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Dear Already Amused Reader

Lala Guse

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Dear Already Amused Reader

Lala Guse

Winner of the 2023 John Little Fiction Scholarship

Dear Already Amused Reader,

I am a sex-crazed teen ready to lick your spleen and take you to an everlasteeng high. Come ride in my car. I'll blast Lil Nas X, and we can talk about Satan's agenda. Come ride in my bed. I'll spread red curtains, and we can speak the language of panting dogs.

I'm a tease. I'll say whatever to please, but don't expect to be pleased... because I am a tease. All of my sexual exploits are as real as the sugar in my mother's Diet Pepsi. You can count on my flirtatious pleas as high as my father's heart beat... 0. Because, he's dead, mother clucker.

It's like the song. "Daddy finger, Daddy finger, where are you?" Like, yeah. Where the fuck are you? That song really hits different when you're sixteen, and boys are really mean. I wonder. What would my dad do if he heard what loud and hungry and predatory things men had to say to me?

Maybe that's why I tempt. I am actually tempting dad to come out those fucking clouds where he's probably up there chill-axing to come shaking his finger, "No, no, no," at my antics and my antagonists. Yeah, whatever, Dr. Phil is retired, so I may as well retire that thought, too.

You still reading, reader?

Yeah, of course you are. You're thinking you found some *Catcher in the Rye* hyped story. Something gripey, mopey, and tragic. How teenager! How real! How awfully representative of my own experiences!

But nah, this ain't that. I am an influencer on a laptop drinking ramen out a measuring cup. Posting pics on a spider net. Leaving cups around the globe for my thirst traps. Maybe, that's how we take the privileged's water and give it to Africa.

I'm irresponsible in words and in action. It doesn't matter because my body is perfection, and your dad, brother, and mother are following me on Snap, Insta, and F.Book. They hate me, but they watch me. They hate me so much that they love me. I am the topic at dinner tables, at nightly prayers, and in public. Won't someone come to my rescue and rectify my withering reputation?

Anyway,
That's just me,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Please Be Annoyed With Me Reader,

My mom is sending me to therapy because apparently you can't make fun of semicolons and still be rad anymore! All I said in response to this sappy post about semicolons and suicide is that sometimes periods are better than semicolons. I thought it was a perfectly timed opportunity for a punctuative argument identifying the merits of life and death; semicolons and periods!

My mom was all, "Your dad died from suicide. Don't you wish he were still alive?" And I was all, "Your husband died from suicide. Aren't you glad he didn't survive?" Then she went and got her nips all hardened about how I need to talk to someone, and how she was setting up an appointment, and blah blah, I better be ready to work with Dr. Tietz.

Sigh.

Dr. Tietz better be ready to turn into my life coach. I am going to post about my growing piety soooo hard.

Anyway,
That's just me,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Be Outraged with Me Reader,

Dr. Tietz is so goddamned boring. Her last name sounds like tits. I thought we were really going to be something to each other. She was going to be some stripper-doctor-life-coach and I was going to be the McDonalds Barbie Girl Queen. But she's so dopey.

"What would you like to talk about?" My social media pages, my imagined future husband, my too small for my ambition tits, my annoying mom, my desire for Tietz to be my life coach, the mean boys and girls at school, my worry about my thigh getting a dimple, the threat of acne covering my face and back.

And she just let me talk.

And talk.

And talk.

I am actually exhausted from talking. Like, I don't have any experience ramming a dick in my mouth, but I imagine that my tongue would be just as swollen. And honestly, my eyes. I had to think about where to focus them. Do I look at her? The table? My new Nike shoes? My blurry nose? It was awkward!

And then it was just over. No feedback. Other than, "Thank you. Let's find another time for an appointment." Bitch, I have been doing one hundred sit ups and running three miles every day since Parker Roberts called me fat and dared me to eat another dino nugget, and all of that was easy in comparison to sitting in this room talking to you!

But sure. Let's make another appointment.

Stunningly Tired,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Wholesome Yet Thin and Attractive Reader,

I. Am. Obsessed.

Change is in the air! Hope is on the ground! And love is trotting on hooves all around me!

