

# Prologue

## Three Years Earlier

I will not say that the day Jesse Mandal asked me out was the best of my life. That's silly, trite, foolish. But I was thirteen, which means I was all of those things. After school, I would have danced home, humming "Best Day Ever." I'd have tweeted cryptic emojis of hearts and endless exclamation marks. I'd have lain in bed listening to All-Time Five sing about love, glorious love.

I was thirteen. I was that girl. But I didn't dance home at the end of the day. I didn't send any tweets. I never listened to ATF again. Because after that day, I'd never be that girl again.

That day started as mine had for the past year, no longer rising to my mom singing whatever song she could mangle my name into—"Good morning, Skye-shine," or "The Skye will come up tomorrow." I'd groan and bury my head under the pillow until she went off to do the same to my brother, Luka—who got Suzanne Vega's "Luka," having been named after the song.

It was only when those wake-ups stopped that I realized how much I'd secretly loved them. Just like I'd loved her hot breakfasts, even when I complained that I could sleep in an extra twenty minutes if she'd let me grab a juice box and granola bar, like all my friends did.

That day I rise to the alarm moments before Luka raps on my door with, "Skye? You up?" He showers first—he's sixteen and needs it more, and sometimes there's no hot water anyway, if Mom forgot to pay the bill again. We both try to be quiet and not wake her. When Dad is away on business she's rarely out of bed before noon, and in the past six months he's been gone more than he's been home.

I'm grabbing a juice box and granola bar when Luka says, "That is not a proper breakfast."

“So you’ve said. Every morning.”

“That isn’t even real juice. You might as well drink soda.”

“Well, then . . .” I take a Coke from the fridge.

He plucks the can from my hand. “Sit. I’m making you scrambled eggs and toast.”

“You don’t have time.”

“I do. Isaac’s picking me up today. He’s borrowing his mom’s car and—”

A horn sounds outside. I arch my brows.

Luka’s cell pings with a text. He reads it and says, “Seriously?”

“That’s Isaac, isn’t it?”

“Yeah. He’s early. Something’s up. *So* important.” He rolls his eyes. “It always is with him.” He starts to type a response. “I’ll walk to school.”

“Then you’ll be late. And if we fight about it, we’ll wake Mom.”

He hesitates before saying, “Tomorrow, okay? I’ll cook for you tomorrow.”

“And I’ll drink real juice today. Just for you.”

He comes over and squeezes my shoulder. “You’re a good kid, Skye. Even when you try not to be.”

I stick out my tongue. He grins, grabs his backpack and jogs to the door.

In math class, Jesse passes me a note asking me to meet him at afternoon recess. Of course, it doesn’t actually say that. It gives GPS coordinates.

I tap his back with my pencil and lean forward to whisper, “I don’t think this is the answer to *any* of the questions.”

He shakes his head without turning.

“Do *you* need an answer?” I whisper. “I can help you out, you know, if you’re having trouble.”

I get a flashed middle finger for that. At the front of the class, Ms. Cooper's eyes widen. Then she shakes her head sharply, as if telling herself she saw wrong, because Jesse Mandal is "not that kind of boy."

"Skye?" she says. "Are you bothering Jesse?"

"She keeps asking me for the answer to 3A," Jesse says. "I know math is hard for her, but she needs to figure it out for herself."

A snicker ripples through the class. Ms. Cooper knows there's no chance I'm cheating—Jesse and I have been competing for the top grade all year. She does, however, give me a stern look, warning me to stop making trouble, because Skye Gilchrist *is* "that kind of girl." When you've gone to the same school since kindergarten, you earn your labels early, and they stick long after you've outgrown them. Well, mostly outgrown them.

When recess comes, I zip along the hall, after waving to tell my friends I won't be joining them. I plan to sneak through the front door, but the principal and two teachers are in a whisper-huddle outside the office. They're talking to Ms. Molina, head of the PTA, and not one of my biggest fans, ever since fifth grade, when I called her daughter a bratty bitch. In the middle of an assembly. While standing onstage. Next to the microphone.

I duck down a side hall and see Mr. Garside moving fast in my direction. I backpedal, but he only nods, as if distracted. I zoom past him and out the side door.

Until this past September, Jesse and I had been what Mom calls school pals, meaning we'd say hi if we passed in the shopping mall or talk if we were in the cafeteria line together. Then came two hours assigned to a shared bus seat on a school trip, during which Jesse Mandal became more than a nice guy from school. He became someone interesting.

