

Prologue

Dear Diary, I don't know what the devil looks like... To be honest I think nobody does.

One time, my Sunday school teacher had shown us pictures and blatantly told us the grotesque figure with sharp teeth, claws, and hideous pitch eyes were the devil.

It'd made sense to me and later that day in school, (that is the public school I attended before I got a scholarship to Evans high school, a private school for the elites and a hell for the not so lucky) I'd called Bethany, the weird brunette who had been my lab partner for two years and have an endless supply of mucus on her nose, a devil. She'd cried and cried, so much so that guilt had clenched my soul in a vicelike

grip even as I notice the hate for me that dug deep into hers.

Well, let's just say that was the last year she was my lab partner. That had prompted my earlier rooted belief that okay maybe the devil was indeed hideous if just the mere mention of his name had invoked such strong emotions.

Another lesson I learned about the devil was a total discrepancy. I can't remember where I have come across this particular slice of knowledge.

Maybe it was Belle's uncle who wears a white robe that made the "satan" in me get thrilled at the thought of dipping my hand into scarlet paint and ruining his white.

Of course, that was a thought I never shared but I was eager to see if his tainted garment would make

his so very high shoulders normal like the rest of us.

He was a priest, I think that was what I've heard few of the women call him, so it made a great deal of sense if he was the one that told us the devil was Angel Lucifer, the morning star and so beautiful with a glorious voice that made Heaven swell.

Another lesson had taught that the devil was anything that tempts, I guess Brittany the blonde with fake extensions, well, was one since she had posted that unflattering picture of me in the sixth grade on Instagram and had tagged me in it!

The devil was not all that when he met me, He was Law Tyler, the sullen-looking boy with stormy grey eyes that always kept to himself but somehow was at the popular's table. Everybody wanted to figure him out, the girls too and so they'd come in their numbers, clinging and falling but he'd not even spared them a

glance.

He was the Devil and I don't mean figuratively, I mean Satan, Lucius, Morning Star.

Whatever you call him is in Senior year with me, Row 5, Seat 17.

Two seats away from me sat the devil with grey eyes that turn pitch black when no one was looking.

Chapter 001|The reason why the word monster was created

~Need a place to hide, but I can't find one near.

~Wanna feel alive, outside I can't face my fear.

Billie Eilish - Lovely

I remember the day I had been given a scholarship to Evans high school, almost like it was yesterday. How elated mom had been and how overjoyed everyone in my public school had felt.

Rob my older brother, who is now in jail, had ruffled my hair and for once had given me a little smile. He didn't get into an argument with Mom that night and the night after that, Because he avoided the pub.

I knew why he had done it, it was the same reason why mom had used up a huge chunk of her saving to buy me a beautiful backpack and a new pair of sandals. We had chicken wings for dinner, later that day too and Mom hadn't said a word even when Rob had opened a bottle of beer, it was to mark my success.

I was lucky, everyone had muttered and I had believed them. It was hard not to when you see the

envious, wistful look on their faces.

Going to Evans high school: A school for the rich, powerful and famous was a big deal. It was not every day, that a child from a ghetto-like neighbourhood like mine gets offered that kind of an opportunity.

Alas, how wrong we had all been. Because what everyone thought was the best thing that had happened to me brought a trail of other horrid happenings that became normalcy in my fucked up life until I met Him...

I woke up with a start even without peering at the alarm clock that I had forgotten to change its battery the following day, I knew why it had not rung.

Consequently, I was late. Damn late.

My room was one in three pieces of our classroom at

Even high school, which had high ceilings and you could hear giggling behind while girls talked about their weekend escapades which involved Paris and an insane amount of money used to buy something as petty as a purse or lipstick while I spend my time mentally calculating just how much problem that money spent on such trivial nuisances would have solved a problem or two at home.

If I was being honest, the room wasn't even mine. It was Rob's. I'd shared the room with Mom until Rob had gone to prison like we all knew he would someday. All the kids in our area spent vacations in prison. It was almost unavoidable.

But somehow I'd managed to leave as much as possible the same way he had. His worn-out poster picture of Dreke was still on the wall and his headphones were at the same spot where he had kept the damn thing, for the past 3 years. I only lift it

occasionally when cleaning and place the damn thing back there.

It might not even be working but it reminded me of Rob when he was just my passionate brother who wanted to be a rockstar and take me out to the big city as he had vehemently promised. He had harboured such a big bag of dreams and I never had the heart to tell him how horrible his voice was and how he couldn't play any instrument to save his life, despite his fumbling with the guitar, because it was the thought that mattered, right?

But then the "phase" had come. The drugs, the friends, drinking, and the women. And my highly spirited brother became a shadow of himself in just a blink of an eye.

