

# MRS. FROUGH'S BISCUITS

SHORT STORY BY ISHA JAISHIVA

I like Mrs. Frough. I like Mrs. Frough a lot. And I like Mrs. Frough's biscuits. *Mrs. Frough's* biscuits. Her brittle, buttery biscuits. Biscuits as brittle as her name and as brittle as her bones. Her home lingers with the scent of her biscuits. That sweet, apple-yness saunters from her oven; a warmth nostalgic of Mother. Déjà Vu, so close, yet so far.

"Mrs. Frough?"

"Child, woul' you like some biscuits?"

"But—"

"Don't fret! Have some for 'ye hunger."

She delicately handed me a biscuit from the oven rack, her pupils dilating with paranoia and anticipation.

*Crunch!*

"Brittle."

"You like that brittle, Child?"

"These biscuits are warm."

"The sweetness like your mother, too, ain't it? 'Ye like 'em? I made for 'ye."

"..."

"Mother?"

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I *still* like Mrs. Frough. I *still* like Mrs. Frough a lot. But Mrs. Frough's biscuits. *Mrs. Frough's* biscuits. Her *brittle* biscuits. Biscuits as *brittle* as her name and as *brittle* as her bones.

That sweet, apple-yness saunters from her oven; that warmth nostalgic of Mother. Déjà Vu, *closer* but still so far.

“Child.”

“Yes, Mrs. Frough?”

“How are ‘ye bone? ‘Ye’re strong?”

“Mhn.”

Mrs. Frough asked me questions about my body. About my bones; *every* day. Taking my arm with her wrinkly hands, she asks,

“Have ‘ye been eating well, Child? I’ll make more biscuits for ye’.”

“No.”

“No?”

“No—”

“Child, ‘ye mustn’t say so to me.”

“But—”

“Have some more biscuits for ‘ye Mrs. Frough.”

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She drops my hand like of a corpse and walks back to the oven of her kitchenette. My feet tremble under her eerie table; my fingers numb beyond my bones. I don’t know what it was, but I wanted to *run*. I don’t know why

The room, titled. The air, thick and foggy with an almost sickening sweetness. The walls tighten and my conscious cuffs my drowsed face. The longer I palpitated, the more ghostly the silence became. She walks closer to me; my blood thins. The apple-yness saunters me with *horror*, not nostalgia.

“The apples were ‘ye little over-ripen. No worry for ‘ye apples aren’t rotten. I slaughtered the apples before collapsing of ‘ye treeow.”

*Slaughtered.*

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Run. I wanted to run. Who was I to like Mrs. Frough. I cracked my head to the door like a caricature doll, but her presence lurked; her voice, *derangingly* soft. She wasn't the warmth I once saw of her as. Her rusk hands clamped my shoulder with detachment.

“But Child, ‘ye forgot me biscuits—warm and brittle for you.”

“No. I don’t want, Mrs. Frough. Now let me go.”

“You can go, but ‘ye mustn’t be so—”

I shut the door with adrenaline. Every step I took on the stairs made the creaky flooring moan. The scent of the air was rather heavy, lacerating the back of my throat. I looked to the left, where I thought it was the decaying apples burning my nostrils with a distinctive pungentness, but it was far too putrescent to be *apples*. I walked closer, the tainted air surrounding me. It was nostalgic of Mother; Déjà Vu, too close to be far.

“Mother..?”