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saving



audrey



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SAVING AUDREY  
by  
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Audrey would have won the coin toss if she'd chosen heads. Her sister wouldn't have driven them to Coles under the influence of sedatives that should only have taken effect an hour later. The car would have remained under a protective layering of steel casing and Audrey might have posted her latest photography collection on her Facebook page by midday.

Her sister would have fallen asleep, engaged in the thrilling plot of another sci-fi novel. Their mother would've had to adapt to the lack of quinoa in the fridge instead of insisting Audrey and Daphne buy every 250 gram packet Coles had in stock.

Perhaps Audrey would have noticed her sister gulp down the sedatives as she slid her hands onto the steering wheel.

Daphne certainly wouldn't have fallen asleep and crashed the car.

Audrey would have won the coin toss if she'd chosen heads. Her sister and best friend would not have died in the seat next to her, the windshield coated in a blood that shimmered as blue and red flashing lights surrounded their heavily damaged Mini.

**But Audrey picked tails.**

## CHAPTER 1 - CAPITAL F

*face..*

The cursor flashes expectantly as I thump in the letters of my desired destination.

*Facebook*

One word. One word chosen from an infinite amount. A sheltered, convenient escape from inevitable suffering and pain. That is all I need – my treatment – and then I will be hauled into reality once again, unpleasant veracities greeting me. As I snap my cursor to the suggested search of Facebook with a capital F, a blue login page welcomes me, the final stage of transit before I am plummeted into a fantasy.

*Email or Phone: ninjagirl@blackbeltblue.com*

*Password:*

On the Internet, I can be anything. No one will know. I don't have to be the 13 year old nobody shadowed by her suffering older sister, invasively nosy mother. I can be anyth-

As I reach to type my password, the hollow and frustrated sob of my sister suggests my comfort.

She's crying, again. The arrow on my screen hovers over the red cross, imprinted in a desolate corner, and with reluctance, I hear the click as the boarding gate snaps shut. Instead, a monotonous mauve background burns my eyes. I flip the laptop shut and glance at the fluorescence of my alarm clock. 11:58PM. She can't sleep, again, stress seizing and tensing every bone. It's as though she is relinquishing her sanity, when she encounters a stress attack. The insomnia has majorly affected her - Mum was told today that it has

developed from an acute to chronic condition. But it'll all be over soon...

As I nudge the door, I see that Daphne's eyes are inflamed, burning the crimson red of blood as she weeps. Her body trembles in my embrace, opaque mascara dripping from her lashes. Across the room, a cluttered mass of studying material occupies her desk.

"Year 12 bugs, huh." My pathetic attempt at comfort.

I don't hear an answer, just a reassuring squeeze that she hasn't lost it completely.

It doesn't stop till 1:07AM. Our arms are wrapped around one another and we are one...

## CHAPTER 2 - OXYGEN

*Throbbing with hostility, my head is a 20 kilogram weight, thrust to the side, straining my neck with the excruciating effort of supporting it. I feel as the blood cells rush toward... the right – probably the cause of my head's weight. Every inch of my body seems to ache, a sticky substance glazing several patches of my face. Processing my surroundings causes immense agony as I drag my eyelids... to the right.*

*I am directed in an awkward position, my left arm cradled to my chest, a deep gouge puncturing its skin. Blood gushes from the wound, a large metal splinter the intruder. My trembling hands reach to salvage the crushed metal - merely bloody hands, unexplainable agony and a strangled scream the result. I seem to be imprisoned in a disfigured metal entrapment that was my sister's mini.*

*Daphne. Gently, cautiously, my head rotates towards the wheel, tears gushing from my eyes. My face stings as the tiny droplets make contact with numerous wounds. Her face is peaceful as the red fluid dribbles into and from her mouth. Her eyes, typically fluctuating between 50 vivacious shades of green lie dull, lifeless and rolled to one side. Her chest barely flutters up. Down. Up.*

*Down. Flat.*

*Oxygen. We need the precious atoms of oxygen in an accident dripping with blood, and tragedy. As I reach toward her with my uninjured arm, the distant and relieving melody of sirens pierces through the air. Symbolising an accident. An emergency. Perhaps even death...*



