

VICES

Written by

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For Dad

INT. LILY'S ROOM - DAY

A pink, girly bedroom. Stuffed animals line a rosy quilt, a high school diploma and scattered fashion sketches hang on the walls, and a PHOTO of a father with two young children sits on a nightstand.

And LILY, 21, leans against the door. Her black turtleneck and mini skirt stand out from the rosy hue of the room.

She scrolls on her phone, cherry vape between her fingers.

HEIDI (O.S.)  
Lily! Aunt Susie's here!

LILY  
Coming!

With a deep sigh, Lily takes a loooong hit of her vape.

She locks eyes with her childhood self on her nightstand. The little eyes seem to bore into her soul.

She moves to her bed, stuffing her vape under a stuffed bunny, and goes out the door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lily staggers up to the kitchen island. Small talk echos in her ears. She pours herself a hefty glass of wine.

At the front door, her mother, HEIDI, 55 yet still in her prime, hugs a relative- AUNT SUSIE, if Lily remembers right.

HEIDI  
Max! Come say hi!

Reluctantly, MAX, freshly 18 and about to fulfill his frat-boy destiny, gives his Aunt a half-hearted hug.

AUNT SUSIE  
Oh, Happy Birthday sweetheart!  
Eighteen, huh? The last time I saw  
you, you still had that adorable  
arm cast!

MAX  
So I was, what, seven?

Heidi chuckles awkwardly, grabbing a tray of food from Susie.

HEIDI  
 Yes, it's been so long! Go  
 socialize, I'll take care of this.  
 You remember Lily, right?

Lily snaps into shape, pearly-whites on display. Glass in  
 hand, she saunters over and hugs her aunt.

LILY  
 Hi! How's Willow?

AUNT SUSIE  
 Still obsessed with that God-  
 forsaken iPad. She should be in any  
 moment... WILLOW! MOVE IT!

WILLOW (O.S.)  
 OKAY!

A whirlwind of blonde hair bursts through the door. WILLOW,  
 5, stares down at an iPad. Aunt Susie grabs her shoulders.

AUNT SUSIE  
 Say 'hi'.

WILLOW  
 Hi.

Lily's eyes soften.

LILY  
 Hey cutie.

HEIDI  
 You've gotten so big!

WILLOW  
 Duh. I'm not in preschool anymore.

MAX  
 Duh.

HEIDI  
 Go, check out the pool. We've got  
 noodles, goggles- even some of  
 Lily's old Ariel floaties!

Willow's eyes widen. She shoves her tablet into Aunt Susie's  
 hands and runs off.

Lily swirls her wine with a smile. Heidi meets her eyes,  
 reaching out her own glass in a 'cheers'. Lily obliges.

The back door creaks open as Willow rushes out.

Then, heavy footsteps fill the space.

ROBERT  
Ohhhh, big girl!

Heidi stiffens. Max looks down. Lily's smile fades.

ROBERT, 60, staggers into the foyer. He plops into a seat next to Lily. He hiccups. Lily inches away.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Cute. Big girl.

Max walks away. Heidi's face breaks into a painful grin.

HEIDI  
Right?!? Reminds me of our girl.

Robert hiccups again, looking at Lily. She refuses to meet his gaze.

ROBERT  
Yes. Cute.

Lily takes a long sip from her wine glass, finishing it off.  
Time for a refill.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A wine opener stabs a cork. White wine cascades into a glass.

Heidi slides up beside Lily, holding out her own glass. Lily tops her off.

HEIDI  
His speech is getting better.

LILY  
Yeah. Went from one word to two.

Heidi gives her a piercing look, and Lily averts her eyes.

She glances into the living room, where Max sits among a gaggle of men, watching some sports game.

Robert, next to Max, attempts to stand. Max helps him up.

Robert hiccups as he enters the kitchen. He protectively slaps a hand over the back of Lily's neck, causing her to flinch slightly.

ROBERT  
Oooh! Par-tayyy.

Heidi giggles, and Lily offers a weak smile. Without asking, Robert reaches for Lily's wine glass, taking a big swig.

LILY  
Dad-

HEIDI  
Rob. Not in my house.

Robert's mood shifts, grumbling spitefully as he moves toward the refrigerator to fetch a soda. He hiccups again.

