

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