

One

By Conner Welty

The rain pelted down upon the streets around the hospital. I ran. My heart pounded in my chest, but I could feel it slowly rising to my throat. The rain hid the tears streaming down my cheeks; but I felt them burn as they spilled over and blinded me.

Finally I hit the front doors as they opened, almost too slowly, for I nearly smacked into the wet glass. The nurse at the front desk glared as I sprinted to the stairs, though I paid no attention to her. I climbed the stairs quickly, but too slow in a sense. Each step could not find my foot fast enough, and I stumbled, pushing past the nurses and patients that slowly descended. On the third floor I stopped climbing, and dashed through the gray doors. His room was next to the staircase so I didn't have to run any farther.

I paused outside Jake's door. He was someone different, his eyes were closed, asleep. Even then, I could see that there was pain stirring behind his smooth mask. I shook off my moment of shock, and walked through his door. He heard me come in, and he was awake.

I looked over to a clipboard on the wall, it read in bold letters **“CAR CRASH.”** I winced, somehow seeing the words made it much worse. He was a pale green color, and his head was wrapped in thick gauze covering the gash received by his impact with the windshield. Jake groaned and opened his eyes. I turned toward him, trying wipe my eyes dry of the tears that continued to flow.

Jake sighed, then opened his mouth and said, “She's dead.” His voice was dry, barely any sound escaped; somehow the words hit me as if they were shouted in my ear. Carey, his twin sister, *was dead*. I froze, for what seemed like hours.

“What happened?” It was all I could say.

He squeezed his eyes shut, then replied, “I couldn't see anything, it was dark, and I ran through a red light without knowing it, then a big pickup slammed into the side of our car.” A tear skimmed his bruised cheek; I held back a new spasm of tears that threatened to erupt and sat in the green chair in the corner. I squeezed my eyes shut. I held my sides, hoping to keep myself together. *Jake* was my friend. I didn't know Carey that well. But I still could feel the blow of the words shake my frame. Seeing him in so much pain, it made me feel as if she had been my own sister, as if my twin that had been killed.

My eyes opened and Jake was looking at me, his eyes were red, streaming.

“I'm sorry.” I whispered. I knew he felt responsible. And his guilt seemed to engulf me. I saw that we were the same. We both felt the same silent pain of her death. We were one.