

The Lunch Lady

Abridged Version

By

Bullied Victims Association (BVA)

BVA Publishing

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Foreword

The characters in this book are a fictional composite of many people. Resemblance to any specific person with whom the BVA interacted with is coincidental.

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PROLOGUE

“Thank you for attending the BVA’s fundraiser,” Janvier said nervously. This was her first event and she went over budget to make a good impression. She hoped that people will be convinced to support her nonprofit and donate very soon. She had enough money left to pay rent but not enough for anything else.

“My name is Janvier and I am the founder of The Bullied Victims Association, BVA. The BVA seeks to help bullying victims learn about what is happening to them, some reasons why, problem solve to start their healing process and find ways to prevent bullying. The BVA has an action oriented and innovative approach to preventing bullying that is based on years of research and experience. I will give an overview of BVA’s approach but first, I want to tell you why I started the BVA,” she stopped to take a breath. She tried to look out into the audience to see how interested they were but the spotlight stopped her from seeing any individual faces. Janvier decided that she would just simply tell the story and hope that it will convince them to join, support or donate to the BVA. Even if they didn’t donate, she hoped that they would walk

away understanding how hard it is to be a victim of bullying and find ways to safely help those who are victims. Since she couldn't see the audience, she closed her eyes and remembered that events that led to this endeavor.

Chapter One

THE GREAT RECESSION

Janvier put her soy vanilla chai tea latte down on her desk and finished updating her resume. She graduated almost six months ago and the pleasure of having time to recuperate from the stress of grad school had worn off. Her savings was almost depleted and she needed to get a job soon or face eviction. The Great Recession was in full swing and people in the affluent area where she lived were having pink slip parties. No one thought it would last much longer and she was sure that her experience would land her a job soon.

A few more months went by and her school loan grace period ended. She applied and was granted an unemployment deferment. The playful pink slip parties stopped and the economic forecast was bleak. It was starting to settle in that this recession was going to last longer and be worse than anyone thought. A lot of her friends went back to school just to wait out the recession. She didn't want to incur any more debt

and decided to take exams to become an actuary. She liked math and it was a quiet profession. She was a quick learner and thought she would pass the exams within six months. That was enough time before her savings ran out. However, something was wrong when she tried to study and she found that she couldn't concentrate. She liked calculus but seemed to be messing up on the practice exams even though she knew what she was doing. She took a week off of studying to see if that would help. However when she went back, she still couldn't concentrate. It was all the pressure and stress around passing the exams.

Janvier was also on a tight budget and couldn't afford to buy a lot of food. She had to ignore her growling stomach as she poured over the material and took practice exam after practice exam. She started to realize that the hunger was effecting her concentration but there was nothing she could do about it. Janvier laughed thinking about how one of the girls from grad school said that she dated for dinners. Their grad school had no meal plan and it was in the middle of the better parts of the city. Paying for grad school and meals was not cheap so students survived the best they could. This girl couldn't live off of Ramen noodles and wanted to go to the best restaurants. She was young and attractive so she took advantage of the dinner dates to enjoy the city life she couldn't afford. She was the kind of girl that guys wanted to impress and be seen with. She could go on these dates and not even so much as give them a kiss but

they would still keep coming back. She had it made. The guys were so grateful for the arm candy that they didn't want to mess it up by coming on too strong. Janvier was as attractive as the girl but that wasn't her style. Plus, the dates would cut into her study time. She had a few weeks left to pass this exam on the first try or wait months before the next exam dates. Time was short and she was too broke to waste any of it.

The exam dates came and went but she didn't register to take them. With all the stress and hunger, she knew she wouldn't pass and wanted to save her money to try again later. Janvier knew that budgeting her groceries to twenty dollars a week was not helping her study. She was so used to a bigger food budget that she didn't know how to downsize her meals to meet her needs and budget. She decided to get a job while continuing to study for her exams.

Janvier applied to all kind of positions within her field and some that supported her actuarial goals but couldn't even get so much as an interview. Jobs had become a luxury and her graduate degree had temporarily become useless in landing her one. She was about to deplete her savings and was worried about paying rent. Janvier had been hiding out in coffee shops all day so that the neighbors wouldn't suspect that she had been unemployed all these months. She laughed nervously after reading an article about people like her who were unemployed but went to coffee shops, bought one cup of coffee then sat there all day. The shop keepers were

complaining and wanted it to stop. Now Janvier was afraid that she would get kicked out of the coffee shops but she didn't have enough money to even buy two cups of coffee. She got desperate and started applying for positions where she was overqualified. Any job would do at this point because she had to stop draining her savings. The worst happened and she was down to having only enough money left for two months of rent. She applied for a job as a lunch lady at a high school out of sheer desperation. She didn't know how much they would pay but at this point it didn't matter. She landed the job. She was relieved and mortified at the same time. Here she was with a graduate degree from a top school and had to work as a lunch lady just to get by. What would her friends think? Janvier was so embarrassed. On top of that, it turned out not to pay enough to pay her rent. She would have to move out of her apartment. She cried herself to sleep for a few days.

Janvier sold as much of her expensive belongings as she could and moved into a studio on the outskirts of her fancy neighborhood. She was only a few blocks from a low-income neighborhood but closer to the better part of town. She didn't mind because she didn't want to run into anybody she knew. In this part of town, no-one knew her and she could walk around without fear of being noticed by a friend. She cut off her friends and kept to herself while preparing to start her new life as a lunch lady.

Chapter Two

FIRST DAYS IN THE KITCHEN

On her first day of work, Janvier was handed a uniform and a hairnet. She got dressed in the locker room and laughed at her reflection in the mirror. She didn't even recognize herself dressed that way. She was dismayed but a little relieved because that meant no one else would recognize her either. The school was far from her old neighborhood but she was still afraid that someone's little sister or brother attended it and would recognize her. She had cut contact with her friends and gradmates. Janvier had to lay low while she figured out how to get back to a more fitting profession. It's not that she looked down on the job but she didn't spend thousand of dollars and hundreds of credit hours in grad school to be a lunch lady. She knew that some of her gradmates would have a good laugh if they saw her now. Most of them got jobs as entry level consultants at top firms. Things were hard enough and she didn't want to deal with the humiliation of being one of the class' best students but ending up as a lunch lady.

After her first week, she got into the swing of things. There were some real arseholes in the kitchen but there were also some nice people. There were definitely some eccentric personalities and bitter people. Janvier tried to play down her looks and blend in as much as possible. She didn't want to attract any attention from the guys who thought they were blue collar heart throbs and never discussed her educational background. She wanted to get through this as quickly and quietly as possible. Janvier was still studying for her exams and found that the hunger really did impact her concentration. She was starting to ace the practice exams and didn't fall asleep half way through reading the material. This helped keep her hopes up to take the exam soon and get a job in that field. The lunch lady hours were long and she had to stand on her feet all day. On some of her days off, she ended up sleeping in because she was so tired and didn't get a chance to study. After a few weeks of this, she made a schedule that would allow her to rest and study because she didn't want to drag out this part of her life any longer than necessary.

Chapter Three

MEANGIRLS

Janvier was able to keep things under control with her coworkers, who were prone to arguments and drama. She got along well with the students.

Everything was fine until she saw a group of girls picking on one girl. She didn't say anything but noticed that it kept happening.

"Here she comes," one of the meangirls said laughing, "I'll wink when she is behind you,". As the girl that they had been bullying walked behind one of the meangirls whose back was turned to her, the meangirl stepped back and knocked the tray out of the girl's hands.

