

(SHORT STORY)

DON'T DISAPPEAR

I know you would.

BY ALI RIZVI



“The sky is getting bright,” his voice echoing in her head, “the stars are burning out,” his hands strumming the guitar, “somebody,” his voice emphasizing the words, “slow it down,” lowering his voice, “here I’m staring,” voice raises as he stands up, “at your perfection,” voice shifts as he walks from her right side to the left one, “in my arms,” coming close to her face with a pause in his song, “so beautiful,” continuing with a smile and raised eyebrows, “somebody,” looking into her eyes, “somebody, slow it down,” voice fading with the beep of heart rate monitor, “this is way too hard,” he starts walking away, “cause I know,” he looks up in the sky, “when the sun comes up, I will leave,” strums his guitar again, “this is my last glance,” continues walking and her memory distorts with the sound of HRM (heart rate monitor), “that will, soon be a memory,” she continues his song in her head, “this is way too hard, cause I know, when the sun comes up, you will leave, this is your last glance, that will soon be a,” she gets flashback of his eyes, “will be a memory,” she continues, (sound of heart rate monitor) “Hey! Please stop! (she runs towards him) No. No! Don’t. (she looks around but cannot find him) Oh. Please don’t. (She holds her head) Oh God. Where did you just go?” (crying)

Heart rate monitor continues beeping.

(3 years earlier)

“Hey, wake up!” her mother draws the curtains, “It’s a good morning, see? Wake up!”

she comes and sits on her bed, “It’s ten o clock in the morning and you are still not up,”

raising her tone, “you’ve already missed your bus for school, wake up!”

“Leave,” Hannah says, “I don’t want to go.”

“It’s your third off from the school, what do you want? A drop out letter?”

“Yes,” she takes her blanket on her face, “can you please just leave?” she replies in a low tone.

“Give me one good reason, and I’ll let you sleep.”

“People.” she changes her side, “Now please leave, mom!” she requests and hides herself in the blanket.

“I wish your father were alive,” Bryna gets up and leaves her room talking to herself, “ I don’t know what’s wrong with this generation.” Hannah listens to her voice fading off.

“Yeah, whatever!” she closes her eyes.

(Next day)

She draws the curtains, “Okay wake up cause I’m not in a mood to hear your excuses, today!” she comes to the bedstead and puts hand on her blanket, “are you waking up or am I pulling this off?” she asks aggressively.

“I’m already up, easy, mom.” Hanna replies.

“Okay, get up and I hope you remember that we’ve an appointment too for today.”

“Appoi-what?” (nose-scrunch)

“Appointment, Hannah, to the psychiatrist” Bryna replies.

“Oh. That?” she laughs in disgust, “that fuck-head who calls me a borderline?”

“My bad that I told you about what he told me about you, (she replies with stable eyes) and WE. Are. Going to him in the noon. Now go, you can brush your teeth.”

Hannah rolls her eyes and goes to the washroom.

“I’ve got to work in the kitchen, I hope you come down by yourself!” she says it loud while she leaves her room.

(After the school)

She walks in hatred, opens the door of the car, “How did she get an admission here?”

Bryna looks Hannah in the mirror of car with a smile, “Who. Did. Now get an admission?” she says it pauses.

“Sarah.” Hannah replies, “How did she get an admission here? Why don’t they put any entrance test system here so that institute may get saved from such annoying kids?”

“Easy, kiddo.” Bryna continues to drive.

“Don’t you call me that.” Hannah replies and starts looking out of the window.

Bryna smiles and shakes her head.

“Yayy, I got itt,” (giggles followed by sound of heart rate monitor). “I knew you would.”

Says a manly voice, “why aren’t you coming here, kiddo?” (voice echoes). She looks around, “I’m chasing your voice, dad. Why can’t I see you?”

“Just three steps from you, c’mon, rush!”

(Hannah moves ahead) “Dad, don’t do this to me please,” says Hannah with tears in her eyes.

“Why can’t you.” (voice interrupted by the beep) “see me?” asks father.

His voice echoes in her ears and she sits down helplessly on the ground (sound of heart rate monitor).

“And,” Bryna says with a pause, “we are here. I hope we’re not late” (her voice sounds as if she’s about to rush).

Hannah takes off her seatbelt and gets down from the car.

“C’mon hurry up!” Bryna says while locking the car, “We’re three minutes late.”

“I hope he cancels our appointment” says Hannah and continues walking with her mother.

(After the formal greetings) “Is she taking her medicines, Ms. Bryna?” asks the psychiatrist.

