

## Blake

The sound of the bell, in which sounds like a regular bell school bell, tells us all it's 3:30pm. School's out. I have already left the building and was on my way to the pick up/drop off corner. Usually on these type of days, my mom would pick me up at this time. She's one minute late.

"Hey, Blake!" I turn around and see my best friend, Carol.

"Hey" I said.

Carol is a little shorter than me with pale skin and long auburn hair. And also, freckles and light green eyes. Right now with 1 backpack strap hanging off her shoulder and her hair swept up into a messy bun (Which it usually isn't), she still looks like the girl who offered to be my gym partner on the first day of school. Even though we've known each other for the past 3 weeks, we've become pretty close friends.

"What are you doing here?" She asks, studying my face.

"Nothing, but waiting to be picked up."

"Oh" she says "And I'm guessing today your mom is picking you up?."

"Yup" I respond.

I check my phone, It's 3:34. She's four minutes late.

"I always wanted my mom to pick me up sometimes, but she always has to work" she says, fiddling with her fingers. "And I wish I had a phone, too".

"I know, you told me a very few times".

"So.....how was your day?" ask Carol.

"It was-" before I can get out the full sentence out, a tall shadow overlaps mine. It's taller than me.

I slowly turn around. Chad stands right in front of me.

"Hey, BLAKE" says Chad, screaming in my ear.

"What do you want?" I ask him, with annoyance in my voice.

Chad is taller than me with dirty blonde hair that is usually spiked up. Being known for scoring 10 or more touchdowns during the past 3 weeks, Chad's stands as 1 of the higher popularity authority's in 7th grade. Big whoop.

"Oh nothing, I was just wondering how it feels to be a *skinny* tooth pick" he says, with a smirk on his face. I tense up.

"Chad, leave him alone" says Carol, with a serious tone.

I *almost* forgot she was still there.

"Um, no" Chad says.

I take a quick glance at my phone. It's 3:38.

"Besides, I have football practice in 10 minutes" he says "The *fun* just now begun".

He steps 2 steps in my space. I step back.

"Chad, can you *please* leave him *alone*" says Carol, this time with a edge to her voice. Her face is *very* red.

He slowly backs away from me.

“Ok” he says “But next time, it will be worse”.

He looks at me and then Carol, before marching off towards the football fields. I breath out a sigh of relief.

“Thanks, Carol” I said.

“You're welcome” she replies “Besides, that jerk needs to lay off the haterade”.

I laugh.

Her face starts to settle back to its regular shade.

“Here comes your mom” she says, tilting her head to side.

My moms car pulls up. The window rolls down.

“Hi Carol” says my mom.

“Hi, Mrs.Kell”.

My mom is slightly tall and has skin like Carol's. She's brunette and has light brown eyes. Just by looking at her, you can *almost* tell we look alike.

I open the passenger side door and hop in.

“I'll see you on Monday” says Carol.

“I'll see you too” I said, before the window rolls up. My mom drives off from the corner and we drive away from the curb.

=====

A few minutes later, at 4:05pm, we arrive at the art studio. Melody is waiting outside.

“Bye,mom” I said as I get out the car.

“Bye, Blake” she says, before driving off.

I walk up to Melody.

“You are late” she says, staring at me.

“I know” I said, looking down.

“It's ok” She said “ Besides, today you can draw whatever you want”.

I look up.

She smiles at me. My cheeks warm up and my hands starts to get sweaty.

“Ok”.

We walk through the lobby doors and on to the elevator.

“So, why were you late?” she asks, as she pushes level 6 on the elevator panel and we go up.

“My mom picked me up late”.

“Oh” She says

“Is your dad in a meeting today?”

“Yup. so that's why I had to call my mom during last hour”.

“Oh, ok” She replies.

The elevator stops on our floor and we walk into the hallway.

”Ok, go have some fun Blake, I'll be in the art space hanging up you new drawings” she says.

“Ok” I said.

We both part our different ways.