"Watch it, you idiot. What is wrong with you?!", she yelled at her. The girl tried to apologize but the meangirl started to berate her. The other meangirls started laughing and making a scene while other students stopped to watch the drama. The meangirls obviously enjoyed the attention and the girl looked mortified as she quietly took the abuse. Janvier couldn't stand watching it any longer and asked what

was going on. The meangirls stopped yelling and told her that the other girl almost made her trip by sneaking up behind her. The other meangirls smirked at each other. Janvier had heard them plan it all out and knew that wasn't true. She called the monitor over and asked her to break it up. The monitor believed the meangirls and scolded the bullied girl about sneaking up on people and making a mess. The girl quietly nodded while looking down and holding back tears. Janvier pulled the monitor aside and let her know that she heard the meangirls plot the whole scene to embarrass the girl. The monitor apologized to the girl and asked if she was okay. Janvier volunteered to help the girl clean up and got her a new tray of food while the monitor went to scold the meangirls. Janvier introduced herself and let the girl know that she had watched those girls bully her over the past few weeks. The girl was visibly upset and didn't say much. She thanked Janvier and practically ran away. Janvier watched her go. She thought about how hard it must have been to be verbally abused like that in front of other classmates. She had never been bullied although she watched it happen to others. She never intervened and minded her business during those times. However, it was hard to watch this girl get bullied every week and not say something. The meangirls denied having plotted the whole scene but backed off anyway. Janvier thought that they would stop picking on the girl for fear of getting in trouble. The monitor didn't tell them who

heard them plotting the scene and Janvier thought the bullying would stop now that the meangirls knew that someone was watching.

A few weeks after that event, the meangirls were watching the girl and giggling again. They were standing behind her table and whispering to each other. Janvier's stomach dropped but she knew that the meangirls knew someone could be watching. The girl's book bag was on the floor and they waited until the girl reached down to grab something then one of the meangirls walked pass her table. The girl suddenly jumped up with her shirt covered in juice. The girl had placed her cup of juice close to the edge of the table when she reached down into her bag. The meangirls walked by her table and briefly stopped. Two stood in the way so that others in the cafeteria couldn't see while one of them knocked the juice over. They walked off as if noting happened. No one could've seen what happened with the two standing in the way and one pretending to look into her own bag but from Janvier's angle, she saw everything. Janvier ran to the girl's table with napkins. The girl was crying and Janvier was angry. She went to the monitor and told her what the meangirls just did. The meangirls denied it and said that no one else but the anonymous person supposedly saw them do it. They had made sure none of the other kids or monitors were watching so they wondered who saw them. They were berating the monitor and saying that she was making things up to get them in trouble. The monitor looked so

overwhelmed that Janvier stepped in to say that she saw everything from her station. She was the one who reported them. The monitor looked relieved to get the meangirls off her back. The girls realized it was true and stared daggers into Janvier. The monitor told them to go apologize to the girl but they refused. She warned that if they didn't they would have spend the rest of lunch with her in the disciplinary room. They chose to go to the disciplinary room, to sit apart and quiet for the rest of the lunch period. They all gave Janvier an angry glare then left quietly. The girl saw that the meangirls were mad at Janvier and felt guilty. She went over and thanked Janvier for helping her clean up.

" My name is Amelia. Thank you for sticking up for me," she said quietly looking down, " I'm sorry if I got you in trouble with them,". Janvier was so happy that Amelia stuck around that her mood lifted.

" They shouldn't treat you like that. I hate watching how they bully you. Have you talked to the principal about it?", she asked.

"Yes, my mom has been telling him about it since last year but he said that it is kids being kids and that those girls will realize how mean they were one day, apologize and we'll end up being friends. Some people mature quicker than others. He said that I should just ignore and avoid them. I have to develop a tough skin. If they don't get a reaction from me, they will eventually stop. That's what I have been doing; Trying to avoid and ignore them," she explained.

"That's obviously not working," Janvier said.

"Oh no, it has. They don't bother me as much anymore. Only once in a while now. I think that I reacted too much last time when I bumped into them and they were probably angry about getting in trouble so they came after me today. I shouldn't have cried but this is my favorite shirt and I didn't know if the red stain would come out," Amelia said. It broke Janvier's heart to hear Amelia blame herself for the bullying. She couldn't believe that the principal told Amelia to tolerate the abuse in hopes that it will stop some day. His only advice was to develop a tough skin? That was practically blaming the victim for having feelings and being hurt by others mistreating her. Why did she have to develop a tough skin when those girls needed to develop some empathy?

"I can't believe you have been going through this for over a year and the principal knows about it. You have to learn how to stand up to those bullies. I have to get back to work but any time they bother you in the cafeteria, come and get me. I'll step in and try to get them to stop," Janvier told her. Amelia thanked her and agreed to do so.

Chapter Four

BULLIED

After the meangirls found out who was telling on them, they decided to get revenge. They were cautious when they went to Janvier's station and stared her down whenever they could. Janvier noticed that some other students who had been nice to her were suddenly cold. She didn't know why and didn't think too much of it. High schoolers were so moody sometimes. One day, her supervisor asked to have a talk with her. She sat down and made small talk with the supervisor. He said she was doing a great job and valued her as an employee but there were a few complaints from some of the students. Janvier was shocked because she usually bent over backwards for the students. She couldn't think of one student who would have a complaint about her. Then she thought maybe one of the meangirls complained. She relaxed a little and was ready to address any of their complaints. Without saying names he described interactions that some of the students complained about. To her surprise, the complaints came from

some of the mousy students as well as a few “cool kids”. They claimed that she was standoffish and rude. They said that the station wasn’t stocked and she would have them wait for a long time while she refilled it. She remembered running out of an item one time but it took long to refill because there was no extras and she had to find a replacement. She told the student that and apologized that it would take a few minutes to find a replacement. She came back with a few options and let the student choose one. She could’ve picked one and not asked but she felt bad that the item ran out. The student had seemed happy to have a pick and thanked her. It was a surprise that she complained. A few students also complained that her station was messy. She remembered one day, when a student had spilled his milk on the counter and because the line was long, she had wait before she could clean it up. They were short staffed on bussers so there was no one to help out. The students were usually so understanding, she didn’t know why they were complaining when they knew it was very busy. As for the rude and standoffish complaint, one male student was making inappropriate jokes while on line with his friends. She noticed that the female students were uncomfortable so she asked if he would not make jokes like that while girls were around. He had quietly apologized and walked away with his friends. She explained it to the supervisor and he understood. “ Now that you explained it, I see where there was a misunderstanding. High schoolers are

sensitive sometimes so just try to be more aware of how they may perceive your response and try to address their concerns right away. Sometimes they are afraid to say something or complain so try to be more aware of the mood on your line. Thanks for explaining. I was a bit surprised about these complaints because I watch each station and you usually have a good rapport with the students," he said. She thanked him for the feedback and letting her explain. She said that she will take his advice and be more aware of how the students may perceive things.

The complaints kind of made her more anxious around the students but she tried her best to prevent any more issues. After a week of anxiously trying to avoid complaints, she felt like she got the hang of it. The supervisor told her that he had been asking for reviews from random students who went her station and they all were satisfied with the service. One day the meangirls came to her station and instead of giving her dirty looks, taking their food and walking away, one of them said, " Well if it isn't Ms. Happy-Go-Lucky. Your doing such a great job. You finally learned how to do your job right after the complaints, huh?". They didn't wait for a response, laughed and walked away.

" What was that about?", she thought to herself. Those girls were so catty. Janvier didn't remember junior high school girls being so mean and disrespectful to adults when she was younger. The ones that were,

usually ended up in alternative schools where they could get help for their issues. This wasn't an alternative school so she guessed those girls weren't dealing with serious issues. Maybe they thought it was cool to be meangirls. With all that goes on with social media, she could see why they would be misled into thinking that was cool. Janvier hoped they would grow out of it soon before they got themselves in trouble. They were staying away from Amelia so maybe that was some progress.

