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December 30, 2012

AP Literature 2A

Journey Essay

### The Blow

Attempting to tune out everything and everyone, I opened my calculus book to the assigned page. Silence buzzed through the air before the commotion from below my feet began.

Eager to pick a fight, I saw her zip pass me as she made her way down the stairs. I knew she had reached the room as soon as her voice rang out louder than the rest. As the yelling intensified, the youngest one preceded the last as she made her way down the steps. Only a few moments later, I distinctly heard my name being yelled out. In a slow succession, I made my way down the steps.

I reached the base of the stairs to see my dad standing in wait for me. Agitation clearly marked his face. I stood my ground, keeping my face as neutral as I possibly could, as I waited for him to speak. The only noise that could be heard came from the room at the end of the hall as the yelling continued.

“Do you see what you’ve done?” He demanded as he gestured his hand towards the end of the hall. “I set up today so that everything could be resolved, but you didn’t want to go along with it. I gave you so many opportunities to set things right and you didn’t take them. You kept answering no to everything when one yes could have fixed everything. Then we get home and *he* gives me attitude. Do you see how you caused all of this?” By now he was practically screaming.

“I don’t see the connection,” I replied earnestly, much quieter in contrast to his voice.

He questioned me with irritation in his voice. “You don’t see how this is connected?”

“I don’t see how him acting up has anything to do with me,” I demanded. My dad remained silent but anger was washing over him in waves. Not having anything left to discuss, I made my way up the stairs as the noise continued behind me. I made my way towards the guest room where I continued doing my calculus as if I had never been disturbed.

There was the muffled sound of the effort it took for my dad to hold her back as more shouting took place. Shortly after, I heard the booming sounds of her footsteps as she ascended the stairway. I knew the next target was going to be me as soon as I heard her coming.

Not having any time to prepare myself, I was struck from the left side of my head as I was momentarily thrown off balance. Grasping the edge of the table in front of me to steady myself, I redirected my gaze at her. She was fuming with anger as she glared down at me from where she stood, only a foot away from me.

“What’s your problem? Why did you even come today? What did I ever do to you?” She continued to shout questions at me, not waiting for an answer as more streams came.

I could hear my dad running up the stairs, and as he arrived at the scene, he demanded her to leave the room. Not budging, the younger one had to drag her into the next room and shut the door. My father glared at me silently as I averted my gaze, avoiding his eyes. Shortly, he too left.

An hour later when the commotion had abated, my dad prepared to leave the house to pick my mom up from work. In hushed voices, he argued with the youngest one who wanted to come with him, but he left the house alone.

Only ten minutes after his departure, *she* walked out of the closed room. Walking to the stairs, she stood above the first step, mockingly stating loudly enough for everyone to hear that no one was home any longer to stop her.

She made her way into the guest room where I was still seated doing my work. I was disrupted with the same strike to my face from before on the same side of my face.

“What’s so great about *him* that you keep choosing him over your family?” She demanded, but pausing this time to wait for my reply. I neglected to give her one as I continued to remain silent. Not satisfied with my reply, she spoke up once again. “Answer me! We’re your sisters!” she screamed.

At hearing this, I spoke. “Sisters' who call me a selfish b\*tch and a c\*nt,” I said these words calmly, making sure to direct my gaze at the youngest one standing in the back as I spoke the last word. The youngest narrowed her eyes in anger, recalling the word she titled me as.

I received another blow to the same side of my face from before. Abruptly, the sound coming through my left ear became muffled. I blinked at the sudden shift in my hearing. Shaking my head, I hoped to pop the noise back into place but it didn’t help. Ignoring this, I saw that my math book had been pushed to the ground and reached down to pick it up. Noticing that she was being ignored, the oldest snatched the book from my grasp.

“I paid for this,” she said, suddenly changing the subject. “I can rip it up just as fast if you don’t start answering my questions.” Irritated with what she had to say, I unclenched my jaw to make my reply. “You didn’t pay for it, dad did.” Unconvinced by my words, she insisted that it was her money that was spent and no one else’s.

Tired of her disbelief to an argument going nowhere, I stopped responding. She decided to switch back to questioning me with my math book dangling from her hand.

One more question. Silence replied. Another blow. Another question followed by the same response. My face was knocked to the side once again. I met her gaze as I noticed the wet

trickle that was flowing down from my mouth after the countless questions and hits that had followed suit shortly after. I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand—red staining its surface.

