

In the Eyes of Addie

Parts 1 and 2 of a novel
by Rachael Kester

Senior Project
Spring 2011
Dr. Cobb

Artist Statement: In the Eyes of Addie

As a Creative and Professional Writing student, my senior thesis utilizes and displays the skills and inspirations I have gained through my classes at Bemidji State in a single piece of creative writing. It is a fiction piece following the journey of a young girl, Addie wells, told in first person through her diary entries. It is contemporary realism aimed for a general audience, but appealing specifically to female young adults.

The story begins with Addie's transition to college as a freshman and, as a "coming of age" type story, brings the audience along as she discovers who she is in this new stage in her life. College brings things like independence, control, and freedom. These are complex themes that can bring both joy and grief. they tie into Addie's central struggle through the piece: distorted body image and eating. A specific focus in on her spiritual journey and how her eating problems relate to her relationship with God.

My inspirations for the piece came from my favorite authors as a teenager: Melody Carlson and Meg Cabot. They both wrote stories of teenage girls getting through the pressures of high school, told through their diary entries. The stories are really simply told and easy to read. However, they dramatically influenced me as a teenager. Their characters became my friends and encouraged me through my own struggles. They meant something to me because they were real, and I could relate to them. Those are the goals of my writing, and so I hope that *In the Eyes of Addie* may someday provide and encouragement and wisdom to someone else.

The idea for the diary format of this piece was originally inspired by *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* series by Melody Carlson and *The Princess Diary* series by Meg Cabot, though something similar has been done by countless other authors. I chose this format, knowing its challenges, because I felt it was the best way to tell Addie's story. It allows Addie to be completely honest in her telling of her life and creates an unreliable narrator to play with. This telling allows the audience to really understand how Addie thinks and get inside her head. It also offers the ability for Addie to write to God and include Bible verses. However, this format made creating scenes and dialogue difficult. As these are two things I struggle with as a writer anyway, I had to work very hard to include them into the story in a smooth and believable way. Much of my revision was adding and expanding on these elements.

In addition to rereading some of Melody Carlson and Meg Cabot's work to get a feel for the diary format writing, I also did some research on eating disorders to illustrate Addie's struggle with bulimia accurately. I briefly studied eating disorders in my Abnormal Psychology class and read parts of *Wasted* by Marya Hornbacher and *Bulimics on Bulimia* by Maria Stavrou. I also mixed in a bit of my own experiences with bulimia. Elements I've added are: Addie's desire to be perfect, Addie's bad eating habits, and Addie's inability to control how others' actions influence her life. Addie also has a bit of self destroying thinking and behavior which plays into her low self-esteem and eating disorder.

I planned for this piece to be only a slice of Addie's full story, leaving me the option to add onto it in the future. Writing a novel has been an ambition of mine since elementary school, and I wanted to use this opportunity to begin this goal. I knew I would not be able to complete the whole story within the time I gave myself, but my goal was to simply create a strong start. The length ended up not being as long as originally planned, but that lent me more time to focus

on revision instead. I believe this was the best choice, as it allowed me to learn a lot about the revision process and strengthened the quality of the piece.

In the Eyes of Addie is still the longest piece I have ever written and has certainly undergone the most revision. The story ends with Addie's first dive into bulimia, creating a dramatic cliff-hanger ending for a section or part of the story. Though the piece has no resolution for any of Addie's problems, it sets up many elements for me to work with in future parts. Most importantly, it shows how the cycle of an eating disorder can begin. I wanted to create a character the audience could relate to and sympathize with to show how easy it can be for anyone to suffer with this problem.

When I expand onto this piece, I want to really illustrate how bulimia can become a habit and influence so many other aspects of one's life. I also want to deepen the spiritual element woven throughout the story. Right now, Addie's belief in God is very basic and trite. I want to find a way to illustrate how that can change through her friendship with her Bible study leader Trevor and her experiences in that group. I also want to show how her eating disorder affects that. I want Addie's to struggle with whether or not she wants to follow God. This conflict stems from an entry in my own diary stating: "Sometimes I wish I didn't believe in God. I want to reject God and live for myself; the problem is I know He still exists whether I follow him or not. I wish I didn't need him, but I know I do." This should really emphasize the themes of independence and control I want in the piece. I want her to go from cherishing her newfound independence to depending on God; from needing to control every part of her life to giving God the control; and from thinking she is free but really enslaved by sin to finding freedom only in God.

Sometimes simple books about everyday life can seem boring and insignificant, but they just need to have the right audience. With all the pressure and depression that teenagers often face, giving them something as simple as a friend and some wisdom into their life through a novel can make a huge impact. There is so much negative media in the world and my goal as a writer has always been to add something positive to it. In my experience, Christian teen fiction is severely lacking, most of it tends to focus on romance and fantasy adventures. I hope *In the Eyes of Addie* will bring a new and realistic light to disordered eating and God, giving readers, Christian and non-Christian, something to think about to help them make good decisions in their lives.

I have wanted to be a writer practically my whole life. Unlike most creative and professional writing students, I did not pick my major because I felt like a writer. I picked it because I wanted to feel like one; I wanted to learn how to write. Writing has been one of the only things I have ever been passionate about, though I sometimes find myself loathing it. However, I know I have grown so much through it, and though I do not know where it will take me in the future, I do not regret my experiences with it. Writing and revising *In the Eyes of Addie* has finally made me feel like I am a writer and that is something I will always be proud of.

In the Eyes of Addie

(Part 1)

Friday August 20th

So you would think that a shy little hermit like myself would be absolutely terrified about starting college tomorrow—going to a place far from home where I don't know a single person—but I'm not. I can't wait. I can't wait to have a new start, to be at a place where no one knows who I am or what I've done. I don't have to be that girl who sits alone at lunch, the one the teacher has to find a partner for by splitting up a threesome when he does team activities. I don't have to spend every night alone in my room with nothing to do but perfect my homework and read books about girls I wish I could be, girls with beauty, courage, and strength. I can change. That pitiful girl is gone. Starting tomorrow, I will be normal. I'll make friends. Everyone says it's easy to make friends in college. I hope they're right. I get to live in the dorms, on a whole floor filled with other girls my age. I even get a roommate. Her name is Daphne, we've been emailing. She's a dancer and an artist. She also seems really nice and wants to be friends. *God, please let her like me.*

I also can't wait to get away from these cold white walls and piles of childhood clutter. My mother is too greedy to just donate my old stuff to charity, claiming we could get lots of money for it at a garage sale, but she's too lazy to actually have one. So it just sits in boxes in my room taking up space, yet somehow my room has always felt empty. There's both too much and not enough. But now I can finally get away from it, leave it all here and take only what I want with me. I've already packed my favorite clothes and accessories, school supplies, and some cooking things that mom won't even realize are gone. Why she feels the need to buy tons of fancy cooking stuff when she never cooks I will never understand. She did, very kindly, give me

a mini-fridge and microwave for graduation that I'm also bringing, and Daphne has a futon and TV. We made a deal: I'll provide the kitchen area and she'll provide the living area. It's going to be great. Daphne has lots of decorating supplies and ideas for our room. I'm finally going to live somewhere beautiful.

