

Some Things Never Die

Jeyden

“Happy birthday to youuuuu,” A chorus of voices sang. It wasn’t a good chorus - a group of kids going through puberty - but they were all singing for him. That’s when it really started to sink in: He might be incarcerated for the rest of his life. Jeyden was startled from his thoughts as rough hands slapped him on the back. “Congratulations!”

Growing up, Jeyden had never seemed like a bad kid. He always paid attention in class, got A’s and B’s. That’s why it was such a big shock when he got sent to juvenile detention for arson.

“I never thought I would see this day,” said Dave, Jeyden’s best friend. “I remember when you walked in here five years ago with your shaky legs like it was yesterday,”

“You’re never gonna get over that, huh?” said Jeyden.

Dave laughed and said, “Nope, not until pigs fly.” As Dave was pulled away, two other people were suddenly in front of him.

“Did you hear me singing?” said Mickey.

“No – did you hear me?” said someone that Jeyden didn’t recognize.

“Yes I heard both of yo–”

“Who was better?” Mickey asked, bouncing on his toes.

“You guys sounded like dying hyenas,” Jeyden said, trying to be as honest as possible.

“But which hyena was dying less?”

“That's not how it works Mik– you know what, never mind. My point is you both sounded horrible.”

Mickey turned to his friend. “So who won the bet?”

He shrugged. “I dunno.”

“Damn, I really thought I was gonna win that one too,” said Mickey.

When Jeyden first got to juvie, Mickey was the only one to talk to him. Jeyden assumed it was obvious to Mickey that he was missing someone, but Mickey didn't ask. Jeyden had never been away from his mom for long; they had always been close. Jeyden's mom looked the exact opposite of him: While Jeyden had dark skin and curly hair, Maria was extremely pale with straight hair. Whenever they were in public, people would stare at them and whisper. But Jeyden and his mom would just laugh and keep walking.

Maria

Maria would have liked to spend her night cuddled up with her boyfriend, watching scary movies and eating popcorn. Instead she was dragged out by her friends, again. They always said it was for her own good but she was starting to think her money was more of a factor than her actual presence.

“C'mon,” said Alice, “it's not that we don't like him, but going to a bar with your boyfriend is like bringing your dentist trick-or-treating.”

Maria sighed, “Fine, I'll come this time, but you guys have to start paying for your own drinks.”

“Deal.”

At the bar, her friends immediately scattered to look for hot guys, leaving Maria all alone. She sat on a stool and ordered her regular, a gin and tonic, and listened to the conversation next to her.

“Everyone around me is starting to have kids. I feel like I’m falling behind.”

“They seem like such a burden – who wants to change a lot of diapers and barely get any sleep?”

“But people say you’ll never stop loving your kid and they’ll never stop loving you. It would be nice to have something like that in my life.”

Suddenly, Maria was back on the couch in her studio apartment. She had just taken baby Jeyden on a stroll through the park and soon had to get ready for work. Jeyden grabbed the edge of the couch cushion and stood up, his tiny hands grabbing at the pillow seam. Then he let go with his hands and started to lift his foot. Maria's eyes widened as he brought his foot forward and back down to the floor. She jumped up.

“OH MY GOD – YOU JUST TOOK YOUR FIRST STEP!”

Jeyden looked at her weird, then started to grin.

Maria woke from her daze, put down her drink, and began to run.

Jeyden

Jeyden lay in bed. It felt like all of his thoughts had stopped for his birthday; now that it was over, they all came rushing back.

Four years ago, Jeyden sat down in the visitors room and looked around for a sign of his mom. Ten minutes passed before she showed up, ten minutes that he could have spent talking to her, ten minutes that felt like a waste. Jeyden could tell she wasn't in a good mood, but she wasn't the one in juvie, so she couldn't be complaining.

She fell into the chair and sighed. "How has it been Jeyden?"

"Ok," he said, not wanting to give much more.

"That's all I'm getting? Ok?" she said, her voice rising. "I drive an hour here and back and that's all you give me?"

"Oh, sorry I'm not in the mood to talk," he said sarcastically. "It's not like I've been living the best life either."

"You know what? I am done with your shit, I have done everything I can for you, I gave you a great childhood, a great education, and how do you repay me? By throwing it all away and going to juvie." Her voice started to falter.

"Do you know the one person who could have stopped me from doing this? Who I could always look up to and he would be there for me? My dad. But you had a little fight with him so I couldn't talk to him anymore, either!" He stood up and stomped out of the room, not daring to look back at her face.

Jeyden awoke in a sweat-covered bed. He sat up and started to cry.

"Why? Why?" he said through tears, "Why did I have to say that? Can't she come back just one more time?" He realized she was not coming back for him, and that meant he had to go find her.

