



by Jenny Gaines

# **As Jenny Ran**

**An Inspiring Story of How a True Survivor Overcame  
Bullying!**

by Jenny Gaines (Author)

My appreciation goes to Amara Brown (Contributor)

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This story is intended for those aged 18 and above, including young adults who can relate to its journey.

*I'm a true believer in the words:*

*"Your life is a story being told as it unfolds..."*

*Looking back, I never wanted to be popular. I never cared about fitting in. My only desire was to be left alone.*

**As Jenny Ran**—she was chased by dogs.

**As Jenny Ran**—she hid behind homes, trees, and cars.

**As Jenny Ran**—she was hit with rocks.

**As Jenny Ran**—she fell, bruising her hands and knees, accidentally exposing the area her mother taught her to keep private.

**As Jenny Ran**—her heart raced and her body trembled with fear.

**As Jenny Ran**—she left behind things that were valuable to her.

**As Jenny Ran**—she looked back and realized that sometimes, no one was chasing her at all.

**As Jenny Ran**—she grew older and the running ceased...

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## Introduction

My birth name is Mae Genevieve Nunn. Family and friends nicknamed me Jenny. My maiden name changed to Gaines at the age of 27. Mae Nunn was the name I was called by my classmates throughout my school years, and even now by some. However, that name was associated with hurt. I hated the name **Mae Nunn**.

My family life was great, complete with lots of happy times. A father who always kept his family laughing by finding the “funny” in any situation. A dedicated and caring mother who sacrificed so much for her children’s welfare. The best five siblings a girl could ask for, who would have done much more for me if only they knew how badly I was being picked on. At home, things were happy; I was the imaginative, yet sometimes frustrated Jenny—but outside my comforting shelter, I was known as ugly Mae Nunn.

What is my motivation to tell this story? And why now? Some years ago, at age 54, a man and woman entered my business together as they shopped. I noticed the man giving me a few glances until we locked eyes and he smirked. “Do you remember me?” he asked. Puzzled, I replied, “No, I don’t think I do.” He grinned, “I used to steal your lunch money at school.” After exchanging a few words, I told him I didn't remember and eventually, the couple left.

His words stuck with me long after he left. Of course, my days of schooling were long gone and I do have some recollections of being teased, but did not immediately remember specific instances like the one the man described. However, as I thought to myself more and more, other disturbing events that I had long forgotten came rushing back into my mind within the following months. First, they came in clusters: scattered memories that I had to piece together to

recreate my cohesive backstory. For example, I recalled that my lunch money was often stolen in junior high school and other acts that preceded and followed it, but had some difficulty remembering who stole it. However, with time, I began to remember more and more specific details about my school days. Honestly, it was quite overwhelming, but something in me knew that it needed to be done.

School should be a place of safety for children, where they can learn, grow, and develop their own unique personalities through positive experiences, but research shows that over 50% of bullying is unreported.

Suicides of children often make headlines—an unanswered tragedy that leaves their loved ones in a state of painful confusion. And typically, at the center of this tragedy, the young victim suffered from relentless and cruel bullying. As traumatic as my story is, I realized that if my story helps just one person, I will share it. However, sharing a past filled with substantial hurt becomes challenging when my present life is good.

One day, my life on Earth will be over and my journey will come to an end. If I can help someone, I will gladly answer my call in the hopes that I will not leave this world with these words and memories buried deep inside. By sharing the story you are about to read, I am taking a stand against bullying—past, present, and future. I am taking a stand against an unfortunate act that can cause mental suffering, emotional damage, and sometimes, physical wounds that can last a lifetime.

Over time, some events were forgotten, while some I do remember, but not in the correct order of when they originally happened. There are many times when I recall being hit, but I can't recall who hit me. Would I like to remember what I've chosen to block out of my memories? No, but to properly tell this story, I will only refer to what I can remember.

“As Jenny Ran...” includes recreations of real documentation of doctors’ records and evaluations from professionals; along with the recollection of memories as my mother raced to help her little girl who was born with medical problems, and problems caused by teasing.



