



Kaylah and Harley

by Heather Atkinson

Illustrations by Patrick Lepage



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Chapter one

There's a big truck out front, said Kaylah. She had opened the side door of the garage to let Puss Puss out.

After four days, the rain had finally stopped. The sun shone brightly, rainbows gathered in the puddles, and up and down Dalkeith Street the large friendly porches welcomed Kaylah's neighbours outside again.

Daddy B was washing yesterday's dishes. He looked out the kitchen window. *It's a moving van. Someone is finally moving into the house across the street.*

Kaylah watched the van. She decided to wait to see what came out of it. The previous owners had no children, and Kaylah was looking forward to having another girl in the neighbourhood to play with. Kaylah liked playing with Theresa and Margery separately but sometimes when the three of them played together there was trouble. When the three of them played house, for example, Kaylah liked to play the mother but she could never count on Margery and Theresa pretending to be her daughters for long. They were older and easily bored.

The door to the moving van showed no signs of opening so Kaylah went back inside to pour herself a second bowl of sugared cereal. Daddy B referred to the cereal as junk food.

I wish another girl would move in across the street, said Kaylah.

Daddy B looked up from the dishes. *What about Theresa and Margery?*

Kaylah explained that Theresa and Margery were not always in the mood to play what Kaylah wanted to play.

You might need to branch out a little, said Daddy B.

Kaylah frowned. She felt she was already pretty branched out.

She loved biking. She most especially loved pretending that her pink Schwinn bicycle was a motorcycle, like the one Grammy rode, and that the loop that started at the stop sign in front of the church and circled back to her house at 194 Dalkeith Street and then twice around the cemetery was a race track. Kaylah always imagined herself winning a race.

She also liked swimming.

She liked reading.

She liked writing stories with happy endings.

She liked looking things up on the computer.

And sometimes she liked to play with her Barbie dolls.

She also liked making useful things out of garbage.

She really liked setting up Kaylah's One And Only Lemon-egg Stand with Daddy B every July. There she sold fresh lemonade she made herself along with Grammy's eggs to the people coming out of the church or going down to Nicholson's.

Kaylah made a face at Daddy B. *What do you mean by branch out?*

Daddy B shrugged. *It's a little boring for Teresa and Margery to have to pretend that you're their mom every time they come over. You're kinda bossy.*

Kaylah frowned. *I just want another girl to play with, she said. Someone who likes to do exactly what I like to do. Theresa and Margery don't like to ride bikes as much as I do.*

Kaylah heard the moving van door slam open. She went back outside.

She watched two men wearing uniforms carrying boxes up the front walk into the vacant house. Then they carried in two large tables and a number of chairs. Then came two beds, one large and the other smaller.

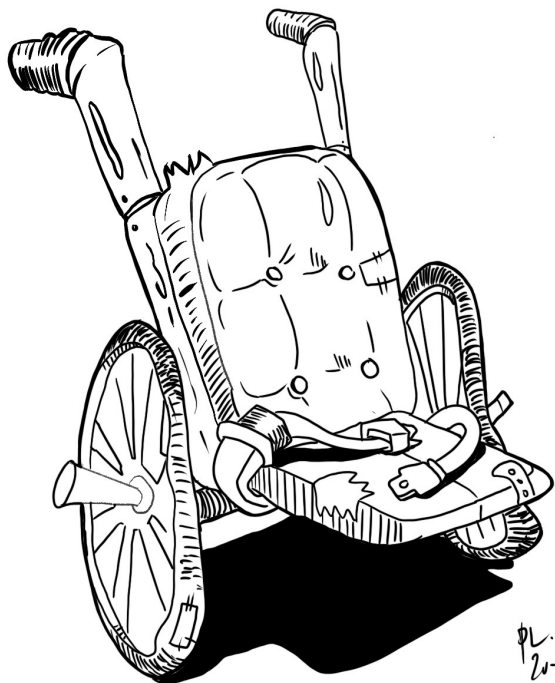
Neither one was pink.

After that Kaylah watched the men carry in two sofas, several large cushioned armchairs, a big screen TV, a number of lamps of various sizes and then two bedroom nightstands, two chests of drawers and one large mirror.

Nothing was pink.

Kaylah moved so she could see the inside of the van. It was almost empty, except for a few objects at the back of the van. It was too dark back there for Kaylah to see anything clearly. But what she had already seen going into the house disappointed her. There was no sign of a single toy, not even a beauty parlor set or a play kitchen that would signify the presence of a girl her own age.

And no bicycle. Kaylah practically lived on her pink Schwinn.



The two men climbed back inside the van to get the last of the items at the back. Kaylah waited. The men emerged, one carrying a tall bookshelf, the other pushing a wheelchair. Kaylah saw the wheelchair was not large, just big enough to fit someone her size.

There was nothing left to carry out. The men slammed the van door shut. Kaylah felt her heart tug a little.

No bike and nothing pink.

But she was curious about the wheelchair. Who would be using it?

