Carol Carota

YOU MUST FOLLOW EXACT MLA 8 FORMATTING GUIDELINES: Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-space.

Ms. Carota

Eng. 12 – Period 5

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The bus winds **its** way through our neighborhood, and **its** occupants **create** a commotion with the events of their school day when suddenly I see her, my best friend, tears streaming from her eyes onto her reddened cheeks. I cannot imagine why she is crying when only two minutes earlier **she and I** were **excitedly** talking about our weekend plans. Then I see the cause of her tears**;** it is a shiny safety pin, repeatedly entering her leg, and **its** owner is one of the mean girls. Being the victim of the **packs’** cruelty was nothing new for me**,** but now they were going after my best friend. In that moment, I realized I had a choice to make**:** stay out of it, or stand up for my friend and risk the inevitable counterattack**.**

If someone had told me, even moments earlier, that I would make the choice to defend my friend, I would have undoubtedly told them they were dead wrong; after all, I had spent many months cowering from these same girls, attempting to avoid their vicious attacks. To this day, I am uncertain of what came over me and gave me the courage in that moment to take that stand and come to my friend’s aide. Perhaps it was stupidity on my part, but it had been coming for a long time. And so stand up I did and shouted at the cruel girls to stop. To my surprise there were no ramifications in that moment, and I genuinely thought that I had escaped any consequences.

How wrong I was! The next day the torture began. And the persecution continued: hip checks in the hallway or on the stairwell and name calling. The verbal and physical abuse was excruciating. I did not think I would make it. Something had to be done.

And then it hit me: if I had the courage to stand up to the mean girls once, why not do it again. After all, what was the worst thing that could happen? It certainly could not be much worse than what I had endured these last few weeks. But I knew I needed a strategy. I had to approach this challenge intelligently. I made plans to approach the leader of the abusive girls the following day, being sure to speak to her alone to avoid her losing face in front of her crew.

When I think back on that time I realize it was truly a defining moment for me. I did approach the leader that day, petrified but knowing I had to take the risk. Fortunately, my courage to face her paid off, and their reign of abuse ended. Being a victim is not something I would wish on anyone, but that fateful day forever shaped who I am, and the lessons I learned overcoming that obstacle are still with me. First, life is all about choices, and often times those choices include certain risks. When we take those risks, however, great things can result. Second, taking a stand against the mean girls taught me about resilience; I may have endured a great deal of physical and verbal abuse at their hands, but I did come out on the other side a stronger person. The old adage, “Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never harm me” are truly words to live by, but when we are in the moment we cannot always see that. Lastly, I learned how standing up for my friend and ultimately myself helped me gain confidence, a sureness that might never have occurred if I had not stood up for what I knew was right. That day on the bus ultimately lead me on a path, forcing me to face my fears as well as my attacker, but the outcome far outweighed any risk.

**NOTE**: In your essay, you might consider addressing your “who I long to become” and how college will play a role in that transformation.

Word count: You will find the word count at the bottom of your Word doc.

In Google Docs, find word count in menu bar by navigating *Tools* to *Word Count*.