THE CELIAC MYSTERY



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This is a fictional story. Any likeness to a real person or diagnosis story isn't purposeful.

Learn more about Type 1 Diabetes and/or Celiac Disease on our website elbowbumpkidinc.org

This book is dedicated to Saige, Taylan, Paige, Annabelle, Jeanette, Mia, Amelia, Anna, Nathaniel and all people living beyond the diagnosis of Celiac Disease & Type 1 Diabetes.

When Max turned nine, he got the skateboard he'd begged for, a rainbow sprinkle cake and... a stomachache. This stomachache had been following him around for months, like a shadow.

Max used to think it was just bad luck: bellyaches after eating at his favorite restaurant, weird rashes that came and went, and the way he felt so tired while playing soccer or video games.



When Max was 2 he was diagnosed with Type One Diabetes-T1D, so monitoring blood sugar and watching what he ate was normal now. But this was different.

His mom started writing things down. Dates, meals, symptoms. She called it the "mystery log." After a long morning at the doctor's office, a blood test, and something called an "endoscopy," the mystery got a name.



“Celiac disease,” the doctor said gently. “It means your body can't handle a protein called gluten. When you eat it, your immune system thinks it's dangerous and attacks. Then your body doesn't have enough nutrients to make the energy you need for school and fun activities. It's common in bread and other snacks.”

“So, wait, I can’t eat pizza anymore?” he asked, eyes wide.
“There are gluten-free kinds that are safe and still tasty. We’ll help you figure it out. It's more common than you think.”



The next few weeks were a big change. His mom reorganized the whole kitchen, labeling shelves and spaces. She even bought cutting boards, utensils, and pans in orange, Max's favorite color, so everyone knew which ones were safe.

His dad learned how to pronounce "quinoa," and his older sister, Lily, started researching and making safe recipes for him to eat.
And the whole family read the labels at the grocery store even more closely.



Max didn't like being different. He missed bagels with the team before soccer games. Once, at a party, he burst into tears when someone offered him a cookie, and he had to say no.

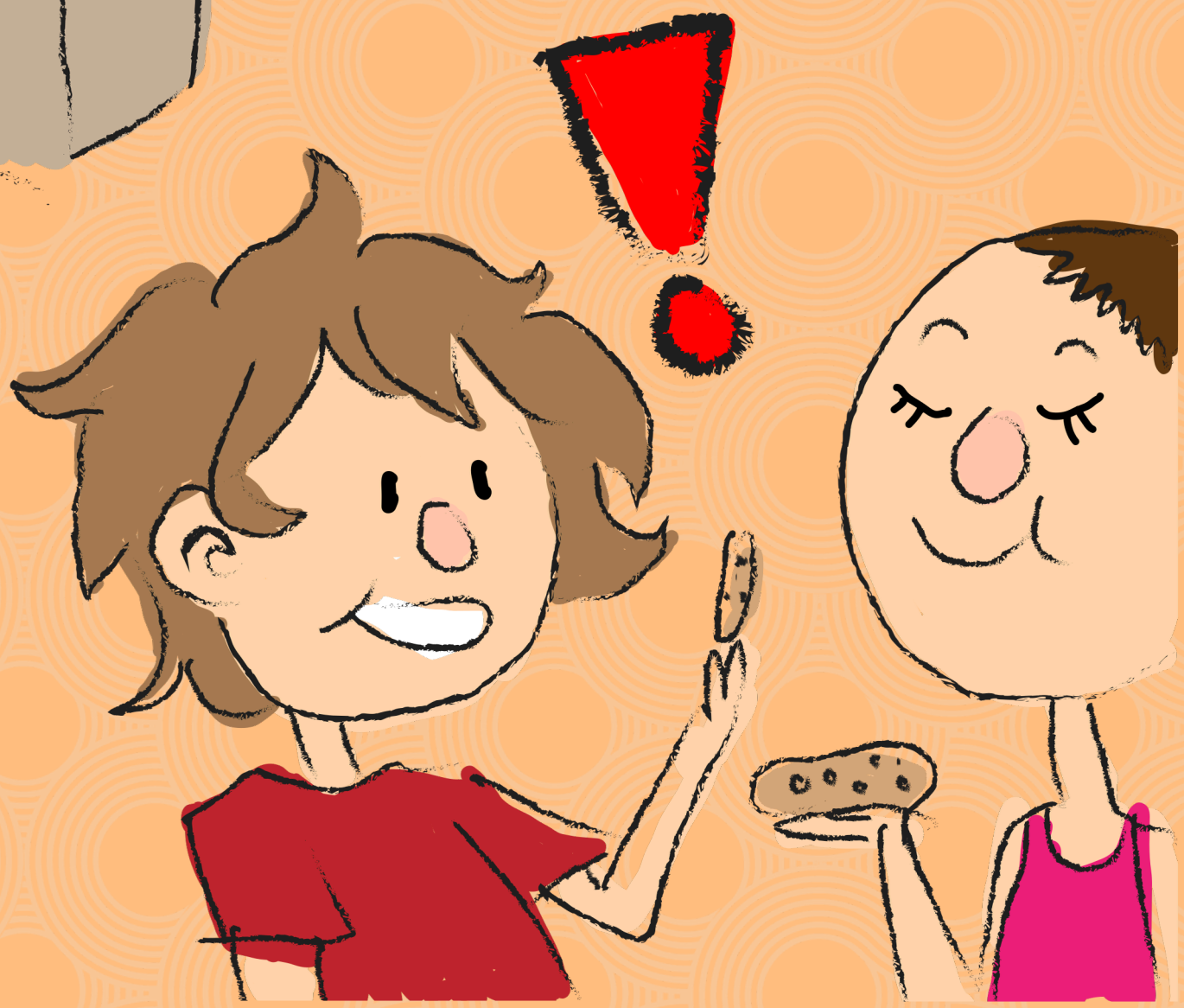
But slowly, things started to shift. "Be patient, we got this", his Mom reassured him, "We solved the mystery, now we need to take action. You will feel better soon and it'll all be worth it." And she found him bagels that get shipped to his house that taste just as good as the old bagels!



A classmate, Zara, whispered that she had celiac too — and gave him a list of the best gluten-free snacks from the grocery store.
His teacher started keeping a special snack box just for him.

And Lily had perfected a recipe for chewy, chocolate chip cookies that didn't make his stomach hurt at all.





Max began to notice that his energy came back. He was riding his new skateboard to soccer practice now. And his Dad was telling him to stop playing XBox to get ready for bedtime instead of him falling asleep with the controller.



One Saturday, Max hosted a “T1D/Gluten-Free Bake-Off” with his friends. They made chia seed pudding, egg muffins with veggies, and lettuce wrap tacos.
Lily wore a chef’s hat and judged every round.

The winning recipe was Zara's homemade energy bites.
Trying new food was delicious and fun.



It wasn't always easy and sometimes Max still got frustrated. But, he was learning that even with T1D and celiac disease, he could still eat well, play hard, and enjoy birthday parties — as long as he was careful, kind to himself, and never gave up on finding joy in new things.

And that perspective was the real solution to this mystery.



The End

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