We've played the coordinates game enough that I can guess where his latest set leads: the recessed janitorial door. I race around the corner and . . .

No one's there.

As I pull out my phone to check my GPS, hands slide over my eyes.

“Tell me what you see,” Jesse says, and I grin, because this, too, is our game.

“A mountain cave,” I say. “It’s dark, but something’s moving inside.”

“What do you hear?”

“A scratching, like claws on rock.”

“Smell?”

I inhale. “Musk. Like a dog when its fur gets wet.”

“So what do you do?”

“Sneak closer to see what it is, of course.”

He laughs. He’s endlessly fascinated by how quickly I can make up a story. If I do the same to him, he sees fingers in front of his eyes, and he can’t imagine anything else. That’s not how his brain works.

His hands withdraw, but my vision stays blocked by what looks like a cardboard rectangle.

“What do you see now?” he asks.

I make out a few printed words. “Are these—? All-Time Five tickets?” I spin to face him. “For real?”

“I hope so, considering I spent my *dida*’s birthday money on them.”

I breathe so hard I swear I’m going to hyperventilate. “Oh my God, oh my God.” I inhale and say, “So you’re going to the concert with one of the guys?”

He rolls his dark eyes. “Do you think I’d show these to you and then take one of them?”

I smile. “Maybe your brother likes ATF.”

“My brother’s a jerk. I want to go to the concert with someone I actually like. That’s you, Gilchrist. And you’d better say yes, ’cause if I get turned down the first time I ask a girl out, I may never get over it.”

“You’re asking me . . . ? You mean . . . ? Like a date?”

He goes still. Then he shoves the tickets into his pocket, saying, “No, no . . . well, yeah. Kind of. But it’s up to you. We could just go as friends if you want.”

“Or a date, if I want?”

He catches my grin, and his eyes light up, and he opens his mouth, but a voice says “Skye?” and we both jump. It’s Mr. Garside. He looks from me to my companion. “Jesse?”

“We were talking,” I say.

Jesse nods.

“You’re both needed at the office.” Mr. Garside sounds as distracted as he looked earlier.

“Follow me.”

“If we’re in trouble for sneaking out, I’ll tell them it was my idea,” Jesse whispers as we follow Mr. Garside.

I shake my head, but Jesse says, “Hey, I actually did something wrong for a change. I want to take credit. Boost my rep.”

I’ve started to answer when I catch the sound of a radio coming from the office.

“—events at North Hampton High School this afternoon. One shooter has reportedly been killed. Another has been taken into custody—”

I stop so fast my shoes squeak. Everyone in the office turns and sees us. Someone says, “Turn that off!” and Principal Salas rushes out, her arms blocking the office doorway as if she can block the sound, too.

Jesse has stopped beside me.

“Did they say . . . ?” he starts.

“The high school. Luka.” I can barely form the words. “My brother goes to North Hampton.”

“Lots of kids do,” Jesse says as he moves up behind me, and there’s this weird hollow tone in his voice, and I spin on him, ready to snap that I don’t care how many kids go there, I’m talking about my brother.

That’s when I see the wall photos of graduates. Over the frames hangs a North Hampton Wildcat banner, because that’s where we go. Dozens of kids here have an older sibling there. And yet Jesse and I are the only ones who’ve been summoned to the office. That’s what he means.

“We’re having an assembly, right?” I say. “You’re getting all the kids in the auditorium to tell them what’s happening?”

Mr. Garside nods, too emphatically, and my heart pounds.

“No,” I say. “You just wanted us. Me and Jesse.”

“Your parents will explain,” Principal Salas says. “Jesse? Yours are on their way now. Skye? Mr. Garside will drive you to your mom.”

“My parents can take Skye,” Jesse says.

There’s a sound, like a harrumph. Ms. Molina stands behind the counter, and she’s looking straight at me. Glaring. I’m wondering what I did when the principal says, “That’s . . . not a good idea.”

My heart’s pounding, blood rushing in my ears, and I can barely hear what he says, barely hear what I say when I whisper, “Tell me what’s going on.”

The principal shakes her head. “Your parents will—”

“Tell me what’s going on! Now!”

“Skye!” Ms. Molina snaps. “Enough of that.”

