

Behind you

"Mom! Dad! I'm home." I hollered, dumping my school bag on the carpeted floor and launching myself in a prostate position on the couch, closing my eyes in the process. I stayed there unmoving until I received a silent response- it was quiet. Too quiet. I furrowed my eyebrows in confusion, *Mom is hardly ever late from work and dad always has music playing.* "Mom? Dad?" I shouted. No reply. Groaning, I reluctantly got up from my comfortable position and searched around the house for them.

I checked the kitchen first, walking in I was met with a cream card that was propped on the kitchen island; I reached out to grab it, I saw a black blur from the corner of my eye. *What was that?* Quickly snapping my head around to see what it was, but the thing is... there was nothing there. Putting a hand over my heart, I could hear it hammering inside my chest. I hesitantly trudged over to the window and glanced around. After finding nothing, I let out a breath and walked back to the card. Picking it up, I unfolded it and it read;

Riley,

I apologize for not being present, but your father fell off the ladder whilst fixing the roof and landed on his elbow. You were at school when this happened, and I was just about to leave for work, hence why neither of us are here.

I had to make a trip to the hospital and I don't think either of us are going to be back until tomorrow afternoon. I left some money on the counter for you to order food. Stay safe Riley.

Love you! ❀❀

Mum & Dad

As I was about to put the card down I noticed a smudge of crimson in the corner, I lifted it closer to my eyes and inspected the color, sniffing it, I retracted instantly- not liking the smell and crinkling my nose in disgust, *is that blood?* Then I thought back to the letter, remembering that my dad must've gotten blood on my mum when she was aiding him. Not thinking much of it, I chucked the card back on the island and sauntered over to my school bag, dragging it back to the kitchen table. I took my homework out and studied.

After two torturous hours of studying I was interrupted with growling. I looked down to my stomach and realized I hadn't fed myself yet. I got out of my chair and made my way to the telephone. I ordered a regular pizza and was instructed to wait twenty minutes. During this time I thought it would be a good idea to freshen myself.

I hastily made my way upstairs and grabbed a random set of clothes from my bedroom and my phone, then walked across the hallway to the bathroom. When I had showered, I noticed that I had created a large amount of steam, causing the mirror to fog up from condensation. Like the child I was, I started drawing stick figures- until I was cut-off by the sound of the doorbell.

"Pizza!" An unknown voice shouted.

I was being so absent-minded I forgot all about my pizza. Hurriedly I put on my clothes and barged out of the bathroom and chucked my towel and phone on my bed, and ran down the stairs nearly tripping in the process. Whizzing into the kitchen, I grabbed the money off the counter and rushed to the door. Before I could grasp the door handle, I heard multiple thuds, followed by many cries outside. My heart was now beating erratically and my hands felt clammy.

Scared I peeped through the side window, but I couldn't make anything out because it was so dark. Gathering up all of my confidence, I rose a shaky hand up to the cold door knob. What I saw next had me nearly running upstairs hurling into the toilet bowl. The stench of blood hit me like a train and instantly I felt light head and grabbed onto the door for support. I wanted to scream at the sight before me, but I couldn't. My mouth felt dry and my throat resembled sand paper... It was putrid. Or shall I say he?

There lay a body, male. His face had numerous scratch marks, four deep slashes running diagonally across his face. Eyes wide open, haunting my soul with his sickly pale skin and his mouth was ajar, leaking blood. His scrawny arms were no longer connected to his beat-up, bloody body and his wounded yet pale legs were sticking out at unusual angles. His body was undoubtedly mutilated. The scene was gruesome, and I for one, didn't have a strong stomach and could already feel the bile rise in my throat. Frantically, I looked around to check for any people around me. I was alone. I quickly looked at the sight one last time, before I slammed the door and bolted up the stairs to retrieve my phone to call triple zero.

Upon my hasty entrance to my bedroom, I felt queasy- not like sick queasy, but felt like something was amiss. Beads of sweat were rolling down my face as I opened the door warily, I took small cautious steps into my room. Walking towards my bed where my phone lay I noticed yet another note. *Why would my parents leave a note on my bed?*, I thought curiously. But this one wasn't a cream color, I squinted due to the dark

room and recognized it as a blood red color. This caused involuntary shivers to go down my spine, reminding me of the scene I had just encountered.

I extended my shaky arm and grabbed the card, I looked at it questionably. Before I opened the card, I smelt it. Call me paranoid or whatever, but from the card and the scene earlier, I would think there would be a hint of blood on it. I only took a big whiff of a bitter, acidic smell that started a hot trail of tingles from my noes to my larynx. I pulled the card away from my nose and turned my head to my left and took in deep breaths to get rid of the pungent smell, but resulted only worse than before; feeling slightly dizzy and my knees felt weak. I stumbled a bit before I managed to balance myself on my feet. My breathing became shallow and rough as I falteringly fumbled with the bottom of the card and lifted it up.

"Look behind you." It read.

Confused and slightly scared, I hesitantly turned around slowly, before my mouth was roughly covered with a cloth, reeking of what I just smelt. Struggling against the cloth, a big meaty hand held my waist to keep me from moving, I screamed but it only came out muffled. I felt myself becoming weightless and before I slipped into a dark world of oblivion, I heard a gruff voice say,

"Sweet dreams."