



# Delirium

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A child in a shabby black dress stared at the lustrous piece of rock in the window of the local jewelry shop. Her little hands softly glided across the glass window that separated her from the diamond ring displayed on the other side. Her large dark brown pupils gleamed as she took in the sight of what lay in front of her with amazement. It was the first time her mother had ever brought her out on the main street. She gaped with awe at the high rising corporate offices and the fancy stores all around her.

"Mommy, I want to see the shiny rock. Can we go inside?" her innocent voice whispered as she tried to convince her mother with wide, round eyes and puckered lips.

"Not today, baby girl," comes her mother's reply.

Bowing her wee head down in disappointment, she clutched her mother's hand as they continued to descend down the busy street.

A half-torn backpack hanging from her slim shoulders, over pouring with textbooks, a beautiful teenage girl stared at a different diamond ring in the window of the local jewelry shop. As far as she remembered, she had passed the same shop millions of times, and the same ornament had captured her attention every single time. Hope blossomed in heart as she dreamed about a day when that ring would rest on her fingers. Remembering the AP class she had to attend to get to that point in life, she walked on yet again, an evanescent smile on her lips.

Black stilettos clicking on the concrete footpath, a

woman hustled down the street, trying to get to her workplace before her boss arrives. A girl who was once vibrant, cherishing life to the fullest, grew up to despise her monotonous routine of adult life. Traipsing past her favourite jewelry shop, her heels clacked to a stop. Years had passed but she couldn't get rid of the habit of halting and observing a different ring with the same design, resting in the same position as always. Desire to have it on her fingers consumed her mind. She worked so hard, toiled for days, yet the ring looked so distant. It felt as if it moved further away from her reach by each passing day. She promised herself that she would claim it as soon as she got her first salary at the huge marketing firm she now worked at. She strode on, hating every step she took, towards a job she loathed.

Blood trickled down her arms, cut from the store's glass window. A wide gash on her forehead, alarms blaring all around her, police sirens in the distance. Lights turned on in the windows of the houses in the area with people trying to witness the crime scene. She had managed to get away unscathed, give or take a few minor injuries. Her heart filled with ambivalence, the same dark brown eyes that had looked upon a shiny diamond ring decades ago, glistened over as she stared at the broken store window and the yellow tape being put around it now. Remorse engulfed her as her hands clutched the bag full of valuables. She had promised herself that she would just take the ring, and nothing other than that. The thought of turning herself in had occurred to her several times since she entered the dark alley. The alley was silent and isolated. Safe, she mused.

"You're the thief aren't you?" a man's voice called out from behind her.

Terror overtook her as she tried to contemplate what to do, how to escape. Her hands dipped into the cloth bag, looking for her most prized possession.

5 seconds was all it took. 5 seconds to run to him, 5 seconds to end his life. He remained quiet, as the life drained out of him. Her knuckles turned white as she gripped the knife protruding out of his chest. She felt emotionless as she looked into his eyes as they begged for mercy. One sharp pull and the wipe of a handkerchief followed by the thud of the man's lifeless body on the ground confirmed what she had done. She walked away, tears threatening to flow out, yet her soul felt so dark. Glacial. She buried her heart the moment she chose to kill him. An innocent soul exchanged for a piece of rock. An old man's family business ripped off for a piece of rock. A single drop echoed through the night as a diamond clinked on the ground.

A little girl's sleep broke as she heard her mother scream from the room opposite hers. Her little feet thumped on the floor as she ran over to her mother in an attempt to console her. Her mom writhed on the bed, as if in pain, as she screamed with her eyes shut. Hallucinations by day and nightmares by night, 5 seconds had ruined her life. Her baby girl climbed up on the bed, night after night and held her mother's hand, while the nightmare rode through her. She brushed her little fingers across the diamond that rested on her mother's finger, a silent prayer in her head.