

# Trying to Fix It

Alisha Ragon

She was trying to fix it.

She walked in with purpose, and nerves on fire.

As hard as she tried to hold up her badass countenance, they could still tell she was tired. She walked with swagger, put distance between her steps. This convenience store's law of awkward nondisclosure was helpful in self-defense. As messed up as she had become, there were still people here much more fucked than her. She said hello to the man at the counter, with lowered eyes. She avoided other consumers with grace; she simply stepped down the wrong aisle.

It had been on her brain since the morning. She realized she had mourned for the unfulfillable possibility. She carried out silent conversations with her lover, with her sister, as a mother. She had teared up when he asked her what decision pleased her most.

She turned on her heel and discovered the right sign: hanging, mocking, betraying. She walked, trembling, but sublime in the knowledge of her competency. Already sick to her stomach. She stood. She looked. She lurched.

Sometimes it isn't pleasure which guides the trembling hand. Necessity requires deliberation; contemplation simply yields desperation.

Before her, the way out was shut. Thick bars clanged down around her chest and her womanhood ached. She wished that he would have felt the same, that he would have helped, that he would have stayed, instead of being out enjoying another date.

She stood in line, waiting while the dazed ditsy Doreen babbled to the young pharmacist about her daughter's prescriptions. Time wasted. Time for thinking. Pebbles slipped away into the past, life isn't like an hourglass. Every pebble lost is an action nothing can take back. When at last the man looked on to her, she feebly fumbled with her falling words. Words like skipping stones plopped down into a well. "Um, in the family planning aisle, um..." Adam, the fresh faced pharmacist, stared back blankly. He left little room for sympathy or comprehension amidst the bullets of confusion and judgment from his wrinkled brow. Lost and desperate, the grungy girl was saved by the appearance of an old face from behind the counter. "I have some up at the front," he said, leaving Adam behind to look into the next script that needed filling. The girl followed, relieved, embarrassed.

The old man fished in the cabinet for the little plastic tub, emerging victorious. "They aren't cheap," he said. The words pinged across her timpani's. Fatherly words, not of concern, but annoyance. Behind his slumped movements she saw the disparity he withheld. If only the young were wiser... She had seen him sell it before. He had spoken kind words. "Shouldn't

he

be the one getting this?" She sank, releasing her badass misconceptions of herself when she dug out the cash. She had wanted anyone to be on her side.

"Thank you," she replied, and stepped back out onto the street. She stepped back into her façade, back into the grime. Back to the hole she had come from. It would be better this way. Out on the street a man nearly walked into her, as if taken by surprise by her appearance on the sidewalk. Though he had been on his phone, staring down into the light and ignoring the night, it was still her fault. He was merely distracted. It couldn't be placed on him. "Excuse me," she said, leaving him behind, simply trying to be polite.

She knew everyone could see the mistakes written all over her face.

But she was trying to fix it.