

ALL ALONE



A story written
by Emma Gough

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CHAPTER 1

After a hard day at school, Maya headed home having to limp the whole way there because the bullies had got to her again. She was black and everyone at school made fun of her and judged her but at home was even worse. Her parents - who adopted her - wouldn't treat her as well as her fortunate yet generous brother called Max. He had all the attention and would be bribed by his parents not to help Maya since his parents didn't want him communicating with her. She was given one slice of bread for every meal while Max had a feast all for himself.

Maya had lived in the horror story ever since she was three years old when she was adopted. She couldn't remember what her birth parents looked like, but every night she would dream of them and hope that they hadn't left her because of her appearance.

When she got home, Maya was forced to go straight to bed but she didn't complain because it was peaceful up in the attic where she could think, alone. Finally, she reached the top of the endless stairs and hopped towards her dirty mattress, trying not to put pressure on her injured leg. Then she almost fainted onto her so-called bed and cried into her pillow as she was stressing over how she was

meant to live the rest of her life being abused for no fault of her own. It wasn't fair.

The poor girl spent so long sobbing that she eventually cried herself to sleep and had a nightmare about the next day. Maya dreamt she would be publicly humiliated in PE by Jessie, the bully, like last week when she put a magnet in Maya's football. Added to that, she was called names in the lunch hall and had to sit all by herself to eat her minuscule meal. After several more punishments, she thought long and hard about previous memories of birth parents; hard because she wanted an accurate answer and long because she couldn't think of one.

CHAPTER 2

After being woken up, Maya got dressed in her small, ripped uniform and set off for school with her breakfast (a slice of bread) and her lunch (another slice of bread) all squished so it could fit in her front pocket since she couldn't afford to pay her parents for a lunchbox. Before leaving the house, she craftily made a bandage for her knee using elastic bands and hair ties she had stolen from her mother's room because she knew the tiring walk to school was very long and she couldn't possibly limp the entire way.

Upon arriving at school, Maya immediately attempted to blend into the crowd before Jessie and her friends spotted her but, like always, it didn't work. "Over here skinny black skin! Or are you too afraid to face me? She's a scaredy black cat isn't she everyone! She's a scaredy black cat! She's a scaredy black cat! Join in everyone!" and after those words, she had gotten the whole school plus the teachers to sing: "She's a scaredy black cat, she's a scaredy black cat. Who's the scaredy black cat? She is!" and when they said 'she' on the last line; they all pointed at her which made her feel hated and depressed, so she ran into the girls' bathroom and locked herself in the first cubicle that was open.

She wouldn't dare step foot out of there until she was forced to when the bell rang. Maya waited and waited for her only opportunity to ring in her ears and when it did, she made sure no one could possibly tease her in the line. She slowly dragged herself out of the bathroom and lagged on at the back of the line, where no one could see her and slipped into the classroom, not ready for what was about to happen.

After the register was taken, Maya sat down and let out an extremely big and loud sigh of relief since she was finally safe, alone, at her isolated desk. "Maya Villerson! How DARE you insult your kind and fair-hearted teacher in her OWN ENGLISH CLASSROOM!! Your manners are disgraceful young lady, DISGRACEFUL! And if my two sensitive ears hear another WORD from you, you will be sat down in the principal's office writing an apology note to me in the blink of an eye! Yawning in my classroom - I will be speaking to your parents about this, yes I will!" boomed Miss Bellbury, the devilish English teacher.

"But Miss B- I..." Maya stammered with a confused expression on her face, until she realised her mistake. "GET OUT OF MY CLASSROOM IMMEDIATELY!!" Bellowed Miss Bellbury, and the next thing she knew, Maya was being dragged out of the classroom and dropped onto 'Maya's Punishment Chair' right outside a door

labelled: 'The Principal's Office' in very fancy writing, all cursive with random swirls and flicks coming off each individual letter.

After dropping Maya off at the Principal's Office, Miss Bellbury smoothed down her skirt, tucked in her shirt and cleared her throat before knocking twice on the door, calling: "William, are you there?"

