

A Year with Kayla Johnson

By Lex

Chapter 1- First Day Jitters

I walk into Maple Hill Middle School with shaky hands. I go straight to Mrs. Hillary's office. Mrs. Hillary is the school secretary. She gave me my schedule, locker number and code, and other important stuff that I forgot. I went to my first period, English and was delighted to see Sofi my best friend since preschool, was there. She was going to move to New Jersey right before kindergarten started, but luckily her mom didn't get the job. I am lucky that I made it out of that school alive. Of course, I had 3 piles of homework sitting on my desk at home. Dad calls it first day jitters, but I call it first day torture.

Chapter 2- Role Model Thomas

I hope that somehow, I can get Thomas, my older brother to do my work for me.

“Kayla, Grandma called, and she said it was urgent. You never miss one of her calls.” Mom explained.

“What?! I didn’t know Grandma called! Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I just did! You can call her back.”

“Ugh!” I stomped as hard as I could when I walked up the stairs so Mom could tell that I was super, super mad. I went into my room and thought about how I would get all my projects finished. Then, Thomas came into my room with a smile on his face, as always. I don’t understand how even through the toughest times Thomas seems to be happy. I try to do the same, because Ms. Anderson my teacher last year, used to say that we should watch key role models in life, and I must agree that Thomas is a key role model.

“What’s up Dimples?” Thomas asks. This is a nickname that I don’t think fits me, considering that I don’t have dimples. He gives me a wink that makes me smile.

Chapter 3- Grateful

I wake up in the morning, not realizing what happened. I guess I fell right asleep after finishing my homework. Mom or Dad must have tucked me in my warm, cozy bed. I remember getting my bed for my 4th birthday. I remember how excited I was to sleep in it for the first time. I feel like now, everyone takes these kinds of things for granted. I remember that one quote by Oprah Winfrey that Grandma said one time:

“Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough.”

I think that this means that if you won’t be thankful for the things that you have, you will always want more so, you will have nothing. It’s hard to explain.

Then, I think about how being grateful is one of the most important things you can be. I decide that I should write this in my journal. My unicorn diary with the fancy lock and key is where I jot down important things, mostly wise things Thomas says, which is everything he says.

Chapter 4- The Award

In school, I usually do okay. I mean, I'm not dumb but I'm not super smart. I guess I'm in the middle from smart to super smart. In Maple Hill Middle School, 3 times a year there are award ceremonies for kids to see who is the best at different things. It's the first award ceremony of the year and I really hope that I get one. I know that there are about 300 kids in Maple Hill, and I don't have a large chance of getting an award.

I heard that Mr. Cox, our principal is known for making the longest and most boring speeches.

"Hello 6th, 7th, and 8th graders! Well, today you are in for a treat, because today is Maple Hill Middle School's winter award ceremony! Now, students before we begin, I just need to remind you that even if you don't get an award today doesn't mean that you aren't good at anything. It doesn't mean that you'll never get an award in your life." He paused to look at his paper. "It just means that there is more room for hard work. I know that I am boring you," Everybody laughed. "So, let's start those awards."

Mrs. Lawson, the string teacher, and Mr. Carter, the band teacher stepped onto the stage. I do string lessons outside of school and I don't do band so I knew it wouldn't be me. Peggy Hickman and Martha Joyce. No Kayla.

Next, Mr. Vincent, our gym teacher stole the spotlight. Definitely not me. Chris Gordon, Kevin Hanson, and Sofi Miller. Not me. Wait, Sofi Miller!

"Yeah! Go Sofi! She's my best friend, everyone! Woo-hoo yeah!"

Everybody stared at me, but I didn't care. I watched Sofi smile at me from the stage. I wish that I were up there with her.

Then, Mr. Cox got back on the stage for the most academic success and good sportsmanship awards. Jimmy Smith and Emma Brown. Not me.

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, please give a round of applause for our good citizen award receiver, Kayla Johnson!" I was so shocked, that I thought that there must be another Kayla Johnson. Then I heard Sofi shout and scream, and I stood up and walked up to the stage. It felt like I was walking on air to the stage. The good citizen award is the best award you could get, and

instead of getting a medal I got a trophy, I never got a trophy before!

At home, Mom and Dad gave me a big hug once they saw my trophy. Mine.

Chapter 5- How to Make A Friend

My favorite season is winter. I love sipping on Mom's famous hot chocolate, having days off from school, and watching the snow delicately fall to the ground. I love turning the fireplace on and seeing the holiday spirit in the air. Also, I would rather be cold than hot because you can always layer up in winter, but in the summer, you can't just rip your skin off.

On Wednesday, January 17, I woke up and I realized that it was 7:00 AM and I was so late! I ran downstairs, wondering what happened and I realized that we must have a snow day and Mom didn't want to wake me.

