

Chapter 2

I hurriedly enter the cafe. I am wearing black shorts, sandals and light blue t-shirt. My hair is unusually- in their natural form- curly- since I didn't have time to strengthen them today.

I try to find my best friend Rachel as soon as possible. It takes me a few seconds to find her among the crowded cafe. She is sitting in a booth at the far left corner of the cafe.

As I walk towards Rachel, I notice she is wearing a white, sleeveless dress and her favourite black sneakers. Her black, long hair ~~are~~is straight today and she is wearing light makeup- a mascara and light pink lip balm, as expected. Rachel never makes up herself heavily. Her parents find that a “proper” girl should not excessively makeup herself unless she is looking for “trouble”. The problem is that Rachel cannot say no to her parents even though she disagrees with them, and she always does what they want. Well, almost always since they don't approve of our friendship because of my “unconventional, rebel behaviour who is going to destroy their daughter one day” according to them.

I sit in the light green booth chair opposite Rachel.

“You are late,” she says as soon as I sit down and leave my small, black purse on top of the table. Rachel has already ordered and she is currently drinking an ice Americano.

“I know. I am sorry. I can explain. Alec and I had to help Madeline tidy up the house before our visitors come tomorrow evening.”

She sighs.

“So, you are still calling your mum by her first name?” she asks.

“Yes, it is her punishment for inviting those people.”

“Until when?”

“I do not know. Until, they leave, I guess.” I say not knowing why I started this charade or if it will ever end. But-, I ~~eamt~~can't back down now. I have to be persistent until the end.

“I am going to order and come back,” I say as I take my purse from the table and stand up.

Commented [MG1]: Combine Lucy's physical appearance with aspects of her personality to make the description of her physical appearance more relevant and interesting to the readers. (Look at next comment!)

Commented [MG2]: You did a very good job in combining Rachel's physical appearance and providing information about her personality and her parents!

As I move towards the cashier I enjoy the amazing, gigantic blackboard that covers almost the entire wall at the other side of the cafe, that has written the menu of the cafe in white chalk-all kinds of ice and hot coffee, tea and all kinds of snacks, such as sandwiches, salads, brownies and cupcakes. The atmosphere of the cafe gets completed with the golden lights, the small pots decorated at the wall in the left side of the cafe, the wooden floors and the white table with their light green chairs and the small white candles on top of the tables.

“One ice Americano,” I say to the cashier while looking at the delicious snacks placed in front of me.

“Would you like one of the snacks?” the cashier asks impatiently as a line behind me starts forming.

“I would like two chocolate cupcakes” I say.

A few minutes later, my order is ready, I pay and I move towards Rachel’s table.

“You will eat two cupcakes?” she says knowing that I am supposedly trying to cut down on sweets.

“No,” I say as I sit down to the table and put my ice Americano and the two chocolate cupcakes in front of me. “The one is for you” I say as I push the cupcake towards Rachel's side.

“You know that I don’t like sweets,” she says in a non judgmental voice. “You can eat both of them if you like. Just don’t complain to me again that you eat too many sweets,” she says as she pushes the cupcake back to my ~~site-side~~ of the table.

I silently unwrap ~~the~~ first chocolate cupcake and start eating it.

“So, how is the moving going?” Rachel finally asks. “I know that you don’t want to talk about it but it is really happening and you have to face it.”

“I know.” I say nonchalantly. “Everything is almost ready. There are only some ~~last minute~~~~last-minute~~ preparations left due for tomorrow.”

Commented [MG3]: The description of the café might not be interesting to the readers. Make the description of the café more relevant to the main character by mentioning that e.g this is Lucy’s favourite café and the reason, the decoration of the café reminds her of a happy/sad memory and so on.

“So, what do you know about them?” Rachel asks. “Except for wanting to make their life miserable and kick them out of your house as soon as possible.” she says jokingly.

“You heard my podcast?” I say supposedly surprised.

Of course, she did it. Rachel always listens to my podcasts. My soul reflections as she calls them. The only place where I can be myself and share my desires and my thoughts without being judged by anyone, because no-one knows that The Rebellious Teenager is my podcast and that I am The Rebel. No-one, except Rachel.

