

Lachesism By Kaye Maranan

Disaster befalls everyone.

It hits during the most inopportune moments, and while the storm doesn't necessarily last, the aftermath leaves everything you once knew in ruins. The hardest part lies not in surviving the chaos, but learning how to live after it.

I am that disaster.

I've learned that it's much easier to let things fall apart, rather than trying to keep it intact. I've built castles out of colourful blocks for the sole purpose of knocking them down. I've found that the split second after the climax is the clearest of them all.

Scarlet and soft orange was painted on top of the melting blue that began to give way to the sooty night the day I fell from the sky and onto the grey stones below. My eyes were wide open as I took in what I had hoped to be my last sight. Even now, it still haunts my dreams in all its unsettling perfection. Beauty froze as my life hung in the balance.

And to think, it was all to get revenge.

It was the perfect poison for my sister. A glass of wine laced with guilt and suffering was to be swallowed by her, but in my frenzy, I had spilt it all over everyone I knew, soaking them to the bone. One by one, they left, unable to dry themselves off. Amy and I are the only ones who remained.

I have yet to see any rebirth from my ruination.

I am awake.

Not in the sense that most may think of, but in the sense that I *feel* everything. I have to thank my inability to be anything but normal.

Sleep is a lie, just like most things in my life (now, don't pity me; it's simply the truth). Amy says it's unhealthy and will just result in an early death. I laugh at her and pretend I don't know what she's talking about. That's how it works between us. We are simply two sides of the same coin.

Amy is smart, and I am not. She excels in school, and I've been expelled from five of them in the last three years. Amy is not lazy, while I cannot drag myself out of my bed for weeks on end. She is quiet, obedient, neat and agreeable. I am loud, dangerous, impulsive, and considered a hazard to everyone, including myself.

My sister is functional, and I'm just barely scraping by.

I blink twice, realizing that the pounding that echoes in my body is not the blood circulating through my veins but a headache that threatens to break my skull. The distorted colors that flash in front of my eyes are not coming from the warm glow of my lamp. Those are only my thoughts, whirling too fast for me to grab them. I laugh, finding the notion of Amy being much smarter than me ridiculous as I am filled to the brim with ideas that she could never even hope to dream of.

That being said, it doesn't take long for those sensations to become uncomfortable, trapped inside of my brain. Sometimes, I have the urge to bash my head open. Right now is one of those times. I can already hear Amy berating me for not just getting up to take my medications and gain a reprieve from the strange sensations. Frowning at that internal image, I crawl off my bed and stumble out my bedroom door, trying to get downstairs while minimizing the noise of my footsteps.

I reach the stairs and contemplate going into the kitchen to follow the directions that have been drilled into my head the moment I got out of the hospital. The lights begin to subside, although the thuds caged by my skull refuse to cease. I would take this agony over the numbness from my pills.

Instead of going into the kitchen, I put on my shoes and step outside. Locking the door behind me, I begin to run in time with the ache.

Cracks of light crawl up from the plunging onyx of the night by the time I come back.

Before I can pull out my keys, the front door opens and I am yanked in by an iron grip. Sometimes I forget that Amy is susceptible to panic attacks. The past hour must have not been pretty for her. After all, it is 4:17 in the morning. As she paces in the small hall in front of the door, her thin body shaking all the while, I feel a small twinge of guilt. That is, until she opens her mouth.

“Lucas, you are *so damn* selfish!” Amy does not shout, but her words hit me all the same. She stalks towards me, and I find that I am frozen in place.

I stare back as she pounds my sweaty chest. “Why are you hitting me?”

“The house alarm went off, and well- you know me, I’m a light sleeper. Do you really think I’m going to be able to calm down when you’re missing and didn’t even leave a note?” she chokes out, the words threatening to swallow her whole.

“Amy, stop. Calm down-” I am cut off.

“*Stop?!?*” Her voice reaches to extraordinary heights. “*You’re* the one that’s being reckless! If you keep doing this, I’m going to be forced to call Mum and Dad!”

I let out a small, humourless laugh that grates our ears. It’s an ugly noise, one that sounds tired of the world. “Go ahead. We both know that *they* aren’t going to do anything. When’s the last time they came home together?”

She gapes at my bitter words, and I take that as a sign to forge ahead and deal the final blows. “Face it, Amy, a broken child does nothing to benefit them. They aren’t going to dirty their hands over me, or *us* for that matter.”

