

You may be wondering if I've always been this way. If I've always been so clumsy and awkward. It actually started at a very young age and in all my childhood memories, it seems like I always ended messing up everything. I can see that time at one of my birthdays, I wanted to make a wish before blowing out my candles, I came so close to the flame, as a stupid mosquito attracted by the light, that I burned my nose. Sometimes it comes because I want to help, like this other time when I hoped I could be useful by doing ironing. I still can hear my mother asking me to check if the steam iron was hot enough. Well guess what? I thought the cleverest thing to do was to put my finger on the burning tool. I can still feel the heating breath of the angry dragon spreading his burning flames on my finger. I guess at a young age, my bad coordination of movements and my head in the clouds could be seen as cute or funny.

Sadly, it turns out to be a huge problem at my age. Especially when you are a shy teenager. Which leads us to one of the biggest act of awkwardness of my short life, and I can guarantee you I make one after the other.

It all started because I wanted to go to the toilets. I was in middle school and it was this age when you couldn't go to the toilets alone, all the girls were coming in a huge group in the bathroom, disturbing all the innocent people who wanted to do what they needed to. Knowing it was annoying, I decided to go alone, leaving my friends for a moment far away from me as I needed to accomplish my trial : to pass the pack of giggling hyenas. Focused on the path and avoiding any contact which could slow me, I rushed to the first open door and immediately closed it behind me. My back against the door, I took a deep breath and smiled triumphantly.

I don't know if it was the overwhelming and awful smell or the fact that there were no toilet paper but something was wrong, like missing. I think it only took me ten seconds to understand what I had done. The first five seconds to realize that I couldn't feel anything but the door behind me, and the next five seconds to understand that it was because there were no handles.

I had just locked myself up.

Have you ever felt the sudden and devastating feeling of loneliness? A feeling running and sliding through your veins? It was exactly how I felt. I couldn't get out. After the loneliness came the shame. The shame of having to shout for help, my forehead against the door, especially with brainless birds on the other side:

"Excuse me ? Is there anyone here?" I tried to ask before repeating louder. After a few calls someone could finally answer me.

"Yes ? Who are you?"

"Um... My name is Angèle and I am actually stuck."

I don't know if it was because I was already tired of this, because of her nasal voice or because of what she responded, but I could have punched someone, and I am not a violent type of person.

"Is it a joke ?" She asked me,

"Yes of course, I locked myself on purpose and threw the handle."

"Why are you talking to me then ?"

"Oh my god, can you just call someone who could get me out of here?"

She told all her friends I was stuck in there while laughing hysterically and it took her at least five minutes before calling someone. After she left, I don't know how long I stayed here. Five minutes? Fifteen? I think I didn't even feel bad. I was just waiting. A few minutes later someone finally came but it was the wrong handle. I heard someone coming, a few people, they were three maybe? And I heard her.

“ Angèle what have you done again ?”

“ I am stuck.”

And then she just laughed. My best friend was laughing at me. But it didn't matter anymore, it actually reassured me. I started to feel the smile across my face and I ended up laughing with her. When I finally got out, all the school had gathered in front of the toilets trying to understand what was going on. They just saw two girls going out, crying of laughter. It took me a while to go in the toilets alone again and I am actually cringing just writing this experience. I think it is one of those moments you remember all your life.

At every faux pas I make I try to learn, to watch where I am going and to focus on my hands when I carry something important. I just learnt that I had to notice every handle I passed by when I go to the bathroom. I guess it is also a funny anecdote to share as an example of my clumsiness.

Written in the manner of Roald Dahl in *Boy*.

Non-fiction/récit personnel

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