

# Avatar



HAPPY NEW YEAR

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**2010 IN REVIEW**

**GIVE ME FIVE  
FOR HEALTH**

**NEW YEAR'S  
RESOLUTIONS**

**SHAKING THE FIRST  
TIME JITTERS**





# EDITORS' LETTER

HELLO AVATAR READERS!

Welcome to 2011! We wanted to start this issue by wishing you a stunning New Year. We hope it brings experiences you can learn from and reasons to reach out to others and take each day as it comes. We want you to not take a single thing for granted, and we want you to laugh your heart out every single day! On the topic of the New Year, we have decided to take two vastly different approaches to the ever popular topic of resolutions! On one hand, we've shared with you our own resolutions, and on the other, we've looked at a new way to make resolutions in the first place. Fortunately, the choice is up to you!

In News and Debates, we have an encompassing review of 2011 as well as a Cause of the Month that highlight the importance of having clean water!

As far as Mind and Body and Lifestyle go, in addition to our two pieces on resolutions, we have a great piece on little things that can truly improve your quality of life! And of course, don't forget to check out our Horoscopes and our Fun and Games.

We hope you enjoy this issue,  
The Avatar Editors.

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## SHAKE THE FIRST TIME JITTERS BY AMY (TUBBY CUSTARD)



What to expect and how to deal with nerves surrounding your first encounter with intimate love.

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## CONTACT US!

Are you a writer? Photographer? Artist? We need your submissions! Valuable contributions from readers like you are what make Avatar so unique and successful! Please consider emailing your submission to [avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org) or submit content online by visiting [www.teen-help.org/avatar/submit](http://www.teen-help.org/avatar/submit).



# NEWS

HAITI EARTHQUAKE | OIL SPILL | DON'T ASK DON'T TELL | PROTESTS

## 2010 IN REVIEW

By Casey (Casey.)



This past year has been quite a year in the news; it is definitely one we will not forget. It's been interesting, with disasters and war, tuition fees rising and laws being repealed. Let's take a look back over this past year.

2010 started with a bang, literally. January saw the earthquake in Haiti, which was devastating to the country, destroying much of the land. Speaking of disaster, there was another not so natural

one caused by an oil rig and a leaky pipe in one of the most successful gasoline companies, BP. The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was terrifying and damaging to much of life in the Gulf. Today, the oil is gone, but the creatures who live in the Gulf are still suffering in the damage and the aftermath of this event.

In further news, there have been mass protests this year throughout Europe. The major ones that made the news

includes the Student Protests in the U.K. The U.K. is raising tuition fees for some programmes which has caused riots all over the country. Taking away the stipend for students and charging them for an education obviously did not go over very well among students, but it has made universities more competitive. Other protests include those in France over the Retirement Reformation. The new plan would raise the age of retirement to sixty-two, which outraged French citizens. This led to gas shortages and significant losses in business for many companies and schools.

2010 was not just the year of protests and disasters, however. It was also the year for change. In the United States, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" act was repealed, allowing gays to serve openly in the military. Russia and the U.S. also signed a Nuclear Arms treaty, which was a promise made by each country to scale back on their nuclear weapons and to work together against nuclear threats.

For a more comprehensive and in-depth look at each month of 2010, please see the "Month in Reviews" in each issue of Avatar for the previous year. ■



# THE WATER PROJECT

By Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

## NEWS & DEBATES

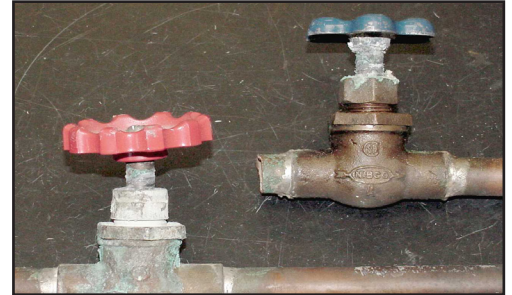
We all know how important water is, and that it's the most vital resource for survival. This month, I wanted to share with you a cause that can help you give someone an important gift - water.

