

Tyné Hazel

Professor Ramjerdi

Engl 301 IND

5/17/17

### Flashback: A Blast from the Past

My hands were clasped together tightly, turning the tips of my finger white due to the pressure. My thumbs twiddled to the tic of the grandfather clock--the pendulum bob swinging back and forth similar to a metronome. A sound reverberated a steady beat throughout the room I was in which was, I guess, supposed to make me feel at ease but only did the opposite. I sat in front of a mahogany desk that seemed almost abounding, since there was little to no paperwork to be seen. Positioned behind it was a jet-black leather desk chair that could recline to an almost obscene angle. The absence of an overhead light casted shadows into corners, spilling under the desk and over the framed pictures that hung diagonally on the wall. The off-white curtains were drawn opened, allowing the light from outside the fourth story window to paint the opposing wall. Also, giving me the view to the hustle and bustle of the city below. I sighed to myself. I didn't want to be here. Jaden had convinced me to do this.

Actually, I feel more as if I acquiesced to the unbending will of him wanting me to see a professional to get this off my chest once and for all. I declined at first, but then he started hovering. I felt like I needed a little space. I just needed to relax.

And maybe his suggestion was the first step into doing that. Maybe it was a good idea. There was no simple way to overcome the fear and anxiety I've been experiencing throughout the week - more importantly, my life. I've noticed that my demons needed to come out or those thoughts and feelings that I wished nobody in the world knew would build up and I'd explode. So, instead of fighting these feelings, I opted to just accept them as part of the process because without making changes in my life, I was just going to keep feeling... and I didn't want to do that. In the silence, I heard the room door clicked open, pulling me from my reverie. My eyes flicked to the side and watched a tall and slender man in his early fifties enter the room through the mahogany door and closed it behind myself. His hair was neatly coiffed with greying streaks along the sides.

Removing his glasses and dropping them into his chest pocket, he turned to face me before greeting me which I did in return. His custom tailored grey suit and deep red tie oozed 'psychiatrist', which was a little discomfoting. As he crisply walked towards me, his handmade shoes crunched away on the deep teal carpet yelled 'expensive'. I shifted nervously, producing a sound from the leather chair I sat in, across the one from Dr. Sykes - as a glass nameplate perched on his desk read - was walking towards his own. "Nice to finally put a face to the name..." The man looked down a bit at his papers - which I assume were notes from the phone call which we had a brief discussion - before his eyes met mine again. "Ms. Morales," he finished. Small talk. I mentally roll my eyes. I'm not here for it, "How are you doing?" "No offense but there is no need for small talk. Let's

just get this over with," I said frustratedly, rubbing my forehead. At my comment, he cleared his throat before grabbing a pen from a silver tin that held a generous amount of ball point pens and started to scribble something on a notepad. What the hell did he write? I mentally asked myself. He's psychoanalyzing me. "As you wish, Ms. Morales. Let's start from the very beginning," he said in a practice voice. "I don't even know if there is a beginning to start from. I remembered these situations so vividly. There was so much of it. So many different types." I said around the lump that was forming in my throat. Dr. Sykes pushed a bottle of water closer to me, offering me to take a sip. I did. Not only because I was thirsty, but because I was stalling a bit. I really didn't want to go through this again, especially with a stranger. I sighed again and relented before focusing on the bonsai plant near the corner of his desk, composing myself. "I never really smiled. I just didn't have the time and energy, if I did I would just be faking it and no one likes a faker. In a way, it was to turn on and off my emotions. It wasn't easy at first because I was not that type of person, but now it comes easy. It wasn't my fault. I didn't deserve it. I was just living my life and she happened to be in it. It all started after my father first married her, I noticed she had a very dark vibe. To this day, I remember the gritty eyes on her face. I was a quiet child. I did not do much talking to anyone. I was asocial, if you will. Being the way I was, I buried myself in my school work and, of course, I've earned excellent grades majority of the time. When the grade I earned wasn't to her liking she would spank me. I grew up around the notion that typical parents are always

right. That was instilled in me. She was an English teacher at the local high school in my town so I got the motivation of her discipline. She wanted me to do better. But, there was a fine line between abuse and discipline. At first, that was what I believed it to be, merely discipline, but now it's impossible to accept that as the true. What she was doing was damaging. Every time I would get a beating, I thought it was my mistake. I always thought, 'next time I'll do whatever I can do so I won't upset her' but the beatings still came. At school, I refused to show any amount of skin in fear of someone seeing the severely bruised skin. My teachers would wonder about me because the bruises that actually remained weren't covered by my uniform. When she was questioned about it she would say "Oh, you know children, they get their selves in more trouble than they know," persuading the teachers that it was my fault that I had bruised skin. My doing. But how wrong was she? One day I woke up to her shouting on the phone. I knew it was my father she was yelling at on the other side of the receiver. I didn't want to be on her bad side. I tidied my room and even made my bed just to stay in her good side. All was good that morning until I spilled milk on my shirt. She yelled at me about how much of a klutz I was and instantaneously I felt the strike of the back of her hand. I apologize even though I didn't know what I did wrong. I just wanted to make it all stop. Nevertheless, all I remember was being able to feel the pain and see the hate and enjoyment in her eyes when she hurt me. My Uncle visited me often since my father was mostly out of town. He was my role model. The guy I considered the parental figure. He was supposed

