a darkening shadow of the past.

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a fairly short story about a summer that turns tragically wrong....

Published on
Booksie

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A darkening shadow of the past eclipsed our entire world that summer. It painted blues and pinks and gold onto the sky like Picasso splattering colours on a bare canvas.Birds were flyinggently over the shimmering water; trees were blowing softly in thewarm summer breeze. Everything seemed perfect. And it was. At least for a while. But everything ends.

Hereâ s how it began,

It was two months before the beginning of summer; I was sitting with mysmall group offriends in the middle of the school oval.My best friend Ashleigh was sitting next to me desperately trying to part her shoulderlength, light brown hair,perfectly to one side for her crush to see in the next period.Iâ venow known Ashleigh since the fifth grade, from the moment we started talking we hit it off.I donâ t know why exactly,just some things are meant to be I guess.To my other side was my new but amazing friend Lauren, she transferred in from Sydney when her parents moved here due to her stepdads job and motherâ s messy divorce. Her hair was sandy blonde with tight curls and ringlets dangling on her arms. We were somewhat different butstuck together, like the opposite sides of a coin but welded together. Next to Lauren was Mitchell. A futuristic haircut with tones of brown and yellows plashed through his short razor cut hair. A half gay, half straight person- though at times I donâ t think he knows what he is. Heâ s been my best guy friend since the third day of grade seven when he saw me sitting alone. On the other side of Ashleigh there was Sam. Whenever I had a problem Iâ d tell Sam. Somehow he'd always make me feel better, his almost black hair draping over half his forehead with his bright blue eyes standing out. Chelsea and Will were just thetwo other quiet ones who silently sit there and agree with what you say and rarely speak. Except Will just usually had his music blasting through his headphones. Iâ ve secretly always loved will but will NEVER admit it to the others.

So there we were, in our normal spot. Discussing what our plans were before the holidays when a bright light went off in my head. We had all been working for the past seven months or so and saved up some money. I just kind of yelled out to everybody, "How would you like to come to my parents shack in the summer holidays?!" Lauren, Ashleigh, Chelsea, Will,Mitchell and Sam were gawking at me weirdly when Sam yelled out, "hell yes!! Iâ m in" followed by wills calming voice, "okay, sounds cool" Chelsea and Lauren said in unison "hehe sounds awesome..... In bed" Ashleigh turned and said "Damnit peer pressure, fine" Mitchell looking at me with an amused expression and said "Lol, yes."

Two weeks later

I had convinced my dad to let us borrow (or maybe it was the constant nagging for eleven whole days) his second car, it was an oldburgundy Kia carnival. It had dents, bumps, and spots of worn of paint all over it. I think it was safe to say the Kia had seen better days. I was so excited, yet all I could think of, on the way to pick everybody up, is how much I loved Will.

First I picked up Ashleigh followed by Lauren, Chelsea, Mitchell, Will,and last Sam. We were heading along a long stretch of unchanging highway. We each drove for three and a half hours, before we reached the ferry. It was a weathered blue float. That had enough room for four cars at a time. It had a chain gate at either end of it, to allow cars to easily move. We had a trailer on the back so we took up two car spots. Once we were loaded on, we felt a jolt, and the ferry named â marina 03â started to move along the swishing sea. Once we were going at a steady pace, we walked over to one side of the boat, where two dolphins were raising

themselves in and out of the water alongside us. The boat started to slow; we were getting closer to Palm Tree Island. We all got back in the car, and drove of the old blue ferry, losing site of the bay in the rear view mirror.

We drove for another twenty minutes before we reached my parents summer house. It was an old one storey American styled house with a long veranda stretching all the way along the front and sides. The windows were adusty shade of brown with myGrandmas old fashioned lace curtains dangling inside. There was anarrowdirt path leading to the old water-rusted jettythat had a small white dinghy attached to it, bobbing up and down with thecrystal clear water lapping around it.

We lifted our bags out of the car and went inside.The lounge had an old pool table, boom box with an assortment of cdâ s and tapes scattered on the floor next to it. There was abig old cosyfive seater black leather couch. The room was kind of hazy with light shining through small gaps.Chucking our bags on the couch we stood still, looked out the door at the jetty then looked back at each other and ran out the door, along the gravel path and jumped of the end of the jetty into the warm water. We all came to the surface and started laughing over nothing. That moment is what true happiness is, Iâ ll never forget that afternoon in the water and sun, splashing around without a care in the world. We were invincible that day.

The next day we awoke to the sounds of birds singing and Will bringing us in scrambled eggs heâ d just made. Everyone got their own plate except Willsharedthe frying panwith me. While everyone else was taking their plates back to the kitchen sink he smiled at me for a while and gave me a look as if tosay, â thank you for this tripâ , herested his head on my shoulder. Ashleigh, Chelsea, Mitchell, Lauren and same walked back in, sat down, and we made planes for the day.