The Water Project is actually focused on bringing clean water to India and Africa, and is a fantastic way to help get the world hydrated! With a donation as small as \$10.00, you can give someone the gift of water for ten years!

The Water Project focuses on five dif-

ferent areas: community engagement (recruiting willing and able volunteers to help with this organization), community education, installing the well (the literal process involved in the installation of a water well in one of these two places), education follow up and handing over (making sure that the community that the well was built for knows how to use the well appropriately), and monitoring and evaluation (checking back periodically to make sure everything is still going okay).

To find out more about how you can get involved, visit **[www.thewaterproject.org](http://www.thewaterproject.org)**. ■





# MIND AND BODY



FIRST TIME JITTERS | FIVE FOR HEALTH | DEAR AVATAR

## SHAKE THE FIRST TIME JITTERS

By Amy (Tubby Custard)

Are you worried about your first time having sex? Are you nervous it will be awkward? That you might underperform? Fact: Everyone was nervous their first time. You're not alone.

Instead of worrying yourself with fantasies or about how the extravagant night will unfold, keep your plans simple. Be sure you know a time and place, as well as the type of birth control you will be using. If you and your significant other have already talked about sex and are ready for the next step, having a place where you won't be interrupted for a few hours will be beneficial. Worrying about a parent or sibling walking in can really ruin the mood of the night. Give yourself a good four hours (give or take a little) where you know you will be alone. You might be thinking four hours is a little long, but remember, you're not an expert yet and things will go wrong. Give

yourself time to try again or explore options, rather than trying to rush through the process simply because your father is returning from work. Sexual intercourse can vary in length and be quite short, but foreplay can last a good hour. Depending on where you can find this alone time, your location might change. Be realistic for your first time. Having sex in a car isn't easy, or very romantic. Keep it simple and stick to a bed or couch. Having sex in the shower or bathtub takes practice as well, and won't be that passionate when you're still figuring everything out. You want to be sure you have enough space and visibility for your first time. Be sure you have prepared yourself with at least one type of contraception. It's recommended that both the birth control pill and a condom are used in order to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Now that a scene has been set, it's time to begin the physical aspect of the night. Perhaps you've watched some pornography and imagine that your body is truly capable of any position in any place. This is most likely not the case. Your mind and body might have trouble working out the details as to what you can physically do. You might want to have sex standing up, but it might just be too hard for the first time. Listen to your body and let it take the lead. Focus on finding pleasure for the both of you. Sometimes your body simply won't cooperate with what you'd like. Don't worry: This will happen at times, but you can easily recover and try something else. Don't let small roadblocks ruin the night. There is no such thing as

'doing it right'. Having sex is an intimate and personal event shared between two people, so whatever way you find pleasurable and enjoyable for each other is the right way for you as a couple. Have patience with your partner: Remember that you're both new to this. Having high expectations can cause more trouble and anxiety toward the whole situation.

Throughout intercourse, emotionally and physically, you will be experiencing a great deal of stimulus and sensation. For females, the physical aspect might cause pain and discomfort. This is normal. The vaginal corona in females consists of multiple membrane folds that are located about 1-2cm within the vagina. With penetration, some of the membrane might break or be stretched, which can cause both pain and bleeding. This is why it's essential to communicate during sex and let your partner know how you're feeling and what could make it more enjoyable for you. Try using lubrication to help ease the penis into the vaginal opening. If the vagina is too dry, it will become very irritated and hurt when the male begins to thrust. The male at this time might be worried about losing his erection, or finishing too quickly. Relax. The first time will never go according to plan no matter how many times you attempt to make it perfect. If the female is in too much pain to continue, or if the male loses his erection, it's okay. You can try having sex at another time. At this point, you could go back to oral sex or other sensual activities. Emotionally, intercourse can be very stimulating. You could have a variety of thoughts



and feelings running through your body. Don't ignore them: Listen to your body and mind and do what's best for you.

If you need to stop, stop. If you feel like crying, cry. Don't hold anything in. Sex can be a big step in a relationship.

