

Perfect Daughter

Have you ever felt like you were being held up on a pedistool? Like your parents expect too much of you, or expect you to be perfect and walk into their footsteps? That's EXACTLY how my parents are. I'll start off with some background about myself first. My name is Brooke Jones. I live in a little town in the middle of nowhere. To be more specific, I live in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It's a little conservative town. Very church-like, and holy. I am 5'9 and very thin. My hair is long and brown and touches my rib cage. I'm told I have a very nice complexion and the prettiest blue eyes. I am considered one of the most "popular" girls in the 12th grade. I don't really like the stereotypes though. Anyways, even at school I am expected a lot of. Getting good grades, always helping people, nice to everyone, no partying, no swearing, no sinning; the list could go on forever. Now for some background on my parents. Let's start with my dad. Dave Jones. He is the pastor of the town. Everyone looks up to him. And for my mother Lisa Jones. She's a lawyer. The best lawyer around I might add. Lastly my brother. Tristan Jones. He's not alive anymore. My parents don't talk about his death much, but when I was about two my brother killed himself. Not sure how, or why. I wish I knew. So anyways, my family is a pretty big deal. Both my parents are super hard on me. Kind of like my school is. Always expecting me to be perfect in everything I do. It's so hard to deal with sometimes. I'm not perfect. There's so much they don't know about me. I have to hide it all. Not only from them but from my town, my school, and my peers. Well because of the pressure I was put under, I ended up here. Drug rehab. I'll back it up a little though.

It was a Sunday morning. Crisp, with dew on the grass. I was of course up before 7 because we had church that morning, and with my dad being the pastor, we all had to be there extra early. I was feeling extra tired that morning. So I locked myself in the bathroom as long as I could before I got yelled at to get out.

"Brooke!!! Hurry up we have to go! We're going to be late!!!!" my dad screamed up at me.

“I’ll be out in a minute, dad.”

I ran out of the bathroom and down the stairs as fast as I could, and hopped into the car. My dad sped the whole way to church and mumbled to himself about how we were going to be late.

“Chill dad, we’re an hour early. Nobody gets there an hour early,” I said starting to get annoyed.

Finally we get to church, and my dad is rushing in, freaking out. Making sure everything is perfect and set up. Only taking like ten minutes at most to set up. So like every other Sunday, we get stuck waiting for forty-five minutes. I just wanted out of there. Every minute felt like an hour as it passed. I was getting fidgety and irritated. After a long forty-five church finally started. The only thing I could focus on was the ticking of the clock, and wanting time to speed up. Snapping back into reality, I noticed there was only two minutes until church was done. I couldn’t sit there any longer.

“Have a nice day. Drive home safe.” I heard my dad saying over and over again to everyone.

“Dad, I’m going to walk home. I need to get out for a while.”

“Okay, be home at a decent time. You can’t miss family dinner, and you have homework to finish.”

“I know, dad. I know.”

I speed walk out of the church as fast as I can. Walking further and further away from it. There’s this old abandoned barn in our town. Kind of in the dead part of town that nobody goes to. Every Sunday after church I meet my friends there. We all get together and get high for hours. Until we have to go home. My friends don’t even live in this town. If anyone in this town knew about me getting high, they would look down on me. Like I was a bad person, they are so judgmental.

“Hey guys,” I say sneaking into the barn to make sure nobody sees.

“Brooke, where did you leave the stuff? I can’t find it anywhere,” yells my friend Paige.

Walking over to a bail of hay I dig into it, and pull out our stash of drugs. Not just the generic marijuana that most other people do. What we do is considered the “hard core” drugs; Cocaine, heroin, crack, and whatever else we can get our hands on. Anything that can take us out of this world. Forget

about everything. Sometimes I wish I didn't do these things anymore though. Sometimes I wish I could just be normal. How I got into this stuff wasn't even my fault. Well, not completely my fault. I was tricked, and now I'm an addict. Not like a smoker addict, but a legitimate drug addict. Withdrawals if I don't get my drug fix every other day, or daily. It depends how bad it gets. And for my parents? They have no idea I do this. If they did, they would kill me. Probably disown me. They're perfect, they think I'm perfect, and they want me to be perfect like them when I get older.

“Here guys. Sorry, I hid it good this time. I just feel like someone will find it if we don't switch up the hiding spot anymore.”

