

## WHAT HAPPENED TO NICOLE?

Once upon a time there was a little girl. Her name was Nicole. She lived with her parents and her big brother. It was Nicole's birthday and what she wanted most was a computer where she could play games and chat with her friends. The only problem was that her family was not very rich and could not afford a computer. So for her birthday she got a doll. The doll was pale, had ginger hair and freckles, and wore a light blue dress with a bow on the back. She had a flower in her hair. Nicole seemed to like the doll, even though she had been promised that she would get a computer for her birthday. When she finally asked her parents about it, they replied, "Maybe some other time."

One day, Nicole had been sitting in her room all day having a little fun and playing with her new doll. She seemed to love her so far. She ate breakfast, lunch and dinner with the doll, she went to school with her, it was like they had a bond with each other. The next day it rained. Nicole got sad because she could not go outside and play with her new doll. She asked her mother what she could do until the rain stopped and she could go outside and play again. Her mother replied that she could try to do something inside the house. The girl grabbed the doll from the couch she was sitting on and ran into her room. She looked around trying to find something creative to do.

- "What should we do, Dolly?" she asked the doll.

- "How about we paint? Why do not we paint something you'd really like?" she said in a high-pitched tone, giving the doll a voice.

- "Hey, that's a good idea," she replied to the doll.

She took out some papers and a drawing set with markers from her closet. She began to draw a small computer with her and Dolly on the sides. When she finished drawing, her mother came into her room to check on her.

- "What are you doing, sweetie?" she asked Nicole.

- "I am drawing mommy, do you want to see?"

- "Sure, honey." she said, walking up to the girl.

- "Look, Mommy, I drew my dream computer, with me and Dolly on the sides as its new friends!" said Nicole, showing the drawing to her mother.

She saw the drawing and smiled at the girl.

- "Oh, honey, I know how much you want this computer, but unfortunately we cannot afford it..."

Nicole looked at her mother with tears in her eyes.

Her mother sighed but could not do anything. Nicole left the room, taking the doll and the drawing with her, and went into the kitchen. There was her older brother Kyle, making dinner. He saw that Nicole was down and asked her if she was okay. Nicole nodded no and hugged her doll. Kyle saw her drawing and after Nicole told him what she wanted, he had an idea.

"I know! Why don't we use dad's old computer? It still works, it's not broken." Nicole liked the idea and hugged Kyle tightly. Then they both went into the living room and got the computer out of a closet. Kyle put it on the table with a charger so it would have enough battery.

Nicole thanked him again and he set to work on the recipe for tonight's dinner. The computer was a small laptop with old stickers on it. It was a little dusty, but it was in good

shape. Nicole could not wait, so she turned on the computer and it opened on the home screen. The only problem was that the computer asked for a password. Nicole was confused and tried pressing some random combinations on the bar, but it did not work.

Suddenly a window opened on the screen "You want to change your password?"

-Yes -No

She clicked on "Yes."

She entered a new code and the computer opened normally on the home screen. She was surprised and excited at first because she now had her own computer. The bright screen and the bright colours of the computer's background image made her cry out in excitement. She did not know what to do first! She was ready to open the internet browser, but a file on the bottom right of the screen drew her attention. The folder was titled "do not open." Of course Nicole was curious and was about to open the file when suddenly her father called out that dinner was ready. She took Dolly with her and headed to the dining room, but she was still curious about what was in that file.

The following day, Nicole had to go to school. She got ready, took Dolly and put her in her bag. She ate breakfast and her mom drove her to her school. She had a lot of fun there. At 1:15 pm, Nicole's mom came to pick her up from school. When they got home, Nicole went to her room to start studying so she would have enough time to play with Dolly and use her new computer. When she opened her bag to take out her books, she found that Dolly was missing. She began to search deeper in her bag, but Dolly was nowhere to be found. She quickly ran to her mother and asked her if she had seen Dolly anywhere. Her mother told Nicole that she had seen her put Dolly in her backpack before school. They decided to go back to the school to look. After returning to school, Nicole checked her class, but Dolly was nowhere to be seen. She even looked in her locker, but her doll was not there. With a sad look on her face, she walked back to the car and her mom drove back home.

"Do not worry about it," her mother said. "We will look for her and tomorrow maybe one of your classmates will have your doll."

Nicole nodded, still sad, and went to her computer, thinking it would cheer her up. She opened the computer, typed in her password, and went to the home screen. She noticed again that strange file at the bottom of the screen. She hesitated for a moment thinking "to click or not to click?" but her curiosity was too strong so she opened the folder and found another folder labeled "unsolved police cases". She opened that folder and found more folders arranged alphabetically. But her attention was caught by a folder labeled "missing children cases". She clicked on the folder and found several pictures of missing children and the corresponding information under the photo. She read the names of the children and did not seem to recognize any of them until she got to the last child. Her name was "Angela Stevenson", Nicole's friend from first grade.

"Didn't she move away?" she thought, clicking on the picture for more information. The description said that she had disappeared on April 4, 2007. She started to read the description further until something caught her eye. In the description were the dates of the girl. It said that the mother had informed the police that the girl had lost her favorite doll two days ago. Nicole clicked on a picture file and she saw pictures of the doll. The doll looked exactly like the doll she had. She quickly checked the other children. "Sofia Whitworth", "Alicia Weber", "Clarissa Branch" - all of these girls had bought the exact same doll as Nicole and disappeared after a few days. Nicole clicked out of the folder and closed

the computer, not believing what she had just seen. She regretted clicking on the folder. But she knew she could not leave it as if nothing had ever happened. She had to look again. Just then, her father called her for lunch. She ran into the dining room, not saying a word about what she'd found in that computer. While it could not be a coincidence that some missing children had the same doll as her, she did not think much of it.

After lunch, she went to her room to study and tried to forget the whole case. But she was still worried about what might be hidden in the other files. In the end, she decided to ignore it and consider it a coincidence. After she finished her homework, she went to bed. Her mother tucked her in and wished her a good night. The next morning, Nicole did not have school, so she went straight downstairs to play with her computer. But her computer was already open. She went to see why that was, and what she saw on the screen made her freeze. She saw that the missing kids folder was open, but the folder contained her picture. No one has ever heard from Nicole since that day.

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