This leads to a very important reminder: You can say "no" or "stop" at any point during sex. Just because you initially agreed and consented to sex does not mean you must continue to participate in intercourse until your partner feels it's over. You are always in control of yourself and have every right to stop. On the other side, if your partner says they need to stop, respect their wishes. A relationship is based on trust and understanding and must be upheld at all

times. You don't need to explain yourself if you need to stop right then, and you shouldn't expect an explanation from your partner at the time. Sex can be very emotionally and physically draining. Offer your partner support and patience, rather than scorn and disappointment when intercourse needs to be stopped.

After sex, there can be a lot of emotions running wild as well as physical fatigue. Allow your body time to recuperate.

Keep hydrated, eat well and rest. Emotionally, you might be worried or upset. Perhaps you are even feeling regret or a sense of loss. Anything you might be feeling is valid and normal. Talk about it with your partner, friends, siblings, parents, or anyone you trust. You have lost your virginity, which can be a very emotional process for some. Just remember that there are people to talk to if you're feeling overwhelmed, confused, happy, sad, upset, or anything in between. ■

## GIVE ME FIVE FOR HEALTH

By Holly Marie (Atelophobia)

Being safe and healthy doesn't have to be time consuming. Each and every one of us can afford to take out five minutes; taking a few minutes out of the 1,440 minutes in a day is worth it for the long term benefits. There are many differences you can make to your life: from protecting your skin to eating healthy, from fighting the urges to smoke, to planting a vegetable patch, you have the power to improve your quality (and quantity) of life!

As simple and obvious as it may seem, remember to wash your hands. Think about all of the things that you have touched today, from the toilet handle to your mobile phone. Millions of germs may be lurking on your hands at any one time, and hand washing is by far the best way to prevent these germs from spreading. Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. You should always wash your hands in warm water. Use soap and lather up for around twenty seconds, making sure to get between your fingers and under your nails before rinsing and drying well with a clean towel.

If you're a smoker, it is claimed that it only takes two to three minutes for the urges to pass. When you feel the urge to pick up a cigarette, try doing something else distracting, such as playing with play-dough, painting, or doing something else with your hands. You can get help from friends, family, and even your general practitioner to encourage and support you in your quest to stop smoking. It doesn't take many cigarettes to damage your health, and even just being around secondhand smoke can do considerable damage to your health. The only safe choice is to quit completely. When you're listening to music, make

sure the sound isn't turned up too loud. Noise induced hearing loss is becoming increasingly common. Playing music for any period of time--short or long--at a high volume can do damage to the ear canal. On headphones, the volume can reach 120 decibels, which is roughly as much as a jet engine. Any volume over eighty decibels can potentially damage your hearing, and some MP3 players can reach up to 105 decibels. Try lowering the volume a little!

Buckle up when you're driving. Wearing a seatbelt in the front seat can save 2,200 lives every year, if not more! In the past forty years, the new driving regulations have saved over 300,000 lives and continue to save more each day. It will take you far less time to buckle up than to recover from injuries following a serious car crash. Car crashes are becoming more and more common, particularly around those who are under the influence while driving as well as younger drivers.

It only takes a minute to make a better, healthier choice about food. Next time you're grocery shopping, take a look at what's in your food. Go for foods that are lower in saturated fats. Pick up fruit and vegetables and try to introduce five fruits and vegetables into your diet each day. There's plenty of fruits and vegetables out there that you've probably never tried, so introduce some new foods into your diet! Keep an eye on your portion sizes, it takes twenty minutes for your body to pass the message onto you that you have eaten enough, so eat slowly. If you feel the need to snack, grab an apple or keep yourself distracted until meal time.

It's also worth remembering to keep your food safe from bacteria. Bacteria

can grow at a very high rate at room temperature, so keep food that will not be eaten within four hours refrigerated. Wash anything that has been in contact with raw meat or poultry before it touches other food substances. Also, remember to cook eggs, meat and poultry thoroughly before eating.

