

## **How to Survive High School as The Main Character**

High school is such a difficult, yet transformative time in a young person's life. It's a time to make mistakes, make friends, and make a fool of yourself. And that's ok because being quirky has never been a crime. But go ahead, lock me up if standing up to stereotypes while also fitting into one is cynical. To save you the humiliation, here's a few ways to navigate high school.

Never under any circumstance let anyone tell you that your education should be a priority during high school. Trust me, you won't have time for that. Between trying to catch your crush's attention or gaining the courage to stand up to the mean girls (or becoming one) there's not much more room to fill your plate with your studies. Adults telling you to take your schoolwork seriously clearly forgot about how pivotal teenage drama was to the trajectory of their life.

As far as your love life, it's never been more pathetic. But don't lose any sleep over it. Pretty soon the all-star athlete will suddenly start to notice you and you'll coincidentally be paired up together for some unforeseeable reason. As you are forced against your will to spend more time with him, you begin to realize that even the brainless jock has some depth to him. Let him open up on his own, but make it seem like you don't care at first. Let him get to know you. Allow him to see you for who you truly are, which may require the removal of your glasses and letting your hair down. Take a minute to soak in his goofy smirk when you lock eyes as he says, "Wow. You look-." You leave him speechless. When your heart starts pounding uncontrollably, just remember how big of a jerk he was a week ago. Try not to let your intrusive thoughts take over. Stick to your guts, girl. Don't give the heart what it wants. It's deceitful. But then you stop and overanalyze the beauty of the situation: He'll never be as smart as you and you'll never be as athletic as him, but that's why it works so well.

If your hometown's future NBA star doesn't show any signs of swooning over you, don't fret. There's a chance you won't just have one guy after you. In fact, you might just end up in a love triangle with a pair of brothers. The best way to navigate this chaos is to make out with one brother knowing there's a chance that the other one will catch you. After you are caught red handed, explain to the other brother that all the time you spent leading him on was really just a way for you to suppress your true feelings that you have for his brother. Reassure him that you wouldn't take back the time you had together. Remind him that he is being demoted to the friendzone by kindly making a peace offer in hopes that nothing is going to be weird between the three of you.

When the entire school is talking about you and your PG-13 love affair with the hottest guy in school, let it get to your head. Turn your back on all your friends and completely forget who you are. Show up to the parties that you didn't get invited to before. Get lost in your newfound popularity until you hit rock bottom. But don't try to turn things around until after the prom court is announced and, surprise, you and the school's Troy Bolton are in the running for queen and king. Act like you're surprised at making the ballot, even if you saw it coming. Your study buddy's ex-girlfriend is also on the prom court, and she will put every bit of her energy toward campaigning and planning ways to ruin your life. When the big day arrives, it's no surprise that the king of the school is also crowned king of the prom. You see where this is going. It only makes sense that his queen is Ms. Popular herself, his ex-girlfriend.

Turn to leave the event. You can't take it. Seeing that brat slow dance with the guy you've abruptly developed a deep connection with is not in your best interest. As you make your way through the crowd, you feel the heat of the spotlight on you as the announcer repeats your name into the microphone. What the heck? Hesitantly look around to make sure you are properly

registering what is happening. Make your way to the stage but walk in slow motion to really dramatize the event taking place. When you get up on stage, lock eyes with the man of your dreams as the crown is placed on your head. Start your acceptance speech by assuring everyone that you did not expect this either. Although the speech shouldn't be planned, go into a moving monologue about how you've been a pretty awful person recently and let down some people that were close to you. You don't have to say the words "I'm sorry." The speech is your way of taking accountability. Give an indirect shoutout to the prom king that you know has a soft side. Let him know that he has changed you for the better. As your speech comes to a close, bolt out of the prom in tears.

When you finally reconcile with your friends and the jock feels like talking to you again, have peace in knowing that you were never the problem. It's everyone else. It's society. You're just a girl, trying to survive high school...minus the school.

**Word Count:** 938