to help me when he came around. I thought I would finally be okay when he did show up, but I wasn't... When I told him my stepmother had been putting her hands on me, all he said was that I deserved it. My Uncle should've protect me.

He was the only family member who knew. He was supposed to show me the world on his shoulders but he ruined it. I was hurt. I wanted someone who I could trust, who I considered family, my father more specifically, though he wasn't there. He never was." I stopped before inhaling a shaky breath, feeling my lip begin to quiver and the burning of unshed tears in my eyes, the telltale signs of tears yet to descend. Dr. Sykes handed me tissue, which I took graciously and continued. "I always remained a little skeptical of everyone but nothing compared to that day. 'It was just all your fault,' 'Don't tell anyone about your mess up,' She told me that nobody would believe me or care. I believed her. The pain on the outside goes away eventually but the pain in the inside never fades. One of the worse things she did was punish me with food. That's why I have an issue with eating. I remember going days without a grain of food or getting her 'rendition' of leftovers. Her version would her doing things to my food to make it gross. She'd take an innocent bowl of spaghetti and mess it up to the point where I thought of it as inedible. She would take literally a half an onion, throw it in there; garlic, clove powder -- whatever she found in the kitchen that had nothing to do with the dish and put it in my bowl. I was forced to eat it. It was hard to express how you are feeling and how scary it was as a child. It was disgusting. It wasn't like vegetables where your parents are giving you for nutrition. She was torturing me.

I couldn't stomach it. I threw up in my bowl... and she'd forced me to finish all of that, too." I stopped again. I couldn't help it. Talking about it was bringing up so much that I repressed. I took a deep breath and continued. "It took literally six hours. It took six hours because with the gagging and trying to keep it down. She would whip me... hard with a belt... all over as even more punishment for soiling my clothes and the tablecloth. I didn't know what was worse, having to eat the food or being beaten. My father was always on a business trip. He was never home. Therefore he never knew. He was in an abusive relationship and I guessed he thought that was where it stopped – with him. But he was wrong.

When he was home, he was useless. He didn't want to deal with her; he was afraid of her. He would lock himself in a room. And that was when the abuse with me would commence." I cut the story short again, worked up. My eyes panned to Dr. Sykes before they panned back to my intertwined hands, finding them more interesting than his burning gaze. "I was like 8 years old when this happened. I could never imagine doing this to a kid. And I wonder why I find it so hard to trust people. I've been hurt so freakin' bad. Now, I know why I'm the way that I am.

Yet, that was only just one instant." I started off at a reasonable level in voice but I soon became louder, furious. "Ms. Morales, please," Dr. Sykes plead, patiently, begging me to keep my voice down. I only conceded because I didn't want others in the premises to hear and believe that I was an actual basket case.

“She was so clever. She'd force me to put ice on my body afterward 'cause she didn't want me to have bruises. Child services gotten wind of a bruise on my body and she would just say 'Chastity did this to herself.' She called me Chastity because she hated my first name. It was just a way to take my identity away from me. And that was not even the worst part of this story. This one time I would never forget.

When I refused to eat what she was giving me, she took me to the bathroom that was in between my room and hers'. She had a napkin that contained cat shit from a random stray in the yard and forced me to eat. Forced it down my throat.

Literally forced me to eat... shit.” I couldn't help it. I lost my resolve in front of the therapist I was trying to put up a façade for. I finally felt those hot tears pour from my eyes as my body thrashed with sadness, pain and tears continually pouring out of my eyes. My breathing was slightly labored, gulping for breath. “I was just a little kid and I wasn't a bad one either. I remember.” I blubbered, putting my hands on my face in distress. “I told my Uncle about it. He had the audacity to say to me, "It didn't kill you, did it?" I looked at him like he grew a second head. I thought my Uncle would really save me this time around. But all he said was

