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The Inside Outsider

What is an outsider? The definition varies from person to person, and the perception of what it may mean changes. You may say that an outsider is a person who has no friends and is completely different from their peers. You may say that an outsider is a person who feels as if they are an imposter in their own body. You may very well say that an outsider is a person within a solid friend group that just can't quite seem to fully engage. I am an outsider. I am an outsider because I am the same, I am different, I have many friends, and I am alone. And that is where our unorganized, chaotic, and messed up little story begins.

D and I were never friends. In first grade, we fought constantly. I'm talking physical fights, name-calling, the works. This continued until my mom had to take a morning off of work to talk to us individually. You see, D's mom and my mom grew up in the same country, so they really wanted this "friendship" to work. Eventually things resolved, and we became "friends".

"Friends"

We call each other "friends"
Is that what we are. . . Are we?
On the same page?
Or are you plastered on the cover, while I flip the pages
Looking for something that was never there?

The choice to make our forced friendship, forced
Is something I will never forget.
Yes, go on, cover it with a smile now
The smile that can't dry the tears of my regret.

You call me a sister
Knowing the meaning, with three back at home
Yet you gore me time and time again
As I clean the blade for you, crying just for a glance
Enabling you to wound once again.

"Friends" don't fuck up your past.

I met M and C at an outside sport. They were nice and fun to talk to, although my problematic self did get easily annoyed by M who was dying to be closer to me. Ironically enough, looking back I regret turning a blind eye to what was right in front of me. What the true definition of someone wanting to be your friend actually was. D, M, C, and I were all in the same group, and things genuinely seemed better outside of school. I was way more popular at my after-school activity regardless, but I could sense a change in D. It was as if there were no problems between us, but the second we were at school surrounded by other people, the same harsh treatment.

One of my fondest memories of elementary school was this cute little time when we played family. Now, of course, everyone had a role. D was the daughter, my other classmate was the mom, etc. I remember asking, "Hey, what role do I get? Maybe I can be D's sister?" My other classmate said no (being the bitch she was) and then proceeded to tell me that I could be the *dead cousin*. Let's get this straight. I, a breathing, living, and thriving human being was chosen to be the *dead cousin*. Not even a family friend, an aunt, a great uncle, or even an actual living cousin. Everyone laughed at that, especially D. And that's what hurt the most. The realization that I wasn't even significant enough to be seen by them. That I wasn't real to them. A crucial part of who I am, my bluntness and desire to make people laugh, stems from the soul-crushing loneliness of my past. I was never good enough, but if I said something completely out of pocket and people laughed, I felt included. I felt wanted. And that became who I was, even though I've owned it now. Sometimes I wonder who I could've been if I was Gabby from the start. Maybe I wouldn't have to go by GG.

The Joker

She looks in the mirror, disgusted.
Horried. Frustrated. Confused.
Who's looking back at her, *is that me?*
Feeling far back in her body, her mind.
She's not quite there, isn't she.
But the tears are.

Fingers trembling, she picks up the mask.
A silly little thing, isn't it?
Running her fingers down the edge of her façade
Nothing a little papier-mâché and deceit can't fix.
Right? Hiding fixes everything, right?
The mask warmly kisses her face, chanting *yes!*

The feeling of comfort overwhelms her
Finally rid of the scum that was her face
Fingers dancing to her lipstick, the blood red covering the mouth
That might've exposed who she really was
That might've been the only part of her left to salvage
Let's put a smile on that face.

Over time, my relationship with D improved, and I had a pretty solid friend group that was the four of us. We would go out, sleep over, and probably do some things that teenagers shouldn't do. I finally felt included, that is until I got social media for the first time at 15 years old. The saying that "ignorance is bliss" truly never fails. While I may have felt included, I didn't see how D, M, and C were always together without me when my back was turned. There were times where I was home on Saturday night with no plans, and I would open my social media to see that they would all post each other saying "my favorite people," while I knew I was never anyone's favorite person. And it hurt. Bad. That's how I wound up in friendships that were insanely toxic just because I couldn't realize that my need for friends or my need to be wanted was killing me. I suffered for years because I couldn't learn how to be okay being by myself. And that wasn't anyone else's problem but *mine*.

So, I finally learned to be alone. There's always been comfort in isolation for me, but I learned to be okay not having a best friend or being someone's "favorite person." And believe me, it wasn't easy. This little narrative doesn't cover half the shit I've been through, but it does cover how much I've grown as a person. I previously shared in Narrative Medicine over the summer that going by the name "GG" has allowed me to reclaim my identity and heal from my past, which it has. In being able to finally start healing and addressing my own mental health problems, life has never been better for me. I found someone who loves me for me, and I love him more than anything for that. Moral of the story, you don't have to forgive anyone from your past. Hell, you could still be friends with them now, I know I am. But you do have to pick your head up and make the best of what life throws at you. I've been in extremely dark places where my life meant nothing to me, but I've made it out. Being an outsider doesn't always have to be a negative. It can allow you to grow as a person and wisely choose who you want beside you in life. I don't know if my story is going to make whoever is reading this feel something, but I hope it allows you to change your perspective on the complex oddities that are humans.