

I shift uncomfortably in the giant leather armchair; you grab the pen from behind your ear and eagerly put it to the yellow notepad on your lap.

You're probably thinking, *Finally, she'll speak*. But you're wrong and in my mind I smile and laugh to myself at the idea of you writing away on that notepad, like you give a damn about what *I* feel.

After a few minutes, you realize I'm not going to give you the satisfaction of my voice and you repeat your question. The same question you've asked me since I first walked into your office three months ago.

"So Emilee, why do you think you're here?" you say in that motherly yet professional voice of yours.

And I do the same thing I've done for three months, turn towards the window and let my mind wonder.

My name is Emilee Johnson, I've been in the nuthouse, or as my mother calls it: "a rehabilitation center for teenagers with behavioral problems", for three months now. I haven't spoken a word and no one but me and the people that read my file know why I was admitted.

Over the past few months I've had to say goodbye more times than a sixteen year old should, and that could be the reason why I ultimately made some bad decisions, and ended up here.

It all began when my mom dropped the big "D" word on me.

Divorce.

It was at that moment that I discovered how naïve I really was. I had been living my life for sixteen years thinking that my parents were madly in love but little did I know that my dad was secretly seeing his secretary, real original huh?

“What do you mean divorce?” I said with my eyes wide like a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming 18-wheeler.

“Honey, I know it’s hard for you but-”

I put my hand up to cut Mom off but I didn’t have anything to say.

“Em,” she began, but I got up and walked out of the kitchen like a zombie.

I couldn’t believe my parents were getting a divorce, it felt like my whole world had just been hit by a massive earthquake and had spun into an alternate universe.

That night at dinner my parents began telling me “the plan”, as in I, Emilee, will live with Mom in a town five hours away and I, Emilee, will visit Dad every other weekend, when possible, and on certain holidays and the summer.

“So sweetie, how does that sound?” Dad said after they were done presenting, like it was some sort of business meeting and they were pitching a new energy drink.

“Well?” Mom chimed in.

“Well,” I began, “I think that you asking me to basically give up my life is completely unfair!”

“Em, I’m sorry that you feel that way but-”

“But nothing Mom, just because you couldn’t make your marriage work doesn’t mean that I have to give up my life and-”

“Whoa there young lady,” Dad interjected, “this is not your mother’s fault.”

“Oh you’re absolutely right Dad, it’s not *her’s* it’s *your’s*.”

I thought my father was going to slap me but instead he just got up from the table and turned to leave.

“Goodbye Emilee,” he solemnly said.

“Bye Dad.”

The next morning Mom had the U-Haul all packed up and ready to leave. It was amazing how my whole life fit into five boxes and my backpack. Dad wasn't there to say goodbye a second time, but I found that I really didn't care.

All my friends came over before I left and our goodbyes were filled with tears, hugs, “I'll see you later” and promises that were never kept. I left my old life and began a new one five hours away.

“So, what do you think?” Mom said when we pulled up to our new house.

Mom had bought a two bedroom, two bath doll house. It was white with green shutters; the front lawn was well kept. It looked more like house for a happy suburban family rather than an escape for a divorcee and her teenage daughter.

“It's a house,” I said sarcastically.

“Of course it is silly,” I could tell Mom was trying her hardest to put up with my teenager attitude. “Let's get to unpacking Honey, you have school tomorrow morning.”

“Great,” I said unenthusiastically.

That night as I tried to sleep on the air mattress, I began thinking of ways I could “fit in” at my new high school. I had never been the new kid; I was always the one that criticized the new kid with all my friends. Being on the other side of the fence wasn't something I had ever

prepared for. I cried myself to sleep thinking of all the horrible scenarios that could happen to me the following day.

As I predicted, my first day at school was a living nightmare. There were cliques for miles at that school but none that I fit into. The teachers were all kind but I figured they had to be. I was the new girl, the one that no one talked to, so rather than make me feel more left out, the teachers tried their hardest not to make my day worse. But it didn't help.

All day I was wondering through the school like a lost puppy trying to find all my classes and by lunch, I decided to stop trying and just go home but then I saw him.

He was sitting at the corner table, farthest from everyone else, with a small group of kids. As soon as I looked at him, we made eye contact and I nearly dropped my lunch tray.

I was headed straight for the door when he stopped me.

"Hey, I'm Derek," he said with his smooth voice and I couldn't help but look up and stare into his ice blue eyes.

