



“People who want privacy should be allowed to have it and the law should protect their right to privacy. If an individual seeks freedom to express themselves, they should be allowed to do so. [...] However, if people choose to relinquish privacy, they can expect no protection from the law.”

— A privacy advocate in the early 2020s

CLAIRE BESSANT

What Would You Rather Be: A Privacy Have or a Privacy Have-Not?

Do you share information on social media? Would you like to be paid for sharing your information? Would you be happy for others to take your photograph? Think carefully. Your future life and the lives of your children depend upon your answers.

INTRODUCTION

In a series of diary entries, the story “What Would You Rather Be: A Privacy Have or a Privacy Have-Not?” discusses the concept of privacy in times of ubiquitous technology and social media. Building upon current evidence, this story foretells the future of a society increasingly divided between individuals who value privacy and those who place greater value on other goods such as freedom of expression. It envisages

a world in which there is such widespread disagreement about whether an individual can expect to maintain their privacy that a radical solution was introduced. This story is set in 2040 in a society that is comprised of two distinct factions: Privacy Haves and Privacy Have-Nots. Entirely different laws apply to the two groups, recognizing that whilst Privacy Haves wish to preserve their privacy, Privacy Have-Nots place

greater value on their freedom to express themselves. A Privacy Have can thus reasonably expect that details of their life will not be publicly available online. They expect to be told when an organization acquires their personal information and to be able to choose whether and how their information is used. A Privacy Have-Not, by contrast, knows that, at a click of a button, details of their entire life, their family, their relationships, even images of themselves as a fetus, may be revealed. A Privacy Have-Not will have been brought up to expect their information to be held and used by businesses and governments and welcomes the income they earn from selling their information. Through a schoolgirl's diary entries, which explore how society became divided, and what it means to be a Privacy Have, this story challenges the reader to consider how they share information about their own life and the lives of other family members, and to reflect upon the way that governments and corporations

use individuals' information. It asks the reader to consider whether they would be a Privacy Have or a Privacy Have-Not, and whether they ultimately value their privacy. The essay picks up on a current trend: Individuals are increasingly allowing smartphones and smart devices to monitor their behavior and their movements. Whilst not all individuals may be aware of the privacy implications of their actions, there are indications that many individuals are happy to trade their privacy for financial or other benefits. Nonetheless, evidence also exists of individuals who, wary of the privacy implications when information is disclosed online, make minimal use of social media. There is evidence, too, that some individuals object to organizations using their information, that some dislike third parties taking photographs of them and their children. It seems that there is, to some extent, a divide between those who consider it important to protect their privacy and those who do not.

Sunday 18th March 2040

Wow! Last night's party was amazing! I still can't get over how big the house was. And it had so many amazing technological devices that I've only ever read about. Ben seems like such a normal person when I see him at school, but his family must be seriously rich to own a place like that.

It was weird, though, to see so many people holding their phones above their heads, taking shots of the whole party and taking photos of each other like it was the normal thing to do. I've never been to a party where people take photos without asking first whether it's ok. Mum once told me that, when she was young, everyone used to take photographs of each other when they were at parties or out in the street, and that's part of why we all divided, but I didn't know people still did that.

I tried to make sure nobody took my photo without making it obvious that I really didn't want my photo taken. I think I managed ok. I really don't want there to be any evidence I was at the party. My Mum and Dad would kill me if they found out I'd been there. I know they don't like Ben's family or the way they live their lives. I told them that I was staying the night at Emily's (which is partly true as I did sleep over at her house after the party).

But that wasn't the best thing! I still can't believe that I spent most of the night speaking to Ben. I didn't think he knew I existed. We had so much in common—he likes the same music as me, the same films and books. I didn't expect that. I've agreed to meet him after school on Wednesday. I'll tell Mum and Dad I've got an extra hockey practice and they won't expect me home until at least six.

Monday 19th March 2040

Swim club tonight. Fastest ever 200m freestyle!

Tuesday 20th March 2040

School was really boring today. Looking forward to seeing Ben tomorrow.

Wednesday 21st March 2040

It was great to speak to Ben again. During school, we've had to pretend we don't really know each other just in case my annoying sister Susie spots us

talking and says anything to Mum. I know there's nothing for her to tell Mum, but I don't want to risk it.

