

My time at boarding school



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At the beginning of year six, when I was ten, my mum brought up the subject of secondary school and I realised that, after that year, I would have to leave the school and people I had known for many years.

I knew I would have to leave my friends, because they were all going to the local comprehensive school, and as my brother was at a private school, I would have to go to one too. I had a choice. I could go to Dauntsey's school, the same as my brother, but I would have had to wear the horrible brown uniform. Therefore, I went to Bruton School for Girls.

A private Girl's school in Somerset. I did not particularly like that uniform, but if I was to go, I would be a boarder and that was what made me want to go, more than anything. I remember getting my green, tartan kilt and my green woolly jumper, my white shirts and socks and my black tights. Tights were to be worn in the winter and socks were to be worn in the summer. I remember when the day finally came. I was excited, but very, very nervous.

We went up the drive and I was left downstairs with my suitcase and instructions not to move and to keep an eye on my mum's handbag while she went to look for the boarding house. She disappeared up some stairs and came down two minutes later, telling me to go with her. I dragged my big red suitcase up the stairs. I still remember the smells and sights.

There was a huge picture of a sad clown on the staircase, which was quite scary, but I instantly liked it. At the top of the stairs was a corridor, with a door to the left and a door to the right. I knew that we had to go through the door on the right because a tiny, thin woman with short grey hair was stood

holding the door open." Hello, I'm Miss Dale or DD for short, so if you ever hear anybody talking about Miss DD, it's usually me.

She politely informed me. She asked me my name and pointed to a door opposite the door we were stood at and told me that I was going to live in there for the next year. I thanked her and carried on dragging my suitcase. When we got in, I was so nervous.

A small staircase that led up into a little room that looked out onto the downstairs impressed me. I chose a bed and wondered who would live in the two other beds up there. Everybody had a small, uncomfortable bed, a chest of draws, with three draws; the top drawer had a lock on, and a small narrow wardrobe. My mum unpacked all my stuff, while I watched the other four girls unpack.

A Chinese girl was talking to a girl with bushy black hair, and there was a very pretty girl arguing with her mum and dad about her poster that had a cat hanging off a branch and a rude word written on it. The other girl seemed to know the girl with the rude poster because she kept talking to her every now and again. It was surprisingly noisy, so I could not hear their conversation. After about an hour, my mum took me to see the housemistress. I walked down the corridor short corridor. Standing in front of me was a dumpy woman with white hair and purple tinted glasses.

She was very nice to me and showed me into a nice small cosy room that had a sign on the door saying " Old House Office". It was all very welcoming, there was a desk with lots of paper and things on and some nice squashy chairs. It was painted magnolia, like everything else in the boarding house,

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but it had a sort of green ivy pattern going round the top. I did not realise that I would spend hours and hours in that room over the years.

Soon, my mum told me it was time for her to leave. She took me back to my dorm, told me to be good, gave me a hug and went. I walked downstairs and the bushy haired girl and the Chinese girls were there, but the others were not. " Hi my name's Becky and this is Josephine Yim and she has been here since yesterday because that's when her flight from Hong Kong was in" and she carried on talking for ages. " Hi I'm Natasha.

" I managed to fit in when she was taking a breath. Just then, the other two girls came in. They both said hi and then I opened the door to the dorm and started to find out who was who. You see, there was a list of names on the door, and I guessed that it was names of the people in our dorm.

I started reading them: " Rebecca Jacobs oh yeah that's you isn't it? " I said to Becky. Natasha Lomas. That's me um Emma Moron. " Emma Moron then informed me that her name was Emma Moran. She was the one with the rude poster.

I quickly apologised and carried on. " Jemma Standen. " " That's me," said the girl who knew Emma. " Samantha Williams. Who's that? " I asked the others. " Oh she went to the Prep school with me.

She won't be here until the evening" Becky proudly told me." And Josephine Yim. I looked at the Chinese girl and she smiled at me. After that, Emma decided that I should be called Tash, and the name has stuck.

We all got to know each other a bit. I found out that Jemma and Emma went to the same primary school, and there was another boarding house with year sevens in and they knew somebody called Georgina who went to their school for a while and then moved to the prep school. Becky claimed to be Georgina's best friend, but nobody really believed that. I cannot really remember much that happened that evening. The other girl, Samantha came and unpacked her stuff next to my bed. I was so caught up in it all.

I know we were told off for talking too late but that is all I can really remember. In the morning, we were all woken up at 7. 15 and we eagerly jumped out of bed and got dressed. I remember us all comparing how repulsive our shoes and uniforms were. We went down to breakfast at 8 o'clock and then at 8. 30, we went into school.

I remember us all walking quietly down the stairs when I dropped my hockey stick and it went clattering down two flights of stairs. I shouted: " Oh no! I've woken everybody up! " And the other started girls screaming with laughter. Then Sam pointed out the fact that if there was anybody still asleep, after me dropping my hockey stick and my shouting, they would not be now. I realised this and started giggling along with the others until I realised that I had to run to the bottom of the stairs to get my hockey stick back. A bad mistake - I ended up tripping over my new shoes and went flying down six steps.

It was amazing that I was not at all injured. I just sat at the bottom of the stairs laughing harder than I ever had in my life! On people's birthdays, we used to have parties. Whether this was a little party in our dorm, or a video

we had great fun. I remember Josephine's birthday. She had been very homesick.

Emma, Josephine and I were all best friends, so Emma and I worked out a little surprise for Josephine. We let the other girls into our plan because we needed their help. On October 8th 1999, we all woke up at 6. 30 and got some balloons out of my wardrobe. I remember staying up for hours after Josephine had gone to sleep blowing up 20 balloons the night before.

We sneaked the ballons and decorations downstairs trying not to wake up Josephine. We managed to sort of hide them behind Emma's bed before Josephine woke up with all the noise we were making. What's wrong? " She curiously asked." Um nothing, Jo, just go back to bed. Emma is not feeling too well so we brought her a bowl. Go back to bed.

" I managed to quickly tell her. Josephine did not want to go back to bed, so she was sent upstairs to play a ' game' with Becky and Jemma, which somehow included a scarf and a toy mouse. Sam, Emma and I managed to decorate the room so it looked great. We got Josephine downstairs and gave her a crown of lollipops that we made. We sang happy birthday as loud as we could, so the whole boarding house could hear us!