

Freak

“Hey, four-eyes!” yelled Jake. “You must have a really strong neck to hold up that bowling ball head of yours!” His friends laughed. And the insults kept coming in rapid succession. So it is with inertia. One fool starts in, and the others get going, and before you know it, there’s no stopping it. “Hey Joe, come on, join in, take your best shot.” “No thanks,” replied Joe, “I’m afraid with three of us doing it, it’ll just look stupid.” I feel lucky to have Joe to help support me. “See you later, freak,” Jake says. And so began the first day of 6th grade.

All I have ever wanted is to be normal. I would even count myself fortunate if I could just be labeled a nerd. For me, that would be a compliment.

A few days later, it was time for our field trip. I really hope Jake doesn’t ruin it for me. As we were walking to get on the bus, Jake stopped me. “Hey, four-eyes. Do your parents even like you? I bet not.”

Tears rolled down my face. I ran as fast as I could into the bus and quickly hid from him. “Where are you, freak?” He’s lucky the teacher isn’t here to see this. I was stunned that such a fortunate looking person could be so...unkind. I’d like to think that if I looked normal, I wouldn’t pick on those who didn’t. Our teacher quickly came in. She doesn’t know all about this bullying thing yet, and I don’t feel like telling her because then I would be a freak AND a wimp. Fuel is not something they lack.

I think my teacher knows people are disturbed by the way I look, but all I really want is friends. I don’t like feeling alone.

Our teacher told us where we would be going. "The bowling alley." Perfect, my worst nightmare. I'm going to get made fun of and laughed at. Jake and his friends will try to use my head as the ball. But little did I know that this would be the day that changed the rest of my middle school career.

As we entered the bowling alley, I was the last to enter. Everyone turned to look at me when I walked in. Head the size of a bowling ball. Once again, I felt like a freak.

As I waited to be picked for a team, I noticed a small group at a lane to the right of us. The bumpers were up and the kids looked different. It was at that moment that I decided I had had enough. Rather than wait to be picked last, I decided to join the group that looked different than everyone else. As I approached that group, I realized their looks weren't all that was different about them. I had never interacted with kids like these before but it had to be better than what was waiting for me at the other lanes. As I started to look for a ball, a small kid with strange eyes came up to me and said hello and offered to help me. For once, I felt like I wasn't weird.

As we started to bowl, I realized that these were the kids at school who were different and I had made fun of them just as the others had made fun of me. I began to feel ashamed as I understood how they must have felt, and I started to see them differently. They suddenly didn't seem so different. They seemed...normal. Bowling with them was more fun than bowling with the other kids because we all treated each other nicely.

From that day on, I knew how much harder their lives were than mine and that I should be grateful for what I have. From that day on, I saw myself and those kids differently and none of us were freaks.