

# Rose, the short story

(Based on the award-winning independent short film...)



<http://www.rosethemovie.com/media.html>

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Short story adaptation by Rick Robinson



# Rose...



...my only real interest was to be alone, to get away—

## Trailer:

"Where are you going?" Darren sneered.

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*Travis has a secret.....that he meets once a year.....every year.*

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"What's your name?" she would ask.

He replied every time, "Travis...Travis...Travis..."

"Mine's Rose."

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Travis asked his brother, "Do you ever watch those nature documentaries, like the ones where there's this big cat or something chasing a rabbit, and then the cat eats the rabbit?"

"Yeah, I know what you're talking about."

"Don't you think that, if it's possible to intervene, you should?"

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*...but this year.....*

*.....things will change..."*

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"Rose...Rose," he breathed excitedly. "I want you to follow me."

"I don't understand!" she cried.

"He's going to hurt you. You've got to get out of here now!"

"You don't even know me!"

"Yes, I do! I know everything about you!"

CHAPTER 1: ALONE

I have a secret. It's the kind of secret that you should probably never share with another person because it's too bizarre, too personal, and just too special to recount. In some ways, the story is too ugly to consider, but, in other ways, for me at least, it's almost too beautiful.

Secrets have a way of showing themselves, though, and you have as much right as anyone else to know this story. However, there is no guarantee that, even after I tell you the details, you will be able to understand what actually happened.

My brother and I were only thirteen and eleven years old respectively when our father left the family. Some ignorant people might say that our family's problems began then, but the truth is that the old man was tired and completely fed up with his life. Who knows? If he had stayed, he might eventually have committed suicide, or worse—murder. I think that he decided that it was better for his two sons to grow up with no father around than with no parents at all.

I was a boy with no interests in particular, not in school nor in sports—not even in girls. Nothing interested me, actually.

My brother Darren, on the other hand, had an interest that occupied almost all of his time: knives! He loved the way that they looked, the way that they felt in his hand, and the way that they cut! He seemed to find a certain art in the destruction that knives could create.

And our mother had an interest, too: cowboys!

But my only real interest was to be alone, to get away—away from the house, from my brother, my mother, and my own boredom—but not, unfortunately, from my anger.

My favorite pastime was to go outside of town into a reserved part of the countryside called Hinkle Park. There, I would enter the forest just to be alone—and to vent my anger on plants, old tree branches and empty bottles. There was a little creek that ran through the forest, and I used to catch the frogs that lived there. I was proud that I was fast enough to catch them with one quick grab.

However, as I indicated earlier, I was never really alone in the forest because my anger had become my constant companion. Whenever I felt really frustrated, angry at Darren's bullying or hurt by my mother's indifference, I would feel an urgent need overcome me, the need to hurt or kill something, something that was smaller than me, something that I could make suffer and that couldn't fight me back—beetles, frogs, and sometimes even baby birds were my favorite targets.

CHAPTER 2: GONE

In a way, I was gone at eleven, when Mom was socializing while Dad was at work. It was the same day that the incident happened, on October 17<sup>th</sup> of that year. Or was it really that year? As you will see, this is a difficult question for me to answer.

I watched as my father got into his car and drove down our driveway for the last time.

“Justine?” I heard the cowboy call at the bottom of the stairs.

“I’m up here, Randy,” my mother called back.

As usual, my mother was entertaining one of her cowboy friends upstairs in her room, and Darren was in the kitchen busying himself with a hunting knife, sawing the head off of a wooden soldier that our father had given to him.

Later, I was lying on my bed listening to the noises that they all made, their nauseating rhythms. The repeated sounds of my mother, her boyfriend, and the doll all losing their heads at the same time was too much for me!

So I left the house early that day.

As I went out through the kitchen door, Darren bullied me, “Where are you going? Put on some deodorant. You smell gay!”

