

RELATIVELY NORMAL SECRETS

by C.W. Allen

EXCERPT

At lunch, her father was the headlining topic of conversation. Perhaps, everyone joked, he was some kind of secret agent—if anyone found out what he really did all day, he'd have to erase their memories or have them deported to Jupiter. Tuesday made a hasty decision: better to ride the wave of laughter, than drown in it. This was ridiculous, of course!

Of course it was.

Tuesday heaved her backpack onto the lunch table and made a production of searching for a missing paper until the cafeteria's collective attention bounded on to a new distraction. She retrieved last week's History assignment and tried to look intensely interested in reviewing it, staring through the page with unfocused eyes while zoning out to the satisfying snapping sound her carrot sticks made, the pitch falling rhythmically as her teeth chopped each one shorter and shorter.

The newly-hatched suspicions about her parents' routines burrowed in with the rest of the doubts nesting in her brain. It wasn't just the way they sidestepped any mention of their lives before they had children. It wasn't just their odd taste in names. It was just—oh, everything.

Her last name should have been different, for one thing; Tuesday was sure of it. Her father wouldn't say what it might have been, but anything else would have been fine with her, really. Anything that wouldn't make her a walking punchline. If her parents hadn't been so weird, her mother would have taken her father's last name when they got married, like normal people. Then Tuesday could have inherited his name, instead of just his face.