

THE QUARRY

Outburst

By Charlotte Marsh

As I sit in Doctor Malone's office I start to laugh, she doesn't really appreciate my jokes but silence always has a way of making me really tense. It's all textbook to her; I make jokes in order to avoid confrontation. To be fair I'm only half kidding, I do genuinely feel bad for Malone, she could have been kicking it back at the beach and instead she's sitting here with me. She looks even more tired than usual and I'm hardly surprised, our meeting was definitely not on her itinerary.

'Bree are you listening?' Malone's voice bounces off the coat tails of my nervous laughter and springs me back to the room.

'Y-yes,' my words fumble out before I can catch myself.

Malone frowns, 'I asked you about your medication, how is it going?'

'As medicated as ever,' I say and she inhales forty-five years worth of air and sighs.

'I know you haven't been taking them Bree.'

Gee, nothing gets past her does it? 'Have you been spying on me again Doctor?'

'It's been six months since I gave you a script and it was only for three months of medication.'

To be fair it's really her fault for not keeping track of my scripts and it's not as if I'm going to remind her. 'Urghhh that stuff makes me sick and it takes forever to kick in.'

'You're *supposed* to take it with food, please tell me you've been-'

'Yes I've been eating, come on Doc at least try to earn your fee.' I start pinching my nose; I just hate all of this.

Any other person would have probably smacked me by now but Malone is pretty cool, instead she just turns away into her papers.

'Always the comedian...so last night.'

'Whoa there Doc, let's not spoil the ending before we've even finished the opening credits.' I figured I might as well try to stall. Malone removes her glasses and gives me the '*I'm disappointed*' face.

'Bree,' it's all she needs to say.

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'Bree, did you do an entry today?'

I was barely seated at the dinner table before Mum began her questioning. I could always count on my parents to step in whenever Malone wasn't around. I had to credit them for that at least; an A+ for badgering their daughter constantly.

'Yes.' But I hadn't and she knew that perfectly well.

'You know I'm going to check after dinner, right?' She didn't though, she always forgot.

I rolled my eyes so far back into my head that I my veins threatened to break apart from my sockets.

'Mum I did the entry, I did the absolute hell out of it; it's just positively oozing with my most deep and dark thoughts.'

Mum just frowned at me, geez tough crowd...

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'Good to know I'm not the only one you lie to,' Malone cuts in.

I'm kinda expected to do these 'mood logs' as part of my agreement with Malone; I could stop weekly visits and in return I write down whatever I'm feeling, if anything, every day for the next few weeks. Who seriously writes in a diary anymore? That's something an old lady who doesn't have the internet would do. It kinda sucks because I *have* to do them and I'm slightly unnerved about the idea of jotting everything down. If there was something the Doc couldn't get out of me, what makes them think I'll put it in writing? Of course that's all gone to shit now, I'll be lucky if they ever trust me again.

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Mum continued back to her steak, her knife ground against the surface making tiny brown grains crumble on the top. It baffled me that she hadn't yet realised that she'd grabbed a butter knife by mistake. But she continued to grind away hoping for the cooked, rippling surface to break through. I sat there with my parents in total silence for a while. That's how most of our dinners played out, Mum asked about my entry and then nothing. Before I came back from observation all their dinner discussions were most likely about me. I mean, what else could they talk about? Now that the topic was staring at them right in the face it suddenly wasn't so interesting. I was only there for a freaking week and somehow I'd completely killed all conversation between my parents.

'Something interesting happened to me today.' Dad's voice broke out, Mum lifted her brow but her eyes were firmly planted on the steak. Man she really is something.

'On the bus today a young boy tried to get on without any money,' he went on.

'Sounds riveting Dad, truly I am honored that you chose to tell us this tale.' I stopped as Dad began to eye me.

'Well, did he get on in the end?' I asked.

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'Not that this isn't interesting Bree, let's not go into every detail ok?'

I hate it when people cut you off, even if the story doesn't interest you its polite to humor them. I notice my back is aching from my hunch so I straighten up and try to shrug off Malone's intrusion.

'Right. Well...it didn't matter anyway, Dad didn't even remember if the kid got on or not, can you believe that?' Malone gives a small grunt; she just wants me to get to the point. 'So then Dad asks what I'm doing after dinner-'

'Why do you think he would ask that?'

I hate it when therapists ask those stupid '*how does that make you feel*' type questions. It makes me miss observation; or rather I miss the solitude. Like, people were watching me but they didn't really speak to me or anything. I guess they were waiting for me to say something but I never did. I don't even really remember what I did during that week but I certainly didn't talk to anyone. They wouldn't have let me come home if I had done anything strange, unlike the other kids there. Lucky for my parents I'm not the outburst kind.

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'Fortunately for you guys I'll be staying in.' I say after Mum asked what I was doing after dinner.

‘You don’t want to see anyone?’ to which I wondered what invisible people she had envisioned for me to see. But I guess all mothers are under the delusion that their children are socially apt enough for friends, despite how obvious the reality is.

‘Nope, I am a child of considerable predictability,’ I started to squish my peas onto the plate with my knife, ‘It’s one of the joys of being the second off the chopping block.’

‘I don’t follow,’ Mum said and I rolled my eyes again.

‘When the first kid drops parents are all set to get their mistakes out of way, if it doesn’t die they’re all good for a second.’

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‘Where *was* your sister at the time?’ Malone asks.

I don’t say anything for a while, partially because I genuinely don’t remember but also because I’m a little scared to remember.

‘She came to dinner a bit late, but she wasn’t there yet.’ Even though my eyes are in my lap I can tell Malone is checking me, weighing up what words to say.