I walk into the huge studio silently and grab a fresh new pencil. I take a deep breath. I walk up to the canvas.

“Finally alone at *last*” I said, softly.

I put my pencil to canvas. I start drawing *softly*, slowly drawing the shape of her face. The curves of her face curves into the shape of a perfect and soft oval. I then start to draw her freckles, eyes, nose, cheekbones, and at last lips. And now to her hair. Her hair is dark and wavy, like *flowing* strands of floating silk everytime I see her. I draw hard and *light* strokes. After 1 hour later, I'm done. She looks stunning and beautiful. I stare at the drawing for a very long time. *Who knew all this time I tried to keep it a secret and yet I be myself, and let it express through my drawing?*, I think to myself. *I just now realized I just now drew Melody.*

=====

It's 5:30 pm and the aroma of baked chicken and mashed potatoes is flowing from the air vent in the wall. I'm sitting on my bed listening to music.

“Blake!” my mom calls.

“Coming!” I call back. I take out my earphones and walk from my room and down the stairs.

*I wonder what she's going to make for dessert*, I think to myself.

By then, I'm downstairs and about to walk into the kitchen when the door unlocks.

Dad's home.

“Hey, Dad” I said.

“Hey, Blake” he says.

My dad is very tall, with jet black hair and light skin and dark blue eyes. Like me. But unlike him, I have hazel eyes and my hair is dark brown and is not always slicked back into a comb over.

“Mmmmm..... It smells good in here, I wonder what your mom is cooking”.

He takes his phandora off and his coat. His suitcase stands upright by his side.

*I hope that meeting wasn't about something*, I think to myself.

“What was the *meeting* about?” I ask him.

He looks at me with a curious look. “Well, it was about some regular on the bases things, Blake.” He said. He pauses for a minute. “We *discussed* about the homecoming that's coming up”. I let out a sigh of relief.

“Oh, ok” I said.

“I was just now cooking baked chicken with mash potatoes on the side” my mom said, walking from the kitchen.

Apparently, she already set out the chicken and mashed potatoes on the table.

“I'll go get the plates and silverware” I said.

“Thank you, Blake” my mom said.

“Your welcome” I respond.

I walk into the kitchen and grab the plates and cups and set them on the table. And now, the drinks. *Should we drink water or lemonade?* I think to myself as I walk up to the refrigerator.

I chosed the water. I pour the water into the glasses and set them on the table.

My mom and dad walk in.

“Blake, thank you once again” she says, as she sits down at the table.

So does my dad and I. “I can't wait to dig in” he said, before we start prayer.

I bow my head and close my eyes. Soon as prayer is over, we dig in. I grab one piece of chicken and scoop up to 1 large spoon full of mash potatoes on my plate. I start eating.

“How was your day?” my mom asks me from across the table.

She bites into her first piece.

“It was good” I said, staring down at my plate.

“Well, that’s good” she says. A smile slowly creeps up on her face.

“Blake, I have good news for you” my dad said.

I look up at him. I suddenly feel worried. *What if dad saw Chad picking on me?* I think to myself. *I would totally be doomed.*

“What type of good news?” I ask him.

My dad and mom look at each other with a smile, Then they look at me.

“Blake” my dad says

“You was selected for the Creativity of Art Competiton” he says, with delight in his eyes.

Melody called me during the meeting”.

A few minutes later, I’m in my room finishing up the last bit of my homework and the apple pie my mom baked at the last minute. I’m finally done. Being this excited in being selected in the art competition, gets me amped up. Right after my dad told me, I hopped out of my seat with excitement and a little bit of weariness. *What would Chad think of me?* Is the question going through my head right now. I stare at the piece of paper on my desk. It has my name on it and the following words:

## BLAKE J. KELL AND MELODY H. MCARTHY

### ARTISTS #5

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU AND YOUR PARTNER ARE SELECTED CONTESTANTS IN THE 5TH ANNUAL CREATIVITY OF ART COMPETITION IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN. THE FIRST 2 GRAND PRIZE WINNERS WILL RECEIVE \$200,000 (IN CASH) AND WILL BE TRAVELING TO NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK TO A MEET AND GREET AT THE MADAM TUSSAUDS MUSEUM. THE COMPETITION RUNS FROM SEPTEMBER 26TH TO SEPTEMBER 30TH. GOOD LUCK!

