



BROKEN WINGS

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As a child, the world didn't fascinate me enough. Then again, that was before I come across a new hobby.

It was tough to find something that peaked my interest. My parents had their own list of diversions—hoping one of them would suit my character.

When I was eight my dad took me horseback riding. I hate horses, they smell of feces and they never obey. His ideas mainly pertained to anything involving animals or the outdoors.

For my eleventh birthday he gave me a pair of binoculars stamped with green and pink posies. I remember staring at the heavy object as he beamed in my direction, wondering what on earth he was planning.

On that same tasteless Thursday afternoon he took me in his baby blue corvette out into an open field. It had the scent of old fruit encrusted on its leather upholstery.

“Hope you're as excited as I am.” My dad said, steering on the grass that has altered to a russet tone over the years of running over its former jade nature.

I gaped through the windshield to observe the clouds. “How can I be excited for something I know nothing about?”

He hesitated like I knew he would, “Good point.” And smiled.

I envied that about him. The skies would fall, the clouds would break, and he'd still find something to smile about.

He parked in a sea of grass, and hopped out.

"Alright, sweetheart. You ready?" He stood in a superman pose gawking out into the tangled woods before him.

"For what?" I climbed out and stood on the tranquil earth as I felt the breeze pass me by. I paced over to the driver's side where my dad had his own pair of eye-glasses. His looked a lot older, while mine looked like they were going to weigh me down any minute.

He pulled out a faded cloth and wiped the spectacles of his tool. He kneeled down, doing the same to mine, and beheld my eyes, whispering.

"Bird watching."

"We're stalking birds?" I questioned.

He laughed. "Observing."

"Isn't that an invasion of privacy?"

"Well..."

That got him thinking.

He shook his head. “Come, you’ll see.”

My dad was a lot more excited than I was. Actually, everyone was more excited than I was. I never found that tug that kept me coming back—something that made me beam on the inside just as much as it did on the outside. That is, until we pressed further.

We treaded on twigs and dry leaves, heeding to the sound of critters in the background.

My dad gently led me up to a hill where a fallen tree laid. He picked me up so I could climb on the gigantic log, releasing a grunt as he almost tumbled over getting on top.

Planting his feet on the bark, he gave a big whiff. “Beautiful isn’t it?”

I shrugged. I’d say the same but I’d be lying.

He placed his binoculars over his hazel eyes, pointing in front of him. “Hon, do you see that? It’s Woody the woodpecker.” He chuckled.

“Neat.” I sighed, sitting down listening to the bird drill holes.

Although I didn’t too much care being out there, I was in no rush to leave. It made my dad happy. So, why wasn’t I—what was missing from my life?



As my dad continued to ooh and ahh I heard a high pitched blare from above. It sounded like a squeak and as it rang through my ears I realized it was a tweet. I stood up, brushing the back of my pants. Placing my father's gift over my eyes I scanned the vicinity as the tweet became frantic. As I continued to swivel I saw a tiny object flying. I traced it with my eyes as it fell.

I looked over to my dad too preoccupied with his own discovery; I slid off the log and headed towards the fallen thing. There was still enough sun in the sky to jog my way through the trees.

I paused, placing the binoculars over my face I scanned the ground in hopes of getting a better view.

Nothing.

I let out a disappointed sigh as another tweet sounded. I marched my way through moss and tall grass as I caught the sight of a tiny bird.

I looked up, guessing it fell from its nest I kneeled down examining the creature. Its chest puffed in and out sipping for as much air as it could. I tilted my head, wondering if I should touch it. It looked like a fish out of water, flailing about on the tangled grass. Then, just like that, its chest deflated for the last time.

That was the moment I first witnessed death.

What beauty it held in its final moments.

I hovered over the creature, plucking a feather from its broken wing. I place a russet leaf over its empty shell, becoming the last beam it will ever see.

I stood, brushing my knees. “Sleep well.” I whispered, hoping it heard me.

I raised the feather above me, getting a full view of its hue. Blue covered most of it, while a hint of white snuck in and spots of gray.

The winds carried my father’s frantic hollers.

