

In An Oldster's Mind

Crowd and noise always interrupt my mind in the TV room. I desire someone to take me back to my private room. I want to be alone and think about my personal things. I appreciate that a nurse helping me to go back my room. Along the hallway, I look straight forward and do nothing like a plant. What factor causes the plant to move? I turn my head as if I have seen my friend, a close friend passing my wheelchair. What I see at the back actually is a nurse who is frightened by my active and rare movement. When I look back again, the nurse has already fallen onto the floor. Screaming and nervousness spread out all over the floor. Bang! The door close behind me.

Staring at the mirror, I used to count the number of wrinkles on my forehead. They remind me the number of inerasable past events that I had involved in. Rapidly, I climb on the bed. Bed is my lovely place. I call it, the gymnasium.

I used to roll on my bed. Whenever my mind cannot function or do not know what should do next, I would roll, roll and roll. This time is unusual because my head is crashing the fence of the bed. It is not much painful. The crash stops me rolling but starts me getting recall of my friend, Angus. At a time, my brain is working like a computer loading an enormous file. A picture is appearing - a guy is walking towards me and gives me his saber. The saber is sharp and shiny, it reflects an intensive light to my eyes. My eyes shutter reluctantly. I see my school, my night school. I am glad that this recall is not being erased. I remember that Angus sat beside me.

"Do your best. You are new to this subject. Everything here is brand new to you. Don't worry. Just try your best." Angus held up his head by his hand and murmured. His eyes were staring on the page of a novel, but I knew he was talking to me. In my class Angus was the only one who retook the course. Everyday I attended the course because I would get the mark of attendance. The teacher's voice was gradually fading out until no words I could hear. Everyday the whole course started and finished like that.

At home I used to turn on the radio. Loneliness was my hatred. The louder the radio, the more it comforted me. Reluctantly, I heard a personal story from the radio. The voice of the caller seemed to be familiar, but what was the purpose to figure it out. I didn't care the other people. My mind was full of my own anxiety. "... Suicide is not a method to get your answer. Find your answer in the real life," the host said.

The caller shared his unsatisfactory throughout the air without taking a breath. The host did nothing to him with his talented mouth. The caller spoke restlessly within a few minutes. Impatiently, the host was trying to stop his speech, "Since it is the time for the commercial, our conversation is threatening to terminate right now. Thanks for your call, Angus." The radio was still on in my room but I was on the street. I was cycling to the park, where once I saw Angus sitting on an unique block of rock. That time his hand was holding a barbecue fork pointing to the fish in the pond, seemed like preparing for his dinner.

Next day, anytime I met him, I could see a heavy book in his hand. In the course, I knew he hadn't brought his textbook but in his hand was the unknown book. My curiosity led me into asking him about the book. He murmured and introduced it, "I love this book. There are many past cases of killings, kidnappings, suicides and that kind of excitement."

"You are preparing for out English independent study project, right?"

"No. I am preparing for kidnapping a girl."

"Stop joking. How about discussing your plan with me. Ha ha." I giggled as I turned my head to the professor.

"I'm not kidding," he responded conscientiously. Since the time I had not paid attention to what he said, I thought he just wanted the lesson's time to pass quickly.

I hadn't seen Angus for a week. One days a person with a sunglasses patted my

shoulder when I was waiting for the bus after the class.

"You are joining my plan?" he murmured.

"What plan?" I had no idea what he was talking about. "Where have you been? Did you drop the course?"

"I got a girl in my basement. She is ill. I need money to get medication."

"Bring me to the girl." I stared at him with my suspicious eyes.

Going down the stair to the basement, I could hear the sobbing of the girl. Under the flame of the candle light I recognized her. She was my neighbour, Rebecca. Her eyes were swollen and I thought she could not see my face. When I touched her, she shrank at the corner, trembling.

What were the consequences if releasing the girl right now or if keeping her in the basement a few more days. These two questions were flashing in my brain alternately. "The coming Saturday I will come over here and decide what to do," I ordered Angus. "Make sure you leave her enough clothing and give her proper meals."

I had thought about what that stupid thing we were doing all the time. In that overnight to get done our group project. That night, I lied on my bed in the basement and Angus went outside for a walk. I had thought and wondered why Rebecca had never hit the locked door or screamed raucously for help. I got up tip-toed into her room, unlocked the door, searching something I could get the answer from, took out her stuff and locked the door. Among her stuff, I found a diary. I read it over page by page immorally. After reading, all her secrets and feelings were exposed to my mind. I was going to talk to her the next morning.

"Are you OK? I want to talk to you," With my mask on, I unlocked the door. I could see her mouth open like trying to say something but then closed. "I know your name is Rebecca. I am sorry about... I have read your diary."

"You read my diary! Read, read, read. Everybody read it. My da read it; my ma read it. Do I need to explain what 'personal stuff' means?"

"Sorry, sorry. My evil mind has controlled me to do that. It is not an excuse. I am just wondering why you have never screamed for help." My hidden face turned red.

"You got the answer, right?" She sobbed.

I got closer to her and tried hard to settle her fluctuant mood down. "Come out. Don't get close to her!" Angus yelled and was juggling his saber.

After the door was locked, he commanded me not to speak to Rebecca again. His conscientious behaviour frightened me. I knew he was not joking that time. However, I had talked to her regardless of Angus' recommendation. I was beginning to realize her as days went by. I knew why she had never screamed for help because she knew it was useless in a room in the basement. I knew why she hated her parents because they had never given her freedom and were always overly exact on everything. I wanted to help her, released her.

Angus had asked me few times if I ever talked to Rebecca. He had been suspecting me if I would betray him. Unfortunately, once when Angus rushed down to the basement, I was talking to her. That time he had his gun in his hand and also yelled, "I told you to leave her alone. You! Spy! Tie her hands at the back."

"Take it easy! Angus, give me the gun. It is no use to point that gun to us. Everything would be OK," I tried to persuade him.

"I ... I also don't want to kidnap her but I have heard her cursing her parents. I hate her. I hate her not to cherish her parents. How about me? Where are my parents? They passed away in a car accident." He put the gun into his mouth and fired.

Everything has passed. After the kidnapping, Rebecca lived with her parents in a small country. Two years ago I got the message of her death. Now I am old. I still don't know what an orphanage feels and don't have a desire to find it out. I only enjoys sitting on my wheel-chair. I get nothing to do. Nothing I can recall, except the suicide.