Saturday August 21st

I've been up since 5:30 this morning. It was rough, but mom and I filled her little Taurus to the brim and made the four hour drive from our Twin City suburb to small-town northern Minnesota, stopping for lunch before hitting campus, and making check-in before noon. With so many parents and students flying about I didn't really get to explore my hall. I felt like a single ant in an army, hustling into the anthill in formation, each bringing in their treasure bit by bit. I signed some papers, got handed a key and shuffled to my room. It's small with worn furniture but quaint, and the white walls make it bright rather than cold.

Daphne was already there. She is beautiful. She has long graceful legs, pouty red lips, and a blond boyish haircut. Her orange floral dress and chandelier earrings swayed as she walked up and back down the hall, unloading box after box into our room. I felt so bland and invisible next to her, but she noticed me right away--giving me a hug before I had a chance to think. She said, "I'm so thrilled to finally be meeting you!" I really hope I live up to her expectations.

Slightly embarrassed by my plain jeans and t-shirt, I felt this need to compliment her. I think I felt that acknowledging that she was so much prettier than me would somehow make it less true. Sometimes I have twisted thinking. "I love your dress," I told her, "I wish I could pull something like that off."

"And why can't you?" What was I supposed to say to that? Admit that I'm too shy to show my pale chubby thighs in public? That not only do I not own any brightly colored clothing, but I would have to lose about 40 pounds to fit into anything that Daphne owned? After she realized I didn't have a suitable answer, she simply gave me the compliment I was fishing for. "Addie, you are lovely and can wear anything you'd like." I could totally feel the blood rushing in my face. I couldn't believe I was so open about my insecurities during our very first conversation. And she didn't even stop there. She reached toward my face and sighed as she stroked my hair. "You have the most beautiful hair" *My hair?* That's what she chose to compliment? My overgrown brown mess? "Luscious chestnut waves," she hummed as she left to fetch another box.

The two of us spent the rest of the afternoon unpacking and setting up our room. Daphne brought a handmade quilt with a sunflower on it to hang on the wall and a long paisley scarf to droop over our blinds. Everything of hers is so colorful. It makes me feel so awake. Mom treated me to dinner at this little truck stop diner and invited Daphne along. Her parents didn't come to help her settle in. She's from a nearby town and has her own car, so she just drove here herself. I could tell mom thought that was a little rude of her parents, but I admired her for being so independent. I couldn't tell if she was happy about being invited along or just came with to be polite. I think she maybe didn't appreciate the dirty plastic table and greasy food. She barely touched her burger and fries, probably how she stays so darn thin.

After dinner, mom dropped us back at our hall and headed to the hotel she booked for the night, too tired to drive all the way back home. I knew she wanted me to come and stay with her, but I told her I really needed to finish unpacking my dorm. She wasn't going to insist with Daphne there. I'm just too eager to sleep in my new room tonight and start my new life. Right

now Daphne's chatting with some girls down the hall. I'm very excited about meeting new people and making friends, but I'm not quite brave enough to just walk up and introduce myself to strangers. Talking with Daphne was enough of a challenge for me today. I'll push myself to meet more people tomorrow.

Sunday August 22nd

Saying goodbye to my mom this morning was rough. I had no problem letting go, but she just looked so heartbroken. "Just one more hug sweetie," then she'd prolong the goodbye with, "I'll miss you every day," and another hug, "don't forget to call me." I bet she started crying as soon as she got in the car. It really made me feel guilty for not spending one last night with her. I wish I didn't have to leave her all alone, but what can I do? It's not my fault she doesn't have any friends. Maybe if she wasn't so controlling. Then, maybe dad wouldn't have left her. Honestly, I'm really relieved to finally get away. I specifically picked a college close enough that I can visit home for holidays but far enough away that nothing more often will be expected.

It felt sort of weird not being at church this morning. That might be the only thing I'm going to miss about home. Maybe I'll find somewhere to try out next Sunday, but I don't really want to go alone. Plus, I don't have a car so I'd either have to walk to one nearby or find someone to ride with. Daphne gave a rather forceful "no" when I asked her if she goes to church, so I didn't press it. It made me wonder if she had a bad experience with it or something. My chest tightened a bit as I prepared to be upfront about my faith when she asked me back, but she didn't. She just went on organizing her closet like I never said anything. I don't know if I was disappointed or relieved. I wonder if there are any girls on my floor who believe in God. I bet most of them that did grow up going to church are happy to not have that family obligation

anymore. There has to be some genuine Christians here though. *God please help me find a Christian friend.*

It was nice to have some quiet time after mom left. It gave me time to think, and I've decided to make some resolutions on how I'm going to live my new life:

1. I'm going keep my room clean and organized. It is so pretty now that we've gotten everything arranged and I don't want to ruin that. Plus, I don't want Daphne getting annoyed with me or thinking I'm a slob.

2. I will eat healthier. I've heard college food is supposed to be super unhealthy, but it can't be any worse than what I'm used to. At least I'll have more choices for dinner than simply frozen pizza, boxed macaroni and cheese, or canned spaghetti, like back home. Our floor is getting together for lunch soon before our tour, so I'll get to see what my options will be.

3. Start exercising. This is probably going to be the hardest one for me. Daphne wants me to do Pilates with her, and I know it will be good for me. I'm just so embarrassed already at how weak and inflexible I know my body is. Ick, that has to change.

4. Do all my homework and get excellent grades. School is one of the only things I've actually been good at, but I don't know how hard these college classes are going to be. I'm a little nervous about that. And finally,

5. Be friendly and outgoing (or at least not as shy). I think this is the most important one. It will be challenging, but also doable. People seem friendlier here than they were back in high school. I promise at lunch today I will meet someone new (and eat healthy)!

Later on Sunday August 22nd

I'm so proud of myself. I actually completed some of my goals! The cafeteria was better than I expected. It was buffet style with tons of different options. They had a couple of different lines offering main dishes of hamburgers and lasagna, which smelled really peppery so that was gross, but it made them much easier to resist. The good part was they had a "fresh" bar full of fruits, vegetables, and other salad toppings like croutons, cheese, and dressings. Since my mom only ever went to the grocery store once a month, the few fruits and vegetables she'd get—or the single bag of plain iceberg lettuce and a couple of bruised apples—never lasted long. So, yesterday I made myself the most exquisite salad I've ever had, filled with olives, cucumbers, carrots, peppers, and tomatoes. I tried not to top it with too much dressing, but their ranch was delicious.