“Of course, I heard the podcast. You know that I always do, like the other 2 million subscribers that listen to your pod-cast every week.”

Rachel takes a sip from her coffee and I finish my chocolate cupcake.

“So....” Rachel says “will you tell me more information about the visitors? You know about their arrival for almost a month and you haven't told me anything about them yet. You change the topic of the conversation every time I try to talk about them.”

“What do you want me to tell you?” I ask Rachel while I take a sip from my ice Americano.

“Everything,” she says and she moves her head a bit closer while impatiently waiting for my response. “A hot guy and his father will live for the next few months in your house and you have to put up with it while at the same time you have sworn to never trust men again because of your ex.” Rachel mentions her last words low, almost in a whisper.

“How do you know that the son will be hot without seeing him? Anyway, that is not the point. The point is that my ex was a shallow, fake, lying cheater and an asshole who pretended I was the only woman for him in the entire world and at the same time he was cheating me with other girls. A soon we had sex, he thought I downed him and he became a cold, annoying bastard.” I say awkwardly.

A chili goes through my spine and I adjust myself in my seat. I do not feel comfortable talking about him. He hurt me so much.... I trusted himI loved him..... and he betrayed me.

Tears start to fill my eyes and I push the unpleasant thoughts in the back of my head. I am not going through the same thoughts and feelings again. It took me so much effort to get back on my feet and stop thinking about him...stop crying....I will never go back. I will not let another man hurt me because I will never trust anyone ever again. I will not let myself fall in love and trust other men.

"Lucy," Rachel says in a soft voice "your ex hurt you, but not all men are like him. You will fall in love and you will wholehearted trust the right man one day. There are good, honest, caring men out there that deserve our love and we deserved to be loved by them."

"Jason and Richard," I say trying to change the subject of the conversation since I know that Rachel and I have different opinions about romantic love and I don't want to talk about it now.

"Who is Jason and Richard?" she says looking puzzled while moving her body at the back of the booth and sits in a relaxed, laid- back position.

"Richard Chandler is the name of the father and the businessman who will open the new restaurant in our town. He is a chef and an owner of already 4 restaurants. He is building the 5th restaurant of his chain franchise in our town. The construction almost finished and he will supervise in person the interior decoration, the menu, he will hire stuff and generally, he will get the restaurant running the next few months."

"Wow. You know a lot of information for people you don't care about. And why will he stay in your house and not in a hotel?"

"Know your enemies better than your friends. Apparently, he is an old friend of Madeline's, so he and his son will stay at our house instead of a hotel or a rented apartment."

"What about his son Jason? How old is his son?"

"His son is at the same age with us, 17 years old. He will be at the senior year of school like us."

"Anything else you know about them? Have you seen any photos? How do they look likewise Jason extremely hot?" Rachel teases.

Commented [MG4]: The passage includes information that the characters already know and/or have mentioned before and it seems that the conversation is happening for the sake of the readers. Consider deleting the information about Lucy's ex and add it as needed throughout the story.

If you mean extremely hot that will me resistantly fall in love with him and blindly tartar trusting men, NO:" I say. " At least I do not think so. I do not know how they look like and I don't care." I cross my hand in front of my chest.

"Lucy, these people will stay at the same house with you and you will hang out with them. Show some interest about them."

"What are you saying? Why will I ever hang out with them?"

"Jason is the new kid in our town and at school. You and your brother Alec will have to hang out with him, introduce him to our classmates and **and** show him our town, at least the first few days, until he settles."

"Damn," i say " i didn't think of that. But, i will certainly not become ~~Jason'S~~ Jason's guide. I want to stay as far away as possible from him. Alec can become his guide."

At that moment, my phone starts buzzing. It is on vibration mode and a buzz that long means that someone is calling I take my phone out of my back right pocket of my black shorts.

"Who is it?" Rachel asks.

"It's my mum."

Instead of answering the call, i decline the phone call and immediately write a message back to her saying i am with Rachel and that i will be home by seven for dinner.

As i attempt to put the phone on the table, i notice that someone has sent me a message. Or, to be more accurate, someone has sent a private message to The Rebellious Teenager account.