"Good morning Dad. Good morning Mom." I noticed that Dad was not in his usual work clothes.

"Good morning sweetheart." Mom and Dad gave me morning hugs and kisses.

"Guess what? Today your off!" Dad exclaimed. "Look out the window." I ran to the big window in our living room and saw...snow!

"Yippee! We have a snow day; we have a snow day!" I chanted.

get buttons, a carrot, and a scarf and wah-lah! I just made a book!”

“Ok, ok.” Mom said, chuckling. “We will make our own snowman. Is that all right, Thomas?”

“Okay.”

25 minutes later and we have the perfect snowman.

“And you thought we needed a snowman book.” I said to Thomas.

“What should we name him?” Dad asked, stepping back to admire our work.

“How about Cheerios, like my breakfast?” Thomas offered.

“Cheerios, I like that.” Mom said. And then we all fell to the ground laughing for no real reason. I love when my family has a good laugh together.

Chapter 6- Babysitting

It was spring, and the birds were chirping, home again. I saw little flower buds, the beginning of a beautiful flower. Then, I noticed that something very strange is happening.

Girls at school were starting to babysit! At first, I thought that at 6th grade we are way too young to babysit but, I started to get jealous.

When I was 10, I always wanted to be old enough to babysit. Nobody would be there to boss me around. No “Kayla do this, Kayla do that.” But of course, Mom and Dad would not let me babysit. There was no point in even asking. Sofi and I could hang out in the “no babysitting” club. At least I was not alone.

Then, the next morning Sofi ran to me chanting “I’m going to babysit, I’m going to babysit! Oh yes I am!” Nooo! That meant that I was the only 6th grade girl who doesn’t babysit. Ugh!

“Oh, sorry Kayla. I didn’t mean to rub it in.” I could tell that Sofi saw I was upset.

“Hey! I just had an idea! What if you tell your parents that every 6th grader on the planet is babysitting

except you? Then they will let you.” I couldn’t help but laugh. This was one of Sofi’s crazy ideas.

“I didn’t actually ask them yet. But, it’s not worth it. I know the answer.”

“Oh, Kayla. You know my dad. He is so overprotective. Remember how in 5th grade he made me sit in a booster whenever I went in his car.” I laughed. “I totally did not expect my parents to say yes, but well, here we are. Just ask, Kayla.”

“Okay.”

So, when I got home I wrote a whole speech about how I should babysit. “Mom, Dad. Please sit down. I have a speech for you.”

“A speech! This is fancy!” Dad exclaimed.

“Stop, Dad this is a serious moment. Ahem! I have a dream,” There were chuckles.

“Stop! Let me read my speech. I have a dream, that Kayla Fiona Johnson will be able to babysit. I have a dream that little boys and little girls will be able to join hands and trust Kayla to babysit them. I have a dream that all 4 children that I will (hopefully) babysit will be

judged not based on themselves but on their babysitter, Kayla Johnson.” There were more laughs.

“So, can I babysit?” I asked hopefully. They looked at each other. It was one of those parent looks that has never been deciphered.

“First things first, I loved your speech.” Dad said and then started to crack up again.

“Anyway” Mom added. “We agree that you can babysit but, there will be a lot of tests and practice rounds before you go off and leave us.” I let out a long scream and gave Mom and Dad big hugs. I told Thomas and he was happy for me, too.

After dinner was my first quiz.

KAYLA'S BABYSITTING SAFETY QUIZ

1. THERE IS A STRANGER AT THE DOOR YOU:

- A) ANSWER THE DOOR AND TELL HIM/HER THAT THE PARENT'S ARE NOT HOME
- B) IGNORE THE DOORBELL
- C) SHOUT THROUGH THE WINDOW “THE PARENTS AREN'T HOME? CAN I TAKE A MESSAGE?”

2. THERE IS AN EMERGENCY YOU CALL:

- A) THE CHILD'S PARENT
- B) YOUR MOM AND DAD
- C) 911
- D) ALL OF THE ABOVE

THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY! TOMORROW, YOU WILL TAKE THE BABYSITTER'S KINDNESS TEST!

Chapter 7- 1 Kayla, 1 Birthday, 1 Package

I was on my way home from school, trotting along the sidewalk in my new birthday outfit as happy as can be. I walked into the driveway of my house. Neon pink balloons were tied to the mailbox. I trudged up two small steps to the front door with my huge backpack. I opened the door. “Hi Dad! Hi Mom! Hi Thomas!” Dad, Mom, and Thomas came out of the kitchen to the front door. They gave me big hugs and lots of kisses.

“How was your special day?” Dad asked.

“Great! Everybody in my class sang happy birthday to me and Sofi gave me this card!” I handed Dad the beautiful card Sofi carefully designed for me.

“That’s beautiful” Mom said looking over Dad’s shoulder.