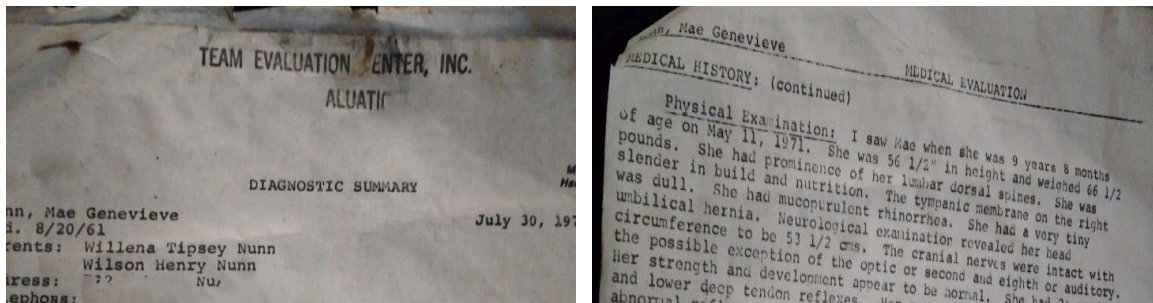
# Chapter 1: Early Childhood History

Perfect. What is perfect? It's true that no one on Earth is truly born perfect, but with proper medical treatment, care, and understanding some problems can be resolved over time. However, when bullying is combined with problems that are already present, a bad problem becomes even worse.

## **Team Evaluation Center 1971:**

At 9 years of age I was referred to TEC by the school:

Reasons For Referral: Sight problems, educational problems.



*“Jenny was my fifth child out of six children,” Mrs. Nunn said at one the first evaluation meetings designed to assess her daughter’s health, “but with her, I had blinding headaches throughout my pregnancy, along with vaginal bleeding, which required bedrest during the sixth month of gestation.”*

*She continued, “she weighed six pounds and one ounce at birth. She often vomited after being bottle fed. Her cries were strange; she looked different from*



*other babies; in addition, it seemed as if her hair would not grow. She constantly got in the dog's bowl and ate his food. She screamed as a baby but did not want to be cuddled."*

***Team Evaluation Center 1971:***

*From the evaluation records: "Mae has a lot of trouble with swallowing and vomiting. She is quite restless and irritable. Her eyes were yellow until the age of 3, after which she was prescribed glasses. She was slender in build—grossly underachieving in reference to her actual grade placement. She would often sit and stare and suck her thumb as she was quite nervous at times, especially after a bad day at school."*

Looking back, I realized that in the year of this evaluation, I was 9 years old, but teasing began for me at the age of 7.

## Chapter 2: Bullying Started in 2nd Grade at Age 7

I don't remember much about my years before first grade, but I do remember my father walking me to and from the speech center for speech therapy, playing outside with my baby brother, and walking to the neighborhood park with my siblings to play. However, second grade was when everything in my life started to change. It was the year when I was first called ugly and bald-headed by some of my classmates. Little did I know that it would last for years.

In this grade, my teacher always seemed upset with me. "Mae, hold that pencil right," she'd say, losing her patience. She would walk over and grasp the pencil in my little hands to make sure I held it correctly. My speech problems prevented me from properly communicating with her. Again, she'd give up on trying to understand me and I'd scream and cry. I recall being frustrated as a child as I ran around the classroom knocking items over. Yet, I knew that I could write—in my own way that made sense to me. But, because of my speech impediment, I just wasn't able to convince her.

Oftentimes, we'd have playtime in the classroom. My favorite thing to do was to take modeling clay and build houses and cars by myself. In my mind, a family would need the gray car to take their kids to school, so I'd take the gray clay and carefully mold each section of the car, along with the family members themselves. I will never forget after spending so much time on my wondrous creations, I'd look over and see my teacher glaring at me. I always felt as if she'd allow me just enough time to collect my thoughts as I played, but not enough time to explore the depths of my imagination and finish what I was working on. Once it was time to attach the wheels to the clay car, she would pull me away

from my own personal time and place me with a group of kids who laughed at me.

While others played at recess, I was curious as I explored my world on my own. Sometimes, I watched ants. It seemed as if they were always busy—building and exploring, much like myself. Over time, I noticed that the small dirt pile grew and grew, each day increasing in size as the ants worked and worked. I guess I was so mesmerized by the ants, that I didn't notice my teacher as she approached me. Unfortunately, she'd grab my arm tightly and pull me away from the anthill and put me in the same group that made fun of me, in what seemed to me to be a punishment. As I cried, I pleaded and attempted to explain to her that I was just watching the ants. I just wanted to see what they were building.