“Stop!” The other one screamed as she struggled to hold her back. “Can’t you see that she’s bleeding?” She was frantic as her eyes were cloaked in fear from the very sight of me.

“Answer the question!” The shouts came again. “Do you not want to talk to us? Do you not want to be sisters?” She screamed out the last question.

“Neither,” I spoke clearly.

“What?” She replied with fury in her eyes. I replied once again with the same answer, and was immediately struck twice, one from each of them. The calmness that enveloped me had started to irritate her as she ordered me to react to what she was doing to me. Yelling so hard that spit was flying from her mouth, I backed up from her. Seeing my response, she spat in my face, grinning at my reaction. Wiping away the filth, I continued to stare at her. She spat at me once more, and I wiped it off once again.

“You’re disgusting,” I told her. She directed my comment at me. “*You’re* disgusting. What’s so great about him? You think you know what love is? Being eighteen doesn’t make you an adult. Why don’t you just go have sex with him?” She screamed her last comment at me. I didn’t feel any sting to her words, knowing that that’s was what she was aiming for. Looking at my calm face that held no reply, she clenched my math book in her hands and tore off a page. My eyes twitched, but I took note that the page ripped off was part of the index and not one of my assignments.

Rushing at her, I tackled her to the wall where I had her by the waste. She had 20 pounds over me, but I was still taller even though I was younger. I managed to tear the book from her grasp and flung it to the floor. My arm flew up to her neck to keep her from writhing around as

she struggled to break free from my grasp. The younger intervened as she tried to tear us apart by breaking my hold on her.

I heard the sound of slippers approaching as my aunt entered the room and the scene unfolded in front of her. Wrapping her arms around me, she ushered me to let go.

Looking down at what was in my arms, I noticed for the first time that she had been biting on my hand the entire time. I threw her to the ground swiftly, and she landed with a thud on the marble floor. "Satisfied with my response?" I asked as blood and spit covered my body. She quickly turned towards me and made her way up to a standing position. "Not even close," she replied.

"I'm calling the police," my aunt said as she walked out of the room with her cell phone in hand as the youngest followed behind her to stop the call. I turned around to see that we were alone. Tired and bruised, I wanted her to leave, but she never disappeared from my sight.

"Uh oh," she said in an eerily quiet voice. "Do you know who she's calling?" She asked me as she tilted her head to the side with a smirk on her face. "The police. *You* drove me to this." She continued to smile at me as the youngest reappeared.

We danced around the room endlessly as she attempted to strike my face. The younger one became my shadow as she followed my steps, trying to ward off the blows. Picking up the artificial flower on the table that was separating us, she made a motion to throw the wooden end at my face. The youngest flinched, closing her eyes as she moved her head aside to avoid being struck. Unflinching, I stood my ground as I calmly stared her in the eyes. Unnerved, she placed it back in place. "Why are you still alive?" With clenched teeth, she uttered these words. I didn't feel any sting of hurt from her question, but knew that that's what she intended for me to feel.

“Do you think I haven’t thought about suicide with it always being in the news? I’m not dumb enough to do such a stupid thing,” I threw at her as more hits came.

Furious, she quickly shouted the first response out of her head. “You want to die that badly? Go kill yourself with him, then!” I didn’t correct her misinterpretation of my statement. I knew that it would be futile to point out that her accusation was wrong.

Not once striking back, I bottled my anger inside of me. She screamed for me to hit her back, but I refrained myself from doing so. “Are you a masochist?” I asked her. “I don’t ever cuss or hit you back the way you do to me.”

“Exactly! Why won’t you ever respond? Respond!” The blows kept coming but I refused to stoop down to their level. I refused to play along in this game of hers.

I stared at the face that was said to look so much like my own. The sneer across she had made me doubt our blood relation. The ladies in the counseling center would always tell me how we’re both so hard working—how *similar* we were. Where was the similarity? I didn’t want to be compared to a person like her who veils her true self with a mask to not be judged by the society. I vowed to myself to never be like the person standing before me.

The next few moments were a blur. The door burst opened as a small, familiar figure ran through it. Tears streamed down my mom’s face as she approached us, ironically asking which one of us wanted to die. She told everyone to leave the room except for me. I watched as she was once again dragged away from the scene, but managing to break free only to strike me again before she was restrained and taken away.

Ordered to sit down on the couch, more questions and yelling awaited me. I leaned back and shut my eyes, relishing in the soft comfort my seat provided for me, and vaguely listened as they deemed me my infamous title: the disgraceful daughter.