

# *Rosie*

*The earth is like the breasts of a woman: useful as well as pleasing.*

—*Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

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“Adam... Adam, stop... I have something to tell you.”

I raised my head and leaned over her, my gaze lingering on her bare femininity. The perfect curves, the gorgeous ivory complexion, stunningly contrasting the pink crests. *Beauty Revealed*—that cursed, faceless portrait of Sarah Goodridge was reincarnated in another female body, 160 years later. A work of art I could smell again, taste again, and touch again in three dimensions.

After I broke up with Rosie for the first time, I had only my memory to rely on. Two painful months later, I stumbled upon an old art book in the library. At seventeen, that was the first thing I ever stole. I came home from the library that evening, locked myself in my room, and took out the book from under my jacket. Lying on my bed, I opened the book on page 137. I stared at the portrait for hours. The artistic analysis described the balance of colors and shading. I read it over and over, till I knew it by heart. The resemblance was shocking. The only difference was that Sarah Goodridge had a freckle—Rosie had none. She was perfect that way. She was perfect in every way.

By the time I fell asleep that night, I was no longer angry at her. The next day, Rosie and I were back together, and the art book soon disappeared somewhere in the mess of my room. Three weeks later, I broke up with her again. Another week passed, and a rare urge to tidy up my room came over me. I found that book. The creased spine made it open, like magic, on page 137. And there we were, Rosie and I, by the end of that week—a couple again.

“What did you want to say, goddess?” My gaze moved up along her neck until I met her face, dizzy at the sight of sheer beauty.

“Alexander came over this morning. We had sex.”

I sat up next to Rosie on her bed and stared at her. Any other girl would button up her blouse and sit up when revealing something like that to her boyfriend. Rosie just lay there, her upper torso in clear view.

She did it again. That was the third time. Anger and tears were pointless. But I was furious, and my face became red and wet. Not a silent weep—I wailed loudly. We both jumped when Rosie’s younger sister opened the door and rushed in.

“LEAVE!” Rosie shouted at her, quickly covering herself, and then muttered. “Retard...”

Rosie’s sister obeyed. Her voice faded behind the closed door as she chanted a single word. “Boobies! Boobies!” The doctors had diagnosed Rosie’s sister as ‘mentally retarded’ —only decades later, that term would become inappropriate. Rosie was ashamed of her sister. I

suspected her parents were also ashamed of their youngest daughter. I could relate to that—I was ashamed of my seizures.

“Alexander... But... We both had the final math exam today—I saw him at school this morning!” Throwing in a logical argument was easier for me than talking about emotions. Were there any emotions to talk about?

“He finished the exam early and came here from school,” Rosie said dryly.

*I was struggling with calculus all morning while that freak... That bastard was...*

Alexander was a prodigy. He was top of our class, and I was the runner-up. But he was a nerd. He had pimples. He had the posture of a praying mantis. And he was ugly.

“Rosie, again? You swore it was the last time... Why the hell do you keep doing this?”

Rosie’s look pierced my soul. “I had no choice. He threatened—”

“WHAT? HE FORCED HIMSELF ON YOU? I’LL KILL—”

“He threatened that he’d kill himself if I didn’t have sex with him.”

“So he’s suicidal? Does that turn you on? Is that what it takes to get into your pants?” I tried to insult her.

“You have special permission to get into my pants whenever you want, Adam—how about right now?” Rosie pointed to her crotch. Right there, on her jeans, was a small drawing I once made for her with markers. It was a triangular road sign, white with a red rim and two black silhouettes in the middle—a boy and a girl—holding hands and running. The writing below said *BEWARE OF CHILDREN*.

Rosie leaned over and pulled me back onto her. She bit my ear. Then she began to lick my left biceps. She’d made me swear I’d never take a shower after my Kung Fu practices. I’d practice three times a week, then hurry from the Kung Fu club to Rosie’s place so she could lick the cooling sweat off me.

I suddenly realized Rosie had already pulled my shorts down, and pulled her jeans and panties down, and I was about to enter the same warm place Alexander had visited that morning.

“Rosie... Rosie—no,” I could hardly speak, exhausted, barely resisting her magnetic pull. “I want to keep my promise to you. I won’t have sex with you—with anyone—until we get married. The first time I’ll have sex, I want it to be with you, as my wife. You promised you’d wait. I want to marry you, Rosie. I want you so much, but we made a vow—”

“Oh, that stupid vow again!” Rosie snapped at me. “Adam, that was six months ago! We were just kids! When we first started dating, I wasn’t a virgin, so I already knew how it feels—having sex. Your willpower turned me on. I thought I could stand it like you do. I wanted to be like

you. But whenever I look at you... Whenever I touch your muscles, move my finger over the veins along your arms, I just... I'm not like you, Adam. With you, it's like a superpower you have. You're like a knight in one of those medieval ballads we learn about in literature class.

"So, here's a news flash. Chivalry is dead, Adam. The guys who wrote those ballads are dead. The Middle Ages are over, and I'm not a lady waiting for you in a castle. How long must I wait until we get married? That whole 'getting married' plan seems so complicated to me... But the facts are much simpler. I'm sixteen, and you're seventeen, and we're crazy about each other.

"And I want you inside me..." Rosie whispered, moving her perfect feminine pelvis like a carnivorous plant about to catch a fly.

