

A TWISTED RACE



By
The Genie's



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT

WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE: VIC

DIVISION: Upper School (Required word count 3500 to 5000 words)

SCHOOL/GROUP: St Francis Catholic College

TEAM NAME: SFCC Melton 5

TEAM ID: 1382

Parameters and random words

Parameters

Primary character 1 Music composer

Primary character 2 Illustrator

Non-human character Suitcase

Setting Abandoned house

Issue A marathon

Random words

novel

goosey

yarn

plunge

homework

Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
 - based on all **five parameters** (above)
 - including all **five random words** (above) as written, and in bold type
 - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
 - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
 - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every** page counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- ☐ Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names
(how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- ☐ Complete the Declaration
- ☐ Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

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DEDICATION

We wish to dedicate this story to the brave children who are going through tough times. We hope these stories may bring you a distraction and give you a laugh. We recognize your resilience and hope during these times, know that you are so strong. We wish you all the best.

Enjoy our story :)



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The Genies – SFCC Melton group 5 would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book was created, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The Genies – SFCC Melton group 5 would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book will be read. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

CHAPTER 1 - *Late*

Asmodeus

“Asmodeus!” the faint yell of my name, as I ran down the street.

I know that it’s my boss calling after me. I don’t think she’s ever seen me run before. To be honest neither have I. I mean it’s not that I don’t run, it’s just not the usual sprint which concerns me. Rushing around my three jobs has been hard, the band never got any gigs which were expected, but we still would’ve liked a big break. I guess that’s why we didn’t work out.

Side stepping around a corner, I came face to face with one of the other places where I work, Woolworths. Woolies is great and all, but sometimes it gets tiring with all the customers between that and Bunnings – my third job.

I glance down at my watch, feeling lucky that I only work four minutes away from the starting point of the marathon at *Blacktown Showground*. Crowds are starting to form and grow the closer I get, a competitive buzz everywhere. The venue itself looks a bit daunting. Nerves start to creep inside of me.

All competitors start to line up at the starting line, just as the gun shot was sounded indicating the start of the marathon.

The other runners are already running; I am so close to the starting line. If I make it, I can try to run with the masses and hopefully gain enough momentum to speed ahead of them at the end.

I just made it. I really hope I have a chance.

CHAPTER 2 - *Pressure*

Penelope

“Penelope, go out for a warm-up now to get your blood pumping!” My mum screams.

“Yes mum, I’ll meet you at the track for the marathon.”

I love my parents, I really do, but I hate how obsessed they are with sports. All they do is enrol me in different activities. I think I have tried every single sport possible under the sun, and I’ve hated them all! All I’ve ever wanted to do was just to be an illustrator for a children’s **novel**. I love drawing, it just makes sense in my head to put my ideas on paper.

I’ve tried talking to my mum and dad a few times about my passion for art, but they dismissed me every time and said that I needed to be more like my older brother Christopher. He’s currently a soccer player at a pristine European University. I do love to jog and run a lot, but I just want it as a side hobby, not my entire career like my parents imagine.

Once I arrive at the race, I find my parents waiting for me with all of my equipment.

“Penelope! You’ve made it at last. We’ve been waiting for 30 mins, what took you so long? You better not perform like that during the race.” My mum shouts at me from across the path with a look of disappointment on her face, her signature look.

“Sorry mum, I got lost in my thoughts while running. And don’t worry, it will not happen during the marathon, ill make sure of it,”

They have this disapproving look on their face, as if they didn’t believe me. That face has been looking down upon me any time I made a mistake. Like when I came second in a

swimming race, or when my footy team lost our grand final, and especially when I suggested becoming an illustrator, not an athlete.

I start to stretch my muscles out as my parents are blabbing on about different techniques to run quicker, as if they had been studying them for **homework**. After 21 years of their annoying rambling, you learn to block their voices out. But in the middle of their rants, there was an announcement stating all competitors need to head to the starting line, and my mum immediately pushed me forward, making me nearly trip over my own feet.

“NOW REMEMBER ALL OF WHAT WE HAVE TAUGHT YOU, MY DEAR!”

I throw my parents a thumbs up and wander over to the starting line. Once I get there, the airhorn blows and I leap into action.

CHAPTER 3 - *Struggle*

Asmodeus

I feel like I am going to pass out. I mean who even does this for fun? *Surely*, I'm halfway done. This is my actual nightmare.

These thoughts run through my head at lightning speed crashing my hopes down a drain. Did I actually think I could win this? Come on Asmodeus keep going. I turn around slightly.

