

Misfit kids create a club. One of their friends is bullied. They try to find a solution to end it. They join together in their clubhouse to vote for an answer.

The Southside Kids

By Jackie Adams

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*The
Southside
Kids*

Jackie Adams

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Chapter 1

Paulie

Paulie slips on her sneakers, runs to the kitchen, and gives her mom a kiss on the cheek. "I'm going to meet Joey outside before it starts raining."

Joey Montello is Paulie's best friend in the whole wide world. They live next door to each other. He moved in five years ago. They have been best friends since.

Paulie meets him on her porch. She says, "It's getting ready to rain."

"I know, but I had to see you. You know what this is a good day for, don't you?" Joey gets a sly smile across his face.

Paulie rolls her eyes, "Yeah, it's good for popcorn and a movie."

Joey sticks his hands in his pockets. "Well yeah, that too, but somethin' even better!"

Paulie hits the bill of Joey's baseball cap, "Stop messing around, Joey. Just tell me."

Joey pulls his hands out of his pockets to straighten his cap. "Stop it or I'm not goin' to take you."

Paulie sighs, "Just tell me already!"

Joey looks out at the cloudy sky, "I thought we could go fishin'."

Paulie looks up at the sky, "You want to ride our bikes to the pond with what's coming?"

"Yep, it's good for the fish bitin'. Are you goin' to come with me or what?" He walks back out to his bike that already has his fighting pole and gear on it.

"Well, wait up. I have to get my rod and tackle box." Paulie goes to the garage and pulls out her bike. Once she gets it loaded, she ties her fishing pole on the frame. "Are you sure about this, Joey?"

"It's just rain, no lightnin'. I had Mom look it up on her weather app." Joey hops on his bike, while Paulie closes the garage door.

"I bet I can beat you to the pond," Joey says, pedaling his bike as fast as he can before Paulie even has a chance to sit on her bright blue bicycle seat.

She yells, “No fair, you cheated!” Once she hops on her bike, she takes off imagining herself being a plane like she took to Florida last summer with her Auntie Jane. Now that was fun! She had never been so hot, though.

Joey knows he cheated, but he also knows how fast Paulie is. Ever since she had to prove herself faster in a bike race against Kaleb, she’s been going twice as fast. With Paulie being a girl, Joey knows Paulie has to be two times better at everything when it comes to playing with the boys. Joey laughs, “You’re never goin’ to catch up.”

Paulie knows with a head start like Joey had he’s right. She’s not going to catch up. She yells over the handlebars, “Only because you’re a loser who cheats!” Paulie slows down a little and takes another look over her shoulder to see Brian Dittmer throwing newspapers.

If she HAD to marry a boy, and that’s only if she had to, she would marry Brian Dittmer. All the girls in school think he’s cute. Paulie nervously stops and says, “It’s going to rain.”

Brian shrugs his shoulders, "I can tell, but I still have a job to do. What are you doing out?"

Paulie points towards her pole, "I'm going fishing at the pond."

"Ahh, well I better get back to throwing these papers." Brian pulls another one from his satchel and throws it towards the porch.

Joey circles around Paulie, "Whatcha doin'? How come you stopped?"

Paulie rolls her eyes again. "I was tricking you!" She pedals as fast as her feet will allow. "You'll never catch up to me now." She speeds past the grocery store. She stops at the corner, looks both ways and zooms the rest of the way to the pond.

When she gets there, she kickstands the bike, grabs her pole and her tackle box. She makes her way to the pond. She is sitting on a tree stump putting her lure on when Joey lets his bike fall to the ground.

"Don't use that," he calls out. "I brought us live earthworms. They're the best. My Uncle Noah said so! He bought them for us." He gets his fishing gear and sits on the ground next to Paulie. Joey lives with his

Uncle Noah. He never talks about why, but that's the reason he moved in next door five years ago.