As strange as it might seem, I still think back to the clay and that anthill. How I never finished the car, and to this day, I still feel as if there are kids who never attended school because I wasn't allowed to attach the wheels to the car that would have brought them there. Also, I never got to see the finished anthill. It was almost as if I were being punished for simply being a kid.



*Jenny 2nd grade.*

***Team Evaluation Center 1971:***

*According to the Speech and Hearing Center “Mae has a central language disorder. Dull normal to average intelligence. She should keep receiving ongoing speech therapy, but with frustration, her speech becomes more slurred”.*

What TEC did not realize was that on top of my medical problems, I was also being emotionally and sometimes physically picked on in school by some kids and some teachers.

## Chapter 3: And I Was Kicked: Third & Fourth Grade

I grew up in a neighborhood where most kids walked home from school. I recall it was the third or fourth grade and I was finally old enough to start walking home. My house was not far away and as long as I walked with a sibling, or with a friendly classmate, I was fine. But when I walked alone, I knew I had to run. I just knew, as each year the bullying that I experienced was worse than the year before. So during class, while my classmates were working on their lessons, I was thinking up new ways to get home. Sitting at my desk, my mind wandered as I anxiously scribbled on my paper. I drew pictures of houses, streets, and kids. When it was time to turn in my work, my teacher would be disappointed. “Mae,” she’d complain, “you didn’t do anything on this assignment but scribble”. But they weren’t just scribbles. I had created a map to get home.

As I’ve stated, the walk home was not very far. At most, it would only take me fifteen minutes to get home, and seemed even shorter if I had a classmate to walk with as we’d laugh along the way. But when I had to walk alone, the walk turned into 30 minutes or more due to me hiding behind homes, trees, and cars along the way. There were times when I’d walk very slowly, hoping the kids who were teasing me wouldn't notice me so far behind, but mostly, I ran.

One day, while running, I fell! My entire back was racked with pain and just my luck, the other kids had caught up with me. Then, I began to feel something else—more intense pain. It was as if someone was kicking me, but I could not see them. I looked up and noticed my papers flying everywhere as they too, were kicked. As I curled on the ground, crying from the back pain, all I could hear was the kids taunting—“**ugly Mae Nunn!**” Whenever a car drove by, the

kids would stop and walk away as if nothing happened. The pain in my head and back was unbearable, and to make matters worse, my hands and body began to shake from the emotional and physical trauma I endured.

There were times when I anticipated the end of the school day and dashed out of class. I'd run so hard and so fast only to realize no one was chasing me. I grew accustomed to the endless teasing and knew that this was the only way for me to escape it, even on days when the kids weren't even following me.

I ran so much that it seemed normal. Sometimes, I'd run so fast that all of my papers would slip out of my hands and onto the ground. But one particular day, while bending to pick up my papers, a girl appeared. I expected her to join in on the usual teasing, but she didn't. Instead, she bent down with me, smiled, and said, "I'll help you!" Together, we picked up the papers and laughed. And from then on, we became friends.



*Jenny in 3rd or 4th grade.*

### ***Team Evaluation Center 1971:***

*Mae's social adaptive level is 2. She typically plays alone and loves dolls, imaginary friends, coloring, and making things with clay. Until recently, she has acquired a girlfriend whom she seems to get along with.*

*Although the screaming fits that she had during the first three years of childhood have somewhat subsided, some teachers have said that Mae viewed herself as being ugly, and if her self-image were improved, her grades would also improve.*

As I look back, I don't remember viewing myself as ugly, I only remember being called ugly.



## Chapter 4: The Nighttime Routine

Every evening, I remember my mother would ask me about school while she and one of my siblings helped me with my homework. Although she was aware of my teasing problems on a smaller scale and even tried to work with school faculty to help—I never shared the full story with her. Maybe I felt as if I had so many problems it was impossible to tackle them all at once. All I knew was that I had trouble thinking clearly and sometimes I just didn't remember after I got home from school.

