

Slowly, I went out the door with butterflies in my stomach. I soon approached the place that would solve all of my worries, and when I did, I stood there in disbelief. Many thoughts started to swipe through my jammed mind trying to think of a way out or a way to fix it, but I had no answer. Not a single clue about what to do. The only thing I knew I could do was to follow my plan.

I'm Lila, I'm a high schooler. Many people think I have many friends; I don't believe that. A lot of people think I'm smart, and I don't believe in that either. "Who did you get?" "It's supposed to be a secret," I replied to Bailey, my one and only friend. I and Bailey have known each other since second grade, and we know most of each other's secrets, most. She's really smart, one place below me, and I'm in the first in school. "Okay," She said looking down at her shiny red slip. Our class was playing Secret Santa for the last three weeks of school before winter break. When I saw her face, I could see from her eyes that she'd gotten someone she wanted. Soon the school bell rang and we were out of school.

Our bus stopped at the end of the street, and I started walking toward my house. When I was just feet away from the front door, I heard a snap, a cell phone to be exact. Instantly, I turned around but was met with nothing more than an open road with cars parked everywhere. I turned around and cautiously opened the lock to my house. Inside, I quickly took a shower and started reading a book. Halfway through, I heard my phone ring. I flipped my phone over and clicked on the message. What I saw was beyond what I'd expected. Someone had sent me a picture of myself just seconds ago while I was reading a book. Horrified, I scanned through the photo checking if there were any clues on who sent me this. I soon saw Bailey's bracelet, the one she wore every day. I let out a sigh of relief and sent a text message to her asking her to stop. Back

then I had no idea how that one act I made would turn out to be a huge thorn stuck with me forever in life.

Lila! Liam screamed. Liam is my twin brother. He's a few minutes younger than me. We don't have much in common except that we share the same parents and go to the same school. "When are you going to help me do my project?" He asked. "Hold on, I'm busy!" I snapped back. "Me and my friend have been waiting since last week!" When I opened my mouth to snap at him, our teacher came in. "In your seats!" She said. "Has everyone gotten a gift for your secret Santa?" "Yes" Someone replied. "Get them ready by lunch, we'll be looking at them afterward," our teacher said. Soon the lunch bell rang, and I walked up to Bailey. "Did you get your secret Santa a gift?" I asked. "Yeah, I spent the night working on it." "Wow, I just got them something from a nearby store yesterday," I said amazed by the fact that she'd spent the night preparing. We started walking down the hall into the cafeteria. "I guess I'll have to get my Secret Santa something better next week," I said breaking the silence. The rule for secret Santa in our class was that we had to get our Secret Santa three gifts, one each week.

After lunch, everyone rushed inside the classroom to see what their Secret Santa had gotten for them. I walked up to my locker to see what my Secret Santa had gotten for me. As soon as I opened my locker, I froze. Not a second to lose, I slammed my locker shut and walked away disappearing into the crowd.

What was that? I thought to myself, the slightest glimpse of what I'd seen made my heart jump. Pictures of me everywhere, inside the school, outside my backyard, and even in the grocery store! Most importantly, my Secret Santa knew it. Everything about me that not even my family members know. This isn't just a joke. I know it. I, once again, sprinted toward my locker and locked it. There is no way anyone will figure out this, and absolutely no way I would get

stalked. The most important thing I would have to do would be to stay calm so no one would know.

When school ended and no one was left, I furiously approached my locker and unlocked it. I ripped and shoved every picture I could find, and walked home. “What took you so long,” Liam asked. “Nothing, what do you want?” “You need to help me with my project, me and my friend have been waiting forever!” “Okay, just wait! Let me text Bailey for a bit, then I’ll be with you. Where is your friend anyway?” “He’s coming after dinner, and he’s sleeping over for the weekend.” “Okay, call me when he’s here.” I walked upstairs.

I ripped open my backpack and studied all the photos taken. This has to be someone close to me, I thought. Who could it be? Why would they do this? Cramped with thoughts, I called Bailey. “*Where are you?*” “*Me? I’m at my house, of course.*” “*I’ve been thinking about this for a while...and I think I need to tell you this.*” “*What is it?*” “*Well, it’s about the Secret Santa thing...*” As soon as I opened my mouth to speak, Liam stormed into my room. “Kai’s here! Now help us!” As I sighed I said, “I’ll call you later, maybe we can talk at the park nearby or something.” I ended the call and went to help my brother.

“Ding!” My phone rang just before I went outside. “*Okay, we’ll meet at the park a few hours later. Also, don’t forget to pick up the sweater you brought the other day.*” Confused about what she’d said, I grabbed my phone but was interrupted by my brother. “Hurry up!” I rolled my eyes and speed-walked downstairs.

