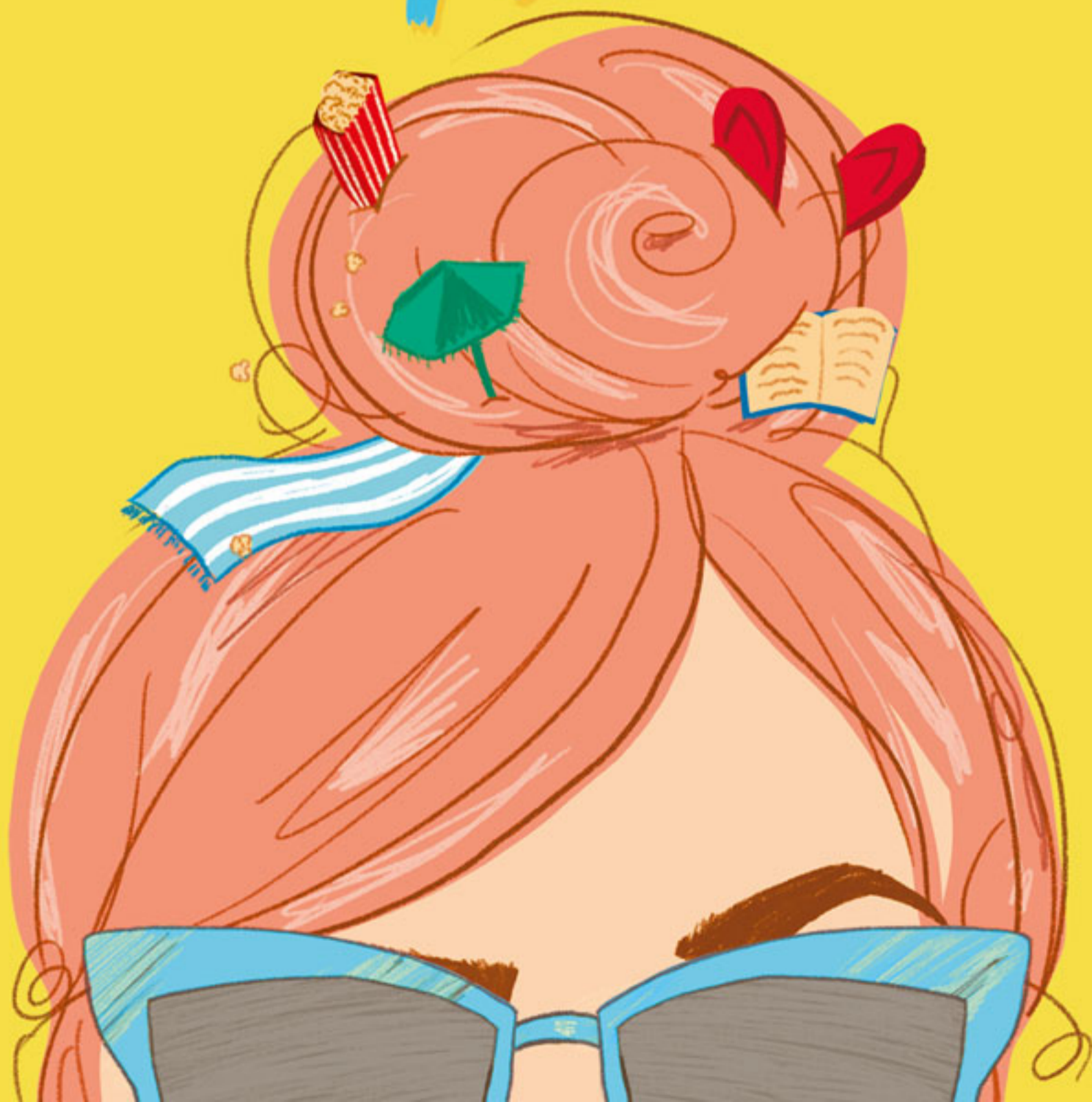


JENNA GUILLAUME

WHAT
I LIKE ABOUT
me





Friday, 15 December

3 things I discovered today:

1. *Ms. Singh is a sadistic sumbitch who thinks it's a great idea to assign homework over vacation.*

Evidence: This journal, which I'm supposed to write my "discoveries" in every damn day, complete with evidence of source material and explanatory notes—like I have so much time for that. All because my English teacher thinks school should be about "so much more than prescribed texts." As though forcing teenagers to keep a "discovery journal" is gonna teach us profound life lessons, like some *carpe bloody diem* crap, when really the only thing we want to discover is each other's bodies.