Chapter two

Kaylah went back inside to finish her cereal. She wrinkled her nose when she saw the milk had inflated it into a soggy mess. She dumped it into Puss Puss's bowl.

Kaylah told Daddy B about the wheelchair and the fact that nothing in the van was pink.

I guess I won't have a new girlfriend to bike around with, she said. Margery and Theresa hardly ever like to bike. And if the new person uses a wheelchair they can't be in the big bicycle parade with me.

Kaylah loved to ride in the big bicycle parade. The parade took place every year on June 28, which also happened to be Kaylah's birthday.

Kaylah heard a car door slam. She raced outside. A silver mini-van was now parked in the driveway of the house across the street.

A woman got out of the driver's side. When she saw Kaylah, the woman smiled and waved.

Kaylah returned the smile and then took a step back. She hoped the woman would not say anything to her. Kaylah was not keen on talking to adults she didn't know.

Kaylah moved a little closer to the middle of the lawn. She watched as the woman across the street brought a laptop computer into the house. The movers had placed it on the seat of the wheelchair. The woman returned to push the wheelchair over to the van. She parked it beside the front passenger door. The woman pulled the door open. Kaylah saw one leg swing out followed by a second leg. Kaylah held her breath. She hoped the legs belonged to a girl.

The woman leaned over, and Kaylah saw two arms grab the woman's shoulders. Then a figure emerged clinging to the woman as she stepped backward.

Kaylah sighed.

A boy.

The boy looked to be about Kaylah's age.

Thanks, Kaylah heard the boy say as the woman helped him settle into the wheelchair.

The boy looked over at Kaylah and waved.

Hi, he shouted. *I'm Harley.*

The boy seemed unusually confident. Kaylah suddenly felt very shy. She returned Harley's wave. She wondered why he needed the wheelchair.

Come on over, said Harley. He was smiling. Even from across the street, Kaylah could see that Harley had a very nice smile. In fact, Kaylah thought, Harley had a very nice face. It reminded Kaylah of her own face.

Kaylah hesitated. *It's okay*, said the woman. *You are very welcome to come over if you like.*

The woman disappeared into the house again. Kaylah decided the woman must be Harley's mom. Kaylah watched Harley reach down to fiddle with levers on his wheelchair. He then propelled himself with surprising speed toward her. He was pumping his arms up and down very quickly to push the wheelchair's big wheels forward.

Harley was soon staring up at Kaylah. Kaylah saw the wheelchair was the old-fashioned kind, not motorized. It looked rickety.

Harley was wearing a t-shirt, which showed off his muscles. Kaylah had never seen such big muscles on a boy Harley's age before.

Harley seemed to be studying Kaylah's face.

Wow, he said. *You're cute. Really cute. What's your name?*

Kaylah told him.

Harley smiled. *K-a-y-l-a-h*, he said, spelling it out. *I bet you spell it with an "h".*

Kaylah nodded. The way he said her name made Kaylah think he might have been thinking of something delicious. Like strawberries and whipped cream.

Kaylah stared at Harley's teeth. They were very even and white, just like hers.

My dentist is Doctor Jim, she said.

Hey, said Harley. *Mine too*. He grinned up at her. The way Harley looked at her when he spoke made Kaylah feel peculiar. His blue eyes seemed to twinkle.

There was a long pause.

My birthday's at the end of this month, said Harley. *June 29. When's yours?*

Kaylah was suddenly alert. *June is my birthday month too*, she said. *June 28. I'll be seven.*

Although Harley was a boy, Kaylah was starting to consider him as a possible playmate.

Having almost the same birthday was an important connection.

It's also bicycle month, said Harley. *I like watching the parade. This year it'll be on the same day as your birthday. Someday I'd like to be in it. But as you can see, all I have are these four old wheels*. Harley shrugged but he was still grinning.

Margery and Theresa and I are going to be in the parade, said Kaylah. *My bike's a Schwinn. It's pink*.

Harley's grin widened. *Good for you*, he said. *Wish I could join you. But I'll be there to cheer you on—if you don't mind*.

Kaylah smiled at Harley though his words made her sad. Harley seemed nice, the kind of boy she could be friends with. She felt sorry that he would not be able to join her in the parade just because he didn't have a bike.

Kaylah wanted to ask why he needed a wheelchair. Then she remembered that Daddy

B was always reminding her not to be nosy. She remained silent. Perhaps Harley would explain later.

The woman came out of the house and called out for Harley.

That's my caregiver, he said. I gotta run. Then he added with a grin, *Just kidding, I meant 'gotta roll'!*

Harley winked at Kaylah and then he scooted across the street. Kaylah watched Harley's caregiver turn the wheelchair around so it faced the street. Then she pulled it up the two steps onto the front porch. Harley held up two fingers in a V shape. V for victory.

Just before he disappeared inside he gave Kaylah one last cheery wave. Harley's good humour surprised her. She did not understand how anyone stuck in a wheelchair could be cheerful.

See you, he shouted. Then Harley wheeled himself into his new house.

Chapter three

Kaylah was standing on the footstool reaching for the cereal box the next morning when she heard a knock at the side door.

