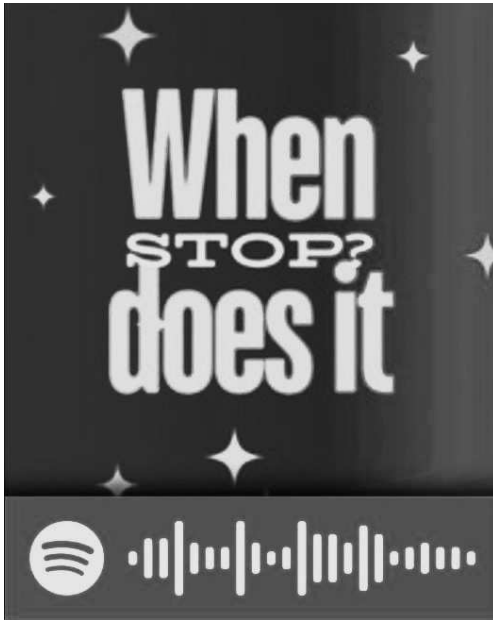


**When does it
stop?**

-

**Written by
Kim Rheiter**

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Trigger warning!

Before you dive into this work, I just wanted to warn you for the topics that might occur in here. I won't spoil anything since I dislike losing the thrill of exploring something, whether it is a movie, book or something entirely else.

I tried to write about psychological matters, which can hit hard or hit close to home for some people, so if you cannot handle heavy psychological topics, then maybe this isn't the right read for you. I made a lot of topics very descriptive and that can be too much for some or maybe most people. Maybe this warning is unnecessary, but it is better to be safe than sorry. I honestly wasn't too sure for writing a warning here, but I don't want people to get traumatized without being warned beforehand. Some people can handle it and some people can't, both are totally valid. Maybe this isn't hard to read

for many, it is hard for me to know whether someone can handle this or not, so there for this small warning.

At the end of this work, I will write more information about why I made this and what the meaning is behind it, for more clarification.

I really recommend reading the afternote before making assumptions about this work. Everyone perceives everything differently and I find that beautiful, but it also means that they can misunderstand my intentions or my work.

1_I_love_existing_

Living on a farm, that is everyone's biggest dream, right? The rain falling down on the grass, growing it for animals to consume. On other days the sun will shine bright upon the house and on the people. The people we call our own. Blood relation is such an important aspect, especially in this society. For many people, I even dare to say, that concept counts for anyone. We all want to be surrounded by family. Or friends, also such an important matter. How do we make friends though? Why are we drawn to people and why do people despise certain ones. What drives us to even wanting that social contact? Is it you? Or is it me? You cannot find the true answer, since it will always be unknown in this never-ending universe. When do you know that you've found the true answer? The true answer to all our problems. The true answer to why people despise me. Or maybe... it was all just in my head. Everything could be subjective, we can easily fool others, just like we can easily fool ourselves. Maybe I am the crazy one, but I

know what I've observed, I know what I'd heard! I was there! But I am just a young girl. Laying on my bed in my room rethinking everything. Why did I say rethinking? I obviously meant overthinking. Everyday feels repetitive and unearthly, like something isn't right. Like there is something that everyone gets but I don't, like I am missing something that everyone else has. I am merely fourteen, but I feel like I have wandered here for a long time. My body feels tired and heavy, I just feel like I want everything to stop. Just for a minute, to finally breathe and have some space. I feel like I am overreacting, the grown-ups make me feel that way at least. I mean my mom cares about me and even though my parents are divorced, I still do see my dad occasionally. They divorced a long time ago, when I was just a four-year-old girl. My uncle and my two nieces often come to visit. I live with my mom upstairs while grandma and grandpa live downstairs. Such an exceptionally occurrence it is. I always thought anyone had easily access towards their family members. When I always overheard the voice of familiarity of my niece's downstairs from up here, I would run down the stairs to see them. No storm, I

wanted to see them as soon as possible, the excitement would rush through me. I was always so overly excited. I mean who wouldn't? Suddenly I heard footsteps coming to my room, I got a bit startled, and my mom barged in.

"Rose! Why are you still in bed? You should go to school now. " My mom said. She is a kind woman though, too kind at times. She can also be quite naive, but for now that's beside the point. She wasn't a strict mom, although she does get in tears when I don't feel like going to church. She is the people pleasing type of woman, always making sure that everyone is living in peace. It annoys me a bit, because some people can be very disrespectful for no reason, and I don't like being nice to people for no reason.