“OH, COME ON, I'm one of the last people?! Are you kidding me?” I say, probably a bit too loud but just thinking out loud here!

I also overestimated how much I've actually run, yeah only about 350 metres. Well, this is going great, just great.

Beads of sweat drip down my back. I've probably sweated enough to fill a pool. Oh my, the thought of a pool sounds delightful. To **plunge** into a cool crystal-clear outdoor pool, drifting down the soft waves. A refreshing drink in my hand as an ice-cream truck blasts its nostalgic music down the street.

I quickly snap back into reality taking it all in. I mean I have to admit, the views on this track are stunning. The Sydney Harbour Bridge comes into view, the one I've driven over so many times before, but it still shocks me every time I see it. I remember a time when I was little my only dream was to climb that thing. I've changed quite a bit I suppose. I wouldn't dare to do that anymore. Little me was a wild child.

The cold breeze hits me as I see the clouds overtake my view of the beautiful blue sky. Dark grey clouds about to burst into an array of water drops on my face at any moment. The trees swaying in the wind like they are dancing to a tune. I start to hum aloud to the sound of the trees and the birds chirping. I often do this, I believe any and all noises can be beautiful. You just have to find the right melody. Music composition is my passion but it's so much more than that. It takes up my every thought, dream, everything and anything I do.

At this moment I feel like I will actually pass out. My feet hitting the path one step at a time. One after another. Yeah, I don't think running straight from work was the greatest idea. I'm exhausted, I am completely dehydrated and pretty much ready to give up. But I need to do this for myself.



Chapter 4 – *Fall*

Penelope

I feel confident, I'm already 20km in and feeling like I might just win this race. I'm not here for the money, but oh boy, If I win, I might just be able to leave home and finally become an illustrator that I've always dreamed of becoming. Don't get me wrong, my parents are amazing and all, but they are way too sport orientated. Hoping that I turn out like my brother, to be the top of my class with a sports scholarship to an international university.

Ouch! What was that?! How am I on the ground? Why is my ankle hurting? Why am I in **gooney**, sticky mud?! I try to dust myself off, but I can't get up, my ankle hurts too much. I must have sprained it. What am I going to do, I need to win this race! It's extremely important that I must finish the race, it will make my family so proud if I do.

As I turn to look back, I hear a thundering sound. Dozens of the other runners have caught up to me. I'm no longer in the lead. How will I catch up with them now? With my ankle not in good shape.

"HEY, YOU! Can I get your number and buy you a drink after I win the race?" A male runner yelled, jogging with a toothy grin. He looks about fifteen years older than me and not looking like the stereotypical runner. His clothing is baggy and ripped nothing like I've seen before.

"Like you could afford me," I retort with a look of disgust. As if I would go out with him! His ego was massive, and he also wasn't my type.

He then explains how he is better than everyone else, including me. I can't believe a person could be so rude!

“Let me try one more time to see if I can get up, if I can’t I’ll stay here forever” I say aloud to myself, secretly hoping someone would hear and help me.

Someone who is kind and respectful, but let’s be honest, people aren’t like that anymore.



Chapter 5 – *Help*

Asmodeus

My lungs are burning, sweat is dripping down my face, stinging my eyes. The familiar pain of my legs refusing to take another step, I ignore them and keep pushing on. Everywhere I looked I can see a cheering crowd, friends, family and loved ones of those in the marathon. The motivation they give to the other runners was beautiful, I just don't feel any for me. Pushing that thought out of my head I continue, chanting to myself '*heel toe left, heel toe right*'. It helps me get a few more metres. In the distance I can see a crumpled down figure.

All the other runners are running past them, no one offering help. Occasionally there are a few yells, mainly from the person on the ground, but they don't sound like cries for help. I'm only a few hundred metres away now. No one has even bothered to help them yet, a few have slowed down and glanced in their direction, but they seem to be too distracted to realise there's someone in need. I can feel something brush past my shoulder, turning around I glance at another runner overtaking me. Slowing down, I looked behind me to find that I am the last one in the marathon, everyone has already overtaken me.

Turning back around, I see the figure is still there. She looks no more than twenty, her hair is up in a tight ponytail, golden locks flowing down her back. Her light blue leggings are scratched and dirty, her light blue top matching. Slowing down, as I get closer to her, straightening my back so I won't frighten her too much. She doesn't seem to be in too much panic or pain.

Approaching her, I can feel my social anxiety starting to take control, taking a deep breath to try and calm myself down.

