

Asana Yano's

Shadows of the forest

Rena's Perspective:

I felt the leaves crunching under my feet. Fall is almost ending. I think to myself as I walk home from school. On the other side of the road, I see kids in the same class as mine going home with their friends, giggling about something that probably happened at school. *They seem so happy. I bet they have nothing to worry about.* I didn't realize I was staring at them for a creepingly long time until they saw me and jokingly ran away while occasionally looking back. I was embarrassed, but I was used to this kind of stuff. I don't even remember the last time I went out with friends or socialized. I hardly even talk to anyone at school). I sometimes wish I had someone, though.

As I get closer and closer to my house I feel more dreadful and contemplating if I should even go home today. But before I knew it I was at the front of my door. *Maybe today will be different. Just maybe.* I make myself hopeful and open the door. But as soon as I do I realize how foolish I was to believe that. The usual smell hits me right away. I cover my nose and carefully walk through the mess trying to avoid the shattered glass and puddles of alcohol. I see my mother lying on the floor looking lifeless. I could hear her short breaths and her muttering something. I do feel bad for her, that her life ended up like this but it was the same as always. It was my fault for expecting more.

"Re-Rena? There's my Sweetie pie. Could you uhm, give your mother, so-some water?" Her voice was wobbly, and her eyes were half open. I just stared at her blankly and left her there.

I leave the house slamming the door. *Why is my life like this?*

Cora's Perspective:

I decided to sit in a spot I don't usually go to, looking up at the scenery. From up here, I could see everything: the trees, the sea, and the city. It was so calm. My ears started to fill with the beautiful sounds of the trees swooshing and the birds chirping. The thoughts and worries all started to flow away with the wind, my mind finally quiet. The only place where I feel safe is here, in nature, in the forest.

CRUNCH! My peace was suddenly burst by the loud sound of a branch breaking. *Could it be an animal?* I scooted behind one of the tree branches and peeked through the leaves. Although it was hard for me to see, near a tree I could see a figure moving. I kept cautious just in case it was a bear. But it didn't quite look like an animal; when it turned around, I could finally see the whole figure. It was a girl. It looked like a girl around my age with short, messy brown hair, wearing an oversized t-shirt and pants. She sat on a tree stump, looking into her backpack. It was hard to see but she seemed confused and angry... She suddenly pulled something from her backpack. *No, No, NO* I quickly realized what it was. I immediately climbed down the tree.

Rena's Perspective:

This was it, I can't do this anymore. I just continue walking farther and farther away from my house.

Where was I even going to go? That's when I saw an entrance to some sort of forest. It was messy, hardly a trail. I slowly went in. Inside was a huge forest with endless trees. This was perfect.

My hands were shaking as I held the rope inside of my backpack. *What am I so scared of? No one's going to miss me anyway.* I made my decision. I took the rope out of my backpack and started to tie the rope to a branch.

"NO! STOP!" I heard a loud voice coming from my right and when I swiftly turned around, there was a girl running towards me hastily. Before I could react, the girl jumped right onto me, making me fall to the ground.

"Don't do this! Please!" her voice was trembling and she was shaking me frantically.

"Get off me!" I pushed her back and I stood back up. She was still on the ground and her eyes filled with tears.

“Please just go,” I muttered without facing her. I continued to walk towards the rope when she suddenly grabbed onto my leg. Her grip tightened even more and I couldn’t move.

“Don't do this, I'm begging you.” she said while sobbing.

I finally turned around to face her and sat down next to her.

“Why do you care so much about me... Please just go let me be” I said while looking down at the wet dirt.

“Because... Don't you have someone that cares about you? Wouldn't they be sad?” she said while looking deep into my eyes. *Someone who cares about me.* I slowly shook my head. It fell silent. I knew she had nothing to say. It was true. I had nothing to live for anymore. I don't have any passion or talent or anyone that loves me.

“That's ok, you have me,” she said while quickly standing up. Her tears were all gone now. Her sudden mood change took me aback.

“What do you mean?” I said confusedly.

“Well because you're my friend, I'm not going to let you die,” she said with a warm smile.

Friend? Is this girl ok?

“I don't even know you,” I said coldly.

“Ok well let's get to know each other, follow me,” she said while lending a hand.

