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STARGIRL

Introduction

When you told us that we were going to be writing a creative essay I was very excited because I have a knack for creative writing. I also knew what I was going to write about when you mentioned this so-called creative essay. But that all changed when you told us the first draft was due on May first and my mind went straight to Jory. Ever since that day, I have been pondering over and over on how I was going to write this essay or more specifically, *how* do I write this essay. It has been a rough month to say the least; I've cried, tried to gather up past memories, looked at her drawings, read some of her old books she wrote, and have come to the conclusion that I've been broken ever since I found out she moved on. Without realizing how truly broken I was. But now, I am pleased I got the opportunity to finally write about my beloved Jory. She has been haunting my pent up guilt and shame, driving me to some dark places. I shared my thoughts and feelings to a close companion and their advice was to use this paper as a burial. To use this paper as a way of letting her go and be truly free. Knowing Jory, she would not want me to wallow in her goodbye, so this burial will allow me to be free as well. I know this was supposed to be an essay, but this is an eulogy, my eulogy. Because she deserves it.

Prologue

I love my father as the stars- he's a bright shining example and a happy twinkling in my heart ~Terri Guillemets

When I was a little girl, my father told me many immaculate bedtime stories of far away kingdoms, mighty wars between the forces of good and evil, and secret, after dark car races he would attend. But the ones that always reminisced within me, were the stories about a trip to a cabin in the woods. My father never told the same story twice, so there were many versions of this specific epic. Even with multiple stories, I was always fascinated with them. It was as if I was one of the children with a golden ticket, and he was Willy Wonka, feeding the sweet tooth of my imagination. Enticing me with Hershey's, fluffy cotton candy, blue raspberry icees, Hostess cupcakes, hearts, stars, horseshoes, clovers, and blue moons, hourglasses, rainbows, and tasty red balloons. Because yes, they're magically delicious. While double crossing me with dark chocolate, devil fruit cake, carrot cake, breaded donuts without the glaze, hot tamales, and worst of all, licorice. The audacity, how DARE he!

I would fantasize in awe of the cabin and what lured in and around. The woods where the wild things go; where the Gremlins, Freddy Krueger, Aubrey II, and where the lions and tigers and bears are. These are the thoughts that kept me up in the middle of the night. Tinkerbell would come to me, telling me that all I need is a little faith, trust, and pixie dust. She would sweep me out of bed to a place I admire and thought of so much, it was an array of one part frightening, and another, fascinating.

Interlude: Part One

We meet the people we're supposed to when the time is just right - Alyson Noel

When I entered sixth grade, I asked my father if we could go to the cabin we share once upon a time. He told me if I got good grades we will go. With a nod in agreement, followed by a wide spread grin, I accepted his challenge. My whole six grade year was well spent on reading and studying. With a goal in hand tagged along with newly found ambition, there was no way in hell I was going to give up this opportunity to see my euphoria. I'm not throwing away my shot.

A week after school gets out, I received the report card in the mail and hand the envelope to my father. He rips it open and set it on the table revealing my grades. It was printed in A's along with "a pleasure to have in class." My eyes shot up to meet his, beaming in the glory of hard work and dedication. He looked back at me, sighed, and smiled. "Alright, we leave Friday."

Friday morning, my father and I packed for a week long stay at the cabin. We loaded the GMC *Jimbo* and were on our way. It was an exhausting three hours of rushing out from the cities to the countryside. According to my father, I spent last thirty minutes knocked out cold in the passenger seat, leaving him to entertain himself for the rest of the ride.

I feel the truck rumble into a stop, the gear shifts into park notioning me to wake up. As the light saturates my sleepy eyes, I notice the cabin stands in front of us. I immediately see four walls that make up the front of the cabin forming a stretched out W. The panels are made of rustic varnish wood and each wall collects six window in a three by two. Crystal ball-like, lights sat on top of black hangers above the first pair of windows. The varnished wood extended itself outward forming a deck that stretching from one end of the cabin to the other. We both get out of the car, gather our belongings, and shuffled in.

