

*I always scorned those girls who went behind the bike sheds with a 'hunk' as they put it or the love of their lives but I found myself there amidst cigarette butts, sitting on unstable wooden planks, not exactly the most ideal romantic setting. But I was with him. He dug into the depths of his pockets, I looked at him questioningly, he did not give anything away in his smile. He opened the palm of his hand to reveal a locket, in it a photo of us, at the peak of our ecstasy. Silent communication meant that I turned around for him to clasp the delicate locket tenderly around my neck. I looked at him. The fronds of his blond hair rested on his perfect forehead while his enchanting eyes penetrated into the very essence of my soul. I didn't want to be anywhere else- the bike shed was perfect. We slowly leaned in, as his faced closed in, my heat thudded our lips edged towards one another in sync with one another, anticipation ran through my veins with a surge of passion. RING! The sharp sound of the school bell snapped us right back into reality. Time was running out.*

Julia snapped open her eyes, that scene seeming like an eternity ago. But one thing remained the same: Time was running out. There he lay, his complexion sallowing, his eye-lids rimmed with a blood-stained red, and his limbs lay lifeless across the hospital bed. The love of her life, the essence of her being, her childhood sweetheart reduced to an old decaying disintegrating man. Death was imminent; doctors predicted a maximum of a few days, nothing could save him. Apart from one life-threatening process that would deprive *her* with one part of her heart. It seemed to her as if it wasn't a choice and she would lose either way, whatever decision she made. She couldn't bear to live without him, even a day without him was a struggle. The dilemma was whether she would live to see him after the operation. Would she open her eyes to see his corpse a failed operation or would she not even see daylight again? Then an answer came to her – there was no way that she could go through everyday life if there was a doubt in her mind, even the tiniest seed of guilt or regret, that she had held his life in her hands but then let him slip through her fingers. She was literally going to give him her heart forever.

She strode to the operating theatre before she could change her mind. She lay on the forbidding operating table and the doctor injected her with anaesthetic. She could feel drowsiness overcoming her.

She groggily opened her eyes to find the blurry figure of a nurse, it slowly came to focus, and the words shot out of her mouth. "Is he alive?" It seemed like a dream, when the nurse replied gently, "Yes, it was a success." Relief flooded through her body, washing away any past distress and fear she had experienced. She hopped out of bed and rushed to her beloved's side. From her first sight of him she could see that colour had already seeped to his cheeks. He opened his arms to form a passionate embrace, her slight body enveloped in his strong arms; happiness pulsated through ever fibre of their being. They were alive. Time had been on their side.

After their speedy recovery, they were discharged from the hospital to form a new chapter of their lives. A tidal wave of freedom swam through their bodies as they exited the doors. The wind whipped their hair and the sun radiated on their skin. They crossed the busy road and Julia suddenly clutched her neck. "The locket!" she exclaimed. She

whisked around, urgency determining every move she made and surged towards the road. Her body catapulted against the red Mercedes. The shrill of her scream, the splatter of her severed heart crescendoed. She was dead. Lifeless breathless soulless heartless. Fully dead.

Her husband breathed a sigh of a relief. A free heart and a dead wife. Life was good. John walked towards the horizon to face a whole path of opportunities for a single man.

By Masarat and Kara 10Z