

ENGLISH ADVANCED

Creative Writing: Imaginary Friend

Two miserable red trees dropped above the languid creek. The long-stemmed leaves, drained of colour touched the water ever so softly, creating a current of soothing ripples. The tranquil harmonies of various forest birds and creatures echoed their way through the seemingly endless thickets of the marshland, eventually making it to James sitting on the bank. James would often meander down here and skim rocks along the water, Frank would be there too, and together they'd play for hours, or at least until it was dark, and then James would head back inside whilst Frank waited until he was needed again.

"What are you doing James?" A familiar figure approached, easing himself onto the grass just above the sand where James was playing. He patted the space next to him and invited James to sit.

"Not much, Grandpa" James replied, taking the offer in humble accord.

"I come down here too sometimes, the whole thing overwhelms me sometimes, and I just need an escape, we all do."

James nodded musingly.

"Is Frank here?" Grandpa inquired.

"Not right now Pa."

"You know you can always come and talk to me if things are getting too tough kiddo. I'm always here for you. Now are you coming back inside, it's getting dark." Grandpa abruptly stated, staggering to his feet. He much looked frailer than usual.

James just nodded and took his Grandfather's hand; together they walked back towards the hospital doors, in no particular rush. As they walked, the perched sun fell just below the horizon and the resulting orange hue quickly infected the contours of the landscape, and as quickly as it came it was gone; darkness.

The gloomy lights on the lobby roof flickered with barely enough light to keep the darkness from creeping in. As they walked to the elevator they passed the monotonous parade of spouseless parents with their children, a frail old woman, a man in a wheelchair, all heading home in the usual trance of despairing serenity. Floor 6 was the floor, the long-term patients resided here and James' Mum was right at the end, room 659. Hand in hand, Grandpa and James walked down the corridor, of which they'd walked for many years, each room as bleak and as lifeless as the rest. The rooms lacked colour, they were confined, and the general morbidity of the estranged nature of lying all day in a hospital bed was hard for James to fathom, especially at such a young age. Grandpa took a seat in the chair next to the air conditioner, and patted the space next to him inviting James to join him. Together they watched as his Mum fight each breathe, each seeming as though it was more of a battle than the last. She'd fought this horrible disease for so many years, but eventually the cancer overwhelmed her, and here they were, at the start of the end.

They sat and waited in such a simple transcendence of time, until after a few forceful coughs her breathing slowed, slowed, and stopped, followed by the CRO heart monitor which pulsed with regressive magnitude until it was entirely flat, her battle was over. The nurses quickly gathered outside, with the doctors, with an ironic hesitance or reluctance to actually enter the room. The serious looks on their faces barely illustrated the severity of the pain James felt. His heart bled tears of incredulous sadness. Howling with pain Grandpa took James' hand and together they walked the corridor one final time.

* *

Under the two miserable trees sat Grandpa and James. Darkness had now overcome the chirpiness of the birds, and the water lacked its subtle finesse of movement, the overall bleakness would have been unnerving if they had the spare thought to care.

“Do you ever see Frank anymore?” Grandpa cried holding James tightly in his arms.

“Not really.”

“I guess you’re too old for an imaginary friend now anyway” He murmured, struggling to his feet once more. James took his hand once more and together they walked, ready to pack up. Ready to go. It was all, finally, over.