

IT STARTED OUT AS A MISUNDERSTANDING.

Victoria “Tori” Adelman is lonely. Her best friend just moved away, and she’s spending the summer alone. But then she meets Jazzy, her next-door neighbors’ stylish granddaughter. Tori hopes her friendless status is about to change.

Later that day she sees Jazzy again, but a misunderstanding causes Tori to panic—and invent a twin sister, Vicky.

All Tori wanted was a new friend. But keeping all her stories straight is getting very complicated.

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Double Trouble

Joanne Levy

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Summary: In this high-interest novel for middle readers, twelve-year-old Victoria pretends she has an identical twin sister.

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Chapter One

“So what’s on the harvest menu for today?” asked Bubby, my grandmother, from the front seat. We were driving home from synagogue.

I was picking at a scab on my thumb. When I looked up, I saw she was smiling at me.

“Tomatoes,” I said. She was asking what was ready for picking in my

organic garden. “Maybe some lettuce and broccoli.” I hate broccoli. I planted it because she likes it. I hoped she was prepared to eat a lot of it, because it was growing like crazy.

“Make sure you take off your dress before you start playing in the dirt,” my dad said. He was looking at me in the rearview mirror. He called it “playing in the dirt,” but I knew he was proud that I’d created the garden and tended to it myself.

I looked back down at my lap and smoothed my hands over the shiny green fabric of my dress. I hated it—because I hate *all* dresses. At least I had been allowed to pick the color of this one when Bubby had taken me shopping after we’d realized I’d outgrown all my fancy synagogue clothes. It reminded me of leaves. “Yes, Dad,” I replied. I might have rolled my eyes too.

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“Your grandmother paid a lot for that outfit. I’d like to see you get some more wear out of it.”

Ugh, no thanks. “Yes, Dad,” I said. Again.

“And you don’t need to be getting it dirty.”

“*Okay!* I get it, Dad!”

Bubby winked and then turned around to face the road. “That was a lovely service at synagogue,” she said. “Maxa did a great job with her Torah portion.”

She really had. I hoped I could do half as well at my bat mitzvah. “She’s been practicing for months,” I said.

“Just like you will when it’s your turn,” Dad said. He looked at me again in the mirror. “Your lessons start in the fall.”

Like he needed to remind me. I had been looking forward to it when I was going to be doing bat mitzvah classes

with my best friend, Anna. But Anna's family had suddenly moved away when her mom had gotten a new job. Now I was stuck going to bat mitzvah class by myself. I'd be lucky if I ever got to see Anna again. She'd promised to invite me to her family's Purim masquerade party, but that was months from now.

This summer had been *so* lonely. I'd always wished for brothers and sisters, but never so much as this year. At least I had my garden to keep me busy. Someday I was going to be a food scientist and solve the world's food-shortage problem.

But for now I just grew what I could in our backyard garden. Most of it we ate fresh. Some Bubby preserved in jars for the winter, like pickles and tomatoes.

I used to give some to Anna and her family too. But since she moved, I have been taking extras to our neighbors, like

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Ms. Simon and her five-year-old twin daughters, Maisey and Daisy. They live across the street. I didn't know them very well since they'd just moved in at the beginning of the summer. But Ms. Simon seemed nice and had even asked me for some advice on her little herb garden.

I also took some over to the Patels—the old couple who live next door.

Everyone appreciated my veggies, but it isn't the same as sharing with my bestie. The Patels like broccoli though.

As soon we pulled into the driveway, I jumped out of the car. I couldn't wait to change my clothes and get to work in the garden. I was partway up the porch stairs when I noticed the Patels' big burgundy car pulling into their driveway. There was someone in the back seat.

A young girl—about my age—stepped out of the car. She had dark skin like Mr. and Mrs. Patel. Her long

black hair was tied back in a high ponytail.

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Patel,” I called over to them. I figured that was the best way to find out who this girl was.

Mr. Patel smiled and waved. “Oh! Hello, Victoria.”

“Come meet our granddaughter,” Mrs. Patel added, waving me over. “She’s here for a visit!”

I knew the Patels had grandkids, but they lived so far away that I’d never met them. I walked over, feeling a little bit nervous.

“Hello,” I said.

“Nice to meet you, Victoria,” the girl said with a big smile. “My name is Jasvitha, but my friends call me Jazzy.”

“Jazzy’s a cool name,” I said, relaxing a bit. She already seemed nice.

“We’ll let you girls get to know each other,” Mrs. Patel said as she reached into the trunk and pulled out

two shopping bags. Mr. Patel took a large suitcase out of the back seat. “But not too long, Jasvitha,” she added. “We have groceries to put away.”

“Yes, Dida.” Jazzy nodded and then turned back to me. “I’m staying with them until Labor Day,” she said.

Labor Day! That was two whole weeks away. My brain started whirling. I was already getting really excited about having someone to hang out with for the last days of summer.

“Oh, really?” I asked, trying to play it cool.

She nodded. “My parents are in Australia looking for a house. My dad just got a new job there, so we’re moving. I’m here for a visit with Dadu and Dida—my grandparents—because it will be a long time before I see them again. They won’t fly all that way, so...”

I couldn’t imagine moving a half a world away from Bubby. I would hate

it if she lived even across town. But my grandmother is like a mom to me. My mom died when I was very young.

“Wow,” I said. “Australia is far.”

Jazzy shrugged. Then she looked me up and down, from my shoes to my dress. “I *love* your outfit,” she blurted.

I looked down at my dress. Even though I hated it, I knew I looked good in it. Especially paired with the glittery silver shoes (which I also hated) and my fancy hairdo with hairspray that itched (Bubby had insisted).

“Thanks,” I said. I was going to talk about how much I hated dresses, but I could tell that Jazzy loved it. She even reached out to touch the fabric on the sleeve.

“Is that silk?” she asked.

I shrugged. “No idea.”

“I bet it’s silk,” she said with a nod. “It’s stunning. You have such great taste.”

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“That’s me, all about fashion,” I said.

“It really shows,” she said. She didn’t seem to notice I was being sarcastic. I didn’t want to make her feel bad, so I didn’t say anything else.

“Jasvitha!” Mr. Patel hollered from their side door. “You can play later. Come put your things away. Then it’s time for lunch.”

“Yes, Dadu!” Jazzy yelled over her shoulder. “I’d better go,” she said to me. “But I’ll see you later, okay?”

“Yes,” I said. “That would be cool.”

Then she leaned in and gave me a surprise hug. “I’m only here for two weeks,” she said, “but I already know we’re going to be best friends.”

Perfect. A new best friend was exactly what I needed.