

*Excerpt*

Regrets by Lizzie Blincoe

I was 16 when I started writing, more seriously, I mean. It has been something I always have loved, but I never really found the desire to share it until I was older. I would spend weeks on stories, madly tapping away as my fantasies came to life. It was not these happy, easy days I dreamed of though. It was the people who filled them. Although I haven't spoken to them in the four and a half years I have been gone, I still find myself reminded of my parents in the littlest things. As I swallow my sorry excuse for coffee, it triggers a memory, and my smile slips a little. The bitterly cold day is recalled perfectly, that picturesque crispness that is only found in the late autumn. The sky was overcast, but the ground was perfectly dry, leaves dancing across it, making their rattling, sad music. I sat by the window, typing and then deleting, typing and deleting. I was working on a short story, a small thing for english class, and I couldn't for the life of me figure out what I wanted to say. I refused to settle for anything less than what I thought perfect, and the odd desire to succeed, if not anywhere else, than at least in this class, was pushing me forward. Taking a moment to collect my thoughts, thinking this one might actually be useable, I snatched a mug off the counter, and beelined for the teapot on the stove. If I consumed enough caffeine, maybe that would speed up this frustrating pace. Shoving the cup into the microwave, I watched as it spun, it's soothing aroma seeping into the air. Impatiently, I stopped it early, and took the lukewarm cup with me back to my laptop. I grimaced as I drank, but hey, I was finally getting somewhere. I typed and typed, and half an hour later, sat grinning as I heard the sharp, scratchy noise of the printer, having written what felt like a true masterpiece. Balancing my laptop and mug, I started for the kitchen, ready for a snack, and jumped, as my mom, seemingly materialized out of thin air, stood making coffee. Thinking back, I'm really not sure how I thought the caffeine addiction started in college, it clearly must be genetic or something. With my heart beating double time, I told her all about my impressive feat, and she smiled as she mixed and poured, a rich, pleasant smell filling the small kitchen. As I was just finishing up explaining how the hero never really fought the man, it was all in his head, my mother handed me a warm, steaming cup of coffee. I don't know why it was so good whenever she made it, I think all mothers are inherently better at making things of that nature, although I haven't a clue why. We spent an hour talking, hot coffee creamy and sweet, and that is why the memory is so special. So specific. It was our easiness, our familiarity with each other.

I stare at the tile on my kitchen floor, dragged back to the present by the damp chill that is numbing that back of my legs. I swing my gaze out the window, the bright blue sky flaunting its good cheer and rays of golden sunlight. Four and a half years. I had moved out, shortly after graduating highschool, ready for the freedom that college would bring. It started a huge fight, lots of ignoring phone calls, and not answering invitations to dinner. I was angry, and now, I was miserable. My eyes stung again, and I swiped at them, wiping away any trace of tears before they had a chance to fall. A chance. All of those moments, taken for granted. Dad dropping stacks of library books onto the table, teasing comments about a slim, if not nonexistent social life. Mom, setting neatly folded clothes, and warm, comforting cups of coffee down for me. I turned away from the sunny day outside, taking a hesitant step toward my phone, lying charging on the counter. I plucked the charger out and frowned a little as I dialed in the still familiar number, praying she hadn't changed it. My stomach clenched after the fourth ring, and I was just debating whether I should just hang up when it clicked, and a voice came through.

“Hello?”

I smiled, this time not bothering about the little tear slipping down my cheek. “Hi mom...”

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