"Munchkin, you gotta learn how to pick your battles in life and this one isn't worth fighting for. Who says that to a kid?" I sniffled before wiping my nose with a soft tissue. I took it upon myself to grab another one for my eyes. “Sorry. Bringing

up everything and reliving it is... difficult. It shouldn't be having this effect on me still, but it does." "It's perfectly normal to still struggle with these kinds of situations at your age, Ms. Morales." He said to comfort me and it actually worked. "It was just so bad." I shook my head quietly to myself, feeling major pity and loathing. "I don't know how she lives with herself. I just don't understand." I trailed off before starting the story again. "With the thinking that I adopted as a child, it was hard for me to shut off her voice in my head. Even to this day. What she used to say and do to me. It was so painful. It was wrong. An innocent child going through all that negative and unjust shit... I tried to get away so many times, but the police kept bringing me back... every time. I begged them to take me. To take me anywhere. A foster home... a group home... an orphanage... to my father. You name it, I'd go. I was just so freakin' scared. But just like the rest of the times they sent me right back home. Right back in my tormentor possession. I never had a close relationship with my biological mom. Never even knew her, really. My father was all I really had – well, the glimpses and pieces I had of him. I'm not entirely sure what happened to her but I knew she was never going to be there for me.

Every time I asked my father about her, his face would morph into a daze of some sort, a trance, and he would never be able to answer the question, physically. Like he lost access of his mouth. "Why do you think he did that?" Dr. Sykes voice ripped me from my story telling. "I'm not sure," I shrugged; I didn't want to find out either. "I was terrified to tell my dad what happened because



Allison--that was her name-- she told me not to, but I shouldn't have been. He would've gotten that situation dealt with so fast. He always told me, "Whenever something is happening, don't be afraid to tell me. I will be here to actually get it done." I never told him, never told him free willingly. Instead of informing my dad of the occurrences when he finally came home from a trip, he confronted me in suspicion of abuse... the very first thing he told me was that it was okay for me to tell him anything and that I was safe. As a young kid I was confused and uncomfortable more than anything. I confessed, but ultimately I told him, I told the man that should've been my role model. He let me know that the way she was treating me was wrong. He didn't freak out in front me even though I saw it across his face. He was livid. I always questioned why not as a kid. But, now I realize that if he freaked out in front of me, the panic would've pushed my emotional state into something a lot darker. I almost have more vivid memories of my father fighting about the incidents than the actual abuse by that disgusting woman. Finally, he filed for a divorce. And even went as far as getting a restraining order from her. That was all fine and dandy, but I still feel a deep, profound inkling that it would be tough to get rid of. "That was quite a life Ms. Morales." He commented when he realized I wasn't offering anymore. He clasped his hand together in the middle of his desk giving me a pointed look.

"What do you think her motive to hurting you was?" he asked silently. "She told me I reminded her of my father," I blurted out before I could stop myself. I opened my mouth to add to that comment but closed it. Wanting me to finish, he

gave me a nod of encouragement to complete what I was saying and that was all I needed. "No, that wasn't the answer at all -- it's because she was sick as hell.

She would have done it to any kid that wasn't hers. That was how those types of people work." I finished with so much conviction. After our session, Dr. Sykes guided me to the first floor, bade me farewell and we parted ways. I exited the building from one of the spiraling doors. The building was a composition that looked modern – made of glass and metal. I looked back at the tall building and saw it in a different light. I saw the tinted glass of green, and blue. Outside the main offices of Consolidated Enterprises Inc. It made me feel so tiny & insignificant – like there were much bigger problems in the world other than my own. I walked a ways away from the building, dodging the tourist and usuals from the crowded area to find the parking spot where my boyfriend parked two hours ago. I walked for quite a few minutes but there was no such luck in finding it.

Earlier, when I was walking towards the building, I felt as if the time couldn't come sooner, yet, now I feel the exact opposite. Perhaps it was because I was delaying the inevitable of going to the appointment. Good thing I actually went. I made an attempt to lift my spirits and now I feel somewhat better than I did going in. Tired of not seeing my boyfriend's car, I nearly took out my phone to call and find about his whereabouts, but I soon spotted the car in the same place he left it.

He never moved from that spot, waiting for me all morning. As soon as I came into view, Jaden dropped his phone before scrambling clumsily out of the

driver's seat of his dark gray sports car and rushed until he was right in front of me, thrilled to see how I was doing, I presume. "How are you feeling?" the blond asked, biting the corner of his lip and wringing his hands, nervous for my answer.

I barely felt the pulsating beat of irrepressible anxiety in my chest, felt no relentless tattoos of my heart that matched my shallow, raspy breaths with intense accuracy. It felt good, lifting in way. Before, I felt that life may overwhelm me, yet all I feel now was relief. Eyeing the familiar face of my boyfriend, I engrossed myself in pure contentment; the pressure that had crushed my body hours before had finally relinquished its vice-like grip, dissolving my fears like fireworks erupting into the crisp air of the dark of the night. For now, I was safe.

"Relieved," I answered earnestly.