

Anonymous

By Jenna Lynn Pearson

As SHE fell backwards, he went to stop HER and pressed his palms flat into HER back. Instantaneously, there was a small breaking in HER consciousness as some barrier crumbled. Some wall collapsed. Some need was violated as he crossed the line and entered HER circle.

SHE was open and unprotected.

Suddenly every breath that caught in HER throat found those palms on HER shoulders, circling, or those hands on HER knee. Walking past HER, sitting beside HER, standing next to HER in an empty room close enough to make the small, white hairs on HER body rise, he was suddenly all over HER; his fingertips dragging along the back of HER neck leaving his musky scent in greasy, invisible lines, or pinching at HER waist with his thumb and forefinger trying to make HER blush and jump. He'd throw his head back and laugh innocently, jokingly, with his straight white teeth and bobbing slick tongue that thrust upward with each laugh. SHE'd cringe and think, If you're my friend, why do you touch me this way? But SHE let him. SHE let him because SHE was no longer innocent. There was nothing left to protect.

He'd squeeze HER thigh, blow in HER ear, massage HER arms, and smother HER with his large body that emanated a perverse warmth. All the while he spoke of their friendship and continued flirting. All the while SHE was losing sleep.

SHE would lie beneath her floral comforter and stare out HER bedroom window. SHE would stare and pretend that SHE could not still feel his eager fingertips licking every inch of HER skin. SHE would stare and deny the tears that resulted from knowing SHE could not escape, that SHE was his, not a friend but a thrill. SHE would stare out the window, the same window SHE had slipped through late one night when SHE was supposed to have been tucked away sleeping, and remember how SHE had once been an object for someone else also.

SHE did not want to remember...

...that night. On the wet cemetery grass in the black of the morning, HE forced HER down and pressed HER body flat into the ground with HIS. SHE tried to fight HIM. SHE tried to push HIM off and roll away. I did try. SHE'd tell herself. I did try. But the toes of HIS shoes dug into HER shins so SHE could not kick. HIS right arm pressed across HER chest like an iron bar, pushing down with all HIS weight, holding both HER arms flat at HER sides and bruising them as SHE resisted. HER ribs caved in under the pressure as HIS other hand yanked at the buttons of HER shirt, stroking HER body beneath it for a brief moment before traveling to HER belt buckle. SHE knew SHE tried. SHE pleaded. SHE begged HIM to stop. And when SHE screamed to HER friends for help, HE dropped HIS head and quieted HER with HIS mouth, HIS warm saliva drooling down HER cheek and mixing with tears in HER hair.

The stench of sweat from HIS naked chest against HERS joined with the alcohol on HIS breath and hit HER face, nauseating HER. HIS belly was slick with the perspiration and oils of HIS skin and rubbed into HERS with each struggle. SHE was covered and caked in HIM.

During the spitting, the tearing, the trembling, the touching, grabbing, pulling, scratching, biting, probing, and ramming SHE pleaded. During the bruising, the kissing, and the drawing of blood SHE failed. During the entire contact, HIS dark brown eyes stared down deeply into HER, dirtied HER broken soul and robbed HER of its luster.

HIM. SHE did not even know HIM.

The casual teasings resurrected that night; resurrected the shame.

But then it was everyone. People brushing HER shoulder while walking briskly by or approaching HER from behind made HER shiver, squeamish, uptight, and shaky. The smell of men's cologne and the sounds of their deep, resonant voices would make HER sick; an accidental graze of skin, a slight sensation of another's breath, a word, a look, a thought, a presence. SHE could not repair the circle HER friend had broken into. SHE could not reconstruct the barriers that had once kept HER safe and unfeeling. HE was constantly watching; constantly standing with HIS hands two inches away from HER skin. And every one knew.

They saw the scars on HER hands and shoulders and knew that SHE was vulnerable, that SHE had been used and stripped of HER innocence, and that SHE was a slut for being too weak to defend HERSELF. And every time HER friend reached out for HER, SHE knew that SHE would never be clean. Again, SHE could not escape.

One night, from utter exhaustion, SHE slept. In a dream SHE strolled through a cemetery at night, threading between tombstones. Eyes spied on HER from somewhere, though SHE was alone. SHE walked about, very conscious of HER body in a thin, transparent nightgown and, ashamed, tried to conceal HERSELF in HER hands. SHE awoke and stared at the partially opened window and listened for HIM to return; to climb through and enter; to lie down on top of HER and cover HER with HIS semen. HE would hiss Tight-legged bitch! And rape HER soul one more time.

While repressing the deepest need to yell and find and punch HIM and tear HER nails across HIS face, SHE ran to the shower and drenched HER naked body in the running hot water to wash away the old smells and fingerprints. SHE scrubbed but could not get clean. Screaming, SHE turned the faucet all the way as if the hotness would be able to penetrate through HER skin and reach the soul. Cleanse HER soul. Touch and heal HER soul. It was time to let HER secret out. In the searing pain of the scalding water SHE promised HERSELF that SHE would not be vulnerable anymore. SHE would learn to love HERSELF again. SHE would cope and survive.

And escape would be HER revenge.

Burned and naked, HER hair hanging in wet clumps over HER eyes, SHE slid down the shower wall and wept the dirt away.