

Pull No Punches, Broken Ouija Board

By

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I never fit in as a child. I was always an outsider. My adoptive parents told me that I was special but barely had anything to do with me. I only cared about my looks just in case I looked like my birthmother. And I liked fashion, but my way, not anyone else's.

I tried running away as a baby. My adoptive parents found me across the room, my head bleeding. I managed to crawl before I was old enough to crawl. The doctor said I am extremely independent and intelligent. There are two records of me through adoptive research, one claiming I was adopted through catholic charities one through the government. My adoptive parents lied and said they were catholic to adopt me, that was my parents only wish for me.

Growing up, I was treated like I was stupid. I'm only forty-three years old now and people act like I should stop menstruating already. I have not had luck with romantic relationships; I barely had any. I want a family. A baby.

Biblically people had babies later in life. I'd like to have a family AND achieve my goals, my talents and hard work awarded instead of being stolen by people who pretend they emulate me. They can't. There's something missing. Me.

In kindergarten they took me to have a hearing test because I didn't listen to certain teachers and other adults at school. I heard the beeps. I raised my hand to the left when the beep was on the left and the right when it was on the right. I passed with flying colors. I

understood some people were not worth listening to. They only had negative wishes for me. The other adults caught my attention. They'd rather believe I'm stupid or can't hear anything.

I only cared about books. Later, art and music. Fashion. Not because everyone was doing it, but because it was how I dealt with my abusive family. It was my refuge.

My adoptive mother gave me an Edgar Alen Poe book as a child because she didn't like it. She seemed like she felt guilty about it. A Ouija board at age thirteen. We went to church every Sunday. My adoptive mother had a cabinet full of Steven King. In second grade, that was interesting to me. I was a book worm. I am not a caterpillar, perhaps I still am.

One day, I brought my Ouija board to my friend Andy's house. I didn't want to use it alone. She was my neighbor. I basically lived there. She refused to give it back to me after playing with it. It said our friend would die. It was just us in the room. Three girls. The planchette moved by itself. The letters it moved to said it was an angel speaking to us and that our friend would die. I was too afraid to sleep at my friend's house that night. Our friend left the slumber party early. She yelled at me and said it was an Angel. There was no reason to be afraid.

I asked for my Ouija board back later; she said she and a few other people broke it and burned it.

I carried a small kewpie doll that was meaningful to me because of the artist I learned about on a trip to Branson. The small doll I secretly carried in my pocket was strongly disliked by Andy. It went missing at her house.

In California years later, a man made me a tiny giraffe with his bare hands. Wax, strings, wire. It meant everything to me, and I brought it to work with me. A treasure near the cash register. It was green. He destroyed it.

Later during that time, Andy had a Furby that she was overly attached to in a way that terrified me. It was adorable wearing a witch hat. Also, scary. I thought it was funny when it got upset. It pleaded for help. She took it seriously.

We didn't really talk anymore after I hurt the Furby's feelings. But also, it was because I moved in with my grandparents to a different city. We hung out later. She tried sleeping with my boyfriend, but he wasn't interested. My other friend who was wild had a boyfriend who stalked her.

She took care of her brother and lived with her grandpa. She buttered pans for brownies. I had never seen that before.

She fed me. She said I reminded her of the child in *The Child Called It*.

I never felt like I was like the other children growing up. But I still got along with everyone.

I went with her once to pick up her mother from the hospital. Her boyfriend beat her up. Black eyes. She gave me an Armani sample and a magazine. She worked for a high-

fashion magazine company. It was all so beautiful. Models, nice cars, and an entirely different lifestyle in a scent. It smelled like a life I could have had somehow. A life anyone could have had somehow that small towns hate. I had never had perfume before.

I was really good at running, but I stayed in the slow-paced group during track. It was my idea to join. The coach saw through me and that I was not giving my all. She noticed and insisted that I participate in a faster group. I refused. I don't know why.

Eventually they asked me to run in the relay races as a team, only as a substitute. A new girl Bobby, had long, lean legs and had mono. I hated running with a team. I hated that people watched me run. I hated it all, but after a few track meets, I started to enjoy it.

We laid in the hot sun in the soft grass in-between meets and hung out with people from other track teams. I wore a hat I liked similar to one I saw in a magazine. One guy said he was in love with me when I took it off and stopped acting stupid. My teammate married him eventually.

We won each time and made it to the finals. Bobby ran the last race. Her photo was on the front cover of the local paper. She was very beautiful. My parents never even knew I ran track. I never felt sad about it. I was wronged.

One of the bad guys in town who huffed paint was very talented at hurdling. I didn't really like him, but I watched him run and jump. I remember him winning medals. I smiled. His sisters were nice to me.

I wonder how fast I could have ran.