

No. 17

Infliction

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(Junior Category)

Bang.

All of a sudden my dreams evaporated and my mind is racing ahead without me being aware. Every where is spinning and it takes me a while to connect the dots and acknowledge that I'm screaming. Screaming, wait, what's happening? It's then that I realise it's not just my screams that can be heard but those of my sister's as well. We're still spinning and it's hard for me to keep my head still and focus on my spinning whereabouts. Swansea, that's right we were driving down to Swansea to see Nana.

My mind flashbacks to when we were in the car, approaching Birmingham, and I glance at my sister and note how proud I am of her, how she's very special to me and how if anything hurt her I don't know what I'd do. She's so engrossed in choosing the next song; her eyebrows are pulled close together, in thought. Hmm, I hope she doesn't choose Teenage Dream next, that's my next choice. Funny isn't it, when I thought that, her eyebrows resumed their natural position and she puts the phone down just as the opening instrumental starts for Teenage Dream. Sods Law.

My head, I can't seem to control it - the spinning, so forceful and brutal, is that right, brutal? Oh, I can't move properly, my chest feels squashed - it's so nerve-racking. The belt... if... I... could... just move... this... belt... and... release...[sigh] it's no good my fingers can't seem to prize the belt away from me. I hold my breath as I feel the car start to relax like it is after a storm when everything around you seems suddenly peaceful. The screaming died down a while ago and

momentarily I feel like I should drift slowly back into my sleep and resume my dream. However, this thought is soon ruled out when I hear another bang, a quieter one but still a bang and my animal instincts kick back into gear again. Unconsciously I can feel that my dad has gotten out of the car as his absence in the seat in front of me is no longer there.

I struggle - trying to unplug my belt - but somehow I find myself pushing my door shut. I look at the car without properly seeing it and before I know it there's a woman right by me, supporting me and guiding me to the pavement where she sits me down; all the while talking to me, I end up agreeing to what she says.

I'm in a haze and I feel completely oblivious, or is it confusion, to the reality of what has happened, for now. Slowly, my senses are returning and I'm looking around as if searching for something, or someone. It soon dawns on me that someone else is beside me, my sister, oh thanks goodness! All of a sudden I feel relief without knowing what I'm relieved about and I turn my head in search for someone else, my mum she's right here too, but my search is soon stopped when I hear a cry of pain. I fling my head around and rest my eyes on the source of it. Oh no. Worry, anxiousness, fear, protectiveness and guilt build up inside me when my sister cries out.

"My neck, owww, my neck"

I look at the woman and realise what she's saying for the first time, she's trying to huddle us together under a blanket; to keep us

warm for we are shaking frantically. Before I know what I'm doing I almost snarl;

“Stop it, can't you see she's in pain”

I think the worst of the situation, naturally, as my common sense has evaporated and I seem to have a troubled hole inside of me. I can see mum knelt in front of us with such a worried and scared look on her face; one I've never seen before and I somehow I know, can feel, it's bad - whatever it is.

I look back at my sister and see how she's tenderly supporting her neck with her hand, so small, so young looking.

It's now that I feel the harsh, sharpness of the cold for the first time, hear the sirens somewhere in the distance and know deep down that they're heading directly to us. Here, now, at this moment in time I realise I've been living my life like a fairytale in a book; I feel sick with myself. I have the first pinch of reality, as painful and hard as a boxer's punch to the nose. Dad, where's dad? I'm fully aware now that it was definitely him who the timid bang belonged to when he shut the car door - but where is he? He got out the car so I know he's alive, I hope he's safe. I turn my head vigorously from side to side, my eyes flying around everywhere in search of my dad and then I find him along with other people picking things up. Our things. He's safe and he's picking things up but why isn't he over here with us, with our family?

It's at this point when I find myself analysing the situation fully. I even find myself looking for more danger, danger? Why danger?

My animal instincts are taking over! I feel like a protective lioness circling my beloved ones; sniffing out unfamiliar smells, unwanted and unwelcome visitors.