I double click the message and i start reading it.

Dear The Rebel,

I can so much understand what you are going through. I am experiencing something similar but i am on the opposite side of the story. I have to move to the other side of the country because of the family business and stay with strangers for the entire senior academic year. I

can't begin to describe how much i hate it and, no matter how many times i have done it. I can't get used to it. New city, new school almost every year for the last five years. How am i going to get through this hell again? I really hope that this is the last time!

P.S You should totally make his life miserable. It will be his punishment for intruding on your house and your life.

Yours truly,

The Wanderer

"What are you reading?" Rachel asks.

"I am reading a message from The Wanderer. He is a fan of the podcast."

I extend my phone towards Rachel with my right hand to show her the message and place the phone in the table in front of her. Rachel starts reading the message out loud. As soon as she finishes reading it, she gives me my phone back. Then, without hesitation, i double click on the messenger and i start replying to the message.

"What are you doing?" Rachel asks.

" I am replying to the message." i say nonchalantly.

"You are replying to a stranger's message?" Rachel says curiously. " You never reply to private messages sent from the fans of the podcast."

"Never is an exaggeration. I sometimes reply," I say while still having my phone in my hands and thinking of my answer.

I ignore Rachel's statement and i continue thinking of my answer. I don't want to give a typical or one-word answer, but i want to send a meaningful answer, a piece of advice that will actually somehow help. This person seems to going through a similar situation and i sincerely want to comfort them. Rachel is right. I never reply to messages but i am not going to admit that to her now. I don't know why but for some strange reason i want to reply to this person. Maybe because our situation seems too similar and i can relate my situation to them. That must be the reason for my desire to reply.

Commented [MG5]: The passage contains repeated information within the same paragraph. Delete the passage.

"Woman or man?" Rachel asks pulling me out of my thoughts.

"What?"

"The person you want to reply to. Man or woman?"

I immediately click into the profile's picture and i see a character from a video game holding a boxing glove. I click into the pictures' section of his account and i see lots of pictures from characters and settings from various video games. Some seem familiar. It must be the same video games that my brother Alec plays with his friends. Some other pictures of video games seem older and can't recognise which ones they are. I don't play video games so i don't know many things about them. If i show these pictures to Alec, he might know and tell me, but he will ask a lot of questions about my "interest" in this -what seems to be a man- and i have not interest to hear to his annoying questions. There are also pictures of boxing rings, boxing gloves and boxers fighting each other. It is obvious that this person likes video games and boxing.

"He seems to be a man," I say while scrolling the pictures on his account.

"Handsome?"

"Rachel?" i respond while stop scrolling the account and place my phone on the table.

"What?" she responds while placing her hands in the air. "You should know to who you are responding."

"I should know if he is a psychopath liar killer, not if he is hot" I respond. " And i don't know."

" If he is a killer?"

"I can't know that. But i meant handsome. There are not pictures of him in his account. There are only pictures related to video games and boxing."

Rachel stands up.

"I am going to the bathroom." Rachel says.

I take the last sip from my Americano and I grab my phone again. I open the messenger and i start responding to the message

Dear The Wanderer,

I can't even imagine how difficult must be for you to change schools and have to say goodbye to your friends every year. I cannot live without my best friend. ~~She~~She is the only person who understands me. The good thing is that this is your senior year so you might be free from your family's orders once you go to college (if you will go to college). I hope you have someone close to you to talk to—or talk to me if you want to. I might not know a lot of things about video games or boxing (Yes, i checked your account) but i know a lot of stuff about authoritarian parents that think they know what is the best of their children but don't listen to their opinion.

P.S I will give him one chance. One chance and in the first instance he messes up with me i will make his life a living hell.

As soon as i send the message, Rachel comes back from the bathroom.

"Are you ready to leave?" i ask her while i am standing up. "I must go home for dinner."

"Did you send him a message?" Rachel asks while both of us are walking towards the exit of the cafe.

"No. Yes. Just a small encouraging message" i say and i secretly smile.

Commented [MG6]: The second chapter is promising. I am looking forward to read what happens next!