“No!” I screamed, kicking the wall as I did. “No, no, no, no, no!” I yelled as loud as I could. I knew that no one would hear me. They were too far away. I was too alone. Even if they were here, no one care. Not about me. Why would they care about little old me? ***I*** wouldn’t care about me. I would ignore me. I would hate me. Never be friends with me. Have nothing to do with me. I would leave me, just like they all did. Just like everyone and everything I ever knew. Gone. Forever. They all hated me, except Her. The one person in my life that cared about me -- really cared about me. Not just, “Oh, hi! I will be your counselor! You can tell me anything! Do you play any sports? I will come to your games if you want!” they would say, every one of them. I would say yes, but then they never came. They would pretend to listen to me, but then just file a report and forget everything I just told them. No one really **deeply** cared. Except for Her.

 In one swift motion, I picked up the small aerosol-shaped bottle, sliding it into to my hand carefully and smoothly. I slowly shook it in my hand. I could hear the liquid inside, swishing around and mixing. I could hear the small ball inside clanging around inside and smoothing out the lumpy liquid. I knew that if I made this painting, I might feel just a little bit better. So, considering I had nothing to lose because everyone was gone, I slowly lifted the container up to the surface of the wall, and pushed on the tiny nozzle. “Ssssssssssssshhhhhhhhhhh” was the sound it made, as white fast-drying spray paint came shooting out, making a white line on the brick. I moved my hand ever so slowly and shakily, slowly forming the letters. I-space-M-I…. It felt good letting all that go, onto the giant canvas I had before me. This brick wall.

 I finished my letters and turned around, knowing there was a tree there. I shook the can again, getting ready to spray. Then, I pressed down the nozzle. But nothing came out. I shook it again, harder this time. None left. Darn. All I had in my bag was some old used and crumpled  tissues, a plan for escape scrawled onto a ripped and broken yellowish-brown scrap of writing paper, and my phone that was stripped of all contacts, applications, data, and service. Oh, and I was stripped of my charger, too. Well, I guess my painting was done for today. I would have to stop off at the drugstore on my way here tomorrow morning to pick up the last few bottles in stock. Oh, well. I was getting tired anyway.

“Do you think we’ll make it?” I said to my fluffy pet, Noodle when I got home.

 “Rawrurawr,” she replied with a doggy shrug. Which I knew meant, “I don’t know. But we have to try.”

 “Ok, but what are we supposed to do? The gates are locked and the walls are brick. And, the ground is concrete, so forget that tunnel idea you always suggest.”

 “Rawr,” she wined. “Rawrurawrurawrgrawr.”

 “Well, too bad. Anyway, why would you suggest knives? You remember what happened...” I bitterly remembered the horrible incident which caused what I call the Great Abandonment, aka the day when everyone left me and Noodle. The horrible incident was so bad, I still haven’t got over it. And it has been over a year. Well, I guess it is time to come to terms with what happened. So here goes. This is the story of how my mom di- die- got lost.

 “Mama! Some guys are coming to our door! I think they are from the lead!” I called to my mom.

 “What? Oh, ok. Wait, what?!” she replied.

 “Some guys are coming from the lead!” I called again.

 “Are you sure?” she ran out to the window and confirmed my calls. “It is! Oh no! What am I going to do?” she ran around pushing all the pictures of me to the ground, and set off the Pic-R-Up-R; it started collecting all of the pictures and putting them in it’s big mouth. As I wondered what was going on, my mom took all of my art pictures off the fridge, and let the Pic-R-Up-R collect them as well. Finally, she closed and locked the door to my room, and locked the box she had locked the key in inside a bigger box; that key was put under her mattress. Now, all indications that I lived here were either locked away or inside the Pic-R-Up-R’s stomach. Now for me, I thought, predicting she would lock me away or stuff me in the Pic-R-Up-R just like everything else of me. But she didn’t. She just sat right near the door, tensely awaiting the arrival of the people from the lead. We heard the sound of their feet climbing the steps to our door, heard the sound of them knocking on our door, heard the sound of them scraping their feet upon our door mat. My mom stood up to open the door, but hesitated. I could almost hear her telling herself she had to do it, that they had asked for a meeting. But still she hesitated. Then, one of the guys knocked again, and I think that awakened her. She opened her eyes as wide as a goldfish, and slowly opened the door.

