

Flip Turn

By: Campbell S.

I was sitting in homeroom, lost in my book. The bell rang, and I left class. I walked past the lake on my way home. All the highschool boys, who get out of school before me were racing, seeing who could get across the lake and back the fastest. I walked over to them. I was going to be straight up honest with them.

“I could beat that.” I said.

They all looked at me like I was crazy. Everyone knew, at least at my school, that I was the fastest swimmer there. Apparently these highschool boys had no clue what I was capable of. The boy who had just finished asked.

“What’s your name, kid”

“Delyla Rayn.” I replied.

He continued, “Ok Delyla, how bout we race next Saturday, right here. Then we’ll see who’s really the fastest.”

I agreed and carried on my way home.

The next day at school, I found that word about the race had spread. Everyone was making fun of me, and worst of all, my best friend Dakota didn’t even believe in me. She said that even if I was the same age as Jackson—the swimmer I’m racing—I would still lose by a mile. I spent 30 minutes in the bathroom crying. When I got home, I ran straight past my dad and right up to my room. He immediately knew something was wrong, and chased after me. That’s what makes him such a great dad. Ever since my mom died a couple of years ago, it’s like his senses were turned up, he knows right away when I’m upset I locked him out and he pounded on the door for about 15 minutes before I finally agreed to let him in. We talked for about an hour. We came to the conclusion that I would go to the pool everyday after school. I would swim laps and exercise. I also was going to try to not let anyone know about my training, but that didn’t go so well because people would see me at the pool, and our town was fairly small so word spread quickly. Kids still made fun of me at school, but I didn’t care as much. The thing that hurt me the most was that Dakota didn’t believe in me, and whenever I heard her talking behind my back I would run to the bathrooms and cry. Everyone thought

that I was crying about ALL of the hate, but in reality only a small portion of them understood how it felt to be backstabbed by their best friend. People were being so rude, they would say that I was stupid and that my confidence level was going to get me into even bigger trouble than it already has. A rumor even spread two days before the race that I had called it off because I was scared.

I hadn't talked to Jackson since our encounter at the lake. I decided that on my way home from school on Friday, I was going to stop by the lake where he was with his friends, and wish him good luck.

It was finally race day. I had gotten a full eight hours of sleep. Jackson showed up in nice swim shorts, a cap, and goggles. I just showed up in an old one-piece and goggles because dad and I didn't have much money. So many people had shown up to watch, probably over 100 kids and adults standing around the lake on the shore. Jackson and I shook hands and took our starting stances on the edge of the dock. Everyone was cheering on Jackson, but over everyone I could hear dad's whistle! Everyone went silent, and I got serious. It was almost as if the world stopped moving, the only thing I could focus on was Jackson and what was in front of me. I heard the whistle blow and dove head first into the water. Everything stayed silent until I came up from the water. Then all I could hear was cheering and people yelling.

“HURRY UP JACKSON!”

With that, I knew that I was in the lead. I kept on pushing, and pushing, harder, and harder. Every once in a while I'd see Jackson's hand in my peripheral vision. It felt like almost immediately, I was at the other side. Jackson was at least ten feet behind me. I pushed off the ground because it was shallow, and I wasn't breaking the rules. As I pushed off my left foot caught on a really sharp rock. It felt like someone put a bunch of hand sanitizer on a giant paper cut. The bacteria filled water flushing out my cut hurt so bad. I then saw Jackson come up in front of me and I knew I had to swim through the pain. I pushed off with my other foot and swam like I had never swam before. Jackson was about ten feet ahead of me. I kept swimming, and swimming, and swimming until I was neck and neck with him. We had about 30 feet left to go. I was only a foot in front of him when my hand hit the dock. I WON! I ACTUALLY WON! I was pulled out of the water. My cut was worse than I thought. I was sitting on the dock when Jackson got out of the water. He came over to me and shook my hand. Then everyone came over to congratulate

me. Other than my foot, which I had to be taken to the hospital to get stitches, that was the best day of my life.

Today I'm signing my full-ride to Florida Southern College to be part of their swimming team; My lifelong dream.