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Rabbit Hole: A Prologue

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Rabbit Hole: The Prologue

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LIT126-001

Character List

NAT- Becca, Arthur, and Izzy's mother. 38-41 years old

BECCA- Oldest child. 14-17 years old

ARTHUR- Middle child. 12-15 years old

IZZY- Youngest child. 9-12 years old

Place

Larchmont, New York

Time

About 30 years ago

RABBIT HOLE: THE PROLOGUE

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Early September. A middle class home that appears nice, but hides many secrets. Down stage right are a loveseat, an end table, a recliner, and a television set. Stage left consists of a small kitchen and a long dining table. Up stage right are a set of bunk beds and a single bed. School has started recently. Becca, age 14, sits at the head of the kitchen table hunched over a math book. Her 12-year-old brother Arthur sits to her left, his head propped on his hand while he reads a biology textbook, and her 9-year-old sister Izzy sits on her right, writing in her English workbook.

IZZY: Becca? (*Taps Becca with her pencil eraser*) What does imagery mean?

BECCA: (*Looking up from her textbook.*) What? Let me see. (*Izzy hands over her workbook.*) Ooooh, imagery. It's pronounced like the g is a d and the e and r are switched.

IZZY: Ooooh, I get it. But what does it mean?

BECCA: (*Hands back the workbook*) Do you remember what imagine means? (*Izzy nods her head*) Okay, it's like when people write a certain way to help you to imagine.

IZZY: That's neat! So what is personmination?

ARTHUR: (*Lifting his head up*) Personification.

IZZY: Personfination.

ARTHUR: Close enough. (*Looks back down at book*)

BECCA: Personification is when an author makes things that aren't people do things that people can do. Like talking or seeing. Like...*the tree told me which way to go.*

ARTHUR: (*Bluntly.*) It can, you know.

IZZY: Really?!

BECCA: (*Glares*) Arthur...Not helping.

ARTHUR: (*Mumbling.*) It's true. If moss grows on it...

BECCA: (*Turning back to Izzy*) Or *the dog said hello.*

ARTHUR: In their own special way, dogs do.

BECCA: (*Angrily*) You know, you really are *not* helping. If you want to make all these comments, you get over here and tell her what these words mean.

ARTHUR: (*He's been looking at Becca with a sideways glare. He slams his textbook shut and stands up.*) I would, but I have better things to do than to play school with you two. (*As he goes to leave down stage left, NAT walks in with her arms full of groceries from down stage left.*)

NAT: Sit down Arthur. Do your homework. (*She places the bags on the counter. Arthur complies and sits back down with a huff.*) How was school?

IZZY: I got a B on my spelling test.

NAT: That's great honey. (*She sounds detached from the conversation as she begins to put things away.*) Arthur?

ARTHUR: (*Pretending to read*) Alright.

NAT: Becca?

BECCA: We began memorizing the elements of the Periodic Table today. The whole final is going to be over the table.

ARTHUR: What table?

BECCA: (*Annoyed*) The Periodic Table. I just said that.

NAT: No need to get snippy. (*A car is heard pulling up into the driveway.*) That's your Dad. Stay right here. (*She exits down stage left. Soon there is muffled talking heard between Nat and a male voice, that soon escalates to yelling and screaming. Adlib this. Nat re-enters, looking flustered.*)

NAT: Keep working on your homework. (*She exits across to stage right. A door slams. A dog barks and then cries out, as if it's in pain. The muffled yelling and screaming starts up again. All the kids sit in silence, morbid looks on their faces.*)

BECCA: (*Hushed*) Homework guys. (*Becca and Izzy begin working on their homework again. Arthur continues to stare at where Nat exited. Becca looks up.*) Arthur homework. Do you want to get in trouble? (*Pause*)

ARTHUR: I wish he would stop. He could talk normally for once. He doesn't have to yell.

BECCA: I know Arthur, but we can't do anything about it. The last time we tried... (*Pause*)...he gave you a black eye.