“Alright, who's going first?” Luke yelled excitedly with the needle and rubber band in his hand. I thought about it for a second. Thinking about turning it down. Trying so hard. I gave in.

“Alright, let's do it.” I hesitantly said. Luke started putting the rubber band around the top part of my arm to get my veins popped out. After a few minutes it was finally time. Luke slides the needle into my vein, and slowly injected the drugs into me. I felt a wave come over me, the drugs overcoming my body. It was finally my escape from reality. I sat down onto the ground and just laid back on a bail of hay, letting the drugs overcome my body. A few hours later, I come out of my drug coma. Finally snapping back into reality, I sit up and look around. Everyone else was sitting around, laying, still captured in their drugs. I realized it was already 4 o'clock and that I had to hurry and get home. I was still high. I was freaking out. Not knowing what to do. What to tell my parents. They're going to be pissed I'm late.

“I'm home!” I yell as the door slams behind me. I walk into the living room to see both of my parents sitting on the couch waiting for me to get home.

“Where have you been? Why were you gone so long?! You said a few hours and its been almost six hours!!!!” my dad screams at me.

“Uhh..sorry dad.. I lost track of time...” I said as I blankly stared at him, trying to keep myself composed.

“If it happens again, you will be grounded. For three weeks. I don't even care. You will do nothing. You will not leave this house except for school and church.” he screamed.

“Okay dad.... I get it!! Seriously!!!” I ran up the stairs and slammed my bedroom door. I dropped backwards onto the bed and just stared at the ceiling. The drugs still in my system. The feeling was so good, and so free. I felt like I could do anything. I slowly dozed off into a light sleep.

“Brooke! Dinner! Get down here,” my mom called up for me. I opened my eyes slowly. Not fully awake, but enough to know what was going on. I had to quickly pull myself together. Even though the drugs were no longer affecting me much anymore, my parents can't be suspicious of anything. I quickly walk downstairs and went straight to the table without saying a word. My parents both already at the table waiting for me. My dad said his prayer and we ate. I wasn't that hungry from the drugs. I had to act normal though. I had to force it down. My parents couldn't know. They haven't caught on after almost a year, they won't catch on now.

“Alright, I'm full.... can I go finish my homework now?”

“Aren't you going to help us clear off the table? We'd really appreciate it,” my mom said sternly.

“Well I just have a lot of homework and school tomorrow. And I'm kind of tired.. I just want to get things done and go to bed... please?”

“Fine.”

I ran up the stairs and plopped myself back onto my bed. I don't really have homework. I just didn't want to be down there with my parents any longer. Thinking and staring at the ceiling again, I doze off into a deep sleep.

Monday morning. Probably the worst possible day ever created. Feeling the after affects of the drugs doesn't help. I'm tired. I just want to sleep and not wake up until tomorrow. But I have to go to school. My parents never let me stay home. They think it'll screw up my future for me. Whatever. Getting ready for school sucks too. I always dress nice. That's another thing that is expected of me. Most girls wear sweatpants and a sweatshirt, or jeans and a sweatshirt. Not me. Everyday I have to

dress up. After my morning routine of getting dressed up and looking nice, I finally get to fill my stomach after not eating much the night before. I was running late this morning though, so I had to take breakfast on the go. I grab an orange, granola bar, a bagel, and a water bottle. I speed to school. If you're late to school, you get a detention. Not worth it at all.

“Brooke Jones! You are looking gorgeous as always today!” a voice I didn't recognize yelled behind me. Slowly I turn around to see who it is. Of course. Its Aj. This kid has been in love with my since 4th grade. He's a really good kid though. Probably someone I should hang around with more... he'd be a great influence on me.

“Thanks Aj, you're too sweet,” I say as I shove half my granola bar into my mouth.

“Anytime Brooke. Hey, are you okay? You've seemed distant lately. From like..church and stuff... you're always rushing to get out of there. You don't even socialize with people after like you used to. Should I be worried?”

“I'm fine Aj. I promise. Just have been stressed about...uh...school and stuff,” I say as I race into the school avoiding anymore talk about how I act.

Walking down the halls.. one of my least favorite things to do. Stopped by so many people to talk, when in reality, I would rather be in the barn, with my other friends, doing other things, actually having fun. But I throw on the fake smile and pretend to care. Walking faster just to get to my class so I can sit down and relax. Finally I make it to my first hour. AP English. Worst. Class. Ever. So extremely boring. So hard to stay awake it. Today is just not my day either. I just think all hour about how I want to go home, and how I want to go to the barn.