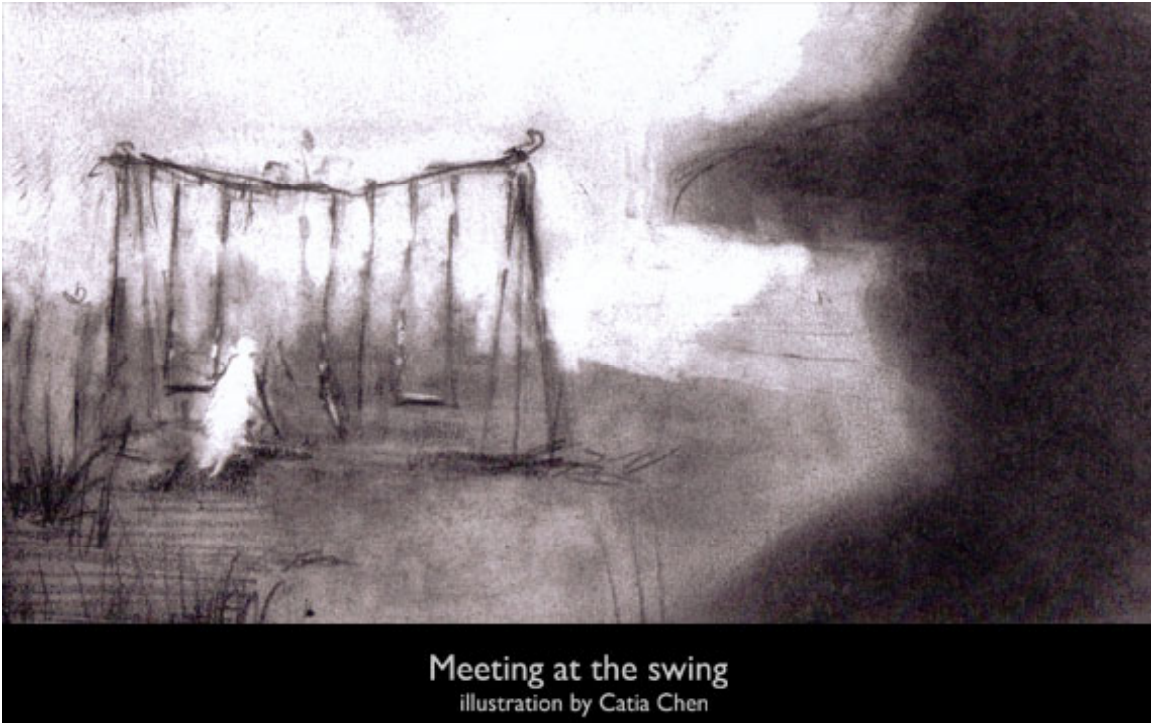
I ran out of the house, down the street, across the town square, and out into the countryside. I ran and ran until I couldn’t breathe, and, when I reached the woods, I began to destroy everything that I found there, plants, beetles, everything. Then I picked up a stick and went down to the creek. There, I caught the biggest old bullfrog that I could find, threw it up into the air, and swung at it like a baseball. The poor creature died immediately upon impact and landed several meters from the bank of the creek.

Unsatisfied with this violence, I began to strike the stick against an old oak tree, but, this time, I was the victim, for, as the stick broke apart, one large piece flew into my face and knocked me to the ground. My head struck a rock, and I was knocked unconscious.

Some time later, I woke up, and I found myself lying on the ground looking up at the limbs of the huge old tree suspended above me. I heard the sound of the wind, of birds flying from the treetop, and of another sound as well. It was a human sound. Perhaps, I thought at first, it was the sound of someone laughing. Or was it the sound of someone crying?

I raised myself to look in the direction of the sound.

CHAPTER 3: IN THE CLEARING



I walked into a little clearing in the middle of the woods, where an old swing was suspended from a tree limb. There was evidence that an old farm had once occupied this space because there was an old, dilapidated fence there, and there were also rotting pieces of wood lying around on the ground.

On the swing sat a slender young woman with her back turned toward me. The swing swayed slightly as she sobbed, holding her head in one hand.

*“Are you okay?”* I asked.

She started and turned to look at me suddenly. *“Yeah, yeah, I’m fine, thanks.”* She stood up quickly, picked up the small suitcase which was sitting on the ground beside her and turned to leave. However as she was walking away, she tripped on a small piece of wood and fell to the ground. As she picked herself up, she laughed lightly and said, *“I should really be going.”*

*“Do you want to talk about it?”* I asked.

*“No,”* she said quietly, her back facing me again.

*“All right,”* I said. She hesitated for a moment, and then she whispered, *“He never showed up. He said this morning that we’d go away and get married. He promised. I’ve been waiting since nine. And I took my daddy’s wallet. He’s out looking for me. I know it.”*

Then she seemed to notice me for the first time, and she smiled a little bit when she realized how young and small I was. Her initial nervous reaction had at first reminded me of a frightened forest animal. But now, she could see that I presented no danger to her.

And I looked at her for the first time, too. Her eyes, although still red from crying, were a bright, clear blue, and I noticed that she was quite beautiful, despite her torn clothes, tousled hair and tattered appearance. She was much older than I was, by almost seven years. We must have been quite a sight for the creatures of the forest to observe from their hiding places, a tall, willowy teenage girl and a short, skinny little boy.

*“What’s your name?”* she began.

*“Travis.”*

*“Mine’s Rose.”* She offered me her hand, but I didn’t take it. Maybe because I wanted to be sure first that she wasn’t a ghost or something.

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Little by little, though, we began to relax in each other’s company, and later, sitting in the shade of an old oak, we began to talk.

*“So how old are you, Travis?”* she asked me.

*“Eleven.”*

*“Jesus! Eleven?”* She laughed at the thought that she would even consider talking to such a little boy, but, when she saw the hurt in my eyes, she apologized. *“Sorry. So do you like bowling? School? Got a girlfriend?”*

I hesitated, still feeling the sting of her laughter. *“No.”*

*“There we go. What about family? What are they like?”*

I didn’t want to talk about my family. In fact, since the time that I had met Rose, I hadn’t even thought about my family.

