

The Statue

Rachel Corrigan

Short Story

There is a statue in the town square.

It was erected many years ago to honor the hero of my town.

It depicts a woman, tall, strong, with her hands on her hips and her head held high. Her smile is wide but her eyes always look so empty to me.

The town has two days a year dedicated to her.

The first is a grand festival, held on her birthday.

Music plays through every street, food and drink is shared with friends and strangers alike, children paint their faces and dance in the town square, and those that were there to witness it tell tales of her might and bravery

On that day, I curl up in my bed, pillow over my head and try to ignore the sounds of music and laughter.

I hate that day.

The second day is one of remembrance, on the day she died. It is a somber day where people gather in the square and light candles in memory of the woman who gave her life to save their town. The people who knew her weep as they speak of the golden eyed girl with a heart of iron and a laughter like church bells.

On that day I stand in my best black suit, by my mother's side, hands clenched and head lowered and try to look sad like everyone else.

I hate that day.

It's the stories I hate the most.

I hear so many stories about the woman in the town square.

Stories of her bravery, of her kindness, of her quick wit and sharp sense of humor. It feels like every person who ever met her has a story about her.

Nobody ever wants to talk about the real story though.

The story of the loud mouthed, over the top, reckless women, who selflessly sacrificed herself to save her town and selfishly left her wife to raise their son alone in a broken home of loss and hurt and stories.

Stories of a brave hero, a loyal friend, a loving wife and an absent mother.

I think I hate her sometimes. When my Mother cries and locks herself away. I want to yell, to scream at her "how could you abandon us? You left us behind and now we are broken!"

I think I love her sometimes. When my Mother holds me close and hums the songs she used to sing. I want to hold her hand, to see her smile and to tell her "thank you, for bringing me into this world, for saving me and Mother"

Most of the time I don't know how I feel.

I've heard every story, seen every picture, watched complete strangers laugh and cry over her, but I don't really know her, I never did.

There is a statue in the town square.

It was erected many years ago to honor the hero of my town.

It depicts a woman, tall, strong, with her hands on her hips and her head held high. Her smile is wide but her eyes always look so empty to me.

To the people of our town she is a brave hero, to others a loyal friend, to my mother she is the love of her life but to me she is a stranger.

A character in a story I'll never get to meet, and that's all she'll ever be.