2. *Growing up bites the big one, if this is the kind of BS you have to put up with.*

Evidence: When I whinged about this homework to Mum, she rolled her eyes and said that committing to responsibilities is a part of growing up: “Look at your father, working his butt off while you’re relaxing yours on the beach.”

Which is profoundly annoying for several reasons: the first being that Mum and Dad have been arguing nonstop about Dad working through our vacation, so it’s not like she’s happy about it; the second being that I can’t even vent without Mum getting a dig in about my “tendency to give up when things get difficult;” and the third being that it’s not as if writing in this thing every day OVER VACATION is actually a responsibility that matters, like it’s going to change my life, and when I’m an adult and living on my own I’m going to get to the end of each day, sit down with my glass of wine and handwrite in a Moleskin notebook: “Dear Diary, today I discovered that the college degree I spent four years and \$40,000 on is absolutely useless and never going to get me a job, so I guess I’m going to become a checkout chick at the supermarket after all.” Yeah. Right.

3. If you find an eleven-month-old packet of Milk Duds in your suitcase, it’s really not a good idea to eat it.

Evidence: Uh...you're just going to have to trust me on this one.

* * *

I'm never actually going to hand this in. Can you imagine?

“Oh, Maisie, I really liked the part where you called me a sadistic sumbitch; you showed some deep insight there. Forget about doing coursework for the rest of the year, because this is so damn good you're getting full marks on *everything*.” —Ms. Singh, never.

“Maisie Martin, you are on afternoon detention for the rest of the year, and your mother is getting a phone call.” —Ms. Singh, probably.

But honestly, after all the crap adults give you about appreciating your youth and embracing the best years of your life and blah blah blah, do they actually help you to do that? No. It's:

“Maisie, you've got to do this homework!”

“Maisie, this year will decide your future!”

“Maisie, should you really be eating that?”

“Maisie, I can't come to Cobbers Bay this time, and you're going to spend three weeks without an ally against your mother, who is perpetually disappointed in you, and your sister, who thinks she's

much better than you, and your sister's new girlfriend, who is probably even more perfect than she is, and life's a bitch and then you die."

Okay, so my dad didn't really say that last bit, just the bit about not coming to the Bay, but he may as well have said the rest. He's breaking a fourteen-year tradition, all because the newspaper he works for decided to launch some "digital rebranding strategy" in the new year, and so he won't be getting a month off like he normally does. It's just complete garbage if you ask me. (Which no one ever does.)

At least one good thing came out of Dad ditching me: Mum's letting my brilliant, beautiful, best-friend-in-the-world Anna come to "keep me company" (translation: keep me quiet). Anna also got ditched by a parent for the holidays (her mum is going overseas with her boyfriend), PLUS she happened to have her heart broken last week, so it worked out great.

Wait, that came out wrong... What I meant to say was, Anna needs a distraction because she's upset with her mum and she doesn't talk to her dad and she found out via *text message* that her (now ex-) boyfriend, Dan the Dickhead, was cheating on her. Luckily I, her most excellent best friend, am able to provide an all-expenses-paid trip to a luxury resort in an idyllic, sunny seaside town. (Okay, it's not a

luxury resort—more like a two-bedroom cabin in a cheesy RV park—but the rest is basically true.) It's win-win really, because Anna gets her distraction and I get my ally. Except for the part where Anna is heartbroken; that's less "win" and more "complete suckage." But I'll put her back together again, even if it takes me this entire vacation.

Which means I'm NOT going to write in this ridiculous journal every day. I'm only doing it right now because

a) Mum told me she wants to see that I've done it before bed, and

b) it beats packing, which I'm also supposed to be doing. But anything beats packing.

Ugh. I really should pack.

Bye, Discovery Journal. I'd say you were good while you lasted, but that would be a lie and I really try never to lie. At least, not to inanimate objects.