A Picture Worth a Thousand Words

by Yiiiiikes

Summary

It's (Y/N) Prescott's last day in Arcadia Bay, and her last chance to say something meaningful to her brother.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

August 31st, 5:00 a.m.

It's been nearly two hours and (Y/N) still can't think of the right words. Ironic, for someone known for her ability to write, and to speak. She had always been a poet in her heart, with an innate ability to make anything feel lovely. It was how she dealt with her family most days, by painting over the ugly and focusing on all the beautiful things.

Designer clothes.

A credit card with no limit.

Champagne at every party, and parties all the time.

She romanticized all of it with such fervor that she had convinced herself the less pleasant parts of
her life didn't exist. She ignored the pressure of her family legacy, of the notoriety her name carried, and most of all he ignored the rapid deterioration of her brothers mental health. It was all because of their father, she knew that. He'd tormented her in similar ways for years before she had learned how to tune him out. Nathan however, couldn't seem to do the same. (Y/N) wanted to help him, to give him some sort of reprieve, but that would only make her worry about him. And if she worried about him that would mean she'd have to confront the ugly parts of her life, something she quietly - albeit, adamantly, refused to do.

So she stood back, off to the side and allowed her world to remain unchanged.

Now, however she was determined to give her dear, sweet little brother, who had once been so loving and so creative, something to hold on to.

When the pair was younger, (Y/N) just starting high school and Nathan entering the 6th grade, they couldn't have been closer. A shared passion for art and a lack of friends outside the family had only driven them closer over the years. Until Nathan's Freshman year. (Y/N) knew something was wrong, but she just couldn't place it onto one thing. Nathan was angry, constantly. He rarely spoke to her and when he did it was briefly and with a great deal of malice.

Every so often she would catch him in a different mental space- somewhere vulnerable, and afraid. More often than not, when she found him like this he was high, but she couldn't find it in herself to chastise him for it, let alone confess to anyone else his substance abuse problems. He would call her, and talk at her for hours, most of it interspersed with the sounds of him crying. He would rant, nearly incoherently, about school, about their father, about how much he hated everyone and everything. And (Y/N) would let him talk until he couldn't anymore, and assure him that the world was not inherently bad, and ugly like he thought it was. She would tell him how much she loved him, and how she wished he would talk to her when he was sober. He'd tearfully promise to talk to her more, and proceed to ignore her texts the next morning.

(Y/N) still desperately wanted Nathan to confide in her, to give her something, anything, to help him with, but she knew that it wasn't likely, especially not considering what she was doing. She's leaving Arcadia Bay, quite possibly for the rest of her life. She'd graduated in the spring and had spent all summer making arrangements to move somewhere very, very far away. What she hadn't done however was tell her family what she had been planning, opting instead to only tell them once she was gone. Hence the note she had been writing (or attempting to write) for the last several hours.

It was easy for her to find the words she wanted to say to her parents, after all she'd written nearly a thousand drafts in the form of spiteful poetry. When it came to her brother however, it was much more difficult. She'd spent the whole night writing and rewriting and waiting anxiously for her ride.

She paced up and down her bedroom, mentally reciting paragraph after paragraph but nothing felt
right. She feared that she might never find the right words to say. A soon as that thought crosses her mind, her phone buzzes. Her ride to the airport is here and she still hasn't written anything. As she's gathering her luggage, she catches sight of an old picture, stuck in the corner of her mirror. It's one of her at 16 and Nathan at 13, standing on the beach, smiling broadly. The sky is bright blue and nearly cloudless, and the ocean behind them appears calm, stuck in a perpetual state of peace.

(Y/N) plucks the picture off the mirror and turns it over, grabbing a sharpie to pen out the note she had been overthinking for hours.

August 31st, 8:00 a.m.

Nathan wakes up to a silent house, as usual. Something however, feels off. The energy of the house is wrong somehow, like something is missing and he's just barely missed it. When he gets up to go get breakfast, he notices something unusual on his desk. A photograph, of him and his sister (Y/N). How happy they seemed then. Nathan nearly misses the hastily scrawled note on the backside of the picture.

"Nathan,

I'm your older sister and it hurts when you treat me like you hate me. I think you're being bullied, I think your friends are assholes, and I think you deserve the world, but you won't listen to me.

If I could give you everything, Nathan, I would. But you need to make your own mistakes, even if it hurts to watch you do so. I'm here if, when, you need me.

Your doting sister,

(Y/N)"

Nathan hates how much he appreciates the note, and he goes to (Y/N)'s room to give her back the photo, and to tell her he doesn't need any fucking help, and that he's doing fine god dammit, so just leave him alone, but when he opens up the door, he's shocked to find that the room is mostly barren. It's totally devoid of all the things that she loved. Each knick knack, notebook, and stuffed animal that she had treasured was gone. And without even seeing her go, Nathan knew she was gone.

End Notes

uwu i love nate even though he's the mcfucking worst. i have a thing for boys i think that i can fix lmao
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