ARTHUR: (*bows his head, resting his face in his hands*) Yeah. (*Pause*) I know. (*Another pause as the dog cries out again.*) Poor Pickles; she can't get away. (*Tears sting at his eyes as the yelling gets louder. Izzy looks up at Becca.*)

IZZY: Why is Daddy so mad?

BECCA: I don't know Izzy. (*Pause*)

ARTHUR: It sounds like Mom paid a bill that Dad didn't want to be paid.

BECCA: (*Turning towards him*) You can hear that?

ARTHUR: (*Nods*) Yep. I think he's mad because she paid for the phone.

IZZY: Why would he be mad about that? We need the phone to call grandma. And 911.

ARTHUR: Exactly. *(Pause)*

BECCA: He wants to make sure that we can't call for help. *(She chokes up and turns to Arthur)* This is getting really bad.

ARTHUR: *(He nods.)* Maybe we should call grandma. She could at least get Izzy out of here.

BECCA: *(Nods)* Or at least get you and Izzy out of here.

ARTHUR: You can't stay here by yourself! *(He slams his hands on the table)* We made a pack. If one goes, we all go.

BECCA: And you just said that grandma could at least get Izzy out. You broke the pack thinking like that.

ARTHUR: *(Rests his head on his hands again)* Yeah. I guess we're just gonna have to deal with this. *(The yelling continues as the kids stop talking. Suddenly, it goes completely silent. A garden gate squeaks on its hinges and then a car door slams shut. The car's engine turns over and the car speeds away. Nat re-enters from stage right. She is now sporting a swollen cheek.)*

NAT: You working on that homework? *(She sits down next to Izzy.)*

BECCA: Mom, you need to put some ice on that. *(She moved towards the fridge.)*

NAT: I'm fine. Finish your homework.

BECCA: *(Holding a hand towel, she begins to put ice into it and wraps it up)* I'm like two questions from being done. *(She rounds the table, stands behind Nat, and places the ice on her face)* There, at least it won't get bigger. Hold it.

NAT: Thanks Becca.

BECCA: You're welcome. *(She sits back down to do her homework.)*

ARTHUR: Are you okay Mom?

NAT: Yeah. *(She's trying not to cry)* Just another day.

IZZY: *(Gets up and sits on Nat's lap)* We'll get through it Mommy.

NAT: *(Rests her head on Izzy's shoulder)* I hope so baby girl.

(Fade to Black)

Scene 2

Thanksgiving Day. The table is littered with remnants of Thanksgiving Dinner. Nat sits by herself at the table. She has an empty wine bottle in front of her and another half full bottle next to it. The cordless phone lies on the table next to the bottles. Becca and Izzy sit on the couch, while Arthur sits in the recliner. The TV is on, but it's so soft it can barely be heard. Everyone has a look of shock.

ARTHUR: Am I dreaming? Did I just hear that right?

BECCA: Yeah. He's gone. Dead. *(Pause)*

ARTHUR: I guess that's it then. No more yelling. No more of Mom getting hurt.

BECCA: No more of you getting hurt. Or of me getting hurt. Or Izzy getting hurt. It's all over. *(Pause)*

ARTHUR: The problem is...I don't know if I'm happy or sad about it. I mean...

BECCA: Yeah. He was our Dad. *(Arthur and Becca shiver a little from the use of past tense)*

IZZY: So Daddy's gone? He's not coming back?

ARTHUR: Nope.

BECCA: We don't have to worry about him anymore.

NAT: Forever Izzy. Forever. He's never coming back.

IZZY: But that's not what I wished for.

BECCA: What do you mean Izzy?

IZZY: When we broke the wishbone. I wished that Daddy would get better; that he would stop being so mean.

BECCA: Well, maybe this is how it was supposed to be.

NAT: Your wish didn't work because there was no way to fix him. There was no way your Daddy was going to be a good man. *(She takes a rather large drink of the wine)*

BECCA: Mom, I think you've had enough to drink.

NAT: *(Puts bottle down)* Enough? I'm just getting started right now.

BECCA: *(Gets up and crosses over to Nat)* Stop. You've had enough to drink. You don't need anymore.

NAT: I'll drink as much as I damn well please.

