

## Extra Feelings – Noah Gustafson

### River Crest Academy. Tuesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>

“Oliver, this can’t go on any longer. I understand that you don’t feel in control, but these ‘extra feelings’ you’re having can get someone hurt. I need you to get it under control young man.”

Oliver’s principal, Mr. McClarty, didn’t understand. No one did. And how could they? They weren’t the ones being told by a random voice in their head to jump out a window or shove that kid in front of the moving car.

“Yes, Mr. McClarty. I’ll do my best.” Oliver acquiesced. Like he even had a choice in the matter.

Ever since turning twelve, the voice has been getting louder...and angrier. Oliver has been trying his best to drown it out and push it away, but it’s not helping. He only comes back with even more malice in his words.

Mr. McClarty dismissed Oliver from the office with a final warning: “If you can’t get those ‘extra feelings’ of yours under wraps Oliver, I’ll have no choice but to suspend you and confine you to your room to start the summer break. I really don’t want to do that, but if you can’t get it together, I may have no choice.”

This was the *last* thing Oliver wanted. Having to miss out on the start of summer break would be bad enough, but being confined to his dusty old dorm room? The place where “Cain” was the loudest and most aggressive? No thanks. “Just gotta make it through one more week of classes and then we’re in the clear,” Oliver muttered as he left the principal’s office, stepping out into the bright blue-white hue of the oppressive school hallway lights. “One more week until we can leave this place. You’ve got it, Ollie.”

**Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>**

Oliver rushed into the bathroom, its lime-green tiling and slightly unsettling humidity becoming a familiar site for another “argument.” That voice is so loud and *so* persuasive. This time was close. Thankfully, he could stop himself and run out of the classroom before Cain could do anything that *Oliver* would regret.

Oliver stepped to the tilted mirror over the sink, turned on the tap, leaned down, and splashed water on his face. Before he lifted his head, Oliver knew what he would see as he looked up. He could feel the heavy presence standing behind him, hot breath in his ear, and a sharp, painful grip on his right arm.

“I don’t want to see you anymore. Please leave me alone.....please.” Oliver pleaded. He was exhausted.

Cain stood behind him in the mirror, his face *nearly* identical to Oliver’s, but he wore a dark, twisted grin...and his eyes were black. “I don’t remember asking you *anything* about what *you* wanted! You didn’t do what I told you, Ollie. Now I have to hurt you...”

“Wait, wait, wait, please, NO!!! Please...don’t hurt me this time. If we can finish today and the rest of tomorrow, then we’ll be free. We can leave school for the summer, and you can do whatever you want with me when we get back home.” Oliver was hoping that when he left River Crest for the summer, Cain would stay behind. Since he didn’t see him until this school year, maybe leaving this place would mean he could finally be free and get some much-needed rest. Cain snarled, twisted, and distorted his face, but Oliver knew he would accept this proposal. Just a few more days...That was all he needed.

“*Fine.*” Cain spit at Oliver. Then he disappeared.

**Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**

Oliver sat slumped in Mr. McClarty's office, his head drooping. Old man McClarty was *not* happy. He looked tired...like he hadn't slept in days.

"Oliver.....what you did this morning.....that girl you hurt.....I...I don't understand. What were you thinking?!" McClarty whispered, a confused look drawing across his face. Oliver couldn't look him in the eye.

"Sir I'm sorry. I have *no idea* what happened. I don't know what came over me. Is Kayla going to be okay?"

"She'll live. But what you did.....the way she fell.....we'll be lucky if she comes out the same. Things do not look good. Her parents wanted to press charges, Ollie!"

Oliver's parents swayed nervously, his father darting furious glances at his son.

"I have no choice but to suspend you and place you on house arrest for the next two weeks, son. You'll be confined to your dorm room and the cafeteria. I've already spoken about it with your parents, and they agree with the decision."

Oliver's mom spoke, trying to maintain her composure: "Ollie son...we love you, but we have no idea what's gotten into you! We'll be here to pick you up in two weeks. I love you. Now go."

Oliver rose, hugged his mom, gave a quick look to his father who was cherry-red with anger, and left the office, beginning the fifteen-minute walk across the campus to his dorm room.

Oliver's mother sat in the office, preparing to open herself up to McClarty for the first time.

"Look Jeff, I am not making any excuses for Ollie, but I do want to give a bit of context that may help you understand his behavior a bit better."

“I’m listening.” McClarty looked at Oliver’s mother inquisitively.

“Oliver is a twin,” she said, in a barely audible whisper. “Or...*was*.” Her tears welled up and she struggled to divulge this information which she had shared with *no one* over the years.

“He had a twin in the womb. We never named him because he was never born...he made little Ollie’s and my life hell in the womb. He was found multiple times trying to take over Ollie, absorbing him or eating him or whatever it is that fetuses do...

When it came time for them to be born, he almost killed me. I don’t know what happened in there, but he was malicious from the start. When all was said and done, and I was finally finished pushing, only Oliver came out breathing. I love both of my babies, and I can only hope that my unborn boy is out there somewhere, happy. But you see Mr. McClarty, Oliver has always sort of had his ‘extra feelings’, and I think they may just be his way of coping with growing up as an only twin. We’ve had him tested by so many doctors for schizophrenia, multiple personality disorder, bipolar disorder, you name it! All negative. I just think maybe his mind isn’t all right without his brother in the world...”

Mr. McClarty listened to her entire story quizzically, his plastic-rimmed glasses falling below the bridge of his nose. “Ma’am, I am so sorry for your loss. I can’t understand what you all have gone through...*but* I still must suspend Oliver. He really did hurt that little girl in his class...plus, this little suspension before the real summer break could be good for him. It’ll fly by and I’ll give you daily updates on his wellbeing. You can pick him up in two weeks.”

### **Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>**

Oliver’s mother placed the key into the door of his fourth-floor dorm room. They had heard *no* updates from McClarty on Ollie and were anxious to take him home. She knew how delicate

Ollie's condition was and how this school's sickly air could get to him. Even his letters home had started to show some signs of his distress. He needs a vacation.

She opened the door, walked into the small single-bed dormitory room, and was immediately mortified. The room itself was empty, but the walls were a *mess*. Scratches everywhere, wallpaper torn down, strange symbols etched into the walls. There was even what looked like.....blood spatter in a few places...

"*Ollie?! Ollie, where are you?*" His mother screamed. She darted frantically around the room looking for any sign of him. Then she noticed, almost like it was laid out for her, Oliver's journal on the bed. An odd sense of dread overcame her; all she wanted to do was get away from this dorm room and find her son. The walls felt close, and the blood streaks felt like they were flowing fresh from the cracks in the drywall. The sickly air smelled like death. She reached for the journal and began looking through it...it was just as the walls were; covered with strange symbols, scratches, and...blood. Arguments were scratched disjointedly all over it, saying "*JUMP,*" "*DO IT,*" "*Get out of my head,*" and "*I won't do what you tell me!*"

As she turned to the last page of the journal, a strong gust of wind blew in from the window that she had only now noticed was open. She scanned her eyes over the final diary page, which said one thing: Scrawled in blood were the words, "*There is no more Oliver. Only Cain.*"

She looked at the open window, cracked from signs of a struggle, but she could not bring herself to look out of it...she knew what she would find at the bottom.