She opened it and saw that Harley had wheeled himself over.

He was grinning. *Ready to work?*

Kaylah raised one eyebrow. *Work? I haven't had breakfast.*

You're almost seven, said Harley. Never too early to start making money. I have a job.

Kaylah stared. *You just moved in and you already have a job?*

Harley nodded. *Mrs. Fulton's paying me 10 bucks to walk Shelly and Shelby every morning.*

Shelly and Shelby were big black labs, brother and sister, and very bouncy.

Kaylah was suddenly interested. How could Harley possibly take two big frisky dogs for a walk? She slipped outside and closed the side door behind her. Breakfast could wait.

I'm not asking because I need your help, said Harley. I just came over to see if you wanted to keep me company. Hop on. He pointed down to the small footrests at the back of his wheelchair. *I'll drive.*

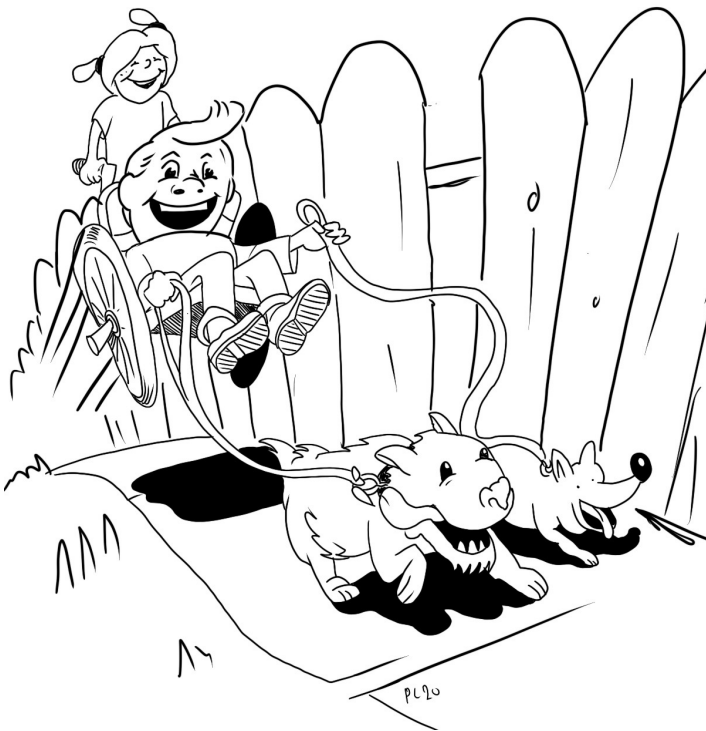
Kaylah hopped on, and together they rolled down Dalkeith Street to Mrs. Fulton's house. Mrs. Fulton was waiting. Shelly and Shelby were straining at their leashes, bouncing like balls and barking loudly.

Mrs. Fulton handed the leashes to Harley. He took one in each hand. He turned back to Kaylah. *Ready to roll?*

Kaylah nodded. *Yup.* She'd never done anything like this before. Somehow Harley made anything seem possible. Who knew someone in a wheelchair could walk dogs?

Shelly and Shelby went wild. They lurched ahead like a pair of racehorses, charging down Dalkeith Street toward the church, up Renfrew Street toward the cemetery and around the loop past 194 Dalkeith and back to Mrs. Fulton's house.

Mrs. Fulton greeted them with a big smile.



Good work, she said. Take them around a few more times and you've earned your money!

Kaylah felt like a princess in a fairy tale riding in a carriage. Racing dogs in a wheelchair was fun!

All along Dalkeith Street, neighbours came out to watch. When Kaylah and Harley and Shelly and Shelby returned to Mrs. Fulton's house after the last lap they found several neighbours had gathered on Mrs. Fulton's front lawn. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Little wanted Harley to walk their dogs that afternoon. Harley grinned, pulled a notepad from the pocket of his jeans and wrote down everyone's names, their addresses and their telephone numbers.

Soon word spread throughout the neighbourhood. More dog owners wanted Harley and Kaylah to race their dogs too.

I'm booked up for the next month, Harley told Kaylah later that day.

Wow, said Kaylah. Think of the money you'll earn.

If you come with me I'll share the money with you, said Harley. We can be business partners!

Thanks, said Kaylah, but I run my own business. Every June, I set up Kaylah's One And Only Lemon-egg Stand in front of the church.

Mentioning her Lemon-egg Stand gave Kaylah an idea. She wanted Harley to join her in the big bicycle parade on June 28. But Harley needed a bike. A special bike that he could ride but clearly did not own.

Kaylah suddenly had an idea.

I have to go, she said.

Harley looked surprised. *Why?*

Kaylah wrinkled her nose and sniffed. Something smelled good. A familiar aroma. It was coming from her house.

I'm hungry, she said. Gotta run.

Kaylah waved at Harley and raced home. Daddy B was on the back deck barbecuing hamburgers. He was talking on his phone.

I need the computer, said Kaylah.

