

MY SISTER AND ME IN 1993

CHARACTERS

SHARYN: *[Redacted]; a budding young poet who is a tad dramatic.*

MARISA: *[Redacted], SHARYN's adoring younger sister and best friend (whether she knows it or not).*

TIME

July 13, 1993.

SETTING

SHARYN's bedroom. MARISA sits down to write in her journal.

MARISA: July 13, 1993.

[Twelve-year-old SHARYN takes the stage and writes a letter.]

SHARYN: Dear Children's Anthology of Poems: Hi! My name is Sharyn Rothstein. It's been my name for as long as I can remember. I'm twelve years old and I have a seven-year-old sister, Marisa.

MARISA: Sharyn has been telling me what to do, like "go get this," "put this in my room," "give this to Dad," "give me this," and I always do it—but sometimes she has to wait and then she starts saying "just give it to me" and when I ask her to do something she always says "you do it" and when I ask her to sit in her room she always says "no."

SHARYN: People say that I am a very deep thinker. I suppose I am, because sometimes things I think are so deep that even I cannot understand them.

[MARISA sticks her head in SHARYN's room.]

MARISA: Can I sit in your room?

SHARYN: No.

MARISA: Mom said you got mail.

SHARYN: Where is it?

MARISA: Downstairs.

SHARYN: Go get it for me.

MARISA: No.

SHARYN: Do it.

SHARYN ROTHSTEIN

MARISA: You do it.

MARISA: No.

SHARYN: I said do it!

MARISA: Okay.

[*She leaves. SHARYN resumes her letter.*]

SHARYN: I have this idea that all people were made to think deeply, but I have discovered that since thinking deeply takes so much time and often takes fun out of life that some people have simply decided (before they were born) not to be deep thinkers. I speak of deep thinking as a disease, because I believe it is. I'm a deep thinker and my thoughts are practically running my life and I'm only twelve! But enough philosophy. I write to you in regard to a poem I have penned called "Last Will."

[*MARISA reenters with a letter.*]

MARISA: Can I sit in your room?

SHARYN: No. Give me my mail.

[*MARISA doesn't.*]

MARISA: What are you writing?

SHARYN: Another letter to get my poetry published. It's really important. So give me the mail and go away.

MARISA: I want to watch you write.

SHARYN: Ew. No. Give me the mail.

MARISA: Rob Golden made Tracy Dembicer go into the boy's room.

SHARYN: I don't care.

MARISA: I wrote something about you at school today. Mrs. Melon made us write about our favorite superhero and I wrote about you and Critter.

SHARYN: Critter's a cat.

MARISA: So?

SHARYN: So a cat can't be a superhero.

MARISA: What about Cat Woman?

SHARYN: Cat Woman's skinny. Critter weighs more than Grandma.
MARISA: So?

SHARYN: So have you ever heard of a fat superhero?

[*MARISA thinks on this.*]

MARISA: But you can still be one, right?

SHARYN: OH MY GOD I AM TRYING TO WRITE! Give me the letter and leave me alone! [*SHARYN snatches the letter out of MARISA's hand. She tears open the letter and reads it.*]

MARISA: I don't think Critter weighs more than Grandma. Grandma's really, really fat.

[*SHARYN looks up from her letter.*] What?

SHARYN: I got rejected. Okay? Will you just leave me alone now?

MARISA: What's "rejected"?

SHARYN: Rejected. It means "rejected." From this magazine thing I sent my poem to.

[*MARISA takes the letter and tries to make sense of it.*]

MARISA: Dear Young Writer: Thank you for sending us—

SHARYN: OMIGOD—don't READ IT.

[*She sniffles.*]

MARISA: Want me to get Mom? She'll yell at them.

SHARYN: That's not the way it works.

MARISA: Oh. But just 'cause they didn't like it, somebody else might like it. Right?

SHARYN: [*Very dramatic.*] I don't know. Maybe I should just quit now. Maybe I'm just not a good writer.

MARISA: I think it was a good poem.

SHARYN: You never even read it.

MARISA: But if I did read it, I'd think it was good. Is this it?

[*MARISA pulls the copy of the poem out from the envelope.*]

SHARYN: Give it back. I don't want anybody to read it ever again.

SHARYN ROTHSTEIN

[MARISA *dodges her.*]

MARISA: "Last Will" by Sharyn Rothstein. Like somebody named Will?

SHARYN: No! Jesus. Will. Like a will and testament. Like what Mom and Dad will leave for us when they *die*.

MARISA: What do you mean, when they die?

SHARYN: Ugh, you'll never understand it.

MARISA: [Reading.]

Last Will.

Do not step on me.

I am no smaller than you,
though you are blind and I can see.

Do not step on me.

I am no more dang- . . . dang-

[SHARYN *grabs the poem from MARISA.*]

SHARYN: Dangerous. I am no more dangerous than you,
though you are deaf and I can hear.

Do not step on me.

I am no more unkind than you,
though you are loud and I am mute.

Do not step on me.

MARISA: That's really good.

SHARYN: I'm not done.

Forgive my friends,
who trespass upon your disrespected land
in search of holy, untouched
once upon a time
forests.

And I will forgive you,
who have ripped me from my home

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and killed my children
and ancestors
and self.

MARISA: Wow. I really like it.

SHARYN: I'm *not done!*

I beg of you only to spare me
for the future of your own
for should mine be gone
yours will be as well.

Remember me and my significance,
as this place dies,
and you die with it.
You are not a god.
Do not step on me.

[MARISA *doesn't respond.*]

SHARYN: That's it. That's the end.

MARISA: It's *really* good.

SHARYN: They didn't think so.

MARISA: It's the best poem I've ever heard.

SHARYN: Really?

MARISA: It's better than the tree poem Mom always says.

SHARYN: Anything's better than that tree poem. That doesn't
make me feel better.

MARISA: I think it's *really* good. I think you should send it to an-
other place, and they'll put it in a book.

SHARYN: I'm never sending it anywhere ever again.

MARISA: But if you do, I think they'll put it in. 'Cause if they
don't they're really stupid.

SHARYN: I don't know.

MARISA: I like the part about don't step on me.

SHARYN ROTHSTEIN

SHARYN: It's about the land and also children.

MARISA: It's a good part. Can I sit in here now?

SHARYN: I'm still working.

MARISA: I'll be quiet.

SHARYN: Fine. But you can't watch me write. It's creepy.

MARISA: I won't watch you. I'm writing too. In my journal.

[SHARYN *takes out her pen and starts writing again.*]

SHARYN: I hope you like the poem I have written. If you publish it I can stop thinking about it and write something else probably more deep, because the older I get the older my thoughts are. In closing, here is another poem I have written.

The babies in their mother's wombs have been taught
beforehand to fear the world in which they
are about to enter.

And they are crying within a wall of human life,
and their shrieks are muted by the felonies which their carrier
has committed.

[MARISA *reopens her diary.*]

MARISA: July 13, 1993. Sharyn Number 2. Sharyn and Critter are my superheroes, even though Sharyn says Critter can't be because he is fat. So now my hero is just Sharyn. She wrote a good poem and showed it to me even though it got jected and she was busy and said she wanted me to leave her alone. I don't know what I would do without her. I think she will be a great writer one day. Or a marine biologist who looks at sharks. I love my sister.

[*She looks up at SHARYN, beaming. SHARYN, totally oblivious, keeps writing.*]

END OF PLAY