With his back to the women, Heidi turns to her daughter, lowering her voice to a whisper.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Have you noticed that? The  
hiccuping?

LILY  
What, is that from the stroke?

HEIDI  
He came from Uncle Johnny's.  
Wouldn't be surprised if they did a  
pit stop at the liquor store.

Lily's head snaps up. Confusion, and rage, cloud her vision.

She opens her mouth to retort, but Robert rejoins them, pointing to the fridge.

ROBERT  
The wine.

LILY  
You're not having wine.

ROBERT  
The *wine*.

HEIDI  
The soda?

ROBERT  
Yes...

HEIDI  
There's no soda in there?

ROBERT

Yes...

Heidi takes a long breath, her patience being tested.

HEIDI

Lil, there's some in the cooler,  
can you-

LILY

Yeah. What do you want?

She looks at him expectantly. He stares back.

He gestures to the door as if saying 'after you'. Lily grumbles, but opens the door and offers Rob a reluctant hand. He takes it, and they go.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Lily leads Robert by the arm, making sure he doesn't fall.

ROBERT

So... fashion?

Lily startles at the question.

LILY

What about it. My portfolio?

ROBERT

Yes.

LILY

It went well I guess. My professor hated my silhouettes, but I still got an A so...

ROBERT

Good. Good.

Lily bends down to a COOLER, placing her glass next to it.

LILY

Still just plain old cola?

ROBERT

Yup.

Lily begins to dig through the ice when Willow runs over, freshly out of the pool.

LILY  
Thirsty?

WILLOW  
Mmhm. Lemonade, please!

LILY  
You got it, diva.

Lily pulls a lemonade from the cooler, moving away from the cooler and toward Willow. She bends down to her level, twisting open the cap.

LILY (CONT'D)  
You know, there are facts on the caps of these! Your Uncle Rob used to get these for us every Sunday with our bagel order, and he would read out the facts for us in the stupidest British accent- do you remember, Dad? It was-

Lily turns around to include Robert in the memory, only to see him sipping out of her wine glass.

They stare at one another for a moment. Wordlessly, Lily hands over the lemonade to Willow.

WILLOW  
Thanks Lily!

Lily strides up to Robert, staring him in the eyes as she snatches her glass away and leaves him alone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lily plops on the arm of the couch beside Max. Through the corner of his eye, he notices her anger.

Her uncles sip beer and scream at the television, but it's all background noise to her.

She glances over at Max, who is bouncing his leg anxiously. He sips... no, chugs, a beer.

Heidi bounds into the room, cheery as ever.

HEIDI  
So! What are we watching!

UNCLE SETH  
Just the Cowboys getting their asses kicked. By the goddamn Jets.

Lily glances out the back door. Robert's form appears through the glass. He's smoking. Lily's lips part in disbelief as she glances at Max, who is none the wiser.

She watches as Robert puts out his cigarette and dumps the butt into one of Heidi's precious potted plants. He slides open the door and staggers in.

HEIDI

Do they have a shot?

UNCLE SETH

Considering there's three minutes left? Not a chance.

Robert leans against the kitchen counter inconspicuously. He glances around before grabbing a red solo cup.

Lily fiddles with her necklace as he fiddles with the cup.

TODD

THAT'S NOT A FUCKIN' FOUL, C'MON!

Robert places the cup on the counter. He glances over his shoulder, unaware of Lily's gaze.

With his good hand, he pours himself a hefty shot of Tequila from Heidi's stash, downs it, hiccups, and tosses the cup in the trash.

Lily hits Max's shoulder.

MAX

What the fuck?!

LILY

Did you see that?

MAX

See what?

Robert stumbles into the living room. With a hiccup, he plops himself onto the couch between Max and Lily.

Lily stares ahead, eyes glossing over.

Robert snaps his fingers to get her attention.

ROBERT

Water? Lily?

Lily stares down at him in disbelief. He gestures to the kitchen.



ROBERT (CONT'D)

Please?

Wordlessly, Lily storms away, taking her glass as she leaves.

The family is quiet as they hear her uncork a new bottle. She switches from white to red.

INT. LILY'S ROOM - SAME

Lily rests on her bed, scribbling in a sketchpad- black charcoal over a once pink, frilly design. She mindlessly sips on her wine, using her vape as a chaser.

