

Chapter One

Finally! It's the last day of school. I'm happy. Summer is going to be great. I made some new friends this year, and we're going to hang out. Go on hikes. Maybe go to the beach. I want to try to earn some money.

I'm in tenth grade. I mean, I'm nearly *done* tenth grade. I don't hate school, but I don't love it either. I go to a private school that's

not very big. Only about 300 kids go here. Our class sizes are small, so that's good. There are a lot of rules. That's not so good. But they're not too hard to follow, I guess. And we don't wear uniforms. That's good too.

The school is far away from everything. That's bad. We can't go get junk food at lunch. We can't walk anywhere. Some days Dad drives me to school. Other days I have to take the school bus. That's also bad. But it's only on the days Dad works in the city. When he needs to leave really early. Like today. That's about half the time.

I go to a K-12 school. That means we have kids from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Sometimes that's annoying. The little kids can be brats. But they can be cute too.

Right now I can hear them in the music room. It's in a separate building. Probably so the noise won't bother the rest of the school. The little kids are playing drums. Badly! It's funny though.

My friends Sofie and Peter and I are clearing up the kids' playground. We have to make sure everything is put away for summer. The little kids left balls and skipping ropes and Hula-Hoops everywhere. We also find someone's hoodie. And a mitten hidden in a bush. It must have been there since winter.

Now it's an hour until summer break starts. I can't wait. I'm excited to be done with school for a while. I'm also excited because my mom comes home from

Japan tomorrow. She's been there for nearly a month on a business trip. She's a computer programmer.

It's okay just having my dad at home. But I miss my mom. I can't wait to show her my report card. School isn't easy for me, and I worked so hard this year. It paid off. I improved my grades a lot. I think Mom and Dad will be really proud. I'm proud of myself too.

It's just the three of us at home. Me and Mom and Dad. I have a half sister, who has a different mom. But I barely know them. My half sister's name is Mara. She's two years older than me. Seventeen. Dad was married to her mom when he met my mom. It's pretty messy. We don't talk about it much. I know

Dad pays child support for her. And he sees her sometimes. But...yeah. It's messy.

Mara goes to the public high school in Abbotsford. She and her mom live near there. That's not very far from us. We live just over the river in Mission. About a five-minute drive from my school.

Dad calls it a "suburb." But really it's just a small town.

I'd like to get to know Mara better. I've only met her a few times. Once I sent her a message on Instagram, but she never replied. So that was that.

Families can be a lot sometimes.

"Amy!" Sofie calls out to me. "Did you find the other mitten?"

She and Peter walk toward the school. Peter has three Hula-Hoops around his neck. Somewhere, someone's dog starts barking.

"No!" I yell back. "But I found a pair of headphones!" Another dog barks, like it's mad at me for yelling.

I tug the headphones out of the weeds. Suddenly the ground starts to shake! Sofie and Peter look back at me. Their eyes are wide.

Earthquake!

I expect it to be just a gentle rumble and only last a few seconds. That's happened before. But the rumbling and shaking gets worse. And it doesn't stop. Soon it's like the ground is turning sideways.

"Get away from the school!" I yell. We've all done the earthquake drills. Every kid in this part of the world has. You're supposed to get under your desk.

That's if you're inside. It's different when you're outside. You're supposed to get away from anything that can fall on you. Away from buildings or power lines. I run out into the field.

Sofie and Peter drop all the stuff they gathered. They run toward me. The ground is shaking so much I can hardly stand. Sofie and Peter can barely run. Sofie falls, and Peter drags her along.

They finally get to me. We hold on to each other. We look back at the school. The noise

is incredible. Like the world is cracking into pieces. The air fills with dust.

Sofie gasps and Peter makes a noise. I hold my breath. I can't believe what I see.

The roof of the music room starts to cave in!

Chapter Two

At last the ground stops shaking.

Sofie and Peter and I stand there. We're in shock. I can't speak. Or move. My mouth is dry and my heart is pounding. My ears are ringing. No, wait. That's a siren somewhere.

A light wind starts to blow the dust away. But nothing can blow away what happened. Almost all of the windows in the school are

broken. Shattered. A light pole in the street has fallen over. It landed on a car. The windshield is smashed. A garage across the street has crumpled. And car alarms are going off.

Slowly I feel my body come back. It's like waking up from a nightmare.

"Are you okay?" I ask Sofie and Peter.

Peter mumbles something. Sofie starts to run.

"The music room!" she yells.

We run after her. Kids and teachers start streaming out of the school. Lots of them are crying. They're dusty. The teachers and the bigger kids carry some of the little kids.

The gym teacher, Miss Carter, and the principal, Mr. Li, run toward the music room.

"Help me get this door open!" Sofie says. She tugs on the door. Part of the doorframe is bent. A beam from the roof landed on it.

"Be careful!" Miss Carter says.

"Step back!" Mr. Li says. He pulls on the door. But it won't budge.

I can hear some kids crying inside the music room. "They're alive!" I say. I can't believe this is happening.

Peter, Sofie and I run around the side of the music room. We can see through the broken windows. The little kids are all under the tables. Miss Singh, the music teacher, is under her desk. She's holding two kids against her.

The ceiling and part of the roof are crumbled all over their tabletops. But the