




**26 TIPS\***  
FOR SURVIVING  
GRADE **6**

**LESSON 3: GEOGRAPHY**

**PARENTS ARE ALLOWED TO DRAG YOU**

**ANYWHERE**

**CATHERINE AUSTEN**

A decorative banner with a star and swirls. The banner is white with a black outline and contains the text "#1: People do not always need your help." Below the banner are several stylized, hand-drawn swirls and a five-pointed star, all in black and white.

#1: People do not always  
need your help.

Becky Lennox lived by the river in a little house with a big yard. She had a dog that didn't drool and a teenage brother who did. She had a red bicycle and a pink bedroom. She had good grades and great ideas. She had everything she wanted — until Violet Turnbull moved to town.

The trouble began on the first day of fall. Becky stepped outside and felt a change in the air. The sun shone. The birds sang. But summer was over.

Becky walked to the curb to wait for the school bus. Her mother followed her, carrying a hand spade and a bag of tulip bulbs. It looked like gardening, but Becky knew it was spying. “Can you go back in the house?” she asked.

“No,” her mother said. “I tried planting bulbs in the house once. It didn’t work.”

“You’re embarrassing me,” Becky added.

“I’ll hide behind a tree when the bus comes,” her mom said. “No one will know I was ever here.”

“The new girl knows you’re here,” Becky said. She pointed down the street, where Violet Turnbull stood in front of a large brick house.

Violet was tall and slim, with blond hair cut below her chin. She wore white jeans with a red T-shirt and black sneakers. She held a pile of pebbles in her left hand and threw them,

one by one, at the SOLD sign in her yard.

Becky's mother waved and screamed, "Hello there! You must be Violet!"

"Unbelievable," Becky muttered.

Her brother, Jason, walked outside, wearing pyjama bottoms and eating dry Cheerios straight from the box. "What's up?" he asked. "Is your bus late? Hey, is that the new girl?" He raised an arm and waved at Violet, exposing all his naked armpit hair.

Violet waved back.

Becky tried to disappear behind the hedge. Her mother put an arm around her shoulder. "She seems nice," she said. "You should sit with her on the bus."

"Why not go wait with her?" Jason said. "She'll be nervous starting school three weeks late. Go welcome her to the neighbourhood."







“Please go in the house,” Becky begged. “Both of you.”

“Promise me you’ll help her out?” her mom said.

“I promise,” Becky said.

But Violet Turnbull did not need Becky’s help. She was smart, she was cute, and she was fun. She started school on Friday morning, and by the time the lunch bell rang, she was the most popular girl in Becky’s class.

“I don’t mind if you sit with me,” Becky said to her in the cafeteria.

“Thanks.” Violet smiled and sat down. But there was ketchup on her chair, so she spent the lunch hour running home to change her pants.

In gym class, Becky whispered, “I’ll go easy on you because you’re new.”

“Thanks,” Violet said. Then she stole the

basketball from Becky's team twenty times in a row.

"I'll save you a seat on the bus," Becky offered after school.

"No, thanks," Violet replied. Then she hopped into her mother's red convertible.

Becky sat alone on the ride home. She wondered how the day had gone so wrong.

When the bus stopped at a red light, Becky saw Violet's car in the lane beside it. It looked expensive. Violet's mother tapped the steering wheel with long, red fingernails. She wore a black suit, black sunglasses, and red lipstick. She looked like she was late for an important meeting.

Violet looked up at the bus and waved. Becky began to wave back, but the girls in the seat ahead of her jumped up and opened their window. "Hey, Violet! Cool car!" they shouted. "Have a great weekend! See you Monday!"

Becky sighed and turned away. Across the street, she saw an advertisement for an expensive law firm. *Some people can sell their help for thousands of dollars*, she thought. *I can't even give mine away.*