A soft KNOCK echos from her door. She shoves the vape behind herself.

LILY

Yeah Mom?

The door creaks open. It's not Heidi, but Max.

Lily exhales. She pulls the vape from behind herself.

LILY (CONT'D)

Geez. You scared me, I thought you were-

MAX

What did he do?

Lily avoids his eyes, focusing on her sketchbook. It's easier to look there.

LILY

It's fine. Don't worry about it.

MAX

Obviously it's something. Or else you would've have caused a scene.

LILY

It's me. There's always a scene.

Max leans against the doorframe. He eyes the vape.

MAX

Can I?

Lily looks down, suddenly ashamed. She hides it again.

LILY

Nice try.

Max takes the hint. Instead, he pulls a weed pen from his pocket.

Lily's brow creases. She glances at the photo again, at her baby brother.

She looks back at him as he blows out smoke.

LILY (CONT'D)  
He's been stealing liquor. All day.

Max freezes mid-hit. He doesn't look at Lily. Then, he turns.

MAX  
Hey, Mom!

Lily moves to follow him, but hesitates. She stays on her bed, defeated. She takes another swig of wine.

After a moment, she hears all hell break loose.

HEIDI (O.S.)  
ROB!

She hears the clinking of liquor bottles.

HEIDI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Are you fucking kidding??

She flops down on her bed. She bites her lip as she stares at the ceiling, angry mumbling echoing from the kitchen.

Lily glances at her glass. There's a large lipstick stain.

She sits up to find her swirling reflection in the mirror. Smudged lipstick. Mascara flaking. That won't do.

She sits at her vanity, and begins to touch up her makeup to the sound of her parents' fighting.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Robert sits on a stool as Heidi looms over, reprimanding him like a child.

HEIDI  
It's just disrespectful- I mean  
it's Max's birthday for fuck's sake-

ROBERT  
Sorry.

HEIDI  
-and to yourself, too! Your health  
is already a mess, and-

ROBERT  
So what.

Heidi's words catch as her eyes soften. Her hand squeezes the neck of the tequila bottle.

Robert hiccups and clears his throat, averting his gaze, but his breath is becoming shaky and his eyes are glossing over.

He turns even further away from Heidi. A grown man shouldn't cry.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Sorry.

Heidi watches, unsure of how to react. Then, she pulls the bottle to her chest like a stuffed animal and turns to the door.

HEIDI  
I'm not the one who needs an  
apology, Rob.

She leaves him alone, poking her head into the living room.

She sees Max staring blankly at the football game, surrounded by his family, but disengaged. He's on his third beer.

She frowns, but leaves him be.

Once she turns, Max looks up, watching her go. His leg bounces.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his weed pen. He ghosts before standing and sluggishly moving to the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Heidi stuffs the tequila bottle behind a shoe rack. She takes a long, deep breath.

She turns her head, noticing Lily's open door.

INT. LILY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lily's hand shakes as she fixes her eyeliner. It smudges. She curses, slamming the pen down. She takes a hit of her vape.

At the sound of a knock, Lily quickly exhales vapor, fanning it away. She shoves the vape under herself.

LILY

What.

Heidi pushes the door open.

HEIDI

You've got a little-

LILY

Yeah. I know.

They sit in the silence of Lily's aggression. Heidi concedes.

HEIDI

Here, let me.

She pulls over a fluffy white stool from the corner and sits face to face with Lily. She licks her finger before reaching up to Lily's face.

Lily flinches away. Heidi raises an eyebrow. Then, Lily relents.

Heidi runs her thumbnail under Lily's cat-eye, sharpening the edge.

LILY

Thanks.

Lily picks the liner back up. She holds it up to her eye, but as her vision swirls, she decides not to worsen it.

HEIDI

So, Max told me-

LILY

Yeah. I told him about it.

HEIDI

I figured. Just like when you told him Santa isn't real. Never giving that poor kid a break.

Despite herself, Lily chuckles.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

Come with me to the kitchen?

LILY

Apology time?

HEIDI  
How'd you know.

LILY  
He wants to, or you want him to?

HEIDI  
I nudged him in the direction.

