

LEVELED Book • L

I'm the Guest



Written by Karen Mockler
Illustrated by Rebecca Stuhff

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Josie was having Ceci over to play for the first time.

“Remember that you are the **hostess**,” said Josie’s mom. “You want to make sure your **guest** feels at home.”



The doorbell rang, and Josie ran to answer it. Before she reached the front door, though, Ceci burst through, sniffing.

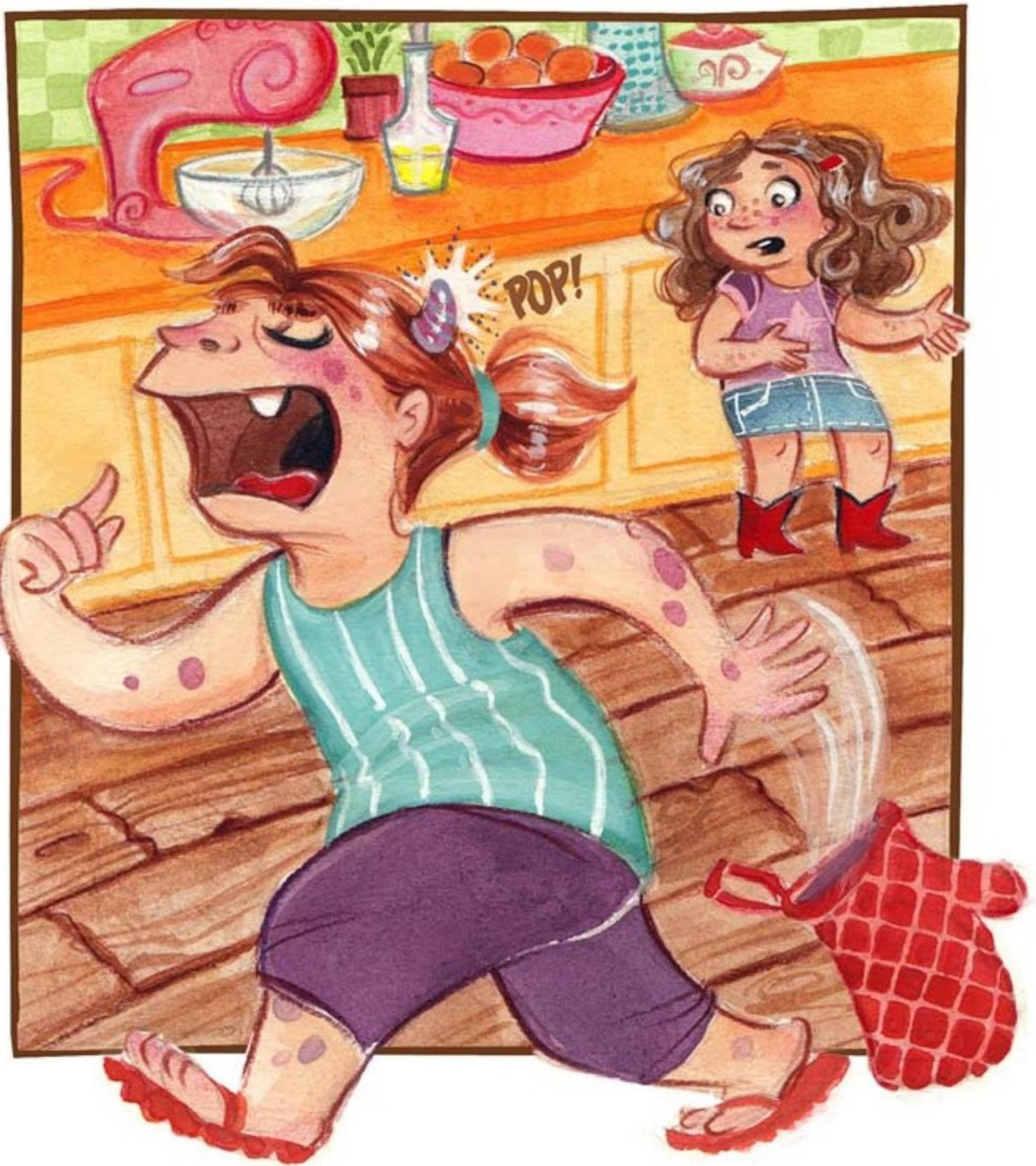
“Do I smell cake?” Ceci asked, running toward the kitchen.



Ceci opened the oven door to look at the cake inside.

“I’ll come back when it’s ready,” Ceci said.

“Actually,” Josie said, “the cake is for my dad’s birthday.”



“Where’s your room?” Ceci asked.

“Let’s play outside first,” Josie said.

“I want to show you my new swing.”

“I’m the guest,” Ceci said.

“Okay,” Josie sighed.



In Josie's bedroom, Ceci yanked the dollhouse from its corner to the center of the rug. Doll furniture went flying into every corner of Josie's room. They played dolls for a long time, until Ceci spotted the chest of dress-up clothes in Josie's closet.



“I call the pink princess gown!”
Ceci cried.

The pink princess gown was Josie’s favorite. As Ceci squeezed into it, Josie heard the dress rip. “I don’t think it fits you,” she said.

Ceci **glared** at her over her shoulder. “That’s not a **polite** thing to say,” she said. “Besides, I’m the guest.”



Ceci walked out of Josie's bedroom and back to the kitchen. She stared at the cake, cooling now on a wire rack.

"Is it ready?" Ceci asked. "Can we have some for a snack?"

"How about some cookies instead?" Josie asked. "My mom makes great cookies."



Ceci opened the freezer door. "Have you got any ice cream?" she asked. She turned and smiled at Josie. "*I am the guest.*"

"We're saving the ice cream to go with the cake," Josie said, pushing shut the freezer door.