Majority decided to go for a hike, come back and chill, then hire a fishing boat for a couple of nights. We had hired a proper fishing boat for two nights, everything seemed normal, like any other day. And it was, it was a normal day, a normal afternoon. Until night fall. Thatâ s when it all changed. It was about 9:15 on a Friday night. We had our fishing rods at the back of the boat waiting for a fish to bite so me, Lauren, Ashleigh, Sam, Chelsea and Mitchell decided to put some music on and have a dance. I couldnâ t find Will, so I went tolook in thefour bedrooms underneath themain floor.I walked into one of the rooms and saw Will. Shirtless. I quickly grabbed the door and started to pull it shut as he said quietly, "no itsfine, come on in" I muttered back "ok" and softly crept in and sat next to him. I just started telling him about the music and dancing when he said, "Are you ever going to admit it to me?" I replied â um admit what?" he looked at me calmly, "your feelings towards me.â I slowly said â um no, I love you. I always have since we first met, but I mean, look at me, Iâ m nothing special, I would never deserve someone as special as youâ he dropped his head to his hands and muffled â what if Iâ ve always felt the same way as you do?â before I had time to say anything he raised his head, and kissed me. Slow and nervously at first, than more passionately. He slowly laid me down on the bed and kissed me many times. I couldnâ t believe it, I didnâ t know whether to laugh or cry. I could feel him smiling; it was so intense, so intimate. Iâ ve dreamed about this for years. He looked into my eyes and said â I love you Roseâ I replied â I love you tooâ Still, it was unbelievable.

It was kind of silent for a minute or two so I said â Want to go up and join the party?â he softly replied, â ok beautiful.â I looked back at him with a cheesy grin. We walked upstairs and things were pretty wild. Mitchell had brought a couple of bottles of vodka on the boat so everyone was either tipsy or drunk. Mitchell has always been a violent drunk. Itâ s not that he means to be, itâ s just the affect alcohol has on him. He saw Will and walked towards him with an evil look in his eye. Like he was an entirely different person, a demon from hell. Suddenly, he punched Will in the stomach. Will being the mellow person he is, he told Mitchell to calm down. Mitchell wouldnâ t listen; he had black eyes in the night. Hitting and punching Will over and over again. Until Will was against the back of the boat with a petrified look in his eye. I will never forget that, the way he looked at me, than back at Mitchell. Sam swung around to see what was going on. His

elbow with a glass of vodka, hit the accelerator and the boat ploughed forward. Will fell backwards off the boat. Before I even had time to move, I heard the thud, Will hitting the water. Like a rock hitting concrete.

Everyone was screaming and yelling. I jumped in the water and grabbed Will. I lifted his hands up to reach Ashleighâ s. She dragged him up into the boat. Blood was rushing out of his head. Somehow I found an inner strength inside myself; I pulled my body up behind Will. Leaning next to him, I began to pound on his soaked, bring me the horizon, t- shirt, trying desperately to resuscitate him. I could feel my warm wet lips pressing against his cold face. His eyes were open. Yet deep down I knew there was no life. But I wouldnâ t admit it to myself. He had to come back to me. Everyone was standing in a stuffed- up circle around us. Even Mitchell has stopped drinking now. Chelsea pulled me up pulled me away from him and sadly whispered in my ear, â heâ s goneâ Sam looked at me and said â what are we gonna do?â Mitchell shaking and trembling â call the police or ambulance?â I looked around at Ashleigh and Lauren, I knew what they were thinking and I agreed. I opened my mouth slowly and said â bury himâ pretend like he disappeared and we donâ t know anything about it. The police would never believe us it was an accident.â

Mitchell and Sam looked at me saying â yesâ we drove for the next four hours trying to find an island in the middle of the water. We carried him right into the centre and buried him next to his favourite type of tree, a willow tree. Even in the pitch darkness I could tell. There was about an hour of silence after that, no one knew what to say at the precise moment. On the way back to my Parents (parentâ s) summer house, I went to the bed where Will and I had kissed on. Rubbing the sheets of where he once sat, lowering myself, I lay down on the spot and cried myself to sleep.

We spent the early hours while the light was just rising from beyond the horizon to drive back to the bay. For the next three days there was silence. No swimming, no laughing, no music. It was a late afternoon, we were supposed to leave the next day, Ashleigh walked into my room and said, â tomorrow morning, when we wake up, we have to ring the police and say Will has run away. We will have a bonfire tonight and burn most of his possessionâ s, so it looks like he took them with himâ I said frustrated, â ok, whatever.â

We lit a fire and one by one threw his wallet, clothes, bag etc. into the fire and buried his phone under the house. Everyone staring into the fire of Willâ s burning items. Watching them burn; turn to nothing but simple ash. I said â we are leaving the day after tomorrow. We will never tell a soul what happened, and we will look those cops in the eyes and be strong like Will once wasâ everyone nodded â ok Roseâ

The next day, I was laying in my bed sobbing. When Ashleigh walked in holding the phone. It was time to make the call. She had told everyone to tell the cops the same alibi. I took a deep breath and called the missing persons department, they sent two police officers. One was very plump, the other quite skinny and stick insect like. They both had glasses on and a facial expression like we murdered their cat. Their names were Officers Cullen and Gibbon. Cullen and Gibbon sat down with all of us and asked a few questions. Officer Cullen talked to me privately and asked, â who realised he was missing?â I replied â me. I walked into his bedroom to wake him up and he was gone. Stuff and allâ with a satisfied look he said â yes, thank youâ all I could think of was, they will always be looking for him. Theyâ ll never find him. His parents will never see there little boy again. They left and told us we could go home and they would ring Wills parents. One by one I dropped everyone home and said â goodbye, see you at college in a couple of weeksâ I only just made it to my bedroom at home before I burst in to tears. I miss him! I love him! How could this have happened? Jumping on my bed I look at all the pictures on my phone of me and Will before the tragedy.

But I guess, the darkening shadow of the past eclipsed my soul that afternoon. It painted sadness and greys. Will, will always live on, in our hearts.

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