“No, I'm not going with you,” I say while standing up on my own and wiping the dirt off of me. I ignored her and walked towards the rope again. But she snatched the rope off the tree and threw it into the river. I snapped.

“Why do you have to keep on bothering me? I just want to die. It is that hard to understand!” I yell loudly at her.

“Fine but just follow me and after that, you can do whatever you want,” she answered very calmly.

I was hesitant but got up and decided to go with her so that she would stop bothering me. I wasn't in the mood to die anymore anyway. I'll just try again tomorrow. I got my backpack and quickly caught up to the girl. *I didn't even know her name. This is nonsense. Why am I following a random girl in the woods?* For a while we both said nothing. I surprisingly enjoyed it though. The sounds of the trees and wind were relaxing and calmed me down.

"It's beautiful, isn't it? I'm here almost every day. I'm Cora by the way." she finally said, breaking the silence. I didn't know how to respond. After all a few minutes earlier I was about to kill myself and this was just a bit too weird.

"My name is Rena," I muttered. She doesn't answer and just continues walking towards somewhere. I subtly started to observe her. She had emerald green eyes with goldish brownish hair that was roughly put into a braid wearing a blue dress that went to her knees. Her face structure was sharp with defined cheekbones, snatched eyebrows, and perfect facial features, like the people you see in magazines. Compared to her, well I was just, normal.

"We're here, come on," she said while sitting down while patting her hand gesturing to sit next to her. *What is this place?* We were on top of a cliff. I tried to not look down and sat next to her. A cold breeze blew as a splash of water landed on my leg. The sea was right in front of us. The waves rippled right below our legs. I looked up to the endless sea. It seemed like it would go on and on with no end. I never realized how much nature my city was filled with.

"So Rena, my *friend*, tell me all about you," she asked dramatically. She had the most warm smile. *Me? About myself?* Something I hate thinking about. Ever since I was little I had nothing that made me, *me*. I remember when I was in 6th grade we were all introducing ourselves and our talents, hobbies, and what made us special. Everyone had different interests and skills and I was the only one who wasn't well, special. I know she could sense that I was feeling uncomfortable.

"You know what? Let's not do this boring introduction stuff, let's just hang out!" she suddenly stood up and leaped right off the cliff.

My heart skipped a beat. *What just happened? Is she ok?* I rush to look down the cliff to see her bursting into laughter and waving at me.

“Come on Rena, join me!” she yelled out loudly.

Was she crazy? But for some reason, something sparked inside of me. *I never did anything spontaneous or fun most of my life, this could be my last chance to finally do something exciting in my life for once.*

And before my brain reacted I jumped. My legs wobbled as I fell. The wind blew through my hair making it fly. As soon as my body hit the water, silence hit. It was so peaceful and quiet underwater. And I slowly floated up to the surface. Cora started to cheer and splash water all over me.

“See, you look so much better when you're smiling!” *Smiling? I was smiling.* I didn't even notice. But I didn't mind, I didn't mind it all. I haven't felt this feeling in a long time, happiness. I joined in with Cora, and for the rest of the evening we spent together in the ocean.

I'm pulled back to reality as soon as I get home.

“Rena, Sweetie you're finally home!” my mom grasped me tightly into her arms as soon as I entered the house. She had a bottle in one of her hands. I tried to pull back but she pulled me in even more tightly. Even her clothes smelled bad.

“Oh, sweetie I realized we never go out together! Like a mother-daughter date you know? ”she was drunk again. I hate my mother when she's like this. It's all a lie. She only says this stuff when she is drunk.

“No Mom, Can I go to my room now? ” I snapped and pushed her away.

“Oh, why not! It'll be fun!” she comes back to me wrapping her arms around my shoulders.

“Because I don't want to be around you! Ok?” I snarled.

But as soon as I said that I instantly regretted it. My mother's expression changed. From sadness to anger.

“How dare you talk to your mother like that! I've done everything for you and this is what I get?” The arguing started. It could've ended here but that's the problem with me I always yell back. The same routine over and over. Yelling back and forward until one of us gives up and leaves.

“Everything you’ve done? You’ve done nothing but be the crappiest mother ever!” I shouted back.

“You don’t understand how much effort I put into raising you!” her voice started to become louder.

