**Suicide Attempt**

The memory of that night sticks in Annabelle’s head like super glue. She didn't know when she was six her mother needed help. Annabelle didn't know the extent of her mothers’ problems until she was much older. Until this day Annabelle still does not understand when her mother went so ‘bad’. What turned her? Was it a life of abuse and torture, was it a longing to be loved or needed? Annabelle will probably never know the answer to that question; because Annabelle does not speak to that woman, does not even utter her name. This is not a story of Annabelle’s mother; it is a story of a girl, a story of how Annabelle came to be, that little girl was soon to be gone, lost in a whirl-wind of pain and horror, growing faster than any child should, while trying to escape with drugs and alcohol. In order to give you a glimpse into her life you have to go back with her, back to the worst of her memories.

 Growing up in Hawaii sounds whimsical to most. Regularly people think of Hawaii as this “great place” to relax by the beach and hike the most beautiful scenery imagined. A tropical paradise to visitors was nothing more than a terrible place filled with horrid memories of a lost childhood. Annabelle grew up there on the island of Maui; her childhood was never filled with laugher and happiness.

Hawaii’s department of child and family services had failed for many years to provide Annabelle and her brothers their freedom, from abuse and pain. They continuously let those children down, saying they were protecting “the family” what they did not know is they were in fact protecting an evil, manipulating, self-destructive drug addict who used her children as pawns in her meaningless hateful life.

Through the next years following the “big fight”, Annabelle rarely saw her father. Once was in a social services office before he lost all rights to her and her brothers. Annabelle remembers her mother coaching her and her brothers, mostly her brother Michael. Annabelle was too strong willed for her mother’s persuasiveness.

“Now Michael this is very important, when your dad enters the room, you must throw a big fit, kick, scream, say NO, run into the corner of the room and stay there, just say NO". Their Mother coached.

Annabelle didn't understand then what her mother was doing, why was she making her brother act out, why did she coach them in answering all their questions? The thirty minute drive to the county offices with their case worker seemed long. They arrived and waited in a room which had only four chairs and a large wooden squared table.

It seemed that hours had passed before their dad finally entered into that room, and like clockwork Michael did exactly as he was told. Annabelle on the other hand was happy to see her dad; he was usually so much fun with her. He sat down and placed her on his lap, he said he was sorry and explained that he needed to go to a school to help him with his anger then he would become a better dad. She remembers thinking of all the fun beach days they had, of her birthday party when he rented a pony and a huge jumping castle. She thought of how nice it would be to have her happy dad back, he was there somewhere. Michael of course did exactly as the witch said; he threw such a big fit that the social worker cut the visit short and made their dad leave them. Annabelle saw the tears in her father’s eyes as he was escorted into the elevator.
 That one night he lost it, he didn't seem himself, and what Annabelle didn't understand then, was her mothers' role in his anger and rage. Not condoning the fact that he beat her, or the fact that he came after his daughter, that was wrong. It took a number of years before she began to see that her mother’s intense emotional abuse which riddled Annabelle over the years must have played a role in his anger that night. Annabelle never saw him again in Hawaii, and over the course of the years the true evilness of her mother showed, more and more. The older she got the more extreme her mother’s torture became.
 At the age of 8, Annabelle’s mother starting dating a guy, his name was Daniel. Daniel was a local man, very soft hearted and fun. Well, with her. He and Annabelle often sat on the couch watching episodes "Three Stooges" Giggling at the stupidity of the show. One night her mother had been lying on her bed in her short silky robe as the two of them laughed in the living room in response to the show.
“What is going on in here?” her voice disgusted Annabelle.

"Mom we are watching three stooges its funny" Annabelle replied.

"NO! What’s funny is my boyfriend rather sit on the couch entertaining my. 8 year old daughter, than cuddling with me in my bed, like some sort of sicko. NOW GO TO YOUR ROOM" Annabelle’s mother screamed to her with a scowling look on her face.

"Jen, what is wrong with you? Annabelle and I are watching a show, you were asleep anyway" Daniel argued his point.

"Well, it’s true Daniel, all you ever want to do is play outside with the kids, go to the park or the beach, when we could be having fun ourselves"

 Annabelle stayed in her room listening to them fight about her, fight about how she was a needy undeserving, energy sucking child, and how her mother wished she had never had her. As a matter of fact Jen often spoke of Michael and Annabelle in that tone, but never Nathan. Nathan seemed to be the baby the ‘special child’, Annabelle and Michael were nothing to her, she told them that often. Daniel stuck around on and off for a few years. He and her mother would often take off for days at a time leaving Annabelle to tend to her brothers.

