

LoopyTeller Studio

THE DAY OF THE LIVING INFLUENCERS



bromera

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THE MYSTERIOUS APP

Today was going to be like any other Monday at *IES Romero de los Desamparados*. Another boring Monday, but worse, because we had a Science exam during second period, and it's impossible for any Monday to start off well this way.

How rude of me! Sorry, let me introduce myself:

My name is Nazaret and I'm twelve years old, and at the moment, I'm locked up in the detention hall of my school, taken siege by a horde of living influencers thirsty for attention.



You don't know what they are? Of course, well this morning I didn't have even the slightest idea either...and I bet you're wondering how I ended up getting myself into this predicament. Everything started as soon as we got up.

My brother Kike and I woke up just like every morning.



We look a lot alike, although I beat him in height by about a centimeter, something that he'll never admit.



Every morning we wake up and wait until the very last second to get out of bed.



THE JUICE IS LOSING ALL THE VITAMINS! HURRY UP OR YOU'LL BE LATE!



Adults think that we still believe in that thing about the vitamins in the juice, but both Kike and I looked it up on the internet, and it's an urban legend. That and not swimming after you eat, another Creepy Pasta story (all kids know that in reality, all our parents want is to have us under control on the beach while they take a nap).

After, we eat breakfast. Sometimes at the same time and sometimes taking turns. Like every day, this morning Mom was the first one to wake up and eat breakfast watching the sports news (which she always does as long as her team didn't lose). Today she had on the 24 Hour News channel, which is normally a huge bore, but today a SUPER old man that definitely smelled like a grandpa started to talk about how social media could brainwash kids. So like, BOOOMEEER. We didn't argue much with mom because it was too early to think.

"Thanks for the info, Einstein!" - I respond to the TV while I'm splitting yesterday's churros between me and my brother.

"You two keep laughing! You're going to end up stupified from so much screen time and whiter than Dracula. You never go out in the sun!" Mom always pulls out the Dracula card whenever she can.

"I don't know, mom. You're also pretty hooked on those Turkish soap operas and you're pretty pale, too." She blushes. My comment is one hundred percent effective.

These kinds of things are why Kike and I usually eat breakfast with our own "news" from TokTok, Instantgram, and MyTube, while we drink our juice and scarf down our churros, muffins, or whatever they put in front of us.

“Seriously guys. You’re both obsessed with your phones. Last night there was a red light coming out from underneath your bedroom door...and your lamp’s light is white, so I’m sure you weren’t studying.” Mom doesn’t like it that we’re always on our phones and especially at night. She always says that they’re going to mess up our circ-something rhythm.

“We weren’t on our phones, mom! We have an exam at second period, remember?” protested Kike, without much hope of convincing her.

“And where did that light come from, mister? When I opened the door to catch you red-handed, everything was turned off and you were ‘sleeping’.” That “sleeping” came with an air quotes gesture that was so strong you could hear her fingers cracking in the kitchen. “But you already know that there’s one thing that never fails” she persisted with a conspiratorial look towards Dad who just walked into the kitchen...

“The moment of truth, you little devils! How are your phone batteries looking?” asked our father while he reached out his right hand. It’s his morning inspection: our parents take away our phones at night and, this way, they make sure that if we stay up all night playing some videogame or watching videos, we won’t have any battery left during recess at school the next day. It’s like a divine punishment: Cruel, but deserved and just.

So we cave in and give him our phones, like those prisoners in movies that give all of their belongings to their jailors before going to prison.

But when we look up from the ground and pay attention to his reaction, we see that Dad changes from a look of moral superiority to a contemplative look and, afterward, to one of absurd astonishment (twitching in pride, I should add).

“They’re clean, dear.” He turns towards Mom “They’re telling the truth.” Dad loves crime movies and really enjoys acting like a cop, like now. He should stop watching so many *Lethal Weapon* movies.

“Well, I’m glad to hear that. Maybe it came from the neighbor’s window in front of your room. But honestly, there was a really intense red light that disappeared as soon as I opened the door” Mom explained, still worried.

I have to say that Mom isn’t a very good detective, but she tries and, to tell you the truth, I don’t know what she means by the red light either.

“You can give them back their phones, sugarbutt.” Yes, Mom calls our dad sugarbutt, to our dismay, while she caressed his chin with her index finger. Seriously, Dad, Mom, STOP, out of respect for your children.

