



LIKE, COMMENT, SUBSCRIBE?

Kat Ost

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Reading level: reading age of 10+, interest age 14+.

BOOK SUMMARY

Fifteen-year-old Becca has been the face of @BeccaBakes since she was old enough to hold a wooden spoon. Her online success has kept Becca, her mum and manager aunt comfortable. Lately, though, Becca's followers have been pointing out she is no longer a cute flour-covered toddler, something Becca becomes more aware of with each pimple she sprouts.

Add no real friends or social life and Becca wonders if the influencer life is for her. Her only outlet - her poetry. When she forms an unexpected friendship Becca is faced with a choice. Does she continue to live the 'online' life she no longer wants and risk losing her first true friend? Or face her aunt and mum and finally brave a taste of the 'real' life she so desperately craves?

THEMES

• Influencers & Kidfluencers • Social Media • Mental Health • Identity & Self-Discovery •

Friendship • Coming-of-Age • Pressure & Expectations • Family Dynamics

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ABN: 30 137 345 941 admin@wombatrhiza.com.au



Kat Ost is available for author talks and workshops. **Contact Rhiza Edge for more information.**

Like, Comment, Subscribe? Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kat Ost is a Sydney-based YA author and educator with a background in English teaching and a Master of Education in Teacher Librarianship. When she

isn't crafting coming-of-age page-turners for teens and young adults, she's helping students discover the magic of books in her role as a high school Teacher Librarian. Kat's teaching keeps her closely attuned to the interests and issues facing today's youth. Her novels often explore themes of self-discovery, family, friendship, and the challenges of growing up in a rapidly changing, technology-driven world.

Kat is the author of YA novels Can't Beat the Chemistry and Remind Me Why I'm Here under the pen name Kat Colmer. Whether through her fiction or her efforts to foster a love of literature in her students, Kat is dedicated to inspiring the next generation of Book Dragons, Story Chasers, Library Lions and Word Wizards.

AUTHOR NOTES

As a teacher and parent, my default wariness of social media has come mainly from a consumer's perspective. Research has linked social media use to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues. Then there are the educational drawbacks including reduced focus, exposure to misinformation, and sleep disturbance. And let's not forget social consequences such as cyberbullying, weakened real-life communication skills, and peer pressure leading to risky behaviour. It was a 2023 article in The Conversation titled 'Kidfluencer culture is harming kids in several ways', however, that made me look at social media from a content producer's perspective. In particular, young content producer or 'kidfluencer' who often doesn't have a say in whether or not their life is broadcast to the rest of the world from a very young age because a trusted adult in their life has made that decision for them.

Curious, I delved further into kidfluencer culture and found that social media has just as many pitfalls for those on the other side of the camera. The loss of privacy for kidfluencers can impact their future autonomy, not to mention exposing young people to inappropriate and predatory online behaviour. Constant content creation often leads to anxiety, self-esteem issues and loss of normal childhood experience and social development. And the lack of regulation around underage people earning an income online leaves them open to exploitation. Clearly, the influencer life is not all social media smiles and sunshine, and many influencer families are fractured once the kidfluencer grows up. This other side of social media influencing sparked the idea for Becca's story, of a teen influencer trapped between family pressure and expectation to continue her influencer life and her desire to take back autonomy and do something else with her life without imploding her family relationships.

OVERVIEW

MAIN CHARACTER

Becca is a 15-year-old baking influencer and the face of the popular social media platform @BeccaBakes. Becca's influencer days began as a toddler, featuring in her mum's baking videos to promote the family patisserie Le Petit Gateau. However, the pressures of maintaining her online persona and the expectations placed on her by her social media platform manager aunt have become too much. In truth, Becca hasn't been comfortable in front of the camera ever since puberty unleashed all sorts of unkind online commentary about Becca's appearance and age, causing her stress and anxiety. As much as she'd like to shut down her entire online life, Becca is hesitant for fear that without the income @BeccaBakes generates, her mum might lose her beloved patisserie. Between the demands of school and her social media platform, Becca doesn't have any real friends she can share her thoughts and frustrations with. Her only solace is writing poetry, which allows her to express her true feelings and provides an escape from the demands of her influencer life.

Becca's Strengths

Creativity: Becca is a creative person which is evident in the baking recipes she has created over the years, initially with her mum and then for platform. Recently, Becca's creativity is seen in the poetry and verse she writes to process and cope with her situation.

Determination: Despite the challenges and stresses Becca faces, she remains determined to fulfill her commitments, for her platform or school.