Thursday 22nd March 2040

Emily was telling me about a new e-book she'd just read. It was set in a future world where nobody had any privacy at all and everyone knew everything about everyone else. We both decided we definitely wouldn't want to live in a world like that. I'd quite like to read the e-book though.

Friday 23rd March 2040

Mum made homemade pizza tonight with ham, mushroom, pepperoni, and mozzarella. She knows exactly how I like my pizza (probably the only person other than me that does).

Saturday 24th March 2040

I can never thank Emily enough for covering for me today. (I told her I had something important to do but I didn't tell her what. I still can't decide whether I should tell her about me seeing Ben. I don't think she likes Ben or his friends, although she did agree that his party was great.)

Ben and I had such a great afternoon walking in the hills. We didn't see anyone the whole time. Ben said it was a bit weird not to take photos of where we went, and that it was the first time in forever that he hadn't posted up what he was doing. I don't know why I wouldn't let him take any photos of me. Is it just so ingrained in me that I can't trust anyone other than my family and close friends to take my photo?

Sunday 25th March 2040

We went to see Grandma and Grandad today. We've not seen them for ages because they live so far away, and Susie and I had loads to tell them about what we've been doing. When I told Ben we were going to see them, he asked me:

“Why would you bother driving all that way?”

He said he just video chats with his grandparents whenever he wants. That sounds nice, but not the same as seeing Grandma and Grandpa or giving them a hug.

Monday 26th March 2040

I decided in the end that it was only fair to tell Emily about Ben and I meeting in secret. After all she is my best friend. I couldn't believe her reaction though. She practically shrieked:

“There's no way you can keep seeing Ben.”

And, of course, she asked the killer question:

“What would your parents say?”

I've tried to sort of put my parents out of my mind whenever I see Ben because I know they don't like his family. I really don't understand why, though.

Tuesday 27th March 2020

Today we had one of the first ever privacy and information studies classes. There's going to be a test on everything we learn at the end of term. Even if we didn't have a test, I think I would still want to write everything down. It feels like what we're learning is important—it seems to explain quite a lot of what I don't understand about our divided world but I've still got so many questions ...

Emily thinks it's interesting too. We couldn't stop talking about it on the way home from school. Rather annoyingly, Emily seemed to know all about what life was like before we divided. Emily says that when her Mum was born, in the twentieth century, there were international laws stating that *everyone* had some sort of right to privacy protected by international law. I think that's an amazing idea!

I don't know how Emily knows so much more than I do. She says it was a man called Tim Berners-Lee who invented the World Wide Web, and that it was because of the web that everything started to change and many people stopped caring about privacy. Emily also said that, to start with, everyone thought the web was great, because before the internet you could only find

out information if someone else knew the answer, or you looked in a book or went to the library. (I'm not sure I believe that bit about only being able to find information if you went to a library. Sometimes I think Emily just makes things up to see whether I believe everything she tells me. Seems weird to me. I can't imagine a world where you can't find something out within seconds by going online. I don't think I've ever been to a library and I'm pretty sure we don't have one in our town—why would you need one anyway when you can get pretty much any book ever written online?)

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Back again. I had to do some homework. Still thinking about everything we learned in class today, though, and I'll probably be thinking about it all night. Life at the beginning of the twenty-first century seems to have been so different, but I've just realized that actually Mum and Dad were my age in 2020 so they must have experienced it all. So annoying that they're both out tonight. I'm definitely going to ask them tomorrow about what life used to be like.

Wednesday 28th March 2040

Wow! Mrs. Hewlett said in class that in 2004 this man called Mark Zuckerberg invented Facebook (which was apparently one of the first and most important types of social media, even if I've never heard of it). The idea of Facebook was that everyone would share their own information and their family's information on the internet and then everyone would comment on each other's posts. I hate the idea. I've been thinking about the photos of me as a toddler with food all over my face that Mum and Dad keep safely stored in our digital vault. I'd be mortified if any of my friends saw them now!

