

Me

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## **SECOND PLACE – FICTION**

I am Martha O'Reilly. I live in Denmark, and I am a modest 16 year old teenager. I have been told all my life, "You're too skinny," "You look fat," "Too much makeup," "Eww, cover those pimples." To a teen girl you can never be perfect. Either you are too lazy or you are trying too hard. Either way, I don't care. I can thank Willow for that.

Willow is my big sister, and she recently went to college for nursing school. When Willow was a week away from leaving, tears came to the whole family. I was one of the worst. Willow has been the best sister, friend, and most confident pal I have ever had. She started to pack her stuff two days before she was going to leave, and that is when it finally hit her: She is going away from her family for almost a year until she can see them again. It was a very emotional week.

At the time, I had been severely bullied. People would make fun of my hair and how my makeup looked. Middle school was rough and I never wanted to be there. I would come home and cry to my sister because my parents were always at work. She would be there like my mom, combing my hair with her soft swift fingers and wipe away my tears by kisses on the forehead.

It was the day she left she gave the most heart warming and confidence boosting thing she has ever said. She had almost got all her bags down from her bedroom upstairs, and she stared me in the eyes. We shared a gaze of concern that she is leaving and happiness that we had each other in our lives. She pulled me close and talked softly.

She spoke, "No matter how hard it gets in life, you are going to soar. Don't let anyone stop you from that. I don't care how hard you want to cry, you can think of me and you will be filled with confidence. You hear me?"

I looked her dead in the eyes. "Yes I hear you," I said as tears started to pour from my eyes.

From then on, nothing could stop me. No matter how hard someone tried to bring me down, I stood with confidence. I made sure that nobody else was brought down as well. Bullying in a serious thing in a teen's life, and I make sure people can overcome it.

Teens and other people can be mean but no matter what they say I will always stick up for myself. I always go to school with a smile on my face and confidence that I look amazing. I will always love me, and no one is going to change me.