Empathy: Becca is empathetic and cares about her family and friends. She values her connection with her mother and wants to see her mum happy, even sacrificing her own happiness for her mum's by continuing with the @BeccaBakes platform despite no longer wanting to be online. Becca also shows she cares for her new friend Celeste by feeling guilt for ghosting her and eventually telling her the truth...

Resilience: Becca demonstrates resilience by navigating the pressures of her online persona and finding ways to cope with the stress, such as writing poetry, connecting with Celeste on Poet's Portal, and finally finding a solution to her problem that allowed for both her and her mother to be happy.

Becca's Weaknesses

Overwhelmed by Expectations: Becca often feels overwhelmed by the expectations placed on her by her aunt Jane and the demands of her online platform. This pressure leads to feelings of disconnection from her initial passion for baking and a tendency to withdraw into her poetry as she feels unheard and unseen by her family. The pressure also takes a toll on Becca's mental health, leading to stress and anxiety.

Struggles with Self-Identity: Becca grapples with her sense of self and what truly makes her happy. The constant pressure to create content and reinvent her online persona to keep her influencer platform growing causes her to question her own desires and interests.

Difficulty Asserting Herself: Becca finds it challenging to assert herself and communicate her true feelings to her family, particularly her aunt Jane. This difficulty in expressing her needs contributes to her feelings of being unheard and invisible.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Aunt Jane: Becca's aunt and the manager of her online platform @BeccaBakes. She is very focused on the success of the platform and often pushes Becca to rebrand and collaborate with other influencers. Aunt Jane's strict and demanding nature creates tension between her and Becca, as she prioritizes the platform's growth over Becca's personal well-being.

Mum: Becca's mother is a supportive and caring figure in her life. She owns and runs a patisserie called Le Petit Gateau and as well as helping with the preparation for Becca's vlogs. Mum is more understanding of Becca's struggles and ultimately supports her decision to step back from the influencer life.

Celeste/@notmylife: Celeste lives in Becca's apartment building. Part of the studious crowd at school, Celeste and Becca don't interact other than their brief elevator encounters on their way to school. However, they unknowingly connect on the online writing community Poet's Portal through their shared frustrations with family expectations as Celeste turns out to be poster @notmylife. Collaborating with @notmylife/ Celeste on a verse story for a Poet's Portal competition helps Becca find the courage to tell her mother how she really feels about her influencer life.

Sophie: Becca's influencer friend who runs popular fashion and lifestyle vlog Sophie's World. Unlike Becca, Sophie loves her influencer life and repeatedly tries to pull Becca into collaboration projects. Becca realises their friendship is shallow, based solely on an influencer lifestyle she wants to leave.

Ms Beaumont: Becca's English teacher who recognizes Becca's talent for writing verse and introduces Becca to Poet's Portal, an online poetry and verse writing community. Ms Beaumont's encouragement helps Becca explore her passion for poetry and ultimately connect with Celeste/@notmylife.

Nick Conway: A well-known fitness influencer also known as FitBit Nick. Sponsored by Next Level Fitness, Nick is keen on collaborating with Becca for mutual exposure and market reach. Despite his popularity and large following, Becca finds him to be arrogant and unpleasant, describing him as a "protein-smoothyslurping douchebag". However, Becca is pushed into collaboration with Nick by Aunt Jane, despite Becca's reluctance and with the idea.

MESSAGE OF THE NOVEL

Like, Comment, Subscribe? is about the importance of staying true to oneself in the face of external pressures and other people's expectations. Becca's story highlights the difficulty many teens experience in trying to balance living up to family expectations while discovering who they really are and what makes them happy.

SYMBOLISM

- The Monster: The Monster in Becca's poems represents the insatiable demands of social media and the pressures of maintaining an online persona. When Becca writes about feeding the Monster with content, it highlights how the constant need for likes, comments, and subscribers consumes her life and leaves her feeling empty and disconnected from her true self.
- The Elevator: The elevator is a symbol of the transition Becca wants to make in her life. Not only does it provide Becca with brief moments of reflection and clarity, the elevator is her means of temporarily escaping her influencer life each morning as she heads to school, as well as the place where she meets Celeste, the person who helps her find the courage to make a permanent transition out of her influencer life. Towards the end of the book, the elevator ride 'up' to the writing workshop signifies Becca's success in finally making the transition out of her influencer life.
- Baking and Food: Baking and food are central symbols in the novella, representing Becca's passion and creativity. As the story progresses, however, the joy of baking is overshadowed by the demands of her online platform and the rebranding efforts pushed by Aunt Jane. The shift from delicious, tasterich recipes to healthy, diet-conscious ones symbolizes Becca's loss of 'appetite' for the disingenuous influencer life she no longer wants to lead. Whereas the indulgent Chocolate Éclair cake Becca's mum bakes in the final chapter symbolises a shift back to an authentic self from the forced, fake demands of the influencer life. The cake also signifies the successful transition of the social media platform to focus on Mum's patisserie, allowing Becca to step out from behind the camera.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

