

From friend to foe

Johnny

knock

knock

knock

“Hello?”

In this instant my mind was racing. Two massive police officers knock on the door and they look somewhat sad or scared. It's like they're not telling me something that I need to know.

“What's happening?” I said, confused.

“I would tell the little girl to go to another room.”

I was so confused I didn't even know that Payton was standing next to me. She was almost hiding. She also had a nervous look on her face.

“Pay, I would go to your room. For now, at least.”

“Okay, dad.”

“Alright, what's up?” I said to the nervous cops. I catch a tear falling down one of the cops' cheeks.

“What is going on?” I said worriedly.

“Sir, I'm sorry to tell you this,” the cop said.

“What why?”

“I'm afraid your wife has...”

“No” I could barely imagine what they were going to say. I look at their faces and they're both tearing up.

“Your wife was stabbed and died on the way to the hospital.” the cop said

I tried to speak, but nothing came out. I just now realized I had known what the cops were here for since I saw that tear, I just couldn't accept the thought. I don't know how I'm going to tell Payton about this. She is only eleven.

“No, I'm going to pull myself together and tell her tomorrow when I'm in a better mental shape,” I thought to myself

That night at dinner we ordered chipotle. Our family loves chipotle. Whenever we get it we always sit together at the dinner table and laugh and share about our days. That's family to us. Sitting together and being close and warming to each other. Pay knew something was up as soon as I picked the food up from the door. I put the food on the table and she quickly realized that there were only two bowls instead of three.

“Where's mom?” she said wonderingly.

That's when I lost it. I knew this moment would happen but I never mentally prepared myself to tell her.

“Daddy are you ok?” she said now worryingly as she saw the tears flowing down my cheeks and onto the table.

“Pay”

“Yeah”

“I'm so sorry. I didn't want to make you scared or worried. Hell I don't want anything to happen to you ever”

“Dad what's wrong” I could tell she was now scared. As of now, I'm shedding tears onto her shoulders. I didn't even realize she was hugging me until now.

“ Pay, Moms gone”

“What, where did she go? Did she get the job she really wanted?”

“No”

“So what do you mean”

“She's gone”

“What do you mean gone”

“She's gone gone, moms, not coming back”

“No, you're lying” she's screaming and crying now.

At this point, I am also.

Payton

When dad told me about mom I was shaking. I was petrified. I was confused. I knew what he was talking about as soon as I heard she was gone. Dinner that night was quiet and sad. We didn't really eat. My ears rang. My mind was a huge swirl. I was broken. I felt like nothing.

School just felt depressing that next day. Im that kid that brings the whole class together. I was a bright, funny, interesting, athletic, and talkative kid. That all changed the night she died. The loud speaker went off calling me to the office. I knew what they were going to talk to me about and that frightened me. I didn't want people to know and in middle school, word spreads like crazy.

“Payton I'm so sorry,” the principal said

“it seems my dad told you”

“Yeah, I just wanted to check in on you”

“I'm ok, a little sad that's it”

“Is there anything I can do for you”

“No, I don't think so”

Now I'm crying. I'm sobbing. I let it all out.

“Oh honey come here,” the principal said

She wrapped me up in a big hug.

“ I forgot that you gave such good hugs.” I managed to squeeze those words out.

“I want to laugh but this isn't the best moment”

I chuckled.

As I'm leaving the office I see the news on the tv.

“Actually can I stay with you for a couple minutes,” I say

“Yeah, you're welcome anytime. I would sit on the chair right there.”

I tried my best to hold a conversation with our principal. The news says “44-year-old mother was stabbed and died in the ambulance. This tragic moment happened at 48th and Haymare at around 7:30 last night.”

Wait, that's close to where dad and JJ play basketball.

I then realized It was about my mom.

JJ

“yo Johnny”

“Yeah”

“You tryna play some ball later”

“Has nobody told you what happened”

“No I know about it, can I at least come over”

“Yeah I guess”

I hang up and pack up my bags to drive to his house. I think to myself I might as well bring my basketball bag in case Johnny wants to play some basketball. There was everything in it from yesterday so I might as well bring it.

The drive over is calm and I ain't thinking to myself about too much. I arrive at his house and I can already feel the depressing vibe as I go through the door.

“man wheres Pay”

“She's in her room”

He yells her name and she comes in a hurry

“JJ!” she says

“What's up”

“Nothing much besides... you know”

“I'm sorry for your loss guys”

“It's alright,” Johnny says

“I'm going to go to the bathroom, can I put my bag on the counter?”

“Yeah”

I put my bag right next to the fruits. And headed to the bathroom

Five minutes later I came back and it's still silent in the room. Pay and Jhon are leaning over the counter. The whole house looks messed up. I've known Jhon since high school and have known Pay since she was born. I'm practically part of this family. As I was leaving I realized maybe I shouldn't have gone over to their house. I could have accidentally left something there that could have made them think it was me. Now I'm worried.

