



September 20, 2016

( Life is not too complicated, we just make it seem it is because we like to ~~give ourselves more importance than we're worth of~~. We humans think we are ~~these complicate~~ machines, but we are not. Once you learn what makes someone tick everything becomes easy.

This is a story about a boy. It's not good. ~~It's not bad,~~ it just is. )

I.

Everyone needs a little therapy, his sister's tone is cheerful, but Jinwoo knows she's scared. She's not scared of him, she's scared for him. ~~Therefore,~~ Jinwoo visits a therapist at the ~~age of 15;~~ **he is discreet, someone who is recommended by the rich and famous, no one will know he has weekly appointments.** ~~Not that Jinwoo cares, he doesn't, if anyone sees him leaving the building he will just come with an excuse, lying is as easy as breathing anyway.~~

He sits in front of the ~~Doctor,~~ stares **at the many certificates on the wall of his room and waits.** It's always a family problem, Jinwoo knows. How is ~~relationship~~ with his parents? ~~Does~~ they spend enough time together? And how about his sisters? Does Jinwoo resent being the middle child?

Good, yes, good, no.

It's not family problems, it's him. Jinwoo is wrong on the inside, and when the doctor says his confusing sexuality is not a problem ~~he chuckles.~~ Of course it isn't.

"I killed a boy." Jinwoo says. Sure, he didn't pull the trigger, he didn't push the kid in front of a train. He used his favorite weapons: ~~Words.~~ He talked and talked and talked until the boy couldn't take it anymore and his mother ~~had to find him dead in his bedroom.~~

"How does that make you feel?" The doctor asks, writing in his notebook.

"Fine." He stops writing, looks at Jinwoo. "He was a nuisance, I'm glad ~~he is gone.~~"

~~It's not a lie for shocking value, it's the truth.~~


~~Jinwoo is wrong on the inside.~~



## II.

His bedroom is simple. Sometimes it's tidy, most times the ~~ground is covered in sheets of paper~~. Jinwoo writes it down as he imagines it; the beach, the sea, how the waves ~~crush on the rocks, the sound they make~~. ~~He uses too much adjectives, his teacher told him~~, so he tries to cut ~~those~~ down and focus ~~on the scene and in~~ the characters.

He can't do it, writing the characters.

Jinwoo can describe places in a way that makes people see them as they read, he can make people dream about the sounds of the sea, **but he can't make them like his characters**. Your characters lack empathy, his teacher says as she corrects another story. 

~~Empathy, Jinwoo never understood what that word means~~.

## III.


Items Jinwoo treasures:

- a. His first chess board, given by his mother when he was 7
- b. His book collection
- c. A shell his ~~young~~ sister gave him the day she came back from the hospital after falling from a tree
- d. The notebook where he writes down his stories

He makes a list and looks at it.

People Jinwoo treasures:

- a. His parents
- b. His sisters

He makes another and compares both lists. Something is wrong when you can't name more than four people you like, Jinwoo knows, but he can't bring himself to like others. ~~His neighbors, the kids on his class, he doesn't feel a thing about them; if they're gone tomorrow he won't miss them~~. Empathy is a tricky thing when the **only feeling you have is self-love**. 



IV.



(There is another boy too, he is there if you look close enough, if you know the right questions, but just if you know.)



V.



This time is the school's counsellor. Jinwoo likes her, she always offers him black tea and it doesn't feel like a session, it feels like a conversation between friends, even if she's ten years older than him and she's being paid to listen to his problems.

"Don't you regret it, what you did to that kid?" She asks, sounding curious. Jinwoo isn't sure, but he can bet she is writing medical essays about him. Classic narcissist, medical terms, etc., etc.

There's a silence as Jinwoo remembers the other boy. Not the one he killed, his face is blurred in Jinwoo's memory, the third one, the one who caused everything.

I killed for you, who else can say they did this? It's a quote from a movie he watched the previous night, but Jinwoo thinks he wrote it. The other boy cried a lot that day, he cried a lot the days after, and he screamed and begged Jinwoo to try to understand, but he was the one who didn't. He was going to take Jinwoo's only friend away, what else could he do?



"No, not at all." He shrugs.

VI.



The story about a boy wins a competition, nothing big, but he gets an award and it is published. He's a young promise, they say, the way he writes moves people, and all of that without one single bit of empathy.



(It's a lie. He felt empathy once, for a boy he called best friend. They loved each other, or at least Jinwoo loved him, but now he is just a memory. Not a good one, not a bad one. Just a memory.)

VII.

"So, Law School after History?" His sister looks at the screen of his laptop, sitting beside him. "Why?"

Jinwoo shrugs, writing down his application form.

"You don't need to like people; you just need to be good."



Heesan ADMISSIONS

Empathy be damned. 