When I asked Mum about it, she said although her parents never put any information about her online, loads of her friends' parents did. She said that when her friend Helen turned eighteen, Helen's mum sent a photograph of Helen as a chubby half-naked baby to Helen's friends, Helen's little sister's friends, their mums! How embarrassing! Even worse, she said her friend Toby's mum posted a picture on social media of Toby, aged two, using the toilet for the first time. She said those photos are probably still on the internet now for everyone to see. Gross!

She also told me about one of her friends who was only a little bit older than me, who had helped his little sister make a gingerbread house for Christmas. He didn't know that his Mum had videoed him and had posted the video on the internet until his friends started to laugh at him. He didn't speak to his Mum for days. Fortunately, I know Mum would never do that to me. Mum told me that she really doesn't agree with people posting pictures of their children online—it's not just about respecting their children's privacy (I like that she thinks that way) but also because you don't know how other people will react to the information that's posted or how they might use it.

What I just couldn't believe was when she said there were some parents who stopped working in their real jobs and just spent their whole time taking and posting videos of their family's daily life. She said that because the children were advertising the food brands they ate, the clothes they wore, and the places they visited, the parents got paid loads of money! Why would they do that? I wonder whether they ever asked their children how they felt about it? Just imagine not ever being able to spend the day in your pajamas with your hair in a mess because you've got to show this amazing image to the world. I'm going to have to chat to Emily about that one.

Thursday 29th March 2040

I had to stop what I was writing yesterday because Mum told me to turn out my light and go to bed. One of the other things that Mrs. Hewlett told us in class, which seems incredible, is that many governments, including ours, used to monitor what everyone was doing. They could check everyone's phone records and internet use and there were cameras everywhere taking photographs to record wherever you went in public. That sounds horrific. Mrs. Hewlett showed us a news clip all about a big terrorist attack on the US in 2001. She said certain governments decided the only way to keep everyone safe from the bad people was to monitor everybody (that way they could spot who the bad guys were and prevent them planning more attacks). I said to Emily that I really didn't like the idea of government (or anyone) being able to know all about my life, about who I was speaking to and what I was looking at. She didn't seem to understand what I meant—she said that in her view if you've got nothing to hide then you've got nothing to fear and so there's nothing wrong with the government knowing what you're doing. I'm not sure about that at all—I don't think I've anything I want to hide, but I still don't like the idea of someone being able to watch where I go and knowing who I talk to on the phone and online! Emily and I ended

up having a bit of an argument in the end. I really like her but sometimes she can be so annoying!

Friday 30th March 2040

We had another one of the new classes on privacy. Even more scary than the last one. Apparently, there were countries in the 2010s and 2020s where the governments developed big databases to store everyone's information, even copies of their fingerprints and scans of their eyes! Mrs. Hewlett said, in our country, everyone's medical records were stored in a big database and any doctor anywhere in the country could access a person's health records. I suppose it would be good to know that, if I went on holiday somewhere and had to go to hospital, doctors could see what medicines I take and know that I'm allergic to loads of things, but I still wouldn't like my information just sitting somewhere on a big database for people to look at. I'd want to choose who sees my information, when and why.

Saturday 31st March 2040

I've been having a chat with Mum again about everything we've been learning in privacy lessons. She said her parents stopped her going to some of her friends' houses because everything in their homes was being recorded by these strange devices—they sound a bit like robots, although they couldn't move, because you could ask them questions like "what's the weather" and tell them to do things like "play my favorite song." What Grandma and Grandad didn't like was that they also listened to the conversations that were taking place in the house. Creepy!

Sunday 1st April 2040

Easter Sunday today. Got loads of Easter eggs. Susie's nearly eaten all of hers already!

Monday 2nd April 2040

I just can't stop thinking about "The great privacy erosion of the 2000s and 2010s," as Mrs. Hewlett calls it. Poor Mum—every time I see her, I seem to have another question for her. She seems happy to answer all my questions, though, which is good, because I know I can trust her to tell me the truth about what it was like then.

In fact, she told me another interesting thing today. Apparently, when she was my age, Grandad used to take her to swimming every Sunday. One day Grandad came running through to Grandma and said:

“Wow. You’re going to be really freaked out by this!”