Finally, take a break! If you feel a cold coming on, the stress increasing, or you feel as though you're slowly losing control, take a few minutes out. Anything from a difficult upcoming test at school, to a major family argument can induce these stressful feelings and will turn into physical illness if it goes unchecked. Take a little time out to focus on yourself. Even as little as two minutes out can give you enough clarity to think and allow you to make better decisions for yourself and those around you! ■





# DEAR AVATAR

By Amy (ShimmeringFaerie)



**The other day, I tried to tell my mom that I am depressed and don't feel important in this family. I started crying, but all she did was yell at me. She said that she was disappointed in me for being selfish. When I told her that I think I have depression, she just laughed at me. What can I do?**

I am really sorry to hear that your mom reacted in such an unsupportive way. It is really hard to open up to someone like that, but it is also really important to reach out for help. Don't let your mother's reaction scare you from asking for help when you need it.

From your mother's reaction, I am going to assume that she does not know much about depression. Her lack of understanding makes it very difficult for her to support you or empathize with you. I think that it might help if you gave your mother some resources explaining what depression is.

I also think that it would be really beneficial for you to try and talk to your mother again. You are probably reluctant to do that considering her reaction last time, but a lot of her reaction may have come

from shock. No one wants to hear or believe that their child has depression. Now that she has had time to adjust to the idea, she may be more understanding and willing to help you.

Ultimately, if your mother does not believe you or does not want to support you, it is impossible to force her. But that doesn't mean that you can't get the help and support you want from other places. Most schools have counseling services, so that would be the very best place for you to start. Your school counselor can then work with you on where to go from here. Of course, you can always post here when you need help, but having someone in real life to talk to is always good.

I wish you the best of luck and hope that everything works out for you! ■



**This boy comes up to me every day and says that I have AIDS. He has been telling other people this as well, even after I asked him not to. My therapist said that this is considered sexual harassment. Is it? What can I do about it?**

Firstly, I am so sorry that you have to deal with someone who has such little respect for you. I am really sorry that you have to feel hurt and humiliated every day because of this one boy who has chosen to be rude to you.

Sexual harassment is a very broad term. Most of the time, it refers to unwanted sexual attention (both verbal and physical), rude or offensive sexual comments or sending someone sexual material that they do not want (like an email or links to pornography). However, sexual harassment can also include sex-based insults, sexual jokes/comments, or asking someone about their sex life when they do not want to be asked. In my opinion,

I believe this boy is sexually harassing you. I believe that saying you have a STI is an offensive comment of a sexual nature and therefore fulfills the criteria for sexual harassment.

However, whether or not what he is doing is technically sexual harassment is not the important part. He is purposely spreading rumours to hurt, humiliate and upset you and that is bullying. You do not need to put up with it because what he is doing is wrong. Have you tried telling a teacher or a trusted adult (like your parents) about this situation? Most schools have strict no-bullying policies and would be required to do something about this boy. I strongly recommend you tell a teacher about this problem as soon as you can.

I wish you the best of luck in dealing with this boy and hope that you soon feel safer and happier at school! ■





# L I F E



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS | WE RESOLVE

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS: WHAT ARE THEY GOOD FOR?

By Cheyenne (Come As You Are.)

New Year's Eve. The images that come to mind are those of frivolity: confetti, balloons, TV specials and champagne. For many, New Year's is an opportunity for a new beginning or a change in their lives. Thus born is the myth of the "New Year's Resolution."

Some people's goals may be small and vague. 'I'm going to eat healthier!'; 'I'm going to be a better person'. Others' goals may be more ambitious: 'I'm going to open my own business!'; 'I'm going to get the leading role in a play.' This is all fine. But more than anything else, the magic that lies with New Year's is the fanciful idea that we can change. Of course, we couldn't change right smack in the middle of the year. It just isn't done. But amidst the hustle and bustle of everyone else deciding what they're going to become this year, it's hard not to succumb to the lure of change. Or rather, the idea of change.

"But what's the hurt?" you may ask. "Who does it affect, other than us?" Well, no one—generally speaking. But here's the rub: while we're making these resolutions, our brains are working overtime creating images of this new person we will surely become. We imagine these new selves working, being universally accepted and loved for the new person that they are. The 'old' you, however, is left outside and knocking on the glass. "What about me?"