Daddy B looked up. *Why?*

I need to look up what kind of a bicycle to get Harley. For his birthday. It's on June 29, the day after mine.

Daddy B looked puzzled. *Who's Harley?*

Kaylah rolled her eyes. *Harley is the new boy who moved in across the street. He's the person who uses the wheelchair.*

Then I don't think Harley needs a bicycle, said Daddy B. He's already got wheels. Besides, a bicycle is something parents usually buy their kids.

Kaylah shook her head. *Harley is living with his caregiver. And his wheelchair is kind of old so I don't think they have a lot of money. But I have a lot of money in my cupcake, she said. She meant her pink ceramic cupcake bank. It was heavy with coins.*

You have exactly twenty four dollars and thirteen cents, said Daddy B. Last time we counted. Since then, you've gone to Nicholson's every day. Bicycles cost hundreds of dollars. And special bikes cost even more.

Kaylah nodded. *I thought about that. So it's time for me to get to work. I need to set up Kaylah's One And Only Lemon-egg Stand right away.*

Daddy B turned off the barbeque and went inside. He beckoned to Kaylah. He sat down at the computer and started typing. He pointed to the computer screen. The screen was now crowded with pictures of bicycles. All sorts of bicycles.

Daddy B put his finger on one of the pictures. *This one costs \$2,000.*

Kaylah was shocked. The bike in the picture was the most complicated contraption Kaylah had ever seen. She wondered how many dozens of eggs and gallons of lemonade she would need to sell to earn that much money. She stared at the picture. *Why does it cost so much?*

Because it's a hand-powered bike for people with disabilities, said Daddy B. The parts are special and so is the design. And the bicycles themselves have to be assembled by hand so they don't make many of them.

Kaylah didn't say a word all through dinner. She was thinking. That night in bed she tossed and turned. *Kaylah go to sleep*, she told herself, but still her eyes refused to stay shut. Outside her bedroom window Kaylah watched the moon drift slowly across the sky. Kaylah was thinking about Harley and the bicycle parade. It was only two weeks away

As the moonlight turned her room silver, she imagined herself and Harley in the lead riding side by side. She imagined Harley would be riding that special bike. And it would be up to Kaylah to get it for him. But how could she earn \$2,000 in such a short time?

Long after the moon had moved away from her window Kaylah finally drifted off to sleep.

Chapter four

The next morning Kaylah found Daddy B sitting in front of the computer. He turned to Kaylah. *How do you feel about us building Harley a bicycle? That way it won't cost as much.*

Kaylah felt her heart skip. *You mean us? You and me?*

Sure, why not? said Daddy B. *I'm looking up parts for special bikes. I fix cars at my shop so I have lots of tools. If we build the bike ourselves, we can do it for about \$500. That's how much I can get the parts for.*

Kaylah was so excited she almost felt sick. *In time for the bicycle parade?*

Daddy B looked thoughtful. *If I order the parts right now, and if they can deliver them as soon as possible, and if you and I spend about a week building it, I think we can do it in time for you and Harley to ride together.*

Kaylah bounced over and gave Daddy B her tightest hug.

But, said Daddy B.

But? said Kaylah.

You've got to earn some of the money to help pay for the parts, said Daddy B.

Kaylah thought for a moment. *I guess Kaylah's One And Only Lemon-egg Stand will have to raise its prices,* she said.

Daddy B smiled. *I know you'll figure it out.*

Chapter five

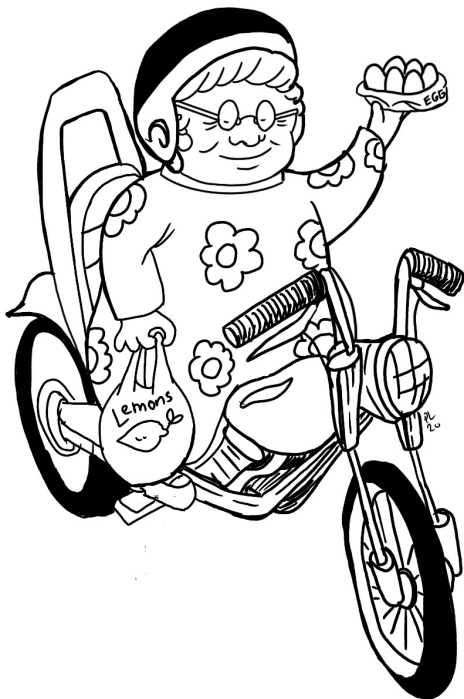
There was no time to lose.

Kaylah sat down at the computer and typed an urgent message to Grammy. *Deer Grammy, help!! please bring all yor eggs and lemins rite away!!!!*

Grammy looked after a small flock of chickens in her backyard so she always had plenty of extra eggs on hand.

Kaylah considered adding more exclamation points to her message but she wanted Grammy to get the message right away so she clicked SEND.

