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Two or Three Days Ago

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Two or Three Days Ago

By: Marcie Blandford

She rallied with the help of her mother in Chicago during lengthy conversations she relied on every night. She yelled every time she thought her daughter was listening—her daughter never really listened to the words that were being thrown at her while she laid on her bed. From her mother’s standing position, she’d pace back and forth from one end of the dresser to the other with a prompt about-face at each end—the carpet was worn down from years of pacing. The words never mattered; in fact, the words contradicted the supportive story that play over and over in her daughter’s mind. Her daughter’s eyes never moved higher than the bridge of her mother’s nose in the respective manner she had thought was normal until she turned seven years old and experienced her first sleepover: her friend’s mom picked her daughter up, spun her around, and kissed her cheek? Her daughter never went to any more sleepovers.

Respectfully, her daughter never looked lower than the soft, round tip of her mother’s nose that always twitched in a flare making the freckle on the left side of her nostril dance: she couldn’t face the sneer. Her mother’s tone suggested that she was not making the right choice. Her daughter turned eighteen and told her mother she was moving to Chicago: “it’s for school. I got accepted. It’s a good opportunity.” She shrugged her shoulders and bowed her head while imagining the thrown words from her mother’s sneer were of congratulations and ideas of matching dorm sheets and curtains. The only words she actually caught were “ungrateful,” “how dare you,” “if you think for one second,” and “*good luck*” with a freckle flare. In her daughter’s head were images of her mother visiting over parent’s weekend—her mother would buy her a cocktail for her first semester’s accomplishments and ask about the boy situation around campus with a cocked smile and playfully raised eyebrow. Her daughter would shake her head to hide

her blush, look her mother in the eyes, and lie about having a boyfriend because it was too soon in the relationship to disclose the messy details about how she got drunk at a random house party on campus instead of going to “welcome weekend.” She had dreamed about making eye contact across the basement to the cute boy in the pink sweatshirt playing beer pong. At the end of the party, she stole his hat. She thought it would be a cute way to make sure she met him again: it worked. This scenario played in her head three times before her eyes accidentally dropped too far down her mother’s face and was jolted back into the lecture by her mother’s grimace.

Her mother scolded and scorned—it was all she knew. Her daughter stared and daydreamed hoping one of these days her mother would hug her, spin her around, and kiss her cheek. When was the last time her mother kissed her? Her daughter couldn’t remember. When was the last time her mother touched her? The bruise on her cheek suggests two or three days ago.