A Winter Rose

At 6.30 a.m., I was waiting for the school bus on the side of a cold, dark road. A **snow plough** had just come by and there were mountains of snow **piled** high on both sides of the road.

I was feeling sorry for myself and angry at my mother for forcing me to take the bus to school because of the dangerous driving **conditions**. No matter which way I turned, the icy wind whipped the falling snow against my face, **chapping** my skin. How could I have ever guessed that I was about to take a bus ride that would change my life forever?

Twenty minutes later, the school bus arrived. Ms. Garcia had been driving the bus ever since I started in kindergarten and, when I saw her big smile, I realized that I had missed seeing her ever since I had started driving myself to school.

"Look who’s riding my bus today! Take a seat near the **heater**, Precious, and try to **thaw out**," laughed Ms. Garcia in a warm voice, "I suggest you get comfortable because it's going to be a long ride with this weather."

I made my way to the heater in the middle of the bus and sat down across from a girl who looked to be about my own age. She had on a baggy, gray training suit, big white boots, and a black ski jacket. She was listening to music on gigantic headphones and shaking her head to the music as she looked out the window. On the seat beside her was a green tennis bag with space for four **rackets**. It had a Chinese dragon drawn on it with black **marker** and what looked like autographs all around the dragon.

I guess that she could feel that I was staring at her, because the girl turned and looked at me with a friendly smile. Her teeth were shiny and very white. And her curly brown hair made her look like an angel.

Before I could react, she took off her headphones and said, "Hi. I'm Rose."

"I'm...," I tried to answer, but Rose cut me off.

"I know who you are, Brad Johnson," said Rose looking at me with her incredibly, big brown eyes. "You play guard on the basketball team. Congratulations with your last game. It was so cool when you dunked in that **inbound pass** with less than a second remaining in the game! Woosh, dunk!"

"Do you play basketball?" I asked shyly, admiring Rose's beautiful eyes and the sprinkling of cute, little **freckles** on her adorable nose.

"I love basketball. I used to be on the girls' **varsity team**, but I am taking a year off from school to focus on tennis and try to qualify for the U.S. Open Junior Division championship," Rose explained in an enthusiastic voice that sounded like music to my ears.

Rose moved her tennis bag and invited me to sit next to her. I eagerly **complied**. Later, I learned that the Chinese dragon was Rose's good luck **charm**, a symbol of success in overcoming great obstacles. She drew Chinese dragons on all her tennis equipment, from her tennis rackets to her tennis shoes and her tennis balls.

I asked Rose what she had been listening to on her headphones and we discovered that we both liked the band Ten Thousand Screaming Blue Messiahs and both had tickets to a Save the Robots concert in the city on Saturday night. Rose asked me a lot of questions about myself and listened carefully to my answers. I asked her just as many questions about herself, and became more and more impressed by her with every answer.

We talked and talked about everything. I had never found it so easy to talk to a girl. She even sang me part of her favorite Save the Robots song, "Bad Hair Day."

I think that’s when it happened. I think that was the point at which I fell completely in love with Rose.

**Word list**

Snow plough:

Piled:

Conditions:

Chapping:

Heater:

Thaw out:

Rackets:

Marker:

Inbound Pass:

Freckles:

Varsity team:

Complied:

Charm:

**Two Questions about the story** *(No yes/no questions allowed!!!!)*

1.