His phone had this basic maps app. I can’t remember what mum called it. You could type into it “I want to go to x” and it would tell you how far away it was, how long it would take you, and which was the best way to go. It even had photographs of pretty much everywhere in the world—so you could click on the place you were going to and take a virtual walk around the area and see everyone’s houses. (I wonder if that app still exists—it would be fun to see if there’s a picture of my house and Emily’s house). Anyway, Mum said that unless you turned this app off (and almost nobody knew how to) it was tracking everywhere you went. It built up a detailed picture of everyone’s weekly movements, where people worked or went to school, and other places they went to regularly. And on that Sunday, the phone told Granddad when he got in the car,

“It will take you thirty-six minutes to get to the sports center.”

He hadn’t even told it he was going to the sports center—it just knew because that was where he went on Sundays at that time!

I thought about it all the way to swim training. I’m glad I don’t have anything like that tracking me.

Tuesday 3rd April 2040

Another privacy and information class, the last one considering privacy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. I’m not really sure I understood everything Mrs. Hewlett said to us today because it was more about technology. The bit that really made think though was when she said that children were only able to use apps for their schoolwork if they told the software companies their name, age, and school. Why would anyone need that information? Why couldn’t people just use a made-up name or an avatar like I do when I do my homework?

I asked Emily to explain some things to me because I don’t want to fail the test at the end of the year. I understood the bit about how when the internet came along everyone started to do nearly everything on the

internet: listening to music, playing games, buying clothes or food, talking to their friends, reading books, doing homework (just like it is today). The big difference (I think this is right) is that the only way that anyone could do any of these things was if they agreed to all of the big companies' contracts—which were so long that no-one ever read them—and if you agreed then they could keep your information. Sometimes the companies did help you by improving their products or suggesting better ways you could use them, which sounds ok. Sometimes companies would send messages online or even put pictures on different websites to say “you were looking at this on our website, are you sure you don't want to buy it?” And I guess that could be quite helpful, although a bit annoying if you'd already bought it somewhere else or decided you didn't actually want to buy it. But sometimes they gave the information to other companies—and even worse, because they wouldn't say who they'd given that information to, nobody knew who had their details, how they'd got them or how they were going to use them. That's scary.

From what Emily said, it sounded like the companies had all the power, and if you didn't agree to allow them to use your information or to send you messages, you just couldn't do anything online. I'm glad it's not like that now.

In our next lesson, we're going to start discussing the differences between Privacy Haves and Privacy Have-Nots. I feel like there's lots I don't know so I've written a long list of questions to ask Mrs. Hewlett.

Wednesday 4th April 2040

I've been picked for the first team for a hockey match next week. First time ever. So happy!

Thursday 5th April 2040

I'm so stupid. All those awful things I wrote about last week—that's what the Privacy Have-Nots do today but ten times more! Mrs. Hewlett told us all about it in class. Their whole existence is about making sure everyone knows what they're doing, and how great their lives are. That's why they were all taking photos at Ben's party. Now I understand why Ben thought it was so weird not to take photos when we went for our walk. I think I'm finally beginning to understand what Ben meant when he said normally

everyone knows exactly where he is, what he's doing, and who he's with. Until we started meeting in secret he really didn't have any life of his own that other people didn't know about—everything about his life from before he was born is documented somewhere and available for anyone to see. I really need to speak to Ben about what it's really like to be a Privacy Have-Not.

Friday 6th April 2040

I still can't believe nobody has told me before about the differences between the Privacy Haves and Privacy Have-Nots. Mum and Dad have always said to us that we shouldn't be friends with Privacy Have-Nots, but we've never discussed why that is. I can't believe Ben can be as bad as they say.

