New Student

by Justin Street

I used to love the first day of school. Don't get me wrong - not because I like school like those nerds in the drama club, or chess club, or whatever. It's because I own my school.

Well, owned. I guess.

It's not named after me or anything. But I run every hall, every class. The teachers don't bother me, the counselor stopped trying to mess with me, and the principal is afraid of me. No one can touch me. I run that school.

Or ran, now - I guess.

I used to be really excited about going back. It's mostly cause all summer long trying to keep up with my friends is insane. They're all over the place. Some get jobs and can't hang, others go on vacation. But come school time, we're all back - and it's the best. That's why I love school going back to school. None of them would admit this, but I'm 100% in control. I'm the king (queen). They all look to me.

And they all want to be in with me - cause they know what happens when you're not. If you cross me, I know how to make life terrible for you. I've made two kids transfer schools already. I'm not someone you want to have an issue with.

Imagine the whole school, turned against you. Imagine that not one of your friends would even talk to you - because they would be afraid that they'd get shut out too.

And rumors? Forget about it. There's nobody better than me. The trick is to make it something based just a little off of something true - but so bad that no one will say anything about it in front of you. It's a gift.

It's the worst.

It's also why I'm not ready to go back. I don't want to do that anymore. I don't want to do a lot of things anymore. I didn't get a job this summer, or go on vacation - not really anyway. I went to camp. Which is not a vacation, whatever anyone tries to tell you.

It's... better. I didn't know anyone, so I wasn't real sure what it was going to be like. I found out real quick that it was actually church camp. They tried to make it about sports and swimming and stuff, but no. It was about Jesus. I tried to come home, but my mom made me stick it out.

I'm glad she did. I'm not exactly sure what happened, but something happened by the end of the week. The counselor said that Jesus came into my heart, because I asked Him to. I think it's true. Everything is different.

Which is why I don't know about going back to school. I don't know what friends are going to do. I don't know how the teachers are going to treat me, or the principal - or anybody. You spend so much time telling people who you are - what happens when you change? Will they let you?

Same friends, same halls, same teachers, same counselor, same principal, same school.

New student.