"I still don't feel well." My response was a bit dry. I didn't know what to do or what to say but I just had this raging headache. My nieces are going to visit tonight, and I just want rest.

My mom said: "I will bring you to school, just hurry up and oh. You better are not forgetting the appointment we are going to after school."

"Appointment?" I asked. "Oh, fuck no! I don't want to talk to those foolish psychologists no more mom! They don't listen to me, not at all and they aren't even explaining my mental disorder."

My mom thought that she was helping me, she even admitted it herself. "Rose, it would be the best to do, and I will be with you."

Promises... We all hear them but when do we know that people stay true to their promise? I hastily grabbed my stuff and I clothed myself with some difficulties, I was way too slow in the morning hours. I quickly brushed through my greasy hair. How did every girl my age have this beautiful hair? I see it everywhere. In movies and on TV, they all have these luscious shiny locks and mine are just straight up looking like a bird's nest. Girls of my class always have such clear skin, but my skin looks bruised and full of acne. Even though I try to take care of my skin and acne, nothing seems to help. And those girls always talk about just splashing their face with water, then how don't they have a single pimple? Even with wearing make-up.

"Jesus..." I softly muttered. Shit! I shouldn't curse as a Christian. My whole family is religious and of course I myself am as well.

On my way to school my mom kept rambling about her cows. She is a farmer after all. Always putting the needs of others before her own, you know the drill. Is it usual? Being a people pleaser? Or do people make it seem that way. I couldn't get my head straight. I always spoke about everything to my mom. Yet there were some topics that I wanted to avoid, and no it isn't her cows necessarily. But something kept gnawing on the inside, like an irritation that I wanted to get rid of. There was a certain topic that just felt like getting hit by a brick wall.

"Mom. I just don't want Timothy to stare no more! He constantly does and it annoys me. He doesn't even talk but straight up stares and he was even following me the last time!" I suddenly blurted it all out. I shouldn't have said that. My mom doesn't understand it probably. I tried to talk about this before, multiple times. I often repeat myself, I don't want to, but do it to process information. Or what if I am just an obsessed freak?

My mom chuckles, leaving me in utter confusion.

"What's so funny? I am very serious." I spoke. I didn't see the amusement in this. It really bothered me, and I wasn't sure what to do about it.

My mom spoke up: "You are just always talking about that boy. Don't you just like him?"

I was annoyed, what is it with people and their forced romance? I just sighed in annoyance, and I kept my mouth shut until I arrived at school. My head was pounding, I was earning for some relief. I need relief for this pounding headache, it was as if daggers were being thrown at my bare brains. After a short while, we arrived at school. I stepped out, waving my mom goodbye as I was heading in. I scanned around the canteen at school, to find someone familiar. I was looking for Carmilla. I actually disliked her for some reason, I don't know what it was about her that despised me so much. She always acted so-

"Hey." Carmilla greeted me, interrupting my though process, her voice sounded monotone as always, maybe even more

monotone than usual. I wasn't thinking too much about it, she always acts this way. Her expression is serious yet with a slight tinge of suspicion as usual. I felt like walking on eggshells around her. It was cutting me from the inside, like I needed to stay away from her. But people always overreact with toxic people. People will always call anyone a narcissist. There's a huge difference between narcissism and arrogance. I always notice people calling their ex-lover's narcissists, because they broke up. Don't they have any manners? Narcissism isn't a joke; it is a serious topic.

"Come with me to the bathroom." she asked, no it wasn't even asking, it was a demand. Yet I followed her order like a little lost puppy, just like a naive fool would. Don't I have an opinion on my own? Why am I like this? Once we arrived in the bathroom, she stepped into one of the toilet stalls while i waited outside of the toilets.

"A good morning to you as well." I slightly joked with a bit of sarcasm. I didn't know what to do, so I felt the need to at least say something.

She responded casually with: "I have been cutting myself yesterday, with a shaving tool. I was cutting at my hips, and it was bleeding everywhere. I will send you a picture later."

I could feel her smirk through the toilet stall. My assumption got confirmed right when she stepped out of the toilet stall and appeared with a big smirk on her face. What the hell? This wasn't a joke from Carmilla. No, she was dead serious. Okay maybe 'dead' is the wrong word to use here, but you get what I mean! What was I supposed to say to this? What answer did she want from me? Who in their right mind would offer their self-harm pictures to someone?

"No."

