

Excerpt from Diary  
Experimental Fiction  
Written by Rachel Ruttenberg

October 8, 2017

It's Wednesday and I could not be more thrilled. Wednesday is when everyone in the school has early lunch, so clubs can meet. This means no lunchtime frenzy today. I'm apart of key cub. It's supposed to help people get volunteer hours but honestly, we never actually do anything. It just looks good on college applications. Lauren is in it too. She has so many friends. Honestly her friends are more my friends than my "lunch buddies". Maya and Molly always say hi to me and Maya and I even have inside jokes. I don't have those with anyone my age. It's weird. Why do they like me and even more relate to me, when people my own age don't? Am I just too different? But I don't feel like I'm weird. I'm just a real human being. Everyone tries to be someone they're not, and yet I'm the outcast because I try to be myself. High school is so strange.

The key club meeting was fine. We did nothing, which is pretty routine for key club. But I actually got to talk some people. Lauren's friends are the best. They don't exclude me or confuse me. It's so weird I feel free to be myself. I don't fear their judgement. These are the times when I'm actually glad to have an older sister. I always envied her somewhat because she gets along so much better with Mom than I do. I don't know why. I guess I'm just not a people person. But the loneliest people are the kindest, that's for sure.

October 9, 2017

Mom got her scans back today and they were good news. Don't get me wrong, I am happy. So happy. I would never want anything to happen to her. But I don't feel joy. I don't feel

a weight lifted or something. I've almost been numb ever since her diagnosis. I don't understand. Is it a coping mechanism? Or am I just heartless? I wasn't always like this. Growing up I wore my emotions on my sleeve. I got told so many times to calm down as a kid due to my ADHD energy. I never slowed down. Never sat still. But now I don't show anything at all. I barely speak sometimes all day. The whole school day I'm silent. I'm trapped in this fear of judgment. So, I keep my thoughts to myself. To protect them.

My sister and her boyfriend have been having trouble. I feel bad for her, he made her happy. But I guess he's been talking back with his ex, so obnoxious. I've never had to worry about love life issues. I had crushes but I think they were just wishes for attention rather than affection. But I convinced myself they were crushes ever since middle school to fit in and people would tease me about them. Like in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I had a crush on this kid named JT and all his friends would come up to me all the time and repeatedly say "Olivia, JT likes you!". He would be behind them shaking his head, mouthing the word "No" over and over again. Stupid middle school boys, the lack of maturity is tragic.

October 10, 2017

Finally, Friday. Thank the lord. This week hasn't been the worst, but I need a break. I'm going to the football game tonight. I think we play Westbrook. They're usually pretty good so I'm sure we'll get obliterated. I'm attempting to be social but I'm sure I'll be ignored and pushed to the end of the bleachers yet again. But if I don't go I can't say I tried.

Apparently, there is some big hangout at Hazel's house tonight after the game. I'm debating if I should try and go or not. I never enjoy myself with those people. I don't know how to communicate with them. I sit there awkward and put in my two cents when I can but

otherwise, I'm basically a wall ornament with eyes. We'll see if anyone manages to still have room left in their car for me to get a ride. I doubt they will. Everyone's car always seems to be filled when I ask, even when it's still the first quarter of the game.

October 11, 2017

Last night went different than expected. Claire actually asked me if I was going to Hazel's and offered to give me a ride. Crazy right? There was pure shock on my face I'm sure. Naomi did give her a blatantly obvious glare after she invited me, but you can't woo everyone in a day. So, I went and managed to semi socialize but I definitely didn't speak much, or as much as I should have. But honestly, I'm okay with that. I'm still high on the fact that someone asked if I was going. That's never happened before. Maybe there are good people here, I just have to patiently wait and find them.

October 12, 2017

I decided to do something new today. I audition for the spring musical. I used to dance growing up and it gave me so much joy. Now normally I would be so nervous about what people think of me. But onstage, I'm comfortable. It wasn't so unfamiliar. And everyone thought I was good, like really good. So many people came up to me asking if I've danced before. I hadn't danced in maybe 3 years, but I guess it's like riding a bike, it comes back with time.

I realized that if I keep going back to the people who treat me like crap, then they will never realize that they're doing something wrong. Maybe if I leave, they'll realize something is different, now if it's better or worse is up to them. Now if I leave them, I doubt they'll miss me. But in the end at least I'll be happier. Maybe that's all that matters.