INFLUENCERS, KIDFLUNECERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1. How does Becca's role as a food vlogger impact her daily routine and school life?
- 2. What are some of the challenges Becca faces as a kidfluencer?
- 3. How does Aunt Jane's management style affect Becca's experience as an influencer?
- 4. What are the positive aspects of Becca's online platform, @BeccaBakes?
- 5. How does Becca feel about the rebranding of her platform to @BeccaBakesBetter?
- What role does social media play in Becca's relationship with her friend Sophie? 6.
- 7. How does Becca's online persona differ from her true self?
- 8. What are the pressures Becca faces from her followers and sponsors?
- 9. How does Becca's connection with Celeste on Poet's Portal differ from her interactions on her vlogging platform?
- 10. What are the consequences of Becca's decision to step back from her influencer life?
- 11. How does the novella portray the impact of social media on Becca's self-esteem?
- 12. What are the main conflicts Becca faces between her personal desires and the demands of her online platform?
- 13. How does Becca's journey highlight the challenges of maintaining an online persona?
- 14. What are the effects of Aunt Jane's insistence on regular, quality content for Becca's platform?
- 15. What is the difference between an adult influencer and kidfluencer? Why is the decision to be an influencer as an adult different to that decision for a child?

MENTAL HEALTH

- How does Becca's role as a food vlogger affect her mental health and well-being? 1.
- 2. What are the signs that Becca is struggling with the pressures of her online persona?
- 3. How does writing poetry help Becca cope with her stress and anxiety?
- 4. What impact does Aunt Jane's management style have on Becca's mental health?
- How does the novella portray the relationship between social media and self-esteem? 5.
- What are the consequences of Becca's decision to step back from her influencer life on her mental health?
- 7. How does Becca's connection with Celeste on Poet's Portal provide her with emotional support?
- 8. What role does Becca's mother play in supporting her mental health and well-being?
- How does the novella address the theme of burnout in the context of social media? 9.
- 10. What are the coping mechanisms Becca uses to deal with the pressures of her online persona?

- 11. How does the novella explore the impact of social media on body image and self-worth?
- 12. What are the effects of the constant need for validation through likes, comments, and followers on Becca's mental health?
- 13. How does the novella highlight the importance of taking breaks from social media for mental health?
- **14.** What role does friendship play in supporting Becca's mental health?
- 15. How does the novella address the theme of loneliness and isolation in the context of social media?

IDENTITY & SELF-ESTEEM

- How does Becca's journey of self-discovery unfold throughout the novella?
- 2. What are the key moments that lead Becca to question her role as a food vlogger?
- How does writing poetry help Becca explore her true self and passions? 3.
- 4. What role does Celeste play in Becca's journey of self-discovery?
- 5. How does the novella portray the conflict between Becca's online persona and her true self?
- 6. What are the challenges Becca faces in asserting her true identity to her family and followers?
- How does the novella explore the theme of self-acceptance in the context of social media? 7.
- 8. What are the consequences of Becca's decision to step back from her influencer life for her selfdiscovery?
- How does Becca's connection with Celeste on Poet's Portal influence her understanding of herself? 9.
- 10. What role does Becca's mother play in supporting her journey of self-discovery?
- 11. How does the novella address the theme of authenticity in the context of social media?
- 12. What are the signs that Becca is struggling with her sense of self and identity?
- 13. How does the novella highlight the importance of pursuing personal passions for self-discovery?
- 14. What are the benefits of Becca's decision to focus on her poetry and personal interests for her selfidentity?
- 15. How does the novella explore the theme of self-expression in the context of social media?

FRIENDSHIP

- How does Becca's friendship with Celeste develop throughout the novella?
- 2. What role does Celeste play in supporting Becca's journey of self-discovery?
- How does the novella portray the importance of friendship in coping with the pressures of social 3. media?
- 4. What are the challenges Becca faces in maintaining her friendship with Celeste?
- How does Becca's connection with Celeste on Poet's Portal influence her decisions and actions? 5.
- What are the benefits of Becca's friendship with Celeste for her mental health and well-being? 6.
- How does the novella address the theme of trust and loyalty in friendship? 7.