“And remember that yesterday in the afternoon they installed the new Wi-Fi that we requested at the Parent-Teacher meeting. So please connect to it and don’t waste your data, cause later we pay your bill and we’re not the National Bank.

We agreed while Dad gave us our phones back. New Wi-Fi at school, what a relief... The old one went at a snail’s pace! At that moment, Kike unlocked his phone and frowned. Something didn’t seem right.

“Hey, Nazz, have you seen this?” said Kike, without looking away from his phone with with an eyebrow frowned.

“Well, if you don’t move your finger, I can’t see anything, son.”

When Kike moved his index finger, you could see a red and green logo from a mobile app: INFLUGRAM.

“That’s weird. This wasn’t here last night. Maybe it got downloaded from a system update?”

“No idea...Are you sure it’s not because you go on those...strange webpages?” I answer with a sarcastic smile from ear to ear.



Angry, Kike snatched my phone from my hands and started snooping around on it.

“Hey, hey, stop! Those are private things!” Now I’m the one that’s worried because deep DEEP inside my phone, I have some pretty spicy videos saved on a certain confession about a crush that I’m not going to tell you about right now...

Instantly, he puts on a triumphant face and I start to get nervous, blush, and I start to feel some heatwaves from the tip of my toes all the way to my head and I think I’m going to die. He must have found the videos! But that was too quick, right??

“I knew it! See, Ms. Know-it-all, you also have the app installed” he says while putting the screen so close to my face that I feel like a bit of heat coming off it.

Bewildered, I see what he’s showing me and I let out all the air I was holding in: he meant that new app...I also have it installed!

Well, false alarm, let’s hope that Dad and Mom didn’t catch on to anything...

“How am I going to have an app installed that I don’t even know about?” I answer, annoyed because he looked at my phone, while I whack my phone out of his hands. “Dang, it’s true...that’s so weird! What do you think it is?”

“I don’t know, but it sounds cool! YOLO!” my brother responds enthusiastically. “I’m going to sign up! If we’re some of the first ones, I bet there’s some sort of reward... Do you think Gemixii07 or LukaGames beat us to it? Those two are always on the latest trends.”

“What are you two talking about?” Dad cries out while hiding his head between his arms. “Dear, I just don’t understand them anymore, what with their memes and their stories and all those weird words...why can’t they just be normal?”

“Oh, sugarbutt. That is what’s normal now, it’s just that you’re not up to date.”

“And I’m not ever going to be. If I get a text, I end up turning off my phone, how am I going to get into TusTuk or whatever, where they’re dancing and playing around all day. I don’t understand these kids!” Dad continued, pulling his hair out.

“Look at your dad!” Mom says while she gets up from the table and forces us to do the same. “You guys are cutting it close. Go brush your teeth and fly to school or you’ll be late!” She pushes us down the hall to the bathroom without letting us resist. “I hope your test goes well! When you come back, you can tell me how it went and, if I like what I hear, maybe tonight there will be a prize.”

“Hey, hey, I know what that means! You better do well on that test!” Dad responds from the kitchen.

“Okayyyy!” Kike and I answer at the same time. The prize Mom is talking about is usually our favorite dish: potato omelet with chicken wings. This morning, more than ever, I implore the Science Gods to give us an easy test. Well, I’m imploring them and Ms. Savini.

Weighed down like mules with all our books, notebooks, notes, churro crumbs, and our parents’ drool on our cheeks (UGH!), we leave the house ready to take

on the world, our Science test, and eat Dad’s sandwiches. When it’s 2 pm, everything will be over. I have the feeling that it’s going to be a long day, like when you live on the 7th floor, you get in the elevator with a neighbor, and you hold in a fart. You know, even though it’s a short trip, it goes on forever. For me, that’s how this Monday was, although the promise of chicken wings made it better.

What I didn’t imagine was that the test was the least of our problems today.



SOME STRANGE BEHAVIOR

Our school is...how do I say this delicately, let's say that if it weren't for the enormous sign at the foot of the hill that read, "High School", you could very well think it was a prison. Like a prison for very tiny people that walk there every morning like zombies for their official Fresh Brains Dispenser. Like real zombies, I mean, you only have to see our faces at that time of the morning when it's still nighttime. Some of us had eye boogers that you could eat as if they were Choco Krispies (Yuck!).