“Okay class, now take out your textbooks and read pages 67-82. If you don't finish it in class, you will have to do it for homework. There will be a quiz on it tomorrow.”

The only thing running through my head is “shut up. It's Monday. I don't want to hear your voice.” I search in my bag for a few minutes to find my book. As I pick it up a picture of my brother falls out of it. I always have a picture of Tristan with me. I feel like it keeps him close to me. Like he's

actually there. I wish he was still here. I wish mom and dad would talk about his death. Of course I don't get to know what happened. Apparently I wouldn't understand. Whatever.

Snapping back into reality I hear the loud ringing sound echo in my ear. Time for second hour. I honestly didn't feel like going. The thought of skipping the rest of the day came to mind. But I wouldn't want to do it alone. During my second hour I go to the bathroom to text Paige to see if she's at school. As I start walking back to the classroom I get a text back saying: No girl. I skipped today. About to go to the barn for a while. Why? I text her back saying: I'll be to the barn in 20.

Finally I get back to my classroom. Walking in there as if I am in pain.

“Brooke, is everything alright?” Mr.W asks with concern.

“You know.. I'm actually not feeling the greatest right now. I think I'm going to go home. Rest might help.”

“Alright, I'll write you a pass to the office. I hope you feel better soon!”

I gather my stuff and shuffle out of the crowded classroom. I've never skipped school before. But I just need out of here. I need to escape. I walk through the office and almost throw my note at the secretary and walk out without even stopping. I check back and forth in the parking lot, making sure my parents weren't driving by or anything as I walked to my car. The coast was clear. I ran to my car. I ran as if my life depended on it. I whipped my car door open and slipped in. I drove off as fast as I could. Heading for the barn it started to sink in. I was skipping school....to fulfill my drug addiction. What has happened to me?! This is the time in which I really needed a sibling. Needed my brother. Someone I could get help from. Rather than my parents, that would disown me.

I parked behind the barn, right next to Paige's bright red car so nobody would see me. I trotted to the front of the barn and slid into the door quickly. As I walked in, Paige had already set everything up. The needles and rubber bands. Lines of cocaine all spread out across dollar bills. And her crack pipe which was laying next to her. I got excited seeing it all. Knowing I was about to escape all of my problems and just be free.

“Holy cow, Paige! Have you been here setting this up all day?! It's so neat!”

“I got here at about seven this morning, set everything up, smoked a little, and waited until you got here. Now the real fun begins,” she said with a smirk on her face. “Where would you like to start?”

“I don't really care, Paige. I just need to do this. I need this.”

“Alright, alright,” Paige said rolling her eyes. She walked over and grabbed the rubber band. “Kay, let me see your arm.” I reached out my arm and she pulled up my sleeve. Paige noticed there were a lot more marks on my arms than she had remembered. “Umm.. Brooke... maybe you shouldn't do this today.. You know.. taking a break isn't a bad thing,” she said as she slowly tied the rubber band around my arm.

“Okay mom, I can handle myself. Just put the rubber band on tighter. It's not tight enough.” Paige tied it tighter and handed me the needle and walked away. She went and sat on the hay bail, watching me. Once I noticed my veins were nice and popped out, I was getting ready to escape. To slide the needle into my arm. Just as I was about to do it, I heard someone walk into the barn door. I panicked. It was a face I had never seen before. A guy. He was tall, and had brown hair, not very long, and spiked up in the front. I couldn't tell what color his eyes were. It was kind of dark in the barn.

“About time you got here, Ry! I've been holding off until you were here. This is my friend Brooke by the way,” Paige said introducing us.

“Nice to meet you, Brooke. I'm Ryan. Ry for short. But you can call me Ryan. Whatever you want,” he said smiling. I noticed he had the most perfect teeth I had ever seen. So straight, so white. Ryan was attractive. There was no hiding that one.

“Nice to meet you too, I'm Brooke..obviously,” I said smiling. After I got over how attractive Ryan was, I got back to business. I looked down and noticed my arm was starting to lose more circulation. I grabbed my needle and slowly slid it into my arm, injecting the fluids into my body. Letting the wave overtake me again. Taking all of my worries away. I slid the needle back out and set it down, along with the rubber band. I looked up to see what Paige and Ryan were doing. Paige was

almost passed out on the bail of hay, and Ryan was injecting something into him. It was different than what I did though. It was into his neck. I tried to ask him why he was doing it that way, but no words came out. The drugs were setting in even more. I forgot what I was going to say to him so I just laid back onto the bail of hay that was next to me and closed my eyes. I hear footsteps walking over to me, then feel someone lay next to me.