## Chapter 3 – QUINOA

*Anatashia Lockwood: Gurl watchu doin?*

*NinjaGirl: Sleepin. Sittin. Livin.*

*Anatashia Lockwood: Gurl. Ma gut is tearing up. U got 1 sad life.*

*NinjaGirl: ...thx "bestay"*

*Anatashia Lockwood: Imma gonna help u get. a. life. Nathan  
hostiin a partay 9.00 at northstreeet pub. U need to come gurl! Do it  
4 u. and me. Don't wanna be seen with u when u don't even come to  
Nathan – the most popula guy in school's partay. Plz galpal. Say  
YES!!!!*

*NinjaGirl: Um... I can't... res...ist...don't...do this...to me!!! Fine. I'll  
come – 9.00. How could I miss out? 1 word is wat that would be:  
embarrassing...;D*

My eyes flicker between the breaches of reality and my digital paradise, abbreviated slang appearing on the screen as my nimble fingers glide across the keyboard. Typing an automated response – the reaction any “usual” teenager would expect to such an invitation. An invitation that cannot - should not be overlooked, without the person jeopardizing what is labelled as their “social rating.” I shouldn’t care. But I do.

The disappointment formed within me evolves into the convergence of various hormonal emotions. I should not have agreed to attend “*Nathan’s*” party – I’m above that, above the usual teenage influences.

The iridescence my eyes usually possess dulls as I stare at the predetermined words. Shortly after an agonizing flight, my head begins to throb rhythmically as a tedious mauve vastness suddenly threatens to scald my retinas.

The clammy warmth of my room lingers as I thrust my shutters open, a crisp wind sweeping and incinerating any

humidity. A golden haze seems as though it has been respired throughout the atmosphere, resting and illuminating the street with an ochre glow. My world is ethereal for 27 seconds, before I am awoken from the temporary stupor by my mother's penetrating squeal.

A series of profanities precedes the attention-seeking explanation for my mother's anger.

"*Quinoa!* How on *earth* could I have forgotten QUINOA!" I flinch as what sounds like a plate is thrust to the floor, the result of her temperament. I manage to recover the names of my sister and I amongst the babble.

"Quinoa from Aldi. Now. Every packet *in stock*." I stare at the porcelain shards scattered hazardously across the tiles of the kitchen, my mother's cheeks flushed with frustration. Little did she know of the consequence her impatience would bring. I watch mockingly as Daphne draws a misshaped silver coin from her pocket. My mother fumes with rage as her daughter's intentions are revealed.

“Heads.” She ejaculates as the coin is tossed through the air...

...

I slump into the comforting fabric of my sister’s Mini as she spins the key, jerking the motor to life. The imprint of my mother’s victory fades as I glance at Daphne, barely clothed by a threadbare jersey and tight-fitting jeans. Her hair lies in a bundled mess, twisted messily into a bun. Nothing unusual... is my assumption, until our eyes encounter one another’s. Concaving circles penetrate her eye contour, sinking miserably and allowing her low cheekbones prominence. Her eyelids droop, little resistance barely exposing the cloudy hazel pigment of her eyes, dappled with red veins that surge through the whiteness. I feel my brow furrow as concern for my sister intensifies. I will purchase the quinoa, we shall drive home and she will sleep. Rest. Rejuvenate.

That's what would have been, had my sister not taken her daily sedatives not ten minutes prior. The sedatives that should have only taken effect an hour later, but didn't...

## Chapter 4 – TEARS

“I see her. All day, every day. I see the pucker of her skin as she smiles. I see the way her eyes gleam with such iridescence, the colour of the sea on a beautiful day, you know? When she forgets all the rubbish she had to put up with and truly laughed.” The path of a single tear is imprinted into my cheek.

“I see her eyes inflame, burning red blood, dripping with the heavy duty mascara as she cries. She was so insistent on applying that mascara. Every morning. She said her lashes were thin, even though they were the most beautiful I had ever seen. They *were*...” Speaking in past tense creates an agonizing reality, and the pain in my heart intensifies. *She*

was *alive*. *She is dead*. Gently, the wind whispers, mocking my grief.

My realization is interrupted by the voice of our new family counsellor, an “esteemed psychologist” who was recommended by the hospital.

“I understand.” She responds, the indifference etched onto her face providing no comfort. I feel my legs take me from the living room in rage. How could she understand? My sister, the person I loved the most in such a life of misery – gone.

