

## Hear It From Me

You know me, right? Sometimes I wonder if you too can hear that maddening voice of yours, if you too are driven by disappearing thoughts. Don't worry about my meds, my shooting veins with brown sugar and memories. I remember last summer I floated to the corner store, smiling until you found me.

"So. What's up," you said as if I still had a room next to yours in the house you came from. You trapped me between Doritos and 40 ounce beers. You looked like a sleepy kitten, Linda. Really, you did! I wanted to pet you; you had no idea. But I'm sure you saw the usual in me, so I answered accordingly.

"Why are you here?"

"I can't check on you, Mel? Saw you walking in. Are ya getting cigs?" You were home for the weekend, pestering and trying to be noticed. Like a manikin, yes, you were always seen and heard, but why.

"I DON'T fucking smoke, Lin." I'm sure the smile at the end surprised you. I know you hate when I say "fuck" and "cunt" and "baby sis," reminding you that we, honey, are not of the same world. I steered around your college body, so used, and tan, better tits. "Going tah ah Vick's tonight?" Did you *plan* on fucking him for the first time that night?

"I might go, are you?"

“Maybe.” After paying for my stuff, I bet you thought I would walk back with you, maybe embarrass you? I knew the possibility of my presence that night would kill you.

“Tell mom I said hi.”

\*

The truth is, when I'm clean, we look alike. Mrs. Ruben told me I was gorgeous three months after I got out of the hospital. I was clean. I told her I had a sister who looks just like me, that her college graduation was coming up. It was interesting having a sober conversation about you, not bringing up your highly sexualized symptoms for kicks. Sometimes I'd fuck around with my psychiatrist. They don't want my twenty minute money and I don't want to hear about my childhood from a nobody. I admit, I told her about when we went on vacation with my Dad's side of the family, to “vent” and “replenish,” and how I got high with my grandma's neighbors, while you fucked the lawn mower, and how you wanted to kill yourself because he left to pick up his wife from the train station after. Good times. Under Grandma's porch, really, Linda? I was stoned, but desperately needed to shoot up in the garage to help filter the sounds of the mountain lion you were screwing. I didn't care if Grams heard it, but it was aggravating! I just needed the warmth of it, the orgasm it provided in under five seconds. Jealous? I knew I'd be nauseous because of all the pot before it. There is nothing like the feeling H gives you in under 5 fucking seconds, baby. I had to, I mean, Lin, those sounds were driving me crazy! You were an inconsiderate bitch; remember your big sister? I was only clean for three months.

\*

If only you'd trust me again for one night. We had so much fun at your school when I drove up there. Your friends fell in love with you that night

"Just try it once." This was before you knew anything about me.

"I don't know Melanie. Pot is different because it's like a plant right?"

"Linda. Chill." I was already in bad mood because of the freaking 5 hour drive, I wanted to slap the shit out of you. "This is not science class Lin. And yes, it is fine, comes from the Coca plant, can get it in hospitals. Sometimes I wonder if you *really* party on weekends."

"Duh, are you fucking kidding me? You have some now right?"

"Yea, let's do this first." After we took shots of tequila, I let you get ready in your room. I was furious, I couldn't get H from home for my self and wasn't about to ask you where I could score some heroin on your campus. I went into the bathroom to cut up some lousy blow I was able to get my hands on; they were shaking. I rolled the bills up for us. I just wanted us to connect. I knew the level of closeness we could attain that night. I could cry right now, because I remember how badly I wanted you to love me, my way. I walked back into the room. You were dancing to Britney Spears, and ironically, I felt more comfortable.

"That was fast babe!" Couldn't even sense that maybe you were trying to impress me. I just kept thinking, *My turn, my turn, my turn*. I made a few lines on your desk, forget how many, but we finished about a gram I think. I hoped to God that I didn't waste good shit on you. I haven't done coke since high school, but I knew it would interest you for a night, and

that in many ways, you were smart enough to not afford it. I didn't take my meds that night. You didn't know to remind me, and even if you did, you were blown like a drunken bitch; it probably wouldn't have crossed your mind anyway. Even just a hit of brown, I needed it. Funny, mom called just as we were leaving. You were shouting, "I'm free. I'm free, this is amazing, do you feel that, do you feel that Mel?"

