

(Static fades in. Cuts.)

I did something last week. That maybe you know of, but maybe I shouldn't have done.

(Music fades in)

I snuck out to go to the address on the canvas. Maybe you would think an adult should not have to sneak out of their own home, but... (Sigh) It is what it is now.

But at least it is easier to sneak out now that the kids have someone else to go to and not that I am supposedly on medication, which would make sneaking out impossible. That's what Dad was after, anyway. And... Look, I know this is a bundle of red flags. I have perspective now. A thing I did not always have.

I've stopped asking Dad about Mom for quite a while, and I only tentatively approached the subject with this new nanny. Under the guise of wanting to test her knowledge on the kids, to test the things that Dad told her also so I can fill in the gaps of her knowledge.

But Mom has not even come up yet, so I know I wasn't being too aggressive or too heavy-handed with her. I know she didn't tell on me. You see, I was going to mention the resemblance between Roslyn and Mom, one that might be upsetting to Roslyn, a reaction that should be looked for.

Now do I actually remember one? No, but she doesn't need to know that. She just needs to know that something about Roslyn's appearance could hypothetically be triggering to her. That would lead to the matter of why/

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

And that's hypothetically of course. Roslyn can't remember Mom enough to ever be upset. Or it's unlikely. And I'm not sure what I would have done if that had been pointed out to me. Maybe I could have played dumb, and maybe this nanny would have known it was all an act. Maybe.

But before any of that could happen. Dad suddenly sat me down one day and told me that Mom allegedly died of a blood condition otherwise unspecified. No time for it to be specified, he essentially said. He had not caught it in time.

Now, Mom would have had her own physician. Just because your husband is a doctor doesn't mean you wouldn't do the standard outsourcing. In fact, you would have to. Not only because Dad's such a specialized professional but also because well, you would need both a partner and a doctor and for there to be as little overlap as possible between those two things. For your own sake.

Regardless, Dad had this whole sob story about how his kids didn't have a mother because he hadn't notice the signs: the paleness in her normally tan skin, the lifelessness in her eyes, and her tiredness. Irritability was something that he clearly danced around, but I know it was there: in his head. Or it was somehow conveyed to me. Talented man that Dad can be.

But as a consequence of all of that, he wanted to run my blood tests, again, just to be sure. And maybe I should have said no, everything I have to hide is not in my blood. So I let him take a sample. And by him, I mean it ended up being one of the physicians' assistants. And they were confused at the task, yes, but I'd always been good to them. So it was an easy thing for them to overlook in the right light. I always

used 'they,' and I only dead named them on legal documents when I literally had no other choice. So the idea of my premature death was distressing to them. Because I treated them like a human being with dignity, and when something that critical is in short supply, it's easy to use that against someone. To weaponize it. And there it was. Right in front of me.

And it was being used against me too because I couldn't fight back. I couldn't resist or throw any sort of tantrum right then. (softer at first) Not, it was... It was was going to just upset this poor person who wanted to feel secure in my wellbeing.

Besides, a quick blood draw isn't a big deal. It was what came next that bothered me.

(Banging of unclear origin. Meanwhile music fades out)

(Sigh) That keeps happening.

(New music fades in)

Wait. Wait. You must have heard that too, right? Right? It's not just me.

It's been nonstop as of late. Every night, it happens a few times, but when I wake up in the morning and try to bring it up around breakfast, no one else seems to remember it. Not just Dad. The kids don't remember it either, and they're fairly light sleepers.

But it has happened, right? You can hear it right,? Right. Lucent, when I... when I see you again, tell me that you heard it. (softer) Even if you didn't.

(Normal volume) So Dad wanted me to take sleeping pills. Like for insomnia, that type of medication. He said it would help. And yes, sleeping is restorative in most

situations. But it seemed careless of him to throw a prescription at me before my blood work came back. Then again, I should not have been surprised. He thinks he knows best. Even better than the standard etiquette of the medical profession.

Obviously, I haven't been taking them. But I was the one that picked up the prescription, so I know it wasn't tampered with. I went to the pharmacy where everyone thinks Dad's a bit of a jerk, so they wouldn't have listened to him if he told them to try anything. And they would have pushed back if I told them they were sleeping pills, and they actually weren't.

(Soft banging of unknown origin)

Face it, though, he doesn't need that much to take control. These aren't weak sleeping pills. They will knock me out, and then I will stay out and stay put. I wouldn't go anywhere. I couldn't. And that might be what he's after. Simply me staying put. Staying where he wants me to be. Maybe because he has a plan or maybe because he needs time to come up with one.

(inhale) The needle was clean, right? (Breathing) I'm not... I'm not asking you. I know you couldn't know. But I'm panicking. I don't know what's going on. And somehow, it's even scarier to think he doesn't.

But I snuck out. Because obviously I didn't take those prescriptions. So I was able to sneak out one night. And when I did so, it was like the one time I was ever genuinely uncomfortable with my body because windows weren't made for somebody with my body type to pass through them. Especially at the hips. Design flaw. Malicious intent. It doesn't matter at this point. But when I pulled out the frame that sat in the cut in

the wall--and don't ask me how I did it, that was like a never ending string of bad ideas that just somehow worked out--I was able to just barely sneak through. I got some dry wall on my pants, but it brushed right off.

Luckily, no one comes into my bedroom anymore. Because the window frame still isn't sitting right. And I can't really do anything about that now. For one, I don't know how. But more importantly, I'll need to make an escape again in the very near future.