“Uhm hi, I was just wondering if you need any help?” my voice cracking and shaking, completely embarrassing me.

She quickly glances in my direction, her ice blue eyes seemed show no emotion.

“Would you like me to call someone for you? Perhaps a partner or family member?” I try again; she seemed to be ignoring me. “I don’t mean to impose on you, I just want to see if you’re okay, I saw you a while back, when you first fell.”

This time she turns around, surprise in her eyes, as she speaks her voice is like honey.

“So, you aren’t here for my number? Or to guilt me into going out with you after you help me?”

I shake my head, hoping that was all the reassurance she needs.

“Oh well then, I would love if you could help me up, I’ve rolled my ankle and can’t get up on my own.”

Smiling I kneel down to help her, wrapping her arm around my shoulder as we stand up.

“Thank you” she said, a soft smile forming on her lips.

“Of course, no one else seemed to help you, it’s the least I could do.” I reply, returning her smile. Looking up to the sky I can see dark grey clouds rolling in from the distance. “We better get somewhere safe; it looks like there’s a storm coming.”

In the distance, amongst the tops of the trees is an old grey roof poking out.

“We should head over there and see if anyone can help us?”

Chapter 6 – *Name*

Penelope

“Asmodeus,” The stranger says.

“Bless you,” I reply.

“Funny! My name I mean,” he said. “It’s Asmodeus, but you can call me Azza, most do.”

“Uh-huh, do they now?” I say.

“Maybe not. But maybe you can start,” he says awkwardly.

I roll my eyes at his strange advance as he holds me up. His grip gentle and comforting, but sturdy. Assuring that I won’t fall again.

The house comes close into view. After a while we concluded that it was most likely abandoned. A small ‘quaint’ house. More of an old cottage I’d say. The windows bordered up with planks of wood and overgrown leaves awning the roof. The cylindrical section of the house built up as if it was turrets of a castle. Pieces of drywall had chipped off over time. The dark burnt sections of the chimney revealed that it has been used many times before. The house looked like it hasn’t been lived in for years. Finally, we come to the front door.

“If this door doesn’t open, I swear-,”

Just as I say this, he opens the door. He helps me in and brings me over to a dusty old chair. I finally get a good look at him. His hair a curly brown mess, and his skin glowing, most likely from sweat. His eyes are a deep brown but are some of the kindest eyes I’ve ever seen. Like staring into a puppy’s eyes ready for their food. He gives me a cheesy, embarrassed smile when he catches me looking at his dorky t-shirt. It has a nerdy phrase that *almost* made me

smile.

‘Never trust an atom, they make everything up’

The room is dark, and everything is covered in dust. Cobwebs hang from every corner of every room. Rusted old metal pieces and wood planks cover the floors, and shelves keep boxes of old toys, pots and pans, fabric, and **yarn** - items that an older person would have. Beyond my view Asmodeus, I refuse to call him Azza, goes to try to find anything to wrap my ankle.

“You all good?” I call out as a I hear something crash into the floor.

“Ouch, I’m fine!” he yells back.

I catch myself smiling. Weird.



Chapter 7 – *Chat*

Asmodeus

“I couldn’t find anything,” I say. “Sorry to disappoint,”

“Oh, its fine. Maybe I just need rest I guess,” she says.

She definitely needs more than rest. I can tell she’s keeping it all in.

“But I did find these outside,” I pull out a bunch of daisies from behind my back that I found in the overgrown garden.

I hand them to her. Finally, a smile.

“Oh! Thank you,” she says staring at them blankly.

We start to chat. Turns out she’s not a runner; she explains to me that she’s always wanted to be a professional illustrator for children’s books. Apparently, her parents have put her into every sport known to man in the hopes of her being a professional athlete like her brother. She wants to win the race for money to publish her own book.

“And what about you?” she asks me.

“I’m a music composer,” I say. “Well aspiring I guess, I had a band. It didn’t really work out. We ran out of money and couldn’t keep the band together, instruments, venues, the whole thing, it was too much. I’m not sure how I thought I had a chance at winning this thing, but I don’t know. I guess I just thought it was worth a shot,”

She groans in pain. It hurts to see her like this. She’s such a strong person and she seems so weak in this moment.

“Some pains killers would be great right now,” she says in agony.

BAM!

What in the world? Out of nowhere a loud bump comes from the room in the back. The room neither of us had noticed. It was concealed by a secret door the same colour and texture as the old ripped up wall. We were so frightened by the noise neither of us realised we were holding onto each other. She had grabbed me out of fear. So had I to be fair, but we don't need to mention that.