Ceci drifted out of the kitchen in Josie's pink princess gown, singing to herself. She sang, "I'm the guest . . . I'm the guest . . ." all the way to the bathroom.

"Your mom won't mind if we try on her makeup," she whispered, "because I'm the guest."



Josie watched nervously while Ceci poked through drawers. She found some red lipstick and put it on. Then she drew red lipstick hearts on the mirror and started laughing.

“Stop that,” Josie whispered to Ceci.

“I-am-the-guest!” Ceci **hissed**, and left the bathroom. On the way through the kitchen, she stopped at the birthday cake and tore off a big chunk.

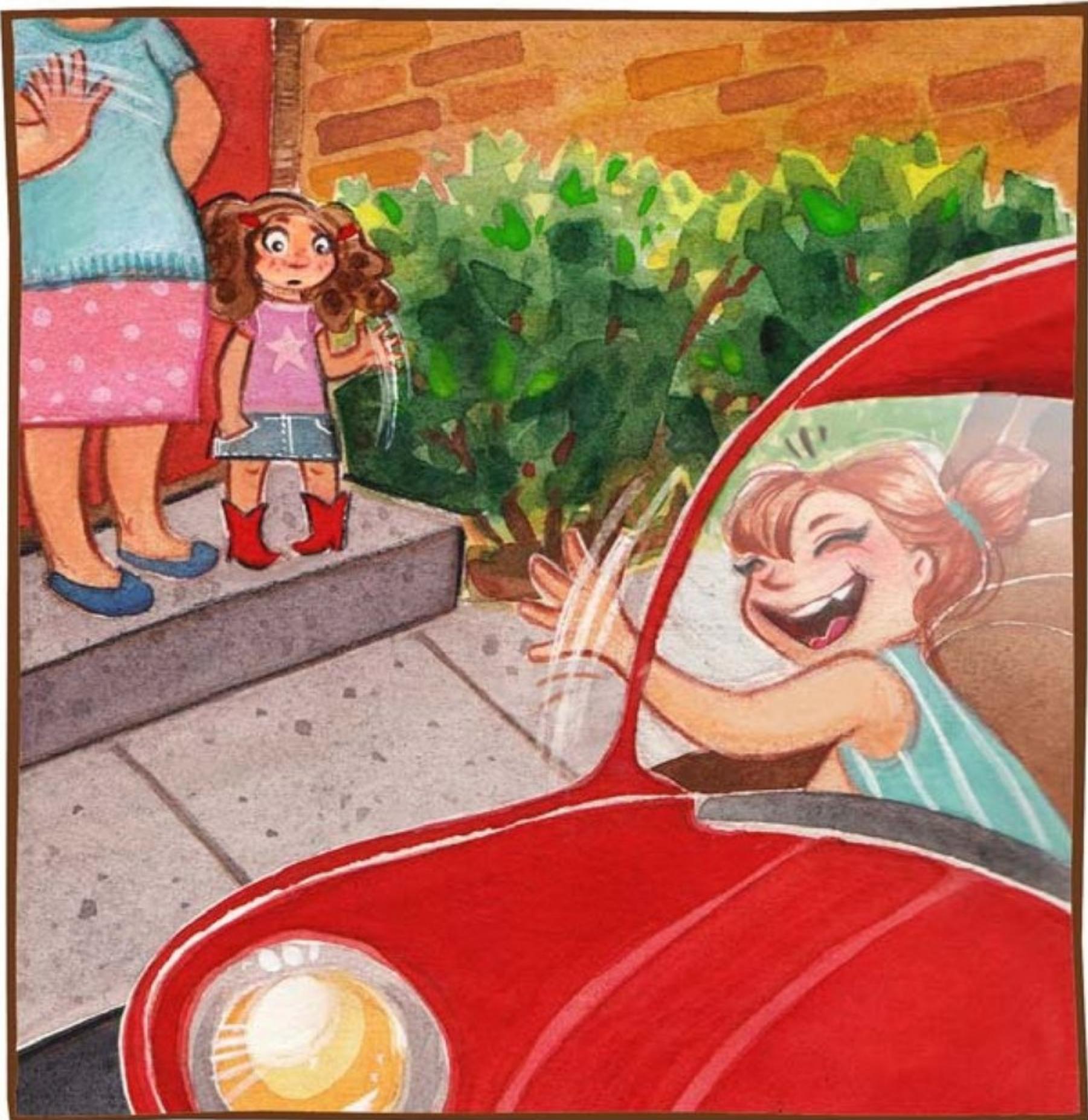




Josie couldn't take it anymore.
“I don’t care if you’re the guest!”
she shouted. “It’s my dad’s birthday,
and that’s more important than
any guest!”

Ceci stared at her, licking crumbs
from her fingers. “What do you
mean?” she asked.

Someone knocked on the front door.
It was Ceci’s dad, come to fetch her.



Josie and her mom stood on their front porch, waving as Ceci was driven away.

“Well,” asked Josie’s mom, “how was it being the hostess?”

“I would like being the hostess,” Josie said, “if I had a better guest.”



Josie's mom smiled and said,
“Some guests behave like monsters.”
“I can believe it,” Josie said.

Glossary

glared (<i>v.</i>)	stared in an angry way (p. 8)
guest (<i>n.</i>)	a visitor who is welcomed into a home or other place (p. 3)
hissed (<i>v.</i>)	made the sound that a snake or angry cat makes (p. 12)
hostess (<i>n.</i>)	a woman who welcomes guests in her home or another place; a woman who holds an event (p. 3)
polite (<i>adj.</i>)	having good manners or showing common courtesy (p. 8)
yanked (<i>v.</i>)	pulled on something suddenly and forcefully (p. 7)

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