

# Alice's Voice

By: Emma F

I have wanted to be fifth grade class president since my sister was president in her class five years ago. Now it's almost my turn. I have my campaign all laid out to the day, and have practiced my speech enough to the point that my entire family has memorized it. But, I know that it's all a popularity contest, and I'm the farthest from popular. I've been bullied since Kindergarten for what I wear. I have developed my own unique style, and I don't care much about the taunts. I still have my own little circle of friends.

As I walked into my new classroom on the first day of fifth grade, I saw two new boys that had not been at our school in grades K-4 like the rest of us. They take one look at me and yell "hey wanna be fashionista, are you trying to bring back the 1980s into 2018?" I roll my eyes at those stupid boys. The bullying usually stops after a few days when I show no emotion toward it. But these boys were different. But I won't get ahead of myself just yet.

The next week when I walk into class I get a new greeting even worse than the last. I thought that they would stop by now. I just hope they don't sabotage my campaign. This week we are starting to run, and I am so excited! My teacher, Mrs. Smith asks if anyone wants to nominate a friend. My friend Mandy's hand shoots up before she even finishes her question. "I want to nominate my BFF Alice, because I know she is going to win." I blush a bit as everyone turns my way, but inside I am bursting with joy. Mrs. Smith nods and scribbles something down. But the boys ruin my happiness when they whisper something horrible to me that no one else can hear. I feel ashamed of myself, and start to believe them. *What if I really am nothing just like they say?*

Well, I shouldn't worry about what they say, just what I can change in the classroom. I have to be very persuasive to change my classmates' opinion on me. But for a second let me pause and tell you a story. When I first started at this school, I was in kindergarten and new to Texas. I didn't know anyone, so at recess I asked a random group of girls if I could play fairies with them. They responded saying "you're way too ugly to be a fairy, go play by yourself." I started to cry, who knew kindergarteners could be so mean? I was called a crybaby all year.

Since then, I have been called ugly a lot more, but I have learned to embrace it. But the boys this year are different, they take my tiny faults and make them seem so much worse. I hate it. I have never been bothered by my style, appearance, or intelligence until now. When I am not at school, or hanging out with Mandy, I am trying to change something about me.

Two weeks later, my classmates and I are starting to vote. I really hope my stickers, buttons, and posters have paid off. My teacher hands out a “ballot” and privacy folder to everyone. The names are: Brian George, Abigail Williams, Alice Forrest and Johnathan White. I know that Brian is the brain, Abigail is the most popular, and Johnathan is the jock. But what am I? I wonder if I can vote for myself. As if reading my mind, one of the bullies whispers, “give up Alice no one likes you. Not even your best friend is going to vote for you.” I then burst out, way too loud “CAN YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?” I then can’t believe what I’ve done. I bury my face in my hands. Mrs. Smith asks me if I need to cool down. I nod profusely and walk out. Now I know that I don’t even have a chance. But I realize something, I don’t really care if I win or not. I worked hard, and I know that. I skip back to class, and fill out my ballot. I vote for myself knowing it will be the only vote for Alice Forrest. But I don’t care anymore. I have an amazing teacher, family, and BFF. And I’m proud of myself.

After everyone is done voting, I walk up to the two boys and tell them a piece of my mind. I say “I don’t care what you think about me. I know it’s not true.” They stare at each other in complete dismay. As if I don’t have a real voice.