"I'll go check that out," I say trying to sound confident. But I probably just sound like a nervous wreck.

"I'll come with you," she says.

I gave her a look urging her to stay. It will only make her ankle worse. She listens and stays put.

I walk into that room realising I am still holding onto the flowers.

"Cough, cough,"

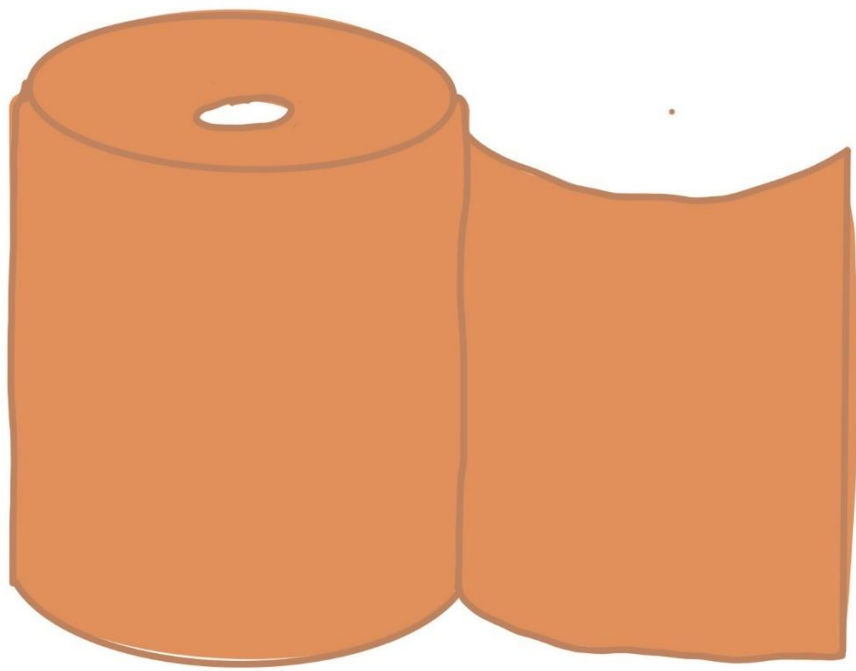
I spring into action holding my weapon. Although my weapon is a bunch of daisies, so I probably am not scaring anybody. The room is completely empty. Except for a singular suitcase. It's made of black fabric and has a bunch of old creases and dirt on it. I should probably check it just in case. Maybe there is a wild animal or something.

Slowly I open the suitcase. When I see the inside, I'm absolutely shocked. How can this be? Ankle tape, and pain killers! I honestly can't believe my eyes. I pick up the supplies and start to walk out of the room when all of a sudden...

"Cough, cough, too much dust," a voice says quietly.

"Anybody there," I say scared completely out of my mind.

"No," someone says laughing nervously. "Nobody at all, carry on,"



Chapter 8 – *Suitcase*

Penelope

“PENELOPE! YOU WON’T BELIEVE WHAT I HAVE FOUND!” Asmodeus exclaims. I’m unsure whether to be excited or worried about his statement. However, as he walks in, I know I need to be concerned and questioning about what he is holding. *Is that a suitcase? WITH EYES?*

But I really lose it when the suitcase speaks in a squeaky voice, “Hello” I freeze.

“Did you just... speak?” I ask with so many more questions in my head.

“Yes ma’am, that I did and still continue to do.”

“This makes no sense, are you all in my head? Are you hearing this?” I ask Asmodeus gesturing to the suitcase.

“At first, I thought it was crazy as well, but then we got talking and realised that I’m not crazy and nor is Casey.” Asmodeus explains casually.

“Casey?” I question.

“This little guy,” holding the suitcase up, who smiles a half happy, and half concerned smile.

“Well, that makes sense I guess,” Shrugging then nodding.

“How is your ankle?” The suitcase asks me.

“Weird that you know but thank you for asking. My ankle is feeling better, but still a little bit sore,” I reply. Still completely shocked.

“Oh, of course, you wouldn’t know would you. So, pretty much I can read minds when someone starts speaking with, ‘I wish,’ or ‘If only I had,’ or something like that. But, if someone were to speak aloud, I can also grant the wish, but only if they say it directly to me. However, unlike a genie, I do not have to grant the thought because I am not bound to this role.”

