

The Fire Within

Grade 11th
Fiction X
Poetry _____
Nonfiction _____



Pain. That's all I've felt for the last couple of months. The constant string of torture seems to never end; God I wish it would. Don't worry about it, everything will be ok. I think to myself, though it never seems to be.

Three months and eight days ago my mother, father and I had gotten into a car crash. We were on our way home from dinner when a drunk driver drove over the yellow line, and swerved into our lane. His car crashed into the side of ours. My mother was killed on impact but my father... his death wasn't as easy. It was slow and painful and I had to watch it. I was pinned so there wasn't anything I could do to help. I wish it would've been me and not them.

I continue driving, and let my mind wander which was probably not a good idea. Eventually it plants itself onto him. The him would be my ex boyfriend, Ryker. I've tried pushing the memories of him out of my mind, but they won't budge. The beginning of our relationship was amazing, more than I could ever ask for. Then one night he got angry and held me against his bedroom wall by my throat. He said it was an accident, that he just got so angry and he couldn't control himself. He said he was sorry. I believed him, and so I forgave him. Things got worse after that night. I would have a few marks on my arms from when he grabbed me as I tried to walk away, a busted lip from when I said something he didn't like, and bruises on my throat from when he just wanted me to be quiet. I still continued to forgive him.

One night I went to a party with my friends, stayed out a little too late and got a little too drunk. Ryker and I were suppose to hang out that night but I just wanted to let loose for a little while and forget everything that was going on. I eventually went home because it was getting late. I went up to my bedroom to change and found Ryker in the corner. He was raging with anger. That was the night that changed everything. Before he laid a hand on me I was begging

him to leave me alone. By the time it was over I was wishing I was dead. I shake my head, I don't want to think about him... not ever.

I pull into the driveway, get out and walk into the house. We pretty much live in the middle of nowhere, the closest neighbor is about seven miles down the road. I guess isolation from everyone else isn't such a bad thing. I walk in shutting the door behind me and set my bag down on the floor. John, my uncle, is sitting at the kitchen table when I walk in.

"I got a call from your principal, he said that you were late for school today. Wanna tell me why." He says looking up at me. "I woke up a little late. I've had a really bad day, I can't handle you being upset with me right now." I say sitting down across from him, burying my head in my arms.

"Hey, it's ok. I'm not mad, it happens to everyone. Don't worry about it kid." He says laughing. "So what else made your day so bad, besides being late for school?" He asks. I just sit there for a moment, trying to decide whether or not I want to share what lurks inside my mind with him. "Car?" he asks as he looks down at me. "Every moment that I let my mind wander, the thought of Ryker creeps in. I don't know why it... it just does and I wish it wouldn't." I pause, "And I've been thinking of mom and dad a lot. I miss them." I say. "I know you do." John says looking at me. "Why don't you take the night off and do something fun, take your mind off things. If you want you can invite a friend over and have them spend the night or whatever kids your age like to do." He says. "No I kinda want a night to myself." I say. "Are you sure?" he asks with a concerned look in his eye. I nod my head.

After talking with John, I went upstairs to work on some homework before dinner. John was downstairs paying for our food, after about twenty minutes of two indecisive minds clashing

together we had finally decided on pizza. He called me downstairs to eat dinner before he had to go to work. John's a cop, he got stuck working the night shift tonight.

We sat down at the table and dug into the pizza. I asked him about some of the cases he's been working. He began telling me about this murder case where a guy shot his wife and kids and left them dead on the floor while he went out to the bar. People these days, they're all going insane.

I told John I'd clean up while he got ready for work. I turn the sink water on and start scrubbing at the plates. My phone starts buzzing in my pocket. I wipe my hands off on the towel next to me and unlock my screen, going into my messages. It's from my best friend Jaimy. 'Hey Car, I noticed you were a little upset. I love you and I hope everything's ok! XOXO' Aww how sweet is he! 'Hey, everything's ok it's just been a rough day. I love you too!' I stick it back in my pocket and go back to my task.