“Effort? You’re just some stupid woman who got pregnant as a teenager who had no option but to keep the baby and become an alcoholic.” I finally snapped without thinking. She suddenly became quiet. My mother’s face turned blank. She quickly turned around and went to her room. I had never seen my mother like this before. *Maybe I said too much. She deserves it though.*

Cora’s Perspective:

I quickly squeezed through the packed crowd and reached my locker. *My next class was social studies.* I dialed the lock number and smashed it open. There it was again. I slowly opened the piece of note.

–Kill yourself No one wants you here–

I read it as I heard giggling coming from behind. It was them again. My eyes started to fill with tears. My fists clenched the paper. But I sucked it in and headed over to my next class.

As the last bell rang, I rushed to put on my shoes and left the school immediately. *I’m finally free*

As soon as I felt the grass under my shoes and the trees in sight, I felt safe. I sat on the rocky surface looking at the peaceful sea. I suddenly heard footsteps coming from behind.

“So! This is where you’re always hiding” *No, no, it was them.* I slowly turned around to see them standing right behind me. I swiftly stood up and tried to leave but it was too late. They pushed me to the ground.

“Why are you trying to leave? We just want to hang out with you!” one of them said while hysterically laughing.

“Just leave me alone Mia, or else I’m going to tell Mom again.” I snarled at her. They all became quiet.

“What does she mean Mia? Does she know your mom or something?” one of the girls asked. Everyone's eyes were on Mia waiting for her to answer.

“Uhh, yeah my mom and her mom are friends-” Mia said awkwardly but I cut her off.

“No, Mia and I are sisters.” It went silent. Mia glared at me. *I said too much* One of the girls bursted out laughing.

“What! You guys are sisters!?” The rest of the girls followed and also started to laugh. Mia's face was red from embarrassment.

“Yeah! We are sisters but that's why I hate her. And she's not even my sister! My parents felt bad that no one wanted her so they adopted her.” Mia said, trying to recover. *Why was she saying this? Why is she lying?!*

“Mia, why are you saying this isn't true!” I tried to stand up but one of the girls pushed me down again. They reached out for my backpack.

“NO! Stop!” I tried to stop them but one of them held me down as I screamed.

“Aww don't you have to help your little sister?” one of them said mockingly. But Mia didn't say anything and joined in with the others.

All I could do was watch. When they were finally done. They left me on the ground. And all that was left was ripped-up paper and stuff scattered everywhere. I was so upset I quickly gathered my stuff. *My Diary*. I quickly grabbed it and wiped the dirt off it. *It was ok*. I opened it and started to write in it. Tears started to drop down. Staining the paper. But I ignored it, writing over the stain ripping the paper. My hand started to clench over the pen. The more I wrote the more anger started to fill in me. *Why? My own sister? How could she do that?* My hands became sore, no more to write. I slowly dropped the pen. I stared at what I had just written. My eyes were blurry but I could see the hate and the sadness of the words. *When will this ever stop?*

Rena's Perspective:

I woke up the next morning feeling drowsy as always. I threw on a random t-shirt from the floor and sweatpants and left for the door. Today was the same again. Nothing was new. I went to school, interacted

with no one, people made fun of me and my mother was drunk again. It was like living in a simulation.

All the enjoyment I felt yesterday drowned underneath everything, hiding it away.

After school, I still decided to go and visit Cora.

I saw Cora already at the spot sitting down. She was wearing the same exact blue dress and her hair was in a braid again. When she saw me she ran towards me and hugged me.

“Rena! I was so worried I thought you might have-” She stopped before she could finish the sentence. But I knew what she was about to say.

“Don't worry about me, I'm ok” I say reassuring her. Although I'm not ok at all.

I sat down next to her. And she looks deeply into my eyes.

“Rena, you know you can tell me anything right?” That hits me hard. I have never been able to tell anyone about my thoughts or feelings, not that anyone asked. It's silent for a while. With the sounds of the waves and the trees swooshing.

Cora gently rubbed my back. She had that kind smile again.

“It's my mom. She doesn't care about me or love me. The only time she would even care to talk to me is when she's drunk.” I say as my eyes start to tear up the more I talk.

“I don't have any friends at school, and I'm not even talented or skilled at anything. I just feel, well, useless” She doesn't say anything instead she hugs me deep. I get that warm feeling again, that I feel safe. I wish it lasted forever.