Within minutes Kaylah could hear the roar of Grammy's motorcycle as it turned onto



Dalkeith Street. The motorcycle was a Suzuki that Grammy nicknamed Suzie. Kaylah was waiting outside by the time Grammy pulled up. Grammy raised the visor of her motorcycle helmet and pointed at her saddle bags. *I came as fast as I could. I brought four dozen eggs and 15 lemons. What's the rush?*

Kaylah told Grammy all about Harley and the special bicycle she and Daddy B were going to build for him and how she needed to set up Kaylah's One And Only Lemon-egg Stand to earn money to pay for the parts.

I am trying to earn \$500. The special bike parts are expensive, said Kaylah.

Grammy looked thoughtful. Then she said, *I figure you can do it if you charge \$100 a dozen for the eggs and \$5 a glass for lemonade.*

Kaylah frowned. *What do eggs normally cost in the store?*

About two dollars and fifty cents a dozen, said Grammy. That's what the store charges. The farmer gets a lot less. And the chickens get chicken feed. You'll need to do some marketing to convince people to pay more for your eggs and lemonade than they'd pay in the store.

Kaylah looked doubtful. *What's marketing?*

It's where you figure out how you're going to convince people your eggs and lemonade are so special that they have to buy them even though they are ridiculously expensive and they can't afford to pay for them, said Grammy. Better get out your crafts and work out a marketing plan.

Okay, said Kaylah. She paused. *What's a marketing plan?*

Grammy smiled. *It's when you come up with a really good reason for people to buy what you're selling.*

Kaylah heard the front door of Harley's house open. She watched as Harley's caregiver came out pushing Harley. She gently manoeuvred Harley's wheelchair down the front steps.

Oh-oh, said Kaylah. Here comes Harley. He will want to help me with the Lemon-egg stand but I can't let him know that the money is for his special bike. I want it to be a surprise.

Grammy watched as Harley pushed himself enthusiastically toward them. *Harley could also use a wheelchair ramp, she said. And a better wheelchair.*

Grammy turned Suzie around and started up the engine. *Good luck with your marketing plan. I know you'll come up with something.* Then she blew Kaylah a kiss and roared off down Dalkeith Street.

Kaylah was right. When Harley heard the Lemon-egg stand was getting ready to open

for business he wanted to help. *I can make advertising signs and get customers and pour the lemonade and hand out the eggs.*

You can help if you want to but there is something you need to know, said Kaylah. We have to charge people one hundred dollars a dozen for the eggs and five dollars a glass for the lemonade. The money is going to pay for a super special secret surprise so we can't keep the money for ourselves. I can't tell you what the secret surprise is right now, but I promise I'll tell you on the day of the parade.

For once Harley wasn't smiling. He looked puzzled. *How will we make people pay one hundred dollars for a dozen eggs and five dollars for a glass of lemonade?*

I don't know yet, said Kaylah. But together we'll think of something.

Chapter six

The next morning, Kaylah dragged her big craft box outside.

She set it down on the front lawn.

The box was overflowing with odds and ends she had collected over the past year.

Snippets of leftover coloured paper from birthday and Christmas presents.

Tubes of sparkly poster paint and markers and crayons.

Bits of Bristol board, old egg cartons, empty juice containers and cardboard boxes Kaylah had jumped on to flatten. She knew it would all come in handy one day.

Kaylah had been to the town dump with Daddy B and found the experience smelly and



discouraging. She decided from that day she would do her best to keep as much stuff out of the dump as she could.

Now she and Harley fished through the box looking for whatever they could use to make posters telling everyone about the Lemon-egg stand. *We can tack them up on the bulletin board in the post office, at the library and at Nicholson's*, Harley suggested.

Kaylah nodded. *And on the big maple trees in front of the church*, she said. *We'll get a lot of hungry and thirsty customers that way.*

Kaylah and Harley worked together all morning, concentrating hard as if they were doing homework. By lunchtime they

had completed 13 posters. The words on the posters read

Kaylah and Harley's One And Only Lemon-egg Stand

Hurey to the chirch

Too day ownli

Be Part Of The Super Speshul Sekrit surpris

Egs 100 dolers

lemonad 5 dolers

It was Kaylah's idea to add Harley's name to hers. *After all, we're business partners*, she said.

Margery and Theresa wandered over after lunch. They'd been watching television in

Margery's bedroom until Margery's mom told them to go outside and find something else to do because it was a shame to waste such a sunny day.

Margery peered at the signs. *What are you doing?*

Getting ready to set up my Lemon-egg stand, said Kaylah. She pointed at the words she and Harley had printed on the posters. *It's for a super special secret surprise. It's so secret I can't tell any of you what it is. Not even Harley. You'll have to wait until the day of the bicycle parade.*

Theresa stared at the words. *One hundred dollars for eggs? Five dollars for lemonade? That's crazy!*

Kaylah explained. *I would normally charge two dollars for a dozen eggs and five cents for a glass of lemonade. But this year I need to get my customers to pay one hundred dollars for a dozen eggs and five dollars for a glass of lemonade. It's for the secret surprise. I'm not keeping the money for myself.*

Margery laughed. *One hundred bucks for a dozen eggs? That's ridiculous! How are you going to convince people to pay you that much money for something you're keeping a secret?*

Kaylah shrugged. *I don't know yet,* she said.