After doing dishes I decided to watch a scary movie in the living room. I begin scrolling through the movies on Hulu and eventually find one of the Halloween movies, the 2007 one which is one of my favorites. I start watching the movie and get lost in thought. I wonder what drives someone to kill another person. I guess there are a lot of different reasons. Jason drowned in the lake and watched his mother lose her head... literally. Michael had a shitty childhood along with psychological issues, a perfect storm. But what about the people without a motive. People that kill for the fun of it. That's definitely a lot worse.

"Alright kid, I'm off." John says, snapping me out of my daze. I get up and walk over to hug him. "Ok, be safe."

“I will. You too, keep the doors locked and the shades drawn.” he says releasing me from the hug. “I will.” He walks out and I watch him walk to the patrol car before shutting and locking the door.

I go back to watching the movie, making a mental list on how many people Michael has killed. So far the number is ten and they’ve all been pretty gruesome. I check my phone to see what time it is, ‘9:13’. It’s been about an hour since John left. This is going to be a long night, I think to myself. To my left I see the porch lights turn on. They don’t come on unless something activates them. I get up and slowly walk towards the window, peeking through the curtains to see if there’s anything out there. Nobody. It must’ve been the wind or something.

I start walking back to the couch when I hear a knock on the door. I walk over to the door and peek through the hole. I don’t see anyone so I open it and walk out onto the porch. “Hello?!” I call out. There’s no answer. What the hell? I turn around to head back inside and I hear the porch creak from behind me. I turn around and there is a large man standing behind me, his body towering over mine. A mask covers his face and all I can see are his stone cold eyes. My eyes widen. I take a few steps back, towards the door, and he slowly follows me. I quickly turn to run inside but he grabs my wrist and pulls me towards him. I don’t remember deciding to do it but I thrust my elbow into the side of his face. His grip on my wrist loosens and I manage to pull it away before he can grab it again.

I run towards the door and try to shut it. His hand slips between it, not letting me close it. I push on the door, but he’s not budging. I pull the door back and slam it onto his hand. He groans and yanks his hand back allowing me to shut the door and lock it. He vigorously bangs on the door sending an echo through the house.

I grab my phone. My hands are shaking horribly which makes dialing 911 more difficult than it should be. The pounding stops, everything goes silent until the person on the other line answers.

“911 what’s your emergency?”

“Hello, there’s this man out on my front porch. He... he tried to grab me and he almost got into my house and he’s banging on the door trying to get in.”

“Sweetie calm down, what’s your name?”

“Caroline... Caroline Smith.” I say trying to breathe.

“Ok Caroline, I’m Ryan. I’m gonna help you ok. Are all the doors locked?”

“Yes.”

“Good, is he still banging on your door?”

“No he stopped.”

“Ok, I’m gonna send someone to your house, where do you live?”

“322 Oak Drive.”

The banging starts again, but this time on the living room window and not with his hand. I can hear the window begin to crack, so I run upstairs and hide behind the wall.

“Please you have to send someone now, he’s gonna get in.”

“The police are on their way right now Caroline. They’ll be there soon.”

The window shatters, sending glass everywhere. He climbs through the window and looks around. His eyes slowly wandering around the room. He walks into the kitchen, I watch him until he disappears. I can hear him searching through things, searching for a place I might be

hiding. Finally he comes back into sight, he whips out his knife and begins looking around the other rooms downstairs.

“How long until they get here?” I ask panicked. “I’m gonna be honest with you Caroline, you live pretty far out so it will take them a minute to get there.”

“How long?!”

“At least fifteen minutes.” My heart sinks in my chest, it feels like everything is crushing me.

The tears that had built up in my eyes have finally spilled out onto my cheeks. “I’m gonna die.” I say quietly, tears rushing down my face.

“You aren’t going to die do you hear me? You aren’t going to die.” Ryan’s words spark a small fire inside me, giving me hope. I peek around the corner, I can’t see the man but I can hear him. His footsteps echo through the house. Each step he takes sends shivers down my spine, I can hear them getting closer. It’s only a matter of time when he finally realizes I’m not downstairs, and I think my time just ran out. “He’s gonna come upstairs. He’s gonna find me.” I say quietly.

