MILLY GOLDSMITH

secret diary of an oversharer

things i told my notes app

Things I Told My Notes App

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Once for me, now for you.
I hope it finds you when you need it most.

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Introduction

I never imagined I'd expose my most embarrassing, innermost thoughts online for the whole world to see, but I sort of fell into it.

It all began at my parents' house one Christmas. I don't know about you, but Christmas is always a time when a lot of feelings involuntarily consume me. I think it's the combination of being home with family and regressing into childhood; the year ending and another one beginning; having basically nothing to do; and seeing everyone else's Christmases on social media. It's hard *not* to start overthinking things. Christmas is also the time of year when families ask you all the usual questions about your life, but the one I'm *guaranteed* to get is: 'Any boys on the scene, Meems?' My family has never seen me with anyone. I've never brought a partner home. And during a season when everyone seems to arrive with their 'special someone', it becomes this alarming little reminder that I'm always the one showing up solo. And the older I become, the worse that feeling gets.

In 2024, it was particularly bad: for the first time

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in my life, Christmas wasn't spent with all three of my siblings because they were all with their partners' families – and it felt weirdly eerie. We didn't do any of our usual family traditions. There was no table laid out, no noise in the kitchen, not even a Christmas lunch. It was just me, sitting at the table eating a casserole (probably ranked in the top three worst dinners to ever exist) while my mum and dad watched TV in separate rooms. I'd be lying if I said it was fine, because it wasn't. It was confronting in so many ways, and it all sort of exploded when I was sitting at that table alone. Every old trigger, every childhood memory, every tiny trauma I'd tried to ignore throughout the day started surfacing all at once. They flooded my brain faster than I could swallow that mouthful of casserole. And then my eyes started to fill with tears. I spent the rest of that day in my room crying, just like when I was a little girl.

The simplest, most obvious thought I had was, *Maybe this would have all been avoided if I just had a partner to spend my Christmas with.* Because without my siblings there, it became glaringly obvious just how single I was – and how single I had always been. Having my dad ask me if I'd considered freezing my eggs didn't help the situation, I can tell you that. Which led me to the day after Boxing Day, back home in London, and already getting ready for a date I matched with on Hinge. I began jotting down thoughts into my

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iPhone Notes app: *Am I going to be single for ever? Am I broken?*

By that point, I had been steadily growing an online following for four years, opening up about overcoming my eating disorder and talking about my fluctuating relationship with self-love when it came to appearance and body image. I was an open book on my social media accounts, but there was still a big part of me that I had never really talked about publicly. So, as I sat on my bed in early January, feeling uninspired about what content to create, I decided to bite the bullet and make my own journal-style video about having been single my whole life.

When you're a creator, you kind of have your own style and ways of editing content. I was more of a pictures and words-on-the-screen kind of gal. That was my style for years. But, this time, I added a voiceover. It was an unfiltered version of me who was pretty much talking to myself and sharing one of the most vulnerable parts of my life; one that had so many feelings of shame and trauma attached to it. I'm not sure exactly why, but I just felt compelled to share it. I wondered whether, maybe, some of my followers had similar experiences. Maybe sharing this would make me feel like less of a freak. It was scary, because I had always been so embarrassed that this fact, or 'secret', about myself existed. But something inside me knew it had to be done.

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I always feel nervous when posting anything on my page (fear of judgement and all), but, after clicking 'post' with this video, the anxiety was so intense I literally chucked the phone at my headboard. I didn't want to look at it. So, obviously, when I saw the video blowing up in the way it did, I was genuinely shocked. My phone started popping off almost immediately with comments, likes and DMs. There were hundreds of girls who were in the same position as me. There were so many people who felt the same way I did: unsure if there was something wrong with them, worried about being broken, afraid that they'd never find love. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and quite unexpected if I'm honest. It was a bit of an 'aha' moment for me. I realized that I *could* share a little too much of myself, and not be judged in the way I always judged myself.

I won't lie – that post also opened up a whole load of new insecurities. I had always worried that never having a boyfriend was a red flag, so had I just cock-blocked myself from ever actually finding one? Would potential boyfriends see my post (which had now gone insanely viral) and think, *Avoid*? To this day, I still don't know whether that has happened. But I *do* know that sharing one of the messiest, most vulnerable parts of my life (and brain) set me on a new path, and I simply *had* to keep sharing in this way. So, I continued posting the

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journal entries that all originated in my Notes app . . . the thoughts I'd quickly jot down on my daily walks, just before bed, after therapy or as soon as I got out of the shower. They covered everything from terrible dates to insecurities I had never admitted (not even to myself, sometimes), including obsessing over my story views, worrying about something I 'shouldn't' have eaten (thank you, eating disorder) and comparing myself to my friends. I put them into words, spoke them aloud and then clicked 'post'.

