

SORORICIDIUM PER ASSOCIATIONEM

EMILY BISHOP, 2018

RUNNER-UP

My name is Margo DeLaffe. I have a sister, Anastasia, who is three years older than me. She's my best friend and I care about her more than anything. I've always looked up to her because she's gorgeous and kind and smart and funny. When I was little I wanted nothing more than to be like her. But recently, she hasn't been herself. It started about two years ago when she met a boy, Ryan. He was tall and thin and when he smiled, it looked more like a sneer. I could understand why she fell for him; he was a musician and he was too clever for his own good. I just couldn't understand why she would stay with him. He was a sadistic jerk, to say the least.

He was loud and pretentious. He thought he was the smartest guy in the room, and he let you know it. I could tolerate that if it wasn't for the abuse. It was rarely physical, but there were times when my sister had come home with a cut across her cheek or a bruise on her wrist that I knew came from the same source.

His verbal abuse destroyed Anastasia. He made her feel like an idiot and like a harlot. He guilted her for being friends with guys she had known since she was six; he would accuse her of cheating on him with

them. When she used the same logic on him, he reacted with rage and told her she was a jealous tart who was too clingy and was lucky that he even paid her any attention. I don't know why she stayed with him and I knew that she would never leave him. I knew that the only way to save my sister's life was to destroy someone else's. I didn't like

“He was loud and pretentious. He thought he was the smartest guy in the room, and he let you know it.”

what I had to do, but I knew that if I planned it out to perfection, it would go off without a hitch. I knew I could get away with. I was more wrong than I had ever been in my life.

My plan involved several weeks of planning as well as a little knowledge about the schedules of Ryan and his family. I knew that his parents would be out of town the second weekend of September. I knew this because he had tried to get Anastasia to stay the night with him so that they could fool around.

She said that she couldn't because our parents would never allow her to do that since she was only seventeen. She had come home that night with a bright purple bruise on her collar bone.

I also knew that Ryan worked as an intern at a law firm from four until seven in the evening every Friday. Everything was going to align perfectly for my plan to go off without a hitch. The materials I needed were few and I spent the week before procuring them. The first thing I needed was a forged note in Ryan's hand writing. It took me the whole week to get his penmanship just right. I had practiced by looking at notes he had written my sister. They all seemed angry and manipulative. Things like, “remember, I'm the only one you love.” And “I don't know how I'd go on if you left me.” Really creepy and really abusive.

The second thing I needed was drop cloths. Lot and lots of drop cloths. We had a bunch in the garage from when we had repainted the living room, so I had those in no time. I also got bleach from the cleaning supplies under the kitchen sink, and a pair of leather gloves from my sister. Ironically, the gloves had been a gift from Ryan when they had first started dating.

Finally, the day arrived that I would enact my plan. I told my parents I had a study group at the library. They were completely unaware that my bag was not filled with books, but the items I thought would save my sister. She wasn't planning on going out that night. I was relieved. I didn't want her involved in this.

Ryan only lived a few blocks away, so I walked. I took the long way around the block through the alley that ran behind his house. I didn't want to be seen by anyone. I hopped the back fence and climbed up onto the railing of the back porch and then pulled myself onto the roof of the portico. I crawled over to the window that I knew was his and put on the gloves I had borrowed. I pulled up on the window frame and it slid open, just as I had hoped.

I climbed through the window, being careful not to touch anything. I then began my hunt for the final and most vital tool for my plan to work. I searched in his closet, under the bed, in his desk. It was nowhere to be found. It then dawned on me that if it wasn't in his room, it was probably in his parents' room. I raced down the hallway opening door after door until I opened

the one that led to the master bedroom. My heart started pounding as I reached under the queen sized bed and wrapped my hand around a metal box. I pulled it out from under the bed and unlatched the clasp keeping it shut. I opened the box and saw to my delight a black handgun.



BEAT / MEGHAN ARIAGNO, 2020

Besides being a musician and a manipulative schmuck, Ryan was also a sharpshooter. He had a real talent for guns, it was a family tradition. I knew that there would be a gun somewhere in the house that was easy to get to. They kept them hidden in places that could be easily accessed in case there was an intruder. The pieces of my plan

began to fall into place. I picked up the gun. My hands were shaking. Was I beginning to have second thoughts?

"Get a hold of yourself, Margo. Don't you want to save your sister?" I said to myself.

I knew that I was doing this for her, not for me. I couldn't

bear another night of hearing her cry or of seeing her try desperately to cover up a bruise that was in an obvious spot. I knew that it was time for her to be her true self once again.

I checked my watch. It was 6:30. Ryan would be home in less than an hour. I had to act quick. I crept down the stairs and placed my bag in a chair in the living room. It was in a straight line with the front door and the light switch. I decided I would sit here when

I pulled the trigger. I took out the drop cloths and placed them on the ground near the front door and on the surrounding walls. I didn't know how messy this would be, so I planned for the worse.

