

## Serendipity?

BANG! We dove into the blue, cold water like dolphins. I could see my friend Lio from the edge of my eye, swimming right beside me. After the dive, all my thoughts went away, and also all of the pain. Neck and neck, Lio and I stretched out to the wall to finish. When we touched almost at the same time, I looked at the screen, and then...

“WAKE UP!” In my ear was the voice of my biggest rival Lio. We were friends, but also enemies. Yesterday, we received a message from our coach for the competition this week.

“What are you swimming this Sunday?” Lio asked with a smile on her face. “I talked to the coach yesterday, and he told me to swim with you on breaststroke.” I said. Her smile disappeared. Breaststroke was Lio’s favorite stroke, and maybe she thought that I would beat her time like before... “Welp! I’ll be excited for that breaststroke of yours!” I walked away, scared a little from Lio’s stare. “Maybe I shouldn’t have said that...” I thought.

I was waiting near the stairs for my mom to pick me up. Everyone had gone home already except me, and I was playing games with my phone. Then suddenly, *clang*. I heard a sound. At that moment I lost my balance and fell down the stairs. I couldn’t stand up, maybe I had practiced too much. That’s what I thought it was. My feet were swollen and bruised. However, the next day, when I went to the hospital, the doctor said, “I don’t think you should do any harsh workouts or activities this week. It will make your feet worse.” “You got to be kidding, right?” I cried inside.

Even though my doctor told me that I shouldn’t swim, I still couldn’t stop practicing. I went to practice with my feet a little swollen. And Lio was the first to notice it.

“What happened? Slipped and sprained your ankle *again*? You know that now’s not the time.” she said removing her cap with a little ring, dangling and always making a clang sound. “I know I know. But, I felt like I got pushed by somebody. Not pointing fingers but, Do you think, *Her*?” I said. Her, Yurie. She and Lio and I, were the girls that our coach was expecting to win this week’s competition. “...You go talk to her! I gotta go talk to the coach, see you in a few minutes!” Lio said as she left the locker room.

I walked up to Yurie, “Hey Yurie. We need to talk.” She had a puzzled face. I took Yurie to the locker room. And asked, “You did this to me right?” Our conversation had a contradiction. “I did *not* do that to you. And I know who.” When I going to ask who, it came that sound. THUD. We went towards that sound and saw Lio on the floor. And her arm was swollen and bruised like my leg.

The day before the competition, I was thinking. “Yurie said she saw who did it. But nobody was there, Was she lying?” Then Yurie came to me. I knew what was she going to say. So I spoke ahead. “It’s ok. I *already know* who it is.” I gave Yurie a look. A look when you see a stranger. And Yurie backed away.

Today was the day. Ten minutes before the race, Yurie and Lio were beside me like coach said. Yurie tried to talk to me but I refused. “I, I’m Sorry.” I heard Lio suddenly apologizing to me. “What do you mean?” I said with a little anger. “I’m sorry I pushed you.”

“You, ...wait what?” Inside my head was loading like a computer. “but, how? Nobody, not even coach was there that night.” I couldn’t put out my words properly. “Yeah. I wasn’t there. *Lio* was.” “What are you talking about?” I asked. “I, had a teleport machine to go to the future and went to see the result of the competition. And you won the race, and I was envy. So I went back to the past and pushed you at the stairs.” Lio said. “And after that, I wanted to

apologize my mistake, but I didn't know how, I asked Yurie, but still I was afraid." Lio continued, "I know today, means a lot to you, but it means a lot for me too." Now, it all made sense. Maybe if *I* had a time machine, I would've done the same. "I understand. but let's forget about it now" I grabbed her shoulder.

When it was our turn, I looked to Lio. "Let's just do our best, no running away from the things we think we can't accomplish." Finally I saw Lio's smile. We went up the stand.

"Take your marks."

BANG! Now I knew, that my dream wasn't just dream. I felt fast. Fast like I was being carried by the water. Neck and neck, we touched the wall, and looked at the time board, our time ...it was *not there*. The time board was black. Somebody removed the cord. Everyone but Lio and I was panicking. "Welp, Next time? Let's battle who will recover first! Arm? Or leg?" Lio said, and laughed. And I apologized to Yurie about what I did these few days. We smiled and hugged each other.

While hugging, from far away, in the corner of my eye, I saw it. *Another Lio*. And realized that using time machines makes people duplicate in that time. And realized what Lio said, "Yeah. *I* wasn't there. *Lio* was." She was holding the cord that was supposed to be plugged to the time board. I could see it in her eyes that she wasn't just *Lio*, she was a *devil in disguise*. I didn't know if she was really Lio, but I could see her mouth moving, "I'm sorry again" and smiled evilly at me.