That was the only answer I could mutter out, I felt repulsed by her behavior. The way that girl was acting funny about it. Like it was some sort of sick twisted joke, just to make me feel weird about it. She didn't even respond back to me. I cannot understand her, not at all. I feel so agitated with myself. Why is she like this and why am I in ~~God's name~~ friends with her? It all sounded like a fairytale from the start. It was perfect. We met when she was rescheduled for another

year, the same semester. She is one year older than me, I believe that she is almost turning sixteen. I was waiting outside by music class, opening my backpack and struggling to find my stuff. She walked up to me, and she boldly responded with: "I have no friends right now and I need someone to hang out with. What about you?" I found this so endearing. Something got me slightly attached, was it her boldness or was it my smooth response. I said back "Nope no friends either." We smiled to each other back then. It seemed like it was straight out of the movies. Our first encounter seemed so easygoing, like soft waves on a beach. It felt like we were meant to find each other and to stick together. She seemed like she knew what she wanted, like she was standing her ground. We were always talking to each other like we kept a secret around. Like we knew things that others didn't. We always seemed to be on one line together.

But... this all broke down.

Piece by piece.

Every good memory faded away, like it was non-existent.

Like it was all for nothing. As if our friendship that we had wasn't that magnificent.

I had my fair share of horrible friendships. And when it was too much, I cut off contact with them. Why wanting someone around you, that will destroy your mentality? Why being taken down by their problems and insecurities? Was Carmilla really being that toxic? Or was my mom right about it? Am I obsessed with everything?

The school bell rang, such an obnoxious sound. It shook me out of my thoughts. Couldn't they do any better to be honest?

2_I_love_the_spotlight

After some obnoxious and brain rotting classes, I headed to the canteen for lunch. Carmilla has run off to God knows where, probably to the other girls of our class. She seemed so desperate to be seen as important. Ugh she makes me nauseous at this point. At first, she doesn't care about what others think of her and at other times she suddenly needs approval. Then she suddenly talks shit

about one of the girls and later on she is friends with them. Once I spotted her, I immediately regretted it. When she is chatting with other girls and we're on a thin line, she laughs with them and then she glances at me to check if I notice her. Or at least it is what it feels like. It made my stomach turn and twist around, like my insides were being strangled and ripped out. And everyone would see, laugh and point at how my organs were discarded on the ground in one bloody hell of a mess.

I sat there,
alone.

I was kind of hungry, but it's so weird to me for some reason. Suddenly Timothy and his friends arrived here as well. Timothy was faced towards me. He is sitting with his legs wide while he stares at me. His staring is very subtle, just so his friends won't notice it. I wanted to roll my eyes at the sight of him, he annoyed me, and I couldn't understand why guys always needed to take up more space than needed. Is it a dominance thing? Or just a 'look at how I am here' thing, anyhow I lost my appetite quickly at the sight of that guy. He sat there like he was

some sort of lion on a throne, like no I won't admire the likings of you, I never would. And to set the record straight, how am I supposed to eat, when that freak is keeping his eyes on me? I glanced around, trying not to look back as I felt myself getting smaller and smaller. If there were any escape route at this point, I would take it, even if it would be a dangerous one. Everyone's gaze, what if they all stare at me once I take a bite out of my food? What if I make myself appear to be an utter fool? I cannot let myself be made out of a fool when everyone has their gaze fixed on me. I made assumptions about guys and their ego, but what about mine? The shame and guilt I constantly bear. When I am at home it is a bit better but once I step one foot inside this school, or outside in general even. I just feel like a disgusting human being. Like I don't belong here, and everyone is staring at me with full despise in their eyes. If they could shoot me to death, they would. God no! Carmilla is glancing at me, and Timothy is still staring at me. Oh no, a teacher spotted me as well! Ugh and those two other kids, why are they standing so close to me. Are my clothes sitting right!? Just give me some space for once, I feel like I can't breathe. I feel like everyone is standing

in front of me, their hands around my throat, in a strong tight grip. Timothy's gaze is piercing and so is Carmilla's. I don't want Carmilla to notice him staring at me like that. I have good reasoning to feel that way. He needs to stop, but if I tell him, then Fletcher- It would just be one awkward big mess. What if Timothy denies his staring? What if I am delusional and I am not seeing this situation as it truly is? I really should stop screwing my life up as it already is.