BECCA: *(Reaches for the bottle)* Give it. *(The two struggle over it)* Give it to me Mom. You're done. *(The bottle ends up in Becca's hands)*

NAT: Don't FUCKING tell me what to do, Rebecca. I have the right to celebrate after what that asshole did to me. You got that? Shut the fuck up; sit down; and give me my damn bottle. *(Becca, shocked and shaken, hands bottle back and slowly moves to sit back next to Izzy. Nat takes another drink. The kids sit in silence as she does so.)*

Ahhhhhh. Such good wine. I haven't been able to drink wine in so long. Your damn Daddy always said that buying it was a waste of money. And today I said, "Screw it. Its

time I just did something that I want to do.” And so I bought myself two bottles of my favorite wine. (*Takes another gulp*) And it tastes so goooood. And to know that your father isn’t coming home tonight, tomorrow, or ever again is just the icing on the CAKE! A wonderful end to this holiday. You know what I’m thankful for? Alcohol; because it not only makes me feel better, it killed that son-of-a-bitch. (*She takes another big swig and finishes off the bottle*). Damn. All out. I’ll just call Maureen to bring some more over here. Can’t drive now! (*She starts laughing loud and obnoxiously as she dials the phone.*)

ARTHUR: (*Whispering*) Let’s go to our room.

BECCA: (*Whispering back*) Yeah let’s go.

ARTHUR: (*Stops*) We should probably take Pickles some of the scraps from dinner. I bet she’s hungry.

NAT: (*Covering the phone*) If you ain’t gonna shut up and watch the TV, go to your room. (*Puts the phone back to her ear*) Yeah, yeah. Three more. I’ll pay you back.

(*Adlib phone conversation*)

(*Becca and Izzy go into the bedroom and sit together on the single bed. Arthur quietly picks up some of the extra Thanksgiving food and places it on a plate. He then walks across and leaves stage right for only a few seconds before re-entering.*)

NAT: (*Loudly.*) You better not have given that dog my good china!

ARTHUR: I didn’t. I used the plastic plate we usually feed her with.

NAT: (*Waving him off.*) Fine whatever, go to your room. (*Arthur walks into the bedroom, where Becca and Izzy have been very quiet. He just stands in front of them. The kitchen goes black and Nat exits with her phone conversation.*)

IZZY: Is Pickles okay?

ARTHUR: Pickles is fine. She was happy to get some food.

BECCA: I hope Mom remembers to let her in tonight. The weatherman said that we may have snow.

ARTHUR: If not, I'll let her in after Mom passes out. (*Pause*)

BECCA: This feels so weird. To know that he's gone. (*Another pause*) I wonder what we're going to do about money.

ARTHUR: Mom'll figure it out. If anything, we can call grandma. She'll help us.

BECCA: Yeah. (*Pause*)

ARTHUR: It'll all be okay, Becca. At least we're free of him. At least we know that we're safe for once.

BECCA: Except now Mom has gone completely crazy and won't stop drinking.

ARTHUR: It's only for tonight. She'll be fine. She just needs one night to pull it all together.

BECCA: I sure hope so. (*Pause*) I guess we should get ready for bed. It's late.

IZZY: Can I sleep with you tonight, Becca?

BECCA: You'll be fine in your own bed.

IZZY: Please.

BECCA: Izzy.

IZZY: Pleeeeeease. I really want to sleep next to you.

ARTHUR: Then let's push the beds together. And I'll sleep next to you too.

IZZY: Yay!

BECCA: You sure?

ARTHUR: Yeah. I think we should all be together tonight.

(The kids all help in moving the single bed over to be right next to the bottom bunk. Izzy bounces onto the single bed.)

IZZY: Arthur should sleep on my bed and then Becca and I should share her bed, that way Arthur will still have enough room to get out so he can check on Pickles.

ARTHUR: Okay. *(He crawls over the beds and gets under the covers of the bottom bunk. Izzy wiggles into the covers of her sister's bed as the lights dim down a bit. Becca joins Izzy in her bed. The conversation continues with only the wall lamp still on.)*

BECCA: It's been awhile since we've done this.