Someone left flowers on my car's windshield today, and the notes on them had these horrible little lines of poetry on them: "You make my cheeks rosey! I lily like you! Let's put our tulips together!" Like, aww. This is most likely in response to my very Georgia O'Keeffe-esque drawing on Snap last night, which is the highest praise. I love my fans.

I totally need to draw more. I am finally being noticed!

Stunningly Me,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dr. Tietz,

Please tell me what a first kiss should taste like.

Captivated,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Readers Whom I Love and Enjoy,

My admirer is back! Admirers are terrific. They allow us to stick out our bosoms a little farther. They allow us to smile even broader. They make our makeup worth checking! They're the best. They really are.

Someone, really special, left a horribly adorable fluffy orange kitten in front of my family's door this morning! There was this giant balloon that read: "Do you believe in meow-icles?" and then on the kitten's collar there was another note that said: "just as only dreamers can."

I told my mom about it, and she was in a mega-flurry over it! She yammered about how we can't be taking in anonymous kittens and how inappropriate it was for someone to be dropping off balloons and kittens, and blah blah, clearly she doesn't get it!

She says she's going to make some social media posting about giving away the kitten. Ugh, whatever. It's going to be so hard to say bye to my little furry Madonna.

Devastatingly Beautiful and Sad,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Approving Readers,

Dr. Tietz says that I am confused on my feelings about my dad dying. Confused? She says, yeah, I speak a bit about him in one mood. Then I go off on a tangent on something else. Then circle back to talking about him with a different mood.

I talked to Mom about it, and she says that it would be good for both of us to go visit Dad's grave since we hadn't been there since the funeral a year ago.

I'm not looking forward to it.

What will I even wear to Dad's grave? I doubt one of my crop tops

or brightly colored pants are welcome inside the gates of a graveyard. I also think the old prudes buried there would be highly disapproving of my thong underwear and bralette. I guess I have something decent somewhere in my wardrobe to wear. But that's going to be so much work.

Whatever, I can do this. Thankfully no one has taken my mom up on her stupid post about taking Madonna away. She can stay forever as far as I'm concerned. I love when she curls up right on my clavicle and purrs. She's like a rumbling volcano with her shiny outstretched fur.

Also, she's a social media star.

Thank You for Reading a Media Supastar's Word,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Oh Shit! Readers,

When my mom and I went to visit Dad's grave today, there was a beautiful card there with a bunch of hearts.

Mom freaked. I watched as her hands trembled as she picked up the card. Her face turned a grotesque color when she unsealed the red envelope and opened the red card.

I asked, "What's it say! What's it say! Is it from one of Dad's old ex-lovers. Do they miss his wicked tongue and wagging dong?"

My mom tried to rip the cardboard paper but struggled and struggled. She threw it on the ground and used the heel of her shoe to dig it into the ground.

Her fingernails sliced into my upper arm as she drug me back to the car. "Ahh, Mom. Why can't I see?"

She turned to me. Her eyes were wide. I could see her pupils as perfect circles. She said, "Shut your fucking mouth." Then she screamed, "Shut your fucking mouth!" She opened the lid to a McDonald's cup and puked into it.

Ew. Gross, Mom.
What the fuck?
Then we drove off.

Heave Ho, Maties,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Enamored Readers,

Dr. Tietz thought the card thing was wild. She seemed like she really wanted to ask some questions. That nosey l'il gossip. I knew I was going to like her.

So I decided to drive back to Dad's graveyard to check on the card. I thought I could gift this bit of insider information to Dr. Tietz as a thank you for making-my-mouth-go-absolutely-dry-from-talking-too-much present.

But when I went back, the card wasn't there. It probably blew away or something.

Disappointed Yet Wonderful,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Fucking Awful World,

Madonna is gone.

--,
Alexandra

*

Dear Let's Freak Out Right Now Readers,

I found the card. And it is loads weirder than I thought it was.

I thought it was from an ex-lover of Dad's past or something that was screwing with Mom, but it wasn't.

The card was for me.

