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Category: Short Story

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**The Abyss**

The Abyss

A gun fires, a child cries. Thump, then nothing.

Bianca was tired, tired of hearing the children's yelling, tired of being cold, tired of being hungry. She sat on the stairs of the orphanage, wishing everything would just stop. The maids called the children in for supper, and the yelling stopped, replaced by a momentary silence. As always, the food was bland and the servings were meager. Today they were having watery cabbage soup and a small slice of dry bread. As she ate, Bianca dreamed of escape. Escape from this rotting place, escape from everyone and everything. She heard the lights out bell and Bianca silently walked up the stairs, donned her nightclothes, climbed into her bunkbed and slowly drifted off to sleep. The next morning, Bianca heard running footsteps. Suddenly the door to the bunkroom banged open and one of the maids ran in. She rapidly shook the children awake.

"Fire, fire in the orphanage! Leave everything and get out!" she panted. Bianca was the last one to leave the room. As she ran downstairs, smoke filled her eyes. She kept running, but the flames blocked her exit and she began to cough uncontrollably. Bianca ran towards the open window and tried to climb out. Just as she was about to reach safety, she fell out the open window and then...

White emptiness. Blank white open space.

"Hello!" Bianca yelled into the void. The sound of her voice faded. No response. Bianca looked down to see that she was wearing a simple white sleeveless gown. Her long blonde hair was hanging loose down her back. And she was floating! She was levitating several inches off the ground. Literally floating.

Bianca began to panic. She wondered if she was dead. Maybe the fall from the window had killed her. But she felt so alive, alive and alone. What if she stayed forever floating in the oblivion with nothing to do for all of eternity?

Suddenly a long piece of paper and a simple white pen appeared, hovering in front of her face. She had no idea why but she had an impulse to write a message on the paper. She wrote, "I am lost, someone, anyone find me, I am in the abyss, Bianca." She then rolled up the paper and threw it into the oblivion and it disappeared.

Then suddenly a white-hot pain crept up her arm. She tried to lift it but she couldn't. Was it broken? All she knew was that the pain was almost blinding. Her lungs began to ache and she coughed violently. She felt as she had during the fire when the smoke had flooded her lungs. She felt more pain as burns and scratch marks began to appear all over her body. Her dress became torn and she fell to the ground. She was no longer floating and world spun around her. She over in pain. The burning consumed her senses. Bianca's vision went red as she fell onto what seemed to be the floor of the abyss. All she could feel was pain and more pain. The red flickered around her and she saw a hazy image of two people in masks and hair nets standing above her. And then she only saw red again. The pain slowly began to recede and Bianca's vision cleared. She was still alone, trapped in the white space. And then she wondered if she could fall asleep in the abyss, so she laid down and put her hands under her head. For the first time, she looked up. All she saw was white, empty space. She drifted off to sleep.

The next day – Although there was no sun in the emptiness -- Bianca awoke and began to float again. She was still alone. Bianca began to panic. She screamed and held her head between her hands. She was the only living thing left. She had no one. Nothing. She was stranded, stuck in infinite emptiness. She yelled for her mother, for her father.

But they had been taken from her early on in life. She cried for her bed in the orphanage. She even longed for the other children, for any other sign of life. The loneliness consumed her and she thought of nothing else. She stormed into the abyss, looking for something anything other than herself. She was lost. She had nothing for her mind to lean on, and so it collapsed.

There was no way to know how much time had passed. In her fragmented state, Bianca barely noticed when pain began to creep up her arm again. She wasn't really aware of her dress becoming torn once more. She just fell to the floor again, wrapped in her own misery. She opened her eyes and saw two nurses hurrying around what looked to be a hospital room. They were checking her pulse and calling for the doctor. A man in a white coat came in. He looked at her and said in a gentle tone, "Bianca you were knocked out while trying to escape from the fire, and you have been in a coma for two weeks.

"No," said Bianca, "No, this isn't real, I am alone in the abyss, I have no one!"

"Honey, I promise this is reality. You will be moved to a new orphanage as soon as you are well enough."

"No, no, this is too good to be true! Mother! Father! I am alone, I am lost!" she yelled. She must be asleep. The abyss was too real. She was still trapped. She was sure her mind would always be trapped in the abyss.

The End