

99 WRITING

Jazmine & Vanessa

by Jazmine & Vanessa,
826CHI

TYPE
NARRATIVE

Dear Jazmine,

Hi Jazmine! Nice to meet you. My name is Vanessa. I'm in eighth grade. I'm glad to talk to you and get to know you better. I have a nickname, which is Vane. I am an animal lover. I love to help out animals as much as I can. I love to hear music that has a good lesson, like "Scars to Your Beautiful" by Alessia Cara. I admire her a lot. I only have a brother. His name is Victor, he is fifteen years old, and he is in tenth grade at Curie High School. Yes, I'm excited to go to high school. I'm planning on going to Curie with my brother. I live with my mom, my brother, my three dogs, and my two birds. My dad passed away.

My neighborhood is Gage Park. I don't mind that we moved here. First my mom broke her arm and then she got in a fight with my dad's family, so we decided not to live near them. I walk around my neighborhood when I'm feeling sad or angry. I can be an active reader when I'm reading an interesting

book. My favorite book is Pink. It has a good life lesson. I only play volleyball.

I was wondering if I can also ask you questions. When is your birthday? How old are you? What are your favorite hobbies? I also noticed we have a few things in common, like our neighborhood and songs. I hope you and I have a lot in common. At first, I didn't want new friends because I'm scared of talking to people. So, it would be pretty cool to hang out with you and maybe become friends. I hope I get to know you better. It was nice talking to you. Bye!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Cruz

P.S. By the way, Jazmine, you sound like a person I can trust.

Dear Vanessa,

It's really nice to meet you too. I'm a sophomore at Amundsen High School. I'm also really excited to get to know you better.

My birthday is in the summer, August 4, 2001. I am fifteen years old. My favorite hobbies are reading and sports. I've played volleyball for six years straight and basketball for five years. My favorite author would be John Green. I'm an active reader

and I love going on adventures around Chicago with my friends, especially to the art museum. I love music too. Alessia Cara is an amazing singer. She puts so much emotion into her songs and I can relate to her a lot.

I'm really sorry about your father's passing. How old were you when that happened? How do you cope with the loss of your father? My neighborhood is Portage Park. There are so many trees and flowers. My favorite season is fall because of all the beautiful leaves. I would love to become friends with you, Vanessa, and to see you or hang out sometime soon. You honestly put the biggest smile on my face when you told me I sound like a person you could trust.

Sincerely,

Jazmine Rodriguez

P.S. You are a humble person and I'm so glad you feel like you can trust me.

Dear Jazmine,

I'm glad I can put a big smile on your face. If you were wondering why I didn't want to make friends, it's because I got betrayed by them. Only three of them still talk to me. The reason why they betrayed me is because they thought I was causing problems, but

once they realized it wasn't me, they tried to talk to me. So, it would be cool to be friends with you.

I agree with you, Alessia Cara does put a lot of emotion into her songs. Which song of hers is your favorite? My favorite one is "Scars to Your Beautiful." My favorite part of the song is: ". . . so she's starving. You know, cover girls eat nothing. She says, 'Beauty is pain and there's beauty in everything. What's a little bit of hunger? I can go a little while longer.' She fades away. She don't see her perfect, she don't understand she's worth it." The reason why I like it is because the girl feels like that and I feel like that. Like I'm not perfect or worth it. Sometimes I feel like I'm useless. I wrote my favorite part on a sticky note and I put it inside of my folder. What are your top ten songs from other singers?

When my dad died I was about one year and three months old. Of course, when my mom told us, I cried for a long time. When I was small and saw little girls hanging out with both of their parents, I would get jealous because I thought it was unfair. At age eight, I realized that they should appreciate that they have both of their parents. Even though I feel sad when I talk about him, I really don't cry. This situation is something hard for me to handle. For example, I sometimes wear my dad's perfume and it makes me sad.

Your neighborhood sounds beautiful by the way. My neighborhood is just plain. It

doesn't have flowers unless people decorate their house with flowers. My neighborhood pretty much just has trees. What college are you thinking of applying to, anyway? Also, thank you for giving me a smile too because I was sad until I read your letter. So, thank you for making me happy. Once again, I'm glad I can give you a big smile on your face, and thank you again.

