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Sugar Cookies

I squirmed uncomfortably as I sat down on the cold metal chair. My mother shot me a stern glance, as I continued to squirm.

“Stop moving!”

I stopped moving as the auditorium stage lit up. Then I watched as my sister confidently walked across the stage, holding a piece of paper in her right hand. I watched as she firmly placed her hand on the podium. She opened her mouth and began speaking. Her mellifluous voice filling the quiet auditorium and captivating those who heard her. Even though she probably couldn't see me specifically, it felt like she was staring right at me. As she finished her last word, the audience erupted in thundering applause. The girl walked off the stage and returned to her seat, and a man walked up on the stage replacing her.

“Thank you for joining us, as we celebrate those who graduate today.” He continued his introduction, and I sat still listening.

When it ended, loud applause followed, as the applause died down, everyone began to scramble and find their loved ones.

“Great job, Lorina!” My mother said as she strode over. “Your speech was amazing! I'm sure everyone would agree.” Lorina smiled as my mother complimented her hard work.

“What do you think, Willow?” Lorina asked.

“It was good.”

“Is that so? I'm glad.”

I tilted my head and looked at my sister. Smiling as she thanked those who congratulated her as we made our way out of the auditorium. That day, I decided I wanted to be just like her.

“Willow...” I groggily opened my eyes to my older sister waving her slender hand in front of me. I smiled and replied, “Sorry, I fell asleep.”

“It’s fine, I was just thinking of making some sugar cookies for us to enjoy! Would you care to help me?”

I nodded. This was just like my sister, she was selfless, kind, and intelligent. An ideal person.

“Hey, Lorina,” I said as I watched her combine vanilla extract and eggs in a bowl. “You know, these cookies remind me of you.”

“Because they’re my favorite?” She replied.

“No, because they’re perfectly made and molded.” I received no response, but when I looked at her I got my response. I saw a deep regret present in her, something that I never saw in my dear sister. I decided to ignore it and continued whisking the bowl she gave me.

As we finished with the dough, Lorina brought out the metal cookie cutters and began pressing it deep into the dough. She raised the cutter and revealed a star-shaped piece of dough with perfectly clean cuts. By the time we finished, we had sixteen identical stars.

“Aren’t they pretty?” I said. My sister said nothing but smiled in response.

When the cookies were finished, we placed them nicely on a tray and presented them to our mother. The 3 of us sat together and indulged in the cookies. I was so happy that day, I forgot about the melancholy present in Lorina’s eyes.

As autumn transitioned to winter, so did Lorina. The hours she once spent studying and cleaning, were now spent laying in her bed. I watched as the energy drained out of her, I watched as she became lethargic, I watched as she disregarded everything, but I did not know what to do. Mother scrambled to help her, but nothing changed. Our efforts didn’t show any results. The evenings we spent together as a family now turned to just me and my mother. Day by day, we sat silently at dinner, we did not mention anything. We pretended as if everything was okay. The miasma over our home grew heavier and heavier. Then winter became spring, and spring became summer. Each day more and more monotone.

I sat down at the table and began picking at my food. Even without looking at my mother, I could tell she wanted to say something, but she kept hesitating.

“Willow.” She started. “I took Lorina to the doctor today.” I knew what was coming next, and I didn’t want to hear it.

“I’m full, please excuse me.” I abruptly stood up and left the table. Leaving the table, I heard my mother whisper to herself in a wavering voice, “The doctor says she is suffering from clinical depression.”

Never would I have thought the girl that smiled so brightly, that was so caring, and intelligent would change in such little time. At first, I felt anger towards her. Why did she let this happen to her? How did this happen? But even if I punched a hole in the wall, she wouldn’t change just like that. So when I walked by Lorina’s room that night, I whispered gently “I don’t think I want to be like you anymore. Now I think I have to be stronger than you.”

I came home to an empty house. No one was in sight, not Lorina, not my mother. I frantically took out my phone and called my mother. After three rings, she picked up.

“Come to the hospital.” was the only thing she said before hanging up. These four simple words gave me a sort of fear I have never experienced before. I dropped my backpack and took the first bus I could to the hospital. As I entered the hospital room, I saw my mother with her eyes swollen. I closed my eyes and prayed. For everything to be alright, for everyone to be fine, for everything to go back to normal, but it didn’t.

Today the sky was almost as dark as my clothes. The sound of pouring rain echoed among the walls of the church mixed with the sounds of people weeping and sobbing. I walked up and placed a white flower next to her. I gently whispered “Thank you for being my sister.” I took one last look at her, and turned away.

Tonight, I made Lorina's favorite cookies with my mother. But this time we didn’t press the cookie cutters into the dough, because the cookies shouldn’t have to fit one mold. When we finished, I took one, closed my eyes, and bit into it. For the first time, I think I realized how similar this sugar cookie and Lorina truly were. Perfectly shaped and molded to society, but we all want to have the best cookies first.

