

The darkness enveloped me as I sat under the drooping tendrils of the old willow tree. Rain had soaked the branches so they sagged lower than normal, concealing me even more. I preferred it that way. She'd never see me coming.

I sat in silence, gripping my spear like my life depended on it. It didn't, not anymore, but I couldn't shake the chill that resided deep in my bones. She'd haunted my dreams every night since she'd captured me and my brother. Though it had been ten years since we'd escaped her house of horrors, I could still hear the ragged sound of her laughter and still see the depravity in her eyes.

Part of me wondered why I'd come. I'd always considered myself a peaceful person—not one to see revenge or gravitate to violence. But when my uncle told me he'd found the woman who'd kidnapped me and Jaime, I'd contemplated a darkness so deep and black it scared me. Maybe I'd always been this way, or maybe she'd brought it out in me.

Either way, I'd made my choice. I squinted into the damp inkiness. I heard her before I saw her. That same jagged breathing. That same shuffling gait.

It was now or never.

First of all, you have to know what we lived. What horror my brother and I lived. It was like a nightmare. We were just coming home from school, like every day but that time, it was different. This woman was in her car, asking for help. And when we came, cheerful and helpful, she grabbed us by putting a tissue over our mouths which immediately put us to sleep and once we woke up, we were in the trunk of her car. We were already terrified without knowing that it was just the beginning.

So we tried to find solutions. You know, my brother and I didn't want to give up but this sick woman had already taken my phone. We screamed so much, hit the trunk hard... but nothing changed of course.

Millions of questions jostled in my mind. I hugged my little brother and tried to calm down. The car stopped, I wiped all my brother's tears that were running down his cheeks and the trunk opened at last. She grabbed me by my hair and put me in a room alone.

I started screaming. Where was my brother ?! There was absolutely nothing in this room. Nothing. Nobody. I remember that I fell asleep from exhaustion from crying, hitting, screaming, calling my brother's name, asking why, and all those questions made me sleep. In the morning I guess, because the sun was softly shining, I woke up panicked not to have my little brother by my side. I called him again and again, and I heard him.

I finally managed to have news from him. He was also in an empty room, alone and afraid. We could speak and see each other because of a little fenster that was on the wall. But my little brother Jaime was screaming so loud. His face was red and his eyes inflated.

The woman did not speak with us, or explain anything. Nothing. Three times per day, she brought us food, enough to live, but nothing else. She ignored our questions or requests. We were in the basement, and after two or three days, we thought that we were not alone. No, other kids were here too, definitely.

And that was the beginning of the horror. We quickly realized that this woman, this sick woman was schizophrenic. The first personality she had was the least dangerous one : she was just normal, just a little bit manic. She wanted us to eat properly or things like that. The second one was a kid. A little one around six, seven years old. That was really creepy ! She invented scenarios to play with us and was always mad at us if we said mean things... The third personality was very protecting. Strange isn't it ? She stayed with us, made us eat a lot so that we wouldn't be hungry, or gave us pullovers when we were cold... And last but not least, she was a kind of psychopath.

When she had that personality, it was dangerous, really. She wanted to hurt us, the more we were screaming or crying, the more she was enjoying it... She made one of us sit and watch, and she hurt the other one. It was horrible. I remember one day, she had that personality and she was so angry. She took me and attached me so that I could see her. And she took a knife and began to cut my little brother in front of me. I felt helpless, I couldn't even look at him. That hurt me more than what she could have done to me physically.

And day after day, even hour after hour, the big question was which personality will she have ? And we began step by step to lose hope. We missed our parents and our lives very much... I was thinking that maybe we would pass the rest of our lives here, in this unique room, without even knowing why. What had we done wrong ? I realised that Jaime was more patient than me. I was always walking, eating my nails, being nervous...

With time, a bit of information appeared. For example, we got to know that there were also two other people in another room. Two young girls who were friends. Sometimes, when we heard them yelling we knew that the woman who kept us here had her fourth personality.