Janvier spoke too soon. She and Amelia had become friends. Amelia would often stop by her station to chat. Amelia was doing a lot better and was a bit more social. She used to hide in the corner, trying to stay out the meangirls' path. Now she wasn't as tense and even made some new friends. Amelia had come over to chat one day and was telling Janvier about her science project ideas. The meangirls stood behind them and one of them loudly said, "Is she a teacher or a lunch lady?"

"A lunch lady because none of my teachers have to wear ugly hairnets and uniforms," the other one answered. The third one, laughed and said, "I think she thinks she is a counselor. She likes to talk to the screwed up kids a lot. I think she may have a favorite mental case,"

"Well, they can have their counseling sessions some other time because I am hungry and this is a cafeteria not the counseling office", the other one replied. Janvier could see Amelia's head going down and she

was starting to cower before the meangirls. She said, "That's enough, girls, why can't you be nice for once?". "Umm..I wasn't talking to you. I was talking to my friends while you were talking to your friend and not doing your job," one of them replied. Amelia said she had to go, apologized for holding up the line and left before Janvier could say anything. The meangirls smirked and seemed happy to still have control over Amelia. They had noticed her being more social and were annoyed that they couldn't make fun of her. Janvier took a deep breath and remembered that she didn't want any more complaints. She politely apologized for the delay and asked how she could help them. The meangirls seemed to get some ego boost out of scaring Amelia off and forcing Janvier to be nice. They gloated as one of them mocked her politeness and said, "Thank you for remembering to do your job. It seems that you are out of spoons. Could you please get me a spoon?". Janvier knew that the meangirls were being spiteful. They stood on line just to ask for a spoon? They could've gone to the busser or another station for a spoon. They seemed to be on a power trip so she went and got a spoon for them. She said, "I have to give you a plastic spoon because the bussers usually put the utensils out. We are short staffed so things are a bit delayed. You can also check the other stations next time to see if they have spoons. The front station is usually well stocked,". "We're sitting near your station, why would we walk all the way to the front station?," one of them snapped.

Janvier bit her tongue, faked a smile and said, " My apologies again. I'll talk to the bussers and see if they could put an extra set of spoons here,".

" I hope so because I don't want to have to complain. The last thing you need are any more complaints about your messy station," one said in a condescending tone. The other girl burst out, " Stop!", and pulled her away. They all burst out laughing and walked away, satisfied with themselves. Janvier was red with anger. She turned around and cleaned the counter so no one would see how upset she was. She hoped that no students would come to her station for a while because she needed time to calm down. She decided not to take any chances and asked for coverage while she went to the bathroom. She rinsed her face and took deep breaths. Janvier wasn't as upset about the meangirls giving her a hard time as she was about how they kicked Amelia back into being a recluse. The way Amelia was so lively but slowly shrunk in front of them replayed in her mind. Their sadistic smiles as they bit her with their harsh words was alarming. It was like watching them eat her alive as they fed their egos. When she ran away, they smiled like they just had a good meal. Janvier was dessert. She recalled their psychopathic smirks while they talked down to her. They got a feast today and walked away like they owned the place. " I didn't sign up for this," she thought out loud.

Here she was struggling to pay her bills and pass an exam while being bullied by a bunch of high school

meangirls. Whose life was this? This couldn't possibly be her life. She was supposed to be a white collar professional and here she was wearing a stupid hairnet while fending off catty little girls. Janvier couldn't believe what her life had become. There were only a few more hours left until she clocked out so she told herself to calm down. She was in the bathroom for a while and decided to get back to her station before they wondered what happened to her. As she walked back, she saw her supervisor talking to the person who covered her. She groaned and tried to act as if she was okay. She thanked the cook who covered for her and greeted her supervisor. " I came by because there was a complaint about your station being out of spoons. I had the bussers refill the station and leave behind an extra set," he explained. Janvier apologized and said that she hadn't noticed that the spoons were out but would pay more attention next time. " It's not your fault. We're short on bussers. I explained that to the students who complained. They also complained that you were talking to another students too long..., " he said. She cut him off to appoogize. " It was one of the students who they have been bullying and she had started improving after they left her alone. She visits my station and has been feeling better. I only wanted to help her progress, ".

" We all have seen her feeling more comfortable and thank you for helping her out. When the monitor saw those girls whispering behind Amelia while she was

talking to you, she kept watch. She heard how rude they were to both of you. She told me what happened right after they loudly complained about you. Those girls aren't some of our nicer students. She constantly has to argue with them about following the rules,". Janvier was so relieved that the monitor saw what happened. She didn't think the supervisor would believe her side of the story and say that she was making excuses. She thanked him for understanding. He told her to keep up the good work and let him know if she needed anything. She felt her stress decrease and cleaned her station. It was a slow day for her because the pizza station had opened. All the students were eating pizza and the line was out the door. This gave her time to think. As she wiped the counters, she realized why the meangirls made the snarky remarks about the complaints. They must have been behind it. How else would they know that complaints were made? She had no issues with any of those students until after the meangirls were sent to the disciplinary room for lunch. She recalled seeing the meangirls talking to the mousy girl who complained about her and looking around with a smirk. She had never seen them talking to that girl before and she really wasn't the type of student they would befriend. The meangirls would think they were too cool for her. She wondered if they recruited the girl as a pawn because they saw her talking to Janvier often. She avoided Janvier's station now but seemed happy being petted by the meangirls for her complaint.

Some students would do anything to get in with the wanna-be cool kids. She could tell the meangirls weren't one of the cool kids because she often heard them gossiping about the cool kids and how they wished they were invited to their parties. They were sort of popular but not amongst the most popular kids.

A week went by before Janvier saw Amelia again. She had been worried and thought Amelia transferred schools as most bullying victims do. Janvier was also worried about Amelia becoming suicidal because a lot of bullied students contemplate suicide to stop the bullying. They usually don't get the help they need or enough of it and think the bullying will never end. Some of the bullies are merciless and drive their victims to suicide with their bullying. She had been reading up on bullying during her breaks trying to find ways to help Amelia. She didn't want her to get hurt or hurt herself over some meangirls using her as a punching bag or a way to get attention. Janvier told her how worried she was about her. "I'm sorry I stopped visiting you. I was afraid those girls would start bullying me again. The monitor stopped and asked if I was okay that day. She told me to let her know if those girls were back at it again. It made me feel a little better," she said.

"Have they bothered you since then?" Janvier asked relieved.

"Yes, but not as bad as before. They are backing off little by little. My new friends come and pull me away

when they see those girls talking to me. They pretend that they have to show me something," Amelia said.

"That's so nice of them. I'm glad you got some support," Janvier said.

"Me, too. It was so hard dealing with this alone. My mom told me to be strong and don't let it get to me but that was hard. They wouldn't stop. They wouldn't leave me alone and I didn't know how to make it stop," Amelia said getting teary.

"I know it is hard getting bullied and you are so brave to come to school and get through the day. You are strong and this will make you stronger. You don't need to go through this, you're so young and should be having fun. You should be worrying about getting good grades, not about being bullied. I remember bullies in high school...", Janvier said.

"You were bullied, too?", Amelia asked surprised.

"Well...no. I watched other kids get bullied and I wish I said something. I hung out with pretty girls and that probably helped. You now what? I wasn't bullied but I survived a lot of catfights from girls like them who were jealous of my pretty friends. I can help you out. I can show you some moves," Janvier said.

"Oh, I don't want to get into fights. I don't know how to fight and don't want to get punched," Amelia said with alarm.

"Catfights aren't physical. Girls don't like to get into physical fights because it messes up their hair and make-up. Girls usually fight with each other in other ways that don't involve punching. I think if you stand

up to these girls, they'll probably back off. Here, I'll show you some moves and what to say to make them back off," Janvier said and spent the next few days showing Amelia how to stand up to meangirls.

