



# JUNK JUNKIE NEEDS A PLACE TO SLEEP

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IS THAT YOU?

I'm sorry I came over like this. Are you mad at me for not calling sooner?

That was my brother in the truck that dropped me off. My brother didn't really feel like dropping me off, but I needed to talk to someone.

Look.

I used again. I have a habit now. It only takes three days, right? I got seventy-five days clean before I went back out and used. Sorry I couldn't give you advice about your problems last week — my head was too messed up to help anybody. I can't even help myself.

Can we talk?

Inside?

Can I stay here?

I couldn't take it anymore. She's driving me crazy—my mom. I swear she hates me. She gets mad when I try to relax.

You know I've been working so hard. Going to meetings every week — Spiritual Awakening, Sundays at noon; Lost & Found, Wednesday nights at eight; Shot of Hope, Mondays at eleven. I got a sponsor. Her name's Katy. I was working Step One — admitting my powerlessness and unmanageability.

I've been filling out job applications every day, but no one's calling me back. I applied to the Royal Farms down the road — put my application in the assistant manager's hands. In his *hands*, and he said he wanted to schedule an interview with me, but he never called.

I've been working so hard. You know how I've been putting in applications everywhere. So I was tired, and sometimes, you know, I just want to lie back and relax. Do you ever feel that way? Do you ever just want to kick off your shoes, lie down on the sofa under a warm blanket, put on an afternoon movie, and just relax?

Rest and relaxation.

Well, I tried doing that the other day, and my mom got mad at me. She doesn't want me to relax. She yelled at me for not putting job applications in. I tried telling her I was, and they weren't calling me back.

It's because I'm the black sheep in the family. Everyone thinks I'm just a junkie-junk. Always a junkie, won't be nothin' but a junkie.

I only tried to lie on the couch and watch a movie about two times since I've been living there.

My mom made me so mad, and my brother, and that's why I used. I couldn't handle it anymore. If she finds out I've been using she'll kick me out. She'll see it in my face and my eyes.

Does my face look bad?

How do my eyes look?

Bloodshot?

I told you before how I tried to hang a window curtain in my room, and my mom got mad at me. I just wanted a window curtain for when I got undressed.

She says, "You don't need no window curtain. No one wants to look at you."

Well, sometimes my boyfriend comes to pick me up. He used to stand outside and wait for me and throw rocks at my window and watch me, and there are neighborhood boys that might see me too. So you understand? That's why I wanted the window curtain. I'm just trying to be modest. She laughs at me for wanting to be modest. So me and my mom got into an argument over that.

I swear she hates me. I'm the black sheep.

You know, with a dope habit — you never used dope — well, with a dope habit you get sick, and I'm not feeling too good right now. I can't eat anything.

Can I use your bathroom?

Where is it?

Can I stay here?

When my mom got mad at me for watching a movie, I just went to my room and did Step Work: *Did I shoot dope to suppress painful memories?* and *Is my dope addiction accompanied by obsessive thinking?*

I tried to call Katy, but she never answers the phone. I know I should get a new sponsor, but I'm scared that if I ask someone else they'll say no. You know, I didn't know what I was doing when



I asked her to be my sponsor—I just asked the first person. I just wanted to get started on a new life.

Anyways, I know I should just be grateful that my mom's letting me stay there, but it's hard. So damn hard.

Things started getting really bad about a month ago. I bought this Wii during Christmas so my daughters could play it when they came over to see me — I have two daughters.

I saved up all my money. The State only gives me a hundred and fifty dollars a month plus food stamps. I give my mom all my food stamps plus seventy-five a month. I saved up the little bit of money left and bought this Wii for my daughters, and it was my daughter's birthday a couple days ago, so I wanted the Wii for when she came over.

It was brand new, never used.

My brother asked to borrow the Wii — this was about a month ago. Not the whole game, just the paddle. I let him borrow it. I didn't want to because I know he steals and takes stuff to the pawn shop, and I tell him, "I swear to the Lord Above, if you break it or lose it, you're buying me a new one."

And he goes, "Yeah, whatever. You'll get it back."

So he had the Wii paddle for about two weeks, and I asked him about it. "Can you bring it over?" I say. "My daughter's birthday is coming up, and I want to have it for when she comes over."

"I'll bring it over. I'll bring it over."

Another week goes by, and I keep asking him about the Wii, and he keeps saying he'll bring it over. Then, one day, he comes over with his wife, and I tell him I want my Wii again, and he says, "OK. I'll bring it over later tonight."

And I say, "No! I want it right now! Go home and get it right now!"

He leaves, and his wife is still in the house, so I ask her if she's seen my Wii. "What Wii? I haven't seen a Wii around the house," she says. "Is that where he said he's going? He said he's going to get the Wii? Oh, honey, he's gone. That Wii is gone."

I knew it. He probably sold it or broke it, and at this point I'm really upset. I'm crying, and my mom is mad at me again, tells me that I need to be nicer to my brother. She always takes his side. It hurts me so much when she does that. He's her favorite. She loves him so much. I'm the black sheep in the family.

My mom's boyfriend is there, and he just looks at me like something's wrong with me, like I'm crazy.

Can I have something to drink?

Just some water.

Thanks.

Can I stay here?

One day I rode my bike to the town center to see my doctor.

You knew I had knee problems? Yeah, I have metal plates in my knees, and every now and then they swell up — get full of pus.

So I rode my bike to my doctor's. He's such a good doctor. He and I talk like friends. He emails me and tells me about his wife and checks in on me. I told him about my knees getting swelled again, and he told me to come down. "I'll take care of you," he says.

