

Katherine is a 16 year old who hides her feelings behind makeup. She hides within the popular crowd, paying for her popularity through doing their worksheets and homework. Everyday was the same, in the morning she would wipe off her tears and cover her imperfections with eyeshadow and lipstick, trying to change everything that was wrong with her. She could have been a straight A student, but that's exactly the thing that would make the bullying worse.

At lunch she would sit at the popular table. A table that she knew that if she got up and left, the girls there would make her life unlivable. At the table, girls would hand her piles and piles of homework, some of the sheets that she would have to finish at the end of period. She had some boyfriends, none of which she connected to or had time for, the homework made sure of that.

After school she would get into her car and drive home. Before she would walk in she stood there for a minute on the doorstep practicing her smile. Everyday her parents didn't even know a thing. She would head up the stairs and wipe off her makeup. Looking at herself in the mirror wishing that she could start over and do everything right. This was her life, rinse and repeat.

One day in February, she was in a beautiful park in a clearing surrounded by trees. The piles of homework sitting around her. A boy came to the park on his blue bike, this boy was so sweet to her. He helped her do the homework and while they were solving the math homework, she spilled everything to him, the bad friends, the little free time, her oblivious parents, it all came pouring out. The boy talked to her and encouraged her to sit over at his table with his warm and welcoming friends.

The next day, she woke up and looked in the mirror, a scratch glowed on her face, her hand reached for her concealer. She stopped herself. When she came downstairs and before her parents could comment, she was out the door.

At school, she saw the boys group, she knew now that his name was Jacob. They waved her over, for once, she felt included. At school she made perfect grades and surprised her teachers. At lunch she sat at a table with Jacob and his friends. Everyone stared at her, but for once, she didn't feel like going along with the script. For once, she was free from her chains just because someone believed in her.

If someone looks alone, or lost, or just like they need a friend, reach out a hand. One gesture can save a life.