"Worms? Really? You didn't tell me that." She slugs Joey on the shoulder. She picks up a worm as it wiggles in her fingers and places it on the hook. "We're going to do some good fishing now. Thank your Uncle Noah for me will ya, Joey?!"

He says, "Yeah, yeah." He's stares at the hook, holding the line, trying to get his worm on the hook.

Paulie laughs, "You can't even bait a hook."

"Can too! It just keeps wigglin' around like crazy." He shakes his head, sticking his tongue between his teeth, and trying again.

Paulie knows better than to help him. He'd smack her hands away. Joey was never a quitter. He will try all day if it takes him that long. He finally gets the worm on the hook and casts his line out into the pond.

Paulie looks over, "Took you too long. I'm surprised I don't have a bite yet." She looks from Joey back to the pond watching her bobber go up and down. "Speaking of!" She pulls her line in. "Looks like I got one before you." She pulls it in slowly yanking it

here and over there. When she pulls it up in the air, she sees it's a blue gill. "How do you like that!"

"That's big for a blue gill, Paulie. Think we should keep it?" Joey asks feelin' sad he didn't catch the first one. Don't get him wrong, he's happy for Paulie and all, just seems like she's first and best at everythin'.

"No, we can't keep it. We didn't bring a cooler. I'd have to catch a whole mess of fish to feed us all, besides mom's making pizza for us tonight. You want to come over and eat with us?"

"I can't. Uncle Noah said I have to come straight home before four. What time is it anyway?" He looks at his watch. "Oh, it's only two."

Paulie sighs and says, "Like a baby with a curfew." She shrugs, "I want to get home for the pizza anyoleways." She's bored of fishing now that she caught one. She watches Joey reel his in and cast it back out.

Paulie finds a fallen tree trunk, stands on top of it, and walks across it. She wants to ask Joey if he's sad about not being with his mom and dad. She doesn't, though. She doesn't know what she would do without her parents!

Joey says, "Hey you're pretty good at that." He sets his pole down and walks across it himself.

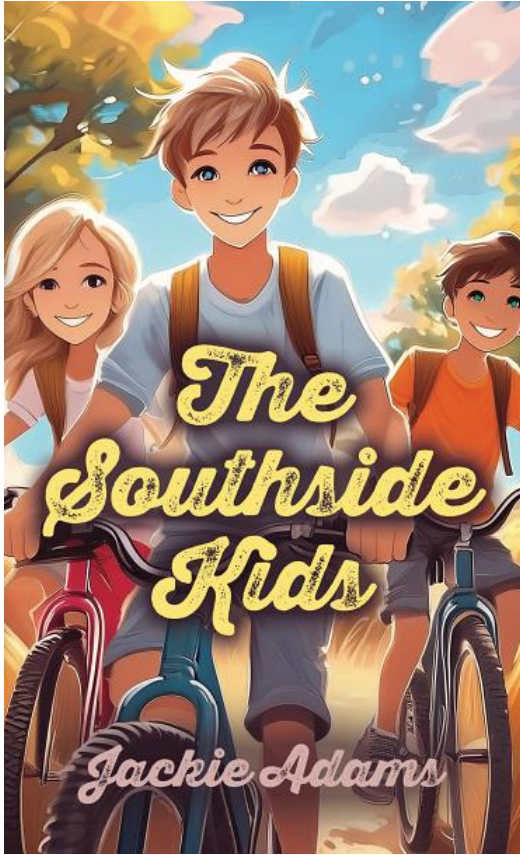
Paulie laughs, "You're good at it, too."

They spend an hour more fishing, climbing, and playing when Joey sees what time it is. "I better ride back home. You comin'?"

"Yeah, you go on ahead. I have to pack up my pole and gear."

"No way am I leavin' you out here alone. I'll wait for you."

It never did rain that afternoon. Once night came, though, it started thunder storming. It didn't bother, Paulie, one single bit. She's no chicken. She did sneak on her WALKIE TALKIE and talk to Joey about it, though, before she finally fell asleep.



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