Annabelle remembers the first time they left, it was an early summer night, and her mother took Annabelle into her room and had her sit on the bed. “Annabelle, you will be in charge, we will be back tomorrow, you will not cook any food, and there is plenty of cereal, sandwich meat and snacks. You will not answer the phone, you will not go outside and you will keep the TV turned down, if anyone comes to the door, you will be as quiet as possible. Do you hear me child? I will come back and kill you if you don't do exactly as I say.” Jen ordered as Annabelle continued to notion “yes” with her head.
 Off they went. Over the next 3 nights Annabelle barely slept, she fed her brothers, kept the house clean, and did exactly as her mother said. At one point she did not think they would come back.

On the 4th night, Annabelle sat in her bedroom crying at all of the creaks in the house, she had always been scared of the dark. Crying in front of her mom was not allowed, ever. Anytime her mother was gone, Annabelle let it out, she would sit in her room hiding and crying out all the pain. Annabelle noticed the headlights of the car coming up the driveway, she felt relieved they were back. Her mother’s skinny pale body stumbled toward the door, her face unrecognizably swelled and bruised; as she made it into the threshold vomit spewed out of her mouth onto the floor. She leaned up against the wall, with vomit chunks hanging from her dark brown short curls, her glassy eyes pointed down at Annabelle. She looked dead, like she was lost in space. Her breath reeked of vodka or tequila; it was so powerful Annabelle had to hold back the urge to vomit herself.

"Clean it up now" her mother ordered. Annabelle didn't argue she walked to the kitchen and grabbed the mop and bucket. It was no unusual task for her to clean vomit, she had always cleaned her own vomit, generally her bothers' vomit also, but this was the first time she cleaned her mothers' mess. It would not be her last.

As Annabelle started to clean the mess, Daniel walked in, "hey baby girl what happened here?" He asked.

"Mom's sick" Annabelle replied.

"Ya she is" He walked to the bedroom, slamming the door behind him. She and her brothers could hear their mother’s moans, and his grunts. They could hear the sound of the bed banging loudly and hard against the wall.

Annabelle thought to herself how disgusting they were, how absolutely ugly it was to see them walk into the house so drunk and tore up.

 The next morning her mother woke and walked out of the room naked. Annabelle saw all the markings on her mother’s back for the first time. Scars and welts. Markings of weird letters and designs engraved or branded into her. Annabelle had no idea what they were and wouldn't dare ask.

After going into the kitchen for a drink Jen made her way back to her room and shut her door. The arguments started, Daniel telling her she was a terrible mother for making her daughter clean vomit. The argument soon escalated into a screaming match. Daniel came out of the room, holding his bag of clothes, with her mother holding his arm, "please Daniel don't leave you are the only thing that matters to me" he turned to Jen; the words that left his mouth will never be forgotten. "You are crazy, you need help, and I can't take anymore". Annabelle’s mother ran back to her room for just a second and when she returned she held in her hand a razor blade, she threatened she'd “do it” if he left. As the front door shut behind him, Jen slid down the wall into a sitting position, her eyes glassed over as if emptiness consumed her, she looked over to Annabelle. Almost as if her mother was making sure she’d see her. She lifted the razor to her left wrist, plunged it through the skin, sliding it, cutting straight down toward her elbow, she then repeated on the right wrist. The blood poured out over the floor, then, she lifted her wrists above her head and let the blood drip to her face, licking it off her lips. Her laughter was sickening, a hackle sort of laugh as she gloried in her own blood. Annabelle became nauseated almost instantly, at the sight of her. What is she doing? Her mother’s laughter did not stop as the blood dripped down her face onto her chest; she rubbed it as if she were in a shower. She began to talk in a language Annabelle had never heard, before long the words became a chant. Annabelle watched in disbelief. Then as quickly as her mother had started the blood ritual, she snapped out of it. "What the fuck are you looking at? You don't know anything yet Annabelle, you have been too young to show, but I think it’s time you join me". She raised herself up, walked into the bathroom, cleaned up her blood, and bandaged her self-inflicted wounds. She called Annabelle into the room, "Sit, there" pointing to the bed.

Annabelle did as she was told, out of fear.

"Hold out your hand"
In Annabelle’s hand she placed a silver knife; it was a beautiful old knife. It appeared to be a small Celtic dagger, with engravings down the blade.

