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## **Shedding the Pain**

### Shedding the pain

The stiff midnight air filled my lungs, making me cold to the touch. I exhaled and saw my own breath. Cold, and icy. I dragged my feet across the dirt path leading to my shed. The shed was the only place felt like home. The sharp plywood walls, the cold concrete floor, and bent, scattered, tools. It wasn't a place most people would feel comfortable in, but I did. I had everything I could ever want. My warm lantern, and the baby blanket that used to be my sisters. The sweet and warm, scent of flowers stimulated my senses.

I loved it when my sister came home. Her pungent scent filled the house with giggles and commotion. For once, laughter filled the family room.

We played Sorry, my favorite game. Rapidly moving the pieces across the board and toppling them over, yelling, "Sorry!"

I'm sorry, I could have stopped everything. Everything could have been perfectly ok. Our family would have been laughing in the family room, playing sorry.

We don't play Sorry anymore, the box is gone, the pieces shattered. Plastic pieces strewn across the table. My dad threw it away; I can imagine it's in a landfill.

The pieces shattered like my heart, the day you went away.

It was the day you decided to leave, the day that someone decided to take you. Your bubbly self hopped in the car, laughed, and said goodbye.

You rolled up the window.

Your boyfriend started the car.

The car was soon unrecognizable, shiny droplets of water peaking through the cracked windshield into the car, soon to become drenched in red.

Red, the color that I never want to look at again. The color that makes me tremble when I see it. It hurts to look at the color red.

The color of the wine bottles my dad harshly throws at my mom.

The color of blood that drenched my sister in the car accident.

The color of love.

The idea of love is fake to me. Love is just supposed to be a fleeting feeling you feel for someone when they want someone to care for them.

Love is only something people crave, it's unnecessary. I don't understand all the cheesy movies that make love seem like such a great thing. Why love someone when you're just setting up your heart to break?

People come and go like Sorry pieces. Sometimes, they decide to move you out of the way and carry on without them. Sometimes they get lost, and the pieces are never found. Other times, you leave them, leaving them at the beginning of the board, not knowing where to go next, or how to start over.

I want a new sorry game. I want to be able to go back to the times where I could be with my family in the living room playing games, with my sister. Ever since you left, life has gotten worse.

Mom started smoking again, and dad began drinking more than usual. Everything plummeted. They can't handle the level of stress that has been put on them while trying to sort out their broken marriage anyway.

I could still hear the yelling from the shed. It was violent, I couldn't bear to hear it anymore.

Slowly, I looked down.

My lap covered in tears, dissolving the grime off my shirt.

My arms and legs are bruised and scarred, probably from trying to escape from my feelings too many times.

My heart, irreplaceable, but I cannot fix the damage anyway. After all, I am the one who caused your death.

Mom and Dad usually try to ignore me; they're too worried about themselves to deal with me. When they get in fights, they usually blame me for what happened, and I don't blame them. I could have stopped the car easily, but couldn't they have too?

I'm engulfed in the moon's light. I bathe in its cold glory as I walk through the weeds. The shed is now empty, or, at least empty inside. Without me, it's just a normal shed.

Since I don't hear yelling anymore, I presume I can go inside.

The house is lit with as many lights as I have ever seen. I have to shield my eyes as I walk in.

I silently slide the back door open.

Mom and Dad have been trying to repair their relationship for a while now, so I'm not surprised if they have something to tell me.

"Honey," my mom starts. She hasn't called me honey in a very long time. I just stare.

"Your Dad and I have decided to file for divorce." She slowly enunciates each word, as if trying to let the words sink in. My face must show an array of emotions. I'm happy for my parents, because they will be able to stop fighting, but I'm sad that I won't be able to see both of them when I wake up. I do love my parents, despite what you might assume.

I start crying, not really knowing why. All the emotions are slowly dampening my soul as I realize what is really happening. I will have to be separated from my parents, and my house, or even my state. Everything is happening so fast, and I don't know what to do. I hug my mom for no apparent reason. I don't even like hugs anyway.

I end up trying to sleep with too much on my mind. I try to push all the feelings away as I scrunch my face up inside my pillow. The draft from my window is heavy, but I don't want to get up. I don't ever want to get up. What if I wake up tomorrow and I have to move to another State? Away from everything I've ever known? I shrink farther into my sheets.

When I wake up, my room is freezing. I come down stairs to the smell of waffles. We haven't made since we had the cooking competition. Me and my mom against my dad and sister. I push the memories away as I slide down the bannister. Mom has a single box packed, and I assume the worst. Before I ask, she casually says.

"Don't worry; we're not moving out until next week until our divorce is settled. And no, we're only moving a little farther downtown than you're used to, nothing outrageous." I sigh in relief that I don't have to move to someplace far away. Either way, I'm still really upset that I have to move away from the only house I've ever known, especially the shed. The shed was my place of comfort when all felt lost. I would curl up in a blanket and read books until the sun rose. My parents would sometimes find me there in the morning, shivering in my sleep, and carry me onto the sofa, if they even realized I was out of the house.

The next week came like a flash, with everyone racing around to get everything packed up in time. I said goodbye to my dad with small hugs and many tears as I saw the moving truck pull up. We loaded the boxes and then hopped in the car.

"WAIT!" I yelled. I suddenly remembered that I had packed nothing from the shed, let alone said goodbye to it. I rushed to the backyard to gather my things. The shed is empty, not just because I am not in it. My mom had apparently taken everything out and packed it up, so I guess she knew. I touched the once spiny plywood, now sanded down. I place a little note in an empty container in the shed.

"To whoever gets this, please treat this shed with care. I have lived so many memories here that I am just not ready to give it away yet, but I'm being forced to move. So please, I ask you, treat this shed as well as you would your own home. It can help you in so many ways, more than you can imagine.

Thank you, Elena"

I tossed the note into the metal box and slowly dragged my feet to the car.