

Taking a Stand

By Josie J.

"I just don't get it", I thought to myself while trying to enjoy a nice day on the beach. The sun was vividly shining, the water was perfect, and for once it wasn't too crowded. But something was off, and I knew exactly what it was.

Littered everywhere lay coke cans, styrofoam cups, plastic bottles, cigarettes, and a lot of other stuff. It's like I'm the only one seeing this, which frustrated me so much. These people are just mindlessly leaving their trash around not knowing the harm it could do to our environment. Or, even worse, expecting other people to pick up what they choose not to. By now my anger was boiling up inside of me, ready to spew out like a volcano erupting. "Lyss!", my sister called out to me. And just like that, snapped back into reality.

The next day at school, after a very boring math class, I meet up with my bestie, Avery, at lunch. I look around to see styrofoam lunch trays and plastic bottles in nearly every kid's hands. (I bring my own lunch of course). "Don't people know that styrofoam will never degrade, and kill millions of living things?"

"Of course they do, it's just easier than packing lunch I guess", replies Avery.

"Well, if they really cared about this planet, they would take less than 5 minutes every morning to make lunch."

"Or maybe the school should just serve their lunches on cardboard trays instead of styrofoam, that way kids won't have to pack lunches and it would be better for the environment."

"You're a genius!", I exclaim!

"What do you mean?", she suspiciously asks?

"I mean, we are going to make this school environmentally safe, one step at a time. And that first step will start right here, in the cafeteria."

Now normally, I would write a whole letter to the principal or whatever explaining why we shouldn't use styrofoam and boring stuff like that, but I decided to skip that part because... Number 1, it would be a waste of my time, Number 2, even if I did compose a letter, it would take FOREVER for the principle to even read, let alone do anything about it, and number 3, I wanted to get to the exciting part.

“How do you get almost everyone in a school to protest for something they probably don't even care about?”, I asked myself. After some time I kind of figured it out. First, you'd have to get people interested and aware of what's happening, then you'd have to convince them to join you. How hard could it be to get at least 200 kids to somehow protest?

That night an idea popped into my head, it would solve most of my problems but it would be difficult, very difficult. There's this very popular girl in my school named Tess, and we used to be best friends, but the second middle school started she dumped me for all the popular girls. I never did anything wrong and yet she left me in the dust. Anyway, back to what I was saying, she's extremely popular and could get the word around pretty quickly. Like really quickly. So all I needed to do now was convince her to join me. It would be practically impossible, but if it somehow works, it will work well.

“What do you want?”, Tess asks me the next day as I approach her. She's loudly chewing gum, her long, dark chocolate, hair pulled into two braids. “I need a favor”, I sternly reply.

“And why should I do anything for you?”

“Because I always did things for you, so now it's time to return the favor.”

“So?”, she doesn't even budge.

This is not working, time to try plan B. “Pleeeeeeeeeaaaaase, your just so popular and pretty and everyone likes you, just this once.” I can tell she's thinking about it, thinking, thinking, “Fine.” I knew it would work! Those popular girls never get enough of themselves which can *sometimes* work to my advantage.

“So everyone knows the plan?”, I ask for the 5th time. A crowd of nods surround me, again. I really want to get this right, it needs to be perfect. “Timothy and Sarah, banners?”

“Check.”

“Lucy, does almost every kid in the school know what and when it's going to happen?”

“Fingers Crossed.” Ok, deep breath, you got this. I've only been planning this for a week, it has to be flawless. Has to be. What happens if something goes wrong? Will we get suspended? Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all. No, it was a good idea. I know it is.

I entered school on Friday, a bit nervous, but overall proud of what we're about to accomplish. I was extremely antsy as the bell rang to dismiss us all to lunch. But instead of heading to the lunchroom, we headed right out the front door. I reckon about 300 students in total. I absolutely couldn't believe this! We all waltzed out the front door, heads held high. Then, as we were standing in front of the school, started chanting, “Styrofoam has to go! Styrofoam has to go!” As if on cue, Sarah and Timothy

dropped the banners off the roof, (don't ask how they did that), and they softly waved in the wind reading, "It's not too late to change."

At that exact moment I had felt better than I had ever felt before. I can't explain the feeling, pure joy mixed with accomplishment. But mostly knowing that I, no we, were helping our planet and undoing the wrongs that had gotten us here in the first place was what made me feel amazing. Truly amazing.

I Month Later

After a very boring math class, I meet up with my bestie, Avery. Except this time I'm buying lunch. A few minutes later I'm walking out of the lunch line, carrying a cardboard food tray.