

TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Claire leaned against the side railing of the second floor of the large mall as she watched the people passing below.

She was on her way to the cinema with her cousins. They were early for the showing, so while they waited for the movie to start, they decided to do a little window shopping in some of the nearby shops.

"Hey, Claire, come look at this!" Matt exclaimed. "This spaceship model would be so fun to assemble!"

Claire wasn't particularly interested in models, so she gave Matt a quick smile and went to see what her cousin Korie was doing.

Just then, Uncle Joe returned with the tickets. "Time for us to head to the cinema."

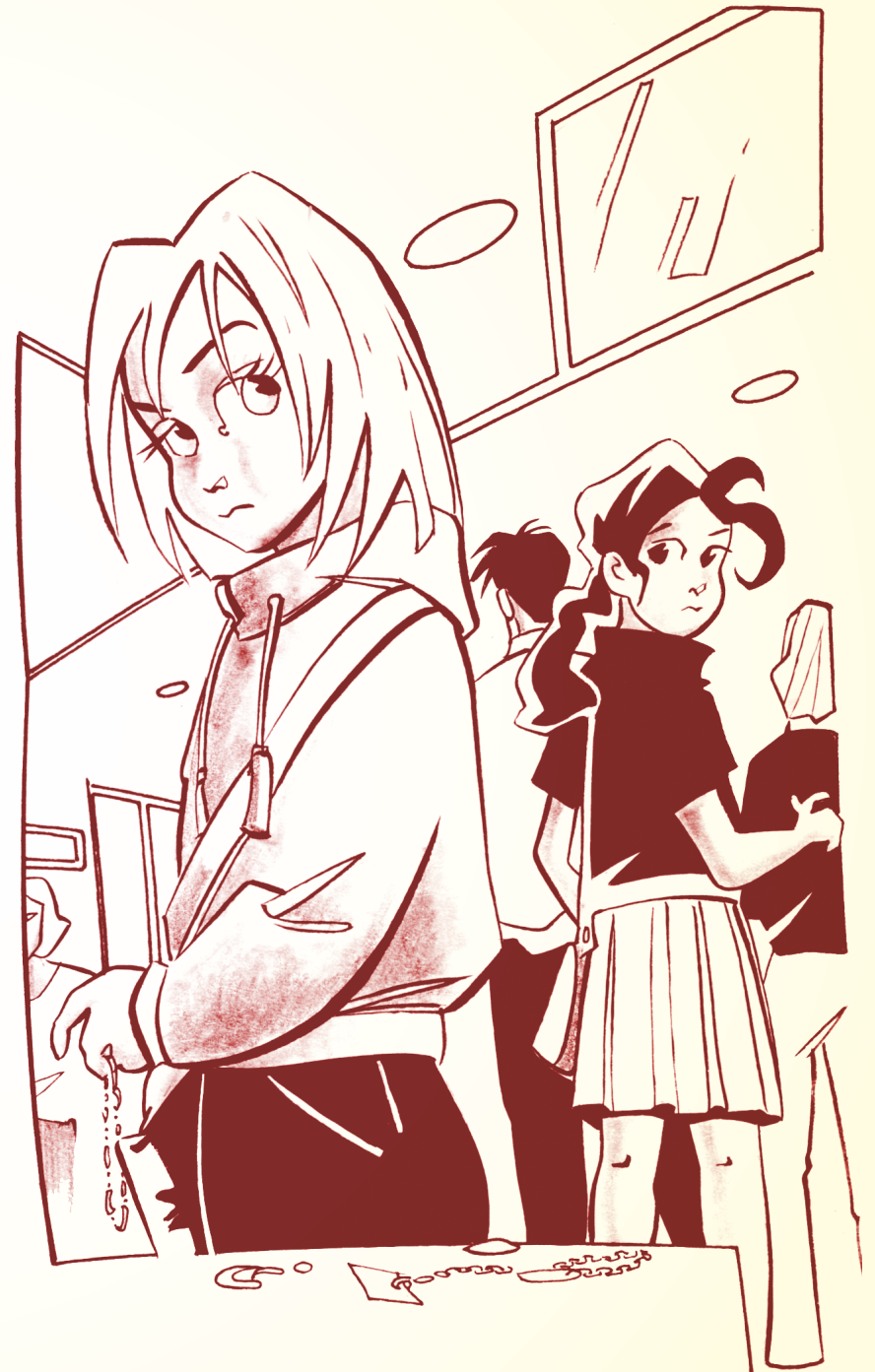
As Claire turned to follow, out of the corner of her eye she spotted Korie take a thin necklace that she had been looking at and slip it into her purse, thinking that no one was looking.