I heard hasty footsteps getting closer, and I placed the feather in the pocket of my coat before arms wrapped around me.

“Oh my goodness—are you alright?” He panicked.

I nodded, curious eyes holding the spot of such a short life.

My father twisted me away from it, caressing my cheeks for any abrasions. “What were you doing over here?”

I paused—not due to lack of words, but due to my mind replaying the image of air being sucked out from the beak of something so acquitted.

I motioned my head behind me. “I thought I saw a bird.” I spoke, with a tone so flat you wouldn’t have guessed I just witnessed the role of death.

“What was it?” He rotated his head waiting for something to appear.

I knew it wouldn't.

“Well, I think that's enough 'bird stalking' for one afternoon,” he attempted to joke, “I'm sure your mother has dinner prepared, I'm starving. How about you?”

I nodded.

He took my hand, leading us out the forest. He continued to jab on about what he saw, while guessing what my mother was cooking.

I didn't feel the need to look back, because there was nothing left for me there.

My father continued to stroll through with his binoculars glued to his face. “Beautiful, isn't it?”

“Amazing.” I muttered, slipping my palm into my coat pocket. Caressing its remains, I finally realized my purpose.

As we motioned closer to the vehicle I felt a slight nick on the back of my nape, but I did not flinch, I grinned. Could that have been Death warning me—threatening me? No, Death welcomed me with open arms, and I returned the favor.



“You see,” I begin, tampering with the mini clock planted on the mahogany desk in between us. “I was quite an unusual child.”

She continues to jot down notes on her oversized notepad, occasionally pushing up her narrow glasses. “Now, I wouldn’t say that—yes most eleven year-olds’ first thought isn’t how beautiful death is—

“Do you disagree?” I get defensive.

She hesitates, removing her glasses. “No, of course not. I’m glad to hear you found something that gave you that tug you were hoping to find. Quite an unconventional hobby, but there’s beauty in all things. However, not everyone sees that.”

I release a soft titter. “How cliché Doc, even for you.”

“Maybe.” She returns the gesture.

“Not many people coming in here speaking about how much they admire death, huh?”

“Not unless they’ve gone through some type of mental or physical trauma as a child,” she says, tapping her pen, “but going through your history, there’s no indication of any distress. You had quite the, uh, normal childhood.”

“One of the lucky ones I guess.”

She glances to her left, eyeing the ticking clock hanging next to her framed Ph.D. diploma for all to admire. To me, it's nothing but a piece a paper that can easily be dog-eared.

"In a rush?" I ask.

She whips back to me, closing her notepad and placing it on a collection of files. "Not at all—it's just...times up for today." She gives a weak grin.

I start to get up, releasing a stretch. "That it is."

"You can let the next patient in on your way out. I'll see you next week."

I start heading for the door. As I choked on the knob I release my grasp, feeling a nick on the back of my neck.

"Actually, I'm your last one."

She gradually places papers in files, looking for her schedule no doubt.

Perplexity stamps her face. "No, I believe I have two more—

"I spoke to the receptionist yesterday. It appears your other two basket cases preferred another specialist. So, I'm all yours."

She looks worried. Picking up her phone she dials the extension to the front desk, but gets no reply.



“She’s not there,” I tell her while locking the door.

Her hands begin to tremble and the phone falls from her grasp. “Um...is it pills you want—I can give you a prescription.”

I casually shake my head, leaning on the door with my arms crossed. “No I’m alright, but I appreciate the gesture.”

She swivels in her chair, not knowing where to place her hands.

“Interesting,” I mutter. “The amount of people who experience fear before death, greatly outweigh those who feel at ease.”

I take a step towards her. “Why is that?”

Her breathing becomes stagnant—confused. “I—I don’t understand, what else can I do for you—what do you want?”

I exchange a bemused glare, as if she should already know.

My eyes trail behind her. “Did you hear that?”

“Hear what?”

Suddenly a sound from the window grabs her attention.

“Oh...it’s just a bird.”

She takes her final breath as she stares out the window.

“Beautiful isn’t it?”



