

Part One

Throughout her life she had seen her fair share of drama and hopeless incidents involving what her father called, “girl problems”, but would have never woken up in the certain knowledge that her life would be changed forever . . .

Warm light peered in through the shutters, casting long and horizontal bars along the threadbare carpet. Her blood trailed in smears along the sheets covering her bare breasts and tears stained her eyes. Her shirt and jeans lay in a heap on the floor while her wrists were adorned with ligature marks and her arms and legs were mottled with bruises. The memory retrieval on how she got there had failed her, but the incident itself was portrayed in flying colors . . .

Previous Night

The room was dark, save for the moon’s rays that coated it in a mystical and pearly glow. The softness in his voice and the way he kissed her neck, sliding his hand down her thigh as he cupped his other around her small breasts were all vividly recalled. She had desperately tried to flee the room, but the door was locked from the outside and the windows were framed with a crisscrossed lattice work of metal bars, abnegating even her slender frame to slip through. He had placed handcuffs around her wrists to prevent her from moving after her second attempt to flee. She remembered the hotness and stickiness of his breath as he hung over her, clearly being able to feel the stiffness of his manhood and the resonating *thump thump, thump thump* of his heartbeat. She recalled the frailty of her punches, (having the strength to barely break a glass bottle) and the feeling of absolute hopelessness: *There is nothing I can do, he is just too strong*. However, those events did not compare with the sensation of him slicing at the stitching of her pants and shirt with a tiny switchblade and the thrusting of his penis inwards and outwards as he erupted deep moans of pleasure, penetrating her like a sword and tearing her insides like paper. But even in her spates of relinquishment she still seemed to speak with the timbre of a child. She ventured in pushing him off her or holding him back but he kept driving himself forward, flattening her chest and constraining any further breath. It was then that the the room was aswirl in bright, glowing colors oddly blending to form an ambivalent coalesce, as every propulsion swallowed every last breath more and more.

After completion, he played with her hair and placed it up against his cheek, disclosing that it was the softest he had ever felt, speaking tenderly in hushed whispers with so much passion and poignancy it was as if he was *truly* speaking to a lover. He finished the night by giving her a sufficient dose of whatever was in the flask clenched tightly in his grip, whispering, "Good luck getting them to believe this, for who would believe a small, insignificant girl like yourself . . ."

Next Morning

She threw the blankets off her and lay curled up on the sheets, goose pimples starting to align themselves on her skin, wanting nothing more than to wake up from this wretched dream. She dragged herself to the shower and turned it on, a deep plead for death. *Wash away last night’s events*. She grabbed soap and rubbed her skin clean until the bottle’s contents were empty, not feeling any different — only foolish that she would believe such a lie, that by merely cleaning herself she could erase what happened the night before.

She stood in front of the mirror, emotionless and expressionless, a deep cloud of depression gathering around her soul. A pair of scissors lay in one of the drawers, so she withdrew them quickly and set upon the action of cutting all the hair off her head — a mere attempt in extirpating the idea

and feeling of him away from her.

Surprisingly, the door was open. She hesitated at the threshold, afraid he would jump out from some bush and bring her back into the room just to tease her. She swallowed the balmy air and began her onerous descent down the cobbled streets, hacking at the loose bits of stone with her foot to send them soaring a couple paces ahead of her. When she got home, she could not even touch her father, she did not know if she ever could.

Part Two

Present Day: Approximately Two Weeks Later

The news had spread like wildfire to millions and every newspaper bore headlines with her name portrayed in prevaricated titles and her phone buzzed through the night with notifications of students' messages, not one offering their condolences. When would the frenzy whittle itself away to staleness, inept to evoke the slightest trace of conversation?

She stood at the threshold of the courthouse — its walls fortified of deep red brick and light sandstone, while scraps of peeling and chipped golden letters fluttered like snowflakes on her hair — listening to the desultory shouts that bombarded her senses, ordering her to “look this way”, stark-white against a sea of eye-piercing flashes from the long-snouted lensed cameras fixed on her every move, her every poise, her every unblinking stare. Wisps of pale smoke drifted from cigarettes as reporters tore hastily into bags, eager to refill their film slots, continuing into the fortuitous clicking as they pushed past the mass fostered in barriers all eager to- and intent on- capturing the “perfect shot.” She placed a delicate step through the door as quiet as a shadow, wearing a black silken dress that drifted precariously through the wind. A pearl necklace clung to her neck like the hands of an attacker, so she tore it off and relinquished the unstrung pearls over the steps causing them to go awry where they joined the remains of scattered leaves scraping the ground as they chased each other in the gathering gusts of wind. She had a willowy frame and her chest was virtually with out breast even though the dress clung tightly to her skin, which only highlighted her pliant and dove-like poise.

