

Lexie World

(The Three Lost Kids, #1)

by Kimberly Kinrade

Illustrated by Josh Evans

Chapter 1- Where My Socks Disappear

I slammed open the glass door and raced into my kitchen. The smells of dinner cooking tingled my senses. *Mmmm, Mommy's making her super yummy meatloaf. Smells almost done. The sniffinator never lies.* "Mommy, Daddy, guess what? Madelynne caught a snake! It's so cool, you have to come see. Hurry!"

Mommy came into the kitchen and smiled. I ran into her arms for a big hug. Mommy-hugs were the best. She smelled like cinnamon and had big blue eyes that looked like swimming pools. She kissed my forehead.

"Lexie, honey, where are your shoes? And socks? And jacket?"

Uh-oh. Mommy's gonna be mad. Time for the big eyes and baby voice. "I'm sorry, Mommy. I left them by the trampoline outside."

The weather, obviously trying to get me in trouble, started throwing raindrops at the roof of our house. And probably at our neighbor's backyard too, where my clothes would be getting soaked.

Mommy looked at me with *those* eyes. "Lexie...."

"I'll go get them super fast." I ran out of the house before she could get madder.

My feet froze after being so warm in the house, and I shivered as rain attacked me. I found my sisters playing by the trampoline. "Madelynne, Bella, we have to go in the house. You better not bring the snake. Mommy won't like that."

I found my jacket, but couldn't find my shoes. Or my socks. The rain came down harder, like taking a shower, only it was super cold. I shivered again. Time to go home.

I ran after my big sisters. "Wait up, guys. Don't leave me!"

Madelynne—my way-bigger 9-year-old sister—turned to look at me. "Hurry up, Lexie. I'm cold and hungry."

I ran faster, but my foot slipped on something slick, and the hard, cold ground smacked me in the head!

"Ahhhh! Mommy! Daddy! Mommy! Daddy!" Tears mixed with the rain on my face. My head hurt super bad.

Daddy ran out of the house and came to me. "Are you okay? What happened?"

Madelynne spoke before I could. "She was running and she slipped. Is she okay?"

I looked up at Daddy. Then looked up some more. I was pretty sure my daddy was the tallest man in the whole world.

He leaned down next to me. "She's fine. Just a bit of a bump."



He picked me up in his strong arms and carried me into the house. The rain stayed outside, and Mommy pulled out the turkey meatloaf just as we came in.

I hiccupped a few times, trying to calm down my crying so I could talk. "Is it time to eat?"

Mommy set the meatloaf on the counter and came over to kiss my bumped head. "Almost. I need to make the salad. Are you okay?"

She looked at Daddy; probably they were using their psychic powers to talk. They did that all the time so us kids couldn't hear them. Whatever Daddy said in her mind seemed to make her feel better. That little line on her forehead—the one she always got when she was worried—disappeared and she smiled.

"I see you found your jacket. Did it happen to come with shoes and socks?"

I wondered if I should start crying again and say my head hurt. Maybe I'd get in less trouble. Daddy put me down and went to kiss Mommy. They did that all the time too, the kissing thing. "Why do you always do that?"

"Do what?" Mommy asked.

"Kiss at the end of sentences."

Mommy and Daddy both laughed, but I didn't know why.

"Would you rather us not kiss at all?" Mommy asked.

"No. Just not at the end, or beginning, or middle of sentences."

They laughed some more. Sometimes grown-ups were so weird.

I'd hoped Mommy would forget about our little problem, but nope.

"So, about those shoes and socks?" she said.

"Um... I couldn't find them."

That wrinkle on Mommy's head came back and her eyes got squinty. Never a good sign. "Lexie, this is the third time this week you have left clothes or trash outside. What shoes do you plan on wearing to school tomorrow if you don't find this pair, or if they are soaking wet in the morning?"

"I don't know."

"You have to go out and find them."

"Right now? But I'm hungry and wet and my head hurts." I started to cry, but these were real tears. My head hurt a lot suddenly.

Mommy and Daddy looked at each other. More of their psychic stuff. So annoying.

"No. Eat first. But after dinner you will go out there and find them and you'd better hope they dry before morning."

I ran out of the kitchen before she could change her mind. My head was all better.

"No running in the house, Lexie!"

"Sorry!"

I found Madelynne reading a really big book on the couch and Bella sitting at the desk playing a game on the computer. "I'm bored. I want someone to play with me."

Daddy walked in. "Lexie, you are five-years-old, not a baby. You can find something to do for yourself."

I knew he wasn't trying to be mean, but it was so unfair. I couldn't read really good yet, and I didn't know how to play on the computer except a few games. What was I supposed to do?

Daddy started playing a new song on the piano, so I sat and watched him some. He had super long fingers and they played a bunch of notes at once. I knew how to play one song he taught me, but not as good as that.

I crossed my arms across my chest. Everybody was better than me at stuff. It wasn't fair. I wished I were older and could do all the stuff they could do.