You could say they're made of gold, said Margery.

But they're not, said Harley. *You shouldn't lie to people.*

And besides, said Kaylah, *you can't fry gold for breakfast. What's the point of an egg you can't fry?*

I have an idea, said Harley. *How about Really Happy Chicken Eggs? People like animals to be well treated and happy.*

Theresa snorted. *I don't care about happy chickens enough to pay one hundred bucks for one dozen of their eggs.*

Kaylah looked at Harley. She was beginning to worry.

Harley's face suddenly broke into a wide grin. *Packaging!*

Kaylah looked confused. *Packaging?*

Yes, *packaging*, said Harley. *Packaging can get people to buy things they wouldn't ordinarily buy. He looked pleased with himself. Do you have any old Easter baskets?*

Of course, said Kaylah. *I never throw anything out. I like turning garbage into something else. She was thinking about what Harley said. She was thinking about all the packaging that had tricked her into buying toys she didn't end up playing with.*

Good, said Harley. *Now if you put six eggs in each Easter basket you can charge half as much. People might be willing to pay fifty bucks for six eggs instead of a hundred bucks for a dozen. And they might be willing to pay that much for eggs if they come in nice packaging. You'll still be getting a hundred bucks a dozen. Fifty bucks for six eggs works out to the same thing.*

That's still a lot of money for eggs, said Margery. *I am sure people will figure it out.*

The four children were silent.

Suddenly Kaylah felt an idea taking shape. A really good idea.

Packaging! Using the right words is a kind of packaging! she said. *I know what words I will use to convince people to buy my super expensive eggs and lemonade.*

Chapter seven

Kaylah ran into the house. She found Daddy B in the kitchen typing on his phone.

I need your phone number, Kaylah said.

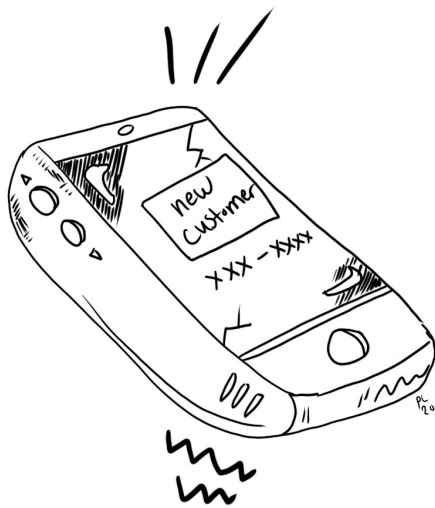
Please, said Daddy B.

Please, said Kaylah.

Daddy B looked at Kaylah. *711 277 9999. Why do you need my phone number?*

You'll soon find out, said Kaylah. *When your phone starts ringing just answer the question.*

Daddy B said *Hmmm* and went back to typing on his phone.



Kaylah wrote the number down in magic marker on the back of a crumpled napkin and took it outside.

Kaylah showed everyone the napkin with Daddy B's phone number. *I need to write these words: 'Please call 711 277 9999 to find out what the secret surprise is.'*

What a great idea, said Harley. *People love knowing secrets. And special secrets are the best.*

Margery was the best speller so she wrote the extra words. Then she and Theresa helped Harley and Kaylah hang up the posters around town. When they were done the four children returned to Kaylah's

kitchen where they squeezed all the lemons into lemonade, which they poured into fancy jugs Margery's mom said they could borrow. They took turns arranging Grammy's eggs into the bright Easter baskets. Then they packed everything into Kaylah's old wagon and took turns pulling it down the street to the Lemon-egg stand. They set up the stand in front of the church where people going up and down the street would see it.

Customers soon came from all over town. Everyone had read the posters and called Daddy B's phone number to find out about the super special secret surprise. It only took one hour for eight customers to buy all of the eggs and twenty customers to buy all of the lemonade.

My phone is still ringing, said Daddy B later that evening when Kaylah came into the living room to say goodnight. *I think people still want to contribute to your secret surprise.*

Kaylah planted a kiss on his forehead. *Good,* she said.

The news was spreading all over the town.

Chapter eight

When Kaylah and Harley arrived at Mrs. Fulton's house to walk Shelly and Shelby the next day, Mrs. Fulton gave them an extra-wide smile. While Harley was calming the two bouncy black labs, Mrs. Fulton took Kaylah aside.

Here, she whispered. Mrs. Fulton slipped an envelope into the pocket of Kaylah's jacket. Mrs. Fulton glanced at Harley. *Don't lose it. It's 30 dollars...you know...for the super special secret surprise.* Mrs. Fulton drew two circles in the air. Kaylah saw at once they were

bicycle wheels.

She smiled at Mrs. Fulton and said, *Thank you.*

Meanwhile, Harley and Kaylah had plenty of dog racing customers so they spent the following mornings racing around the neighbourhood in Harley's wheelchair.

Bystanders who happened to see them laughed and waved.