I couldn't take all the staring anymore and so I grabbed my backpack and I stormed towards the study place. It was a short walk since this school is pretty tiny. Just one hallway and you're around the corner. There are a lot of computers and some chairs with tables. I sat down somewhere, grabbing one of my textbooks and pretending to study. Yes pretending, I wasn't in the mood to actually study. When was I even in the mood to study? I cannot focus, yet everyone thinks that I am such a nerd that is always in check of their homework. To be fully honest, I don't even think when I do my homework, I just write random answers down. People sometimes want to rewrite my homework and I let them because I don't mind, I already messed it up myself. I chuckled, no

one would notice, since I was at the study place anyways.

A few years ago, at a party, I encountered one of my old classmates. At this party they do small races with hummers, the summer party is pretty popular at the small neighborhood we live by. My mom always wanted to go there, to see familiar faces and her 'comrades'. Well and she forced me to come with her, which I didn't mind at first, I kind of liked hearing the people chatter with each other. I always looked up to them, wanting to be like them when I grow up. I wanted to have those fun, engaging conversations as well. How good it would feel, to have everyone look at you in that way. To have everyone listen to your stories, making them laugh about the funny jokes you made. Anyways, those old classmates were pricks. Always picking on me, it wasn't bullying, but they wouldn't leave me alone. One of the guys asked me to catch a ball. Such a weird request and when I didn't, he just threw the ball at my face. I was fuming, I started to kick and hit him. Was it a smart move? The most common answer would be a 'no'. If someone treats me like shit, then I won't hold back. I always say, if someone respects me, I will respect them back with no

problem. However, if someone disrespects me, then I will show no mercy. Anyways, once I was hitting that kid, someone came up to us and they pulled us apart, which left me in tears. I still don't know why I shed those tears, often they stream down my face without any means. I feel like such a winy girl every time I cry, I sometimes don't even want to cry, and it just happens. I want to stop those tears, but they keep coming back like some sort of curse that I can't get rid of.

But finally, those douchebags left me alone. In peace. Until I saw this guy glancing at me. I didn't think that he saw the little fight I had, otherwise his gaze would be different than I had observed. This guy was around my age. When I went to school the next day, I saw him there. Strangely enough I never noticed him before, even though the school is small enough that everyone can know who's who, yet I never saw this guy before. His name is Fletcher. Yes... You think that you've heard that name before? Because you did. He's Timothy's friend. Fletcher started to stare at me every time we crossed paths, he did that for a year and once he quit his staring, his friend Timothy started. Timothy and his friends always used to tease Fletcher about him liking me, but now. Timothy is the

one that stares and not Fletcher, but he never speaks up, they both never did. How is a girl going to talk about this to anyone? And why do I feel like strange things always happen to me?

Last summer, when we went to church with the whole school, parents and children. Well for me mom and daughter. Fletcher was staring me deadass in my eyes while my mom was next to me. He looked like a puppy, with those sparkling eyes, his hopeful stares for whatever reason he had. I was embarrassed. How am I explaining this to my mom and to be fully honest. It also hurts my ego. Him staring at me with those fake pathetic dog eyes. I truly believe that they didn't like me, making a joke about liking me. But still, Timothy is quiet. So, what might he be thinking? How is he feeling? Unfortunately, we would never know.

I sigh and overthink the whole ordeal about visiting the millionth psychologist this year. My mind is running with every possible scenario I'd have to face. I feel like I am a bother to anyone, especially my mom. My mom is always forcing me to every psychologist. She keeps making me feel bad when I don't like them. I mean, I am

diagnosed with autism, and I never get any explanation. I get these angry outbursts and I don't know what to do about them, I don't want to hurt others. I don't want to be a burden anymore. My dad left. It has been told that it isn't my fault, but he doesn't initiate any sort of bonding towards me. Every time my dad and I hung out, I knew that it was my mom's doing. She literally needs to ask him to visit a park with me together. What else is there to expect from an alcoholic dad that is obsessed with weed? I visit him, sometimes but not a lot. I feel like I am walking on eggshells around that ~~guy~~- I meant my dad. I am going off topic with my thinking now, as always, my mind is a racing maze of corruptness. I almost chuckled in myself again, but I'd noticed that I would look like a freak if I did. Why did I even almost laugh in myself? ~~Goddamn it-~~ wait I cannot curse I am religious.

