

# Annabelle

*Ms. Amelia S. Greene*

## *Prologue*

I and the other students waited in our classroom for our teacher, Mr. Potter, to arrive and give us our morning class lecture. He was unusually late, and many students joked that we would get the mean old Mrs. Hendricks to substitute.

One student jested that he saw Mr. Potter in the principal's office on his way to class with another student, which only led to his friends teasing him that he was more likely in the principal's office for his shenanigans and was trying to hide that fact.

We waited nearly 10 minutes, and it became obvious that our teacher would be fashionably late, as they say. When Mr. Potter entered, a student that I and everyone else did not recognize walked in tow. She was small and fragile in appearance but not much shorter than my average 5' 6" height. She was tall for her age, yet I felt strangely endeared to her; I couldn't explain it.

Mr. Potter stepped forward with his usual cheery, "Good morning, class!" And proceeded to introduce the new student. "I'm sure you are all wondering who this new student would be. This is Ms. Annabelle Smith. Ugh... She will be joining us from now on. Be nice, and don't tease." He then asked the girl, "Annabelle, would you like to say a few things about yourself?" When I transferred to this school a few months ago, Mr. Potter normally made every new student do this, including myself.

"Ugh..." she started with uncertainty in her voice. "My name is Annabelle," she said before being rudely interrupted by a student at the back shouting, "He already said that!"

She blushed and felt uncomfortable talking in front of the entire class. I wished she would say more; her voice was angelic. A moment passed, and she started again, "Well, I moved here from Chicago just a couple of weeks ago, and up until now, I was homeschooled. So I'm unfamiliar with how things work in public school." I was in a bit of shock – she spoke! And quite confidently, I might add. Once she got talking, she seemed rather to enjoy the attention. Her spirits seemed to only slightly peeked.

Then that same student from before in the back shouted, "Woohoo! Go, Cubs!"

Which was very late compared to when she said she moved from Chicago. He normally only did so when he wanted attention which he usually got. As is to be expected living in Kansas City, almost everyone in our class was a die-hard Royals fan, or at least they only answered that since their parents were. Everyone looked to the rear and gave him a stare that made him regret what he said. Mr. Potter continued, "Well since we started late, I'd like to cut this short for now. You can get to know... Ms. Annabelle was better after class. Annabelle, would you take a seat at the desk next to Mr. George?"

“Sure!” she said as she picked up her backpack and sat beside my desk. She smiled and offered to shake my hand, which I accepted without thought. Perhaps I was mesmerized by her charm.

Mr. Potter started writing our assignment on the chalkboard, and we all turned to the respective page in our books. I looked at Annabelle, and she appeared frazzled, trying to find the right page. I leaned over and softly whispered, “You’re looking for page 158.” Once she had spread her textbook out, ready to work, she reached for a cute pink kitty pouch from her Pretty Princess brand backpack.

Honestly, I never knew an 11th grader to have such a backpack. In fact, I think my sister had the exact one for two years before she decided she would not be caught dead with it.

Annabelle momentarily searched through her pencil pouch when I noticed how frantic she became. “Where is it?” she murmured. Using logic, I made my best guess of what she intended to find, likely something as simple as a number 2 pencil. I leaned over again and offered her my backup if my pencil lead broke. “Is this what you’re looking for? You can borrow mine.” She stared longingly and just as awkwardly at the pencil as if I had stuck it up my nose. I wasn’t sure what to think of it until she gracefully took it from me with a smile and a quick word of thanks.

Gee-wiz, you forgot a number 2 pencil on your first day in public school. I don’t want to call that pathetic, but it’s pathetic. Maybe it was someone who borrowed it without asking; even my siblings do that every now and then.

While we proceeded with class and listened carefully to our teacher’s lecture, I couldn’t help but glance over and observe her attire. She wore a cute snowy white and blue wool skirt below her knees. My extended family would approve since they believed girls should never wear pants or skirts at or above their knees. She also wore a layered v-neck with a thick cardigan around her shoulders. On her legs, she had white wool socks and boots. What she wore was not fashionable per se, but it looked good, and she wore it with pride from what I could tell from her feminine seated pose at the desk.

For what little time remained of class, I managed to focus on the lecture. Before I knew it, the class bell rang, and Mr. Potter dismissed everyone. I stood up and walked towards to door. Annabelle must have packed up as quickly as I, for she soon came behind me and tapped me on the shoulder.

“Excuse me?” she said. I turned around to greet her cute face smiling at me.

“Yes?”

“Thank you for the pencil; I don’t know what I would have done if I couldn’t write down my first day of assignments.”

“Please, don’t think anything of it. I always carry a spare.”

“Well, thanks, anyway,” she said before she pushed the pencil into my hands and ran out the door. I watched, amazed at her speed. What was she in such a hurry about? My pencil felt strange in my hand, so I looked down and noticed that she had mildly chewed on it during class. She had delicately imprinted bite marks in a spiral pattern from tip to the eraser. Most people would be mildly angry. However, pencils were a dime a dozen, so I didn’t care so much.

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It was now mid-afternoon, and PE was our next class of the day. I looked for Annabelle during lunch and was disappointed never to find her. I had just come out of the boy’s locker room when I noticed her

seated on the benches and still wearing her outfit from earlier. Was she not going to change for PE, or did she not get her PE uniform just yet? I wondered. It was strange at our school, we had a freely expressive dress code, but outside of that, everything else was a school uniform with the school logo embroidered.

Even the girl's swimsuits were branded. We also had school uniforms but were only expected to wear them for special events or field trips. Otherwise, PE was one of those classes where we had to wear our uniforms—so why would Annabelle be dressed like that?

I walked over, as we had a few moments before PE would officially begin. I sat down and met my eyes with Annabelle. She looked embarrassed when she saw me, and I could probably guess why. “Hey, don't worry about my pencil. I don't mind if you chewed on it.”

“You... You don't?” she stuttered.

“No, not at all. Besides, I used to chew on my pencils too.”

“Well... I tend to do it when I get nervous or in unfamiliar circumstances.”

“Same here. I couldn't tell you how many pencils I destroyed during my first year in school.”

Annabelle giggled and continued, “Well, I still feel bad since it was your pencil I destroyed. Can I make it up to you?”

“If you'd like, but I don't mind if you never do.”

“Well, I certainly will. I will try to find that perfect pencil that reminds me of you.”

“I'd like that... I wanted to ask why you were still in your street clothes. Why are you not dressed like the rest of the girls? PE is about to begin.”

“Well...” she blushed and looked towards the floor. “I...”

“Do you not yet have a PE uniform?”

“Well... There is that, and girls don't normally feel comfortable around me. Nor do I feel comfortable just yet with the idea.”

“That's understandable. Girls can be cruel if my sisters have been right all these years. I hope they can get past you changing in the girl's locker room soon.” I returned a smile and reassured her that I was understanding, but she didn't find my reassurance effective.

“Sure... Thanks for the encouragement. I'm just waiting for an answer to what will be done. I've already been given an exception to skip PE from the principal, so today is at least taken care of.”

“Well, I will be running track today. I'll check back with you later. Okay?”

“Okay. I'd like that.” She smiled as I ran off to join my fellow classmates. I liked talking with Annabelle; she was different. I felt there was so much we could teach and share with each other.

*To Be Continued*