

Shakespearian Suicide Note

by Chloe Whitehorn (803-322-9662, chloe.whitehorn@gmail.com)

A monologue for a young woman.

ANNE:

You ever hang upside down off the side of a couch and wonder what the world would be like if the ceiling were the floor. Stairs would be slides and people could sit around chandeliers like they were bonfires. The world seems more fun upside down. My brother, he once said that if the world was upside down and we walked around on the ceiling, I would be complaining about how I wished we walked on the floor. He probably had a point.

My mother always preferred my brother. She was pissed that she got pregnant with me. She only had a year with him before I was born. I guess it wasn't enough. Well, it was enough for her to decide he was her angel. Mom didn't really deal with my brother's suicide. She just checked herself into some clinic. I guess she couldn't deal with the grief of losing him. I guess that's normal. What are you supposed to do when your favorite child kills himself? I'm pretty sure she didn't blame herself though. Isn't that what most parents do? Blame themselves? Wonder about what they could have done differently? No, I'm pretty sure she blamed me. Like if she hadn't had me, if I'd never been born, then none of this would have ever happened. He was supposed to be away at school but he'd come home early for Christmas.

Mom didn't even tell me right away. She just said Christmas was cancelled.

You can't cancel Christmas. I mean, it still happens and everywhere you go there's Christmas music and jingle bells and guys in Santa suits asking for money. Which always struck me as odd. I mean, if it's supposed to be Santa why does he need money. The guy supposedly spends all year making toys and then gives them out to kids all over the world. For free. And postage is expensive these days. And if it's supposed to be just some holiday thing and not ACTUALLY Santa, then why don't you see any people dressed up as menorahs ringing bells on street corners asking for donations. I could have been a smart ass and asked if Hanukkah was cancelled too, but I could tell from her tone that it wasn't, well... it was serious.

She didn't talk to me for 2 months. I came home but she wasn't here. I was informed of my brother's suicide by the police officers taking the yellow tape off my house. When she finally did talk to me, she wouldn't talk about him. I kept asking about his suicide note. I mean no one

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commits suicide without leaving a note. Otherwise how would you know it was suicide? You should really leave a note anytime you need to say goodbye and you can’t do it in person. Break ups can be like that too. Well, you should really do that in person, but if you can’t... a letter is good. Better than an email or a MSN message. But face-to-face is always best. And if you can’t do that, a YouTube video is always a good option. Very public though.

She wouldn’t even tell me how he died so I had to keep asking. Maybe he tripped in the bathtub while shaving and he slit his wrists. Or maybe he was trying to adjust the satellite dish and fell out of the window. Maybe he was into erotic asphyxiation where you strangle yourself to reduce oxygen to the brain to enhance sexual pleasure and he just accidentally hung himself. That happens. I think I remember seeing that on CSI once.

I love CSI Miami. Not that I really like it, I mean it’s exactly the same as regular CSI, but it’s in Miami. I like it because of Horatio Cane. Well, the actor who plays him. I watch it because I want to learn to talk the way he does. Everything he says, everything regardless of how mundane it is, sounds like it is the MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ... YOU WILL EVER NEED... TO HEAR. Doesn’t matter what it is. He could be talking about who the murderer is or telling a janitor the bathroom was out of toilet paper. People listen to someone who talks like that. I would love for people to listen to me like that.

Nobody really listens to me. People watch my YouTube videos though. I can tell ‘cause it tells you the number of views, but in person, people don’t listen to me. They like to talk about themselves. The easiest way to get someone to like you is to spend an hour with them getting them to talk about themselves. After that they feel connected to you, like you’ve really bonded and have a lot in common. But I’ve asked all the questions. I listen really well. That’s all people really want. Someone to listen to them. Talk about themselves. And after all that time, the only stuff they’ve learnt about me is in the shrapnel of the conversation.

My mom says she listens to me but talking to my mom is like talking to an aquarium. Eventually she just blurted out “He shot himself in the head with my gun!” Who says that? I guess she thought better of it afterwards. Maybe her psychiatrist told her that was a mean thing to do and one day I’d grow up and be in therapy and figure out that everything was my mother’s fault. Or maybe she thought I might commit suicide too. And then what would the PTA think?

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She went on a huge therapy kick. She dragged me to a psychologist—he wanted me to keep a diary. Fat chance. Then there was SOS. Survivors of Suicide. It’s like AA for people whose family members have killed themselves. There was a lot of (*standing up*) “Hi, my name is Anne and my brother committed suicide”. “Hi Anne.” I think she thought saying it over and over would make the words mean more. “Until a survivor verbalizes his or her feelings, the survivor is unable to accept the loss and move on.”

Yeah, we’re called survivors. Like some weird game show with challenges minus the whole gross bug eating thing.

In therapy they made us play that trust game. You know, the one where you close your eyes and fall backward and somebody is supposed to catch you. I think the purpose was to prove that we were able to trust that our loved one weren’t going to leave us, that they would still be there. Do you know what it’s like to not be able to trust your mother enough to play the game properly?

I stopped asking about a note. But still, you’re supposed to leave a note. That’s like a key ingredient. Except this one suicide pact I heard about. These two actors were in love, and I don’t know the details of why they killed themselves. Maybe life was just too mundane for them. Anyway, they were in this very Baz Luhrman-esque adaptation of Romeo and Juliet and on the last night, the final performance, when the characters kills themselves, they actually did. Nobody even realized at first. Mostly because the rake of the audience was so bad you couldn’t see anything that happened on the stage floor. So nobody noticed the blood seeping across the stage from Juliet’s body. Not until the actor playing the prince slipped in it walking downstage for his curtain call. They didn’t leave notes. But they did it in public so people actually saw them do it. That’s kind of like a note. I mean they told people exactly what they were doing. “then I’ll be brief. Oh happy dagger, this is thy sheath. There rest and let me die.”

And a suicide note written by William Shakespeare is pretty much the best explanation out there.