

The Sanity

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By : Antonio Rivera

Another short story about a boy who loses his sanity due to a terrible night.



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They tell me that Iâ€™ve lost my mind. And at first thought, Iâ€™m surprised. Then I take a minute (by this time, theyâ€™re staring at me; wondering why Iâ€™m in silence) to collect my thoughts. When I do, I fill my face with wrinkles and smile. Then, to capture the last word I retort and simply say: â€œHow could I have lost my mind, if I never had it to begin with?â€

Oh you should see how they look at me after that ha! Itâ€™s almost as if I didnâ€™t even say it; their eyes bulge out of the sockets as they question what theyâ€™ve just heard. Being a mystery is fun.

I have delicately led myself to believe that Iâ€™m no longer sane. Maybe when I wore diapers, and bottles were given to me; maybe at that time I was normal. Now skip ahead several years later, around the age of ten; that is when I realized that I was meant to stand out. I was isolated in elementary school. Not a lot of kids want to converse with the boy who sat in the corner and buckled his knees to his chin. No one paid attention to me. The teacher was a nice woman; sheâ€™d often allow me to stay there for the duration of the period, then come over and talk to me individually.

â€œEllis, why arenâ€™t you sitting with all of the other kids?â€

Iâ€™d keep my eyes low, and my voice lower: â€œBecause they donâ€™t like me.â€

â€œOh nonsense, theyâ€™re nice. Just like you.â€

Remember how when you were young, every adult seemed to attach a smile to every sentence they spoke? Like it was some sort of access to comfortability. I hated that.

â€œThey arenâ€™t nice,â€ I remember saying, â€œthey all make fun of me.â€

â€œHoney Iâ€™m sure theyâ€™re just kidding,â€ again with that fucking smile.

I recall unconsciously grabbing a pair of scissors from the floor next to where we kept our things. She continued to display her teeth as I spun the circular part of the scissors around my finger.

â€œNow Ellis, you put those down. You wouldnâ€™t want to hurt someone, would you?â€

Of course I would. â€œNo,â€ I said.

â€œGive them to me please.â€

This is where it gets exciting. She was so close to my face that I could smell the apricot evaporating from her lips. I firmly grasped the scissors and thought about giving them to her, honestly. But for some reason, and a sure sign that I was an unusual kid, I struck her in the throat. With the scissors of course.

Following my act, I received information while I sat in the principalâ€™s office that my teacher was fine. After all, they were safety scissors, so the nurse walked in and reported that she had minor bleeding and a small puncture. But the crime was heinous nonetheless. The principal looked at me as if I were Damien; with his eyes locked onto me as he got a hold of my mother on the phone. It only takes common sense to assume what happened to me next. I was suspended from my school and highly considered for mental therapy. My mother explained to me in the car that it was all to help me get better; my father didnâ€™t acknowledge that I even had a problem.

â€œEllis, now I know this sounds bad; but this man is going to help you get better.â€

â€œBut there isnâ€™t anything wrong with me mom. It was an accident I swear.

I was a compulsive liar; even as a child.

â€œI believe you.â€

â€œBullshit,â€ Dad interrupted.

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â James, donâ t curse in front of him and make it seem like youâ re mad at him.â

â I am though. Why would I lie like you just did Sam?â

I thought I was the focus of this conversation?

â I didnâ t lie. I know my son. He wouldnâ t do something like that on purpose.â

James mumbled under his breath as Sam continued to drive. Why do I call them by their first names? I find it less homely. See, normal children call their parents by the proper titles. I wasnâ t normal, therefore my views of my parents were also abnormal. We pulled up in front of the doctors home. Usually a doctor works alongside other doctors and people with similar professions; this doctor however, had his own house and operated from it. Sam and James quickly exited the car as I waited inside. The house was jejune, with an attempt to stand out by having a large blue sign aside it with the doctors name.

â Ellis, come on honey. Weâ re already late.â

I obeyed her and stepped out of the car. James was already on the steps; eagerly waiting for this all to end so he could get back home. The doctor muffled the shades of his windows and quickly ran to the door as if we were the first visitors heâ s ever had during his time of isolation.

â The Hayward family I presume?â

James was polite to any man who earned more money than him.

â Hello sir, thatâ s us,â he smiled.

My mother smiled too, but it was one of small, judicious attraction. The doctor was very charismatic with his gestures and words. When he shook Jamesâ hand, that was simply it. When he shook Samâ s hand, he placed the other hand on the small of her back. I noticed those little details as a child because I did not know what they meant, so they peaked my interest.

We entered his warm home and uncomfortably made our way into his family room, though he had no family living there with him.

â Can I get you guys anything to drink, eat? Anything at all?â

James shook his head with a frown as he admired the decorations inside of the doctors home.

â Iâ d like whatever you have,â Sam stuttered, â I mean, whatever you have to eat or drink.â
Nice one.

I could see that as James focused on the deer heads mounted onto the wall, Sam was taking advantage of the comely doctor. I think he knew it too.