These journal entries dragged my cringe, awkward thoughts out into the open – the absolute definition of oversharing (something I have always thought was an annoying or unattractive trait). But my community and the internet seemed to love it. And I guess it's because honesty can feel like a welcome relief in a world of perfectly curated Instagram squares, depicting seemingly flawless lives, that we are all forced to live in, against our will. And before I began creating these journal-style videos, I was feeding into that narrative too. I had been hiding behind my phone, even if I didn't realize I was doing it. What I've come to understand, though, is that, in doing so, I was hiding from myself.

It was totally unexpected, but oversharing became a positive loop for me: I helped other people feel seen (so I was told), and they made me feel seen in return. I wouldn't say it completely healed me, but it unravelled a

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lot of the shame I had felt for years. So, I kept going. And if that meant cock-blocking myself for ever, well, I guess that was the price I had to pay.

And that's when Penguin (yes, *the* Penguin Books, with the little penguin logo that is recognized literally all over the world) asked me if I would write a series of my journals in the form of a book. An actual, real, paper book that you're holding in your hands right now. Of course, this felt like the biggest, most exciting opportunity. And then the vulnerability and fear hit me, just as they did with that first journal I posted on my Instagram and TikTok. Would I expose too much of myself, to the point where everyone would realize I'm a fundamentally flawed human being? Would I be giving away every single part of myself to the world? Am I capable of even *writing* (I have never considered myself a writer, more of a talker)? Why would anyone want to read my rambling thoughts? Will any of it even make sense?

But then I remembered: being as vulnerable as I am is kinda my thing now, even if it actively repulses men I might want to date. I was never going to be that 'mysterious girl' I longed to be, so I may as well go all in, right? After quite literally shutting myself off from the world and spending hours at my laptop, in coffee shops in both New York and London, I have finally managed to pull it all together. And I am so proud of it.

This book contains twenty extended journal entries, which all originated in the same way as my online videos:

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from the random thoughts I jotted down in my Notes app. Except, this time, I'm digging into memories, musings, obsessions and self-reflections that I couldn't possibly condense into a quick social post. I deep-dive into how a notification, or a pimple on my chin, can change the entire course of my day. I explore my anxious-avoidant attachment style that, in simple terms, originated from never feeling heard as the youngest child in a big family. I lament my annoying ability to say one thing and then act in the completely opposite way (when it comes to guys, self-worth . . . literally everything, actually). I'm not an expert, a qualified therapist, a theorist or an adviser, but I am an expert in myself and my thoughts. These journal entries reveal the parts of me that I'm pretty sure most people wouldn't want to share with their closest friends, let alone *the whole world*. But I think it's so important that I do.

Why? Because, from what I've learned, you can only heal when you make peace with your wonky edges. When you embrace the parts of yourself that aren't 'cool' or 'acceptable' by the world's standards. When you realize that you're not alone in overthinking a single word in a text message or losing sleep worrying about whether you're wasting your 'best years'. Personally, I have found it so freeing to put pen to paper (or, more accurately, fingertips to keyboard) – even if it has been painful and confronting sometimes (for my thumbs and for my ego). But I hope that, by reading my experiences, by delving

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into all of my most unlikeable and cringey thoughts, and my attempts to become a better person, you might feel inspired to journal yourself. Maybe you'll open the Notes app on your own phone and just let it all out – without shame, without self-judgement; only with curiosity. Meet your real self sooner, and you get to live your real life sooner. That's how I see it. With that in mind, I hereby open up a portal of self-acceptance: I want to give you permission to acknowledge the stuff that makes you feel uncomfortable – because that, ultimately, is where a lot of healing (and humour) can be found.

Welcome into my slightly deranged Notes app, aka, the deepest, darkest corners of my brain. I hope you will find something for yourself in these pages. More acceptance, less brokenness, maybe even a breath of fresh air. Or maybe you'll just think: *Who is this whiny idiot?!* Either way, I hope this book offers you a safe space to be yourself.

