

THE ORPHAN

"Iris wake up, you have to go help at the orphanage." I opened my sleepy eyes as the world around me came into focus. My sister leant over my bed, her striking green eyes staring into my own brown ones. "Morning, Annette." I said, as I climbed off my hard mattress and planted my feet on the cold stone floor. "Father needs me to help him mark his student's essays. I'll be back in a second." Annette turned around and ran daintily out of the room, a trail of red hair following behind her. "Happy anniversary mother," I whisper.

5 years ago, when I was 11 and Annette was 7, our mother fell ill. We didn't know what it was: that was too *'grown up for children such as us to understand'*. We thought a little bed rest would cure it but ... we were very, very wrong; nothing would cure this disease. I can remember just how cold her hand was as she held us as if we were her lifeline. I can remember her face, the blood trickling from her mouth, her dulling green eyes, teary and hopeful, and her face, as white as a ghost. "You both are the most precious things I have ever known. Don't forget that. Iris, do not let anything compromise your kindness and determination. Help those less fortunate than yourself. Promise me that," she whispered hoarsely. "I promise, Ma." I replied tearfully.

"And Annette, don't underestimate yourself. You are the wittiest little thing I've ever seen. You remember that, for me."

"I will. I will, Ma." And we sat there as Ma was relieved from the pain of living.

5 years later I still feel a sharp jab of pain as I think of her, especially today, her death anniversary. I decided to make her proud by volunteering at the orphanage in town.

I head out the door and walk along the hot, cracked pavement all the way to the orphanage. When I arrive I look up at the tall building above me. It was a dazzling day; the sky was blue and not a single cloud dotted it. The sun reflected off the crystal clear water on the nearby bay and everyone

was smiling, but the building seemed to make the town look dull and the tall fence covering it suggested society had attacked the orphans once. Or the other way round.

I walked in and the same stench that came from mother's corpse pervaded my nose. A red liquid I was hoping wasn't blood spread across the floor along with deflated teddy bears, headless barbies and torn raggedy Annes. I could hear a silent sobbing coming from the bedrooms and decided to investigate. '*Why is no adult here?*' I thought.

When I opened the bedroom door I was confronted by a girl lying wounded on her bed, tears streaming down her face as the blood drained from her twitching body. "She stabbed me," she whispered.

"Who?" I asked.

"The girl who's about to stab you." I turned too late. My sister's knife pierced my skull and I fell to the floor.