It read:

"Dear Alexandra,

I will be your daddy since this one is dead and rotten.

Come be with me at your new home,

Handsome Daddy"

LOL. What a freak! My fans must be crazy that they're willing to go looking for dad's grave and want to replace him.

Anyway,

Slightly Charmed/Slightly Freaked,

Alexandra McQueen

*

Dr. Tietz,

Your concern for my safety is unappreciated.

I am an object to be desired and drooled over. My social media pages are my glass case protecting me from the public's grimey fingerprints, okay? I'm Snow White. Cover me in roses with men looking desirously at me through the glass.

Like, just chill the fuck out. I'm sure other hotties have people sending them gifts and writing them cards, too. People are weird. That's not my problem.

And if you want to try to make it my problem. Then WE are going

to have a problem.

Hands off my social media, Dr. Tits-ma-gee. I do what I want, and I do me. Unapologetically.

Kindly and Poetically Go Twist Your Clit,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Whoever Is Awake,

I found two furry orange legs poking out of my bedsheets.

My God, my Madonna.

But, when I pulled up the bedsheets, the legs fell onto the floor. They weren't attached to anything. They weren't attached to anything anymore.

Someone killed Madonna.

And they left a note for me:

"Tiny daughter,

Why would you get rid of our purr-fectly nice kitten?

What a shame that you both needed to be punished.

She was a beauty and let out the most wonderful cries

When I shaved off her legs.

Don't get rid of anymore of my gifts, Alexandra.

You don't want me to discipline you, do you?

Do you?

Hugs and Kisses,

Daddy"

I don't think I can tell my mom or Dr. Tietz about this. They are both so annoying and will probably use this to try to get me to stop posting. I'm just going to stop posting for awhile. Live a nicer and normaler life.

It's going to be okay.

Shaken and Confused,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Bemused Audience Members,

The people at school keep talking about what my current absence from social media means. They think that I am really hyping up to something glorious! I love it. I had not thought that my postings would be so missed, and that by not posting that my upcoming postings would be even more highly anticipated. Neat. Neat. NEAT!

On my way to the car today, Rhonda's dad even stopped his car as I walked by, and said, "Hey, Alexandra. I really miss your posts. When are you going to start again?" They all love me. I giggled. He then handed me this giant lollipop and he said, "Here, I got all my kids one of these today."

Like, so cool! Licking this lollipop is going to be a great back to posting on social media photo!

L-l-l-lick Me Like a Lollipop,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Mom,

I wish I could tell you how much I miss my kitten Madonna.
I wish I could tell you how freaked out I was about that card.
I wish I could tell you how the love I receive on the internet is not enough.
I wish I could tell you how I need you.

Crushed Inside,
Alex

*

Dear Let's Draw Some Boundaries Readers,

Dr. Tietz tells me how awesome and important boundaries are, and how, if I really want to work on social media fame that I need to start setting them.

I didn't like the boundaries she suggested though. I like receiving anonymous gifts. And I like randos coming up to me to take my photo. And I like reading the post responses talking about how sexy and mature I am. I do. I like them. I want to keep them.

I said that I was willing to set up boundaries for mean vibes. She asked why that was so important to me.

I almost told her about Dad.

But I didn't 😊

N-n-n-n-not Listening,
Alexandra McQueen

*

Dear Let's Talk Some Sense Readers,

I have not told this to Mom. To Dr. Tietz. No one. But I am telling it to you.

The day that my dad shot myself. He was yelling at me for wearing makeup. I yelled at him, "I HATE YOU." He turned from me. Shut the door to his bedroom. I ran to my room and shut the door and seethed. I was putting on more and more makeup. He thought that what makeup I had on was trashy. Ha! I will show him actual trashy.

I heard a really loud CLAP outside my door. It made me drop my makeup on the door. It was a harsh sound. Quick and loud.

I just knew it was dad making trouble again. I stomped towards his door and tried to open it. It was locked. I pounded and pounded at the door. How immature! Who was the adult here!

I took a pen, took the sleeve off, and penetrated the door's inner locking mechanism until I hit the button. I unlocked the door and opened it.