Saturday 7th April 2040

Ben and I had a chat today about what we've been learning in privacy classes. Ben had as many questions for me as I had for him and some of his questions really made me think, especially when he asked me why I think it's so important to have privacy. It's not something I can easily explain. I think it's a bit about wanting to choose how your own stuff is used and who gets to use it; sort of like the information is my property and so I get to decide what happens to it (but not quite). It's a bit about the fact that there are just some things that I think are personal and private and that I wouldn't want people to know (like how I feel about Ben and the types of things that we discuss when we're alone together). There's stuff I don't want people to know because they might use it to hurt me (things like how I worry about being too thin and not being as clever as Emily). It's also about just feeling weird or uncomfortable at the idea that someone else knows that information (even information about ordinary things like my favorite breakfast cereal or my favorite song) but I don't know who has that information, or how they might use it. I also used my Dad as an example (sorry Dad) to explain that there are also things about my family I just don't think are anyone else's business. Who needs to know that Dad farts loudly while watching TV and that the rest of us find that gross and usually end up shouting at him to stop or start throwing cushions at him. (That's definitely not something I think anyone other than my family needs to know!)

Sunday 8th April 2040

Ben and I managed to meet while Mum and Dad went into town with Susie—I told them I had homework to finish. We talked for ages. I can't remember everything he said, just the bit when we were talking about having our photos taken. Ben says he doesn't mind if his mum and dad or his friends take his photograph, put it on the internet, or share it on a public photo screen. That's the way his family has always done it and he's never thought of it as being a strange thing to do. He thought it was weird that my family never put things on social media. (How strange is that?)

I tried to explain to Ben what Mum said to me about children getting teased or bullied and that I thought it was important for me to choose whether my photos are shared. He said that the way his parents have explained it to him, because they're his parents they have a right to decide what posts they make about him while he's a child. His view was that children could always ask for their photos to be taken down when they reach eighteen. I think that's missing the point—by then loads of people will have seen everything that's out there about him. Even he had to admit that most people don't ask to get their photos taken down—after all, what's the point when everyone has already seen them and has made nasty comments about them.

I still find it strange that I can't stop thinking about all these things when before the privacy classes I never thought about them at all. I guess the differences between people like me and people like Ben just haven't been obvious to me because the Privacy Haves and Have-Nots don't have lessons together and nobody is allowed to take photos or videos at school. Then, of course, all of my friends and family are Privacy Haves, so none of us would ever take a photograph without checking first if that was ok.

Monday 9th April 2040

Emily and I were talking at lunchtime. She asked me what happens when a Privacy Have marries a Privacy Have-Not. Neither of us knew the answer, so we did some research at lunchtime. Apparently, there is no official record of a Privacy Have ever marrying a Privacy Have-Not. That was a bit of a shock. Emily and I were talking about why that might be and she argued that right from the beginning it would be a total nightmare, like:

“Just think about the wedding. What would you put on the wedding invitations?”

As she pointed out, for all of the weddings we've ever been to there's been a clear statement on the invitation that if a Privacy Have-Not wishes to attend the wedding, they agree to forego their right to take photographs. I bet that Privacy Have-Nots have something on their wedding invites that says you are free to take photos.

Tuesday 10th April 2040

I managed to ask Ben today about what Privacy Have-Nots say on their wedding invites. It was a bit of a surprise to me what he said. Apparently, it always used to say on Have-Not wedding invitations that everyone could take as many photos as they liked and that, if you were a Privacy Have attending a Privacy Have-Not wedding, you had to accept that your photograph could be taken and posted on social media or on any other public forum (so just like I thought). He says that's all changed now because of the Photographs in Public Act (I think that's what he called it).

He was telling me that now if a Privacy Have like me finds out that there's information about them online (photos, facts, comments), they can ask the company in charge of the website to have it removed, and they must remove it or they'll get a big fine. When Ben said that I shouted:

“Hasn't that always been the case? What? Really? You mean before that law came in if someone put my photo up there I couldn't get it taken down?”

(Apparently, the answer is no. It hasn't always been the case. And yes, if someone had put my photo online ten years ago I would probably have been unable to do anything about it! Argh!)

It was a relief when Ben said that now this Photographs in Public law says that if someone wants to take a photograph they have to check with anyone who might be in that photograph whether they are ok about having their photograph taken and uploaded to social media or made public in some other form. If they aren't happy, then the photographer has to pixelate the photo, put an electronic sticker over the face or just not take the photo. (Phew! So, hopefully, I'll never find my photo online without me knowing.)

Ben said he went to a wedding last week and everyone was asking:

“Are you a Privacy Have or Have-Not? Do you mind if your information is uploaded to social media?”

