



Volume 12
Issue 2 Fall/Winter 2003-04

Article 17

1-1-2004

Donut Boy

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Recommended Citation

Jensen, Tabitha (2004) "Donut Boy," *The Promethean*: Vol. 12 : Iss. 2 , Article 17.
Available at: <http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol12/iss2/17>

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DONUT BOY

Tabitha Jensen

Donutboy17@aol.com. It was one of those mass mailings to everyone on your list. I could identify everyone in the “To” line: Sara, Jamie, me, Josh, Jessie, at@hotmail.com...? Oh, that must be that boyfriend of hers, Andy Taylor. But donutboy17@aol.com. For the life of me, I could not figure out who on Earth that could be. And it was enough to nearly cut my ties with sanity.

Google couldn’t find it, and neither could the Yahoo! directory. I wanted so badly to reply and say “hey Lydia, thx 4 the letter... btw who is donutboy17?” But for some reason, some invisible yet poignant reason, I knew I couldn’t do it. It wasn’t my place to pry into Lydia and find out the stories behind new friends, new adventures, and new loves. My fingers itched to graze across the keyboard, click send, and be content; but it was in that moment I realized not only did I not know Donut Boy. I no longer knew Lydia.

Like a Hollywood paparazzi-stalked power couple, we were best friend extraordinaires. We did almost everything together, and if we hadn’t we could still recount it in perfect detail as if we had. We lived each other’s joys and triumphs, sharing them as if our lives were meshed into one grand adventure. We shared the hurt, the breakups, carrying together the utter angst that was adolescence. Hours we logged into our phone sets, gossiping about our petty enemies and the scandals enveloping the student body. Partners in crime, shopping confidants, small town liberationists. Lydia and Ellie.

High school ended. We tossed our hats, drank to the moon, and vowed never to change. It was in our yearbooks, after all. Best friends 4-eve!!! It had to be true.

After I moved away, I discovered all kinds of new things to relay back to Lydia. To keep her in my world. The great tree falling of 2003. The scary cafeteria vegetarian alternatives. The 1 a.m. fire drills. I’d call and be cut off short, she was always about to be picked up by the boyfriend I’d never met or the friends I didn’t know she’d made. She’d call back though, sometime, yeah. Oops, forgot. Sorry. Maybe some other time.

It was as if cutting me out was easier than pasting me back in. Distance was too hard. I’d become inconvenient. Now I couldn’t imagine what she saw every day, or who she talked to, or what she learned. I know became I’d known.

Closing my eyes for one brief second I hit delete, not out of spite, but because there was no reason to keep it. Ambivalence was a tough teacher, but if Lydia and Ellie were broken, I couldn’t let Ellie be shattered along with them. I could still meet brand new people and go to exciting places and do great things without her. And maybe someday, when she’d inevitably become nostalgic and curious, I could give her a little taste of them. Perhaps at that

future rendezvous she would grasp, almost, how great a person she'd left behind. A person no longer there, and in her skin was a woman made tougher by challenge, and stronger by independence. Because I could already feel Ellie flaking off me, piece by piece, with each day a step deeper into the unknown. I had no idea what college and adulthood would make of me, but that was why it made it worth leaving home, the familiar, and Lydia behind. I saw glints of the true Elizabeth shining brighter and brighter, taking over the dull shadows of the old Ellie, who shared the limelight.

Maybe then Lydia would see that what you take for granted runs through your fingers like sand. She'd best be careful. Soon she may not know Donut Boy, either.