“Rena! Come, du-down right now!” I heard my mother's muffled screams through the door. I just ignored her. She was drunk more than usual, I could sense it from her voice. It's probably just something stupid again.

“Rena!” I jumped as she suddenly pulled open the door. She stormed into my room, taking exaggerated stomps.

“Y, YOU! Don't you dare ignore me” she stood in front of me.

I ignore her as I continue to study. My mother glared at me and snatched my pencil from my hand.

“You're su-such a nerd!” she says while hiccuping. But I just got another pencil and continued to study.

“Gosh! Can all you do is study? You're just like my sister.” she says while laughing.

“What?” I quickly turn around to face her.

“Oh! She finally talks!” she jokingly chuckles.

“Mom, you have a sister?” my mother's face slowly drops.

“Just get to school! You're going to be late” she suddenly snaps. I quickly pack my bag and walk out the door. *Weird.*

Cora's Perspective:

I stared at the soggy peanut butter jelly sandwich in my hands. I didn't have any appetite for it. I threw it down the toilet and flushed it down. I looked down at my watch. *15 more minutes.* Lunchtime was my least favorite part of school. For most people, they could hang out with their friends and have fun, but for losers like me? We had to sit in the bathroom stall, hiding from bullies.

That's when suddenly I heard a couple of girls walk in the bathroom. In times like this, it is best to stay quiet until they leave.

“Did you finish the science homework?” one of the girls asked.

“No, of course not that teacher is so annoying,” another girl complained.

“Oh yeah, how's your dumb little sister?”

“She's annoying as always. The other day, even my mom and dad told her that they didn't like her. Might as well kill herself already.” Everyone started to cackle. *It was Mia.* I couldn't believe what I just heard. Why would she say that? My body felt like I didn't have enough air. And I felt like my heart was stabbed by the person who I thought cared about me.

Rena's Perspective:

I couldn't wait to go to the forest again. I couldn't keep my mind off of it and Cora. As the bell rang I was the fastest person to run out of the classroom and leave school. I didn't even bother to go home and ran straight to the forest.

There she was with the same smile, waving towards me. Naturally, a smile formed on my face too.

"Today I know exactly where to go, come on!" she said, pulling my arm. She was in the same dress and hairstyle again.

"How do you know this forest so well?" I asked curiosity. It seemed like she knew every inch of the forest.

"Cuz I've been here all my life! I feel safe here," she said. She was smiling. How does she do that? Always stay happy.

"We're here!" I gazed at the scenery. It was a huge open meadow with pretty white clover flowers all around. And I was filled with the smell of fresh grass and dirt.

We sat down in the middle and looked up at the blue sky. I was in awe of how beautiful nature could be.

"Hey, how come I never see you?" I asked. Cora looked at me confusedly.

"What?" she answered while we both looked up at the sky gazing at the different shapes of the clouds and how unique each one is.

"Like at school? I never see you there!" I looked over at Cora but she was looking down and her smile wasn't there.

"Ah, such a majestic day isn't it?" she suddenly stood up and started to skip around the meadow.

"Come on! Just have fun!" I quickly forgot what we were talking about joining her. It was another good day. When I'm with Cora all of my worries and negative thoughts just seem to fly away into the distance. And all I am aware of is that I'm having fun.

"What! How is it already 10!" I shouted as I opened my phone.

"I better go now, bye Cora!" I stood up and turned on the flashlight feature on my phone.

"Ok bye!" I heard her say and I glimpsed back to wave at her but she was already gone.

I slowly headed back to the main road. It was already pitch dark and the only thing I could rely on was the flashlight. As I was walking I suddenly kicked something on the ground. I flashed the light at it to see it was some sort of book. I slowly picked it up. *Diary* It said on the front. It was stained with dirt and grass smeared into the cover. *It was someone's Diary.* I knew it was wrong but I hesitantly opened it. With my phone in one hand, I started to flip through the pages and read them one by one. The first entry was from February 12th, 1988. That was from around 40 years ago. It was about a girl. And her life. It started off with happy entries but as I went through each entry they started to become filled with negative emotions. As each day went by she became more and more sadder. And the lonelier she got the entries started to decline. I flipped to the next page but it ended there and it seemed like one of the pages was ripped off. I slowly closed the book and stuffed it in my backpack.

