

Why are schools built like prisons, standing outside looking at the high spiked fence like medieval soldiers with their spears at the ready. Poised and waiting to capture kids trying to escape.

A prison that holds the bullies in. Waiting for the first bell to ring so I can go straight to class without being ambushed by the gangs that run the yard and hallways.

Taking my seat at the back left corner as to not expose my back. Hearing whispers and side glances that sound like screams of a warriors performing their all-too familiar battle cry.

Dreading the bell that indicates break. This bell lets me know it's open session. Slowly putting away whatever I was using for the lesson to gain extra moments of not being tortured.

Opening the door and into the yard. The noise is deafening. Shouting and screaming fills the air

I scan to look for a safe place to hide to bide my time to go back to class hoping to fade into the background.

Not realising I have walked into a trap. Grabbed by the horrid kids that move me away from the sight of the 'guards' that patrol the yard. This has been planned and orchestrated to perfection

I realise I can't be seen. I can't scream nowhere to run. The first punch has been landed against my chin. I don't move nor fall. I stand resolute in defiance. Kicks land into my stomach.

Jumper pulled over my head and ripped. Spat on and pulled back down. Blows land against my face and body. Bell rings. Move to the bathroom to clean myself as best I can.

Reset, relive each day. Why are schools built like prisons that hold scared kids that want nothing more than to go home and be safe, hating each day as more pain is inflicted. The joys of my school days.

Now listen, I know things seem bad now and you wonder what you have done to deserve this young Connor, but listen, you will grow up strong. You will be tough and loving.

You will be strong enough to protect your brother. Our family will always be there. Dad will become your best friend. Try not to be so hard on yourself growing up. You will wear your heart on your sleeve.

Connor, you will be honest and caring. You will be a decent man. Ohhh when dad tells you that you have dyslexia, calm down you are not going to die and don't worry it will help you be creative.

You will meet friends that mean the world to you. You will be inquisitive. When the English teacher calls you an idiot, remember twist your hip when throwing the punch.

Most of all, remember you are loved, it will see you through.

- CONNOR DEVLIN