

# Marian Seat: Finding Myself

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## Finding Myself

Graduation: a time of smiles, funny hats, parties, short summers and dramatic conclusions. As a high school student you look forward to this day from the second day of your freshman year (the first day you are too stunned by the transition that you completely forget you've **only** got four years to go.) Graduation is a sign of freedom, from here on out, adults consider you an adult and you finally get some of that respect that everyone has been talking about for so long. Yep, it is awesome. It is just great. Dandy, even.

Now you are wondering to yourself, "Why is this girl standing in front of me not excited, she should be jumping for joy, she's done, she's moving out, she's all grown up so now the real fun can begin. She will go off to Syracuse University and have the time of her life (because that is what all college kids do) and it will be an experience she will fondly remember for the rest of her life."

It is not that I am not looking forward to college or my life in general, simply that I am rather afraid of what the future holds. I do not know exactly where I am going or how everything will play out. Generally, I am not a control freak (in my family that role falls to either mom or Lauren) but this sensation of freefall is driving me crazy. Time passed without so much of a "By your leave" and suddenly I find myself standing here in front of all you guys, Seekers, essentially my extended family, telling you things I've not told anyone before (ooo the real juicy secrets!!).

Logically I know that I'll love college, I'll love working, and I'll my life ahead of me, but in my head I can't help but hesitate in saying all of this. The future is not free. It comes at a price, perhaps it is not as expensive for others as it feels it will be for me. Nevertheless, this is one price tag that I am having major trouble choking down.

My life so far has been great. Why would I want to up and leave all of it behind? (Yes I know I'm not actually *leaving* it all behind but then again this isn't logic speaking) I can honestly say I am happy with my life (whatever that means). My family (Seekers included) is delightfully aggravating yet always loving and supportive, my friends are nothing but surprising but always dependable. Moreover, I have the most wonderfully stubborn and yet accommodating boyfriend anyone could ask for (say, "hi Chris"). Who would want to leave all this? Not I.

Yet I am and I have known I was going to from that second day of freshman year. So why bother with getting attached if I am just going to go off and leave anyways? Well for me it is the memories.

Up until freshman year, my life was static, I was the quiet one and that was fine with the world and more so it was fine by me. **Enter** the COMMUNICATIONS ARTS PROGRAM (CAP) (essentially a magnet program for humanities – English, history, journalism and media literacy).

In ninth grade the first semester of required "electives" you take as part of the program is drama. Now this was horrible news for me. Essentially a death sentence to any shred of dignity I had as a freshman. That class was hell for me, literally. It was not that the teacher was particularly cruel or that the assignments were particularly hard, it is simply that I feel as if all of my internal organs have curled up and died when I get in front of an audience.

The first actual assignment we had was to pick your dream role in any play and walk silently across the stage as that character, and then the other students in the class would guess who you were. I slaved over this assignment, it had to be just right, after all, it was the first real work we had done in the class and I wanted to make sure that this year went without incident. The character had to be something doable just in case she held me to it but something with a little bit of flair. It is therefore obvious that after much deliberation I picked ----- an extra. Really, I chose an extra, but preferably something in a historic period. My logic ran like this "as an extra I would be able to see all the behind the scenes work that goes on and hopefully avoid that wave of nausea that stepping on a stage gives me." It was perfect.

It is safe to assume that there was much laughter when this came out (I do not quite remember as I have probably blocked this day from my memory). After that, my teacher, Ms. Newman, labeled me as a disturber of the peace. The semester in that class went downhill from there. I can say however that I did survive (but just barely).

Looking back on it (from a distance), I am extremely grateful to Ms. Newman for forcing me to get out of my comfortable little bubble. Being the quiet one is only so interesting, besides what is the fun if you cannot express to others what you have observed in your years of quietly sitting and watching. I'm not saying that her class led me to star in the school plays or made me want to move to New York City to try my luck as a Broadway actress, simply that I'm not going to end up forgetting all my lines and run off stage crying. Most importantly, she taught me that I do in fact have something (however small) to contribute and that by not sharing it I am depriving everyone of that insight.

In tenth grade, I was exposed to Media Literacy. I absolutely hated this class, mainly because I felt so completely

unprepared for it. Most other students in CAP has been in a middle school magnet class with a TV production program similar to Media Literacy but this was my first time through the curriculum so it meant I had to work twice as hard to get half as far. At the end of the year we produced two major productions the first was a 14 min. Cultural Movie Review show which my group bombed (royally so). The second project was the 29 min Culture Project where we had to define American culture (no small task I assure you.) This time around, my group (the same as before) nailed it, we worked as a team, we were the only group to receive an A on the project. This experience encouraged me to try out for Blair Network Communications (BNC) the student run TV and radio station at my high school.

Junior year I was selected for the position of Production Manager at BNC, which essentially meant that I organized the production of the 3 monthly live to tape half hour shows at BNC with the help of my friend Sarah who luckily was the Assistant Production Manager. I absolutely loved my time in that position. As it turns out I enjoy teaching and that's what I did, every single week I taught a new group of 11 people who had never worked with each other or been in the show studio how to first operate the equipment and then how to communicate as a group. It was exciting, stressful and extremely important to me.

