

# If I Had Known....

Hi my name is Madi. I'm 11 years old and I have the toughest life you could imagine. I'm being abused every second, every minute, every day, of every week of every year. I feel trapped like a bird in a cage. I can't escape.

As I walk into the school gates Suzie, the school bully, is waiting for me.

Another *painfully slow day* of hearing her loud voice is not fun. Suzie thinks she's the boss of everything around her. She is such a *drama queen* and thinks she is very pretty. She calls me fat, grubby and smelly each day. She follows me to the toilets and traps me in a corner and punches me until I cry. No one seems to care or notice my tears. I'm too scared to tell anyone in case she finds out and hurts me even more. I want to, but I can't, it feels like I can't speak.

One day she pushed me too much and **I'd had enough!** She stood there and mouthed off about how my parents neglect me and don't take care of me properly. I finally said something when she said "You are useless. I don't even think you should be in grade 6. You should be in kindergarten". After she had finished saying that horrible thing it felt like there was a **RED HOT VOLCANO** inside me that needed to explode.

That's when I lost it. I yelled in her face and said "Why do you treat people like gum under a desk? You don't know what is going on in other people's lives especially mine. My parents are doing the same thing to me every day like calling me names, hurting me, not caring about me the exact same as you do. So maybe you can think before you speak." I was relieved to get that off my chest. I had been holding it in for a very long time. As I walked away slowly feeling empty inside Suzie called me back. She stood there and spoke quietly to me. "If I had known" ....

By Madi Gaffney