“Rena! Where have you been? It's almost midnight. This is unacceptable!” My mom yelled loudly. But I ignored her and walked right past her.

“Where are you going? Don't you ignore your mother!” She says while following me. But I just keep ignoring her and walk up to my room. I felt a strong grab on my arm.

“Hey let go!” I yelled but my mom pulled me to her. But my bag wasn't fully closed and the diary fell. Before I could pick it up my mom quickly seized it.

“Give it back!” but my mom's expression was cold. She just stared at the diary.

“Hello, mom?” I grabbed the diary out of her hand.

“Where did you get this?” my mom muttered. I ignored her and shoved the diary in my backpack.

“Did you read the diary?” She muttered again. But I just walked past her pretending like I didn't hear her.

“DID YOU READ IT” I was startled by her sudden rage. Her face was still emotionless.

“Yeah, why do you care anyway?” I continued up the stairs and went to my room. I sat on my bed and opened the diary again. *Why was she acting so weirdly?* I started to re-read the diary again. *She was just like me, lonely.*

“Mom?” I said quietly as I creaked open the door. She was lying on her bed looking more drunk than usual. Her head slowly tilted towards me. Eyelids barely opening. But her head soon dropped on her pillow again.

“Mom!” I say loudly wobbling her body. I've never seen her this badly. I went closer to her. Her pillows were stained. I gently took the bottle that she still had in her hand and tucked her in. Her eyes slowly opened, looking into me.

“Re-Rena?” My mom said in a shaky voice.

“Just go to sleep, Mom,” I say while placing her water next to her. But she reaches my hands and holds it.

“I love you, Rena.” Her voice was soft and scratchy but I heard it clearly. I looked at her again but she was already passed out. I slowly stepped away from the bed, turned the lamp off, and left the room. *I love you.* I knew she was drunk but she had never said that to me.

Cora's Perspective:

“Mia!” I stormed into her room filled with rage. She was lying on her bed with the phone in her hand giggling about something.

“I'm on the phone Cora! Leave!” she yells while covering the phone then quickly going back to giggling. I couldn't believe it. I angrily ran to her and threw the phone out of her hand. Breaking it.

“Hey!” she quickly stood up looking at the phone on the floor trying to put back the pieces.

“Why would you say that?” I mumbled quietly

“What?” she asked as if she didn't hear me.

“WHY WOULD YOU SAY AND DO ALL THOSE THINGS? I HEARD EVERYTHING YOU SAID IN THE BATHROOM” I yelled loudly, my fist starting to clench in anger. Mia just stared at me blankly saying nothing.

“Answer me!” I yell again.

“Because maybe I do want you dead!” Mia shouted. I couldn’t understand what she had just said. I didn't want to.

“Wh-What?” My vision started to become blurry tears dropping onto the floor.

“You don't actually me-mean that do you?” I say looking up at her hoping she would nod or say something. But she didn’t. Nothing at all.

Rena’s Perspective:

I slowly walked into the clean house. No bottles, or alcohol and the floor. It was clean. For the first time in a while I saw the marble of the dining table and the leather of the couch. I was shocked and just stood there observing everything.

“Hey, sweetie! How was your day?” my mom said from the couch as this was all normal.

“Mom, what's going on?” I slowly asked as I cautiously walked over to her.

She was just sitting on the couch watching the daily news. She looked at me and turned off the TV.

“I'm just working to try and be a better mom for you, now come let's watch a movie together.”

She said as she patted the empty space next to her on the couch. I slowly sat next to her. She had decent clothes on and didn't smell like alcohol as much.

“I'm sorry I haven’t been a great mom,” she mumbled. I didn’t say anything. It's not like an apology could fix things.

“I'm really going to try this time, I'm thinking about going to treatment centers.” I just blankly stared at her. *How could I believe her?*

“Sure, Mom, good for you,” I said as I angrily stood up from the couch and headed up to my room. I could see my mom disappointed. But what did she expect?

“Rena? Are you ok? You're not eating any of the biscuits I brought!” Cora asked concerned.

“Sorry it's just my mom again, she says she's trying to recover when she's obviously not going to,” I said bitterly as I took a bite out of the biscuits. Today we were near a beautiful stream having a

picnic. I slowly placed my hand in the cold water letting it run through my fingers. The water was clear as glass and you could see everything, the fish effortlessly gliding through the water, the rocks and the algae growing from it.

