

Wishful Thinking

By Sasha Gabriel

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I don't know why people don't like me.

I try to be nice and smile at them but they just look at me... or past me... and ignore me.

I used to like school... I had so many friends... but it's different now. Now, I hate going to school. Maybe they think it was my fault – but it wasn't! It wasn't!

I wish... more than anything... that they'd like me again.

At lunchtime, I sit by myself and watch everyone else laugh and talk together, but no one wants to sit with me. And if I go over and want to join them, they all get up and leave.

At recess, I sit alone, watching all the other kids play. I don't know why they're so mean to me... I just want to be friends.

Sometimes, when I throw a ball to someone, they'll just point at me and run away.

I wish... more than anything... that they'd let me play with them.

At home, I end up in my room upstairs... mostly looking out the window and wishing for things to be different.

But I always remember that awful day at school when a fire broke out down the hall from my classroom. I remember hearing the fire alarm going off and thinking it was another stupid fire drill.

I was alone in the second floor classroom doing some extra credit work, when I heard screaming. No one ever screamed before during a drill, so I went and opened the door. I saw Mrs. Hendricks, our teacher, hurrying kids to the stairway as orange flames tinted their faces and clothes.

I ran back to get my books and by the time I shoved them all in my backpack, smoke was sneaking under the door. I reached for the handle but cried out as it burned my hand.

I ran back to the window, opened it and looked out. Below on the grass were all my friends and I see two fire trucks! I yell to them, again and again, but no one can hear because the fire alarm is screaming louder than me.

Suddenly I see my Mom. I wave to her and she sees me! She pushes away from the firefighter holding her and rushes into the building.

Mommy's going to get me!

I look around for something... anything... to get the door open so Mommy will know where I am!

I see Mrs. Hendricks' chair and somehow, I pick it up and throw it against the door and to my surprise, the door shatters!

There's fire everywhere! I yell for her and... she's there! She runs through the flames and embraces me and I hold her crying.

There's no time, Mommy says, and takes me to the window. A fireman is there, motioning to us. Mommy hands me out but the fireman yells at her to hold me and climb out together... that there's no more time.

As we climb out the window, Mommy loses her footing and as the fireman grabs for her, she lets go of me.

I hear her scream my name...

I feel her arms around me. She's rocking me and calling my name.

I start to cough and open my eyes and see all these faces around me. I smile at them and they smile back.

And that's when it started... when no one wanted to talk to me again. It's because they think I started the fire but, I swear, I didn't!

I wish... more than anything... that they'd like me again.

I wish... more than anything... that... I was... alive.

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