CHAPTER 3

Principal William Schander was never called Principal Schander; just Will or William because no one in the history of humans would ever be able to pronounce this interesting yet very peculiar surname and whenever poor Maya tried to, she was made an embarrassment and was laughed at and teased for a whole month.

You, dear reader, have probably struggled reading this man's surname so I will now teach you exactly how to say it without looking like a lunatic. Most people say Shnander, Sc-hander, Shander etc. but the true way to speak this word is by saying the following: *Sh c n ah n der*.

By the time Principal *Schander* opened the door to his office, Miss Bellbury had left and so now he had to deal with Maya by himself with no clue as to why she was there.

"Miss Villerson, yes. This is where you live isn't it- ha-ha!" William chuckled. Maya forced a laugh.

"So, I am not quite sure of what has happened in your first few minutes of... English. So, what do I do with you, hmm?" Maya couldn't think of what to say.

"Let me leave?" Maya eventually suggested.

“I would but... well... as a Principal, when my students behave badly it does require punishment- I’m sorry but it’s my job.”

Maya sighed. She knew exactly what would happen.

CHAPTER 4

After her 2 hours of after-school detention, Maya couldn’t get her head around just how much had happened in just one day. So much so that she couldn’t even remember why she was in detention in the first place. With a tear-stained face and a black eye, Maya dragged her bag as she shuffled along the pavement in the direction of her house.

Upon arriving at home, she was shaken to see a wall of presents along the driveway. She hadn’t been checking the dates for months and months so that day could be any day including: Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, Halloween, her Birthday- anything! Tripping over her own feet, Maya dashed round to the back garden, flung the door open and read from a 3-foot-tall banner: HAPPY 12th BIRTHDAY!!

She stared at the sign for a while; she wasn’t turning 12, she would be turning 11... Maya sighed as she finally worked out that this surprise party wasn’t for her at all. It was for her brother Max. Dragging herself through the door, she began to complain even though she knew it was wrong. “What’s all this about then and why didn’t you tell me? What if I wanted to surprise Max too! Don’t you

forget he is my brother, not just your precious little-" She couldn't carry on because she was soon distracted by the familiar sound of her mother's Volvo, driving closer towards the house.

"Shut up everyone! SHUT UUPPP!!" hissed Mrs Villerson, who was unfortunately Maya's mother. They heard the car park up, the door opened, then shut. Anticipatory footsteps edged towards the house, then a loud gasp and a squeal filled everyone's ears with excitement. Without warning, Auntie Phillis pulled a cord and the presents gave way to craft a door for the birthday boy to walk through, as confetti poured into the air out of cannons.

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY MAX!!" Maya cried, running towards her brother when.... her mother grabbed her by the collar and pulled her backwards, causing her to fall to the ground. Maya pulled herself up and dashed into the house, up the stairs and burst into the attic so she could go to bed undisturbed. Lying on the cold wooden floor, she thought about her past and future life and started considering ideas that she knew would get her in trouble but would love to do.

Maya was a curious girl; curious because she wanted to find out answers to un-answerable questions. That night, she twisted and turned in the hope that she would find a place on her mattress that was comfortable so she could sleep peacefully. Unfortunately, that didn't happen and, since there was nothing else to do, she thought

about life and how everyone treated her. She was hit by a wave of emotions when she remembered things people had done or said to her and she started to sob loudly. With tears streaming down her face, she thought more about her past, present and future. Then all at once, she made the life changing decision to run away from home in search of her birth parents.

CHAPTER 5

Just after midnight, Maya got dressed, crept into the kitchen, packed a mouth-watering lunch in Max's lunchbox and set off towards the dark, gloomy woods. She had never been there before and so she had to trust her gut instinct and follow the paths to a new area she had never stepped foot in. Since she had only ever glanced at the woods, Maya had a 50% chance she would pick the right path and survive or a 50% chance of choosing the wrong path and meeting her death. The sun was rising fast and she had no time to waste so, swiftly selecting the left path, she began to make her way through the mysterious wood.

