



Future Justice

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Midnight Room of Yesterday

Nikita White

The room was small yet bright as the sunlight burst through the glass doors. Sentimental items placed carefully and delicately in a glass doored, wooden cabinet sat in the corner. A light wooden dressing table was squeezed tightly against the wall between the cabinet and flower-covered bed. A thick layer of feather-like face powder lay across the white doileys. Bursting trinket boxes exploding with past life memories were placed gently and lovingly upon the dressing table. And through the reflection of the dressing-table mirror she restlessly sat; an old woman she had become. Her bright blue eyes smokey from past years stared into the blackness of the unknown.

Flashes of childhood memories danced across my mind with past life's joys filling me up from the inside out. Ghostly songs of children's laughter filled the air, getting louder and clearer with every memory I entered.

Her soft loving voice echoed as bedtime stories were read aloud, one after the other after the other; books slowly disappearing from the pile which I had placed excitedly next to my bed.

Flashes of Christmas mornings came rolling back; us kids sneaking quietly from the darkness of our rooms into the excitement which lay hidden under the tree, with smells of pine and tinsel lingering in the air; and running down the wooden stairs, which creaked as we went into the darkness of the cool foyer, then into the room where she slept to wake her.

Aromas of face powder and Tabu perfume had embodied itself into the pores of her skin and were detectable before she was seen.

But as I looked at the woman who was almost unrecognisable, the memories faded away. This was now reality. Her pale white wrinkled skin sagged alongside her mouth. Her eyes now firmly locked on the trinket boxes were sadly longing for freedom.

While I slowly came out of the safeness of this unconscious dreaming, my eyes still firmly closed; the icy coolness in the air disturbed me. I felt the frozen fingertips of the still, silent night slowly work its way down the back of my neck, my spine, my legs, until they reached the very tip of my toes, paralysing me where I lay. A statue as I was, unable to move, my eyes too terrified to open. I sensed her there, watching me intently. She stood in the corner of my midnight room, her presence undeniable. I realised this was no longer a dream, for when I dream I know I'm asleep. But as time stood still, I became more aware. I was now conscious.

The carousel, my childhood present from them, sat dust-covered and still on the top shelf of my white book cabinet, untouched for years. But as I suddenly heard its sweet lullaby start to play aloud in the stillness of my room, my dry, burning throat closed up unwilling to let oxygen pass through. My stinging, salty eyes closed tighter.

The breeze of her body moved silently across the room closer to where I lay, I stiffened. Her gaze burned onto the side of my pale, blood drained face. I felt the energy and ice-like presence of a hand slowly moving towards my thigh, palm outstretched.

It was only centimetres from my paralysed, goose-bumped skin before I reacted. My lungs unmoving until this point let out the remainder of my air, making its way up my now unblocked throat and into the dryness of my mouth. With the only movement I could force myself to make I let out a high-pitched screech. As though I had found the key, the rest of my tense body unlocked.

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My legs, stiff and sore, cut through the air like razor blades slicing butter. The white cotton sheet that lay on top of me blew silently into the frosty air. My scream now flew effortlessly out of my cracked, dry lips. I felt her back away apologetically toward the bookshelf at the same moment that my door swung open, light switching on.

Confusion mixed with concern spread across the tired face of my mother, moving across the room towards me. As the invisible woman from my childhood next to the bookshelf disappeared the warmth of the still night returned, surrounding me.

While my mother comforted me I felt the sudden tinge of guilt flow through me. I overreacted. I knew for certain that I had hurt the woman's feelings. How couldn't I have?

It had been a week to the day since she had died, since I had held her hand while she left our world; and yet I'd known my Nan had never left me. I'd overreacted when she had come just now, waking me from my dreaming state, to wish me her final goodbye.

Although her carousel gesture was one filled with love, she'd never expected to scare me. Regret hit my chest hard; as I'd known in that moment she wouldn't come back; never in that way again. From then on, she was only to appear to me in the unconsciousness of my peaceful dreaming; until the moment I would reach her in the light.

Flashes of her clouded, bright blue eyes staring up at me from her deathbed, her tied lips trying to mouth the words 'I love you; came back to me'. And as I sat here on my bed the memories of that night still raw, the lump in my throat returned. As I savoured the moment while my mother left the room, one single salty tear rolled down my sleep deprived face; the words 'I love you Nan' were whispered from my lips.



Nikita White wrote this in 2009 when she was in Year 12 at Ulladulla High School in New South Wales.