

Ayanna (10 Grey)

Forgotten

Forgetting is difficult, but watching someone forget can often be more frustrating.

At the ripe old age of seventy-two, my grandfather began forgetting. It started off with minor mishaps. Misplacing his belongings, forgetting the directions to the local clinic, calling me by my sister's name. At first, nobody took it seriously, poking fun at him when he forgot. At first, he joined in the laughter too. But it wasn't long before he started to forget more than just where he left his keys. He began to forget me.

Me, who visited him every Friday since I was a toddler. Me, who made all the birthday cards that are taped to his fridge. *How could he forget?*

I suppressed a scowl as I unlocked the door to my grandfather's bungalow. It was a Friday. "Grandpa! It's Robin!" I hollered as I entered. No response. I ventured further into the house. A layer of dust had settled on the once spotless mugs that lined my grandfather's cabinets. I resisted the urge to scrub them clean. *No*, I told myself, *that's his job. It's his fault if he's forgotten.* A picture of a red-faced five year old me sat glowering on the kitchen counter. I scoffed, remembering the havoc I had wreaked.

It was a distant memory now. One I nearly ceased to remember. But at least I could remember it, vaguely.

My sister, then, a proud middle schooler, had won a competition and was off to a summer camp. I thought it was extremely unfair that she got to go and I didn't. I screamed and thrashed, complaining through thunderous howls and slobbery snuffles. My grandfather, smiling, picked me up and brought me to the backyard. I wriggled and struggled to get out of his arms. When he set me down, I promptly burst into a fresh stream of tears.

"Grandpa," I cried. "It's not fair".

Sighing, my grandfather eased himself into a chair, and propped me up on his knee.

"Not everything is always fair, you know," he said.

"But I don't understand, grandpa!"

He chuckled softly. "You don't have to understand someone to love them.", "You love your sister, don't you, dear?"

'You don't have to understand someone to love them' The realisation stung with the bite of a hornet. I bit my lip to stop myself from crying. I traced the picture with my finger and repeated the phrase aloud. As I set it down, I heard a shuffle of steps behind me. "Hello?" my grandfather asked. I spun around and quickly enveloped him in a warm embrace. When I let go, he stared at me astonished.

"What was that you just said, dear?" he managed. I repeated the phrase. My grandfather's eyes widened as he scratched his head, looking for the fragment of a memory that was awakened by it. He fumbled, confused. *This is it*, I thought. *He will finally remember me.*

I helped him into a chair as he drummed his fingers on the tabletop. I waited and grew impatient, huffing and glancing at my watch. It surprised me what I heard next. A clear,

hearty sound, a blessing to my ears. A laugh. My grandfather's laugh. And I had forgotten what it sounded like.

'Robin!' he exclaimed. My name. His face lit up with such joy I had never seen. Or perhaps I had, but I'd forgotten.

'Yes, grandpa. It's me' I said, teary eyed.

I still didn't understand him, nor why he had forgotten me, but maybe I didn't have to. I'd still love him all the same.