“No, Skye’s right.” Jesse steps forward to stand beside me. “We know something’s wrong. The radio said . . .” He swallows. “They’ve been shot, haven’t they? Our brothers.”

“Your parents will—”

“No!” I say.

Jesse lays his hand on my arm and says to the others, “You don’t want to tell us what’s happened? Fine. Tell us they’re okay.”

Silence. I look from face to face, searching for a sign, any sign, *please give me a sign* . . .

“Are they—?” My voice hitches. “Alive? Tell us they’re alive.”

No one says a word. No one will even look at me.

I see their expressions, and I crumple to the floor. I hear this scream, this terrible scream, and I realize it’s coming from me. Jesse’s crouching, his arm around me as he pulls me against his shoulder.

Jesse helps me to my feet, and I can feel him shaking, but his voice is calm when he says, “Skye is coming with me. With my parents.”

“No, Jesse,” the principal says. “I’m sorry, but that really isn’t a good idea.”

“Our brothers are . . .” Jesse’s voice wavers, and he swallows. “They were both . . . both victims of . . .” Another swallow. “We’re going together.”

“No, you’re not.” Ms. Molina comes out from behind the desk, her gaze fixed on me. “Skye’s brother wasn’t a victim. He was one of the shooters.”

# One

Forty-four hours after I heard those words, I was in the backseat of my grandmother's car, with all the belongings I could stuff into a duffel. Anything I'd left behind, I'd never see again. We were running. Running as fast as we could, and the only reason we hadn't left sooner was because my aunt Mae had insisted Mom stand firm. Except my mother was, at that point in her life—as at any point thereafter—barely able to stand at all.

That was three years ago.

I'm skipping those three years. I have to. The aftermath of that day . . . Even thinking about it makes me feel like I'm back there, caught in the eye of a tornado, hanging on for dear life.

My father is long gone. He called my mother that night to say he wasn't coming home. That whatever happened with Luka, it was her fault. Which was exactly what she needed at that moment.

*Sorry, but this one's yours, babe, I'm outta here.*

When the divorce went through, he married the business partner who'd been with him on all his trips. What happened with Luka just gave him an excuse to dump us for her, and I'll never forgive him for that.

Three years.

I can break it down from there, like a prisoner tracking time on her cell wall. I keep everything about that first month confined to its place—don't let it out, even when it pounds at the back of my head, sometimes a dull throb I can ignore, other times a gut-twisting migraine.

One nightmare month followed by six of mere hell. A period of shame and guilt, the feeling that I'd failed Luka. Or that I'd failed to stop Luka.



There's grief, too, but I bury that even faster. You aren't allowed to grieve for someone like Luka. It doesn't matter if he was an amazing brother. Luka Gilchrist was a monster. Write it on the board a hundred times and don't ever forget it.

There's doubt and curiosity, too, which must be doused as quickly as the grief. I want to understand what happened. I want to know how my brother—my kind and thoughtful brother—joined his friends in a school shooting.

How my brother killed four kids.

Except Luka didn't kill four kids. He didn't kill anyone.

*No, see, that's an excuse. You aren't allowed to make excuses for him, Skye. He participated in a horrible tragedy, and he would have killed someone, if he hadn't been shot by police. Making excuses for him belittles what he did and belittles the value of the lives lost.*

Judgment. That's the big one. Being judged. Sister of a school shooter.

My early curiosity led me places I shouldn't have gone, into online news articles, where I got just enough details to give me nightmares. Then into the comments sections, which was even worse as I discovered total strangers who thought I should die for my brother's sins and said it so offhandedly, like it was the most obvious thing. *Hey, I hear one of those bastards has a sister. Maybe someone should take a gun to her school. Or maybe someone should take her and—*

I won't finish that sentence. I see the words, though. Thirteen years old, reading what some troll thinks should be done to me and wondering how *that* would help anything.

Then came anger and resentment and feeling like maybe, just maybe, I didn't deserve the petition that went around my new school saying I shouldn't be allowed to attend, for the safety of others. But on the heels of that anger and resentment I would slingshot back to shame and guilt, thinking about the kids who died and how dare I whine about whispers and snubs and having **DIE, BITCH** written on my locker and yes, the janitor will paint that over the next time he does repair work and no, I'm sorry, Mrs. Benassi, but there are no other lockers for your granddaughter at this time.