~ Ten mins later ~ <((_____(()

With the loft being mine for the taking. My clothes and belonging now sorted in their designated areas. I sit on my bed, pooped and dazed as NASCAR insulates the cool noon air. *It's time to explore.* Kicking myself out of bed, down the spiral stairs, I slide my shoes on and head out in search for adventure. I walk along a path for a while before noticing a supposed bike trail with the entrance blocked by a fallen limb. I tilt my head in the manner of a confused dog. Interesting. And before I knew it, my body climbs over the limb and onto the other side. My feet trace along the faded bike trail, moving deeper into the thicket. As time prolongs for what seems like ages I finally walk upon an abandoned cabin. I catch myself blinking in disbelief. We had to be in the middle of the woods by now, and to think there would be an anchor of land with nothing but an old, rickety house and a willow hunched over it protectively. *Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go huh?* I snickering to myself. As the wind trickles in, I can hear a faint tune, a muffled mezzo piano. Surely it cannot be from *this* house I exacerbate. A breeze runs through the air again, whisking leaves from the ground, exerting me forward towards the house. In the gentle breeze I hear a soft voice

tinkering, *just a little faith, and trust. She will give you the pixie dust.* She? When I blink back into reality, I come to find myself standing right in front of the door.

Scanning the dark oak door, I notice it is covered in burnt marks exposing the tissues and age. I press my ear against it and sure enough, there is a piano in there, and someone is in there, or so Tinkerbell says. *Twenty seconds of insane courage* I breathe in. I clenched the rusty brass knob, spun it clockwise, and pulled. I stare into the open abyss. The walls are hoarded in homemade paintings resembling a tattooed sleeve, no surface untouched, brimming with color. A hidden story in each drawing. A masterpiece. My eyes wander aimlessly through out the room as the piano playing echos in the background. My feet abandon the front entrance to approach an archway the melody is seeping out of. I stop in the archway to view another open room with dry birch wood flooring that has been worn thin, as if time had not been kind to it. The walls were a papery white. The wall opposite of me had one open window letting the cool afternoon breeze circulate around the room. The window swallowed the whole upper wall, leaving two feet between itself and the floor. Dark oak trim lined the window, walls, and archway. Transparent lavender curtains danced in spirit to the harmony. In the middle of the room sat a worn out grand piano, decorated in scratches and indentations. The lid was open, megaphoning the song. And finally, in front of the piano was the said girl. She was sitting on the stool, swaying back and forth, humming and releasing a few words here and there.

Part Two

Any day spent with you is my favorite day. So, today is my new favorite day. - Winnie The Pooh

If it was an awe in need, it was an awe well received. Why is she in such a dilapidated place I wondered. I lean onto the archway causing the floor under me to shift and creek. My body froze with fright. I turned my head to her, distinguishing whether she heard my poor attempt to analyze the situation. And sure enough, she did. Her once swaying body was now still and the only sound you could hear was the slightest dissonance of wind. She quickly stood up and spun around in a self defense stance. Now surprised, I grab the wall and press into the archway hoping desperately to disintegrate. The room is now completely silent, a little too quiet for comfort. We stand there, eyes locked on each other for what seems like an hour. She finally blinks. I win. She relaxes her arms back to her side and straightens up with a smile glued across her face. I blink still startled and unsure, but I release my grasp on the wall. She steps on the stool and does an allegro off of it towards me. When her feet land on the floor she jogs to me, grabs my hands, and raises them to chest level looking me in the eyes, "Play a song for me!" She chimes.

Without hesitation she starts briskly walking to the piano with a skip in her step, pulling me with her. We reach the piano and I sit down on the stool and look up at her questionably. Her glass emerald eyes glimmer back at me in suspense. I sigh, rest my hands upon the keys and proceed to play Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star. She catches on immediately causing her to step back laughing. She spins around before starting to sing along to the piano. Seeing how joyous her response is sprouts a smile across my face. As the song comes to an end, she settles back down and stands still right next to me. "It's a happy piano isn't it? I came upon this beauty when I got lost in the woods" she says, now looking all around the room

smiling. She refocuses her attention to me and sits next to me on the stool, "I'm Jory, and this is my super secret base. Well, I mean, I thought it was a secret, I guess it's not anymore. What's your name?"

"Sydney, my name is Sydney."