Maria

She didn't know where she was running; she just went. After twenty minutes, she started to feel the ground through her shoes, but she didn't care. After about an hour she finally stopped. Her lungs felt like shards of glass had punctured them. Her mind was like a circus: too many things happening in one small place. She couldn't figure out if she was sad, scared, apologetic, or all of them. It was just one big mess. But one thing she knew for sure: She had to find her son.

She got home and started making calls. Calls to his old social worker, calls to the last juvenile center she knew she'd been at. When she was finally able to track down Jeyden's current location, she immediately bought plane tickets and started packing.

Jeyden

The next morning Jeyden had a plan. All he needed was a handheld mirror, two batteries, and a bribe-able guard. He first set the mirror against the wall so the sunlight would bounce off it. Then he placed the batteries in front of the mirror, went to the commons, and started to wait. As lunchtime approached, Jeyden started to fear that it wouldn't work. That's when a BOOM came from his cell. Everybody started to panic. Three guards left their posts to see what was happening. This was his chance. He rushed forward, darting through hallways he knew like the back of his hand. As he neared the next post, he pulled out his gun. He crept around the corner and put his gun to the back of the guard's head.

Maria

Maria's plane had just landed. She rushed out of the airport and got into the first cab she saw.

"How fast can you get to the Juvenile Detention Center?"

"Why rush? The Center isn't going anywhere," the driver responded.

"I'll find a faster way there if I need to."

"Ok, ok."

The drive there was a blur. *What would she say? Would he forgive her? What if he didn't recognize her? What if everything goes wrong?* When they got there, Maria was startled out of her daze. Why were there 15 police cars and three SWAT teams surrounding the Center?

Jeyden

"Hands up, slowly, no sudden moves." The guard jumped a bit at first but slowly put his hands up.

"Good choice," Jeyden said. "Now very slowly take out all your weapons."

The guard took out his baton and taser.

"Don't think I forgot about the knife."

The guard's shoulders sagged as he reached into his boot.

Jeyden tied up the guard, grabbed the knife, and said, "Good thing you didn't resist, because I only had a nerf dart in here."

Jeyden started again down the hallway, but around the next corner, he was suddenly taken by two people. He kicked and punched but it was futile. Eventually they blindfolded him and threw him down on some hard surface. Then, the surface was suddenly moving, causing him to

roll to the edge and hit his head on a wall. Jeyden rolled around like this for about twenty minutes before everything finally came to a jolting halt.

Maria

A guy walked up to the cab. “We are not allowing visitors right now– we have a small fire in the prison and we are closed for everyone’s safety.”

“YOU HAVE TO LET ME IN! MY SON IS IN THERE!” Maria screamed.

“Ma’am I am very sorry to hear that, but we can’t let you in.”

“Comon, I’ll take you to a diner and we can wait until they let visitors in again,” said the cab driver. Maria just sat there, unable to process what she just heard. The cab started to move and she could do nothing to stop it. She watched the trees move by. They pulled into a diner parking lot, and Maria let herself be led inside by the driver. The only thing she noticed was a small red balloon in the trees, trapped, just like her.

Jeyden

Jeyden was thrown out of the van and he rolled a couple times on the concrete before opening his eyes. His head hurt, his arms hurt, his neck hurt, everything hurt. The only thing he could see was a small red balloon floating up into the sky.

The end

Artist's Statement

In my story I used two perspectives: Jeyden's and Maria's, because the story is about both of them finally meeting. I feel this makes my story interesting and allows the reader to learn a lot about each separate character. I think especially for a short story, two perspectives is the best. Also, if Jeyden and Maria did not have as close a relationship, the story would not be as intriguing.

Throughout my story, I have used snapshots, thoughtshots, dialogue, dramatic irony and motifs. My main snapshot was after Maria stopped running: Having overheard people talking about kids, and she realized how much she missed her own kid. This snapshot showed how much Jeyden had meant to her, and how she just threw it out the window. I had a lot of thought shots, but the main ones were the memories the characters re-live throughout the story, the good memories of each other that they miss so much. I used dramatic irony when Maria got to the prison when they were on lockdown and the reason they were on lockdown was because Jeyden was trying to find her. Also when they get so close to each other but don't fully find each other. Throughout my story I used dialogue to set the scene, move the plot forward, and show the characters' emotions. Without my dialogue and descriptive details the story would seem boring and no one would want to read it.

The essential questions for this project were: *How might one's family impact their identity? And What does it mean to be family?* In my story I talked about how important family is to everyone. Even if you are not the closest with your family they will still always be there for you. I think that good family relationships will affect people positively and that shows in my story. Because he had a bad relationship with his mom for a while he kind of went crazy. Even though their relationship had ups and downs he still wanted to find her in the end, no matter what.