

A Little Bud

GRADE 9th
Fiction
Poetry
Nonfiction



I woke and groggily looked at the clock, it was noon. I rolled over and stretched, trying to remember what had woken me. There was a buzzing sound, interrupting my thoughts, my phone. I reached for it and answered it, not bothering to look at the caller I.D, "Hello?" I mumbled, exhausted.

"Hey, I didn't mean to wake you up. We need to talk, I've been knocking for ten minutes." It was Nico's voice. We had been friends for as long as I could remember.

"Yeah, sorry!" I jumped out of bed and ran to the door, I slammed it open. Nico looked me up and down, grinning, "You look like you just crawled out of a garbage disposal." He tried to make his voice lighthearted, but he obviously had something on his mind.

"Shut up." My voice was groggy.

He smiled, I turned and pushed the door to close in his face, then walked a few steps and sat on the sofa. He caught the door, then pushed it back open and sat next to me.

"What did you want to talk about?"

He bit his lip, silent, then pulled pulled my small clay keychain from his pocket, it had been pieced back together and the paint was chipped. It was the last gift my mom ever gave me. She made it, a small fairy keychain, her hair was in a ponytail, there were small hairs that escaped it, her clothes were made of vines, leaves and flowers, and her wings were a bright pink. My mom had named her Angelia.

Every detail was perfect, my mom had made details so small with the paint, she must've had a paintbrush with just one small bristle.

"You fixed it!" I yelled and hugged him, he awkwardly hugged me back, still tense.

"What's wrong?"

He looked at me, pulling away. He pulled out his phone, was typing on it for a second, then he showed me a post on the school cite. Posted by Noah Collins. A picture of me on my knees, crying and holding the broken keychain. It had a caption:

Look at her cry, like a child over a toy.

It was after Noah had ripped my keychain away from me and shattered it on the concrete. I had sprinted away from the school, and to Mine and Nico's treehouse on my mom's property. It wasn't really a treehouse, just an old cabin we found. She gave the property to my dad, knowing how important it was to Nico and I, she made sure we wouldn't lose it, along with her.

I stared in shock at his phone. I blinked. Nico turned his phone off and slipped it back into his pocket. I stared at the empty space where his phone had been.

"I'm sorry." He paused, waiting for me to respond, when I didn't, he apologized again.

I shrugged and forced a smile, "Thank you for fixing it." I took the keychain from his still outstretched hand, "How did you do it so fast?" I studied the cracks in the paint. It had been shattered to bits just yesterday.

He laughed, nervously at my reaction, "Uh, yeah" he smiled, "It was pretty easy, the hardest part was finding the glue."

I smiled, still studying the keychain, this smile was more genuine than the last one, I was so relieved that he could fix it. It was silent for a second, then Nico smiled, "Yesterday, you posted a song. I liked it."

I took my eyes off of the keychain, they shot to the floor, I felt my face go bright red. He laughed, "Why are you so awkward? I said I *like* it!"

I covered my face, "I'm not awkward!" My yell only made him laugh louder, I glared at him.

"Okay, whatever." His laughter finally stopped, "But I still don't get why you don't do some huge face reveal, I mean, you have, like, twenty million subscribers."

I did not have twenty million, only like, a couple hundred thousand.

My youtube account name was Rosie67, Rosalie was my mother's name, she was born 1967. I had created the account and started to post music on it three years ago, four years after my mom died of something that the doctors never could find. Her last few days were horrible to watch. I tried not to think about the way I had seen her. I tried not to think about her weak hugs, the way her boney hand shakily squeezed mine, as she told me everything would be okay.

"I told you." I mumbled, "I don't want the attention."

"Make a deal with me, okay?" He paused, "When you get a million subscribers you have to."

"Fine." It wasn't like I ever would.

He smiled, smugly, "You swear?"

I brushed him off, "Yeah, whatever."

He grinned, "How long has it been since you checked?"

I shrugged.

"You should." His voice was smug, he got his phone, went to YouTube and twisted his phone, showing me the screen. It was on Rosie67's account, I looked at the subscribe button, nine hundred thirty two thousand.

I couldn't hide my shock, "Wait, how long has it been that high?!" I took his phone from him, and stared in shock at the number.

"Seriously? What did you think it was at?" He was trying to hide how amused he was by my reaction.

"I don't know!" I yelled, I couldn't help but smile, when did this happen? When did Rosie get so big?

"You've never heard people talking about you at school?" He chuckled.

"Do you think me, of all people, would care to hear what they say about her?"

"Why do you talk about yourself in third person? Nico is confused, Nico wants to know." He mocked me.

“Shut up.” I smiled, “I mean Rosie67.”

He laughed again, “You *are* Rosie.”

“Yeah,” I hesitated, “but,” I didn't know how to finish. I had always posted songs about sensitive topics. Nico and Adam, my older brother, were the only ones who knew about Rosie67.

“No going back on the deal!” Nico yelled.

I groaned, “I didn't think I'd actually have to do it!”

He laughed, “You promised.”

That night I sat at my computer, I started to type.

We're almost to a million subscribers! To celebrate and to thank you all, I'm planning a face/identity reveal once we hit the million mark! Thank you all so much for your support, I'm so excited and I'm sure we'll get there soon!

I read it, my cursor hovering over the post button. I cringed at my wording and over-enthusiasm, but could find no other way to phrase it. I hesitantly pushed down on the mouse pad, posting it, then slammed the lid of my computer, my hands shaking. My heart was beating out of my chest. This was the first time I had ever posted anything aside from the music. I stood and walked to the kitchen, Adam was putting a frozen pizza in the oven, he glanced at me when I walked in, I smiled and he nodded in acknowledgment. I walked next to him, “what're you cooking?”

“What does it look like?” He grumbled.