Once glittering diamonds had been reduced to gray eyes that shone dully in their sockets and thick ringlets of hair, like fine black silk cascading in voluminous waves became thin tendrils of mousy brown hair, devoid of their crispness and vibrancy they once obtained. Therefore, her eyes, hair, and face were just the artifacts of a better and more-happier time...one she would never *ever* get back, no matter how many times she wished and prayed, she was still the victim of rape, and even worse, no one, except her parents, believed her.

The mild crisp in the air hinted at the end of summer, while the wind ruffled the neatly manicured hedges portrayed in the likeness of the Scales of Justice and a gavel, one of which had not been her friend this morning.

Her father raised his hands so that they were parallel to one another, beckoning her into a hug. She merely shrugged at his attempt and threw herself onto her mother and sobbed like she had never before; uncontrollable and burdened with the recollection and eventful past of one well beyond her years. Cries of “liar” slaughtered her ears as a figure approached the multitude of onlookers. The man stood at the precipice with flinty eyes dark with amusement and light wrinkles that caressed his face. Playing the part extremely well, he appeared to swallow his anger and began to speak in a courteous, yet firm voice, even daring to take part in crafting a wavering tone that spoke to his grief.

“For those of you that don’t know, I am Franklin Gore,” he jibed, “a wealthy businessman in these estates and I will not heed my outcry in this manner any longer. Plenty of you have denied my innocence and it is clear to see by the news titles blaring my name that I am some kind of pedophile! That I would take some small, *insignificant* girl into my bed and . . .” He allowed the audience to perceive

that he was contemplating the correct words, lost in thought. “. . . *fucked* her like a dog would do to a bitch.” She tried to bull rush him, but the officer pulled her back by the arm, holding her in what resembled a half-nelson.

“Get off me, — STOP TOUCHING ME!” she squealed, as she drove her heel backwards into his shin with a loud crack of bone. She considered it ill-advised to approach Mr. Gore, but she did not want this man she did not know touching her. Her father blurred by her, knocking her onto the ground, but as she regained her composure she saw her father being subdued by the patrols and Mr. Gore rubbing his jaw, a slaver of blood oozing downward from his chin. Her mother retched a scream so shocking, ear-piercing, and so thick with agony, she thought she might retch up the small portion of food she had allowed herself today.

The audience caught notice of Mr. Gore’s gaze and directed their attention to her. “Let us control our children and not let them spin such fanciful tales just to be noticed. I’m sure she was a perfect girl, but she didn’t need to get noticed like this.” He stood over her to where she could feel the hotness of his breath. *His voice was annoying. The way he spoke and smoldered his lips and allowed for the thin creasing of skin between his eyebrows as he hopelessly pondered the words to inform the crowd.* “You’ve hurt so many people. My wife is a good woman, and now my kids have this tainted view of their father because some girl decided to weave a *very* convincing tale about a man four times her youth. That’s it, no more further questions!” He then briskly strode to a glistening black sedan and before entering, placed his hand in farewell and blew Emily a kiss.

It didn't matter what they said or what they did, it was time to take matters into my own hands.

Part Three

The room was silent save for the scratching of her pen as she scribbled a quick note to her loved ones.

Dear Family and Friends,

I am so sorry for what I have put you all through. I love you and none of this was supposed to happen. Dad, I want nothing more than for you to hold me and whisper in my ear that everything is going to be okay, but I can't bring myself to do it. This is one of the many reasons why I have decided to end it. Being with a man has forced me to relive the most painful moment of my life. I thought I could fight it, but the truth is: I just can't do it anymore--especially after today's incident. Mom--you have been the best mother a child could ask for and I mean that, not just because I am about to die. You were there for me when everyone else left. You wiped my tears and held me late at night when the visions came back. You sacrificed your dignity and worth in this town to protect me even though there was no evidence of rape. I know I was drinking that night and I know I wasn't supposed to, but you stood by me and protected me. Stay strong. . . please. And Andrew--I love you and I wish that I could be with you for the rest of my life, but we both know that can't happen anymore. You were the best boyfriend and I have had the best time of my life with you these past months. Please know that I never truly stopped loving you.

Goodbye, all. Maybe now you'll all believe me.