Every night, it was routine for me to say goodnight to my mother and siblings, grab my favorite doll on my bed, and hold her tight. I'd turn my back to the wall, so no one would see or hear me crying, and put my thumb in my mouth. I'd cry myself to sleep because, unfortunately, tomorrow was another day of school.

### ***Team Evaluation Center 1971:***

*Mae lives with her family in a large house. Although she and her three sisters share an extra large room, Mae has her own bed.*

## **Chapter 5: Repeating the 6th Grade & the Bulky Brace**

During my fifth-grade year, I began experiencing more intense back pains and often complained to my mother. I can still feel the gentle touch of her hands on my back as she asks me where it hurts. At this point in my childhood, I was absent from school quite often because of countless doctor's visits in order to find out what was causing my back pain. After being treated by nine doctors for several months, it was discovered that I had Prominence in the lumbar region of the dorsal spine, a missing disc, and developed kidney problems.

Once I left the hospital, I was told that I had to wear a back brace. The brace was large and bulky underneath my clothing. It was made of metal that started from my shoulder down to my waist. Every time I'd sit down, the two sides of the brace would rise up under my shirt, adding more attention to my appearance. And to make matters worse, I was told I would need to repeat the sixth grade as I had missed too many school days.

I didn't want to wear the bulky brace or repeat the grade. I knew the kids in my grade and those who teased me, plus I had made a few friends by now. As crazy as it sounds and despite how badly I was treated, I just didn't want to start over with a new group of kids.

During that time we were being bussed to the school. It was the 1970s, which meant that kids from all over the city were being integrated into different schools and neighborhoods. After I got off the bus and was sent to the new class, I realized the kids who teased me in the previous grade had younger siblings who knew about me beforehand. "Look! It's ugly Mae Nunn, y'all", a boy called out, to

the rapturous laughter of my new peers. This group of kids was fairly similar to the last group, but there was something different—they were more physical. I'd wear my stubborn, clunky back brace in class and some kids would laugh. When I sat down, the back brace would cause the sides of my shirt to lift and rise. Someone would always pull on it and I'd heard someone call "humpback!" as they'd laugh. My eyes were filled with tears because I was in such pain. Some teachers noticed and stopped it from happening by stepping in, but that didn't stop me from feeling like I was all alone.

***Team Evaluation Center 1971:***

*Although Mae was not malnourished, she appeared very slender in build. The tympanic membrane on the right side of her ear was dull. She had decreased hearing due to an upper respiratory infection. She had mucopurulent rhinorrhea which was also due to her multiple respiratory tract issues. She had a very tiny umbilical hernia. Mae was quiet and shy.*

*Mae's auditory screening was well below normal limits. On the visual testing, she scored 20/30 for acuity in the right eye and 20/50 for the acuity in the left eye. Mae also failed both the muscle balance test and the color perception tests.*

## Chapter 6: New Faces Appeared & the City Bus: 7th Grade

Oftentimes, I look back and remember the hardworking efforts of my parents: my father, a foundry worker, and my mother, who worked long hours as a nurse. In addition to her job and other children, she strived to address my medical needs, along with my physical, mental, and emotional problems caused by teasing. And these were only the problems she knew about—back then, I hadn't begun to scratch the surface and tell her of everything I had been through thus far. I never fully talked about what happened at school, but also couldn't understand why I didn't.



*My Parents: Wilson H. & Willena Nunn.*

By the time I advanced to seventh grade, I was in a new school and emotionally bullied down from now 6 years of bullying, more and more kids transplanted from other schools. Somehow, I knew they would find out about me

and soon enough, some did and joined in the bullying with the others. In addition to the verbal bullying, I was physically abused by them many times.

I lowered my head at all times because I found it difficult to look others in the eye. When I was asked a question in the classroom, I could not get the words out, even if I knew the answer. To relieve the anxiety and stress I felt, I would lower my head behind my book and suck my thumb.

Sometimes, I wanted to take a break from running home and choose to ride the city bus instead, often with a friend or sibling. This day, although I was without a buddy, I decided to ride the bus because I knew a few bus drivers, and nothing typically happened under their watch. Once I walked on the bus to go home, all of the seats were taken in the front—where I comfortably sat, so I decided to choose a seat in the back.

