

6:30. Her alarm clock went off and she got up to turn off the annoying buzz. She thought to herself “Oh that familiar E natural will be the end of me, but I guess I’ll live another day.” The buzz certainly did its job and she stumbled out of bed in order to get ready for her first day as a sophomore at Henady Senior High School. In an “I’m-getting-older” way, today was almost exciting, but in any other perspective imaginable, it was a real bummer. Last year, Leah Morgan was labeled as a geek, thrown into a few honors classes and stuck in the desk right in front of the teacher. Who would have thought that it would instantly tell the entire student body to stay away from her and avoid all contact? Consequently she did not really make any friends and she certainly did not have an “optimistic eye” for the new school year.

Forty minutes later and a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios consumed, Leah began to walk to her bus stop. “Goodbye Mom!” she yelled, but she knew she wouldn’t get an answer. Mrs. Morgan was often at “work” or sleeping, at least that was what Leah assumed. They never had a close relationship, not that Leah cared much.

After the short walk, she arrived at the crowded corner where good old 72409 would arrive in about 3 minutes. In a way it was pretty depressing that she knew, but there wasn’t much to do when she waited alone. She took a look around and everyone was in their own little cluster talking about their summer vacation and their schedules. “Oh my gosh! Really? Awesome!” As much as Leah wanted to hear more of that “interesting” conversation, she walked closer to the sidewalk and noticed a new girl.

The girl stood there with her circle of friends and it made Leah feel even more secluded from the other kids. Envious, she began comparing herself, but the bus came and interrupted her.

Like usual, she was the first to get on and she took the seat right behind the bus driver, waiting for everyone else to sit down. It was all so familiar and she chuckled to herself, “It’s almost like I’ve done this 185 times”. Once again, she scolded herself for knowing the silly little fact. “This is why I can’t get friends.”

Most everyone had gotten on when she noticed the new girl again. However, like everyone else, she walked past and disappeared to the back of the bus. “For once, I’d like to sit back there. I wonder what really goes on.” As much as Leah wanted to just walk back there, she stayed in her “designated” spot, all by herself. It would be another 34 minutes until they would get to school, so she decided to listen to her mp3 player. It wasn’t an Ipod, but a Sandisk. No one had ever heard of it, but it was reliable and \$150 cheaper. She pushed the little blue button and instantly “An American Elegy” came on. She lost herself in the beautiful horn phrasing and waited for the 34 minutes to pass.

When the bus finally arrived, Leah headed straight to her homeroom on the second floor of the Moore Building. Just like last year, homeroom was four times as long, so lockers could be assigned and papers distributed. This year, she got locker 0361, 74 lockers to the left of her homeroom. She scurried to her locker as soon as she got all her papers and packets, attempting to avoid the usual locker traffic in the building. When she reached her locker, Leah began to mumble “28, 8, 38...” as she rotated to the

numbers of her combination. “Hmmm...” She stood there observing the numbers for a moment and said to herself “those are the first three terms of $(8(3/2)^{n-1} (-1)^{n-1}) + 20...$ ”

“What are you talking about?” said a voice to her left.

“Huh? Nothing!” said Leah, as she frantically covered her lock, fearing someone would break into her locker. She turned around to see the potential thief and to her surprise, the new girl... wasn’t standing behind her. It was a boy, who she assumed was also new. She expected him to cower over her in order to get the information, but he looked back with a pair of soft eyes, almost as if he was being friendly to her.

“Oh... I thought you were talking about sequences. I guess that’s what happens to people when their parents are math teachers. I’m sorry if I scared you. My name is Jordan Burke, but you can call me a math geek if you want.”

Although Leah was a little suspicious, she nervously chuckled. “I guess that’s what you can call me too. I was umm... talking about umm...” As much as she wanted to tell him about her locker combination and share a decent conversation with somebody, she wasn’t sure she could just trust a stranger.

After the awkward pause, he responded “It’s ok if you don’t want to tell me. I understand”

“Ok. Thanks” Leah managed to stutter. She scolded herself for her lack of social skills.

“So umm...I’m guessing this is your locker. That or you’re a very prepared thief who is already breaking into lockers.”

Leah felt uncomfortable and answered “Yeah... I have to go.” She looked around for an excuse, but there wasn’t anything or anyone to be seen in the hallway. For what seemed like several hours, she continued to search her mind for some sort of an excuse and after (what was actually) 3 seconds, she said “I have to ask if I can look for some classes of mine.”

“Oh. That’s perfect! I’m new here from Watsonville High School in California and I don’t know where any of my classes are. Here’s my schedule.”

“Oh... well... I... Let me see what I can do.” stammered Leah, as she took the schedule from him. She really didn’t want to, but a lack of social skills meant that she really didn’t know how to say no either. She looked down and to her surprise he was in the same math, English, science and history class as she was.

“I think that’s a good look, right?” said Jordan as he observed the shocked gaze on her face. “What’s your schedule?” he said as he grabbed the protruding paper from her locker.

