

# THE BIGGER PICTURE

## Characters

**Alicia**  
**Brice**  
**Dean**  
**Nadia**

## Setting:

A Study room in a middle school library

**Alicia, Brice, Dean and Nadia** are all good friends. They have started a magazine, Starbright, as a project for their science class. Alicia is helping Brice with an article he is finishing up for the magazine. They are sitting in front of a computer terminal in their school library.

**Alicia:** These pictures are incredible, Brice. Did you download them?

**Brice:** From the NASA web site. You can get photos of the shuttle, pictures of Mars –

**Alicia:** And we can publish them in our magazine, no problem?

**Brice:** These photos belong to us cause we're Americans.

**Alicia:** (Proudly.) I'm Polish-American –

**Brice:** And I'm Scottish-American. Ok? We're all "something-American," but we still get these pictures.

**Alicia:** Why?

**Brice:** The government pays for the space program and our taxes pay for the government. We can print any of these we want!

**Alicia:** That's amazing. Which one should we use for the cover? We want people to really notice our first issue.

**Brice:** Any magazine started by four seventh graders, I think the world will notice.

**Alicia:** Brice, we're only publishing twenty copies for our science class.

**Brice:** Today, our middle school, tomorrow, the world. You gotta think big, Alicia.

(Dean and Nadia enter.)

**Dean:** Attention Starbright magazine staff!

**Brice:** Hey, Dean, check these out.

**Nadia:** He said "Attention."

**Alicia:** And he's the executive editor.

**Dean:** Thanks, Alicia. Big new. (To Nadia.) Drum roll please.

(Nadia does a drum roll on a desk with her hands.)

**Dean:** We got invited.

**Alicia:** To what?

**Nadia:** On the field trip. With the eighth graders!

**Brice:** You mean it?

**Dean:** Mr. Preston said of all the kids in the seventh grade, we got picked to do the science museum overnight. (Imitating the teacher.) "Your starting of Starbright magazine shows your exceptional interest in space." So we get to go! Party!!

**Brice:** All right!

**Nadia:** We take a bus to the city, spend all day Friday in the museum, spend the night in a hotel, then get all of Saturday for shopping! Alicia, what should we wear?

**Alicia:** I don't know –

**Brice:** (Cutting her off.) I'll shoot hundreds of shots for the magazine of our whole staff in front of a space capsule –

**Nadia:** (Posing.) All four of us!

**Brice:** Then we'll pose in front of a vintage aircraft. Alicia, you can cover the human-interest angles, like: (Using a scientific voice.) "How do it feel when you consider the advances human kind has made in air and space travel" – wait. What am I talking about, I can't go.

**Nadia & Dean:** What??

**Brice:** I forgot! I'm grounded.

**Alicia:** Till when?

**Brice:** Next month.

**Nadia:** What'd you do? Rob a bank?

**Brice:** I messed up my literature grade, and my math, and history.

**Alicia:** That's why you wouldn't let me see your report card.

**Brice:** My parents are really mad. They say I play around on the Internet instead of studying.

**Alicia:** They're right!

**Nadia:** But this trip was given to the entire Starbright staff. You've gotta come, Brice. We need a strategy – a strategy to convince your parents to let you go.

**Brice:** Yeah, and I'm gonna be the first kid to fly to the moon tomorrow.

**Dean:** We'll come up with something. Here. You know Brice's Mom, right Alicia?

**Alicia:** Sure.

**Dean:** Then you pretend to be her. I'll be his dad. Nadia, you coach. (Pretending to be the Dad.)

"Hello, son. Anything exciting happen at school today?"

**Brice:** (To Nadia.) Should I say yes?

**Nadia:** Yes.

**Brice:** (To Dean.) Yes.

**Alicia:** Then tell us.

**Brice:** Well, I got this big honor.

**Dean & Alicia:** Oh?!

**Brice:** I got asked to go on an eighth grade field trip.

**Dean:** How wonderful. You go right ahead, son!

**Nadia:** Dean, you're no help. Get up. I'll be the Dad.

"Son, if you want to go on this trip, you're going to have to earn our trust again."

**Dean:** Man, I hate it when my Dad says that.

**Nadia:** "You are to old to let anything get in the way of your school work."

**Brice:** But not old enough to do what I want! Why am I too old for some things, but not old enough for others, huh, dad?

**Nadia:** (as Dad.) "Because you're twelve. Deal with it."

**Alicia:** (As Mom.) "It's important for you to work very hard in school. How else are you going to be a success in this life?"