Timothy and his friends suddenly arrived at the study spot as well, they were acting like annoying usual teenage boys when they see computers. Laughing loudly and acting like they are that cool. I occasionally glanced to check if I got stared at again and I didn't. Until I was actually pretending to be busy with my homework, then I could feel his gaze

on me and when I stared back, he quickly wandered his gaze elsewhere. Or he was looking over me, even though he was way taller than me. It doesn't make any sense. I didn't have any more focus left, not that I had any focus to begin with. Yet before I could get lost in my thoughts again, I got interrupted.

The school bell rang, and my stomach was slightly rumbling,

I haven't eaten,

...

again.

3_I_love_being_heard

After school ended, I was in the car once again with my mom on the way to another psychologist. I had no idea who the hell it was going to be this time. I only know that her name is Savannah. Ugh another useless insect that thinks she can know everything about me. That woman is probably going to ask me my favorite color or she will probably ask about my water bottle as well, making a

comment about how I am taking a diet just because I am trying to consume enough water for today. Okay Savannah, if you want your ass dehydrated then that's fine, but don't come for me and my water drinking.

As I was deep in thoughts once again, I glanced in the rearview mirror, and I notice that my make up is slightly smudged.

"Shit!" I screamed. My mom dramatically puts her hands on her ears as I let out a soft scream.

"Sorry mom..." I immediately apologized. ~~God~~ why does she always get so annoyed with me. This is what she does every time, am I that much of an annoying brat?

I checked myself in a small mirror to fix my make up. I dislike mascara so much due to it always smudging everywhere instead of staying on my eye lashes and waterproof mascara is so damaging. Hmm, maybe I should ask my niece for more advice, we both adore make-up. After a short period of time, we had arrived at yet another prison. At least that was what it felt like for me, like I was imprisoned at that stupid place with a bunch of weirdos. I am not calling the patients weirdos, but those damned

psychologists. As we arrived here, I couldn't help but mock this place.

"Holy shit, it reeks here of dead animals. What the fuck is that smell? Aren't they hygienic enough?" I said that, while I slightly smirked in a mocking way.

My mom couldn't help but respond and agree with me: "It kind of does, doesn't it? I mean, even my room isn't rotting like this place is."

I chuckled. Even though we aren't thinking alike, and we are complete opposites in that regard, we are still able to joke and judge others together. This place did smell bad and as soon as we stepped towards the hall, a woman walked over to us. Ugh, that must be Savannah. My mom suddenly went into serious mode as she noticed her, putting on her forcing smile. My mom seemed a bit anxious about the fact that Savannah might've overheard us.

Savannah stared at us, putting on her ugly smile. Yes ugly, because I sense something behind that smile. Something indescribable. As if she was hiding something, not wanting to be here just like I didn't. But I have no choice. Although, I sure can make a scene

and sneak away, but my mom would get upset and when my mom gets upset it is a painful situation to experience. I want her to be happy, after everything she has been through. Savannah appeared to be in her early thirties. Or maybe even a bit younger, late twenties. She had blonde long hair, that appeared to be healthy. And again, I wish I had those beautiful locks as well. I stare back at her, my face appears expressionless, and I might look quite shy.

Savannah spoke up: "Ah, so you must be the family Hendrix-"

My mom responded with her forced smile. "Actually, my daughter's last name is Reyes. My ex-husband and I got divorced so she is named Reyes, and I am named Hendrix." Alright mom, hold your horses. No need to bring my dad up, everything is fine in that aspect.

Savannah nods, in her fake understanding expression. As if she even had listened. She would probably say it wrong the next time as well. "I see." she said. "So, Rose Reyes, that is your daughter right there. Anyhow, follow me you two." she said with a smiling face. Why was that woman so happy? Was she

going to judge me later? Make me feel miserable and make me feel like i should just die in a ditch somewhere?

We arrived in a small room. There was a desk and an office chair in front of it. At the other side of the desk there appeared to be two chairs as well.

Savannah spoke up. "So, take a seat you two." She kept smiling, it was obnoxious. I glance around the small room that we were in as i sat down. I softly pluck the sides of my fingers with my fingernails. I always wondered why it bled and why the skin was so damaged around my nails. Well, it appeared that I was doing that automatically. It wasn't on a miraculous occurrence, but it was my own doing. I wasn't even aware that I was plucking my fingers, or my skin in general. I constantly pluck my acne until it bleeds at times. And when it bleeds, I feel embarrassed and I try to hide it as much as possible, but that's a hard thing to do when you are surrounded by fools who stare or people that constantly pay attention to every single motion you make. The room I was surrounded in right now, with that psychologist called Savannah appeared like a childish room. I mean for

fuck's sake, why is every room that is meant for autistic people, looking like a kid's playground. The stuff that is laying around isn't even cute, no. It's always those goddamn puzzles with the three primary colors. And it is so fully decorated, like, chill out woman. My eyes need something to focus on, and not on all that garbage, that just looks like a messy room of a five-year-old.

