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Orange Stream

11/23/20

FFT Creative Project

Grace

Grace flopped down on her bed, exhausted but content. Meeting Peach had been exciting, but it only made her realize how much she was missing out on her life. Peach was growing up, drifting away from Grace, becoming untethered. Grace wanted to be the one to buy her that tiny blue-checked dress, that white sweater (Even though Grace knew her outfit would've looked better with a pink one). She let her mind wander as she thought about all the things she had wanted to give Peach but couldn't.

"Grace, come down and tell us about your visit with Milly!" her dad called from downstairs.

"I'm gonna go for a walk, I'll tell you all about it at dinner," she promised. On her way out, she grabbed her keys, phone, and Rafe's sweatshirt.

"What's mine is yours," he had told her. Grace, being an only child, had felt strange wearing someone else's clothes at first, but was comforted by his minty-fresh scent that lingered on the fabric.

Grace hummed along to the music playing through her headphones as she ambled down the sidewalk. She didn't know exactly where she was planning on going, but she knew that she just needed to be away from her home life for a little. Her thoughts were interrupted by a sudden light tap on her shoulder. It was surprisingly gentle, like the person didn't mean to startle her, but they had definitely failed their mission if that was the case. Grace jumped, turned quickly to see who it was, and was even more frightened when she saw who had tapped her.

"Hey Grace..."

"Max?" Grace was at a loss for words.

“Look, I’m really sorry for everything. I shouldn’t have let my dad get in my head about the baby and I shouldn’t have let Adam get away with making fun of you... basically what I’m trying to say is that I did a lot of things wrong in the past and I’m here to make them right.” Max said. All Grace could do was stand there and stare at him. She didn’t even know that he still cared about her!

“Wow, um, I-” Grace started to talk but she couldn’t put into words what she was feeling. “It’s a lot to process. I don’t really understand where all this is coming from.”

“I miss you, Grace. I still love you.” Max confessed.

They were silent for a long time. After no less than thirty seconds, Max spoke again.

“Did I... did I do something wrong?” he asked her. “I’m sorry if that was a lot, I just really needed to tell you that.” he looked hopeful, but Grace just started to walk away.

“ I need some time, Max.”

At dinner, Grace was quiet, only speaking up when her parents wanted to know about Milly.

“So how was it? Was she cute? Did you have a good time? How do you feel?” her parents, understandably, wanted to know all about her visit.

Grace mostly just said “good” and “okay,” even though she wanted to tell them that it had been great. She wished she could fill them in on how Milly smiled, how proud Grace felt, and how much Catalina and Daniel loved her. However, all she could think about was Max. She’d never had anyone confess their love for her like that, and she admired Max for being bold. On the other hand, she and Rafe were doing really well. They’d gone on their first official date and she really liked him. Right then, Grace realized that she was going to have to choose between them. She felt nauseous.

“May I be excused?” Grace asked her parents.

“Oh, um, okay!” Her dad replied.

Grace put her plate in the dishwasher and headed upstairs before silently burying her head into her pillow. Once she had recovered, approximately 10 minutes later, Grace texted Max. The only way to figure out what she wanted was to talk it out, she thought.

Hey, can we meet up tmrw for lunch? Grace typed.

Sure, how about that sandwich place near my house? And how's noon? Max replied back within seconds.

Yeah, Grace almost sent back, before deleting it and going with a more casual **Ya.**

When Grace arrived at the sandwich place that she and Rafe often went to, Max was already sitting in a booth waiting for her. Grace stopped for a second, feeling like she was being brought back in time to the day he'd asked her to be his girlfriend. His curly blonde hair was pushed under a light green baseball cap, just like it had been that day that Grace's life changed forever.

"Hey Grace, over here!" Max called to her. Grace flushed and quickly made her way over, taking the seat across from him.

"What can I get for you two today?" A waitress asked them a few moments later. She was used to seeing Grace and Rafe seated in the booth near the back, but didn't recognize Max at all. She was even more baffled when Max ordered the same thing that Rafe usually ordered! She just shrugged it off though, she didn't get paid enough to be worrying about that kind of crap.

"Coming right up!" She declared after collecting both orders. There was a bit of an awkward pause after the waitress walked away. After a few seconds, Max finally spoke up.

"I'm sorry, Grace, if you're mad at me. I really didn't mean to hurt you or anyone else. I was really overwhelmed when you told me you were pregnant and I had no idea what to do. But..." He paused, taking a deep breath. "I never stopped loving you."

Grace, once again, didn't know how to react.

"Max... I still have feelings for you..." Max waited in anticipation for the rest of Grace's sentence, a small smile starting to form on his face. Just then, the bell rang in the restaurant, signaling that someone had entered. It was Rafe. "But not the feelings you want me to have." Grace stated as she caught sight of him. Max looked like he'd been slapped across the face. Hard. Grace stood up and strolled over to Rafe, taking his hand and guiding him out of the restaurant. All Max heard was,

"Hey."

“Hey, I thought you had off today!”

“Nope, came to grab a quick snack before my next shift.”

“You just grabbed *me*!

Grace giggled.

And then they were gone.

Explanation

Our goal was to write a chapter to close out FFTT that would satisfy us and our classmates. We wanted it to be interesting and engaging while also sounding like it was meant to be part of the book. We achieved this mainly by referring back to the book very often. This ensured that we weren't forgetting any small details (such as the color and pattern of Milly's dress), getting any names of restaurants wrong (it turns out that Rafe and Grace's go-to sandwich place didn't have a name), and that we were writing using the same style that Robin Benway used.

We chose to write a chapter about Grace because she was the least talked about in our class discussions and because we felt that she and Rafe needed a happily-ever-after. In addition, we wanted to know how things would turn out between Max and Grace, as well as how Grace felt after meeting up with Milly and her parents. For all these reasons, we were pretty set on writing a final chapter (as opposed to making a soundtrack or newspaper) from the beginning.

Adding on to that, we wanted to use this project as an opportunity to practice our writing, collaboration, and improvement skills. Both of us agreed that we enjoyed writing and wanted to practice it together. Because SLA involves lots of collaboration,

we jumped at the chance to work together and put those skills to the test. Finally, we each had previous feedback we'd gotten and we took advantage of this project to try to improve. Sebina wanted to work on being less repetitive in her writing and use a wider variety of different words while Valeria wanted to use more details in her writing to help make it come to life. Overall, we can both say that this is one of the most successful collaborative projects we've done!