

Where the Sun Sleeps

The sun's rays were reaching out onto the soft face of young Addison. The warmth radiated amongst the town, making the summer heat apparent on her pale cheeks that now had a rosy color, a shade lighter than her cherry tomato nose. Addy was playing in her backyard, letting her imagination take her to new places she had never before seen. Everywhere Addy went her unseen best friend followed, saving her from loneliness and keeping her safe throughout her adventures. Together they were flying a jet one moment and were swinging from the vines of the tropical rainforest the next. She was too lost in the explorations of her own imagination to remember to reapply sunscreen to her burning skin.

Her mother yelled out the sliding glass door, calling Addy in for supper. The scent of sweet yellow corn and juicy hamburgers filled her nose the moment she stepped inside, and she quickly realized how hungry she was. As she went to wash her hands, cleaning herself from the day's messes, she realized that this would be the last time she would eat dinner in this home. Tomorrow Addison and her mother were moving to a new house with new neighbors and a new backyard. The day's fun quickly escaped her as she was overwhelmed with sadness. The days until the dreaded "Moving Day" had passed too quickly. She had never moved before, and she loved her magical backyard that took her anywhere she imagined.

After supper Addy and her mother sat on the front porch drinking sweet tea as they watched the sun set in the warm sky. She imagined the sun getting ready for bed as it tucked itself in behind the horizon.

"Mommy?" Addison asked in a tired voice

"Yes, my sunshine?" responded her mother as she patted the messy brown curls that poofed out all around her daughter's face like curled birthday ribbon on a petite gift.

"Where does the sun sleep?" questioned Addison as she saw the sun finally dip completely beneath the hill far out in the horizon.

Her mother was not expecting that to be the question that trickled from the curious lips of her daughter. She thought for a moment longer.

"The sun sleeps in his bed, just like you do, except his is a lot bigger."

She grabbed Addison's hand and led her back inside to her bedroom. All of the pictures on the walls had been removed, leaving the room to be nothing but bare yellow paint. The only evidence of life left in the room was found underneath the few blankets and pillows that created a hiding fort on the floor, or that's how Addy had perceived what was intended to be her bed for the night.

Addison lay awake listening to the summer sound of crickets chirping through her window. She silently wondered to herself what her new neighbors would be like, and she hoped her new backyard would still be able to take her to new places each time she closed her eyes. She was an uneasy mix of anxiety and excitement as she lay restless, curious of what tomorrow could bring.

"Wake up my baby!" Addison's mother knocked on her bedroom door, coming in before Addy had a chance to respond. "It's time to go to our new home!"

After a few minutes of wiping the sleepiness out of her eyes and stretching her growing legs, Addison began to get ready to say goodbye to the home that she loved for all six and a half years of her existence.

The morning passed quickly as the final boxes were packed into the moving van, leaving the house to only be protective walls of empty space. Addy looked out through the sliding glass door that led to her backyard and saw memories that no one else could see. She waved good-bye to Cinderella, remembering the time she was a princess alongside her as they attended a grand ball together. Addy blinked and now could see her borrowed spaceship, reading NASA on the side as it stretched through the atmosphere beyond the clouds. She remembered her visit to Mars- how she made it there, discovered life on a distant planet, and made it home all before her mother called her in for supper. Her backyard had created the best memories of her lifetime, and she was devastated to leave the place that was a best friend to her. Addy waved goodbye, holding tight to her memories as she got into the car with her mother.

The ride's distance seemed to be endless, driving Addy farther and farther from her old home. She peeked out the back window and saw nothing but the cars traveling behind her. She closed her eyes tightly, hoping that when she opened them and peaked out the back window for a second time she could see some trace of her old home. She tried this a number of times but never had such luck. Although the ride seemed to be an endless journey, the time passed too quickly, for when they pulled into their new home Addison wasn't ready for what was before her when she stepped outside the backseat door.

Addison was used to one home, her own, isolated on the country road that she lived on. This was different. The homes of many filled one building. There were many doors that acted as passage ways into the lives of other families living in the same apartment complex. Surely this was not where they were going to be living. There was no backyard to live out her imagination, so this could not be her home.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Addison's mother in effort to act excited about their new home, only hoping to cheer her daughter up as she herself was a little uneasy.

"I know it's a bit smaller than our old home was..." her mother began.

"What about my backyard?" Addy whispered as tears began to soak her baby blue eyes, looking like a cloudy sky on the brink of a storm.

The unpacking began instantly, leaving no room for hesitation or regret. Boxes were transported inside, new rooms were being discovered by Addison, and the organized chaos began. Addison looked inside what was going to be her new room. It was small and bland, old and boring- nothing like the outspoken personality she possessed.

Addy began to sob, letting the storm that was brewing overflow from her sky blue eyes, releasing a downpour of tears. She ran outside to get away from the place that had ruined her happiness.

"I don't want to live here. I don't have a backyard to play in. I don't want to sleep in that room. This is not my home." Addy pouted as the tears continued to run down her cheeks.

"I don't like this place." Addy continued to repeat.

Finally the tears began to slow, and eventually came to a halt. She was amazed by all the cars in the parking lot and all the windows that filled the complex. Suddenly a little red-headed girl came up to Addison that seemed to be her age. Her pale skin illuminated everything around her; her presence enhanced what was already beautiful and shone a light on the darkness around her. She was hope. She was love. She was peace.

"Hi, my name is Ellie." said the little girl with a warm smile. "Why are you so sad?"

Addy quickly wiped the final tears from her cheeks and shouted out "I don't like this place one bit!"

"Did you just move here? It will get better. It did for me. I just moved here a month ago!" said Ellie. "What is your name?"

"I just got here today." She said. "My name is Addison."

"Can I take you somewhere that might cheer you up? I was just headed there and I think it will make you feel better." Ellie was a friendly, adventurous girl with pin straight hair and freckles everywhere from her forehead to her toes.

Addison quickly said yes, willing to do anything to keep her out of her new home as long as possible. She didn't want to go back. Anything must be better than her bland, boring room.

They walked side by side telling each other about themselves- all the things they loved to eat, their favorite games to play, and their biggest pet peeves. Soon they arrived at their destination.

"Isn't it wonderful?" said Ellie in awe as she looked into the park before her.

Before the two of them was an enormous jungle gym. There were sky high twisting slides, swings, monkey bars, and even a miniature rock climbing wall. Addison couldn't believe it. They immediately ran up to the monkey bars, pretending there was hot lava beneath their feet and the monkey bars were the only method to get across the dangerous terrain. They climbed the rock wall pretending that they were climbing Mount Everest in snowy conditions, being careful to hold on tight and not take one wrong step. Together they traveled through time, creating new adventures together, and sharing memories. Addison and Ellie became best friends the very first day they met.

"Mom!" Addison shouted. "How did you know I was here?"

Addison's mother was suddenly standing before them in the entrance of the park.

"I just knew you would find your way here without me telling you how." Her mother said with a smile. "Who is your new friend?"

Addison introduced Ellie to her mother and they all began to walk back home. Much time had passed and it was already time for supper. When they got home there was greasy, cheese pizza ready to eat on the table- Addison's favorite.

"Guess what Ellie told me today, Mommy" Addison said.

"What is that baby? Her mother responded.

"Ellie told me that the sun doesn't sleep. It just lives somewhere else for a little while when we can't see it. And when the sun lives somewhere else he still shines his light and makes the earth warm."