As Jen placed her hand over Annabelle’s she said "hold it like this, let me show you" Annabelle started shaking, does she dare trust her mother holding her hand with a sharp object after watching what she had just done to herself. Her mother faced the blade to Annabelle’s chest, and pushed Annabelle’s head down forcing her to lie on the bed; Annabelle didn't want to hold the dagger, and released her hand. Her mother then ran the blade across Annabelle’s forehead, down her cheek caressing her unruly blonde curls and made way to Annabelle’s neck, just below her right ear. Her mother’s face right up to Annabelle’s, she climbed on top of her. Her breath was rancid; it smelled of death, of pure putrid. "I will tell you this only once, you are my flesh and blood, my oldest child, my daughter. YOU WILL NEVER SPEAK OF ME AND WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS HOUSE EVER!!! If you so much as utter anything to anyone, I will take this blade and make you sorry". Annabelle instantly started to cry; crying was not allowed. "Cry, go ahead and cry, you little baby, cry cry baby" She then lifted Annabelle off the bed by her hair, slapped her across the face and threw her toward the door. "Get out! you little bitch, go cry in your room and don't forget I brought you into this world, I can take you out"
 Annabelle couldn't look at her mother for days, she didn't speak to her, she just did her chores and watched her brothers for countless hours while her mother stayed locked away in her room, as usual. Some days Annabelle sat in the backyard picking flowers, stringing them into leis, thinking of the horrible things she had seen; day dreaming of being a princess in a faraway land, where all things were happy, where she had a real mother who cared for her children.

 One afternoon Annabelle’s mother joined her outside. She walked out the back door and sat in the grass next to Annabelle, she picked up some flowers and said, "these are the fairies' favorites, the pink ones, we should take them to their home"
"What home? What Fairies?" Annabelle replied.
 "You haven't seen the fairies that live here?" Her mother asked in a concerning tone.
"No" Annabelle quietly responded
 "It’s because you don't believe they are real, Annabelle I will teach you about all the things in this world people cannot see without believing it to be true. I will show you to be powerful to be their queen."

What was she speaking of?

Who knows?

She was crazy, after all.

Fairies and things people don't know of.

Annabelle’s mind traveled in hundreds of directions as she tried to understand.

 Her First Communion was coming up fast. Just a week away, having being raised Catholic Annabelle was filled with excitement and joy about receiving her first communion. Annabelle woke in the morning and decided she need a shower. She went into the bathroom and turned on the water. She began removing her clothing, suddenly the bathroom door flew open, her mother entered in a rage; she grabbed Annabelle by the arm and led her to her room, "HOW DARE YOU!!! YOU CANNOT SHOWER FOR SIX DAYS" tossing her naked body to the floor her mother retrieved her wooden spoon, with each hit onto Annabelle’s back she cursed her, she did not stop until Annabelle’s entire back and legs were covered with welts. Then she laughed as she left the room slamming the door shut. Annabelle lay on the floor, she had no pain she felt nothing after the third strike of the spoon. She was sure god had spared her pain; he had surely sent her an angel who took the pain away. Six days, she was not allowed to shower closing in on the day she was to have her first communion, as a matter of fact her communion was on the sixth day which would fall on a Friday.
 Wednesday came fast, Annabelle had spent most of the days and nights in her room she didn't eat. She wasn't allowed to eat, only drink water and red wine. A couple of times Annabelle snuck into the kitchen and got some bread and rolled the pieces into balls eating small pieces at a time, the slower she ate the more filled she would feel.

 Annabelle’s grandmother showed up that day with her new communion dress, and veil. Annabelle was called to the living room, She slightly smiled at her grandmother as she approached. Annabelle did not run to her grandmother as she normally did, "here sweetheart try it on" Her grandmother said.

"NO! Mummy she will not try it on today she is not to wear it until the day of her communion" Jen abruptly scolded her mother.

"Jen, that is ludicrous, we need to see that it fits her" grandma replied.

"No we don't I have all the materials to taper if needed on Friday morning, she will not try it on for a second, look at her she is filthy she has refused to bathe for days all she does is sit in her room I cannot even get the child to eat"

"Annabelle, my darling? is this true? Why aren't you eating" her grandmother asked.

Annabelle shrugged her shoulders and looked at her mother as Jen placed her finger to her mouth signaling for Annabelle to keep quiet.

"Annabelle what is wrong with you? You are going to eat something I'll fix it for you" her grandmother protested.
And immediately went into the kitchen and made Annabelle’s favorite, grilled cheese and pears. Annabelle sat at the table, her mother standing across from her said, "Eat child Eat" as she shook her head no. Annabelle did not eat it instead she looked at it with her mouthwatering, and pushed the plate aside. Annabelle was sure her mother was putting on a show for her grandmother showing Annabelle was being defiant, that Annabelle was the one refusing food and refusing to bathe.

