

“*When I woke up this morning,*” said Izzie, “I was sure that something awful was going to happen.”

She and Jasper had left their houses in the fishing village of Granite Cove and were walking along the beach in their snow boots, kicking at pieces of frozen seaweed, loosening them from their hold on the sand. Sometimes they stopped to skip stones across the water, when they found ones that were flat enough. Jasper looked at Izzie, puzzled. They had been best friends since before they could walk, but he still often found her hard to figure out.

“What on earth are you talking about?” he said, his brows screwed together. “Why would you think a thing like that?”

The sea was so calm that it looked like a big lake. They could actually see trees reflected in the water off Squid Point—something that almost never happened. It was warm for January—just a bit below freezing—and the sun was shining down on them from a cloudless sky. Jasper often had a way of looking on the gloomy side of things, but right now, the only word he could think of to describe the day was *perfect*. Besides, Izzie had a big grin spread all over her face.

She laughed. “Because there was a full moon last night. People sometimes do weird things during a full moon. They can get just a little bit crazy. Even cats. Adella cries to go out at full-moon time so she can roam through the woods and slaughter things all night.”

Jasper’s eyebrows were still drawn together. “So what’s the awful thing?”

Izzie laughed again. “A great big nothing! How wrong could I be? It just shows how superstitious I am about all that moon stuff. And how dumb. Full moons are so beautiful. Did you see it come up last night over Shag Island, like a giant orange pumpkin? And nothing bad happened. Stupid me.”

Jasper was grinning now. “It’s so perfect this afternoon that it’s hard to believe there’s a war on, and that out there—and not so far away,” he pointed at the horizon, “people are trying to kill each other.” He shook his head.

“And *wanting* to,” said Izzie. “The Eisner twins in grade eleven can hardly wait to be eighteen, so they can join the army or navy and go out there and get themselves blown to pieces.”

Jasper looked sideways at Izzie. “Well,” he said in a low voice, “if I absolutely *had* to go to war, I’d choose the air force. Imagine flipping around in one of those dandy little Spitfire fighter planes, zapping a big bomber out of the sky and sending it crashing to the ground.” Jasper was zooming around on the sand, with his arms spread out on each side. He drew his arms together to aim his imaginary gun at the imaginary bomber. “Yes, sir,” he sighed. “That could be a lot of fun.”

Izzie stopped abruptly, drew a circle in the sand with the toe of her boot, and then sat down on a flat granite rock. “You fellas are all the same,” she said. “Guns, guns, guns! I’d like to be a military messenger for the underground forces in France—lurking bravely behind enemy lines, delivering secret coded documents, hiding the notes in my school bag between the pages of my arithmetic book.” She grinned. “I just know I could do it! I wouldn’t be scared or anything. If someone stopped me, I’d just say, ‘I’m Izzie Publicover on my way to school.’ And they’d let me go through.”

Jasper snorted. “Would you be saying it in German or in French? People might find it kind of funny that you were taking a shortcut through a field in France to get to your school in Granite Cove, Nova Scotia.”

Izzie looked at Jasper and grinned. “Good old Jasper!” she said. “Always ready to take the wind out of my sails!”

Jasper smiled to himself and stared at the horizon. “Sorry,” he said, “but you’d be a terrible spy. With hair that red and that frizzled with curls, you’d light up the whole countryside like a torch.”

Izzie thought for a few moments. “Or I could be a military nurse,” she said, “with a navy blue cape. I’d work in a big tent hospital, with bombs falling all around. I’d mop the perspiration off the foreheads of brave and handsome men, and hold their hands in mine when they were in pain from their wounds.”

“Girls!” said Jasper. “They think nursing is all about mopping brows and holding hands. They never mention people throwing up or needing bedpans.”

“Sometimes,” said Izzie, as she got up to head for home, “I wish my best friend was a girl instead of a boy. Girls aren’t so eager to step on your dreams and squash them into the ground.”