

Alisa

I don't think people understand the meaning of family. Hell, I didn't until *I had no choice* but to. Blood doesn't make a family. Sure, you may have the same DNA as them, but family is someone you trust, someone you desire, someone you love unconditionally. Growing up, I always thought I had the best family. The sturdiest family that couldn't split with the thickest knife in the world... I was wrong though. Maturing for me was realizing that if I wanted a family, I would have to step out of my bubble and into theirs.

Of course, I was scared that night. As one would be. It wasn't the people screaming for someone to call 911 or the ringing in my ears that came from the incident that scared me though but the fact that I couldn't move. I just stood there over my sister's body as she bled out onto the ground. I don't know what happened. If you asked me to explain it today I still wouldn't be able to. I just froze. The therapist my parents set me up with months later told me that it was okay, it was normal to freeze up in such a spot I was in. I just nodded my head, acting as if I agreed but I knew, and I think the therapist also knew, that I believed that was B.S.

It's been 8 years since then. Going to therapy helped in no way. I just needed someone to understand what I was going through. You would believe that your parents would, or at least be there for you. Not mine though. The parents of the year decided to take a trip to Italy instead, leaving me and my twin sister alone. Scarlett. My twin. My other half. When our sister died, Scarlett kind of just went silent. She didn't talk or eat, just stared at me. One night I woke up to her sitting on her bed just watching me. It was weird, but maybe that's just how she was coping.

We were close with our sister, her being older made us look up to her. At her funeral my dad just talked about how much she *loved* her younger sisters. "ShE wOuld IOVe tO sEE hOw MuCH thEY'vE gROWn", he repeated that line at least 67 times. As if he would *know*, he never paid attention to us. Our older sister basically raised us.

Scarlett didn't come to the funeral. She had spoken for the first time in two weeks and just said it "wasn't her cup of tea." She was just being a brat now. Out of me and her, she was the emotional one who could show her feelings and talk about them. Not me though, I always pushed it down and acted fine. I envied Scarlett for that. Maybe things could've been different, I don't really know. I always think about it though. I always think about Scarlett.

Scarlett

Having a family is pathetic. They bring you down. They loosen the tie you took hours to tighten. Maybe that may seem dumb to you. Not to me though, if *you've* been through what *I've* been through then you would probably understand. *I had no choice* but to keep to myself. Having people around messes you up. That leads to messing your plans up, and that leads to getting nowhere in life. I can't have anyone messing up my plans. I worked *so hard* to get here.

I'm not scared of anything. My idiotic parents believed that a therapist would help me cope with my "troubles". My trouble was them, no, my trouble was her. My sister was my problem. My twin sister. She was the reason that our family fell apart. It's all *her* fault. She doesn't care though, which is so damn pathetic.

I'm sixteen years old. Eight years ago it was a Tuesday night as I watched my mom give my sister 2 dollars to go to the store and buy some candles for *my* birthday cake. She never returned though. Dominique was no longer able to hug me, she was no longer able to brush my hair back as I told her the new movies I added to my list. What picked at me the most, was that I would never hear her harmonious voice make jokes about the nickname she gave me again.

Everyone treated me so fragilely when Dom died. I had stopped talking, it was my way of saying that everyone is full of s*it. No one understood that though, No one but Alisa that is. I'm sure she believed I was being a brat. I was, to her. I wanted her to feel the same pain I imagined Dom felt. My parents continuously told me that it wasn't her fault. It made me so angry, I resented Alisa more each day.

Not long after Dom died my parents decided they wanted a "fresh start". I knew that it actually meant that they wanted to be away from us so they took a trip to Italy which wound up with them never coming back. I didn't care, they weren't any good anyway. Alisa didn't say anything about it. She always hides her feelings, so when they told us she just shrugged it off.

Alisa moved out a few days after they did. She probably thought that I didn't want her there. Which I didn't. I could fend for myself. The thing about Alisa is pathetic. When she left she had to go and find people who could lift her up when she fell. I watched her from afar, closely, because one day... I was going to kill her.

Alisa

"Kind of like swaying to a slow song," I sang watching L'Ja flip the pancakes while moving the pan.

L'ja looked down at me laughing, "You don't think that it's too much though?"

"No, we need this L," I said brushing my pants legs off. "It'll be fun!"

I'm sixteen years old now. It's been 8 years since the incident & 7 years since I moved along with my life. Or at least that's what I tell people when they ask. Actually though, I never moved on from what happened that day. It haunts my mind like an elf on the shelves haunt jars. I try to make myself believe I've moved on but in reality, every moment when I'm alone, I am left to my thoughts and I think of her.

Hiding these feelings is easy for me since I've been doing it for the majority of my life. I know some people realize though, mostly L'Ja. He never confronts me about it but I know that he just wants to take all of my pain away. I met L'Ja through two other people who are very close to me now. He needed a job and I suggested that maybe he could work for me.

It's not weird for a 16 year old to have a job, it is weird though for a 16 year old to have an arms dealing job. When my parents moved to Italy they left my uncle's business in my hands. They told me that it would help me cope with my experiences. It didn't, but it keeps me busy. For my job I need bodyguards, at first I thought it was self centered but I realized that what I do is very dangerous. It wasn't just the job that made me get bodyguards though, I hated that fact. Scarlett had been trying to assassinate me for 4 years now. She's angry, I understand that. She has every right to be, but trying to kill me is just foolish.

Artist Statement

This is not my first time writing about the journey of Alisa and Scarlett. It's been a recurring thought in my head of twins who are out for each other. I thought it would be interesting to have them describe the different ways people view family. The essential questions are answered by Scarlett and Alisa both telling their point of views of what it means to be a family. There are many thoughtshots all around, especially when the girls talk about their feelings. My snapshot was when Alisa described what happened the night her sister died. It gives close action on how she feels and what was going on.