(Banging of nondescript origin - Music fades out and new music fades in)

And I've... I've been preparing for that. I've been taking a dollar here and there from the grocery bills and the like. As I see it, since I'm going to have to forsake my actual bank account and all the money I've earned in it, this is just fair. I'm walking away with much less than is rightfully mine. And I even started that before this started. It-- It was just to be able to buy myself a treat now and then. And that's what I'm doing now. This is the ultimate treat of them all. Freedom.

So I'm almost ready, you would think. When I was walking to that address, even, my feet seemed to lead the way. (sigh) And it was like my body knew where to go without me telling it. And without me insisting or navigating. I didn't anticipate that. I had even brought a map and a compass. Even if I don't exactly remember how it was that I learned to use those things. I can still do it. I had to do stuff with the kids for scouting, and I definitely still know how. Maybe... Maybe the issue of how is the sort of memory I would have never retained if I learned it when I was very young. And it's just like learning how to ride a bike. It's a procedural type of knowledge that people don't easily forget, so there's that.

(Banging of nondescript origin again - Music fades out and new music fades in)

It was dark out. The street was quiet. I hopped on a bus that, rationally speaking, had no reason to be running so late. But it was. And there were no other passengers. At the right angle, the bus driver seemed to disappear too. And it was the sort of environment that would make you think, “wow, I’m really not supposed to be here right now.” Except I didn’t think that. Not after a while.

There was some uncomfortableness in the beginning, but I can tell you the exact intersection when this change happened. When I seemed to come more into myself. It was at Wright and Juniper. Once we crossed over Juniper it was like the world shifted over. I... I always was or so I remember avoiding the plant juniper. Like I was allergic to it. And maybe I was. Or maybe this is just a reflex of some other origin.

(Banging of a nondescript origin)

When I got to Grotto Road, I jumped off. And the bus continued onto wherever it was going to go. At that point, I didn’t know how I was going to get home because if there was no bus going in the opposite direction.

But at that point, I also did not care. I kept walking. And around me there were these... buildings with a nondescript purpose. They weren’t homes or businesses. They didn’t look right for that, and they were quiet but not desolate or abandoned. They just existed. The backdrop of this unfathomable practice run of an adventure I was undertaking.

The road was cobblestone, which was bizarre, I thought. The city is so modernized, and there’s so many impracticalities to cobblestone, and there were no

cars in sight. No bicycles or anything that would have protested. In fact, there was no life at all.

(Banging of a nondescript origin again)

No one to recognize me. No one to hurt me and no one to save me. This was as much of a blank slate in life as anyone could get, I suppose. So I kept walking.

I kept walking. And there were no numbers on any of the buildings, so how could I have known where I was going? I just knew. I just knew where I was going. Because I've been there before, haven't I? And navigating that route isn't so different than using a compass. It's the same type of memory: a type that hasn't been taken away just yet. That works differently, and that sits differently in my mind.

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

But sure enough, I found the building in question. On the corner of Grotto Road and Ferry Row. In a neighborhood of bizarrely named places, there it was. There was this broken dream, the building you were pointing me too. How fitting that it's a dark green color. It always seems to come back to that.

But you know, I, I have always liked green, if I'm to be completely honest. So thanks for that. Not that you could have meant for it to work out like this. I don't see how you could have.

But I stood out in front of the place. And I just stood there. I didn't go in. Once again, I moved much too slowly for something that I keep saying is life and death, but I have a reason this time. I didn't bring everything I need. All the money I have, practically

speaking. The paperwork involving Mom, also practically speaking. Some odds and ends to bring me comfort, not so practically speaking.

And my resolve.

(Banging of nondescript origin again)

(more emotional) I'll never see those kids again, will I? They won't understand. They won't forgive me. I can't even do that for myself. So you know, it, it is what it is, which is not possible. The love I share with them is the payment I'll have to make for this. And you think that'd be easy because it's just so much work. Sometimes, though, I hear Roslyn's laugh in the other room. I hear the boys' voices. And I can't help but think of the good times. Yes, they're exhausting and tiring, but they're kids. They can't help it. And they can't help being born to a monster and a mom who... Who also left.

I thought I was going to spend this time figuring out why, but now, I can't be bothered to care. I should care, maybe. She was my mother too. She was my mother who may have a disease is what I said. But in reality, I'm, I'm just scared of losing those kids, losing the one source of joy I remember in my messed up life. Once I leave, it's all gone. There's no going back. There will be no back to find.

(Banging of nondescript origin continues)

It doesn't have to be that way, sure. There's a way to sell this. There's a way to sell anything. I know that all too well.

The most noble thing to do or claim to do would be that I'm going to go find her. That I have enough of a trail with the legal paperwork from the divorce that I could go and get her and... Well, not bring her back in the same way. But she could at least be



around them in some capacity. She could exist, most importantly. And not be this never ending source of mystery.

But I don't want to make another promise I can't keep. I... (inhale) I already promised Roslyn I was going to stay and, and I was never going to leave her, and that's a lie. Just because Mom didn't die like we were told she did, doesn't mean she's still alive today. (inhale) And it doesn't mean she's worth knowing. And it doesn't mean she wants to be known.

Like... When I leave, I... I don't know if I'll want to be known.

(Static starts. Music cuts. Static fades out).

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