Six months of that. Then Gran moved us, and I registered under her surname. That blessed anonymity only lasted a few months before someone found out. Then it was homeschooling and moving again and that time the new surname worked. By then two years had passed, and when kids did find out, I lost a few friends, but otherwise, compared to those first six months, it was fine.

Now, three years later, I'm going back.

Back to Riverside, where they have definitely not forgotten who I am. Back to Riverside, where I will live two miles from my old house. Back to Riverside, where I will go to school alongside kids I grew up with.

I'm returning to the only place I ever truly called home. And there's nothing I can do to stop it.

My aunt Mae picks me up. It's a tiny airport—Riverside is a city of three hundred thousand—and I scuttle through the terminal, my head down, praying I'm not recognized, and knowing that even if I succeed, I've only dodged one bullet.

I have to deal with this. That's what Mae says, just like she said to my mother three years ago.

"You did nothing wrong, Skye," Mae insisted when I asked—no, begged—for some other solution to our predicament. "Your mother should never have left Riverside. Your gran wanted to make things easier on you two, and I get that—I really do—but it didn't help your mom."

I'm not sure anything could have helped my mother, spiraling into depression even before the shooting, drifting from us as our father drifted from their marriage.

Mae continued, "You're going to come home, and you're going to look people in the eye and lift your chin and say, 'I'm sorry for what my brother did, but it has nothing to do with me.'"

Fine words. Strong, sensible words. But Mae was only the aunt of a school shooter, and while I'm sure she got her share of whispers and glares, I bet no one said they thought *she* should be sterilized so she didn't pass on her tainted genes.

When I walk into the baggage claim, she's there, looking as if she's stepped off a magazine cover. Mae runs her own firm, one of those vaguely named businesses conducted in hushed offices full of very busy people. She's never married. She's had one live-in girlfriend, but it didn't last long. I'm her only niece. Luka was her only nephew.

When Mae sees me, she smiles and calls, "Skye!" as she strides over and envelops me in a hug that smells of cherry blossoms. "Welcome home."

I want to say this isn't my home anymore, and I'm certainly not welcome here. But I'm too busy cringing as my name rings through the tiny terminal. People look over. I tell myself it means nothing. Skye is only a moderately unusual name, and I'm even less unusual-looking—straight dark-blond hair in a ponytail, average height, average build. Stick me in any high school classroom and at least two girls could pass for my sisters. It's that kind of look.

We're waiting for my luggage. Mae's talking to me, and all I can hear is her appending my name to every sentence, as if she needs to remind herself who she's talking to. Each time she says it, I swear more people look over. I tell myself I'm being paranoid. Then a college-age girl whispers to her mother, whose gaze swings on me.

I'm imagining things.

Except I'm probably not. The shooting at North Hampton hit front pages across the country. While that may have faded elsewhere, the people here will not have forgotten. They will not have forgiven.

We have my luggage, and we're heading out and that mother's gaze is glued to me, her face gathered in that look I know well, the one that asks what right I have to be walking around like a normal teenage girl.

"I thought we'd eat at Frenchy's," Mae says as we walk out. "I remember how much you guys loved that place."

*You guys.* She means me and Luka. He hated Frenchy's almost as much as Mae did. Greasy food served halfheartedly, as if by a mother who's really tired of cooking for her ungrateful offspring. Luka never let on how much he hated it because I loved it, and that's the kind of brother he was. The kind of person he was. Except he wasn't, was he?

I used to have nightmares where Luka wasn't involved in the shooting. Where they investigate again and discover it was all a mistake. Those were wonderful dreams . . . until I woke and remembered that wasn't how it happened, and the recollection would twist them into nightmare.

I want to say that whatever happened that day, Luka would *never* have fired a gun. Not the guy who wouldn't go hunting with our dad, couldn't even stomach shooting lessons. I'd taken those lessons instead so our father would leave him alone.

A guy like that *couldn't* be part of a school shooting.

But if I even think this, I'm making excuses. Refusing to face reality. Downplaying Luka's role. Disrespecting the dead.

But he *is* one of the dead. No one ever says that, though. The North Hampton shooting claimed the life of *four* kids—four *real* victims. My dead brother exists in another place, beyond where I can speak to him, speak *for* him, mourn him. He's just gone.

