

# Ricky's Story

By bek-ee

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*"so there's me, sitting peacefully on the couch reading as usual. Then a sudden explosion from down stairs shock me from my seat." Ricky is an ordinary girl who worries about ordinary things but her happy life is about to be turned upside-down*

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## 1 - Scratch and a start

so there's me, sitting peacefully on the couch reading as usual. I'd been sick all week and so, to my immense joy i got to stay home from school. i had finally built up the energy to crawl out of my bed and onto the sofa in the lounge where i could read a book and, if i wished, i could stare out of the window and down the quiet street. about two minutes walk from my house was the beach so i could also watch the sea from the lounge aswell. i was greatly enjoying sitting there, book in hand, house as silent as it should be during the week. silence is golden they say and now i know exactly what they mean. i had the whole house to myself, and i was enjoying it so much i was greaving at the fact i was no longer sick. i would have to go to school tomorrow. and when the weekend came, the house would no longer be empty and quiet. Then a sudden explosion from down stairs shock me from my seat. "I TOLD YOU TO BE CAREFULL!!!"

"I was!"

"IF YOU WERE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE..."

"IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!!!"

"ACCIDENT!?"

"YES! sorry, I-I didn't mean to..."

"YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME!!!"

"I never meant t-to, s-sorry"

my younger sister, Amanda, had a habit of stuttering when she got angry or nervous. I'm guessing she was feeling a bit of both at the moment. Blake, my older brother, had the frustrating habit of yelling at the top of his voice if something wasn't going how he liked it. it was his voice that was booming up the stairs now. "ITS BLOODY MASSIVE!!! WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T SEE IT!!! OPEN YOUR EYES YOU IDIOT!" I could hear someone running up the stairs. Mandys head soon appeared, her eyes wide. she quickly ran to my side, perhaps to seek protection from our rawing brother. i continued to read thinking Blake had calmed down. He hadn't. "GET DOWN HERE YOU LITTLE TWIT!!!" i should have known better. my silence was murdered. Blake's footsteps thundered up the stairs. i could hear him a mile away, unlike little Amanda. She was so small and petite i sometimes imaged i could break her in half. Blake was probably sharing this thought as he finally reached the top of the stair case, his eyes blazing. "THAT," poking his finger in Mandy's direction. "THAT LITTLE COW SCRATCHED MY CAR!!!" "you were the one who crashed into my bike!" squeaked Mandy

"YOU LEFT YOUR BLOODY BIKE IN THE WAY!!!"

"no, you just can't drive. it was well out of the way"

"ARE YOU BLIND!!! YOU OPENED THE CAR DOOR ON IT AND SCRATCHED MY CAR!!!"

"ok, sorry. Just calm down." i growned. If ever there was a line that made anyone that was angry into a furious raging monster, "clam down" was it. Amanda had dug her own grave, it was time for me to step in. I've told you what my brother and my little sister's annoying habits are, i suppose its time i told you what my annoying habits are. among other things, one of my annoying habits is peace keeping.

"YOU ARE SO PAYING FOR A NEW COAT OF PAINT!!!" Blake Yelled

"She doesn't need to pay for anything, it was an accident." I put my peace making skills into action.

"BUT OUT OF THIS RICKY!!!" Blake seemed to be the only person who resented my peace making.

Mostly because it was usually him i was trying to make peace with. "No i wont. Not when your trying to con Manda into paying for something she didn't even hardly do."

"SHUT YOUR MOUTH!!!"

"NO!" sometimes when your trying to stop a fight you have to make it worse before you make it better.

"WHAT DID YOU SAY!!!" it wasn't a question, it was a challenge.