The dining room had those long narrow tables that smelled like bleach. All the girls on our floor could fit at just one. I ended up sitting on the end because I took so long constructing my salad, and I had to wait in line since that's what most of the other girls ate too. It was fine though because my Residential Assistant, or RA, was sitting across from me, so I got to talk to her. I met her on move-in day, but hadn't really got a chance to talk to her much then.

Her name is Gina, and she seemed really sweet. This is the beginning of her third year here, majoring in elementary education. She has olive skin and dark curls that bob when she gets excited, which I'm guessing is a lot. All she could talk about was how happy she was to be meeting her new residents and how she couldn't wait for classes to start. I think she was genuinely serious about it all too.

After lunch, Gina led our floor on a tour of the campus. When I first toured the campus it was winter, so I hadn't realized how pretty it really is. I don't think I've ever seen a place with

so many trees that wasn't a park or forest. They were scattered everywhere between the quaint brick buildings and into the center courtyard, providing shade for the wooden benches and picnic tables. And there were pink and blue wildflowers lining the building and adorning the courtyard. As we walked the afternoon sun warmed my shoulders, and this sense of peace settled on me. I couldn't help but feel that this was where I'm meant to be.

Once we got back to our dorm, we settled on the front lawn and Gina led a small meeting to go over rules and do some get-to-know-you stuff. Normally I hate that kind of thing because it requires me to talk about myself in front of a lot of people, but it wasn't so bad. Gina's "fun fact" was she used to be a cheerleader in high school. She even did a little cheer for us. Daphne shared about the year she spent in France when she was 14. A lot of the other girls just told us their planned major and talked about their career plans. I can never think of anything interesting to say about myself, so that's what I did too. Psychology is a pretty basic major, so I don't think it made me stick out or anything either, which I appreciated.

I did mention too though that I want to be a counselor, which felt a little weird as I hadn't really told anyone that yet. Saying it out loud made it seem a lot more real, and I haven't even decided if counseling would actually be something I might be good at. Mom doesn't think so. She thinks I'm coming to here to major in something practical like business. "I don't want you wasting all that time and money on something for crazy people." But I feel like majoring in business would be a waste of time as I know I'd be worse at that than just about anything else. But, I don't want to openly defy her unless I know for sure, so right now that's what she thinks.

Well, I've picked out my outfit for tomorrow, my favorite navy blouse and gray flares. Now I'm going to go take a long hot shower and go to bed early so I can get up with plenty of

time to get ready before class tomorrow and act like the new me. So far, no one seems to know that I used to be a loser, and now with my new rules no one will.

Monday August 23rd

Today was wonderful! I woke up with enough time to braid my hair, pack a lunch, and have a bowl of Cheerios before my first class. We didn't do much in my classes, just went over the syllabus and talked about not cheating and coming to class and all that. I think it will take me a little while to get a better feel for them, but they don't look too hard. The teachers are older than the ones in high school and there were a lot more students in the class. I'm mostly excited about my introduction to psychology class. My professor is has a long white beard and was wearing a bowtie, suspenders, and socks with his sandals. He had a high squeaky voice and was very enthused about the course topics. I really hope I do well. It would be just my luck to totally suck at the one thing I might actually want to do with my life.

It was really nice having a long lunch break between classes. I ate my lunch alone outside on one of the courtyard benches and read, but it wasn't at all embarrassing because lots of other people were doing that too. It felt more like I chose it, even though I really would have eaten with someone had I been invited. But I still enjoyed it. I got done with class early too, almost like I didn't even go to school, just something extra added to a weekend.

Daphne and I had dinner together and then stayed up late in our pajamas watching a Lifetime movie and talking. Gina even joined us for most of it too. I think she's trying to spend a little time with everyone on the floor. She looked so cute in her pajama pants covered with rubber duckies. The three of us cuddled onto Daphne's futon, each wrapping a blanket around our shoulders and sharing a large bowl of microwave popcorn.

It was so much fun gushing over the cute male leads and their sweet gestures. I always thought it was considered immature to be sentimental like that, so I used to try to hide it. But Daphne was the one who suggested the sappy movie about a dying man's last chance at love. It was fun to just be myself and actually have Daphne agree with me. We were both attracted to the sophisticated blonde hero, where Gina liked his optimistic best friend with a good sense of humor. She said it was because he reminded her a bit of her fiancé.

Isn't that crazy that someone close to my age is engaged? I've never even had a real boyfriend before. I didn't want to tell them that, but I wasn't going to lie when Gina asked me.

"Seriously?" she almost yelled in my ear, "not even a silly little middle school fling?" Was it really that surprising? I knew that was a bit unusual, but they had to be able to see that I'm not very unattractive.

"I was just really shy growing up." I *was* shy. I said that on purpose. I need to keep reminding myself that I am not who I used to be anymore.

Then Daphne chimed in, "I've never dated anyone either." Can you believe that? She's so pretty. It doesn't make sense. Maybe she's just being picky and waiting for the right guy. When, Gina turned her attention Daphne and began to press her for details, Daphne just shrugged her shoulders and stated that "it just hasn't happened yet."

I couldn't tell if she was proud of that fact or not because she wouldn't say anything more than that. Even after Gina left, I tried to bring the subject back up, but she just said the same thing. I suppose either way it's fun that we have that in common. I felt like we bonded, like we were having a sleepover, but it wasn't a big deal, just an average night. I hope we do things like this together a lot.

I am a little mad at myself though at how much popcorn I ate. The whole bowl was empty by the end of the movie and Gina only nibbled at it while Daphne didn't have any. I was just extra hungry with the whole trying to eat healthy thing, and as soon as there was food within reach I just couldn't help myself. I can't even make it one day. I hope I didn't look like a total pig.

Tuesday August 24th

Daphne and I woke up early before our classes this morning to do Pilates. I'm finally starting on that exercising goal. If I'm going to keep it up, I need to get some better workout clothes. All I had to wear was a pair of brown sweat pants I use for pajamas and a loose T-shirt. I wore my 'I heart NY' shirt mom got for me on her work trip, which is way too big. I think she must have thought I was fatter than I really am when she bought it. I looked terrible next to Daphne, with her tight black yoga pants and lemon workout tank.

Daphne had a 30 minute video that we followed. Somehow we found space in our teeny room to do it, good thing we lofted our beds. Fortunately, the workout didn't require a lot of moving around. Most of the moves were done lying on our backs and moving our legs. I actually didn't hate it as much as I thought I would. Daphne was, no surprise, way better at the moves than I was, but she's a dancer and had done the video before. I was just happy that I could do the whole workout without quitting. It really set a great tone for my day.

I just can't believe how great it is here. Everyone is so open and friendly. I love how there's always people around no matter where you go: class, the courtyard, the union, the dining hall, even my room. And if I'm there and Daphne's gone, I can hear the other girls on my floor, and though they're not talking to me, I don't feel lonely. I've never felt so happy.

