

## Set Me Free

I hate using the term alive, at least when describing myself. Someone who lives in constant fear and sadness isn't really living now is it? My music blares, blocking out reality. What do you love in life? Reading, speaking with friends, your significant other who says you're going to be together forever but you guys break up every damn week. Well I love to sleep, it's like death without any commitment. Waking up is dreadful like whatever virtual life I have going on in my mind is sucked out of me by that damn alarm clock. Going to school is even worse than waking up, going to school is like a nightmare, but it's real.

*Dakota...*

what..?

"Dakota!"

"Yes ma'am" dammit I fell asleep in class again...

"Stop daydreaming and get to work!" everyone is looking at me, god I hate having attention drawn to me. I swing my head down and my hair covers my red face and I stare intently at the math problems in front of me. When will this day be over? The bell rings and I bolt out of class, trying to get to the next before *they* come. I round the corner and everything goes black.

I come to with a girl standing over top of me. "Oh my god are you okay? I'm so sorry..." she continued on but I was still dizzy and my books were all over the floor, who was this girl. She held out her hand to help me off the ground and she scrambles to pick up my books. "I'm Bailey" she says handing me my books.

"Hi, Bailey. Dakota, what the hell just happened?"

"I wasn't watching where I was going, I kind of ran into you, I'm sorry..." Her face turned red and she walked away. I continued to my class.

At lunch I sit alone, like always. *They* don't have lunch with me, thank god. I jumped as someone tapped my shoulder. I turn around to see Bailey. "Hey, what are you doing here?" I smile kind of forcefully, my head still hurts from hitting the ground.

"You looked lonely" Her smile was genuine. Finally I had someone to sit with at lunch, this was odd. We talked, and talked. For once I was actually a bit disappointed when I heard the bell ring, she slipped a piece of paper in the pocket of my jacket and trots away. It was... a phone number. I smile...

Later that day I walk home, alone. I decide to text Bailey.

"Hey☺"

"Hi, Kota, do you mind if I call you Kota? Anyway, where are you, lets hang out, meet me at the park around 5. K?"

"Okay." I walk home and wait, it seems like forever until I can leave. I never have anything to do. Have I actually made a friend? It's been a long time since I've been able to call anyone a friend.

"Mom, I'm going to the park" I say peeking my head around the wall into the kitchen wear my

mom was preparing to fix dinner.

“Okay, be safe. I love you”

“You too, Mom.” I was eager to leave.

I arrive slightly early and sit on the swing swaying lightly. Bailey approaches me at 5 on the dot and suggest we take a walk. So we do. We approach a bike trail near the edge of some woods.

“Kota, I wonder what’s back there.” She said smiling like a kid about to go into a candy store. She grabs my wrist and pulls me in. The fall leaves crunching under our feet and putting an orange hue on the whole forest, it was so pretty. There was a clearing on the other side of the trail. We lay in the grass and look at the clouds, until my worst nightmare became reality.

“Hey, Faggot!” I look up, there they are. Just a few yards in front of me. I stand up and start to run, I’m not fast enough. One of them grabs my hair and throws me to the ground. Pain is everywhere, I lay on the ground unable to do anything but scream, and we are too far into the woods for anyone to hear. I just lay there, I feel my bone cracking under their feet. “I bet you love this faggot, a bunch of guys surrounding you, touching you.” One of them kicks me in the groin and I let out another scream.

“Please no...” I protest, they won’t stop. I hear laughing... Bailey...

“Did you really think someone would want to be friends with you?” a tear falls on my cheek and I sob in pain.

“Aww, is the little gay boy sad?” I start coughing, I taste blood. I feel a sharp pain in my head, and once again everything goes black.

I see them start to back away, I don’t move.

“Fuck, guys we have to go”

“We have to bail!” They start running. I stand up. I see something on the ground it’s... me. Covered in blood and dirt, no longer breathing. My body is visibly broken in many places.

I feel no more pain, I just feel light as a feather, I look around and see nothing but me, and this open field, but I feel different. I look at my body I’m clad in white, examining myself, on my back I feel a surprise, wings? The city being not too far from here I run, I run to the bring connecting my city over a river. I stand upon the ledge and close my eyes, relax my body, and just fall. Finally, I’m free. I’m free from this living hell I’ve had to deal with for years, I’ve found my wings, spread them and flown away from the cruel reality. No more waking up. Finally, they’ve set me free...