That’s just what I’d expect really. I’d never think of taking a photo of my friends without checking it was ok.

Wednesday 11th April 2040

We won our hockey match 3–2!!! Yeah! I think I played ok. Emily played amazingly, as always. Hannah, who’s a Privacy Have-Not, asked at the end of the game why we couldn’t all have a team photo together. The teacher said it wasn’t possible because there were Privacy Haves in the team whose parents hadn’t agreed to us having our photos taken (I guess she meant Emily and me). I’ve never thought about it before now, but if you were somebody who liked to record everything about your life, it would be a bit strange not to have a photo to record something as exciting as winning a hockey match. Thinking about it now, I don’t want to tell everyone everything I’m doing, but I do think it would have been quite nice to have a picture of me with the rest of the team.

Thursday 12th April 2040

Everyone was talking about the hockey match before school this morning. I felt so proud to have been part of the team. I was talking to mum about it too when she got home from work. I explained about us not being able to have a full team photograph and I asked her why she won’t let me have my photograph taken at school. She said it just isn’t an option for me. Susie was in the kitchen when we were talking and, as usual, she kept asking Mum:

“Why? Why?”

The way that mum explained it is that you have to choose whether you’re a Privacy Have or a Privacy Have-Not when you’re eighteen and you follow the same rules as your parents until then. I knew that bit of course. What I hadn’t really realized though is that since all the laws are designed differently depending upon which group you belong to once you’ve made your decision (or your parents have made that decision for you) you have to stick to it. And if you’re a Privacy Have, you never put things online because then you know you’re in control of your information. I still don’t really get why I can’t have my photo taken with the hockey team but I think

we're going to be learning about the laws in our next class on privacy, so hopefully that will explain things a bit more.

Friday 13th April 2040

I was talking to Ben today about the fact that there's no record of a Privacy Have and a Privacy Have-Not ever getting married. He said it didn't surprise him. His mum and dad said that it's simply not possible for the two to live together because in every aspect of our daily life we have to make choices about our privacy and Privacy Haves and Privacy Have-Nots will never make the same choices. He said that Privacy Haves and Privacy Have-Nots even have completely different settings on their computers and when you buy your computer you have an option to buy a Privacy Have computer or a Privacy Have-Not computer. How did I not know that!!!!

I had to admit to him that I wasn't sure what he meant when he said computers had different settings. He was nice about it, which was a relief.

What he said really surprised me. I remember Mum telling me about some Online Privacy Law when I bought my favorite black top online last year. She said that organizations can't make us give them our personal information if we don't want to, but if we need to provide information, like I needed to give our address for my top to be sent to, the company has to message me afterwards to say what information they hold and they have to delete it as soon as I ask them to. From what Ben said, it sounds like the new law only applies to Privacy Haves (which is a bit like what Mum was saying to me about us having different laws). I can't quite believe it (although Ben swears it's true)—apparently, if you're a Privacy Have-Not, your computer automatically gives out information whenever it's requested to do so, and all of the Privacy Have-Nots agree that companies can use that information in whatever way they want. Ben says that's why his family is so rich; they've been selling their private information to companies for years now, and they're being paid for the pictures that they post of Ben and his brother!

Saturday 14th April 2040

I decided to ask Mum about how Privacy Have-Nots, like Ben's family, are paid for selling their information. I didn't want her to find out that I'd been speaking to Ben about it so I just pretended it was something someone mentioned at school.

Mum says it is true. The Privacy Have-Nots do get paid lots of money for letting everybody use their information. Mum said that part of the reason why she and Dad chose to be Privacy Haves is because she'd rather be poor and keep control over her information than be rich and have no privacy. That's really made me think ... Mum and Dad both have good jobs as lawyers so actually our family isn't poor. What if you don't have a good job and you haven't got enough money? Would you feel you had to sell your information to get some money even if it meant you lost all your privacy? That doesn't seem fair.

