

The Sunset Wind

1 - Dylan

Dylan was with friends when he got the call. He thought it was a prank. He decided to play along. He drove there, wondering what was waiting for him. When he arrived, all he saw were ambulances, smoke, and flashing lights. All he could hear was yelling and sirens. His eyes landed on his parents, their bodies bloody and distorted. He almost couldn't recognize them. And then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw his brother.

His brother lay, bloody and broken, though not as much as his parents. Dylan was stunned. His girlfriend Zoey was yelling in his face, but he could only hear muffled sounds. All he could focus on were the lights. He hated flashing lights. By the time he came back to reality, the ambulance was driving off with his parents and brother. He ran back onto his motorcycle. Instead of chasing after the ambulances, he chased after the lights. He ignored the wind lashing at his face, chasing the lights as if he would lose his family if he lost them.

3 years later, now Dylan is going to college while working two jobs. He goes about his day as if there was a dark cloud surrounding him, blocking out everything and everyone. Except for Zoey. She stayed with him. When he came back to school, when he went to find job interviews, when he sold his beloved bike, and when he mourned his parents. Every week, he would sit with them at their tombstone and talk about his life as if they were still there. But today was the anniversary of their deaths. He looked up, the sun was setting a beautiful orange. His phone rings. It's from the hospital.

“What is it now? I already paid the bills.”

“No, it’s not that,” the doctor responsible for his brother was on the line.

“It’s about your brother.”

Dylan stands straight up.

“What is it?” he is already preparing for the worst.

“He’s woken up,” Dylan froze in place, tears rolling down his face.

“I’m glad Dylan, it was the right choice not to give up.” The doctor continued, but Dylan couldn’t hear him. His legs shook, and he fell to his knees, looking up at the sunset. It was the most beautiful thing he’s ever seen.

2 - Mack

“Well, are you coming or not?” Mack asks, holding out his arms. Without another beat Dylan, as if a gust of wind is pushing behind him, runs into his arms and hugs him. He could tell Dylan was trying not to hurt him. He didn’t notice this but his brother felt different, taller, more muscular. “Oh, okay, cool,” Mack says as he awkwardly hugs back. Hugging Dylan for what felt like an eternity in an attempt to make up for the past 3 years. He felt his brother’s warmth in his arms. He could feel the sun shining through the window, the warm breeze tickling his face.

“I’m sorry Mack, but you won’t be able to walk.” Mack could feel a storm rising inside him.

“Why?”

“Your spine was injured during the crash and it damaged the nerves that control your legs.” Mack just leaned forward, putting his head in his arms. The doctor said more things but he didn’t care. All he could feel and hear was the rain coming out of him, and then his tears drop. *I hate how cold my tears are. I hate how cold the hospital is. I hate how cold the world is. I want something- no, someone- to warm me up.*

3 - Dylan

“Hey there, how was your day?” Dylan asks as he comes into Mack’s room. He looks at his brother and sees him having a certain look. He knows this look all too well.

“It’s fine,” *To hell it is*, Dylan thought, *I know he isn’t telling me everything.*

“I’m just tired.”

“You sure?”

“Yes.”

“If you say so. Wanna go out next weekend? I can ask the doc if we can.”

“Sure.”

“Did something happen? Did the doctor say something to you? You usually aren’t like this.”

“...now.”

“What was that?”

“WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW?!? You’ve been awake for these three years! You still have your friends! YOU lived out all those years! YOU graduated high school! YOU went on dates with YOUR girlfriend! YOU did all the things I COULDN’T because I was in a COMA! I GUARANTEE YOU forgot about ME until I woke UP!”

Dylan who was stunned until then turned red.

“What do you mean I lived out those years?!? Who do YOU think paid for YOUR bills?!? OUR PARENTS?!? Because they’re DEAD! Why do you think I can only see you on the weekends?!? I’m *sorry* that you missed 3 years of your life but DON’T you DARE say I forgot about you,” Dylan starts regaining his breath.

“I’m leaving. See you next week.”

4 - Mack

He spent days sulking beneath his bedsheets. He had everything closed, the door, the window, the curtains, and his heart. The doctors would come in and change his IV and do checks on him, but he never talked unless necessary. Dylan would still come in every weekend and tell him how his week was. Mack just hid from anything and everything for a month.

He heard the doctors rushing by, heard people crying, begging, shouting names of people they prayed would stay alive. *Was that how Dylan had felt?* The doctors were yelling again. He thought he heard a familiar voice outside, but thought nothing of it, not until she shouted a familiar name..

“DYLAN!!!”

Dylan? Why is he here? What happened? His mind was rushing. He could feel another storm building up inside. He rapidly pushed the button that would call a nurse. He waited for what felt like an eternity, waiting for the nurse, waiting for answers. She finally came into his room.

“What is it that you need so desperately? Must be something important.”

“My brother!”

“What about him?”

“How is he? Is he here? Why is he here?”

“Woah there slow down. Can’t answer all of them at once.”

“Tell me. Now.” Mack stares straight into her eyes. She sighs.

“He’s here because of an accident at one of his jobs. He fell.”

“Then why could I hear her screaming?”

“Who?”

“Zoey, the girl with him.”

“How do you know she was here?”

“Just tell me.”

“He fell from a high place and landed on a sharp object. It missed his vitals though.” Mack bent his head down again, he could feel a cold breeze on him.

“How’s his condition?”

“Stable.”

