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Professor Whitworth

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 The throbbing in my head intensifies with each barbarian war cry. How could anyone have this much energy? I keep my head low, reading quietly to myself as I feel the wind from pencils being thrown across the room. The teacher says something from behind her desk, made into a fortress by the piles of papers, but no hears. Or cares. She’s a big woman with little hair. She always wears the same brown vest that looks like someone puked on it. Someone probably did. I avoid eye contact with her. I know if she sees me looking at her she’ll call my name and that’s when the class will get quiet. “Alright class now flip to page 339 and check your answers. Then we’ll go around the room and say what we got” announces Ms. Smoller. She looks over at me as she finishes her words and smiles. I quickly look down. I don’t need the other kids seeing me act like the ‘teachers pet.’

The class settles as kids start calling out different numbers. I can feel my face start to burn and my palms start to sweat. I’m not nervous because I did poorly, I’m nervous because I did well. Really well. 100% well. But no one else has, or ever does for that matter. They’re all too busy talking to each other to be highlighting important sentences. Too busy joking around to do any kind of work. I look over at the clock sitting above a bulletin board of ‘Important Reading Tips!’ Time is so slow in this world. All I want, is to be back in Sunset Valley and watch as the day’s fly by as I gain Skill after Skill. It’s easier there. Everything is easier there. The kid behind me laughs out his low score and it’s my turn. I got this. “10.” I say with a croak. An orchestra of groans follows. Mutters of ‘cheater’, ‘nerd’, and the like escape from the lips of my lovely classmates. I just sink low into my chair and read ahead to the next stories. I may be a ‘nerd’, but at least I can express myself better than the trite language they use at me.

The bell rings and it jolts everyone out of their current state as they grab their folders and run for the door, shoving desks in the process. I pick up my notebook and binder covered with doodles and head towards the door. “Good work today Courtney.” She walks over towards me and puts her hand on my shoulder looking down at me. “Don’t worry about what the other kids say. Soon you’ll be the boss and they’ll be bowing at your feet.” She smiles an attempted warm smile and I smile back not saying anything and walk out the door.

I hunch over as I walk down the halls, avoiding everyone in my path. Or rather, everyone is avoiding me. I walk into the locker rooms and turn the dial on my lock and open it up to pull out my gym clothes. My favourite class of the day because honestly who wouldn’t love being forced to play a sport you don’t enjoy in weather that wanderers of the desert die in, right? I’m just thankful that the coach’s office is in the locker room. Oh how those sweet sweet windows of hers keep me safe as she can see everything that’s going on. She comes out in her usual ‘Panthers Sports’ grey hoodie, grey sweatpants and yes, grey shoes and blows on her whistle. “Outside now!” The slew of girls run out the door and down the hallway. They open the exit doors to the outside world and I feel the hot air hit me. hard. This was going to be awesome.

It’s only been two minutes outside and I already feel the sweat drip from my forehead and down to my chin. I straightened my hair today. Well, I do every day, but it actually came out decent this time. I try to keep in the shade, playing wall ball with myself underneath the awning, but I’m whistled at. Right. Teachers have classrooms there. I walk over onto the court and see the multiple games of basketball going on and don’t even bother asking to join. Instead I just walk around the court. After about 128 laps I hear the whistle again. “Inside now!” the coach shouts. Instead of running, this time everyone walks towards the door, legs tired, air missing from their lungs. I get in tow with the others and feel the cool breeze of the A.C as I walk through the double doors of hell.

“POOOOODLE!” I hear a kid shout from down the hallway. I hear laughter erupt from his lackeys and I don’t dare turn around. I can always pretend I can’t hear them but it’s hard to hide tears when you’re looking dead straight at a person. I go into the handicap stall in the locker room and look in the mirror. Of course. My hair looks like it has been to Frankenstein’s wedding and then some. It juts out from all angles and the curls, or what looks like it’s trying to be, are what give rise to the name. I don’t know what kind of poodle looks like this, but they do have the minds of eleven-year-old boys. Not very bright.

