

Mom notices something different about them. It might be something positive or negative, but it doesn't matter right now. Mom has to get to work.

Mom worries about it all day, while she folds the clothes onto the hangers at the dry cleaners. Because she knows it could be bad. Her boss yells at her to keep working. She tells her boss to fuck off, and leaves just minutes before her shift ends.

Mom drives home, and halfway to the white house with the red barn with peeling paint and rats, she decides to kill herself.

Mom usually pulls the Volvo from the mid-90s into the barn, so if it rains, the water doesn't get into the rust-holes in the roof. But not today. She tries to smile as Becca tells her she tested out of Algebra 1, but after that conversation ends, she goes outside on the porch with a pen and pad.

*Becca, I know this is selfish. Goodbye baby. I lied when you brought Connor home, he seems like a nice kid. I hope you stay together.*

*-Mom.*

Then she starts to look for rope. She walks to the garage, and finds some. She gets on a ladder and ties a square knot to a garage rafter. Sobbing, she ties a noose on the other. She has final thoughts of her daughter, and the boy she's "in love" with, and almost smiles, but then keeps crying, *Big girls don't cry*, she thinks. But she is.

Then she sees Becca underneath her, screaming at her to get the fuck off of that ladder. They talk for a while. Becca wins the argument, and Mom starts to take the noose off of her neck. But as she does, Mom stumbles. And falls off the ladder. Becca sees her mother fall off the ladder, and swing around the garage, bouncing off the walls. She never saw what was different about them. It wasn't good.

Becca screams. She can't believe what she just saw. She runs back to the house and screams to Dad that Mom is DEAD, Mom KILLED HERSELF. SHE WASN'T GOING TO, BUT SHE FELL OFF THE LADDER COMING DOWN. Dad stares at her, and realizes why she had been acting different. He slowly picks up the phone.

After the funeral, Becca goes back to school. She walks through the halls, people staring and whispering. It makes her want to go with her mom. Or at least see her again. One more time would be nice. Her friends try to make her feel better, but they just make her feel worse. She is trying to forget that she only has a dad, or pretend they "just" divorced, but all the "I'm sorry" bullshit just makes her mad. What can they say? Have they lost a parent?

She doesn't believe it was selfish, what her mom did. Because now she's on that road, the one that leads to suicide at a young age. She skips the dress rehearsal for the school play she has the lead role in, and goes to her boyfriend, Connor's house. Connor means everything to her. They act like soul-mates. They listen to the same music, watch the same TV shows, all that stuff.

Connor does the same "I'm so sorry" shit. It seems like it never ends, Becca thinks. She snaps at him, asking if he knew shit. The ignorant part of him snaps back that his parents divorced when he was 4. She screams "You bitch! My mom is dead!". Connor punches her in the stomach. Hard.

That night, she notices the blood running down her leg. *But I just finished* she thinks. Wait. *Oh shit*, she thinks, *I'm having a miscarriage*. She screams to Dad, and they go the gynecologist. Usually this would be embarrassing as hell for her, but she has too much to think about to worry about being embarrassed. She can't believe she had sex with that pig.

She feels like she has nobody. Because she does have no one. She walks through the halls of Franklin High School after the bell has rung, when nobody is in the halls. She's crying so hard, she falls over. Curled up in a ball on the floor, she pulls her straight razor she's been cutting herself with, and stabs it into her wrist, making a long line along and inside her vein. She pulls her legs closer to her chest. Nobody sees her for 33 minutes. This is the end for her.

Dad leans over her hospital bed. The doctors told him half an hour ago she would make it through, but he is still in absolute shock. She split her ulnar artery in half, for five inches. Standing over her and stroking her pretty blonde hair, he wonders how he will tell her his own secret.

Dad was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor a month exactly before his wife committed suicide. He has already arranged for Becca to live with his parents. He looks at the tube bulging out of the bandage in his daughter's wrist. He doesn't have much longer before he too is gone, and he's looking forward to it, but he is scared of what will happen to Becca in Detroit, where her grandparents live. He wonders what the score of the Lions game is, and how in the hell did his body, which used to be a star running back in high school, turn on him so badly.

Now the tables are turned, and Becca leans over her dad, kissing his semi-wrinkled forehead, looking into his blank eyes. the EKG line has gone flat, the life sustaining machines turned off, but she puts her chapped lips to his ear, and whisper for him to squeeze her hand. She feels a slight twitch. "Dont take him away!" she screams, "He's still alive, he moved his hand!". The doctor looks at her coldly, because he's seen this a hundred times, and tells her that it is just his nervous system dying off.

