

MY LIFE, GRANDMA, AND FRIED CHICKEN

JaQuenna Wilson

When I was little, my mom, my two sisters, and I lived with my grandma. My mom had my oldest sister, Tearra, when she was sixteen. When I was about one or two years old my mom was hardly there to take care of me. My cousin La'Quanna lived with us, too, and she took care of me. She potty-trained me, showed me how to tie my shoes, and did my hair all the time. She even showed me how to walk and talk. La'Quanna took care of me until she moved out to go to college.

After La'Quanna moved out, my grandma started to take care of me. She's a strong person who has never been to jail or smoked in her whole life. She smells like White Diamond perfume, which is a strong smell that makes my stomach hurt. She has a short Afro and she likes to go to bingo. She is sixty-five and works for Tulalip

Casino doing housekeeping. I don't like watching action movies with her because she always asks me what's going to happen next and I don't even know. My grandma signed me up for preschool; she took me the first day.

When I was about five my mom had a baby. It was a girl—she named her Memory. In first grade my mom and my three sisters moved out of my grandma's house. I didn't move out with them. I stayed at my grandma's because my cousins lived there and I didn't want to leave them. In 2001 my mom had one more baby girl—her name is Taviyah.

In the third grade I didn't get to go on field trips because I got in trouble a lot. Like this one time I told the teacher that she was stupid. She told me to get out of her class, and I was so mad I threw a chair at her. I yelled at the teacher and threw more things at her. A teacher named Mr. Greer told my grandma that I wouldn't get to go on field trips if I kept getting smart with teachers and staff. When I got home, she told me to sit down so she could talk to me. She said if I talk back to the teacher it will go on my record and I would turn out not successful. The next day I went to school and had a good day.

I was doing well in school until I got to middle school. My attitude changed big time. The teachers were very strict and I didn't like it so I started to talk back to them. I kept getting suspended, so they expelled me and put me in John Marshall. I wish I had remembered what my grandma told me, but I didn't. The summer before seventh grade, she told me not to go to school and talk back to the teachers or I'm going to be living with my mom. I liked living with my grandma because she is a good cook and not as over-protective as my mom. She cooked for me all the time—my favorite is her fried chicken and greens—and she let me go out to movies with friends.

At John Marshall, we just don't have regular time, like school. It's not as much fun. The teachers get on my nerves and I try hard not to cuss them out because I want to leave and transfer to my old school. The teachers are always talking about points! We get points for being on time to class, focusing on our work, communicating effectively, and following directions. If we don't listen they always say, "If you don't do this, I'm going to take away points." There

are a certain number of points I need so I can get my percentage up and get out of here. I need to keep the score I have for the next five weeks and then I can move upstairs to the regular school and eventually back to Denny Middle School.

My grandma sold her house so I had to move in with my mom. Living with my mom and four sisters is hard because my sisters and I fight a lot and my mom doesn't really have time for me. For instance, a few months ago, my sisters had a big fight about a new burgundy blanket that my grandma gave to my oldest sister. The second oldest took it and put it on her bed and it turned into a fistfight. I told them it was just a blanket. After my mom broke up the fight, Teanna went into Terra's room and they started laughing about the fight and eating spicy Cheetos. They don't stay mad at each other for a long time. I'm hardly ever there at my mom's house—I'm usually at my cousin La'Quanna's house because there aren't as many people there.

A month ago, my grandma got her new house and I sometimes wish I could live with her, but my grandma wants to live on her own now, after helping raise all her ten grandchildren. I understand that, even though I miss eating her fried chicken.

GRANDMA'S FRIED CHICKEN RECIPE

1. Salt and pepper the chicken pieces.
2. Dip the chicken in beaten eggs.
3. Roll the chicken in flour.
4. Roll it in breadcrumbs, any type, but I like the Italian flavored.
5. Deep-fry it in oil. Do not make the oil too hot, and fry the chicken for about 25-30 minutes if boned. If boneless, fry it about 20-25 minutes.

IT'S NOT ALWAYS...



*What words describe thirteen-year-old **JaQuenna Wilson**? “I’m kind of nice, weird, black, laugh a lot, loud, and energetic.” Her hobbies include playing basketball and helping her little sisters with homework. Her grandmother inspires her “because she is strong.” Her goals are to graduate high school and college. What else should we know about JaQuenna? “I’m one of a kind!”*