Sunday 15th April 2040

Dad was listening to the news this morning, and I heard the broadcaster say that a new law has just been agreed that will mean that when Privacy Have-Not children reach eighteen, they can get everything removed that they, their family, their friends, and even strangers had posted about them while they were children. The presenter said any posts about the child will normally just be deleted, but that if someone who had posted or shared the photographs objected to them being removed, then there was a process for asking for the faces of those who wanted them removed to be blurred instead. Apparently, the law is being introduced so that a Privacy Have-Not could choose to become a Privacy Have if they wanted to.

I just messaged Ben to see what he thought about it and he said he'd never ask his parents to delete their posts because he wouldn't want to hurt his parents' feelings. I know I wouldn't want to hurt my parents' feelings either—but I can't help thinking that it means Ben and I can never have a long-term future.

Monday 16th April 2040

A new girl joined swim club today. Her name's Mira. I really liked her, although she's a Privacy Have-Not. She was showing all of us all the pictures of everybody at her old school and swim team, and her family, and her dog, and the medals that she's won. It was easy for her to show us everything because it was all online. She said it's great being on social media, because she can keep up with everything that her old friends are doing and they can see what she's doing, so it will be easy for them to keep in touch. I guess that could be quite handy if you've moved. It's never going to be an option for me though. We don't have many photos and none of them are on social media.

Tuesday 17th April 2040

We had another privacy class today. I already knew about some of it, like the Online Privacy Law and the Photographs in Public Act. It made a change for me to be the one telling Emily something she didn't know. What I didn't know is that these are just a tiny proportion of the privacy laws introduced worldwide since the 2020s.

We watched some videos from the 2010s, which said that Facebook (the big social media company Mrs. Hewlett told us about before) started selling information about the people that used it. That seems wrong, especially as it sounded like it had loads of information, not just information that people had put on their social media profiles themselves, like their age and who they're going out with, but also information that Facebook had found out from their friends and from when people were looking at other websites. Mrs. Hewlett said that people didn't even realize Facebook had all this information and they definitely weren't expecting Facebook to sell it on.

It's because of the Facebook scandal, Mrs. Hewlett said, that our government banned all social media companies from using the information that individuals post online unless they pay the individuals. It was the first government in the world to do so and then all the other countries copied our law. (I was really pleased to hear that our country was the first country to try and protect our privacy in that way but a bit horrified that it needed to do it. I've always just assumed that whenever any person or organization has my information, they'll tell me and I'll be able to decide whether or not they can use it and how they can use it.)

Wednesday 18th April 2040

At breakfast this morning, Mum asked me what we'd been learning in our privacy classes. Recently, it seems like it's been me asking her all the questions. Once we started talking, of course, I did have questions for her. I said what I really wanted to know was why anyone would think it was a good idea to divide society into two different groups with different laws. Why don't we just have one set of laws for everyone, like Mrs. Hewlett said used to be the case back in the 2010s?

Mum explained it by telling me about when a singer sued a newspaper. The newspaper had taken photographs of him and his children having a day out. The photographer took the photos even after the singer told

the photographer he didn't want their photographs taken—I think that's shocking! The court made the newspaper pay compensation to the children because it said they could reasonably expect not to have their photographs taken when they were having a family day out. It also said it wasn't right for the newspaper to take their photograph when their parents were trying to keep their children's lives private. I think that's what she said anyway—and if so, I think that's quite right. She said, though, that there were some people who said the court had made the wrong decision and that if you were walking about in public, you should expect to have your photograph taken (something about you can only have privacy in private? Didn't fully understand that bit). Mum said that things got worse after that. Society became divided between people who really wanted to keep privacy and people who didn't mind very much. Many people thought privacy needed to be protected but others didn't and because nobody could agree whether it was reasonable to expect anyone to have any privacy, it was decided that the law would have to change. The solution that the privacy advocates came up with was to have two sets of laws, one set to suit the people who wanted privacy (people like me and Mum) and one for people who weren't really bothered (like Ben's parents). She said that, in the end, it was the only way for anyone to get any privacy protection.

Thursday 19th April 2040

I was thinking again about the fact that Privacy Haves never marry Privacy Have-Nots and that, as far as I know, no-one who's a Privacy Have has chosen to become a Privacy Have-Not or vice versa. Then that got me thinking about what would happen if Ben and I did stay together and wanted to have children, because I don't want to be a Privacy Have-Not and Ben says he doesn't want to be a Privacy Have.

