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“EVERYTHING’S COMING UP ROSIE”

A SHORT STORY

BY

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Rosie was a nice girl, or at least everybody said so. They all thought, perhaps knew, that a lot more than butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. They liked her especially as nothing ever appeared to be too much trouble and she would openly help everybody. To Rosie, everybody was equal at the top ten investment consultancy firm of Brooke, Blades Associates where Rosie had worked for many years in her first and only job. Even the CEO and the MD had the same soft spot for Rosie as all other employees in the company appeared to have; no doubt about it, Rosie was everyone's favourite. They never credited her with being over intelligent but that was never a drawback; on the face of things, had they expected anything more of her they could well have been disappointed. It was later than usual to be copying papers but Rosie understood they were urgently required for the morning and she was not the type of person to let anybody down. After all, the company were good to her and allowed her Friday afternoons off to help with the lesser fortunate children at the special wing of the local care home. She didn't cost them much by way of salary and she had no company perks, yet they were aware she never left in a hurry and was always happy to see a project through before going home. In her case, it was a unique arrangement. She could do anything she wanted, although she was unaware of it and the company appeared to function better when she was content; which was the reason they had no objection to the Fridays. In the past Rosie had always been upset after volunteering time with the kids and her gloom tended to spread through the office. This way, she wouldn't be back at work until Monday, giving her all weekend to get over the sad pain of every Friday afternoon. She placed the copies on Mister Featherstone's desk and was about to leave when he returned to his office, startling her.

"Oh, Mister Featherstone. I've just put those copies on your desk for the morning".

Featherstone, like so many chartered accountants, was the quiet, thinking type who carried the weight of the world on his shoulders resulting in a permanently expressionless face. He grunted a barely audible thank you to Rosie who turned to face him at the door.

"Don't worry, Mister Featherstone. Tomorrow's meeting won't be a problem I'm sure. You'll come out of it happy, just wait and see", she said in an air of confidence.

He looked up at her through his half rimmed spectacles.

"Er, what. Oh. I only hope that is true, Rosie but I can't see it somehow", was his pessimistic response.

Rosie was having none of it.

"Well, with respect Mister Featherstone", she paused before deciding to go for it. "If you spend the rest of your life with your pot half empty, you'll end up a sad and lonely figure".

Featherstone couldn't believe what Rosie, the oldest office junior in history, was telling him.

"You should spend some time at the special wing I go to on Fridays if you really want to see the other side of life. Your cross can't be that hard to bear, sir", she pressed on, aware she was hitting a nerve. Wisely, she decided to change the subject. "One more thing, sir. You should recommend to the board that the plastics division should be sold off".

Featherstone stared at Rosie in total disbelief.

"Rosie. What on earth do you know about the background of this company?" he demanded, not understanding what could possibly have prompted such an outburst.

"Well, sir. I take a keen interest because I'm happy working here and the truth of the matter is, on review of the figures, the plastics division has become a lame duck. Of course, Browns don't know that and would pay well over the top to acquire it. The injection of cash flow could be utilised to expand the export side. Good night, sir", she finalised before turning from the office door and leaving Mister Featherstone speechless behind his desk.

"Sounds like a damned good idea to me and it could net us twelve to fifteen million. I'm in favour of an approach to Browns. Can we have a show of hands please gentlemen", urged the chairman and founder of Brooke Industries, Sir Alan Brooke.

The show was unanimous and the meeting was closed. Mister Featherstone, applauded by the board members for his tactical brainwave, returned to his office wearing a rare full faced smile. He pressed the intercom.

"Sheila, is Rosie Ross around?" he asked. The response was immediate.

"No, Mister Featherstone. It's Friday. She'll be in on Monday".

"Thank you", the secretary heard him say.

"And thank you, Rosie Ross", he said to himself, rubbing his hands together in self satisfaction.

Rosie sat at home after the three hour afternoon session at the hospital pondering on how she was going to reach a breakthrough with young Simon. She knew he was a lovely little boy but hadn't achieved any success in getting him to register a lust for life. Medical tests had revealed no physical damage to the boy but his constant rejection of everything and everyone suggested a conclusion to his mental state would be difficult to reach. Rosie had spent as much time with Simon as she could but, rightly, felt it unfair to single him out for special treatment on the premises. She decided to speak with the health authority about taking him away for a week's holiday, hoping the change of environment would spark something locked away in his five year old mind. Yes, she would make it happen and would speak to the senior consultant on Monday. The doorbell rang, much to Rosie's surprise; she didn't have many visitors and was more than nonplussed to see Mister Featherstone on the step, brandishing a bunch of beautiful flowers.

“Mister Featherstone, this is a surprise”, she said.

Featherstone handed her the flowers and smiled as she shyly accepted them.

“Rosie. You were right on the nail. I gave your proposal serious thought last night and submitted it to the board this morning. It was approved unanimously”, he enthused.

Rosie was pleased for him. “That’s good, Mister Featherstone. I’m very pleased for you. Perhaps you’d like to come in”.

He accepted and followed her through to the pleasantly decorated lounge, impressed by Rosie’s taste in furnishing.

“Please call me John”, he said as he sat down.

