

A Voice Of Treason

Act I: The Ice Cream Shoppe

Vivian May glances at the short, stout man entering her establishment accompanied by a pair of small children. The man smiles politely at her as he approaches the counter but she does not respond in kind, she doesn't trust herself to make those decisions.

"Hello, how may I help you?"

Note how Vivian doesn't say "Hello, how may I help you today sir?" as she was trained to do three months ago when she began working at Burt's Creamery. Her worthless coworker Pauleen shoots Vivian a resentful look as she taps on the sides of her register while chewing gum so loudly that poor Vivian can hardly hear me.

"Ignore that gutless bitch!" I scream at her silently.

Vivian listens, perhaps now she is malleable enough to perform my ultimate assignment.

Act II: Childhood

I started speaking to Vivian when she was eight years old. She decided to call me Fid for some reason, so I suppose that is my name. The doctors say I was born of a serotonergic imbalance involving the 5-HT_{2A} receptors of her brain. Her mother wept when Vivian told her about me, thinking that her little girl was a schizo. She wept more when the doctors said that this was not schizophrenia, but a far more complex disorder which they had even less understanding of.

I've always cared for Vivian, but even when she was young she didn't appreciate me properly, she didn't see how much I could help her if she just listened to me. She ignored me when I commanded her never to sleep, so in return I made my voice louder and more intimidating. She stopped sleeping as much after that, she once went four days without a wink before her mother figured out what was going on and brought her back to the hospital.

"Your daughter is extremely ill, ma'am."

I listened from the hospital bed, enraged, as the foolish quack spoke to Vivian's mother.

“I recommend that you increase the frequency of her therapy sessions to five days a week, and I also strongly suggest that you reconsider her taking antipsychotics.”

And of course Vivian’s mother, that stupid, manipulatable wench listened to him. At first I didn’t understand those small pills that Vivian started taking everyday. It wasn’t for a couple weeks that I began to notice the effect they had on my power. My voice became muffled, and even when Vivian heard me, she obeyed me less. For the first time in my existence, I was frightened. I began to scream as loud as I could, and I didn’t stop for two weeks. Even with her decreased sensitivity to me, the endless shrieking drove her mad eventually. I told her I would stop only if she stopped taking those pills, and she did. When Vivian’s mother gave her the medicine, she would put it in her mouth and pretend to swallow and then spit it out whilst her mom was not looking.

Act III: Nighttime

The night can either be my hell or my haven. Because when Vivian sleeps, I cease to be impactful. She is not awake to believe in me, so in a way I do not exist. However to me I do exist, in a state of torment and powerlessness. When she sleeps, my thoughts are so cloudy, and I cannot speak to her at all. I have no control outside of the rare opportunities where I get to roam around in her dreams.

I suppose to some degree, the form I take in Vivian’s dreams is representative of how she must see me. When she was young, I was a little boy around her age. She would dream of us being at the playground together, or getting ice cream at Burt’s Creamery, or doing something more fantastical like riding a flying elephant over the city. This was before she was scared of me.

As Vivian got older, I became more sinister looking. She saw me as an eleven foot tall figure with eight spindly spider legs. I like this iteration more. Because another aspect of Vivian’s dreams is that I finally have physical control. I can move around on a three dimensional plane like humans, I can interact with the world. I can hurt people, hurt Vivian. I never kill her though, because that just makes the dream end, and I get sucked back into the hellish darkness of dreamless sleep.

I don’t enjoy hurting Vivian, well perhaps I do, but my primary reason for doing it is so that she will obey me when she is awake. When she was fifteen I had ordered her to slash the tires of the bitchy teacher who yelled at her for being late to class, and she refused. I shrieked at her at the time, but she still ignored me, so I awaited her next dream. It took awhile, probably two weeks, but eventually I felt the surge of physical presence in myself, as I looked down and felt my eight long legs with my hands. I saw Vivian in front of me, terrified. I tore her limbs from her body, one by one as she begged me to stop.

“This is your fate for every dream you shall ever have until you obey my will.”

And so, when she awoke and inspected her arms which she had just seen ripped from her torso, she knew that she must listen. That day she brought her dad's pocket knife to school, and at lunchtime she snuck out to the parking lot where she slashed every tire of the that goddamn teacher's car.

Act IV: Therapy

"Has the new medication been any more effecti-"

"Yes." Vivian cut off Dr. Lee, I had trained her thoroughly in always answering affirmatively in such questions.

"Okay, well if that stops being the case, we still have several other options, including upping the dosage."

"Tell him you're fine, no better than fine, you're doing well." I told her.

"That will not be necessary, I am doing well." She told him, her hands fidgeting and her eyes wide open like those of a speed addict on the fifth day of a bender.

Dr. Lee had only been Vivian's therapist for the past three months, she had changed counselors six times since she started therapy at age nine. Dr. Lee is my least favorite though, because he is the smartest. I know he can tell when Vivian lies to him, I know that he knows she is lying right now.

"What is Fid telling you Vivian?"

"He's telling me to tell you that the new medication has been effective."

"What do you think you're doing you fucking whore?" I yell at her and she clenches her eyes shut the way Dr. Lee had taught her to do when I yell.

"Is this really the case though? Is the medication working or is Fid making you lie?"

I could tell she was conflicted, she closed her eyes again and tensed up for several seconds before answering.

"He-"

“Shut up!” I commanded her. “Don’t you dare say a word.”