"Hi," I managed to spit out.

"You're new here," it sounded more like a statement than a question, "Why don't you sit at my table?"

"Sure," I still wasn't past one word responses.

We sat down and to my surprise the kids at the table didn't say much, no interrogating or even a stare. It was like they were too caught up in their own lives to even notice that a new person had slipped in.

When the lunch period was over Derek invited me to cut class and go out back and drink.

At my old school I never would have done that but I didn't dare reject an invitation from Derek, my only friend. So, I cut class and for the next couple of days I continued to cut class and I was happy, or as close to happy as I could get.

Then one day, the school caught on that I hadn't been attending my 6th and 7th periods and they called my mom.

The look on her face when she realized that I was longer a good girl was priceless.

"I don't understand Emilee," she began her stern parent speech that night at dinner, "I've tried my best to make the most out of our situation and I thought that I didn't have to worry about you."

"I guess you thought wrong."

"Look missy, I will not stand for you skipping class, I've raised you better than that and--"

By that time I had stopped paying attention to her rambling and decided to go find Derek. After all, he understood, unlike my mother.

"Em, where are you going?" Mom asked.

"Out." And I shut the door behind me.

I met my "friends" behind the school, grabbed a beer and started to unwind.

"Mom trouble?"

It was like Derek could read my mind.

"Yeah, she just, I don't know."

"It's cool, I get it," he said. "Parents don't know what it's like being a teen these days, it tough and we need a little help getting by."

That's when he pulled out a little pill.

"What's this?" I asked.

"Just take it; it'll make you feel better."

Just as I grabbed the little pill to put in my mouth, headlights came into view.

"Who is that?" one of the girls asked, "I thought everyone was here."

I was completely mortified when Mom stepped out of the car and went straight for me.

"Emilee Marie Johnson, you get your butt in the car now!"

"No!"

"No? Then I'll just put you in the car!"

She grabbed my arm and literally dragged me and pushed me inside the car like I was a child. Although, I *was* kicking and screaming like one.

"I can't believe you!" I yelled when we got home.

"You can't believe me? Emilee, you're doing drugs, cutting class and you're not my daughter anymore!"

"I said goodbye to her a long time ago!"

By that time we were in the kitchen and I did something I had never done before. I saw the knife poking out of the dirty dishes and I snapped. All the horrible things that happened to me up to that moment flashed through my mind and I grabbed the knife.

"Emilee, what are you doing?"

"Saying goodbye!"

I put the knife to my left wrist and just sliced it, like my arm was a birthday cake and everyone wanted the first piece to be cut already. But instead of an ice cream filling, blood gushed out.

I woke up the next day strapped to a bed and Mom at my side. My first instinct was to run but I couldn't. Then Mom saw that I was awake and attempted to explain to me what was going to happen next.

"Emilee, you know I love you," she began. "That's why I'm sending you to a rehab center."

"You're sending me to a nuthouse?"

"It's a rehabilitation center for teenagers with behavioral problems."

I tried to talk but Mom cut me off.

"Em, your father and I talked all night and we decided that sending you there is the best way to get you help."

"Why can't I just see a shrink?"

"They have therapists there too."

And here I am, sitting in your office, three months later, not talking. But maybe if I do speak, I'll finally get to go home. But then again what if I speak and you decide I'm too crazy to ever be let out.

This the fear I've had ever since that first day I walked into this dreary place with the nurses wearing huge smiles on their faces, as if they like working with a bunch of psychos.

I've decided.

"They divorced," my voice is so tiny, I don't even recognize it.

You look at me with wide eyes then remember that you are a shrink and quickly write something down. Like in that split second I'm going to take back my words and you won't be able to write down that I actually spoke.

“Well Emilee,” you begin, “Thank you for talking.”

I shrug.

“Would you like to tell me how your parent’s divorce made you feel?”

“How much time do you have?”

“I have all the time in the world,” you say encouragingly.

I spend hours telling you everything from the move, the school, to my thoughts on Derek and how I really thought he liked me, and how Mom wrote to me and told me that he had been arrested and told the cops I had all the drugs. Then I end with *that* night.

At the end of my life’s story you put the notepad down, click the pen and stand up, signaling the end of my session.

“Emilee, if you continue with this progress, you might be saying goodbye to this place sooner than you think.”

I smile weakly and think how good it would feel to say goodbye to all this, all that and start over again.

Word Count: 1,991