

Emma Anderson

Period: 2

Fiction

Not a Father's Daughter

I felt the blistered wall texture on the back of my shoulder blades, piercing my skin with every movement. My eyes were burnt by the smell of dead spirits- dad's whiskey breath. My body slowly went limp, I couldn't speak or move- a corpse. I began to hear a ringing in my ears, getting louder as dad's words got quieter. My heartbeat returned to normal. I woke up and thanked God that it was just a dream. Dad had gone off the deep end, and this dream was only a glimpse of what was yet to come. Shivers were sent down my spine, as I heard the loud and unsteady footsteps on the floor. Each board creaked louder than the other. Dad was home for the first time in weeks. He must have gotten tired of his mistress and wanted someone else to beat on.

Hiding in my room, doing the so-called challenging fifth-grade math homework, I eavesdropped on mom and dad's conversation. At first, it sounded fine, but after each word spilled from his mouth, I could tell he wasn't sober... big surprise. I remember something he said to mom very distinctly, though it had been six years now.

He said, "Maria, it's time that you get that nuisance of a child out of here. She is the reason I never come home. She should be on the streets living in a damn box. She will be gone by tomorrow."

Mom never responded to him, which made me feel better after hearing my own father speak of me in such a way. I usually never cried when dad would say those things, but something hit me differently that day. I thought to myself that he could be right, was I the problem? Thoughts fluttered in my mind so loud that I could hardly hear the water boiling in the kitchen- dinner time. Dinner is supposed to end a person's day on a good note. For me, dinner was the worst possible thing. Nothing good ever came from dinner. Dad had already slugged down five beers, and two shots of whiskey. His eyes gradually became hollow, much like his soul. I sat at the orange, old, worn out table. My chair imprisoned me. Mom looked at me shamefaced. I could tell she knew that something wasn't right, but that didn't mean she would take any sort of action. She was so in love with dad, it completely blinded her from any kind of reality.

Wanly, I looked at mom and mouthed the words; "l e t s g e t o u t o f h e r e."

I knew she understood me. After the last words of dad's drunken mumble, my brother, Julius, left the dinner table, hoping he wouldn't have to hear any more. After Julius excused himself, everyone else did, like at the end of a movie when there is always one last person in the theater watching the credits and soaking in the film, that was me in this case. I sat at the table for a moment so that I could try and sort out the millions of

thoughts stirring in my mind. As soon as the bland tomato soup loitering in front of me got cold, and the idea of eating anymore made me ill, I left for my room.

As I sat and watched the moon tango with the sun through my small window, I imagined what my life would have been like if dad was locked up years ago. Could mom have been happier, would Julius hate me? Thoughts whirled in my brain, causing a surge of fear. As always, that night was sleepless. As the next day arrived, I pondered what would happen. Would I be a punching bag? Or perhaps a soldier in war, praying for my life to be spared? Usually, when dad came home, the next day would be terrifying for me. That day was nothing like I imagined, dad didn't speak a single word to me nor come anywhere near me. As dinner came around once again, I could feel my own stomach turn inside out. That night dinner was silent much like most of the day-unsettling. I took the action of doing the dishes, knowing mom stayed in the kitchen every night for about an hour after dinner to clean. That night mom wasn't there. Dad was nowhere to be seen. The house remained quiet, it felt like an eternal moment of silence, their marriage was finally dying. The back door swung open, as I heard mom utter the word "leave." The door then slammed shut and caused the brittle house to shake. Dad left again.

I finished doing the dishes, then went to my bedroom. Tossing and turning as nightmares ate me alive, I woke up to a real-life nightmare. Dad was back, higher and drunker than he had ever been. I was so terrified, my body did everything in its power not to let me move. I broke through my cocoon of blankets and stuttered towards the only thing keeping me protected from dad-- my door. I peeked through the small crack between the door and hinge and saw dad rip mom's phone from her hands. She fell to the floor crying, and that's when I knew it was time for me to stand up to him, the man that imprisoned me in a world of pain. The sound of mom and dad fighting subsided as I began to feel light headed. I opened the door and saw dad hit mom. I thought to myself about the consequences of what I was about to do. It was worth it for mom to see what he does to me. It was worth getting dad out of here after all these years of sad childhood memories. It was worth all the pain I would soon be in. In all honesty, it was completely worth my life.

I yelled, "leave her alone you drug addicted freak!" Fast movement- he was bolting toward me. The door handle slipped through my hands as if it was covered in grease. The door never closed. The handle missing, ripped from the door. I could feel the blistered wall texture on the back of my shoulder blades. My head filled with a haze as dad struggled to yell,

"You piece of shit! You don't deserve to live! You will never be my daughter, why don't you kill yourself!" Moments passed, mom had somehow managed to get dad off of me.

I felt the old carpet in between my numb fingers, wet from the blood- my nose flooded the floor. I noticed that I couldn't move my wrists, they were both shattered, the evidence on the wall. I could barely gather the strength to mumble the words, "Is dad gone?" It was silent, the loudest silence in the world. My mom was knocked on the ground out cold, with a goose egg already developing on her head. Dad was in the backyard screaming when, sirens came blaring into our driveway- police. They opened the back door to our house to find one thing, us lying beaten on the ground. A young deputy tackled my so-called father. I blacked out after that.

Soon, I woke up in the E.R., laying in a bed next to my mom. I stared at her with an unforced grin. Tears ran down my face as I gripped her hand tightly. She opened her eyes, taken aback to see me next to her. As the two of us laid there in the hospital room, I thought about how much my life was about change, for the better.

My dream of dad being gone had finally come true. Though I would always wonder why he really hated me.