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opening extract from

Becoming Bindy Mackenzie

written by

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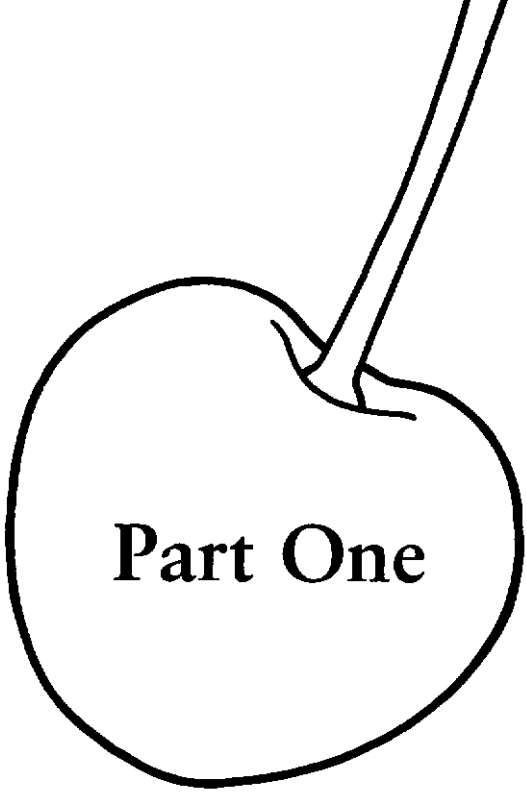
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Part One

I have never spoken to Bindy, but I am sure that behind her extremely annoying personality she is a beautiful human being.

A bit too smart.

You can't help who you are, Bindy, and maybe you will change this year? Good luck with Year 11. I think you will change.

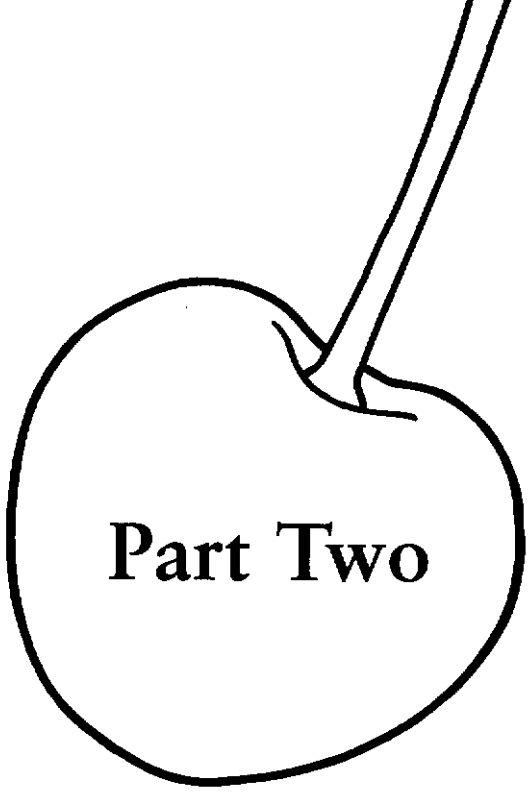
Bindy wears her hair weird even though people talk about it behind her back. I'd change my hair, but that's Bindy for you, she's got guts.

Bindy Mackenzie

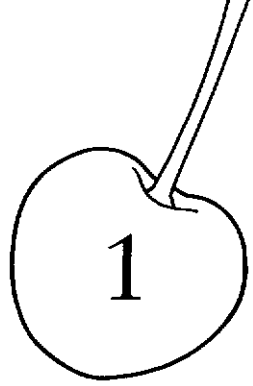
She's a fast typist.

Well, what can you say about Bindy? Hmm. Did someone say the word 'SMART'???? Bindy! You have words in your head that would be too long to fit in anyone else's head! Because you have SUCH A HUGE HEAD!! Just kidding!! (kind of)

Bindy Mackenzie talks like a horse.



Part Two



Resolutions from the Heart – this week, Bindy will . . .

1. Begin Year 11!
2. Consider her future.
3. Read the book: *How did I get this dysfunctional and what can I do to change?* (Britney Brillson, PhD). Photocopy extracts and distribute to fellow students.

*

As Wednesday wends its winsome way, so Bindy goes to:

1. Maths

And Bindy, pay heed to . . .

Lucy Tan – she was close second last year and rumour has it she's had advanced tutoring over the holidays. May well be a threat.

2. Biology

And Bindy, pay heed to . . .

Tonja Slavinksi – her sudden flashes of genius last year were disturbing (to say the least).

3. English

And Bindy pay heed to . . .

The teacher – it was to be Ms Lawrence, but I hear she took flight at the last minute. Hence: a substitute named Miss Flynn. Substitute teachers, like student teachers, rarely reach the *heart* of a lesson. Find a way to guide her to the essence?

4. Form Assembly

And Bindy pay heed to . . .

Nothing – ignore their clichés! Use time to recite strong German verbs in a whisper.

5. Friendship and Development ('FAD')

And Bindy pay heed to . . .