You see, there's two sides to this New



Year's excitement. Yes, it's great to set goals and achieve them. It feels good. There are countless self-help books and seminars devoted entirely to setting goals. It works. But what about when you don't achieve your goals? This doesn't just apply to resolutions, either—any goal at all. You're left with a sense of failure. Any self-help expert will tell you that a minor setback is no reason to give up entirely. The truth is, though, many of us would rather just give up in the face of failure. "I'll try it again next year,"

some may reason. This alleviates guilt and is a very useful defence mechanism. So here's my proposition. Maybe instead of setting sky-high goals—or indeed, any goals at all—we could just be content with who we are right now. Not the person we would be if we were thinner, or more well-liked, or smarter, or admired; just the person we are. Forget the pressure and guilt that comes along with setting resolutions. Leave that behind and decide to do the impossible: be the you that you are as you're reading this. ■

## WE RESOLVE

By Brittany (.Brittany.)

**T**his January, we collected a few of the Avatar Editors' resolutions and wanted to share them with you. On the note of sharing one's resolutions, we believe in the importance of special relationships with others, and we want to encourage you to talk with others about your resolutions. Find an accountability partner, someone who can hold you to keeping your resolutions throughout the entire year, and do the same for your partner!

**Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)** resolves to resolve.

"This year, I want to resolve to continuously resolve. Each month, each day, and most likely even each hour, I know I'm going to face new experiences, some of which I'm probably not going to be totally prepared for. I don't want to stick on a "blanket" resolution for this; I want to always be adaptable, and I want to make positive changes in my life as I travel down what I know will be the wonderful journey of 2011.

With that in mind, there are a few resolutions I would like to cascade across my entire year. In 2011, I want to be mindful of differentiating between things that ARE in my control and things that are

NOT in my control. As far as things not in my control go, I'd like to try my best to not get upset about those things since I know that worrying won't change a thing. Finally, I want to resolve to continue to see the beauty in EVERYTHING and EVERYONE, and I want to be kinder than necessary to each person I meet...because I can never know who, behind each smile, is fighting his or her own personal battle."

**Chess (Sidhe/x.Psychic Crisis.x)** resolves to better herself and take chances.

"According to Wikipedia, only 12% of people actually achieve their New Year's Resolutions. I know that in the past, I've never succeeded in any of my resolutions, whether they be to get fit or write a book or fly to the moon. That's why this year, I'm making my goals more flexible, and more personal. First and foremost, I will try to be a better person. I will do more, and I will be more. I will take more chances. If there's one thing I learned in 2010, it's that you can't take anything for granted. I want to learn to be happy with what I have, even if it's not as much as other people. Each day, I will find one thing I'm grateful for. And, of course, I

resolve to follow my New Year's Resolutions."

**Haley (Halcyon)** resolves to finish what she's started.

"I have never been one to make New Year's Resolutions because they are easy to make but difficult to maintain. This year, I thought hard about what I want to achieve and how resolutions might actually help me. Quite simply, there are things that I have been postponing that really need to be done. In 2011, I resolve to finish what I have started. I would also like to start pursuing my dreams and to continue to reach out to those in need."

**Casey (Casey.)** resolves to stay true to herself.

"Every year I resolve to do something completely impossible, and I get stressed and angry when I can't. This year my resolutions are simple. I resolve to stay true to myself, and to come more out of my shell, to stop hiding behind others, and to face my fears, whether that be speaking in class or asking for help."

**Holly Marie (Atelophobia)** resolves to change lives and touch hearts each passing day of 2011.

"Everyone's looking back into the past, and more importantly, ahead into the bright new year. On the 1st of January, we get to all start afresh and try to recreate a whole new 'us'! Tradition says that once every 365 days we should try to kick our bad habits.

Realistically I know that there is no way I'll manage 365 days of healthy eating, no swearing and being organized. A New Year's resolution which is entirely 'me' orientated is probably the best bet. Which is why my New Year's resolution is hopefully a whole lot simpler than most people's! For every day in 2011 I'm going to try and touch someone else's heart. A compliment, a hug, an action and even a smile. In 2011 I'm going to open my heart and reach out to others."