Lily doesn't move, but the anger radiates off of her.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
You know he's not all there,  
mentally.

LILY  
Yes, he is. Broca's. Not  
Wernicke's.

HEIDI  
Sure, but he's defeated. Thinks he  
has nothing to live for.

LILY  
Not his children?

HEIDI  
Who he thinks hate him?

Lily goes quiet, once again fiddling with her necklace. She  
sips her wine.

Heidi reaches up, brushing a strand of hair from Lily's face.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

LILY  
It isn't my responsibility.

HEIDI  
It's not. But he's trying. You have  
to try, too.

LILY  
I've been trying for the past  
twenty years. I'm tired.

HEIDI  
Trust me, I know. But he can't fix  
things now if you don't let him.

Lily looks up at her mother with child-like defeat.

LILY

Then why can't he stop fucking up?

Heidi can't find an answer. So instead, she hugs Lily.

Lily melts into the embrace. Over her mother's shoulder, she spies her family photo.

She sighs, taking a deep breath.

LILY (CONT'D)

Fine. Let's go.

Heidi pulls away, smiling at her. She stands, and Lily follows.

Heidi looks down. She sees the vape. Lily tenses.

After a beat, Heidi walks toward the door.

HEIDI

We all have our vices, Lily. What makes his any different?

Lily's shoulders fall. Heidi leaves her behind.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Holding her glass, Lily walks into the kitchen. She immediately wishes she hadn't.

Robert sits on the stool, crying. He has Max in an awkward hug, who is attempting to pull away.

Heidi spots Lily in the doorframe.

HEIDI

Rob, Lily's here.

He looks toward his daughter, letting out a hiccup. He lets Max go, opening his arms to Lily.

ROBERT

Lily.

Lily looks at Heidi before hesitantly walking over to Rob.

He engulfs her in a hug. She sniffs, scrunching her nose.

Out the window, she eyes the potted plant where he tossed his cigarette.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Lily lifts her arms, half-heartedly hugging him back.

LILY

It's fine.

After a beat, she forcibly removes herself from the hug.

She leans against the island. Over Robert's hanging head, she meets Max's eyes. He tightens his lips.

HEIDI

See? Was that so hard?

None of them can tell who she's talking to.

Awkward silence. Lily moves to sip her wine, but looks at the glass, and puts it back down.

The back door slides open.

AUNT SUSIE

Willow! Towel! You'll track water  
all over Auntie Heidi's kitchen!

Willow bounds into the kitchen, mermaid floaties on her arms. Heidi is immediately on the defense.

HEIDI

Wow! You look so pretty! Was the  
pool great?

Willow nods, flashing a toothy smile. She turns toward Rob, and her smile falls, brow scrunching.

Robert looks down at the girl, and hiccups.

ROBERT

Lily... Come...

Lily squeezes her eyes shut. Her hand flies to the wine glass, but she flinches away.

Willow is frozen. Aunt Susie comes rushing in, towel in tow.

AUNT SUSIE

Alright, here we go. So sorry,  
Heidi, she... Willow let's go back  
outside and dry off.

She ushers Willow out. Robert moves to follow, but Heidi shuts the door.

In the other room, the men scream at the television. The kitchen stands still.

HEIDI

Alright! It's almost dinner time.  
Let me take orders. Burgers or  
hotdogs?

No response.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

I'll come back to you guys.

She slides open the door and leaves.

HEIDI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Willow! Burger or hot dog?

Max looks at Lily expectantly. She refuses to look at him.

He tosses his beer bottle in the trash and takes another before following Heidi out the door.

Lily stands feet away from Robert. Neither of them speak.

Robert hiccups. Once, then twice, then again and again. He grabs a napkin, and coughs into it.

Lily glances up at him.

She walks over to the sink, tips her glass, and watches the red drip down the drain. Then, she takes a solo cup from the island and fills it with water.

She hands it to Robert. A peace offering.

He reaches out and sips from it, hiccuping with each gulp.

Lily moves behind him, hugging him gently. Resting her head on his shoulder, she rubs his arms.

ROBERT

I'm sorry. Love you.

LILY

Love you too.

As the sounds of the party echo through the space, Lily and Robert stay still.

There's still much to be said. But for now, this is enough.

END.