“Um,” she takes a pause and look at Hannah from the right corner of her eyes, “Um, Yeh-s, she misses a dose or two some days, but I always try to make her take that.”

(Bryna gives an embarrassed smile)

(Psychiatrist’s session continues)

(Sound of heart rate monitor) “Is there any chance of betterment, doctor?” asks Bryna.

“She’s alright, you don’t need to worry much about her” replies the doctor.

“Oh.” (smiles sarcastically) “It’s her seventh day and you’re telling me not to worry about it?” Bryna asks with a mixture of anger and nervousness.

“See, we’ve already told you that she’s in coma, and we can’t do anything to make this any better than the fact that she’s still alive” doctor replies while looking at her medical reports, “she will get fine, don’t worry” doctor tries to calm Bryna.

Bryna goes to Hannah’s bed and holds her hand, “C’mon, open your eyes, baby-girl” she kisses her hand, “Wake up girl, we won’t ever go to that psychiatrist again,” she looks on her closed eyes, “C’mon let’s just have leave this ICU. This sound of heart rate monitor is so disturbing to your mom, baby. Please. (tears in her eyes) Open your eyes, please,” She rests her head on Hannah’s hand, “I know you would.”

(Curtains drawn) “Hey, good news, you just have to go to school today. No appointment girl!” Bryna says to make her wake up from sleep.

“I’m already up, Mom! Just five more minutes please” says Hannah with a tired voice.

“No no no no no no” she lowers her tone, “I ain’t giving you even a single minute, get up, Now!” Bryna orders.

Hannah holds the corners of her closed eyes with her thumb and middle finger, “Don’t you have anything else to do THIS early, mom?” she asks with a tired voice.

“Obviously not.” She replies in a humorous tone.

(They both take their breakfast and Bryna drops Hannah to the school after it. Sarah gets excited and starts running towards Hannah).

“Hey, wait for me!” says Sarah while shoving through the other girls, “Sorry, in a rush! I’m sorry” she continues to rush. “Hello pretty! (Sarah hugs Hannah) It’s so good to see you this early in school.”

“Is it?” remarks Hannah with an uninterested voice.

“Yess, It is.” Sarah sounds excited. “I got so many things to share with you.”

“I came here for my class, Sarah. You can tell that to someone else who might seem interested in your “things”, huh?” (Hannah turns away)

“We both are in the same class I guess?” Sarah says in a jeering manner, “and we still have nine minutes for the first lecture” she says it loud to mock Hannah.

“Haah, I know (Hannah continues to walk), “at least a vacant class won’t eat my brain.” says Hannah.

“I don’t know what bothers her so much,” Sarah talks to herself, “I’m a good friend of her. She needs to understand this.” (She shrugs to cover her embarrassment and walks towards the corridor).

“I never wanted to stop,” sings Recker, “because I don’t wanna,” (sound of heart rate monitor interrupts the song), “all over,” (interruption) “start all over.” (he stares at his guitar while playing this song).

“Would you stay if I’d ask you to?” Hannah sees her mother asking Recker. He continues to sing, “cause when the daylight,” (interruption of sound of heart rate monitor) “comes, I’ll have to (interruption) go, but tonight I” (interruption) “need to hold you” (interruption) so close. Ooh whoa. (interruption) Ooh woah. Ooh woah.”

“Please, stay,” she takes a pause, “at least wait for your-” (interruption) “-daughter to start her school.” says Bryna,

(He puts his guitar aside and takes three years old Hannah in his lap) "Business calls, you know?" he talks to Bryna with his dead-still eyes. (interruption) "We work in the dark to serve the light," he continues, "and (pause) I cannot guarantee you my return, love, but I can promise you one thing," (interruption) "I'm always gonna be there whenever you or Hannah will need me." He looks at Hannah with a tiny smile. "I won't go anywhere," he continues, "you'll just have to close your eyes, and," he closes his eyes, "just like this," he adds, "and you'll just have to call out my name for once," his voice was soft and a bit strained, "and I'll be there," a tear rolls down his cheek, "I'll be there." He repeats himself in a low tone.

Hannah plays with the beard of her father and the sound of Bryna's sobbing does not affect her giggles (she hears Bryna's sobbing in her memory with now mixed with the sound of heart rate monitor).

(Sarah finds Hannah waiting for her mother to pick her up after the school)

"Hello Hannah!" she shouts to get her attention and grinds her teeth to wave her from a distance, "Here you are. I've been finding you everywhere" says Sarah and stands on her right side as if she's waiting to see Hannah's mom too.

“Nobody came to collect you?” says Hannah while looking away from Sarah.