Becca goes back to school again. In Detroit. A white girl in a black city. 82.7 percent, according to the census. She walks through the halls the halls of the school that's even bigger than her old one, not knowing where she's going. People stare at the gigantic scar on her wrist, and she hears at least one girl, a senior by the looks of her, say to a friend that it looks like she wants attention. *If only they knew*, she thought, *they don't know me*. "Fuck!" she screams out loud to the girl who said she cut herself for attention. "You don't know me! What do you know why I did that?" *Did that*, she thinks, *more like slit that*. But the girl doesn't go away, and steps up and faces Becca.

After Becca gets slapped, she walks out of the school with one cheek red and tears running down her face again. *I can't learn shit anyway*. She walks past a boarded up house, and then another. Then a parking garage that was at one point a movie theater. She turns into an alley, and sees a little stray mutt that looks like it has it's fur

falling out in places. She feels bad for the creature. "I love you more than I loved Connor," she says sarcastically, and strokes its head, thinking. She has an idea "But seriously, we got a lot in common. Wanna come home with me?". Becca doesn't even know if the dog has a chance to live, given the state it is in.

When she walks into the house on the outskirts of Detroit, her grandpa is lying on the couch, and her grandma is washing the dishes. It is 10:00 in the morning. "So I'm guessing it didn't go well-" her grandmother starts, and Becca cuts her off. Becca tells her about the dog that she put in the garage, and they look at her like they have never heard of a dog before. She goes out to the garage again minutes later, but she had left the door open, and the dog wandered out. She never saw that stray again. That might have been what put her over the edge, but who knows?

Grandpa unties his shoes, and that hurts, because of the arthritis. He kicks them off and sits in his armchair. After Becca walked in and woke him up, he immediately started worrying about her. He knows that she has changed, but he doesn't know she's suicidal. *Oh well*, he thinks, *can't let the boys at the range down*. He says goodbye to the two females, and gets in another rusty Volvo with his .357 Magnum revolver. He drives to an indoor pistol range in Farmington Hills, and meets up with some 'Nam vets he went to high school with, back when high school wasn't so complicated. They shoot off their guns, and have a good time, and he almost forgets about Becca. But then he remembers and feels sick to his stomach.

When he gets home, he leaves the revolver and the box of bullets on the kitchen counter, and goes to bed. When he wakes up, the loaded gun is gone.

So is Becca. She stole the rusty Volvo and drove till she found a true forest, three hours up north. To the place where she went camping with her parents years ago. When they were still alive. She pulls the Volvo into the ditch and drives straight through the brush, driving into the unoccupied woods outside of Cadillac, Michigan .

Grandpa sees the cleared counter, and yells for grandma to get out of bed. He starts sweating as soon as he sees it, because he knows that he might not see Becca alive again. He looks to the driveway. No car. He runs to the house next door, owned by the Moore family, and asks to borrow their car. He offers money, but after he explains the situation, they let him take the Honda Civic they barely drive.

He starts towards her parent's old house, which by now is boarded up and condemned to be torn down. *The barn*, he thinks, *she must be going to the barn*. He does an easy 90 on the freeway. Then he gets pulled over, and pleads with the officer to let him go, and is arrested on a reckless driving charge.

*I don't deserve this*, Becca thinks. She doesn't. She also thinks it's too late for the suicide prevention numbers, because her cell phone has no service up in northern Michigan. It's only September, so she kicks off her light blue vans with the holes in the soles. She feels the moss between her toes. She feels the wind. She feels the grass and pebbles and twigs under her feet. She feels it all right, and she's about to throw it all away. She pulls out the picture of Connor she always kept in her pocket, and burns it with his gold Zippo lighter. She watches his face distort and blacken, and just for a second it looks like- no. Her dad looks nothing like Connor. She blinks, and she holds the smoldering remains of Connor's picture. Becca hears a car go past from her spot in the woods. She has just realized how close the road is to the Volvo. Better get this shit over with, she sighs to herself. She checks the cylinder. Five out of six bullets are in it. Becca decides play a little game. She pulls back the hammer and spins the cylinder as hard as it could go and hopes to God, or Satan, that it doesn't land on the one empty hole in the cylinder. She puts it to her head, and pulls the trigger.

Something loved Becca, because the only sound that gun made was a dry click . She realized then, when she heard that click, she realized that she was better than that. She notices the tears have let up, and she isn't shaking as bad as she was before the click.

Police soon found the tire tracks going into the woods, and they took her to a inpatient mental health facility. They kept her there for a whole week, but Becca knows it's pointless, because after she heard that click, she knew there was hope.

Becca walks into school three weeks after her release from the hospital. Smiling, she opens her locker. The senior and her friend who said she was looking for attention come over and apologize. For the first time in a while, she smiles the kind of smile that only happens when you are really happy, the kind of smile that makes everything just go away for a minute.