Sincerely, Vane

P.S. By the way, if you want you can call me Vane. Everyone calls me that.

Dear Vane,

I want to tell you a story about myself. I don't have a father figure in my life. I grew up missing that part, just like you. My father is alive, but he's like a dead rose in my heart. My mother got together with my dad at the age of seventeen. My father was twenty-three. She went to the same high school as me. My dad went to another high school that's about ten minutes away from Amundsen. I know very little about my father. He was never there. He wasn't even there when I was born.

Being raised by a single mother is the most powerful thing. My mother had me at the age of nineteen. She was already out of high school. My father was twenty-five. He

acted as though he had no brain, no emotions. He cheated on my mother and he even tried saying I wasn't his. I've grown up thinking and making myself believe that he never existed. I'm happiest without him. My mother is the most independent woman and the way she is inspires me to be the person I am today. Do I fail? Yes, of course I do. But I pick myself up. My mother is my rock, but yes, I do wish I could be in my father's life. I wish I could be daddy's girl. I understand your feelings, Vane. It hurts and bothers me when I see others with their fathers, especially when they don't appreciate them. Unlike us—we don't have those father figures in our lives. P.S. Share a story about your family that you feel comfortable telling me, Vane. I would love to hear more.

Hey Jazmine,

I'm happy for you, Jazmine, that you kept going. You are very strong because, compared to me, it sounds like you kept on. I'm very happy you shared this with me. Now I feel like I really know you and have been friends with you for a long time. Though I'm sorry to hear that your dad cheated on your mom. I know that nothing will stop you or your family.

I know we are just getting to know each other, but I hope you know that I'm here for

you. Like you said, I know how it feels to have no dad. I've got to admit seeing Mom suffer taking care of us is hard. Like I told Ms. Abi and Mr. Patrick, February 10 is another year without my dad (thirteen years without him). After reading your letter, I knew I should keep going, knowing he is happy wherever he is. Like you kept going on without your father. To be honest, I would have done the same thing and tried to forget about my dad. In my opinion, it is really hard to forget about your dad, isn't it? Once again, thanks for sharing this with me.

Every February 10, we celebrate by going to church and later lighting up some candles that we have on a small altar that's full of pictures of him. Later, we just hang out, the three of us, as if it is just us four. My mom always tells us stories about him. For example: this February 10, my mom told us that every time someone asked my dad "Are those your kids?" my dad would happily reply, "Yes, they are my kids and I'm proud of them." So, once again, thanks for sharing this. Hope the best for you.

Love,
Vane

Hey Vane,

I'm so glad you could relate and appreciate my story I told you. It was hard to open up

about him, but I know it's probably harder not to have your father alive. February 10 was hard for your family, and I want to give my respects to you and your family. I can only imagine how you're feeling—thirteen years is a long time.

Your dad is proud of you, Vane. You are a strong-minded person, and I'm gonna give you this advice: don't ever make yourself someone you're not in high school. Keep that trait of yourself going into high school. It will either make people intimidated by you or respectful of you for that, like I am. Don't ever tell yourself you can't do something or break when that's what some people want to see.

Going back to the subject of our fathers, I want you to know that, no, I haven't forgotten about him. He's on my mind 24/7, but he's also a lost memory. I only hope the best for him, but I gotta keep going and I want you to do that too. You have to strive toward what you want. Don't ever put yourself down when you're feeling sad or lonely. I can't wait to meet you, Vane, because you seem like a great person. I hope you continue becoming and growing into an amazing person.

Hey, by the way, I want to tell you a story. When I was a freshman in high school, I started dating this guy, and I completely lost my way at the end of the year. I started to care less and less about friends, school, etc. All I wanted to do was be around my boyfriend. Our relationship wasn't perfect and he wasn't either. Long story short, I found out he had cheated and I was heartbroken. It was like my whole world fell apart

because I lost everyone around me. I was in a place, and a mood, that I couldn't get out of. I told you this story because I want you to be smarter and stronger than me going into high school. Don't let anybody walk all over you. Be true to yourself. I gave you this because I wish someone would've told me this: be wise and always be as humble as you are now.

Love,

Jazmine

P.S. You'll always be my best friend.