“Maybe you should give her a chance? I'm sure she's trying her best.” Cora said. I looked over at her. *Give her a chance?*

“Seriously? Now you're defending her too, I thought you were on my side!” I said angrily.

“No, I'm not, I'm just saying just give her a chance!” I couldn't believe her. How could she seriously defend her right now? I snapped and quickly stood up and left. I was angry at both my mom and Cora.

It's been a week since I last talked to Cora and my mom. I just ignored my mom as much as I could even when she acted nice cause I knew things would just go back to normal soon. But it hasn't. I haven't seen her drink a single drop of alcohol for a week. I haven't stopped by the forest at all and it's killing me. I don't even know why I'm mad at Cora. I started to feel bad. Maybe it was all my fault. I should have supported my mother, she was actually getting better. And Cora said nothing wrong, she was just trying to help me. I was going to make things right.

I slowly went downstairs. I saw my mom on the sofa watching TV again. I walked over to her and sat next to her on the sofa. She seemed surprised but scooted closer to me.

“Mom?” I mumbled quietly.

“Yes, sweetie,” she said with a gentle voice. I never heard her talk like this. Her voice was so calm.

“I'm, I'm sorry I didn't believe in you.” I say looking down. She doesn't say anything. I look at her to see her eyes filled with tears.

“Thank you, Thank you Rena, I really am trying.” We both smile and I hug her deeply. My heart starts to fill with warmth. I've never, never had this.

“Cora!” I shout. I've never been more excited to see her. I could always rely on her to be in the same spot.

“Rena?” She quickly turns over and runs towards me. We both clash into each other and hug.

“Oh Rena, I'm so sor-” But I stopped her.

“No Cora, I'm sorry. You did nothing wrong. I was just so mad at everything. I'm sorry.” She just smiles at me and we both go into another deep hug. I've never been so filled with joy. My life was finally starting to become better.

Cora's Perspective:

“Coraaa we know you're here!” I heard them as they stomped into the bathroom. I stayed quiet hoping they would leave. But I heard each one of them start to check the stalls.

“Guys! She's here, I see her shoes!” one of the girls says as she bangs on my stall.

“Cora, I know you're in here!” they say as I hear them cackle.

“Oh this is going to be good” I could hear rustling from outside the stall. What did they want from me? Haven't they done enough?

“Cora, we have a surprise for you!” they shouted as I saw hands come under the stall with a bag. When they opened the bag rats ran out of it covering the floor. I screamed quickly opening the stall. They were all laughing including Mia.

“Oh the queen rat itself finally comes out! Did you like our surprise?” one girl said mockingly. But I just ignored them and walked past them.

“Hey! Where do you think you're going!” they said while pulling on my backpack snatching it from me.

“Stop” I say as I pull back my backpack but all of them together are too strong and pushes me down to the ground. They open up my bag again and they pull out my diary. *NO*

“Give it back!” I quickly stand up but they just push me down again. One of the girls opens it up and starts reading it.

“Dear Diary...” she says while everyone's laughing.

“Aww this is so sad, we feel so bad for you” she says sarcastically.

“Come on guys let's give her stuff back now” she says and dumps all my stuff onto my head all I could hear was laughter. I finally hear them leave. And I just sit there. I didn't feel anything. Not sad, not angry, nothing. It's like I was numb, like I was already dead.

Rena's Perspective:

I couldn't believe it. She was just sitting there with a bottle in her hand. Slouching on the counter. The T.V is still playing in the background. I stared at the mess.

“Mom! I thought you were getting better!” I stormed over to her shaking her awake aggressively. Her eyes slowly lit open.

“O-Oh Hi Rena”*Hi?! I couldn't believe this.*

“I shouldn't have ever trusted you!” I shouted at her but she didn't budge.

“Rena, please I really don't need this right now.” She mumbled and slowly got up walking up to her room.

“Seriously? Fine, I knew it's not possible for someone like you to get better” The sadness slowly started to change to anger.

“What do you mean someone like me? I've tried very hard to quit, but it's not that easy. You can't just quit!” my mom said quickly, turning back, her voice getting louder.

“I hate you! I wish you were never my mother!” I shouted loudly, my hands shaking. I was filled with rage.