One afternoon after a particularly thrilling morning racing dogs Kaylah arrived back at 194 Dalkeith to find Daddy B waiting for her on the front lawn.

It's about your super special secret surprise, he said. I have some good news and some bad news.

Kaylah felt queasy. *What's the bad news?*

Harley's special bicycle parts are stuck in China. They won't arrive for three months, said Daddy B.

Kaylah sighed. Way too late for the bicycle parade. *And the good news?*

Daddy B grinned. *So many people have called to donate to your secret surprise that we now have enough money to buy Harley a brand new special bike. Already assembled. So you and I won't have to build it. And the really good news is I have already bought it. I just have to pick it up.*

Wow, screamed Kaylah. *It will be the best bike in the parade.*

Hold on, said Daddy B. There's just one more thing.

Kaylah's heart fluttered. *One more thing?*

Yes, said Daddy B. *We're short exactly twenty four dollars and thirteen cents.*

Kaylah took a moment to think. The number sounded familiar. *Wait a minute, she said. She ran from the kitchen and came back with her cupcake bank. She jiggled the cupcake and the coins tumbled onto the kitchen table.*

Let me guess, said Daddy B. Twenty four dollars and thirteen cents?

Yup, said Kaylah. How did you know?

Daddy B winked. Kaylah squealed and hugged Daddy tight.

That night Kaylah dreamt of sailing her pink Schwinn across the sky with Harley sailing his new bike close beside her.

Chapter nine

Harley came over after breakfast the following morning. He wanted to help Kaylah decorate her pink Schwinn. The parade was in two days.

Harley brought over a pretend speedometer and side mirrors and a pretend throttle and clutch he'd fashioned out of scrap metal he found in his garage. When he was done putting everything together Kaylah's pink Schwinn looked almost like Grammy's Suzie, only smaller.

Harley proved to be as good as Kaylah at making useful new things out of old things.

After lunch Kaylah and Harley went back to work. They had five new dogs to race around town.

Our business is booming and we're making a lot of money, said Harley. But if we want to keep things booming we need to come up with a good name for our business. Plus we need to put up posters around town telling people what we do. Think of how much more money we'll make if we race every dog in town!

How about calling ourselves 'H&K Dog Racing', suggested Kaylah. We're not just

walking dogs like other dog walkers!

Harley agreed.

After supper Theresa and Margery rode over to 194 Dalkeith to show off their bikes, which they'd decorated to look like black cats. They had painted whiskers and noses on the handlebars, and each bike had two black flags sticking up like ears. Black cloth hung down from the seats, and black garbage bags wound around broom sticks at the back of each bike were supposed to be the cats' tails.

Harley smiled at the "black cats" and Kaylah's "motorcycle".

Kaylah loved Harley's smile. She was excited to think about Harley's huge smile when he saw his special surprise.

Daddy B came out of the house to admire the three bikes. He turned to Kaylah and winked. He lowered his voice so Harley wouldn't hear. *I'm going into the city to pick up the-you-know-what.*

He asked Mrs. Fulton, to keep an eye on Kaylah while he was gone.

While Daddy B was away, Mrs. Fulton served Kaylah and Harley Oreo cookies and milk. Then Kaylah and Harley helped Mrs. Fulton pull weeds from her garden.

Daddy B got home in time to barbeque hamburgers for supper. After supper he took a big box out of his truck and set it down on the driveway.

I'll get everything ready after you've gone to bed, he said.

But Kaylah was too excited to fall asleep right away. Tomorrow was June 28. The day of the parade.

She was so excited thinking about Harley's face when he saw his new bike for the first time that she forgot June 28 was also her birthday.

Chapter ten

Kaylah woke up early the next morning. She looked out the window. The sky above Dalkeith Street was a sharp bright blue.

The parade would start in one hour.

It would start at Nicholson's, travel up Main Street to the golf course then back to the school, down to the beach and then wind its way up and down every street in town until it ended where it began in front of Nicholson's. Mr. Nicholson would be ready to hand out free ice cream to everyone in town.

Kaylah heard a knock on the side door. She ran downstairs to open it. There was Harley in his wheelchair, smiling as usual.

Daddy B came in from the garage. He turned to Kaylah and winked. Then he turned to Harley. *Young man, we have a surprise for you. Follow me.*

Harley looked puzzled. He tipped his wheelchair onto its back wheels, spun it around and pushed himself into the front yard.

