

## Untitled

She sat idly tapping the glass top of her desk, whistling softly to herself in the quiet house. The only light was the small, dim desk lamp that sat above her head, mounted oddly onto the wall; one of Curt's wild ideas for maximizing as much space in the house as possible. Almost everything, including random tools, art supplies, paper reams, and other odds and ends were piled into plastic tubs, organized, labeled, and stacked *Tetris*-style in the basement by content and color of tub. She was fairly certain he had a form of OCD, which paired with his childhood diagnosis of ADHD meant a lot of arguments and unending need to do something that wasn't sitting idly in front of a computer screen, waiting for inspiration to come. But, he wasn't there then. Just her, a humming laptop fan, and the soft purrs of their cats as they slept under the table (the big orange one dubbed "King Fatty VIII" for his large belly and King Henry VIII mentality of superiority) and the other hidden somewhere in the surrounding shadows (the black one with the apt name "Ninja," since he had a weakness for jumping out nowhere and darting off just as fast before you even realized what happened), were the only other living things in the house. Unless you counted the fish, ("Fishy" like the little girl from *Finding Nemo*, braces slur and everything) but no ever really counted the fish. She never counted it either, but it was her roommate's anyway.

She drank from her bottle of Blueberry Lemonade Smirnoff, feeling the buzz of the alcohol slowly creep through her veins. It wasn't a usual thing for her to get drunk, especially with a deadline this close and nothing to show for it all, but she thought *The hell with it!* and cracked open the six pack nearly an hour ago. Now, here she was, idly sitting in front of her laptop, staring at the blank Word document. The pure whiteness of the page seemed to mock her in her increasingly tipsy state, as if her computer was laughing at her for having

writer's block this late in the game. *It's not my fault!* she shouted in her head, sighing on the outside. At this point on her contract, she was supposed to have nearly 200 pages ready and here she was, two days before her deadline and she had nothing. Nada. Zilch. Her agent was going to be mad; she was certain that the publishing company would be thinking twice about accepting her first fiction novel after only having two research based journal articles published since her graduation from university two years ago. They'll probably want the advance back. *Oh god, how am I going to pay them back? I've already spent most of that ten grand!* She bit her nails in nervousness, the first time in nearly three years. This was definitely a sign that she was totally and utterly screwed.

But not as screwed as she was when she woke in a drunken stupor nearly four hours later. Her dream was delightful and she was reluctant to leave it so soon, but the loud bang that shocked her awake ruined that. Desperately she tried to hold onto the fading images, the softening dialogues, and *Alice in Wonderland* backdrop, but it slipped through her mental fingers as another bang echoed in the empty house. She lifted her head from off the scorching keyboard, staring at the screen that now had nearly 200 pages of random letter combinations from her face lying on the plastic buttons for so long. She glared at the irony of the page numbers before deleting the whole mess and standing up. Looking around the dark living room, she didn't notice anything out of place, but she had a feeling Ninja had made another naughty attempt at knocking the trashcan over to riffle through for a sinful treat. "Dammit Ninja!" she roared, but as she rounded the corner into the dining room, Ninja yelped in pain and took off from underfoot into the back hallway to no doubt hide underneath their queen sized bed. He had been sleeping peaceful next to her the whole time, just as she had been only seconds before. She looked up towards the kitchen and sure enough, the trashcan was upright in the corner behind the curio cabinet as it had been since they had moved in almost a year ago. Quickly, she checked her and Curt's room, finding King Fatty curled up in a fur ball on the comforter, fast asleep. She checked their roommates', Kyle and Mandy's room, not seeing anything out of place. Scratching her head in confusion, she began to make her back to her desk when another, even louder bang issued from the garage. She stopped stock still, waiting for the sound to happen again. In her

drunken state, she was not completely sure if it was in the garage or if it was merely the old worn hardwood floor that settled harshly in winter, sometimes sounding like planks of plywood banging against each other. Her heart began to skip a little faster, suddenly going into hyper drive when she heard the noise again, which she was certain was not the floor boards. Quickly and silently, she swept back into the living room, grabbing her small silver boot knife, attached it to the inside of her pajama bottom waistband, and swiftly lifted Curt's battle ready sword from off its holder on the mantle above the fireplace. With a soft *scheenk*, she unsheathed the ancient weapon and, imitating Ninja, padded almost silently across the tile floor in the kitchen. Barely turning the doorknob, she verily melted into the shadows of the stairway that led down to the garage. Half concealing herself behind the dingy pink curtain that covered the window, she peeked into the dark garage, searching for a sign of an intruder. Her heart leapt when she saw the small dot of light, like a cheap cell phone flashlight app or a dying mini-flashlight you get at dollar stores or gas stations.

