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2020 CFUW Writing Contest

### **Broken Portrait**

When did it all go wrong? I stand between the two of them. The two people who, all my life, I believed to be a fairytale couple. They were the real life Romeo and Juliet. Or so I'd thought.

The shouts were deafening, the sights horrid. His hand was wrapped around her wrist, to the point his knuckles turned white. The fear was evident in her eyes. Fear of him. Fear of losing him. Fear of ruining it all.

Out of all my 15 years of life, I've never seen something more horrific. Terrifying. Unsettling. She screamed in pain. Tears splattered down her cheeks. He knew he hurt her. He knew he just became his worst nightmare. My worst nightmare.

I tried to scream. Tell him he was hurting her. I tried to move. To rip his hand off her. But I couldn't. My feet were glued to the ground, my voice lost in my throat. The noise soon was cancelled. And all I could hear was my own heart beat. Pounding faster than humanly possible. I've never experienced something like this. Something so... awful. A voice boomed through my mind. Something he told us years ago. *We are a family and nothing can break that bond.*

Nothing. What lies.

I'm in a daze. I hear their muffled screams. I hear her hand come in contact with his face. What happened to us? It's hard to believe a month ago, they sat at the table in

perfect harmony. A month ago, they enjoyed each other's presence. A month ago, they didn't scream at one another's move.

A month ago, only thirty days. Seems surreal. Surreal, what can happen in one month. How fast everything can slip. How quickly it can fall from your fingertips. And no matter how many times you try to catch it, you never can. It stumbles, bumping off your palms, forearms. You believe you're going to grip it for a split second, then it leaves your embrace. Like everything we love will someday. Sometimes not in the way we expect it.

The things we love the most can destroy us. It's like they carry a knife. Dragging it across your back, tauntingly. Not hard enough to hurt you, because sometimes they don't want to. Until they lash out. And you hear the pierce of your skin. You feel the gooey, scarlet liquid trickle down your back. You don't scream. There is a voice, though. Deep in your mind, it's muffled. It's as though your head is underwater. But, all you feel inside you is fire. An unusual mix. Yet, the most deadly.

My knees are weak. I stare, blankly, at them. At the ruins of my home. Home. A place that no longer was a haven. A place that seemed so good a few days ago. A place I will never look at the same. In these walls, was where it all fell. In these walls of this two story house, with three bedrooms. The maroon wallpapered and carpeted structure.

It crumbled before my eyes. The bricks falling down, causing debris to fly. The ground shook violently. She grabs the black frame filled with a portrait. A portrait of the three of us. I

was 5 and we'd visited Disneyland. Everything seemed brilliant and bright. Life seemed so alluring. But now, I stare at the shattered glass. The shattered frame, once filled with the pictures of a loving family. Each piece, scattered, was like another piece of my heart. I sit cross-legged in front of the frame. The shouts stop, to watch I suppose. To watch me unfold. To watch as my insanity rose to the brim. To watch, as I gawp over my now broken family and wonder, *when did it all go wrong?*