

The (Golden) Opportunity

by Vincent P. Désilets

Elsa had found something that would mean she'd never be poor again—but there was a catch. She had to sacrifice something. And that something was her little sister.

Pros and Cons—quick!

Pro: No need to worry about money anymore.

Con: Sister dead. Guilt inevitable.

Pro: Sister already miserable anyway—no parents, broke, live in a shitty neighborhood.

If you're looking for the greater good, an average of happiness of all involved, wouldn't it be wise to make one happy instead of two miserable? Who was she asking?

All in favor, raise your hands.

Brain: It makes sense. Better provide for one than let two starve to death.

Body: I'm starving, I'm cold, I'm itching from the bed bugs—so what do you think?

Heart: I love her.

Soul: We're all just energy. She'll still be there, floating around, vibrating all over the place.

Conscience: Come on...

She looked at the little golden brooch. The crystal on it was foggy. Maybe there was already someone in there.

The brooch had said this to her, word for word, telepathically, when she picked it up from the dew-covered grass: "Wear me and all the money in the world will come to you. But I need your sister's soul."

That it knew she had a sister didn't surprise her. It was talking, after all.

She squeezed it in her hand.

When she got home, the door fell off.

Her sister burst out laughing. She was sitting on the floor of the living room between two puddles of rainwater from which rats came to drink.

Elsa smiled at her. What a spirit! What good, light-hearted, heart-warming, comforting company her sister made!

She threw the brooch in the garbage and turned on the burner because it was dandelion soup time, her sister's favorite.

As she prepared the flowers, a burn grew in her chest, as if someone had lit a fire between her two lungs. She grimaced in pain. It grew hotter, harsher.

She held herself on the counter, turned to ask her sister to fetch some water. Words never left her mouth.

Her sister stood next to the garbage can with the brooch in her hands. She shrugged, like what did you expect me to do? Not be rich?

The last thing Elsa experienced in the living realm was her brain, body, and soul calling her an idiot.