Maya trekked for hours on end, continuously stumbling across skulls of previous beings that had trodden the same path without success. She started to worry over needing more supplies as she had eaten nearly all of her survival food several hours ago because it had been too tempting for her ravenous stomach.

She decided to rest against a tree and refill her water in the nearby pond because this seemed the only opportunity to refresh herself as there was no more water stations as far as she could see. She unscrewed the lid off the bottle and swooshed it around in the filthy

water, slowly filling it up. Then, as she was securing the lid back on, the strangest thing happened. Out of the corner of her eye, a flash of golden light caught her attention. Maya sprung to her feet and sprinted towards the brightness whereupon she discovered a stray Golden Retriever puppy lying down, panting breathlessly.

She could see clearly that it was abandoned and in pain so Maya decided she would take him with her on her journey. She held him snugly in her arms and started back towards the tree where she had left her belonging whilst wondering what to call her new pet.

She settled on the name 'Lion' as it represented the courage both she and the puppy had shown in the face of adversity. Clutching Lion to her chest, Maya collected her bag, threw it over her back and resumed her trek through the never-ending woods.

CHAPTER 6

Making her way along the path, Maya started to consider turning back but she didn't let that idea get the better of her. She was determined to discover the answer to every question her enquiring mind had ever dreamed of. She had shared some water with Lion as he was looking extremely thirsty and now the bottle was running low again. She wasn't sure if she could make it much further. Had she maybe picked the wrong path? Worried and stressed, Maya started to feel nauseous from lack of food. As the day faded to night, the woods darkened and it became impossible to see anything. The only noise that could be heard was the continuous whimpering of Lion wanting the warmth of a bed to lie down in.

Suddenly something touched Maya on the shoulder. She screamed as she jerked her head around to see who or what had needed her assistance so badly, they had to scare her out of her skin. It took a while for her eyes to focus on the shape in front of her as all she could see was darkness but when they did, she realised it was the shape of a human.

"Hello!" they said. She knew that voice; she knew that voice anywhere. "Max?" replied Maya, trembling slightly.

"I heard the door close and so I decided to check to see if you were ok" said Max, "but of course you weren't there. I knew something was wrong so I looked in your journal and you'd written about running away into the unknown, and the only place mum and dad won't let you go (well, not the only place) is the woods so.... here I am!" Maya was shocked.

"Won't mum and dad be worried sick? I mean they're probably celebrating that I have left, but you - that's a completely different story!" stated Maya.

"It'll be fine, don't worry! Anyway, if they do find me, the most they can do is be mad at me for coming after you!"

There was silence until Lion barked so they started walking and it was only broken when Max suggested they sleep because he knew Maya was tired.

"Yes please!" she replied, a tone of relief in her voice, "I've been up almost non-stop and can't find my way around this place."

Maya slumped down against the nearest tree while Max made a fort to sleep in for the night. By the time it was ready, dawn was starting to break but that didn't matter to two children and a puppy. They snuggled up together and drifted off to sleep.

CHAPTER 7

When they woke, Max and Maya were astonished to find that Lion had disappeared. Maya was devastated and, without a word, started back towards the way they had travelled. Max could see she was upset.

"Maya! Where are you going? Come back!" he cried.

"I'm going home, to where I should have been all along." Maya sobbed, "I was so stupid to have run away. What was I thinking?"

But just as the words came out of her mouth, Maya froze in her tracks. Standing in front of her, seemingly out of nowhere, appeared Mrs Villerson.

"Yes, you are a stupid girl." Mrs Villerson hissed. "Come with me Max. And you Maya, you chose to run away so you are staying right here where you belong - on your own."

In a split-second Max was whisked away by his mother and Maya was left with the familiar sound of silence and once again all alone.

- The End

We hope that you, your family and friends enjoy the book you have created. This project was co-ordinated and facilitated by author Nikki Young for members of her Storymakers writing club.

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Maya is a girl with problems - lots of them. It feels like the world is against her and she doesn't know how much more she can take. She's also a girl with questions - lots of them. So one day she makes a life-changing decision. One that takes her on a search for the unknown. But will Maya find what she's looking for and will she ever know life without being all alone?