â Coming right up.â

Shortly after he fetched Sam a few small things to eat and a glass of water, he finally acknowledged me. It took so long, even though I was the only reason that we were there in the first place.

â Alright,â he clapped his hands together, â whatâ s your name buddy?â

â Ellis.â

â Hello Ellis, Iâ m Dr. Sempston. You can call me Dr. S if you want.â

â Okay.â

â You donâ t have to be afraid to talk to him honey.â

â Itâ s okay uh-,â Dr. S paused.

â Oh,â she laughed, â Sam sorry.â

â Sam,â he rewarded her laughter with his bright teeth, â let him open up to me. Letâ s not force anything.â

Things began to feel peculiar, I remember. I felt more insane being tended to than I did when I was left alone. This doctor was concerned with Sam though. She was meretricious and at that age, I mistook it for kindness. James was too incoherent to notice. Maybe he had someone on the side to wither those jealous feelings away.

â These fresh bucks you got hanging up here?â

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â Theyâ re actually about a year old. You like hunting?â

James didnâ t really like hunting, but he liked people with money, so he lied.

â Hell, I go hunting every year,â he cackled.

â Well Iâ ve got a grizzly pelt in the backroom. Along with some pictures and a few rifles. My own little gallery if you will.â

â You canâ t say all that and expect me to resist goinâ in there.â

â Go ahead. My focus is on Ellis, so you can excuse yourself.â

So now James had been eliminated from the equation. Who left next?

â Ellis, sorry for that delay. I really want to get to know you,â he shifted his eyes to Sam, â and your mother.â

It was a bold move; for him to say that. It was like a risky chess move. He didnâ t know the outcome of his words, but he said them anyway. Sam blushed profusely with a few beads of sweat growing from her hairline.

â Weâ ll all get to know each other just fine I bet.â

I looked at her after she said that. It was becoming clearer that the concern was no longer directed towards me, no.

â I have some neat things set up in the next room over. A video game system that my son left here.â

I was already verbally estranged, so I walked into the next room without even excusing myself. So you may think that I set up a situation. An by that assumption, youâ d be correct. I was nefarious at such a young age. I left that room, just to see what Dr. S would do since he had Sam alone. The room was directly next to his family room, so I could still hear every word very clearly. They kept their words low, but still audible enough for me to hear. James wouldnâ t come back anytime soon, so they assumed that their time was extended.

â When you called, I didnâ t think that such a beautiful voice would measure up to how you look. Boy was I wrong.â

â Doctor,â she inhaled, â Iâ m here because of Ellis you know.â

â Oh I know sweetie. Heâ ll be taken care of too. But in all honesty, I canâ t help but notice how little attention your husband pays to you.â

â Heâ s just angry about Ellis.â

I shifted the weight of my body onto my other leg since my supporting leg was growing tired. I kept my head leaned up against the wall and continued to listen silently.

â I understand. Listen, how about we talk about Ellis in private. You can tell me more, so I can get a better understanding.â

â But we arenâ t in private. Heâ s in the next room, and Jamesâ ll be back soon.â

â Perhaps you could stop by tonight?â

Iâ m not making this up I swear. Iâ ve never met someone so blunt and straightforward as he was. But still, Sam seemed to like that aggressive approach.

â Tonight? Here?â

â Just come by after everyone is sleeping. Weâ ll talk.â

â Okay then.â

Did I hear what I think I just- did she accept his suggestion? Thatâ s it? Several minutes of conversation after seeing each other for the first time and sex is already arranged? Pardon me, Iâ m skipping ahead in my story. At the time, I didnâ t know that their conversation meant sex. Iâ d find that out later.

We drove home that night and occupied a terrible silence by playing music over the radio. When we reached our home, James went directly to the refrigerator and grabbed himself a beer. Sam went into their room and locked the door for some reason. I also went to my room. As a young boy, my thoughts were very guileless. They developed as well as they could, then were broken down and stripped of interest. But tonight was different. I was-excited you could say. See, Sam was up to something. I wanted to find out so badly; it was preventing me from sleeping that night. Curiosity was eating me alive and I would not rest until I found out what they were up to.

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The clock struck twelve and the house was completely silent. I awaited for the slightest noise; that would be my cue. It happened a half hour after twelve, but that didn't matter. I wasn't tired, nor was I uninterested. Their room door ached open and footsteps covered with sweat crept along the hallway. I followed close after her as she grabbed her car keys and walked outside. I was very small and sneaky at the time. I timed when she opened her door; I opened mine. And when she quietly closed hers, I closed mine. Of course, my stomach was flustered because I was nervous. If I had been caught, things would've become difficult for Sam to explain. That would've been interesting.

We drove to his house as I expected and as they had planned. She slipped out of the car as did I. It was like I was attached to her, but also bound to shadows. Thinking back on it, I pulled it off so well. The lights were on in his home, so I knew that he was awake and waiting. She placed her knuckles on his door, but he was so eager to see her. He saw her pull up, and he counted the footsteps as she approached the door.