*Pain numbs my mind as I marvel at the metal entrapment that was my sister’s mini. Daphne. Gently, cautiously, my head rotates towards the wheel, tears gushing from my eyes, causing my face to sting as the tiny droplets make contact with numerous wounds. Her face is peaceful as the red fluid dribbles into and from her mouth. Her eyes, typically fluctuating between 50 vivacious shades of green lie dull, lifeless and rolled to one side. Her chest barely flitters up. Down. Up. Down. Flat.*

The last I saw of her, before her spirit rose to the heavens, free of the pain that haunted her for so long. The last time I saw her before the sirens came and took her away, shaking their heads as That was the last time I sat in the passenger seat of the Mini, as I watched her drive... as I watched her drift into oblivion. As I watched her die..

The tears do not come as I muster the courage to enter her room, the bed still unmade from Tuesday morning. I feel the mattress convulse beneath as I slump onto it. However, the tears will not come.

Daphne's door creaks open as my parents enter, Mum's face inflamed with grief and Dad with empty, shadowed bags outlining his eye contour. Not a word need be said. They simply lay on their dead daughter's bed, her pungent, minty fragrance still lingering. I let them hug me, and for a wholesome 10 minutes, the tears come. For a wholesome 10 minutes, we cry our tear beds dry, until we cannot cry any



more. We cry for her, for the life that she lived, and what she would have lived...

## Chapter 5 – CLICK FOR SUPPORT

My fingers stall, still with hesitance, yet determined to forget. To forget what once was joy and perfection. To forget what turned into something horrific, unforgivable and unendurable, bittersweet. The determination proves dominant, and the words that appear on the screen satisfy my temptation.

*Facebook.*

A vast and pleasing mass of blue meets my eye as various elements of the page assemble. I enter my page, numerous updates and chat rooms awaiting my arrival. Sympathetic apologies and condolences seem to mock my pain and grief.

Why am I here? To forget. How can I overlook my sister's death with mock sympathy forcing and manipulating my emotions?

I can't, period. Despite this, I make the empty decision to enter a chat room labelled: *Click for support*. Staring blankly, I feel my eyes as they are dragged with the cursor on my screen, the flashing line awaiting my engagement as it arrives in the textbox. I simply watch as conversation unfolds within my vision, meaningless words appearing suddenly on the screen.

***LifeSavingAdvice101:*** *the world luvs u and supports u! Don't be depressed. Your mum is happy in heaven.*

***UnlovedKittie:*** *easy 4 u to say. U don't have to put up with the pain!:(*

***LifeSavingAdvice101:*** *just clear your mind and memories of her and pretend she is right next to you. I know you are sad.*

***UnlovedKittie:*** *no you don't. she was my best friend. ITS NOT SO SIMPLE AS TO FOLLOW YOUR STUPID ADVICE!!!*

***LifeSavingAdvice101: its gonna be alright. Just look at the beauties in life.***

***UnlovedKittie has left the chat room.***

Regret forces my absence from the page. Nothing is going to be alright. There is nothing beautiful about life. She is gone. I will never recover. I will never feel the joy of her infectious laughter, her witty sense of humour ever again...

## CHAPTER 6, PART 1 - REALITY IS REAL

*!Audrey, you have one new private message!*

I hear my mouse produce a hollow click as I snap to the destination my computer is providing me. Controlling, manipulating, seeming to mock the pain I am drowning in. The pain I am aimlessly flailing in, panic and devastation dragging me under a surface of hope. The surface was unbroken, but as I obey Facebook's command, the tension is broken, a new hope disclosed.

*dear NinjaGirl654 i saw your avatar on the "click for support" chatroom last night. So useless. i just wanted to tell you that if you need any support, don't go to that useless bunch of ignorant*

*morons. i checked out your profile, and am so very sorry about all that has happened. a rough couple of weeks, huh. you guys seemed so close. my mum died a month ago, from a bicycle crash. i miss her so much, she was my best and only friend... I know it's a touchy topic for us both, but i just thought it might help us both if we maybe met up some time, perhaps have a coffee together? let me know what your thoughts are. i understand if you aren't up to it though. <3 best wishes until we (maybe?) meet? p.s im not some weirdo creepy 60 year old dude...!! my name's Juliette btw, im 14 and go to school at st john baptist college.*

*From UnlovedKittie*

I brush away the tears with frustration, hope, appreciation for this girl who has offered to help me, to kindle a friendship with one another. I feel my lips form a strange shape, happy, as tear collides with them, my fingers placing themselves cautiously on the keyboard so as to reply.