“Wow! That’s a lot to take in. Surly that must be a lot of work?” I ask impressed.

“Oh, not really, the last people to live here was a while ago. You’re the first humans I’ve seen for quite a long time.”

BANG! CRASH!

“WHAT WAS THAT?!” Asmodeus exclaims, scared. He grabs the flowers and Casey to go to inspect the room next to us.

“Wait for me, I’ll come and see as well!” I say, even though I know walking isn’t exactly the best idea right now.

“No, you stay and rest up for when we head off to finish the race.” Asmodeus says in a calm, reassuring voice, I nod my head in response.



CHAPTER 9- *Goodbye*

ASMODEUS

“Hey Penelope, are you ready?” I yell, hoping she can hear me from the other room.

Casey looks up at me, and whispers something underneath his breath. Confused, I set Casey on the table next to me so I could get a better look at him while we talk. He looks around the room, frantic. Unsure of how to proceed, Penelope hobbles into the room.

“Yeah, I’m ready, Asmodeus, I’ll just need some help downhill,” Penelope says, walking over to Casey and me.

“So, Casey,” I say, as I pick him up again, “You ready to go for an adventure?” Casey looks between Penelope and I, a bitter look on his face. He seems to be fighting the urge to say something.

“Theres something I need to tell you two... and it most definitely cannot wait,” he says in a small voice.

I glance at Penelope, and we share a knowing look, setting him back on the table, we take a seat on the couch, so we are all at eye level.

“I can’t go with you, it’s not because I don’t want to, I really do, I just can’t leave this house,” he takes a deep breath before continuing, “Many years ago, the previous owners loved to travel, we went everywhere you could possibly imagine, Paris, Germany, you name

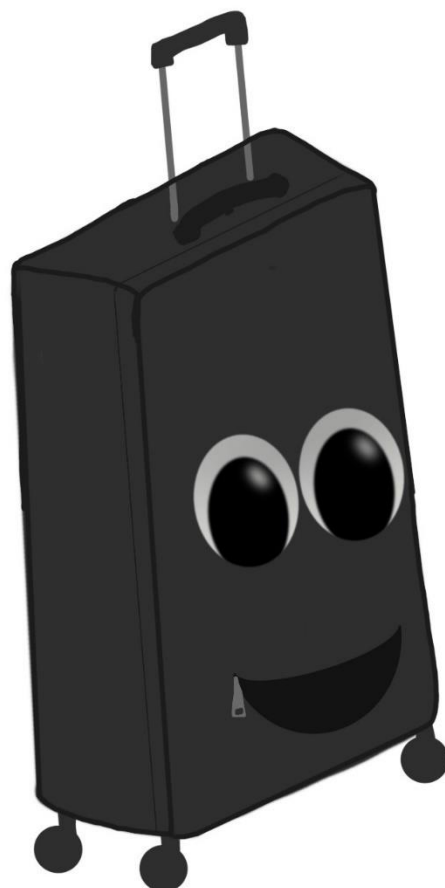
it. But as they got older, we travelled less. Unsure if I'll ever travel again, I started asking if they could move me on to new people who also loved to travel. They didn't like that at all.

“So, they cursed me, making sure that I'll never be able to leave this house, meaning I can never travel again. This was due to my ungratefulness for them. Not long after they sold the house and moved out.”

Gasping, Penelope rushed over to Casey, comforting him. Completely out of character for her.

“Oh Casey, that's terrible, don't worry we won't leave you. We'll return again. Won't we Azza?”

I nod. Azza? She called me Azza. I smile. after saying our goodbyes to Casey, we step out into a fresh breeze. Waving back through the window to Casey.



CHAPTER 10 – *Support*

PENELOPE

My arm is wrapped around Asmodeus' shoulders; his steady saunter helps me hobble along the footpath. He occasionally glances down at me and smiles. *Such a dorky smile.* I can't help but smile at that thought. He seems like a genuinely nice guy, so respectful and helpful. I'm glad he helped me.

A small ball of guilt forms in my stomach; I feel like such a failure. I haven't become the person my family wants me to be, and I don't seem to be following my dreams, illustrating my own novel.

"Hey, everything okay?" he asks, stopping our stride to look me in the eye, concern was written over his face

I nod and continue to hobble, I like Asmodeus, a lot, but I've only just met him.

"Penelope, something's up, you don't look so happy to be going back to the marathon."

I sigh, glancing up at him, I knew his concern was genuine. It really means a lot to me.

"It's stupid, don't worry about it."

