

It Happens Here January 2016 Event

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MiddSAFE: (802) 377-0239

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Three Tales

(1)

The first time I didn't know what was happening, I was naïve. Packed into the MTR car you thought I didn't notice your hand in places it shouldn't have been. The eternity of those two minutes. At the opening of the doors of wading through the crowd you forced me, finger up my brown knee length skirt pressing firmly against the white cotton underneath,

pressing harder as you rammed your body into mine as you walked out of the doors, taking me with you. I was twelve.

(2)

I thought that would be the end but then, within my first week in the US you found me again. You had lost weight, your skin now black, your clothes now tattered. I saw you linger outside the bus. Don't make assumptions, I told myself. I boarded the bus

and you, soon after. Wanting to leave room for others I sat on the inner seat. You eagerly took that spot. I flashed a smile. Next thing I knew your hand was on my bare thigh. Rubbing up and down. I endured it thinking you would stop. I looked up and you smiled, your eyes clear with lust. What was I to do? I looked to the only other passenger for support. She had a vacant inner seat. I gathered my belongings and proceeded to move. I thought I would be safe because this time I was not alone. But as soon as I

sat down the woman left. I thought she of all people would understand! I caught the bus driver looking through her mirror, but she kept silent. That deafening silence. I texted Lucas, I texted Lyza... someone, someone help me. Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse I got responses to my texts.

“hahahaha lol”

“are you sure?”

I couldn't speak.

(3)

Third time's the charm they say. This time you changed your tactics. In the streets of Tangier you employed not one, not two, but five boys no older than twelve to do your work for you. The three of us just wanted to get back to our hotel safely, but you wouldn't allow it. You cheered them on. They ran after us through that endless dark alleyway, and just when we approached the entrance to the hotel, scrambling to get the key in, I felt a hand grab my

ass in a swift sweeping motion. I looked back and to my horror found a boy no older than twelve snigger, his friends patting him on the back for what he had accomplished. Your uncle called you all back into the house, it was time for dinner. No more fun and games.

You Believe

Almost two years to this day I was drugged and raped at a party held in Coffrin apartments. After months of shock, depression, anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, denial, numbness, embarrassment, confusion, insomnia, secrecy, flash backs, and self harm I have finally arrived at my current mental state. I am hurting but I am also healing.

Since arriving at Middlebury I have been slut-shamed more times than I can count. It is a fact that I have hooked up many, many people but it is also a fact that hypersexuality as a result of sexual assault is a very real, legitimate response.

You believe that you're not good for anything else but sex. You believe sex is the only way you could possibly connect to another person. You believe sex is the only kind of intimacy you're good at. You

believe that cuddling after sex is the only way to get nonsexual physical touch. You believe the flashbacks will stop if you drown them out with other memories. You believe that sharing a bed with someone is the only way you'll sleep safely. You believe your body is the only part of you that matters. You believe that complete control over your sexual experiences is the only way to feel better about your assault. You believe that being drunk and alone in your room is when you are the most unsafe.

You believe that forcing yourself to get blackout drunk is essential because you don't want to remember seeing your rapist at a party much like the one he assaulted you at. You believe that a guy's borderline territorial behavior when he is interested in sleeping with you is a valid form of protection. You believe that there is no other way to get attention. You believe that it's the only way to stop feeling wordlessly desperate. You believe that you need someone else's compliments about your

appearance to be able to stand looking in the mirror.
You believe that you cannot expect love without sex.

The relationships between me and my assault, my voluntary sexual encounters, and myself is much better and slowly improving day by day thanks to supportive friends, caring family, devoted therapists, and my ability to finally forgive myself but some days are easier than others.

Today in the dining hall my rapist looked at me,
smiled then waved. Today I am struggling.

Fangs

I have the place where his vampire fangs sunk into me. I have the place where his handcuff hands fastened around my throat. I have the place where his hammer palms pushed down into the thin skin below my collarbone. The skin was ghost white before but now it is simply the skin of a ghost. I am a ghost. Before I was a road with scarlet and tangerine leaflined trees, but now I am the dead-end-winter-bitten-alcove with trees that have branches kissed

with death's open mouth and trunks with vampire bites that look much like my own. I let the cold invade me as I press my fingers against the slashes in their bark, wishing I could push the sides together hard enough for the poison to ooze out and the tree to be whole again. And then I wish the same thing could be done for my heart.

I have memories that shoot out like bullets into the inside of my head whenever I close my eyes.