 “Why hello, Lucia Menchester! What a surprise to see you here.” one exclaimed to me.

 “In her own home?” my mom defended me. The man who had spoken clamped his mouth shut and gave her an evil stare.

 His stare broke into a smile and he said,“Why hello, Nadia Menchester! I see you still live with...never mind,”

 “Still what?” my mom said, through clenched teeth.

 “Oh...nothing,” the man rambled innocently; the other man was still silent. “I was just saying that you still lived with...um...uh...this...oh...dog! Nudley, was it?”

 “It’s Noodle,” my still angered mom replied to his fake innocence.

 “Right, Noodle. Sure. Anyway, the real reason I’m here. We need to talk.” He pretended he had been on task the entire time.

 “Fine, if we must. Ple-” my mom started.

“Oh, we MUST,” the man firmly ordered.

“Like I was saying, if we must, then, right this way.” She led him into her meeting room.

“Oh, and, as for you, little ‘*girl*’, go sit on the couch. You’re not needed anyway,” the man ordered me, spitting out the word girl as if I was only one in my dreams. He also pointedly looked at the limp left side of my body.

“Don’t you DARE tell her what to do,” she defended me to the man. Then to me she said, “Lucia, please go play on your scootayr**2** outside, ok?”

**2** =(pronounced **scooter**)

“Ok!” I replied, happily and innocently, running outside.

“So now, about Lucia...” was the last snippet of their conversation I heard. I was happy playing outside a little while later when I heard a bloodcurdling scream…

“Eeeeeee!” I heard, and it sounded like my mom’s voice. I ran inside to find my mom’s body lying on the floor, her beautiful brownish-blonde hair splayed all over the floor soaked with blood. Her stomach had a large worrying slit right where her heart would be. Ok, right where her heart would be. Wait! Right where her heart ***would*** be! Where is her heart? Then, I noticed it. Hanging on by a puny, shriveled, vein was it. The heart that should be pumping regularly. The heart that should be moving blood. The heart that should be inside her body. It was lying on the floor. LYING ON THE FLOOR. Out of her. She was dead. Never would be alive again. Gone forever. The only person who defended me. The only person who seriously cared. Lost. I suddenly realized that the men were still there, still hovering over the body with the horrible device that was used to make this mess on the floor. The knife.

“Hello, little one. How are you this fine day?” one questioned me, slowly walking forward, slowly inching closer to me. I could see the fiery glint in his eye, the glint that could shoot daggers. I knew instantly that I would be next, if he could get me. But, no matter how much he tried, he could never get me. I never let him, for my mom’s sake. Never. I turned straight around, and bolted through the door, around the block, and didn’t stop running until I had almost hit the border wall. I turned around, finding that I was alone, and the sun was almost fully down. I could have died, I told myself. But, I didn’t. I said it to myself again and again, examining the words that came into my head. I was scared. Mostly surprised, though. I had lived, but my mom hadn’t. The man and his colleague would be executed, I knew, but that didn’t mean that the rest of the world would like me like she did. That didn’t mean that they could bring my mom back.

That is the story of how my mom died, and I guess I am ok with it now. Somewhat. Anyway, I had an idea for escape. I could go to the drugstore and pick up some of the explosives I saw there. I knew that they wouldn’t be hidden, they didn’t bother to do anything when they left, just leave. So, I told myself I would try to do it the next day. So, good night I told myself. See you in the morning (hopefully).

I got to the wall, and I had Noodle and the explosives.  I was about to light them. Then, I thought of my mom. I thought of how she always had faith in me, always believed in me, always defended me. Mom, this is for you, I mentally told her, even though I knew that she could never receive the message. \*Sigh\*

I lit the fuses, and ran behind the nearest building, Noodle close on my heels. If this could just blow through, I thought. Just as I said that in my head, I heard a great crash. I peeked around the wall, and sitting there, in crumbles, was the wall. The wall that had held me in for so long. I had done it! I had made a way to escape! I had actually done it! I cried for Noodle and she peeked around the corner, too. She yelped in happiness, mostly because the dog food was running out in the shops, and this promised more food. I pumped my fist into the air, relieved and excited all at the same time. I thought about what I was going to do. Was I going to find another community that would take me in and love me even though I was different? Would I find a city? Would I make it? I never knew. The only thing I could do was try. So, starting the next morning, I would set off on my way with just enough for me and Noodle for a sun course. So, I hightailed it back home with Noodle, who was just a blurry bullet speeding with me towards home.