Amy doesn’t try to stop me when I march upstairs and slam my door shut. My gut tells me that she flinched when she heard the banging. I can’t help but think that it sounds like a typical fight between a mother and her child. She didn’t need to care this much about me.

I remember a time when a simple ‘I hate you’ summarized all of our feelings for each other. Now it’s much more complicated. Amy isn’t the only one thinking that.

I hate myself too.

For the next week, I make it my duty to drive her insane.

There’s no reason, really. I just do what I want to do, and stopping me is next to impossible. A small part of me believes that maybe if I mess with her like we used to do, things will go back to the normal we once knew. Maybe if I do, it would somehow solve all my mistakes. Another part of me just calls for destruction, a reason to implode. It pounds in my blood, whispering sweet little nothings in my ear. There are people who just want the world to burn, and I have to say, the flames are calling to me.

Massive, intricate pranks were always more of Amy’s style. I don’t have any patience nor am I inspired to do anything creative, so I fall back onto the knowledge of all the things that I know easily set off my sister.

I mix up the books on her shelves, pulling them out from the alphabetical order and shoving them into random spaces. She doesn’t bother scolding me, but when she stays in her room for the entire

morning instead of making us breakfast and lunch, I know that she's getting riled up. I throw myself in front of our TV and drown myself in horror games, skipping both meals.

Amy only comes out to make dinner, speaking to me only to remind me to take my meds, and retreats just as fast as she came. I scarf it down, even if I had no appetite. My pills feel like they're stuck in my throat.

She has a lot more patience than I give her credit for. I leave dirty dishes in the sink, allow the garbage to pile up, and my chores in the house go undone, but she still does not complain. I hate how Amy acts as if she is stepping on eggshells around me. Being fragile is not my suit, and I don't need to be treated as if I am made of glass.

Messes are cleaned up without a word, and I am beginning to reach my wit's end. I can't help think that she would have surely won our prank wars if she had just killed me with kindness. For three straight days, the house alternates between a dumpster and a museum, all the while, it is as silent as a graveyard.

I decide to take it another step further.

Loud music blares through the walls unexpectedly at random periods of the day. There is no way she isn't terrified by this. Even I jump when I turn on my bluetooth speaker. After four days of the noise going off at different intervals, Amy confronts me.

Dark circles mar her pale skin and the white of her eyes are now red. Her blue irises flick around nervously. She is fidgety, the past few days having hit her hard. Amy's strawberry blonde hair is unkempt and strands go every which way. This is not my sister, but a mere shadow of her.

I fight the urge to vomit and somehow manage to put on airs of my previous cocky self.

"You've fallen quite a bit from your throne, *your highness*. Doesn't the queen need to look presentable at all times?" I scoff, feeling the seams of my heart rip all the while.

Amy looks like a frightened rabbit, and yet, she manages to square her jaw and look at straight into my eyes. “Lucas, you need to stop. We aren’t children anymore. This isn’t helping either of us.”

“See, I don’t care what happens to me. But, this is *definitely* bothering you, which is perfect,” I say, shrugging casually.

Her face is a portrait of frustration and sadness. “Why *me*? What did I do to you Lucas?”

“*You exist*,” I spit out. A fire spirals in my chest, coming up in the form of my vicious words that tear her apart. Amy crumples into herself, but I see no sign of the ravenous flames beginning to cease.

“You’re *little-miss-perfect* who could do no wrong. You’re our *stupid* parents’ favourite, as *neglectful* as they are. You can walk through the halls without looking like a *freak*, because you’re just *so* much better at lying to other people. You’re a *liar*, Amy! You lie to the world, putting up the porcelain mask that hides the crappy reality you live in. You lie to *me*, carrying all this baggage as if it’s nothing even though I’m so much stronger than you and it’s really just crushing you. You lie to *yourself*, saying that everything will be okay.”

“*Well it’s not going to be!!*”

With that, I am left empty. The fuel for the burning red had taken the form of all the frustration of the past few years, and now that it is all laid out, I am exhausted. Fat tears roll down Amy’s face as she stares at me in horror. The house was not physically damaged, but the air is tainted with the heaviness of our hearts.

She wipes away the streaks on her face, but more replace them. I can only look at her blankly as a knife twists deeper into my stomach. Regret becomes the sky, and I am Atlas, cursed to hold it up for as long as I exist on this plane. Numbness possesses my body and I know that with a single breath from Amy, I could easily crumple into a pile on the ground.

My sister inhales, and I feel my knees weaken.

“I can’t do this anymore. You’re being toxic Lucas, and this isn’t healthy for either of us. We need space from each other,” Amy says, voice barely above a whisper.