"Well Sydney, I have so much to show you." Jory beamed, grabbing my hand tightly now standing up looking back at me, "Lets go!"

Jory and I run through the woods to a clearing. There was a hill in front of us and a field full of lavender surrounding it, basking in the afternoon sun. My eyes widen in amaze. Jory runs out into the field and turns back to me smiling ear to ear. She closed her eyes and stretches her arms out joining the flowers in their light gathering. The sun reflected against her blonde hair. Back at the house, her hair waterfalled down to the floor, but now, it flowed into the soft summer breeze. I walk over to her by the wave of her motioning hand. "Beautiful isn't it. Lavender is my favorite flower, color and all."

Jory run to the hill and I follow after her. When we get to the top we lay down laughing and watching the clouds move by and imagine what they look like. She held my hand and squeezed it. Her hand was baby smooth. "I'm so glad you found me, I've been so lonely lately." She says is a soft calm tone. "This probably has to be the best day in a very long time." I turn to look at her but she's not looking back. In fact, she's not looking at anything, her eyes are close. A struggling smile frames her mouth with a tear in mid-stream. This causes me to twitch and turn my head up back to the clouds. Jory has fair, easy, breezy skin with soft freckles sprinkled on her nose that stretch under her eyes. Her eyebrows are like two Yellow Woolly Bear caterpillars. She was like a princess my father once told me about in a kingdom, or in this case, a far away cabin. If I didn't know any better, I would have thought she was Rapunzel in the making. But for me, she reminded me of a sunflower, happiest when looking at the sun.

Part Three

*And in that moment I swore that nothing in this universe could be so heavy as the absence of the person that you love -
Beau Taplin*

Every day that week was spent with Jory. We were inseparable from dawn to dusk. When it was time to go back to the cabin, I would tell father about my adventures with Jory. After the week of fun with Jory we became very close. We said our farewells instead of goodbyes, because goodbyes are forever. And with that, my father and I returned home for the school year. School came and went and when summer returned, my father decided we could stay the whole month. As soon as we got there, I would spend my summer with Jory. And when that summer ended, i spent the next summer with Jory. Every time we would met, she would look and me and smile her usual perfect smile; that carefree, easy-go-lucky smile. We would run around the woods climbing trees or dance in the lavender field. We would bring our drawing books to the hill and draw endlessly. "While you were gone over the winter I started a book. I call it The Game of Cat and Angel."

She started to read it to me. It was about a kingdom with glorious gardens, the flowers weren't like any other in all the land. There was a shimmering rivers that laid next to the castle. The king was gentle and treated all beings equally creating harmony in the land.

We would stay on the hill either putting our creative minds to work or take a small cat nap. Some days we would sit under the willow tree and have a picnic while telling stories to each other. The willow had a hollowed out hole where the trunk splits in half. We would put gifts for each other in there, or drawings, quotes, pictures, memories. When it rained we would stay inside and find open spots in the entry room to paint. Jory would paint more intricate artwork while I doodles animals or mythical beings. Other times we played piano together dancing and dueting. I would tell her my about school life and everything that happens there. She would tell me what was on her mind and i would tell her what was on mine. She was my everything, she is my stargirl.

A day i remember very distinctively; I was on my way over to see Jory. And when I opened the door she was lying on the floor of the entry room. I gasped and rushed to her aid. She was covered head to toe in cuts and bruises. I looked around her and noticed some drawings, they were covered in blood, but the drawing themselves were much darker. There was a drawing of a head with the face missing. What lacked in face was restored by cloud of smoke with lavender blood dripping down. Another was a body stitched up together. One was a dead rose with a couple petals on the ground. I look back at Jory and she's now looking at me. She gives me her brightest smile while her eyes squint. "I was wondering when you would come." She said.

I tried to ask what happen, but she didn't answer. So I helped her up and wrapped her wounds. I could feel her rib cage, she hasn't been eating. She would chuckle every so often and say "oh man, what a mess I am." And after that, the rest of the summer wasn't the same. She would laugh and she would sing, but her emerald eyes would never illuminate. Her drawings grew darker with age and I could tell there was something plaguing her heart. As well as she tired to hide it, and she did everything humanly possible, I could never see past her facade. And like that, summer was over.