“I’ll call you John but not in the office”, she replied.

“That sounds fair enough if you prefer it. Listen, Rosie. I came here because I wanted to celebrate and well, I’m not very good at this sort of thing but, would you like to join me for dinner?”

“When?” Rosie enquired.

“Now”.

“Yes”.

“Good. Shall we go”, he got up to move.

“One moment. I’m not going out like this. Give me ten minutes or so. Can you wait that long”, she smiled in a slightly mocking manner.

Mister Featherstone relaxed. “I’m so sorry, Rosie. Of course I can wait ten minutes. I did tell you I wasn’t very good at this sort of thing”, apologising for appearing impatient.

Mister Featherstone had never seen any physical attraction in Rosie but that changed immediately she came back into the room and his face lit up. The ponytail had vanished and Rosie’s blonde hair flowed freely over her shoulders. Her spectacles had been replaced by contacts and a hint of eye make-up completed the transformation. His mind began to race. “Here’s this plain Jane who saves my career and turns out to be a real corker to boot. This must be my lucky day”, he thought.

“Ready, Mister Feath....er, John”.

Over dinner, Rosie explained to John the problems she was having in trying to get through to the young boy at the care home. Apart from this topic, the diners were careful not to give too much away about each other and, although the evening had been pleasant, to Rosie it was nothing more than a dinner date. At thirty eight and seven years her senior, Mister Featherstone saw the evening as the start of something new and visions began to form in his mind of a growing relationship. His token advance had been expertly thwarted by Rosie but he left her doorstep a happy man.

Over the next two weeks Rosie was careful to stay politically clear of Mister Featherstone, not wishing to encourage him further. She had arranged for a week’s holiday and the special unit had approved her taking Simon away for one on one therapy. She had wanted a quick word with Mister Featherstone

before leaving but he was in meetings in the city all day, so she left him a note which read, "Off for a week's holiday with Simon. Suggest you sell the stake in BLB and put it into Gerrard Holdings. See you. Rosie Ross.

The fresh air, sand and sea were the best possible tonics for both Simon and Rosie. She decided he would determine the course of the holiday and took the calculated gamble of not uttering a single word to the boy. On the Wednesday a little voice said "Rosie". She turned to see Simon looking at her, holding a bucket and spade. Rosie cried for joy and hugged the little lad.

"Of course we can, darling", she said as she held him close. Over the course of the next few days it was all Rosie could do to stop Simon from chattering but his sounds were sweetness to her ears and she did little to discourage him. She had made the all important impact on Simon's young world and had taken the decision to adopt him; it had to be that way for the child's sake.

"How on earth do you know these things, Rosie?" John questioned over another dinner.

"I study the market. It's just one of my silly hobbies", she casually replied.

"You're fantastic".

"I felt fantastic when Simon spoke to me and now, unfortunately for me, he won't speak to anyone else. I'm going to have to leave the company, John and adopt him".

"Marry me, Rosie".

"I'm not sure that's possible at the moment, John but it's nice of you to offer".

Mister Featherstone tried not to show the rejection he felt and thought about what to say next. "We could start with a readymade family and perhaps add to it later", he suggested in hope. "Besides, I've quite taken to the little fellah as well".

Rosie smiled and offered her hand across the table which John took and kissed.

"I love you, Rosie for more reasons I can think of".

"I'm not sure I want to be Rosie Featherstone", she said, seemingly rejecting him again.

"What do you mean, I don't understand you", John replied in a beaten tone.

"Rosie and Simon Featherstone-Ross has a much nicer ring to it, don't you think?"

Three months after the wedding, Rosie fell pregnant and fell once again when their little girl, Lily was four months old.

"John, now that I'm pregnant again we should think about our financial security. Now could be the time to put in an offer for Browns and get you in as chairman", she offered.

"But, Rosie we sold them the plastics division and they've gone downhill. This time it doesn't make sense", his accountants mind completely confused.

"But, if we buy back BLB and link it to Browns we'll be bigger and better than Brooke Blades. Make sense to you, darling".

"What, you mean leave Brooke and buy the other two. Is that what you mean?"

“That’s exactly what I mean”, and she did.

“How would we fund it, Rosie? You’re talking about a lot of money. It’s not possible, just not possible”, he said in trying to make her see sense.

“My dad left me a bit of money and I’ve done quite well with my portfolio”.

“How well, Rosie?”

“Let’s just say well enough to finance the plan”, she replied.

“Rosie. How well?”

“Look, darling. I wouldn’t say it if I didn’t mean it. We can make this work”.

John looked at her, dumbstruck at how clever his lovely wife was. Rosie had set his mind racing but he had to be sure. “Rosie, for the last time, how well?”

Rosie smiled. “Fifty, sixty”.

“What are you talking about? Fifty or sixty what?”

“Million”.

John’s mouth dropped, words would not come. He sat transfixed.

“Are you alright, darling?” Rosie said innocently.

“Are you serious?” No reply.

“You are serious, aren’t you?”

Rosie simply nodded and smiled as John burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

“Rosie, Simon, Lily and whoever’s joining us next Featherstone-Ross. I love you all”.