We built a new world together. But I mean it. I made him believe in a giant play like another dimension where he was the hero so that he had sometimes to fight that woman. He was not so little but I guess he wanted to believe in that so he just did believe in it. Then I did too. It kinda sounds crazy but we had to escape that too hard reality that was ours. We were young and really did not deserve it, so to live, well I should say to survive, we had to think about something else. So we began to think that we were playing a game, or that, it was another life or something like that...

Time passed and we didn't know which day it was anymore. But what we did know was that one day, we did not hear the two girls anymore. Not at all. Oh my God, were they dead ? Had they escaped ? If they had escaped, it meant that they would speak about us ! Would we be free soon ? The silent responses were too hard to manage. It was decided for me. We had to escape [too].

I had that idea now but I needed solutions. I did not speak about that to my little brother. And since then, I thought every second on the best plan. Which personality could we use ? When was the best moment to escape ? I tried to remember how the house was when we came. Was the best moment when she wasn't in the house or with an easy personality ? I had to think quickly. I was afraid for our lives, we were suffering, a lot. My brother and I were all cut and had bruises done by her fourth crazy personality and it was becoming serious. My idea was to play a game. When she would be with her kid personality, if I could find something to make her help us to escape, it might work.

And indeed, she came in the morning being a little girl. She wanted to play and I asked her to play hide and seek in the whole house. I took Jaime with me and while she was counting we tried to escape. But that was not that easy. You remember when I told you that Jaime didn't know that we had to escape ? That being here was like a game for him ? Well, here I realized that I should have told him before. When I took his arm to run away he said to me :

- " Hey what are you doing ? If we don't stay at home, we'll lose the game remember ?  
- Jaime I do not have time for this. We have to go ! Do you understand what is going on ? Mom and dad are waiting for us outside, don't you want to see mama and papa again ? Don't you miss them ?  
- I do. But you said to me that it was a big game, that I had to fight to be a hero !  
- Look Jaime, you see those marks on your arms, those bruises on your face ? That is not normal. I lied to you to keep you safe, but this woman is sick, crazy and she will hurt us more and more. You're a big boy now and you have to trust me. Please come with me now, we don't have much time."

He looked at me confused and exhausted. At that precise moment, I felt rage against our kidnapper. I wanted to yell and to beat her so much. But that wasn't the right timing for that. I look at my little brother :

- Jaime, if anything happens, I want you to run as fast as you can and find someone and tell him what we lived and you asked for help. Whatever's going on I want you to do that and to be safe. Do you understand what I say ?
- But you won't leave me alone ?
- I won't. But please remember that.

I made sure he nodded his head all the same, and as fast as we could we ran. We were already upstairs. Nobody else in the house. I looked quickly around. The door was closed of course. Wait... The silence was everywhere. She wasn't counting anymore. We had to do it quickly, really. What if she had changed her personality in the meantime ?! I did not think much, I took Jaime behind me and I threw the first object I saw on the bay window. She broke in a shrill sound. My legs were trembling. A lot. We ran. Faster and faster. We couldn't see anything anymore. Tears were flowing from our eyes. We both were breathing hard and loud.

- I wanna stop running, Jaime said.
- No no no ! Not now Jai. Come on, a little more effort. We are almost there, come on ! You're doing great. Stay with me. Come !

So he kept running with me, with some difficulty. Finally, without watching behind our backs, we arrived in a town. All panicked, we knocked at a door and screamed. You guess what comes next. We explained the situation. They called the police, and we found our home back. That was a horrible and very shocking experience. I was afraid for Jaime. Since that day, he always had nightmares. Me ? I was not afraid anymore, but I was so angry. Angry against everyone, against destiny, against everything. Against her. Why us ?! Why did my little bro have to live that ?! Whatever, that was the past, but that made my present and my future. I kinda become someone else. I was dark, looking for revenge.

Then my uncle announced to me he'd found her. My heart immediately became dark. I had just one goal. I had to do it. I sat under the drooping tendrils of the old willow tree. I'd made my choice. I squinted into the damp inkiness. I heard her before I saw her. That same jagged breathing. That same shuffling gait.

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