I shrugged and followed him as he sat on the couch of our small apartment.

“You don't have to be so grumpy about it.” I mumbled.

“And you don't have to be so happy about it.” He stuck his foot out I dodged and glared at him.

“Where's dad?” I asked, my tone neutral.

“Went to the store.”

“Oh.” I was quiet as Adam flipped through the channels, he found one and stopped.

After about fifteen minutes the timer on the oven beeped, Adam stood and went to the oven.

The night went on just like normal, but I had to force myself to stay away from my computer.

I checked the number of subscribers everyday, it continued to rise quickly. Sunday afternoon I checked it. A million. After the shock wore off, I slowly, grudgingly, stomped over to Nico's apartment, he opened the door as I knocked and plopped the small video camera that I had come over for in my hands. I turned swiftly and stormed back to my apartment.

“Wait, Andy.” I could hear him holding back a laugh, “Don't you need a cameraman?”

“Nope. I'll sit it on a stack of books.” I closed the door, but he caught it and followed me into my apartment.

“Do you even know how to edit?” He laughed as I stacked books on the dining room table.

He handed me a cloth bag, I took it, confused.

“A tripod.”

“Oh.” I stirred uncomfortable, “thank you.”

He chuckled, “Stop being so stubborn.”

“I’m not being stubborn”

After awhile he convinced me to let him help. I awkwardly stumbled over the scripted words, while sitting in front of the camera.

After Nico finally turned the camera off I sat and glared at him for a minute, he smiled, then we edited it. Nico did most, I just sat and watched. That night I couldn’t even think to sleep, I forced myself not to check my account.

My alarm went off, I quickly turned it off, changed into an old T-shirt, sweat pants and my plain black hoodie. I shakily covered the bags under my eyes and attempted mascara, I wasn’t even going to try with eyeliner, my hands shaking too much. I stared at my reflection for a second, my breathing shallow, I couldn’t believe I did that.

I told myself that no one at the school knew Rosie, and that if they did they didn’t know me. I mean, I was the biggest outcast in the whole school. So what were the odds?

I met Nico outside my apartment and we walked to the bus stop.

“Why are you so nervous?” He smiled, sweetly.

“Nothing, I’m not.” I forced a smile back at him.

He bit his lip, “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have made you post it, I didn’t know you’d be this stressed.”

“I’m not.” I again smiled, then got on the bus as it pulled up.

Nico followed, “Don’t worry about it, okay? I’m sure no one’s gonna notice. There are like what, five people in this school who know your name?”

I laughed, “If that.”

We talked and joked loosely the rest of the ride to school. I put my hood up as we approached the building, Nico slipped his shoes back on. He refused to keep them on if he was going to be sitting for more than a few minutes.

We parted ways and I headed to my first class, History. I had always hated History, not that it wasn’t good to learn, it was just the plain fact that I sucked at it. No matter how much I studied or how much extra credit I did, I was horrible at it. The day went on as normal, and at lunch I sat in my usual seat, as far away from the crowd as I could get, put headphones in and worked on homework.

After about five minutes I felt a light tap on my shoulder, I turned, confused. It was Noah Collins, he seemed uncomfortable. He motioned for me to take my headphones out, I hesitated, but took them out.

“Andy,” his voice was hesitant and shaky, “I-I’m sorry.” He bowed his head, “I-I never-” he stopped, “I never knew you were going through that.” His words sounded genuine, my head darted around, just to make sure no one was recording.

“What are you talking about?” My voice was more of a hiss.

He looked at me, “I’ve listened to Rosie67,” he paused, “I’ve listened to you for such a long time, before I even moved here. I never thought that you knew,” he again paused, “w-what it feels like to be a nobody.”

His words shocked me, I didn't know how to react. I'd been a nobody my whole life, he only made that fact more obvious, and he thought I didn't?

“And I-I’m so sorry for being s-so cruel to you. I-I” he breathed deeply, “I just thought you were the kind of person that people just *like*.” He rambled on for another second.

How was I supposed to respond to him, I again checked my surroundings, expecting one of his friends to burst around the corner with a camera, laughing.

No one did.

I looked back at him, he seemed *actually ashamed*. I must've been going insane.

“This is funny.” I said, turning back around in my seat, “Just turn your stupid cameras off and leave me alone.” I growled, reaching for my headphones to put them back in my ears.

“No, Andy, wait please.” He said, but he didn't pull the headphones from me, “It isn't a joke, really.” He said.

I rolled my eyes and looked back at him. His face was bright red and his hands were shoved in his pockets, he looked so much different then from every time I've ever seen him, “I'll leave you alone, I won't bug you anymore. I just wanted you to know that I'm sorry.” He turned and walked away, he was almost cowering. My wide eyes followed him across the cafeteria, he didn't sit with his usual group of friends, he sat in the corner of an almost empty table.

I still had no idea what to say or do. I shut my computer and stood. I walked into a bathroom stall and locked it behind me. I leaned against the locked door, my breathing still coming in small patches. I pulled out my phone, I shakily went to the school site and looked up Noah Collins's profile. I clicked on it and hit the message button. I stared at the screen for a second, then started to type.

You swear this isn't a trick?

He replied back almost instantly.

Yes I do

I bit my lip, still hesitant. I walked out of the bathroom and slowly wandered to his table. He noticed me and stood, taking the few steps to get a reasonable distance from me. We stood in silence, until Noah said, “Does this mean you'll forgive me?” He asked, his voice had hope.

I bit my lip and shrugged, time would tell.

That night he messaged me. We were up the majority of the night, he told me how his parents fought so often, and he was always in the middle, forced to pick a side. He told me that he just wanted to be something more than the third opinion, he wanted to have a normal, happy family.

Maybe he wasn't that bad after all, and there was no permanent damage, aside from the few small chips in my keychain.