

"Where I Left Off"

Candace Folske

She sits by the lakes edge, staring at the waterfall a few yards away. Slowly she looks at her reflection... Who is this girl, she thinks. Why am I here?

She doesn't remember who she is. The doctors said the accident damaged her brain. Of course it would be the memory part, she thinks. Her face is unfamiliar to her. She can't remember her past, her family, or her friends. Nothing.

All she can do is start over new. Yet she wants to remember how it happened. The doctors said she was hit by a drunk driver. The doctors say there is a fifty-percent chance she'll never remember who she was. The doctors this, the doctors that. STOP TALKING IN MEDICAL MUMBO JUMBO! She screamed in her head.

Still she looks. Still she tries. Tries to bring back the memories she knows won't come. What is she doing here? Why did she even bother coming? There's no point.

Thunder rumbles in the distance, but she doesn't care. All she wants is to be who she was before.

Her face is hardly disfigured by the accident. An angry red scar runs from her temple down her neck. That's all. The doctors said she was lucky to have lived.

What was my name again? She asked her self for the fourth time that day. Oh yeah. Brook. That's right.

Lightning flashes over head. Still she doesn't move. She's marveled by the reflection before her. It's only been the second time she's truly looked at herself. The first was in the hospital. Since then she purposely avoided mirrors. Asking her parents to get ride of the ones she passed daily.

Her raven black hair whips around in the wind. Her steel blue eyes are rimmed with red from hours of crying. Her cheek ones are well defined. All around, she has a lovely

face. She's short; she had a body girls would kill for. Yet she doesn't care. She'd trade it all for her memory.

The first rain drops land softly near by, one landing in the pool of water before her. The drop shatters the reflection, rippling the surface, distorting her face. Falling harder, the rain soaks her cloths and hair. She stays planted in her place.

Let the rain come, she thinks. Let it come and wash away my pain, my fear. Take it all away, she pleads.

Slowly the rain stops, and she's drenched in the fallen water. Gradually she gets to her feet. She unbuttons her pants and slides them down. She pulls her shirt over her head. With out even pausing she dives head first into the freezing water. Darkness engulfs her; the pressure seems to free her mind. Suddenly she can think straight. She stays below the surface for a long time it seems. And just when her lungs are about to burst she breaches the surface.

She remembered something! She remembered how to swim. Remembered how she loved swimming. She swims around for a while longer. A few memories come back. She and her best friend, Shelly, used to come and swim here late at night. She remembered laughing with Shelly.

Swimming back to the edge of the water she notices someone else is with her. Immediately she knows the face. Shelly. Her best friend.

"Hello Shelly," Brook calls.

Shelly looks shocked. Not knowing what to do or say she raises a hand and waves. Brook swims closer.

"You... you remember me?" asks Shelly.

"Yes. I do." Replies Brook.

"How?"

"I'm not sure. It just came back to me while I was swimming."

"Well... could I... could I join you?"

"Absolutely."

Shelly strips down to just her undergarments and dives in. Together the girls swim and Shelly tells Brook everything she's been missing. Brook might not remember the people, or the stories Shelly is telling her, but she listens attentively. It helps.

Later on when the girls are dressed and laying on the grass, Brook turns to Shelly.

"Thank you," she says.

"For what?" replies Shelly.

"For being normal around me."

Oh... you're welcome." Shelly smiles.

"Lately everyone's been trying not to upset me. Watching what they say. I want to know what I'm missing from my old life. I want to start from where I left off."

"I'll help you in whatever way I can, Brook. You're my best friend. And I love you like a sister."

"Thank you."

Later that night Brook writes down the day in her journal. She wants to make sure everything is preserved.

She thinks to herself. Maybe I'll never get my full memory back, but maybe I'll get some of it. I'll work to get it back. And I will.

She goes to bed that night looking forward to a new day, knowing there's a chance she can start over from where she left off.