

True Colours

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1. Flat 169, Second Floor in the Ninth Block

Three and a Half Years Ago

Maddy was cold and shivering as she found her way to the nearest B&B block of flats. She stumbled inside, bumping into someone.

"Sorry," she mumbled, not looking up. She clawed her way to the service desk and waited for service.

"Uh, hello," the lady behind the desk was slightly taken aback by Maddy's appearance. She scanned from head to toe quickly, noticing she had many bruises and cuts, and her eyes were a greyish green, her clothes were ripped, bloodstained and looked well-worn. She was wearing one shoe and her bare foot was bleeding on her heel. She was a sight for sore eyes, but the lady also realised, being a trained nurse, that her eyes were that of a blind person's. She immediately felt sorry for this girl, but couldn't possibly imagine what happened to her. Well, she was about to find out. "Can I help you, sweetie?"

"I need a room for tonight, please," her voice was thick, like she had a cold or had been crying, and there was a tone in her voice that lightly suggested she was pleading.

"Of-of course," the lady smiled, even though she was aware the girl could not see it. "What is your name, and other details?"

"I'm M-Maddy uh...I c-can't remember my last n-name," she sniffed.

"Right. I think you're going to have to take a seat dear," the lady said, sighing. Maddy groped the air till she found the arm of the chair, and sat down, shaking quite a lot.

"I-I was adopted," Maddy said suddenly. "I just can't r-remember my adopted l-last name..."

"Oh okay," the lady understood kindly. "Well, I am Tia, the locals call me Tia Maria," she chuckled. Even Maddy managed a small smile. "So, how old are you?"

"I'm eighteen," Maddy said, her face contorted in confusion.

"Okay. Now, I'm not being rude, but Maddy, what's happened to you?"

"H-he..." Maddy blinked slowly. She seemed quite drunk. "It was all his fault," she said sullenly, slurring "fault" obviously. "He forced me to do the drugs and I don't know what he did..I can't remember but he hit me with a lamp, and - "

"Maddy, who is he?"

"My ex," Maddy bit her lip. Her eyes filled with tears, and Tia felt helpless and Maddy broke down before her.

"Right. Maddy, I'll let you have Flat 169, on the second floor on the ninth block tonight for free okay? Let me take you there," Tia consoled her, and she took the confused Maddy to her room.

"Go straight to bed, just find someone if you need assistance, I'll come and find you tomorrow. You - need to rest your poor self..." Tia closed the door behind Maddy, feeling so guilty that someone had to go through such nasty things at such an early age. She didn't look like the kind of person who deserved such trauma...

2. All New And Improved!

Back To Present...Maddy, twenty one, is living in a small bungalow, not too far from her adoptive family's home, but they are not aware she lives there; yet.

It was a fine Sunday morning. After Maddy had dragged her body out of bed, she opened her curtains, and not being able to appreciate the wonders of this Spring morn, went straight into the kitchen to eat. She prepared a large bowl of porridge slowly, savouring the fact she had no work today; no rush, a lay-in and breakfast! This was a day to be grateful for.

Just as she was thinking along the lines of a wonderful day, she decided absent-mindedly it was time to visit Leianne, her adoptive mother, and Alex, her adoptive father, and their twins, Savannah and Damien. It had been, what, three years since she last saw them, at least? And Maddy knew very well she had been a pretty moody cow on the twins' fifth or sixth birthday them a few years before.

An hour later, Maddy hitched up her jeans properly, ruffled her shoulder-length hair, and hoped she looked half-decent before she left to go and visit Leianne and Alex. The streets even let her have her way that morning, the traffic was from little to none at all, and there were no people about at all. As Maddy started to sing to herself quietly, she stopped abruptly.

"This is the place," she said to herself, before turning forty-five degrees exactly and waltzing to their front door. Knock, knock!

"Uh - hello - " Leianne looked slightly out of place, but her conscience seemed to snap back as she realized who it was. "Maddy?!"

"Ummm, hey," Maddy wasn't entirely sure how to digest this reaction but she decided she'd prove her old family that she wasn't a nutter anymore, she was all new, and improved!

"It's been too long," Leianne said, near-tears, but not with happiness, but because she could see plenty of scars on Maddy's face and arms. She dreaded to think of how it happened. There were slashes, grazes, some that looked like the had been stitched ... it was dreadful.

"Maddy, Maddy," Alex appeared at Leianne's distraught side. "You'd better come inside!"

"Oh Maddy, what happened to you?" Leianne said thickly, choking back tears.

"W-what do you mean?" asked Maddy. She felt let down, she felt like she hadn't done anything right, and her heart sunk deep down to her toes.

