

Voice—A Short Story

“Are you sure you’ll be alright?”

I nod.

“Are you absolutely, *completely* sure?”

“I swear that I am fine. Please, lay off a bit.”

‘*Liar.*’ the *voice* whispered. I hate the *voice*.

I know my brother is only worried about me, but I couldn’t keep up my “I’m fine” facade forever—and I really don’t want him to be here when it falls. He’s worried about me so much since our mother went mad and killed herself. He’s 19—only two years older than I—and already has gray hairs on his head. Because of me.

He shakes his head like he doesn’t believe me. He doesn’t. He knows me far too well for that. “If that’s what you want to think you are, go right ahead.” He tried to meet my eyes, but I wouldn’t let him see the voice hidden there. I hadn’t let him look me in the eyes since my 16th birthday. Giving up, he sighs. “Just promise me that you’ll contact me if *anything* out of the usual routine happens. *Please.*”

“Promise. At least, if you promise to get over this sister-complex of yours.” I make a weak attempt at a joke.

‘*Pathetic.*’ the *voice* whispers. I used to mentally scream at *it* every time *it* spoke, but by now I know it’s a moot thing to attempt.

“Only reason I have one is ‘cause if I didn’t, who knows where you’d end up.”

“With a brother who isn’t going to be late for his flight. With a brother who got going before I should probably notify his father about said brother missing said flight.” I retorted. He was my half-brother, and his father was this big businessman who’s paying for half of my brother’s college tuition.

“Alright, alright! I give! As per usual, you win.” He gave me a hug and pecked my cheek, “I love ya, ‘lil sis. I’ll be home at Thanksgiving.” We said our goodbyes and he hopped over the railing on the porch and went over to his car and climbed in.

He started the engine and rolled down the window, “Try not to get into any trouble, ‘kay?”

I nodded. I don’t go looking for trouble, but it’s *voice* plagues me. He rolled up the window before backing out of the driveway and driving away. Now I’m alone. At least until Thanksgiving.

‘*Bye bye stupid guy!*’ The *voice* cackled.

“Say that again and I’ll...” I began a threat but was cut off, quite rudely, by the *voice*.

‘*You’ll what?*’ It sneered. ‘*You’ve already tried everything.*’

The voice had been in my head since my mother died. Actually, it had been in her head since her own mother died. The *Voice of Insanity*, as she called *it*, was a genetic monster that had been passed down through generations of my mother’s line, solely through the females—mother to daughter. When the daughter reached the age of 16, the *voice* drives to what’s been dubbed “the breaking point” by my mother.

I never knew my grandmother, but my own mother had told me stories. My grandmother had spent forever trying to get my mother to believe her about the *voice*. Eventually, my mother decided her own mother was a quack and ran away when she was 15. But the very day my mother turned 16, the *voice* entered her head and was there until the day she died. The day I turned 16. The day it was my turn to bear the burden of the *voice*.

"I won't have children and you'll die with me." I can't believe I hadn't thought of that before.

'It won't work. It never has.' It taunted. *'By the time you're twenty the temptation will become too great for even a stubborn girl like you.'*

"You don't know that." That was pointless. Both *it* and I knew *it* did. *It* knew everything. "What are you anyway? Why do you plague us? What did we do to earn this?" I cried. I had asked these and more many times, but it was useless. *It* either answered with silence, blood-chilling laughter, or some creepy and cryptic remark. This time it was my least favourite—the laughter. It bounced around in my skull, echoing like in some horror film.

"Shut up or I'll kill us!" I demanded.

'We both know you could never do that.'

"Try me. One of these days I. Just. Might."

All *it* did was begin laughing that awful laughter again.

I decided to go I back inside. I head towards the kitchen and open the fridge. Half of the chocolate Oreo cheesecake I made a few days ago is still there. I grab that, a fork, and the half gallon of milk from the fridge door. I head up to my room with my hands full. It's time to get to work on the brilliant idea that just popped into my head. I set the food on my desk and pull a few fresh notebooks and a handful of ballpoint pens from my drawer.

I eat half of the cake as uncap a pen. I open a notebook, put the pen tip to the paper and begin to write. I take my time—there's no need for me to hurry.

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I work tirelessly on my project. I spent over a week doing little else. I scarcely even sleep. I go through four notebooks—and a package and a half of pens—writing *everything* down. I'm so utterly absorbed that not even the *voice's* continual screams can distract me, for once.

After I finish the message I needed to write—the contents of which contained everything that the *voice* was and had done, as well as the choice I had made—I had only the backside of the last page of notebook number four that was empty. I was suddenly inspired, like I was for the project, to write a poem there. Before I wrote that down, though, I decided to write a note specially for my brother at the top of the page. I told him to, not forget me, but to live like I was never there, to be happy and at peace with my decision, to live his life to the fullest with the utmost happiness. Below that, I slowly wrote the poem, signing my name in my illegible signature beneath it.

I set the pen down and the *voice* was screaming at me as loud as it could, telling me I was a fool and that'd I'd be sorry. But nothing could sway me at this point.

"I win." I whisper as I leave my room for the last time, never to return.

The words of my final poem played over and over inside my head, blocking out the *voice* until my final breath.

Goodbye.

This is the last thing

I will ever write.

The last thing

I shall record.

The last thing I add

to my legacy.

But don't cry for me.

I hate when people cry for me.

Cry for yourselves.

Don't worry about me.

I suffer no more.

There's nothing anyone could have done.

Don't go searching for me.

For I will not be found.

But I am not lost.

I am free.

So don't cry for me.

It's because I love *life*

that I embrace death.

It's because I

love *you*

that I now say

goodbye.