The Story of Lisa

by Sunny Schreiner

Since going viral, The Story of Lisa has been sending chills down the spines of online horror communities. The project, often dubbed ‘The Little Pink Backpack’, has been widely shared on Reddit, Tumblr, 4Chan and Creepypasta and has reached the ranks of the top internet ghost stories. We spoke to it’s creator Sunny Schreiner about the inspiration, backstory and the reaction to the piece.

“Online, fans have dubbed the story “The Pink Backpack.” When I first wrote the story, though, it wasn’t called that, and actually, I didn’t originally intend for it to be seen by anyone else. I was looking around the store one day, bored, when I came across this preschool notebook like we always had in elementary school. Being a huge fan of dark and creepy things, I started thinking “What’s the creepiest thing I could do with this?” So I bought it (along with a package of 96 crayons), brought it home, and went to work. Originally, I had intended to draw a series of “family outing” pictures with a sick twist (for example; “Family Vacation!” – with a picture of the parents pulling out of the driveway and leaving the child in a burning house). But I thought that might be a bit much, so instead, I decided maybe a story written as a child’s journal with an imaginary friend who was, to adults, not so imaginary.
I was 19 when I wrote it, so this was about six years ago. It wasn’t until a couple years later that I found the notebook again while going through some of my things I’d left at my mom’s house when I moved out. Someone convinced me to upload it to the paranormal board of 4chan. I was kind of apprehensive to do, since the people who spend time on that website are… questionable, at best. But I ended up doing it (uploading it to my DeviantART the same night). All I said was something to the effect of “Never pick up a random pink backpack that you find in an abandoned alley.” The response I got from that alone was enough to satisfy me. So many people believed it was real, and those who didn’t were quickly attacked by the crowd of believers.

The first time I ever heard anything about it after the 4chan debut was maybe a year or two later. A friend of mine saw it floating around Tumblr and linked me to it. I was so surprised at how many reblogs it had gotten. I spent a good hour just reading through all the comments, and so many people were terrified by it, saying they’d be having a difficult time getting to sleep, or that they were worried for their own children. Since then, it’s been on 9gag, Reddit, Imgur, and FEARnet, and I’m constantly getting questions from people asking me if it’s real. My general answer to that so far has been: “believe what you want to believe.” There are some people who want to believe that it’s real; to believe that there is something out there bigger than what we have come to understand, and even if my story is just a work of fiction, who am I to crush their hopes? There are also those who want some kind of reassurance that it is indeed a work of fiction, presumably to help ease their minds and let them sleep at night. Since I have no way of knowing which people are which, I’ve always just told them to believe what they choose. There have been a couple of instances where there was simply no doubt whatsoever, and the inquiries were about me and how I am doing/coping after what I “went through” as a child. For those people, I simply reassured them that I am doing just fine and that I am healthy and happy.

I have since written other similar stories which can be found on my DeviantART page. In December of 2013, I was contacted by a production company who specializes in horror movies because they had seen my work on FEARnet. They expressed interest in Lisa’s potential as a motion picture and have paired me with a screenwriter who is currently working together with me on this project. At the present time, I have no sort of time frame for when the movie will be released, but it is in progress and my best guess says it will probably happen within the next couple of years.”