“How rude!” Leah tried to yell, but it was just another silent thought. As much as she was starting to hate this Jordan guy, she sort of admired him for being so bold.

“Sweet... you have all your major classes with me!” said Jordan, more excited then Leah would ever be. “I guess that means you can show me around then, right?”

Leah sighed a mental sigh and she nodded her head yes. “At least he talks to me” she thought. “It’s a start.”

Not only was it a start, but Leah learned to look past his confident exterior and spent time in between periods, talking to him. Jordan soon became Leah's best friend and he influenced her greatly. After Jordan introduced her to a club for teens interested in math, Leah became much bolder outside of school. There she gained more friends, some of whom were Sophie Wrightman and Manny Carler. Unfortunately, they were both home schooled, but she saw them increasingly as the school year passed. They often met at the Henady Library, where they would do a book of math problems lent to them by Jordan's parents.

The four of them did almost everything together, but each was very dedicated and responsible when it came to school work. During class, Leah and Jordan would never contact each other and before they met, they would always finish their homework. Almost three years after they met, this group seemed destined for greatness. Manny had been accepted into MIT and Jordan into Princeton. Fortunately, Leah had not been completely separated from her friends. Sophie and Leah were both accepted into Yale, where Leah would receive a full scholarship for her exceptional skills in mathematics. Sophie on the other hand, wanted to become a physician, but they were still both ecstatic that they would be going together.

Graduation came and Leah missed salutatorian by one hundredth of a point. Disappointed, she almost refused to go, especially since Jordan wasn't going to be there. He got a serious case of poison ivy following their group trip to Yellowstone national park and it was highly contagious. Although Leah knew that it could never have been

prevented, she depended a lot on her friends and was very insecure without them. However after a few minutes, Sophie and Manny convinced her to attend in order to receive her hard earned diploma.

She arrived only minutes before the ceremony began and found her seat in the middle of the group. She was unable to receive a program and sat in her uncomfortable seat impatiently for the diplomas to be distributed. While Leah waited, she determined that she was number 186 of 256 students and if two students received their diplomas every 31 seconds, she would receive hers in one hour and 36 minutes (96.1 minutes, 5766 seconds), not accounting people who tripped or walked slowly. Unfortunately, she forgot about the speeches and by the time the valedictorian and the salutatorian approached the podium, she began daydreaming. As thoughts of derivatives and limits danced in her head, she was unaware that scholarship recipients would be called up next to say a few words.

“Our next student is the recipient of a full ride scholarship to Yale University. She is one of the brightest students we have at Henady High School. Please welcome Leah Morgan to the podium.” Only awakened by the loud roar of applause, Leah was stunned. She slowly stood up, made her way up the stairs and onto the platform. Never had she been more nervous in her life, as she stood facing the graduating class and the audience. She considered running away or pretending to be sick, but she was eventually calmed. It was not by envisioning everyone in their underwear, but by

spotting Manny and Sophie in the crowd. She imagined they were the only two in the audience and her insecurities seemed to disappear.

“As Mr. Gaul had said, my name is Leah Morgan. Although I was aware of the 87% probability of rejection, I was still determined to apply to Yale. The campus, the scenery and the prestige of that college had appealed to me ever since I was 8 years old. The day I received that letter, I arrived to homeroom late, wore my t-shirt backwards, got 2 paper cuts and forgot to bring my gym clothes. The day seemed to only get worse and I was almost certain that I was rejected. It seemed every time I looked at it, the letter got thinner and thinner, so I avoided opening it to see if my luck had changed. It took an hour long conversation with my friend Manny to convince me to open it. I’m glad I did because, as you all know, I was accepted. The letter also stated that I was going to be the recipient of the full ride scholarship. I was ecstatic!

I would like to thank Manny, Sophie and Jordan for being my best friends and for inspiring me to write my admission essay about them. Furthermore I would like to thank the faculty and staff of Henady High School for supervising and teaching me during these last four years. Everyone has greatly influenced the way I am now and I am proud to represent our school at Yale University. I hope to portray a prime example of our student body and perhaps, I can return in the future in order to give back to this community.” The group cheered and Leah walked back down to her seat, feeling an immense sense of accomplishment. She looked back towards the stands and saw Sophie excitedly jumping and cheering.

After the ceremony, Leah found Sophie and they both hugged each other tightly.

“I’m so proud of you, Leah!” screamed Sophie.

“I’m proud of me too! I could’ve never done it without you, Manny and Jordan. I don’t know what I would do without you guys! Anyway, while we’re speaking of Manny, where is he?” said Leah.

“I’m not sure. I think his mom called him. They’re going on their ‘last family vacation’ and I guess he had to pack.” assumed Sophie. “You still have me though! Yale is gonna be so awesome!”

“I know! I know. I can’t wait! We’re going to have the time of our lives!”

Awesome it would be, indeed. Three months after, Leah and Sophie arrived at Yale in a car stuffed with random school supplies and junk food. Tired and cramped, the girls were overjoyed that they were finally at college. They entered their little dorm, unpacked and immediately went to sign up for classes.

