

An Unsettled Journey

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Submitted: May 30, 2011

Updated: May 30, 2011

"I never would've thought that my life would be different" thought 16 year old Apple Granger as she looks back at the past. "When everything changed"

Provided by Fanart Central.

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0 - Prologue

I remember the last time I saw Tyson alive... We were just little children and we always had fun in Greece. Except for that year... That year when I lost him... When I lost everything...

“Tyson... I don’t think this is a good idea anymore,” I said as I looked at my big brother. My brother, Tyson, and I were staying at my aunt’s and uncle’s house in Greece for the summer because my parents were on a business trip to Rome. I barely saw my parents as it was and they barely noticed me whenever they weren’t on a business trip.

“Oh, quit being a wimp. You’re just another cry-baby, exactly like your best friend Hilary,” Tyson said as he stared at me straight in the eye. We were walking on the edge of a cliff that was ten feet over the shore.

“I am not a wimp or a cry-baby!” I pouted and crossed my arms, “And neither is Hilary.”

He shrugged his shoulders and laughed, “Once a cry-baby, *always* a cry-baby.” I stomped my feet and growled at him. Tyson and I were only two years apart but we were inseparable. Wherever he went, I went.

Tyson looked a lot like my mother. He had her beautiful brown eyes and her long, silky blue hair, but he also had my father’s button nose and his enchanting smile.

“Come on, Apple,” whined Tyson because I didn’t move, “we are almost there!”

I puffed my cheeks and kept staring at him. Everybody says that I look like my father. I have his straight brown hair and his button nose, but I also inherited my mother’s brown eyes and her alluring smile.

“Where exactly are we going, Tyson?” I asked, finally letting my curiosity overwhelm me. Tyson had told me earlier that morning that he wanted to show me something and when I asked him what, all he would tell me was that it was something that I would like. It never crossed my mind that day that I should’ve asked him before he made me go on the stupid hiking adventure. I mean, I hated walking as it was; I was always a lazy-butt.

“The beach on the other side of town, the one that’s called Sarakiniko Beach,” he simply replied and beckoned me to keep walking.

I gasped and backed up a couple of steps, “But Agenta and Achlys told me that it was a forbidden area!” Agenta and Achlys were my friends that I made in my previous stay in Greece. I had always played with them, but Tyson had always claimed that he could never see them.

Tyson rolled his eyes and put his hands in his pockets, “Apple, Agenta and Achlys aren’t real. They are just make-believe people that—“

“They are not make-believe!” I yelled at him. He shook his head and muttered something that sounded like “annoying brat.” “I am not a brat!” I screamed at the top of my lungs. He stopped moving and seemed to be in deep thought. I stared at him for a couple more minutes, feeling my anger heating my skin. I screamed at him, “I wish that something bad would happen to you so that I would never be able to see you again!”

He spun around quickly so that he could make some sarcastic remark about my wishful thinking, when, as he moved, he lost his footing.

My eyes widened as he started to fall towards the water and I tried to run to him but everything seemed to be moving in slow motion.

“TYSON!!” I screamed. After I screamed, everything seemed to move quickly. I tripped over my own feet as I fell off the edge, but I managed to catch a branch that magically appeared out of nowhere. I heard a crash as Tyson’s body hit the water. I looked down and tried to find Tyson, but there was no use, his body was gone forever...

“Apple!!” yelled a voice from over the cliff. I looked up to see a boy with glasses and messy, gray and blue hair, stretch his hand out toward me. “Grab my hand!”

I looked at his hand and then back at his face. I couldn’t make out his face but I knew that it was familiar. “Tyson,” I managed to choke out, “save Tyson.”

“Apple, listen to me!” the boy yelled, his face was pale and he was panting. “Tyson is gone! You need to grab my hand!”

I stared at him, “No.... Tyson can’t be gone...”

“Please!!” he yelled again, sounding desperate. The last thing I remembered was looking at him and seeing Tyson’s face.

“But Tyson can’t be gone...”

1 - Alone

But that was years ago... Everything is different now... Ever since Tyson died...

The boy saved me when I almost let go of the branch. The boy, I later found out, was also walking to the beach when he had heard me screamed. He tried to run as fast as he could and when he got there, I was already hanging off the cliff. I kept punching him because he saved me, demanding that he let me go so that I could find Tyson, but he wouldn't let go. He just held onto me tighter. He kept trying to tell me that it was going to be fine, that I could stop crying and that I was safe with him. I just stared at him and thought that I wasn't crying, that the moisture on my cheeks were only from the sudden rain that decided to pour on that tragic day. But that was when I realized that it wasn't raining, that I was crying after all. I finally stopped punching him and allowed my feelings to fall like the rain. The boy still held onto me, but I couldn't feel his embrace.