September 30th is next week. Today is Friday, the 26th. So, from this day on, Me and Melody have to work on a drawing that will showcase both of our drawing skills. It needs to be a good drawing that will show Chad, I’m more than just a *skinny* tooth pick. And also, to grab Melody’s attention. Definitely hers.

=====

It's 8:00 am, the next day. My mom already dropped me off and I'm standing at the lobby doors. I arrived early today. *I wonder what she would think of me when I tell her*, I think to myself. I walk onto the elevator and press on the floor level. When I reach my level, I walk out the elevator. Before I walk into the studio, a new picture in the art space room catches my eye. I walk in there. Hanging on the wall are all of my other drawings. But the one I saw out in the hallway, is different. It's the picture of Melody. The thought hits me. *I'm so stupid. I forgot to put it away.*

"So, *you* drew that one of me" a voice says behind me.

Her voice sounds curious.

I turn around.

Melody stands in the doorway with her hands on her hips.

"Um..... yeah" I said.

She stares at me.

"Why?" she asks.

I start to get sweaty. It takes me a minute to answer.

"Because I uh.....like you" I said slowly.

Me and her stand there silently. Everything is silent, it stays that way for a few seconds.

Finally, after standing there for a minute now, Melody walks up to me. She stops 2 inches in front of me.

"You know Blake" she says, looking me in the eyes.

"I feel the *same* way too".

She tilts her head slowly and plants a kiss on my cheek.

I start to blush.

"Does this mean...." I said

" We are dating" she finishes.

"Yes, it does".

We stare at each other for a long time.

"Let's go work on that drawing" she says, before walking out the room.

=====

Over the weekend, I spent most of my hours working on the drawing with Melody. After telling her my idea of drawing a Converse shoe, we both agreed on it and started drawing. Half of the time, we would always flirt with each other or take a break off of drawing. The plan for our drawing was to draw a Converse shoe that stretches 6ft wide and 6ft high on a canvas. So far, we got half of it done. By this week Tuesday, we will be finished. I just know it.

=====

9:00am. This is the only hour where I have a class with Chad. And also, Carol. I walk from the boys locker room and into the gym. I have already changed my clothes and was about to go outside to do warm-ups, when the speakers come on.

“HELLO, EAGLES!” booms Mr.Scott’s voice over the intercoms.

By then, everybody else is out the locker rooms. Including Carol.

“This is just a quick announcement” he says “This week, we are having homecoming on Friday”.

Most of the boys woo and some don’t. I do.

“This will not be a formal homecoming, so you are allowed to wear casual clothing. Or formal clothing, if you like”.

“The dance starts at 5:30pm to 7:30pm.”

“All are welcome who attend this school or the high school, that is all. So, for the rest of the day, be positive and be the best you can be. I’ll see you all tomorrow at morning announcements” says Mr.Scott, before ending the announcement.

We all stand there silently for a few seconds. Then, all at once, everybody starts talking. Carol is with a group of girls by the girl locker room on the other side of the gym. I make my way over there. I’m halfway over there, when I’m suddenly pushed to the ground. I hit the floor *hard*.

Before I can see who it was, A face hovers in front of mines. It’s Chad’s.

“Ooooh, look. The *skinny* tooth pick is down” he says, laughing in my face.

By then, everybody crowds around. No sign of the gym teachers anywhere.

“What’s wrong you can’t *pick* yourself up?” he says “ Are you to *tall* to anyway?”.

He backs away from my face. Heat rushes into my face.

I had enough. I get up.

“No, I’m actually *ok*. But the only problem is, are you?” I ask him.