Chapter Five

IN TROUBLE

Janvier spent the next few days showing Amelia how to stand up to meangirls. It took some time but Amelia finally got her chance and the courage to snap back at the meangirls. When she did, they were shocked and she walked away before they could respond. She was really running away but she pretended that she wasn't with a sassy hair toss and strut. She had practiced appearing more confident at home. Amelia really was still scared of the meangirls but she knew that practice was the only way to start building her confidence. The meangirls tested her new confidence a few times but she got better and better at shutting down their underhanded comments. Soon they stopped making comments and just gave her dirty looks when they came in contact. Her new friends were so happy to see her stand up to them and so was Janvier. It was obvious the meangirls resented her new attitude and weren't done with her yet. However, they watched her cautiously and lurked around waiting for a chance to strike.

One day, Amelia was late to gym class. She was hurrying to get dressed when she heard the meangirls come out of the bathroom area and head towards the gym. When they noticed her, they stopped and looked at each other. This was their chance, no one else was around but her and them. No monitors or friends to come to her rescue. The meangirls decided to strike. They stood where she could see them and started to indirectly talk about her. Amelia knew they were trying to get a rise out of her and ignored them. She tried to get dressed quickly and get out of there. When they saw that she was growing immune to their attacks, they got angry and meaner. They started to say really mean things but not directly to her so that she couldn't get them in trouble. She could feel her confidence waning and her eyes tearing. She turned her back to them but it seemed as if their predatory nature picked up on the fact that the prey was wounded. One of them decided to go for the kill and said the meanest thing about Amelia. Amelia's face turned red and a tear rolled down her eye. She was so angry and hurt that she blurted out the meanest thing she could think of to the meangirl. Janvier had told her that catty girls' soft spot was the boys they were interested in. Amelia's friends had told her about rumors that the meangirl who hurt her feelings was used and dumped by her own crush. She made a snide remark about that and the meangirl was furious. She walked over to Amelia and pulled her by the hair. She called her a little witch and demanded an apology

for making that comment. Amelia said, " Let go! What about all the mean things you were saying about me?,".

" I wasn't even talking to you!", she yelled at her.

" Yeah but you were talking about me right in front of me. Let go. You apologize first then I'll apologize," Amelia said.

" I am not saying sorry, witch. Apologize now or I'll rip your hair out!", she threatened. Amelia could feel the meangirl's grip get tighter and her scalp started to hurt. The other two were laughing and one of them was actually recording the incident. The meangirl pulled hard on her hair and it hurt so bad that she screamed. A monitor showed up and tried to pull them apart. The other meangirls yelled that Amelia started the fight. The monitor was finally able to get the meangirl off her and took them all to the disciplinary room.

The principal and an assistant came to meet with the girls while they were in the disciplinary room. He listened to both sides of the story and watched the video one of the meangirls shared to prove that Amelia started the fight. He stepped out the room to talk to the assistant and came back a half hour later. He decided the meangirl who pulled Amelia's hair should get five days of detention because fighting is not the answer to conflict, it should only be used in self defense. " I was defending myself. She said really mean things to me," the meangirl told the principal. " Self defense means that she hits you first or is about

to hit you right away. The monitor was outside the locker room, you could have gone to her.", he explained. The other two girls were given two days of detention for laughing and not trying to stop the fight. "What? I wasn't going to jump in the middle of that to stop the fight," one of them exclaimed.

"You didn't have to. Again, the monitor was outside the locker room, one of you should have gotten her instead of recording and laughing at the fight," he said. He turned to Amelia and told her she was suspended for one week for provoking a fight. The meangirls laughed and Amelia burst into tears.

"I didn't start the fight. I didn't even hit her. I told her to get off me!", she cried.

"In the video, you said, 'What about all the mean things you said about me' and she responded that she wasn't talking to you. You have had issues with these girls before and I told you to ignore them. A monitor was outside the locker room and we agreed that you would go to a monitor for help if they were bothering you. Provoking a fight is not the way to resolve these situations, it'll only make it worse," he explained.

Amelia was sobbing and the meangirls watched with satisfied smiles on their face.

"Stop it!", he yelled at them, "I want you girls to leave her alone. Bullying is not allowed in this school and if I hear about you bothering her again, you all will get suspended. Is that understood?". The meangirls were so pleased with his decision that they wiped the smiles off their face, faked remorse and said, "Yes, sir,".

He told them that they could go back to their classes. Amelia said that she wanted to call her mom and go home. The principal and his assistant walked quietly with her to his office. She sat outside while he called her mom to explain what happened and to come pick her up because she wanted to go home. Amelia asked to go to the bathroom and they allowed her. She went to the cafeteria and asked to speak to Janvier. Janvier came out and asked why she was crying. "It's all your fault! I did what you told me and one of the girls pulled my hair. We had to go to the disciplinary room and I got suspended while they only got detention!", she cried.

"Oh my...who gave you detention?", Janvier asked.

"The principal!", Amelia cried.

"Oh boy...I am going to talk to him right now. Let me go talk to my supervisor."

"It doesn't matter. They showed him a video of the fight and he thinks I started it. There is nothing you can do. My mom is coming to pick me up so I have to go. I wanted to let you know that I don't want to talk to you anymore," Amelia said and left. That really hurt Janvier's feelings and she started to tear up like she just lost a good friend. She watched Amelia go. Janvier stood there quietly for a minute and her supervisor came over. He asked if she was okay and if the student was okay. Janvier told him what happened and said that she needed to go speak to the principal about the situation. He allowed her to go and said to keep him posted on what happened.

By the time Janvier got to the principal's office, Amelia had already gone to the car but her mother was still talking to the principal. She waited until the mother came out and introduced herself. The mother was pleased to meet her and said that her daughter had so many nice things to say about her. Janvier figured Amelia hadn't told her mother about her part in the whole mess yet. Janvier told the mother that she advised her daughter to stand up to the meangirls and it may have caused the situation. She was going to talk to the principal about how she watched Amelia get bullied right now. The mother said that she agreed that her daughter needed to develop a backbone; Her daughter had told her that she had been talking back to them and it helped. She said that she will talk to her daughter when she calms down so she can hear her side of the story. Janvier gave the mother her cellphone number and told her to call if she wanted to fight the suspension and needed a witness. The mother thanked her and left.

Janvier knocked on the principal's door and asked to speak to him about what happened. He wondered why the lunch lady wanted to talk about the incident between the girls and sat down confused. He listened quietly as she explained how she saw the meangirls constantly bully Amelia, stood up for her and taught her how to stand up for herself. It was partially her fault that Amelia got into a fight and she wanted him to take that into consideration. He shook his head and said, " See, that is why I told her to ignore them and

get an adult involved. Talking back usually leads to fights. As you said, it works some times but soon tempers are going to flare and it is going to get physical. It's a common mistake for people to think that but don't advise any more students to do that. Tell them to go to a teacher, monitor or principal," he said. " She did that and had been their punching bag since last year. You should've seen how she had to cower in the corner and run from them at the beginning of the year. The poor girl couldn't even make friends because she had been living in fear of being bullied. That's no way for a kid to spend their days," Janvier said.

" I suppose getting into fights and getting suspended from school is better? Look, it's a growing phase for everyone involved. Those girls will mature one day and reflect on how they treated Amelia. They will see that they were wrong. I am hoping that day will come soon because I let them know that bullying is not tolerated here. They got a few days of detention each. I think I was fair and let them all know that fighting is no way to resolve issues and can get them in trouble," he said confidently.

