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### To Ricky

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5.0" x 8.0" (12.70 x 20.32 cm)  
Black & White on White paper  
28 pages

ISBN-13: 9781541165946  
ISBN-10: 1541165942

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-TO RICKY-

Written by Rijamekee T. Veii

To Ricky is dedicated to everyone who's run out  
of time

## Chapter one

"...you have about five months left. It could be longer, that's only by chance. Our biggest fear is that your time could be less. The cancer cells are multiplying at an alarming rate. If there was anything more I could do..." Doctor Phillips took a deep sigh after saying that. He looked at Rachel, waiting for her to say something. Rachel didn't say anything. Her lips felt dry and she had reached into her purse to get some lip-gloss. She didn't know what to say. This was the last thing she expected to hear, the last thing anyone expects to hear. She didn't know how long it would take for the shock to settle in. Kelly. Her name kept playing over in Rachel's head when she finally felt a tear roll down her cheek. Doctor Phillips grabbed a tissue and passed it to her. He thought it better not to say anything. What could he or anyone say to make her feel better? The deafening silence lasted for a few minutes after he decided to say something. "You'll get the medication at the front desk. Those pills work wonders for headaches and...um...stomach flu. Please inform me if they aren't."

Rachel couldn't say anything, what good would it be. Her fate had been decided. Her throat felt dry.

She put her lip-gloss back in her purse and stood up to leave. Kelly must've been waiting for a while now, Rachel knew how restless she got in waiting rooms.

When Rachel got to the waiting room, Kelly was being her usual self. Telling all the other kids about a really cool story she had read a while ago. Everyone seemed to be on the edge of their seats with excitement.

Rachel went to the front desk to get her medication. The secretary gave her the most rehearsed smile she had ever seen, like something out of an American toothpaste commercial from the nineties. Rachel graciously smiled back and motioned for Kelly to come with her. She thought it best not to tell her anything, not just yet.

Once they got home Kelly ran to the lounge, her favorite cartoon was on and it seemed she hadn't received any homework for that afternoon.

"Keep the volume down will you?" yelled Rachel as she went up the stairs.

"Sure Mum!" Kelly replied once she got there.

Rachel didn't know who she'd tell first. Her parents were in France and she had no idea when they'd be back. Her younger sister Hayden was probably at the mall and her friend Marcia was probably still at work.

She didn't seem to know who to tell or what to say, she didn't really know if she wanted to admit it to herself.

Rachel went to her room and found her diary on her bed. She couldn't remember the last time that she had written in it so she picked it up and decided to go through it. Somehow she felt she was a different person from when she had written those entries so long ago. Most of the entries were about the books she had read, Friday's at the park with Kelly and Eric. Eric was her little brother and almost every second entry was about a prank he played or a new joke he told her. She wondered how he would take the news.

Rachel found a note on the last page, an old piece of paper. She didn't remember how it got there, but it had a name on it as well as an address. She read the name *Adrian Abenzio Moretti*, Rachel didn't remember ever hearing that name before and it was attached to what seemed like an Italian address.

Maybe she had forgotten who that was, the paper seemed old. She tore a page from her diary and decided to write Adrian a letter. She didn't know how she was going to introduce herself, she hadn't written anyone a letter since high school, and that was a long time ago. She decided she would write that letter. She needed to talk to someone, even if he was just an address she had come across.

Dear Adrian...she wrote. She scratched that out; she didn't want to sound weird since they hardly knew each other. She giggled at the thought and tore another page from her diary.

*To Adrian*

*I don't know how to start. I really need to talk to someone and I happened to stumble across your address. I don't really know you and I'm guessing you don't know me.*

She looked at the page, not knowing what to say next. She decided to say exactly what she needed to, ignoring civility and humility for the first time in her life it seemed.

*My name is Rachel, I would prefer to use my alias 'Ricky'.*

*I got some really bad news today; turns out I'm going to die in a bit. I haven't really told anyone but you. I don't really know how to break the news, especially now that I finally got my dream job. Was planning on traveling next year, seems to be the only thing I really wanted to do.*

*Went to Hawaii once, adopted a child while I was there. I named her Kelly, prettiest little thing. Loved that country but I was only there for a week though. Tell me what was the most impulsive thing you have ever done. Guess I'm pretty Impulsive myself, didn't expect it all to end this soon.*

*Write back*

Rachel leaned over the drawer and grabbed an envelope. She noticed it was yellow and tossed it aside.

'Who uses yellow envelopes?' She thought to herself as she reached over to grab a blue envelope instead. 'Not exactly a brighter concept, but blue will do'

She put the letter in the envelope, sealed it and wrote his address on it.

She was really going to do it...

## Chapter two

Adrian didn't bother to put off the stove once he was done cooking the spaghetti and had put the pot on top of his fridge. He was really exhausted, it had been a long day at the office. At times like these all he wanted to do was lie down and think. He still couldn't get the letter he had received out of his head. He didn't know who this Rachel could've been. His friend Devin told him about a Namibian girl named Rachel once, but that was quite a while ago. He'd only been in Namibia for a month, Hardly enough time to get to know anyone well enough. He thought it was all a big joke that Eudora could have played on him. After all, she was the only Namibian girl he knew. He thought he would play along.