I walk towards him.

He steps back.

His face is red and sweat starts running down his face like a waterfall. His hands curls into fists at his sides.

“Chad, I ask from you is to STOP bullying me and other people around here.”

I take a deep breath.

“It doesn’t make *you* look cool, it makes you look stupid”.

I take one step towards him.

“And by the way, I’m not a *skinny* tooth pick. I’m much more than that”.

I turn around and walk through the parted crowd and go outside. I leave a group of stunned faces behind me, including Carol’s.

+++++

“Wow, so that’s what *you* did?” asks Melody, staring at me.

She’s clearly stunned.

“Yup.” I said. “And I just walked straight out of there”.

It's 4:50pm. Me and Melody are finishing the final touches on the shoe.

"I have to say, that sounds pretty awesome" Melody said, smiling at me.

I blush.

"But that sounds strange." She says "My cousin told me a *similar* story today, also".

I look up at her. Before I could ask who is her cousin, she cuts me off.

"And there, we are finished" She declares.

I drop the question.

We're finished with the drawing.

"It looks amazing" I said, staring at it.

"Yeah, it does" she says.

"Now, all we have to do is leave it here and the judges will come and see it tomorrow".

We walk out the studio and get on the elevator.

"Melody, can I ask you something?"

The elevator goes down.

"Sure, what is it?" she asks, looking at me.

I take a deep breath.

"I was wondering if you would go to the homecoming with me?" I ask her.

Her whole entire face lights up.

"I'll love too" she says, leaning into me before giving me a hug.

Later on, at 5:50pm, I'm helping my mom cook dinner. She's cooking spaghetti with meatballs.

My dad sits in the living room, watching football.

"Blake, can you hand me the pasta noodles?" She asks, looking over the pot of boiling water on the stove.

"Sure" I said.

I grab a pack of pasta noodles out the cabinet. I hand it to her.

"Thanks" she says "Can you get the meat and roll them into little balls for me?"

"Yeah". I roll up my sleeves and wash my hands in the sink. I grab a piece of meat and get started.

"You know, homecoming is this Friday, Blake" she says, eyeing me "Have you asked out *any* girls yet?"

I stop rolling. My cheeks are warm. I slowly turn around.

"Um, yes I have" I say slowly "I asked *Melody* to the dance".

Her eyes open wide.

"You *asked* Melody to the dance! What did she say?" she asks, anxiously.

"She said yes" I said.

My mom walks from the stove and hugs me, being careful to not touch my meat caked hands.

"Oh Blake, my sweet precious *Blakely!* You are growing up to fast. You're becoming a grown man now" she says, squishing me.

"Mom, I'm only 13 and so is Melody. Don't worry about me too *much*" I said.

She releases me.

“Besides, there are more awkward-and-yet fun years to come” I said, staring her in the eyes “I’ll enjoy it”

“Ok, Blake” she says kissing me on my forehead, before turning back to the stove and emptying the pack of noodles out in the pot. She turns back around.

“Brandon!” she calls.

My dad walks in. “What is it, Michelle?” He asks, looking at me than to her.

“Blake asked a girl out to homecoming!” she squeals, smiling.

“Who is it?” he asks “Is it a student at the school?”.

He looks at me with a questioning look.

“No” I said “ I asked Melody to the dance”.

My dads hand goes up.

“Blake, I am so *proud* of you” he says, giving me a bro hug.

I am squished once again.

“You are becoming a man now” he says.

“Yeah, I know” I said, looking at my mom.

She smiles and joins us.

We stay that way for a minute or so.

“Well, I have to finish making the spaghetti” my mom said.

“So do I” I add in.

We break apart.

“I’m going to the store” my dad says, grabbing the car keys off the kitchen wall.

“I’ll be back”. He kisses my mom on the cheek. He puts on his shoes and walks out to the garage. Soon, the car starts and he’s gone.

“I think he’s going to go buy you a tie” She says.

“I wouldn’t doubt it” I said.