" I see your point but you ended up punishing the victim more than the bullies. Not only that but their bullying is being tolerated while you hope they mature. Meanwhile, this poor girl is suffering for no reason. I don't want to argue about it and see your point but a lot of bullying victims become suicidal or develop mental health issues. I don't want to see that

happen to Amelia. While you are waiting for the bullies to mature, she is developing issues from their bullying that could take years or even a lifetime to resolve. You underestimate the long term detrimental effects of bullying on the victim," Janvier explained. " Listen, I know the facts on bullying. We are one of the most proactive schools in our district when it comes to bullying. We can go back and forth but the answer is that there is no clear answer. Bullying has been a childhood issue since time memorial. Everyone has been trying to figure out how to stop it but there are no clear answers. It is just one of those growing pains and unfortunately, Amelia is a victim. Life is not fair sometimes. I will have her talk to the counselor when she returns because you are right about the mental health issues people who think they are bullied have to deal with. Is that fair?", he asked. " People who think they are being bullied?", she thought, " Does he even believe that this girl is getting bullied or does he really think she is just too sensitive and that is why he told her to get a tough skin and hang in there?". Janvier knew that arguing about this was going to get her nowhere and said, " If that is the best you can do then at least it's something. Thank you for meeting with me." He thanked her for stopping by and she left feeling defeated.

Janvier walked slowly back to the cafeteria. She updated her supervisor about the meeting with the principal and went to her station. She spent the rest of the day in a daze and couldn't wait to get home.

Janvier needed to be alone to think about everything that happened. She couldn't believe that it turned physical. Girls usually don't fight, they just go back and forth until somebody walks away. She hoped that Amelia will survive this round of attacks and be able to move on. Amelia probably will end up switching schools.

The meangirls stopped by her station the next day and gloated. It was a self serve station so she pretended to wipe the counters and avoided them. One of them asked if there were any spoons. Janvier got her a plastic spoon but as she handed it to her, she noticed that the spoon container was full. She pointed that out and the meangirl said, "Oops, I overlooked them. So much has been happening this week, my mind is all over the place,".

"I agree, what happened yesterday totally threw me off. I am so glad that crazy witch won't be here for the rest of the week," the meangirl who pulled Amelia's hair said. She looked at Janvier and asked, "I bet you miss your little friend, don't you?," and they all laughed. One of the other girls said, "If we're all lucky maybe she'll switch schools. She causes way too much drama," and they walked away with big smiles on their faces. Janvier stared at them with disgust. She couldn't believe that they got away with all that and the victim ended up in trouble. What type of sick situation is this? Why does the victim have to be the one who switches school and have to start over while the bullies get to stay and continue their lives

unbothered? The more she thought about it, the more she got upset. To make matters worse, she had to leave early that day to go to a job interview. She would only be serving lunch for half the lunch period before leaving for her interview.

Janvier decided to apply for an apprenticeship so that the company could pay for her to study and take the exams while she worked in that field. She hoped that her graduate degree would help make her a competitive candidate. As she drove to the interview, she tried to forget about the whole bully situation. She wanted to focus on getting this new job. The interview was going well and the interviewer seemed interested until he asked what she was currently doing. Janvier responded that she worked for a school and he took interest. He asked what she did at the school. Her stomach churned as she said she was a lunch lady. He laughed, caught himself and pretended he coughed. He said, " Let's see you graduated a year ago, haven't worked in your field since, don't have any experience that applies to this position and currently work as a high school lunch lady. Thank you for your time. I have another interview scheduled shortly,". She didn't know what to do so she politely thanked him and left.

Chapter Six

LIFE'S TWIST AND TURNS

Janvier went home, laid in bed and cried the rest of the day. She was so emotionally drained that she didn't even study. The next day, Janvier went to work totally depressed. She quietly set up her station as she thought about the interview and what happened with Amelia. She was in a daze for most of the day until she looked up and saw Amelia walking towards her station with a big smile. Janvier just stared at her totally confused. She couldn't figure out why Amelia was there and why she was smiling since said she didn't want to talk to her anymore. Amelia warmly greeted her and Janvier was relieved. She smiled and asked, "What are you doing here? I thought you were suspended for the rest of the week?,".

"There was another person in the locker room that day and she secretly recorded the whole thing from start to finish. When she found out I was suspended while they only got detention, she didn't think that was fair. She said that I was only defending myself and didn't even hit the girl while she was pulling my hair. She wants to remain anonymous so I can't even thank

her. The principal reversed my suspension and suspended them. He wants me to see the school counselor once a week to make sure I am okay and nobody is bullying me," she explained. Janvier couldn't believe it and let out a sigh of relief. " I'm sorry, I said I never wanted to talk to you again. I was so mad that day but my mom told me you were only trying to help. I was still mad but realize that you were right," Amelia said.

" If I had known it would have turned physical, I wouldn't have given you the same advice. Girls from my generation hardly ever had physical fights so I didn't even think of it. They didn't look like the types to fight. I'll have to update the whole strategy to deal with these new issues. I'm sorry my advice got you in trouble and I'm glad it all worked out," Janvier told her.

" It's okay. The principal called us all in together to talk about it. They were shocked to see me and I was sulking because I didn't know what to expect. My mom didn't tell me that someone stood up for me but she told me to call her right after the meeting. They tossed their hair and gloated when they saw me. When he told us about the new video they flipped and called whoever sent it in a liar. The principal said that the person didn't have to say a word and he heard them provoking me for himself. One of them said, ' What about my video? It showed her picking a fight with us,'. He told her that her video showed only part of what happened. The new video showed that too

and what led to that point. The other girl complained that people shouldn't be recording videos in the locker room. That is a privacy issue and the person should get in trouble. The principal reminded her that her friend had recorded a video too and they got quiet. He told them that they were suspended and they got so mad. One of them started crying and said that she will tell her mom and get a lawyer to sue the school. She told the principal he will lose his job over this. They all started complaining and one of them called her mom right away. The principal walked me to the door and told me that he was sorry about the mistake. Now that he got more information, he hoped this will make it right. He let me go to class if I wanted and told me about the counselor visits. He told me I could go home if I was overwhelmed by what happened but I told him I wanted to stay. He let me know those girls were getting sent home right away because they were so rude and unapologetic. I won't have to worry about them for a week," Amelia said. "I am so glad they got what they deserved for being bullies," Janvier said. Lunch time was almost up so Amelia got her food and left to eat. Janvier's mood lightened and she had more faith in the world. It was so nice that people were doing the right thing and helping bullying victims in the safest way possible.

The rest of the week was quiet but the meangirls returned the following week. The supervisor held a meeting to warn that those girls were on a rampage. Their parents threatened to sue the school and get the

principal fired. They were just looking for anything to use against the school. Everybody was ordered to be extra polite and careful around them. After the meeting, the supervisor went to Janvier's station to say that the parents said the meangirls complained about her. They made up all these ridiculous accusations but he stood up for her because her station was highly visible and no one saw anything wrong happening between them and her. The parents' wanted to know who gave them the second video but the principal refused to give names. The parents wanted to know how he knew the person wasn't lying and he said the video showed everything, the person didn't have to say a word. They kept threatening to get lawyers involved and take it to court so he let them watch the video. They walked out saying that it was unfair and they will consult their lawyers. He knew they had nothing to go on because they stopped threatening to sue and left quietly.

" Now we see why those girls are so screwed up. Anyway, I wanted to give you a heads up because they wanted you fired for sticking up for Amelia and 'not minding your business,'. That's what they said, 'she needs to mind her business and do her job, which is serving food, not getting involved in student interactions. She's a lunch lady not the police,'. We'll all be looking out for Amelia so you come to me or the monitor if you see something and don't say one word to them," he told her. She thanked him for the heads up and was on guard the whole lunch period.

