

“Dungeons & Dragons – A Tragedy”

Sarah Bowden  
sarahkatherine.bowden@gmail.com  
© 2014

*(Olivia sits in her room, on the phone.)*

OLIVIA

No, it's fine. It's fine! I'll sneak away before—

*(Graham enters at the door, holding a notebook.)*

I can have it both ways, the Reverend doesn't know what I do after lights out.

*(Graham clears his throat, looks less than happy.)*

Uh, Stace, I gotta go. Yeah, uh, you, too.

*(She hangs up.)*

GRAHAM

You want to explain this to me?

OLIVIA

Explain what?

GRAHAM

First off, what this is doing in my house.

OLIVIA

It's my history notebook.

GRAHAM

Then would you care to explain February fourth's notes to me?

OLIVIA

That's just a doodle.

GRAHAM

Of a level five ogre—yes, I can read that on the page. I also see he's got strength and invisibility points in the hundreds, and he's amassed an incredible stockpile of mead over the last twenty-four days. But that's not what I'm asking.

OLIVIA

Dad.

GRAHAM

You know how I feel about this game. You said you'd never play again.

OLIVIA

I'm not playing D&D, I'm just—

GRAHAM

What, watching? Is that what you were talking to Stacy about a second ago?

OLIVIA

Okay, so maybe I was in a pick-up game the other night.

GRAHAM

Olivia, you know how small this town is! Everything gets back to the pulpit.

OLIVIA

Well, I wasn't trying to jeopardize your job, Dad! I just wanted to have some fun.

GRAHAM

And you couldn't do that at youth group tonight?

OLIVIA

Uck. All anyone in youth group plays is euchre.

GRAHAM

Everything you do reflects back on your folks, sweetie. And that game is known to breed Satanic worship and homosexuality.

OLIVIA

Stace isn't into either of those things!

GRAHAM

It doesn't matter what anyone is into; you playing this game is just as good as broadcasting a signal that someone in this house, even the town preacher, isn't right within themselves. Honey, it's not safe to air our dirty laundry in public.

OLIVIA

Geez! I want to play in Stace's basement tonight, it's not World War III breaking out!

GRAHAM

Well, I'd tell you you're forbidden from going, but you'd just climb out your window the second I leave the room. I could make you promise not to disobey me, but what good has that done so far?

OLIVIA

You're being—

GRAHAM

So I want you to promise you'll think about your family instead. Me, your mom, your brother and sister. And maybe you'll choose to do right by us, all on your own.

OLIVIA

Dad? Do people really talk about our family? At church?

GRAHAM

These crows' feet aren't just for show, kiddo.

OLIVIA

Then—I won't go. I won't go tonight.

GRAHAM

I try to put my family first, Liv. It's all I know and it's worked out pretty good so far.

OLIVIA

I'll try harder to do that. I promise.

GRAHAM

Good. Just one more thing—to seal the covenant, so to speak.

*(He produces another notebook, a smaller one.)*

OLIVIA

Where did you get that?

GRAHAM

You didn't care where I got the other one.

OLIVIA

Because it was lying on the kitchen table; this one wasn't!

GRAHAM

I admit, you're good at keeping your dirty laundry shut up—better than most. But our house isn't a fortress, and your mother wouldn't have to scrounge too hard to find this.

OLIVIA

Did you—did you look inside? See what I drew?

GRAHAM

Um, there was a lot more ... detail than I was expecting. But Stacy's a very beautiful girl. It shows how much you care about her. It shows.

OLIVIA

Oh, God.

*(He hands the book back to Olivia.)*

GRAHAM

You—uh, you'll just want to keep that under wraps, understand? For the good of the family.

*(He speaks purposefully but avoids her eyes.)*

That's what I do and ... it's worked out pretty well so far. Understand?

OLIVIA

... Yeah, Dad. Okay.

*(He exits. She dials her phone.)*

Stace? Yeah, sorry. Um, I can't make it tonight. No, you were right. I can't have it both ways.

*(She hangs up. Lights fade on Olivia, alone with her thoughts.)*