

Sweet ol' Alabamian

She is ten and her life has just started going to shit. When her mom had first announced that they were going on a vacation she couldn't believe it. During all of her so far short life, they had never even moved outside the city limits. And now they were going on vacation? Life ruled for all the time it took her to pack her belongings she found most fit to bring along to a swampy forest and for the journey to start. Soon enough she realized it though: this was not a family trip. Oh no, it was a Jason and mom trip. Her mother had decided that Jason needed to go somewhere off to learn about his newfound glory. They couldn't leave a ten year old in the apartment alone so they dragged her along only to dump her at some grandma's place while they got off into the forest and did all the cool stuff.

The lady was old, had a crooked back and needed a cane to walk. In her youth she had been in an accident so she also had a special bed and a special chair Victoria was not allowed to sit in, and since she lived alone, the only other place to live on where the floor. She had to sleep on a lumpy futon on the floor, she had to sit on the floor, and she soon hated the floor. The house was a tiny thing without air-conditioning and the bad circulation made it smell like old lady, summer heat in the form of sweat, dust, cats and cigarettes. It was not a great combo.

The lady was grumpy, went to church every Sunday and always tried convincing Victoria in the way of the lord as any southern lady should. But Victoria soon found she liked the lady anyway. She had a foul mouth and loved to whisper insults to Victoria about everyone who turned up in the church those Sundays. She screamed at young men down the streets when they didn't do stuff to her liking, especially if they tried to get close to any girls. She cooked the most amazing southern comfort food and she actually had two chairs so they always had dinner together. It was a different world to Victoria had experienced the last couple of months. It felt like home with the old lady, more so than her actual home.

They spent the whole vacation together, Victoria soon becoming the lady's trusty companion. They even recognized her in the store where she used to run the old lady's errands. They spent most of the time on the porch, smoking cigarettes and trash talking everyone walking by in the summer sun. Victoria learned not only to smoke but to do smoke circles on that patio. She learned that cats are coziest animals there is and that dogs are just not that great. She learned a lot about god and his will, and that you should never let anyone drag you down. She learned that if life don't take you on the path you want it to, you plow your own way through life. They spent long summer days, talking about everything. After the initial floor and involuntary church meetings she started to love it. Of course it all had to end.

Her mother freaked out when she came to pick her up. There was a shouting match which had no equal and she was forcefully dragged out of the little house. Her mom did not take lightly to both the church and the smoking. Or the fact that Victoria didn't want to leave. Or that the lady didn't seem to want Victoria to leave either. She was forced into the backseat of the car and before she had any chance to do anything they were off. She only had time to wave goodbye to the old lady as they drove off.

She had to stay in the apartment in Chicago alone the next summer.