

Twin Souls

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The last thing I said to my twin sister was "I wish you were dead." I don't think she heard me, but I meant it at the time.

Lisa's a detective, and a damn good one. I like to help her out however I can, though of course what I can actually do is limited. It's the vestigial dynamic of our childhood. She was the outgoing, adventurous, dynamic one, and I was her sidekick. Her assistant, more than her partner..

I'm still the Watson to her Holmes, though sometimes it feels more like the Penny to her Inspector Gadget.

Now, watching her slink through this dirtbag's living room, part of me hopes that he'll pop out of the closet and put a bullet between her eyes. Does that make me a bad person? I can't really tell anymore.

It's hard not to feel disconnected. Nothing seems as real as it did when I was alive. Everything's abstract. Academic. Hypothetical. Like you're remembering it while it happens, though I guess I'm the memory. Do you know how much emotion is caused by hormones and neurotransmitters? I don't have a body. I don't have receptors for them. No blood to carry dopamine, adrenaline, serotonin, or anything else. I don't get angry, or frightened, or happy. But I do get lonesome. And I can remember what feeling was like.

That's not entirely true. I do have that weird twin-connection with my sister. That's persisted into death. In fact, without the conflicting signals from my own body, I think I can tune in to what Lisa feels all the more strongly. I don't think its as genuine as my own living feelings were, but when I'm close to her and she's really feeling, its like vivid splashes of color and life cutting through the fog of the afterlife. And it's a hell of a lot more than what other ghosts get.

Maybe that's why they go crazy.

I don't want to go crazy, but these echoes I get from Lisa, her emotional cast-offs, sometimes they're so intense that they remind me of what it was like when I could feel things for myself. I think the big reason why I want her dead is so they'll stop, so *I* can stop, so I can let myself fade away into catatonia like so many of my deceased peers.

The other reason is that I hope that when she does die, she'll be here with me. And I'll feel complete again.

And she will die. Eventually. Everybody does. And Lisa's life is more dangerous than most. Even for a cop. She takes a lot of chances. A lot of dumb risks.

Maybe that's my fault, too.

Right now she's come to the home of Jimmy Malone, dirtbag meth dealer accused of shooting his pregnant girlfriend. She called for backup, but she's not going to wait for it. Lisa's pretty sure he did it.

She's right. The dead girlfriend is here too, screaming at him about killing their baby. She died feeling this heady mix of hate and betrayal that will sustain her through eternity. It's the only echo that's hers, the only one she has left. It's strong enough that Maria won't fade, not in a year, not in fifty. Eventually everything else will fade until all that's left is that hurt. She doesn't have a twin to anchor her, to feed her a stream of fresh impressions.

Lisa can't see her, of course, any more than she can see me. She passes right in front of the closet that Maria is screaming at. Inside Jimmy is biding his time, waiting for the perfect chance to jump out and shoot my sister in the back of the head.

He's got a good chance of making it out of here a free man. Lisa's careless, and her backup is still a ways away.

Something makes my sister stop, something makes her turn, something makes her draw a bead on the closet door before Jimmy can even start turning the knob. She's a good cop. She waits until she sees the pistol in his hand before firing. It's a good shoot.

Later, she'll write in her report that she heard him shifting before he opened the door. She'll confide to her partner that it was a gut feeling that made her turn. She's been having a lot of these gut feelings lately, and she's learned to trust them. So much so that she's been taking unnecessary risks.

I blame myself. Or at least I would, if I still felt anything akin to guilt.

Everyone else thinks my sister is lucky, and she is. Lucky that that twin-sense thing works one way, lucky that the bond of sisterhood extends beyond death. I'm still not sure if I'm helping her out to keep her alive, or if I'm trying to make her overconfident and careless.

Either way, we're finally spending some quality time together.