**Cheyenne (Come As You Are.)** resolves to decrease her worries and increase her kindred spirit.

"My New Year's resolution is to focus less on myself and my problems and instead reach out to others and help them. I seem to spend too much time worrying about what my issues are and I feel like I'm completely oblivious to others' problems sometimes. I want to be more selfless." ■





# JUST FOR FUN



By Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x)

## WORD OF THE MONTH

Pessimism: maximally bad; opposite of optimal  
[Source: Dictionary.com]

## TRIVIA

How many sub-sections are in the Chit-Chat forum?

Challenge: Name them in alphabetical order.

Answer: 4

Challenge answer: Birthdays!, Games and Things, Pictures, Videos.

## UPCOMING MOVIES

- The Green Hornet
- Season of the Witch
- No One Killed Jessica
- The Dilemma
- No Strings Attached
- The Way Back

(<http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/index2011.php>)

## CAN YOU SAY IT?

English - smile  
Croatian - osmijeh  
Dutch - glimlach  
Finnish - hymy  
Indonesian - senyum  
Lithuanian - šypsena  
Portuguese - sorriso  
Turkish - gülümseme

## NAME THAT TUNE

Done looking for critics  
'cause they're everywhere;  
they don't like my jeans,  
they don't get my hair.

Pink - Perfect

## RECIPES

To go with this month's article called 'Give Me Five For Health', here are a couple of healthy recipes you can enjoy:

### Orange Salad

- Ingredients:
- 2 large oranges, cut in chunks
  - 3 spring onions, finely sliced
  - 2 tablespoons of chopped sun-dried tomatoes
  - ¼ cup of sliced olives
  - 1 tablespoon of toasted pine nuts
  - 2 tablespoons of olive oil
  - 1 teaspoon of balsamic vinegar
  - Black pepper (to taste)

Method:  
- Place all ingredients (minus the pepper, oil, and vinegar) in a bowl and mix.

- Drizzle with oil and vinegar, and sprinkle with pepper.
- Garnish with parsley, if desired.

### Hearty Vegetable Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 chopped onion
- ½ cup of macaroni
- 2 chopped carrots
- 300g peeled and chopped pumpkin
- 1 large chopped zucchini
- 4 chopped celery stalks
- 4 cups of vegetable stock
- 400g of chopped tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon of dried oregano
- 2 finely chopped cloves of garlic
- 300g rinsed and drained butter beans
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley

Method:

- Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion over medium heat until soft (around 3 minutes).
- Add the garlic and cook for another minute.
- Stir the carrot, celery, pumpkin, and zucchini into the onion mixture.
- Add the stock, tomatoes, and oregano, and bring to the boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, for ten minutes.
- Add the pasta and cook for another ten minutes, or until tender.
- Stir in the butter beans and heat through.
- Stir in the parsley just before serving.

(Both from: <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>)



# FUN AND GAMES

## MOTIVATION STATION

By Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

*"YOLO - You only live once"*

**R**eason for January's Season: Obviously, there's all KINDS of reasons for January's season! First of all, it's the start of a year, and we all know what that means! Even if it doesn't ACTUALLY mean a clean slate since it's only a millisecond different from the year before, we get to pretend that it does, and I don't know about you, but I fully intend to take advantage of that!

Reveal the Real: For the past few months,

so many people have been stressed out, strung out, and freaked out. I have a very special friend who has been nothing but "peaced out." This friend is someone who I admire greatly, who loves giving gifts to others for no reason other than because it may be a Tuesday, or a Saturday! This friend keeps me inspired and motivated, and goes with the flow, but is definitely her own person.

Send a Grin: This month, help someone carry out their New Year's Resolutions! Take an active interest in the

resolutions of a friend or a family member, and see to it that you encourage them to either start doing something new to achieve their goals or continue on the path they've already set out on.