- What are the signs that Becca values her friendship with Celeste? 8.
- How does the novella explore the impact of social media on friendships? 9.
- 10. What role does Sophie play in Becca's life, and how does their friendship differ from Becca's friendship with Celeste?
- 11. How does the novella highlight the importance of mutual support and understanding in friendship?
- 12. What are the consequences of Becca's decision to step back from her influencer life for her friendships?
- 13. How does the novella portray the challenges of balancing friendships with other responsibilities?
- 14. What are the lessons Becca learns about friendship through her experiences with Celeste and Sophie?
- 15. How does the novella address the theme of communication in friendship?

FAMILY PRESSURE, EXPECTATIONS, AND DYNAMICS

- How does Becca's relationship with her aunt Jane impact her life and decisions?
- What are the pressures Becca faces from her family regarding her online platform, @BeccaBakes? 2.
- 3. How does Becca's relationship with her mother differ from her relationship with her aunt Jane?
- What role does Becca's mother play in supporting her journey of self-discovery? 4.
- 5. How does the novella portray the impact of family expectations on Becca's sense of self and identity?
- What are the challenges Becca faces in asserting her true feelings to her family? 6.
- 7. How does the novella address the theme of family support and understanding?
- 8. What are the consequences of Becca's decision to step back from her influencer life for her family dynamics?
- How does Becca's connection with Celeste on Poet's Portal influence her understanding of her family relationships?
- 10. What role does Aunt Jane's management style play in Becca's feelings of being overwhelmed and disconnected?
- 11. How does the novella explore the theme of family pressure and its impact on mental health?
- 12. What are the signs that Becca is struggling with the expectations placed on her by her family?
- 13. How does the novella highlight the importance of open communication within families?
- 14. What are the benefits of Becca's decision to focus on her poetry and personal passions for her family relationships?
- 15. How does the novella address the theme of compromise and negotiation within families?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ENGLISH

REVEALING CHARACTER

Writers reveal a character's personality or 'character' through their appearance, dialogue, actions and thoughts. Analyse the story's characters by completing the table below. Describe the character's appearance, dialogue, actions, and thoughts and say what that reveals about their character personality. E.g. 'I'd rather work on my essay than do the birthday planning' in chapter 1 shows Becca's negative feelings towards her influencer life as she'd rather do schoolwork.

Character	Appearance	Dialogue	Action	Thoughts
Becca				
Aunt Jane				
Mum				
Celeste				

ONLINE CHARACTER PROFILES

Create a mock social media profile for @BeccaBakes as well as @BeccaBakesBetter. How would the profiles differ?

POETRY ANALYSIS

At the start of the book, Becca writes the following poem, expressing her frustration with her influencer life:

I'm tired and hungry

But need to feed the Monster first

It's never full, this starving beastWith a yawning pixel pit for a stomach

It's constantly

craving

content

No recipe will satisfy

It's wired and hungry

It wants you to Like. Comment. Subscribe.

It needs you to Like. Comment. Subscribe.

Whatever you do, don't leave the Monster hungry

So ...

LIKE.

COMMENT.

SUBSCRIBE?

a) Tone: What is the 'tone' of the poem? How would you describe how Becca is 'feeling'? What words/phrases tell you this?

- **b) Metaphor:** In what ways does the poem use the metaphor of a "Monster" to represent the insatiable nature of social media?
- c) Personification: How is the "Monster" personified with human-like qualities in the poem?
- d) Repetition: What is the effect of repeating the phrases "Like. Comment. Subscribe."?
- e) Alliteration: The poem uses alliteration in two places. What are they? What effect does this have?
- **f)** Layout and formatting: Look closely at the poem's layout and formatting, including line breaks, capitalisation and punctuation of words. What effects, if any, do the poem's layout and formatting have on the meaning of the poem?

POETRY WRITING

Becca writes poetry to vent her influencer life frustrations. Think of a frustration in your own life (or a frustration one of the other characters in the novel might have). Using some of the literary techniques above, write a poem expressing how you (or a secondary character) might feel. Start with the same first line, swapping out Becca's adjectives:

I'm	and .
1 111	una i

VERSE VS PROSE

Look at the first pages of a range of verse novels such as Karen Comer's 'Grace Notes', Sharon Kernot's 'Birdy', Sally Murphy's 'Worse Things' or Steven Herrick's 'By the River'. Make a list of features of each, noting similarities and differences between verse and prose novels.

