

## Denial

So there I was— slowly cascading into oblivion, my thoughts disappearing right before my eyes. Lament unravels me, tearing up my deepest soul bit by bit. I stare directly into the eyes of the woman that murdered my father— a glare met with heavy, hateful tension. The woman returns my gaze, her face filled to the brim with pain. Imagining what terrors this woman must have experienced to turn into such a killer frightens me to silence. I expect the woman to lunge forward, to attack the slivers of life still attached to my poor heart. Instead, she stands there, as unaware of my presence as I am aware of hers.

I fake my body this way and that, attempting to make an escape from the bloodthirsty murderer. The pallid woman follows my movements exactly, preventing any sort of escape from her clutches. I know this woman holds a sort of cunningness in her body, a cunningness too powerful to dodge. A part of me realizes the little bit of sanity left in me cannot escape this murderer. My actions turn to release, in preparation for my imminent death.

“It is over.” I choke out, acknowledging the clever killer’s victory.

“It is.” The woman says almost immediately. I wonder about death. How does one manage to slip away from existence, and where does that person go? This question has puzzled me my entire life. Now, I can experience the answer first hand.

“Go ahead. Do it.” I challenge the woman.

“Do it.” The woman returns. The words cling close to my emotions. This murderer, this sick, mentally impaired woman, challenges me— a seemingly innocent young lady— to commit the very crime this murderer forced into my life. She killed my father. Now, the nameless murderer challenges my sanity to keep hold.

“You killed him!” I growl at the arrogant assassin.

“You killed him.” The woman repeats. I take a step back, startled by the woman’s response. This woman, so deeply senile, actually believes I killed my own father.

“You’re insane!” I scream.

“Insane?” The woman grins evilly at me, as mad as a Cheshire Cat. For minutes, I held a slight chance of escape. I know my chance disappeared long ago, wasted away due to my impractical attempt to reason with the woman. Reasoning with a murderer ranks more difficult than baking a perfect soufflé.

Without a moment’s hesitation, the woman suddenly brings out a pistol, small and silver. I flinch at the sight of the weapon, and it seems the woman may contain the same uncomfortable fear as I. I know I hold only a small chance of escaping, but the woman’s hesitation to pull the trigger gives me a small sense of security. She studies the implement, peering into the small bullet-filled barrel. I retract myself in fear, only to look up and see the woman pointing the gun at herself. I gasp.

“It’s not worth it! Don’t pull that trigger!” I warn the woman, the expression on her face so pained. Suddenly, the creases in her forehead smoothen out. I feel... relaxed.

“It’s not worth it.” The woman say self-assuredly. She lowers the gun.

I look at the gun in my hands, and lay it gently on a nearby shelf. Regret pours through me, engulfing my horrible deed and spilling the insanity over. I killed my father. I almost killed myself, too, but careful thinking prevented my dreadful fate. I look into the mirror once more to see the murderer—me—giving myself a pained nod. I turn away from the mirror and bend down to my father’s corpse.

“I’m so sorry, Papa.” I sob, collapsing on my dead father’s body. “I needed help, but I didn’t know how to ask for it. I didn’t ask for it, and now I’ve killed you.”

Tears trickle down my face, unable to stop. I cry and cry, until I finally feel the need to stand.

My nimble feet rush quickly down the stairs, running to the kitchen, where the phone book is located. I leaf through the pages, searching for what now remains my only hope. I skim through the medical section, finally stumbling upon my desired contact.

Dunbar Mental Institute.

I scrawl the building’s address on a sticky note, throw my coat and sneakers on, and rush out of my parents’ home. Stepping into my car, on old, worn-down Jeep, I turn the ignition to begin the journey to my promising future.

A sane future.