**Brice:** Please, can I go?

**Alicia:** (As Mom.) "Well..."

**Dean:** She's giving in. Now's the time to promise to do something really helpful around the house, or go somewhere she's been trying to drag you to for months –

**Nadia:** Or promise to take your sister to the park on Saturday –

**Brice:** No way.

**Alicia:** Or take out the garbage –

**Brice:** I do.

**Dean:** Then try looking really sweetly at your Mom. Give her a hug. That always works for me.

**Nadia:** I know. Tell her you'll get off the phone right when she asks you next time.

**Alicia:** (Teasing him.) And tell her you'll not get mad when she calls you "pumpkin" in front of your friends.

**Dean:** She calls you "pumpkin?"

**Brice:** Lay off!

**Dean:** (As Mom.) "Bye, 'pumpkin,' have a good day at school!"

**Brice:** I thought we were working on my strategy!

**Nadia:** I got it! Here, I'll be you. You be your Dad. (They switch places.) "Dad?" (As herself.) Make sure you're not slouching or anything.

**Alicia:** That makes my Mom crazy, too.

**Nadia:** (Sitting up very straight, as Brice.) "Dad. I promise, if you let me go on this trip, I will strive to live up to each and every expectation you have of me for the rest of my life."

**Brice:** Isn't that a little extreme?

**Nadia:** It'll make a point.

**Alicia:** Brice, just say, "I messed up. I'm sorry. I'm working to do better." They'll let you go.

**Dean:** I don't know. That sounds too honest.

**Brice:** It's not like I'm asking to go to an amusement park or something, right?

**Dean:** Right. You don't have to tell them about the parties we'll be havin' behind the chaperones' backs.

**Nadia:** Or what might happen on the bus when I get to sit next to Damion –

**Dean:** (Teasing her.) From the eighth grade!

**Brice:** I mean, this grip is going to help our science grade, right?

**Dean & Nadia:** Right!

**Dean:** Your parents will cave, Brice. No problem!

**Brice:** Thanks, guys. Now we can plan out our stories, Alicia. We can fill ten issues of Starbright with everything we're gonna see.

**Alicia:** I've got a better idea. I'll be the home-base link for the trip. You guys can e-mail me here in the library, and I'll start working on stories from here.

**Nadia:** What?

**Alicia:** I can get us ahead on our second issue while you guys do the on-site reporting –

**Brice:** Don't you want to come? (Alicia does not reply.)

**Nadia:** This trip is for all of us.

**Dean:** Are you grounded too? Here, let me be your Mom. "Welcome home, Alicia."

**Nadia:** I'll be you. "Hi, Mom. I get to go to the science museum."

**Brice:** She wants you to be a doctor, right. This will help!

**Nadia:** (As Alicia.) "And I'll write all these great stories for Starbright, my magazine. You can read them –"

**Alicia:** She can't read them, OK?

(The group is silent for a moment.)

**Brice:** Then you read them to her. In Polish. And the pictures are cool –

**Alicia:** That's not the point. Look, I promised my Mom I would never miss a day of school, not for anything.

**Dean:** But this is like school.

**Alicia:** Which part? The party in the hotel or playing musical chairs on the bus until Nadia gets to sit next to Damion? Sure. I'd like to go. But I keep my promises to my Mother.

**Nadia:** But it's just a day.

**Alicia:** A day when I would miss school, then not be home to help with my sisters before my Mom goes to work –

**Nadia:** Get somebody else to baby-sit. I'm gonna get my aunt to watch my brothers.

**Dean:** Alicia, if you need to borrow some money for it –

**Alicia:** I don't need money. I need to stay here to go to school and to be with my Mom. Saturdays are the only time I have more than one hour a day with her. All the other days, I do to school, and then she goes to work. Don't you get it? I want to be with her.

**Brice:** More than you want to do Starbright?

**Alicia:** Yes.

**Nadia:** Wow.

**Dean:** I don't know too many kids who like their mothers.

**Nadia:** We're still friends, though right? Still the Starbright staff?

**Alicia:** Of course. OK. Let's get this cover designed. It's our first issue, so we want – sorry, Dean. You're the executive editor. This is your job.

**Dean:** Maybe it should be yours.

(Alicia and Dean exchange a look of new understanding of each other. Alicia crosses to the computer.)

**Alicia:** Brice, bring up the photos. Have a look, team. I like the one that's looking way off into space. Into the future.

(The students gather around the computer monitor.)

End of Scene.