

BFFs

“Have a great day!” Mom says as she drops me off in front of my new middle school. Her forced smile is too big for her face. She desperately wants me to like it here.

“I will,” I say, smiling back. But I don’t think I will. I don’t know anyone here. Who will I even eat lunch with? Moving is the worst.

I get out and walk slowly toward the building, following the sea of kids through the door. It’s weird how alone you can feel while being surrounded by people.

The morning is basically like I predicted. I’m all by myself, wandering from class to class, lost more often than not. No one says hello besides the teachers. But then at lunch things turn around. A girl sits next to me and says her name is Lucy. She doesn’t say much after that, but at least I’m not alone at the table looking like a reject. What a relief.

The next day Lucy meets me at the school door and walks with me to class. I don’t remember her being in my first period English yesterday, but maybe I just didn’t notice. She nods to me but doesn’t say anything. I wonder if she has a group of friends I could connect with. It’s always nice to have a group. Lucy seems to be kind of a loner though. She dresses funny, with a full skirt and a sweater underneath that matches another sweater on top. They

are pink. She looks totally different from all the other kids who are mostly wearing hoodies in shades of black. Usually different isn't what you want at a new place, but I can't really be choosy at this point.

It turns out Lucy is in all of my classes. She doesn't leave my side all day. I wish she would talk more. I've asked her some questions, but she mostly just smiles and nods. And she doesn't seem to have any other friends either. Maybe she's new too?

Lucy walks out to the pick-up line with me. I half wonder if she's going to get in the car with me too, the way she's been following me around all day. But when I climb in to the front seat, she seems to disappear.

"How was your day?" asks Mom. She's using that cheerful voice again. "Any BFFs yet?"

"*Mom,*" I say and roll my eyes. Mom looks sad then, so I give her the good news. "Well, I did meet Lucy. She was standing right next to me when I got in the car. Didn't you see her?" Mom looks puzzled. How could she miss a girl with a bright pink sweater? Weird.

English class the next morning is weird too. Lucy is there, as always. But when the teacher starts handing out a short story for us to read, she is suddenly gone. How could she leave so fast? "Where did Lucy go?" I ask the teacher as she gives me the handout.

"Lucy?" asks the teacher. "There's no Lucy in this class."

Hmmm. What? I don't have much time to think about it, because the teacher is talking to the class again and I'd better pay attention. Getting bad grades at a new school won't help anything. I tune in as she's explaining the story we're about to read. Apparently it's a true story that actually happened at this school almost 75 years ago. Interesting. She asks me to start reading aloud.

"In the days of poodle skirts and twin sets," I say loudly, "tragedy struck at Stoneville Middle. What started as a harmless prank at the homecoming dance resulted in the death of a young student. It's said that this student haunts the halls to this day, picking out targets to enact her revenge." I look up from the paper and swallow hard. What I see makes my heart pound. Lucy is peering in the classroom window with a small smile on her face. She looks right at me. And then, she winks.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Why doesn't the narrator have any friends at the beginning of the story?
 - a. She recently moved.
 - b. She is mean to everyone.
 - c. She doesn't want friends.
 - d. She wears weird clothes.

2. Which class does the narrator have first period?
 - a. Creative writing
 - b. Math
 - c. Lunch
 - d. English

3. Which of the following is NOT a clue that Lucy is a ghost?
 - a. Lucy is wearing old-fashioned clothes.
 - b. The narrator's mother didn't see Lucy.
 - c. Lucy sits next to the narrator at lunch on the first day of school.
 - d. There is no one named Lucy in English class.

4. Why do you think the narrator is scared at the end of the story?
 - a. She thinks the teacher is going to give her a bad grade.
 - b. She thinks Lucy is going to get revenge on her.
 - c. She thinks she's never going to make any friends.
 - d. She thinks her mom is going to be mad at her.

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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 - b. She is mean to everyone.
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 - d. She wears weird clothes.
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 - a. Creative writing
 - b. Math
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 - d. **English**
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 - b. **She thinks Lucy is going to get revenge on her.**
 - c. She thinks she's never going to make any friends.
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