*“Sweetie?”* she talked to me as if she were my babysitter!

*“My mom,”* I said slowly, deliberately, *“bangs a lot of cowboys.”*

*“Oh!”* she said. The shock was evident on her face. *“Wow! There you go!”*

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*“So when did you meet him?”* I asked her later.

*“Early October. The first night of the new moon.”*

*“That’s last Tuesday!”* I exclaimed.

*“I know.”*

*“You’re hitching with someone you met last Tuesday?”*

*“I know!”*

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Later, we found a huge, old oak tree with an enormous limb hanging almost horizontally about twelve feet above the ground. We climbed the tree together and sat and looked at the darkening sky. She offered me part of her sandwich to eat.

*"This is supposed to be pastrami," she said, "but we're going to have to settle for p. b. and j."*

*"So, why are you running away?"* I asked.

*"Because I want to."*

*"That's selfish."*

*"Why?"*

*"You can't just leave your family because you feel like it!"* She smiled at me indulgently. *"Why?"*

*"Because you're supposed to help out your mom and dad."*

*"What if you don't like them?"*

*"Well, that ain't a good reason."*

*"I think it is."*



"So why are you running away?" I asked.

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Later, I took her down to the creek to demonstrate my frog-catching skills.

*"Watching?"* I called to her as I grabbed at an old bullfrog.

*"I am!"* she replied, sitting on a nearby rock.

*"Watch this!"* As was my habit, I picked up a stick and threw the frog up into the air. But before I could hit it, she had stopped me, holding back my arm.

*"Hey!"* she yelled at me.

Suddenly, I felt my face turn red. I was angry and embarrassed about her interference. She was not my mother after all, and certainly not my babysitter! But then, I realized that this had probably been the first time in my life that anybody had shown me that they cared about anything that I did! And, besides, Rose and I were in the process of becoming friends. As I didn't have any other friends, I didn't want to take a chance on losing her. And, to tell the truth, I hadn't really felt like killing the silly old frog anyway."

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When the sun set, I realized that Rose and I had spent the entire day together. The moon was still bright, and Rose and I lay on our backs looking at the silhouettes of the tree branches against the clear October sky. Softly, Rose's voice broke the silence.

*"I don't think he's going to show up, Travis,"* she whispered. *"Hey, your folks at home are going to worry about you."*

Suddenly, the sound of a car engine interrupted our peace.

*"Hey!"* a man's voice called out. *"Rose, is that you?"* I was familiar with the mixture of anger and alcohol that I heard in the man's voice. I had had enough experience with the adults in my own house to recognize the sound of someone who was in a drunken rage.

*"He found me!"* Rose shuddered. *"It's my dad!"*

*"Where are you going?"* the voice called out.

We both stood up. Rose picked up her suitcase and turned to me. Then she opened my hand, put something into it, and softly kissed the top of my head.

*"You go home, Travis,"* she said.

*"What happened to all my money?"* the voice called drunkenly.

She started to walk alongside the road in front of her father's pickup as the man continued to yell at her. I looked down into the palm of my hand, and I saw that Rose had given me her ring. I decided to follow behind them at a safe distance to see how I could help her.

*"You stay away from me!"* Rose yelled back to her father.

*"Get in the car! Are you taking a trip?"* he demanded? *"Where are you planning on going, Little Girl? Hey, I'm talking to you! Hey! Hey!"*

He stopped the pickup suddenly and yelled, *"Get in the car, and let's go home!"*

Rose froze in her steps, shivering from fear. Her father jumped out of the vehicle and violently grabbed hold of her arm.

*"No! No! No! Help!"* she screamed.

*"God damn it!"* her father yelled.



It was impossible for me to move from my spot, and I stood there paralyzed, watching in horror as the man slapped my new friend across her face. She reeled from the pain, but she did not fall down. When she turned back to him, she saw that her father was carrying his hunting knife in his belt, and, in an instinctive reaction, she pulled it away from him for her own protection. As she did so, the man grabbed it by the blade, accidentally cutting a deep wound into the palm of his hand.

The booze now combined with pain and shock to further enrage the man, and, as he stepped forward to strike the girl again, she moved to protect herself, unthinkingly thrusting the knife forward into her father's abdomen.

In horror, Rose saw blood running down her father's shirt. But the man was not yet finished with his attack. With his last ounce of power, he thrust his right arm forward, and, with the strength of two men, pushed his daughter against the pickup truck, causing her head to strike its side mirror.

Dazed, she continued standing and staring at her father, but the blow to her head had caused her brain to begin hemorrhaging. Her beautiful face shone white in the moonlight, except for a thin trickle of blood which was running down from her temple. Suddenly, at the same moment, both Rose and her father fell to the ground, face down, a widening pool of blood their only remaining connection.

