

# NOTICED

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## CHAPTER 1

“I never wanted to be famous. No, scratch that, I think *everyone* wants to be famous in some small way. To go to movie premières and hang out with celebrities, to have people to do your hair and make-up, to wear dresses that are as far from off-the-peg as you can get, that could be fun. But it’s not really me, you know?”

“I mean, I’m the one that stands in the corner of the party, hoping that nobody pays attention to her. I’m the one that feels more at home at a Comic Con, dressing as an anime character, than I do walking down a street as myself. And there

are a lot of us out there. The Un-noticed. And you know what? Mostly, we're happy about that.

"Give me a console game or a DVD box set of a show I really like and I'll love you forever. But don't take me to a *chick flick*. That's not the way to my heart. Give me a book to read and I'll snuggle up against my pillows as the rain hammers down outside. Just don't give me compliments, because I won't believe you."

I looked at Callum, currently fiddling with the camera.

"And cut?" I said, waiting for him to look up. Eventually he did, a frown on his face.

"Sorry," he said as he continued to fiddle with the buttons. "I thought it hadn't recorded all of that." He smiled. "It did, though."

"How was I?" I asked, getting up from the end of my bed, where I'd been sitting while recording. "Did I look OK?"

“Sure.” Callum replied, but it was more in an *I don’t know* kind of tone. I sighed.

“I should have got Tess to come over. She could have given me a better assessment.”

Callum closed the screen on the camera, looking back to me with a smile. “You looked great, Ellie, you always do, and it was fine, you didn’t trip over any words and you were totally smiley, and why do you care as only about three people will ever see it?”

“Because,” I replied. It was all I could think of, as Callum was right. Once I uploaded it, I’d be one of millions of similar voices out there, all shouting out their secret thoughts to the universe. Some had millions of subscribers. My channel, MakerGirl, had *three*, not including myself – my mum, Callum and Tess.

“It’s good to go,” Callum said as he passed me an SD Card. “You might want to throw it through the editing software first though, put a title page on it.”

“Yeah, because I’ve never done this before, at all, ever,” I said, taking it and slotting it into my laptop. “How would I cope without you?”

“You wouldn’t,” Callum grinned as the door to my room opened.

“Tea, anyone?” Mum breezed in, smiling at Callum as she did so. “Hello, Callum. How’s your mother?”

“She’s fine, thanks.” Callum grabbed his rucksack, sliding the camera into it. “Which reminds me, it’s lasagne tonight. See you at school.”

As Callum left the room, and the ‘clump clump clump’ of his footsteps could be heard running down the stairs, Mum looked back at me, her eyebrow raised.

“Grow up,” I said, turning back to the laptop. “We’re just mates.”

“Shame,” she replied, leaving the room as well. “He’s a lovely boy, and it’s obvious he’s sweet on you.”

Staring at my face paused on the screen, I hid a smile. Callum was a friend, nothing more.

Or was he?

\*

The biggest problem I had about that was that, although I really liked Callum and he was my best friend and all that, I didn't *like* like him in that way. That honour was held for Luke Callaway. And before you ask, Luke wasn't my boyfriend either.

He wasn't anyone's boyfriend since he broke up with Frankie King before Easter. That said, it wasn't because he had no choice. Pretty much every girl in Year Ten wanted to go out with him. He was the most popular boy in the school, captain of the football team and drop-dead gorgeous.

And, of course, he had no idea who I was at all. Why should he? I was the shy girl with glasses, who went red when he walked past, who didn't

even look him in the eye in case I hiccupped with nerves. And, as we walked into class, Tess was finding this incredibly amusing. To be honest though, Tess always found this incredibly amusing. She must have been the only girl in Year Ten who didn't fancy Luke.

"Just say something," she whispered as Luke and his hangers-on walked past. "Tell him you *loooove* him."

"Shut up," I snapped back, embarrassed, punching her arm. Frankie, sitting behind Luke, looked up at this, glaring at me as if to say *how dare you even think of my beloved Luke*. I looked away, pushing my glasses back up my nose. Tess made some kind of motion with her hand, and I don't know if it was an insult or a wave, as I was already looking out of the window.

"What's the worst that can happen?" Tess was watching me. "I mean, if you allow yourself to be noticed for once?"



“Bad things,” I sighed, looking back to my books.  
“I’ll be insulted. Laughed at. Shouted at, even.  
The world does terrible things to those that  
choose to stand out from the crowd.”

Tess shook her head and went back to her work,  
not speaking to me again for the rest of the lesson.  
At the end of the day, rather than face Tess  
and Callum again, partly because I didn’t want  
another lecture and partly because I was worried  
that my mum was right about him fancying me,  
I decided to walk home along the canal.

It was a sunny day and the water was calm, with  
only a few narrow boats travelling along it, and a  
few families of ducks using it like a motorway. It  
was safe. Nothing ever happened on the canal.

*And then I saw the boy fall in.*