He became a drunk and a bully. He didn't care about taking us out of the poverty

-ridden neighbourhood we lived in that reeked of every crime vices possible but rather he wanted to be the King of the ghetto-like trashcan we call home.

He had succeeded and that was why he was attending his coronation in prison and had been awaiting trial for the past two years.

Worn out rug and dirty torn curtains that had certainly not been changed because of sentimental attachment but because of inability to avoid such mindless luxury.

The only thing that hinted at my personality in the little cramped space was my long pile of books stacked neatly at the side of my poster bed.

My clothes were still in mom's room because I never had the heart to take down Rob's and put mine up on the rack. It seemed so final, almost like we had

moved on and he'd given up on him.

I stifled the yawn even as I stood up. I knew that I didn't have time to make breakfast, so I would be going without, again. Mom should be out already, that is if she even came back last night.

She was taking more shifts than necessary recently and though I didn't know why I knew better than asking. All I could do was sigh and think all night if she told me about the recent bills stacked on the counter she now took to bed every night.

I grabbed my Evans high school identification card which was totally essential if I needed to get past the high walls and gates because although I abhorred it and would have found a way to get rid of the emblem on it with the motto that was all a lie, I couldn't. Striving for excellence.

Excellence, my foot I thought with e sigh es I put my bleck heir into e bun so it is out of the wey while I brush my teeth.

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Excellence, my foot I thought with a sigh as I put my black hair into a bun so it is out of the way while I

brush my teeth.

The only thing Evans high school was good at, was striving to make monsters. Monsters who took trips to Milan and Dubai wore clothes with price tags that makes me go to the washroom and shed tears at how unfair the world was and weep at how much was splurged into nothingness.

I splashed my face with water gazing at the almost empty toothpaste pack on top of the enamel sink.

Great, just another thing that needed to be bought, another stuff that needed replacement.

"Hello," I muttered drily believing I was addressing the man inside the thick clouds above my head. A man which when I was little, I liked to imagine eating from a glass of medium cooked grilled steak and sipping from a champagne flute, a snarl on his face at our petty problems we disturb him with again and again.

At least then I had believed something but now, there was this hollow ache in my heart where that thought

had stemmed from. Mama had said if you didn't have money, religion was Good. Faith helps.

But as always I just had to be the one who didn't have money and also didn't believe in God.

Sometimes I wonder if I'd be in prison too just like Rob, if not for I was book smart. Because most of our ideologies were identical and he was one of the rare people who get me.

"It is a beautiful day," I whispered aloud sarcastically, hoping that just maybe if I say it loud enough I might just start believing it.

I offed the shower immediately after the last drop of foam was washed out of my body, the last thing I wanted to be doing was wasting water unnecessarily even though I couldn't help but fascinate about having a dip in a bathtub with bubbly warm water and not a

care in the world in your pretty privileged head like my other school mate.

I fisted my hand remembering mom's warning about knowing my place and sticking to it. People from my neighbourhood don't dream about bathtubs and long baths, they thought of how to pay off piling bills like the one mom had in her room and how to stay out of jail.

My head was down and covered in my grey hoodie, and my earplugs played Billie Eilish's lovely, while I mumbled the lyrics even though I knew I was getting it all wrong since I hated the music and Rob had once commented on how it seemed like it gave inspiration for suicidal people to act on their gut feelings but maybe I did needed some inspiration, any kind of inspiration I thought to myself, as I tried to stay as unnoticed as possible. One of the first rules and most important rules of being a bottom feeder especially if

you wish to stick around longer in Evans high school is to make sure you don't attract attention. It was an insult on its own to remind the highly placed beings that animals like myself still exist among them and there was nothing they could do about that. It was a silent taunt, a dare and it was equivalent to the corner of your lips being raised and showing them your middle finger. The consequences of not knowing this particular rule were shiver-worthy because the dirty terrible pranks that would come your way and the Jabs, bullies, and snickers would teach you that these smug privileged asses were the reasons why the word monsters were invented.

All my clothes were black or grey for a purpose, to stay hidden like an image in a hoodie and it was a game I was currently acing because apart from the intentional shove at me once in a while and increased sharpie written words in my locker with tags like charity case, smelling pig, scum and other interesting

choices of words I've gotten used to after crying in the bathroom when I'd first got here for a whole year, now I looked forward to seeing what new words they managed to have stumble upon even though atimes I had to do corrections to the spelling which was getting on my nerves like If you must taunt me, at least know how to spell the damn words.

So, like I was saying, acing the invisible game had come with lots of benefits, my body had not been pushed against the wall for starters and I've not "incidentally" created a dent on my locker with my head. Maybe this month would be one of my lucky ones, just maybe I thought not knowing that soon I'd realise how wrong I had been.

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