“Hi, guys!” I said and Kai spoke back. Kai was Liam’s best friend, and he’s one of the weirdest kids at our school. He’s always staring at me and coming over at random times. The only thing we have in common would be being in the same class. We made eye contact for a few seconds, until I said, “Okay, so what’s this project about?” “We’re supposed to make a scary story,” Kai

said. “Well, do you guys have any ideas, or something brainstormed already?” I asked. “Well, I was thinking about someone getting stalked by the main character,” Kai said. At the word “stalked” I froze. Why would he think about stalking out of the many other scary things that can happen around the world? “Why stalking?” I asked with a shaky voice. “Well, I just think it’s the scariest thing that can happen to someone.” “Okay then,” I said a little shocked. Soon I brushed off the weird feelings and focused on the project, but as we got further into the project, things started to shift.

Why? How? I thought to myself. How is everything fitting in? Everything Kai had brainstormed about the stalking had happened to me. “Ring ring” My phone rang. “LILA!” Bailey screamed. “Where are you? I’ve been waiting for you since five!” “Oops! I’m so sorry, I forgot!” I raced out the door.

“I’m so sorry!” “It’s okay. What were you doing anyway?” “I was helping Liam and his friend do their project.” “Oh, okay, what were you going to tell me earlier?” “Oh, well, it’s nothing,” I said avoiding eye contact. “I have another question for you, though.” I said, “How did you know I had to pick up my sweater?” “Oh, um, didn’t you tell me?” “Me? I don’t remember telling anyone. Besides, I was forgetting about it too.” “Oh well, I guess I got it from your brother.” “Okay then. I’ve got to get going, it’s late.” “Okay by.” As I walked home I saw something flash behind me. I turned around as fast as I could but was met with nothing, and Bailey was gone. I ran back home as if my life depended on it.

The next morning I woke up, tired. I shot out of bed and checked the time. It was almost nine o'clock. I walked down the stairs and approached the living room. I saw Kai and Liam watching TV. Surprisingly, the weekend had gone by fast, and it was Sunday night. Kai hadn't done anything weird that caught my eye, like always. “Thank you for having me over,” Kai said.

“No problem! I’m so happy we got our project finished in time!” Liam replied. “See you at school,” I said and quickly left the scene.

In frustration, I slapped my alarm and got ready for school. It was Monday morning, and this week, I was determined to find my stalker. Exams were coming up the next month, and I had to get ready. “Get up!” I yelled to Liam, who was still in dreamland. I quickly went downstairs and said goodbye to my parents. As I waited at the bus stop I thought, “Who would do something like this to me?” “Did they find out my secret?” Just the thought of someone knowing my secret made my stomach shift. Like always, the bus showed up, and I was at school, the place where everything had started.

I quickly approached my locker and got my books out. Finding out who my secret Santa was only two weeks ahead. I’d just gather any evidence I could find. Then, something fell out of my textbook, a note. As I read it my body became cold, and my heart stopped beating. “I’m in your class. I’ve been watching you for years.” The only person I could think about was Kai. I carefully folded the printed note and walked inside the classroom where Kai would be. I’d ask him after class about the note.

Like I said I *was* going to ask him, but I couldn’t, at least not in school. I’d ask him sometime later today when we were alone. I got on my bus. While walking home I heard a snap then another one. I turned around and sprinted toward the sound, and when I did, I wasn’t surprised. Kai was standing feet away from me.

I grabbed Kai’s arm and stared directly into his eyes. “So...you’re my stalker?” “What?! No, Lila, this is a misunderstanding! Why would I stalk you?” “Then why did you take a picture of me?” “I was trying to help you! Bailey’s the one stalking you, and I’m trying to gather evidence!” “Bailey?! Why would Bailey do that!” “I have a video of her taking pictures of you!

In the video, I could see Bailey's phone, some parts of her body, and also me way in the back.

"She's been stalking you since last year, and is determined to keep going." "Give me the video."

I couldn't believe what I'd just heard. Bailey, my friend, had been the one this entire time? The only way to find out was to ask her. "Hey, Bailey..." "Hi, why did you call me?" "Do you want to meet at the park again, tonight?" "Sure, what is it this time?" "I need to ask you something." "Okay then."

I slowly went out the door, to the park, where everything would be revealed. "Tap, tap, tap" I heard my feet make noises "Swish!" I heard the wind around me. When I approached the park, I stood there in disbelief. "Bailey...what is that?!" "The progress I've been making throughout the year!" She said with a spin-chilling grin. "Why are you doing this to me?" I said as I backed away. "How about you guess? Do you really not know? You've been cheating on everything! I've tried hard to keep up with you and your studies. I've always looked up to you until I found out you were cheating." "What do you mean?" I said with a shaking voice. I'm sure she heard me quiver. "I'll tell everyone that you're cheating on your exams. You'll be kicked out of school, and I'll be the first place in school like I was meant to be." "No," I said "Then you tell everyone, tell them that you're cheating. If you do, then I'll stop." Stab! Drip...drip. I stabbed her with the knife I had in my pocket. All I have to do now is take care of this body, then no one will know.

"Last thing before we take the exam, does anyone know where Bailey is?" "No, the last time I saw her was at the park. She told me that she'd go home after a few minutes." That's the last thing I saw..." I replied to our teacher. "Alright, is everyone ready for the exam?" Our teacher asked. "Like always, I'm sure Lila will get first place..." I heard someone say. I smiled. Who cares what happened to Bailey when they have me? I thought.