

WRITTEN ON THE BATHROOM WALL

Written by

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INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY- DAY.

A hand slaps BRIGHT PINK POSTERS to the walls along a hallway.

"Jess for Class President" is written next to a photo of JESS, a teenage girl with a plastered, phony smile. We can tell each poster was painstakingly hand-made, by the excessive use of glitter and stickers on each one.

Jess brushes some glitter off of her skirt and strides confidently down the hall-- her pair of fancy designer shoes clacking on the linoleum floor.

We tilt up to her grinning face from the large CAMPAIGN BUTTON on her chest, which features her grinning face- identical to the posters.

JESS (V.O)

What people don't understand about me is that I have to win. If I don't win, I don't see the point in it. Why do anything if you're not going to have people chanting your name in love and admiration? Enjoy your sad little participation trophy your mom is going to throw away the minute you go to college. I plan on winning at everything I do, and having a wall of real trophies so big my dad is going to have to buy another shelf from IKEA. What, you're going to volunteer at your local animal shelter to make a better life for the poor abandoned dogs? I joined because I want to win the world record for most shelter dogs walked at once and get famous.

Jess passes a bulletin board with the words VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: across the top. Camera tracks across several identical photos of smiling Jess under the words AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER.

JESS (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)

They even started a "volunteer of the month" wall because of me, and I've won every month for ... Three months straight. I'm on a roll!

Jess hands flyers to students walking the hallways. Tilt up from her picture on the flier to her face.

It's the same pasted-on smile. She doesn't really care about her classmates, and just wants their vote.

JESS (CONT'D)
Vote Jess for Class President!
Jess is the bessss...t!

She dismisses each student once she shoves a flier in their hands.

JESS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
If you vote for me, I'll make sure
our school lunch is actually
edible!
I'll, uh, give everyone a free
puppy, to keep!
(winks)
I've got the hookup.

A clique of three ARTSY STUDENTS in the hallway glare at her.

ARTSY BOY #1
So desperate.

He crumples and tosses the flier into a garbage without reading it and wipes the glitter residue on his hand onto his skinny jeans.

Jess pretends to be unfazed and marches on.

JESS (V.O.)
Yeah. Sure they're empty promises:
the school lunch is going to stay
tasting like the bottom of
someone's foot.
(beat)
I just want to win, and I don't
care what it takes. If I have to
lie to my peers, then so be it. I
never liked any of them, anyway.
(beat)
I guess except one.

INT. GIRLS BATHROOM-DAY.

VICKY is pressed against the side of the bathroom stall on the phone with someone. Her eyes are watery and her mascara is running.

VICKY
No, no no... you can't break up with
me.
(beat)
(MORE)

VICKY (CONT'D)

I'm serious, Theo. Prom is like,
three days from now..

(beat)

Oh, you're going? Without me? Yeah,
good luck finding a date in three
days.

(beat)

You already have one,
(scoffs))
yeah right.

(beat)

Freaking Olivia? That girl who
literally can't read?

(beat)

I'm going to write her a very
passive aggressive text the minute
I hang up. Wait. She wouldn't be
able to read it. Because she
literally can't read words.
Nevermind. Tell her I hate her
then!

(beat)

No Theo, I see how it is.

(beat)

Yeah, go to hell, Theo. I hope your
date wipes out on the floor because
she can't read the slippery when
wet sign!!!

Vicky hangs up and slides down the bathroom wall-- slowly
sitting down on the bathroom stall floor, face pressed
against her knees. Sobbing.

SOUND: the door of the bathroom creaks open and slams.

A pair of fancy designer shoes walk past and then turn back
to face the bathroom stall Vicky is in. It's Jess's shoes.

JESS

Can you hurry up? I wanna put some
posters in there so when they're
taking a dump... they think of me.

Jess slides a poster under the bathroom stall.

VICKY

Ew. I'm not coming out of this
stall anytime soon, Jess. Put your
stupid posters somewhere else. We
don't need all that glitter in the
toilet. Bad for plumbing.

On the other side of the door. Jess realizes who it is.

JESS

Vicky?

No response. Jess sighs loudly and stomps away to the sink.

She twists the squeaky knob and runs the water. We hear the sounds of Vicky sobbing loudly.

Jess turns around to face the stall. It is reflected in the mirror behind her. She realizes Vicky is crying. Jess is conflicted: too afraid to comfort her but doesn't want to leave her alone in the bathroom.