“Paige?” I ask, without opening my eyes.

“No, its just me.” The sound of Ryan's voice made me smile. The fact that he was laying next to me made me smile. After a while we both passed out. I didn't know what time we passed out, but I woke up at about three. My school gets out at two thirty. I panicked. If my parents found out I skipped school, I will be screwed. I quick jumped up and started walking towards the barn door. Looking back before I walked out, Paige and Ryan were both still passed out from their drugs. I didn't bother to wake them up to tell them I was leaving. I got out of there as fast as possible and got home as fast as I could. I walked in the door, and there they were. Both my parents there to greet me...again.

“Where on earth were you today? Were you going to tell us you weren't at school? That you supposedly came home?! You're grounded. I don't even know how long for. Your life is so done with. No phone, no car, no leaving the house unless it's to school, or church and back home. What has gotten into you lately?! What are we doing wrong?!?” My mom screamed and cried at me.

“Really? Do you guys hate me or something? My whole life is a punishment. You give me barely any freedom. My life revolves around you guys. You expect me to be the perfect daughter, and the perfect person in general. I'm sick of pretending. I'M NOT PERFECT. I never was, and never will be. Accept it!” I screamed as I ran up the stairs and into my room, slamming the door behind me. I can't hold in my anger anymore. I have never lashed out on my parents like that before. I don't know what's gotten into me, but I feel so much hatred towards them right now. All I can do is rage. Breaking things in my room, screaming, crying. Finally starting to catch a grip on myself, I grab the broken picture frame on my floor. The picture of my brother. The best picture I had of him and I. In it we were outside

the church yard playing. I was on his back and both of us had the biggest smiles on our faces. The picture was starting to fade. It's old. It was taken when I was two years old. It was vintage looking with a big crease down the middle. I used to keep it folded in my Bible, but I felt better with it framed in my room. And I broke it. I press the broken frame to my chest and lay back onto my bed, crying, shaking, thinking. I needed out of here. I couldn't be here anymore. I could hear my mom crying downstairs and my dad comforting her. This was my chance. They were both absorbed in the hurt that I caused them. I jumped up off my bed and grabbed a small bag. In it I shoved a few pairs of clothes, a hairbrush, tooth brush, my phone charger, my phone and the picture frame with Tristan's picture in it. I grabbed my car keys and hooked them onto my belt loop so I wouldn't lose them. I opened up my window and popped the screen out. I set it against my wall and threw my bag out the window into some bushes under my window. I had to quietly climb down the side of my house without falling.

After about ten minutes of maneuvering myself down the side of my house, I finally made it to the ground safely. I grab my bag and hop in my car. Starting it and driving off as fast as I can. Not looking back. The only thing I could think about was how upset I was and how much I hated my parents right now.

“Paige? Where are you? Are you still at the barn??” I ask her sobbing over the phone.

“Brooke, what's wrong? No, I'm not at the barn anymore, but Ryan should still be there. What's going on?”

“Nothing. I'm fine. I'll tell you later. I'll be at the barn if you want to come by later,” I said as I hung up the phone without letting her respond.

After what seemed like hours of driving, I got to the barn. I checked my clock before I went in. I'd only been driving for ten minutes. It was only four. I parked behind the barn. I didn't want anyone to know where I was and tell my parents where I was. Walking into the barn bringing my bag with me, I see Ryan. Staring at the wall.

“Uh..Ry?... You ok?”

“Yeah...I'm perfect,” he says without even turning around.

I slowly walk his direction. Once I get to him I tap his shoulder. He turns and looks at me and smiles.

“Hey Brooke, what's going on?”

“Just got in a fight with my parents. I honestly hate them so much. I hate how they expect me to be perfect. I hate how they're so strict on me. Don't they know that just pushes me away?!”

“Chill out, Brooke. Everything will be fine. Do they know you left your house?”

“No... I don't care. They can't ruin my life anymore than it possibly is. Do we have anymore stuff left from earlier?”

