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ENGW-102

30, November 2023

### Lake Superior

Yesterday, on October 21st, I celebrated my 21st birthday. The number 21 always stood out to me. Not only does it signify that I am now legally able to drink, but it also reminds me of my younger sister, Kiera. Gosh, that beautiful Kiera, gone way too soon.

The third week of October was slowly approaching. I could tell by the leaves departing from their homes, leaving an empty nest. Our mother, Claire, instructed us to have the driveway free of leaves in time for our family dinner. Family. Another word that sticks out to me like a rainbow after a rainy day. I wouldn't consider my mother family. Why? Because I blame her for the death of my sister.

It took our mother 21 minutes to finally get out of bed after screaming at her like a gruff drill sergeant. 21 times did my sister yell, "Help! Please! Anyone..." while slowly dissolving into the bitter, cold lake water. 21 seconds til I saw blood rise to the surface of the water that swallowed her whole.

The number 21 bothers me. And yesterday, on my 21st birthday, I was given another validating reason to hate both 21 and my mother.

“Coo-coo! Coo-coo!”

I was awakened by the sound of the screeching bird protruding from my wall. Usually birthdays should come with excitement, but this time, displeasure was seen exiting my body.

“Come on, Savannah! Time to get up bright and early so you can finally start your adulting duties,” Claire says while clanging pots and pans together. “And time for you to get the hell out of my house,” Claire whispers as she goes to wake up Kiera.

“Mom, why are you already being a pain this early in the morning?!” I say while rubbing the underage, dried up crust around my eyes. “Damn, I can’t even get a happy birt-”

“Happy Birthday, sissy!” Kiera screams while excitedly hopping onto my bed.

“Thanks love! At least someone cares.” I gently grab her by her waist and place her beside me. I give her a big, tight hug. A kind of hug that I can’t even receive from my own mother.

“What plans do you have for your birthday today?” asks Kiera.

“Well, I’m inviting a few of my coworkers together and we’re going to drink by Lake Superior and-”

“What?! That sounds so cool. Am I invited?” Kiera asks with puppy eyes.

“I wish, but no love. You know Lake Superior is home to their monthly ghost sightings.”

“Then why are YOU going sissy?”

“Because.. this is the first time mom is letting me do what I want, and I want to make this moment unforgettable. Now c’mon, let’s go change so we can help with the party decorations.”

I find myself pondering over the family picture that was taken of me and Kiera a few minutes after she was born. A small grin was forced out of me until a sudden ray of sunshine aligned perfectly on the photo where Kiera was. The photo dribbled on the table as I was curious to hear the conversation going on between my mom and sister.

“But mommy, I wanna go with sissy to Lake Superior!”

“Okay that’s fine, sweetie. And besides, those monthly sightings are only myths.” Claire pats Kiera on her back while pushing her away.

“Now go on and find something useful to do,” Claire says while placing a cigar in her mouth.

By the time 6 o’clock came about, the party was already jumping. One shot in, I was feeling fine. Dancing on my girlfriends and singing *Birthday Cake* by Rihanna. I took two more shots. Nothing happened. Two shots turned into three more shots. I started feeling a little tipsy. The ground seemed to move with every step I took.

“Chug! Chug! Chug!”

Why did I start to see two of everything? I could feel myself tumbling over everyone's foot, but I was still intact.

"C'mon peeps! Let's take this to the Lake!"

They all followed, but what I didn't notice was that Kiera was trailing behind.

We arrived at the Lake. The sun had disappeared and the clouds seemed to cover the only other source of light. It was me and 5 other people, plus my sister who none of us knew followed behind us. We were all laughs and giggles until we heard a branch snap in the distance.

"Guys... What was that noise?"

"Probably just a fallen twig." Billy reassured us.

We heard a noise again. This time it wasn't a twig, it was a loud whoosh.

"Um Savannah, I don't think this is a good idea, especially us being intoxicated." Sarah said while tears formed in her eyes. "What if the ghosts capture us?!"

"Girl, nothing is going to happen, okay? I've been here plenty of times without my mom knowing and nothing has happened yet."

We all move closer to the shore. We sat the bottles down and decided to play a game of *Truth or Dare*.

“Okay Billy, your turn. I dare you to run into the Lake and stay there for 5 seconds then run back out!”

“If you insist.” He shrugs and takes off his shoes and shirt. We watch as he runs bare-foot into the lake.

“See, it wasn’t that bad,” Billy says as he shakes his head to remove the water.

“Savannah, now I think YOU should run AND jump into the lake. Make sure you are fully submerged too!”

“Oh yea? Let’s make this a bet.” I say while looking at the almost-empty bottle. “If I can last 10 seconds under the water, you guys all have to take a shot!”

I start sprinting towards the water. As I was sprinting, I saw Kiera in the corner of my eye sprinting along with me. I scream to tell her to stop but she continues to jump in.

I turned back around towards my friends, but all that we heard afterwards was a loud whoosh. The Lake went quiet.