

Broken

By Pierce Ror, grade 9

Despite the fact that it had been a tiring day of work, the thought of going out with Alice right after was sounding lovely. I figured I would be more accustomed to it after a half year of lengthy shifts. Being a paramedic was definitely more tiring than being a waitress. I liked waitressing, though; it was a good job to have while going through school. Alice, my sister, and I both worked there together. All our lives, people had called us inseparable. That was the truth. Yet we couldn't be more opposite. She was always at least 3 inches shorter than me, with a more athletic build and black hair. I have blonde hair and have always been very thin. She was more of a risk-taker growing up; I was the "good" one.

We both knew as children that we wanted to become paramedics. She was behind me in the process considering the year gap between us. Now she had just gotten her Care Certificate, so she was that much closer to becoming a paramedic.

I was so proud of her, and I couldn't wait for her to be working alongside me. I wanted to switch her out from my present partner, Ryker. He was a nuisance to work with. As I was thinking about Ryker, I could see him walking towards me in my peripheral vision.

"How's your day been, Lindsay?" whispered Ryker from behind me, as he grabbed my shoulder.

I responded with a sigh and slung his hand off of me.

"Do you want to come to dinner with me? My treat; it's your birthday after all," he asked with a charming grin.

His question caught me off guard. He had already invaded my space, so he was not acting appropriately. Plus, relationships in the workplace are prohibited, so I replied sternly. "I'm going to dinner with my sister, she said she has a surprise for me."

I felt bad for the tone I gave him, so I carried on. "Thanks for the invite, though."

I rolled my eyes at him as he walked away to be sure he didn't see.

My mood suddenly increased after my phone pinged, my sister Alice had texted me.

Alice: "On my way, you're going to be SO amazed!"

Me: "Okay, I just got off work. I can't wait!"

I looked down at her thumbs up with a smile across my face. It seemed like maybe that day wouldn't end so badly after all.

I heard commotion as I was about to walk out. Ryker dashed over to me.

"We have to go back out, there was another call, and it's an emergency. We are the closest to the accident and need to go now."

"Why can't someone else go? What happened to the people coming on shift right now?"

"Everyone else is on other calls," he remarked.

Of course he was okay with taking the last call, he's such a workaholic. Some of us have places to be, besides, it's my birthday. I would rather live my life outside of work.

I gave in and texted Alice as soon as he walked away, "I will be running late; extra call; I'll tell you more later."

After the first few minutes of getting ready again, I looked down at my phone. She hadn't replied to my text; she was probably driving.

As we got into the ambulance, the tension was unbearable. It then carried on into the drive. Ryker was acting very immature the whole time. He refused to talk, which I took offense

to. I felt it was just because I said no to dinner with him. He is a grown man with the attitude of a teenager. His good looks had deceived others, but I knew the truth behind his beautiful face. He's a liar and a cheat.

My thoughts got put to a halt as we neared the location of the accident. The roads this winter had been insanely icy, so this was nothing out of the ordinary. The closer we got, the heavier the air felt, it was looming over us. This call felt different than the others.

“This doesn't look good.” Ryker fretted.

I didn't know what he meant by that; I couldn't see a car at first. Instead, I could only see the headlights beaming through the blizzarding weather. I hesitated before leaving the vehicle; we had to make sure the car was safe to approach. Stepping out of the ambulance, I got a spike of frigid air going through me. As I got closer, I could see it was the most beautiful color, what a shame it was wrecked. It was surrounded by fresh falling snow. It took me a moment to notice the car was on its roof. It must have been a rollover. The fatality level is thirty-five percent for rollovers. I went to the driver's side of the vehicle and saw a person's body hanging out of the side window. Their head dangling below their shoulders into the ground. I couldn't tell what the person looked like. It was gruesome. It appeared that the airbags had not gone off, and they must have not been wearing a seatbelt either. Ryker looked all over the car. They were the only occupant within the vehicle. We carefully approached them to see if they were stable enough to get them fully out of the car. I checked for a pulse to see if they were alive. They had one, thankfully. We came to the conclusion that it was best to get them out of the car as soon as possible.

As we conscientiously took them out of the vehicle, we noticed more and more things were wrong with them. It did not appear to be okay, but it appeared that their head hit the

windshield at impact, which caused their face to be half-torn off, making them unrecognizable. They had glass embedded in their freckled skin. Their arms and legs were all clearly broken and a mess. I could see their tibia piercing through the skin on their right leg. I elevated their legs and applied pressure to each wound to cease the bleeding. The temperature was minus 20 degrees celsius, so they were becoming hypothermic. I grabbed one of the thermal shock blankets before we put them on a gurney, and put them in the ambulance.

Ryker was driving, and I was tending to the patient, trying to do what I could to save them. I was also trying to talk to the person.

“You are going to be okay. We are going to get you to a hospital.”

They didn't speak and didn't move. The person was unconscious, but I continued to talk and comfort them.

As I was working on tending to their wounds and stopping the bleeding, they winced and opened one eye ever so slightly, and I heard a mumble. Without a second to spare, they closed them again and started coughing up blood.