I moved closer to the lifeless bodies on the road in front of me. The pickup engine was still running. It and the beating of my heart were the only two sounds to be heard in the forest. I was only eleven years old, and, despite the small creatures that I had killed in my frustration, I did not really understand death. I could not make myself believe that I would never again see Rose alive!

"Rose," I whispered. I looked again into the palm of my hand, but the ring had disappeared! "Rose."

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#### CHAPTER 4: THE SECRET

It was October 17<sup>th</sup>, exactly one year later. Several more cowboys had passed through our doors, and we hadn't heard from father in all that time. I left my room and was trying to get to the stairs when I ran into my mother's newest boyfriend. He was standing in front of her bedroom door at the top of the stairs, wearing nothing but his underwear and a cowboy hat.

*"You want a granola bar?"* he called over his shoulder to her.

*"No thanks, Bud,"* she called back.

As I tried to pass by him, he joked, *"Hey! What's up, Little Stud?"*

When I left the house through the kitchen, Darren looked up and sneered, *"Where the Hell are you going, all dressed up so nice?"*

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I found myself in the Hinkle Park forest later on that morning. I had brought a small bouquet of dried flowers with me to leave on Rose's swing. I didn't know where her grave was, so the swing was the only place that I could leave her a tribute. And I didn't want anyone to know that I had known her or seen her die. Thinking about the day we had spent together made me feel lonely.

Suddenly, the air seemed still, and I looked up and saw birds flying from the treetops. And I heard the sound of someone laughing...or crying...

I walked over to the clearing, and there I saw a slender young woman sitting on the swing, just as I had on this day one year before. Her back was turned toward me. The swing swayed slightly as she sobbed, holding her head in one hand.

*"Are you okay?"* I asked.



*"Do we know each other?"* She asked.

She started and turned to look at me suddenly. *"Yeah, yeah, I'm fine, thanks."* She stood up quickly, picked up the small suitcase which was sitting on the ground beside her and turned to leave. However as she was walking away, she tripped on a small piece of wood and fell to the ground. As she picked herself up, she laughed lightly and said, *"I should really be going."*

*"Rose?"* I asked.

*"Do we know each other?"*

*"Yeah, Travis!"* I said.

*"I'm sorry,"* she said, *"I don't recall ever... I'm sorry. I should be going."*

*"Do you want to talk about it?"* I asked.

*"No,"* she said quietly, her back facing me again.

*"All right,"* I said. She hesitated for a moment, and then she whispered, "He never showed up."

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Later, as we were sitting with our backs against the trees, she asked me again, “So how old are you, Travis?” I couldn’t answer. I was so unsure of what was happening to me.

“Hello?” she asked me as if I had not heard her.

“Twelve.”

“Oh, my God! Twelve! Sorry, I’m sorry. So, do you like...”

“I like bowling, and I don’t like school, and I don’t have a girlfriend.”

“Well, what about your family?”

“My family’s not to... We’re not together anymore. My dad, he left.”

“Oh,” she sighed.

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Later, we found ourselves sitting on the old oak tree limb again.

“So why are you running away?” I asked her.

“Because I want to,” she responded.

“Probably a good idea,” I added.

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We spent another day together, just as we had the year before. Everything repeated itself as before. Everything!

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“No, no, no!” she screamed as her father grabbed her.

“Shut up!” he yelled as he hit her again.

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## CHAPTER 5: MY BEST FRIEND



Another year went by, and another, and then another. Every October 17<sup>th</sup> was my day to spend with Rose.

By the time I was 16, I knew everything about Rose Everett. I knew the things that made her happy and the things that made her sad. I knew her favorite foods, her favorite music and the kinds of programs that she liked to watch on television. She even told me where she had gone to high school.

On my own, in the many days between each October 17<sup>th</sup>, I learned where she had lived, why her mother had left her father, how disliked her father had been by everyone in the county, and how sadly her friends had mourned her death.

And, on that day, I came to our place again.

*"What's your name?" she said.*

*"Travis."*

*"Mine's Rose."*

*"Hey! Do you like pastrami?"*

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*"So what does she look like?" she asked me as we sat on the ground.*

*"I can't tell you."*

*"Why?"*

*"Because you probably know her."*

*"So what's her name?"*

*"I can't tell you."*

*"God! You act like you're eight!"*

*"I know that."*

*"Well, does she know how you feel?"*

*"She has a boyfriend... ..and she's moving."*

*"Where?"*

*"I don't know."*

*"Well, you should follow her!"*

*"I haven't even been out of Quincy, much less where she's going."*

*"Well, why stay?"*

*"Do you actually want me to answer that?"*

*"No, I'm serious! Why stay? I mean, if you don't like it here and there's something better out there for you, then why stay?"*

*"Because, unlike you, I don't have any company."*

*"Hey, by the looks of things, I don't got company, either."*

*"Saying it's easier than doing it."*

*"I'm not just saying it."*

Later, Rose showed me the ring that her boyfriend had given her, the only thing that anyone had ever given her, probably.