Slowly I start walking towards the closest room, which just happens to be John’s. You’re almost there Caroline, just a few more steps. Don’t make a sound. My foot finds the floor and it just happens to make a creaking sound. I don’t have the time to look back, all I can think about right now is getting to John’s room.

I walk in and shut the door behind me, carefully trying not to make another sound. The doors don’t have locks, so there’s no way to stop him from getting in here. I start panicking. My breathing is fast and shallow. What am I going to do?

In my mind I start thinking about ways to survive this. The doors don't have any locks on them. The only way I can stop him from getting in here is if I tie the doorknob to the dresser or push the dresser in front of it. No... too much noise, he'll hear me. I start looking around John's room for a weapon. He has a safe in the closet, that's where he keeps a hand gun. I run to the closet, falling down onto my knees when I get to the front of the safe. Password... what's the password? I start typing in the numbers of special days hoping that one will work. Nothing I try is working. "Dammit!" I say as I hit the side of the safe. "Caroline, are you ok?" Ryan asks. "I don't remember the password to John's gun safe." I say crying. "Ok Caroline, the best thing you can do right now is hide." He says. "There is nothing I can do that will stop him from finding me." The tears are streaming down my face. "There is, find a place to hide and stay there. Help will be there soon." He says. "Ok." I say

His footsteps become louder the closer they get. I get up off the floor and walk over to the bedroom door. I lean in and press my ear to the door, listening to see exactly how close he is. I can hear him step down, and the floor creaks beneath him. The same spot that creaked beneath me. He's close. I step away from the door and look around for a place to hide. Every place I could hide in here is too noticeable. I look over at the bed, I can fit under it. It's probably the most obvious hiding spot ever but it's what I have.

The door opens and the man walks into the room, stopping a few steps in. I watch as he walks over to the corner behind the dresser. Realizing I'm not there he walks into the closet and looks. He sees that I'm not there either, and walks into John's bathroom. This is the time to escape, I think to myself. I slowly slide out from under the bed and peek around the side of it to

see him, I don't want to take my eye off of him. I can see him in the mirror above the sink. I slowly walk out of John's room and run downstairs, not even worrying about looking back.

My footsteps were light but each time they hit the wooden floor, a creak came out from under them. He must have heard me. The man runs out of John's bedroom and down the stairs. His long strides catch up to my smaller ones. I try to run out of the house but his arms latch around me and throw me back. My body tumbles onto the floor and my right side makes contact with the corner of a wall, sending shooting pains throughout my body. A shriek escapes my mouth, and I try to catch my breath. All I can focus on is the pain in my side, that and the fact that I'm about to die.

He walks over to me and bends down, his face is close to mine. His eyes are a blue-grey color, cold and rigid... like steel. They look familiar. The way he is looking at me, like he could turn me to stone. He smiles and wraps his hand around my throat. He picks me up and slams me against the wall, pinning me to it. His grip tightens and I can't breathe. Dark spots appear in my vision. My fingers start tingling. Before I pass out I slam my fist into his throat, he releases me. My legs give out and I sink to the ground. He steps back, gasping for air. I get up, my knees shaking, and my side burning. I thrust a knee into his stomach, but it doesn't do much to him. He pushes me away and I fall back onto the ground.

There's not much I can remember after he smashed my head against the floor. I remember him shoving me onto the ground and him driving his foot down into my side. I remember trying to crawl away and him grabbing my leg and yanking me back. Then he started smashing my head against the wood floor and my memory after that is blank. Telling from the blood dripping

from my face, the dark spots blurring my vision, and the throbbing pain in my head, it wasn't good.

I try to drag myself away from him but my arms are too weak. Out of the corner of my eye I can see him looking down at me. His eyes travel from me to something else on the floor. He walks over and picks it up, I realize it's my phone. I can hear Ryan talking through it. I hear the man press a button and now Ryan's voice is louder. I want to talk to him, I need his help now more than ever. "He... help." I croak, tears stream down my face. "Please help me!" I manage to scream out, blood gurgling in my throat. "Caroline the police are almost there." Ryan says. The man laughs and puts the phone up to his mouth. "You're. Too. Late." he says. His voice is familiar, I know I've heard it before.

