

Change

By Jaiden K.

I stare at the place that used to be called home. It's a cold, windy afternoon. The white, modern walls and the black panel door haven't changed a bit, but the only thing that has is the red "For Sale" sign. I look deep into my mind, thinking about how I got to this place in time. I think back to when this all started.

2 Months Earlier

I wake up to a blinding light and try to move my sore limbs, but they don't budge. A deep pressure presses all over my body. I scream for help, but nothing comes out. My vision is heavily distorted. My lips are as dry as a desert. Suddenly, I feel a deep pain in my back. Pain and confusion are the only emotions I have. I feel my eyes getting heavier and heavier to the point where I am drifting out of consciousness.

Once again, I open my heavy eyes to a grey ceiling with a round, shining light in the middle. I look at my surroundings, and notice I'm laying in a hospital bed. All the windows around me are shut with turquoise blinds. I try to sit up from my lying position, but my legs won't budge. I do it again, same result.

"You won't be able to move your legs due to severe damage to your spine".

Finally, I can see clearly. The voice belongs to a tall man in his mid-thirties with black hair and pale skin. He is wearing a black suit so polished it's reflecting light and is sitting on a wooden bench right across from me.

"Who are you?" I croak in my raspy voice. My lips are still dry.

"Jung-Dong-Nuel. I was your family's financial lawyer and a close friend of your father for many years. We've met before, Jessica," the man replies. I don't recognize him at all, and what does he mean by "was"? I move my head into the direction of my left arm and gaze down at it. It's bruised to the point where at least half my arm is a dark red scab with discoloration everywhere. I don't feel anything though.

"What happened?," I cough. My throat is crying for water.

"Jesscia-," he trails off.

"What?" I yell impatiently. I'm sitting in a hospital bed, confused, and this man won't give me a straightforward answer!

"A week ago, your family got into a really bad car accident. A drunk truck driver rammed your car. It fell onto a shallow shore. It's a miracle you're alive. Your parents are dead, Jessica. I am so sorry".

I couldn't believe it. My beloved parents. I stuff my face into a pillow and cry my eyes out. *They're gone.*

"When they found the wreckage, you were on the verge of death. When they pulled you into the hospital, they found out that your spinal cord was shattered to pieces". *Paralysis. No. Why?*

"So I can't use my legs... forever?" I sob. I know what he's going to say, but I still just need to hear it.

"I'm afraid so".

I just lay there and really don't know what I'm going to do. I have nothing to my name now.

"Your parents stated in their wills that you go live with a close family friend of theirs if anything happened to them," Jung-Dong-Nuel stated. I don't care what happens after this. My life is over.

"Who are they?" I blubber.

"Their names are Katy and Jarold".

The names feel familiar, but also feel unfamiliar at the same time. The thought of going home was clinging to me like a heavy weight. I lay back down, rest my heavy eyes, and drift back to sleep.

Present Day

The red "For Sale" sign plastered on my door haunts me. The place I grew up in would be given to someone else. The thought is just horrific. Ever since the accident, I've been seen by a psychiatrist. She told me to let the sadness out, but when I hold it in, I forget for a few moments that my parents are actually gone. I instead think about my old wheelchair. I look at Jung-Dong-Nuel, he's standing right next to me. Seeing my house one last time was something necessary to me.

"It's time. Let's go to my car," he whispers. I don't want to leave, but realize there isn't a choice. Jung-Dong-Nuel escorts me to his black Audi. Since I'm in a wheelchair, it is extremely difficult to get in. *Working legs are something I truly miss.*

"Let's go see Jarold and Katy," he gently whispered while we were resting in the car. I act like I don't hear him. *Jarold and Katy don't matter to me at all.*

"I've met with them. They are quite lovely people." Jung-Dong-Noel stated. That still doesn't change my mind. I don't want to be loved by them. Instead, I want to be loved by my parents. I sit in the back of the car, inspecting a dead, cracked phone recovered from the wreckage. It was my father's. It used to have a picture of me. *I miss him.* I shed a single tear and wipe it off with my palm within a moment.

When we pull up to Katy and Jarold's suburban home, I get really nervous. I don't know why, but I just do.

"I'm going to stay in the car for a moment," Jung-Dong-Nuel sighs.

"Thank you," I smile.

I wheel myself towards my new guardians' house with the cracked phone resting in my lap. I stare at the wooden door, realizing that when I knock on that door, my life will change forever.

"I love you mom, and dad," I sob quietly.

I look at my surroundings. The perfect green lawn with a red doghouse in the left corner, and the black Audi Jung-Dong-Nuel is sitting in. I stare at my hand, and then form it into a fist, and knock.....