

## Dora the Explorer underwear

First graders are the most respectful people in the world. For as I walked across the brown worn carpet stepping past my fellow classmates to retrieve my Dora the Explorer underwear from the teacher's grasp, not a single student made a sound. Not even a chuckle, an uncomfortable shuffle, or even a sympathetic sigh could be heard from the small room of first graders. The only person that seemed interested in the events unfolding was me.

Since my younger self did not fit society's definition of what a seven-year-old girl looked like, I earned the infamous title of tomboy. My never brushed brown cropped hair resembled a bird's nest and my wardrobe at the time did not include anything slightly "girlish" but instead contained an assortment of hoodies and wide-legged pants. My wide-legged pants were so wide-legged that perhaps a bundled-up pair of Dora the Explorer underwear or an AK47 rifle could be concealed within the pant leg without an observer noticing. On that day my trousers concealed the former.

The time was approximately 1:03 pm after recess. The cool fall weather kissed everyone's cheeks turning them rosy pink. Smiles and sporadic giggles were commonplace among the students as we filed into our separate classrooms. Ms. Brunner's classroom filled up with the scent of wood chips as everyone got comfortable for story time. We sat criss cross applesauce with hands placed in our laps facing the grand white chair. We had reached the twenty sixth novel in the Junie B. Jones series in which Junie and her family took a trip to Hawaii. I personally felt connected to the story since Junie and I share many similar habits such as grammatical arroers, spilling drinks on clothes, and talking to inanimate objects... unfortunately not a lot has changed... Junie is a fellow Jones and also sports a similar brown

bob. Another brown bobbed character I fell in love with in my youth was Dora the Explorer as everyone would soon find out.

I listened intently to Ms. Brunner as she spun the latest tale of Junie's misadventures. As she continued to read the story my short attention span soon depleted, and my eyes started wandering the classroom eventually falling on my pants. That is when I saw it- a strange lump on my knee. I felt the soft lump, and being an imaginative child, I immediately thought the worst... a tumor. Curiosity started taking hold. Maneuvering the strange soft lump from my pant leg into the open, I revealed to my horror the God forsaken object.

My Dora the Explorer underpants...not a tumor

My whole seven years of life flashed before my eyes. I silently panicked occupying a level of hell I rarely traveled to in my seven years of life. Meanwhile, my classmate quietly listened to the story. Instead of acting sensibly I immediately started scanning the room for a victim to take the blame and save myself from utter disgrace. Because if Dora had taught me anything it was how to be resourceful. My eyes scanned the room looking around for a culprit to pin the crime on. They landed on a certain long blonde ponytail I deemed worthy to suffer my embarrassment. Softly setting the underwear on the floor I nonchalantly slid them toward the long blond ponytail.

The long blond ponytail started to swish as its owner's short attention span soon dissipated and her eyes started wandering the room. Her line of sight soon reached the underwear lying by her side. Instead of gasping in disgust or screaming in horror she simply raised her hand and quietly waited for the teacher to look her way.

Ms. Brunner caught her raised hand in the corner of her eye, "Yes Gabriella?"

“There’s underwear on the floor,” She said as a person would say when there is in fact underwear on the floor.

A murmur dispersed across the room and my heart caught in my chest, my body sat as still as a rock, my forehead perspired, “Well, bring them up.” Ms. Brunner said calmly

Gabriella walked up and placed the underwear in the teacher’s hand retreating back to her place on the carpet. Ms. Brunner held up the underwear as if holding a misplaced book.

“Alright, whoever these belong to can come up and get them, and NO one will laugh okay?”

Silence hung in the air so thick that the safety scissors stored in my backpack could not cut through it. A couple seconds seemed like ages as I decided my fate. To this day I do not know what spirit overtook my body as my little legs gradually stood up and walked quickly towards the front of the room. The room seemed to stretch, elongating my trail to the white chair. I swiped the undies from Ms. Brunner's grasp and swiveled around to place them in my locker. I quickly glanced at the students expecting suppressed smiles or even pity. But everyone sat silent most indifferent to the events unfolding. My overactive imagination had pictured everyone pointing and laughing, a news station bursting through the door filming my humiliation for the whole world to witness. But no one even brought up the event afterward, and most kids seemed to forget by the end of the day.

I almost felt disappointed, all that emotional trauma, and for what! Some kid leaving Dora the Explorer underpants on the ground is way more interesting than some kid wetting their pants, and those stories usually circulated for at least a week! At the time it seemed like the end of the world, as if I would forever be known as the girl with Dora the Explorer underpants. But in the end, no one cared about the little mishap.

Everyone has their Dora the Explorer underwear story, and in the end that is all they are, stories. Even though I now look back and laugh at the unfortunate turn of events I was not laughing at the time. That's what childhood and all of life is, we grow, we learn, we accidentally wear two pairs of underwear, and we move on. People must learn to laugh at small things and just enjoy the ride like Dora and her monkey pal always do.