

Emma's story

13-year-old Emma Trott from Berkshire describes how she coped when her best friend Rosie Mayling died two and a half years ago.

I met Rosie when I got a place at Redroofs, the theatre school where she was already a pupil and she was assigned to look after me. We just had the same quirky, hyper personality and sense of humour; we both loved The Simpsons and Friends and playing The Sims on the computer and we became best friends very quickly. Rosie's illness started when she had a cold that she couldn't get rid of and seemed a bit like flu. When she didn't seem to be getting better she had to have hospital tests and ended up being admitted. I didn't really understand what was wrong with her (Rosie was eventually diagnosed with vasculitis, a rare disease affecting the blood vessels) and didn't really ask her much about it - when I went to visit I just wanted to cheer her up so we'd play games or talk about what was going on at school.

After a few months she was sent home and I really thought - I think everyone did - that she was better. But she suddenly had a relapse and was taken back into hospital into intensive care in a coma, and I never saw her again. At school we made a tape of us singing some songs that Rosie had written herself but I don't know if she ever got to hear it. When I got the phone call to say Rosie had passed away part of me wanted to believe it was a wind-up, but in my heart I knew it was true. Children weren't allowed at the funeral but I didn't mind; I didn't want to see her coffin anyway. Instead we held a memorial show for her through school where I did one of her songs 'Be Proud'. I don't think I could have got through it on my own but some friends were singing with me. My granddad had died earlier in the year but this was different. I didn't see him very often, whereas Rosie was an empty seat beside me in class. If someone laughed, it seemed wrong - how could people be enjoying themselves when Rosie was gone? I didn't talk about Rosie's death much, only to two other friends who'd been close to her - we'd share happy memories of her and just wonder where she was and what she was doing.

Soon there were new people in the class who'd never known her and somehow that hurt, like life shouldn't be going on as normal as if she hadn't been here. At the beginning every little thing that happened - a door blowing shut, a sudden noise - I'd think, is that her? If I'm sitting on her special bench at school and a breeze blows or a butterfly goes past I still believe it's Rosie. I really think she's still with me; I picture her sitting next to me watching The Simpsons and laughing, or playing pranks on people. When the sun comes up, she's there, and when I see a rainbow, it's her - rainbows were her thing; she wore these coloured stripey socks and on the day of her funeral there was a huge double rainbow in the sky. I do think about heaven now, what she does there and if one day we'll meet up. I wonder, though, if I'll be an old lady and she'll still be a young girl? In the meantime, I remember her all the time but on her birthday or Christmas or the anniversary of the day she died I'll do

something special like write a poem and post it on her website, or light a candle in the window for her. Last time I wrote her a letter, just telling her what I was thinking and feeling and what we'd been doing at school, and threw it in the fire so it could float up to her in heaven. I hope she somehow got to read it.

You can visit the website set up in Rosie's memory at www.rosiesrainbowfund.co.uk