

Please, mama, forgive me - Diana Cehláriková

*Dear mama,*

*I am sure that in days long gone you were aware that writing was never difficult to me. I could go for hours and hours of not eating or drinking, only because my fingers were touching the keyboard placed atop the wooden table, typing the emotions out of my mind easily. However, this time, as I am holding a paper and a pencil in my hands, everything is silent - including emotions...*

*If everything's gone the way I planned, this is the special date. I know you know it and no matter how mad you are at me; I know you didn't forget. Or at least, I hope so... Being the kind of person you are, I am sure you were searching for answers day and night. I think it is only fair that you finally get them. You waited long enough...*

*On the 23rd of July, 2006, it was Friday, when I finally came home from college after three months. You wanted to celebrate that the family was together again at least for a few days before I had to go back. I was too stupid to appreciate your effort - a party with childhood friends was my priority that day.*

*"You can't be serious! You come home for three days and decide to spend one of them doing ridiculous things at some party while drunk and then sleeping it off tomorrow! You're not going anywhere!"*

*"Oh really? I think you forgot how old I am and that it's none of your business what I do anymore!" I spat at you. With my blood boiling and anger spreading in my veins, I left the house. The partying mood evanesced, but I was too mad at you to stay at home.*

*As every young adult, I thought that I could drown my sorrows in a tumbler. I was sitting at the bar, downing one shot after another and a thought that you had always hated that club flashed through my brain. I was sure if you had known, you would have started your traditional monologue about the quantity of perverts that this place kept, how the bartenders shamelessly poured up drinks to minors, while the location itself was swarmed with junkies, prostitutes, white meat dealers and blah, blah, blah...*

*'Of course, mom. I'm being pawed up here the whole evening by some men with filthy minds, while other guys at the bar are discussing which country they are about to send my organs to...' I could almost laugh at the absurdity of the idea. Frankly, the worst thing that had happened to me there so far, was that after few shots, I didn't feel any better and wanted to get out.*

*Soon, my friend Jade got sick and as I was told that her brother would pick her up in a few, she just needed someone to safely „deliver“ her, I did it. As I was standing in front of the club, with Jade throwing up again, I was studying the building. It was old and the grey painting surely wasn't renewed since it had been built and small windows were smothered with beer etiquettes. A neon sign with the name of a bar a few meters above the ground was blinking and it was annoying the hell out of me. There were some boys standing outside, having a smoke and that was the first time that I started to wonder what was pulling me here so strongly.*

*Fortunately, Jade's brother turned up soon and I was left alone at the poorly lighted boulevard.*

*"Having fun?" I heard a voice behind me.*

*"I wish..." I answered.*

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“If you don’t mind, I could give you a lift home. There’s no point in staying here when you’re not enjoying yourself,” *he said.*

“I don’t want to bother you. You were obviously enjoying yourself back inside...”

“No, that’s okay. I want to leave as soon as possible myself. By the way, I’m Dylan.” *He smiled at me.*

“Halsey.” *I responded. He was cute.*

*As I was sure other girls from our squad were having fun inside, I decided not to ruin it and go home. We walked to his car and struck up a conversation. He was friendly to me, asking me about my life, but he wasn’t pushing anything... I felt like I could trust him. Still talking about everything, I gave him directions on how to get to our house and he headed that way.*

*You’ve always known that trouble was going to find me someday while I didn’t even know how and that evening was no different... Soon, we got lost - he had barely known the area and I gave the credit to myself as well, as I was still speaking and distracting him.*

*Driving for forty-five minutes and still unable to disentangle from the situation, Dylan stopped the car. At first, I thought he wanted to ask someone for directions, but not at all...*

“How much?” *he asked me and I looked at him uncomprehendingly. He grabbed the crotch of his jeans, indicating that he wanted sex with me and repeated: “How much?” At that point, I knew that everything was completely wrong. The alarm in my head went off. I wanted to get to know him at first, but sex was out of the picture.*

“I’m sorry.” *With that, I got out of the car. When I took out my phone, and dialed my sister, he smashed the phone out of my hand. I didn’t even hear him exiting the car... He punched me in the face and I was sure he’d done it repeatedly, because when I woke up in the hospital a few hours later, I had bruises all over my face. He needed to make sure I was unconscious because otherwise I would have fought back...*

*The next thing I remember I was blinded by the sharp white light, bandages on my back and elbows. The first thing that occurred to me was that I had too many drinks and got so sick that girls had to take me to the hospital... That was far from the truth, unfortunately...*

*I was raped, mama. At first I thought they had the wrong person. That it just couldn’t be true. I didn’t believe them.*

*That was before I was allowed to use a toilet...*

*I pulled down the pants I was wearing to find out they were ripped in between legs. When trying to do the same with my panties, I couldn’t feel them. The fabric my panties were made of was hanging only on the thin seam on the right, the rest of it was torn up. I had deep scratches on my inner thighs and when I touched them, I felt a burning pain. My vagina was another story. Covered with scratches, I could see the drops of blood falling on the cobbles in the bathroom from between my legs... I felt like a part of me was ripped from my insides and I would never be able to get it back. I didn’t have a word for that feeling. I felt empty. My brain*

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*was talking my gut into not collapsing. I felt like screaming for help. The help that was never to come.*

*I was asked to sign papers that said Rape Victim, my clothes were confiscated and I was forced to stand straight naked while nurses took photos of my flesh wounds - I had a camera pointed to my elbows, back, thighs and even vagina...*

*I didn't want my body anymore. I was scared of it, I didn't know what had been in it, what it had been used as... Or why for that matter... I wanted to take off my body like a t-shirt, leave it at the hospital and then go to Walmart and get myself a new one.*

*I was told that I was found unconscious in an outlying street of New York, bleeding from between my legs. They advised me to get retested for HIV, because results didn't always show up immediately. But until then, I should go home and get back to my normal life...*

*I'm sorry, mama, but I was never ever going to be able to get back to my normal life. I felt helpless, like I was never going to be able to take control of my life and body again. I could never bear you seeing me like this, going crazy, worthless, hopeless, disgusted by myself, unable to do the simplest things... I'm sorry.*

*Mama, please, forgive me. For breaking all the rules, for getting into this situation, for becoming so dirty. I thought that something like that could never happen to me.*

*Today, it's been ten years since I slit my wrists because I didn't want to live like this, not being able to look into your eyes, because I ended up a dirty, restless, upset, frightened, listless and useless mess. Please, forgive me.*

*I love you.*

*Halsey*