

Of Dinosaurs and Love

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“Excuse me Miss, could you have a look at my creative writing internal and let me know what you think?”

“Sure, I’ll read it now...”

“RRRaaaWWWW!”, my brother’s new toy screamed out, echoing through the house.

I sat in my room, sighing. This toy was his new obsession. It was a stupid little dinosaur with the latest technology, which meant it could walk around and make loud scary noises. Perfect for me, just perfect. I now had to listen to its loud stomping and horrendous screams for days. I caught a glimpse of it; its eyes gleamed at me. I was convinced from then on it was evil. I wanted it out of the house immediately. But mum told me not to worry, that he’d get bored and move on.

Mum was wrong.

This toy was no toy, no! It had caused a fever. My brother was sick with amnesia, forgetting about the real world and his family. He was so fixated on this dinosaur he forgot to look after himself, he forgot about me. The fever made him a different person; ill-mannered and tired. It was like he was under its spell, staying up all night, cleaning and feeding it. He felt lost and angry whenever he was without it. He was addicted. It was scary. I hated that dinosaur. It was so evil, willingly hurting my brother like that. Dad said it was just a phase, that he’ll get over it.

Dad was wrong.

This toy-fever was like a drug. My brother spent all his time and money buying new accessories for it. He became dazed and delusional. He couldn’t get enough of it - like he was in love. This dinosaur needed to go! My brother was not the same person anymore. He was enslaved to it. He couldn’t see that it was a one-sided relationship. It didn’t and couldn’t feel anything for him. It only cared about itself. My aunty said that in time this would all be a distant memory.

She was wrong.

I had had enough of this craze! One year and two months - it had gone on long enough. Maybe I was impatient, maybe it wasn't my business, maybe it wasn't the right time, but it was affecting me as well as my family. Most importantly, my brother was hurting! In my eyes I had to save him...

The next day my brother was in tears. It was almost as bad as the noises the dinosaur had made. The day after that - more tears rolled down his face. And so the week went on. Who knew my brother could cry so much?

Finally, the fever passed. My lovely caring brother returned. I missed him so very much and was so glad to have him back. No more crazy, evil dinosaur taking up his time. No more wasting his money or energy on something so unnecessary.

I was wrong.

Unfortunately, it only lasted two months. I woke up startled after hearing a familiar sound. It can't be, it couldn't be, it--

"RRRaaaWWW!"

Dammit, my brother's ex-girlfriend was back.

"Hmmm Sophia, it's a well written piece, but a little bit one-dimensional for NCEA Level 3. If you're wanting to achieve Excellence, it really needs more depth."

"Oh, believe me Miss there's hidden depth to this story, if you read between the lines. It's just too raw for me to express in a more obvious way. You see it's kind of an allegory. Like so many stories this one is inspired by real life. It's true, my brother had many childhood obsessions - including one for dinosaurs. But this is really a story about another obsession, and about broken people, broken love...

She came to live with us you see. She was welcomed into the family but just didn't seem to be able to fit in. Call me dramatic, but the girl had waltzed into my home and turned it into a place of harrowing discomfort. Every time I heard her, or felt her presence, it was like fingernails scratching on a blackboard. She didn't like me, I could tell from the way she looked at me. She wasn't nice to me, so naturally, I wanted her gone.

Call me protective - or even jealous - but sadly I didn't see much of my brother anymore. When I did, he was fixated on this girl. She wanted all the attention, his attention. I really didn't understand it. How did my brother enjoy any of it? Surely he got tired of running around looking after her, being her slave? My brother was so devoted - so obsessed! She was so self-centred. Her life consisted of doing university work from our couch, going out, getting drunk and unconscious. Smoking in our bathroom or garden. She didn't eat properly, starving herself, while also training for a marathon. His life consisted of trying to make her happy.

Sadly, she was broken. I would hear my brother and her arguing constantly about her physical and mental health. My brother wanted her to get help, but she didn't listen. She put him in so many horrible situations, that only a doctor should deal with. But she didn't trust my brother, didn't seem to trust anyone. As sick as she was, it was no excuse for being disrespectful, for undermining and using people. But somehow, she managed to get away with it all.

Finally, it ended. Relationship over - or so I thought. But she would come over in the night, bang on the front door, and then fight and argue with my brother. She took to social media to expose their broken relationship to anyone who cared to read about it.

Then one night my brother got multiple texts and calls. He had no choice but to go. He called the police, he called his friends, before walking into the night. Into the woods. I was not there. What my brother went through that night, I don't want to imagine. But trying to save someone's life - it's something else.

Finally, thankfully, she was able to accept some help - to subdue the demons. And at least for a while I've got my dear brother, my family and my home back.

The trouble is Miss, I just don't know when the dinosaur will return..."