

## Oh I Pity That Sound

Shoes. What girl doesn't like shoes? I love those satin black stilettos with the large bow on top. Those shoes have seen a lot but they weren't meant to be mine. Most times when I wear those shoes, I just tell myself to suck up the pain because they just look too cute for me to care about the large blisters forming. Similarly, my brother had to suck up the pain of having a younger sister to care for.

I have heard the story several times and it simply shows how our relationship started. One day my parents sit eleven year old Jeffery down along with eight year old Andrew.

"Boys, ya'll will be getting a younger sibling," my parents tell my brothers. Andrew didn't seem fazed. But cute little Jeffrey simply asks "Do we still get a dog?"

My parents giggle and tell him "Of Course."

His outlook on our relationship has not changed much since that day. With my arrival, Jeff always received the short end of the stick.

Several mornings Jeff asks, "Mom can I hang out after school in Little Rock?"

"No Jeff," Mom replies "Your dad and I have to work late. I need you to watch Allison."

"Ok fine," he replies and slams the door as he violently throws his backpack into his truck and drives off.

As a young six year old child, witnessing such an event I understood his true feelings towards me.

Jeff would watch me alright; he would do the bare minimum if that. He would arrive shortly before my daycare closed to pick me up and then drive directly home with no words coming from either of us, just the faint sound of the radio. Once we finally arrived home Jeff quietly walked into the kitchen while I placed my backpack in my room. After twenty minutes or

so the door bell would ring and there was the glow of a delivery van shining through my window. The door bell stood not just a sign for someone to answer the door, but also as my unspoken call to the dinner table. Running as fast as possible downstairs, I would pray the whole way that there would be pizza left for me. Jeff would scarf his pizza down and retreat to his room where he would stay for the remainder of the night, which left me with my other brother, Andrew. Andrew saw me as a toy and saw my toys as something for him to destroy. Nevertheless, Andrew would at least acknowledge my presence.

Since my brother was much older than I, this meant we never enjoyed the same hobbies. By the time I was actually old enough to have a hobby, Jeff was off at college. My parents obviously saw the relationship we had but had no idea what to do about it. My brother and I share physical characteristics but our personalities have always been worlds apart. My mom would attempt to get us to do things together but it never seemed to work out. Around the holidays we would spend the most time together each year simply discussing presents for our parents. My parents attempted for us to get along but there is a piece missing in our relationship. Jeff never expressed any form of fraternity, which did not help considering that was his role in my life until he moved out.

Jeff went off to college and rarely visited home, unless absolutely necessary: for a football game or the closing of the dorm for holidays. Several years went by and I almost forgot I even had two brothers. Most people didn't even know that Jeff existed until they saw pictures. Jeff went about living his new life in college while I grew up in middle school. I remember Jeff brought a girl home with him one time, which seemed odd since he had never done this before. Erin went to school with Jeff and they had become inseparable. Erin seemed to be a very nice

girl who took the time to play with me. Jeff and Erin finally decided to get married shortly after I entered junior high.

I remember purchasing my beloved little black shoes. A few weeks before Jeff's wedding, my mom and I went out to purchase shoes for the big day. Since I would be participating in the wedding party, I needed a specific pair of shoes: simple little black pumps. As a junior bridesmaid, shoes were supposed to be something that set me apart. While waiting for the salesmen to come over I got a glimpse of the shoes the rest of the bridesmaids would be wearing that day. That day I simply did not want to be a little kid anymore. I wanted to be included in the same thing as all the other bridesmaids. Rebellious against Erin's wishes, the stilettos that came to a point, with no back, and a beautiful bow tied on top became mine. They were meant to be.

Always to be ingrained in my memory is the first time I was supposed to wear my favorite little black shoes. A cool December morning I rose from my bed and began to get ready for the long day ahead. Today was the day that Jeff would marry Erin. Erin had always been a nice girl but something quickly changed one day for no valid reason. Erin became frustrated with my mom as she thought my mom wanted to ruin her life. Erin saw my mom as an awful person even though my mom had done nothing, and did everything in her power to make my mom suffer. Erin would not allow anyone to speak to my mom even my own brother, and he complied with her wishes. The night before was supposed to be a fun rehearsal dinner but instead it was a dinner that took place with hardly any words spoken to me by my soon to be sister in-law, Erin.

I began to style my hair when something hit me. I had the wrong shoes to wear to the wedding that day! Erin already had a fire brewing inside and now I would just fan those flames by wearing the wrong shoes, which would somehow be my mom's fault. In complete panic I ran

to my dad to try to figure out a solution. My dad, being the good man he is, went to the store to purchase the plain black pumps I should have bought in the first place. I now was ready to attend the wedding wearing the shoes that were not my favorite just as my existence was not Jeff's favorite.

Throughout the years the relationship between my brother and I has not been the best but I learned to just accept the fact. So for the sake of his happiness, I walked down the aisle with a fake smile plastered on my face wearing shoes that had a price tag on the bottom that stuck to the floor with each step I took. Instead of taking the time to remove it, I simply kept walking and ignored the sound. Jeff treated me the same as I treated that price tag. I was something stuck in his life that he ignored.