

My ANXIETY IS MESSING THINGS UP

by JENNIFER LICATE



My Anxiety Is Messing Things Up

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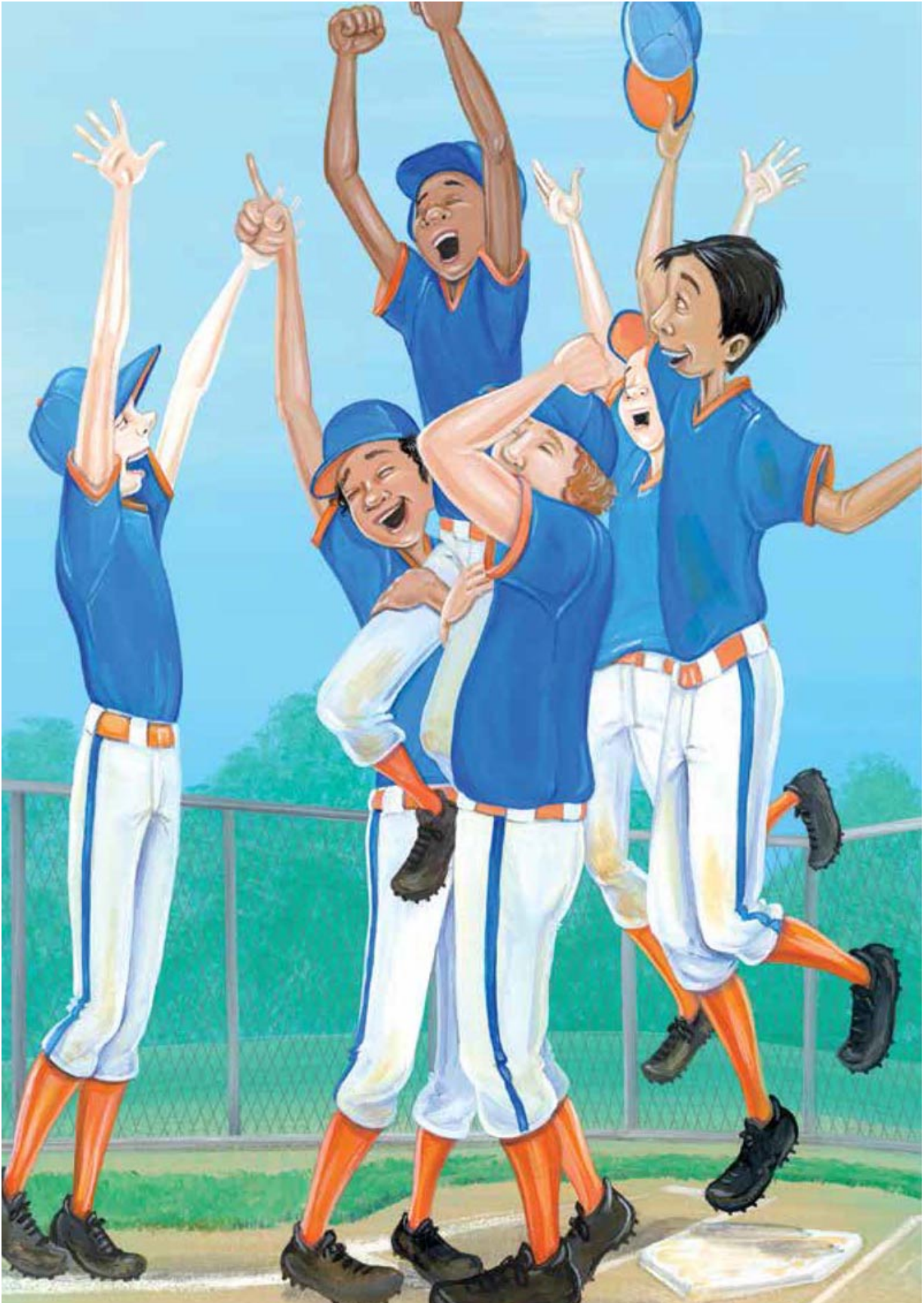
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*To Elianna and Vinny
who are always my inspiration to be my best.
Thank you for all your love (and Mom for your continued
love and support).*



Chapter 1

I'M OSCAR. MOST PEOPLE THINK I HAVE A LOT GOING FOR ME.

I get good grades. Last year, my friend and I even won second place in our school's science fair. I also play on my school's baseball team and in the school band. I know a lot of kids, am pretty well-liked by everyone, and have been friends with the same group of guys for years.

I try my best in everything I do, which makes me look like a really responsible kid. But what most people don't know is that I put a lot of pressure on myself to excel. Sometimes it stresses me out.



My parents also expect a lot from me. They don't think they do, but I feel the pressure. My older brother gets almost all A's in school. **SO, I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO DO THE SAME.**

My parents say I'm a perfectionist. That basically means I try to do everything perfectly, which is impossible. I'm rarely satisfied with my best, and I'm always pushing myself to do things better.

I try not to be a perfectionist because it's too much pressure. I tell myself to just do the best I can. Sometimes that works. But mostly I feel the weight of all the expectations, pressure, and worry. Sometimes I think I feel fine when, suddenly, I notice I'm clenching my jaw or shoulders because I'm so anxious or trying to be perfect.

I usually can keep pretty calm during school because I'm busy and distracted. I'm most anxious when I try to go to sleep at night. My mind races with all the what ifs. What if I didn't study enough for the test? What if I fail the test? What if I fail the class? That would make my parents so mad...What if I flunk out of school?