*“A Crackerjack Box?”*

*“It’s that obvious, huh?”*

*“He draws a lot of pictures. He isn’t any good, but that’s what I like about him.”*

*“What kind of pictures?”* I asked. But this time, I had brought my own drawings with me, and I pulled them out of my bag.

*“What is it?”* she asked me.

*“Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore,”* I responded.

*“I love that show,”* she said enthusiastically.

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This time, when we climbed up to our tree limb, I stayed below and let Rose climb up first. When she saw me taking a quick look up her skirt, she brushed dirt from the limb into my eyes. I made a mental note to be less obvious with my glances the following year.

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## CHAPTER 6: MY BIRTHDAY

When my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday came, I was trying to decide how I could change my life. But my family was not much help.

*“Happy birthday, Little Bro,”* said Darren sarcastically as he clapped his hands unenthusiastically.

*“Travis,”* said my mother, *“Thank Mickey. He went to the grocer himself and bought you cake.”*

*“Look, it’s made out of chocolate,”* sneered Mickey, her latest cowboy.

*“Thank you,”* I said glumly.

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Later, I went to my brother’s room and asked him if I could come in.

*“Darren?”* I asked, knowing that he would give me a cold response.

*“Yeah?”*

*“Do you ever watch the Discovery Channel?”*

*“Hell, no!”*

*“Have you ever watched those nature documentaries, like the ones where there’s this big cat or something chasing a rabbit, and the cat eats the rabbit?”*

*“Yeah, I know what you’re talking about.”*

*“Don’t you think that’s fucked up?”*

*“What?”*

*“Well, there’s all these movie folks there. They see this rabbit getting eaten alive, and they don’t do anything.”*

*“Nature, Bro, you’ve got to let things be.”*

*“But don’t you think, if it’s possible to intervene, you should?”*

*“I guess, if you dig rabbits,” he replied.*

*“Well, say you’re the cameraman, and you see the cat kill the rabbit ever day, but the world’s all screwed, so the same cat keeps eating the same rabbit each time. But it’s your gig, and, if it stopped happening, you’d be unemployed. Do you think that’s fucked up?”*

*“Get out of my room!” Travis shouted.*

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It was later the same night, the moon was bright, and we were lying on our backs looking at the silhouettes of the trees against the night sky.

*“What does he look like?” I asked her.*

*“Who?”*

*“Your boyfriend.”*

*“He’s tall, about your height. Skinny. He combs his hair over like he’s got somewhere important to be. Big eyes, bad teeth. Today, he said...he said he was going to dress up with me. He was going to get a suit, a nice beige suit to match me, to start our trip. I don’t think he’s going to show up.”*

*“What are you going to do tomorrow, Rose?”*

*“I don’t know. Find him? Hit the road to the city by my lonesome.”*

*“I’ll come with you.”*

*“No, Travis. That’s sweet, but no.”*

*“I guess I’ll see you next year,” I whispered.*

*“What?”*

*“Nothing.”*

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Then we heard the pickup come, and I watched them both die for the sixth time. And again, the ring disappeared.

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CHAPTER 7: MY PLAN

In my eighteenth year, I started planning. My father had left behind a box with some clothes that he had worn when he was younger. There, I found an old white shirt, a striped tie and a beige suit.

I stood in front of the mirror in my bedroom and practiced what I would say to Rose when I saw her again.

*“Rose,” I said, “I want you to come with me. ...I know... You have to trust me..... Rose, I’ll go with you. ....Rose! ...Rose, I want you to follow me.”*

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On October 17<sup>th</sup>, I dressed up in the suit and tie and packed my bag. I was in the living room looking at the picture of Rose that I had found in an old high school yearbook, when I heard Darren’s car turn into our driveway. As I heard his and his fat friend Winslow’s voices outside the front door, I made the instant decision to take Darren’s hunting knife, a Buck Tactical, with me for protection.

*“Damn! You look like a morbid Pee Wee Herman,”* he jeered the instant he walked in the door. *Got any hot dates, Bro?”*

*“Apparently so!”* exclaimed Winslow as he picked up Rose’s picture from the coffee table.

Darren grabbed the paper from Winslow’s hand. “Whoa, who is this, Bro?” I ignored him and took the picture away from him.

*“You got a girlfriend? She’s hot, Bro! Is this your date?”*

I picked up my bag, and ran out the front door slamming it behind me.

