

## Father

My father protected this town twice as long as I been alive. I plan to be the same. That's what I wanted to tell the new sheriff of the town, the one that replaced Papa. I planned out the whole interview in my head. I wanted to pace around the old plain white room with rugged gray carpet floors. I sat on the chair, one which seemed designed to try and give me chronic back problems. I heard chattering about paperwork, investigations, and people would come in to give their reports of My eyes are sunk and I feel the years like tears running down my face. I fidget with my hands tugging and twisting my fingers upon each other. My breath is lost, and I find it. I stop and listen to my heartbeat. It is quick yet soft, like the rabbit that my father and I used to shoot.

I closed my eyes but instead of imagining my interview and how it would go I'd imagine seeing my father.

It was peculiar, I usually see him outside of our home, not the rundown one me and mom live in but a new one with him. It would be the middle of the night and I'd sit down next to him. I'd lay my head on his shoulder and he'd place a hand around me. His warmth and love would be all the love he never got to give me, poured into one act of love and dedication.

Instead, this vision was one against my will. Against what I wanted.

It wasn't night, nor was it day. I couldn't tell at least. It was foggy, and as far as I saw it was a single path on grassy fields. I attempted to walk it. No matter how far I went, even as the setting changed, the time did not. I thought I was moving, but it didn't feel like the world was.

I don't know why, what made me do so in the vision, but I walked off the path. Instead of finding my father from this created expected path I came to find him out when I could no longer see the path. The fog was engulfing even harder, winds blew hard with rain and thick weather brushing against my hair and face. I am wearing enough clothes to sustain my warmth. These aren't old puffy jackets mama gave me but my own, and own alone.

My dad was digging.

I come clean to the point, the first question which comes to my mind and which I will with my words. I ask the man I have so many questions for the most basic one:

"How are you?"

"Digging."

"Diggin ain't a state of being that's an action," I tell him, feeling my accent come through as soon as his own hits me.

"Well I'm doin quite fine, not livin but i'd argue it's better than life."

"Town's a mess, I wanna do what you did," I say as happy as I could pretend.

"Are ya now? You think that you really wanan?"

"I have to, for ya."

"Like I care."

"Xcuse me?"

"I'm dead," He said plainly, "You expect me to tell you to do something with a thing I won't eva have eva? You do what you want-"

"This is-"

"I disagree."

"It's true. Live, don't go through life."

"But-"

"For...for me?"

"..."

I could not speak anymore, what else could I say.

I woke up again, I looked around with a refreshed vision. I stood up and slid out the door as soon as I could, no word to the front desk or to the interviewer.

I ran back home, rushing on my legs attempting to not trip myself as I walked through the forest back home, I stormed home and without speaking to nobody I stayed in my room.

I stayed for days upon days, only eating what I could from random lost snacks in my room. I think without responding to those in the outside world.

It takes almost a month for me to come out from there. I never saw the sheriff or anyone similar, not in the context of wanting to talk to them. Instead I thought of and did things I never thought I'd do. Stupid young people stuff. Childish sure, but my father would have done the same. Running through the forest not to solve crime or stop a bad guy, but for the fun, the adrenaline, and love.