*To Rachel, I take it you'd prefer to be called Ricky. You mentioned that you were going to die in a while. Not sure what's going to kill you, I think you forgot to tell me that. I really don't know how you got my address.*

Adrian stopped writing. It all started making sense. He remembered Eudora telling him that she gave his address to a girl she knew, Ricky must be that girl.

*Come to think of it, you probably got my address from*

*Eudora. She never told me much about you. So you adopted a baby in Hawaii, sounds interesting to say the least.*

*I think the most impulsive thing I've ever done was go blonde in middle school. I blame it on the hippie craze of the early 90's. My friends make sure I never live that down.*

*You could write back, but that's completely optional*

He sealed the letter in order to post it the next day. He got up and walked over to the mirror to fix his hair. Isabella said she'd be there by eight. Adrian checked his watch to confirm that she was late.

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Eudora had come by Rachel's place. Rachel told her about the letter and she smiled. Eudora had sneaked his address into Rachel's diary a few weeks ago. She had planned to hook them up since he would be coming to Namibia in a few months.

Rachel knew she had to tell her family about the Cancer, she wouldn't want them finding out the wrong way. She decided that tonight she was going to do it. Her parents had just come back from France and they were going to have a barbeque. Everyone was going to be there and she knew that she probably wouldn't get

another chance.

They got to the party a bit late and just as she had expected, everyone was there.

"Glad you could make it honey." Whispered her mom.

She sent Kelly to play with the other kids at the pool. Her friend Umuna was there as well.

Almost everyone was glad to see her as she took a seat next to her brother.

"Rachel, this is Julia. I think you met last year at my birthday party." Eric said as he introduced his girlfriend.

Rachel smiled at Julia, who gave her the most exaggerated grin imaginable.

This seemed to be the opportune moment to tell them.

"I'm not sure you've all heard the joke about the broken engine..." began her father as he told the oldest joke in the family. Everyone had heard that joke about a hundred times before but they all laughed out of politeness it seemed.

The table got quiet again and Rachel cleared her throat as she began what would be the most difficult sentence she ever had to say.

"I presume you all know I got the job at the firm." She said, trying to put the words together in her mind. Everyone applauded almost instinctively.

"I knew you would get it sis." Yelled Hayden from the far corner of the table

"That's not exactly what I wanted to say." She took another sip from her glass as the table grew quiet again

"I went to see the doctor about those headaches I've been having. Turns out I have brain cancer." It was quiet except for the noise coming from the pool.

"Turns out it's terminal." She added.

The silence became more deafening. Umuna thought she would say something, but audibly cleared her throat instead.

Eric decided to break the silence.

"When did you get the news, have you started with the chemo yet?"

"Yes I have, Doctor Phillips said the cancer cells were detected too late." she faintly replied.

She was almost shivering by now.

She felt the cold air on her face as a tear rolled down her cheek. Her mother put her hand over her mouth and Hayden ran to hug her.

It was going to be a long night.

### Chapter three

Weeks had passed and Rachel was losing weight at an alarming rate. Kelly was being very helpful around the house and Hayden visited more often. Eric got into a lot more fights at school as well. Rachel almost wished she had never told them.

Rachel still hadn't decided whether she would write back. She hadn't written to Adrian in a while and she felt that she needed to, he did write back after all.

She tore another page out of her diary and began writing.

*To Adrian*

*It's me again, Ricky. I don't know why it took me so long to write back. Eudora told me you were coming to Namibia in a while.*

*So I wasn't really specific in my last letter, I've got cancer. A lot has happened since I told everyone. The cancer is really eating at me in more ways than one.*

*It was great of you to write back, I was hoping you would. I also did my hair blonde in high school. I thought it looked great, till it all broke off the next week.*

*I have difficulty sleeping sometimes. My dreams depress me. Don't we always think death would be the easiest thing? Cancer feels like an appointment with death. I hate the way it makes me feel so powerless.*

*This might sound strange but for the first time in my life I feel mortal. Don't we all feel immortal? Like death happens to everyone but us.*

*If anything, my cancer made me think more about the other side. What makes you think about the other side?*

*Write back*

Rachel folded the paper and put it in her purse. She was going to mail it later. She stood up and walked towards the mirror. She looked at her frail figure and pulled the loose hair out of her head. It made her think of her life, her impending death. It made her think about God, about Jesus and the cross.

She hadn't talked to God in a long time. She couldn't believe it but she hardly remembered the last time she prayed. Rachel knew she had to talk to God, she just didn't know what to say. She kneeled to pray.

**Heavenly Father**

**I know I haven't talked to you in a while, I don't know where we lost touch.**

**I need your help Father, to deal with this. Give me courage Lord, and your grace.**

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