I asked Ben what he thought should happen if one parent was a Privacy Have-Not and wanted to post up pictures and the other one was a Privacy Have and didn't. It almost ended up with us having our first argument ever. What Ben and I realized though is that because Privacy Haves do everything to protect privacy and Privacy Have-Nots are always encouraged to share information, it really would be difficult for a Privacy Have to live with a Privacy Have-Not.

And then I found myself telling him about the hockey match, how I would have liked to have had my photograph taken and I wouldn't have minded if the school had shared the fact that I'd won with a few people online,

provided it didn't say anything like my name or address. Then Ben said that, after our chat last week, he's been thinking too and that actually he isn't happy about some of the things that his parents have posted about him. Some bits of his life he would have rather kept private, and he wished his parents had asked him before sharing that information. By the end of our conversation, we'd both decided that even if parents need to make decisions for young children, older children should get more say. That might mean Privacy Have parents do need to record and share some of the important things (like winning hockey matches) online and it might mean Privacy Have-Not parents can't share everything, but we thought that was probably right.

It's funny, because we both started putting across the points that our parents make but the more we thought about it, we realized that we didn't agree with what either my parents or Ben's parents say and do. We both thought it was stupid to say children can't *ever* decide privacy issues for themselves. I pointed out that Susie's perfectly capable of making decisions about whether she has her photograph taken now that she's eight. Ben didn't totally agree with me. He thought you'd need to be at least twelve to make decisions about sharing information with companies online. It doesn't make any difference anyway. None of this is possible for us—in our world, you have privacy or you don't, there's no middle ground where you can just share a tiny bit.

Friday 20th April 2040

It was the last of our privacy classes today. Mrs. Hewlett shared a quote with us that I'm writing down here because I thought it was a good one and it sums up exactly what I think. Apparently, it was made by a privacy advocate in the early 2020s, and it's why we've got a divided society now:

“People who want privacy should be allowed to have it and the law should protect their right to privacy. If an individual seeks freedom to express themselves, they should be allowed to do so. They should be free to make public whatever aspects of their lives they wish to make public, except when it adversely affects the rights of those who seek privacy. However, if people choose to relinquish privacy, they can expect no protection from the law.”

I'm quite sad that the privacy classes are ending, because they have been interesting. At the same time though, I almost wish we'd never had them.

They've made me look at our society in a very different way and I'm not sure I like it so much anymore.

Saturday 21st April 2040

Susie won a medal at her dancing competition yesterday. I'm so proud of her. Mum took a photo of her in one of the empty practice rooms so that she didn't get anyone else in her photo. It's a nice photo. It's sort of sad to think that no one else will get to see it other than me, Susie, Dad, and our grandparents. Susie's quite happy with that though. She said that she can take her medal into school to show her friends and there's no need for anyone else to see the photo of her in her dancing clothes.

Sunday 22nd April 2040

After all the excitement yesterday, Mum thought it would be a good idea if we had a lazy day at home. I didn't get out of my pajamas until the middle of the afternoon or brush my hair. Glad Ben couldn't see me.

Monday 23rd April 2040

Oh no! Ben's brother has posted all over social media that Ben and I are seeing each other. When I went into school this morning all the Privacy Have-Nots were talking about it, and by lunchtime, the whole school seemed to know. Even Susie knows. She gleefully informed me at morning break:

“You're so going to get into trouble with Mum and Dad when they find out! There's no way they're going to let you keep seeing Ben.”

Thanks Susie!

I hate being talked about. I just wanted to shut myself in a cupboard and hide. To make it all even worse, Emily and I found out something when we were doing our homework.

I've always known that Mum and Dad are lawyers in the government, but they've never really explained what they do and I've never asked them. Now I know! The quote that Mrs. Hewlett put on the wall last week was apparently made by Mum in the 2020s. By my Mum!! And not only did Mum write that quote that I liked so much, but apparently my Mum and Dad were

the original privacy advocates who invented the idea of Privacy Haves and Privacy Have-Nots. No wonder they don't like the way Ben's family behaves!

How will I ever convince Mum and Dad that they should let me keep seeing Ben?

The end.

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