

Rachel York

Socratic XII

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### I Choose to be Spider-man

I remember exactly where I was when I heard the news. I was in the tenth-grade Socratic room, the third seat from the door. Ms. Smith was gone so we had a substitute, and I heard someone say “Stanley is dead.” Stanley? Stanley who? “Stan Lee is dead.” I was shocked. I didn’t know him, I didn’t read Marvel comics, and I had seen very few marvel movies. But Stan Lee’s death made me realize something: spider-man isn’t real.

It seems like something I should have known by the time I was 15, and I’m sure deep inside me I did know. But I didn’t want to accept that in a multiverse where there is room for an infinite number of spider-themed superheroes, I live in a universe where they’re fake.

Let me retell to you the origin story of the original spider-man. Peter Parker was an ugly nerd. He was bitten by a radioactive spider and gained “the agility and proportionate strength of an arachnid.” He was also able to build himself web-shooters using his aforementioned background as a science nerd. When Peter failed to save his uncle Ben, he learned that “with great power, there must also come-- great responsibility!” Thereafter Peter donned the name Spider-man and the classic suit and chose to fight crime. A pretty hard-core origin story

He and I are not so different. Though the resemblance isn’t super clear at first. I’m not exceptionally smart, I don’t have spider-powers, and I don’t have a tragic backstory. I’m just a kid.

There it is. I’m just a kid.

Peter Parker started life the way most of us do. Without great wealth, powers, or popularity. In fact, there weren't very many people who even liked him- he was bullied. He didn't have a lifetime full of experience to help him when he was bit by that spider. But like us, when his life was changed by something out of his control, he had to choose what he was going to do about it. You've heard the saying, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them"? Well, greatness isn't the only thing that can be thrust upon you. As your life continues, trials seem to come out of nowhere, thrown at you like a punch from your arch enemy. When Doc Ock comes at you are you going to leave your future in his six hands? When Venom tries to take over, will you let him? When the Green Goblin joins the fight will you watch him destroy you? You're the one who needs to make the choice to fight back. It's not always going to end in victory. Sometimes you need to let it end with a "to be continued." but what's important is that no matter how many times you get hit, you find a way to get back up. Peter Parker didn't choose to be bitten by that spider, but he did choose what he was going to do with his powers.

I didn't choose to be born into a universe where Spider-man was make-believe, so let's do this one last time. My name is Rachel York. I wasn't bitten by a radioactive spider, and I don't have powers. But I fight my villains and I always get back up, because I choose to be Spider-man.