Student B

Mrs. Payne

English 1010.4

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Scrunched Noses

 I was never much of a dance in the rain kind of girl, those spontaneous moments never appealed to me. I was a stay in my warm room and read kind of girl, a planner who didn’t have time for soaked clothes. I learned from a young age (too young) how planning brought a lot of disappointment; don’t plan on dad being home early tonight, he has a meeting. I lived on mac and cheese, I never did my hair, and my typical night was watching old game shows with my dad when he had time. And I had my books. Nothing special, but that was my life and I wasn’t ready for any part of it to change.

I hadn’t realized my dad had much different plans.

Maybe I might not be enough to fill the void in his life, maybe, just maybe, living on mac and cheese was not the life for him.

 They didn’t date for long, my dad and the new girl, or at least it didn’t feel long to me. Our game show nights quickly turned into nights with *her*. I could feel myself getting replaced and I couldn’t do anything about it. What made all of this bearable was my dad’s wheezing laugh came back, the one where he turns red in the face and doubles over from laughing so hard, I had almost forgotten how he was infamous for doing it in family videos, when there was no void in his life.

Did he ask me if I wanted two new brothers? That was a definite no.

So I retreated into my books.

 I truly believed *he* was the bane of my existence. It’s ironic really, because we were practically the same person, but I could not stand him, my new, younger brother. It was like having all of my own annoying qualities living in the room next to me. He obviously didn’t know I was the only one allowed to whistle while I did my homework, he didn’t understand how nights were meant for watching game shows, not playing the violin mediocrely (piano is the better instrument anyways). He caught on to my ticks very fast, and made it a point to do them as much as possible: constantly eating all of the popsicles, making the cat cry, hiding the good cereal (tick, tick tick).

 We were both negative magnets and whenever we got close to connecting, we would rebound harder than ever. Our parents eventually stopped trying to force the magnets together in order to avoid the repelling force. I was exhausted from fighting this war, but I was too stubborn to surrender. We were motionless, neither of us willing to give up or lose any ground we fought so hard to get, it was an endless cycle of tug of war and neither side was winning.

 But I still had my books.

I still have no idea why I ran out into the pounding rain that day. This rain was like no other, the gutter rivers sloshed over onto the sidewalk and the ringlets next to my ears were instantaneous as I ran towards the cement moat forming in front of my house. As I reached the rain filled gutter I started laughing, and it took me a second to recognize the laugh harmonizing with mine. It was my brother, my bane, running into my beautiful, spontaneous moment.

 The most beautiful part about this, is no part of me was tempted to return to my books when I saw him. We looked at each other, and then down at our feet completely overcome by water and we laughed. I never noticed how his nose scrunched up just like mine when he laughed, and his hair got slightly curly in the rain. I could physically feel our tug of war snap as we stood there. It was a clean break, there were no harsh rebounds or cut palms, just scrunched noses and curly hair. I was losing the will to fight with every rain drop dripping from my nose. The magnets finally connected, the war was over, this felt like the best surrender of my life. I never would have felt this relief if I had stayed inside and sat motionless in my war zone. I never would have seen the scrunched nose if I had kept focusing on every tick. So I stepped back, held up my white flag, and embraced the wet curly hair.

 There were no apologies after our moment. There was no dramatic forgiveness hug or tear filled confession. We went in, dried off, and lived our lives, the lives we should have been living for 2 years. It’s funny to think about those times now, to think how there was a time when we didn’t get home from school and eat our Cinnamon Toast Crunch and Life together. We still laugh when we compare ourselves to our cereal combination, him being the crunchy cinnamon with a twist and me being the bland, mushy life (his words not mine), but somehow when you mix them together, it makes everything better.