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Sherry

A sense of wonder overcomes me as I hesitantly grab the Smiths & Sons case that was piercing through the corner of my closet. *It's been a while*, I thought to myself. I shook my head, grabbed the case, and set it on top of my desk. The case that once felt so heavy to me was now lighter than I could ever imagine. I pull up the chair and take a deep breath. I couldn't help the overwhelming sense of guilt I felt for letting it sit in a corner and collect dust. It was almost as if I was visiting an old family member for the first time in years, and all the nerves of seeing them again surge through me. I softly caress this dark bulky case and let my thumbs find the cold latches that once clicked multiple times in a day. *It's time to see Sherry*.

The click of the latches brings a worrisome smile across my face, and I finally open the case to find Sherry resting. A familiar scent fills the room: oak and pine. Almost immediately, memories surround me like a moving picture on the silver screen right before my eyes--from the very first time I ever heard a violin to the very first time I played one. The 5-star rating, however, goes to the very first time I owned a violin; it was the best gift I have ever received. I must have been six years old when my parents surprised me with one, I hadn't shut up about wanting one for weeks at the time. I wanted to be just like the mariachis we saw at the restaurants all the time, although it was hard to hear over the very loud instruments around it, the soft faint sounds of the violin are what appealed to me the most.

At the time I had no idea how expensive a violin was or how hard my parents worked to get that for me; they even paid for private lessons so I could play properly. The learning process wasn't easy, in fact there were many times I refused to practice because I felt like I wasn't doing good enough. Finally, over a period of time I could play a tune, fairly well I might add. After my first recital, I knew that this was the right choice for me. I fell in love with my violin and couldn't wait for what new music we would play together, life however, had other plans.

The day was like any other, I got picked up from school and headed home so that I could have dinner and gather my things for my lesson. Upon arriving home everything appeared normal, it was not until my mother opened the door where things seemed different. Nevertheless, my mother rushed to the restroom and I walked into my room confused to find it a mess. *It wasn't like that when I left.* I shrugged it off and proceeded to look for my violin. It was gone. I wasn't concerned though because usually if it was not in my room it was in my parents' room. I calmly walked to the other side of the house into parents' room surprised to find their room a mess as well, only, their TV was missing and so many other things. *Something's wrong.* I hadn't even noticed my mom crying at the foot of her bed. "We've been robbed," she said. I knew then that I would never get my violin back.

Many years would pass until I had another violin--borrowing one from school was something that I loathed. I couldn't keep it over the summer, and on top of that, the violins seemed used and abused. My parents couldn't afford to just get me a violin, but luckily found a shop that had a "rent-to-own" option. When this happened, I couldn't be more grateful. I was much older and vowed to take care of this violin with my life. The great part was that I was able to actually go and pick out my soon to be violin. There were so many options to choose from, but this very shiny and lightly stained violin spoke to me. When pointing her out to the salesman I

said, “The one to the left of the Cherry stained violin, and actually, I like that for a name! Since the one I want is not a red color I’ll make her name *Sherry!*” Three years would pass until Sherry was officially mine, and on that day we had arranged a beautiful solo.

Sherry has some years on her, but the beauty she carries still shines through. Atop her scroll, the color fades through the waves of the wood. The pegs surrounding it appear to stand strong and in place like little soldiers at attention awaiting their orders. Coming down her neck the indents of my fingers peer through; the memories of all the different notes I’d play are wearing away the strings. The bridge separating the fingerboard and fine tuners is chipping away, but the blanket of rosin over it seems like a gentle snowfall. Her chin rest still holds some residue from my makeup. I laugh at the thought of my face looking strange after I play, given that Sherry probably wiped most of my make up off. The laughs continue as I move my fingers over the empty “f holes”—I used to get my fingers stuck in them when I was bored during orchestra.

Sherry’s partner is her bow, which is nicely mounted above her in the case. She’s in desperate need of a new one. The horse hairs of the bow that were once so white, are now manila and browning at the ends. A thick coat of rosin sits over the hairs and wood of the bow, the rosin makes it smell sweet. I so badly want to play. I release the bow from its cozy bed and tighten the hairs. I begin to adjust my fingers over the bow and all of my muscle memory kicks in, my hand couldn’t appear more elegant to me. I reach over and grab Sherry by her neck, and in one swift motion, position her perfectly between my chin and shoulder. *Just like a glove.* I take a deep breath and place the bow over the strings, I wanted to hear Sherry sing. *SQUUUUEEEK.* “Fucking shit! That was awful.” I scared myself at first and then I burst out in laughter. I didn’t realize that I was out of practice for so long—a year to be exact. The fact that I made Sherry

sound awful didn't faze me; I couldn't wait to practice with her and eventually make some beautiful music again.

Although Sherry was not my first violin, I came to appreciate her more for that very reason. I learned many things with Sherry and I saw her more than I ever saw my friends. I dedicated my time to her for many many years. She entered middle school with me, and then we were in high school playing for the varsity orchestra! She put up with the melancholy music I played when I was sad, and transformed beautifully into the fiddle I needed for all my favorite jigs. Sherry was such a huge part of me it saddens me to think that I let life stray me away from her when she helped me through so much; but just like a good old friend she welcomed me back with open arms.