"Hello?" Apparently she had a missed call from you and couldn't reach you. "We're good, about to go to some girl's apartment for drinks." Of course mom would ask about my meds. "I left them in my other bag, but I should be fine for tonight, gonna have a few drinks and try to get to bed." She worried. "Ok, love you too. Bye"

I met some cool people that night, and I was entertained seeing you under your little kiddy fix. You knocked out in your room at about 2:30am. I didn't want to toss and turn in your bed so I took the living room couch. Coming down from the coke only left me with chills, wanting and wanting H. Tears were streaming across my face and I instantly started forgetting things, like where your bathroom was, where we had gone that night, what I was wearing, how to exhale. I remember kicking a tight grasp off my ankle every few minutes. I saw my car keys on the floor, got home in 3 ½ hours, went straight to Mike's. I don't remember if you called me when you woke up.

\*

Remember when you were wasted and fell asleep in my bed after Vick's party that summer? I decided to go home with you instead of Mike. Drifting off, you whispered, "What's the craziest thing you've ever done."

“Wanted to be you.”

\*

After you graduated, you had a lot of free time before med-school. I heard you and mom in the kitchen. Did you hear me bang my head against the wall? I didn't want to die then, just to pass out for a bit. I had to leave so I called up Mike who had more china white; we had a party in his room. He made me a fat line of pure H the size of his middle finger. In a few minutes we were itching like we had fleas and doing some more. I still don't like the prick, but shooting hits me like a mad woman in warm feathers. I think about you a lot.

“I think you'd. You'd like my sister,” I strained.

“She look like you?”

“Tits, yes. Ass, no ugh. You'd fuck her. And tell tell me. You saw her in the light in um the living room. With my, my-my mom.”

“Which one was your mom.” He kept using his pinky finger to scratch an eyebrow.

“UUUghhhhh. Stop er. Stop doing it.

\*

I just had to leave the house that night. I could not stand hearing mom tell you everything. You were untainted and I was the purple sleep walker who woke up numb. The truth is, if you're attractive, and play the game right H is somewhat free if you know the right addicts. I was really only addicted to you. You, like a character, strutting in stilettos and eye

liner. All you needed were whiskers and a tail to stick up your ass. There I was, 5'3, eye-less and a stray. Mom went through my shit every night when I was clean. She thinks you have the answers, beauty queen. I heard enough from the two of you that night.

“Mom, I. I want to help in any way that I can.”

“I can't go through this again.” Mom's crying sounds like dying sheep, the way she leaves her mouth open with her lips wet and folding over. “Again, Linda. This is not the first time.” I was clean before your graduation, didn't want to embarrass you, and haven't heard from Mike in weeks after my first OD. I was miserable starting out.

“She overdosed before your graduation.”

“I thought she had food poisoning. She missed my graduation because she's a fucking druggie?” Yep. That's a about right. And were you really surprised, Lin? Come on.

“She's been seeing a psychiatrist, brilliant woman, Mrs. Holmes. You cannot say a thing to her; it'll only make her pull away. I have to tell Mrs. Holmes.” I took a fucking 8 mg pill of Subutex almost every day when I was sober. It blocks the high of the drug even if I were to snort, smoke or shoot.

“Mom you're gonna ignore the fact that your daughter is a fucking heroin addict?” The pill leaves me stuck for about sixteen fucking hours. I wasn't having withdrawals as bad as that one week in the hospital when I first ODeD, but they were still there. Imagine sweating to death in a hospital bed.

“I couldn’t tell you that Linda. Couldn’t have you worrying about that *and* med school.”