Sometimes when people shoot themselves in the head they do not die right away. Some can even survive it. My dad was not going to survive, but he did seem enough alive that I thought he could be saved. I took my phone out of my back pocket and dialed 911. I was so scared that I was mad. I was so mad that while I was telling the 911 operator what happened I actually started screaming at my dad again. I kicked him. I kicked him a bunch of times. How stupid! How stupid of him!

I threw the phone at him, but it missed. It landed in his blood. Then I was even more mad and sick. I threw up at his feet and collapsed sweating on the floor. My eyes looking into the red place on his face where his eyes should be. I was whispering, "Daddy, I don't hate you. I don't hate you. I don't hate you."

The ambulance people took me to the hospital because they said I was in shock. I laughed and said, "I'm shocked, not shot. Daddy is shot, not shocked." Then I don't remember anything. The people probably got tired of me depressing them and put me out of misery with drugs or

something.

No Semicolons Here Unless Winky Faces,
Alexandra McQueen 😊

*

Dear Alexandra,

You have such talent. I think I could really help you with that.

I work as a photographer and have some connections to some major brands, and your image could really mean major dollar signs.

Please think about it,
Jimmy
Aka Rhonda's Dad LOL

*

Dear Rhonda's Dad,

No, thank you! I make my own content and creations.

Some day those brands will seek me themselves. I don't need to go out seeking them.

However, "If You Seek Amy,"
The Queen

*

FRM: alerts@achildissinging.org

SUBJ: A Child Is Missing Alert

MSG: URGENT Message-Grand Forks County PD. Missing Child: Alexis McNamara, 16 y/o blonde hair, 5'1", 120lbs. Pink crop top, blue jeans, white Nikes.

Any info pls call 701-999-9999

Mar 1, 7:24 AM

Active AMBER Alert

Missing Child in Grand Forks, ND

Alexis McNamara was last seen on Tuesday leaving home in her car to go to school and is believed to be in imminent danger. Please call 701-999-9999 if you have any info

Shared 1,203 times

AMBER ALERT

NAME: Alexis McNamara

MISSING: 1/01/2023

AGE MISSING: 16 years

AGE NOW: 16 years

SEX: Female RACE: Caucasian

HAIR: Blonde EYES: Brown

HEIGHT: 5'1" WEIGHT: 120 lbs

FROM: Grand Forks, ND

COUNTY: Grand Forks

NARRATIVE: A North Dakota AMBER Alert has been issued for Alexis McNamara age 16, last seen in the area of Darcy's Cafe on Highway 81 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. She was last seen wearing a pink crop top with a gold logo, navy blue joggers, and white Nike shoes. She was in the passenger side of her 2015 Toyota Camry with an unknown man driving the car. #NDAMBER

Headlines

SALACIOUS MISSING TEEN'S DAD COMMITTED SUICIDE

MISSING TEEN MADE FUN OF SUICIDE SURVIVORS
MOM OF MISSING TEEN SPEAKS OUT ABOUT INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS
FANATIC FANDOM CAUSE FOR MISSING TEEN GIRL?

*

Dear Anyone, my name is Alexis McNamara, also known as Alexandra McQueen. Rhonda's dad got me. I can't remember his name. He keeps telling me to call him dad, but their last name is Skylar. He has me in this tiny bedroom underneath the basement stairs. Please, if you find this, come get me. I don't want to be here. He puts on my dad's Old Spice cologne and makes me take pictures on his lap and in bed with little girl dolls. He keeps telling me that if I play along, I can get another kitten. He keeps saying that this is my home now. He keeps bringing me flowers. I don't know how to get out. I don't know how to leave. I'm scared that this tiny bedroom is the rest of my life. This is all that I have left.

He keeps playing that song from the balloon. "do you believe in miracles? just as only dreamers can, and if he can work with a miracle, like a bloody minded man." He says he's working with a miracle: me. That he can make me good again.

When I scream that I hate him, he says that I can't hate my dad, and I try to tell him that that's exactly what I did and said right before my dad died. He looks at me shocked, and says, "I'm not dead. I'm right here," with a sick fucking smile on his face.

