

Short Story: Editing Sample

Tap. The mouth of the stream formed halfway up the window. The bursting sunlight slowly forfeited its living room space to the rolling clouds; dancing in its beam, unsettled specks drew their cloaks.

Tap. Tap. Melissa lifted her head; a red half-circle lingered on her arm. She watched the last band of light retreat up through the clear pane, sucked out by the passing fall wind. She pushed loose brown locks behind her ears and pressed the rising tension out of her temples. A faint whistling crept by the front door, the wooden frame resisting the cold that pressed inward.

Tap. Tap. Tap. She stood and tiptoed to the window. The sky was a gray dam; its overflowing spray fell around the house. She tightened in on herself. Her fingers bundled the white edges of her camisole, hiding under sheer sleeves colored like the clouds. Contrasting her pale skin, ebony pants stretched to her calves. The sky's belly rumbled.

"Melissa?" Called a sing-song voice.

She stared through the square as silver streaked across the sky. She pulled the curtain and retreated.

"Melissa?" Said the voice.

Fluorescent light suddenly filled the space. Melissa noticed the claps against the wood floor.

"Melissa!" Boomed a tall, slender man behind her.

"What?" She snapped.

"Your mother is trying to talk to you."

She blew out through her nose and tightened her arms across her stomach. Behind her father stood a blonde-haired woman, the beginnings of wrinkles forming at the corners of her mouth. An ivory button-up fit snugly above freshly pressed navy pants. A snake coiled around a cross was sown onto one shoulder. Melissa's father wore a similar uniform except a lanyard hung from his neck, displaying his credentials as an emergency room doctor. . . .

Commented [EK1]: Green highlights indicate sections that were well-written, compelling, or need no revision at present.

Commented [EK2]: I like the mood evoked by these descriptions on page 1.

Commented [EK3]: Specks of...?

Commented [EK4]: I inserted strikethroughs in a few places where I felt the details to be non-essential.

Commented [EK5]: Is there a different way you could describe without using the word "contrasting"? I feel like that particular word draws my attention away from the narrator and towards the Author's presence.

Also, I don't need to know everything she is wearing. Just the camisole might be enough.

Commented [EK6]: Nice pacing in this section of dialogue.

Commented [EK7]: Square of windowpane?

Commented [EK8]: "Snow boots clapped against the wood floor."
No need to describe via the protagonist's perceptions (e.g. She noticed; she saw; she heard)

Commented [EK9]: Suggestion for smoothness:
"Sewn into the left shoulder of her ivory button-up blouse was a snake coiled around a cross. Melissa's father wore that uniform, too—ivory shirt and pressed navy pants—and a lanyard hung from his neck. His nametag read, "..."