



Friendship...Character...Community...

Friends Forever Girls: You Decide!

Natalie's Name Calling Nightmare

Natalie felt the cafeteria bench bounce a little as her friend Kristina plopped down next to her.

“Yum, chicken stick day,” Kristina said.

Natalie pointed to the girl sitting across the table from them. “Kristina, you know Bethany, right? She’s captain of my Swim Team.”

Bethany tossed her long hair back over her shoulder. “Don’t forget, I’m fastest swimmer on the team, too!” she boasted.

Kristina nodded. “I’ve seen you swim when I’ve come to the meets to watch Natalie—you are really fast! And we’re in the same Math group, too.”

Bethany said, “You sit in back, right? Hey, I got a 98 on yesterday’s test, can you believe it? What did you get?”

Natalie noticed that Kristina looked down at her tray for a moment. But then her friend looked up and grinned. “Oh, I didn’t do very well. I studied really hard, but somehow I got all confused when I saw the test. Just call me Bumble-brain.”

Natalie smiled. Kristina was being a really good sport! Natalie knew Kristina had a tough time with her schoolwork. She worked just as hard as the other FFGs. But Kristina said it was like no matter how much she tried, the information wouldn't stick to her brain when it was test time. Natalie was impressed that her friend was able to joke about her struggles.

“Bumble-brain! That's funny, Kristina,” said Bethany. “Bumble-Brain, Bumble-Brain! Hey, Morgan, did you hear that?”

Morgan was on Natalie's swim team too. She set her tray on the table and sat down next to Bethany. “Hear what?” she asked.

“Kristina's decided to change her name,” said Bethany. “She wants us to call her Bumble-Brain from now on.”

Morgan flashed a smile. “Bumble-Brain? How did you choose that, Kristina—I mean, Bumble-Brain?” The girls all laughed.

Kristina laughed hardest of all. “Yep, I'm Bumble-Brain Lee,” she said. But Natalie thought Kristina's cheeks looked a little redder than usual.

“Wait,” said Bethany. “Maybe we won't call her Bumble-brain—we'll call her Dumber-Brain! You know, because she never gets the answers right when Mr. Timms calls on her.”

Morgan and Bethany laughed even louder, but Natalie noticed that Kristina wasn't laughing any more.

“Or Dumb-No-Brain,” chimed in Morgan. Natalie was the only one who seemed to be paying attention to Kristina anymore. The other two girls were having too much fun

thinking of silly names. But Natalie could see that Kristina's smile was looking pretty wobbly.

"Poor Dumb-No-Brain," said Bethany. She sighed and shook her head. "What if tomorrow she forgets where the classroom is? Or how to tie her shoelaces?"

"Or maybe she'll forget how to walk!" said Morgan. She was laughing so hard she had to hold a hand over her mouth because she had just eaten a big bite of chocolate pudding.

"Dumb-No-Brain, missed the train, forgot her name," chanted Bethany.

Natalie looked over at Kristina again. Kristina's cheeks were flushed bright red. She was staring down at her lunch tray and biting her lip.

Natalie realized she had to do something, fast. The girls from the swim team didn't seem to realize that what had started out as teasing had turned into something hurtful. Kristina had started it by giving herself a silly name. But now the teasing had gone too far. And nobody else seemed to notice!

But what could she do, Natalie wondered? If she said the wrong thing, would she make things even worse? Maybe Kristina would be even more embarrassed when the other girls noticed how upset she was. Did Natalie really have the right to tell her teammates how to behave? What if they got mad at her? Or told her she was making a big deal out of nothing? Natalie loved to swim—she didn't want to do anything that would spoil Swim Team!

Natalie saw a small tear plop down off of Kristina's cheek onto her t-shirt. The same t-shirt that had the picture of a beautiful butterfly floating across the front. And just like that, seeing the tear and the butterfly reminded Natalie of the promises that all the

FFGs tried to live by. The Butterfly Promises: that was her answer! Now she knew what to do. Natalie took a deep breath.

What do you think Natalie has decided to do? Look at the Butterfly Promises. What would you do if you were Natalie? Once you have decided, write the ending for this story.

BUTTERFLY PROMISES

Be the best I can be

Use kindness and be fair

Tell the truth

Treat others the way I want to be treated

Encourage my friends

Respect myself and others

Find the courage to do what's right

Listen to others

and always remember ...

You can do it!



