

Cyber Bullying

Track practice ended late, and I only had ten minutes to reach the bus. I sprinted through the long hallways to my locker, which was at the other side of school. My backpack smacked hard against my back, as my sore legs ached as they tried their best to run. Finally, I reached my locker and stuffed my belongings into my backpack. I continued jogging to the bus, until I felt the sudden urge to go to the restroom. I fought with myself internally not knowing what to do or where I should go. I had to decide quickly for time did not wait, and from where I was I could hear the roar of the starting engine from the bus. I pushed open the bathroom door with a force and threw my black backpack into the corner. As soon I went in, I went out, there was no more time to waste. No time to even take a quick glance at myself in the mirror, even knowing I look like a hot mess. I grabbed my things, and exited the bathroom. I accidentally slammed the door behind me. Suddenly I felt a feeling of forgetfulness fill my mind. Though I could not properly ascertain what I had forgotten. The loud honk from outside snapped me back to reality, as I remembered about the running bus waiting for any last passengers. It was only when I was aboard the bus when I realize what I had lost, my phone.

The next day I made it my mission to find my lost phone. I was too afraid to tell my mother, knowing she would berate me, and tell me I am an irresponsible teenager, especially for one who is near graduation. I had to prove to her that I was a responsible young adult. I comprehensively searched the school for my cell, starting from the girls' locker room to the bathrooms I last left yesterday. The last spot I decided to check was the lost and found in the office. "Hello." I said to one of the receptionist. "Hi," she replied, "what could I help you with?" "Well I am actually looking for my phone I lost yesterday." I shared embarrassed. "Okay, can you tell me what type of phone you have, please so I can check?" "Sure, an LG Samsung smart phone." I answered. She unlocked a door and entered into a room with a variety of items from eyeglasses to sweaters all placed on shelves. She looked around carefully, but did not spot the phone. " I am sorry." she said, " Maybe someone by the end of the day might turn it in." "Alright." I said feeling debased.

I left the office, and rested my head on a locker. I closed my eyes and sighed. Where is it? Who has it? I pondered. Nothing. "Hey Olivia." I opened my eyes it was my friend John. " Hey." I replied back to him sadly. I could tell that he heard the sadness in my voice so he asked me, " What's wrong?" I sighed again and shared what bad luck had fell upon me. "Yesterday, after track practice I lost my phone. I am looking everywhere for it, but I am unable to find it." " I am sorry Olivia." John said. "Yeah I know." I said. " Hey, you can use my phone if-" John's phone cut him off; His iPhone rang, it was a text message.

John quickly entered the password and opened the message he had just received and he was not pleased. His face twisted. I looked at him confused, wanting to know what had disturbed him. " What's wrong?" I curiously asked. " Ah," he wondered scratching his head

nervously. Unsure what to say to me he instead said, " Nothing. It's really, nothing." He ended, "I promise." I could tell he was lying so insisted questioning him again. "What is it." I demanded again. John continued to protest, but I knew something was wrong. Angered, I snatched the phone from his hand. "No!" he warned. I looked at the screen in disgust, displayed was girl's bare-naked body. I gasped, "Who is this!" I shouted at John. I didn't think he was that type of guy. "Olivia its not what you think-" he tried to explain. "Oh really!" I said upset, cutting him off. "Look I don't know who she is, look she didn't even show her face. Plus I don't have a girlfriend." He defended himself fiercer. I didn't believe him, I scrolled up to see the number, and it was mine. My heart stopped, everything became sickeningly silent. But in that silence the truth was revealed to me: someone had my phone and sending out these fake pictures of "me". I was speechless; tears swelled up in my eyes. I looked up at John unable to speak. He hugged me tightly. "I am so sorry for whoever may be doing this to you." He consoled me. I cried into his chest distraughtly. He hushed me, "You'll get through this... we'll get through this." He held me tighter. "I know" I managed to utter.

The rest of the school day went terrible. The text of "my" picture went viral, it seemed everyone knew about it. Heading to class people stared, whispered, and some started to name call. By the time I reached home I was drain of all emotion. I slowly closed my front door, and walked to my room. I felt guilty for not greeting my mother or telling her what had happened to me at school today. Instead I descended into an abject depression. I dropped onto my bed lifeless, and buried my face into my pillow. I laid there for while until I heard a sound coming from my computer. I turned my head around I noticed that I had left my computer on, and my Facebook page was displayed on the screen. I was too sad to care, until I heard the Facebook notification sound. I walked over since I was unable to see the message on my bed. I refreshed my Facebook page and clicked on my profile. My heart skipped a beat. I read the messages my so-called "friends" posted on my page. I scrolled down the page reading the horrible posts: one person wrote: W***e, another S***t, the next wrote B***h, and the list went on. As I scrolled down the page, and as I read each message it became harder to breathe. I immediately closed the page ands started bawling.