The point – this is a new self-awareness course and, quite frankly, *what* is the point? Can it be best use of our time? Seems unlikely.

6. Free Period

And Bindy pay heed to . . .

YOURSELF! – go directly to the library, begin homework at 2.30 pm precisely, and continue until final bell. DO NOT GET CAUGHT IN REVERIE.

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
Wednesday, 2.32 pm (in the library)

As with a knocked funny bone, so with life at large. Wait. Simply wait. Let the moment pass and your elbow will be yours once again.

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.35 pm

Consider a dirty window. If life seems suddenly dirty and smeared, simply *wash the window.* And life will sparkle once again.

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.38 pm

But how to wash the window?

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.39 pm

Nay, how to *smash* the window? And where to buy fresh glass?

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.40 pm

Turn from the window and consider this: people are generally good and kind and it is right that they inhabit the earth.

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.42 pm

Of course, some people have venom in their hearts. But venom is nature's defence mechanism, and who are you to find fault with nature?!

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.43 pm

If certain venomous others – a certain Venomous Seven – have spoken ill of you – what is the *antidote* to that?

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.44 pm

Kindness is the antidote to cruelty!! Be kind to yourself! Behold! I will try it right now!

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
2.57 pm

And what, pray tell, if the antidote fails? What if the poison courses through my blood, already seeping into bones?

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.00 pm

The solution, Bindy, is: move on! Why waste your time on seven troubled people? Think of them as grimy dinner plates arranged in a row in a dishwasher. You, Bindy, are the dishwasher's fan. Set way *above* the seven grimy plates, you spin through the soap bubbles of life.

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.08 pm

Bindy, stop your reverie! Chew on a carob-coated energy drop and turn to your homework at once. Even if you just get five min

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.10 pm

Oh, who am I trying to fool? My entire study period has been wasted. It seems to me that my entire career at Ashbury High has been wasted! I have been so helpful to my fellow students: I've

offered free, private tutoring! I've offered lunchtime seminars for troubled teens! I *realize* that my academic record may be intimidating, so I wear multicoloured nail polish to show that I'm approachable – a free spirit! I hang little sprigs of tinsel from my spectacle frames each December! I know the birthday of every person in my roll-call class, and I *always* lead the class in 'Happy Birthday'!

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.12 pm

Secretly, I admit, I find many of my classmates annoying. I've often thought to myself, 'Good grief, these people are five-year-olds. Why must I spend my days amongst them?' But have I ever *said* such things aloud? No. I have been nothing but generous to them, and have kept these thoughts to myself.

And how have they repaid me? Have they been grateful or kind? Ho NO!

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.14 pm

They have leaped at the chance to *attack* me! Perhaps the following crossed their minds: 'Here is a sheet of paper with Bindy's name in the centre. Shall we write something complimentary?' But the answer came at once: 'Why, no, let us write vicious comments! Let us be the Venomous Seven! What do we care for *her* feelings?'

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.14 pm

What, indeed?!

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.15 pm

Well!

*

The Philosophical Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
3.16 pm

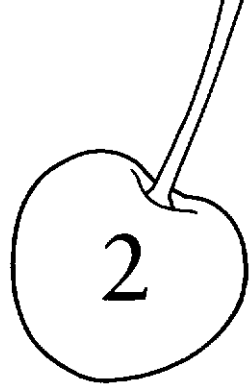
It has come to this.

A decision has been made.

Pay heed, Venomous Seven! You thought that I was bad before? *Wait until you see what I can be.* You think that your words are incisive and cruel? Wait until *I* speak my mind.

You had your chance with benevolent Bindy.

Ruthless Bindy just arrived.



Night Time Musings of Bindy Mackenzie
Thursday, 2.47 am

My strategy is simple. First, I will contact the highest authority and expose the travesty, nay the crime, of Friendship and Development. Second, I will gradually decipher the true nature of each of the Venomous Seven, and will hold up a mirror to their souls. (The blood-curdling screams that will follow!) (It will do them good.) Third, I will attend the next Friendship and Development class and *I will speak the truth at all times during the session.* Words that have been left unsaid throughout my life will *roll like a rich red carpet from my tongue!*

I can scarcely wait.

They all disguised their handwriting but I know who wrote that I talk like a horse. (Me? The girl who had voice training between the ages of seven and eleven? Third speaker on the debating team? *A volunteer to sing at the School Spectacular each year!* The girl who approaches those who seem distressed and offers a shoulder to cry upon! An offer rarely taken up, I admit, but never once made in the voice of a horse.)

This is surely a joke or a bad dream!

I have known him since infants school, and he's always had the same scrunched-up handwriting, as if someone had hammered each of his words into the page.

His name is Toby Mazzerati.

Toby Mazzerati is a cane toad. But here is what I wrote (generously) under his name today:

I admire Toby. He has struggled academically (and perhaps with his weight) over the years, but has found his niche in woodwork. He likes to keep up a low-voiced commentary on life, so perhaps he has a future in radio?

Here is what I ought to have written:

Toby Mazzerati should die.