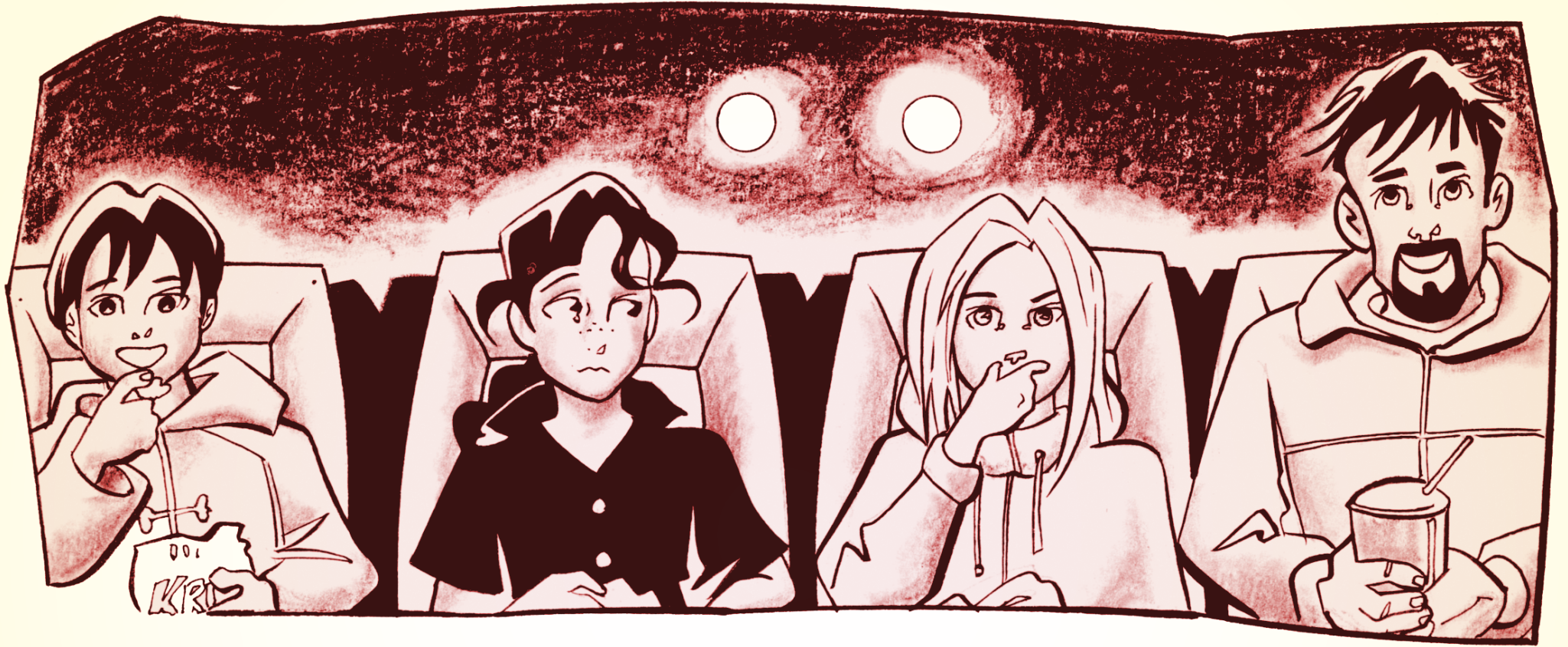
Claire stood frozen for a moment, wondering if she should let Korie know that she had seen what had just happened or not.

"Come on, Claire," Uncle Joe said. "We need to get moving."

Claire caught up with the others as they headed for the theater, but all the joy and excitement of the trip had suddenly faded.

I should have told Korie I saw her take the necklace, Claire thought as they rode the escalator up to the theater.