"i said no you deaf fool. i wont shut up and she wont pay"

even though my voice was little more than a whisper, Blake stepped backwards as if i had yelled at the top of my voice. He went red and i could see him getting ready to yell a reply but the grandfather clock sitting in the corner of the room sang the next hour. i knew what this meant, it meant he was late for work and we wouldn't have to deal with him again until he came home drunk sometime later that night. Mandy and i decided to cross that bridge when we came to it. meanwhile, i wished for nothing more than to return to my book. "Thanks Ricky." Mandy whispered as Blake thundered back down the stairs. "No probs. anytime." was my reply. As Amanda went into the next room to start on her homework i settled back down with my book. Silence. the way the house should be. When i get my own house it would be silent all the time. Perhaps I'd have a Husband and some Children. Perhaps i'd have a flat mate. Perhaps i'd be alone. in any case, i'd make sure that every day i'd put aside some time for silence. My life would be a happy one.

i was jolted out of my daydream by the arrival of my father and my other older brother, Taylor. Perhaps this is a good time to tell you how large my family is. there are Nine of us. Seven Kids, two parents. Now you might appreciate how much i love silence. I'm number four. First is Blake, the oldest, he's twenty five, loudest and most dangerous of them all. Katey comes second at age twenty two, she went over to Australia about a year ago and never came back. we get postcards from her every now and then saying how great it is over there. Dad refuses to read them because he said she left him for our rival nation. You might have guessed we live in New Zealand. I think Dad was being silly but later that day i saw him sneak a look at them after Mum put them on the fridge. Next is Taylor, nineteen and at univercity, Dad's favourite Son. Taylor was good at everything and he never hesitated to put me to shame. He was Smarter, faster and stronger than i am, although he does say that i am stronge for a girl. Don't let my name fool you, i am a girl. My real name is Rhona but everyone calls me Ricky. I'm the sportyest girl in my year. my room is full of trofies and metals, but never the less, i still love a good book. And, when i say MY room, i really mean OUR room. My parents aren't rich, i share my room with my little sister Amanda. She is the next in line. Amanda is Thirteen. Three years younger than me. I'm sixteen. Last, but by all means, not least are the twins. Dale and Daniel. I'm not even going to waste my breath telling you how annoying they are. All my family has annoying trates and habbits but Dale and Dan ARE SOULY annoying trates and habbits. its as though all the annoying qualities in the world were put together and Mum gave birth to them. TWO of them. They are both eight and haven't seemed to growen out of the terrible twos. Sometimes i wish mum and Dad had just stopped at Manda. Shes not so bad, even fun at times. I'll tell you about my Mum and Dad. Dad likes to hide his emotions, just like Blake, the only emotion he really truely lets everyone see is his anger. Although its less seen than Blake's. But both Dad and Blake can be pretty fun at times. Now, Mum. She is a legend i tell you. most teenagers wouldn't admit this about their Mum but i'm not the sort to tell unnessisary lyes. She, along with Dad, raised seven kids. Not a challenge many would take up i tell you. Why am i giving more credit to my Mum than my Dad? Well, for one, Mum gave birth to all of us. Ouch! She also cooks, cleans, works and who knows what else. Legendary. Thats the only word left in the english dictionary that describes her.

Dale and Daniel share a room. Amanda and i share a room, Katey shared it with us before she left. I think she left because Manda snores but don't tell her i said so. Taylor and Blake share a room and, of course, Mum and Dad also share a room. This is my life and i'd like to share some of it with you, if you'd like. My family is very large so we're used to sharing. Another reason my life as a teenager is hard. Hand-me-downs. I'll tell you more about that later but for now, another thing teenagers have trouble with,

sleep.

## 2 - Back to school

After several hours of fruitless tossing i gave up on sleep. so i got out of bed and go to the kitchen for a glass of milk. school tomorrow. i don't have to tell you that i hate it because most people do, but its better than being at home with my messy noisy mosterously large family. i sighed and listened for a while to the sounds of my family sleeping over the sounds of the highway that is parked sight outside our front door. a loud noise from outside, however, distracted me from the sounds of snoring and skidding vehicles. Was it Blake coming home? at this time at night, or should i say, morning? so i look out of the window and onto the street below to see some ruddy drunks vadalising the side of our house! "Oi! Get out of it!!!" Yeah, like they'd listen to me!

