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ENG 2010

Memoir Essay

### The Blow

Attempting to tune out the commotion from below, I flipped open my math textbook to get started on the homework assigned for the holiday break. I willed myself to concentrate on working even with the constant noise in the background. The yelling from below continued in a crescendo before the sound of heavy footsteps ascended the stairway. I tensed, knowing full well who was coming for me even before I saw her emerge from the doorway.

*She* came barreling into the room eager to pick a fight—the girl whose face is the slightly older version of my own. Without having much time to prepare myself, I was struck from the left side of my face and momentarily thrown off balance. Grasping the edge of the table, I redirected my gaze to her. Anger was rolling off of her in waves as she glared down at me.

“Do you think that you’re better than everyone? That you know what’s best for yourself even though you make one stupid decision after the other?” She continued to shout questions at me, not waiting for any of them to be answered before asking the next. “Answer me!” With this demand, she struck the side of my face again. Having been better prepared this time, I tensed my body for the second blow. The loud slap echoed throughout the quiet house as I remained silent.

In the distance, I could hear someone running up the stairs. I knew it was my father

trying to stop what was happening before it got too out of hand. He stepped foot in the room with authority surrounding his stance. My youngest sister hovered behind him to look at the scene in front of her. For a tense moment, the four of us stood in the room quietly. Without hesitation, my father demanded for everyone to leave but me. His eyes blazed angrily as they bored into my own, but I quickly averted my gaze from his. Shortly after the other two left the room, my father made his slow departure out the room, leaving me to my own company once again.

An hour later, the commotion had abated. My dad was preparing to leave the house in order to pick up my mom from work. I could hear his hushed voice with my youngest sister, willing her to keep the peace at home while he was away for the next hour. Only ten minutes after their conversation, he left the house alone.

Moments later after his departure, I became antsy. I knew that without his presence, I wouldn't be able to keep myself away from her very long. My theory was proven correct when I heard her bedroom door open. She walked right by me to hover over the stairs. Mockingly, she stated loudly enough for everyone to hear that no one was home any longer to stop her.

She made her way over to where I sat still trying to finish my homework with my younger sister behind her. I was disrupted with the same strike to my face on the same side as before.

“What's so great about him that you keep choosing him over your family?” She demanded, but paused momentarily as she waited for my answer. I knew she was referring to the boy I had been dating. Her anger towards my choice to date him was evident during the past few years since this wasn't the first time I was struck with her

vehement objection towards my relationship with him. Having neglected to reply to her, I remained silent and pointedly ignored her. Not satisfied with my silence, she spoke up once again. "Answer me! I'm your sister!" she screamed.

"Sisters who call me selfish for just being a normal girl," I said calmly. I received another blow to the same side of my face as before. I wanted to be a normal teenager who could date a boy without being hurt every day by a sister who neglected to give me a choice in the matter. Abruptly after the blow, the sound from my left ear became muffled. I blinked heavily at the sudden shift in my hearing. Shaking my head, I hoped to clear my ear but nothing helped. Noticing that she was being ignored, she snatched my textbook from my hands to gain my attention. "I paid for this," she suddenly stated. "I can rip it up just as fast if you don't start answering my questions." Irritated with her statement, I unclenched my tight jaw to speak.

"You didn't pay for that, Dad did." Unconvinced by my words, she continued to insist that it was her money that was spent on the textbook. Tired of her bickering, I remained silent once more. Noticing my lack of replies, she began to question me again with my math book dangling from her hands.

One more question. Silence replied. Another blow. Another question followed by the same response, my face was knocked to the side once again. I stared into her eyes and noticed the wet trickle that was flowing down from my mouth. With the back of my hand, I wiped at my mouth to have it stained red with blood.

"Stop!" The youngest screamed as she struggled to hold her back. "Can't you see that she's bleeding?" She was frantic and her eyes were cloaked in fear from the very sight of me. "Answer the question!" The shouts came again.

Yelling so hard that spit was flying from her mouth, I took a step back 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. 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 taller than her 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. My youngest sister intervened as she tried to tear us apart by breaking my hold on her.

The sound of slippers approached as my aunt entered the room and the scene unfolded in front of her. Wrapping her arms around me, my aunt urged me to let go. I looked down at the girl I had locked in my hands and noticed for the first time that she had been leaving teeth marks along my arm. 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. My younger sister followed behind my aunt 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. 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. Unmoving, I stood my ground as I calmly stared her in the eyes. Unnerved, she placed the flower back in its 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.

“You want to die that badly? Go kill yourself with him, then!” It wasn’t the first time that she suggested for me to end my life, and I let the comment roll off me as I always did. Not once striking back, I bottled my anger inside of me. She screamed for me to hit her back, but I refrained 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 her level. I didn’t want 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 she had made me doubt our blood relation. All of the women who work in the counseling center at my high school would always tell me how identical we looked—how I am like a *replica* of her during her youth. Where was this similarity they were speaking of? 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 society. At this moment, I vowed to myself that I would never be like the person standing before me.

The next few moments were a blur before the door burst open and 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. My mom told everyone to leave the room except for me. I watched as my oldest sister 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. I vaguely listened as they deemed me my infamous title: the disgraceful daughter.