I took the forged note and placed it carefully on the coffee table next to a book of famous architecture. I read over the note one more time, impressed by my skilled forgery:

Mom and Dad,

By the time you read this note, I will be long gone. I can't take this town anymore and the expectations placed on me by everyone. I have become a person I do not like and I am afraid of who I might become if I don't try and change. I have decided to head west, looking to change myself. I hope you understand and know that there was nothing you could have done to fix me. I want you to know I love you and I'll come back for you one day.

Your Son,
Ryan

I had to give people hope that he wasn't dead. If they thought he ran away, the authorities would spend a few weeks looking for him and then he would fade into obscurity. I knew that once I shot him I would have to get rid of the body. It was supposed to rain the next night. I would move Ryan's body in his own car to the river just outside of town and then dump it. The heavy rain would cause flooding and wash the body away. I would leave the car near the train station. I would place the gun back in the box, I would clean everything to be spotless, and I would get away with everything. I checked my watch. It was 7:09. Ryan would be arriving any moment. In fact, I thought I heard his car pulling into the driveway. I moved to the chair and sat there, waiting. I wasn't going to give some speech about how he was getting what he deserved or that I was doing this as an act of love. I had seen enough movies and read enough

59 *ECHOES*

books to know that monologuing takes too much time and is usually the downfall of a plan. Besides, he didn't deserve an explanation. But he did deserve what was coming.

My heart began pounding and my hands were shaking. I tried to steady my breathing, but it wasn't working. I knew that it was okay to be scared. I knew that what I was doing was right. I heard footsteps approaching the front door. It was dark outside and inside. I could barely see the figure that unlocked the door and stepped through. The door closed, I could vaguely make out a hand reaching for the light switch. I knew it was now or never.

BANG! One shot. I heard a gasp. The lights flickered on. Tears welled in my eyes and I dropped the gun. I looked up and saw a purple sweater with a dark spot slowly growing. Black Curls that were pinned up and grey eyes that shone like moonlight.

"Ana!" I shrieked. I had shot my own sister. Her expression was one of confusion and fear. I rushed to her. She fell back. Her hands were pressing on the bullet hole. Her breathing was rapid and her eyes were watering. I propped her up and held her. I began to sob.

"Ana, I didn't mean to. This wasn't for you. This was for him! I would never hurt you!" She reached a blood-stained hand up feebly and wiped a tear from my face.

"It's okay. Don't cry. I'll be okay. It's not your fault." Of course in her final moments, she would try and comfort me. That's

just the kind of person she was. I sobbed and my tears fell on her face. I wanted to believe her words. I wanted to believe that everything would be fine and go back to normal. I knew I was lying to myself. The bullet had hit her in the stomach. It was an unfortunately accurate shot.

"Margo. I need you to talk to me. Please, just tell me a story," she begged, her voice shaking. I nodded and tried to stop my crying. I told her how much I loved her and how much she meant to me. I told her about the park where we used to go and feed ducks when we were little. I told her about the time we tried to make our parents breakfast for their anniversary, but had ended up horribly burning the toast. I told her that she was loved and that she was amazing. She smiled and said she loved me. And then she closed her eyes.

It felt like I sat in that living room for an eternity. I held Anastasia and cried silently, not knowing what to do. I just held her. I just sat there, unmoving. It felt like the wind was knocked out of me. I heard footsteps approaching the front door. I would not let my sister die in vain because of my mistake. I leaned down and kissed her forehead and placed her gently on the ground. I crawled over to where I had dropped the gun and picked it up. I stood and held the gun out in front of me, one finger resting tentatively on the trigger. The front door opened. "Margo?" Ryan said in confusion. His expression turned to one of

terror and he placed his hands in the air.

"Close the door, Ryan."

"Look, Margo. I think we should--"

"I SAID, CLOSE THE DOOR, Ryan."

He closed the door and locked it.

"It should have been you, asshole."

BANG! BANG! BANG! The bullets hit him in the shoulder and the chest. The third one missed. His body fell to the floor. He laid there, bleeding out. I sunk down, my back against the leg of the chair. I heard police sirens. One of the neighbors must have called the cops when they heard the first gun shot. I'm screwed. There's no way I'm getting out of this. I had too much pride, too much faith in myself. I don't even know why my sister came to this godforsaken house. She was probably planning on surprising Ryan. Maybe she had convinced our parents to let her stay the night. I won't ever know.

My time is running short. I know that the police will come in the house soon and I'll be taken away to some institution or I'll be tried in court for my crimes. I'll end up in the chair, electrocuted painfully as people watch. That's not how I want to go. I'm running out of time. At least if I go this way, it's on my terms. I don't know what waits on the other side, but even the possibility of a dark, never ending void of nothing seems more appealing than my current options. A tear rolls down my face and I take a deep breath.

