

Daniel's story

By Katie Williams

Daniel scratched his head and thought as he placed the pen down gently. He was stuck, in all honesty, he was stuck. The paper was due in tomorrow and he still hadn't done anything. The truth is, he hadn't asked for any help and had hidden himself in the darkness once again. He wanted to prove to everyone that he could do something once on his own, without the pressure of help beside him, which he had had for years through the countless tutors.

He sighed as his face fell into his paper; nothing had been answered, and he was as stuck as you would be in quicksand. Only this time, there was no one there to pull him out. He didn't like a life of help, but he also didn't want a life of not being able to do anything alone. His mom had told him he needed to pass, and there was serious stress and tension on his shoulders after they had their "discussion" about his grades.

Daniel didn't want to care. But he knew if he didn't pass then his parents would surely kick him out and make him get a low-income job. He didn't want a low-income job; he wanted to work for a database company in California that paid good money. He was good around math and technology, but unfortunately, he also needed a science degree for that, and he only had a short time span to get it and had not completed the stages necessary beforehand.

His dad never looked at him anymore, had muttered many times that he was a "disappointment" under his breath and nothing else. Daniel used to be sad about this until he realised that his father was like this with everyone, even his mother. In fact, if Daniel looked back, he couldn't put a finger on a time his dad smiled, unless it was for his gain.

Many people had called Daniel's dad an evil man. And usually, a boy would defend his father from such insults, but the problem was...that he agreed to a certain extent that his father was an evil man. Last summer, he fired two employees for missing one day to help care for their children who were sick. He'd classed it as "misinformation", but that was all a huge lie. Anyone who dropped below his father's expectations was going to get removed.

Daniel has been terrified of his father for a long time, but he recently realised that his father was not interested in him. If he got good grades and didn't break the rules that were set. He could have a peaceful life without interruption from his father. Of course, it saddened him sometimes to think that his father had become that cold and that horrible, to not care for his son.

But he knew how his father had turned into that. His grandfather had been the same, worse apparently. But the only difference from his father and his grandfather was that his grandfather used a more physical punishment to keep his father in line.

He was glad his father didn't touch him or hurt him. But as much as this sounds like insanity, he was still wondering whether physical abuse and being able to see his father would be better than his father isolating himself from him.

He'd only ever met his grandfather twice, once at a funeral and once at a wedding when he was younger. One thing that he knew about his grandfather was that he was a very cold man. He still thought less of Daniel's own father, and seeing his grandson for only a moment would be a huge disappointment in his eyes.

Family gatherings weren't often. As far as Daniel was concerned, he only had two cousins from Washington, and that was all on his mother's side. His father had kept him away from his side of the family, like he was almost hiding something. The thought crossed his mind once or twice a day that he was maybe hiding him, yes, his own son from disapproving eyes on the other side.

He was sucked from his thoughts when he heard a knock at his door. "Come in", he said loudly enough for the person on the other side to hear. One of the maids came in and smiled at him sweetly, and he smiled back. He knew how hard it must be working for his father. He often felt sorry for the maids who washed his clothing, made his bed and cooked his food. If they messed up once, they would surely be out of a job within the next day.

He turned on his monitors and started browsing the internet. He thought of playing a game with his friends online. But he knew if his mother came in, then there would possibly be trouble. His mother talked to him every day; she was a good mom to him. Sometimes he felt sorry for her that she had to marry such a man, did she even love his father?

After the maid left, he opened his journal and started flicking through it. He'd been writing in it ever since he was 10 years of age; he was 16 now, and honestly, the time had flown. It had been a lot simpler when he had been younger; his father still hadn't really acknowledged him. But he hadn't looked down on him as much as he did now. He'd also had more freedom.

He stopped flicking through the pages when he hit a date that stopped him in his tracks.

16th May 2014

Today I went out with my friends to the local lake, and it was very fun. Mom came along and watched me. She looked very happy as she watched me swim in the lake with my friends. Father hadn't come because of his work. I wish he had come; he never comes. He's been distancing himself from me more lately, and I don't understand why.

Mom won't tell me anything. She says he's just busy with his work and needs to focus because it's important. Sometimes I wonder if I'm important to my father. He always chooses his work over me. He never talks to me; he never addresses me as he addresses his

co-workers. I don't dare ask mom about this because I know she will say nothing. She never mentions my father.

My friends tell me maybe he's just busy, and that's the problem. But I'm not so sure. Last night I came across him in the hallway as he was walking to his study. He did not acknowledge me in any way. He just gave me a cold stare and then continued walking. ~~It's like he didn't see me. He never sees me. I sometimes wonder if he ever really saw me.~~

Daniel felt like his throat had closed; he gasped for air. It felt like a hand had reached around his throat and choked him. He didn't want to keep reading. He knew what the next entry would be about. But he had to.

24th May 2014

One of the maids woke me up today very early; she seemed alarmed. She told me to get up and get changed. I was confused, but I did so as she asked. I asked her what was going on, but she never responded to me. She hurried me as I changed and told me to take what I wanted. I didn't question anything, but even I was starting to feel nervous. I wanted mom.

After I had grabbed a few of my belongings, the maid took hold of my hand and had taken me down the back staircase. I was confused. Why was she taking me down the back staircase? Why couldn't we go down the main staircase? Before I could contain it, a tear had gone down my face, and I was confused and scared.

After we reached the bottom of the staircase, I saw my mom; she had a coat on and a bag in her left hand as she held out her right hand for me to take. She had said, "Come, Daniel," and I had taken her hand and let her lead me away. Just as we were about to open the front door, a voice had echoed through the building. I had realised who it was even though I had not heard it in years.

It was my-

Daniel slammed the journal shut. Sometimes the past was better left where it belonged.