

## Vindicta

### Then

Sister, Mommy and Daddy held me down.

So I punished them beneath the ground

Where they locked me so I could never be found.

Aqua sancta est et maledixit \*

I'm coming for you☺

Sent at 13:13 from Desdemona's cell

This is the message I received on my cell at 1:13 pm. It didn't make sense. Nothing ever made sense when it came to my family. Least of all with my sister. As I paced in my small college dorm, I had an epiphany. A completely nonsensical, paranoid, and frightened deduction. Nonetheless, my gut was telling me to act on it. Here's a tip, Never trust your gut when you receive text messages from people whom you last saw incarcerated in the basement of an asylum. Yet in a just few hours I found myself standing at the gates of the building that was responsible for driving an innocent girl to insanity.

### Now

The stonewalls of the asylum loomed over me like a dark cloud. The windows were blown out so I could see the inside decaying like dead flesh. When the wind blew through it's halls, I swear I could hear the screams of the deranged patients they once imprisoned. One of those patients, Patient#335142, was my sister, Desdemona Poe. The patient that committed no crime except the crime of being born.

### Then

Our parents, this asylum belonged to them. All those years of “treating” Satan worshipers and serial killers must have seriously screwed their heads up in that they were *terribly* superstitious. Which doesn't even begin to describe how truly deplorable they were. I, was born during advent so my parents cherished me as if I was some kind of religious relic. I was also born with pale skin and light blonde hair, which shone like the sun. They named me Mary. My sister was unfortunate enough to be born on October 31<sup>st</sup> during a full moon and if you've grown up in the English-speaking world then you know what that means. She was born with hair the colour of charcoal and skin the colour of dirty puddles on a gravel road. She was named Desdemona (of the devil).

Well, you can see where this is going. I was the favorite child and Desdemona was the embarrassment. It didn't help that she was born with a hearing impairment, which made her voice sound hollow. Everything about her was demonic in the eyes of my parents. Her off colour skin, her brown-red eyes, and her long untamed ebony hair. To me, she was everything. She was the perfect sister. When Mother Father got mad at me, she

would fling herself in between us like it was her natural instinct to protect me. This earned her many extra beatings.

To my parents she was unwanted, a mistake, nothing but dirt beneath fingernails.

Eventually my parents sought to rob our twisted family of its last bit of humanity. They locked up Desdemona in the asylum. That's right. They put my sister in an asylum, sharing oxygen with serial killers and Satanists, on account of a hearing impairment, a different colour of hair, eyes and skin an unfortunate birthday.

The things that human beings are capable of doing to each other never ceases to amaze me.

Now

You know when you have done something over and over again and your limbs just do it without thinking at all? That is what happened next. Without any commands from my brain, my legs moved on their own. Putting one foot in front of the other independent of my will. As if there were invisible strings attached pulling them like I was some kind of puppet. The worst part, my legs had taken me inside the walls of the asylum involuntarily.

With every step, I trembled with an overwhelming sense of fear. The kind of fear that makes every single blood cell shiver. The fear that stops your breathing, for you feel that if you open your mouth, something is going to climb into it. Every inch of you wants to do nothing but run and not stop until you are safe in your bed with the covers pulled over

your head. You know the feeling when you're so afraid of what comes next that you feel the unending urge to let out a shriek in hope someone will hear you and come to your rescue. You hope the *thing* doesn't hear and come too.

I was helpless. There was nothing I could do to stop.

Have you ever seen a bug get trapped in a spider's web? Have you ever watched it struggle for its life as the spider descends on its prey? Well I was the bug, the asylum was the web, and my sister was the spider.

The inside walls of the asylum were caked with mould and rat dung. There were cracks so deep that I could hear a family of rodents scurrying around in there. At this point I was just letting my legs take me to wherever I was being lead to.

I was trembling with every involuntary step for I knew this asylum well. Very well. My legs (or *the* legs) were taking me down the stairs, to the basement, to my sister's cell.

Then

I had visited Desdemona many times when we were kids. I would bring her food, books, and toys. Anything that I could sneak past the guards. With each visit she looked worse and worse. The conditions that she was in were horrific. Besides the inedible food, the abusive staff, and the vermin problem, she had to deal with our parents stopping by every now and then to read some ancient poem in Latin trying to send her to hell. Little did they know, their daughter was already living in hell. Her neighboring patient was convicted

with murdering his family. All day he would mutter curses and poems telling of murder and revenge. At night, he would say it all in Latin. Desdemona was in a room by herself but she said she could hear rats, and God knows what else in the walls.

One day I visited her for the last time. I wasn't bringing terribly good news either. It was time for me to go to college. I wanted to stay by her side forever but my parents would never have it. Me becoming a lawyer was their dream for me. After I made the chilling journey to the basement, the state of my sister was anything but encouraging. Her eyes were sunken and bloodshot. Her skin was drawn tightly across her face. She had seen hell. When we spoke she would slip into Latin.

"Desdemona, how are feeling?" I asked.

"... I haven't esus\* all day. How do you think I tago?\*" She glowered.

