

N.B. Since this story is based in America and the protagonist is American and it is told in first person point-of-view, I felt the need to use US spelling.

VICTIMS

By Rachel Loveday

The courtroom is so bland-wooden pews for the people who, for some reason find it fascinating to watch people be sent to jail to sit on, desks for the defence attorney, the defendant (me) and the prosecutor to sit at, the chair which I will be sitting in and the big podium for the judge. It's all wooden and bland-no cushions, no color, no life.

I'm sitting in a chair, under oath, I've been sitting here for half an hour already, being asked questions by my attorney, Miss Alexander, about how my life was before I had to move here with my mom, how good I was at my old school, how good I was at Hillsworth High before the bullying started, which caused my grades to slip and how the bullying traumatised me to the point where I had no other choice but to do what I did, which is the reason why I'm in the bland, wooden courtroom in the first place.

Now I'm going to be, I think Miss Alexander called it "cross examined" by the prosecutor, Miss Blaine, Miss Alexander warned me about this, she's going to try and poke holes in my story, say that it was my fault and that I planned the whole thing and that it wasn't an accident at all.

She gets up from her desk and walks towards me and takes a breath before she starts on me.

'That's a very sad story Morgan. But why not tell a teacher or your mother about the bullying?'

'I did tell a teacher, but they just told me that it was all part of the high school experience and that I'll be fine. My mom is never home.'

'You said that Heather also sent you text messages and emails. Why not turn off the phone or computer?'

'I need to use my phone to contact my mom and my relatives; I need my computer to do my assignments. I did change my phone number and email address, but Heather found out what my new phone number and email address was, she could always find me.'

'You also said that you were defending yourself against Heather's punches that she wouldn't stop. You're six feet tall, you're a weightlifter, you've taken self defence classes, Heather is five feet two, petite and yet she overpowered you?'

'Yes, she went ballistic! Nothing from the self defence classes were working on Heather, she was too strong.'

'So you thought that you needed to push her down the stairs!'

I could feel tears pouring down my cheek. 'Nnnnnoooo, no, I didn't mean to do that! I....I didn't mean to hurt her!'

'Objection! Your honour she's badgering the witness!'

'Sustained. You're crossing the line Miss Blaine!'

'Your honour I request a ten minute recess so my client can composure herself.'

'Recess granted.'

The judge's gavel ran in my ears-it was a sign of finality, the next time I hear it, my fate will have been decided. I freshened and cleaned myself up in the courthouse bathrooms, wiping the tears away from my face and looked at my face in the mirror-it looks convincing, genuine. Hopefully I can get off on this affirmative defence that Miss Alexander has going for me.

Rumours are spreading around the school like wildfire-no one looks me in the eye anymore, no one bothers me-I like it.

Nobody will ever mess with me again.