

Short Story Competition

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AGE/CATEGORY: 14 (13-18 age category)

WORD COUNT: 398

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A Stranger I Met

I vividly recall the day I met a peculiar little girl named Bryn Easton. She was rather short, had a gap between her incisors and skin dark in complexion. We bumped into each other in a grocery store line. I figured she was waiting for her mother to grab something from the aisles which she had forgotten to pick out before. The child looked around thirteen years of age. When I bumped into her, I promptly apologized, and she followed suit.

"Where's your mother?" I inquired. The child gave me an expressionless look before replying, "She's somewhere in this grocery store. That's all I know."

"Well, stay with me for now. Before your mother comes back." The child nodded. There was an awkward silence that loomed in the air before the child asked politely,

"May I fill this dreadful silence?"

I complied, and the moment I did, I subjected myself to learning about the most interesting little girl anyone could ever meet.

She introduced herself as Bryn Easton but informed me her real name was Sabryna Easton.

"Is that your nickname, sweetheart?"

"It's more than a nickname," she replied. I gave her a questioning look.

"Care to explain, then?" Bryn nodded and began enlightening me with the origin of her nickname.

According to the child, before she invented herself as Bryn Easton, she was Sabryna Easton. She figured the other three letters in her name were unnecessary and began telling everyone around her to call her by her new nickname. Everyone complied but her mother and figure skating coach, something which always irked her. She grew to detest the name Sabryna

and promptly re-labelled everything with the word plastered on it. The only other name she allowed usage of was Bryna (and she would constantly reiterate that its pronunciation was Bree-nah and not Braai-nah). It was her figure-skating name, as she called it. Short, simple, and sweet. Something the people would remember easily. Sabryna was a common name (spelt differently from the other version of the name, courtesy of her father. However, that did not matter to her), and she declared her name needed to stand out when she was five.

As Bryn turned eleven, she sought to blend in, finding social interactions exhausting. She preferred solitary activities like watching game shows in a dark room, asserting her independence with a simple "I just don't want to."