

A WOLF AT THE DOOR

by Shawn Deal

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ISBN: 978-1-64479-304-6

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A Dramatic Monologue

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SYNOPSIS: A teen tells of her looming battle with Lupus; the wolf at her door. This compelling drama explores resilience and the "uneasy acceptance" of chronic illness, offering a unique, impactful role.

TIME: Present.

SETTING: A bedroom, school room

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female)

NARRATOR (f)..... Teen.

SET: This can be done very simply; bare stage

PRODUCTION NOTES: There is no specific costuming and no props. However, the actress could certainly use some wolf jewelry, or a photo or drawing of a wolf, or even a stuffed wolf.

DEDICATION

To Victoria.

NARRATOR: There's a wolf at the door, quiet and unassuming.

It lies there, not doing anything, not making any kind of noise at all. It doesn't move, and it's absolutely no threat. But the wolf is at the door, nonetheless.

I imagine we all have one. Each and every one of us has their own wolf at the door, and for much of our individual lives, it does nothing at all.

Eventually, that wolf will do something. It's inevitable, I realize now. Depending upon how your life is going, you could be waiting for that wolf to move. You might even be wishing for it.

Mine has been able to permeate my thoughts. I have posters of wolves on the walls of my bedroom, I draw wolves, and I own wolf jewelry. I have always loved wolves. They have forever been my favorite animal. I imagined that the wolf was my spirit animal and there to protect me. Well, I guess I was wrong about that.

For me, I thought my personal wolf matched my personality, and was just extremely sleepy.

I love to sleep.

I guess I don't know any teenager that doesn't like sleep. I think us teenagers are renowned for it.

Sleep for me is like my religion, my own personal motto, my own personal credo, the meaning of life, all wrapped up into one glorious activity.

I sleep, therefore I am.

My father says (*In a father's voice*): You'll sleep through history. You'll sleep through all the important events in your life.

Now, I know and you know, that's a gross over-exaggeration. But maybe not by much. Besides, the events could not have been that important if I slept through them.

I take my sleep seriously.

My father has to come into my bedroom every morning to shake me awake. There is no alarm created by humankind that can wrestle me awake. I don't care how loud it is or annoying the sound, I can sleep through it.

Not only do I sleep late, but as soon as I get home from school every day, I climb into bed and take a nap until dinner.

My mother has told this particular story to so many people. As soon as I was born, instead of crying out due to the extreme change of environment, from the warm, darkened womb to the cold, bright outside world, or crying out due to hunger, I fussed for about a minute, and immediately went to sleep.

So nobody should be surprised now that I'm a teenage girl, I need my beauty sleep. Granted, I don't do much with it. I'm not into makeup or the whole putting myself together or whatever, so I probably need the extra beauty sleep because I'm going on natural beauty alone.

Once I'm revived from the dreary tedium of the high school day with a nap and food, I can adequately focus on my studies and do several hours of homework.

No matter my absolute love for sleep and the fact that it is my predominant hobby, I do have a completely full life. I admit I sleep more than the average teenager. There are certainly teenagers who sleep less...okay a lot more who sleep less. But still.

I belong to a couple of clubs, FFA for one. I may not look it, but I'm a pretty good trap shooter. Not many clay pigeons survive me. I also belong to the chess club. I have a mean opening move, even if I do say so myself. And I spend a lot of time with my friends.

There's a wolf at the door, and it begins to stir. Not by much. But it has certainly opened its eyes and lifted its head off the floor.

I'm a good student. Actually, not to blow my own horn too loudly, I'm slightly amazing. I'm a straight A student. Some of those A's were in fact A minuses but still A's. So as far as I'm concerned—straight A's. I won't accept any grade less than an A minus, so when I started feeling tired, even in class, I had a growing concern.

Let me explain something about my love of sleep: don't confuse it with me being tired all the time. I'm rarely tired. I love to sleep, don't get me wrong. When I see an unoccupied bed, my body instantly goes into sleep mode. I start to yawn, my eyelids get heavy, I can't keep them open, and the bed calls out to me.

But during class, during school hours, I'm focused on learning. I'm one of those few teenagers that enjoy learning. I want to go on to college. I want to make something of myself. I want to chase my dreams. I don't exactly know what those dreams are at the moment. They're just so many classes that I love. I haven't yet picked a subject to throw myself at quite yet. I will choose eventually. I'm not rushing to pick one. When I get to college, who knows, maybe I will discover something new. I'm motivated. I'm focused. So, it was concerning when I began to feel tired all the time. I was lethargic. I just couldn't find the energy within me to get anything done.

I mentioned it to my parents and, at first, they just kind of shrugged it off. Probably going through a growth spurt or my body was going through "changes." And it had to be one of those two things that was causing me to feel 'extra' tired.

It was plausible. I accepted those as being the two most likely causes, even if I had a lingering, niggling doubt in the back of my head.

It turned out to be more than “changes.” Besides, I had already changed. That was already a done deal. Believe me I wasn’t excited about it.

I could barely stay awake in some classes. I began to literally nod off in them. A couple of my teachers even asked me how my home life was and if I needed to talk, they were available to listen.

I don’t know what they imagined was happening at home, but I knew that whatever was happening to me wasn’t good.

I didn’t want anyone thinking anything negative about me or about my family. My parents love me and were doing well by me. I have great parents. So, I mentioned to my mom what a couple of the teachers had said to me, and it was then that we headed to the first of many doctor’s appointments.

There’s a wolf at the door, and it’s beginning to growl.

The first doctor, my pediatrician, who had been seeing me since I was a baby, put me on vitamin B supplements and said it was sunlight deprivation, so I was supposed to get light from specialized UV lamps and take a pill every week.

Neither made any difference.

After two or three more weeks, I was back at the doctor, worse than I was before.

The doctor changed my entire diet, having me eat all the foods I hate, and stop eating all the foods I love.

Yes, it killed a certain amount of joy, which may have not been so bad, if it had solved the problem. But it did not solve the problem, and then the pain came.

It started in my elbows. And it wasn't a pain to start with, more like a discomfort, which grew into a constant pain, especially when I extended my arms. So, I couldn't let them fall naturally to the ground and swing while I walked.

They continued to say it could still be growing pains. Okay, maybe, but isn't that something you're supposed to get in your tweens. I'm sixteen years old. I stopped growing about four years ago. And this is as tall as I got. Five foot two. *(Insert actress's height.)* That's it. Frankly, I didn't get any taller than my mother, which was a dream of mine. I wouldn't have cared, as long as I was a little taller than her. Even if it was just one inch taller. It would have been something I could have teased my mother about for the rest of her life. My one and only bragging point, but no. Here I am, standing back to back with my mom, and we are exactly tied.

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