Turn around, said Daddy B. *Both of you. Don't look.*

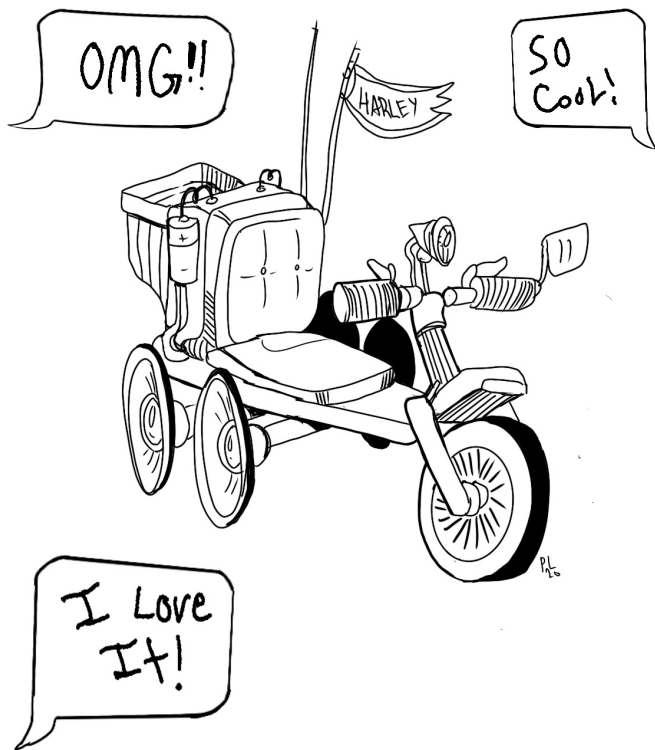
Kaylah heard the rustle of paper. She heard Daddy B moving something onto the front lawn.

Okay, said Daddy B. *You can look.*

Kaylah and Harley looked.

They stared at a large something hidden under a mountain of shiny black wrapping paper.

People were now coming from all over town to gather in front of 194 Dalkeith. The



post office lady had come up from the post office and Mr. Nicholson had left his store to join them too. Harley's caregiver was standing on the front lawn smiling at Harley and Kaylah.

Theresa and Margery rode up on their black cat bikes. Margery pointed to the shiny black wrapping paper. *Is that it? Is that the super special secret surprise?*

Harley turned to Kaylah. He seemed astonished. *For me? The secret surprise is for me?*

Open it, Harley, said Daddy B. It's to you from all of us.

Harley didn't move. He seemed to be stuck in front of the mysterious mountain of shiny

black paper.

The post office lady said, *Want help opening it Harley?*

No, said Harley's caregiver. That's not necessary. Harley likes to do things himself.

Harley looked at everyone gathered on Kaylah's front lawn. He pushed himself closer to the black paper until he was close enough to reach out and grab a corner. He pulled off the paper as he slowly rolled backward while his eyes opened wider and wider.

And there it sat in the middle of Kaylah's front lawn.

Harley's super special bicycle.

It reminded Kaylah of the sort of contraption an alien in a movie might use to travel around. Gears and levers and fancy dials and big wheels and thingamajigs that Kaylah



knew Harley would figure out.

The chrome was painted a glossy black cat black.

Harley stared at his new wheels. Then he turned to Daddy B.

Is this really for me? This bike is amazing. I've seen this one on my computer and I know I can ride it!

Six letters were written in gold paint across the back fender.

H-A-R-L-E-Y.

It's an early birthday present for you Harley, said Daddy B. Just in time for the big bicycle parade. Daddy B laughed. It's your first 'Harley'. Harley may be your name but it's

also the name of a very popular motorcycle.

But today is Kaylah's birthday, said Harley. So I brought Kaylah a present.

He reached under his wheelchair and pulled out a package. It was wrapped in pink paper. He handed the package to Kaylah.

In the excitement, Kaylah had forgotten about her birthday. Now she remembered. On this special day she was officially seven years old.

Kaylah ripped off the pink wrapping and carefully peeled apart the pink tissue paper knowing it would all go into her craft box.

Nestled inside was a small pink leather motorcycle jacket. Just the right size for Kaylah. And a pair of pink leather motorcycle gloves.

Six letters were inscribed across the back of the jacket.

K-A-Y-L-A-H.

Happy birthday, Kaylah, said Harley. I used the money we earned from H&K Dog Racing. I wanted to watch you riding your 'motorcycle' in the parade. I thought you'd look cute in a pink leather jacket and gloves.

Kaylah pulled on the jacket and the gloves and twirled around. Everyone clapped.

I was right, said Harley, smiling at Kaylah. You do look cute. Really cute.

Speaking of parades, said Daddy B. Yours starts in fifteen minutes. You better hop on your Harley, Harley, and take it for a spin.

Harley did not need help figuring out how to ride his new bike. A special gizmo allowed Harley to get on and off all by himself, and by pulling another special gizmo he could get the bike moving.

Harley and his new bike sailed down Dalkeith Street at top speed then disappeared onto the gravel path that ran behind the cemetery.

When he reappeared, Harley was howling with laughter.

Kaylah had never seen such joy.

Harley pulled up alongside her and winked. *Hop on your bike. It's time for us to roll.*

Kaylah and Harley took the lead in the parade, sailing side by side down Dalkeith Street, past the church, left at Renfrew Street and right onto Main just as they had in Kaylah's dream.

Along the way, people smiled and waved and pointed at Harley and his special bike.

Kaylah and Harley laughed and waved back.

Best birthday ever, said Kaylah, smiling at Harley.

Yeah, said Harley, smiling back.

But best of all was their friendship.

That was the best present of all.