And I feel so free. No one's mess to deal with but my own and no one wondering where I am, what I'm doing, or when I'll be home. I never realized how suffocating living with my mother was until now. It's not like my mother babied me really, she was just overprotective, being a single mom and having lots of her own regrets. In some ways I think I grew up quicker because of it, having to be alone a lot as a child because mom was working and couldn't afford a sitter. Spending every weekend helping her with the laundry, cleaning, dishes, and then cooking (more like heating up premade dinners) for her every night when she finally got home from work.

But I think I was a little sheltered too. I wasn't allowed to go to the neighbor kids' house unless mom preapproved it with their parents and I couldn't ride my bike past the end of our block. I had to call her every day when I got off the bus to let her know I got home safely. These rules only mildly relaxed when I reached high school. Even now, I'm sitting in the student union between classes sipping an afternoon coffee, and it's so utterly liberating.

Wednesday August 25th

There was a campus organization fair today. Daphne and I decided to go together to see what clubs there are. The courtyard was crowded with different booths and tables, each promoting every kind of club from sports to music to role playing games. I didn't know where to begin, but Daphne spotted what she was looking for right away. In less than two minutes she scurried off toward a group of girls with big highlighted hair and matching tight pink shirts, parading around a picnic table underneath the big oak tree. Pop music blared from a large black speaker as the girls took turns leaping and spinning around. Plastered on the side of the table was a huge blue banner labeling them as the school's dance team. Daphne had been talking all week

about how much she wants to be on it. I have no doubts she'll make it. I just hope it won't affect our relationship. In high school, a dance team girl never would've talked to me.

I was sort of sad to be left on my own. There were so many booths and people chattering, plus everyone kept pushing past me since it was so crowded. It made me feel very overwhelmed, but I knew joining a club would be the perfect opportunity for me to grow some independence and make some new friends. So, I tried my best to keep a positive attitude, and I promised myself I would find a club to join before I allowed myself to leave.

I knew it would be a challenge though. Good thing there were so many choices. Anything involving a ball or running was immediately eliminated, as well as anything that required being on stage or talking in front of large groups of people. There were a lot of clubs for different majors, so I began by heading to the Psychology club table, but it was rather intimidating since I'm only a freshman I don't know much about psychology yet. What if I end up being really bad at it? I suddenly felt like there would be all this pressure on me if I joined the club, so I left without talking to anyone. I'm kind of mad at myself for being such a chicken.

I wandered a bit more and found a booth dedicated to helping the environment. I figured they would be pretty inclusive, since they probably want as many people as possible, as opposed to any skill based club. I grabbed a pamphlet from the table and skimmed it as I stood there awkwardly waiting for an opportunity to talk to someone. There were just so many people, and as soon as anyone left there were others already ahead of me who were better at starting a conversation. It was like people were cutting in front of me in line, but there was no line. I was hoping one of the club representatives would notice me looking at him and introduce himself, but I couldn't even make eye contact so I left.

Not really finding anything else I was interested in, I seriously considered just forgetting the whole thing. Then I saw this boy with a long skinny neck and big ears sitting at a table in the far back of the courtyard out of the shade. It was the only booth I saw that didn't have a huge group of students hovering around it, and I wondered why. I squinted, trying to make out the name on the little banner. As I walked a bit closer, I noticed a large wooden cross leaning up against the table. I remembered my prayer for a Christian friend and thought that maybe this was my opportunity.

When I made it up to the table, the boy grinned and introduced himself as Trevor and his club as "Lifeline." He was wearing overalls with a neon green polo shirt and his voice was much deeper than I expected for his small frame. When I asked exactly what his club is, he gave me an information sheet with the when and wheres of their meetings. He said it was just a group of students who hang out together and study the Bible. I felt very satisfied with just that and was ready to finally retreat back to my room, but he wasn't ready to let me leave.

"Do you believe in God?" He had more of a curious tone than a reprimanding one, but I was still a little put back by the question. I hadn't even told him my name yet.

"Yes," was all I said, unwilling to share my whole God story with basically a stranger.

"Sweet. Are you hungry?"

"A little bit."

"Why don't you come to dinner with me?" I was embarrassed at my elation over a simple dinner invitation. I knew he was just being friendly, but it was the first time a boy had ever asked me to do anything with him.

"Okay." I really was tired, but I wasn't going to turn down the chance to make a friend.

"Great. Some other students from Lifeline are meeting me at the caf in a bit. I'm excited to introduce you..."

"Addie."

"Addie," he repeated and then shook my hand.

By this time the organization fair was ending, so I helped him clean up his table. There wasn't much to it compared to most of the other groups, just a bunch of information pamphlets and a picture collage of students from their club. I noticed Trevor in many of the pictures: in one he was being held off the ground by a cluster of girls and in another he was posing on his tiptoes like a ballerina. I carried these as he led the way to his car, shouldering the wooden cross. Then I trailed behind him as we walked to the dining hall, like a child following her parent. He was on the phone with some girl named Kendra who seemed to be bringing the other people.

As soon as he hung up, Trevor stopped in midstride, squatted, cupped his hands around his mouth, and sang out "Knnnnndraaa" in an off-tune almost screech. It reminded me of a bird-call. A petite girl with a long rusty braid and a pointy nose waved from across the parking lot, not looking at all surprised, and hurried over to us. I didn't know how to react, so I just stood there awkwardly. I suddenly wasn't sure if I would fit in with this group after all, but I was determined to try.

Trevor introduced me to Kendra, who apologized for not bringing anyone. She didn't really say why, but I just assumed they already had plans. I tried to hide my disappointment, and reminded myself that I would simply meet them another time.

The three of us ate together and it was nice. It was a lot more crowded than when I'd been here before. I didn't have to wait in line for too long, since I just had a bowl of soup and some fruit, but that meant I had to sit by myself until Trevor and Kendra made it through the main line.

I thought about waiting in line with them so I wouldn't be alone, but I really didn't want the Chinese chicken they were serving. I ended up sitting on the end of a long table that had a bunch of loud boys eating multiple plates on the other end since there weren't any empty tables. Fortunately, it was by a window, so I watched other students walking and a couple playing Frisbee until Trevor and Kendra joined me.

Things didn't get too much better when they did though. They kept asking me questions about myself and trying to get to know me. It was sweet but I just didn't really know what to say. I am such a terrible conversationalist. I answered their questions with as few words as possible. I didn't like being the center of attention. Trevor and Kendra were obviously very good friends and I just felt like a burden to them, like they would have enjoyed themselves more if I wasn't there. Kendra left after we were done eating and Trevor walked me back to my room. He lives in the same hall as I do just a couple floors down, plus he's friends with Gina and wanted to stop by her room and say hi.