“Do not talk to me like that!” She yelled, I saw her arms rise to the air dropping the bottle to the ground.

I stared at the sharp glass stabbed into my flesh. The blood started to drip down to the floor.

“Oh my goodness, I'm sorry baby, I meant to aim for the floor. Let me help you-” I slapped my mother's hand away from me. I glared into her eyes.

“I hate you, and I know you hate me too. So I have some good news for both of us, I'm going to be leaving.” My mother's face dropped.

“Wh, What? Leaving where? Please don't go I'm sorry” Her voice was quivering. But I ignored her and quickly packed my bag and ran out the door. Cutting her off.

I was running as fast as I could. My breath paced. I ran past the school, I only had one place to go.

I instantly felt comfort when I sat down on the cliff.

“Rena?” I heard someone call my name. *Cora*.

“Cora? What are you doing here? Don't you have school?” I ask.

“Uhm well, I was just skipping!” she said, chuckling.

“Hey, are you ok? You don't seem alright” As soon as she said that I couldn't take it in anymore and I started bursting into tears.

“I left my house. I couldn't stand my mother anymore.” I wept. More and more tears fell and it didn't stop. I wasn't ok, I never was and I'll never be “ok”.

“Hey hey, it's ok,” Cora said trying to comfort me but it did nothing.

I was in the dark again. As soon as I thought things were going good everything had to fall down again.

I stood in front of the door. *Who comes home the same day after leaving?* I felt pathetic and weak. My mother probably wouldn't let me in the house anyway. But I had nowhere else to go and with no choice I opened the door.

“RENA!? IS THAT YOU?” I hear footsteps come down the stairs.

“Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry.” She hugged me tight again. Her tears started to soak into my clothes. But I didn't pull her away this time.

“Please don't leave me, Rena, I can't lose you too.” My mother sobbed. *Lose me too?*

“Mom? What do you mean lose me too?” I say pulling out of the hug. She looked at me, her eyes red and I could see the tears forming. But she didn't say anything.

And pulled out a piece of paper from her pocket. The paper was crumbled up and ripped on the corners with stains on it. I slowly took it from her hands and read it.

October 18th, 1988

Dear Diary

I'm sorry I had to do this. I just couldn't be strong enough. But all the pain was too much for me. Every day was like torture. Getting stabbed by the person you loved every day hurt. Hearing those words from your own sister hurt and I just had to end it. I'm sorry. I hope someday, Mia, I can forgive you.

My heart sank. I slowly put down the paper. I didn't know what to say. My mother was on the verge of tears.

"That's the missing page from the diary. And it belonged to my sister," her voice was shaking. I didn't say anything and just held her.

"That was my sister, my own sister! It's all my fault. And I can't lose you too Rena, please" She started to sob even more, her tears soaking into my clothes.

"Please..." her voice was weak and tired.

"I won't leave you. I promise," I said as I rubbed her back comforting her. Her sobs slowly started to stop. She held my hand tightly

"I've always held on to her with me, hoping someday she will forgive me." She said while firmly holding onto a heart pendant. She gave it to me and inside was a picture. The blue dress and the braid. It was her.

I was running as fast as I held my moms hand.

"Rena, where are we going?" she asked, concerned.

“Just trust me,” I say out of breath. We were almost there. The usual road. The usual entrance. My pace started to become faster and faster. We were here, in the forest. I quickly headed to our usual spot. But before we could reach there I felt a strong pull.

“Rena, what are we doing here” she was just standing there. I tried to tug her but she didn't budge.

“Mom, please we're almost there,” I said as I tried to get her to move.

“I can't be here, Rena.” she mumbled.

“I know this is weird but I know your sister, Cora. I've seen her in this forest, and she's my friend” I looked over to my mom.

“Wh-what?” She had a confused look on her face and her voice was weak.

“ I know where she is,” I said as I slowly led her to the cliff.

And she was there. Sitting there with her blue dress and the braid. Tears started to stream down my face.

“C-Cora, is that you?” my mom said, her voice trembling. Cora slowly turned her face over to us. She didn't say anything. Just smiled. The warm kind smile. Then she disappeared into the sky. Over the forest.

I held my mom's hands gently. We were both crying. But this time it was different, it was warm.

“Mom, I think it's time for a new start” The gentle breeze flew through the air as we stood in the forest with all the memories.