The walk to the back of the bus felt like it took ages as I saw several of the bullies from school already in their seats. It felt like their eyes were on me, even if I wasn't looking up at them. And then I heard it: "ugly Mae Nunn". My heart sank but I couldn't turn back.

Looking for safety, I took my seat next to an adult woman. But from behind, I could hear the sounds of drumming and chanting as the kids beat on books someone began singing:

Mae Nunn-Mae Nunn! Pick up the comb and comb your hair!

Mae Nunn-Mae Nunn! Pick up the comb and comb your hair!

...and the song grew louder:

**Mae Nunn-Mae Nunn! Pick up the comb and comb your hair!**

**Mae Nunn-Mae Nunn! Pick up the comb and comb your hair!**

...and even louder:

**MAE NUNN-MAE NUNN!**

**PICK UP THE COMB AND COMB YOUR HAIR!**

Which ended with laughter throughout the back of the bus.

I know I was only imagining this, but once I turned around to face the children, I could see everyone pointing and laughing at me. The lady sitting next to me saw the tears roll down my face. “Are you alright?,” she asked. It makes me wonder if she realized the song was about me.

A quick stop was made by the bus driver, and she immediately stood up and said that song was not allowed on her bus. From that day on, she’d let me sit up front and drop me out closer to my home to bypass the kids who teased me.

But her efforts didn’t stop the song from happening. In class and away from the bus driver, the song continued:

In one room, the new song was **Mae Nunn-Mae Nunn! Pick up the Comb and comb your hair!** I always prayed for the teacher to enter the room and stop the song. In another room, my lunch money was being taken, while in another not only were my feet being stumped someone would always make others laugh by saying Mae Nunn farted ya’ll!

## Chapter 7: Junior High 8th Grade Shame

As a child, I was always an early bird as I am today. One day, I arrived at class early and found myself alone with one of the boys who bullied me, along with a few students who came in before the teacher. I can still remember the exact seat I was in. As the boy walked passed on the way to his seat, he lifted his leg and released gas into my face. "Mae Nunn, you stink." I was immensely embarrassed—my insides felt degraded and my body felt crushed. It seemed as if the world saw what had happened and felt my shame. The next thing I remember, I ran out of the classroom down the hall, and into the girl's restroom. I rushed into a stall and bent down on the floor, holding myself as I cried. Later, I remember my teacher came into the restroom to talk to me about what happened as she helped me off the floor. She then told me that the boy would be punished. Although the punishment didn't stop him or his future acts, I began speaking out more after this incident but was cautious enough to only enter the classroom after the teacher did.

In most classes, I realized that I was always the class joke as in most of my classes. When there was only one bully in my class, I never had any problems. However, the majority of the time, two or more students would pick on me. They would dig in their nose and wipe it on my clothes. As I walked up the stairs to class, someone would put their hand up my dress and pull me backward. They stole my lunch money. As time went on, a group of girl bullies joined. They would wipe their spit on my clothes. They would take their hands and rake it through my hair as they called me "bald-headed". Someone would take a comb from their pockets and pull my hair, saying, "girl, comb your hair!" They would knock my books out of my hands. They would holler out "you go with Mae Nunn" and I



could hear laughter. In the hall between classes one bully would push another bully on me and laugh, “you touched Mae Nunn”. They would take my paper assignments, crumple them into a ball, and throw them on the floor. If one thought I was looking at them they would loudly say “Mae Nunn don’t look at me with your ugly self”. They would stomp on my feet. This would happen day after day, week after week, month after month, and it felt like years. I suffered silently since, most of the time, it didn’t happen when others were around, and when others were present, the abuse was more covert on a smaller scale. Some teachers refused to tolerate it, while others turned their backs, ignoring the bullying that I endlessly endured.

It got so bad that I began finding new ways to hide between classes. It wasn’t uncommon to see my siblings coming or going out for lunch in the school cafeteria, but I never told them I wasn't eating. I was a preteen then and maybe I was ashamed to tell them. But to escape and eat in peace, I decided to bring food from home and eat in private. As with most times, my memory of what happened at school had dissipated by the time I got home, I realized later I had blocked it out of my mind in response to the trauma I experienced.

