



## NOT ANOTHER VERITY by S. Bee.

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]

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### Not Another Verity by S. Bee.

"Hello, Mum! We've decided to call her 'Verity'," Shelley announced over the phone.

"Verity?" I was taken aback. "That's rather unusual."

"It is, isn't it? We found it in a baby name book."

I groaned. Oh, why had Shelley and Evan named their newborn daughter 'Verity'? To me, it was a truly horrible name. Why? Well, the girl who had bullied me at school was called - you've guessed it - Verity.

As soon as we knew the couple were expecting a girl, Shelley and I had drawn up a list of possibilities.

"I like flower names," I said. "Daisy. Rose. Marigold."

She pulled a face. For a while, they'd toyed with 'Jennifer' but they still hadn't chosen a name when Shelley went into labour.

"They're naming the baby 'Verity'," I told my husband, Mike, when he arrived home from work.

"Crikey. That's a blast from the past. You were at school with a horrible girl called Verity, weren't you?"

I nodded sadly.

"I thought they might name her after you," he put in.

"'Patricia's not very popular these days, and remember how they instantly ruled out Evan's mum's name as well?"

"Yes. That was a shame."

"Well, 'Barbara's hardly bang on trend either," I added dryly.

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Reflecting on events, I took the plunge and searched for my school bully on Facebook. With a 'Verity' addition to the family, I needed to come to terms with the past.

I found her easily. Sporting red hair, cut in an elfin style, she had a warm, friendly smile. Verity was the manager of a local charity.

I sent her a friendly 'Remember me?' message.

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Later, when I logged on to Facebook, there was her reply.

“Hi, Pat. Of course I remember you! Judging by your photo, you haven't changed a bit! Let's meet for coffee.”

We arranged to meet in town the next day.

“Before we start, let me apologise for the past,” Verity began, as we sat down with our coffee.

“I was so insecure, really. Being top dog meant having a certain reputation. It was my insecurity that motivated the aggression. I'm so sorry. I ended up paying the price. You know I was suspended for three months?”

“Yes,” I whispered.

“At the time, I pretended I wasn't bothered - but I was. When I eventually returned to school, I couldn't catch up. I failed my exams. And my folks were so disappointed. Anyway, in the end, I sorted myself out and went to university. Now, tell me about you.”

As we chatted, I warmed to the grown-up Verity. We even arranged to meet again.

Then Mike and I, plus Barbara and Evan's dad, were summoned round to Evan and Shelley's house.

“There's something we want to say,” Shelley announced. “We want to change Verity's name. We're going to call her ‘Jennifer’!”

“‘Jennifer Patricia Barbara’, actually,” Evan added.

“Oh, that's nice!” Barbara beamed. “What do you think, Pat?”

I smiled. “How lovely to include both grandmas' names.”

Yet I realised that I now quite liked the name ‘Verity’...