A few minutes turned into hours. My aunt and uncle found us after realizing that Tyson and I hadn't returned from our hike, and Tyson must've told them where he was planning to take me because they found us in no time. They looked at my tear-streaked face and asked the boy if he knew what had happened. The boy, whom I soon learned that he was called Kai, told them that I had accidentally fallen off the cliff and he claimed that he had no idea what had happened to my brother. My aunt looked at me again and burst into tears.

"Christopher," my aunt said to my uncle, "we need to call Yoshie and Bruce. They need to know what happened and come back to Greece, pronto."

"Diana, honey," my uncle said, "you know that they would never give up an opportunity like this just because of their children!"

"Well—they should!" my aunt replied, tears streaming down her beautiful face. Aunt Di is my mother's younger sister by three years. They never saw eye to eye and I doubt that they ever will.

"Di, your sister and that man had never cared about what happened to their children. They even said so themselves!"

"But—"

"Di," he interrupted, "we need to get Apple home." He looked at me and I thought I saw something that I had never seen before flash in his eye. What was it? Pain? Sorrow? Or was it *anger*?

I looked up at my uncle, and for the first time in my life, I feared him. I feared the man that I had wanted to call my father. My uncle, with whom I had spent my whole entire life with, seemed emotionally and physically different.

Aunt Di sighed and wiped away the rest of her tears, "Christopher, you're right—I guess. But I still think that we should call them."

I didn't pay any more attention to their conversation as I looked back down the cliff that almost cost me my life.

"He's gone..." I whispered. I didn't direct it to anyone, but a hand squeezed my shoulder reassuringly.

"Not in spirit," he whispered. I looked at the boy, the boy who saved my life, and I shook my head.

"It doesn't matter. He's still gone." I tried to stand up, but my legs felt like jelly and I winded up falling down again.

"Why won't you believe me when I said that he's still here?" Kai asked as he caught me mid-air and tried to help me stand upright.

"Because *he isn't*," I replied angrily. He just shook his head in utter defeat.

"Thank you, Kai," said my uncle as he took my hand from the boy, "I can take care of her from here on out." Kai looked at my distraught form then nodded.

"Come along now, Apple," Aunt Di tried to say cheerfully, "we're going back home." She stretched out her hand toward me and I numbly looked at it.

Where's my home now? I thought as I looked at her. *Life would never be the same without—Tyson.*

I looked at the ocean, in which now held my brother's soul, for the last time that day and looked at my aunt's hand, then I looked up at her once youthful face and saw the horror in her eyes and the stress take form into wrinkles.

Tyson... Why did You have to take him away from me? Now I'm alone once again. I'm alone once again... Is that what You want!? I thought as tears started to pour again.

"I'm sorry, Aunt Di," I said as I burst into tears again. "I'm sorry!"

I'm sorry... But I'm alone... Again...

2 - The Funeral

Remembering the past may be hard for some people, but for others, the past will always haunt them. For me? It would be the second part because no matter how many times I try to tune out the past, I would always remember the funeral.

Aunt Di called my mom and dad, and like Uncle Chris had said, they didn't bother to return to Greece to soothe my wretched soul. I didn't talk to anyone after that day, for I was in mourning and was drowning in guilt. Aunt Di and Uncle Chris did all they could to help relieve myself from my solitude, but their efforts were worthless. Uncle Chris called the police to see if they could find Tyson's body. But there was no hope. Days turned into weeks. Weeks turned into months, and eventually, the police gave up searching for his body. So we had a funeral without his body. It was a horrid day, but yet, that was the day that I learnt the whole truth about myself.

Tyson was loved and blessed by all who knew him, so it was heartbreaking to see all his friends, relatives, neighbors, and teachers crying over a boy who was gone but his body was to dwell in the darkness of the ocean floor. His funeral was just a blur to me, as was everything else at this time, but what I did notice was that my mom and dad weren't here to see their beloved son depart from this world. Of course, there were people gossiping about it and they all made sympathetic glances in my direction.

I was wearing my hair in braided pig-tails and a black dress, as what was called for in such an occasion as this. The dress reached down to my ankles. It was *really* frilly and it was making me itch. I was also wearing black laced stockings and black boots.

I was sitting in the corner hugging my legs and crying "woe is me." I didn't want to talk to anybody, nor did I want to see them, unless I had to. Tyson was the sociable one, not me. *I* was always the one who stood by his side and remained silent.

"Tyson..." I whispered to myself and hugged my knees tighter. "Why did you leave me?"

And it was at *that* moment that my life changed forever. *That* moment when I thought that my normal, lonely life wasn't going to get wackier.

"*HeIIIIIIlooooo!!!*" someone screamed into my right ear, making me jump and fall out of my seat. The person laughed at me as I rubbed my ear gently. I stared at the person in anger for I hadn't expected it but then I saw his face and froze.

"So how's my little Apple?" the person asked me and sat down on my chair.