IZZY: I like it!

BECCA: The first time we did this was when Izzy was 2 and we stayed in the motel.

ARTHUR: Yeah, and she wet the bed.

IZZY: I did not!

ARTHUR: Yes you did. And how would you know? You weren't old enough to remember.

IZZY: I remember stuff.

ARTHUR: Like what?

IZZY: Like you taking my pacifier and chucking it over the fence.

ARTHUR: I did not do that.

IZZY: Yes you did.

ARTHUR: No I didn't.

BECCA: Yeah you did Arthur. She was four and you were like “She’s not a baby anymore” and you threw it over the fence into Mr. Harris’ yard. He rolled it over with his lawn mower.

ARTHUR: That was the first time Mom lost her temper with me. Then we all had to swear not to tell Dad, because she was afraid that Dad would try to beat me and then her. *(Pause)*

BECCA: I’m glad those days are over.

ARTHUR: *(a little shocked)* What?

BECCA: The days that we don’t have to worry about getting beat. Or Dad yelling at us or anything like that.

ARTHUR: Yeah. *(Pause)*

BECCA: We should get to bed. There’s a lot of cleaning to do tomorrow. And Mom’s gonna be too hung over to help.

ARTHUR: Yep. Goodnight Becca. Goodnight Izzy.

IZZY: Night Arthur. Goodnight Becca.

BECCA: Goodnight Izzy. Goodnight Arthur. *(She turns off the light)*

Scene 3

Three years later. A breezy April day. Becca, now 17, washes dishes in the sink as 12-year-old Izzy does her homework at the table. After a few beats, their 15-year-old brother Arthur enters from stage left. They aren’t the same kids anymore. Becca looks old than her age in a motherly way, Izzy is wearing mostly black and her hair and make-up are wild, and Arthur looks really pale and skinny. The house looks the same.

BECCA: *(drying off her hands with a towel)* Where have you been? It's already 5 o'clock.

ARTHUR: Out. *(He goes into their bedroom and opens his backpack. He looks around before he removes a rather large plastic bag full of white powder from it. He quickly pulls out a box from under the bunk bed and places the bag in it.)*

BECCA: Where were you? Do you have any idea of how mad Mom was when she left for work and you weren't home? *(She sits down next to Izzy and points at the paper in front of her)* Recite the facts for me.

IZZY: George Washington was the first president of the United States.

ARTHUR: I bet she was pissed. *(He pulls out another box from under the bed.)*

IZZY: Abraham Lincoln was the president during the Civil War.

BECCA: Yeah; she was. Livid actually, considering you didn't tell anybody that you weren't coming straight home today. *(He pulls out a spoon and little baggies from the second box.)*

IZZY: The Great Depression began in 1929...

ARTHUR: She's always pissed about the most stupid shit. *(He begins bagging the white powder, one spoonful a baggie.)*

IZZY: ...and it ended at the start of the United States' entrance...

BECCA: Its not stupid shit. Something could have happened to you. *(Arthur places the baggies that he's done with back into his backpack.)*

IZZY: ...into World War Two.

ARTHUR: Well, nothing happened to me. (*He closes up the big bag of white powder and closes both boxes before sliding them back under the bed. Becca, unbeknownst to him, is standing in the doorway as he slides them back under.*)

BECCA: You know...you should really learn to close the door.

ARTHUR: (*zipping back up his backpack*) And you should really learn to mind your own business.

BECCA: You're well being is my business. (*Arthur pushes pass Becca and begins to cross to exit stage left.*)

ARTHUR: No it isn't. God, how dumb are you? Just leave me alone.

BECCA: Arthur...

ARTHUR: Don't start that shit. I won't take listening to that shit again. (*He's about to walk off stage when...*)

BECCA: Arthur!

ARTHUR: (*he stops*) What!? Seriously. Leave me the fuck alone.

BECCA: Why are you doing heroin? (*Silence falls on the stage*)

IZZY: Heroin? Isn't that a drug?