Claire found it difficult to enjoy the movie. She was distracted by wondering if she should say something to Korie or not. *I want to keep Korie as my friend, but if I tell her that I know what she's done, she might get angry at me.*

On the way home, Claire was quiet. *Jesus, please show me what I should do. Korie and I have always been good friends. I know that what she did was wrong, but now it seems too late for me to do anything about it.*

Claire heard Jesus' voice inside her heart telling her, *If you had humbly spoken up to Korie right when you saw her taking the*

necklace, it would have been embarrassing for her, but she would have put the necklace back. She's not sure what to do about it now.

It might seem hard to report on a friend and family. You're worried that Korie will get in trouble and be discouraged that her stealing was found out and then hold this against you.

But if you care about Korie, you'll want what's best for her. Tell your aunt Meg what you saw, pray for Korie, and then trust Me for the outcome.

Even though the thought of telling Aunt Meg was hard for Claire, she felt better and more at peace knowing that as she obeyed what Jesus was encouraging her to do, He would take care of the rest.

Later at her cousins' home, Claire found her aunt in the kitchen and told her privately about what happened at the mall.

"Thank you, Claire, for telling me," Aunt Meg said.

"But I wish I had told Korie I saw her taking the necklace right when it happened," said Claire.

"Yes," answered Aunt Meg. "Even though Korie might have been embarrassed and acted offended that you told her, she probably would have been grateful in the long run since she could have put the necklace back right away. I'll talk with Korie tonight. She's probably feeling very bad and will be relieved to have it out in the open."

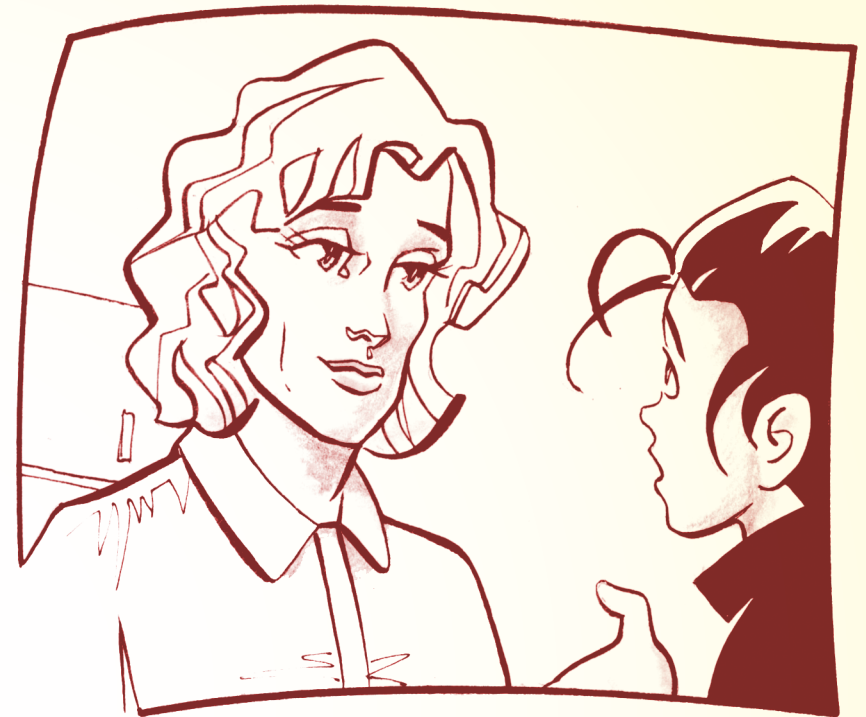
"It's time to get you back home," Uncle Joe said as he walked into the kitchen. "I just phoned your parents and told them we're on our way."



The next morning, Korie phoned Claire. "Thank you for saying something to Mom. I felt really bad about stealing that necklace, but I was afraid to ask for help. Would you come with Mom and me today when I take it back to the store? I need the support of my cousin and friend."

"Of course," answered Claire.

Thank You, Jesus, for working that out! Claire silently praised. And thank You for giving me the strength to do what was right. I love You, Jesus!



**"Faithful are the wounds of a friend"
(Proverbs 27:6 KJV).**

**"A friend loves you all the time.
A brother is always there to help you"
(Proverbs 17:17 ICB).**