

Candace's eyes are a sea, navigable enough to sail my ship.

I am prepared to sail into new waters, clearer waters. The expression on her face, when I tell her about Mother and Father will have to be savored. I don't have many friends and don't intend on hanging out with people who only wanted to be my companion for my parent's money. I'm an only child as well, the only son of the Winchester family.

Mother is always out of town, accompanying grandmother who of which is sick and usually hospitalized. Grandmother was once a very successful lawyer and was married twice to two men who had very lucrative jobs as well; when they died she inhabited all their money and when she dies we'd get all of hers. Needless to say Mother makes it a priority to watch after her. Father is a plastic surgeon and spent most of his at the hospital. They never speak to one another when she is home. In the morning Father fights off the sleep with two cups of coffee and he is off to work.

"My turn," she says. The corners of her mouth folding into a smile.

I imagine finally departing the train and returning to the comfort of my home in Preston Hollow community. Running up the large spiral stair case, I'll be ready to collapse into my bed.

I had gone to visit my aunt, Maria, in Beverly Crest, California. Mother had sent me stay with her while she found a new nursing home to move Grandma to.

Aunt Maria was busy planning an event for the Rogerson's who of which lived down the block. Mrs. Rogerson and Mr. Rogerson were renewing their wedding vows on the twenty seventh and as my Aunt Maria put it, there was "no time to waste."

Finally, after countless days of lounging on the love seat couches in the living room and watching re-runs on the large flat screen T.V tacked up on the wall I'd be returning to the comfort of my own home.

I decided I would take the train home after a minor argument with father about my school performance. I wasn't doing very well in math and he had told me before I left that if I didn't improve there would be trouble. I want to get away from everything for a while.

"I was six years old." She says then pauses. I try the picture her little with long reddish, blond hair and those same deep blue eyes that seemed to eliminate any distance between us.

Things I would never tell people seemed okay to say now and maybe it was the fact that in the dining car of a train with one empty seat between me and a beautiful girl named Candace who I'd most likely never see again after this moment.

"I'd been woken up to quite some ruckus outside. I'd thrown on some clothes and made my way out to find papa sittin' on the stairs. He was sulking. 'Papa, what's wrong?' I asked and he just looked at me with the saddest eyes. Mama had left. 'Left to where?' I asked. He had 'nt had an answer... She had just decided that she needed to go."

Grandma was feeble and we all knew she didn't have much time left, but Mother *always* came home to us.

"Licking her fingers like she was done and deciding there was so much more than us." She adds.

"I was twelve years old." I begin. "It was my birthday. My grandmother had some type of medical emergency that same morning and my mother dropped everything and flew all the way out to see her. My father got called in to work that day to do a surgery. I can remember him standing there in the door way as he told me 'Gabriel' as you get older you're not always going to get what you want; hell if people always got what they wanted there'd be nothing to work for.. Just like that he left me alone."

I felt less comfortable with sharing the story after hearing myself say it. Clenching my teeth, I stop myself from saying anything else. Sure, it was my *worst* day, but it isn't worst then having someone walk out on you.

"You have a maid?" She asks token back.

“Mhm,”

“Wow, down on the farm we could use one of those.” She tells me. I roll my eyes. Everyone in Mississippi could use a maid. We sat there in silence for a few minutes.

“What part of Mississippi do you live in?”

“Vicksburg, Mississippi a lil’ town on the border by Louisiana.” She states blithely. “Well enough with worst days let’s talk ‘bout the best ones, so what was your best day?”

I decide don’t want her to feel bad for me. I look skyward out the window as if the cloudy august sky will tell me my ‘best’ day.

“Uh well... my best day hasn’t happened yet, but years from now I want to be very successful and I want to have *lots* of money and live somewhere in Beverly Hills, California in a nice house. I’m going to be a surgeon just like my father and I can’t wait for the day when he tells me ‘Gabriel, you did well.’”

I know I can’t to function without money. I want nothing more than for my father to acknowledge that I did well. I want to be successful and affluent just as my parents.

“What is your best day?” I ask her. I’m sure it won’t be better than mine.

“My best day hasn’t happened yet either, but I’m fix’ in to make sure that it does. My papa always drives by this big, old house. Nobodies lived there for like twenty somethin’ years, but he’s pretty handy and wants to fix up the place. My goal is to buy it for him. I’ll buy it then the rest is up to him. He wants to change to floors, the walls, the wiring, all of that good stuff. That will be my way of thankin’ him for everything, for bein’ there all of it.”

Years from now I wonder if I’ll still be trying to gain my father’s attention. It feels silly in a way after hearing something so genuine to think that all I want for my future is the acknowledgement of my father and of course more money. It makes me question what she’d say if I told her that being successful to me was getting money myself.

Candace looks at me as if she knows and understands exactly what I'm thinking. I wonder if it is obvious that I am second guessing what I want. Maybe she thinks I'm selfish. *I would*. It's strange to want someone you barely even know to think so highly of you. I don't think I could bear her disliking me and I can't even figure out why, even if as I said I would never see her again after this.

"Hey Gabe, uh bein' honest do you think I could do it? You think I could buy the house and make my papa proud?"

This question goes much deeper than me or my wants because this is someone else's future. I've never had to decide anything like this before. This ship has sailed in a sea of uncertainty. I watch as we move towards the city and I still ponder an answer.

I am a ship loaded with wants and hopes that all seem so selfish now. My father is a ship and we are so distant yet he has ambitions, and hopes for the future as well. She is the vast ocean, selfless and even the littlest thing said can make a ripple effect, so I must be careful.

We pull up at the train station and the driver mumbles something into the intercom. I slowly gather my belongings to depart the train at Jackson, Mississippi.

"I get off at Vicksburg, Mississippi so I guess this is good-bye." She announces. I look at her and know this is the last time, but strangely I wish it wasn't.

"I guess so," I hesitate. I pause looking at her one last time; I eventually check my bags and step out into the isle of people moving out of the train car. I am about to waltz out the door when I stop and turn around.

"Candace!" I call out to get her attention. She shifts her direction so that she's facing me. There is no distance between us. "I hope so, I really do."