## Chapter 8: As I Ran to My Secret Hiding Place: 8th Grade

When I walked with friends, I felt protected. However, sometimes I had to find a new hiding place since I attended a new school and anticipated walking alone. While running home that day, I ran to my secret place behind some trees, to wait for a while for some of the kids to pass by. But, as soon as I got there, there stood one of the male bullies, watching me. It made me cry! How did he find my place? How did he know I was coming?

I'm not sure about this person's intentions. In my mind, I can see him, but I can't make out his name or features. He started his usual taunting and physical bullying, but he didn't realize that I was once known to have screaming fits in response to feeling frustrated. Despite my fear and trembling, I kicked and screamed and ran away as fast as I could to get home. After that, I don't remember him picking on me again. It was as if he simply faded into the background of my life.

My thoughts were often cluttered. I experienced intense anxiety as my voice trembled with fear whenever I spoke. At times, I felt as if I couldn't catch my breath and my hands violently shook. **I HATED SCHOOL.**

## Chapter 9: And Some Even Spoke

Some of the boys who bullied me had older brothers who would often be on my street. Some would even speak when my siblings were around. “Hey Mae Nunn” they’d yelled, sometimes with a grin. But when I’d walk alone to my friend’s house after school to play, I could hear them talking to their friends and laughing. “Look, there’s ugly Mae Nunn, ya’ll!”

My brain felt scattered, my thoughts were unclear and I was having difficulty learning and staying focused. Strangely, my mind frequently thought back to the times when I molded the clay car and drew the map to get home. They were reminders: even though I experienced much pain and hurt during these times, I felt something or someone—some unknown entity, that did not allow me to give up I just wanted to be left alone.

## Chapter 10: Storefront Church and the Preacher Man

During my junior high years, I remember my eldest sister spoke highly about a storefront church that she was attending. She invited me and our other siblings to go with her to the service. When I walked into the small building, I felt a calm feeling come over me. The preacher was powerful, kind, and stern, yet loving. He often shared many stories from his own life. We would meet for service every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. I found it hard to hold my head up high, I felt as if there were weights on the top, pushing it back down again. There were times in private when I recall the Preacher asking, “what's going on with you?”

I couldn't answer. My memory was clouded at times, so I didn't even know how to answer him. Most of the time, during service, I refused to look at the other members of the church for long periods. Rarely did I maintain eye contact with them, and I often avoided most conversations, because I feared my voice would shake.

As hard as it was for me to walk into the building after a bad day at school, I knew I had to. Weeks and months passed by as the Preacher's words of strength went into my ears. I heard him in my head throughout the day. I heard him throughout the night. I heard him in my classes. I heard him as I played. I heard him as I ran home. I heard him as my hair was being pulled. I heard him as they sang the “Mae Nunn” song. I heard him as they called out, “ugly bald-headed Mae Nunn—girl, you ugly!” I heard him as laughter roared around me. I heard him as they laughed and said Mae Nunn farted. I heard him as someone's hand pulled

me from under my dress. The words of the preacher infiltrated my mind. These words gave me life. I could hear my mother in one ear, and the Preacher in the other. I was still called “ugly Mae Nunn,” but it didn't feel the same. There were times when I didn't even cry when I heard it. It was as if the bullying problem moved to the background and the words of the preacher moved forward.

I worshipped and studied under the teaching of the same preacher for years and even though the Preacher has since passed away, I still admire and love him. Before he was laid to rest, I had the opportunity to look him in the eyes and say “thank you,”—and although I didn't say why, I'm sure he knew.



*The preacher man, the late Bishop W.C. Hunter.*

## Chapter 11: Growing Stronger: 9th Grade

Luckily, by the end of the ninth grade, many of my medical problems seemed to disappear or resolve themselves on their own. The back brace was gone. I didn't have to wear the glasses I was prescribed as much nor did I have as many doctor visits. However, I was still very slim with short hair and had lots of self-esteem issues. To help with this, my mother enrolled me in a modeling school in Atlanta to boost my confidence. This school allowed me to be around others who had similar bodies, helped me learn new skills, and boosted my confidence. Looking back, my mother always cared for me and fought to solve my problems, Smart, beautiful, and always teaching her six children-she was my hero then and now. And the modeling classes worked! Over time, my speech improved, and I felt stronger and more confident. However, I now faced new challenges. No matter what I did, I just couldn't escape the name that I had grown to hate, this time, with a curse word to add more insult to my injuries: **Ugly Ass, Bald-headed Mae Nunn.**

As I grew stronger with my mentality, more of my personality began to shine through that was once tucked away due to my overwhelming medical problems and bullying. Yet, I was still mistreated by some. During this time, if I walked alone to the local store up the street, I was called ugly Mae Nunn, and if I walked down the street to another store, I would get hit with rocks. Both acts were from those bullies who lived in the neighborhood and went to school with me. However, not all of them were from my neighborhood; there were just as many who lived outside the neighborhood and came from other schools.