"So, daughter and mother. Rose is the name right. I heard you live on a farm. What animals are there?" Savannah said.

I immediately was annoyed, because... what the actual-

"I milk cows, we also got chickens, one pony and one dog." My mom said with her forced smile.

I couldn't care less about any of this, while Savannah and my mom kept rambling about my mom's cows. I was lost in thoughts again. I was actually a bit relieved, due to my mom's obsession with her cows, Savannah wasn't paying her attention to me... for now.

My mom smiled as she spoke. "The cows are outside again, since the weather is perfect for

it. And our chickens, they lay so many eggs. It is abnormal. Some acquaintances of ours, they came to see us, and I sold some eggs to them because, what do we need with all those eggs for? Haha, you know?"

I couldn't help but feel a bit annoyed though, I always needed to hear my mom ramble about her cows. If she keeps going like that, I might even learn more about those cows than she does.

"So... Rose has a slight form of autism, right?" Savannah said, while glancing back and forth between me and my mom.

I was annoyed but I had no choice but to answer, before I answered I glanced at my mom, and I responded with a dry tone. "Yes." Why are they even mentioning my 'slight' form of autism? Isn't autism just autism? I mean, people on TikTok who are actually autistic themselves are saying that autism is autism. Honestly, at this rate I learn more from my peers who are autistic and who I can find online on the internet, instead of trying to learn from this freaky woman.

"I see that you have brought a water bottle with you, are you on a diet?"

Ah yes, there it is. I told you that that woman would make a comment like that, ugh I should never doubt my intuition. I mean, people are underestimating their own intuitions. They are mostly on point, especially around these normies.

My mom answered. "No, she just drinks water."

"Yeah..." I responded. I honestly had no clue on what to say here, this is so awkward. And that woman keeps staring me in my eyes. I want the time to pass so that I can be with my nieces.

"So, about the farm..." Savannah went on. I mean what kind of comedy movie is this? I am here for my autism appointment, yet Miss-Know-It-All is distracted by me living on a farm, what is people's deal with that? They get so obsessed over it, I know that they don't get to see cows every day in front of their window like I do, but still, it's not that special. "The weather isn't that good for them at the moment, right? Not a lot of rain for the grass to grow."

If there isn't anything worse than low intelligent people, it must be small talk. Weather? Seriously? And didn't my mom say

earlier that the weather was looking nice for them? So... if I get this right, the weather looks good to our eyes with seeing cows grazing the grass, yet when it comes to a few rain periods for the growth of corn, the weather sucks? I mean yes, it is common knowledge. We need rain and we need sunlight, but why did my mom state that she loved the weather, yet now she seems to be complaining about it.

My mom spoke up again, she is a pretty loudspeaker, she claims she doesn't know that, but she almost screams when she talks, yet when I do the same, she tells me to keep it down. Maybe it is a typical mom thing. "Yeah, but there is not much to do about it." And there's that fake smile again, with the forced chuckle at the end of her sentence.

"So where were we?" Savannah asked while glancing at me.

And at this point I was so riled up from the inside that I couldn't refrain myself from shutting up.

"Nowhere, because you keep talking about the farm instead of what we came for here!" I said with a tinge of sarcasm, annoyance and passive aggressiveness in my voice.

Savannah looks slightly surprised, but she quickly regained her posture and was forcing that same smile again. It felt like she was mocking me, like she wasn't smiling but smirking. As if she knew what she was doing, trying to make me feel like I am the clown here.

"Well Rose. Fine then, we will talk about you. So, tell me more about yourself." Savannah spoke, still acting friendly for some weird reason. I knew that she wouldn't be nice forever though.

"Like what?" I never know what people want to know about me. I for sure cannot tell them about my unhealthy and raging obsession over Gojo Satoru from Jujutsu Kaisen.

"Ah, of course." Savannah chuckles. "Like most people you don't know what your talents are and stuff, every girl your age is struggling with that."

"No that is not what I mean-" I tried to respond to her, but it was no use. If i could escape, I would because this felt like a living hell to me. I just didn't know what she wanted me to answer. Like I need clarification, I want to know whether she