The next morning I found myself waking up at my computer desk. I looked to see the time I was late for school. I unwillingly got dressed for school. I truly did not want to go, but the teachers were starting to crack the whip on attendance, since the school year is almost over plus seniors were graduating soon. After I finished preparing myself I look a peek outside my window. My mom's car was parked in the driveway. I sighed in relief; hopefully my mother could give me a ride to school. When I descended down the stairs my mom was eating her breakfast.

"Good morning honey. Is everything alright." She greeted me.

"Yeah, everything's fine. Could you give me a ride please?" I asked. "Sure." Ten minutes later I arrived at school. "Thank you mom." I said to her softly. As I was about to open the door she held my hand. "I love you." She told me. "I love you too mom." I replied and left.

I received the same treatment as yesterday, but it was worse. Some people started pushing me against the lockers, and tried to play it off as just an accident. At science, no one wanted to be my partner for our lab experiment. I ended up working with my teacher. Although my classes went badly, it wasn't as terrible as lunch.

When I walked inside the cafeteria the room slowly became silent. People stopped eating their meals to stare at me. I passed the table I would usually eat at, but I could tell that I wasn't welcomed there, as my "friends" didn't dare make eye contact with me. I ended up sitting at a table at the back of the room. I won't see them from here, I thought to myself. I ate in silence, as my thought drifted of. I wondered about the girl on the phone. Clearly, it was not my body, people thought differently. When I get home, I decided to delete my Facebook account. I have been hearing rumors kids have been editing the pictures and putting my name on it. I don't even want to think about some of the things they've done to it. I was brought back to my surroundings, when I sensed someone presence behind me. I turned around to look it was John. I smiled, happy to see a friendly face. "How are you?" he asked. "Okay, I guess." I said. We sat together in silence for a moment then he started again, "This needs to stop." He said quite seriously. I looked at him puzzled. "What do you mean?" I wondered, then figured out what he meant. "Oh this." I looked down on my lunch tray, unable to answer. I wanted the bullying to stop, but didn't know how to. "Let's go to your guidance counselor." John catalyzed me. We waited until I finished eating my lunch and then headed to the guidance office.

At first my guidance counselor was upset with me for not telling her earlier about the bullying, but it hurt her the most that someone out there is purposely framing me. After I shared what had happened, she immediately called my mother, and the school police officer. My mom after hearing the news was also upset that I didn't inform her first. I explained to her how I thought I could find my phone without her knowing, but didn't expect this type of problem would occur. When the police officer arrived, he asked me a plenty of questions, like: When I last had my phone?, When the text of the girl was sent?, etc. After being questioned by the police officer he said he would do more investigating. It seemed everything was close to be being resolved. "And next time Olivia." my guidance counselor dismissed, "don't hide this sort of problem. I know you maybe thought that all of this would just blow over, but you see how far this got out of control." I nodded. She continued again, "We are always here if you need help." She lightly squeezed my shoulder, "Well at least you told us, better than never right?" We both smiled.

After I shared what happened, I felt a burden lift of my shoulder. I no longer had to deal with this problem alone. Now I had a support system of people who love me and would do

anything in their power to end the rumors and mistreatment I had received. The school board even tried to help by suspending the students who posted the picture online. They even sent out letters to parents sharing what had happened in school. The bullying gradually died down as students started to realize I wasn't the one behind the text message that was sent. I was glad, but unfortunately I didn't find my phone or discover the person who was behind all of this.

One afternoon though, as I was waiting for my mother, I saw the school receptionist I asked earlier about my phone running towards me. "Hello, is everything alright." I asked her. "Yes, dear," she paused as she tried to catch her breath, " I found this." In her hand was the missing phone. I looked at it for a while, not knowing if I should take it or not. I thought for a moment that how such a seemingly harmless device could cause so much harm. It even had the power to potentially ruin a person's life. From a simple text that can make it's way all the way onto people's Facebook page. As I thought deeper, into the situation, I realized it is what you chose to do with the technology around you that can make that difference. It was apparent that whoever sent the text message made an unwise decision.