On one particular day, as I walked to the local store up the street for my mother, I decided not to walk all the way around, as I usually would to avoid the

bullies. Instead, I felt as if I could hear the words of the Preacher and my mother—both directing and telling me to take the shorter route this time. Once I passed the bully’s house, I remember him glancing at me, saying, “**Mae Nunn, don’t walk your ugly ass up this street**”. I just looked at him. I didn’t flinch, cower, or turn and walk in the other direction; and most of all, I did not run. He appeared unfazed by my reaction as well—it seemed as if he had grown tired of his own taunts. It was as if these words had become routine.

Again, I felt as if the Preacher and my mother were standing next to me, telling me not to move. “Jenny, look at him and don’t run” It was as if I stood there for hours looking at the boy but I’m sure it was only seconds. I remained victorious because his words rolled off my back and I walked away smiling. Of course, this did not stop the usual name-calling, but now I felt as if I had a choice in taking the long way through the neighborhood, whereas before I didn’t think I had that choice. I knew I had the power to choose where I wanted to go, whether a bully was present or not. I was slowly growing stronger and stronger each day.



## **Chapter 12: The Painful Years Are Over: 10th & 11th Grades**

Although things improved at school a bit, it wasn't ideal for me. As a result, I began skipping classes. However, I hardly heard the name, "bald-headed Mae Nunn" anymore. I could now fully remember events that happened throughout the day. I stopped running and walked home each day with friends thanks to the remaining few bullies choosing to take the bus instead. I became more powerful and stood my ground, but found myself still weak from years of emotional and physical bullying.

Never did I attend a prom or a school dance and I went to very few ball games. Even when I tried to be active in school events/activities, it didn't work out. However, as I became more familiar with myself, I realized it didn't matter whether I was involved or not. All I ever wanted was to be left alone to think, plan, and build—the same way I did when I was a child, creating with clay or drawing the scribbled map that got me home.

Some of my friends and/or classmates never learned the full story of my trauma because some events occurred when they weren't around. Most times, I did not have much recollection of what happened the day before or who caused the harm. Each day, I felt as if my memories were being erased. My experiences left me so exhausted that I decided to drop out of high school after the eleventh grade. From there, I joined the Job Corps.

## Chapter 13: And He Helped Me Focus

I met a man four years out of the job corps. Upon becoming friends, he asked, "Jenny, why are you so far behind academically?" and said, 'you should be finishing your first four years of college by now.'" During our conversation, I shared memories of events during my school years that made it difficult for me to focus. He offered to help me catch up with my higher education levels. As a school teacher and scholar who took pride in his education and dreamed of owning his own school, he bought study materials for me, and we'd work on them together. He even convinced me to enroll in a computer school, where I graduated with a certification in COBOL and RPG.

During the long nights that we spent together, he would hold my hands as he tutored me. Often he would say, "Jenny, look at me. Hold your head up and look at me in the eyes." Sometimes, he'd point at me and say, "they better not pick with 'That Girl'". "That Girl" was his special nickname for me.

When he would leave town for work events, he'd invite me along, and I was often terrified to join because I knew I'd have to meet new people and look them in the eyes. At times, he noticed my anxiousness and tried to calm me down by saying, "Jenny, if you get nervous or have trouble speaking, just hold your hands together, relax, and smile. Your smile is captivating, and I felt that soon I'd find the courage to speak again.

At age 27, I became the wife of that scholar man, the teacher, and the coach.