After my first detox, my muscles lost complete control for about an hour. I fell off my bed unconscious, and according to the nurse the fall knocked me out for a few hours. I woke up in bed at mom’s house. No one was there, reached over for the pouch with my needle, wasn’t there. Car keys weren’t there. I vomited in bed, on the floor and looked up at mom standing in the doorway. She told me you would never have to know.

The reason I did not come downstairs that night, Linda, is because you gave way too much of a shit, way more than I did. I was so proud of you, my baby sister, med school. The least you could’ve done was come down to spend the weekend with me at my apartment. I guess it wasn’t sophisticated enough for you, angel. For Thanksgiving, mom went with her boyfriend, and so did you. I called you.

“Linny Lin, I’m psyched! Our own thingy right? Our own little thingy at my place. For us, you know me, and do you care if it’s at Mikeers, our place right?”

“Yes. I can’t wait.” Maybe I shouldn’t have shot up before I called you. Mike and I were rushed, ass-naked. I was on the floor, Mike on the bed, shooting.

“God damn! I love my sistaah!. You bringing him? I mean, you wanna tah bring Vick?” I wanted to tell you to use you brain, never your heart when dealing with guys. As cold as this may sound, it wasn’t that I didn’t want you to get hurt, because you will. I wanted to give you the power, to make you into a sorcerer, wanted by all, taken by none. I would never allow Mike to call me his girlfriend. Never give them your heart because they’ll take a bite out of it and spit it in your face.

“I think he actually has plans with his family. Are you not going with Mom and Dave?”

“Baby sis, where is your peanut brain? Why would I go there? That – would – be – smart, smart! Like Lind-err right? With, and with mom, and faggot dirty Dave. Encore! Encore!”

“Mel, are you drunk?”

“Linda, he’s fucking homeless, not a job, eating all thee shit in our house since mom started menoo ya, men-O-pAUse Lindy. Eight fucking years! You know you’re just like her— suck common sense out of life and replace it with a lab report.”

“Been drinking huh, so I’m gonna go now?”

“Been swollen baby! Not going tah be a wild flower beneath your feet my sweet virgin.” I don’t know if I hung up, or if Mike’s hands were between my legs. “Gimme babe-eyyy, another hit for the lay day?” The horn dog made me a fat line of china white H on his thigh. I’m sorry.

\*

Your graduation was on Friday. Well, that Tuesday I had not taken my Sudo, because it makes me slightly anxious and I was already nervous about your graduation. I just got back from the mall with your gift. Mom and Dave were already staying at a nearby hotel by your school, but I was planning on driving up on Thursday. Mike called me.

“Babe, I have the perfect gift for Lin. You’re gonna flip!”

“Mike, what the fuck?”

“I know, I know I’ve been MIA, but I know how you’ve been looking forward to this, and how Linda thinks I’m some sick bastard.”

“I do miss you’re crazy ass. Are you a brown man?”

“As ever.”

I drove to his house in 3 minutes, parked, left my doors unlocked and ran to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. I dropped my phone, which fell through the spaces from the railing, crashing at the bottom of the landing from his door. He met me at the door, started grabbing my ass—shut the door. It felt as if my vein was a pipe about to burst. Immediately, I took my shirt off and my eyes were blood shot. Again, the tears made their way down my face. I was ecstatic. My brain felt like a storm as I saw my syringe on the bed, my candy, already loaded. My mouth got so dry that Mike’s lips hurt until the sides of my mouth slightly bled. Shit I couldn’t stop my hand from shaking. I had so many spots on my arm; they were cute, like freckles. There’s nothing quite like it when it hits that spot, immediate euphoria. It feels like golden ladies rubbing your scalp while you’re getting off in a sauna. I nodded off a bit and was ready for another rush. We smoked it this time from his pipe. I woke up the next morning and Mike wasn’t there, probably ran to the store for cigs.

There was a lot left over and decided to do it all in one shot, found a new place to prick. I remember feeling the best elation I had ever felt, then feeling like I did too much. I woke up feeling like shit in the hospital. Mom was there.

“How you feel?”

“I’ll tell Linda.”