Payton

JJ didn't say anything for a solid five minutes. It was kind of scary sitting there. JJ gets up and leaves wishing us the best. Although when he picked up his bag the pineapple he put his bag next to it moved with it for a second. My dad didn't notice it. As soon as he left I looked at the pineapple and saw a good stab into it. Something sharp came out of his basketball bag and cut the pineapple.

“Dad”

“Yeah Pay”

“Can we cut up the pineapple”

“Sure if u want”

As soon as I got the knife I cut it open. Specifically where JJ had put his bag. Where whatever JJ had cut open in it was red. I tried a little bit of it and it tasted like blood. I was shaking. It wasn't fresh blood, it was dried and only a little was on the inside of the pineapple.

“Pay you ok” my dad exclaims from the other room

“Dad,” I say

“Yeah”

“Come here”

“Give me a couple of minutes”

Payton thinks about what could have caused the slice in the pineapple.

“It could have been a red zipper, no it can't be, it tasted funky.” she thought.

As my dad comes down I have to explain to him what happened. I tell him everything. I told him about how the pineapple moved with the bag when JJ picked it up. How the inside of the pineapple had blood stains in it. How the cut into the pineapple was deep.

It was no use. Dad was still mentally destroyed by the death.

Jhonny

The night JJ came over we ordered chipotle again. To us, having chipotle is like a calming joyful meal. Everytime our family has chipotle we all are in a good mood. It brings our family closer and together. This changed when Lauren died. Chipotle became a landmark of the day she passed. The day our life changed forever. The day we had to tell Pay that she won't be growing up without a mother. Lauren passing took a huge toll on Payton. Her grades dropped. She became more sassy and disrespectful. When Payton found the blood in the pineapple I thought she was messing around. I acted normal and didn't say anything about it. However now I'm interested in finding out who the blood came from and why a knife would be in JJ's bag. I don't think Pay saw the knife but I certainly did.

JJ

I'm making mac and cheese when I hear a bang on the door.

“Your under arrest” the cops say

“What why”

“We got reports of you stabbing a woman. We also got word that you know the woman and her family.” one of the cops said as he put handcuffs on me.

“What? I didn't do anything,” I said, now worried.

“We caught security footage of you robbing a woman on 48th about a week ago at around 7:30.”

They viciously throw me into the car

It's been a couple months since I've been in prison. Today is the day Johnny and Payton visit.

“Hi Pay” I said

“Don't call her that” Johnny said tearfully

“Sorry” I said

“Why, what did we ever do to you? We supported you. We did everything for you. How could u backstab us like that” he said

“I'm sorry. It's just you guys have so much money. I saw my chance. I didn't mean to kill her, I swear. I meant to take some money then disappear. I would never intend to end someone's life.”

“Whatever. You really hurt us. Pay is failing school and crying almost every night. I can barely go to work and get through my day. All because of you” he said

“I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to”

“You're pathetic. Were leaving”

Artist's Statement

I chose these perspectives because I thought it would bring more interest into the book. I could bring in Payton's perspective on their mom's passing and how it affected her. I could bring in Johnny's perspective on how he was devastated both on finding out his wife passed and that his best friend did it. I brought in JJ's perspective to show why he did it and to add some tension into the story.

The first essential question is what does it mean to be a family. I answered this throughout the story through how torn apart their family was after the wife's passing. For example, Payton struggled in school and had a hard time and Johnny had a hard time getting through the day.

The second question is how might one's family impact their identity. I answered this when explaining what kind of person Payton was before her mom's passing.

One thoughtshot in the story is when Payton shows what she felt when she was told the news about her mom. She breaks down and I chose this to be a thought because I felt that her reaction would push the story forward. A snapshot I chose to add is when Johnny finds the cut into the pineapple. I decided to zoom in on this moment because it was when Johnny started to think about what if JJ killed his wife. Or at least who the blood was from.

The dramatic irony is when JJ is reflecting on his decision to go to Johnny's house was a good one. He was wondering if he gave anything away about the death. This is when the readers know that JJ killed their mom however the characters don't know yet.

The motif in this story is a little confusing. I chose it to be the chipotle for dinner. They had it a couple times throughout the story at very important moments. The first time was the day the mother died. The second was the day JJ went over. As I said in the story it was a landmark for their mother and how much changed after her passing.

My choices for dialogue were mostly to move the story forward. I tried to incorporate dialogue but make it have a purpose. The main points for dialogue was when the wife died and towards the end when JJ is in prison. I choose to put these key points of dialogue in those places to enhance what each character felt and to show emotion.