

The Florida Writer

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Are Writers Uniquely
Vulnerable to Scams?

Reading in Your Own
Genre

The Developmental Edit





Do I Know You?

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Her barren eyes were wide and dry, and her frozen expression emotionless. A growing, high-pitched ringing grew in her ears as life began the process of blowing the world out.

Rose is a timid, cynical girl. Her curly, dark, auburn hair engulfs her frame of pale skin and jade eyes. She lives in a small village alongside her parents and cat named Mew. Once a hopeful and creative child, she grew less curious as she got older. With age, she discovered life's unsettling and unnatural tone and how once special things can slowly lose their spark, or end. Between lifeless buildings, disloyal relationships, and the endless routine of schoolwork, she craved more. Constantly observing and interpreting her dull surroundings, she volleyed between resisting and accepting the truth that the hollowness of life cannot be filled alone.

Always dreaming of finding love, Rose found herself alone most of the time. Since middle school, her love interests have been frequent, but no matter how hard she tries or who it is, things never work out. No explanation: the flame of her relationships just blows out from erratic, unpredictable winds. After years of poor luck, she wondered if she simply was not cut out for love and the possibility that she alone was enough.

A romantic, intrigued by antiques, old-fashioned movies and music, Rose's style is nostalgic and heartfelt. Some may call her "an old soul". Her rare fascinations cause her to feel disconnected from the modern world, also pushing her to find happiness alone. Thinking back on once was, her record muffles, and her eyes grow heavy from reading. Once drifted, Rose waltzes into a private world of her own, one that no one else can find.

While she tunes out her surroundings, Rose finds herself floating onto a luscious patch of emerald grass. Regardless of moonbeams or sparkles from the sun, a golden hand-held candle illuminates alongside her. Delicate and lively; each flicker like a heartbeat she would do anything to protect. Her eyes fluttered closed bring a sense of great peace, yet she rises to whimsically glide toward what awaits her. Passing enchanted wildflowers and innocent critters, she soon reaches a moss-veiled stone footbridge. Below her, the stream gracefully glides against smooth stones and singing toads. Through the warm haze ahead, her destiny

welcomes her. A warm, cobblestone cottage where she can defrost and hibernate, safe from the bitter world.

Adorned with a marble bird bath, flower gardens, fruit trees, and fairytale white and red mushrooms, the cottage is imperfect bliss, clearly aged and constructed with intent. Mesmerized, she reaches for the golden doorknob to explore her pending dream with the candle in her contrary hand. As she turns the knob, a slight sense of unease captures her spirit, and she looks over her shoulder. A thick, bustling wind drapes over her, and then she smells a charred, heavy odor of ash. Looking at the candle, a creeping, swirling smog mocks her. Her heart pounds, then stops. Her warmth begins to slip away. She curses herself for again believing the joy would last for eternity. She feels painfully unable to control her hope or reality. As the candle vanished, she felt her vibrancy drain again and her reluctant return to a soulless and desolate world.

After experiencing this same tragedy countless times, Rose felt hopeless and unable to change the outcome no matter how hard or how much she tried. Her magical world where she found happiness kept slipping away and sadly it became more and more difficult to find it again.

Suddenly, with the light from a firefly, Rose's eyes were opened amidst the darkness. She learned she had been trying so hard to preserve her independence she couldn't see that what she actually needed was help from others. Together, keeping the candle aflame and relentless winds calmed. You see, for Rose, learning the lesson that protecting the fragile flame alone would fail time and time again, taught her patience. Something she's always lacked and needed to find true love, friendship and happiness. ✨



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