs. At the bottom, they found their mother sitting on the last step, watching the sky through the sliding screen door.

"Why didn't you call us?" said Evan.

"We're missing the fireworks!" said Jessie.

"Oh, I figured whatever the two of you were talking about was more important than a fireworks show." Mrs. Treski turned to look at

her kids. "Did you work it out?"

Evan and Jessie nodded just as a roman candle exploded in the sky.

"Not a bad seat," said Mrs. Treski, patting the step. "Enjoy."

For twenty minutes, the night sky was alive with wagon wheels, party-colored dahlias, and whistling glitter palms. Evan, Jessie, and Mrs. Treski sat watching, silent but for the occasional "Oohhh" and "Aahhh" that seemed to escape from their lips like hissing air from an overblown tire.

When the last of the fireworks bloomed and then faded, Evan, Jessie, and Mrs. Treski sat in the darkness, waiting. No one said anything for several minutes. And then Jessie whispered, "It's over."

Yes. It was over.

"Wait," said Evan. "What was that?"

"What?" asked Jessie, straining her ears.

"Listen."

In the distance, a boom and a rattle.

"More fireworks," said Evan, staring up at the dark sky.

"Where? I don't see them," said Jessie.

All of a sudden the sky split in two as lightning sliced the night. An explosion of thunder rolled through the house, rattling the windows and pictures on the walls. Rain poured from the sky as if a gigantic faucet had been twisted on.

"Yow!" shouted Mrs. Treski, leaping up from the step. "Battle stations!"

Every window in the house was wide open, so Evan, Jessie, and Mrs. Treski ran from the top floor to the bottom, shutting windows and sopping up puddles. The rain came down with the fury and impatience of a two-year-old having a tantrum. As he closed the window in his room, Evan could hear the gurgle of the gutters choking on the downpour.

"One thing ends, another begins," said Mrs. Treski, meeting Jessie and Evan on the stairs. She raised her index finger, like a wise philosopher. "Fireworks. Rainstorm."

Jessie raised her index finger. "Summer. School."

Evan raised his index finger. "War. Peace."

Then they laughed because it was silly—the three of them acting like wise philosophers, standing on the stairs.

That night, before she closed her door, Jessie whisper-shouted to Evan, who was already in bed, “Hey. I’ve got an idea. About getting Megan’s money back.”



Ten Tips For Turning

By Jessie and

FIRST PRIZE



By



Tip #1

Location: It all starts with where you put your lemonade stand.

Tip #2

Advertising: Make your lemons stand out in a crowd.

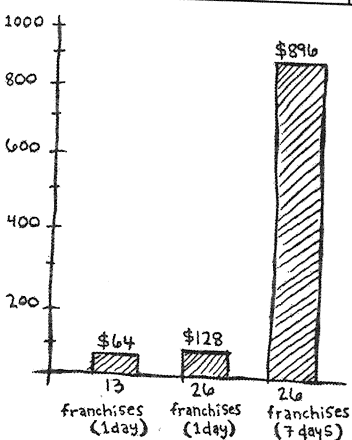
Tip #6

Business Regulations: Be sure you know your local lemon laws.



Tip #8

Franchises: How thirteen lemons can earn more than one.



Lemons Into Loot

Evan Treski



Tip #3
Underselling: Cheap! Cheaper!
Cheapest lemons in town!

Tip #5
Value-added: Giving your lemons
that something extra.

Tip #4
Goodwill: How to make
people love your lemons.

PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT

Expenses:	
52 cans of lemonade	\$65.00
5 packages of cups	\$14.25
Tax on cups	\$0.75
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$80.00

Gross sales:	\$312.00
Total profit:	\$232.00

Jessie's gross: \$104.00

Tip #7
Profit Margin: How to calculate
the limits of your lemons.

Tip #9
Going Mobile: Take your
lemons on the road.

Tip #10
Employee Appreciation: Don't be
a sour boss—always say thank
you to your workers.



BROTHER AND SISTER WIN ANNUAL LABOR DAY CONTEST

This year's winners in the annual Rotary Club Labor Day Contest open to all town residents ages 8-12 are Jessie (age 8) and Evan (age 10) Treski of 81 Parsons Road. The brother-and-sister team created an impressive poster that described their entrepreneurial efforts as purveyors of lemonade.

"It was hot, so we decided to sell lemonade," said Evan. "And then Jessie had the great idea of taking everything we learned and making it into a poster for the contest."

The award-winning poster included ten tips for running a successful lemonade stand, a profit-and-loss

statement, business definitions, and a chart that tracked franchise profits.

"We've had other entries in other years that described businesses," said Jack Petrocini, president of the local chapter of the Rotary Club. "But never anything with this much detail. We were very impressed."

Jessie and Evan will share the \$100 prize money. Will they use it to start up another business? "No," said Jessie. "We kind of need a break from running a business, because of school starting."

Both Jessie and Evan are fourth-graders at Hillside Elementary School.

Jessie and Evan's Money Plan PRIVATE!

\$100 (prize money)

\$ 62.11 (Evan's lemonade money)

\$ 10 (Jessie's birthday money)

\$ 172.11

↓
\$104

Megan's
donation to
the Animal
Rescue
League

↓
\$34.05

Evan's
iPod
fund

↓
\$34.06

Jessie's
Animal
Rescue
League
fund