My Life in Obsessions

1. Justin Bieber.
2. One Direction.
3. My childhood Labrador.
4. Dopamine.
5. Checking my story views.
6. Pictures of myself in good lighting.
7. Picking my spots.

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8. Peach citrus SULT (shameless self-promo).
9. Lindt sea salt 70 per cent dark chocolate.
10. Scrolling on Rightmove for houses I'll never be able to afford.
11. Scrolling on TikTok.
12. Rewatching my recently uploaded TikToks.
13. Touching my hair.
14. Diet Coke with a load of ice.
15. New York.
16. Yoghurt bowls.
17. Belts (the bigger the better).
18. Vintage shopping.
19. Scrolling through my WhatsApps and not replying to any of them.
20. Checking what time it is.
21. Checking my sleep score.
22. Stalking my friends on Find My Friends.
23. Saying 'queen' in greeting.
24. Holding my phone at all times.
25. Clicking my wrists.
26. Reformer Pilates.
27. Boys.
28. Boys when they wear baggy grey joggers.
29. My lip liners.
30. Picking off my gel nails.
31. Snacking.
32. Overthinking.
33. People-watching.

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34. Procrastinating.
35. After Eight wrappers.
36. Popping bubble wrap.
37. Proving people wrong.
38. Checking the weather app.

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I Wanna Be One Less Lonely Girl

'JUSTIN BIEBER LIKED MY PHOTO!'

The words flew out of my mouth much louder than they should've, considering it was 10 p.m. and my whole family was asleep already. But it was like all the excitement bubbled up in my throat and I couldn't hold it in. I can still feel every emotion that fourteen-year-old version of me felt, sitting on her sister's bed in the pitch black, with nothing but a questionably high heart rate and the brightness of her iPad screen. My mum came bursting into the room naked (thankfully, I couldn't see in the darkness), yelling, 'WHAT is going on?! You've woken up Dad! It's a school night!'

And all that was coming out of my mouth were the dribbled leftover tears that were streaming down my face. All I could do was cry, cry, cry – that childhood cry where your whole body convulses and you can't even breathe. Then I went into absolute disbelief,

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refreshing my Instagram notifications and seeing the likes and comments rolling in:

'omg he liked ur pic!!'
'Justin noticed 😭😭'
'JUSTIN BIEBER LIKED'

Yes, I was hyperventilating over a Canadian popstar liking my photo, even though he definitely still didn't know I existed. Bear in mind the photo wasn't even of me – it was a screenshot of something he was promoting at the time (lol). But the details didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was the fact that I existed in some capacity to this magical, mythical boy. He had seen my username! Surely, the only logical next step was everlasting love, right?

It was 2012 – and, like so many girls my age, I was so madly struck by Bieber Fever. I believed to my core that I was destined to be with him. I believed that, if I was close enough, we'd lock eyes and he'd fall in love with me at one of his concerts. I knew everything about him: where he was born, what his favourite colour was, the name of his hamster (PAC, in case you're wondering). I'd dig deep into the underbelly of the internet to find unreleased songs as a way to prove to people in my class who were supposedly 'Beliebers' that I was an even bigger Belieber than them – like it was some sort of competition. I used to imagine his team picking me out of the crowd to be the 'One Less Lonely Girl' and, sometimes, even act it out in

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my bedroom by sitting on a chair with the song playing from my laptop. I'd fall asleep by making up whole stories in my head of what we'd say to each other. My imagination took me to wild places: he'd take me on his private jet, write songs in the studio about my blue eyes, and just be so utterly in love with me.

Now that I'm writing this out, it feels so creepy. Or was it normal for a fourteen-year-old, with limited experience of real-life boys? The fantasy of falling in love felt so warm and comforting, but, at the same time, so out of reach. Until, that is, he liked my photo and, suddenly, I was special. I was different from the other girls.

And I think that's where it started – this obsession with being chosen. This belief that being noticed is the same as being loved. That I had been 'picked', even in the smallest way, and that joy was euphoric and overwhelming. But how do you explain all of that to your mum when you're sobbing at 10 p.m., gasping through tears that 'JUSTIN BIEBER LIKED MY PHOTO', while she stands there naked in the doorway wondering if someone has died?

I wish I could tell you that this was the first and last time that a celebrity crush elicited such an intense reaction in me, but that would be a lie. Of course, like any sane British teenage girl, I also fell deeply into a One Direction phase. I was Team Niall (but eventually Team Harry), and I'm proud to say I was on board the 1D train right from the beginning. I have four Facebook albums dedicated

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