“You're here,” he spoke lowly.

“I am. You seemed to think this was a good idea.”

“It will be,” he smiled mendaciously.

Now, as I said, I was one with the shadows. But his home was lit so waltzing in wasn't an option. Getting in would be the hardest part, I thought. I went to the back of his house in hopes that he'd have a window open or something. My nose picked up a trail of ashes and smoke. It was dark, but I could see a cigarette just put out resting in an ashtray. That meant that he was just out here while he waited for Sam. I hopped over the railing that protected his back door and noticed that the door was ajar. He must've heard the car and ran inside; this was good for me. Bad for them.

I slipped in and found myself in the “hunting room” that James found himself in earlier. I could smell his cologne still, not that it was important. I crouched low and sneaked around the dark places in his home. I heard their laughter from the other room that we were in before.

“You drink?”

“On occasions,” she replied.

Yeah right. Every night, there's another empty bottle in the recycling bin. And James only drinks beer.

“I'd say this is an occasion, wouldn't you?”

“I would.”

I remained in the kitchen as they conversed insidiously. It wasn't long before Sam consumed countless drinks and they were on the stairs heading upward.

“Lightweight?” Dr. S joked.

“Psh, baby I drink everyday. This isn't the first time I've been drunk,” she replied as she tumbled up the steps with her arms around him. I remained incognito, but my curiosity was peaking. It was bad enough that she came here alone. Now they were going upstairs? The ending to that scenario wouldn't be appropriate; I knew that even at such a young age. Their voices became muffled as they travelled further upstairs. I followed close by. Honestly, they were so concerned with each other, I could make as much noise as I wanted. But being secretive was exciting, so I remained on my hands and knees. It was dark in the hallway that I occupied. The only light that accompanied me was the one coming from his room. I could see their shadows dancing as he helped her onto the bed.

“Just lay down,” he insisted.

“I really shouldn't be-this bed is so soft,” she hiccuped.

“It is, isn't it? Enjoy it.”

Since the hallway was so dark, I crawled up closely beside the door so that I could hear everything.

“I'll take care of you like your husband never could,” he whispered.

I thought she'd push him off, or insult him at least. But the alcohol had run its course. And she was taken by it.

“Oh please do. I want this so bad. Just do it.”

“A little foreplay goes a long way Sam. Relax.”

I had known no such words; no such feelings expressed through heavy heaves of air. But that night I became very familiar with all of it. I wasn't scarred, no, not yet. My head began to hurt and my fingers cringed. I was angry. Though James paid little attention to me, he was still my father and this-this bitch was

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deceiving him. Could I let her act slip through my fingers? I'll allow you to answer that.

They moaned excessively as I walked back to the kitchen. For a moment, I thought about leaving; but where would I go? The car was my only way back, and I could not operate it nor could I call for someone to escort me home. So I would stay. I would endure her calling out his name, and his constant asking if I felt good countless times as if the answer would change. My teeth scraped against themselves as an unknown anger grew inside of me. My tolerance for such immoral behavior was growing thin. Very thin. I paced back and forth in the kitchen as I contemplated my solution to this. Their behavior was unacceptable; so what I did next was completely understandable. In my opinion. I was never compelled to harm someone. In fact, stabbing my teacher was my first offense. Tonight, I would commit my second. My adrenaline was continual and extreme. I never felt such nervousness and anger mixed into one feeling.

Dr. S had a bundle of knives beside his sink. My first response to seeing them: Why does he need so many knives? My second response: Exactly what I need. I didn't bother finding the most malicious or barbaric knife, thought they were available. I simply grabbed one long enough to impale someone deeply. Unlike before, I walked up the stairs without concern for my secrecy. They were still mixing fluids when I reached the door. I stood at the crack of it and watched as their skin rubbed against each other and as they connected in most intimate way possible.

Does it feel good? He asked with his breath unattainable.

Yes, oh God yes, she replied loudly.

My hands shook, I remember that. The anger, though, was outweighing the nervousness. I pushed open the door, but I remained unnoticed because they faced the opposite direction. He pushed himself into her so belligerently; it disgusted me. I could see his back shine from the immense sweat that they had built up with their actions. I couldn't see Sam though; he covered her completely. My feet led me to end of his bed. I was so close now. I could smell the body odor, and the pure snuff of two people becoming one. It was a terrible scent that I'll not soon forget. The knife stopped shaking between my fingers. It was steady there while I watched.

Does it feel good? You like that? He asked.

And that was it. I grew so inexplicably frustrated at the question, and before I knew it, my face and chest were covered in bright red. His body slouched over Sam as she screamed beneath it. She attempted to push him off, but his dead weight was too much for her. She edged her head out from his neck and saw me standing there with my tremulous hands.

Ell-Ellis? That can't be you. Ellis! What the fuck did you just do? She screamed. I would've rid of her too, but I loved her. I hated what she did, but I did love my mother. Now, the realization that I had just killed a man settled into me.

And that night, I lost the sanity that I would never have again.

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