I see the man lift his arm, and then hear a thud on the wall next to me, followed by another thud as something hits the floor... my phone I imagine. He crouches down next to me, and smiles. I know this man from somewhere. He lifts his hand and pulls the mask off his face. What he reveals is horrifying, I can't believe it. The man that snuck into my room and held me hostage. The man that tied me up, and nearly beat me to death. That same man is hovering over me like a predator hovers over its prey right before it makes the kill, ready to do it all again. "Ryker." I say quietly.

"Surprise." he says. Fear disseminates throughout my body leaving me numb. "No." I choke out, the blood in the back of my throat making it hard to talk. Tears are still spilling from my eyes. I roll over trying to get away from him but the beating I endured makes it difficult to move. He grabs my shoulder to stop me, and pulls me back into my previous position. "Hey,

don't move." he says sternly. He gently wipes the tears away with his thumb. "Poor little Caroline, lying there all defenseless. Too weak to fight back."

He takes my face into his hands and his eyes lock onto mine. His stare is a mixture of things. Harsh yet sympathetic, bitter yet sweet. It's almost like he feels bad for what he's doing; I know he doesn't. Behind the sweet and caring look he first gives off is the toxic one. The one that is pure deadly. He smiles and takes the knife out of his pocket and holds it to my throat, the tip of the blade resting on the center of it. "This time I will make sure you die, and you're too weak to do anything about it." He says. The fear disappears, and is quickly replaced with anger. I won't give him what he wants. He wants me to be completely terrified of him. He wants me to beg for my life. He wants me to feel like nothing. He wants to win, I won't let that happen.

"You're wrong." I say. I push the knife away from my face and slam my palm into his nose. He steps back and drops his knife. I stand up and drive my foot into the front of his knee. He groans but he doesn't fall. I go to kick him again but he latches onto my foot and yanks it forward. My head snaps back and slams against the floor. My vision goes dark for a minute and there's a distant ringing in my head. I feel a sharp pain in my side, followed by another one in the center of my stomach. A burning sensation trails behind it. I look up and see him hovering over me. My eyes move from his face to his hand, which is connected to a knife stuck inside me. Oh no. No,no,no,no,no. Blood is streaming out of each wound, forming a small puddle on the floor. My head starts to get fuzzy, and I can start to feel the toll of all the blood loss... I feel tired. My fingers are tingling. I move them around a bit to try and regain some feeling and I notice there's something under my hand.

Everything starts to go numb. I can't feel my legs anymore, my fingers are still tingling and I just want to sleep. I know If I give in now I will die, and he will win. There is one thing I can do. I look back up at Ryker, and see him smiling. "Goodbye Caroline." he says. The small sparks have united into one large flame. The wildfire raging inside me is fanned with a hurricane of hate for him. It is uncontrollable. I can't help it, a small smile tugs at the corner of my lips. "Goodbye." I say. I drive the shard of glass from the broken window into the side of his neck. I release my grip on it and my hand falls to the floor beside me. The piece of glass sticks out of his neck, lots of blood is dripping from the wound. He grasps at his neck. His fingers clasp around the shard of glass and pull it out. A larger stream of blood shoots out of his neck. He is surprised, I can tell by the expression on his face, I think I even see a little fear; and then his expression goes blank, and his body hits the floor with a loud thud. He's dead. My small smile turns into a beaming one. I won.

I remember every bit of my last moments. I remember thinking of mom and dad and how hopefully I would get to see them soon. Then my mind trailed from them to Uncle John. I couldn't help the thought of leaving him behind. I want him to know that I tried my hardest to stay alive, and how much I love him and that I didn't want to leave. I remember how painful it was not being able to say goodbye, and then I remember the moment when all of my pain drifted away. I remember feeling my heartbeat slow down, and how relaxed I felt. Then my mind went to all the positive things I did in my life, and how grateful I was for it. My life may have been short but it was one well lived. Suddenly, I wasn't scared about dying anymore.

The moment I remember most is when I decided to close my eyes and let the fire inside me burn out; when I decided that it was ok to let go. The thing I remember most about it, was how peaceful everything was when I finally did.