

The Unwanted Girl

By Cara Schaaff

Melissa is 11 years old, living in her two-story house with her mom. Her father left when she was a child, leaving her to care of her two younger brothers. Randy is five and Luke is seven, she basically became their mother over the past couple of years because her mom had to take a second job.

Melissa's routine is always the same. She would get up brush her teeth in the morning after eating breakfast. She then takes care of her brothers in the morning she makes sure they get on the bus then she's off to school.

It is her first day of sixth grade, in junior high. It is very much a big difference then elementary school. She gets on the bus and heads straight to the back to sit by herself. She doesn't have any friends; she is never allowed to have anyone over so the relationships she has with people doesn't last very long. The older kids that sit near her start to tease her.

"Don't you ever brush your hair? Where did you get those clothes?" An older boy questions as his friends laugh.

She couldn't answer, she felt self-conscious all of a sudden. She never felt self-conscious before and these older kids are starting to make her feel that way. She was always a loner but now she didn't know how to shake the feeling of what that boy said to her.

As the bus rolls to a stop in front of the school everyone gets off and she is the last one to leave. She never felt so alone; a small fish in a big pond is more like it.

She went to homeroom that she is assigned to and beelines to the seat closest to the back. She could feel all of her classmates' eyes on her as she walks to the back of the classroom. She sits down and puts her bag on the floor.

"Alright students, welcome to William Floyd Junior High, I will be handing out your locker assignments and your schedules for the semester." As the teacher calls out students by their last name. She is the last to be called.

"Zell?" The teacher calls out. Melissa gets up and went to the front of the room.

"That would be me," says Melissa, as she receives her schedule and her locker assignment. Melissa takes her seat and glances over her schedule and locker assignment.

"The bell will ring in about ten minutes feel free to talk amongst yourselves," the teacher says. The students all start to talk to one another, no one talking or acknowledging Melissa.

"This is going to be a long day," She sighs to herself.

Melissa's first couple of classes for the day is all the same in terms of how they went. Her teacher's went right into teaching while she tries to keep busy by doodling in her notebook. Her lunch period arrives half way through her day as she heads down to the cafeteria with a rumble of her stomach. She gets on line with the rest of the student body that has lunch that period. The boy from the bus who was making fun of her hair is behind the girl that is behind Melissa. She can hear him cackle about her. She just keeps quiet, as she gets closer to the food distribution part of the line.

“You, what do you want?” An elderly woman, with her hair in a black hair net barks at her.

“Uh, turkey sandwich please.” Melissa says meekly. She can hear the boy scoff to his friends.

She takes the sandwich and walks down the line. She grabs a small carton of chocolate milk. The boy wouldn't stop making fun of her. She can hear it; a boiling point is about to be reached.

“Where does she get her clothes? The garbage? What a joke!” He says, laughing. His friends start to echo with laughter. As she turns around the girl behind her who was quiet turns around to the boy.

“Why don't you keep your mouth shut, you should talk with that rip in your jeans,” says the girl to the boy behind her. She is wearing a baseball cap and her hair in a ponytail. Her baggy jeans and t-shirt makes her more boyish than a girl. The boy stops laughing with his friends and walks straight up to her leaving no room between the two of them.

“This rip was in these jeans when my mom got them for me. Why are you defending her? She's nothing to be defending.” He says back.

“You don't even know her, you should back off before something bad happens,” says the tomboy.

Melissa is stunned that someone is defending her. She pays the cashier but stays off to the side to watch.

“Oh yeah? What are you going to do?” The boy is about five inches taller than the girl. She looks fearlessly at the boy as she pushes him hard, he falls backwards into the boys behind him. He falls on his butt and grimaces in pain. The girl steps up

to him and places her foot on his hand. Hard enough where he couldn't move it but soft enough so she didn't hurt him.

"Say your sorry to her, now." She says to him. He looks up at her.

"No! Let go of my hand!" He wiggles his hand and she presses on his hand with her foot a little harder.

"Do it!" She says as she hovers over him as she applies more pressure onto his hand. Melissa is curious as to whether or not this girl will actually him. She wasn't expecting what was going to happen next. The girl stomps on his hand once, Melissa is sure she broke it. The boy whales out in pain.

