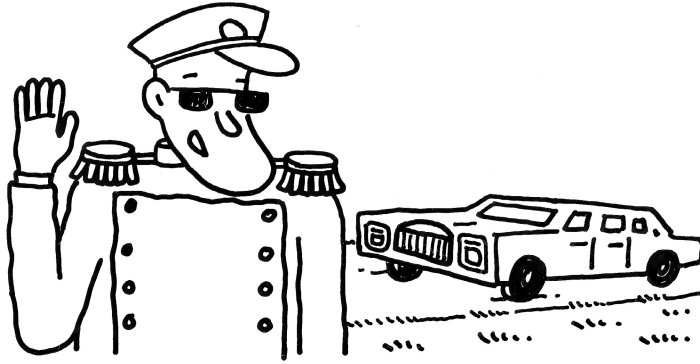


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My mom squinted, looking out our living room window. “Honey? Why is there a nineteenth-century Austrian general in the driveway?”



I ran to the door and saw a guy in a military-looking costume. It took me a minute to realize he was Selfie's chauffeur.

"I'm Reinhardt, Miss St. Claire's driver," he explained. "She's waiting in the car to take you to school."

"What?" My mom gave me a sharp look.

I dived for my backpack and pulled a jacket out of the closet. "It's a long story," I told her. "My new friend—"

Reinhardt went back to the car, and Selfie appeared at the door. She was wearing her rock-star-at-the-airport look: trench coat hastily thrown over leggings, three-inch heels, sunglasses, hair in a glamorously messy topknot, tumbler of coffee clutched in her hand. She looked about twenty-five.

*“Becca?”* My mom’s voice held a warning.

“Hi, we haven’t met.” Selfie held a manicured hand out to my mother, who was shorter than her. “I’m Sloan St. Claire.”

*“How* do you two know each other?” My mom’s eyes traveled downward, taking in Selfie’s diamond ankle bracelet and quilted Chanel purse. I could tell she knew the answer wasn’t “debate team.”

“She’s—we’re—” I stammered. This wasn’t the time to explain how we’d lost the principal’s bra together and almost got kicked out of school.

“Becca’s my assistant on the Dance Committee.” Selfie’s voice was smooth. She knew how to talk to adults.





"I see." Another detail I "forgot" to mention. My mom looked hurt.

Selfie turned to me. "Sorry, I should've texted. I'm dying to know how it went with those jocks."

Now my mom looked truly alarmed.

"Alone with six guys, you must've gotten *something*." Selfie frowned and flicked a granola cluster off my shirt. "Were they *all* eighth graders?"

My mom's eyes got even wider. "Becca?"

"It was a group interview! For the school newspaper." I sighed and turned to Selfie. "My mom's getting worried. . ."

"Oh no!" Selfie reached down and patted my mom's shoulder, anxious to reassure her. "Everything's cool."

It's not like she was playing Seven Minutes in Heaven at some guy's party while his parents were in Turks and Caicos."

"WHAT?" my mom croaked.

*Oh, crud.*

"Let's gooooo." Selfie tugged my sleeve. "Before the principal freaks out on us again."

I could see my mom's brain spinning furiously as she tried to sort out a blitz of new information: I had contact with older boys, trouble in school, and some very weird new friends.



“Sloan.” My mom walked up to Selfie. “This is the first time we’ve met, and I—I’d just feel better if I talked to your mom and introduced myself. Since you’re giving Becca a ride. Is that okay?”

“*Totally.*” Selfie nodded. “We’re kind of, like, not speaking right now, cuz she won’t let me pierce my belly button? But you can def call her.”

“Oh.” My mom didn’t look reassured. “Okay.”

“Nice meeting you!” Selfie handed my mom a business card as she floated out the door.

“Wait up, Selfie!” I shouted back.

“‘Selfie’...?” my mom repeated, confused.

“Just go with it, Mom,” I said, flying out of the house.