Senior year, finally, I am almost done with school and senioritis is in full swing, and I will be going off to Syracuse University next year (Go Orange Men!). I am looking forward to it, it will be exciting I am sure (I will keep you all posted!). My only real goal for this year (besides getting into a school) is to make the most of it. Test the waters for everything and make as many awesome memories as possible. So far it is working (I blame Chris for a lot of this).

Seeker's has also played a large role in this, recently I did something that goes against every fiber in my body (yes every single one) in an attempt to loosen up and live a little, I

joined the clowning troop.

Yes — Marian, the girl was afraid to pick a hypothetical lead role.

The same one who — hates make up, became a clown!

Actually, it was a lot of fun and something I would recommend to anyone, especially those of you who consider yourself “shy” if I can do it the rest of you have no excuse.

In addition, in an attempt to cover as many of my interests as possible, I took a wide range of classes this year. I took: "Origins of Science", where we sat around discussing philosophy (the alternate reflection piece is recent my contribution to a discussion on the existence of God); "Cultural Anthropology", where the teacher lived and taught his philosophy that we as humans need to take care of nature rather than abusing it (we did a lot of research into ancient lifestyles and their impact on the environment); "AP Comparative Government", a last ditch effort to gain some shred of political interest (my theory was that my lack of interest was due to a lack of understanding, the subject matter is interesting but I still haven't picked up on a particular philosophy); and "Law", as it turns out I have a natural knack for it (who ever would have guessed??)

These classes are an interesting break from the daily grind; they provoke more thoughts and encourage discussion rather than assigning busy work. They are all excellent examples of what an education should be. They also remind me of seekers and the varied topics discussed and taught here.

This year I am again part of Blair Network Communications, this time as one of the five students who run the organization; my formal title is Production Executive Director. However, I am responsible for the maintenance of studio equipment, the production quality of all of the shows and helping any students using the equipment in the studio. It

is a huge learning experience, and on some days, it seems as if it is equally insurmountable as drama with Ms Newman. It is about as real as my education has gotten.

Now we get to the hard part.

I do not know what I believe anymore.

Somewhere in this four-year span, my faith in Christianity disappeared. It was not anything particularly dramatic; it just kind of petered out. Learning about these "Holy Wars" and the cruelty and hatred that belief in God has caused over the eons makes it a very bitter pill to try to swallow anymore. The concept of the loving grandfather figure was lost and has not been replaced.

Something has died in me since those innocent days. This is particularly painful because I do not want to admit to it. I would not like to be exposed out in the cold like this, but I also do not want to go back. There are too many things wrong with blind faith for me to be a part of it.

Perhaps there is something greater than all of us, but the point is that I am no longer sure, at all. It is almost as if saying that I do not believe tears up everything I love about this church and the fond memories I have made in Sunday School and on the retreats. It is also denying the very thing to which my grandparents have devoted their lives.

A couple of winters ago I got into a theological debate about faith, my theory was perhaps it is not the belief in Jesus that gets you to heaven but belief in general (i.e. other religions aren't completely and totally wrong). The discussion ended in a "well we'll pray for you." This was frustrating to say the least.

I am sick of the intolerance in the world for those of differing viewpoints. There should be discussion and interest. Perhaps I am just spoiled here at Seekers; I grew up here

amongst open-minded people, and I know that it is possible to be open-minded and simultaneously have faith. People lose sight of the fact that Religion is and always will be a human created institution. Whether inspired by something greater or based on something instinctive inside all of us, for some, religion fills voids that other things in life cannot. Seekers for me has been a family; I have spent my whole life inside these walls I remember thinking the green paint was so cool and how great it was that we dared to be different. The walls are now painted over. I hope that we still dare to be different despite our white walls.

So suddenly in the span of four short years, I am a completely different person, and I am not quite sure what to think about this. Who is this stranger with my name, my face, my friends, my family and evidently my identity? In my quest to expand my mind and my experiences, I have lost track of who I am and this is a horribly frightening experience.

I went into high school knowing exactly who I was. I was Marian Seat, a big sister, a Christian, an avid reader, mostly silent in class, slightly louder around friends, and thought that the Spice Girls dressed themselves in the dark.

Now things are a bit different. I am still Marian Seat but I now respond to Lauren or Sarah (a friend who evidently looks like me). I am not sure where I stand on the whole religion aspect of my life, but I know I do not like calling myself Christian. I still read though not as often as I would like. I cannot keep quiet anymore; as I am one of the leaders of the class time for BNC and tend to speak up quite a bit in my other classes. I find myself forcing myself to go outside my comfort zone knowing that I will be completely exposed and will be uncomfortable (today for example). I do however stand to my theory that the Spice Girls did in fact dress in the dark (thankfully, my exposure to music has increased since then.)