“What are you so angry about all the time?” asks Sarah to ignore what Hannah just said.

(Sarah keeps looking away)

“Hey, hey, lemme tell you something that would cheer you up” says Sarah.

(Sarah looks at her watch and takes a deep breath and releases it with a shake of her head and continues to look to her left side)

“Last Tuesday, I met Reznov,” she bites her lips in excitement, “Oh God, he’s such a nice guy, I can’t tell you” (Sarah sounds as she does not want to stop).

“I don’t want you to” says Hannah.

“Oh God, it was raining and he was playing his guitar, woah” Sarah continues, “and the way he was singing and looking into my eyes, my God, (says loudly) everything was so perfect! The way he sang, the way he played his guitar (she repeats her words in excitement), woah!”

“Uhum” Hannah replies uninterestingly.

“Yes! He was holding his guitar like this, (she acts as if her handbag is her guitar) and he was singing and moving from my one side to the other, (she walks from Hannah’s right side and comes to her left side while nudging her on her back) just like this, (she waits for Hannah to smile) and then he came closer to me and continued his song (her voice gets louder in excitement), and then he started walking away -and (she takes a pause) and, you wanna know the most interesting part? says Sarah with a hope of hearing a yes.

(Hannah shifts her eyes from the road to Sarah)

“What?” says Hannah (she sounds as if she is now interested in hearing the interesting part)

“He stopped when I asked him to. Woah hoo! It seemed as if he was walking away just to make me stop him” says Sarah with a giggle.

“Pathetic” says Hannah to herself and rolls her eyes.

(Hannah’s mother arrives and she sits in her car)

“How was your day Hannah?” asks Bryna.

“You’d better focus on driving” replies Hannah.

Bryna looks at her in the mirror for a while and continues to drive after shaking her head in disappointment.

(They continue in silence).

(a few days later)

(Just like after an ordinary day, Bryna gets Hannah from her school and drives to her home. On her way, while going through an underpass, Bryna changes the gear of the car but it gets stuck. Car slows down, Bryna continues trying and in the meantime, a car from behind hits her car. Bryna gets injured but remains in conscious).

“Hannah, you okay?” she asks as she looks on her back seat, “Hannah! Hannah!”

(Sound of ambulance) “Oh, no!” (she takes her in her arms) “Hannah! (she calls her name) Hannah! C’mon wake up! Hannah! Please, Hannah! (Bryna hugs her and cries) Your dad won’t forgive me! Please!” (she cries out loudly)

(Sound of ambulance fades into the sound of heart rate monitor)

“How did it, come so fast?” his voice echoes in her head, “somebody,” his voice gets louder, “I would leave” he walks away (interruption of sound of heart rate monitor).

“Please don’t go.” Hannah shouts and runs. She looks around (interruption). “Please, don’t leave” she gets tired of running and falls down. “Why can’t you hear me?” (she sits on her knees, looks up in the sky and sobs). “I knew you would disappear!” says Hannah with a disappointed voice. She holds her necklace and cries (Sound of heart rate monitor)

(Pause)

(Sound of heart rate monitor) The doctor says I’m in coma (interruption of sound of heart rate monitor). At least (she laughs sarcastically), it’s safe here. Here in my head.

(She hears footsteps of doctor coming to examine her). I can hear the doctor, (pause) my mom (pause) and even myself (she sounds excited about it). I don’t know why my mom keeps crying. She has always gets over-reactive (she laughs). I hope I won’t have to see that psychiatrist. Never, again! (She emphasizes the word ‘again’) It’s so good here (she whispers to herself), so good and safe.

I don’t have any idea of where did you go. (interruption) Or of when would you come.

That psychiatrist never believed that you existed (she laughs). Fuck-head! I always told

my mom that he was never worth wasting our time. She never listened to anybody (she taunts). The only thing that makes me want to go back is the fact (sound of heart rate monitor) that I cannot write to you. I can say things to you (pause) here, (she emphasizes), but I cannot convey them to you, my love (she sighs).

I know I cannot write it down to you but (pause), I don't know why do I have a feel that somebody else (sound of heart rate monitor), somewhere else in the world (sound of heart rate monitor) is writing my thoughts down. He's just writing them as the way I'm saying. He's writing, even, (she mocks) this annoying sound of heart rate monitor (sound of heart rate monitor).

(Pause) I won't let you go this time. (Pause) I hope you'll get to read that someday.

(Pause) I hope my words would reach you someday. I hope whenever you'd read that, (lowers her voice), you'd to come to see me here in the ICU. Please?" (sound of heart rate monitor).

"Please?"

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