On our walk back, he told me more about this Bible study that he's leading in our dorm. It sounded really fun and casual, and the perfect place for me to make more friends. I was excited about it until we got back to the room. I wish Daphne hadn't been there. I hadn't even told her I believe in God yet, and I bring this goofy looking guy back to our room who immediately tries to convince her to come to the Bible study too, without even knowing her.

I prepared myself for an odd look from her or a rude response, but "I am not a church girl," was all she said.

Trevor wasn't deterred. "You don't have to be. You don't even have to believe in God to come. It's just a place where we can hang out and learn together."

Her eyes widened a bit at that, and then she looked up from the ballerina sketch she was working on and stared at him for a moment. Then she cocked her head to the side like she was seriously considering it and said, "maybe." Was she just too polite to say no or was she really interested in going? I should have just been glad that she didn't make fun of him to his face or start arguing with him or something, but I was actually a little irritated. This was supposed to be my thing. Trevor was supposed to be my new friend.

"Great!" Trevor lit up. "Tomorrow at eight works?" He looked at Daphne and she nodded. "We're meeting in the Moose Room downstairs, but I'll stop by beforehand and escort you ladies down there."

I got nervous for a second, thinking Trevor was roping Daphne into something she didn't want to do, but she just smiled at him and said, "I'm looking forward to it."

Once he was gone, all she said was, "he seems sweet." She sounded serious. Could she not tell how odd he was? He was wearing overalls and his ears stuck out like a monkey! Did she just not care? Was he the reason she wanted to go to the Bible study? I wanted to ask her more about it, but before I got the chance, she left to take a shower like she specifically wanted to avoid talking about it.

I know it's terrible of me to not want Daphne to come to Trevor's Bible study. I should be happy that she's potentially interested in learning about the Bible.

Thursday August 26th

I learned tonight where the 'Moose Room' got its name. I'm glad that Trevor came and showed us the way, or I'm not sure if I would have found the room. It's at the end of the hallway in the basement. I hadn't even realized my dorm had a basement. The room was actually really

nice, compared to the rest of the hall. It had brown walls (I was beginning to forget what colored walls looked like) and poufy green chairs and couches. It would be a perfect meeting room, except for the giant stuffed moose head taking up an entire wall! I remember seeing a mounted deer head once at my grandpa's house when I was a little girl, but this was the first time I'd ever seen a moose head.

I have no idea why it's there. Trevor said the rumor is some guy that used to go here shot the moose and was so proud he got the head mounted. But then he moved in with his girlfriend and she wouldn't let him put it in their house, so he decided to temporarily store in that basement room. After he and his girlfriend graduated, they got married, moved away, and he decided to just leave it there. It's been there ever since and has rightly been dubbed the "Moose Room." That doesn't explain how it got permanently mounted to the cement wall, but whatever. Trevor and most of the boys in the group thought that it was super cool. They kept touching it and making jokes about it. Surprisingly Daphne really liked it too. She pulled out her phone and had me take a picture of her pretending to kiss its cheek. Apparently it even has a name: Oliver. "Oliver the Moose." His eyes kept staring at me the whole night.

The Bible study was different than I expected. First of all, there were a lot more people there than I thought there'd be. There must have been almost 20 of us. Everyone but Trevor, Kendra, and one other guy were freshmen. I thought it would be mostly talking and hanging out, with Trevor maybe talking to us about God a little. There were some games and more get-to-know you stuff, but then we actually all read a Bible passage and discussed it together. Trevor really meant "Bible Study." He had a copy printed out for everyone to look at that we could even write on, which was nice because most people didn't have their Bibles with them, and Daphne apparently didn't even own one.

The verses we read were in the beginning of Acts. I haven't read much of Acts (or really much of the Bible at all, terrible I know), so it was really interesting. Acts was written by the apostle Luke and it's about the first Christians and described what the first "church" looked like.

Trevor talked about how he wanted our group to be like them: to be devoted to prayer, generosity, and helping each other. To prove it, Trevor gave Daphne *his* Bible since she didn't own one. She seemed to really appreciate that. She blushed and kept trying to give it back to him, but he insisted. I admired that. I don't use my Bible much, though I plan to start now, but I really like it. My mother got it for me as a gift when I started high school, and it has a lavender cover and silver lined pages. I wouldn't want to just give it away.

Trevor also offered to take Daphne to the store to help her pick out her own Bible, if she was interested. He said he would pay for it and everything. That really made her happy. She kept smiling and asking him questions the whole night. I'm still not sure if it was because she was actually interested in the Bible or if she was just happy to be around Trevor. Probably both I guess. I still have mixed feelings about Daphne getting involved, but overall the night went really well. I met a bunch of people and felt like I really learned a lot about God.

Trevor even ended the night by praying for everyone by name, thanking God for us and asking that we be blessed this week. That was really kind. I couldn't believe he remembered everyone's name. I sure didn't. My old youth pastor used to pray for us sometimes, but none of the students ever did. I would be too scared to pray out loud. I'd be so afraid of everyone listening to me, and I wouldn't know what to say. I'm so impressed that Trevor is just a couple years older than me. He seems a lot more mature than I originally gave him credit for. I think I'm really going to like this group.

God, please help me to be more generous like Trevor and help me to read my Bible more. I want to be a better Christian. I want to be a part a group where I'm loved and supported, like the one we read about in Acts.

Friday August 27th

I knew I couldn't keep this "normal" act up for so long. One week it lasted. One week and already I'm back to my old pathetic self. Why can't I just grow up and quit being such an emotional wreck? I hate my life! *God, why did you make me like this?*

It's not like anything that bad even happened to me. Daphne asked me this morning if it would be okay with me if she invited some girls she met at the organization fair over to our room to hang out. I told her "of course!" I thought she was just being polite and letting me know there would be other people in our room tonight. I thought it would be fun.

Daphne ate dinner at the cafeteria with her friends and then they came back to my room. There were three girls with her. I learned that two of them were freshman planning to try out for the dance team too and one was a sophomore who's already on it. They all had K names—Kristi, Kelly, Katie—something like that. But I only figured that out from them talking. They never introduced themselves to me. I smiled at them when they in and managed to squeak out a "Hi, I'm Addie." Two of them intentionally avoided eye contact—as did Daphne—and one practically sneered at me without replying.

I tried not to let it bother me, decided to stay on top of my lofted bed out of their way, and focus on my Psychology reading. But I could feel their annoyance with me. They kept looking up at me and then huddling together talking really quietly like they didn't want me to hear them. It was like they couldn't do whatever it was that they wanted to do because I was

there. I figured I must have misunderstood Daphne when she asked me if they could come over. She probably thought I would find somewhere else to be. I felt so stupid for getting the wrong idea and probably embarrassing her in front of her new friends.

Then, the one that sneered at me started 'venting,' loud enough that I could hear perfectly, about her super dull and annoying roommate that was following her around and trying to imitate her. I couldn't help feel like it was directed at me, like this friend of Daphne's was trying to tell me how Daphne felt about me. And I wondered if it was true.

