**The Desk**

The bell rang and the crowd of students made their way to their third period class. I shuffled my way through the jammed hallway until I found myself at room 308. Entering the room, I took my seat and pulled out my binder. Math was never really my subject, so instead of beginning on the work I just sat there.

It wasn’t long until I caught my eyes wandering about the room looking at the other students with their heads down to their desk working away. There was something about the silence of the classroom that left an unsteadiness lurking. I tried to focus my attention back to the board but when I did the numbers all merged into a blur. I rested my head on my desk and closed my eyes.

“Excuse me.”

My head jerked up to the front of the class where Mr. Thompson was sitting. A simple glare from him was enough for me to get the message to get back to work. Without even attempting to get back to the assignment I began to doodle on my desk. Images of hearts and swirls filled a small section of my desk as Mr. Thompson arose from his seat to start the day’s lesson. It was easy to block out the sound of his voice as the section of hearts and swirls grew larger. Thoughts of this class ending brought a slight grin to my face. Taking a look at the masterpiece of swirls I had created the grin grew into a smile. I was only interrupted as the bell rang for fourth period. The crowd of robotic teens stood and shuffled into the hall. The room grew as silent as it was before.

The following day it was even more dreadful when the bell rang ending lunch and forcing us to go to class. After the holiday break it was going to take a while getting back into the habit of attending classes. Once again I found myself at room 308. As I took my seat and “started on the work,” my eyes ran over the art drawn just the day before. I was surprised to see something else written besides the array of doodles,

“Hi… Nice hearts,” it read with a smiley face drawn just beside. I could feel myself grinning and without hesitation I wrote a “thank you” and a second smiley face underneath. The day went on and I was most relieved when the bell rang beginning my weekend.

By the time Monday came around the events of the previous week had faded from my memory. Although I was physically in class, mentally I was somewhere else. After lunch I found my way to room 308 and took my seat. My stomach flipped as I read what was written on my desk.

“You’re welcome. I hope you respond”.

So I did.

 Every day before class my stomach would tie into knots. I expected to see another message and every day I would receive one. Something about these simple messages made me excited to go to school. They gave me something to look forward too. For the first time I actually enjoyed attending school.

Every day I would sit and smile as I read my desk. We began to share information with each other such as our gender, our likes and dislikes but we never exposed our names. We agreed to not tell each other but I wanted to know who he was more than anything. It would have been easy to find out who he was but there was something about the mystery of it all that kept things exciting. There wasn’t a single day that he hadn’t left me a message and there wasn’t a day I didn’t leave one for him. The thought of not being there and someone erasing my messages or not leaving him one in return created this ripping feeling. These messages went from leaving sentences on the desk to leaving letters taped under the chair.

Our letters started to contain more personal information. In one of the letters he told me about some difficulties with his life at home. He told me how his dad was involved in an accident when working a job in construction. His father was left paralyzed from the waist down; leaving him to get a job to support himself and his dad since his mom was not in the picture. After him telling me this I knew I had to meet him but no matter what I did there was no way I could convince him to meet up. I was becoming really good friends with someone I had never met. Sharing our thoughts on different subjects with each other was comforting. My entire life in high school I had no one I could open up to, yet here I was having a deeper conversation with someone through a piece of paper then I ever would with someone face to face.

 I had convinced myself I would never get to see the face behind the letters. That was until the day I read that one.

He wanted to meet me.

 He told me that for his birthday he wanted to meet me. February 16th, was only 2 weeks away. It turns out they were the longest two weeks of my life.

The fourteenth was a Monday. I arrived at school that morning and walked in the front door. Greeting every student in the main lobby was a large picture of a grade 12 boy. It read:

*In Memory of Jordan Williams*

*1997 – 2015*

on the bottom of his picture. Surrounding the floor at the base of the picture were teddy bears, roses and candles. I immediately felt pain for the young boy and his family. Knowing I walked the same halls as him almost every day brought a tear to my eye. Feeling dread I read the article beside his picture. He was hit by another car that ran a red light. The other driver walked away from the accident and Jordan was killed. The accident was just the day before, just 3 days before his 18th birthday. I feared the worse. Wiping the tear away from my cheek I tried to convince myself that it couldn’t be him, but I knew the truth. I made my way to English. His death was announced over the announcements as I scribbled down another letter. It was nearly impossible to write with my hand shaking as bad as it was. At the beginning of lunch I ran to the room and taped my letter under my seat. With everything going on I couldn’t focus during class, so I went home early.

 I entered the subway and placed myself in one of the seats. Sitting by the window and staring into the black tunnel. All of the letters came flooding back into my mind. The large image of the boy’s face was in graved in my memory.

 The morning of Tuesday the 15th was the longest morning ever. When lunch began I ran to room 308. He had never missed a letter before. If there wasn’t a letter there now I knew what that meant. I tried calming myself down, telling myself it wasn’t him. I would walk into class

and I would find a letter under my chair and I would still see him tomorrow and everything would be okay. It seemed like forever for the door to open. Slowly and dreadfully I walked into room 308 and took a seat at my desk. Reaching my hand underneath my seat the feel of the metal chair felt cold against my hand. My hand scrambled underneath the chair feeling around as if I missed it. Tears rolling down my face I fell to my knees and looked under the metal seat.

Nothing was there.

Word Count: 1314