I hear the bell ring for the end of the day and breathe a sigh of relief. I walk out the stall and go to my locker, spinning the dial one more time to get my clothes out and change for home. I walk to the car line and no one says anything to me. funny that no one will say anything with their parents around. I open the door to my neighbors big white Excertion and plop down on the leather seats. “How was school?” she asks, turning around from the driver’s seat and looking at me.

“Fine.” I say. Smiling at her. Sharon was always nice to me. She picked her son and I up from middle school while my dad dropped him and I off in the mornings. Her hair had streaks of grey and, unlike my mother, she didn’t try to hide them with fake dye.

“She’s here let’s go.” My neighbor said glaring out the window. He was a small kid, older than me but smaller. I understood what he meant. He didn’t want to be in this place longer than he had to. We were playing the same game, just with different players. I couldn’t wait to b home and play with the people that I loved though. They were waiting for me. right where I left off. Right where I saved them.

As we pulled up to my house and she slowed to a stop, Sharon said, “have a good rest of your day!” She smiled as she unlocked the doors. “Do you have your key?” I raise my hand up with said key on display and nods. I hop down from seat and close the door. She waits for me, making sure that I can get inside safely, even though the walk is about fifteen steps. Like I said, she’s a nice lady. I get inside and the house is silent. I’d call out but no one would answer anyways. My sister was most likely holed up in her room. She’s a typical teen, staying in her room, coming out only for meals and throwing a hissy fit every time my parents ask her a question. But at least she has friends. Or at least it seems that way. That, or she talks to herself a lot. I put my backpack down on the discolored futon and walk into the office. I did all my homework during third period and there was no school tomorrow. That was good news for me. I stopped before I walked in, seeing my brother sitting at his desk.

“Are you feeling better?” I asked him. He had stayed home from school that day complaining of stomach pains, but he looked pretty content with a bag of chips and a Red Bull sitting on the desk beside him. He looks up at me and groans. He clicks something on the computer and I see the screen turn black in the reflection of his eye glasses. He shoves his rolling chair back and gets up, walking past me in a huff. All of my senses become blind to the overwhelming B>O and fart that emanate as he walks past me. they linger as I walk further into the office. He must’ve thought he was a Glade Plugin and would scent the room every ten minutes. I don’t know why he refuses to be in the room with me. It’s not like I’m taking the computer away from him, there are two. I guess he just can’t stand the smell of clean.

I sit down in the torn up blue chair and a warmth starts to spread as I turn on the computer. Finally. I’ve been waiting all day for this. The last I left of my family, we were all at the beach, swimming in the ocean. Our Neighbors had joined us and were Cooking on The Grill. It was a Birthday Party for my Best Friend. She was turning into an Adult. I double-click the icon on the desktop and my life launches before my eyes. out the life I was made for. Or, I guess, the life I made. I am in line to be an International Spy. My Husband is Police Chief and my three kids made the Honor Roll at School. I’m constantly being invited to neighborhood parties and receive gifts in the mail from admirers. Time is different here. Minutes are seconds, Hours are minutes, so I spend the night watching the virtual sun go up and down. Time speeds forward as I sleep and time races as I get lost in this virtual world. This world I wish were real. Where I could make 50,000 Simoleans by just typing [CTRL + C] motherlode. Where I can have as many friends as I want, and not be called names. A place where people liked me. Talked to me. Called me on the phone. A place where the only person who was considered a best friend, was a dog.

I look at the clock and it says 11:58. It’s been more than nine hours and I can’t stop. The only other thing I’d do is sleep. Why would I sleep when I could be living a happy life? What are dreams compared to actually making the things you want, happen? I can do anything in Sunset Valley. I can make my friends. I can get as many skills as I want. I can do anything I want and the other characters like me. they love me.

 It’s not real though. I know that. But, maybe if I try hard enough, I’ll convince myself that it’s real. Maybe then I’ll be happy.