

IN A DARK PLACE WITH NOTHING BUT A DRABBLE FOR A SHIELD

DARK DRABBLES VOL. 1

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IN A DARK PLACE WITH NOTHING BUT A DRABBLE FOR A SHIELD

In a Dark Place shines a light into the deep, holds your hand as you gasp, allows you to laugh, and leads the way back home. If you squirm, good. If you're shocked, even better. This isn't for those that are easily offended. If this world were a safe place, you wouldn't need a **Drabble for a Shield**.

A **Drabble** is a short work of writing of precisely one hundred words in length. The purpose of the **Drabble** is brevity, testing the author's ability to express interesting and meaningful ideas in a confined space. This book's description is a **Drabble**.

Dedication

She was my Oma. To me, that sums up everything. So, when my Aunt asked me to write something about her - what she meant to me - that was all I could come up with: She was my Oma. Tick-Tock Oma to my children. A pillar of strength, with more love in her than any other ten Grandmother's combined. Giving. Caring. Sharing. Always hopeful. To her, things were always looking up. Her expectation that miracles, not only could happen, but did, and would, was unshakable. She was my Oma. I didn't know what to say. Except, "I miss her."

These Drabbles were written in the weeks before and after her passing, during the pandemic. I cannot imagine what she'd have thought of them, but we all deal with life, death, and grief in our own ways. No way is better than any other, so long as you make it through to the other side. And **my** getting through is something she'd have gotten behind. This book is dedicated to my Oma. She had a good life (a full eight-eight) and a good death (in her sleep, surrounded by loved ones). I cannot imagine a better way to go.

Preamble

“Perhaps this is the bottom line to mental illness: incomprehensible events occur; your life becomes a bin for hoax-like fluctuations of what used to be reality. And not only that – as if that weren’t enough – but you... ponder forever over these fluctuations in an effort to order them into a coherency, when in fact, the only sense they make is the sense you impose on them, out of necessity to restore everything into shapes and processes you can recognize. The first thing to depart in mental illness is the familiar. And what takes its place is bad news because, not only can you not understand it, you also cannot communicate it to other people. The madman experiences something, but what it is or where it comes from, he does not know.”

- Philip K. Dick

The Jogger

I wake up early to jog. I love the smell of the fresh morning air. The empty streets seem pregnant with possibilities. When I get back to the house, though, I never feel like I belong. Everything is too quiet, and if I wake the baby, Mother will not be pleased. In the eerie silence, even the sound of the tap is unnerving. I hold the banister, and I freeze when the stairs creek. It isn't until my hand is over Mother's mouth, and my knife is pressed to her throat, that things begin to feel alright. "*Wakey-wakey*," I whisper.

Lunar Landing

You left without saying goodbye, but I couldn't hold it against you. You must have known, that had you shown, I wouldn't have let you go. So, with the rest of the world, I watched your first launch, on a cheap flatscreen television. And oh, how we cheered, when you took your first step, on the dark side of the moon. But then I got mad, 'cause if you'd said goodbye, I wouldn't have let you go. But who would have guessed, how cold it'd get, until your space helmet began to crack? And then the camera feed cut out.

Beautiful

When she returns from the washroom, I smell vomit. But I do not berate her. She has a disorder: Bulimia. It is not her fault.

I meet her gaze as I hold her hands, and even though I want to cry, I do not. Instead, I tell her that she is beautiful.

We have this conversation and I talk to her in a way that most people are afraid to. She listens because she senses something different. She's in pain, and her eyes are full of tears. She asks, "Why would you say that?"

"Because it is true," I reply.

Uphill Both Ways

It's ironic how society ran in reverse. As the pandemic went into its fifth year, the internet crashed. This time, for good. Soon after, television went down. Then the radio. Finally, electricity. Planes had long since stopped flying. Then cars stopped running. No gasoline to fuel them. No shops to maintain them. Before long, the Amish were the only ones getting anywhere. A population decimated in under a decade. I don't know. Maybe "ironic" isn't the word. In fifty years, though, there's no way our grandchildren will believe us when we brag about how easy it was to access porn.

A Victim of My Cowardice

Eight men dragged a frail woman down a hallway for electrotherapy. Stepping forward, I told her, "Just go with them. You're only making things worse."

Two staff came at me. "You want some?" they asked. "Or can you be good?"

Looking around, I saw perpetrators/doctors, victims/patients, casual observers like myself, but no heroes. At any time, staff could have refused to abuse, and observers could have risen and become heroes. A victim could learn to stand up for themselves. Me? I stepped back. "I will be good," I said – and the next day, she showed me her burns and bruises.