She bends down and is face to face with him. "There you go, there's your hand back. Bother her again and you WILL deal with me after school. Got it?" The boy doesn't respond to her as she turns around. She walks right up to Melissa.

"That should show him, I'm Ann by the way." Ann sticks out her hand and Melissa responds with a friendly handshake. She smiles at her hero as she looks down at the boy who is still on the ground. He looks furious but also in pain, his friends help him up.

"I'm Melissa, and thanks. I didn't expect that." They start to walk out of the kitchen area and into the cafeteria that is buzzing with the sound of students chatting away while eating their food.

"I hate when people get made fun of for no reason. What's the point? Everyone should just be nice to each other and call it a day, you want to sit over here?" Ann says as she point to a random table. Melissa nods in response as they sit at an empty table away from everyone else. They sit down across from each other.

“It was really nice of you.” Melissa starts to smile, something she hasn’t done in all day.

“Wow, you do have a pretty smile.” Ann says as she takes a few sips of her apple juice and smiles back at Melissa.

“Thanks, I don’t get to do it very often.” Melissa started to take a bite out of turkey sandwich.

“I’ve noticed. We have like three classes together including lunch so far today. I guess you didn’t know that, you always sit in the corner.” Ann says, she takes off her hat and takes out her ponytail, just to do it up again and to puts back on her hat.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t realize. No one has said one nice word to me today. That’s excluding the teachers of course. That boy has been harassing me since this morning on the bus. I am glad someone noticed, I really am in my own world sometimes because people put me there. You know?”

“Hey, it’s cool. I get it.” They look at each other for a second with understanding. Someone is actually paying attention to her for once; it is starting to make her feel wanted. She snaps back to reality and has a bite of her sandwich.

“You want to hang out after school today? You could come over, my mom won’t be home.” Ann says, to Melissa. Melissa knows she needs to be home for her brothers but she really wants to hang out with her new friend.

She thinks for a second before she responds. “How about you come over my house? I need to be home for my brothers when they get off the bus. My mom won’t be home either, not until late.” Ann smiles at Melissa’s response.

“Cool, I’ll take the bus with you.” They finish eating their lunches and go out to the courtyard. They exchange likes and dislikes with each other. Melissa also explains a bit of her home life, how she is the caretaker in her home because her mom work’s two jobs. Ann is more than willing to help Melissa with her duties as caretaker to her brothers when they get home from school.

The rest of the day they had four more classes together, seven out of nine is a lot of classes to have with another classmate. They try to sit near each other in the remaining periods they had together. At the end of the day Melissa became a lot more vocal because of the new friend she made.

Ann met Melissa at her locker at the end of the day. Melissa grabs the books she needs for the homework assignments that she has for the evening and locks her locker as they made their way down to the bus.

As they exit the building, the boy whose hand is now bandaged up is standing against the wall watching the two girls go towards the same bus he is going to be riding. He frowns as he marches up the Ann from behind and pushes her over the curb before she could step off it. She falls to the ground but Melissa helps her friend up right away.

“You alright?” Melissa asks Ann.

“Move out of the way Melissa.” Ann gives Melissa her backpack and charges at the boy. They both fall to the ground. Ann is on top and started punching him in the face. He tries to push her off of him but she gets up and stomps on his bad hand, this time she is feeling no mercy. Melissa could’ve sworn she heard a crushing sound as the girl tramples his hand again. Ann bends down and grabs the collar of his shirt, pulling him up to her face.

“You stay away from me and her, otherwise I will make sure your hand will end up in a cast. I will also play “the harmless girl card,” if I really get in trouble for it. You better leave us alone.” Ann holds his collar roughly. Ann is now her protector. Melissa never wants this girl to leave her side from now on.

“No one deserves to feel unwanted and guess what bro, if you mess with either of us again, it will be us laughing about how your face got busted in by a GIRL.” Ann lets him go and brushes off the dirt on her jeans. She turned to Melissa and grabbed her arm.

“Come on, before we miss our ride.” Melissa gives Ann her backpack back and gives her a hug. Ann reciprocates the hug.

“You are like, my protector. You know that?” Melissa says. They let go of each other and board the bus.

“Maybe that’s what I am meant to be, your protector.” Ann says, they sit together in the seat at the back of the bus. The boy didn’t join them for the ride.