

### 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 was 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 sidekick, 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 landed 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?”