"I don't really feel like Frenchy's," I say as Mae waits for an answer.

Relief floods her face. "All right. Well, if you still like burgers, I know a little shop that does gourmet."

"Can we just pick something up? I'd rather not go out."

There's a heartbeat of silence, and in it, I hear disappointment. I am not the girl she hoped I'd be.

Maybe I should feel a surge of inner strength at that, should be shamed into saying that the burger place sounds good, and then she'll smile and be proud of me. But I can't form the words.

"We'll get takeout," she says finally, and we continue through the sliding doors.

I'm supposed to go to school the next day. I consider skipping. But it's not like I can avoid it forever, and my pleas for a day of rest fell on deaf ears. It's Monday, an excellent day to start, and the school is expecting me. Chin up. Get on with it.

Mae insists I take a cab. I have it drop me off a few blocks away. As I walk, I call Gran. She had a stroke two weeks ago. Last Tuesday I was at the hospital with her late into the night, and then Mom took a turn for the worse the next morning, so I faked a sick call to school. Big mistake. Child services had been hovering ever since Gran's first stroke. When a teacher called with her concerns, they swooped. No one cared that I could take care of myself *and* make up my schoolwork. Which is why I'm with Mae.

Talking to Gran isn't a two-way conversation—the stroke affected her vocal cords—but she listens. She always listens.

“Mae's new condo is worse than the last one,” I say. “All steel and glass, and I swear she sets the temperature at sixty. It's like a walk-in freezer.”

Gran makes this noise that I know is a laugh.

“My bedroom is white,” I say. “White with more steel and more glass. I'm telling myself it's good practice for when I'm an astronaut.”

I'm not really going to be an astronaut. I said that when I was five, and Gran never forgot. For years, I thought it was an actual possibility, well past the stage where most kids realize it's like saying you want to become a rock star.

I keep the joke with Gran, though I'm not sure she realizes it's a joke. Like Mae, Gran's one of those “you can do anything you put your mind to” people. I used to believe that. Now, when people ask what I want to be when I grow up, I want to say that just growing up seems like an accomplishment. Not everyone gets that far.

“I see the school,” I say. “I'll let you go and call Mom before dinner.”

I put my cell phone into my backpack. There's no reason to keep it handy. The friends I left behind were "school pals," and I doubt I'll hear from them again.

Sometimes I'd see kids in the corners of school cafeterias, perfectly content with their own company, and I'd wish I could be like that. For me, my own company can be noisier than a table full of football players.

I'm walking up to the school. It is not North Hampton High. NHH had already been slated to close, so after the shooting, they shut it down early. This is Riverside Collegiate, one of the two places the NHH kids ended up. One of the two places my old classmates ended up.

I wanted to go to another school, whatever the travel time. Mae thought RivCol was best—face my fears. I understand her reasoning, but there's a point where her encouragement starts to feel like a punishment.

I have to meet my vice-principal—Mr. Vaughn—before class. I follow a few other early birds, and right inside the doors, there's a metal detector. My heart starts thudding, and all I can think is that there were never metal detectors at schools in Riverside before. Now there is one, and it might as well have a plaque on the side: **BROUGHT TO YOU BY ISAAC WICKHAM, HARLEY STEWART AND LUKA GILCHRIST.**

When I stop at the detector, a girl behind me says, "What? Never seen one of those before, Skye?"

It takes a moment to recognize her. Lana Brighton. We'd been classmates since kindergarten. Lana was the kind of girl you know well enough to invite to your birthday when your mom says you can have twelve kids and you really only count eight, maybe nine, as good friends, but you want your full allotment, so you add kids who don't get asked that often. It's the right thing to do. I'd invited Lana to a few of those parties, and she used to sit with us sometimes at lunch.

"Lana," I say, hoping my voice isn't shaking. "Good to see—"

“Just walk through the damned metal detector, Skye,” she says. “In fact, I think you should walk through it twice, to be sure we’re all safe.” She turns to the kids waiting. “For those who don’t know, this is Skye Gilchrist. Luka Gilchrist’s sister.”

Blood pounds in my ears and my vision clouds, and I stand there, unable to move, until Lana gives me a push, saying, “Go or get out of the way.”

I’m turning to walk through, and I catch a glimpse of a boy rounding the corner. For a split second, my brain sees Jesse and screams no, it can’t be, that Mae swore he went to Southfield.

