

Life of a Bubble

I stalk through the crowded grocery store, swishing past junky foods and sugary drinks. Snacks with their tacky labels seem far away. Even the beeping of the cash registers seem faint. Memories of my “friend” flash through my head, causing me to scowl. Why does Nicole have to be so difficult?

Crash!

I bump into someone, chips, soda, and cookies spilling on my sandaled feet.

“Oh, I’m so sorry!” A middle aged woman, her reddish-brown hair reflecting the late afternoon light, bends to pick up her groceries. I pause long enough to give her a side-eye, then continue on my course.

I don’t know what I’m looking for. Just something that will help me get back at Nicole. I scan the shelves for the usual suspects of prank merchandise.

A flashy label catches my eye. It reads: **“Prank Must-Haves!”** With a nasty smile on my face, I snatch it.

Starting towards the checkout with my stock of tricks in hand, I see the self-scanners are filled up, and I don’t have the patience today to wait. I redirect myself to the cashiers, swishing in front of someone to get ahead.

The long-haired employee quickly scans everything. His name tag informs me he’s Oliver. He wears many silvery rings that accentuate his crystal-colored eyes.

I tap my card. *Please wait*, it says on the screen, causing me to frown. Three dots continuously float across the small surface, my frustration building with them. After several seconds, the annoying words on the screen finally change to: *Approved!*

“Have a nice day,” Oliver says in a gravelly, low voice. He hands me a bulging bag made out of crinkly plastic. I ignore him and flounce away.

As I leave, the setting sun glares in my eyes with the intensity I frowned at many people that day.

I scowl back at it.

I’m home.

And what a *joy* it is to be back.

Tramping up the stairs, I hear a sing-songy voice call my name. “Ja-ane!”

“I’m here, Mom,” I call back, rolling my eyes. She’s almost as bad as Silvia.

As if my thoughts summoned her, my six year-old sister scampers up to me. “Whatcha doin’?” She asks in her nasal, high-pitched voice. She sounds like a mouse. An annoying one.

“Go away!” I say stormily. She whines and skips away, her short pigtail braids flopping against her neck.

I rush up the stairs with my bag in hand, only stopping at the bathroom to check my perfectly applied makeup.

Once in my room, I rifle through the supplies I bought. Such and such are boring, this and that are too gross, and...

Wait, I think as I pull out a small bottle. *I didn't buy this!* The colorful label proclaims it as: **™Bubble Twist; Mix Must Have!**

I stop my prank sorting and head downstairs to a trash can. Passing the living and piano rooms, I find Silvia in the kitchen, eating a snack of graham crackers and orange juice.

The kitchen trash is located by the edge of the counter, and reeks with the musty smell of old bananas and wrappers. But that's where I'm headed.

"Don't throw those bubbles away!" Silvia cries, looking up from her book.

"Why not?"

"Because I want them!"

Knowing she'll whine and tell mom, I hand her the mix. She squeals happily, rushing outside to go and play with it.

Once again upstairs, I look out the dirty window. Silvia is still there, sitting on the back steps and blowing bubbles. They catch the last glimmers of sunlight, causing me to tilt my head. One of the bubbles pops, and I think about what the life of a bubble is like.

Their life is short, but in it, they float calmly through it, creating beauty, and then... they pop.

I think about my own life. *I only have this life to make friends, to be loving and kind, to make good relationships... to have a good life.*

I think about all those people who I was rude to. Oliver, that lady with the red hair, the person I cut in front of, Silvia. The list goes on. *I wish I could say sorry to them.* Or do something nice for them.

Before the sun goes down and mom calls me for dinner, I have to do one thing. I stretch my hand out to my phone, hesitate, and then unlock it.

To call Nicole.