I wanted to not let it bother me. I didn't want them to see me get upset, but I could feel tears beginning to build behind my eyes. I had got so used to everyone being so friendly here and trying to get to know you, I forgot what it's like to be unwanted. How in the world I could forget a feeling I had so often I don't know, but as soon as I felt it again I was brought right back to high school. It was like all the progress I was making in my new life began to unravel. Maybe everything that I thought had been going so well this week was really just an illusion.

I didn't know where I could go, but I decided that there had to be somewhere that was better than there. So I got down from my loft and packed up some homework and my journal, focusing on just keeping things together. I wasn't sure if I should tell Daphne where I was going or if it'd be better if I just left quietly. After all, she hadn't even looked at me since she got back from dinner. But once I was on the ground, she eagerly came toward me and whispered "can I talk to you outside for a moment?"

Then, she very politely asked me if I could find somewhere to go for a few hours so she could spend some time with her friends. She apologized for the inconvenience and said she'd make it up to me. I think I might have been okay if I'd just left, but having to hear her ask me

pushed me over the edge. She was so nice about it, and I could tell she felt awful. I just couldn't be mad at her after that. I was just mad at myself. Back to usual. My pain is always my fault.

All I wanted was to be alone. This whole 'people always being around' thing instantly turned from wonderful to terrible. Seconds from spilling my tears, I just went to our floor bathroom. The bathroom was of course filled with girls as usual, one brushing her teeth for an early turn-in, and a group of three girls attempting to dye a fourth girl's hair. My face was burning, yearning for the release of emotion. I was tempted to simply lock myself in a stall and cry, but there were too many people in there. And it was too close to my room. What if Daphne or one of her friends came in and heard me? Instead, I splashed some cold water on my cheeks to keep me calm a little longer and left.

I walked to the lounge: boys playing pool; then the study room: rowdy poker game. I finally went to the stairwell and headed down to the basement. It didn't seem like anyone ever went down there. I could deal with Oliver if there weren't any people. Down one floor, I heard the echo of a girl screaming "I hate you!" and even though I knew it wasn't aimed at me, I still felt its sting. I descended faster, and when I reached the bottom of the stairs, the silence told me I was finally alone.

I hurried to the door I thought led to the 'Moose Room,' but it was locked. That was all I could take. The tears came, and I didn't care anymore. I walked back up the hallway, looking for an unlocked door. I found a janitor closet door, locked of course, and another locked door without a label. Then a bathroom. A one room unisex bathroom.

That was the best I was going to find, so I locked myself in, plopped down on the cold tile, and continued to cry. I'm always surprised at how many tears I can shed over nothing. I cried until I thought I was empty, and then I wrote in here. I've heard that writing things down is

supposed to be therapeutic. I thought maybe it would help me feel better, help me get it out of my system, but I think it made it worse. It made it seem more real, harder to forget, harder to pretend it didn't happen. And dwelling on it is making me cry even more, which I didn't think was possible.

(Part 2)

Saturday August 28th

So I've decided not to let last night ruin things. After sitting in that bathroom for awhile I eventually felt better. Sometimes I just really need to cry my feelings away. It was nice having toilet paper and a sink to clean up with. Once I felt like my face was back to normal I grabbed my books and headed up to the lounge. The boys were done playing poker, so I found a chair to curl up in and got back to my psychology reading. Students passed through, which was a bit distracting, but I was still able to get a bunch done. It wasn't bad. It helped that I really am interested in my psychology class so I could just focus on the reading. When I felt like it was late enough that the girls would be gone I ventured back to the room and found Daphne asleep, so I just slipped into bed too.

My plan now is to just focus more on my new rules. Keep my room clean, eat healthy, exercise, do well in school, and be outgoing. I've decided I can accomplish this last goal by trying my best to get more involved in Trevor's Bible study. Next time I see him, I think I'm also going to ask him about going to church on Sundays. I'm starting to miss my church already, and it just feels weird knowing I can sleep in tomorrow. I've also decided to add, 'get closer to God' to that list. Going to Trevor's Bible study and church should also help with that, and I plan to start reading my Bible more. I think if I do all these things it will help me feel better about myself and keep me in a good mood, so I won't freak out anymore.

Daphne treated me to lunch today to make up for kicking me out. I kind of wanted to some time away from her, but since she was my roommate I knew I couldn't just ignore her for the rest of my life. I figured the best thing to do was just make up as quick as possible.

It was nice out, so we walked to this cute little soup and sandwich shop Daphne wanted to try out. We sat outside at a glass table with a large pink umbrella to block out the sun and drank sparkling fruit water with lemon and lime slices.

It was actually nice spending some more time alone with Daphne. She's really is very kind and fun to be around. Once our food arrived, yummy turkey sandwiches with a bowl of mixed fruit, she apologized again for last night.

"Addie I feel absolutely horrible for kicking you out like that. It's just that Kayla really wanted to talk about dance team stuff and didn't want anyone not on the dance team or trying out for it to hear. It was really rude of her, and I'm so sorry. I promise it will never happen again."

"Don't worry about it." I waved my hand. Her apology was making me embarrassed. Just thinking about last night was making my face red. I could have been mad at her, but I still wasn't. I didn't want her to know how upset I really got. I just wanted to forget it ever happened.

"They were actually pretty dull company anyway," she said and then changed the topic.

That was the all that was said about it, and I'm thankful. On our walk back, we decided that tonight we will stay in together, do our laundry, and work on homework between loads. I thought that sounded perfect as it will keep me up on keeping my room clean and doing well in school. Things really are great here, and I'm going to make sure they stay that way.

Monday August 30th

So Mom finally called me today. She was kind of upset that I never called her last week to let her know how things were going. I think she must have been trying really hard to give me my space by waiting a whole week to call. I told her that I thought she would just call me if she wanted to talk that bad, but I knew she really wanted me to be the one to call her. Apparently

next Monday is Labor Day so she wants to come up and visit for the long weekend. I've only been here a week and already she needs to come see me. I suppose she doesn't have anything better to do with a day off work. I couldn't tell her I didn't really want to see her. How mean would that have been? So I said that would be fine. Ugh! I hope that doesn't deter me from my goals. I don't know how easy it will be to spend time with new friends when I have my mom to entertain.

Tuesday August 31st

I've been doing well with the eating and exercising so far this week. I did Pilates with Daphne again this morning. And I've gotten into a habit with my meals. A small bowl of cereal with skim milk for breakfast before class, a sandwich for lunch between classes, afternoon coffee, and then a salad at the dining hall with Daphne for dinner. I know it's only been like a week, but I feel healthier and lighter already. I can tell being healthier puts me in a better mood. I hope if I keep this up I might be able to lose some of my nasty tummy flab.