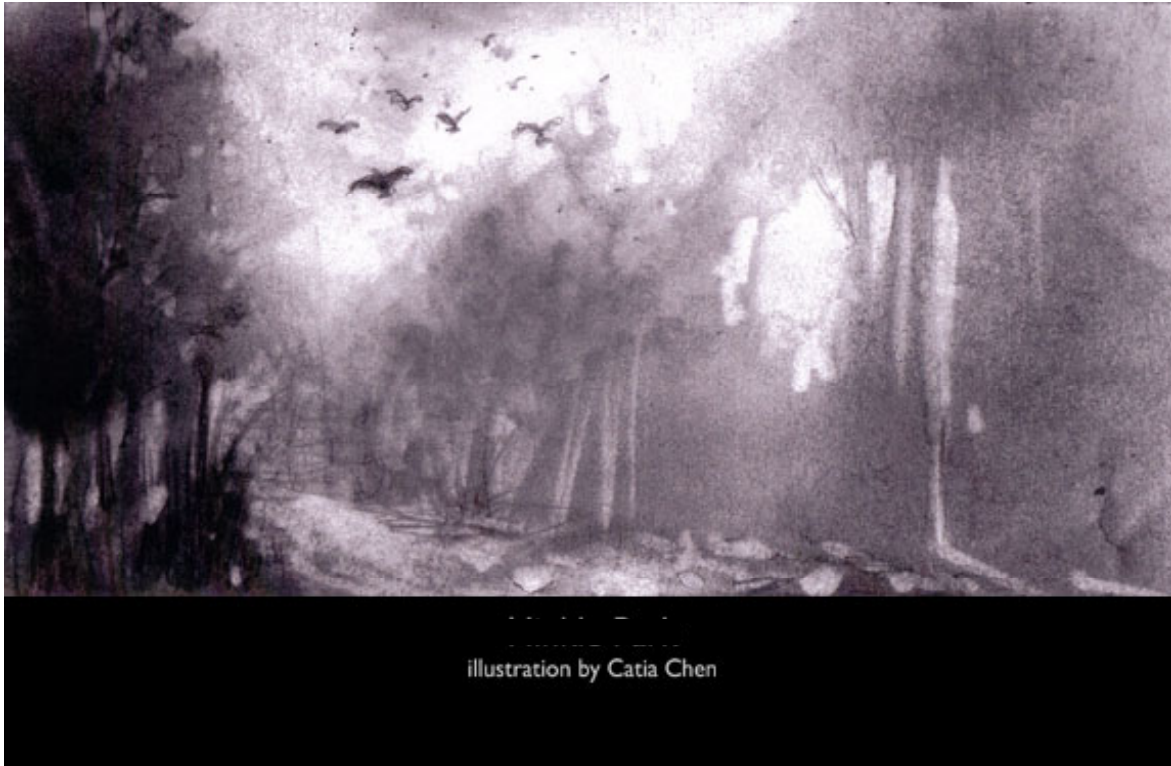
*“Wait a minute,”* Winslow mused. *“I’ve seen her before.”*

But Darren had something else on his mind. He noticed that his favorite hunting knife was missing. “Hey, where’s my Buck Tactical? That son of a bitch!”

Winslow pulled himself off of our couch and walked into Darren’s bedroom. He looked through the books on the bookshelf there and pulled down the seven-year-old high school yearbook. He opened it up and leafed through it until he found the page with a huge rectangular hole cut out of it. The page was edged in black. At the top was written, *“In memory of...”* and at the bottom in bold letters was written:

*Rose Everett*

*“Well, I’ll be damned!”* exclaimed Darren.



CHAPTER 7:       OCTOBER 17

As I entered the forest, the sun was beginning to lower in the western sky.

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Meanwhile, Darren had started his old car in our driveway. “Winslow!” he yelled. “We’re taking off!”

“This ought to be interesting,” said Winslow as he crawled into the passenger’s seat.

“No doubt,” added Darren.

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I walked over to the clearing, and there on the swing sat a slender young woman with her back turned toward me. The swing swayed slightly as she sobbed, holding her head in one hand. “*Are you okay?*” I asked.

She startled and turned to look at me suddenly.

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“Where are we going?” Winslow asked Darren.

“Hinkle Park. When he ain’t in his room, he’s there.”

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“I’m sorry,” she said, staring at my father’s beige suit, which was much too big for me and hung loosely on my body. “You look like someone I’m supposed to meet. What’s your name?”

“Travis.”

“Mine’s Rose. So what’s with the suitcase?”

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“Here we are!” said Darren as the car drove through the gate to Hinkle Park.

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“You make a good sandwich,” Rose enthused as she took another bite. “Hey, why don’t you sit down?”

“Let’s go for a walk,” I said.

“You keep saying that. Do you need exercise or something?”

“I just feel like walking,” I replied nervously.

“Relax! Besides, it’s getting dark.”

“Yeah,” I said. “I know it is.”

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“Whoa!” yelled Winslow. “Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! STOP!” When Darren stopped his car, Winslow shined his light on the dirt road. Footprints!

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We heard a man's voice in the distance. "Rose! Rose!"

As we sat finishing our sandwiches and talking in the clearing, we heard a man’s voice calling in the distance. “Rose! Rose!”

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With the windows to his car still open to look for more clues, Winslow and Darren drove slowly through the forest. Suddenly, they also heard the voice calling from a distance. *"What's that?" asked Darren.*

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Rose jumped to her feet and grabbed her suitcase. *"I hear him, Travis!"* she exclaimed happily. *"He came! I've got to go, Travis! Thanks for everything!"*  
*"Rose! Rose!"* the familiar drunken voice was getting closer.