BECCA: (*To Izzy*) Yes; and a severely addictive one. (*To Arthur*) What the hell is going on with you?

ARTHUR: That's none of your business Becca.

BECCA: (*loudly*) Arthur.

ARTHUR: Leave me alone.

BECCA: (*louder*) Arthur. What have you been doing?

ARTHUR: (*as loud as her*) Shut up Becca.

BECCA: (*louder still*) Who got you into heroin Arthur?

ARTHUR: Mind your own business!

BECCA: It is my business!

ARTHUR: (*yelling*) You aren't Mom, so stop acting like her! (*The stage falls silent*)

BECCA: (*after a few beats*) I'm not like Mom.

ARTHUR: Yes you are. You boss me and Izzy around like you're our mother. Hell, the teachers even act like you're our mother. (*A beat*) I'm sick and tired of having not only Mom, but you breathing down my neck about every last thing I do. Just leave me *alone*. I don't need you looking after me. I can take care of myself. I have ever since Dad killed his fucking self.

BECCA: Dad was in a car accident with another car.

ARTHUR: But it was his fault! He was the one who was drunk!

BECCA: That doesn't mean he killed himself! (*Pause*)

IZZY: If this is going to end up about Dad, I don't wanna hear it.

ARTHUR: Then fucking leave Izzy.

BECCA: HEY! (*A beat. Becca approaches Arthur.*) Don't talk to her like that.

ARTHUR: Make me. (*They have a stare down. Becca gets closer and closer until she's only two feet from Arthur. A few seconds pass.*) Whatever. (*He goes to leave, but Becca grabs his backpack.*) Let go of me! Let go of me Becca!

BECCA: (*dangling a couple little baggies of white powder*) I'll ask you again. Who got you into heroin?

ARTHUR: (*He looks from her to the baggies a couple times.*) You want me to tell you? (*He reaches over and snatches the baggies back.*) None of your damn business. (*He takes off his backpack and puts the baggies back.*)

BECCA: Okay then...*why* are you doing heroin?

ARTHUR: Why? (*Backpack on*) WHY? That's a dumbass question Becca. *Why not* is the question here. Have you seen how we live? We may have gotten rid of the only major threat to us in this house, but that doesn't mean that shit has gotten any better around here. It's still shit. Mom drinks almost every night after she gets home from work. You kiss up to her to keep her from being too depressed to actually hurt herself. You act like you're mine and Izzy's mother when you're clearly not, and then you don't shut up about all the great things that happen to you. I don't do all that great in school, and I frankly don't give a shit. Neither does Izzy. No matter how much of your little house-playing Mommy shit that you do, you aren't going to change anything. Why? Because YOU AREN'T MOM. (*Silence*)

BECCA: (*Quietly*) Fine. Then just get the hell out of here.

ARTHUR: Gladly. (*He storms off stage left. The door slams, followed by silence. Becca hangs her head. A few beats.*)

IZZY: Becca, are you okay?

BECCA: (*through quiet tears*) I'm fine. (*A beat.*)

IZZY: He's right though. You act more like a mom than a sister to us.

BECCA: But what am I supposed to do? Mom only works, sleeps, and drinks. How is she supposed to be of any help? I've been helping the two of you out since we were really little. I always thought that it was the right thing to do.

IZZY: Maybe. But it's not working for Arthur. (*A beat.*) And it's not really working for me either. (*She gets up and leaves stage right. A dog barks.*)

BECCA: (*Moves to sit down at the table. She rubs her hands up and down her face. She shakes with a few tears.*) What have I done?

(Fade to black)

(END)

Property List

Math textbook
Biology textbook
English workbook
Pencils
Bags of groceries
Towel
Ice
Two bottles of wine
Plates (China)
Food scraps
A plate (plastic)
Cordless phone
Blankets
Wall Lamp
Backpack
Bag of white powder
Small baggies
A spoon
Two small boxes
Notebook
History textbook
Small baggies of white powder

Sound Effects

Car pulling up
Car door slamming
Dog crying
Door slamming
Muffled yelling
Garden Gate slamming
Car turning over
Car speeding away
Dog barking