"Get lost white girl!" They yell back up to me (or words to that effect).

"My dads' a coppa, i'll wake him if you dont piss off!" An empty threat but it was worth a shot. My dad wasn't a cop at all. he was an engineer, same as Blake. "Go wake him, we'll smash him ael!"

"Smash him my @\$\$! you'll be in jail before you know it!" And with that i disapeared so it would look like i'd gone to wake my father when really, i'd done nothing of the sort. i drained the last of my milk, picked up a pen off the table and began to doodle on my wrist. After finishing my rose fake tatoo i stood up to see if the drunks had left. they had.

Morning came swiftly and i was woken from my nightmears about school and related topics by my sister's sharp prod. "Wake up, your sitting on my seat." Aparently i was still sitting at the table with an empty cup in hand an the imprint of my fake tatoo on my left cheek. And, i was late for school. five minutes later i was running down the street, pass the half graffeted garage door with a piece of toast in my mouth. Skirt flying around my waist, hair loosly tied in a messy bun and a small smile playing around my lips as i ran to the bus stop and to my friend Patrick. This was my first day back after the mid year break but every else had been back a week more than i because, as i said before, i was sick. "Wagging the first week of the term isn't a good way to get on our new english teacher's good side"

"And hello to you too" I smiled at him. It was good to see a friendly face after spending the week sick it bed listening to my rawing family. "What was that about a new english teacher?" I asked.

"Mr Taper left at the end of last term remember? His marage broke up so he moved. we have a lady called Miss Brown now."

"A nice common name. Whats' she like?"

"Quite cute actually." I rolled my eyes.

"Boys." i muttered under my breath as the bus pulled up to our stop. Patrick must have heard me though because he gave me a playful shove as i hopped on the bus.

We chose a seat near the back of the bus and Patrick filled me in with what has happened since the end of last term. When the bus stopped outside the school we joined the rush of students exiting the bus and walked towards our seating area. our bus was always at school at least an hour before the bell because we live in an area were a bus could be...delayed somewhat by unwanted drunks or vandals. We reached our spot and it was only then did i realise that Patrick had grown a lot taller over the month or so that we had spent apart. He was a lot hansomer too. He had had a haircut so his usual curly black mop of hair was now shorter, more wavy than curly and was framed around his face which made his green eyes stand out. his face was broader and his chin more man-like. he was a head taller than me now and his sholders were broad. he gave me his small corner-of-the-mouth smile than always brought on a smile of

my own. "What are you looking at Rick?"

"You" i answer and gave him a playful shove which he returned.

"Why are you looking at me?"

"Because you have changed Patrick David Harrison."

"So have you Rhona Georgia-Rose Stanley"

I poke out my tongue. "Don't use my middle name and don't call me Rhona! And...me? Changed? how?"

"You're a lot shorter." And we laugh. "No actually," He smiles down at me. "You're a little taller, and a lot prettier."

I shoved him again. He always jokes like that. And he can always always get a smile out of me. Even when i've been crying or when i'm upset. Ever since i can remember hes' been there to make me smile, like that was what he was put on the earth to do or something. When we were kids he once even ate worms to stop me from crying when i hurt my ankle on the jungle gym. He has, and always will be, my best mate. "What'd you do in the holidays?" Patrick interrupted my train of thought.

"Now that would be telling!" I cocked my head to one side and he raised an eyebrow. I couldn't help it, his one raised eyebrow always made me laugh. He laughed with me, long and hard. But our laughter was cut short by the bell. i sighed, "What do we have first?"

"English."

"Ah, with Miss Brown was it?" It was my turn to raise an eyebrow and he laughed.

"That woman has stolen my heart!" He exclaimed dramatically.

"I didn't know you had one to steal."

"I do, it's just hard to find." I shook my head. If there is one thing i'll never forget about Patrick, It's how big hs heart is.

