

Life was good for Vicky. She was on the honor roll and had been named the most valuable player on the school tennis team. She was friends with just about everyone at her middle school. Everyone thought she was super smart, nice, and athletic. In fact, there really wasn't anything not to admire about Vicky. But one day when she was visiting her dentist for her usual check-up, she received some bad news. He saw that her teeth were becoming slightly crooked and instructed Vicky and her parents to consult an orthodontist right away about getting braces. Vicky was shocked. She had never even had a cavity before, how could this be happening to her?

Vicky was really worried. She knew that middle schoolers were infamous for teasing one another, but she had never been the source of any jokes before. Nobody had ever had a reason to pick on her, but the braces might change all that. She'd heard other kids with braces called "metal mouth" and "brace face," and she certainly didn't want to be given such hideous nicknames! The orthodontist attached Vicky's braces on a Friday afternoon. Vicky spent most of the weekend in tears. Maybe she was still smart and nice and athletic, but now she was funny looking too. It didn't help that her little brother told her that her mouth looked like train tracks! Vicky dreaded what others would say to her on Monday.

Surprisingly, no one made a single negative comment at school the next week. In fact, a few classmates told Vicky they liked her new look. Vicky started feeling a lot better, especially when she thought about how straight her teeth would be when the braces were removed. In fact, when she reflected on how much she had dreaded getting her new braces, she felt a little embarrassed.