Blood drains from my face. This always happens. I always take things too far. This is my fault. I drove away the only thing I could cling onto, and-

“This is just temporary. Despite what I’ve said before, you are still my twin and I will be back. Just give me a couple days away to clear my head. It’s the best for the both of us.” She is now shaking and only now can I gauge the true amount of stress I have put her under.

I reach out an arm to pull her in a hug, but she shrinks away. An uncomfortable silence settles as I retract, ashamed of all my actions. Amy’s eyes sink to the floor and nothing I do can make her look up.

“Please Lucas. If you truly love me, I *need* this,” Amy begs.

No words surface.

We both know that there’s nothing that will change her mind anyways.

I find refuge in the washroom in the hall of the second floor. My sweatpants and socks do nothing to negate the coldness from the ceramic toilet tank, but the discomfort takes a backseat to my inner turmoil.

I’m so stupid.

How could I not see that I was driving her into a corner? Am I really that blind to have not seen how affected she truly was? Is this how heartless I am? Where did the old Lucas and Amy go? Did I just cut the last thread I had to my sister? Why is this hurting me so much? What do I now? How do I convince her to stay?

The water in the toilet is disturbed by my falling tears, creating perfect circles that expand outwards. Only after wiping them away do I notice the slight trembling of my legs and my arms that rest on my kneecaps. In one hand, Amy's pills rattle with my erratic movement.

If I can't convince her to stay, I'll force her to.

Soft shuffling comes from her room as I hear a zipper being moved. It sounds like Amy is almost done packing. Floorboards creak as she makes her way downstairs. Cabinets open and close in succession. She's probably looking for her meds.

"Lucas!" Amy's voice drifts up in the echoey house. I don't respond and wait for her to come closer. "I can't find my prescription bottle. Do you know where it is? I haven't moved it or anything."

"Come upstairs!" I call out, voice cracking at the end.

She picks up on it. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." My heart begins to beat faster in anticipation.

Her footsteps get louder and louder, and I find myself being unable to draw in any air. "You're not in your room," Amy says, closer now.

"Come to the wash-" The words die in my throat when I see her stop in front of me, hand resting on the door frame. We stare at each other, both frozen in place. Her eyes shift down and zero in on her open pill bottle in my hand.

"What are you doing?" she asks carefully, taking a cautious step forward.

I tilt container, bringing her meds closer to the water below. "Stop moving," I order.

Amy freezes, hearing the steel in my voice. "Lucas, I *need* those."

"And I need you to stay," I say, not moving.

"I will! Just please," she begs, "You can't do this!"

"Try me," I bluff, pretending to tilt them all in the toilet.

But, before I could pull back, Amy lunges towards me. Her hand becomes a tight bracelet around my wrist as she tries to force me away. Startled, I drop the entire container into the toilet, effectively ruining her pills. In desperation, her other hand dives into the water, trying to salvage anything she could.

She manages to fish the bottle out of the toilet, collecting a clump of soggy pills. Amy flings my wrist away from her, almost as if she had been burned. She pushes me backward, and I stumble into the wall behind me. Her face is taken over with intense loathing.

“How could you Lucas?! You’re a monster!!” Amy hisses, moisture collecting at the edges of her eyes.

“I-I didn’t mean to drop it in! You scared me!” I protest, stuttering weakly.

Her jaw tightens. “What do you think you’ve been doing to me this entire time? I’ve tried my best to be patient with you, but this isn’t fair anymore. I’m done.”

She rushes out the door like a whirlwind, and I stay against the wall, the only solid thing I could hold onto without being blown away. I sink to the floor, dazed.

I did it again.

Somehow, I manage to push myself up and stumble into the hall. This is my last ditch effort to fix this, for real this time. An apology won’t do much, but I’m just praying it will be enough for Amy to believe that there is a chance to set things right between us. I almost fall down the stairs-- still I keep going.

“Amy!” I yell. “I’m sorry! I’m so stupid, please! I’m sorry!” I repeat my words over and over like a mantra for every step I make.

She doesn’t respond, but I don’t expect her to anyways.

I stagger into the kitchen and pause, eyes blown wide open. Amy is dumping my Lamictal and lithium pills in the overflowing trash can.

Ice shoots through my veins.

No. No. No. No.

“NO!” I yell. “Amy, do you have *any* idea what you’re doing?!!”

She jumps and turns around to look at me. “I’m doing what *you* did to *me*.”