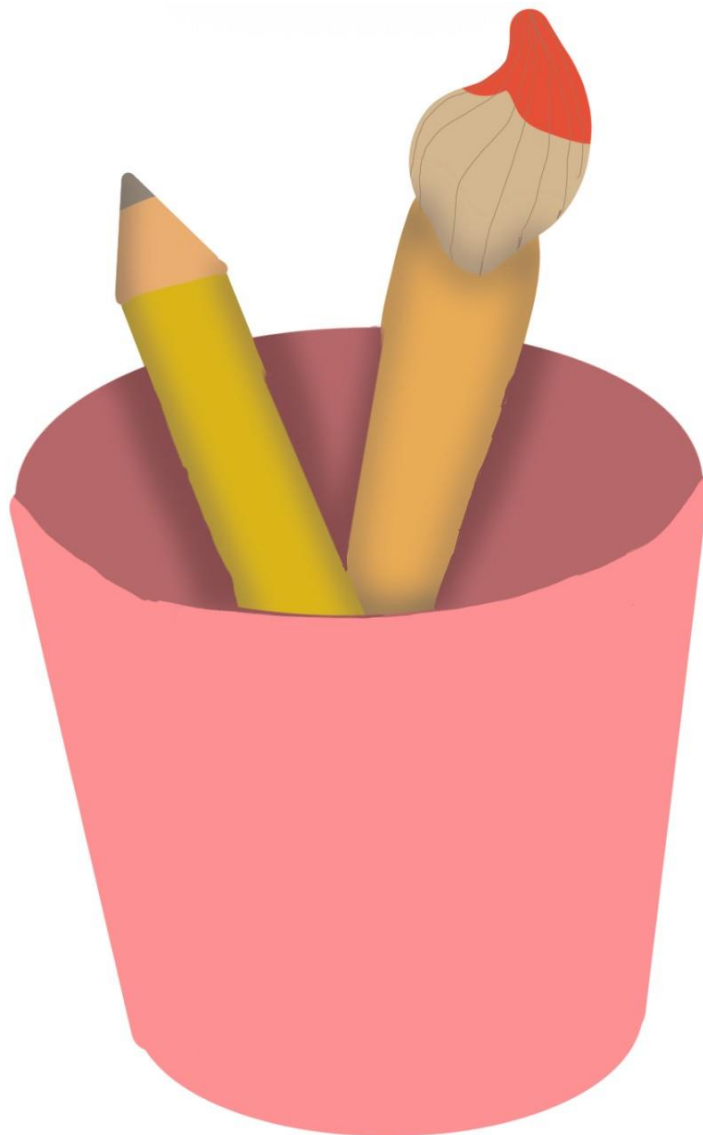
He looks me dead in the eye, his voice is stern rather than his usual jokingly personality.

"Nothing's stupid, don't ever think it is. I'll always be there to listen."

I smile my gratitude from his statement and tell him about how I feel like I'm a failure to my family and myself.

“Penelope listen to me, you're not a failure, not at all. You are just too hard on yourself which is understandable. You've had so much pressure that you feel like you've failed. But you haven't, not really, instead you've built yourself a life and I think you should go for it. Go and illustrate a book, don't wait for them to go to you, go to them.”

“Thank you, and I will,”



CHAPTER 11- *Finish*

ASMODEUS

Penelope and I look in front of us, and in there it is, the finish line. As soon as I notice it so does Penelope.

“LOOK! We’re almost there!” Penelope exclaimed with great joy.

“Yes! Finally! Then we can go back to save Casey.” I sigh with relief.

Penelope rolls her eyes, but she also has massive grin on her face. As soon as we crossed that line a crowd of the volunteers surrounded us, questioning where we've been. Amongst that crowd was an old man who looked about fifteen years older than us. He has clearly just finished the race too.

Penelope then looks at him and says extremely loud “I guess you can’t buy me that drink after all.”

The man looks mortified and embarrassed, but Penelope has already started to drag me to the beach and sat down in the sand. We sat together and spoke about the day’s events. She grabs my hand and leans her head against my shoulder, and we stay like this for what feels like hours, maybe even days. It was our definition of perfect.



**AN ILLUSTRATOR AND A
MUSIC COMPOSER MEET IN A
SUDDEN TWIST OF FATE
DURING A MARATHON. WHEN
THEY ENTER AN ABANDONED
HOUSE AND MEET AN
INTERESTING OBJECT, WILL
THEY EVER BE THE SAME?**

Recommended ages 10+