JESS (CONT'D)

Vicky... are you okay? Are you crying?

The loud sobbing stops.

VICKY

...No...

Jess takes a leap of faith.

JESS

Look. I know it's been a while since we... hung out. But do you want to talk to me about it? I-I'm here for you...

Jess looks at her smiling poster on the wall of the bathroom.

JESS (CONT.) (CONT'D)

...if that'll make you stop sobbing very loudly and scaring away all the girls so they won't see my lovely posters in the bathroom.

Vicky stops crying. She's conflicted too. She looks over at the sharpied-in "Vik + Jess = BFF " on the bathroom stall door, fading away and smudged.

CLOSE-UP on Vicky's face.

CUT AWAY TO:

[FLASHBACK]

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL. NURSES OFFICE- DAY

YOUNG VICKY and YOUNG JESS are sitting in the waiting room of the NURSES OFFICE with a chair in between them.

Young Vicky has her arms crossed and is clearly annoyed. Young Jess is sobbing over her BLOODY NOSE - now with an ice pack to ease the pain. They are both careful not to even acknowledge each other. We sense tension between them.

VICKY (V.O.)

The first time I ever met Jess was when I punched her in the 8th grade. Why punch someone I didn't know? Well... I was aiming for another kid- but he ducked and Jess took the hit. I had to spend several hours in the nurse's office watching that dork cry over her bloody nose.

[FLASHBACK continues]

INT. CLASSROOM- DAY.

Young Vicky and Young Jess are sitting next to each other in DETENTION. Vicky is looking at her black nail polish, and Jess has her arms crossed, angry. Jess' bloody nose is gone, but her bruise is now BANDAGED. They're both clearly bored, while mutually angry at each other.

VICKY (V.O.)

We had to spend a week in detention together for "fighting at school". I never got why Jess even got detention with me. But I never said anything because, well, I didn't want to be alone. For the first few days she refused to talk to me, but after a while we got so bored we decided talking was better than sitting in silence picking our noses.

YOUNG JESS

I still don't understand why I'm here. Like, I literally got punched in the face. I'm the victim here!
(Jokingly)
I should sue you for attempted murder, Vicky.

YOUNG VICKY

(rolls her eyes.)
You know I wasn't aiming for you, Jess. You didn't deserve to get hit. You know who does?

(MORE)

YOUNG VICKY (CONT'D)

That idiot Robert. I hate him. He said I had "major anger issues".

YOUNG JESS tries not to laugh.

YOUNG JESS

Wow, I wonder why.

Young Vicky glares back. A wave of regret hits her. She's determined to make things right again.

YOUNG JESS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Vicky, okay? I didn't mean it.

Young Vicky looks up at Young Jess. It's clear not many people apologize to her. She's grateful for Jess's sudden kindness.

YOUNG VICKY

It's ok. I guess Robert is right. I do have anger issues. But don't tell him I said that.

YOUNG JESS

Why would I? He pops his pimples in class and smells like wet socks.

The two new friends chuckle. They've made a connection.

[FLASHBACK continues]

INT. BATHROOM, STALL - DAY.

Giggling, Young Jess and Vicky swing open the bathroom stall door. Vicky whips out a SHARPIE marker and takes off the top. Jess looks at it, wide-eyed, with a look of: are we really going to do this?

VICKY (V.O.)

And so, we became best friends almost instantly. We kinda didn't have any other friends to start with, so this was pretty refreshing for the both of us. It was nice to have someone to vent to, and someone who will always have your back no matter what.

Vicky writes "JESS + VICKY = BFFS" on the bathroom stall

VICKY (V.O. CONT.)

Or so I thought.

(beat)

A year ago, we got into a major fight. I don't even remember what it was about. All I remember was that I started dating Theo in Sophomore year. She grew distant after that and got into that Student council crap. We grew apart. And suddenly, we weren't friends anymore.

[FLASHBACK ends]

CUT BACK TO:

INT. BATHROOM, STALL-DAY.

Vicky looks at the faded writing again with a sense of pain, and almost longing.

JESS (O.S)

Well, do you wanna talk about it or not? Girl, I have posters to tape up.

