

The Girl
who knew
She
could
CONFIDENCE STORIES
FOR 12 YEAR OLD
GIRLS

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Confidence Stories for Shy 12-year-old Girls

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Introduction



Growing up can feel confusing sometimes.

One day you might feel confident and happy, and the next you might feel nervous, left out, awkward, too quiet, too emotional, or like everyone else has things figured out except you. You might compare yourself to other people, overthink conversations, worry about fitting in, or wonder if you are “too much” or “not enough” at the same time.

If you have ever felt that way, this book was written for you.

Confidence is often talked about as if it means being fearless, outgoing, or perfectly sure of yourself all the time. But real confidence usually looks much quieter than that. Sometimes confidence is speaking up even when your voice shakes. Sometimes it is saying no when you need rest, trying again after a mistake, or simply allowing yourself to be who you really are.

The girls in these stories are all different. Some are quiet. Some overthink everything. Some compare themselves to others. Some feel nervous in groups, afraid of making mistakes, or worried about not fitting in. But each girl discovers something important about herself through small, everyday moments of courage.



Chapter 1

The Girl Who Stayed Quiet





Scene 1



Maya sits in the third row by the window because it feels like the safest place in the room. Not invisible exactly—but close enough.

Afternoon sunlight stretches across her desk, lighting up scratches in the wood and old pen marks left by other students. Someone has carved a tiny crooked heart near the corner. Maya traces it with her thumbnail while the classroom buzzes around her.

Chairs scrape loudly against the floor. Someone laughs too hard near the back of the room. The smell of dry-erase marker mixes with watermelon gum and the sharp citrus scent of hand sanitizer.

Maya keeps her shoulders tight and her eyes on her notebook.

At the front of the room, Ms. Okafor writes across the whiteboard in giant block letters:

VOICES IN THE ROOM

The words alone make Maya's stomach twist.

Ms. Okafor turns around and smiles at the class. "Today we're trying something different," she says. "Everyone is going to share one thought about the story we read this week. Every voice matters."



WHAT SHE LEARNED

Sometimes anxiety makes it seem like everyone else knows exactly what they're doing while you're the only one feeling nervous. But Hannah discovered that most people carry their own worries quietly, even when they look confident on the outside. You do not have to be perfectly relaxed or fearless to belong somewhere. Often, the moment we stop trying so hard to "get everything right" is the moment we finally begin to feel comfortable being ourselves.

THINK ABOUT THIS

1: Have you ever worried about fitting in or getting something wrong in a social situation? What did that feel like for you?

2: What is one thing that helps you feel calmer or more comfortable when you are nervous?

Affirmation

I do not have to be perfect to belong.

.....

Chapter 4

The Girl in the Group Chat





Scene 1



The hallway outside the arts wing at Northfield Middle smells faintly of printer toner and acrylic paint, like someone tried to bottle the idea of creativity and sprayed it all over the cinderblock walls. Aria's Favorite detail is the row of digital collages pinned to the corkboard—some with magazine cutouts, some with perfectly Photoshopped filters—each one an act of public, brightly lit self-invention. She walks the hall with the practiced chill of someone who's trying not to be late for sixth period but will absolutely not be seen running.

Her hair is dark and extra straight today, parted down the center because that's what the algorithm likes this week. She adjusted the center part five times this morning, each time feeling it make her face look more or less like itself, until she finally settled on something that looked deliberate. Her nails are short with no polish, but filed into perfect ovals. She keeps her hands in her hoodie pocket so she won't fidget.

The hall is a moving diagram of kids and screens. Nearly everyone has a phone in hand, even the ones pretending not to care. The sound of incoming notifications is the hallway's background music: ding, buzz, cha-chunk as lockers snap open. Aria navigates the shifting river of bodies to her own locker—third from the end, the number worn off—and spins the dial with two fingers.

She folds the slip, opens the jar, and drops it in with the rest. This time, the sound is just audible—a small, hopeful clink.

She sets the jar back by the lamp, adjusts it so the folded slips are visible through the curve of the glass. She sits on her bed, knees pulled to her chest, and watches the light refract through the jar and onto the wall behind it.

Outside the window, the last of the day paints the backyard in bronze. The trees are nearly bare, a few yellow leaves holding on like the final notes in a song. The world is colder now, but the room feels lit from within.

Rowan doesn't think about what she'll write tomorrow, or next week, or ever again. She just sits with the proof in front of her—a jar of small, brave things, each one real, each one hers.

WHAT SHE LEARNED

Bravery does not always look loud or dramatic. Sometimes it is a text message sent after hours of overthinking, asking for help when you feel embarrassed, or telling the truth about how you feel. Rowan discovered that small brave moments matter because they slowly teach you to trust yourself. Confidence is not built all at once—it grows quietly, one small brave thing at a time.

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

1: What is one small brave thing you have done recently that you are proud of, even if nobody else noticed?

2: What is something you would like to try, say, or do if you stopped waiting to feel completely ready first?

Affirmation

Small brave steps still make me strong.

.....

A Letter to You:

You Were Already Enough



Dear You,

If you are reading this, I want you to know something important before you close this book:

You do not have to become a completely different person to be worthy of confidence.

You do not have to be the loudest, funniest, bravest, prettiest, smartest, or most popular person in the room to matter. You do not have to stop being sensitive, thoughtful, quiet, emotional, nervous, creative, awkward, caring, or different.

A lot of people think confidence means never feeling afraid or unsure of yourself. But real confidence is usually much quieter than that.

Sometimes confidence is:

raising your hand even when your heart is racing.

Saying no when you need rest.

Being yourself around the right people.

Trying again after a mistake.

Walking into a room while feeling nervous.

Telling the truth about how you feel.

Starting before you feel fully ready.

Small brave things count.

You are growing every single day, even when it does not feel obvious yet. The way you care deeply, notice little things, keep trying, and continue learning about yourself matters more than you probably realize.

*And if you are still figuring things out?
That is okay too.*

*You are allowed to grow slowly.
You are allowed to take up space.
You are allowed to protect your peace.
You are allowed to be a work in progress.*

Most importantly, you are already enough while you are becoming who you are meant to be.

Thank you for spending time with these stories.

And maybe, after this book, you will start noticing your own small brave moments too.

With love,

Eleanor Hartwell