“Take me there.”

“Where?”

“To Dylan.”

5 - Dylan

Dylan couldn't remember much of that day, only that he had been calling Zoey on the roof of the restaurant he worked at when he fell, the wind gushing past him. The next thing he remembered was waking up on a hospital bed, bandages everywhere and a cast on his left arm. Sitting up, still shellshocked, he surveyed his surroundings. He was hooked onto the same machines and IV's as his brother had been. Mack was sitting at his bedside, next to Zoey. The rest of the day was a blur of apologies and tears from Mack.

It's been 2 weeks since Dylan got admitted to the hospital and now he is being discharged. On his way to leave the hospital he sees Mack's nameplate and stops in front of his door. He takes a deep breath, and then knocks on the door. He waits until he hears a response. He waits and a minute passes. Still no response.

"I'm coming in," he opens the door and walks in, "gosh it's cold here." Dylan opens the curtains and windows. A warm breeze brushes his face. He walks over to the bedside and sits down.

"Hey, how are you doing?" No response.

Dylan just sighs. "I heard about your legs. I heard you can't walk. I- I'm sorry about that. I know how much you loved running, I really do. But there is so much more to life than running." Mack looks Dylan in the eyes before asking.

"Like what?" Dylan starts walking out before turning around to face Mack.

"Well, you'll see next week." Mack smiles.

"Yeah, see you next week."

6 - Mack

Mack didn't know what to expect when Dylan brought him out. Dylan and Zoey had both come in.

"What's the special occasion?"

"I told you, there's more to life than running, and I'm here to show you that."

Mack already knows this by now, he remembers how he felt when he saw his brother on the bed. It fueled his self-hatred. *Why did I have to do that? I'm so sorry.* He feels guilty yelling at his brother like that but he's trying to find ways to make up with him.

"How are we going to get there?" Mack asks as he gets into his wheelchair with Zoey's help.

"You'll see," Dylan says as he holds open the door. Zoey starts pushing Mack to leave.

"Wouldn't want to ruin the surprise now would we?"

"Better not be anything fancy. I hate fancy." Dylan and Zoey let out a laugh.

"Don't worry we won't be going anywhere like that. You know I hate those places too."

"Really? I thought most girls did."

"Do I seem like most girls?"

"True... you *are* dating my brother."

"Hey!" Dylan exclaims, looking back. Mack missed the bantering between the three of them, missed this warm feeling within him whenever they talked. He didn't care where they went, as long as this feeling followed. "Welp, time for the long part."

Mack stares up and sees the trail leading up.

“Where are we?”

“The special spot I was talking about.”

“I can see that, what I mean is what’s so special about here?”

“You’ll see.”

“You know what he’s talking about?”

“Kind of.”

“Spill.”

“Nope.”

“I hate you.”

“No, you don’t.”

It took them nearly 15 minutes to get near the top. Zoey and Dylan were bent over, out of breath.

“Are you guys good?”

“Yeah, we’re fine.”

“How much further Dylan?”

“Almost there.”

“Alright then,” they continued going, stopping after a few minutes.

“And we’re here.”

Mack looks around; the first thing that catches his attention is 2 tombstones. The next thing was the skyline looking over the city and the setting sun. Mack just sat there speechless. They exchanged a glance without saying anything. Dylan nodded his head

and started pushing Mack forward toward the graves. When he gets close enough, Mack gets off his wheelchair and hugs the tombstone as he cries. He cries all the tears that had been building up for 3 years. He can feel his brother hugging him as the wind envelopes them.

Artist Statement

The perspectives I used for this story are the 2 brothers Mack and Dylan because I felt that I could write a story about a sibling bond the best. The way I engaged the essential questions is how to be a family where you can have your lows and your downs but you can rely throughout everything. Meanwhile, for how family could affect someone's identity I answered with how taking care of one's family member can change what you are able to do and it changes how much actual freedom you have to do what you want. I created dramatic irony through the use of dialogue and thoughtshots. You are able to see me using dialogue and thoughtshot to create dramatic irony near the end of the 2nd chapter and near the beginning of the 3rd chapter. This is where Mack finds out he can't walk and where Dylan knows something happened to Mack but can't say exactly what it is. This causes them to fight because Mack want's Dylan to comfort him but Dylan can't because he doesn't even know about Mack not being able to walk. One of my favorite thoughtshots I had made was when Mack was saying how cold everything was near the end of the 2nd chapter. Another thoughtshot I created was when Mack was thinking back on the night where Dylan got hurt and thinking about how wrong he was and how sorry he was. The snapshots I created had a lot to do with using the motifs to describe a character's condition. An example of this is when Dylan comes to see Mack in his room after being discharged and how cold Mack's room was until Dylan came in and opened everything and it warmed up the room in the middle of the 5th chapter. I would use dialogue to create tension and to eventually reach the climax. An example of this, although I keep using it, it does work, it's when the doctor told Mack about his inability

to walk which leads up to an argument between the brothers. This occurs from the end of the 2nd chapter to the end of the 3rd chapter. The motifs that are recurring throughout the story are how warm or cold something is, the wind and storms, and the sunset at the parent's grave at the end of the 1st chapter and the 6th chapter. I was able to describe how Mack is feeling throughout the entire story using the temperature and the wind and weather. The sunset at the parent's graves, although only happening twice, represents the end of a dark time for both main characters. Mack being in a coma for Dylan and not seeing life worth living for Mack.