CUT TO:

The OUTSIDE of the door:

JESS (CONT'D)

I want everyone to know that in my campaign, I'm advocating for 4-ply toilet paper in every bathroom. Students deserve the comfort and satisfaction of-

VICKY (O.S.)

Fine. Come in here.

Vicky reaches her hand out from under the stall, and beckons for Jess to follow.

CUT TO:

INSIDE the stall. Vicky is peering underneath the stall, but is met with the stall door opening by itself. She looks up. It's Jess.

JESS

The door was unlocked.

VICKY

Oh.

Vicky and Jess stand squished together, shoulder-to-shoulder leaning on the wall of the stall. Jess tries to make conversation.

JESS

So... where do you think I should put this?

She pulls out the poster, this time picturing JESS holding a roll of pillowy toilet paper with googly eyes. She has that same plastered smile as before. Vicky smiles and rolls her eyes. She forgot how funny Jess used to be.

VICKY

Next to the T.P would be good. Maybe they can use it instead of the sandpaper the school gives us.

Jess' eyes light up.

JESS

So, you agree! Can I count on your vote?

VICKY

You know I was going to vote for you anyways, Jess.

Jess is taken aback. Vicky points at the sharpie graffiti on the wall again. Jess squints and notices it for the first time.

JESS

Wow, I can't believe it's still there. I remember when we did that.
(chuckles))
It was like, a month after we met each other.

VICKY

Yeah. You wanted to write it in pencil so we didn't get in trouble, but before you had the time to take the sharpie out of my hands... I had already scribbled it.

Jess starts laughing, embarrassed.

JESS

Oh my god, you're so right. I was so scared we were going to go to detention for that. I could not go back to that prison cell.

VICKY

You were all like: "my permanent record will be tarnished!". That was so freaking funny. I could not stop laughing for days.

JESS

Well, I guess nobody ever found it, huh?

There's an awkward silence. Both Jess and Vicky don't know what to say. Jess stares at the graffiti, thinks about it, and takes a deep breath.

JESS (CONT'D)

Look Vik, I know what you're thinking.
 "How could Jess be so successful after losing me as a friend?"
 "She's just so awesome at everything she does, it's amazing!". "She walks multiple dogs at once and looks really cool doing it!" But to be honest Jess, it hasn't been all sunshine and rainbows for me.

Vicky chuckles.

VICKY

Oh, is that so?

JESS

Yeah.

(Not sensing the sarcasm)
 After my stepmom moved in with us, I've been under a lot of pressure to be the "perfect daughter" from both her and my dad, now that my brother is living with my mom.

(beat.)

My stepmom told me she didn't like you, and that's why I snapped at you a year ago and why I've been avoiding you ever since. And to be honest, Vik, I'm just running for student body president to make them happy.

(MORE)

JESS (CONT'D)

I don't really care about the 4-ply toilet paper. I rarely drop a deuce at school, anyways.

Jess suddenly becomes embarrassed. She's regretting telling Vicky about her personal life. It's just that she has no one to talk to, and sitting together with her rekindles that spark of friendship they used to have.

VICKY

Wow. I thought it was because you thought I was too dependent on Theo. I know, I was starting to hang out with him more and more around this same time last year. I seriously thought you hated him.

JESS

What? I don't hate Theo!

(Guilty))

But I was just a little jealous when you'd go to movies with him and not even invite me. Or laser tag. Or that Italian restaurant with the all-you-can-eat breadsticks...

Vicky realizes what she did, and feels guilty about it. She tries to make it up to Jess.

VICKY

Want to know something that'll make you feel better?

JESS

What?

Vicky smiles.

VICKY

He dumped me. He's going with to prom with Olivia

Jess' eyes widen.

JESS

That girl who can't read?!

VICKY

That's the one.

JESS

I knew I had a reason to hate Theo!

VICKY

Wait, I thought you said you didn't
hate Theo!

JESS

Well, I just found my reason!

Jess and Vicky smile. They both look at the graffiti on the wall. We get a close up of the words scribbled. Vicky looks at Jess, and pulls a sharpie from her pocket.

VICKY

Wanna make it extra-permanent?

JESS

(paranoid)

But what if we get in-

Vicky shoots Jess an insistent look, takes the top off the sharpie.

JESS (CONT'D)

Alright, fine.

Jess rolls her eyes.

Vicky smiles.

Jess and Vicky take turns outlining the graffiti in sharpie.

"JESS + VICKY = BFFS"