Come find me,
Alex
March 3, 2023

*

Dear Anyone but Fake Daddy, He has given me a fake wardrobe, little kid toys, and says he's getting ready to help me become a woman. I don't want to know what that means. He says to not worry, but I'm involuntarily trapped with the male version of Nurse Ratchet who claims he's helping me to heal while I sit in silence and humiliation. I don't want to play as a little girl, but I fear immensely his plans for me as a woman. I've never been kissed. I don't want this. I want to go home. I want my mom. I want my real dad.

Save me,
Alexis
March 5, 2023

*

Dear Anyone, I don't want to live anymore. I am no longer "a little girl" and now I'm "fully cured" and now I'm "his miracle" that he deserves and desires. I no longer care if I see my mom again or talk to Dr. Tietz. I'm really sorry that I'm not stronger.

Planning goodbye,
Alexis
March 10, 2023

*

Dear Anyone, you still haven't found me yet? You're running out of time. I have given up on you. I know how I'll take back this storyline. I had intended the world to know my final thoughts, but it's just you. That is, if there really is a you who has found this. Maybe this note and the others will end up burned, deteriorated, or buried. That's what will inevitably happen to me if I'm successful tonight.

You should know, reader, that I really had intended to apologize

to my dad eventually and to tell him that I loved him. I'm so sad that he killed himself and my last words were how much I hated him. I also wish I could apologize to my mom and tell her about my stupid search for a new identity and for attention. It wasn't worth it. None of it made me happy, excited maybe, but not happy. Happy is doing puzzles at home with her and talking about books. Happy is waking up in a home where you know your parents love you. I was so numb after dad died, I hadn't realized when I was happy or sad or mad. I only knew if something was exciting or boring.

This sucks. Are you sure you can't come get me and save me? Bring me back home? I don't want to do this.

Under this line lies,
Alexis McNamara
March 12, 2023

*

Headlines

SALACIOUS MISSING TEEN FOUND WRAPPED IN RUG ON I29
MISSING TEEN FOUND ALIVE, IN SERIOUS CONDITION
MOM OF MISSING TEEN NOT TAKING ANY QUESTIONS
MISSING TEEN ON LIFE SUPPORT, NO SUSPECTS

*

Dear Alexis,

My beautiful little girl. You're alive, honey. I prayed and prayed for you to be okay, but alive is fine. Alive will do! I'm here with you. That's more than I can say for myself since your dad died. To be honest, even before your dad died. I'm so sorry that I was distant, honey. I spent so much time focusing on everything else than the two people that I love most. You'd think that I would have figured it out after your dad died. But it

took longer. It took now. I'm not proud. I'm so sorry.

I love you, my girl,
Mom

*

April 2nd, 2023

*Interactions Written Between Alexis and Her Mom on Alexis's AAC
Device*

Alexis:

M-O-M
S-E-M-I-C-O-L-O-N
L-O-L
C-A-L-L T-I-T-Z
L-E-S-S T-H-A-N S-Y-M-B-O-L 3

Mom:

I
H-A-V-E
S-O-M-E-O-N-E
2
T-E-L-L
U
A-B-O-U-T

Alexis:

L-O-L
W-H-A-T?
Y-O-U
P-R-E-G-G-O?

Mom:

Y-E-S

C-O-L-O-N E-N-D P-A-R-E-N-T-H-E-S-E-S

Alexis:

Y-O-U

S-L-Y

D-A-W-G!

1

N-I-T-E

S-T-A-N-D?

Mom:

N-O,

W-E

R

G-O-I-N-G

2-B

A

R-E-A-L

F-A-M-I-L-Y

A-G-A-I-N!

A

M-O-M,

A

S-I-S-T-E-R,

A

S-I-B-L-I-N-G,

A-N-D

A

D-A-D!

Alexis:

W-T-F!

W-H-O?

The End

Lala Guse is a doctoral student in UND's College of Education and Human Development and is a member of the Red River Valley Writing Project.