I couldn't speak! I was in such utter terror that the little voice in my head seemed to have died! *How could this have happened? How did he get here?* I pondered to myself, too scared to say it out loud. He tilted his head and grinned, that same grin that I hadn't seen in months. His long, silky blue hair seemed untouched and dry and his clothes weren't tattered like I thought they would be.

“What’s the matter? Cat got your tongue?” he asked in that voice that I’ve missed sooooo much.

“H-h-how did you...” I stuttered, petrified.

“How did I... What?” he asked in a tone that always made me want to slap him.

“Y-y-y-you are s-s-supposed to be—“I didn’t want to say it... It hurt just thinking about it.

“Dead?” he finished and raised one of his eyebrows.

“No, I was thinking about you dressing up as a pig,” I said sarcastically and I blinked rapidly. This was the first time that I had spoken with such emotions in months!

“Of course, I thought you were dead!” I glared at him and the tears that were dwelling inside of me since *that day* fell again.

“I-I thought that I was going to be alone...” I said as I tried to dry my tears away. His grin disappeared as he looked at me sadly.

“Apple... I—“

“WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME, TYSON?!” I screamed as I started crying uncontrollably.

“Apple,” Aunt Di said and ran to me, “what’s wrong?”

“T-t-t-t-Tyson,” I stuttered and pointed in the direction of where he was standing. But as I pointed at him, I realized that he wasn’t standing. His feet weren’t touching the ground. Tyson was floating. Aunt Di stared at him, but it was like she couldn’t see him. I stared at her, mortified by the fact that she couldn’t see him.

“H-he’s just standing there, Aunt Diana! Can’t you see him?”

Tears started to form around her eyes; she kissed my forehead and pulled my shivering body in her warm embrace. Funny, I didn’t remember ever shaking, but as she held me in her arms, I realized that I wasn’t shaking because I was cold, but I was shaking because I was scared.

“Apple,” my aunt said as she hugged me and tried to muffle her tears, “you’re just stressed. It’s just the stress of whatever happened to Tyson, and your mind is finally allowing your brain to feel pain. He is dead. We have to accept that.”

Shocked? Yes. Stressed? Yes. Seeing *Tyson* because I was stressed? Hell *no*.

“But I see him!” I insisted as I kept pointing at Tyson, who was staring at me rather intently. Aunt Di shook her head.

“No, you don’t, honey, it’s probably just post-dramatic-shock.”

Post-dramatic-shock?! Do you think I'm crazy or something? Like I'm making this up?? I thought as I stared at my aunt like I thought she was crazy to even say that when I obviously can see him.

"Apple," my uncle said as he entered the room, "good *Lord!* What happened to you, Apple? You look like you had just seen a—"Aunt Di's glare made him swallow up his next word.

"A ghost?" I said and faked a smile, oh yea, as if seeing a ghost was normal. I mentally rolled my eyes at my stupidity to act innocent in front of my uncle and my aunt. Ever since that day near the cliffs, I've never looked at Uncle Chris the same way again. He *definitely* seemed different now. He shaved off his jet-black hair before the funeral and his ocean-blue eyes seemed to have turned lighter somehow, with no help from any contacts either.

He smiled apologetically at my aunt and he nodded to my choice of words. "An eight-year-old seeing ghosts, huh? Now that's something new."

"*Christopher,*" hissed my aunt as she looked at me and smiled, "Apple *wasn't* seeing ghosts. It's just *stress*. And I bet that we are all feeling stressed after a long day at a funeral home, so let's go home and have some cookies, okay? And Apple, honey, you can help me bake them."

I nodded reluctantly as my aunt kissed me again and walked up to Uncle Chris. She wacked his shoulder and his only response was "what". Then after a minute or two of looking at each other, they started talking in Greek.

"Tyson," I whispered so that the wind could carry my voice to wherever the dead might live. I wanted some answers, and I wanted them then. I didn't want to think that I was crazy, or have anyone else think that. And I know that the only way to get those answers was to see if I can talk to Tyson *again*.

"You called?" answered my *dead* brother as he materialized right next to me. I looked at him and I tried to put my hand on top of his. And just as I suspected, my hand slipped through as if I was just touching regular air that felt like it came from the Atlantic Ocean because it was really cold and it made me shiver. Then I asked him the questions that would change my life forever.

"I'm not in shock, am I?"

He nodded his head.

"I'm not stressed out either?"

He nodded his head. I took a deep breath and tried to think of words that would be appropriate to ask the next question.

"You're a ghost, aren't you?"

He nodded his head.

"And I can see you?" I mentally braced myself for his answer. But he just nodded his head. No other

words left my mouth as I stared at him, then back to my aunt and uncle, who were watching me pretty intently. I got up from my sitting position and when I stood up, my legs felt like they were made out of jelly. I looked down at the spot to where Tyson sat and noticed that he had disappeared.

“Apple,” said my aunt. I sadly looked up at her and, like I was being forced to do stuff against my own free-will, I walked over to her and faked another smile.

If I can see ghosts and am able to talk to them... Then what does that make me?