

Reborn By Brandee B.

Grandfather

I sigh, kicking the dirt from the gravel path. I glare at my gnarled hands, the back webbed with grotesque veins, as if a frail man of ninety can make them go away. And suddenly, pain shoots through my back and I gasp. Along with the pain, anger floods me. Why do I have to be like this? Does God think that I am ready to give up, to rest at last? They think I am weak, and it is so, though I would give my heart and soul to be once again the strong, handsome young man that I once was.

I stumble and fall, shaking arms spread as if to embrace the ground, to hit it a dead end facing the earth, and to snap my bones and have an excuse to cry out at the world who had caused my misery.

But someone catches me, strong arms tightening around my middle and lifting me upright. I turn around and see Christopher, his brilliant green eyes shining as mine once did. I huff and struggle out of his arms.

"I could've stood myself, without your grubby fingers squeezing the life out of me." The words come out sharp and cold. He sighs, and whispers as if afraid of my brittle fingers and bent limbs,

"No, Grandfather. You can't."

Christopher

He thinks he is still young.

He is not proud of his age, but tries to conceal it, as if something like that can be hidden.

He is afraid of being old and frail.

He is afraid of death.

I pretend along with him.

Like a small child's game.

But I cannot pretend forever.

Robert

As soon as Christopher lets go, the pain comes back, stabbing pain. It's in my chest, resonating in my limbs. I shake. But I tell myself to stand straight anyways. I tell myself that the pain shall stop, the weakness will cease at last. But my will has been weakened along with my bones, and I feel the hope crumbling away. I collapse, my heart crying to be strong and not give up, but something weighs me down, pressing me flat to the ground, blurring my vision and crushing my breath. I see black shapes shimmering before my eyes and I am overwhelmed with grief. Is this pain? The pain from my heart, or am I ill?

Could this be the end?

My last sight is Christopher, shaking me.

Reviving me.

If he wishes, he can run..

If he wishes, he can carry me home.

If he wishes, he can cry for help.
If he wishes, he can save me.
But me?
I can do nothing.
Nothing at all.

I'm falling, and falling. I wait for impact. I wait for pain. But it never comes. I cry out in my head, wondering if they will be my last thoughts.

Please, God, give me a second chance to live. I promise I will be better this time. Please. Just let me be young and strong one more time. I forgot to cherish what I had until I lost it. Be merciful. Give me a second chance. I'm not ready yet! I can't! I have so much more spirit!
I'M NOT READY!

I break into a quiet sob, unsure whether it's in my head or if it's real. But I can feel the pain in my chest, and the pain in my heart. I think of all the happy days I've had. Drink root beer as a little boy with my Pa. Getting my first bicycle. Marrying my darling Marilee, and watching her die. I recall pain, anguish, and love. Could I have had so many memories in what seemed like a mere minute of precious, precious life? I see pieces of me flash in my darkening vision. Things I thought I had forgotten. I hear heavenly music, and there is a rainbow of colors and light dancing in front of my eyes.

I realize that I am dying, that there is no hope left.

I can see something, something that sparks a brilliant memory. I see a face, pictured above mine. Lines of worry crease his young handsome face. His brilliant green eyes seem to light up my vision. This face seems familiar, something of my past. I grope, but nothing is there. Despair crashes through me. My mind is numb and dull, but I know that this face, this beautiful face, is tying me to my essence. Tying me to reality. Can I really hold on for eternity, though? When will I let go? But suddenly a bolt of clarity slices through my thoughts.

The face is me.

God has given me a second chance.

The face is screaming words, words that have no meaning but that strike emotion inside of me.

"Grandfather! Grandfather!"

I have been reborn again.

My prayers have been answered.

Christopher

I see him before me. I cry his name, once, twice, even though there is no point. Grandfather is dead. This cannot be true. The vicious, thriving old man who hated me so. And now he is gone. I am like a puzzle that is missing pieces. I can see Mama crying, weeping as Pa holds her gently. I stare, and feel hot, wet tears run down my face. I feel lifeless, as if I had died with him. As if I was connected to this hateful man in some heavenly way. I cry, tears shaking me and my breath coming as sharp as knives into my lungs.

Please. Just take him back. I need him.

And suddenly the puzzle piece snaps into place. As well as I can feel his icy hand clenched in mine, I can feel his presence. My tears stop, and a wave of clarity and peace flushes over me. Like I have been falling all my life, and now I have landed soundly on the ground. I smile.

I understand now.

At last, I am complete.

