

PROLOGUE: (i.e, the very, very beginning)

CLAUDIA

Wars are terrible things. I know this because I've read about a lot of them on Wikipedia.

And also because I was just in one. It was me against my brother, Reese.

That might not sound like a war to you. Trust me. It was. In fact, it was a lot like other famous wars I've read about on Wikipedia.

Just like World War II, it involved a sneak attack on a peaceful people who never saw it coming (me).

It was sort of like this:



Just like World War I, it lasted a lot longer and caused a LOT more problems than anybody expected, especially people who were totally innocent and didn't deserve it (me).

...and kind of like this:



And like all wars, when it was over, somebody had to write a book about it (me), so that historians of the future would know exactly what happened and whose fault it was (Reese's).

This is especially true of the partwhere the police got involved.

REESE

Calling it a war is kind of stupid.
But Claudia always has to make a big deal out of everything.

I mean, yeah, it got out of hand for a while there. But it's not like anybody died.

Except on my MetaWorld account. THAT was a horrible, bloody massacre.

It wasn't actual blood or anything.
It was pixels. But it was still pretty bad. There was, like, little red pixel blood splooshed all over the screen.

And that was all Claudia's fault, and totally NOT COOL. **(NOT my fault)**

I would never, EVER do something that mean to my sister. I'm nice to her almost all the time!

Except when she's mean to me first. And then it doesn't count.

Also, I had nothing to do with the cops. That was all Claudia. I have a totally clean record. Seriously! Call the cops if you don't believe me. **(wait a few year--this will change)**

MOM AND DAD (Text messages copied from Mom's phone)

MOM: Claudia says she's writing a book about the incident

DAD: Like a novel?

MOM: No. Oral history. Interviews. Like that zombie book. But real

DAD: Great! If published, will look good on college apps

MOM: I'm worried it'll make us look like bad parents

DAD: How?

MOM: She wants us to participate

DAD: By interviewing us? I might have time after Entek deal closes.
Getting crushed at work right now

MOM: No interview. Says she just wants to quote from our text messages

DAD: I don't like that

MOM: Me neither. But she already has all of them

DAD: How?

MOM: I left my phone on the kitchen counter last night

DAD: Tell her no

MOM: I tried. She got upset. Now I feel guilty

DAD: Ugh. Fine. Let her use them

MOM: Really?

DAD: Yes. If we don't like the book, we can always sue her to stop publication

MOM: Are you kidding? I can't tell

DAD: I can't either

Dad has not sued me. (Yet)

CHAPTER 1

THE GATHERING STORM

CLAUDIA

Here is some background information about The War:

My name is Claudia Tapper. I live in New York City, and I have two goals in life: I either want to be a famous singer-songwriter like Miranda Fleet, or the President of the United States.

Or both, if I have time.

My brother's name is Reese. He has no goals in life. Unless you count being a professional soccer player, which is totally unrealistic.

We are, unfortunately, twins. I am twelve years old.

Reese is six.

I know what you're thinking. "Really? Is that possible?"

No. It's not. Reese is twelve, too.

He just has the brain of a six-year-old. A six-year-old that ate too much sugar and did not get its nap, so it has to run around our apartment and kick soccer balls against the wall and make noises like "GRONK!" and "SKADOOSH!"

Honestly, living with him is the most annoying thing ever. It's a pretty small apartment.

We live on the Upper West Side. But we go to school at Culvert Prep, which is across Central Park on the Upper EAST Side. My parents like to say the Upper West Side is more "down to earth." As far as I can tell, this basically means our neighborhood has more burger places, and not as many stores that sell \$800 shoes. (Which, BTW, is insane. The shoes aren't even that cute.)

Culvert Prep is academically excellent, so there's no way Reese could have gotten in if he hadn't started going there in kindergarten. At that age, it's very hard for the admissions office to tell if a kid will turn out to be a total meathead.

Mom and Dad think Reese is perfectly smart, and he just needs to apply himself. They're wrong, but it's not worth arguing with them. If they had to admit the truth about their meathead son, it would make them incredibly sad.

And Dad is sad enough already, because he is a lawyer.

Anyway, back to Culvert Prep, which is where The War started.

Culvert Prep (mostly not meatheads) (except my brother) (and his friends)



To be totally specific, it started in the Culvert Prep cafeteria on Monday, September 8th, at approximately 8:27am. That's when Reese—in front of basically the whole sixth grade—launched a cruel and senseless sneak attack on me.

REESE

It didn't start at school. It started in our kitchen that morning, when Claudia ate my toaster pastry.

Our kitchen (site of toaster pastry argument)



CLAUDIA

That is SO not true. It wasn't even yours.

REESE

Yes, it was! There's six in a package. We each get three. And I only had two!

CLAUDIA

I only had two, too.

REESE

Liar!

CLAUDIA

It's true! I think Dad eats them when he gets home at night.

REESE

All I know is, brown sugar cinnamon's my favorite. And there was ONE left, and it was MINE.

And I was lying in bed, thinking, "Oh, man, I can't wait to narf that toaster pastry!"

Then I go into the kitchen, and you're, like, stuffing your face with it! And when I got mad, you laughed at me!

CLAUDIA

A) "Narf" is not even a word. And B) this is completely irrelevant.

REESE

It's totally revelant!

CLAUDIA

Relevant.

REESE

Whatever! It's important! I NEVER would've made fun of you in the cafeteria if you hadn't eaten my toaster pastry! And then laughed at me about it!

The whole thing was your fault!

CLAUDIA

That is ridiculous. I'm not putting it in the book.

REESE

You HAVE to! It's the whole reason the war started!

CLAUDIA

No way. Not going in. It's MY book.

REESE

Then I quit. Do your own stupid interviews. I'm going to go play MetaWorld. (MetaWorld site of major battle like Gettysburg or Waterloo)

CLAUDIA

Reese!

Augh! Fine. I'll put it at the end. Like a footnote or something.

REESE

No way. It goes in the actual book. Right at the beginning! This exact argument.

CLAUDIA

That'll ruin the whole thing! Have you ever SEEN an oral history?

REESE

I don't even know what one is.

CLAUDIA

It's like, different people telling a story in their own words. But nobody, like, stops to argue with each other in the middle of it. ESPECIALLY not at the beginning.

REESE

This is supposed to be the true story of what happened, right? And you're recording it. So you have to put in EVERY WORD I'm saying. Or your book is a big skronking lie, and I quit. **(also not a real word)**

CLAUDIA

I hate you.

REESE

Duh.