"Jen, maybe she is sick we should take her to a doctor"

"No, she is just mad because she didn't clean her room, I told her she could not go outside all week, this is what she does mummy she is a terrible kid she never listens to me, I've even considered having you take her for a while so I can have a break"

"That might not be a bad idea, she can come with me now"

"She will go with you Sunday after mass, I need her to finish her punishment before she gets spoiled with treats and play time at your house"

"Very well then. Annabelle I love you, I will see you Friday for communion and Sunday you will come to stay with me for a while."

 Annabelle’s heart sunk in her chest as her grandmother left. Thoughts quickly rushed through Annabelle's mind. Have I done what my mom wanted, had I read her facial expressions correctly? She must have, because her mother politely told her she could go back to her room.
 Friday morning her mother came into her room and sat beside her on the bed. "Okay Annabelle I need to tell you something, first off you will be taking your first communion today you will act as if nothing had happened, do you understand me child?”

 "Yes mom" she picked Annabelle off the bed and stripped her down, lead her into the bathroom she then ordered Annabelle into the shower and with the water tap cold she scrubbed her from head to toe. She scrubbed so hard that Annabelle’s skin turned bright red. When her mother felt she was finished she had Annabelle get out of the shower and follow her into her room where Annabelle put her communion dress on. It was a pure white lace dress, very pretty Annabelle felt as if she were a princess wearing it, there was no need to alter the dress it fit perfectly the veil was placed on her head.

"Okay it fits, now you can go play while I get ready then we will go to your communion"

Annabelle went outside for the first time in a week but didn't feel much like playing. After her mother got ready she did Annabelle’s hair, and fed the children breakfast. Annabelle only took a few bites, her appetite was very small after the week long fasting. She dressed in her communion clothing and loaded into the car. They arrived at a filled church; her entire family came for the event. Annabelle had her own designated spot in the first pew, her family directly behind her in the fourth row. She walked up to the podium and read her scripture out of the bible into the microphone. Each of the 10 children receiving communion had a specific scripture to read prior to receiving the body and blood of Christ.

When Annabelle’s turn came, she did not listen to her mother’s words. Annabelle knew she could always talk to God in her head. Her mother could not hear Annabelle’s thoughts it was the only thing she could keep from her mother. As she walked down the aisle and up to the alter, she prayed, she begged with each prayer in her head for her mother to be better, she begged that god would save her mother and forgive her for her sins, she prayed that if he couldn't stop her mother from her evil that he take Annabelle’s life or at least take her away from her mother. Annabelle reached the alter, the priest held up the circle to her mouth "The Body of Christ" she opened her mouth and he laid it onto her tongue, Annabelle sucked on the dry piece of yeast less bread, he raised up the cup of red wine "The Blood of Christ" she drank of it, it was a much better taste than the wine they had in their house. Annabelle sipped it, closed her eyes and said "AMEN" then made the cross from her forehead to her diaphragm and across her shoulders and returned to her seat. A feeling of happiness and light overcame her, she thought God must listen to her now she has eaten his body and drank his blood she was pure now and she had prayed for his help. He would most definitely save her from the horrible home life.

Sunday came and went uneventful, after mass Annabelle left with her grandmother. Her grandmother’s house was so peaceful, she was a smoker though, and she smoked at least a pack a day for years so the house smelled of stale cigarettes.

Her grandmother of pure Portuguese decent, she was beautiful even in her old age, her eyes hazel like Annabelle’s, turned blue on occasion. She kept her hair short and dyed a medium golden reddish brown.

Annabelle’s grandparents had separate living spaces, separate bedrooms, bathrooms and living rooms. The only area shared was the kitchen, although they rarely spent time in there together, they rarely even spoke. It had been the norm of Annabelle’s grandparents her whole life, she remembers asking her grandmother why they didn't sleep in the same bed. Her grandmother’s only response was, “once you get a certain age it’s too uncomfortable to sleep with someone else”.

Annabelle didn't really understand that they lived this way because they were catholic, and divorce was not an option. She didn't know what their 40 years of marriage had been like or the horrible things her grandfather had done in their life. Annabelle was too young to understand, she didn't find out all the family "truths"" until her grandmother was on her death bed.

Annabelle stayed with her grandmother for a few months, and then school started. Her mother came by only a few times with her brothers. Annabelle often played with her older cousin Kevin who her grandmother watched while her aunt worked.

One day during school Kevin walked into Annabelle’s classroom and told Annabelle to come with them. Annabelle had worn a dress that day her favorite dress, white with purple and blue flowers with a silk sash that tied at her waste. Kevin led her, up the hill, through the cane field, and told her to hurry. As they ran toward the road Annabelle’s dress snagged on the sharp cane bushes, her shins became scratched up and were bleeding. "Kevin why are we running it’s not even lunch time at school?' she asked.