Quickly, she exited out of the side door, circling around from the backyard to come up level with the driveway. She could still see the small pinprick of light reflecting in the windows as she moved from shadow to shadow. Halting in front the main garage door, she quietly unlocked her passenger side door of her Honda Accord, reaching up and clicking the automatic door button. As the door whined and cackled across the rusting tracks, she barrel rolled underneath the rising door, landing in crouched position, sword out, searching. The garage door clanged to a stop and in the bright light from the mechanism, she slowly realized as she turned on the balls of her feet round in a circle that no one was there. No one in hiding in the empty shelves, no one crouched on the other side of Curt's (still) blown Isuzu, no one lurking behind the door that led to the house. Absolutely no one. She growled in irritation until embarrassment began to overflow her mind. Here she was, crouched in the middle of her half empty garage in the middle of the night, holding a sword in battle readiment, drunk to boot. Standing up, she shook her head and turned to shut the garage door and relock her car when she heard a shout from next door. There, in her large bay window that for some God awful reason faced the west-side of their house (which looked directly into her and Curt's room if the blinds were open), stood old Mrs. Carroway in her

bright pink bath robe, graying hair covered in curlers and holding a half empty bottle of vodka. She stopped, her face bleeding red from blushing as she guiltily waved, sliding the large sword behind her back in a sad attempt at hiding it. Mrs. Carroway stared for a few seconds before breaking out in a great grin and waving back, yelling “I see you’re having a nice winter break.” She chuckled heartily before disappearing farther into her house, no doubt to drown her own woes in strong spirits. In growing embarrassment, she hurriedly shut the garage door, locked her car, and trudged back into the house. On her way through, she grabbed another bottle and plopped down into her office chair. Twisting the cap off with a tad bit of drunken fumbling, she drank heavily from the glass container, hoping to forget the whole ordeal of paranoia. *Well, at least it was just Mrs. Carroway who saw me out there. If that had been someone else, they probably would have called the cops. Now that would be an interesting story to try to explain before being taken to the drunk tank for disorderly conduct.*

Suddenly, she had it. Chugging down the rest of the bottle (nearly gagging in the process from the burn of the mixed alcohols), she began to type furiously, her small fingers darting across the surface like a hummingbird darting from flower to flower. Her fingers were suddenly like the Flash, blurring almost into one image as she typed furiously into the early morning hours.

And nearly 4 more hours later, she lit a cigarette, preparing to read over what she had written so far, before clicking save and closing the program.

“My god, this is great! And nearly five hundred pages at that! That is way more than what we expected at this point in time. Absolutely fantastic! How is it that you came up with such a fantastic psychological thriller as complicated and original as this?” Her agent gestured over his large wooden desk. In all of his excitement, he nearly knocked his coffee mug and nameplate over twice (she giggled inwardly at the irony of his name “Dick Coffee”, since his was nearly in his lap that last time).

She merely shrugged, lightly tossing her black hair over her shoulder, nervously playing with the tassel on the overstuffed armchair she sat in. “It just came to me one night.” *Drunk off my ass*, she thought, but didn’t say. *I think I’ll keep that tidbit to myself and let him keep*

*thinking I'm the next Stephen King prodigy or something. Don't want the fantasy to be shattered.* She smiled to herself as Dick continued his praise, leaving her feeling slightly guilty and flattered as she stepped out into the bright sunlight of her new life as a fiction author, holding tightly to her new check. *And I think I know what to spend it on,* she giggled inside, gazing intently at the high end liquor store catty corner from the brick office building, a new idea for a new story already brewing in her mind.