The Sister Stealer

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

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Cover Page Footnote
I was the last and most anticipated family member to meet him. Of course, they had only known each other since the end of August. I remember the day that she came to do her laundry at the house, the first day I heard her mention him.

"So, this guy at work invited me to the Montrose Fair."
"You're goin' on a date? Do you know him?"
"Yeah, we've talked before. He's cool."

That's all that was said about Ryan until we were packing my car for my trip back to school.

"I think I am going to have a boyfriend soon."
"What? Who? Out of the Blue?"
"No, Lis. You remember that guy Ryan...I went to the fair with him."
"Really. That was quick."
"Yeah, it's weird. He's so easy to talk to."
"Shell, you know this means I need to meet him."
"Yeah, Yeah."

It never happened. I didn't get the chance to meet him before I went back to college. I really didn't suspect much. She's had her share of boyfriends. Some serious, some not. So, when she called me one day and said, "I'm gonna marry him," I thought she was kidding. But she wasn't. One conversation after another brought about the same dialogue.

"I know it, Lis, he's the one."
"Shell, how do you know? Do you really know him? I haven't met him yet."

Time and time again, I questioned her about this stranger. I didn't know him. I hadn't met him. I hadn't even talked to him. I didn't know what kind of family he is from? I only knew his name. That bothered the piss out of me.

My mom finally called one day. "Lisa, honey, you need to come home and meet Ryan. He and Shell are pretty serious. Your dad and I have met him. We like him, Lis. We think that you will
like him. He fits in with the family. He just fits in."

Of course I wanted to meet him. My mom saying that "he and Shell are serious," is synonymous to "Lisa, we need your approval before we can go any farther with this." I made plans to go home the following weekend.

He wasn't at all what I expected. Shorter than I had predicted, more love handles than I had anticipated, more talkative than I wanted. I felt like I was interviewing him. I felt like I was scrutinizing him. I felt like breaths were being held in until I said the words, "I like him."


I met him. I gave my sister, my other half, my approval. I lied. Don't get me wrong. I like the kid. If he were friends with my sister and I met him, it would be cool. We'd be cool. If her were her boyfriend, a not-so-serious one, we would be cool. But he's not just a friend or a not-so-serious boyfriend.

He called me yesterday. He told me a secret. This is the first secret I have ever had to truthfully keep from my sister, for her own good. On February 23, he will become her fiancé if all goes as planned. That doesn't make me like him any more. Yet, it doesn't make me like him any less.

He asked me if it was okay to marry her. He hasn't asked my dad yet. The way he talked about her. The way he looks at her. This one is not going to hurt her. He actually does love her. That makes me like him a little more.

Not today, not tomorrow, but someday, soon, I will learn to share her.