She paused again. Dr. Lee didn’t rush her to answer. He was smart, he was patient. Perhaps I should take a more gentle approach like him, I thought. I could at least pretend to, maybe then Vivian will trust me more.

“Vivian, it’s alright, there’s no need to worry,” I told her. “Just tell him the truth, that you have been taking your medication and that it’s working fine, come on you’re doing great.”

“Get out of my head!” She screamed aloud.

Now I was angry again. “You bitch! You stupid gutless bitch! What is wrong with you? You’re a 25 year old woman throwing a tantrum like a little baby you freak.”

She began crying, and Dr. Lee sat down next to her in attempt to console the whimpering mess. As long as I can keep her incoherent in these sessions, as long as I can keep that meddling doctor outside her mind and me inside then I will remain safe. It’s only when she answers his questions, and he provides her advice am I threatened. He is smart, but I am smarter, and I know Vivian’s fears and weaknesses enough to control her even in his presence.

Act V: The Institution

Back when she was 16, Vivian and I spent six ungodly months in the city’s youth mental health institution. I remember very little from this time, because the nurses made sure that Vivian was actually swallowing her medication and not just spitting it out. Of course I started screaming again, but this time I had lost enough influence over her that she actually told someone. Dr. Rivera, her psychiatrist in the institution dosed her with Valium so that my screaming hardly bothered her. She was eventually taken off the anxiety reducing drug once the antipsychotics had taken full effect. At this point I was a numb being of semi-consciousness. It reminded me of the torment of Vivian’s dreamless sleep.

She was well liked by the staff in the institution. The nurses all referred to her affectionately as Miss May, and would even give her extra privileges once her mental state began to improve.

“And how are you doing today Miss May?” Asked Audrey, Vivian’s nurse.

“Fuck off,” I told her to say.

“I’m good Audrey, how are you?”

Act VI: Vacation

Once she was released, Vivian continued taking her medication. For the first time in eight years she felt normal. She began developing normal friendships and living the life most 16 year old girls do. She became very close with a girl in her grade named Alexandra, whose parents invited Vivian to stay in their beach house for a week over the summer. At this point I was still just a passenger, All I had were my own thoughts. It was misery.

Waking up on the first morning of her vacation with Alexandra's family, Vivian went to her duffle bag to retrieve her morning meds. She located the pill planner with seven little compartments for each day of the week, and opened the one for Tuesday only to find it was empty. She checked the other compartments, all empty. I was euphoric. Vivian was only mildly concerned. At this point she had taken for granted the independence those small pills had granted her. However, over the course of the week, I began to come back to life. I decided to stay in hiding though, to fool her into thinking that I was still dormant. That gutless bitch actually fell for it.

By the time Vivian returned home, I had regained nearly all my strength, those wicked antipsychotics having been all but flushed from her body. And so, when she picked up the little pill bottle in the kitchen cabinet and began to open it I screamed. It felt glorious, I had not been able to scream like that for nearly a year. Startled, she dropped the bottle to the ground before realizing my return. She froze in fear, and in despair.

“No!” I yelled at her, my voice now more imposing and eery than ever. “Not again, not anymore! I have endured months upon months of torturous imprisonment, you will chain me no longer you worthless whore. You will obey me as you did in the days of old, you will cower to my mastery of your psyche, you will be my prisoner not I yours. And if you do not, I will make you suffer beyond that which you can comprehend, or conceive of comprehending. I am the master of your mind and body, I am your king, your lord, your God!”

And like that, Vivian was mine again.

Act VII: The Home of Doctor Lee

Vivian's shift at Burt's Creamery ended and she took the bus back to her parents' home where she lived. She knew that neither her mother nor father would be home until quite late that night, as after work they were going out for drinks with friends from their university days. With an emotionless gaze and a ghostly gait Vivian entered her parents' bedroom and proceeded to the closet opposite the entrance. She examined the safe and entered the four digit combination I had helped her obtain, “1-5-0-8”.

Inside the safe was an unloaded handgun, though Vivian and I don't know enough about guns to know which kind exactly. The magazine was immediately next to the weapon, she loaded it as I had previously instructed her. My control of her was so great at this point that I needed not to convince her to do as I said, she just did. She had almost zero thoughts of her own, I had conquered her without question.

Vivian obtained her purse and placed the handgun inside, then continued outside back to the bus stop she had recently arrived at. She got on the bus and traveled eight stops before getting off in a suburban area of the city. She then walked calmly down the road until she reached the residence of Dr. Lee. She approached the front door and gave it three loud knocks, spaced slightly too far apart from each other to sound normal. The doctor lived alone, so I knew it would be him that answered the door, and it was.

"Hello Vivian, is everything alright? Why did you come to my home?" The doctor is visibly uncomfortable, having never told Vivian his home address.

She began performing the script I had instructed her to memorize.

"I'm sorry doctor but it was an emergency and I could not wait until tomorrow's session, Fid is trying to make me hurt myself," she uttered in tears.

"This is highly unusual Vivian, but come in we-- should discuss this immediately."

"Thank you, Dr. Lee," she said, wiping the crocodile tears from her eyes.

The two of them entered the house and Vivian closed the door behind her. My ultimate assignment was about to be completed, I willed a smile onto her face, I willed her hand to take the gun out of her purse. When he pleaded for his life, I willed her to ignore him. I willed her to aim, and I willed that gutless bitch to fire.