

## Austin's summer

"It's time to go, Austin." my mom says. But he's not listening. My little brother is looking at my mom's flower garden. "5,8,2,4,5!" he says. He has a mental condition called autism. "Libby, can you PLEASE get him in the car?" mom asks me. I walk to him. "Video game store." I say. He gets in the car and buckles his seatbelt (the wrong way). I fix his seatbelt.

We start driving. We stop at a small brick building with a sign that says 'SPECIAL NEEDS THERAPY'. We go inside. I spot a girl named Caroline. She has cerebral palsy. I don't know much about her. Then a lady called Quinn comes in the waiting room. She takes him and Caroline into separate rooms. Then I see Abby, Caroline's sister (also my classmate and friend). I ask my mom if I can get ice cream with her. She says yes. I walk to Lola's ice creamery with Abby. After we get our ice cream we start walking back to the building. "What's wrong?" she asks. "Austin." I say. We walk in silence the rest of the way. When I get there, mom is not in the waiting area. I hear screaming. I go into Austin's room. He stops screaming and I hand him my cone. He chews away. Then it's time to go.

We drive to the video game store. "You can get one." Mom says. He runs to the minecraft section. "One! One! One!" he says while pointing to the game. We pay for it and go home. When we get home, he puts the disk in the game console. He plays until he gets blown up by a creeper. "YAY!" he says. That makes no sense.

I tell mom I'm going for a walk. She says to take Austin. I walk over to a group of girls. "Hi" I say. "Gum!" he says. "Weirdo." One of them says. I run home and cry. Austin knocks on my door. I open it. He has a piece of gum in his hand and one in his mouth. He puts the one in his hand into my mouth. "Mom say girl meanie." he says. I hug him while crying. I look at my watch. I take his hand. Dad drives us to my school. A banner says 'SUMMER DANCE'. We get in line with Abby and Caroline. When we get in, I get Austin a grape soda and we start dancing. Then we drive home. I get in bed. Before I know it, I'm asleep.

This morning summer vacation starts. Austin has a therapy session so he's not here. I decide to bike to Abby's house. When I get there, Abby motions for me to come. She's holding a small, brown squirming puppy. "It's yours. Your parents say it's ok." I take the little puppy and put it in my bike basket. After I get home, I text mom. She says she did give me permission. I check my wallet. I have \$30.50. I bike to the pet store, get dog food then bike back home. I put some dog food on a plastic plate. The dog eats away. Just then Austin comes home. "Daisy! Daisy!" he's shouting. "He wants to name the dog daisy." mom says. "Okay, I guess." I say.

That night we have baked potato soup. Austin is pretending the chunks of potato are boats. He is then eating them. I chew on my bread roll. After dinner dad lets Austin and me go on a walk. I turn on my sparkly purple flashlight. We find a grassy spot and lie down. "Austin, your life isn't going to be easy. There will be some hard times because you have autism." I tell him. "Autism." he says. Then he hugs me. I hug him. We lay there, under the stars.

**The end**