Dare to Share? Have you been inspired lately? Did you see something that just made you smile? Has a friend told you a piece of advice that really did change your life? Let us know, and get involved with the Motivation Station! ■





# SELF EXPRESSION

## MONSTERS

Last year I had to fight monsters. Not the kind of monsters that big, with huge claws and horrible tempers, no, these ones are scarier. These kind of monsters have a very good disguise. They are orange-skinned, with big poofs and glossy lips. They wear mini skirts with UGs in the middle of the summer, and talk as if they've never taken an English class. These monsters walk with a swing of the hips and pout of their lips. They are immature teenage girls.

It was my freshman year and everything was going fine. I felt like I had a solid group of friends that I could trust to always be there for me. I was content with my life. That is until I decided to make a change. I decided I wanted to make my own decisions. I didn't want to dress like I was going to work on the street corners or act as if I didn't have a brain. I decided to switch tables at lunch every other day so that I could expand my group a little and see how the other half lives.

This is where the monsters decided to shed their disguises. The people I thought were my best friends were really evil, manipulative, control freaks. They wanted me destroyed. To them, thinking by yourself was like wearing plaid and stripes, it was a big deal. They told me I had to choose, be friends with just them or not be friends with them at all. I chose what I thought was the better of the 2, the latter of the 2.

That's when the bullying started. I would receive texts and face book messages about how ugly I was and how much they hated me. They would accuse me of saying and doing things that just wasn't true. They also made up a nickname for me, "the hulk." They called me this because I was fat, ugly,

had mood swings, I boxed and I wore green tights one day.

The secretive stuff wasn't enough, the physical stuff started. They would trip me and elbow me in the hallway. They would also get up from a table I sat down at and get me in trouble in class. We had assigned seats and in one of my classes mine was a couple seats down from 3 of the monsters. They would whisper, giggle and point at me. I knew what they were saying, but I didn't want to think about it.

It got worse after that. I started getting texts from people I had never talked to and hearing rumors about the most random things. They called me the brain washer and accused me of things that they did. They knew what my weaknesses were because I had trusted them. I had confided in them with confidence and they used those weaknesses to hurt me.

They didn't care they were destroying my life, destroying my heart. They enjoyed watching me suffer. They destroyed my trust, my confidence and my faith in people. I would look in the mirror and cry because I just felt so ugly.

The year took a lot to get through. Fighting them was harder than fighting any monster out there. I hated it and still get tears in my eyes just thinking about that year, but I would not change it if I could. Before this event I was an immature teenage girl, just like them. I only cared about boys, clothes and self tanning. Now I know what's important in life. I know how to be my own person and thinking for myself. This experience made me grow as a person in more ways than I will ever know myself. I have grown so much stronger and am so proud of myself for getting through it.

By Devon (lovatoac)

# FAIRY PRINCESS

Little girl terrified  
Of the only things that stories should hold  
As her life is like a story  
A fairy princess  
A monster and his wife  
But in this fairy tale there is no prince  
No queen and no king  
Just a scared little girl  
Who wishes so very hard every night  
That someone could come  
And save her  
Stop the monster  
That people call her farther  
She has bruises from him  
But the worse thing he did  
Can't be found like a bruise  
She says she is dirty  
She acts like she deserves it  
She even says she does  
But she knows in her heart she doesn't  
That he is just a bad man  
When she was saved from him  
Only then did she have a family  
Fairytales speak about  
There was a queen and a king  
Who loved her very much so  
A polar bear as a brother  
One that would give her big cuddly bear hugs  
And  
A wolf as a sister  
One that would look after her  
Keep her safe and the monsters away

By Amesycub

# NEVER ENDING NIGHTMARE

It feels so bad, I can't wake up, I shiver with fear and loneliness. I pray for daylight to get me out, but on and on it goes getting only longer and more depressing each second. The screams grow louder the cries more frequent. Why is my life an endless nightmare? Why won't it just go away? When will the pain go away?

