

Have you ever heard of sense memory?

I hadn't until one day during one of my acting classes in college. I was working through a particular scene where my character had to say goodbye to her parents, knowing she would never return. But I just couldn't quite seem to get it right. So, my director had pulled me aside, telling me, "Maggie, I want you to remember a childhood event—something sad." But he didn't want me just to dwell on the actual memory, but of the sights and sounds around me at the time.

He gave me about fifteen minutes to become sufficiently morose—something I thought was a ridiculously short amount of time for. But he was the expert, so I gave it a try.

And strangely enough, I found out it wasn't so hard a task. I had the perfect memory. The death of my grandmother when I was eight years old—how we had gotten the call while my mom was cooking breakfast—and the devastation I felt at the news. But that wasn't what he wanted me to remember, so I focused on more—the smell of bacon burning on the stove, the smoke detector shrieking, the rain hitting the windows, the wailing of my mother. I took that—all of it—and pulled those memories to the front of my consciousness then recited my part.

I got an "A" that day.

Well, today is another "A" memory.

I'm watching him speak, but I haven't really heard anything he's said—not since he told me about Lisa. In fact, I haven't quite wrapped my mind around what he's actually saying to me. All I can think is, it sure is cold today, and the cars rushing by have come *this* close to throwing slush on my new boots.

My eyes roam over his face and I realize he hasn't shaved today. He's always so clean cut, so it's a bit surprising. He also needs a haircut. It's so long the wind is picking it up and blowing it all over his head.

I'm tempted to laugh, but I don't, because I finally look into his eyes. They're red and bleary, almost like he's been crying. But, again, maybe it's just the wind and cold.

Because why would he be crying. I should be.

He's leaving me for my sister.