All at once, everything was happening too fast. *"Come with me!"* I said, as I grabbed her by the arm.

*"What?"* she asked.

*"Come away with me. You don't want to be here,"* I urged. She looked at me with confusion and fear in her eyes.

*"I...I don't understand."*

*"Come on!"* I insisted.

*"No!"* she cried, pulling away from me. *"Who are you?"*

*"Please, trust me. He's going to hurt you!"*

*"Travis...!?"* she asked fearfully.

*"I'm sorry. Look, Rose. Don't stay here. Don't come with me if you don't want to, but you've got to get out of here!"* I said urgently.

*"Rose! Is that you, Girl?"* the voice repeated again. Frightened, I grabbed Rose by the arm and started to pull her from the clearing.

*"HEY! HEY! HEY! ROSE!"* the voice yelled.

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We bolted from the clearing and found ourselves at the point where the dirt road curved around a stand of trees. A car was coming directly towards us, and its headlights blinded us at first, but when I shielded my eyes with my hand, I could see that it was NOT her father's pickup.

*"Darren,"* I called, when I recognized my brother's vehicle. *"We need to use your car!"*

*"Did you take my Buck Tactical?"* he demanded.

*"Darren,"* I repeated frantically, *"we need your car now!"*

*"No room, Bro,"* he sneered. Then he moved his flashlight from my face to Rose's and back again, and when he finally recognized her as the girl he had seen in the picture in our living room, his mouth dropped open. Just then, we heard the

sound of another vehicle behind us and all three of us turned at once to see the lights of Rose's father's pickup.



...we heard the sound of another vehicle behind us...

*"What the Hell is going on here?"* the old man demanded as he crawled out of his pickup.

Suddenly, I grabbed Rose by the wrist, and started pulling her towards Darren's car. Her father moved towards us quickly, but Darren was standing between him and us. Too drunk to go around Darren, the man violently pushed him out of his way, knocking him to the ground. Angrily, my brother picked himself up and pulled out a knife to repay the old man with his own form of violence. But the old man was bigger, stronger, and much angrier than Darren, and he knocked him to the ground again. This time, Darren became the victim of the man's frustration. He began hitting and kicking my brother repeatedly.

Before we could reach Darren's car, Rose stopped and freed herself from my grasp. I suppose that, after years herself of being a victim of her father's violence, she couldn't stand by and watch him beat another person.

*"Dad! Stop!"* she cried.

Darren tried again to fight the man back, but his resistance and Rose's voice only enraged him further, and he doubled the fury with which he attacked my brother.

Rose turned to me, her eyes pleading. Understanding now that I was only trying to help her, she opened my hand and placed her ring into my palm. Then she turned again towards her father to try to stop the violence that he was committing upon Darren.

*"Dad! Stop it! Stop it!"* she cried. She ran over to the two of them and tried to pull her father off of my brother. The man turned to her and grabbed her by both arms.

*"You like these boys, hey?"* he jeered.

At this moment, I ran to them and jumped upon the man's back, but, fueled by alcohol and frustration, he easily tossed me to the ground as well. However, this

interruption gave Rose the opportunity to free herself from his grasp, and she spied Darren's knife lying on the ground where he had dropped it. She picked it up quickly, and, as her father turned again to grab her, she pointed it towards his chest.

*"Go home, Dad!"* she yelled.

I lifted myself onto my elbow and called out to her, "Rose, let's go." She hesitated and took one step towards her father.

*"DROP THE KNIFE NOW!"* I screamed. The urgency in my voice startled her, and she let the knife fall to the ground. Fearfully, she looked her father in the eye. He moved forward towards her, but suddenly he stopped. There was a look of shock in his eyes as though Rose had actually put the knife into his chest.

We all looked at him in terror, Darren, Winslow, Rose and I, but he didn't move. He just stood there, staring straight ahead, terror filling his own eyes as well. Then he looked down at the front of his shirt, and, just as it had so many times in the past, blood began to pour from his chest, just a thin line at first, and then more and more, spreading across the front of his shirt as it ran down to the ground. Suddenly, he fell face down in the dirt.

Rose walked slowly to her father's lifeless body. *"Daddy?"* she whispered. She waited for a response, but there was none.

*"Rose?"* I asked softly. She quickly made a decision, picked up her suitcase, and began to walk to her father's pickup.

*"You were never here!"* she said firmly.

*"What?"* I asked.

*"Someone will find him in the morning. The police ain't going to know we were here,"* she responded.

*"Where are you going?"* I begged.

*"I've got to find my boyfriend! I've got to try and see why he didn't show up."* As she said this, she opened the door and crawled into the pickup.