Today has been pretty quiet. Daphne's gone this evening at a dance team practice for tryouts tomorrow. Lunch was a little unusual though. It was raining outside, so I ate in the union. I found this cozy little two person table off in the corner furthest from the door. I was sitting with my back against the wall, so I could see practically the whole place if I wanted. However, I was pretty absorbed in my history reading, so I didn't even notice right away when Trevor just plopped down in the chair across from me.

"What're you reading?" Normally, I hate when people ask me that. If I'm reading, that usually means I want to be left alone. Plus, it almost never works as a conversation starter because no one reads the same things I do, so they have nothing to reply back with when I

answer them. However, since it was just homework, I didn't get real defensive about it and just lifted up my book so he could see the cover. As it turned out, Trevor recognized it as he had taken the class before, so he started rambling about the funny professor and how easy the tests were as I just stared at him, still not really understanding why he came and sat with me.

When I didn't respond with anything but a slight nod, he decided to change the subject. "So...do you always eat lunch by yourself?" If anyone else asked me that question I would have been offended, but Trevor just isn't like everyone else. I could tell he was genuinely curious and trying to get to know me.

I still didn't really know how to respond though. "Yes," was all I said.

I was worried he was going to offer to sit with me every day or something, but he just replied with, "Oh," and then nodded his head to himself as his lower lip slightly protruded. It made it more of an interested kind of 'oh' rather than a questioning or surprised 'oh.'

Then, to fill some of the silence, I told him, "I like eating by myself," which is only partially true. I do like it when I choose to eat alone, but I don't like being forced to eat alone. I liked that Trevor came and sat with me, and I felt sort of bad that my comment might have made it seem like I didn't appreciate him being there. I thought about saying something to amend the implication, but nothing came to mind.

He didn't seem offended though. I have a hard time imagining him offended. I bet I could have told him just how ridiculous he looked in his colorfully patched pants and tie dye t-shirt and he would have thanked me for my compliment. "That's cool," he said and then left, just as suddenly as he came, running after Gina who had just walked past. I wish I wasn't so sad to see him go. I remembered that I wanted to ask him about church, but decided it probably be better to wait for a Sunday when my mother would not want to tag along.

Even though it was a small and quite awkward encounter, it sort of made my day. It put me in a good mood and made me even more excited for Thursday.

Thursday September 2nd

Daphne was gone again last night and tonight for the dance team tryouts. Tonight was the actual tryout. I think it must not have gone too well. Daphne seemed sort of upset when she finally got back and went straight to bed without saying anything. It was the first time I've seen her sad, and I felt bad for her. One of my favorite things about her is how she always seems so happy. I wanted to say something to make her feel better, but I felt like anything I tried would have just made her feel worse, so I left it alone. I hope she does end up making the team because I know how important it is to her.

Since Daphne was at the tryouts tonight, she couldn't go to Trevor's Bible study. He came to our room extra early before the study started to just hang out I guess. Daphne had already left, and I was worried Trevor would be disappointed when I told him she wasn't coming. I wondered if he came early to talk to her, but he just sat on our futon, lifted his right foot up to rest on his left knee, wearing nothing other than Birkenstocks, and calmly said "I know." When he had the chance to talk to Daphne I have no idea, but it didn't surprise me that he had.

"Is Addie short for something?" he asked me.

"Yes," I said. My heart felt like a spider, wiggling in my chest, and I didn't like it. I didn't like that talking with Trevor was making me nervous or happy or whatever it was that I was feeling. I didn't want Trevor to make me feel anything. I turned to my desk and pretended to sort through some papers so I wouldn't have to keep looking at him. I was waiting for him to ask

me what it was short for, but he didn't. Again he just sat in the silence. I always thought I could handle silence better than anyone, but with Trevor I couldn't. "Adina. My full name is Adina Ray Wells."

"Adina." Why did I like hearing him say that? I hated when people called me that.

"That's a Biblical name you know."

That was impressive. Not even my old youth pastor knew that.

"I know. It's a man's name." I think that came out rather angrily, as I am not a fan of that fact. That's why I go by 'Addie.'

"I like it. It suits you." What did he mean by that? Then he asked, "Can I call you that sometimes, Adina?"

"No." Even Trevor was not special enough for that.

And after a significant amount of more silence, we finally walked down to the Moose Room for Bible study.

Tonight Trevor shared his testimony. I've heard testimonies shared at my church before, but it was always guest speakers or people who had dramatic life changing experiences when they became a Christian, like drug addicts and suicidal teenagers. I enjoyed hearing them, but I could never relate to them. I've been a Christian my whole life and always been a goody good. They made me question if my faith should be more radical like theirs, which maybe it should. It was really interesting hearing Trevor's testimony, though, because he was very real and honest about it. He too grew up in the church and has never done anything real extreme, until his senior year. His voice got really quiet as he told us about his addiction to pornography. I knew that can be a huge issue for a lot of Christians, but I'd never heard anyone talk so openly about it. I

wondered how well Trevor even knew some of the other students there. I sure didn't feel close enough to him to earn that knowledge about his past.

Then he looked at the ground as he explained how God had helped him overcome that struggle but now he was having trouble with a different issue: forgiveness. He said he didn't feel comfortable saying who he was angry at and why, because he didn't want any of us to think badly about them, but he did say that he knew his unforgiveness was keeping him from God. When he finally glanced up he looked so upset with himself I wondered for a moment if he would cry, but he didn't. I'm really curious to know what anyone could have done to Trevor to make him so angry since Trevor does not seem the type to get angry easily. It amazed me that someone who'd overcome something like a pornography addiction could struggle so much with forgiveness. He must have really cared about his relationship with God to be so torn up about it. It made me almost jealous.

Afterward, Trevor invited everyone to an adventure night he was planning for tomorrow. He wouldn't tell anyone exactly what he meant by that, but he certainly made it sound exciting. I was the only person who said they couldn't make it. My mom's not even here yet and already she's ruining my plans. I didn't want to tell everyone about her visit, but they wouldn't leave it alone until I gave them a good reason why I wouldn't be there. Trevor suggested bringing her along, but I knew that would be a disaster. I did not want anyone to meet my mom if I could help it, so I told him that that was not going to happen.

God, help me get through this weekend smoothly. Help me to be patient with my mother and let us have a good time. Please! And help Daphne feel better too.

Friday September 3rd

Mom got here even earlier today than I expected. I thought I'd at least have a little time to myself after I finished class, but as soon as I got back to my room she called me to say "I'm here!" in this cheery voice. She said that she took half a day off work, so she could leave right after lunch. She was so excited to see me and all that. I have no idea how I'm supposed to entertain her for two more whole days. Just this evening was rough enough.