*The late Ernest H. Gaines II, the scholar, the teacher, and the coach.*

## Chapter 14: The Aftermath

When a bomb explodes, it leaves behind much destruction. Even when the debris is cleared away, the aftermath lingers, years later—just like with me. There was much to discover in my aftermath. At times, I have to coach myself: hold your head up, Jenny. Look people in the eyes when you speak, Jenny. And, Jenny, when you get nervous, just hold your hands together, relax, and smile. Your smile is captivating, and as always, I find the courage to speak again.

## Chapter 15: Taking a Stand

In writing this story, I've recalled more and more hurtful experiences, some more painful than others that I have chosen to leave out. Some faces and names come to mind. Between the second and eleventh grades, I recall 35 people, some classmates and relatives of classmates, and teachers who either bullied or turned their backs on me while I was bullied. This number does not include those who did not take part directly but found the abuse to be amusing. Some of these people have since passed away. Although I must forgive, it doesn't mean I cannot use my voice to help others.

Once, I read an article about bullying where the author described how their child was bullied to death. Shouldn't all children deserve the right to learn without fear, regardless of their background, status, or race?

In my research, I learned that kids who are victims of bullying come in all colors and walks of life. While some are popular, others suffer from illness or disability. Some are bullied due to cultural or religious beliefs, or sexual orientation, and some because of their physical appearance. However, no child should feel degraded at school—their place of learning.

There are some kids who have medical problems that prevent them from telling their complete stories; some are strong but still hesitant to speak up. Others fight back, and unfortunately, some give up. No child should ever be forced to worry about impending danger at school or tremble in fear as they figure out how to get home. Additionally, no child should ever have to walk away feeling degraded and shamed. School is designed to develop young minds, "But if they cannot concentrate, how will they develop?"

**So, I take a stand,** no longer running or living in fear. I will raise my voice until God removes the breath from my body and beyond. I believe every child should have the freedom to learn without the fear of bullying.

## **Chapter 16: As Jenny Ran Foundation:**

The As Jenny Ran Foundation ([asjennyran.org](http://asjennyran.org)), established in 2022 in Tennessee by Jenny Gaines, is dedicated to rebuilding the lives of children and adolescents aged 7 to 19 who have been emotionally and physically impacted by bullying. Additionally, we provide materials for bullying intervention to support children in transforming their negative behavior into positive actions, and we also strive to educate and empower the entire community in this fight.

As Jenny Ran does not discriminate based on race, color, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or national or socioeconomic status. Our goal is to restore self-worth in children, create a society free from bullying for children of all backgrounds, provide help to those who seek change, and foster positive behavior among everyone.

## Chapter 17: Giving Thanks

I give thanks to my loving mother, Willena Nunn for noticing that her little girl needed help and broke down doors to do so. To my father the late Wilson H. Nunn for the many days he walked me to and from the speech center for speech therapy. I'm grateful for my siblings, who would have stepped in if they had known how bad things were. I'm also thankful for my baby brother, who was not just my brother, but my friend, who played with me and felt some of what I went through. To the preacher man, the late Bishop W.C. Hunter, it was the Word of life that gave me the strength to stand my ground. To my husband, the late Ernest H. Gaines II—the scholar, the teacher, and the coach—for helping me focus on my higher education journey. And thank you to the little girl who sometimes ran or walked with me.

Through it all, I grew to love the name I hated—the name my parents, Wilson H. & Willena Nunn, gave me at birth: Mae Genevieve Nnnn.



## Chapter 18: In the Year 2022

Today, I proudly serve as the Founder/Managing Director of NETWORK ADVISING-U, specializing in Small Business Web Design and Development Services. I am certified in COBOL and RPG and hold both a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Technology and a Master's degree in Information Systems.

For those small businesses that want to enhance their online presence and user experience through digital transformation, I developed the Startup Analyst Program<sup>SM</sup>, DesignPhases<sup>SM</sup>: Digital Design Course, and BrandU<sup>SM</sup>: Small Business Branding Course. Furthermore, I have developed policies and guidelines for multicultural virtual technology teams, enabling individuals from diverse cultures, languages, and time zones to work together. I am also an independent software tester for some of the world's most recognized brands.

**AND MOST OF ALL, I, MAE NUNN, AM A SURVIVOR OF  
BULLYING!**



*Jenny today at age 61.*

## **General Contact Information**

We invite you to join us in our efforts as we work to rebuild the lives of children.

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