"You're covered in scars!" Alex explained.

"Well...erm, not long after I left, I got together with someone. I can't remember - uh - his name - but he started beating me - but I'm all okay now - " Maddy stammered nervously.

"Maddy why didn't you get help? We would've helped you too," Leianne asked.

"I did get help - just take a look at me now!" Maddy stood up, with pride, but deep down inside she was panicking that they thought she was even more of a nutter.

"Admittably, you do look a lot better than you ever did," Alex smiled.

"I suppose we should be proud that you've changed so much for the better!" Leianne gushed. At this point, Savannah and Damien came downstairs, and so surprised to see their big sister, they hugged her with delight and asked their parents if she could stay the night.

Maddy had achieved what she was after for such a long time; the acceptance of ones that loved her.

3. Three Years Ago

Three Years Ago

Knock knock!

"Come in," the nurse said.

"Um hello," Maddy said quietly. "I've come for the scan."

"Wonderful, and you're just on time too! How are you feeling? Any perks or downs?"

"Not really," Maddy chuckled softly. "Just as normal, just feel like I've put weight on, oh dear ha ha, and I don't sleep much these days."

"You do look rather weary. You shouldn't outwork yourself. You have more to struggle with than the average woman. Don't push yourself!" the nurse said kindly, and steered Maddy on to the bed. She lay down and sighed. It was a comfy bed. A lot comfier than her flat's.

The nurse tottered around as Maddy was depressing over how she wouldn't see when she particularly wanted to on important days or special occasions.

"Oh would you look at that!" the nurse squealed girlishly.

"Is it okay?" Maddy asked quickly.

"It's just perfect. It's going to be one hell of a life for you, trust me, Madeline, sweetie."

Maddy got up and smiled. She felt much better now.

"Any queer happenings, Maddy, you tell me okay? Better safe than sorry!"

"Yes, yes, very true," Maddy appreciated. Maddy gave a little wave before leaving.

The receptionist called her back before she left the surgery.

"Is everything going okay then Maddy? Or is everything going perfectly right for you now? After all you've been through, you deserve it."

"Well I don't deserve it - I guess I'm just lucky," Maddy smiled politely. "Do you think I should tell my adoptive family? Or will they be too annoyed or upset?"

"Well you should really shouldn't you, ducky, or else they'll be angrier if you

don't tell them until it's too late or...if something goes wrong," the receptionist added the last bit hesitantly.

"W-wrong?"

"Well...you know what I mean. Extra problems or something!"

"I don't want this anymore...I don't think I can handle it. What if I die?"

"I seriously doubt a fighter like you would die, Maddy. Definitely not. The tough part will be over soon, then it'll all be fun and games afterwards, I promise."

"Pinky promise?" Maddy said childishly.

"Pinky promise!" the receptionist and Maddy linked pinkies and shook. "Bye then, Maddy."

Maddy left without a word, smiling and worrying all at once. Deep down inside, she was not sure what she wanted anymore, but she thought she didn't want this. But it was too late to turn back now. Like the receptionist said, she was a fighter: and now, somebody depended on her with their life...she couldn't let them down. It just wasn't how she rolled these days, instead of being so selfish, she had to start thinking of others. When Maddy got home, she changed and went out to the nearest payphone, and dialled the house number that used to be hers.

Ring ring!

"Pick up," Maddy urged.

"Hello?"

"H-hi.."

"Who is this? This is Leianne speaking."

"I think I've got the wrong number, sorry!" Maddy burst out, and slammed the phone down.

She couldn't tell them. She felt ashamed, what would they think of her?

Whatever it was, they wouldn't find out - she wasn't going to tell them.

Ever.

4. Two Years After That O.o

"Mum, mum!" Maddy gave Brody a tickle under the chin before she turned around and nearly collided with Alfie. His presence made her jump and she leaned slightly forward, and he caught her in his arms. Maddy rested her head on Alfie's chest, and giggled.

"Morning, baby," he whispered.

"Morning," Maddy smiled. She felt like the luckiest woman alive. She put his caressing hands down and returned her attention to Brody.

"Mum, I hungry!" Brody cried, kicking his legs against his high chair.

Behind her, Alfie was watching Maddy with a soft expression. He was thinking just how lucky he was to have Maddy in his life, and Brody, two of the most pretty people he knew. When he came back to reality from his daydream, Maddy had Brody in her arms and she was staring in his direction.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing!" Alfie said honestly, "just thinking how lucky I am to have you two in my life."

"Don't say that," Maddy blushed, "I don't deserve either of you."