“I only have one fraction sheet, a two page English packet, and I did my social studies and math homework at school. Then, I have free time before we go to Ooka!”

“Well, how about you get that done now so you don’t have to worry about it later” Dad suggested. “...and I made you a special birthday snack” Mom added.

“Yum! Thanks!” I walked to the kitchen and plopped myself down at the table.

“Happy birthday, sis!” Thomas said, then sang Happy Birthday for the 31st time.

“Done!” I called. I carefully placed my homework neatly into my folder. “Ding, Dong!” The doorbell rang. “I’ll get it!” I unlocked and opened the heavy door. I looked down and saw a package that said:

To My Dearest Kayla

I knew right away that it was Grandma and Grandpa by their fancy, cursive handwriting. Even though they only live about 20 minutes away, we still send each other letters on birthdays. I opened the package and there was a pink stuffed bear with a note attached:

Dearest Kayla,

Happy birthday! My, you are getting so big! We remember when you were a baby down at the hospital. We can't wait to see you at Hibachi tonight!

Love,

Grandma and Grandpa

I gave my teddy bear a great big bear hug. I gently tore off the letter and placed the stuffed bear back into the box. I grabbed the box and letter and headed upstairs to my room.

After dinner and opening presents, I went straight to bed. I wanted to call Sofi and plan my birthday sleepover activities.

Chapter 8- Last Day Of School

On the last day of school, we made bucket lists. I never actually expect to do most of the things on my bucket lists because my camp gets in the way of plans. This is what I wrote:

My Bucket List:

1. Have a picnic at my favorite park (and feed the ducks in the pond!)
2. Have an amazing last year of day camp
3. Finish my lego set
4. Go to the pool
5. Have Amanda (my cousin) over for a sleepover
6. Write Sofi 1,000 letters
7. Make a lemonade stand
8. Go fishing
9. Have a family bike ride
10. Binge watch Netflix

The last day of school was fun! We made bucket lists, New Year's resolutions, we got report cards, and we had the summer award ceremony. Oh, and no homework!

Chapter 9- The Backyard Olympics

Guess what?! I completed everything on my bucket list! My summer was amazing! I had a picnic at my favorite park and fed the ducks in the pond, I had an amazing last year of day camp, I finished my Lego set, I went to the pool, my cousin came for a sleepover, I wrote Sofi a lot of letters, I made a lemonade stand, I went fishing for the first time, I had two family bike rides, and I just relaxed and watched TV.

But, camp was over and I was bored. It was a beautiful day out, not one of those really hot and humid days and as soon as you step outside you start dripping sweat, but it wasn't cloudy or rainy. So, I went out and rode my bike two times around the block with Sofi but, we soon grew bored. Then I had a sudden breakthrough

"I have an idea! We can create a backyard Olympic course in my front yard and Thomas can be the announcer, our parents can be the audience, and we can be the competitors!"

"Great idea! I'll get my parents and you can get ready."

At home I told everyone the idea.

“That’s a great idea! Also, the traditional part of the ceremony starts with the Parade of Nations. That is when the athletes march into the stadium, country by country. They are normally dressed in their country’s colors. You can both dress up and I can play the national anthem as you walk on. Afterwards, each athlete passes the torch to each other. We can use a flashlight for that.”

“Whoa! That’s cool! I’ll call Sofi and tell her to dress up. Get the chairs, speaker, and flashlight.”

When Sofi came, she was dressed in a white tee-shirt tucked into a red skirt with navy blue tights. I was wearing a red tee-shirt with white and blue striped leggings and American flags in my hair. Together, we hung up a handmade Olympic flag onto my front door and we made a medal out of a plastic plate and ribbon. We set up all the obstacles. The audience was patiently waiting for Thomas to come.

“Hello everybody!” Thomas said enthusiastically into a pretend microphone. “Welcome to the Olympics!” the audience clapped, and I heard Dad whistle. “First up, America! Sofi and I walked to the middle of the driveway like we were on the runway. “Time to pass the torch.” Thomas handed me the flashlight and I turned it on and

passed it to Sofi, then she passed it back to Thomas.
“Now, let’s begin. First up cardboard hurdles.” Sofi got that point.

“Next, who can throw the frisbee the farthest?” That point went to me.

“Now, who can run from the starting line to the finish line and get around the obstacles? There were boxes and jump ropes everywhere and we were supposed to jump over them and make it to the finish line first. Sofi got that point.

Lastly, who can jump the farthest? Sofi jumped 2 inches farther than me. She won!

“I won!” Sofi yelled with joy.

“Good game.” I laughed and shook her hand.

“And our winner is... Sofi Miller!” Thomas put the medal we created around her neck.

“That was so much fun.” Sofi said as she was leaving.

“Yeah! See you on the first day of school!”

“See ya!”

And next school year is for another story.