

## Rudolf the Star Football Player?

Oh, why hello there, did you pick up this story thinking that it will be a happy reindeer and how he saved Christmas? Well sorry, that would be the wrong story then because this one is a bit different. I'd like you to meet Rudolf or what he likes people to call him Rud because he always gets so many jokes about him having the same name as a children's Christmas story about some reindeer so he wanted a nickname to try avoiding all the jokes. He loves to spend his time by himself working independently on his own projects because of kids at school, his dad and society tells him that he is different and weird for being himself.

Let's set the scene for you; It was the first day of high school for Rud and he was so excited to be going to a new place with new kids he has never met before. He woke up way earlier than his alarm because of how excited he was and to make sure he had everything he needed for the day. This was also the first time he was going to ride a bus since before he was within walking distance from his old school. When he finally put on his first day of school outfit that he picked out a week ago, he headed downstairs to see his mother making him his favorite breakfast of blueberry pancakes with three berries on top.

"Aw mom, you didn't have to do this!" Rud said with happiness in his voice

"Of course I did! You won't ever have the first day of high school again!"

" Mom it's not a big deal." As Rud was trying to play down his excitement of this day he has been waiting for.

"If you say so... Come take your plate of pancakes and go sit at the table. Dad should be down here any minute to send you off on your first day!"

Rud was trying to avoid seeing his dad before he left because he knew he would ruin his morning. Donner, Rud's dad, was a major NFL football player who played football his whole life and tried to teach Rud the game. Now, Rud hated playing the game even though he was pretty good at it; he liked other things better. He never told his dad his actual feelings about football; he tried so many times but his dad never listened. I guess Rud did have more in common with Rudulf in that children's story then he realizes because a line from that story is; "Although he was lonesome, he always was good... Obeying his parents, as good reindeer should"<sup>1</sup>. They both can't tell their parents what they truly want to do and just do what they are told. The reason I'm telling you this is because not only was it the first day of school but also the first day of football tryouts that Donner expected Rud to go to.

"Hey there son! Excited about today? Football tryouts are at 3:15 sharp and I want you to get there early and introduce yourself to the coach so he knows your face."

"Yeah about that..."

"Oh don't worry son! You're going to be the star player and help the team make it to the playoffs!"

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<sup>1</sup> Lankford, Ronald D. *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer* : an American hero. University Press of New England.

"Yeah, I guess."

"Well, you better be going if you want to catch that bus now!"

"Ok, bye dad. Bye, mom. See you guys later."

Rud finally made his way to his bus stop and waited for what seems like forever, pondering his thoughts on how he wants his high school years to go. Does he want to be the "star football player" kid again which is the only thing people knew him for? Or does he really want to be his true self? Rud is taking this as a fresh start and wants people to actually know who he is other than a good football player.

The bus pulled up and the driver swung open the doors and Rud climbed up the stairs to see his friends waving him over. Pretty much all his friends were on the football team which is how he met all of them. The whole bus ride consisted of his friends talking about how they were excited about tryouts later today and how they think the coach will be like. He wondered if they would still be his friend if he didn't play football anymore. The bus finally pulled up to school and Rud was so excited for a fresh start.

Now I'm not going to go into how his day went because it was pretty basic of going to class and eating lunch and talking with his friends, it's more interesting once it reached 3:15. So the school day finally ended at 2:50 and Rud had to finally make a decision with what he was going to do about football. He decided that he wanted to be happy and start living his life for him and do what makes him happy which would not be playing football. Rud knew that his dad will be very infuriated with him and not understand but he didn't care anymore he wanted to be himself and finally start doing the thing that made him happy, making art.

It was 3:15 and Rud didn't even go near the football field, but instead went to find the art room in his school. He started getting texts from his so-called friends on the team asking where he was and that he better come. He knew that since he was deciding to quit football that he would lose all his friends because his friends were the ones who made fun of the kids at school that he always yearned to be like. When he found the art room, those kids were all there creating amazing artwork that Rud was stunned by. Rud was really into painting abstract paintings because there wasn't any rules or staying inside the lines unlike playing football. Rud ended up staying in the art room talking to those kids and talking about art for two hours until the bus comes to pick them up to go back home.

This is what Rud was dreading, going home to his dad to tell him he is quitting football. Rud took his time walking from his bus stop to the front door of his house where he knew his dad would be there waiting for him to talk about football tryouts. And what would you know, his dad was sitting right at the head of the table again as if he never left the table this morning waiting for his return.

"So tell me everything that happened? The coach loves you already doesn't he?!"

"Ummm, yeah about that.....I didn't go to tryouts..."

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DIDN'T GO TO FOOTBALL TRYOUTS?!?"

"Dad. I have tried to tell you a million times that I don't really like football and don't want to play."

"WHAT YOU HAVE NEVER EVER SAID THAT!"

"I know because you would always cut me off talking and trying to tell you what I REALLY WANT. I HATE FOOTBALL!!! IT WAS NEVER MY DREAM TO PURSUE IT IN THE LONG RUN. I WANT TO BE AN ARTIST AND BE CREATIVE."

"YOU WILL NEVER MAKE A CAREER DOING THAT. AND WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT HATING FOOTBALL?!? YOU ARE A STAR PLAYER!"

"So, what if I happen to be good at football, it doesn't make me happy. I want to start doing what makes me happy which is creating art pieces"

"I can't believe this. I need to go talk to your mother about this."

"Ok fine, but I'm still not joining the football team at school anymore."

As you see his dad wasn't happy to hear what Rud wanted to do. He gave him the silent treatment for a couple day, but finally come around. After his dad cooled down after a while, he decided to support Rud with his new-found talent and not punish him for not wanting to play football. Even if Donner never came around to accepting Rud's choice of not playing football, it didn't matter what anyone thought of Rud now. He finally talked to his friends about his feeling on football and what he wants to do now and surprisingly they were all supportive and they still want to be his friend. He finally came out of his shell and isn't letting society or people tell him what he should be like or do. He and his new-found friends or his "misfit toys" have each other and its ok if other people don't agree because they have each other and like being unique to themselves.

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