=====

The next day, at the end of school, I was getting on the bus. My mom and dad said they had something to do. Since Carol rides the same bus as me, I get to talk to her. I was just about to get on the bus, when a hand clasp around my shoulder and pulled me back. His hand was sweaty.

“Chad, what do you want?” I asked, facing him.

His face was red.

“Are you ok?” I ask him.

He nods. “I just now ran from the football field”.

*I wonder why*, I think to myself.

“I came here to say sorry” he said, looking me in the eyes.

I’m shocked.

“What for?” I ask him.

“For what I’ve done to you for the past 3 weeks up until now” he says “And what you done yesterday, was very cool”.

It takes a minute for me to respond.

“So, you are apologizing for bullying me?” I ask him.

“Well, yeah” he says “What you did yesterday made me realize what I was doing and I felt bad”.

“Will you accept my apology?” he asks, holding his hand out.

I look at him.

“Yeah” I said, shaking hands with him.

“Well, I got to get back to football practice” he says “I’ll see you tomorrow”.

“Ok, bye” I said.

He runs back to the football fields. I get on the bus and sit next to Carol.

“What happened?” she asks.

“He apologized” I said. *What a surprise*, I think to myself.

A couple of minutes later, the bus stops at my house. I said bye to Carol soon as I get off. I walked into the garage and find my mom and dad in the car.

“Hop in, Blake” My dad says.

My mom has her digital camera wrapped around her neck.

“What’s going on?” I ask her, opening the back door.

“It’s the day of the Art Competition” she says.

I smack myself on the head. I almost forgot.

I get in the car and my dad pulls out of the garage and onto to the street.

=====

At 4:05pm, we arrive at the art studio building. The place is packed. As soon as my dad found us a parking spot, we get out and walk in. The main floor is decorated with floor to ceiling decor, with the colors of baby-blue, blue, and purple. The room is crowded. There are highly decorated tables everywhere spread out across the room, along with the confetti that decorates the floor around us and the rest of it. Along with balloons that hangs as centerpieces of a party of 5 for each table. There is a stage set up on the farthest side of the room, where a panel of chairs are set up on each side of a very large presentation table. It has the the cash prizes set on it, along with the plane tickets. The smell of popcorn fills the air. There’s a refreshment table nearby.

“This is the art competition” I said.

I take in the excitement.

“Yes” says both of my parents in unison.

“So, where do we sit?”.

My mom leans in close and whispers in my ear.

“How about over *there*”. She points to a table that’s 2 tables away from the stage in the middle of the room.

Melody is sitting there.

"Ok" I said.

We walk through the *almost* parted crowd and reach the table.

"Blake!" shouts Melody. She gets up and hugs me.

"Hey" I said, hugging her back.

"Hi Mr. and Mrs. Kell" says Melody, letting go of me.

"Hello, Melody" they said.

"Hello, Blake" says a light and gentle voice behind me.

I turn around. It's Melody's mother.

"Hello, Mrs. Carthy" I said, with a smile on my face.

Though I never met her before, she looks sort of like Melody. She's tall and very slim. Her face is a perfect oval shape, with a hint of freckles and cheekbones where some dimples should be. Just like Melody's. Her eyes are a soft hint of caribbean blue with a mixture of mint, that goes right with her light olive skin. But unlike her daughter, she has light brown wavy hair. We all sit down.

I sit by Melody.

"So, Blake. I heard you were taking my daughter to the dance" said Mrs. Carthy.

"Yes, I am" I said, looking at Melody.

I smile.

"I am so happy you are" says Mrs. Carthy "I'm pretty sure she will have a great time".

"I know I will" said Melody, returning the smile.

"Blake, would you mind taking a picture with Melody?"

My mom holds her camera out.

"Sure" I said.

Me and Melody both smile into the frame. She snaps the picture.

"Lady's and gentleman, please be seated" Says a young man on the stage. He's probably the host. The crowd slowly clears up and everyone is seated.