When I entered high school. I stopped making my annual visits to Jory. I stopped going to the cabin because I didn't have the time, or that's what I told myself. But honestly, I think it was because I had a very hard time watching her starlight dim.

Over the period of my high school experience I got to meet a boy I really liked since the first day of school. I got to make new friends. I got to play solos in band. I got to dance with people and laugh and sing. I got to watch sports as well as play in them. I got to be preppy and posh. I got to straighten and curl my hair. I had a reason to wake up every morning. I got to score a winning varsity goal. But I also got to learn what a broken heart feels like. learned what real drama is and looks like. Dealt with stresses people shouldn't have to go through. I got to experience something I can never change. And have something stolen from me I never get back. When things like those happened it would remind me of Jory, "keep your head up princess, your tiara's falling." And with that, I graduated high school.

After my graduation party, my father asked me if we could talk. When we finally were able to speak he told me that they found a dead body of a girl in the woods by the cabin. When I heard this horror my mind race and then blanked.

Part Four

*I will never regret you or say I wish i'd never met you. Because once upon a time you were exactly what I needed. -
unknown*

For a long time, I was in a terrible mind set. I couldn't get my grades passed a B. I would go to school, then work, back to bed, sleep, repeat. Other times i would stay up all night feeling guilty for not being there for her when she needed me the most. I hated myself, and I just wanted to be with her again. I thought about reuniting with her multiple times. I found out that the police found her body on May 2nd. But I believe she did the deed on the first. I got some help along the way to ease some shame and guilt. When I felt like it was time to see her it was my Sophomore year in college. So that summer I drove out to see her again. When I reach my cabin, I turn the car off, grab my bag and climb out of the Passat. I walk up to the door and glide the key into the lock. I twist the knob and push it open. I set my bag on the stool and turned around closing the door behind me. I jumped over the "Do Not Pass" tape and run down the bike trail to Jory's house.

I stop and look over the house. I see the willow more hunched over, in a weeping position. I walk to the door and gently open it. I wander through the quiet entry room, nothing here has changed, nothing, beside the girl who lived here. I run my fingers along our paintings, sliding them to the archway as I walk. I peer out into the piano room. Empty. No wind, no melody, and no girl. I drifted over to the piano and patted my fingers against the keys. My thumb presses down on C, then again, then G. Tears well up into my eyes and I nod knowingly to my fingers command. They start to play twinkle twinkle little star. When I finished, I released the happy piano from my weary grasp. I stare at it awhile, close the lid, turn, and walk away.

I exit the now, truly abandoned house and walk over to the weeping willow. I pet the trunk empathizing with it. I walked around to the hole and as luck would have it, it held a gift. My hand slipped in and pulled out the lost treasure, a book. The sight of it drew out a choked up laugh. *A Game of Cat and Angel by Jory. She finished it.* I sit down, pressing my back against the trunk. I open the book to find a picture Jory drew of her and I together on the piano along with a lavender stalk that was tightly pressed, preserved on a chapter she dedicated to me. Chapter fifteenth: StarGirl.

Epilogue

Awwww Sydney chu made me cry!! I really stayed because you were there to talk to, since you were there to listen. You're an awesome best friend - Jory Redding

When I was a little girl. My father told me an immaculate bedtime story about a cabin, a cabin in the woods specifically. The woods had everything you could imagine, but most of all, it had a girl. This girl lived in the middle of the woods. Evergreen trees wrapped around her like a cocoon. And in her cocoon was a home with a willow that watched over her. And this girls name was Jory. She would laughed when there was no joke. She danced when there was no music. She was the friendliest person I've ever met. She was my best friend and had changed my life for the better in so many ways. I'm all that I am as I am because of her. Ever so often I

will sit on the piano stool at home and play the songs we shared together. Other days I would catch myself talking to her as if she was next to me. I stopped drawing though, she was always better at it and will forever be. I returned to her home the following summer and tied a wind chime to the willow. The clappers were made out of stars and were tinted green. In the sun they would glow into a glassy emerald. I stand back and admire it as the cool afternoon breeze plays the chimes. I smile and wave to it, "Farewell."