Mommy called us into dinner, which made me feel a little better. My tummy rumbled like Winnie the Pooh's did when he wanted honey. I liked honey too, but had to ask Mommy or Daddy before I could get some. They didn't like it when I got a bunch of peanut butter in the honey jar. I didn't *mean* to, but they still got upset.

Dinner went by too fast. I didn't want to go out in the dark and rain to look for my stupid shoes and socks.

"I'll go with her!" Madelynne said.

"Me too," said Bella.

I had the best sisters. Mommy said okay, so they came with me to find my socks and shoes. TayTay, Madelynne's Royal Frenchel dog, came too. Maybe he could sniff them out.

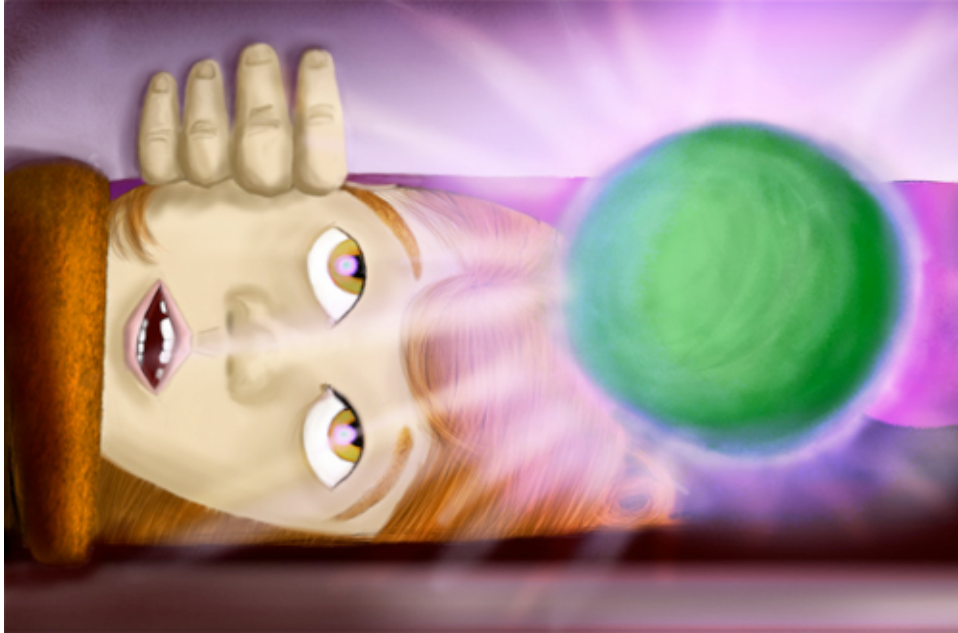
The sun had disappeared by the time we were outside, and the moon only peeked out a little. If I listened real hard I could here monsters in the woods around our house. I tried not to listen.

"I'm scared," I told my sisters.

"Don't worry," said Bella, "we're here with you." Bella was always so brave. Nothing ever scared her.

I wanted to be more like Bella sometimes. "If this was Lexie World, it wouldn't be this scary at night."

"What would it be like?" Madelynne asked.



We had each found our own world. I found mine under my bed. It was 300 years old. "It would have magic and friendly trees that talked."

"That sounds cool!"

Emily, our neighbor and the mom of a little baby we played with sometimes, walked towards us as we got close to her house. "Hey, girls, I found someone's socks and shoes out back. I'm guessing they belong to one of you?"

"They're mine!" I ran up to get them from her.

"Here you go, kiddo, but I need to talk to your parents about all the stuff that gets left by the trampoline. Can I walk home with you?"

We all nodded, but inside I felt like bees had gotten into my belly. If she was going to talk to Mommy and Daddy, then we might be in bigger trouble.

When we got home, Emily came in with us.

Mommy smiled at her. "Hi, Emily, how are you?"

"I'm good. Just busy with students at school, and the baby. You?"

"Doing really well, thank you. Is everything okay?" Mommy's line popped back on her head.

"Yes, fine. I found Lexie's shoes and socks out back. I wanted to talk to you all about the trampoline. I love for the girls to come over and play anytime, you know that. But I've noticed they've been leaving a lot of stuff outside, and it's making it look really messy back there. If they don't start picking up their stuff, I'm afraid I'm going to have to turn the trampoline over so no one can play on it."

Mommy nodded. "I totally understand. I'm so sorry that this is an issue. We'll talk to all three of them."

"Thanks. I'd better get home. We still haven't had dinner yet. See you soon."

"Okay, bye."

Mommy gave me *the eye*.

"Thank you, Emily," I said before she walked out.

"You're welcome, Lexie."

After Emily left, Mommy and Daddy called a family meeting. We talked about the rules and how we all had to bring in our stuff. They kept telling us things we already knew, like how we need to pick up after ourselves and take care of the Earth and our things. Finally, they let us go so we could get ready for bed.

I put my shoes in front of the heater and hoped they would dry by morning. I hated wearing wet, squishy shoes. It just wasn't fair!

That night I dreamed of Lexie World, where everything was perfect and I never had to wear wet shoes.

