

TUG & FRIENDS

LUCAS AND LILLIAN

A Promise to Keep



A story about honesty, trust, and doing what you say.

Story concept by Daniel Adams

ILLUSTRATED STORYBOOK DRAFT

01

A new friend, a new adventure



Same birthday. Different paint!

"A tire swing?" Lucas asked. "Over a real lake?"

Tug nodded. "Some of the older friends found it beyond the hill. They said they swung out and splashed right in!"

Lucas imagined soaring through the air. Then he remembered how deep a lake could be. "I'm still learning to swim. Mom and Dad say I mustn't go near the water without them."

"Then we'll save swimming for a day they can come," said Tug.

A pink-and-turquoise blur bounced up the trail. "Who can come? Where are we going? Did somebody say adventure?"

Lucas laughed. "Tug, this is Lillian, my twin sister."

"Same birthday. Different paint!" she said, giving her glittery hood a wiggle.

"Nice to meet you, Lillian!" Tug smiled. "I've got to go. Let's play later!"

"See you later!" called the twins.

Then they rolled into the forest, where a hundred little adventures were waiting.

02

Not quite grown up



A hundred little adventures.

Birds chirped overhead. A rabbit bounded through the clover, and a groundhog peeked from beside a stump.

"Hello down there!" called Lillian.

A little snake slipped across the path. The twins stopped and gave it room.

Farther up the hill, a bright-eyed raccoon waved a tiny paw. "Lovely day for exploring!"

"The loveliest!" said Lillian. The friendly storybook raccoon leaned close, and she gave his head a gentle pat with her mirror.

Soon the twins were climbing again.

"When I'm bigger, I'll go on enormous adventures," said Lucas.

"I'll explore every hill!" said Lillian. "Well, maybe two hills before lunch."

Lucas chuckled. "I wish growing up would hurry."

"Me too," she said. "Remi gets to do so much more."

Up they went, talking about bigger tires, longer trails, and all the things they would do someday.

Then the trees opened. Beyond the grass lay a shining little lake. An old tire swing swayed above it.

"We found it," Lucas whispered.

03

I promise



“I promise.”

The twins stopped beside an oak, well back from the bank. Across the clearing, some older trucks were talking. Lucas hardly noticed them. He was watching the swing.

Lillian's smile faded. "My tummy doesn't feel right. I'm going home for a minute. I'll be back."

She looked from Lucas to the lake. "Promise you won't go near the water. Wait here, by this tree."

"I won't go near it," said Lucas. "I promise."

"You mean it?"

"I mean it."

Lillian headed down the familiar trail. Lucas waited.



A leaf drifted past. A bird called. The tire swing creaked. I could just look, he thought. Looking isn't swimming. But looking from the bank would mean leaving the tree. Lucas knew what he had promised. He rolled forward anyway. One little turn of his tires. Then another.



The grass grew slippery near the edge. Suddenly, the ground gave way beneath a wheel. SPLASH!



The water was deeper than Lucas expected. His tires paddled, but he couldn't get back onto the bank. "Help!" he called. "Help me!"

04

Remi was there



“Let’s get you home.”

A familiar voice answered. "Lucas!"

His older sister Remi had been visiting the trucks across the clearing. She hurried to the rescue ring hanging nearby and sent it out to him, staying on solid ground.

"Hold on to the ring!" she called.

Lucas caught it. With the rescue rope secured to her tow point, Remi eased backward while her friends kept the path clear. Slowly, she pulled him toward the sloping shore.

Just as Lucas reached dry ground, Lillian came around the bend.

She stopped. Her brother was dripping. Remi was beside the water. The rescue rope lay across the grass.

"Lucas... you promised."

He couldn't meet her eyes. "I know."

Lillian's voice trembled. "I believed you. But mostly, I was scared. What if Remi hadn't been here?"

"Thank you, Remi," Lucas whispered.

"Let's get you home to Mom and Dad," she said.

05

The hard thing to say



“Will you stay beside me?”

The trail home felt much longer. Lucas rolled beside Lillian, with Remi close behind.

At last, Lucas whispered, "Please don't tell Mom and Dad."

"They need to know," said Lillian. "You were in trouble."

"But they'll be upset."

"Maybe," she said softly. "But hiding it won't make it unhappen."

Lucas watched a pebble tumble beneath his tire. "What if I just say I got wet?"

"That leaves out the important part."

For a little while, only their tires made a sound.

"I hurt your feelings, didn't I?" Lucas asked.

"Yes. You said you'd stay, and I trusted you." Lillian moved a little closer. "But I love you more than I'm upset with you."

"How do I fix it?"

"Start by telling what really happened. Tell them what you'll do differently. Then do it."

Lucas took a slow breath. "Will you stay beside me?"

"I will," said Lillian.

This time, Lucas wasn't looking for a way around the truth. He was finding the courage to say it.

06

The whole truth



“The whole truth.”

The brick house came into view. Beyond it stood the red barn and the old windmill. Mom and Dad were waiting by the drive.

Mom saw Lucas's wet tires. "What happened?"

Lucas looked at Lillian. She stayed beside him, just as she had said she would.

He faced his parents.

"I need to tell you the whole truth."

His voice was small, but he kept going.

"We found the lake. Lillian went home, and I promised I'd stay away from the water. But I didn't keep my promise. I went to the edge, and I slipped in. I couldn't get out. Remi pulled me to shore."

Mom and Dad listened closely.

"I wanted Lillian to keep it a secret because I was afraid you'd be upset. That wasn't right either. I'm sorry."

Lucas lifted his eyes.

"I won't go near the lake without you again. If I want to change a plan, I'll tell you first. And when I give my word, I need to keep it."

Lillian stayed close as Lucas finished.

"That's what happened, Mom and Dad. All of it."

07

Loved, even when you make a mistake



“Our love for you hasn’t changed.”

Mom rolled close. "Oh, Lucas. We are so glad you are safe."

Dad's voice was gentle, but serious. "Going near the lake was dangerous. You broke a promise and a rule meant to protect you."

Lucas lowered his eyes. "I know."

"But you acknowledged your mistake," Mom said. "You told us the whole story, even though it was hard. You're trying to make it right. That matters."

"That's part of integrity," Dad added. "Being honest, taking responsibility, and doing what you say you'll do."

"Are you still mad at me?" Lucas asked.

"We're upset about your choice," said Mom. "But our love for you hasn't changed. We love you, Lillian, Remi, and Oakie. Every one of our children, every single day. We make rules because we don't want anything bad to happen to you."

Dad nodded. "And there is still a consequence for breaking the rule: tonight, you'll eat all your green bean casserole."

Lucas blinked. "All of them?"

"All of them," said Dad, with a small smile. "The consequence is for what you did at the lake, not for telling us."

"You can always tell us the truth," Mom said.

Lucas leaned against her fender. Lillian nestled beside him.

"I love you," Lucas whispered.

"We love you too," said Mom and Dad.

And Lucas knew he belonged, even when he had a mistake to make right.

Little promises. Growing trust.

What did Lucas promise Lillian?

Why did Lillian feel hurt and frightened?

Why was “I got wet” only part of the truth?

How did Lillian help Lucas tell Mom and Dad?

What could Lucas do next time to show he means what he says?

Integrity means trying to make your actions match your words, even when no one is watching. When you make a mistake, honesty is the first step toward making things right.

A note for grown-ups: These are make-believe trucks and talking woodland friends. In real life, children should stay away from water without adult supervision, call for adult help in an emergency, and watch wild animals without touching them.

