

## Superficial

by Beccah

Niki and Chloe walked into school. Kids were slamming lockers and papers were thrown everywhere. Suddenly, there was a smell so great it could make the flowers pop up. The smell traveled through the halls, past the lockers and over the garbage that was everywhere. It was fruity passion Herbal Essence. Niki looked. Soft blonde hair was swaying in the distance. There was only one thing it could be . . . Samantha Stillman.

Niki pulled on Chloe's arm. "C'mon, Chloe." They moved behind the lockers.

"What?" Chloe asked, still looking down the hall at Samantha.

"I don't want her to see me. She's probably going to make fun of my clothes again." Niki lifted her backpack shaking with fear. "I hate her!" Niki glared.

"She's not that—" Chloe stopped herself midsentence and looked at Niki.

"Don't tell me you were going to say that she's not that bad. She's terrible!" Niki wanted to scream out, but she didn't want anyone to see her behind the lockers.

"Hey!" a voice said. Niki's heart beat out of her chest. She looked up to see Samantha Stillman standing in front of her.

Niki opened her eyes wide and looked straight up at Samantha. "What do you want?" she asked shaking. It seemed like the walls were closing in on her. She wanted to walk behind the lockers, turn and run the other way, but she didn't.

"I just wanted to see your new, I mean, your clothes from the back of the closet," Samantha said laughing. Niki stared at her hard. Chloe looked at the floor. "C'mon, Chloe. We have class," Niki said. But Chloe just stood there. Niki wanted pull Chloe away and run down the hall. But she did nothing.

"I have a question for you, Chloe," Samantha said gritting her teeth at Niki. "Why are you friends with her?" Samantha motioned with her chin in Niki's direction.

"Because," Chloe said proudly. Niki gave her a nudge. Samantha stared. Chloe's face turned red. "She, um, well, I don't know. I mean—" Niki wanted to crawl away.

"I mean, like she has the worst taste in clothes, right?" Samantha said cutting Chloe off.

"Yes. I mean no. I mean I don't know!" Chloe whined. Niki turned away. She didn't get it. She and Chloe had made a pact—Best Friends Forever.

"Sorry, Niki," Chloe whispered.

"Chloe," Niki said, turning around and wiping the tears from her face. But it was too late.

"Let's go," Samantha said. They all stood in the hallway looking at each other. Doors were opening and closing as kids went to class. Samantha pulled Chloe by the shirt and together they followed the rush of other kids.

The doors shut behind them as they walked off to class. Niki stood alone and wondered if it was worth being class president. I should have known after beating her last year in the election. If you mess with Samantha Stillman, she'll mess with you.

Niki started to walk to class, not sure which way to turn now that she was all alone.