I stalk over to her, and grab her shoulders. “It’s *not* the same for both us!! I’m *different* from you! I *need* those!!”

Amy wrenches her body away from me. “Don’t *touch* me!” She glares at me with her arms around her. “I need my Xanax too!! You aren’t special at all. We’re *both* messed up Lucas!”

“You don’t get it, Amy! I can’t-”

She bitterly laughs. “That *right*. You could never be the brother I could rely on. Instead of becoming allies, you decided to declare war. You started it all, and *now* you have to suffer the consequences Lucas. Here is where we are tormented together.”

Snip. The last thread between Amy and I is cut.

Our connection has been completely destroyed. There is no hope in recovering my pills either. They all sit in a disgusting pool of spoiled milk and rotten tomatoes. I feel as though my heart sits in that mess too.

“*Goodbye*,” she says coldly, brushing past me.

I hear the front door open and close, but still I stand there, unable to do anything but stew in my shock.

Dread burrows its way into my stomach and makes itself home.

Friedrich Nietzsche once said, *‘To live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering.’*

I have yet to find the meaning he talked about.

How does one find something within the unfortunate reality I am trapped in? It must take a genius to solve this mystery. There's probably some vegan who has a control of their life out there. Maybe they know the answer. I bet Amy the smarty-pants is in on this joke. I could just ask her-

Oh right.

She's gone.

Pangs of pain stab me in the head and my stomach as I roll over to bury my head into my pillow. I try to fight off the wracking sobs that threaten to choke me, but it washes over. Even my body isn't putting up with me anymore. It feels like it's trying to expel my consciousness from the confines of my skeleton.

After Amy left, the only thing I managed to bring myself to do is trudging up stairs, which felt like they went on for an eternity, and collapsing on my messy bed. Exhaustion overtook me, and I easily fell into a dreamless sleep.

I have no idea what day it is, or how long I've been stuck under my covers, unable to muster up the energy to get up. Even lying down I am dizzy and feel faint. The contents of my stomach threatens to come up, even though I've only had the water I could reach from my bed. The uncomfortable sensation of tingling stays trapped underneath my skin, almost like an itch I can't scratch. I am hot underneath my covers, but freezing when they're off. In the end, I settle for simply not moving, and stew in my reeking clothes and pools of sweat.

Sleep comes and goes. The difference between reality and my dreams blurs. Sometimes I wake up wondering if I even fell asleep.

During my brief moments of clarity through my persisting symptoms, I write Amy a mental apology.

Dear Amy, you're my twin. I need you please- no wait

Dear Amy, I'm such a jerk. Things haven't been the same since I tried to- not that either. She wouldn't appreciate that.

Dear Amy, you don't deserve any of this. Maybe it's better if I just die. You would like that wouldn't you? It'd be much easier for everyone else I guess. You always did complain about you hated having a twin.

Dear Amy, I love you so much, even if I was a crappy brother. Take care of yourself. I bet mum and dad will finally come home. Or maybe they won't.

Dear Amy-

Dear Amy, I'm sorry.

A figure darts in front of the road.

This is just a dream.

Amy is waving her hands, calling to me. "Lucas! Lucas, stop!"

My eyes are half-closed and my vision is blurry.

This is just a dream.

I'm still up in my room. She wouldn't have come back after what I did to her. It doesn't matter what I do here, right? At least I can talk to Amy in this space. Dream reality is much better than real reality. I step on the brakes, lurching me forward.

What a realistic dream.

She walks over to the driver's door. I roll down the window. "You don't look okay." Amy is trembling. Even in my mind, my sister is scared of me.

I feel my face stretch into a lazy smile, even though I don't feel in control at all. *"You shouldn't be saying that Amy. Look at yourself. You're shaking."* My mouth opens, and I hear my voice, but that isn't me. That is just dream me. There's something comforting in just letting someone else control me. Maybe they know what they're doing.

"That's withdrawal from my Xanax, you idiot. This is why I freaked out when my pills fell into the toilet," she grumbles, less angry than she was before and more annoyed. Dream Amy is much nicer than the real Amy. So is this Lucas.

"Ha..." I slur, *"Look at me! I'm perfectly fine. Driving is a piece of cake. I didn't run you over at all. You think you could run me over Amy? I need someone else to do it for me. You've always been bad at driving."*

Amy sighs.

"Move over Lucas. I'm going to drive us to the pharmacy. We need to go get new pills, or we're just going to completely fall apart at the seams. You can't drive like this, but I don't trust you on your own."