*"Travis,"* she said slowly, deliberately, *"I don't know you."*

*"Rose...Rose," I said, "you ain't going to find him."*

*"How do you know?" she demanded.*

*"I just do! Rose, your boyfriend...he doesn't. He didn't care about you."*

*"Excuse me?" she asked angrily.*

*"I care about you!"*

*"Stop it!"*

*"Listen to me!" I begged, "Rose..."*

*"I'm leaving!"*

*"Rose, you're my best friend."*

*"You don't even know me!" she insisted.*

*"Yes, I do! I know everything about you!"*

*"What is it with you? What are you talking about?"*

*"He's not here! He never was here. He 's never going to be here! But I'm here, ...and I love you!"*

*"Travis," she said slowly, deliberately, "I don't know you."*

Once again, the only sounds in the forest were those of the pickup engine and the beating of my own heart. I turned to walk away. Then I heard Rose open the door of the pickup. She got out, and came over to me.

*"Thanks..."* she said softly. I turned to her and she kissed me tenderly on the cheek.

*"Don't forget me this time,"* I said sadly.

*"Good-bye."* She whispered. She put the old pickup into gear and started to drive away, leaving me standing alone by the side of the road. As the vehicle moved slowly in the distance, it suddenly appeared to evaporate before my eyes. Darren, Winslow and I stared after it in amazement.

\*\*\*

Later, as Winslow was driving Darren's car away from Hinkle Park, Darren was sitting in the passenger's seat, completely silent for perhaps the first time in his life. I sat in the back seat, lost in my reverie.

*"Pull the car over,"* I demanded. Lost in his own thoughts, Winslow did not respond. *"Pull the car over!"* I repeated. *"Stop the car now!"* Winslow stopped the vehicle immediately, and I crawled out of the car.

Both young men looked dazed as they looked up at me through the car window. I took Darren's Buck Tactical out of my belt and handed it to him.

*"I'll see you guys later, okay?"* I said softly. Then I looked down into the open palm of my other hand, and there was Rose's ring.

\*\*\*

I never came home that night...or ever again really. I'm not quite sure whatever became of my mother, my father, or Darren.

The next year, I did visit the park, and I wasn't surprised or too disappointed to find that, this time, I was the only one there.

**The End**

*Rose*

# Rose

## Detail Comprehension Questions

Mr. Robinson

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Directions:**

- a) *Read these questions before watching the film and turn them in at the first class period next week. Some of the answers can be found in the "book," some are in the film, and some can be found on the Internet.*
- b) *This exercise is NOT for a grade, but I will ask you for the answers orally in class. Some of these questions will be asked on your next test.*
- c) *All of your answers must be long or medium answers.*

1. Who wrote and directed this film?
2. What is the name of the actor who played Travis as a boy?
3. Who played Travis as a young man?
4. Rose was played by which actress? What do you know about her?
5. What was the family's religion? Why do you think so?
6. What were some differences between the conversation that Travis and Rose the first time that he met her and the one that they had the second time?
7. What is "The Discovery Channel?" Google the Discovery Channel or go to the website <http://dsc.discovery.com/>. Click on Animal Planet.
8. What is a "Cracker Jack box"? You can find the answer by googling "Cracker Jack Box" or by going to the website [www.www-packagingsolutions.com/cracker-jack-box.html](http://www.www-packagingsolutions.com/cracker-jack-box.html). Click on Cracker Jack Boxes here.

9. Were any parts of the movie funny?
10. Was this a black and white film?
11. What color was Travis's mother's nightgown?
12. What kind of cake did the cowboy buy for Travis's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday?
13. What were the names of the mother's three boyfriends?
14. Describe the boyfriend that Rose was waiting for.
15. Why did Travis put on his father's old suit and tie?
16. Where did Travis find a photograph of Rose?
17. What did the sign on the door to Darren's bedroom say?
18. What happened to Rose's father's pickup when Rose drove it away?
19. What was the name of Travis's town?
20. There are many computer-generated effects in this film. Can you identify any of them?



# Rose

## General Comprehension Questions

Mr. Robinson

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Directions:**

- a) Consider the ideas below and be prepared to discuss them in class . Some of the answers may be found in the "book," but some are a matter of opinion and interpretation..
- b) These ideas and discussions may form the basis a written composition or interview questions.

1. Describe Travis as a young boy. Why did he behave the way that he did whenever he went to the forest?

2. What do you think is the moral of this story?

3. Are there religious themes in this story? If so, what are they? What religious lessons did the characters learn, if any?

4. Think about and be prepared to relate some of the following ideas to this film:

*-If you love something, let it go free.*

*-We can sometimes change the lives of other people without even being aware of it.*

*-It can be difficult to take action, even when we know that it's necessary to do something.*

*-The only consistent thing in life is change.*

5. Did Travis help Rose? Did Rose help Travis? How?
  
6. Do you believe in destiny? Do you believe that destiny can be changed? Should we try?
  
7. Was Rose already dead the first time that Travis met her?
  
8. At the end of the story, why did Rose's father die although she did not? How did he die?
  
9. Did you like the end of the film/story? If not, how would you have changed it?
  
10. Do you believe that Rose and her father loved each other? Why did he abuse her?