

Tell Me About That Morning

When I finally get to the comic section of the newspaper, my favorite part, Jared has to go and cut his arm. He rushed into the house yelling “My arm! My arm! It’s gonna fall off. I’m gonna pass out” He gets queasy with blood even in his middle age. “Jared, you’re fine.” I stalk over to the kitchen and grab the first aid kit. “Sit,” I say pointing to the chair. Jared sits holding his arm and swallowing his puke. “You know this wouldn’t have happened if you got a job and moved out of my house.” I pull the gauze tight to show my frustration. Jared has been living with me for the past year. I love him. He’s my brother and my best friend and the only family I have left, but he’s dirty and loud and doesn’t help with any chores. Jared winces. “I will be out soon. Scouts honor.” He holds up two fingers as he goes back outside.

I’m not in the mood to read anymore so I turn on the news and make some breakfast. “The Riverside Ripper is still unknown. At this time 10 young girls ranging from 7 to 13 have been found. If you have any information please call ...” I tune out the rest. It’s sickening what that person did to those poor girls, getting raped and tortured and then brutally murdered. I lose my appetite thinking about it. A loud ding tears me from my thoughts. Jared’s laundry must be done. After folding the clothes and neatly putting them in a basket I make my way to his room. He asked me not to go in so I should just put the basket outside and walk away, but I’m bored and it’s my house. His room needs cleaning anyway and it smells horrible.

I open the door and am blasted with the smell of death. I almost choke. I set the basket on the bed and start meticulously putting the clothes away. When I get to the last drawer a small box is sitting in the back blocking me from putting all the clothes in. I decided to take the box out and put it somewhere else. I should have thrown the box away right then and there but curiosity got the best of me. I opened the box carefully, putting the lid on the bedside table. The first thing I

see is a picture of a young girl hogtied with rope and tears streaming from her face. I move the image and under it is another but this time I recognize the girl. She was my neighbor and only 7. She's lying in a bed naked and red. Fear is plastered over her face and there is no light in her eyes. How could Jared have this? He helped us look for her. He led the search party and baked her mom muffins. I pick up picture after picture of the missing girls. One after the other containing gruesome scenes. After the last picture, a small red Ziploc bag is laid at the bottom. I pick up the bag and open it. Hair, fingers, and ears filled the bag. The Ziploc wasn't red, it was just covered in blood. I dropped the box to the floor.

I returned to the kitchen, closing Jared's door behind me. I dialed 9-1-1 all the while keeping my eyes on Jared and smiling at him when he waved. "9-1-1 what's your emergency?" Shakely I respond "My brother is the Riverside Ripper." I held back tears the best I could. I answered the operator's questions but I was in a haze still coming to terms with the fact that the brother I loved and have known since birth, my little brother was a murderer and rapist to *children*. When the police arrived I took them to Jared's room and they asked me where he was.

Jared wiped his hands on a towel and threw it on the patio. He entered the house with a smile which quickly turned to a frown when he saw the officers. "Why are they here?" he asked me. The officers pushed his hands to his back. "You're under arrest .." Jared stared at me confused. "Why are you arresting me?" Jared asked as the officer walked him out. "We got a tip." the officer responded. "Who sent in the tip?" The officer didn't answer but his gaze lifted to me. Jared caught the interaction. "No, NO!, That's my sister, my big sister, she loves me, she wouldn't do that, she loves me, .." He continued crying out all the way to the police car and all the way down the street. That was the last time I saw Jared, not even at his trial, not even in prison, not even at his execution.