"Oi! You two! Get to class now!!!"

"Sure thing Mr Bork." I answered politely but i wasn't being so polite to him in my head. I hated that teacher nearly as much as he hated me. Patrick pulled me to class as I made rude gestures to the back of Mr Bork's head.

School. Mental torture chamber, social deathtrap, boredom breeder, and, among other things, just plain horrible. I was doodling in my maths book. It was only the second lesson of my first day back and i was already dying. First lesson had been cool. I liked Miss Brown a lot, I could easily see why Patrick had a crush on her. She was young, funny, pretty and made English fun. i wish there was a teacher who could do that with maths. As if the sky decided to reflect my emotions, it began to rain.

The time came when the bell signalling the start of intervil finally rang. i met Patrick by the library (because he was in a different maths class) and we headed towards our spot. That took a while because we both stopped to talk to people on the way. Somewhere near the tuck shop we met up with Alex and her new boyfriend, Steven. "Hi Alex."

"Hi Ricky, Pat." Patrick aknowledged the greating with a lazy hand gesture. I wondered if that was because he didn't like Steven very much and thought little of the two being together, or because he simply hated being called 'Pat'. I decided it was a bit of both. "So what did you get up to in the holidays?" I asked politely, as if i didn't already know.

"I hooked up with Steven." I rolled my eyes. "So tell me Ricky," she ventured. "When are you and Pat gonna get together, or is it a secret?" She got the finger for that. Patrick and I are just mates and it'll stay that way. Even the thought made my tummy turn. Not because Patrick is repulsive, because we've been friends for so long it'd just be....weird!

After that, we reached our spot with minamal fuss. Our spot or 'meeting area' was beautiful. We had

defended it all the years we've been at this school and it was easy to see why. Under the sheltered area were two benches surrounded in grass and opposite a drinking fountain. But the main feature of our area was the old oak tree that grew in the middle, depicting just how old our school was. That tree has been our pride and joy since we first arrived at the school as primary kids. Heather field high went right through from five-year-olds to eighteen-year-old so everyone knew everyone. The school was also situated in a semi-rural area so, while you get cows and sheep right next to your Art classroom, its only a two minute walk into town. You also get vandals from town popping in from time to time to let us know that they still enjoyed smashing things and painting rude pictures on the principle's office wall. The best of both worlds. Some people might not like it but i wouldn't have it any other way. This was home to me and life was looking good from where i was standing, that was, until I got home that evening.

### 3 - Blood on the carpet

I arrived home just before dinner time because Patrick and I went for a swim at the beach. I was expecting the house to be quiet because Dad was working late since it was a Friday. I expected Blake to be working with his as he usually does. Also, Taylor was working and the twins were at a friend's house so it'd just be Mum, Manda and me at home. I was wrong, boy was I wrong. I arrived home and the house was dead quiet. I slowly walked up the stairs and peered into the living room. The first thing I noticed was that the grandfather clock had been turned over. The next thing was that Blake was home...and standing over Manda's comering body. Mum was trying to hold him back but he was twice her size so she wasn't helping much. Blake's hands were raised and boodied. And they all just stood there. Like a painting. A horrible violent painting. None of them even noticed my entry until I let a horrified gasp escape my lips. Then, everything happened at once. Blake thundered across the room and grabbed me by my shirt, Mum ran to the phone and frantically punching in numbers and Manda rolled over and crawled toward Blake and me. "Blake, You're drunk!" I was in no position to be accusing him of being drunk but I was always the stupid one. Next thing I know he's got my blood on his hands. My lip was bleeding onto my shirt. "Blake stop!!!" Amanda screamed before he kicked her. She gave out a noise like a wounded animal and curled up into a ball. Her head was bleeding and she was shaking badly. "Your peace making skills aren't working so well now, are they little sister?" He spat at me. "Stop it Blake, you know you'll go to jail for this." My so called 'peace making' skills got me punched again, knocking the air from my lungs. "Nosey cow." He dropped me and his shoe hitting my face was the last thing I remember.