*Reply to Unloved Kittie:*

*You've made me smile for the first time in 3 weeks. since I heard  
her laugh, saw her smile... can we meet at the café on the ron street.  
11am tomorrow?*

My fingers react prior to my mind. I watch as the page informs me that the message has been sent. Stupid. Really stupid decision. Instantly, the inky blue notification box appears on my screen.

*Okay, awesome! Meet you there...*

*From UnlovedKittie*

## CHAPTER 6, PART 2 - THE EXISTENCE OF FATE

A homely mug, of which I can only assume is filled with mocha, arrives in front of me. Curling into oblivion, the steamy haze it produces carries a rich, full-bodied fragrance that I embrace.

I am immersed in an ethereal presence, *Daphne's* presence – because her familiar scent is everywhere. It compresses my lungs, my oesophagus; it blocks all brain signals, impeding movement of any kind. I am frozen.

“Audrey. Audrey? Nice to meet you, I’m Juliette.”

Our eyes lock, and I lift the cup from my nose to the table.

She is real. She is here, to see me. “Juliette. Thank you.”



“Didn’t I tell you I wasn’t some sort of hitman? I know it is always risky to meet someone over the internet, but we both know we’re desperate. All that’s gone on and all. I’m sorry by the way. Must be hard. We can help each other! If it works out. That is, if you don’t find me too annoying..”

First impressions are everything, right? And the way in which she babbles aimlessly confuses me, a sense of melancholy in her delight. It is then that I know we are best friends. It doesn’t matter than she talks and I listen. It doesn’t matter that I, we are desperate. We have each other – hope in the midst of an apocalypse...

We were meant to meet one another. I know it. Because fate does exist.

## CHAPTER 7 - SAVING ME, US

*I know what I am doing.*

“But you are unstable, depressed, confused. You do not know who from who.”

*She is my best friend, now. Leave me, us, be. I am fine. Because I can be, because with her, I am.*

“Audrey, you met her on Facebook. This is a first impression in itself! Listen to your mother!

*No.*

I slam the front door in rage as I slide into Juliette’s car.

*Where are we going today?* I ask. Her gaze is distant, oddly cold and determined as she skids away from my familiar suburb. She heard my mother and I screaming about her, she

tells me. She says I should have listened to her as the car screeches to a halt. I realise it was all a lie as she pulls out a gun and punctures a hole in my chest.

...

This is the scenario I have imagined every other minute. I am worried that my mother is right. Am I really unstable, depressed, confused? Of course I am. Of course I don't know who from who and of course I met Juliette on Facebook. Of course my mother is right.

But as Juliette and I sit at the highest point of the church bell tower, as we stare upon a city, a world vibrant with life, I realise – I must let it go. As twilight embraces another town, city lights contrasting the darkness, neither of us utter a word and I realise – the world must continue to endure, well, everything.

Juliette reaches for the grasp of my hand and I realise – this girl is my best friend and I owe her everything, and nothing,

she has taught me all, yet none. We watch like ethereal spectators, witnessing the horrors and pains but the inspiration and determination. She squeezes my fingers and I know that she has realised too. And I truly am inspired that even the deepest agony can be overcome and that life can go on, only you must choose whether you go on with it. And I know I, we, have...

## EPILOGUE

Life is cruel, but it is also pleasant. Fate must be related, a sibling, perhaps. In my case, I was faced with the former and the latter of each. My sister, my tragic best friend was killed in a car crash that I used to blame myself for. I used to think I would never recover or find happiness after the moment when I saw her perfect face maimed by the hands of fate, and killed by the cruelty of life.

But I did find happiness, because of one person and the inspiration she gave me. She lost someone dear to her too, but together, we overcame the overpowering waves of depression and anxiety, confusion and instability. Despite the negatives of fate and life, together we found happiness because of each.

So fate, you and life are even. We still love and remember those we lost, and may never *recover* to the entirety of its meaning, but it's enough to keep going. And I thank you for that, Juliette.

As I stand at the foot of my sister's grave, her beautiful smile beaming at me tragically from the picture on her stone. For the first time, I do not buckle over as I am shot in the heart; I merely tingle at the memory of her, a flame rising in my chest, alive as ever. And I am at peace, with her and with myself. I know that life is unfair better than anyone,

because

pain demands

to be endured

but Juliette, you and I, together, we have done just that.

...

THE END