Everyone was on guard when the meangirls came in but they remained polite and professional. The meangirls tried to provoke Janvier with underhanded comments but she ignored them and reported it to her supervisor. The meangirls gave up but a week later her supervisor called her in to say that there had been complaints by random students about her station. He would take it seriously but the monitor overheard some of those kids laughing and saying they were going to get Janvier fired for getting the meangirls in trouble. She recorded it to show she wasn't making it up. They just stood there in front of her laughing about their fake complaints as if she wasn't even sitting nearby. The monitor was completing some online training and had her headphones on so they probably thought she couldn't hear them. He was required to talk to her about the complaints but he noted on her record that the kids admitted the complaints were false through a recording made in a public place to address a known issue, which was the meangirls' bullying. Janvier was realizing that bullies weren't really loners. They had groups and worked together sometimes to get someone in trouble. She realized that doing things to deliberately get someone in trouble is a form of bullying. As the victim, she was wary around those girls because she didn't want to lose her job. They practically had her walking on eggshells around them and it was stressful. It was different from how they bullied Amelia but had similar effects. She practically

hid behind her station and refused to leave it when students were around. She cleaned the counters from behind her station instead of going around to the self serve side. Janvier was constantly looking over her shoulder and became more reserved with the students because she didn't know who would go complain. It made for long hard days. The meangirls seemed to notice their negative effect on the workers and gloated. They started walking around like they owned the place.

Chapter Seven

NO MORE

The meangirls stopped bullying Amelia and she was able to make new friends. Word got out about what happened in the locker room and the other students started to look out for her. It was so nice to see her walk around without fear and just live a normal teenage life without being tormented. She befriended a boy who was getting bullied. He hadn't reported it because he thought it was weak to report it. He feared the other guys would call him a momma's boy or wimp. He quietly took the bullying and pretended it didn't hurt. He thought he was being tough and standing up to them by showing it didn't faze him. However, you could tell it was effecting him. He was always defensive, tense and found it hard to make friends because he had to keep his guard up. There was no telling when the bullies would strike or if any other students would join in the bullying. The bullies usually tried to show off by bullying him in front of girls. It was embarrassing and effected his interaction with girls. He avoided them and was afraid that they thought he was a wimp.

Some of the meangirls even tried to bully him then run to the guy bullies for help when they saw him about to blow up on them. He got a reputation for being a weirdo with anger issues, even though it wasn't his fault that he had to react that way because of the bullying. He was really a nice kid but he thought that nice guys got bullied so he became a standoffish recluse. He only talked to Amelia because she had been bullied really bad so he knew she would understand what he was going through. Amelia wanted him to meet Janvier.

"The lunch lady? How can she help me?", he asked.

"She helped me deal with my bullying. I think you should talk to her and see how it goes. If anything, it was nice to have someone listening and looking out for me," she said. He agreed to meet Janvier and allowed Amelia to tell Janvier about what he was going through. The day Janvier met Hamel, her heart broke. She was very empathetic and saw the strain that the bullying had put on the poor boy. He was basically living in fear and was broken by the stress. Janvier got so angry that a kid had to suffer like this because other kids had psychopathic tendencies and wanted to take their anger out on someone.

"I am so sorry to hear about all that those boys put you through. You shouldn't have to deal with that alone. Why don't you tell the principal?", she asked.

"It's a guy thing. He's only going to tell me to man up and stop letting those guys push me round. The problem is that it's more than one person and they will

gang up on me if I mouth off to one of them," Hamel explained. Janvier was quiet.

" No, you should totally stand up to them and hit them where it hurts once, they'll start to back off. That's what worked for me, right Janvier?", Amelia chimed in.

" Oh no, no, no!", Janvier exclaimed, " Remember what happened in the girl's locker room? If girl bullies are getting physical over comments, I don't even want to know what the guys will do. Let me talk to my guy friends about this and see what they suggest. I would tell you to toss your hair and walk away but that probably won't work with guys,".

Hamel laughed and said, " No, they would start calling me homophobic slurs if I did that,".

" That is true. I will get back to you in a few days. In the meantime, keep me posted and if they mess with you in the cafeteria, come to my station. I have a reputation now as the lunch lady police," Janvier said and they all laughed.

A few days later, Hamel was getting dressed for gym class when the bullies approached him. They made fun of him as usual and he ignored them. They got bored and went to the bathroom. He was relieved and rushed to finish getting dressed so he could get out of there.

" Look what I found!", he heard one of them say loudly. They were quiet then started whispering. One started laughing and said, " No way, dude, that's messed up."

" Oh, come on. It will be funny as hell," the other one replied. They both laughed.

" Okay, you do it. I'll be the lookout," the other replied. He got a sick feeling in his stomach, closed his locker and tried to rush out of the locker room. He had only his socks on but decided it would be best to put on his sneakers outside. They must have heard him rushing because one of them suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

" What's the rush?", he asked with a sadistic grin. He was holding something behind his back and Hamel started to sweat. He was really scared and tried to walk the other way but the other bully showed up and blocked him. His eyes opened wide and he started to have a hard time breathing. The other boy snuck up behind him and put him in a head lock, " Scream and I will knock you out. Just be quiet and lay down. Lay down!". Hamel had no choice because he couldn't breathe with the bully's arm wrapped around his neck. He laid face down on his knees on the locker room bench like the bully told him.

" I can't hold him, down. Come over here and hold him down for me. The monitor is on a cigarette break. He won't be back for a while,". The other bully sat on Hamel's back and told him not to move. The one who had him in a headlock stepped in front of Hamel and showed what was behind his back. He held the plunger in his hand and asked Hamel what he thought the bully was going to do with it. " Beat the crap out of me with it?", Hamel responded.

" Close. I'll save that for next time. This time you're going to get pretty intimate with it. Suck on it," he

demanded.

"No!", Hamel yelled and started to squirm but the other bully's weight was too much for him to get up. They started laughing as the bully with the plunger tried to stick it in his mouth. He held his head down as close to the bench as possible. The bully got mad because he couldn't reach Hamel's mouth.

"If you don't suck on it, I'm going to stick it up your butt. You choose. In your mouth or up your butt,". They started to laugh as Hamel started to cry. He was too upset to answer or lift his face.

The bully said, "Okay, I guess you want it in the other end. Pull his shorts down,". Hamel yelled and started to fight hard as the bullies tried to pull down his shorts.

"What's going on! Where are you guys?", they heard the monitor yell. The bullies got off him and ran towards the opposite exit. The monitor found Hamel, shaking and crying. He asked him if he was okay but Hamel wouldn't talk. The monitor kept asking him what happened but Hamel was too shaken up to talk. He helped him get up and took him to the nurse's office. Hamel was quiet and traumatized but wouldn't talk to anyone so they called his parents. His parents picked him up and he still wouldn't talk.

"Have you heard from Hamel yet?" Janvier asked Amelia.

"I tried to call but he won't answer my calls. I texted him asking for a text letting me know he was still alive and okay and he finally answered. I told him to send

me a text each day to say he was okay and if he needed to talk, to call me any time. He's only sent me texts to say that he is okay," Amelia said looking worried. Janvier told her that she was glad he didn't do anything drastic but wondered what happened. " He won't talk to anybody. Something happened but he won't talk about it. The boys who bullied him have been walking around gloating but they haven't said anything about him to anyone. I wonder if they did something to him?", Amelia said, " It was a locker room incident just like with me and those girls. The monitors have to sit inside the locker rooms instead of outside the door now."

" The bullies seem to like to corner people in locker room and bathrooms," Janvier said.

" Oh yeah, that's where those girls usually mouthed off to me. It's because there is no one else around to get them trouble. I always checked the bathroom to make sure no one was in there after they bullied me there a few times. I did what I had to do and got out of there fast. I was so glad when they put in the one person bathrooms and always used those instead of the big ones," Amelia admitted, " I'm so worried he might hurt himself. They said he seemed traumatized,".