The last time I saw Jesse was the night after the shooting. I’d been in my room, sitting on the floor, shaking so hard, unable to cry. I heard stones at my window and looked down to see Jesse below.

I still remember the relief I felt seeing him—the one person I could talk to, maybe even cry with. Then I saw his face, the anger, the rage, and I remembered what had happened, that his brother was dead and mine was to blame. One look at his face, and I shut that blind as fast as I could and curled up on the floor, and cried, finally cried.

Now, as I catch a glimpse of this boy, I think it’s Jesse. But then he’s gone, and I realize I was mistaken. This boy is tall; Jesse was an inch shorter than me. This boy has wild, curly dark hair; Jesse always kept his short and neat. Even the face isn’t right, too angular, too hard for the boy I knew. I’m left with the feeling that the only reason I even jumped to that conclusion was that the boy has brown skin and Jesse’s grandparents came from Bangladesh, and that just makes me feel worse, that I jumped to such a stereotyped conclusion.

I push through the metal detector and hurry to find the office.

## Jesse

Skye Gilchrist.

Jesse leans against the wall, out of sight of the school doors. When he spotted her, he backpedaled so fast he nearly fell on his ass.

It isn't Skye. Cannot be Skye. She left three years ago and never looked back. Never reached out. Never contacted him. Never even said goodbye.

The last time he saw her, he was standing under her window. He escaped the hell of that day and went to the only person he could talk to. He ran all the way to Skye's house and stood under her window, seeing the light on, knowing she was in there, tossing pebbles at her window, getting no response, and growing more and more frustrated, the stones getting larger until finally she looked down. Looked down . . . and shut the blind.

It took him a day to calm down. A day for the turmoil in his head and in his home to settle, just a bit, and let him realize, well, he'd kinda been an ass. Skye had her brother, too, and he'd only been thinking of himself, *his* anguish, *his* confusion.

Skye had been hurting, and she just hadn't felt like talking. He needed to understand that. So a few days later, he went to try again . . . and she was gone. Left Riverside without a goodbye, and that hurt—hurt like hell—but he told himself it was temporary. She knew where to find him. She would text. She'd email. She'd do something.

She did nothing.

Three years of silence.

He thought they were friends. *Good* friends. Maybe even becoming more. He liked her. No, let's be honest, he fell for Skye the way only a thirteen-year-old kid can fall. The first girl he couldn't stop thinking about, couldn't wait to see again, to talk to again.

Now, at sixteen, he looks back and wants to roll his eyes at that. Silly kid stuff. Only it didn't feel like silly kid stuff. And when he caught a glimpse today of someone who looked like her, what he felt . . .



One spark of heart-in-throat joy, followed by a gut-twisting crash, the pain of her rejection and her betrayal coming fast and hard.

Not kid stuff. Damn it. Not kid stuff at all.

But it isn't her. Can't be. Jesse takes a few deep breaths. Then he heads back to the door and walks inside, and there she is, up ahead, turning down a side hall. He sees her, and there is no question. Absolutely no question that this is Skye Gilchrist.

He backs up fast, bumping into a kid who mutters, "Watch it!" Then he breaks into a jog and gets out of the school as fast as he can.

He makes it two blocks before a silver minivan pulls over. It's his chem teacher, Ms. Blake.

"Going the wrong way, aren't you, Jasser?" she says.

He tenses at the name. It's his, and he's fine with it, but no one uses it at school, not since first grade, when a kid called him Jesse by mistake, and he declared that was what he wanted to be called. He feels silly about that now, being so eager to jump at a name that made him fit in better, but by sixteen, he *is* Jesse, and no one outside his family uses Jasser . . . except Ms. Blake, when she's annoyed with him.

"I forgot something at home," he says.

"Well, you'd better hop in, and I'll drive you. You have that makeup quiz with me this morning, and I'm not rescheduling if you skip it, too."

"I was home sick Friday. My dad called in."

"Your dad. That's right. He's phoned in sick for you a few times this term . . . and it's only October. I've started to wonder if we should follow up with your mom. I know she's a doctor, and I'm sure she's concerned about your health."

Jesse wants to shrug and say whatever and continue walking home. If he does, though, his parents will get a call, and they don't deserve it.

"Climb in," she says. "Let's go pick up what you left at home."

He mutters that it's not important and jogs back to school.