Minutes passed, or was it hours? I woke up to find myself in my bed. A doctor was telling me to lie down but I didn't listen. I ran into the kitchen to find several police men drinking coffee. I walked over to the first one, "Where is Mum and Manda?!" I demanded.

"Don't worry, they're ok."

"Where are they?!"

"Your little sister is sleeping and your mother is giving her statement."

"And Blake?"

"Jail."

"Good!" I spat, "Hes' not my brother anymore." The police man placed his hand on my shoulder and gave me a reassuring smile.

"Everything will be ok."

"I hope so." I truly hope so.

Amanda had a sprained wrist and six stitches in her head and I had a broken nose and bruised ribs. Mum's hair grew more grey and she looked as if she'd aged twenty years in a week. Dad spent most of his time talking to police. As for Taylor and the twins, they really don't know what to think and settle with not getting involved with any of it. And Blake was now safely behind bars. The way I wanted it to be, although I'd dearly like to give him a piece of my mind. After a lot of piecing together what different police men and woman said, we decided that Blake was just wasted. He wasn't getting revenge or anything, just so drunk off his head that he decided we would make good punching bags. Although he might have been taking revenge on me for all my so called 'peace making.' Sometimes I just wish I kept my nose out of other's business.



I went back to school on Monday only to be pumelled with questions about my and my sister's injuries. I told most people that we were lifting a bookcase full of romance and science fiction novels out of a friend's house because she was moving but i tripped over her collection of snow globes and my sister and I both got crushed under the bookcase. Patrick didn't believe my story though. It was after school and we were sitting on the beach when I told him about the evil romance novels on the shelf but he wouldn't have a word of it. "Ricky, You've got bruises up your arm like someone grabbed you and your face has a mark that oddly looks a shoeprint. Please tell me what happening." He said it so gently and sweetly he could have asked me anything and I would have done it in a heartbeat. So I told him what happened all the while watching his face to see what his reaction would be. He was horrified. So horrified, in fact, that I burst into tears. I was crying so hard i thought my eyes were going to fall out. I pressed my hands over my face but that didn't stop the flow of tears. My body was shaking and my head was pounding. I was falling to pieces and I couldn't pull myself together. I wanted to die, the pain was so bad. And then Patrick reached out his arms and pressed me gently onto his chest. If I was in any other situation I probably would have thumped him but his t-shirt was oddly comforting. And he smelt nice. His steady heartbeat soon calmed me down. I was so calm infact that I stopped crying and fell asleep right there and then, in is arms. I didn't even notice him kiss the top of my head and whisper something in my ear.

The next week went tediously slow for all of us. Dad was having a hard time at work bcause Blake was no longer there. Mum was still off in another world and seemed to be aging twice as fast as everything else and Amanda jumped a mile in the air whenever someone made a sudden move or a loud noise. It was Thursday evening and I was bored out of my brain. I was flicking through the channels on the t.v. at break-neck speed. Something Manda would usualy snap at me for doing but instead, like Mum, she seamed to be off in another world. I continued to flick through the channels while staring at Amanda to see if I could get a reaction. She was hardly blinking. I frowned, how long was she going to stay like that? Channel one, channel five, channel four, channel eight, channel three, channel two. Nothing, not even a blink. "You know, it's not like it's the end of the world!" I surprised myself with my sudden anger. When Amanda didn't reply I screamed, "HE DOESN'T MATTER!!! THEY SHOULD THROW AWAY THE KEY! HE GOT WHAT WAS COMING TO HIM!!!"

"He didn't mean it, we're his family." She whispered.

"NOT ANYMORE! HE CAN ROT!!!" The venom in my voice was un-matchable. I was going out of my way for a fight, not like usual.

"Hes' our brother."

