“Words could save your life, or they could murder you. They could be the greatest antidote or the strongest poison. That is why you must use words with caution because you never know if someone’s soul is being mended by words or torn apart.” -Lina

To whom it may concern,

This is my story. I’m not writing this to impress anyone or to get any money. I am simply writing this in the humble hopes that it makes somebody smile or it inspires someone to do something nice for another person. I am writing this so that you will be inspired to reach out and pull someone from raging waters, and I hope that someone is inspired to do the same for you.

Today

Today is the day that it all came crashing down. Right now, I’m just trying to pick up the pieces. I don’t know what made her do this and I need to find out. This whole nightmare dates back to the first day of high school.

The first day

Today is the first day of school. I’ve just moved here from Wisconsin to Massachusetts and I have no idea what I’m walking into. My floral backpack is packed for Arlington High, so I seem prepared, but I can’t shake this nervous feeling. What if the kids at Arlington High don’t like me? I wouldn’t be surprised. I don’t even really like myself. Frankly, I’m prepared to spend the next month or so in silence. All these thoughts stream through my head as I wake up in the unfamiliar bed of my family’s brand new house. I literally roll out of my bed with no particular enthusiasm. I dress myself in yoga pants and a North Face jacket, clothes that I can slip by in and go unnoticed. I walk straight past my makeup without a hesitant glance and downstairs into the kitchen. I can smell bacon and cinnamon rolls and see my mother drinking coffee at the circular table in the middle of the room. I pour myself a cup and my mother frowns. “I’d rather you wouldn’t drink that,” she scolds.

“Good morning to you, too,” I reply groggily. It’s too early for argument, and besides, I need some coffee to get me through this dreaded day.

“Fine,” she sniffs, “would you like a cigar to go with that coffee now that you’re all grown up?”

“Actually, I’ll have some bacon.”

My mom guffaws but still brings me a plate of bacon and cinnamon rolls. Actually, I sort of feel bad for my mom, she wasn’t the only one affected by the move. She had to leave her only sister behind in Wisconsin and I bet that she already misses her. But she knew that my dad wouldn’t have a job if we didn’t move so she had to do what was best for her family. She is probably feeling as lost as I do now. I wonder what she’ll do today while I’m at school since I’m her only child. She’ll have to look for a job, I suppose. I mean, what else could she do with her time?

I watch my mom’s slim hands as she cooks herself another batch of bacon. She eats it quickly with buttered toast and orange juice. “Alright,” she says, straightening up, “looks like it’s time to go to school!” I check my cell phone and a pit forms in my stomach. Yes, it is time to go to school. I drag my feet towards our red Toyota Sienna and buckle in. My mother and I drive in silence until we reach the school. The walls are concrete and inanimate; they remind me of a jail. “Oh,” my mother says, “what a—interesting campus.”

“What exactly do you mean by interesting?” I ask my mom while still staring apprehensively at the building.

“Well, the architect was certainly not having a very good day when he designed this.”

I chuckle. My mom can be funny when she’s not commenting on my ridiculous coffee intake.

Dear Ella,

I know that you’ve been acting different lately but I don’t mind. I just want to tell you that I have always wanted to have a favorite person, someone that will talk with me and that I can smile with. You are my favorite person. I know that I’m probably not your favorite person in the whole wide world, but I still want to put a smile on your face. I just want to say thank you for being so nice to me. I’m sorry that I wasn’t able to put as many smiles on your face as you have mine. Things have been a little rough lately. I’m sorry that I can’t be around anymore to make you smile but I just can’t take this world full of frowns.