

## Cyber Bullying

Mondays.

I let out an exasperated sigh as rain pelted my face. For as long as I can remember, Monday has always been my least favorite day of the week. I pull my hood over my head and walk faster, although it doesn't help much.

A car passes by, splashing me with water. It stops; the windows open as I walk past it. "Hey, skank" a voice says from inside the car. I don't dare look up. Walk faster! Walk faster! The voice in my head screams.

The car zooms past me, the sound of the people in it and their laughter fades as the car goes farther.

"Loser!" someone else yells.

It's only a picture, I try to convince myself. Everything will be Okay.

When I finally arrive at my high school (a.k.a hell), I quickly scurry inside and navigate my way through the crowded hallway. I pretend to ignore the obvious shoulders that purposely butt into mine. I arrive at my classroom and take a seat.

The bell finally rings, and my classmates assemble into the classroom. I ignore the dirty looks people give me. I'm so washed over with relief when I see my best friend, Clara, take the seat next to mine.

"Hey!" I greet her. Her gaze is still fixed forward, surely she did not hear me. "Hey" I repeat again. Clara doesn't look at me. I sink farther in my seat and close my eyes. My own best friend won't speak to me.

"Clara," I say in a loud whisper "don't ignore me. I haven't explained-"

I get the hint, she- like everyone else- hates me. I cover my head with my hood once again, and sit quietly through the class.

The days drag on and the messages I receive via IM and Facebook leave me speechless:

slut

whore

kill yourself

how much for a little bit of time, baby ?

Die

Whore

Slut

Don't cry I command myself almost every day, despite the heavy numbness that has overwhelmed me. I think about the Facebook comments on the picture, and how obvious it is that no one will believe a word I say. Every time I stare at the girl in the mirror; she looks so shocked and sad. Her face is pale and her eyes are wide. I hardly recognize myself.

The next day there are more comments on my Facebook wall, and the picture seems to have spread like wild fire.

Whore

Slut

Shank

Hoe

Fat

Kill yourself

Everybody hates you

A few weeks pass, and things at school gradually get worse. I consider telling an adult about the online harassment, but who? My mom? She's never home. My teachers? That will make the students hate me even more. I wish my dad was here, he'd know what to do. He'd tell me how to deal with everyone.

It is around Monday again when I get a phone call from Clara.

"We have some serious catching up to do!" she exclaims "I'm picking you up in ten minutes."

When I get into her car, she doesn't say a word. Suddenly, I feel hand clamping my mouth shut and a blindfold is tied over my eyes. Another pair of hands grabs my arms behind my back and tie them together with rope. Then the car screeches to a halt, and I am pushed out the door and onto the side of the road. The car squeals past me.

Luckily the blindfold slides off of my face, and I manage to cut myself loose of the rope that ties my hand together. I can't believe Clara would do this to me. I start limping towards the direction of my house.

The pain of everything that has happened this month is so tangible; I can reach out and touch it. The painful, wracking sobs come. My damaged self that seeps through the cracks that I flimsily repair each time fell apart. But this time, those cracks have been split open, leaving gaping holes of my being.

Once I reach my bedroom, I turn on my webcam so that everyone can watch this video live from the internet.

"Hello everyone" I begin, staring straight at the camera "my name is Zoey, Z-O-E-Y. Not skank, whore, slut, or hoe, as I have been referred to for the past month" my voice waivers "as you all know, a picture of me with Bryan Edwards has been posted on Facebook. I feel like I should explain what really happened, although doubt any of you will believe me."

I take a deep breath. "I was at a party when Bryan approached me, I was standing there- minding my own business- when he came up to me, piss drunk. He then shoved his tongue down my throat, and groped my breast. Besides the fact that this was completely violating, one of his idiot friends decided to take a picture and post it on Facebook."

"Since then, people- my own friends- refused to talk to me. The only thing I received from all of you is hate. What I want to say to you cyber bullies, is that you are all cowards and I hate you." I walk out of my room and into my mom's. She is not home, as usual. I search the drawers for the hand gun that I know she keeps, and I check if it is loaded. I numbly trudge into the bathroom and stare at the girl in the reflection. She is not me, she looks back at me calmly- as we both point the gun to our temples.

I feel a terrible tightening in my chest, the constriction of my lungs, I try to inhale deep, shuddering breaths as I try to hold back the inevitable-

"Nobody will miss you" she whispers to me, I hear the computer Ding! To notify me that I received a new message.

"Whore" she adds.

Now I can be with dad.

She smiles bitterly at me.

I say goodbye.