"NO!!!" I screamed and ran accross the room. "HE IS NOTHING! HES'....." Amanda's shirt was in my hands. My fists were raised, casting a shadow on her face. The look in her eyes were the same the night Blake came home drunk. A look of pure fear...fear of me. I let her go, my rage dissipating into nothing. I was just like Blake. I was a monster. I had to get away, I had to run. So thats what I did. I ran.

## 4 - Muggers and hugs

I don't know how long I was running and I don't know where I was going but I just had to keep moving. It felt like my lungs were bleeding, I had tears streaming down my face, my bare feet were bruised and bloodied and I could go no further. I collapsed onto the side of the road. I sat there panting and sweating for the best part of an hour before I could control my shaking body. My head was spinning. Where was I? "Hey you!" My head whipped around. Trouble. Once again I felt the air being crushed from my lungs as someone made off with my wallet. I growled and rolled over. Picking myself off the ground I began to stumble along the street looking for something, anything, that was familiar. It was dark now and the street lamps were lit. I wondered aimlessly until I heard something I liked. "The sea!" My legs found the motivation they needed somehow, I ran to the beach. I reached the sand and with my last Joule of energy, climbed down the banks and drove my head into the soft gold powder. I tried to get up but all I managed to do was throw up my lunch. I felt like I was going to die there but I didn't care. This was the place I loved most. Then, someone was calling my name. It was Taylor. "Big brother?" I whispered as he picked me up. "I'm sorry big brother."

My parents let me stay home on Friday, that was after yelling at me from running away into the night in the first place. I got up early on Friday, even though I had the day off, because I needed to talk to Amanda. "Can I come in?" I asked tentatively.

"O.k." She looked a little confused at my request. I usually just walked in since we shared the room. I had just been talking to Taylor about the man who mugged me and told him about having to cancel my credit card, but that's not what I wanted to talk to Amanda about. "I'm sorry...for yelling at you and grabbing you. I didn't mean to, I suppose we're all a little edgy at the moment but that is no excuse for my behaviour." I closed my eyes, praying that she would accept my apology. I opened one eye to find her smiling at me. Laughing even. "Don't worry about it Ricky," she smiled again. Such a sweet innocent smile it was like drinking in the sun. "I know you didn't mean to." Her eyes were sparkling diamonds. How could she be so forgiving? "Thankyou." I muttered, lowering my head so she wouldn't see my tears. "I love you Ricky." She surprised me by saying and gave me a hug. I was startled at first, then I returned her embrace. "I love you too Manda."

After talking to Amanda I crawled back in bed and slept all day. It was afternoon when my Mum came into my room, "You have a visitor."

"Tell them I'm sick."

"It's Patrick."

"Oh, let him in!" Patrick slowly entered my room as if it was the room of a dead man. "Hello Ricky." I smiled and sat up onto my elbows, "Hi Patrick." He sat on the edge of my bed as Mum left the room NOT closing the door. I thought that was odd, she'd never done that before. Patrick and I had been friends for years, did she think that was about to change? "Why are you frowning Rick? Something wrong?" I shook my head.

"No, I'm fine." And I plastered together a fake smile for him. He continued to look worried. "Ricky, you look horrible!" He made me laugh. At least he was honest. "Yes, and I suppose you want to know what happened." Patrick was shaking his head even before I finished my sentence. "Your Mum told me."

"Oh....." Silence. I would usually welcome silence but I didn't enjoy the quiet that had eaten its way into our conversation. Tension grew. Tension that never used to be present. Something had grown between



hiccuped and choked on my tears as he stroked my hair. "Hush hush, It's ok."

"P-Patrick?"

"Yeah?" He looked down at me and gently wiped away my tears with his thumb.

"I-I m-missed." Pointing to the basketball that lay five or so metres away from the hoop. Patrick chuckled and gave me one of his corner-of-the-mouth smiles, "We all miss sometimes." And he squeezed me tight. All the tension that was previously hindering our friendship had vanished. For the moment, the only thing between us were our clothes.