" All we can do is hope for the best. Please keep me posted on how he's doing, Tell him I hope he feels better soon," Janvier said. Amelia said she would as she took her food and went back to sit with her friends.

He stayed home for almost two weeks trying to get over what happened. When he came back to school, nobody mentioned what happened for fear that it would bother him. They figured when he was ready, he would talk. The principal told him that the counselors were ready when he was, even if he needed to step out of class. He hadn't told his parents what happened either. All anyone knew was that he was yelling for help and crying. The monitor said he heard other boys there but don't really know what happened because by the time he got to Hamel, he was alone and shaking. Amelia was so happy to see him and gave him the biggest hug. She told him she was glad he was okay and that everyone was worried about him. She let him know that she won't ask what happened and he could talk about it when he was ready. "It was like when those girls trapped me in the locker room and I got suspended. I wouldn't talk to anyone, not even my mom so I get it. I'm all ears when you are ready to talk about it,". He thanked her and remained quiet.

Things were okay for a few days and even the bullies seemed to back off a bit. Then one day, he was talking to Amelia when the bullies showed up and stood nearby. They stared at him with the most sadistic smiles on their faces. One of them zipped down his sweatshirt and took it off. He turned around to show his t-shirt with a plunger on it. He made vague comments about the plunger and locker rooms. Hamel turned red, fumed and walked away. The

bullies started to laugh and gave each other a high five. Amelia was confused, stared at them then ran after Hamel. She found him sitting on the floor with his head down on his knees. She asked if he was okay but he was shaking again. He wasn't crying but he was fuming mad. Amelia didn't know what to say, she said that she would go get a monitor but he said that he was fine. She told him that he clearly wasn't and got up to go, he yelled at her saying, "Leave me alone. I'm fine," and walked away. He walked right out the school doors and Amelia ran to the monitor. She told him what happened and they got the principal. They went outside, trying to find him. They told Amelia to go to class and that they would call his parents.

It turned out that he took a cab home. His parents found him in his room lying in a fetal position but he wouldn't talk to them. He stayed home for a few days. His parents didn't know what was going on with him and wondered if he was on drugs. They asked him if he was taking drugs and offered to get the help he needed if he would admit to it. He got really upset that they thought he was a drug addict and denied it. They kept asking him what was wrong and he got upset, ran to his room, slammed the door and wouldn't let them in. He stayed home from school for a week and didn't want to go back. He started to feel suicidal because he could never feel safe in a locker room again. Hamel had permission to get dressed for gym in the bathrooms instead of the locker rooms. He

didn't want those boys to bother him or anyone else again. He was worried that if he switched schools, he might see them again somewhere around town and they would still bully him. He couldn't see an end to the torment and thought that they would keep bullying him until he went off to college. He couldn't live with the bullying anymore and didn't want to live in fear. He decided to kill himself. The more he thought about it, the more he got upset. Maybe those boys would be glad he died and tell everybody that they were right about him being crazy. It pissed him off that they would get away with it while he was dead so he decided to take them with him. He wanted to scare and terrorize them as much as they did to him. He wanted to see them crying and shaking with fear like they did to him. He ordered a gun from the internet. It would arrive in a few days and he would be ready. He actually felt better after he decided to shoot the bullies and wanted to go back to school. His parents were happy to see him in a better mood.

Amelia noticed the change in him. He seemed to have recovered quickly and even the bullies noticed the change in him. When they stared him down, they noticed he didn't flinch and gave them a cold hard stare. It even scared them a bit and they backed off waiting for a different time to strike. They both wondered if he had told on them and that was why he didn't seem scared of them anymore. Amelia and Janvier were relieved that he was doing so well. Hamel was even more talkative than he was ever

before. They didn't know what caused the change but they were happy that he was doing better.

His gun arrived right on time and he planned out his attack. On the day that he was going to do it, he texted Amelia, telling her to stay home from school and watch the news. She asked why he told her that and he said he heard something bad was going to happen. He told her to just trust him on this one and stay home. She was scared because he never texted anything like that before and pretended to be sick. Her mother let her stay home and she texted him to find out what he knew. She asked if they should call the police and he said no because it was only a rumor but he wanted both of them to play it safe. He knew that Janvier would be out that day because she had an appointment. When he got to school, he went straight to the locker room and hid there. He knew the bullies had gym that day and the time they would be there. He had time to text Amelia and tell her the truth. He sent her a video of him talking about what happened. He had taken a picture of the bully wearing the plumber shirt because he was going report it that day and had recorded himself talking about what happened. He had wanted to play the recording for the principal that day but he felt hopeless and thought nothing would be done about it. He decided to kill them instead. He sent the picture and recording to her. He told her to send it to the police after she saw the school shooting in the news because he was going kill himself afterwards. He told her that he

would also try to kill the girls who bullied her if he could but he didn't know how far he would get before the police came. Amelia was terrified. She didn't know what to do so she texted Janvier to tell her what Hamel was doing.

Janvier was so sure that she was going to get this job. This was her second interview and she had passed all her exams. She was sitting in the waiting room while the interviewers exchanged notes about her. They actually asked her to stay so she was sure that they would offer the position that day. These past few months were filled with so many ups and downs that she wasn't sure what would happen and hoped for the best. She thought about how far Amelia and Hamel had come. They made her lunch lady days so worthwhile. Seeing them blossom and overcome bullying made her day. Her phone buzzed as she thought about them. She wasn't going to check it but something told her it was important. She read Amelia's text and was confused. At that moment, the interviewers came out, told her that she was impressive and offered her the position. Janvier just looked at them, alarmed and confused. They asked if she was okay and she came to her senses. She ran out of the office without saying anything and called Amelia. Amelia answered the phone crying and said that she hadn't called her mom yet because she wanted Janvier to go tell the principal to call the cops. Janvier reminded Amelia that she had the day off for an appointment but she would head right to the

school and call the cops on her way. She told Amelia to forward all the videos and photos to her so that she could show the cops. Janvier told Amelia to pretend she didn't call anyone and find out exactly where Hamel was and what he planned on doing next. She told Amelia to keep him texting and try to talk him out of it. She knew that the next period would start in about fifteen minutes and that was all the time she had before the bullies headed to the locker room to change for gym class. She called the cops and looked for her supervisor's number so he could alert the principal. Janvier realized she was texting and driving and stopped because the last thing she needed was to get in an accident. As long as the cops know what was going on they would alert the school. She arrived at the school before the cops came and headed towards the boy's locker room. Amelia said that he was hiding there. She wanted to stop the bullies from going in there. She had about five minutes left and wondered where the cops were. Within a few minutes, the monitors showed up with the cops. They didn't use their sirens because they were afraid Hamel would start shooting if he knew they were there. They thanked Janvier and told her to leave but she was afraid that they were going to shoot him and said she wanted to talk to him first. He had no clue that the cops were there and Amelia seemed to be calming him down. The cops said it was too dangerous and told her to leave. Janvier quickly opened the locker room door and yelled out his name. She told him that

she was there for him and wanted to help. The cop said that she was endangering herself and the cops then tried to pull her away but Hamel yelled for her to go away because he didn't want her to get hurt. He didn't know she would be there. The cops got quiet and entered with their guns up. Janvier told him not to do anything drastic because the police were there and she didn't want him to get hurt. The cops were angry with her but she was afraid that he would step out and they would shoot him. She told him that she wasn't going to leave so please don't come out shooting. She begged him not to let the bullies ruin his life by doing this. He was a bright kid with a bright future and not to throw it away by ending up in jail or dead. She told him the police were there and ready to help him. Janvier told him that she knows about what the bullies tried to do to him. She has the pictures and videos of the bullies wearing a t-shirt with a plunger on it and making remarks that could help prove what they tried to do to him. She told him to put the gun down where he was and come out with his hands up. They could hear Hamel crying and waited quietly.

