

The Roles They Played
By Tyler P. Fick

The room was empty. Only an old white whicker chair decorated the room. The paint on the old chair was chipping off and some of the whicker had fallen out of its weave and was darting out ready to pierce the person that dared to sit down on this chair. They stood in the middle of the room; the chair silently wheezing over in the right corner. Far enough away, but somehow still managing to creek breaking the cement silence, breathing a life of it's own. The tension was so black inside the room; the chair was blinded. The stage was set for the roles the three of them would have to play. There was one that wanted to leave and there was one that wanted to stay. The chair stood patiently. It was that simple. Of course it wasn't always this way. Of course in the beginning the roles could never have been more different. But that was the beginning. This is the end.

It started in the first months of the summer; it might as well end here as well. Their relationship will always be wrapped around a year, tied like a bow and inside is a present. She moves over to the old chair, everything childlike inside of her searching for her present. Peering from corner to corner inside this empty room, the chipped paint seeping into her skin. It does not take long for her to find it. Her eyes dash across to his hands. No longer hers. Her eyes dash across to his neck, his Adams apple waiting to be touched by her pointer finger. No longer hers. Her eyes dash across to his face, the face that has somehow made love feel angry. No longer hers. He is the present, a statue with accessories that are no longer hers. She grabbed onto the chair for support because after all, he was not moving any closer. He stood firm, somehow tattered, somehow cold... his face, like a brick smashing against her own face, crushing her eyelashes every time his eyes met hers. He was emotionless. Brick... smash, all windows inside her body broken. His feet reeked of confidence, each tap whispered confidently that this was for the best; confident that although he had just slashed the bow that tied their relationship together somehow she would still be bound to him. The stench of her feet only reminded her of a flabby, about ready to be slaughtered pig leisurely pulling itself to its troth as the farmer sharpens the axe and licks his lips. She hated his confidence, almost as much as she hated his brick face. After all, what does she owe him now? She knows nothing of his confidence, all she knows is that her soul throbs when she looks at his body. No longer hers.

“We're going to be just fine. This will work out, I mean things have not been going well for a while.”

He was right; things had been strange for about three weeks now. But why exactly were reasons she still did not understand. And as she looked into his eyes, she remembered how it had felt as if one day he woke up, rolled over, saw her naked body next to his and simply decided that he did not like the look of it inside his life anymore. He hid inside different bars to escape her, and he slept on the far end of the bed while she lay awake wondering why he would not touch her like he used to. Those slow deep breaths he used to take before he leaned down for another kiss. She closes her eyes; she yearns for those deep breaths. She did try sleeping with clothes on one night... she did try

everything her mind would allow her to think of. She will never understand why things are strange because inside her heart things are still very much the same. She takes a slow deep breath... the chair breathing along side her.

“We can still be best friends. You still are my best friend.”

The words flowed out of his mouth like he was reciting his multiplication tables. As if one times a number would always equal that number. As if their whole relationship had been about a theory that was set in stone found just outside the periodic table and around the corner from the quadratic equation. She must have just been dreaming when she had thought it was about poetry.

Still though she tried to see his side, but the math she did inside her head seemed so different than the math he did inside his own. She had all this pain to add, she had all this anger and rage to divide, and she had all this confusion inside her equal sign. And besides, she wanted to steal something from him. Subtract something, divide and laugh coldly as a remainder imperfectly came out over and over and over again making his pretty theory simply wrong. She wanted to prick his skin as deeply as his decisions these past weeks have pricked hers. If friendship was the only thing she could take from him, hand her the gun and start the getaway car, just let her watch him as you drive away.

If she could have her way they would remain inside this empty room all day, acting out the roles they play. He is done talking; he is bored inside her tears. The chair takes a slow deep breath. As he leaves the room, he almost dances out. Fred Astere on his feet, light, joyful and excited. Her eyes so heavy they must remain floor bound. The shocks of his dance steps bounce inside her body as if tiny icicles grow roots and take hold of her veins. She knows these icicles will invade her days now, trapping her like a dutiful prisoner inside the calendar blocks. She suddenly is very angry that she has had no say in the role she has played. Trust hits her heart. Not as a thrust of hope but as the final sword. She sits down on the chair heavily and is pierced by a whicker that has fallen out of its place. She cusses. Alone and broken by a chair, she cries. Inside this empty room, a standing ovation for the role the chair has played.