1. Winter 1B

Zareen rips off the paper to reveal a black case with a shoulder strap. She flips the top up. It's a camera. A real one. Different lenses are nestled in foam padding.

"A camera?" Zee says puzzled.

"It's one of Thisby's. It's digital, so you don't have to worry about buying film and dark rooms, and you can modify your photos on the computer. It's pretty good for close-ups."

"It's Thisby's?" She's still puzzled, but she's curious now.

"She gave it to me when I graduated high school. She had others."

"I didn't know you were a photographer too." She gently removes the camera free of its bed. The body feels cool but solid in her hands.

"I gave it a shot myself. Turns out I wasn't that good, but I had fun. I thought you might have fun as well. Take pictures up there. It's a whole different experience from your phone. There's just something about the weight of a real camera in your hand and looking through the various lenses. It changes how you see things. If you really like it, there's a digital photography class at your school, and they have a club you can join."

Something like eagerness sparks in her. "Thanks, Quince. I love it." Zee chokes up, but in a good way. "I'll take really good care of it."

Quince clears her throat with a short cough. "I expect nothing less."

Zee hasn't told her that she's supposed to be deciding whether to live up here for good.

She can hear a knock on Quince's door.

"Come on in," Quince calls. "I'm talking to Zareen."

The door creaks open, and Mrs. Bennet's voice comes through the speaker. "Hi, Zareen. I hope you're having a good time up north. By the way, next time you come over, can you show me how you got to that TV program we watched the last time you were here? You know, the documentary about that art heist? I can't find it now."

Zee laughs and almost feels normal. She shouts so Mrs. Bennet can hear her, "Of course."

"Thanks, sweetie," Mrs. Bennet calls, then mumbles something.

"In a minute," Quince says, and Zee hears the door close. "I should go back downstairs," Quince says into the phone. "The men are looking for revenge. I'll call at Christmas, okay?"

"Don't get excited about my present to you. Nothing like yours. It's pretty lame."

"I'll love it no matter what it is."

It's a T-shirt that says *I don't care who dies in the movie as long as the dog lives*.

