

### Excerpt From “Dear Me”

I looked up the meaning of the word once in my grandmother’s dictionary, just being curious as to why people keep calling me bitch, and the first meaning sent me rolling, it said, the female of the dog. I thought that wasn’t so bad, I like dogs. Next it said, a lewd or immoral woman. That would be my mother. The next definition: a malicious, spiteful or overbearing woman, again mom. Then I read the last definition, it said, something that is extremely difficult, objectionable or unpleasant and I thought... that’s me. I don’t remember how old I was, but I thought to myself, my mom is right. I am a bitch.

Getting back to the whole teacher thing, Mom walks into the classroom all proper as if she has never said a cuss word in her life, and expects me to apologize for defending myself. You see Sarah the thin blonde, with the rich daddy, had been talking to Brittany, who is kind of her side kick, and mentions how my stomach is laying out of my jeans. I heard them, they were laughing and pointing and well you know I wasn’t going to put up with someone talking about me that way. My mom had taught me better than that. So I lay into Sarah so hard, I didn’t even have time to get out of my desk. Me and the desk go flying across the room at this poor skinny white girl who is sitting there eyes wide open as I actually take flight heading right into her. I wish you could have seen her eyes, it was great. This blimp of a sixteen year old headed her way, freakin’ hilarious. Well anyway I land on top of her, and that was pretty much it except for some hair pulling, but the teacher wouldn’t even listen to me. I can’t let people talk about me like that. Mom should understand that. But no, she sits there expecting an apology. Mom looks at me saying, “Rosa, what has gotten into you? I want you to apologize to Mrs. Hunter right now, and I mean now!”

This is coming from a woman who brought me into this world, and called me little bitch so much I thought it was my nickname. I’m not kidding. I would be out at a mall or somewhere and someone would yell the word, “Bitch” and I would turn around thinking they were talking to me.

I answer back, “I’m not apologizing. You didn’t hear what those girls were saying about me.”

“Oh, Rosa it’s always one thing or another with you. What...what did they say this time that was so bad?”

“You didn’t hear them, they were talking about me.”

“It couldn’t have been that bad, at least not bad enough that you sent a desk hurling at them. You need to apologize to Mrs. Hunter right now. They’re not going to give you a second chance this time.”

“I don’t give a damn what they’re going to give me. Do you think I care? You most of all should know about not caring. What the hell are you doing here anyway? I don’t want you here. Why don’t you just get the hell out of here? You’re not helping me; you’re not listening to me. Why the hell are you here?”

“I’m here to try to keep you in school, Rosa. Rosa, are you listening to me?”

I sit there looking at her as she continues with this façade. “Rosa you shouldn’t have called your teacher those names. You need to apologize right now or they’re going to suspend you. Rosa...Rosa did you hear me?”

She is now looking at me, giving me that eye jerking thing, making her head go back and forth pointing to Mrs. Hunter with her forehead, like this is going to make me somehow do what she asks. I sit there with my arms crossed in front of me shaking my head left to right, still not believing what is happening right in front of me.

I look at her with this kind of I can’t believe we are having this conversation, and I start in, “And who the hell do you think you are. I’m not listening to her. I’m not listening to you. You both had better God damn get out of my face before I give you both black eyes.”

My mom’s mouth drops open a mile wide, as I continue even though I know I shouldn’t have, even though I know I should have shut up right there. Something just got a hold of me. You know when you hear

that little voice inside you saying, *Rosa...Rosa what are you doing, you know your mom is going to kill you later. You had better stop right now.* But unfortunately I didn't listen, I ignored the voice, you know you have probably been there on one occasion or another.

So anyway, I continue, "That's right, bitches, both of you. And who taught me to defend myself, it was you mother. You're sitting there with your 'Yes ma'ams' and your 'no sirs' like you are some righteous angel. You may be able to put on this act for them, but you and I both know what kind of mother you are."

I get up and leave the room, cussing at them the whole way. Heading down the hallway, I hit the school doors and send them flying in both directions. I can see the school officer behind me out of the corner of my eye, but I keep going. I can't seem to stop myself as I continue walking to the car. I can hear him yelling for me to stop, but by this time there is no turning back. I keep walking, as I feel him grab me from the back holding on to my arm as I turn to shake it loose, and I keep walking. He grabs me again as I start to shout any kind of profanity that I can think of. Everything I had been taught. Every word I have learned in the name of love, and he grabs me, lowering me to the sidewalk, as the other school officer, who ran out behind him handcuffs me, bringing me back into the school. I don't remember everything I said, but it wasn't pretty. I saw my mom watching me, her face white as a ghost, as if I were some stranger, some disappointment, someone else's daughter.

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