After a few minutes, he told them that he was surrendering and came out of hiding. The police pulled Janvier out and pointed their guns at him. Janvier could hear them telling him to lay on the floor with his hands behind him. He cooperated and they handcuffed him. As they walked him out of the school, the hallways were empty because everyone was sheltering in the classrooms. The news reporters

had come and some were trying to interview her. Janvier told Amelia to send the new reporters videos just in case the police tried to prevent it from being seen. There were two sides to this story and she was sick and tired of some bullied victims taking the full blame for school shootings. She looked into the cop car and saw that Hamel was scared and shaking. She asked if she could sit with him in the back of the car. The cops said no but he begged them to let her because his parents weren't there. They allowed it as long as another cop sat back there with them. Janvier held him while he was shaking and crying all the way to the police station. His parents were notified and would meet them at the police station.

Janvier wiped the tears from her eyes and looked out into the audience. " The police investigated his case. He was sent to a psychiatric hospital and the bullies were questioned. It was a complex case because the bullied victim usually doesn't survive a mass shooting to tell their side and if they did the evidence usually mounted against them. I am by no means saying that what Hamel decided to do was right or justified. Violence is not the answer. What I am trying to explain is that it didn't have to come to that. He made those decisions out of desperation. This wasn't a kid who was sick in the head, this was a kid who sick and tired of carrying the weight of being bullied. He saw no way out but to shoot the people who were bullying him. If he could've gotten help like

Amelia did, would it have ended differently? I think so. If he felt as if something would actually be done and not someone giving him a pep talk and telling him to deal with it, would he have reported it from the beginning? I think so. Through it all you see this kid having to make hard decisions, decisions that he wasn't experienced enough to make. Decisions that no kid should have to make. When you are that young, even if you aren't a bullied victim, you have been sheltered as a child and haven't built the resilience that years of life experience brings. You are often short sighted and live in the present or not too distant future. His teenage mind couldn't see pass high school and the bullying. That skill comes with time and life experience. He had been living with the bullies' torment so long he couldn't see it ending. Worse, he had to deal with it alone until Amelia and I came along. You don't have to be his parents to feel how horrible that must have been. That's why I started the BVA. I want to help the victims see pass the bullying. To talk to people who understand and who will not only give them a pep talk but proactively help them to deal with these issues in an effective non-violent way. There are troubled kids who commit mass shooting for no reason but there are also those who are like Hamel. Who just want it all to stop and couldn't think of any other way to make it stop. Let's not let it get to that point. Amelia's story gave me hope that if there is early and effective intervention, lives can be saved and school shootings can be

avoided. It is time to hold bullying accountable for its role in this horrible mass shooting epidemic that has swept the nation. Let's do more than talk. Let's do more than excuse bullying as a normal childhood issue. Let's do more because we can take no more. Thank you for attending this fundraiser and now you will hear from some of the victims themselves, including Amelia,". As the audience clapped, Janvier stepped aside as Amelia took the podium.



You can help stop
Peer Abuse!

Help raise awareness and advocate for victims through activities that support them. A peer is someone who is around the same age as you. It could include people who are a few years older or younger than you. Friends can joke around sometimes but the thing that turns joking around into abuse is it being unwanted and having no mutual consent.

The three main areas of Peer Abuse include:

Platonic

Abusive or bullying behavior by friends. When teasing becomes mocking and the jokes make you cry instead of laugh along, it's platonic abuse.

Sexual

Abuse or pressure with a sexual nature. It can be between peers who are friends, strangers or anywhere in between. It's being forced or pressured into sexual situations that are uncomfortable or hurt. It's not only actual sex, it could be sexual harassment, pressure to perform sexual acts including oral sex, hand stimulation or touching private parts. It could also be verbal, ex. a peer forcing you to tell or listen to sexually charged language or conversations.

Bullying

Being harassed and tormented by peers. Bullying can occur among friends but it is usually more severe in cases where the bully and victim are not friends.

Some things you can do:

Set up support groups so that those who have been peer abused can talk about what happened to them without fear of retaliation, protest to get rules in place or enforce rules that prohibit peer abuse, have prevention workshops about peer abuse, etc.

The BVA offers one hour awareness and prevention workshops to address the three main areas of Peer Abuse. For more information, visit:

bulliedvictimsassociation.com

Bullied?

The bullies have a bigger advantage than you think.
The Bullied Victims Association (BVA) Can Help You Problem Solve This Issue.

First Three Months

Start Understanding What Happened To You & The Personalities Involved
Case Management & Problem Solving
Option To Tell Your Story At Fundraising Events

Based On Innovative Field Research Into Toxic Personalities

*If your child is being
bullied,
next year doesn't have to
be the same...*

- Victim Support
- Training
- Growing Resources
- Advocacy

*If you are experiencing
workplace bullying,
get help dealing with
this issue...*

You Don't Have To Go Through This Alone.

Join The BVA

\$250 annually Primary And Secondary School
\$350 annually College Age And Up (Includes workplace bullying)
Visit: bulliedvictimsassociation.com

Visit: bulliedvictimsassociation.com

\$320 annually College Age And Up (Includes workplace bullying)

\$250 annually Primary And Secondary School

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- Advocacy

*If you are experiencing
workplace bullying,
get help dealing with
this issue...*

I think I might be a bully, how can I find out for sure and what can I do about it?

Becoming aware of bully habits is the first step in deciding if this is the type of person you are or want to be.

The BVA offers workshops to help bullies get a better understanding of their bully habits.

The workshops are not intended to change the bully because change only occurs if a person wants to change. The workshops are intended to give people who think they may be bullies a better understanding of their possible bully habits and then they can choose what path to pursue next.

If the person chooses to prevent future bully behavior, they can continue with additional self help workshops. If the person decides to take time to reflect on what they have learned about themselves, they can pursue their own path. No pressure to change or even explore issues or topics that the person isn't ready to deal with.

If you suspect you are a bully and are ready to confirm it and/or explore bully habits, contact the BVA for more information about Survey Bullying Workshops.

Email: **publicrelations@bulliedvictimsassociation.com**

Be PND Aware



Take ***The PND 101*** Workshop
For more information, email:
tenunnipublishing@gmail.com

Practice Setting Healthy Boundaries



Attend

The It's Okay To Say No

Session

For more information, email:

tenunnipublishing@gmail.com

Practice Setting Healthy Romantic Boundaries



Attend

The It's Okay To Say No: PG 13

Session

For more information, email:

tenunnipublishing@gmail.com

Practice Respecting Healthy Boundaries



Attend
The It's Okay To Take No
Session

For more information, email:
tenunnipublishing@gmail.com

Detox Your Workplace



Prepare Your

PND Squad

For more information, email:

tenunnipublishing@gmail.com

*Help Break The Bully Chain By Raising
Awareness.*

Posters

Buttons

Stickers

Visit

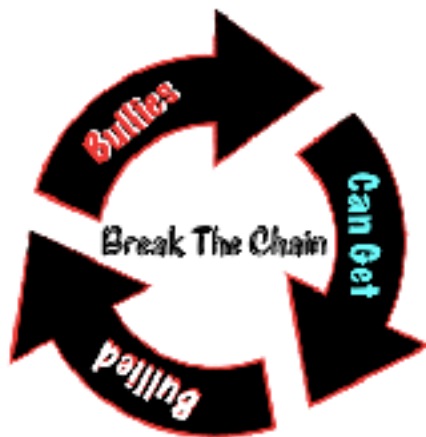
bulliedvictimsassociation.com

Reader's Notes

Child Bullies
can become
Workplace Bullies
and/or raise more
Bullies

Bullies
BULLYING: A CHAIN OF ABUSE

FRIENDS
DON'T
PEER ABUSE
FRIENDS
FRIENDS?



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