Deep down, I know most of these what ifs will never happen and I should stop worrying. Still, it's hard for me to relax. My heart races and my body gets all jittery, making it hard to fall asleep. The longer it takes to fall asleep the more frustrated I get, which stresses me out even more. **I GET SO RESTLESS, SOME NIGHTS I'M UP UNTIL 2 OR 3 IN THE MORNING!**



I try to put off going to bed, hoping I'll be so tired that I'll fall asleep as soon as my head hits the pillow. Unfortunately, it hasn't worked yet.

Most mornings, I wake up exhausted and cranky. It's hard to be in a good mood when I'm tired day after day. I try to give myself a pep talk as I get ready. I say to myself today will be better, and I'll be relaxed enough to get some sleep tonight and feel better.

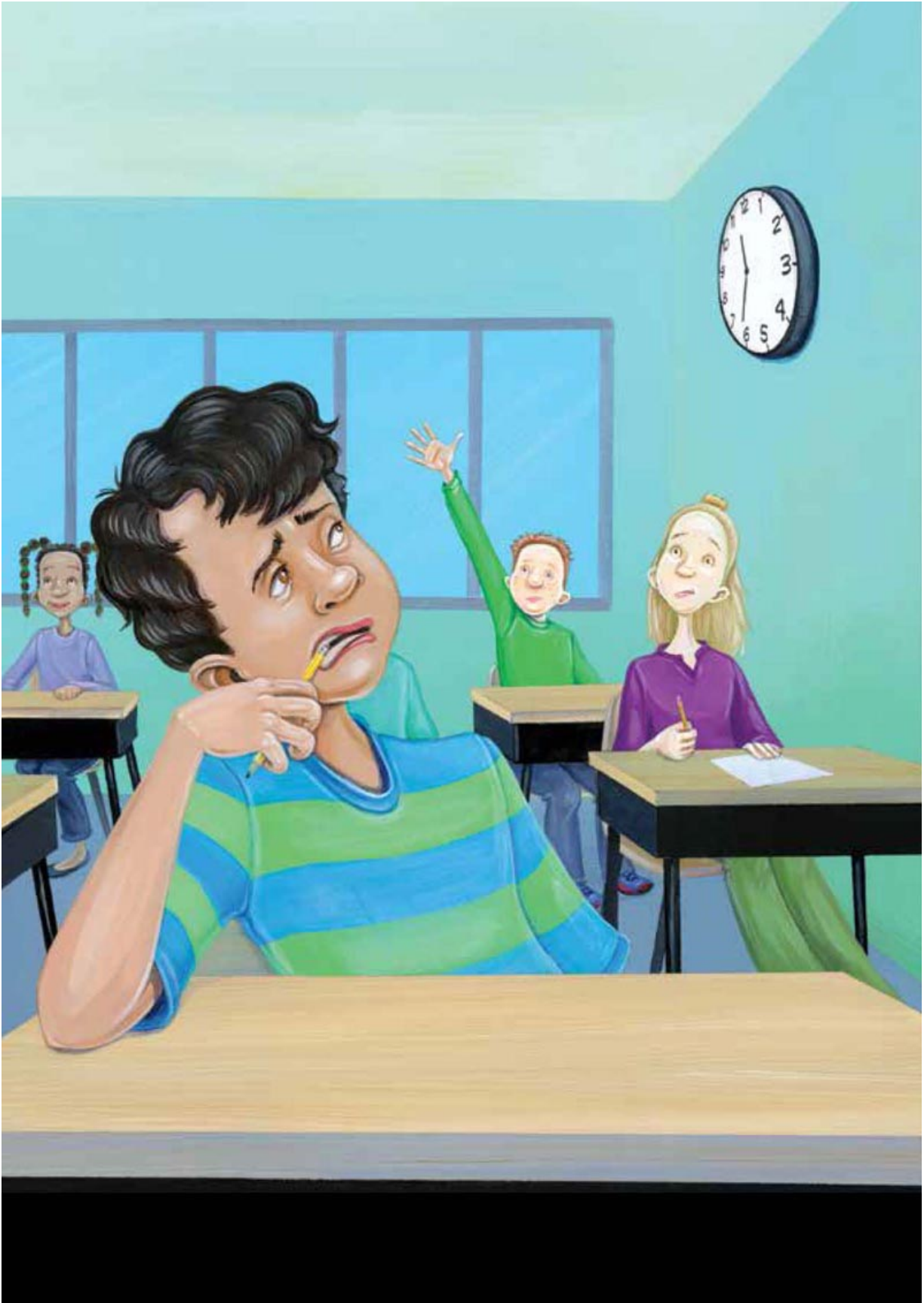
This morning, I'm in a bad mood again. When I got to school, I hung with my friends before class started, like I normally do. But I didn't really want to talk or hang out. I just wanted to get the day over with so I could go home and chill. I stood emotionless while my friends laughed and joked around. Darius looked at me, somewhat confused. "What's up with you, dude?" he asked.

"NOTHING!" I SNAPPED. "You guys just aren't funny. It's the same stupid jokes every day."

"Oh, my bad," Jayden said in his snarkiest voice. "Next time we'll try to keep you entertained." Then the bell rang. My friends grabbed

their bookbags and walked off to class. Why did I do that, I wondered? Ugh, I always do that! Why can't I just keep my mouth shut and not start a fight? I can't believe I went off on my friends. Now I have another thing to worry about, friends hating me. **WHAT A TERRIBLE WAY TO START THE DAY!**





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