We crossed the crosswalk and we start to go up the steep slope that took us to our destination: First period Math with Mr. Javier Y. That Y always intrigued us... what was he hiding from us? Maybe he was a spy, a Mytuber, or any other thing that required having a secret identity. Although we prefer to call him Uzi, for the amount of homework he shoots off per second.

As we make it up the hill, we see our school rise imposingly in front of us, mere mortals whose dull lives pass by in its interior. While we make it towards the building, we review our notes as quickly as we can in case there's anything that we might forget and that, once we pass through the door of numbers, fractions, and equations, we will forget forever. Kike interrupts our silence with a look that I recognize:

"Hey, Nazz...let's play the same game as always, alright? If I say the word *melon* really quietly, you raise your arm so that I can see what you wrote on whatever question I don't know the answer to."

"You are going to become an expert in ASMR videos with all that whispering during our tests! But fineee, alright. You know I can say no, but everything has its price".

"How much is it this time?" resigned Kike.

"Two. Three, if the question you don't know is short answer one. The teacher gets suspicious if you write EXACTLY what I do, little brother. So...you'll do the next two or three Art projects. Deal?"

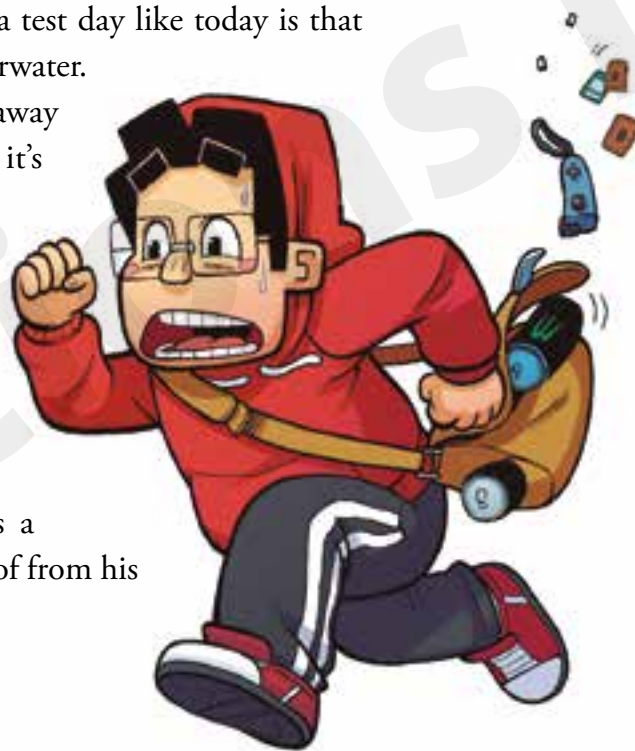
I reach out my hand to Kike to seal the deal, knowing that the response won't be negative.



“Kike, Nazaret! Wait for me!

That squeaky and gasping voice behind us sounded familiar. A voice that always arrived rushed everywhere: Jaime’s voice. The bad thing about having to go to school with someone like Jaime on a test day like today is that doesn’t stop talking even underwater. So Kike and I huff and put away our notes because with him it’s impossible to study.

Jaime is our best friend and he loves video games and energy drinks. He says he’s able to survive solely on those drinks, caramel popcorn, and playing Fournite twenty-four hours a day. But when we ask for proof from his mother, her eyes go white.



Every morning, Jaime meets up with us and all three of us go to class together. The philosophy of friendship is simple: if he’s late, we’re all late. But what Jaime doesn’t seem to understand is that Kike and I live in the same house and we always leave at the same time. This means that if we’re late, it’s always his fault. Regardless, we don’t throw it in his face because every day he has some anecdote to tell us and we love listening to it on the way to school. Let’s go over what he had to tell this morning...

“Guys! I swear yesterday I picked a book so big I almost named it! Rigoberto! It seemed like an appropriate name for a booger. But I didn’t eat it or anything, ok? I’m not some kind of eccentric pig. Plus, I almost felt bad...” Jaime tells us with his eyes lit up and making exaggerated gestures with his hands.

Well, I have to say that this anecdote wasn’t the best. But it’s always nice to listen to him, ok?

“Gross, Jaime! Hahaha,” Kike and I laughed while we lovingly pet him (*cough, hit him, cough cough*!).

“Oh! And another thing I wanted to tell you guys about. You know what happened to me last night? You’re going to flip out!” Jaime opened his eyes wide and searched in his pocket.

“Pss, yo, look at that little group over there” Kike cuts us off suddenly.