We got home, and started pack up a eHippy Pack (a bandana bag on a stick usually held/worn over the shoulder but could fly on its own when instructed) that we would have with us on the journey. I packed up the rest of the food (enough for both of us for one sun course), and placed it carefully in the pack. I also placed Noodle’s favorite ball and my stuffed animal knitted for me by my mom in there as well. Last but not least, I placed some valuables that I didn’t need anymore in there that could be used as a peace offering if needed. We were all ready when suddenly Noodle started to whimper. “What’s wrong, girl?” I asked her.

“Riar,” she whimpered to me.

“I know. I’m going to kind of miss it, too. But think, we might actually live! Somewhere other than here! And, you will have unlimited dog food! Just think...we might be accepted for who we are!” I encouraged her.

“Rawrur,” she replied sarcastically pretending to believe me but not really believing me.

“There you go, my trooper pup!” I played along, pretending that I thought she was serious.

“Rareer!” she said in a high-pitched voice, again being sarcastic.

“Oh, you stop. Who got you an escape route out of here again? Oh yeah, me. That’s what I thought.”

 The next day, we set off towards...um...the unknown? I guess? Anyway, we thought that we had seen a civilization out to the east earlier the other day. So, we were headed that way in hopes of a community, or even an oasis.

 About an hour later, we got to the place. It was a large pile of rocks, sitting in the gold, shimmery, sand. “Darn it!” I said to no one in particular. “Just some rocks.” I was walking around when suddenly, “Aaaah!” I screamed. I was falling fast. I groped around for something to stop my fall, when suddenly, “Oof.” I hit the ground with a grunt. It was surprisingly cushiony and soft, so it didn’t hurt when I fell. “Noodle!” I called for her, hoping she too would find the hole. Just then, I saw her make contact with the ground. She crawled over to me, still shaken by the incident. “Why, how nice of you to drop in!” I said to her jokingly. I could still see the panic in her eyes, though. She would eventually calm down, but until then I needed to be very careful with what I said or did so I wouldn’t hinder her relaxation. I stood up, and saw a hint of light a little ways away, and started walking towards it. I made it to the spot where the light had been coming in, and found a community. A whole, working, city! “Noodle! Noodle! Come here, girl!” I called excitedly to her. She walked over to me, her paws softly padding on the cushiony floor. “Noodle! I found a community!” she looked up and yelped with joy. We had found it, a community! Noodle and I started walking towards a huge building which seemed to be a sort of capital building. We made our way inside, and saw what looked to be a king or high ruler of some sort sitting in a bronze, gold, and red velvet chair. He was reading something. We completely entered the room, and he looked up. He saw us, put the paper that he had been reading down, and cleared his throat.

 “Hello, young lady and her pet,” his voice (which had a slither of a British accent) bounced along the walls giving a very powerful effect. “Who might you be?”

 “Um, sorry to bother you, sir. We have come looking for refuge from our abandoned community. Um...sir.” I replied unsteadily.

 “Ah, newcomers. Welcome, welcome. Why were you abandoned?” he asked us.

 “Well, we were abandoned because we were outcasts. No one liked us in our previous community. You see, I have a limp left side of my body, and use this flight chair to move, and Noodle here can’t smell,” I explained.

 “Ah, so I see. All kinds of people live here. Short, tall, thin, fat, completely paralyzed and completely fine. You are welcome here, by all means.” he assured us.

 “Are you sure? I can’t work, and neither can Noodle. Don’t you need to work for your food here?”

 “No, no, no. Of course not! All you have to do is be a good citizen to live here! You would be accepted in a heartbeat!”

 “Well, if you have room...”

 “Of course we have room! You are officially a community citizen! Go see Marge and she will lead you to your quarters!”

 “Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!” I cried with relief. We finally found a home. A home where we were accepted for who we were. My mom would be so happy, I thought.

 After that, Noodle and I mostly lived a wonderful life. I did rent out the library typewriter for about a month, though. You know why? To write this story, of course! And Noodle got accepted for a spy dog class! We are both so happy here. Anyway, it’s time to turn in the typewriter, but before I go, I just want to say...Not everyone looks the same or does the same things, but it doesn’t mean that they aren’t just as good as you. They could be even better than you. So just give them a chance!