I had never gone through that before. I was frantic, but I remembered from class when we were talking about internal bleeding. I knew every second counted and she would need surgery to survive.

I put them in recovery position to be sure they could have their airways clear and open. They were getting paler by the second. They were cold to the touch, despite having a blanket on them to seal in the warmth. I tried making them as comfortable as possible until we could get them to the hospital.

I could hear the motor revving lightly under the sound of the blaring sirens as Ryker was swerving through traffic.

"How much farther till we are there?"

He didn't answer me, he just humphed and kept driving.

I was just trying to ask a simple question. I looked up to see how close we were to the hospital, I could tell we were almost there.

In that brief moment of time when I was looking up at the window, the person's chest wasn't heaving like it had before. They weren't breathing. I did not want to lose someone on my birthday. I placed them out of recovery position and started doing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation on them. I had never wanted to save anyone that much before. Determination was flowing through me as I completed each chest compression and breath. I was filled with eagerness and hope.

One last time, and they gasped in the air, and I helped them.

As I saw it in that moment, I wished for them to be alright; until they took in one tremendous inhale and their heart began beating sporadically. It was as if I could hear it, their fast-paced heartbeat began to sting my ears. My head began to pound.

I grabbed the defibrillator. I had to work fast. This was my only hope to save them. I had to get their heart rate back down. I switched on the defibrillator, and cut the person's shirt. It was a woman. I dried them off, then intricately removed the clear plastic layer from the conductive gel pads and planted them on her disheveled body. One on the right side, high up on the chest, the other on the left, lower side of her chest, beneath her armpit. I clicked the shock button, and a surge of electricity went through her. I began to do CPR once again, starting with compressions.

No matter how hard I tried, it wouldn't work. Every time the defibrillator surged, I begged for their heart to readjust. My head at this point was still stinging in agony. Just as the chaos in my mind stopped, they took in a single breath, and their heart came to a stop. We pulled

up to the hospital just nearly minutes after. As we went into the hospital, we were immediately met by the emergency doctors who rushed to assist, but she had succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced deceased.

As I was grabbing my stuff to go, Ryker came up behind me.

"Where are you and your sister going tonight?" He questioned.

Annoyed that he was even trying to enquire this information from me at this moment in time, I responded, "We're going to Bistec Real. Not like you care."

He chuckled under his breath. All of my attention was on him. Why was I feeling those feelings? The thoughts of him and I were dancing above me. For how much I wanted to hate him. I couldn't. I had to do what was right. I had never strayed far from the rules. So why now? I was looking at his stubbled face with his brisk brown hair. He looked at me and smiled. I smiled back. I was distracted and in a daze. I had forgotten how exhausted I was for at least a little bit of time before he walked away.

The depressing truth was staring me in the face now. I tried, there was nothing else I could do. I accepted the sad fate of that poor person, that I failed to help. I felt the ache for their family, for whom they will never see again. I got out of the hospital as soon as I could. It had been a long day beforehand, and it felt even longer after that.

All I wanted to do was sit down with Alice for dinner.

Me: "Finally done with work, it's been a long day. I'm about to leave, see you there."

The drive to the restaurant was short. I had changed at the hospital into a gorgeous blue dress. Considering just a few moments earlier I was covered in my stained uniform, I looked good.

I walked into the restaurant and saw Ryker in blue jeans and a plaid shirt. He looked handsome, but I pushed away my troubled thoughts. Why was he here? I knew I shouldn't have told him where I was going. I really did not want to talk to him, so I continued looking around for Alice. She wasn't there. I walked out of the restaurant with my phone in hand, calling Alice over and over again. She was probably just playing a little birthday prank on me. I turned around and saw Ryker standing behind me with sorrowful eyes.

“I'm sorry, Lindsay. I wanted to tell you in person.”

He really did not have the right to be there at that moment, but I couldn't help but wonder what he was saying.

“Tell me what?”

“It's your sister, well, was your sister.”

“What do you mean? What happened to Alice?” He looked down at his feet, then back up into my emerald eyes.

“The person we were helping tonight was your sister.”

My mind began swirling, and my vision got blurry. He had to be joking.

“I would know my sister if I saw her. That was not her.” I demanded.

“She had her contact on her. They found it in her purse. After you had left, they identified it as her. The cause of the accident was distracted driving, they found her phone on the scene. You were going to get a call, but I didn't want you to have to get that information in such a devastating way.”

His last sentence didn't stick in my mind; all I could think was that person was not my sister. I was just texting her before the call. Then it hit me. I was the one who made her die. I was the reason. I could've saved her. I should have tried harder to help her. How could I not

recognize my own sister? All of the things I could have said to her while she was dying but didn't start coming to play in my head.

Ryker could see through my hurt eyes and came over and gave me a hug. I hadn't noticed I was crying until then. I didn't want his comfort. I didn't deserve his comfort, I thought to myself angrily. I pushed him away and ran to my car. I turned on music and wept. I looked at myself in the mirror, my mascara was running down my face. I was saddened by the monster I saw staring back at me. That was the day I was broken, never to be fixed again.