Memories of words he said and words I should have, memories of the words I did say but didn't mean that dripped out of my broken mouth. My lips were drenched in a raspberry venom and they housed a tongue suffocated by a clonazepam rattlesnake, who's grip got tighter and tighter as the hours passed and my hazel eyes closed. The brush of my lashes against the hollow of my cheeks was the only gentleness I knew. I could not feel myself. I could not be there for myself. I am here and then I am there

again.

Going through the motions—he speaks. Maybe he doesn't know. He just sees me as a tool to make him happy—*“From the second we met I wanted to see you naked.”* Well now he has gotten what he wanted. He has successfully hunted his prey. He smiles and touches me. Here and there and there. To him I have no mind—I am just sexual and warm and elastic. If he's so happy then maybe I'm being dramatic.

Maybe I am masking deeply seeded regret with deeply visceral feelings of victimization. I don't trust myself anymore. All I can say is I remember thinking—*if only I can just get up and get to my phone, then this will all go away, he won't be able to touch me anymore.* But my body couldn't move from the plushness of the slaughterhouse he made for me, couldn't move itself to follow my mind towards the last bit of light left in my eyes—

No, no, no.

This is my fault.

This is my fault.

That is what I say to myself and what many will say to me. But then logic reminds me if that truly is the case than I must be the equivalent of a little child's Barbie doll. Like a Barbie, my legs must have been meant to be moved without me. Wrapped above my head, tearing at my muscles, challenging my joints. I

must have been meant to feel pain like this. I must have been meant to turn my back only to be turned back over, covered in my hair and an exhaustion so deep I was immune to care.

Confusion consumes me.

I stand in the shower and try to scrub his grimy rat tails off of me. I crouch down. I am so, so *tired*, tired to the very limit of the word. I touch my body,

but I cannot feel anything. I grip my kneecaps. I dig my teeth right into the bone. If I bleed I cannot see it. I cannot see anything but the girl I wish I was. The girl that was not so reckless with what she was given. The girl that could comfortably sit in her precious purity. I have failed. I have savaged my own body.

And then I cry.

I've been doing a lot of that lately.

“I like my sex rough, I think you do too.” Well, I don't, but I *do* remember wishing those handcuff hands narrowed in diameter. Wishing they would crack my neck and finish me. When I pulled his fingers off of me I remember wishing I pulled a trigger, aimed not at him, but at me. Then I would no longer be the damaged one, the milk at the bottom of the carton that no one wants, that's lukewarm and

smells like day old cereal, rotting. All I've ever wanted was to be somewhere that I can be beautiful and unafraid. Even now I dare to want, to dream. I want to be somewhere that I am not so tempted to fall back into the arms of yet another person that hurt me. Do you understand I have never known a kind love?

Stop, stop, stop—stop. The shower water spills down across my back. It is past the point where I can be

taught these things. No one can save me. No one will ever love such a cold and broken thing. I am lost and confused, but this abyss must be where I'm meant to be. I was meant to be hit, his strength a tsunami and my body the shore. In a limbo of the mind where the tide is rising and I am falling.

I will admit to myself that even now in my "safety" I wish the night had invited me into its blackness when he crawled on top of me. Even now as I

continue to breathe amongst the living I long for the finality of the dead. I look inside myself and see that there is no longer anything there. Can you blame me for coming to the conclusion that I was meant to be exterminated in youth, to be buried deep beneath the land of lovers and tender places that I was never invited to? Perhaps inside the box that will carry my cadaver I will finally be of use. Maybe the creatures that lurk in the dirt will appreciate me. Maybe there I will be loved. With this thought I finally smile. With

the thought of a coffin my heartbeat regulates. *I was not made for this world. I was not made to survive.* This man impounded that belief in me. I was too tired to squirm away from the fates this time. The girl with a crescent moon smile that loved the wild side has finally been eclipsed by a terrifying darkness cloaked in the garbs of a friendly face. Now I am finally branded with the caduceus of all those who knew I was trouble from the start. I carry this mark with me, on my face, my chest, in between my

thighs. If only I had been made to be someone who enjoyed walking the plank, instead I find that I cannot help but tremble as I get closer and closer to the edge knowing I do not have the energy to turn back this time.

I can't talk about this anymore. I don't have the time. I have to get to class. I hope this time he finally stops saying hi.

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Additionally, you can always reach the organizers at ihhmidd@gmail.com.

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