

Excerpt from The Glitch – Ida Linehan Young

It took him 94 years to say the words, though he'd known it for quite some decades. He was miserable, and crooked, and didn't deserve the woman Anastacia was. He didn't deserve the man she would have helped him to be.

And then he died.

He entered into a white space that became familiar to him. He'd been here before. "Hello, James."

"Hello," he said. "I'm afraid I don't remember your name."

"It's Violet."

"Right, Violet. Hello Violet." The words left his lips and suspended in the air of the vast and sterile colourlessness.

"Do you know why you're here?"

"Umm, because of the glitch?"

"That's correct."

"I don't know how I remembered there'd been a glitch and I had gained some time."

"This time is different; you have used up two and a half minutes of your bank. You only have two and a half left."

"Okay, so I can go to any time in my life and change a decision, correct."

"Correct. However, if you go beyond the set limit of two and a half minutes, you don't get to choose.

That decision you made before will stand as it was, and you will replay the rest of your life once again as

you just lived it. If you make the decision fast enough, you may even get to do this again, but the clock is ticking.”

“Okay.”

He reflected on his life as Violet set up the screen for him to pick a moment. Time was nothing here so it wouldn't take 94 years, but perhaps, 94 seconds. He watched until he got to Anastacia when he told her he was leaving without her, that he had bigger plans, that she didn't fit into them. He thought of the music on the second floor, and the family she'd had without him, he thought of his own selfishness and misery. Most of all, he thought of his loneliness and his longing for her companionship.

“I want to go there.” He pointed to the screen. Perhaps he could have that life.

“I'm sorry,” Violet said. “That one is off limits.”

“Off limits? But why?”

“You're two and a half minutes went to that choice last time. You'd raised a big family, you'd had a life with Anastacia, but you wanted to change that. You can't use your glitch at the same decision point. Nor can you use it later to undo the decision.”

“What? I had that life?”

“Yes, you were on the second floor with your family around you when you died.”

“How come I don't remember?”

“Because it was your first glitch.”

“But I want it back.”

“The glitch doesn't allow it. You can't repeat. I'm sorry. You must choose something else.”