Alfie looked at Maddy's fringe where it was sticking up at the side. The cowlick she always moaned about. He grinned and gently patted it. Maddy's hand flew straight to the place his hand touched self-consciously.

"Mum, mum," Brody cried. Both of them looked at Brody, and Alfie took him off her hands.

"Tell you what, Brody," Alfie suggested, "how about daddy reads you a story before he has to go to work?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Maddy, kick back, you've been working hard recently. Don't push yourself," Alfie said softly, stroking her face with his spare hand. "I love you, you know that right?"

He left the room to read to Brody as Maddy stood there, thinking for a moment. It had been bugging her for months; she needed to tell Leianne, about Brody, about everything. She picked up the phone from the hook and dialled the number automatically for the fourth time this week, but had been unsuccessful in maintaining to speak to her.

"Hello?"

"Is this Alex?"

"Yes, who’s this?"

"M-Maddy."

"Maddy! Wh-where are you? What’s that noise - who’s speaking? Who’s there?"

"It’s just the radio in the background. I’m okay. Just tell everyone I’m okay." Maddy hung up straight away.

She still couldn’t even tell them the honest truth. But at least she had let them know she was okay since she left home those many years ago.

"Maddy?" a young girl’s voice floated through the doorway.

"Sky?" Maddy turned to face her.

"Why do you keep ringing those people?"

"Because...it’s private," Maddy replied hesitantly. "Where’s your father?"

"Gone to work already," Sky replied immediately. "I had to finish reading to Brody for him."

"Do you think honesty is the best policy no matter what?"

"I don’t know," Sky said thoughtfully. She was a six year old prodigy, she was amazingly intelligent and she looked, according to what everyone had told Maddy, just like Alfie. Sky was the quiet, cooped up version of Alfie, and never told anyone anything about her school life, or personal life anyway. She kept herself to herself, sometimes, Maddy even forgot about her.

"Do you think love is important?"

"Sky, that’s a weird question to ask, isn’t it?"

"Well I’m just curious."

"Well yes love is important. Leianne, my adoptive mother, always told me that instead of loving someone that will never love you, love someone who loves you already. Then, you’ll make them so happy. And, I guess, I followed her advice, but the other way round. I’m so lucky to have Alfie in my life. I loved him so very much, and when he said he loved me too, it was everything I’d ever dreamed of."

"Really? That’s so sweet."

"It is, isn’t it?" Maddy said quietly. "Love is an amazing thing, I don’t think anyone understands it, or knows what true love is, you know. But for what I understand of it,

that's good enough for me!"

Sky smiled even though she knew Maddy would not be able to see it. Sky's curiosity sometimes got the better of her. She was always wondering things. Right now, she was wondering how Maddy's blind eyes could focus on hers, even though she couldn't see. It was actually quite freaky. But even though most blind people's eyes are quite queer looking, Sky thought Maddy's were beautiful grey-green and always so sparkly and nice, but they told her life story. There was hurt, there was betrayal, there was death and there was abnormality in there. Her eyes seemed to be that of a freak child's, and Sky could almost see a younger Maddy rocking back and forth in the corner of a messy room, and a rather chubby woman coming into her room, speaking to her. Sky wondered if this woman was Leianne. Maddy was one of those people she would never truly understand, in her ways of life.

But she loved her for who she was of course. Nothing could ever change Maddy.

Wait...Sky thought suddenly, if nothing can destroy her physically, then mentally...she must be very weak.

Maddy was still staring.

"I'm going school now, Maddy," Sky said softly, "bye now."

Sky left, and Maddy stayed there for a while, till Brody's cries became too strong to ignore any longer. Maddy blinked and fell down to earth again, after a series of unusual flashbacks. She was a disturbing child, she realized, when she lived with Leianne. She walked into the lounge.

"Brody," she smiled, "do you love mummy?"

"Yes!"

5. Flashbacks

Maddy had not been fourteen for long when everything changed. When she met Leianne's boyfriend, Alex. Oh yes, it was something else. Meeting him determined her a more fractured future than she had already been promised to live through. She was always getting extremely jealous when she had little or no attention, because Abigail, her adoptive sister, had it all. Especially from Alex. The thing that made it all wrong, was that Maddy loved Alex with all her heart. But she couldn't do anything about it, could she? She was fifteen and in love with her adoptive father, twice her age.

She told Abigail of her feelings.

"No, don't you dare! Don't you wreck that relationship, you'll break Leianne's heart!" Abigail cried.

"Recently," Maddy said darkly, "I noticed she hasn't got one."

"That's...pure evil," Abigail said, shocked. "She took you in - she could have left you wherever your family left you!"