Verse	Prose
Told in poetry/verse	Told in normal prose

VERSE STORY WRITING

Becca and @notmylife writing a verse story about five classmates in detention after causing an explosion in their chemistry class. The story opens with:

We sit in the quiet tension of detention

Five of us reflecting on last Chemistry period's Big Bang

Each of us adamant it wasn't our fault

But one of us knows exactly what went wrong

Continue this verse story however you'd like. What caused the explosion in the chemistry class? Who was at fault? What are the consequences?

PROSE CHAPTER WRITING

In Chapter Nine, we're introduced to the character of Nick Conway. However, even though Becca ends up collaborating with Nick, we never see him 'on the page' in a scene. We only know about him through

Becca's description of him. Write the scene in which Becca meets Nick 'Fitbit' Conway for the first time, using the information you've been given about him though Becca's descriptions.

MATHEMATICS

DATA ANALYSIS

The start of each chapter of *Like, Comment, Subscribe?* states Becca's social media statistics and mood. Create a graph depicting Becca's followers on one axis and her mood on the other axis. Can you deduce anything from this graph? Does Becca's mood correlate in any way to her follower statistics or is her mood linked to other things? Explain.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY

BECCA BAKE-OFF

Aunt Jane makes Becca film and bake the following health-conscious recipes as @BeccaBakesBetter:

- Black Bean Brownies
- Keto Cookies
- Carrot Cake Protein Muffins
- Chickpea Cookie Dough Bites

Choose one of these and find a recipe for it online, as well as a recipe for the traditional version (e.g. Black Bean Brownies and Chocolate Brownies). List the ingredients and nutritional values for the two recipes and discuss the health benefits and drawbacks for each. Make both recipes and rate them for taste out of 10.

VISUAL ARTS

Visual Depiction

In Chapter Sixteen, Becca notices pencil and charcoal sketches on the walls in Celeste's room. Celeste explains these sketches depict her poems. Choose one of Becca's poems and depict it through a visual art medium such as sketching or drawing. Or, if you prefer, choose any scene from the novella to depict visually.

PDHPE

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Using Becca's influencer experiences as a starting point, research the effects of social media on teens as both producers and consumers. Look at areas such as self-esteem, peer pressure, anxiety and other mental health issues. Construct a Venn diagram, showing the overlap of effects of social media on those who produce vs those who consume social media.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

CURRICULUM V9

YEAR 8

English

AC9E8LE03 - explain how language and/or images in texts position readers to respond and form viewpoints

AC9E8LY01 - identify how texts reflect contexts

AC9E8LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to interpret and evaluate ideas in texts

AC9E8LE04 - identify intertextual references in literary texts and explain how the references enable new understanding of the aesthetic quality of the text

AC9E8LY03 - analyse and evaluate the ways that language features vary according to the purpose and audience of the text, and the ways that sources and quotations are used in a text

YEAR 9

English

AC9E9LA08 - analyse how vocabulary choices contribute to style, mood and tone

AC9E9LA02 - understand how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices such as allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor

AC9E9LE04 - analyse texts and evaluate the aesthetic qualities and appeal of an author's literary style

AC9E9LY01 - analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts

AC9E9LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group

AC9E9LA01 - recognise how language empowers relationships and roles

AC9E9LE02 - present a personal response to a literary text comparing initial impressions and subsequent analysis of the whole text

AC9E9LE03 - analyse how features of literary texts influence readers' preference for texts

AC9E9LE05 - analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references

Civics and Citizenship

AC9HC9K06 - the influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identity and attitudes to diversity

YEAR 10

English

AC9E10LA01 - understand how language can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people

AC9E10LE06 - compare and evaluate how "voice" as a literary device is used in different types of texts, such as poetry, novels and film, to evoke emotional responses

AC9E10LE05 - analyse how text structure, language features, literary devices and intertextual connections shape interpretations of texts

AC9E10LE04 - evaluate the social, moral or ethical positions represented in literature

AC9E10LE03 - analyse how the aesthetic qualities associated with text structures, language features, literary devices and visual features, and the context in which these texts are experienced, influence audience response

AC9E10LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to implicitly or explicitly represent values, beliefs and attitudes

AC9E10LE07 - analyse and evaluate the aesthetic qualities of texts, for example, analysing and evaluating the use of literary devices.

AC9E10LY01 - analyse and evaluate how people, places, events and concepts are represented in texts and reflect contexts

AC9E10LA02 - understand that language used to evaluate, implicitly or explicitly reveals an individual's values

CURRICULUM 8.4

SENIOR SECONDARY

English

Like, Comment, Subscribe? can be used as a text for Years 11 and 12. It can be used in English, Literature and Essential English. The applications can include the intersection of culture, information technology, health and language. Character arcs and motivations can also be observed.