‘How about we skip to when she arrives, ok?’ she speaks with a certain care as if I were stupid enough to not know what she wants, but the longer I can put it off the better.

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‘Get out of my seat.’ Olivia barely looked at me when she came in; she had it stuck in her head that we had a special seating arrangement in the house. Dad at the head, Mum to his left with her to the right. I was put next to Olivia but personally I was not fond of such rules. She jabbed her finger in my side, it was like getting a sharp stab with a blunt knife. It was enough to get me hunched over so that she could lightly push me from the chair and take her rightful place at Dad’s side. No one said anything as I stumbled to the next chair. Of course no one said anything. Olivia placed her hands carefully across the table; her fingers looked just like Mum’s, really long and slender, it’s the only thing about her I like. Dad’s fingers are tough and fat like overcooked sausages, which makes him look like the kind of Dad who fixes stuff around the house. Everyone in my family has hands that tell lies.

‘Bree, how about you answer my question huh?’ Olivia’s voice completely ripped me out of focus. ‘I asked if you were glad to be home, not that you look it.’

I could always count on my dear sister to leave every sugary statement with a twist of lemon in my mouth. I dignified her question with a one shouldered shrug; not worth the involvement of both. She just rolled her eyes to our parents and gave a ‘can you believe this girl?’ look.

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I look up at Malone and her eyes are glued to me, she says nothing but her gaze has an intensity to it that begs me continue. Even when it's about me it's always about her, naturally.

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'Wow must be so hard to sit around all day with no school or parents. Maybe I should become crazy too,' she laughed to Mum and Dad. They said nothing again. She went on about some friend of hers who she hates and it was like I wasn't even there anymore.

'What would you know about hard?' I mostly said it to myself but I figured it was equally relevant for Olivia.

'Excuse me?' I hated how she always talked to me like I was stupid kid and she was this super mature adult. She tossed her knife and fork down and turned toward me, 'please go on about how super difficult your life is.'

My cheeks began to give me away and I wasn't so cool anymore; all of a sudden I had nothing. No cool quips to throw back, nothing, and so I just sat there looking at my dinner like it was the most interesting thing ever.

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'Having an older sibling can be tough.' Malone speaks like I'm only hearing this stuff for the first time, what a stupid cliché.

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I really wanted to say something to shut her up, but I just kept staring down at my plate, rolling my fork between my fingers. Olivia snapped her head back to her plate and resumed her dinner, 'It's not the 'Bree Show' you know, we all have our issues and you don't see me going off for a holiday.' My grip tightened a little.

'Stop it you two,' Dad says, but what he really meant was *stop it Olivia* and it always had to go unsaid because that would just be too mean. No matter how much I scrunched my face; it wasn't enough to send a signal to Olivia's brain to tell her to shut up.

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'So that's when you-'

'No!'

Malone jumps and I realise I need to breathe, 'No...that happened...later,' I really want to stop; surely it's been an hour by now.

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'Whatever, it's not my problem that Bree wants to act like everything's about her.'

Every word she spoke made my jaw really hurt and I could feel my nails pressing against my palm as I gripped my fork.

‘You let her get away with so much; this is why she’s so wound up in herself. I would have never been allowed when I was her age.’

Mum and Dad pretended to not hear and I pretended like I didn’t exist. My hand began sweating a little; the fork was so warm from holding it.

‘I don’t know why you even bothered sending her there.’

Despite not having eaten I felt the constant need to swallow, hard and smooth like a marble that kept getting bigger and just wouldn’t go down.

‘She’s not even saying anything, because she knows I’m right. See? She’s not even-‘

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Malone’s pen stops, there’s no real need to continue. She knows the rest.

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It’s kind of a haze or at least that was my excuse, there was screen of silence the second I slammed my fork into the back of Olivia’s hand. Before I even had time to think it completely shattered and I was drowning in her shrieking and the groaning of our wooden chairs as they ground against the floor. It’s me who stood up first, Olivia sobbed over her hand like a needy mother clutching her baby. I can still see the mark I left; four little red squares on the back of her perfect hand. Branded forever with four perfect squares as if there’s one for each of us; Dad, Mum, Olivia and me. Olivia shook as she turned her way up to me, I was almost scared she was gonna hit me or something until I saw her face.

Complete fear. Not only for herself but for me, fear for the hatred I held for her and what it had turned me into.

Either Dad pulled her away to the next room or I looked away, I don’t remember. It doesn’t really matter; her eyes are still with me. I can’t stop seeing them.

I grabbed my face, pulled on it like I wanted to tear it off. My jaw screamed for me to open so that I could let out some kind of sound but I just couldn’t. Not in front of Mum.

I was wrong, so wrong; turns out I was the outburst kind after all.

Mum choked out something but I don’t really remember. It wasn’t until she tried to pull my hands away from my face that I started.

‘You let her say that to me,’ I mumbled like a stupid kid. ‘You never say anything...not a goddamn thing,’

‘Bree...’

‘No every time! Every fucking time you don’t do a goddamn thing about it.’ At that point I couldn’t even tell where I was facing anymore; I couldn’t see anything. Olivia cried while Dad consoled, I cried while Mum made the call.

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‘It’s so weird when you hear your parents trying not to cry.’ Malone doesn’t respond, ‘I can’t stop hating her.’

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They left me alone in the dining room, Olivia had stopped and it was quiet again. I looked around the broken room of unfinished dinner, scattered chairs and the small beads of Olivia’s blood. I hate her but I hate myself more for hating her.

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Malone just gets up and says something but I don’t retain it, I realise that I’m tracing my fingers over the back of my hand when she tries hands me another script. She asks me to come back next week and suddenly I’m no longer in her office. I meet Mum in the car, she tries to say something but it’s all muffled and I’m just really tired.