"Family..." Maddy said quietly.

"You're despicable," Abigail shouted, "but - I'm not going to tell anyone, just for your sake, you hear?"

Abigail stormed off angrily, leaving a dazed Maddy standing there.

Deep down inside, Maddy didn't want to hurt this family one bit more than they had already suffered. But jealousy, and the fact that she had never had a such a stable family environment, caused her hatred to bubble to the point where she actually believed she wanted to destroy this family, rip it at the seams. But, she didn't. She spent hours on end in the corner of her room, rocking back and forth, thinking, dreaming, and sometimes doing nothing at all. The family assumed she was mental. She began to slit her wrists. She wasn't emo, or Goth, or any label people may have called her. She was just Maddy. Evil, twisted Maddy.

At school, she had a different love life, totally. Alex was nothing at school because she had Dom, he kept her mind off everything bad that may have occurred at home. Nobody knew of her relationship with Dom. She worked hard for his love. Abigail was suspicious, though, but didn't pursue it, to Maddy's relief.

"Hey, Maddy," Dom said, hugging her tight this Monday morning, "have a good weekend?"

"Not really," she replied softly, hugging back. She waved goodbye before leaving to her form room as the bell rang.

Along the corridor, Abigail caught up.

"Who was that? Are you going out with him?" she asked openly.

"Well...er - " but before she could reply, Abigail was swept away by her swarm of friends and she forgot by break time. To Maddy's fortune.

Then, later, Leianne had twins. Alex and Leianne were proud parents of two of the most beautiful babies in the world, so Maddy was told.

As much as she had liked to have seen them, she didn't, but she fostered her hate for them. When the twins arrived, Maddy was pushed out of the picture totally. Abigail was the favourite, because she was the miracle all along, but the twins, they were Leianne's own, of bloody course they'd be more important than Maddy. This just pushed her off the edge. She went mad, destroyed the family's trust and got sent to a loony bin. And when she looks back at this, Maddy doesn't laugh, cry or wonder. Tell a lie, she wonders, "was this really my childhood?". Maddy hadn't changed as such, but she never really understood anything at that age. Years before, having nearly committed murder and having a bloodthirsty obsession, she never really understood much girly stuff.

She was independently dependent, if that makes sense.

Probably not.

But Maddy never did.

6. Disaster When Maddy is 28

Look Into The Future; Maddy is 28 -

"Mum," Brody squealed.

"Yes?" Maddy asked her son fondly.

"Hurry, today's a big day at school, we've got a maths test!" he cried, jumping up and down.

"Don't get overexcited!" Maddy laughed. Brody grabbed her mother's hand and dragged her out of the house. She scrambled to lock it as he continued to tug on her arm.

"Come on! Full speed, mum! Hurry hurry hurry!"

"Coming, baby."

"Good. It's my birthday on Saturday isn't it?" Brody inquired.

"Yes it is. You're...nine, right?"

"No! I'm ten, silly," he laughed, tugging at his mother's sleeve more.

"The big one-oh. Double figures. My big big boy."

"Yay!" he chuckled, and he let go of Maddy's hand and went prancing off ahead slightly.

Maddy remained deep in thought, thinking about visiting Leianne on his tenth birthday, as a surprise to say, you're an adoptive grandparent! ten years late. Just as this thought made her grin to herself, there was the screeching sound of brakes, a thud, and a scream, ending with a crunch. Maddy turned round, panicking. Car doors slammed, and people were talking.

"Excuse me ma'am," someone patted her shoulder. "Is that your son?"

"I'm sorry - I can't see - I'm...blind," Maddy said hastily. She still hated telling people she was blind.

"MUM!" Brody's voice cried.

"BRODY!" Maddy screamed. "Where - how - call an ambulance!"

The woman that spoke to her did as she was told, and the ambulance arrived quickly. Maddy

sat at the back of the ambulance, with people rushing around her, making sure Brody survives the ride. She couldn't believe it. Was that pure bad luck?

At the hospital, she sat outside the room for a good three hours. Then, she visited him.

"Brody..." Maddy stroked his cheek. She could feel rough skin, where he was grazed and stitched, "oh my god, baby, what's happened to you?"

As she said this, his monitor starting beeping slower. Doctors and nurses rushed around her, took her out, and she sat outside again, for four hours before, finally, a doctor came out to tell her the news.

"Madeline," he said solemnly, "I am so sorry. Brody didn't make it."

"He's d-dead?"

"Yes. Your son is dead. I am really sorry for your loss." Maddy stood, stunned, as tears rolled down her cheeks.

What was she to do without Brody?

He was the only one she had ever been able to love the right way...