When I told her I was going to be leaving town for college, her head shot up. Her eyes seemed to turn a darker shade of red. She screamed and clung to me. She shouted in Latin "VOS NON INTELLIGITIS SOROR ANIMAM MEAM IN INFERNO SUNT HODIE MITTO! AQUA FIET SCLESTI! PLACERE MANERE PER MEUM LATUS ET ERIPE ANIMAM MEAM AB AETERNA DAMNATIONE! I, of course, cannot speak Latin so Desdemona's wailing was just the mad plea of the poor tortured soul that was my sister. When I tried to detach her, she only screamed louder. Her nails began to dig into my flesh. The sounds she made were barely human. Finally I had to call for the guards to drag her off me. As I left the room slightly shaken, I looked back to see her red eyes glaring maliciously at me. As the guards dragged her away she muttered two words "Vindicta, Mary."

### Several months later...

I had settled into my college campus life when I found out the news that my parent's asylum had been shut down due to mistreatment of patients. All the patients were relocated to other asylums and some were set free. Mother and Father had gone missing. The news had initially lifted my spirits. Knowing that now, many patients were free of that wretched place and now receiving sufficient care. Thinking of my parents and my sister burdened my thoughts but I was happy she would be treated like a human being and hopefully reintroduced into society. With that thought in my mind I decided on looking into what had become of her. I called all the institutions that the patients were sent to. None, not one of them had even heard of Desdemona Poe. There was no way to know whether she left the hospital. In fact, there was no information to know if she was even in the hospital.

It was like she had never existed.

I'm ashamed to say I was somewhat *relieved* but terribly worried.

### Now

As I descended the stairs it got colder, the walls narrowed, one set of stairs led to another smaller set of stairs. The stairs were wet too. I slipped a few times landing in puddles of rancid smelling water. I recognized a few markings signaling I was near the basement. I recognized the set of tiles that were torn off by a patient that had tried to escape and had

to be dragged back to their cell. I recognized the rusty sign listing rules when visiting patients.

Attention! When visiting a patient please:

1. DO NOT visit them without a guard present
2. Keep the visit to 10 minutes
3. Try not to look them in the eye
4. DO NOT give them anything
5. DO NOT go into the cell with them

I let a ghost of a smile creep on my face. I broke every one of those rules.

That smile vanished as quickly as it came.

I was in the basement now.

The long hall of the basement contained 18 foul smelling cells. Each with heavy steel doors that could only be opened by a guard's key. The once sterile, bleak halls were now flooded with foot-high chemical smelling water. I could see it had once been higher from the level of paint that had been stripped off the walls by whatever chemical was giving the water that rancid smell. The puppet legs, of course, were unforgiving of my squeamishness and waded right into the oily water without showing any sign of slowing. There were plenty of unpleasant things in the water including a rat, which looked half eaten, still alive, trying to swim to safety. However

not even a half dead rat could compare to the horrible thing coming from my sister's cell.

Blood. Trickling down from the steel door mixing with the water. The cell really looked like it was bleeding. As if there was a huge wound in the cell itself. Whether the possession of my legs had spread to my arms or not, paying little heed to the blood gushing from the door, I reached out my hand, grasped the door handle, and turned it.

The door gave way, revealing a dark, completely empty cell. Except for one, big, bloody bathtub. The puppet legs, along with the rest of me, started to shake uncontrollably. They proceeded to the bathtub. Call me crazy but the way they moved seemed inhuman. I stood over the bath, gazing into its crimson depths. They swirled around forming different shapes, one looked like a hand, another looked like a face. No, it *was* face. It was the face and hands of Desdemona Poe. I stood there frozen as I watched the face of the angry spirit float to the surface. Even in a literal blood-bath, I could recognize her sallow skin, her charcoal hair. I even recognized her tiny scar from a nasty beating by mother and father. Her hands shot up from the bloody depths and grasped my head in their cold, dead palms. I tried to jump away from the tub but I guess you can never escape death when it comes for you. Almost instantly, they dragged me down into the crimson abyss.



The blood was freezing and stung on my face. My eyes were burning, my ears were burning, my lungs felt like they would explode. I thrashed around with every ounce of strength I had but to no avail. Through my eyelids, I could see her face. Her eyes, her lips. Moving slowly as things do in water. She was saying something. In English too. I stopped my thrashing for a millisecond to try and hear.

“You weren’t there when I was here. I was where you are now. I begged you to stay but you wouldn’t listen. Sister, sister, mommy and daddy held me down. Why weren’t you there?”

It clicked. The shrieking, the insanity, the Latin, the message, the water, the blood. It all fit together in one grand puzzle. When I visited Desdemona that last time, she wasn’t insane, she wasn’t speaking Latin because she had gone mad, she was begging me to save her from the fate I will soon share. She knew she was going to be murdered. She tried to tell me. *I* left her to die. She was murdering me in the bathtub Mom and Dad murdered her in. They held her head down like she held mine. She was taking revenge.

If anything can comfort a person being drowned in a bath of blood, it’s that their death will lead to a lost soul of a loved one finding eternal peace. I always loved my sister. I cared more for her more than anyone else in this world. Including myself. I would gladly give my life for my sister. It was time for her soul to rest. This was divine retribution.

My body was screaming for air. My brain pounded against my skull. I couldn't hold on any longer. I opened my mouth and took in a big gasp. Blood filled my lungs. I felt a pain greater than anything I ever felt before and then my world went dark. The last sound I heard was a steel door slamming shut and being locked...forever.

Latin translations

1. "Holy water is also cursed"
2. "eaten"
3. "feel"
4. I leave the translation of this passage to your imagination.