She wanted to go shopping, but of course the mall closes early in a little town like this, so we have plans to do that tomorrow. Instead we went out for dinner. We ended up going to this burger bar joint because mom said she really needed a beer after such a long week. I didn't understand why we couldn't have just gone to Applebees or something, but that's where she wanted to go. I was hoping it would be more restaurant than bar, but it had dark lighting, neon signs, and awful electric guitar background music. I know I'm old enough that it shouldn't bother me to be in a bar or have my mom drink in front of me, but it still does a little. I'm not 21 yet and have spent very little time in real bars. I guess that was still legal since it was before 10:00, but I didn't feel right there. I think even when I'm old enough to drink, I still feel out of place.

Plus, I really wanted to try and keep eating healthy, and all they had at this place were burgers, fries, onion rings, and cheese curds. I ordered a water to drink, and even that bothered her. She gave me this sad expression after our waiter left, "I would've bought you a coke dear." I used to never order water at restaurants unless I was trying to save money.

"I know. I just wanted water." She looked at me like she didn't believe me. I wanted to tell her I was trying to eat healthier, but I was worried it would come out as an insult, like if I was eating different than her to eat healthy or lose weight, that would mean I thought she ate

unhealthy and needed to lose weight. To eat, I got a plain burger with the intention of only eating half of it. But of course it came with fries, and mom got a basket of onion rings for us to share without even asking me if I wanted any. There was so much food in front of my face, and I was trying so hard not to overeat. But mom kept pestering me, "I paid good money for that. Eat up." And somehow fry after fry found its way to my mouth.

After dinner mom dropped me back at my dorm and said she'd call me tomorrow morning, so we could do breakfast and then shopping. At least she didn't try to convince me to stay with her at the hotel. Daphne was still gone when I got back. She went to Trevor's thing. I thought about calling one of them to see if it wasn't too late for me to meet up with them, but I just wasn't in the mood to go out again. I'm still not. I just want to go to bed. I feel so sick and so mad at myself. All my work of exercising and eating healthy last week is totally worthless now. I bet I instantly gained back every ounce I lost. And all because I have this stupid need to please my mother that I cannot overcome. I feel so weak.

Saturday September 4th

Mom's taking a nap now. We had a long morning. I convinced her to just get coffee and bagels at the local coffeehouse rather than an actual restaurant. I knew I couldn't handle eggs and pancakes. That was only a success of the day though. Shopping should have been fun. I love shopping, and I do love my mother. But she was driving me crazy.

All she wanted to do was buy me stuff I don't need. I told her I wanted some exercise clothes because I had started doing Pilates and she said, "Nah, you don't need that stuff." She wanted to take me to this older lady boutique that I'm sure she would like to shop in if she was thin enough. I hadn't been to the mall here before so I didn't know what stores there were. I

decided I would go in, but after I saw the 40 and 50 something women working I was ready to leave. I told her I didn't like anything in that store but she ignored, as she excitedly browsed around and picked things out for me. I didn't want to try anything on, but she kept saying, "Just try it on for me please" until I would. Before we left, she bought me a mint green cardigan and a leaf printed maxi dress. It was making her happy so I didn't want to ruin that, and I didn't mind getting new clothes. It wasn't terrible, I just felt like I had no say in the matter. I'm in college and my mother is still picking out my clothes for me. How pathetic am I?

After much pressing I finally convinced her go to a store that looked more age appropriate for me. They had sophisticated feminine clothing, but the women working there looked to be in their 20s and the sizes were still in odd numbers, meaning junior sizes. I grabbed a few things to try on, but was super disappointed when I made it to the dressing room. I always think shopping will be fun, until I see myself in the mirror. Nothing I tried looked good on me: the jeans were too low cut, the shirts too tight. I did find one navy empire waist dress that I really liked, but it was a bit too small and I knew mom wouldn't like how expensive it was. I asked the dressing room attendant to get it for me in the next size up as I contemplated how I would ask Mom for it. I would have gladly returned the items from the other store, but I didn't that reasoning would work with her.

But then the attendant returned. She said they didn't carry that particular dress in a larger size, but that they had a wonderful selection of plus size clothes I should browse. I had never bought anything in a plus size, and I couldn't stand the thought that I was really that big. I should have just looked because I may I found something that actually fit me well, but I just got dressed and walked out of the store. Mom had to run to keep up with me, but I wasn't going to explain to her why I wanted to leave.

"I'm just tired and ready to be done shopping" was all I said.

So of course, for Mom that meant it was time for lunch, and we headed for the food court. I was still so upset I just gave up on trying to eat healthy. There's nothing good at the food court anyways, so I indulged in a very large slice of greasy pepperoni pizza. As if I wasn't feeling bad enough, that's when classes finally got brought up. I decided to just tell her about how much I liked my psychology class, hoping to ease her into the idea of me majoring in it. I knew she wasn't crazy about psychology, but she actually laughed at me.

She said, "I took psychology when I was in school, and it's all a big load of crock. It's just a way for crazy people to justify their actions." She pointed her finger at me. "Normal people have no business wasting their time with it."

I was trying to think of a way to respond to that when she asked rather harshly "Are you required to take this class?" I should have just told her. Told her she was wrong and that I liked it. I took the class because I want to be a counselor, but I didn't. I said it was a 'lib ed' and changed the subject. Sometimes I really hate myself. I am not looking forward to this evening.

Later on Saturday September 4th

So I did something tonight I never thought I'd do. I did something sick, something that I don't even want to write down. I didn't mean to do it. Really.

After mom woke up we went out to dinner again. Mexican this time. All I could think about was how she did not have that much money to waste. But if I ever tried to hint at that she got really defensive, so I just went along with it. Powerless. That's exactly how I felt as I dipped chip after chip into the homemade salsa and up my mouth. I was so full, that when my burrito came I didn't want a single bite of it. But all I could think about was how much my mom spent

on it and how disappointed she'd be if I didn't appreciate it. I was tired of trying to resist her and tired of attempting conversation. I ate the burrito because it was there in front of me and that's what I was supposed to do. I always do what I'm supposed to do.

Then, I told mom I wasn't feeling good and wanted to go to bed early, so she dropped me back off at my dorm. Daphne was in our room with some dance team girls again. They looked like the same girls from last week, but all those girls look the same to me. I could hear them before I even got to the room. They were celebrating. Apparently Daphne made the team. I wondered if they had been drinking. I didn't stay long enough to find out. I went back down to the basement bathroom just to be alone. I locked the door and sat on the tile.

I wanted to cry. I always feel better after I cry, but I couldn't. I was more mad than sad. And there were no tears inside of me, just food. A ridiculous amount of food. I could feel my stomach, swollen from overeating, bulging over my jeans. I felt absolutely disgusted with myself for letting that happen. For making that happen. The toilet was there and my insides were churning. I felt this need to get rid of them. It would fix everything and punish me all at the same time. It was like I had to. Like I was nauseous, only this was a different kind sick feeling. So I did. I threw up.

It was easy, and it made me feel better.