

Here A Short Story

(Stella)

"I remember meeting you the first day of school.

My hair was in wavy pigtails, my bright pink shirt had my favorite princess on it, and my smile was wider than it had ever been before, even with the giant gap in the front. Back then, I thought I was gonna grow up and be this happy, popular girl with a cute boyfriend and become a famous pop star. I always loved to sing, and perform, so it seemed like a reasonable outcome. Those were the days man, those were the days.

When I met you, you were wearing a sweater vest and a collared shirt, I remember this because you were the nicest dressed boy in the class. I look back fondly on your hair in a mess of brown curls, and the goofy smile that you wore. These traits made me want to be your very best friend.

We met in the sweetest turn of events, like something out of a movie. The necklace that you wore was broken during recess. At first, you didn't notice, but as it was ripped from your neck when you went down the slide, I watched it fall. I then found it in the wood chips and shoved it in my pocket, hoping no one would see. When you finally noticed it was gone, you ran to a teacher crying, and we were all told to search for it. I pretended, though I kept it, but not because the necklace was pretty and I thought it was mine, I just wanted something special that I could hold that reminded me of you.

In the 3rd grade, I remember throwing a snowball at you, and it had ice in it. It nearly broke your nose, but you were still laughing. I remember being in the ER with you because I felt really bad and my mom understood that, but you were confused. You understood it was an accident, but you didn't understand why I felt bad. You were the most forgiving person from the very start.

In the fifth grade, you gave me your apple in trade for my pudding every day. Even on days I was sick, you would walk over with an apple in hand and that goofy smile on your face.

You really liked mama's pudding.

As we grew, we would play together, talk about books and music, and our hopes and dreams for the future. You wanted to be a firefighter, because you always wanted to have a dalmatian puppy and help people out of burning houses, I wanted to be a pop star for reasons I've already said.

I remember walking into middle school hand in hand, because we were both super nervous. We were yelled at by a teacher that it was "inappropriate behavior for sixth graders", but we just thought of it as best friends helping one another through one of the biggest transitions in a kid's life.

You walked me to every class to make sure I was ok, even though I held your necklace in my pocket, which made me feel ok anyways.

We were an inseparable couple of kids, we did everything together. I clung to you and you did the same to me. I thought this was how it was supposed to be, and how it was going to be forever and ever.

Then came the falling out.

You got caught up in a bad crowd. Us two little nerd kids quickly became strangers as you left me for the kids who made all the trouble. You started listening to angry music, dressing in baggy clothes, talking like proper English was a foreign language to you. It broke my heart to see you act this way, yet, you seemed happy. Last I heard you were part of a gang; a real, drugged up, lady harassing, people hurting gang.

And I had nowhere to turn.

One day, this new girl came to school, with bright dyed orange hair and an attitude. She wore the gothic type of clothes, and was constantly speaking with one earbud in. I was afraid of her at first, until she complimented my superhero t-shirt. Somehow, after that, we clicked right away. I showed her my comic book collection, she showed me her CD collection, and suddenly you meant nothing to me.

That girl became my new best friend, and our styles collided. I was wearing black jeans and dark shirts, and I began to chase my dream by auditioning for bands of a more rock genre. I was happy once again.

The night we went to our first concert together, I found your necklace in the pocket of an old skirt, and for the first time in years, I put it around my neck.

As we partied hard, dancing, jumping, and just enjoying the music, I suddenly felt a fierce tug at my neck. I quickly reached to my chest, feeling for your necklace...nothing. I felt nothing but skin, and I panicked. I dropped to the floor and began feeling around, only to have my hand crushed beneath someone's steel toed boot. I screamed, but over the music not a sound was heard. My tears of pain and panic smeared my makeup all down my face and I stayed curled up on the floor as the last song trailed off, and a worker came to help me up. He told me that in a weird turn of events he found something on the floor, and thought I should have it.

Then, he handed over your necklace.

I decided then it would stay in a safe place, and would never leave again, so I shoved it down to the bottom of my jewelry box.

By now, we were in our sophomore year of high school, and nothing could have prepared me for what happened then.

You died.

Yeah, I know, kind of crazy, right?

I was told it was heroin overdose, though your friends say it was just a prank.

While at a sleepover they stabbed you with the needle and pumped 15 grams of heroin into your blood. It killed you within the hour. I guess it was lucky you didn't feel it.

I like to think maybe you were dreaming of me when you went, but the realistic side of me thinks otherwise. maybe you were dreaming of your next fix, your next drink, but boy do I wish it was me.

I don't know how I could have ever gone on without you being in my life some way, but I guess I'll have to learn. But until we meet again, Jamie Barnaby Osborne, this necklace will remind me of precious time that was lost."

I finished my eulogy, turning off the lamp at the podium, leaving everyone in the church in tears. I wanted my speech to be real, unlike anything anyone would have expected, and I think I succeeded. My every word came from the heart, yet my tears were out of order. I had already cried too much over the course of these past few weeks, it seemed as though I couldn't cry any more. My hand rested gently on the silver pendant that fell just below my collarbone.

As I took my seat, I felt a pressure on my chest and a gust of cold air, almost like a whisper of a breeze, and I didn't feel alone anymore.

And I knew I had made it through the veil, I had made it to you.

(Jamie)

"Jamie Barnaby Osborne, aged sixteen, male. He was born in Columbus, Ohio, but moved to San Francisco during his 3rd year of life. His interests were set and arranged in a way that should have led him to success, but those changed when he turned thirteen. What happened?" the loud yet light voice boomed in the blackness around me.

"He was weak. Mister Osborne gave into temptation, and he abandoned his hopes and dreams, for everything the devil puts into the world." a snake like voice hissed in return.

"But the boy has so much promise, shall we let him return to earth?" the first voice spoke again. It's holder didn't seem to have a gender, or at least I couldn't tell.

"No!" the serpent voice replied, "He can not be allowed freedom. We must be sure he will not cause trouble in the real world for a long time."

And that's the last thing I heard before I ended up Here.

Here. That's what they call it. There's not a reason or rhyme, other than probably a lack of creativity. In Here, we are but only spirits, kind of like Purgatory I guess, where we roam the world still, we just don't have a body.

Ghosts, you could say.

I'm still not sure why I'm Here, and why I just didn't go to hell where I belong, but I'm thankful I am, because now I can be with Stella Preciado.

Fuck, that girl has it all.

I just wish I had treated her better.

She deserves the galaxy and beyond, but I gave her grief years before my passing. She's a moon among stars, but I was light sensitive. She's a rose among daisies, but I was allergic to pollen. She's a rainbow, but I was color blind. My heart may have stopped beating, but that does not mean it doesn't belong to her.

So now I follow Stella as she lives a life I wish I could have been a bigger part of.

I watch her eat, sleep, read, sing... I protect her, or at least I try. Though, every time I touch her, hold her, or even speak to her, it doesn't do anything. There's some sort of supernatural barrier that prevents me from showing her love, and it crushes me every day.

Where is Here? All around you. Here is the lost souls who need a refuge, need a home. Here is not just those who have passed on, it is those who feel as if death is the only way out.

Here is the lost.

Are you here?