By Sarah (volleyballchick751)



# READ THE STARS

by Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x)



## CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20

**Happy Birthday, Capricorn!** Happy New Year and happy birthday, Capricorn. You may find your home is under new influences this month. Perhaps you have new neighbours or visitors to your house. Now is the time to appreciate change, and to initiate it where you feel necessary. A refreshing amount of freedom and independence will be yours this month.

**Capricorn in love:** You may face a certain amount of resistance from your partner, if you have one; it may require some tactful negotiating to overcome. For those of you without, you may find yourself drawn to someone unexpected; if that's the case, don't be afraid to try new things.

**Capricorn on the job:** Financially, this will be a good month for you. Putting in a few extra shifts at work may pay off.

**Capricorn, the alert:** There will be a fair amount of change going on this month. It will take a keen eye and an attentive observer to keep track of everything, but you're well up to the task.

## AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

January is all about new learning, and lessons. You may meet some new people, who'll be able to offer you some advice or life lessons. You may also travel, which can be a good opportunity to increase your knowledge and understanding. Keep an eye out for opportunities to learn – not just textbook work, but real-life learning. Lessons you gain now may help in the future.

## PISCES

FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20

New destinations characterise this month for you. As they say, it's not about the journey – it's about the destination. With a little bit of effort, you can find yourself soaring to new heights in January, and end up in places you've only dreamed you can go. Play to your strengths, and you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish.

## ARIES

MARCH 20 - APRIL 20

The new year brings new ideas, and plenty of them. While the month may start off with some troubles pertaining to work – schoolwork, housework, or paid work – you'll be able to get through it easily as long as you keep a level head. If you have an idea, now is the time to turn it into more than that, and bring plans to fruition.

# HOROSCOPES

## TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 21

This month may bring some more problems your way. New power battles may emerge between you and people you're involved with – either professionally or personally. The best thing you can do to overcome those is to practise the art of compromising, and, if needed, take a step back from everything.

## GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUNE 21

January may bring a new burst of creativity your way. If you feel the urge to pick up a pen or a paintbrush, this month is a great time to do so; alternatively, you could try looking at an existing problem and tackling it creatively. This month may also find you on a search for answers – just remember that finding them isn't everything; understanding them is what really matters.

## CANCER

JUNE 21 - JULY 22

New initiatives emerge this month; and if they don't, you can make them. January's your month to take control and get things done. You may find yourself drawn towards projects you've put on hold, or perhaps plans you've abandoned. By putting in the effort now, you can pave the way for more exciting things in the future.

## LEO

JULY 22 - AUGUST 23

The start of the new year may coincide with a new resistance. People you work with – at school, or in the workplace – may seem suddenly difficult and stubborn. You could easily get dragged into their troubles, but it should pass if you just give them time and space. Empathy is the key to getting through this period unscathed.

## VIRGO

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 21

Amid all the cheer of the beginning of the new year may come a few new family issues, especially relating to children. It may seem like you're facing opposition on all sides, but try to think of it not as a battle but as a way to learn self-reliance. If you can wait out the more difficult parts, eventually the issues will be discussed, and resolved, and you'll be free to focus on other things.

## LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 23

Whether you're riding on a holiday-season high or coming out of a holiday-season low, January sees you developing a new positive attitude. You may find yourself moving out of a previous period of secrecy and uncertainty towards a brighter time of socialising, travelling, and expanding your horizons in general. Go with the flow, and enjoy yourself.

## SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 22

January for you may mean new advancements in your career. This could be anything from a promotion to a new job opportunity. These opportunities don't even have to be the kind you just sit around and wait for; you could go and seek them out. It's important to find a job you like doing, so be discerning when you choose to enter a new job or career. As long as you're happy with it, you'll do a good job.

## SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 22

The new year may also bring with it a new focus. Your views and opinions may be changing, and in response, your actions will change too. You may find yourself taking a more assertive and less passive approach to issues, or taking more risks. That's all well and good, as long as you remember your limits and know when to slow down.



Thanks!

# THE WIND DOWN

## IMAGE SOURCES

THANK YOU to the following TeenHelp users for contributing to this issue of Avatar:

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All comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms should be directed towards the editorial team. Email us at **[avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)**. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!