“Uh.. No, I have my own though.. I'll share if you want?” Ryan stares into my eyes. His eyes are bloodshot and glassy. He's high. He's been high. I can tell. Doesn't bother me any though, because I'm about to be in that state of mind too. “Brooke, you should try this the way I do it. It get's you more high, quicker.”

“I don't care how we do it. Just do it. I need an escape.” Ryan fills the syringe with the liquid all the way to the top. I've never had that much before. Should I do this? Yeah, it's my only escape. I need it.

“Alright Brooke, I'm going to inject this into your neck, I'm going to need you to relax, okay? Don't clench up no matter how bad the pain. It will be gone in a matter of seconds.” I closed my eyes as Ryan pressed his cold hand against my neck, trying to find where to put the needle. I felt it. The pinch of the needle sliding into my neck. It hurt really bad, but he told me to stay relaxed. I felt him shooting the fluid into my body. It was already starting to overtake me as he was still shooting it in. Finally he pulled the needle out and just sat back and watched me.

“Wow Ryan, you were right. This is better. Much better. So much faster. So much stronger. I feel amazing.” Again he just sat and watched me. Then he went back and got a new syringe and filled it to the top again with more fluid.

“This is the rest of my stuff Brooke. Want to go half and half on it?”

“Let's do it. I'm ready.” I sat up, and still again waiting for Ryan to poke me again. Finally I felt the needle slide back up into my neck. This time, it was not painful. It brought me pleasure. It was the only thing that made me happy in my life. These drugs had overtaken my life so much that I was dependent on them. When I wasn't high, I wasn't happy.

“How ya feeling, Brooke? That was the rest of it.”

“I feel g-gr-good. I feel alright,” I stutter. I start to feel a little weird though. A feeling I haven't gotten before while being high. I feel like maybe coming here was a bad idea. Doing this was a bad idea. Leaving my parents was a bad idea. The drugs start to drown out my thoughts. I can't even think straight. See straight. Anything. I begin to panic as it gets harder and harder for me to breathe. It was as if someone were sitting on my chest and closing up my air passage. I could faintly hear two people screaming and panicking, but I wasn't sure if it was real life.

“Call her parents! Call 911! Something! Help her! My best friend can't breathe!!!”

I figured. It was Paige. Whether this was reality or a dream, Paige was there. The drugs once again started drowning everything out. I started seeing things. I thought maybe I was dreaming. Then in front of me, I see my brother standing. I had to be dreaming. He's dead. He can't be there in front of me. He starts to walk closer to me though. He had a weird look on his face. A look of disappointment, tears streaming down his cheeks. Suddenly he disappears and reality starts to set back in. Struggling to breathe and keep myself awake, I hear even more voices in the background. I hear crying. Screaming. I can feel the panic around me. I had no idea what was going on.

“Help her! Help my baby!! Don't let me lose her! Help her!!!” I hear my mom screaming. Why is she here? How did she know I was here?

“Ma'am, we're going to do all we can, we just need you to step back and let us do our job,” I heard an unknown voice say over my mom's sobbing and screaming. I felt my body being lifted. It was like I was floating. I had no idea what was going on or where I was. I could feel myself slowly losing

consciousness. Everything became dark. Everything became silent.

“Oh my gosh, she's awake! My baby is alive!” my mom screams as she sees my eyes slowly open. Once I fully regain consciousness, I don't know where I am.

“...where am I? What's going on?”

“You're in a rehabilitation hospital. You're staying here until you're better,” my mom looked at me with teary eyes. “After you ran away from home you went to the old abandoned barn and overdosed on drugs. You're lucky Paige was there. She was the one that called. You weren't breathing. I was so scared I was going to lose you the same way I lost Tristan.” My mom broke down crying. I finally knew the truth. I finally knew what had happened to my brother. He had an addiction problem also. But he wasn't as lucky as I was. “I'm sorry I never told you. I didn't even want to put the thought of drugs into your head. Our town had just been so clean and perfect and I didn't want drugs to come in and screw things up again.”

“I understand,” I say quietly as I stare at my mom.

“Alright, visiting hours are done. We need to put her to bed. She has a long day ahead of her tomorrow and for the next few weeks,” the nurse said in a sweet voice. My mom just nods her head, and walks out. She doesn't say goodbye or anything. Just walked out. I knew she was upset. I guess now she knows I'm not perfect. I'm not who she thought I was.

So that is how I ended up here. Drug rehab. I have a long journey ahead of me, but I will be clean one day. It all starts with babysteps.