After the doctor's, I left my bike chained to a stop sign and my friend rode me home. When I came in the house, my mom says, "Your brother stopped by. There's a Wii paddle or something on the TV. I knew he'd give it back."

From across the room I could tell something was wrong with it. When I got closer I saw that it was not my Wii. It was broken. The Wii I lent him was brand new, never used.

So my boyfriend calls my brother — his name is Steve, by the way — Steve is my brother. My boyfriend calls Steve and asks, "What's going on with the Wii, man? You know she bought that for her daughters. You need to buy her a brand-new Wii." My boyfriend was pissed — he wanted to beat Steve up. He's tired of Steve treating me like this. Steve bought a brand-new Wii because he's scared of my boyfriend, and finally, after a month, I got a new Wii paddle.

I will never lend him anything again. I bought that Wii for my daughters. I couldn't stop crying. I just went to my room and cried in bed. My daughter's birthday already passed by the time I got the Wii back. She didn't come over. I wanted to call her the morning of her birthday, so I asked my mom if I could use her cell phone.

"What d'you want to use my cell phone for?" she says.

I told her I wanted to call my daughter for her birthday, and she says she wants to call her too, but I tell her, "I'm her mother. I should be the first one to call."

So my mom goes, "Fine. No one will call her," and she didn't let me use her cell phone.

That really upset me.

Then, one day, I was in my mom's car — we were driving to Wal-Mart — and I was telling her how hurt I was by Steve, and my mom tried to get me to feel sorry for him. She says, "You know Lara, Steve has always tried to get attention. Even when he was little. He always thought that your dad and me loved you more than him."

"So what do you want me to do, Mom?"

"Be nicer. He's your brother. He just wants attention."

That's what my mom does—she tries to make me feel sorry for him. She always takes his side.

Even when we were little.

See, something happened between me and my brother when we were younger. He did something to me. He raped me. Not right



away. For a while, he just touched me. He touched me every night. My mom knew about it. Then, one night, he penetrated me. It was reported, and we went to court. He went to juvenile detention.

"You must have done something. You must have been asking for it," my mom says to me, but I know that deep down she blames herself because after my dad died she just went to the bars every night.

And that night, when it happened — the penetration — she was at the bar with a man and came home piss-faced drunk. The next morning, she called the police, and Steve admitted to everything.

No one else knows about it, not my aunts or uncles. They all just think something's wrong with me. "She's just a junkie," they say. "She just wants attention." They can't figure out why I act the way I do — argue and get so emotional about my mom and brother. My mom doesn't want me telling my aunts and uncles.

A few days after I got the Wii back, me, my mom, her boyfriend were all getting along, playing *Life* when my mom and I got into an argument about my brother not bringing the Wii over for so long. She said to her boyfriend, "I don't know why she acts like this."

And I say, "Oh, yes you do. Shall we tell him?"

"Tell me what?" her boyfriend says.

"Shall we tell him, Mom — the truth?"

She didn't say anything. Her boyfriend is looking at me, looking at her, looking at me.

So I told him. I told him everything that my brother did.

The touching. The penetration.

And he says, "So that's why she acts the way she does. You keep saying you don't know why your daughter acts like she does. This is why! She needs help. She suffered."

And my mom says, "We all suffered."

And her boyfriend says, "No! Who suffered?"

She says, "Me and Steve."

"No! Who suffered?" he says. He points at me. "She suffered — your daughter suffered!"

Shit, I forgot about this needle I have on me. Will you walk with me outside to dump this down the sewer?

Damn, it's cold, and it's not even winter yet.

I wish my teeth were as white as yours.

Can I stay here?

After my mom's boyfriend found out, she was nice to me for the next few days while he was around.

Put on the "happy face" and pretend everything's okay.

Her boyfriend felt sorry for me, so he cooked me pancakes and scrambled eggs a couple mornings. With salt and pepper too. And

one day my mom told him that my bike was locked to a stop sign in town. I was about to walk down there and get it, but he said he would take me. So he rode me into town, and I put my bike in the back of his truck.

He's a really nice guy, but I don't want special treatment. Now I feel awkward in that house, since everyone knows. Now I just stay in my room all day.

Try to keep quiet.

Listen, the morning after I told him, I woke up and my mom and her boyfriend are in the kitchen talking, laughing, having a real good time. My mom comes up to my room and sees that I'm crying, crawled up in bed. She comes over to the bed and sits down next to me. I tell her I'm hurting somewhere deep inside, so she rubs my back. A couple minutes go by and she says, "You want to go to Wal-Mart?" I know she didn't want me to go to Wal-Mart — she was just asking to be nice because her boyfriend was around.

Her boyfriend left after the weekend to go back to work in Virginia. The next day, my mom came home from work — I was just watching a movie on the sofa — and she says to me, "Look, Lara, you know we both hate each other. I think it would be best if you moved out. You could stay in one of those halfway houses."

Those halfway houses cost about a hundred and ten dollars a week, and I don't have money like that. I don't have a job, no money saved. I feel like she just wants to see me fail. She saw that I was getting better, and she didn't want me to succeed.

What was I supposed to do? I felt like I had no other options.

So I used.

I couldn't handle it. I wasn't ready for it. God doesn't give you more than you can handle, right?

Well, I couldn't handle it.

God doesn't love all of us.

God doesn't love me.

I can't let my mom know I used, and I don't want to go back to my mom's house anyway — my brother's there.

My boyfriend would let me stay, but I can't go over there now. If he knew I used he'd leave me.

Can I stay here — just for tonight? Think about it.

Can I stay here?

I knew you would help me.

I don't think I'll be able to sleep though. That's the thing with dope: you can't sleep, but once you do fall asleep, you sleep heavily, for a long time.

I'll just lie here for a while.

Can you turn out the light?