Maybe Dream Amy isn't as nice as I thought. *"You're acting like my Amy. That's not fair,"* I grumble, letting my head rest against the steering wheel.

She reaches over to shift the car into park. *"I **am** your sister. Just listen to me and move over already. We need to get you back on your meds before this gets worse."*

"Leave me alone Amy!" I growl, pulling the door open. Anger courses through me.

This is just a dream.

There are no consequences for what happens in something that isn't real.

"You're a wreck Lucas. Just listen to me for once," Amy says with resignation.

*"Go. **Away!**"* I shove her to the ground. She feels oddly solid. I chalk it up to me simply shoving a pillow on the ground. This isn't her anyways.

The red-hot poker of anger is submerged in water. I am too tired to do anything else anymore. When I do not see this Amy crying, I turn away and hobble inside. My sister would be crying. Dream Amy is too brave to do that. Their shocked faces look too similar though.

I don't expect either of them to come back ever again.

Amy picks herself off of the ground and dusts herself off. Her tailbone is sore and she has several scratches on her legs from the rocky driveway, but she is fairly unscathed. Lucas' push is weak. If he was at full strength, that shove would have made her bruise.

Her brother is more gone than she thought he would be. Stopping Lamictal and Lithium cold-turkey is wrecking him, not to mention the signs of the fever he might have. As fate would have it, her back up pills lasted up until yesterday, which forced her to return today to get them all refilled.

Yet again, she is responsible for Lucas.

Amy frowns. She doesn't want to leave him, but gets in the car anyways. He isn't going to listen to her in that delirious state.

She just hopes that she's fast enough to save him.

Sometimes, I don't even realize when I fall asleep.

Being awake all the time gets tiring I suppose. When I wake up, I find myself more lucid than I have been for however long I've been out. I am strong enough to pull myself off the stairs and shuffle into the kitchen. The headache is now just a dull throbbing in my skull, and the nausea and fatigue has

subsided to the point where standing up is no longer a battle in itself. I take two capsules of Tylenol, downing it with a cold glass of water that quenches my thirst.

I am coherent enough to think about my next move.

I cannot stay here. My presence only brings people around me grief. Amy has suffered enough at my hand. I attack her even in my sleep. That is not what siblings do. This is beyond sibling rivalry. I really am a danger to those around me.

Disaster truly does befall everyone.

And just like every hurricane before me, it is time to move on. They never stay still, and neither will I. I will just be far enough to not harm the ones I love. Maybe if I'm far enough, they will find it beautiful. This time, I refuse to bring them down with me.

I have the desire to feel the clarity of destruction, so that when all has been destroyed, we can plant the roots of another beginning into fresh soil.

Goodbye Amy.

Amy pulls into the driveway, and just about manages to make the car door fall off as she slams it shut. She probably looks crazed as she runs to their door, but she doesn't care. Lucas could have seriously injured himself, could have tried to jump off the roof again, could have- *could have actually died while she was gone.*

Her heartbeat continues to race as she puts her hand on the door knob. She turns it slowly, and feels her stomach plummet when it opens. He didn't lock the door. Lucas wasn't awake enough. Amy curses herself. All she could do is hope that he's still safe.

She closes the door behind her and plods into the kitchen. A half empty glass of water is on the counter along with a shut bottle of Tylenol. That meant Lucas should be conscious enough to hear her.

“*Lucas?! Lucas, where are you?*” she calls loudly.

No response.

Dread possesses her body as she sprints upstairs, frantically searching every room in the house.

Empty. Empty. Empty.

She stops at his room. His bed is a mess and clothes are scattered everywhere on the ground. The blinds are shut and it smells like sweat and cologne, the type Lucas always wore. Amy walks in, hoping to see his strawberry-blond hair peeking up from underneath his blankets.

Nothing.

Amy grabs his favourite sweater of his from the ground and clutches it to her chest, taking shallow breaths. The fabric darkens with every tear that falls on it. He is the only person she has left in her family. Lucas was- *is* home. And while they didn’t always get along, she would always, *always* love her twin.

She closes her eyes and makes a vow.

“I’m going to find you Lucas, and I’m going to bring you back.”

Addendum : *Lucas has Bipolar and Amy has OCD/Anxiety. Lachesism means “n. the desire to be struck by disaster—to survive a plane crash, to lose everything in a fire, to plunge over a waterfall—which would put a kink in the smooth arc of your life, and forge it into something hardened and flexible and sharp, not just a stiff prefabricated beam that barely covers the gap between one end of your life and the other.”*