



CUTTING EDGE

The Questions Within

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CHAPTER 1

Today started off like any other day. I awoke to my alarm clock obnoxiously blaring in my ear at precisely 6:25 a.m. Sometimes that alarm can start me off in a bad mood because I really don't want to get up, but today I am consumed by a sense of complete bliss.

Anyhow, where was I? Oh yes, my day. Well, I took my shower, put on some make-up and slipped into my freshly pressed khaki shorts and polo shirt. I just had my hair done the other day and it is fabulous. It is pretty short, just above my chin, perfectly styled. I'd like to think I look nice, but other people may think differently.

The Questions Within

This morning is the first day of my last year in high school. I am excited, yet I feel strangely nervous too. Still, I am determined to walk through those black metal doors with a smile on my face. In my mind, today is a new beginning, the first day of the rest of my life. I can at last hold my head up high—I think. I hope.

The last ten years of my life have been a little rough. It has been a long road, but I am so glad that I am past those times and that I actually made it. I now have an imaginary umbrella every day of my life to shield me from the rain that occasionally pours.

Isn't it funny that when you were a young child everything was such fun and so easy? When I was about five years old I loved to play outside with my friends. My neighbor had a fake kind of amusement park at her house every weekend. My friend Lily and I would go over there and have so much fun, riding down the steps on a blanket or sitting in the middle of a huge parachute, being thrown up into the air. Those are a few good memories that I have.

Lily was my age and we were such good friends. We sat on the bus next to each other on our first day of kindergarten and the few years that followed. We were practically inseparable, even though we were very different from one another.

She was the type of girl to play with Barbie dolls and play dress-up in her mom's clothing. Me on the other hand, I hated Barbie dolls and only played with them when she forced me to. I always liked Legos or GI Joe and *only* played dress-up with my dad's ties or hats. She would always look at me curiously, wondering why I hated dresses, wore high-top sneakers and loved to get dirty. But she loved me anyway... until third grade came along...

Wow, it's ten past seven already. I've been going on and on, almost forgetting that I have to be in class in an hour. I have to put my shoes on, and then I will be ready to go. Man, I love these shoes; classic Adidas. They are simple, black and white, and extremely clean. I have a tendency to wash them every day. I cannot handle even a speck of dirt on

The Questions Within

them. Obsessive? A little, but I have always been this way. I love nice clothes. No one should wear dirty shoes with fresh and clean gear. That just isn't right at all!

Speaking of which, that brings me back to my third grade year, the second day of school to be exact. I remember that day like it was yesterday. In the first three years of school I hadn't made many friends. Lily was pretty much still the only friend I had. For some reason no one talked to me; they just gave me dirty looks, like I had some contagious disease or something.

Well, that day was a day that changed my whole outlook on myself and my life. It is when I started to think that I was really weird and disgusting.

Lily was acting strange with me that day, barely talking to me or looking at me. I tried to act like nothing was going on but when recess came, I got a slap in the face.

The entire class was going outside to play, practically running. I walked over to Lily.

“Hey! You okay?” I asked.

She gave me a really odd look.

“Uh yeah, why?”

Right there and then I knew something was wrong, because she wasn’t even looking at me. She was just looking around the classroom at the other kids leaving, and the two snobby girls at the door who were waiting for her.

“I dunno, you’ve been acting weird to me all week,” I said.

“Well... I just think we can’t be friends anymore.”

“What? What are you talkin’ about?”

“You are kinda odd; always dressing like a boy and well... you just *are* weird. Sorry.”

The Questions Within

She said it without even blinking or betraying any emotion at all.

I stood there not saying anything and she walked away toward her new friends at the doorway. I felt the tears coming fast, my eyes full, but I pushed them back; after all I didn't want to appear to be a baby. I looked down at my long shorts and took off the baseball cap that I was wearing. I never thought that it was weird that I loved boys clothing or never cared about boys like the other girls did. But Lily had told me straight.

I lost my best friend in that moment and I was suddenly alone, with no one to talk to at all, and I knew it. I remember walking outside to the basketball hoops at break by myself, just standing there by myself.

A couple of boys were playing basketball and their ball bounced toward me. This kid named Chris walked over to grab the ball that had stopped by my feet.

“Aren't ya going to give it to me?”

I didn't say anything, just picked up the ball and handed it to him. He took it from me, standing there briefly and sort of staring.

“Thanks, ugly.”

Then he just ran back to the three other boys he was playing ball with. They all turned and looked at me, laughing.

I stood there and watched them for a minute or so, then walked back toward the school doors. I wanted to go home and stay there; I didn't want to be at school or around anyone. I just wanted to crawl into a little ball and hide. I didn't have anyone to talk to anymore, not even Lily.

That then, was the day when my life changed all right and the years that followed were like a roller coaster ride.

Today, so many memories are brought to the surface. But not in a bad way though, because my memories just serve to show me how far I have come.

The Questions Within

I'd better get downstairs. I know my mom has probably made me some breakfast, which I will have to wolf down so that I can get going. It takes me about 15 minutes to walk to school. I don't know why my mom makes me walk because the school is a mile away, but I guess it is good exercise.

Oh yeah, I can't forget my book bag. All this nostalgia has distracted me. I love my book bag; it is black and actually it's a sort of messenger bag. It is covered with metal badges. I have a few that are the rainbow flag and a few others with funny quotes. Actually, I have never gone to school with them pinned on my bag before, but like I said, today is different; a new day.

CHAPTER 2

Walking down the stairs to the kitchen I can smell breakfast. My mom has gone all out this morning for breakfast. She's made omelets, bacon and toast. This is way out of the ordinary; normally I eat cereal of some sort. I really have no idea what has gotten into her lately. She seems to be doing a lot for me, much more than usual even.

In the kitchen I see my mom in her bathrobe sitting at the table reading the newspaper. She smiles over at me.

“Good morning, sweetie.”

The Questions Within

She lays the newspaper down on the table, stands up and goes over to the stove.

“Hi, Mom. A lot of food this morning, huh?”

“Yeah, but it’s your first day back to school. It’s a big day for you. Are you excited?”

Mom grabs a plate from the cabinet next to the stove and loads it with food.

“I guess so. I’m just glad I am almost finished.”

She hands me the plate, smiling.

“You look nice.”

I look down at my outfit, like I’m inspecting myself.

“Thanks,” I say to her.

I take the plate over to the table. I can’t believe how much food is on there; I really don’t know how I am going to eat it all.