Sincerely,

A merely insignificant girl

The note was soaked with leaking tears allowing for the ink to drip off the page, and the letters were sloppy. She folded the paper delicately and cinched a laced, pink ribbon around the scroll. She set the note on the table next to the peculiar object lying facedown and titled it: *To whom it may concern. Mom won't be back for at least a couple of hours and Dad is at work--I have time.* She looked outside: A curtain

of fog swept away from the ground in an essence of grandeur to reveal a wide expanse of jagged mountains piercing the skyline, marble palatials, lichen spreading unchecked over its face, and the moon, a silver alloy disk set amongst a banner of silvery stars. A swash of shill pressed itself against her face, pale as bone. *Maybe you don't have to do this . . . we can work through this . . .* She was about to tear the note when the voice spoke, a cold hissing that did not speak to her, but inside — deeper than that for it was in her very soul. *Yesssss . . . Do yourself a favor and end it . . .*

I can't do it any longer . . .

She grabbed the noose and fitted it around her neck, whilst walking to the balustrade, but was quickly interrupted by the soft *click* of the door.

Someone's home! She dove into her room and closed the door only partially, her chest heaving up and down rapidly. *What do I do? What do I do?* Her attention was somehow averted to the blade that reflected dully in the moonlight threading its way through her tattered curtains. It was the same one used to cut the noose. She pressed her lips against the metal and realized that this must be the one to end it all.

“Honey, I'm home!” her mother called, “Are you in your room?”

Now! During the same time it took to touch the edge where the puncture must fall she hugged a pillow to her face to muffle her screams. “Honey, I got this nice pot roast for dinner tonight--do you want to help me make it?” Her mother's shouts drifted from the kitchen.

The wave of emotion and uncertainty forced her to recall her friend's mentioning of snidbits about suicide and where most ended up after they performed the action. She said that all who killed themselves went to Hell because it was just the same as killing someone. She kept that thought buried deep in her mind . . . *Heat washed over her and screeches assaulted her ears with pleas for death as they staggered and wreathed brighter than stars, emblazoned in bright gold and orange. Flesh sloughed off bones, dripping with the consistency of curdled milk. Her vision was obscured by the rush of blistering, sulfuric air. Hobbling bodies approached her with thick ribbons of worms striping at the loose bits of flesh dripping and hanging from their bodies with eyes as pale as ice. She imagined there would be no formal: 'Welcome to Hell' sign, but there might be towering brazen serpentine statues coiling around a tower stacked so imprudently it gave the impression that it was a multi-layered decorative wedding cake--*

“Honey, are you okay?” inquired her mother, still calling out to confer on her presence. She could hear her dog's footsteps bounding up the stairs as he mounted each step, one by one each time. In a blur of silver she buried the knife deep within her torso, producing a red slash that painted the carpet crimson. *The first was always the hardest . . .* “You don't own me! You don't control me!” she spoke, over the soft squish of flesh, tearing at it like the wrapping of a Christmas present spewing forth a darkling stream of crimson. *The kiss of death, oh how sweet!* It was then that her legs gave out, compelling her to fall forward and drown in her own blood. The taste was oddly warm and profound like licking a copper pot.

She heard the emphatic pounding of gigantic paws gamboling toward her. He scratched at the door and poked his wet, black nose through it and entered in a scurry, slipping on the trail of blood by the entranceway. “*Pludy,*” she gurgled through a mouthful of blood. He pawed at her back, hopping about anxiously at the sight he was beholding. She attentively placed a gentle hand on his back, feeling the twitch in his body as she made contact, smearing his fur scarlet. Her dog howled and whimpered, crawling up next to her licking the blood from her face. *I guess I should have included one more name in my note.*

Shortly after, a loud scream pierced her ears. Her mother ran to her embellished in a dress of ebony velvet, clad in rose and silver, screaming, “EMILY! NOOOOOOOOOOOO! STAY WITH ME--DON'T LEAVE ME! I NEED YOU TO HOLD ON FOR JUST A LITTLE LONGER--JUST A LITTLE LONGER FOR MOMMY!” Her mother fumbled for her phone, pleading to the operator, her voice thick with anguish.

But it was too late . . . *I will already be gone.*

Her dress was soaked red where her daughter laid. “Mom, your dress.”

“My dress? My daughter!” she cried, dripping tears that caressed her daughter’s cheeks, washing away the blood stains. She threw back her head and screamed, “MY BABY! MY BABY! WHHHYYYY?”

“Mom?” Emily spoke in a faint voice and handed her the peculiar object that was contained tightly within her grip.

“What’s this?” Her mother flipped the object over in her hand, aghast. “You’re pregnant!”

“Yessss . . .” The words left her like her last breath as death began to touch her with cold fingers.

And for that, I’d most certainly go to Hell.