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Dahlia

Some would say I'm a "troubled kid". Others would simply say I need to talk to a therapist or get some help, in order to make me think and act like a normal 18-year old girl. But what most people do not realize, is that no matter what, I will always be different. Do you ever just look at something beautiful, say a vibrant sunset melting against a city background, and just think to yourself, "Wow, that is such an amazing sight," realizing that without the sunset, the city would not be complete? Seeing that the sunset and the city are both separately beautiful and unique, but together they complement each other and make something unexplainable occur. Replace the sunset with a tornado. No one would look at that sight and say it's beautiful; instead, they would look at that and be afraid, seeing that the tornado is disastrous and only is accompanied with trouble. That is how I would describe myself; out of place, misunderstood, and causing trouble in everyone else's lives.

The first time I came to the conclusion that I was different was when I was just a child. All the other kids would be playing on the playground, climbing and running around. I would just enjoy sitting under a tree nearby, not wanting to talk to other kids and not really wanting to play, being perfectly content just being by myself and thinking. Realizing I didn't fit in was the first step in embracing my fatal flaw. I thought I would experiment to see what made me feel human and complete. My parents could tell I was lost, they would just ignore it and pretend that it was just a phase, but deep down I knew my decisions were hurting them and my younger brother. I'm from a small town in Illinois, born and raised there my whole life. My name is Dahlia and I have never had many friends. There is only one person whom I have ever met who had seemed to understand me. His name is Evan. We met in middle school and we would eat lunch together by ourselves everyday. We never talked much, we just sat and enjoyed each other's company in silence. It escalated as we got older. Realizing we were both outsiders in a world of conformists, we decided to live life as recklessly as possible for two nobodies.

We would go on "adventures", sneaking out at night and wandering through creepy ass forests or under old bridges, smoking whatever we could get our hands on and making up stories. One thing we could both relate to was art. We would go paint the town, putting our mark on whatever seemed appropriate at the time. Some nights we would just up and leave in the middle of the night, telling no one and taking his bike and driving to nearby towns. I loved riding with him, it was always a rush. We would always go too fast. That's how our lives worked together; not really thinking about anything, just doing it. We would go to the darkest most ominous places, places most normal people avoided, but that’s where we felt most like ourselves. My family somewhat came to terms with how I lived. I just didn't care about anything, or at least that’s what I tried to act like.

Evan was my escape. We were more than just friends; we were one in the same free-spirited souls. He distracted me from what I was really doing with my life. Everything seemed good in my life, as good as it could be at least, everything seemed to be where it should. Until the night that everything changed. I don't like to think about it because it's where everything fell apart. I knew there would be consequences to my decisions but I didn't really think about anyone but myself. I don't really go home anymore since then. I kinda just stay on my own, wandering from place to place, but never too far away. I just can't stay still. I'm haunted by my recklessness and through distancing myself from everyone. Aside from the drugs and the fearless façade I put on, nothing could stop the truth from being ever present from my mind. I am eternally lost. I do not have a place anywhere in this world. I am an outsider. I enjoy the very things people avoid. They think I'm insane. And maybe I am. Kissing the brink of death is kinda my thing. Even Evan would tell me that I would push my limits sometimes. People say that your whole life flashes before your eyes before you die, in a matter of seconds. You could see all your memories, filled with your most remarkable and terrifying moments, all in a matter of seconds. I was always afraid of what those seconds would show me. My life is just a dark painting, and each painting varies from person to person based on how they live their life. If I could paint my life, I would choose black and grey. Black is a color that envelopes so much character, so much emptiness, and so much depth. Black also represents everything that is me. Grey, on the other hand, is a color that not most people use. Since I am a person not many people understand, I would be grey. Confused and mixed with a little bit of everything. My life might sound either completely boring or utterly stupid and pointless, but that's just who I am. I am that part of recklessness, confusion, and fear that dwells inside of all of us. I am the deep, dark, scary thoughts that twist in your mind. I am that girl that all of us know that you think is so strange and yet, no one even tries understand her. I am that homeless person on the side of the road that has nothing left, nothing to fight for. I am inside all of you, yet I am always shut out.

That night, the night I don't want to talk about, was the worst and best night of my life. It was a freeing night, one that unleashed me from the prison inside of my mind and inside of this world. It hurt and yet it made me realize the fact that everything happens for a reason. I had my eyes opened, realizing maybe my purpose in life was not to be someone of importance, but to be something that impacted someone else's life. People change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worst; however, these changes endured are sometimes exactly what needs to happen in order for the rest of life to move on. Evan is different now, my mom is different, my dad is different, and even little Joey is different. This needed to happen. I needed to happen. Evan now studies at a university and plans to major in art history. He seems so happy and that makes me happy for him. I saw him earlier and I followed him. Of course, he didn’t know I was following him, I wouldn't want that. He seemed down as he walked out of his apartment door and took a corner toward the park. He had the hood on his jacket pulled up and he hung his head down. He was walking slowly, looking down at the ground and smoking a cigarette. He turned left on the street and headed down the hill toward the old cemetery. I followed him until he entered through the gates and stopped in from of a tombstone that was nearby a tree, fresh flowers, red, blue, and pink, were resting on top. I stopped, leaning against the tree, quietly observing him as he took a seat right in front of the headstone.

"Dahlia, I miss you so much. Why did you have to go? I know deep down it wasn't my fault, but I can't help but think that I should have stopped you," he paused, choking on a sob, "you always did such crazy shit but I never thought you would go this far...I just want you to be proud of me," he stopped again, taking a long breath, "I know you always thought you weren't important to a lot of people, Dahlia, but just know that you were always important to me."

It had hurt me to see him hurting like that. I wish I could just reach out and hug him, do something to show him a sign that I'm still here. I sighed and started to walk away. I started thinking; I still do not know why I am here, I didn't know what would happen after death. All I know is after I had started walking away, I heard Evan gasp. I turned, alarmed, to see that in the spot where I was standing near the tree, a single dahlia was peeking out, bright and radiant and vibrant as ever. Evan slowly reached out to pluck it, his hand shaking. I am not sure why I am dead, but I do know what my purpose was in this life, and I am finally free.