Running to the line for math courses, Leah accidentally collided with the man in front of her. A little discombobulated, she immediately apologized and asked if he was ok.

“Yeah, I’m fine.” He said, as he collected his fallen books.

“Oh ok. Once again I’m really sorry.” She said sincerely.

“It’s fine. Really.” said the stranger, picking up his last book. At that moment, he looked into her eyes and Leah felt her heart skip a beat. He was unbelievable, or at least

she thought he was. Maybe it was the math text books he had dropped or his brilliant green eyes, but she definitely was mesmerized from that moment on.

“Umm... I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your name.” he said, causing her heart to race faster.

“Oh. I’m umm... Leah uh... M-Morgan.” She managed to stutter.

“What a pretty name. I’m Jake Bane.”

From that moment, Leah and Jake were inseparable and every second she spent away from him, she spent her time gossiping to Sophie about his charm and looks. They shared an incredible amount of stories with each other and after a few days it seemed as if Jake was another High School friend.

“I want to meet him” said Sophie. “I mean it’s been 2 weeks and I haven’t seen him! You’ve got to introduce me to this prince charming of yours!”

“That’s a great idea!” Leah said. “I’ll call him right now!” So the girls huddled around the dorm phone and Leah asked him to come over.

“Sure. I’ll be there in a few minutes.” said Jake.

“Awesome! My dorm mate Sophie wants to meet you.”

“Oh, I see! Well I’ll take my time then!” he said sarcastically. “Bye.”

The girls waited in anticipation and when the doorbell finally rang, they both jumped up. At the door, the girl argued over who would open it and Leah won.

“Hi there, gorgeous!” she said, pushing Sophie out of the way. Jake stood in the doorway with a flower filled vase in his hand.

“Hi. So where is this friend of yours?”

“She’s right here!” said Leah, opening the door a little wider.

“Huh? Where?” said Jake. “I don’t see anyone. Are you trying to trick me?”

“Don’t you see the girl in the green shirt and jeans? I mean she’s standing right in front of you!”

“Very funny! I never knew you were such a comedian! C’mon, where is she?” he joked.

“Me? Funny? Not a chance! You’re the one who’s pretending to be blind! I’m really not kidding! She’s standing right in front of you! You’ve gotta see her! She’s waving her hands in your face!”

“No. I don’t. In all seriousness, Leah, are you ok?” said Jake worried.

“Yeah, I’m fine! Don’t tell me you can’t see Sophie! We’ve been friends since high school! I’m not crazy!”

“I really don’t see her and I’m not kidding. Stop playing around. There’s nobody there.”

“You’re unbelievable! Fine! I’ll prove it to you!” said Leah in disbelief. “Here, Sophie, catch!” as she threw his vase for her to catch. Sophie tried to catch it, but the glass slipped out of her hands and shattered on the carpeted floor. “Sophie, you’re such a ditz.” She turned to Jake and said “That doesn’t count ok? She was never very good at sports. You can’t hold that against her.”

“Leah, calm down. Tell me, are you really feeling ok?” said Jake as he walked into her dorm, trying to comfort her.

“For the last time, I’m fine!” Simultaneously, Leah shoved him to the ground, where he fell on the shards of glass.

“Ow! What was that for?!” Jake shouted. He looked down at his hands and arms, both cut badly. The most severe wound was on his wrist, which began bleeding profusely. He wailed in pain and told Leah to call 911.

“I’m so sorry!” panicked Leah and she ran to the phone. “Stay there! Sophie will take care of you! She’s studying to become a physician! Hold on Jake! I’ll be right back!”

“There’s no one here!” screamed Jake in pain as the blood rushed quicker down his hands and soaking into the carpet.

“Hello? There’s an emergency... dorm room number 5693... Yale... cut wrists...blood...everywhere.” Leah managed to say

“Are you all by yourself?” said the woman at the other end.

“No. College student... physician...” she said between sobs.

“Ok. Calm down. Stay on the line and tell the other person to apply pressure to the wound.”

“Sophie! Apply pressure so his wrists!”

“There’s no one here!” Jake tried to shout, but he was getting weaker by the moment.

“There will be paramedics arriving in a few minutes. Please stay calm ma’am.” said the operator.

Leah remained on the phone as Jake lied there in the blood soaked carpet. Minutes later, just as the operator had said, paramedics came to Jake’s rescue. Unfortunately, no one was there to apply pressure to Jake’s wounds and he was pronounced dead at the hospital, due to an excessive loss of blood.

The paramedics believed that Leah was delusional as a result of the traumatic event, but later they discovered that she suffered from multiple personality disorder. She was admitted into the New Haven hospital, where they determined that none of her best friends really existed. Sophie was her dependency on people, Manny was her insecurities, Jordan was her seclusion and the new girl was her envy. As she gained or lost each trait, those people would disappear from her life. Unfortunately, Jake was not a figment of Leah’s imagination and he lost his life trying to be a companion to her misled life. This goes to show that nothing really is what it seems...