*Should I forgive her again, so quickly? Am I ready to break my vow?*

"Adam, I want you to take that strong will superpower of yours, and use it to pleasure me tonight," Rosie said with a smile that melted me. "I want us to have sex until we collapse. I want us to stay up all night and—"

I jolted back.

"Adam! You're not giving in!" She gave me a strange, astonished look. "What's... Why aren't you giving in?"

I began to cry again. The doorbell rang and the front door opened and closed. A few seconds of muffled chatter. Then, a knock on Rosie's door.

“One moment!” Rosie shouted as we were quickly getting dressed.

“Come in!”

Mom and Dad walked into Rosie’s room. Mom stared at my red, swollen face.

“What... How did you know I’m here?” I asked, wiping my tears and envisioning the obvious answer—my younger brother and sister.

*Those little snitches...*

“What are you doing here?” I asked a more interesting question.

“Get up,” Mom said. “We’re going home. She’s no good for you.”

“Who are you to decide? I’ll be eighteen soon. I can—”

“I’m your mother. Keeping you out of trouble is my duty, no matter how old you are. Someday you’ll understand. Maybe when you have kids of your own.”

“GO!” Rosie shouted at me. “Run to your mama and papa. You’re just a baby anyway! You’re—” She caught Mom’s enraged face and fell silent.

I got up from Rosie’s bed. My body felt lighter, lacking the mass of the huge hole in my heart. I left Rosie’s house with Mom and Dad.

I was silent on our way home.

“It’s been almost a year since you were diagnosed, Adam,” Mom said.

“You’re still in denial—you’re living recklessly as if you didn’t have

epilepsy. Your life is packed. You study till late for your final exams, so you don't sleep enough. You go out to drink. And you have that Kung Fu thing. You keep ignoring our advice and your neurologist's advice. And if that isn't enough, you've become angry all the time, stressed, and even more stubborn, ever since you started dating Rosie. Alcohol, lack of sleep, and stress—they can all cause seizures.”

I rolled my eyes in silent despair.

“Rosie keeps cheating on you,” Mom continued. “You deserve someone better. A nice girl who won't take advantage of you. You haven't even told Rosie about your epilepsy, have you? You shouldn't be afraid of telling your girlfriend about something like that. That's just wrong.”

I recalled the French kiss with Rosie one evening, twelve hours after I chewed on my tongue during a seizure that morning. The pain almost made me faint, but I didn't flinch, and she never suspected. That kiss was so sweet—Rosie's bubble gum flavor, blended with the taste of my blood.

“Adam, you're special,” Mom spoke softly. “Always remember that. You're so smart and strong, you have such an enormous heart—don't let people break your heart. Someday, you'll do great things. I can feel it. You'll see.”

*Yeah, right, I'm special... So why do I feel like I'm damaged goods?*

We came home. I locked myself in my room and stayed there the whole evening. I slept a lot and skipped school the next day.

I'd wished for my first-ever sex partner to be a girl I cared about, a girl who cared about me, who'd want to bond her life with mine, despite my defects. That wasn't going to happen. I had wet dreams about sleepless nights of carnal pleasure with Rosie. But in my nightmares, right before we reached a synchronized climax—I'd give out a sudden shout, bite hard on my tongue, violently shake my limbs, unknowingly bruise her terrified face with my convulsing arms, and finally pass out, while blood and foamy saliva drip from my mouth, staining her white bosom.

I was clueless as to what could trigger seizures in that defective brain of mine. The doctors recited their textbook checklist: sleep deprivation, alcohol, flashing lights, dehydration, stress, extreme anger, and so on. But they admitted it would ultimately depend on my physiology. Worst of all, those doctors experimented on me with various types of seizure-depressants to see what worked best. Each type had its nasty side effects—none of them made the seizures go away altogether. I was their lab rat.

I wasn't going to let those doctors dictate my lifestyle. Why would I, Adam, give up alcohol just because it triggers seizures for a certain percentage of all epileptics? I could be one of the outliers. And how would I avoid getting angry or stressed? What other emotions should I avoid? Could true love cause seizures? How about longing for someone? Or just being horny?

Most urgently, I had to find out for myself how I could get through a night of alcohol, sex, and multiple orgasms without sleep, and avoid seizures—but for that kind of experiment, I needed a lab rat of my own. I was too afraid to try it with the only girl I truly cared about: Rosie.

When evening came, I was wide awake—ready for action. I took a shower and got dressed. My pecs and biceps looked good. I liked what I saw in the mirror. I put two Valium pills in my jeans pocket, went to the kitchen, and grabbed something to eat. I ignored my parents, who were sitting there. I then stepped outside.

The pub at the university campus was branded as a place for one-night stands. I loathed that concept. I was there once before. My friends dragged me there the night I first broke up with Rosie, but I went home alone after two girls came on to me. Finally, I was back, and I was on a mission.

To be on the safe side, I charged myself with my effective seizure contraceptive, which had become my friend: Valium. I bought a pint of Guinness and downed the two Valium pills along with the beer. My messed-up neurons were going numb. Sure, there was the risk of a negative impact on my libido, but I was a seventeen-year-old male virgin—I had more than enough libido. I approached a fairly attractive girl at the bar. She smiled at me—undoubtedly a student, at least five years older than me. Such an age gap must have rendered any intimacy between us borderline illegal. When asked, I said ‘twenty-six.’ She either bought it or didn’t mind. Whatever.

My vow to Rosie had expired. A shiny new vow—a more realistic one—  
took over.

*Before sunrise, I will get laid.*