Vincent Morse

Mrs. Rutan

Creative Writing

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**“Vegas, Baby!”**

 Born in Vegas: somehow when I tell people this, they see the flashy signs in my eyes and imagine gold coins pouring from my ears. It’s silly. *Stop staring at me.* I’m not a slot machine that will solve all of our problems. They should really be thinking of BDUs and boring brick buildings. That should simmer their excitement. My family was in Nevada for the airbase, not in hope of “hitting it big” on some road trip. However, they did manage some luck in Sin City, the blessed and miraculous Vincent D. Morse.

I like to think of myself as the Grand Prize they left Las Vegas with. You know the one that all the neighbors oogle at like the shine of a brand new Mercedes perched in the driveway. Or the prize that gives your parents so much pride that they walk into work the next Monday morning and shout “I quit!” at the top of their lungs. They may even skip out like a happy-go-lucky leprechaun who found his pot of gold. Although I make them proud, I don’t think they see me as a new hot rod or pot of gold; more like a screaming child that empties their pockets. I suppose we agree to disagree.

My dad; what a character. He’s the guy who would command “front and center!” if he wanted us kids—usually associated with the prominent vein in his fivehead that showed ever so clearly in times of stress. Now that I think about it, that vein and I go back. We share a lot of memories. Despite being a rigid man, my father has one weakness, his toys—more specifically, fireworks and gun powder. Leave it to explosions to form a father-son bond. Seems excessive compared to fishing.

Anywhere my father went, eyes followed. The infamous questions never failed to escape their lips; “Is you dad in the Army?” and “Has he killed anyone?” No you dimwit, he’s a COM (short for communications. The military loves their abbreviations and acronyms.) guy for the Air Force. Not Special Forces. Not a pilot. Not a killer. He’s a man behind a desk with slightly more responsibility that most. Curse Hollywood and their theatrics.

In the eyes of Momma Bear I’m nothing but a cub in need of protection. My mother is a loose cannon, but a passive one at that. Her “Go to bed,” At 4 A.M. was as grungy and serious as she gets. If she were to go off, she’d probably erupt in butterflies—even though she’s deathly phobic. Believe it or not, she’s my reason for responsibility.

Somehow through her quirky behaviors—like a sick attempt of a belly dance in desperation for an authentic smile during senior pictures—I learned that life is nothing but emotion; it’s my responsibility to decide which one I wear that day. My mother is affectionate to hysterics and stress ridden, but along with those qualities, she’s the happiest, most supportive, understanding person I know. I love her for passing those down to me; all of them.

Kaka! Not like the cry of a bird, but a name. the regrettable name I called my older sister Erika growing up. No matter how many joyful times I uttered the nickname, her face always seemed to darken. I use to admire her so much, even though she would move my mouth like a puppet; she knew the youngest gets whatever they want. She was a sly little thing—still is. Her luck of early sibling bullying quickly ran out. I outgrew her and now stand an easy 13 inches taller than her. Erika developed a favorite word to cope with the sudden halt of teasing. No.

“Can I play with your toys?”

“No.”

“Can I have some of that?”

“No.”

“Can you help me?”

“No.”

Today, my sister and I have a great connection. We feed off of each other’s weirdness to combat the enemy we identify as “Old Folks.” We’re so different and adverse that we bring our particular strong-willed qualities together. Her bold argumentative challenges made me question myself. Erika indirectly developed the person I am today, but just who is that?

Yes, I am an athletic, 17 year old boy who blasts his music and chases and special girl, but what am I underneath that? I suppose my thoughts are similar to others of my age and interest. Aptitude tests often define me as “above-average.” What in the hell does that mean? I do not care to be above others, nor do I care to be below. I only wish to be an individual—capable of leaving my mark on this world.

I’m like everyone else—slightly disturbed by my family dynamic but thankful for my upbringing. So next time you see Vegas in my eyes, know that it is not some gaudy flashing logo, but a glimmer of hope. I’m chasing my dreams, like anyone else.