

The Boy with the Pencil

Veronica King walked into her 5th grade classroom gripping the bottom of her sky blue pinafore dress. Her dark brown hair was tightly pulled back by a yellow ribbon. She hated the way she felt, she hated wearing a dress. It was harder to run and play in, but her mother insisted that she wore a dress on her first day at Sandalwood Elementary.

They had just moved to the coastal city of Cavea. She wasn't nervous about going to school today; her mother was nervous for her. She spent the whole morning and night before, preparing for her first day in the new city. While she walked Veronica through the front door and into the front office, she gripped her daughter's hand distressingly tight, but Veronica dealt with the pain. Because she loved her mother. When the nice lady in the front office was ready to take her to her new class, her mother bent down, squeezed her tightly, and said, "I'll be waiting right outside after school. Don't be nervous. You'll have so much fun today. I love you." Veronica wasn't nervous, but the way her mother hugged her made her want to hold on a little bit longer.

When her new teacher, Miss Warnicky, held out her hand Veronica let go of her dress and shook it politely. Then Miss Warnicky took her to the front and asked her to introduce herself, then Veronica confidently said her name. Then her teacher showed her to her seat. Veronica sat down and kicked her legs back and forth. She was small for her age, and her legs didn't completely touch the ground. She looked around at her classmates, looking for a new friend. She took notice of two girls in her class. One girl across the room had a dark green dress on with

matching bows in her course curly black hair. The other was sitting in front of her and was wearing blue corduroy pants with a white t-shirt. Veronica looked at the boy behind her. He had wild curls on top of his head and was scribbling on his note pad with his tongue sticking out. Then she looked at the boy next to her. She stopped and observed him for a moment because he was sitting there looking straight down. He was picking at the pencil he had in his hand. At 8 o'clock, Miss Warnicky wrote the date on the board, September 20th, 1975, and then she began her lesson. When she started talking, Veronica sat up straight and listened intently. She glanced over at the boy picking at the pencil. He hadn't changed his position and didn't look like he was listening at all. She squinted at him with annoyance.

At lunch, Veronica asked the girl in the green dress if she could sit with her. The girl said yes and introduced herself, warmly, "I'm Marie."

"I'm Veronica," Veronica replied brightly, and they sat down at a table with two other girls from her class. Veronica pulled her peanut butter and jelly sandwich out of her Scooby-Doo lunch box. She looked around the cafeteria at the other kids. Veronica's new elementary school was quite small, so all the grades ate together during lunch. There were a lot of younger kids in the cafeteria. She looked over to the right and noticed the boy who was picking at the pencil, walk to an empty table with the boy who sat behind her, he was much smaller than the other boy. The short boy was chatting wildly to the other boy who walked and listened quietly. Veronica didn't like quiet people. She didn't understand why they never spoke or why they wouldn't stand up for themselves when they would get teased. Veronica was very brave, much braver than most girls her age. She didn't let anyone push her around. Suddenly a larger boy tripped the boy with

the pencil. When he got up and didn't do anything, she immediately decided that she didn't like him.

During lunch recess, she saw the boy with the pencil playing with a long stick. He was sitting at a table alone from across the playground. Marie took Veronica to the blacktop and they played hopscotch with some other girls. Veronica then heard a commotion behind her and turned around towards the swings. A much younger girl with pin-straight blond hair and a pink dress was sitting on the swings with her friend. The larger boy who had tripped the boy with the pencil was teasing her. Veronica watched closely, and when the boy pulled on her pink tails, she ran right up to him and said, "Hey, stop that!"

"Or what? You better stay out of this, or you're gonna get it." The boy threatened. He towered over her.

"You don't scare me." She said and stepped closer; then, the boy gave her a large violent shove. Veronica fell hard on her back and looked up at the boy, fighting back tears. All of a sudden, The boy with the pencil was standing in front of her. He wound back and punched the boy hard right in the nose. He yelped loudly then ran off, blood pooling on his face. The boy with the pencil looked at Veronica and held out his hand to hoist her up. He looked at her then turned to the blond hair girl on the swings. She quickly ran up and hugged him. "Are you okay, Julie?" He asked. "Yes! You're the best big brother ever." She squealed, then ran off with her friend. James turned to Veronica again. Looking down, he shot his hand out and said, "I'm James." Veronica looked at his hand then shook it "I'm Veronica." She said and immediately decided that she loved him.