"Thank you. Today is the end of the 5th annual Creativity of Arts Competition here in Detroit, Michigan. The following artist who were selected has already been judged by the judge panel to my side over here" he says gesturing to the panel on his left side.

"They have already viewed each artists artwork and gave them a rating of 1-5 based on the time,effort, and of course *creativity* they put into it".

"But only 2 artist and their partners can win. The artists with the highest score added by all the panel judges, can win the grand prize of \$200,000 in cash, and a flight to New York City, New York to a meet in greet at the Madame Tussauds Museum, this following Saturday."

he said "So, let's get this started!".

A couple minutes later, after going through the 4 other artists, our names are called. We're last. When our drawing appeared on the screen, me and Melody were speechless, We got the score of 14. The second *highest* score.

"Ok, ladies and gentleman, this the moment we've all been *waiting* for" the host said, holding a folded card in his hand.

“The winners of the 5th annual Creativity of Arts competition is.....” He unfolds the envelope  
“Kristy Mcking and Kate Vines with the score of 15!”  
The table near ours let out screams and shouts. There are 2 girls there with the names on their tags.  
”And..... Melody Carthy and Blake Kell! With the score of 14!”  
Me and Melody let out a shout. So does our parents. We won!  
“I can’t believe it” Melody says, smiling at me.  
“Not me either” I said. I kiss her on the cheek.  
“Kirsty,Kate,Blake, and Melody, please come up and get your prizes”.

=====

The next day, I went to school. Soon as I was dropped off, I walked to my locker. I frozed.  
Posted all over my locker, was all *my* drawings. They were suppose to be at the studio. A crowd started to form around me.  
“Congratulations, Blake!” says a girl to my right. Her freckles pops out from her green eyes.  
“Carol, how did *you* know?” I ask.  
She walks up to me. She leans in close.  
“Let’s just say that *somebody* told me.” She whispers, softly “And she’s a *friend* of yours”.  
My eyes widen.  
“*Melody*” I said. She nods.  
It all hits me. *I should’ve known*, I think to myself. The freckles, the long hair, and the light colored eyes. *Carol* is Melody’s *cousin*.  
“How come you never told me?” I ask her, completely dumbfounded.  
She looks straight into my eyes.  
“You never *asked*’ she replies, with a smirk on her face.  
“So, now you tell me”  
“Yup, Captain Obvious”.  
I laugh. So does everybody else, not knowing what we were just talking about.  
“Congratulations, Blake” says a deep voice behind me. I turn around.  
It belongs to Chad.  
“Thanks” I said. He pulls me into a bro hug.  
“I’ll see you in gym?”He asks  
“Yeah” I said.  
“3 cheers to my son,Blake!” says my dad.  
He stands right beside me. He smiles.  
“WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!” shouts everyone.  
“WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!”  
“HOOOOOOO!”. Everybody claps.

=====

Me and Melody celebrated. Both of our family’s threw a party for us at my house, soon as I got out of school. During the party, me and Melody sneaked glimpse at each other from wherever

we were. Both of our parents were proud of us and also including our friends and family. We had a blast. We all sat around in our huge living room and had a laugh. My relatives brought over different foods. So did Melody's. After the party was over and everybody left, my dad gave me a blue tie.

"Blake" he said "here's a gift for you for homecoming tomorrow" he said, patting me on the back. I just realized something.

He was about to walk out the room.

"Dad?" I said

He stopped at the archway.

"What is it, son?" He asked.

I took a deep breath.

"Melody doesn't go to my school nor the high school" I said "How, will she be able to come with me?".

My dad grinned.

"I've taken care of *it*". He winks at me. I nod.

I went to my room and changed into my pajamas, before going to sleep. That night, I couldn't hardly sleep.

=====

At 5:00pm, the next day, after school, Melody was waiting outside for me in a maxi dress that was the same color as my tie.

"Are you ready?" she asks.

I straighten my tie.

"Yup" I said.

We both stare at each other. Than we kiss.