"Just shut up and follow me, we have to go" he replied.

They continued to the road, where their grandmothers silver sedan sat.

 "Get in fast and lay down" their grandmother ordered.

What was happening? Annabelle questioned in her head. Kevin sat in the front of the car while Annabelle hid, laying in the back seat. They drove for quite some time, picking up Annabelle’s brothers along the way. When they finally stopped their grandmother opened the rear door and told them to get out. There was another car on the dirt road, a woman with long red hair.

Annabelle over heard her grandmother saying to the unknown woman, "Take the boys, I cannot care for the three of them myself. I can keep my granddaughter for now because I had already had her with me, that way she won’t question a thing."

The woman placed Annabelle’s brothers in the car and drove off.

"Annabelle, your mom is going to get some help. That woman is taking your brothers to Aunties house to be cared for, Don't you worry they will be fine"
Annabelle wasn't able to attend school for a while, Kevin didn't go either they just stayed at their grandmother’s house watching TV.

Finally, after weeks of waiting they were able to go to school; it had been almost a month. Annabelle’s first day back, but she was neither happy nor excited. She had no friends at school and didn't play or talk with anyone.

Her brother Michael had not returned to school at this point, Annabelle had no idea where her brothers were. School seemed okay that day. But, right before the bell rang Daniel, her mom’s boyfriend. appeared at Annabelle’s classroom door. She was happy to see him.

"Hey honey I'm here to get you today grandma can’t come she had to go to a doctor’s appointment”

Annabelle didn't question it, she trusted him. They drove off in his truck heading to his house in Paia. When they arrived Annabelle’s mother was there with Nathan.

"Get in the car Annabelle" her mother ordered. Annabelle did as she was told, and they drove off, fast. Annabelle tucked her head between her legs while her mother sped through the windy roads. They pulled up to a house, her mother ordered Annabelle and Nathan to stay in the car, she quickly got out and grabbed Michael right off the front lawn and put him into the car. They drove through the long stretch of Hana Highway, the 2 hours of windy roads and one lane bridges. None of the children said a word, just sat there in the car staring out the windows. Eventually they came to a very long driveway filled with bushes and trees, which lead toward the ocean. The stilt house was hardly noticeable through all the tropical plants and trees. They all got out of the car and went up the stairs, "we will live here for a while, where we won't be bothered" Their mother stated.
 The house had no phone, no running water, or electricity. It was built and filled with furniture but it appeared that it hadn't been lived in for some time. The days seemed to drag there; the children spent most of their time outside running around, climbing trees, and playing various games like hide and seek. It was nice, their mother hadn't yelled at them or been mean the whole time.

A few weeks had past, and they were running out of bottled water and food. Jen said she would go into town to buy some items and return shortly. Annabelle and her brothers didn't care that she left; they kept on with their games.

Nightfall came and their mother had not returned, Annabelle lit the candles they had been using for light, and the three of them ate bananas and nuts for dinner. The next morning they woke, still no sign of their mother, and now they had no water to drink and very little food to eat.

How long was she going to take? Annabelle thought to herself.

She and her brothers started playing outside when police cars made it down the driveway. Annabelle was always so confused, why were the police here now? Why did Daniel pick her up from school that day and why did her mother snatch Michael from the lawn? Annabelle didn't understand anything.

The officers walked to the children, explained to Annabelle that she and her brothers were not supposed to be there, and they had arrested their mother for kidnapping.

"Kidnapping? She's our mom" Annabelle stated.

"Yes she is, I know your probably confused, but you mom is not able to see you kids right now, not until she has cleaned up" the officer replied.

Annabelle thought ‘Cleaned up? Cleaned up what?’ Maybe the police knew something she didn’t. The three of them went to stay with their grandmother for the rest of that year. They did not see their mom, once, the entire time. When summer came that year, the children started having visits with their mother. At times the visits would take place at their grandmothers house, and other times at the social services office. Their Mother looked good; she had gained some weight and wore her glasses instead of contacts. Jen appeared to be nice, especially to Annabelle telling her she loved her and would be able to get a place again where they could be together.

That was Annabelle’s third grade year. When summer was close to ending Annabelle and her brothers moved back in with their mom. Things seemed great that year, Jen actually went work and school, she woke up and got the children ready for school every day, she cleaned, and even cooked. Things had gone back to the way it used to be, before things got bad. The state workers would come to the house twice a week and check on them. Their mom had been doing really well. She and Daniel had been dating regularly; he spent nearly every day and night with them. Annabelle was happy, she thought maybe her prayers were being answered maybe their mom was being normal and nice