

## Third Place Prose – High School

### **The Darkness**

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**Grade: 12**

**School: Petoskey High School**

I open my eyes and just lay there, feeling numb. Today's the day. One of the most important days of the year. I get out of bed and walk into the bathroom. I brush my teeth, take a shower, and put on my nicest pair of clothes. I look in the mirror and comb my hair. I try to get every hair perfectly in place, like somehow getting my hair perfect will keep them from retracting their decision. I take one last glance in the mirror and then head down stairs. Just as I reach the bottom of the stairs Thomas runs past me with Tiffany chasing him, yelling for him to give back her dolly. You see, Thomas and Tiffany are twins. They are six years old with blonde hair and bright blue eyes. Like the rest of the kids, they were either left on the front steps when they were young or transferred here from another house.

Skyler is one of the other kids in the house. He's thirteen and real trouble maker. He is almost as tall as me and has brown hair with matching brown eyes. From the other room I can hear Mrs. Davies yelling at Skyler to stop skateboarding in the house. Mrs. Davies is the petite blonde woman that runs the house. She is in charge of taking care of us until we get fostered or adopted.

Mrs. Davies looks up and as if she can sense how nervous I am says, "You will be fine. They will love you!"

"No they won't, none of them do."

"That's not true!"

"Then why haven't I been adopted since I got here?"

"These ones are different. I'm sure of it."

"You said that last time."

"Well, this time it's true!"

"If you say so."

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Mrs. Davies walks to the front door and opens it. It's them.

"You must be the Richardsons. Hi, I'm Mrs. Davies."

“Hello, I'm Mark and this is my wife Lisa.”

“Please come in!”

I stared at them as they walked into the living room. Mark looks at me, like he is about to say something when Thomas runs into the room yelling about wanting to go outside. Mrs. Davies tells him to go back into his room until she is done.

He was about to leave when Mrs. Richardson said, “Wait, shouldn't he stay? He is the boy you were telling us about, isn't he?”

Mrs. Davies looked confused and pointed to me. “No, the boy you're here to meet is right over there.”

The Richardsons looked over at me and their faces fell. They looked at me for what felt like eternity and then asked if they could talk to Mrs. Davies in private. Mrs. Davies led them into her office to talk. I just sat there, a million things running through my mind. Why do they want to talk in private? Do they not want me? Did I do something wrong?

I must have zoned out because when I came back to reality Mrs. Davies was looking at me with a sad smile.

“What's wrong, where did they go?”

“They left,” she said looking at me like she was telling me my dog died.

“Why did they leave? Do they not want me anymore?”

“I'm so sorry Jason, but they changed their minds.”

“What was it this time? Was it because I'm not the cute little child they were hoping for?”

“No”

“Then what was it?”

“They thought you seemed troubled,” she said hesitantly.

“Ughh! Why does this keep happening to me?” I knew this would happen, it always does. I'm either too depressed, too weird, or too troubled. I knew these weren't the real reasons. It was the darkness. I have always been surrounded by darkness. Ever since I was young the darkness has engulfed me. Following me everywhere like a shadow follows a person.

Mrs. Davies put her hand on my shoulder, pulling me out of my thoughts. “Everything will be ok.”

“No it won't! It's not all rainbows and butterflies!” My anger was rising. I can feel the darkness taking over my body as I start to lose control.

“You don't know that.”

“I know what it’s like to feel rejected! Do you know what's it's like? To feel rejected? It sucks! All my life I have been rejected. My own parents didn't want me. Every time I had something in my life that I thought was going great it was ripped away from me. Do you know what that does to someone's self-esteem? All it does is add to the darkness!” She stays silent. She knows I'm right.

My eyes start to water and my lungs burn, trying to catch the slightest amount of air. It’s the Darkness. I try to swim towards the light but no matter how hard I try the darkness keeps pulling me down, further and further into the dark abyss. Then, suddenly I can breathe again. My lungs are gasping, trying to take in as much air as they can. My vision clears, but my head is still spinning. All I see is a bright light and shadows standing above me. The shadows are saying something but I can't understand them, their voices are muffled. All I can make out is my name, before everything goes black again.

When I wake up again everything is clearer. I am in a hospital room surrounded by nurses. “Dr. Richards, he's awake!”

A man, which I assume is Doctor Bruce, walks in. “Jason, how are you feeling?”

“Where am I? Why am I here?”

“You’re at the hospital. You had a panic attack. I had to give you a mild sedative to make you calm down.”

I don't respond. The truth is everyone as always told me that this happens. That it's just a panic attack, but I know it's not true. They don't see it. They don't feel how cold it is.