

I walked to the bus stop with a huge frown on my face. I was sad and depressed and I felt like I was going to cry because my grandma had passed away the weekend before. I really missed her because she was a really big part of my life. My dad was a photographer for National Geographic and he was always traveling all over the world. I traveled with him for a long time until I was 7, when my grandma had an argument with him about me needing to live a normal life and stay in one place instead of moving every month. He agreed and I lived with her in Virginia for 6 years, until now. I was going to start traveling again next week.

As I was toward the bus stop, I saw my so-called best friend Victoria was standing there. She was wearing her blue polo and white jeans. Just as I saw her, I remembered that today was “We Love America” day at school. I wanted to run back home to change but there was no time. The bus was right there. I ran across the street to the stop and got on the bus. I saw Addison, one of the popular kids look at my clothes, turn around, and start talking and giggling. I tried to sit at the seat in front, away from Victoria but she caught me and called me to the back.

I didn’t have a super huge problem with Victoria and since I was so shy, I just went with it and acted like I was her friend. She was a really horrible gossip, though, and didn’t care about anyone but herself. She was my best friend when I stopped traveling, which was in 2nd grade, and she was the nicest person ever back then. She started being so obnoxious last year in 6th grade, on the first year of middle school.

“What’s wrong?” she asked.

“Nothing,” I lied.

“Come on, it has to be something,” she said, trying to squeeze the answer out of me. “I’m your best friend. You can trust me.” Of course I didn’t believe it but I knew she wouldn’t shut up so I just told her.

“My grandma died.” I mumbled, sadly, as I felt the tears coming up to my eyes.

“That’s it?” Victoria asked. I guess she was expecting a front page magazine article. I tried to hold back my tears as she went to the back to sit with her perfect clique.

We got off the bus and I walked to the school, alone. I saw a few people look at my clothes and laugh. I was considered a dork already and I guess I made it worse by wearing my uniform on a day I had the opportunity not to. Just then, Rebecca walked up to me. Rebecca is in the perfect clique too, just not as mean.

“Hey Claire! You okay?” she asked.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” I told her, sadly.

“It’s okay. Hope you feel better.” she said, and walked away.

Mr. Pilou was late and the whole class was doing whatever they wanted. I was the first one in the classroom, so I took out my binder and started writing down all my notes. Addison, who was also friends with Victoria, came over to my desk.

“Hey Claire!” she said. “Guess what? I just had the best time with my grandma last weekend. She took me to the mall and bought me everything I wanted and took me to my favorite restaurant and we just had a great, grandmother and granddaughter bonding day. How are you and your grandma? I heard you were very close.”

I looked down and this time I really started crying, real crying, in the classroom. I couldn’t believe I was doing that right there, with everyone looking at me. I stayed crying like that for a while until I heard their voices laughing and talking about me. I wiped my tears with my shirt sleeves and stomped over to the desks where Addison and Victoria were sitting together.

“You guys seriously need to get a life!” I yelled. All eyes were on me. The normal Claire would’ve just dealt with the pain but not this me. I had way too much anger building up inside. I

was like Beyoncé turning into Sasha Fierce, well in a classroom. “All you do is gossip and adore yourselves in you \$200 mirrors and smother yourselves in 20 pounds of makeup.”

“What?” Victoria asked, acting all innocent.

“You heard me. You are all so fake. You walk around the school like Nicki Minaj with your big crew of wannabes. You act like school is a party, like it’s your Red Carpet and you have all these millions of fans, making everyone feel bad. Then you complain about stupid things like not having the newest iPhone or tablet.”

“Excuse me?” Addison asked, trying to act all sassy. “You don’t come over to our territory and tell us what we need to do to be perfect, because we already are.”

I stood there, quiet for a second, looking at how stupid they just sounded. It’s like they just fought back by giving an example of their obnoxiousness I just told them about.

“First of all, ‘your territory’ is marked Miami Dade County Public Schools. Second, I’m done yelling at you. It’s like yelling at a makeup bag. You just fight back by fighting yourself. Just please, get a life.”

I walked away, and I felt like the weight of the world was lifted off my shoulders. I never want to talk to Victoria again, and I was glad I was finally leaving. I don’t feel like having to see her every day trying to make my life miserable. Plus, everyone will look at me differently. Everyone will look at me like “Stay away from her, she’s the one who stood up to Victoria.” instead of, “Oh look it’s... wait, what’s her name? She’s so quiet she never talks.” I miss being the invisible girl, the one who no one paid attention to, and I’m glad that with the move, I won’t have to be seen as either of them. I won’t be seen at all.

Ever since I left Virginia, I’ve actually had a great time with my dad. I forgot how much I loved the travel. It’s not that great not getting to meet anyone new and to be just with my dad but it’s still really interesting. Today, we went to the Eiffel Tower and after we went to a fancy five

star restaurant called *Le Meurice*. We stayed in a hotel which was one of the fanciest I've ever been in.

No matter how much fun I have with my dad, one of the best parts of staying with my dad is being away from Victoria and Virginia. I don't want to be judged and treated like dirt any longer. I hated that and now, I don't have to deal with it anymore.

"Hey, Claire," my dad called. "You still talking with Victoria?"

"Yeah," I lied. "Why?"

"Just wondering if you want to let her come on the trip with us next week. I know this is hard for you and I want you to see some of your friends. I can ca—"

"Me and Victoria aren't really talking anymore." I said.

"What happened?" he asked.

"I don't know we just stopped talking."

I guess he could see that I was lying because he stared at me, looking like he was waiting for the truth.

"When grandma died, I told Victoria and she told her friend and they started making fun of me and I got really mad at her." I admitted.

"I thought you and Victoria were best friends."

"Victoria changed. *A lot.*"

"Well, I guess she's not a real friend." he said, and gave me a tight hug.