My sister crying out in pain distracts me momentarily; I can feel myself shaking more vigorously as I continue on with my search. That's funny, I think as I notice our car - Berry - for the first time. I'm sure we weren't driving in that direction. Oh well. I dismiss it as quickly as I acknowledge it. Oh no, the bang... the bang... was the bang related to us? Oh, there's so much to take in! Let me think, yes, yes it was! That's why we were spinning - it has to be; so many thoughts whizzing through my brain, I feel so dysfunctional.

Suddenly I understand. Tears. Tears which can't quite seem to form, no matter how much I try to cry - my body just won't let me. Instead, I find myself raising my hand over my mouth. Thoughts, which were once like lightning, passing so fast through my head stopped. It all becomes clear. A car was responsible for: that bang, the spinning, the screaming... everything. We've been in a car accident! Guilt seems to slowly, silently and sneakily creep through my body as I acknowledge the fact that I never took the chance to see how my family were doing, I was too focused on myself and I, I, I forgot about them. I turn towards my mum and sister; still wanting to cry but not being allowed to.

"Sorry, I'm so, so sorry" I whisper, it's all I can manage. I look at my sister and see the look of pain spread across her face. It's killing me inside. Looking at my mum I want to say a thousand words but

again I'm not allowed to; instead I give my mother a peak into everything that's going on inside my head - I hope this accounts for everything I want to say.

Turning away, I notice our car being pulled away. Something's not right about it: the back left wheel is horizontal, not vertical, the boot is up, my sister's door is crinkled and there's a dent, a humongous dent - the bang, that's why our car is like that. The sirens are becoming louder; they should be almost here. It's dark, really dark, and quiet - no cars are about just people; who are picking up our things.

The woman, again, tries to bring us together, closer, but I notice pain in my right shoulder for the first time. I restrain from the gesture and exclaim to my mother the pain I am feeling. Nothing to my sister's but still there. My mother only looks pained in what she's witnessing. My dad, I can't tell; he's too far away.

Suddenly, a man; who looks quite threatening, started to shout. His words I tried to concentrate on but I was still seeking for potential danger. However, I caught; 'black car', 'speeding at 50mph', 'drunk driver', 'driving the wrong way', 'saw what happened', 'hit taxi too', 'carried on driving', 'ran after him and knocked his lights out'. Something about him being an amateur boxer. I was confused. His information was circling in my brain like a record. One thing I'm certain of is that he's describing who had hit us, what had happened. I'm glad and thankful to him for stopping the man from getting away. That's something at least. The man's all wound up, swearing and

everything. I feel reassured with myself that there are some people in the world who still care about others; like this man. You can never judge a book by its cover.

I can hear the siren's now, louder than ever, my ears can't take it - it's too loud. I can see the blue, so bright. One, two and three: two ambulances and one police car. The woman is talking again, this time to a paramedic. He's asking my mum questions and mum's answering for sis. Then, he turns towards me and I find it hard to focus on the words his mouth is making. However, finally, my body allows me to answer, to talk properly. Before, I know it he's helping me up and telling me to go into the ambulance. The boxer helps me to walk over - I'm shaking too much to walk on my own - and he helps me up the steps. I forget to thank him - too overcome to think properly. I feel even more guilt rush over me. Soon after my mum and sister join me; but not my dad, where's dad?

However, another paramedic helps me down the ambulance and into the other one. I find my dad already sat down. For the first time in hours I ask my dad if he's okay, if anything's hurt. After a zillion questions from the paramedics and the police men, we finally set off for the hospital. Not Singleton, where I thought, but Moriston. On the drive to the hospital I'm left to render the happenings of the night. I find myself relating this night's episode to a fairytale storybook. My fairytale isn't like one in most books about finding a prince, becoming a princess and living in a castle. A traditional fairytale would be nice but the reality of it isn't worth the dreaming. Instead, I have a more

modern fairytale: for my family to be well and safe. Also, I will fight for justice over what that man did to us, not revenge - for that won't do any good, just justice.

The End