

**LESSONS
I NEVER
LEARNED AT
MEADOWBROOK
ACADEMY**

LIZ MACCIE

DIVERSIONBOOKS

PROLOGUE

The night before my life changed forever, I put up a good fight. I really did. I marched right into my parents' bedroom, arms crossed, attitude oozing from every inch of me, and I screamed at the top of my lungs, "I'm not going!"

Now, granted, it was around midnight, the room was pitch-black, and my mother was sound asleep. So, I guess it was plausible that I actually did scare her "half to death," thinking I was a "murderer," as she argued after her initial shock subsided.

"What are you doing, Roberta?" she finally asked after reaching over to flick her bedside lamp on. Her hair was covered in those puffy, foam, pink curlers that look like they belong to an entirely different era altogether.

"I just told you...I'm not going."

My mother sat up and leaned her back against the headboard, adjusting a few curlers on the side of her head. "Yes. You are," she said rather calmly for a woman who is prone to spontaneous outbursts of grandeur.

I crossed my arms even tighter around my stomach, as if that somehow shielded me from what I didn't want to hear.

"Do you want me to call your father?"

My dad was a truck driver and had been on route up to Canada for the last couple of days on a delivery. I'll fully admit that my father is my weak spot. I never want to feel like I'm disappointing him. Even though I know I've done so countless times before.

"No," I said.

"Look, Roberta, I'm not going through this with you again. You are going to Meadowbrook Academy. Tomorrow morning.

Plain and simple—”

“But I want to keep going to West Orange High. For once in my life, I finally have friends—”

“*She* is not your friend.”

My mother used the word “she” when referring to my one and only friend, Christine.

“*She* is a user and a bad influence and you should be thanking me a thousand ways to Sunday that I am getting you away from her.”

“Her name is Christine,” I said with just enough ‘tude to make my point.

My mother often referred to me as having a “tone.” I don’t like your “tone,” young lady. Or you better change that “tone” of yours. By the look on her face, I could feel it coming.

“I don’t like your tone, Roberta. Go to bed. You’re giving me heart pains,” she said as she flicked off her bedside lamp.

“Do you have any idea how hard this is going to be for me? To just pull me out of one high school to go to another? Do you want to carry that burden the rest of your life?”

“I’ll take my chances.” She turned over onto her side, facing away from me.

Standing there in the darkness, I debated spewing out a few more combative words, but to be honest, my arsenal was void of any new retaliations. Over the course of the past two weeks, I had tried every ploy, every excuse, and every factual reason as to why my parents were unequivocally ruining my life by sending me to Meadowbrook Academy. And none of them worked. None of them.

“Fine,” I said and stormed out of her room, right back into my bedroom. Exactly where I had started off.

I got into bed and pulled the covers up over my head. This was such a disaster. An utter and total nightmare. My life was about to completely change and I had absolutely no say in the matter whatsoever.