

Sadie Dyer

English 12 Advanced

December 2, 2021

Promising Future To Forever Paraplegic

*Buzzzzzzzz Buzzzzzzzz.* Reluctantly, I open my eyes. The bedside clock reads 2:45 A.M. *Buzzzzzzzz Buzzzzzzzz.* My cell vibrates so violently, that I fear it may shatter my glass bedside table. *Who is calling at this hour?* The temptation of ignoring the phone call and plummeting into a deep sleep nags at me, and for a moment I let my eyelids close. *Buzzzzzzzz Buzzzzzzzz.* My daughter, Iris, is spending the night at her friend Casey's house tonight. *What if the phone call is from her?* With a heavy sigh and much effort, I reach for my cell and look at the caller ID.

“Where’s my daughter?!” I scream as I burst into the ICU. Out of breath, and as white as paper, I search for the nearest nurses station or anyone that can provide me the whereabouts of my sweet Iris.

“Ma’am, I am going to need you to calm down.” An older looking nurse walks up to me. “You must be Iris’s mother. If you would please follow me I will take you to see her, but I must warn you, she may no longer be the Iris you know.”

“This cannot be happening..” The sentence comes out in a whisper, barely audible, and in a tone of denial. As the nurse leads me down the ICU hallway, a growing sense of dread overcomes me.

“This is her room.” The nurse stops outside a closed door. With a kind smile the nurse reaches out and touches my arm. Then, she opens the door and we enter Iris’s room swarming with doctors. My head buzzes as my eyes flit around the room and commotion. Then I see my

daughter, a heap of limb wrapped up in plaster and laying scarily still. Her head is heavily bandaged, and her eyes are slits, barely open. Surrounding her eyes are dark blue circles, which gives the appearance that her face is concaving. She looks like death, a skeleton, someone who clings to life. Around her neck is an uncomfortable looking brace that sends a chill down my spine. Nausea sets in, and I have an overwhelming instinct to look away. A doctor with tired eyes and round glasses faces me. He folds his hands politely and twirls his thumbs as he speaks to me.

“Mrs. Porter, your daughter Iris was in a very serious car accident last night. She was in the car with two other girls, A.J Plummer, who sadly didn’t make it, and Casey Anderson who has minor injuries. Iris suffered a broken neck, and because there was poor response time on the EMT’s part, the bleeding in her brain resulted in permanent brain damage. We did everything we could to suppress it, but from the broken neck and bleeding in her brain, she will never be able to walk or use her limbs again.” My breath comes in ragged inhales, and I struggle to keep from collapsing. *This cannot be happening. Not my Iris. Why her?* I let my head fall into my hands, and before I hit the floor, the doctor slips a chair underneath me. As I weep into my palms the door opens again and two police officers with multiple badges step into the room.

“Mrs. Porter?” One officer asks.

“Yes?” I say in a low tone. The officer pulls up a chair beside me and places his hand over his mouth for a moment, as if he doesn’t know what to say. “What happened last night was that Casey Anderson, A.J Plummer, and your daughter were on their way back to Casey’s from the grocery store, when Casey, who was driving, picked up her phone.” He paused, sighed, then continued. “A dump truck was coming the other way, and when Casey’s car swerved into the other lane, it was too late to slow down.” The officer cleared his throat. I had so many questions, but at that moment, my only ability was to sit and stare at my paralyzed daughter. After I was

able to collect myself enough to form a few words, I managed to thank the officer and gave him my phone number in case there were any more developments.

I sat in the cramped ICU room, until the morning light gleamed through the window onto Iris's death stricken face. It was 8:45AM when Iris finally woke. Keeping a close eye on her through the early morning hours, I had watched as doctors and nurses filed in and out of the room meticulously checking her vitals and writing on their clipboards. Behind my eyes, memories of Iris in her childhood played in my head like a slideshow, while in front of my eyes, I watched my only child's life slip away.

Accepting that my sixteen-year-old daughter would never be able to use her arms or legs again, was the hardest part of that night. Flashbacks of Iris taking her first steps, and writing her first words faded in and out of my subconscious. As these memories surfaced, my eyes fell upon my daughter, now a paraplegic, hooked up to a monitor that was preventing her from slipping into darkness forever. I believe I am still going through the five stages of grief, but that night at the hospital I went through my angry stage. I was angry with that idiotic girl who picked up her phone. How dare she. She willingly put my daughter herself and another in danger, and now she will have to live with the knowledge that she paralyzed my daughter.