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## Forever Escaping Me

by Melody Bertucci

“The story of my childhood is a...is a complicated sentence, that I am always trying to finish. So, ok...for starters; as a kid, could I have had a “normal” childhood, when every eighteen to a maximum of twenty-four months, my parents would always make us move around?” I pause and try to think back.

“Oh, I don’t know...It’s a sentence that I am always trying to finish, I guess. But, I can’t quite complete because...well because I can’t remember properly. You know as any time I’d ever settle; we would then pick up and move on soon after. So, no...I can’t quite complete it or understand it. All I remember about my childhood, is all the moves!” I take a deep breath and focus on the variety of cracks the ceiling draws my eyes to.

Then just like that, I close my eyes. My breathing picks up. I feel my rib cage rise-up and down, faster and faster. My heart starts to race through my chest. Every beat feels like its gaining momentum. It’s trying to beat out of me. My heart is also trying to escape me, it’s trying to get away from me. Some place else. Some other place that’s not in here. In this sterile white room. A room that feels as though it’s walls are also judging me, trying to process me and figure me out.

“Errrrm!” He clears his throat, but the sound that I usually feel is loud, obnoxious and investigative, is now a faraway faint sound...or did I imagine it?

“Errrrm, where did you go?” His voice enquires. Oh, I’m not going that crazy. I don’t think. I don’t know. Perhaps I’m not hearing things that are not there. Maybe? Maybe not anymore.

“Errrrmm!” He clears his throat again. This time there’s meaning behind it. I must obey. Do as I’m told. Talk, But I am. I’m talking here, in this space. Fluidly. Can people not hear me? Am I not here? It feels lonely. Where am I wondering off to?

“Errmm! Huston to Spaceman, are we still here?” He says, oh so mighty condescendingly.

“Oh yeah...yes!” My eyes suddenly open wide in unison, in an instance. The instance of realisation, I am here, in this sterile, cold, judgemental room...with him!

“My childhood is a pretty cold memory of...no close friendships, no sibling to share it with, I may have as well have been an orphan, vagabond.” I continue, words are just escaping my body. Just like my heart is still trying to do.

“My parents were always busy on some work research. And me...well I was either at school or at home with the nanny. A home where the only family meals were held at Christmas or...or on my birthday. Those were the two exceptions!” I pause, my mind has now returned to those memories. My brain is reliving those few meals shared together. Talk. Back to the talking I remind myself.

“Fuck...you know... I don’t even know the dates of my parents’ birthdays. Neither of them were ever around to share it with, or if they were they would be doing research on their studies in their office.” I clear my throat.

“You do NOT, disturb if we are working in the office!” I say with a put-on stern dad voice.

“Yeah, my Dad made it pretty clear!” I finish off, but he persists.

“So, John, your childhood?” He’s asks. He’s doing his job well. He’s persistent. He wants to delve deeper. But I’m at my limit of sharing for this session. And my brain is too, clearly. It’s getting lost again in the small gathering of cracks on the ceiling. They are pulling me through. In the depth of the unknown, unidentified mysteries that reside within those cracks. He clears his throat. Come back in the room Spaceman. Jump monkey and go, I joke inwardly to myself.

So, from my lying down position on this cold, uncomfortable, harsh edged sofa, I bring my arms that had sunk at either side of my body, behind my head. I cross my legs and sink back into the harshness of reality. I close my eyes. I close those cracks. I close the hurt. My heart is still trying to work its way through my rib cage for its escape. As its race is once more making itself known to me, the hurt of this vital organ, works its getaway upwards towards my body, to my face and out of my eyes. Warm, salty droplets of emotion start to run down my face.

I take a deep breath in. I will not allow them to escape. Enough! I have the control to trap them within me, just like my many thoughts. No more tears!

I take a second-deep breath in, and through a plastered fake smile, I tell him what I know.

“So yeah...as you see...the story of my childhood, is a complicated sentence that I’m always trying to finish.”