

Kate Travis
Third Period
Mr. Bye

Everything Doesn't Always Go Your Way

“What are you two laughing about now?” asked Mr. Leviticus. “Need I remind you that first semester finals at Maybeck are only three weeks away? Giggling won't get you that A you want, Ms. Michaels.”

Josephine had the slightest smile on her face that only her best friend, Cody, would notice. Cody and Josephine were paired up as partners in chemistry class, and as usual not paying attention. Josephine and Cody were like yin and yang. Josephine was dark and pretty with her Philipino heritage. She had shiny straight black hair and light brown eyes. The perfection that she demanded of herself showed up in every aspect of her clothing and grooming. Everything she owned reflected her neat-freak personality.

Cody, on the other hand, had skin the color of coconut cream. Her hair surrounded her narrow face with golden waves. Clothing didn't have the same appeal for her as it did for Josephine. She wore jeans and hoodies most every day. Her backpack was overflowing with loose pieces of paper and random

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energy bars. Both Cody and Josephine had swimmers' builds, since they were both on a private swim team that practiced at Strawberry Canyon.

Their friendship changed when Cody started dating a guy named Jason. She started to hang out more with Jason than Josephine, never getting it that Josephine felt like a third wheel. She hadn't said anything to Cody about, it but inside was getting jealous. The final straw came one day right after chemistry class. The bell rang and chemistry was over.

"So where do you want to go to lunch, Cody?"

"Oh I thought we were having lunch tomorrow. Jason and I are going to Blondie's, but you can come."

Josephine had tried to get used to this new arrangement but this was too much.

"No, I'm tired of being second to Jason every time! You know what? I'll just go have lunch with Mark and Annette. Maybe they'll even talk to me."

Josephine whipped around so fast that her hair slapped Cody in the face. Whether the tears in Cody's eyes came from that or from Josephine's harsh words was unclear. Months went by without them talking or sitting near each

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other. The bond of their friendship was fading. In the halls, they walked by each other, though Cody sometimes would glance over her shoulder to see if Josephine would look back. She never did.

The school year was ending and they hadn't said a word. Cody and Jason had broken up and her thoughts went back to Josephine. She decided to try and fix things. At first Josephine was stubborn, but as time wore on she started to accept Cody's invitations to hang out. The weeks before graduation were hectic. Josephine was madly studying for her AP exams and Cody casually went over her notes, but afterwards went swimming.

The summer before college was a glorious time. Sunsets at Indian Rock in late summer were particularly great. Cody had called Josephine to meet her there at sunset. At first Cody sat there alone thinking Josephine wouldn't show up.

"Hey," said Josephine.

Cody jumped a little and turned around. She saw her old friend and was relieved that she came. The broad smile that broke out on Josephine's face let Cody know her friend had really forgiven her. Cody had brought something that she thought Josephine might like, a small pipe and some weed. Maybe it was the

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weed, or maybe it was the sunset, but Cody felt light as a feather. Josephine sat on the edge of the rock facing the pink and orange sky over the bay.

“Race you to the bottom!” shouted Cody. As she got up she lost her footing. Josephine tried to grab the back of her shirt, but let it slip. Cody looked over her shoulder at Josephine as if to say: *Don't let go!* But Josephine's stare was vacant. That look was what Cody remembered as she fell down the side and hit her head on a jagged rock. Josephine stumbled down the side of the rock as fast as she could. When she got there, Cody's golden hair was starting to soak up the crimson red.

Josephine barely remembered the terrifying ambulance ride to Alta Bates. Sitting in the waiting room, she hoped that her friend would pull through. Josephine tried to keep her mind occupied with the simplest things like counting the tiles on the ugly linoleum floor. She fell asleep on the hard plastic chair and was awakened by a voice she didn't recognize.

“Miss, we have bad new about your friend. I'm sorry but she passed away last night.”

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Josephine couldn't even think. *This can't be happening! She only fell a little ways.* Josephine's way of dealing with any kind of emotion was to organize and control things. She put all of her energy into packing and shipping things to the New York City where she would be starting NYU in two weeks. She hoped her study of forensic science would help ease the pain.

It turned out that forensic science was a perfect match for Josephine. Her attention to detail put her at the top of her class. She graduated with many job offers, but she chose to come back to Berkeley, her hometown. She got a job as a high-ranking detective on the Berkeley Police Force. She hadn't been on the job long when the city was shaken by a series of gruesome murders. All the victims so far had been teenage girls. It was a big job for her first case.

She had gotten a call that a person had seen a body down by the Marina. When she arrived there, police officers had already taped off the area. The dead girl's hair was matted with debris from the sludgy water and her lips were blue. Her eyes were open, the color of milky white. On her forehead, the letter J was etched in blood. Josephine cringed at the sight of the girl, who was too young to have suffered like this.

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A week later, Josephine got another call about a teenage girl that was found dead at People's Park. When she saw the body she knew there was some connection between the murders because this one had the letter O written on her cheek. Subsequent murders turned up with the letters S and E. *So why would this serial killer want to be sending the message "Jose"?* Josephine gathered her evidence in a methodical way. Autopsies were done on the girls, which showed similar markings on both girls.

Months went by and no further killings happened. The case was always on her mind. She painted her new apartment a creamy white. All her things were organized in baskets and folders. Her life was in order, but she was distracted thinking about when the murderer would strike again. She spent all day working on this case and into the evenings and weekends, too.

Early one Sunday morning, Josephine's phone woke her out of a deep sleep. It was a call that she had been dreading. Another body had been found on a hiking trail in Tilden Park. When she got there, she walked up through the grassy field to where the body laid. Her eyes went immediately to the letter P that was written on the girl's arm like a tattoo. She wondered why all the victims

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were teenage girls. *What is the killer trying to tell us with these letters—J-O-S-E*

and now P?

King Middle School was the site of the next killing. A girl with an H on her back was found on the athletic field. But this time, there were words with the H, which said, "Hi, Josephine Michaels."

"Oh my God," she gasped. "What the hell is this person trying to do?" For the first time since she'd been on the job, she realized she might be one of the victims. The other officers at the Berkeley Police Department advised her to take time off. But Josephine refused to take time off because she wanted to feel in control. Wherever she went, she was always looking around to see if anything was out of place.

She always looked forward to returning to her neat little apartment at the end of the day. This, she thought, was her haven. As she placed her key in the door, she found that it was slightly open. Pulling out her gun, she cautiously entered the living room. Nothing was out of place. She kept the gun ready as she checked out the other rooms. When she entered her bedroom, she saw a message written in black sharpie on the window. "I guess you haven't figured out

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who I am. Now let's go swimming for old time's sake." Putting it all together, she realized that the murderer was spelling out her name. The N and I were there, now only the E was left.

Josephine slumped against the wall with uneven breaths. She felt overcoming her, but she knew she had to pull herself together. *Swimming... where would I go swimming?* She had an idea; she didn't know if it was right. Taking a chance, she drove up to Strawberry Canyon Pool.

The parking lot was surrounded by trees that blocked what little light there still was. Cautiously getting out of the car, she pulled her gun out. The only sounds she could hear were her footsteps and her heart pounding. As she walked toward the entrance, she heard someone call her name.

"Is that you, Josephine?"

"Who's there?"

"Oh, you don't remember the sound of my voice. That's sad. Remember when we used to swim here?"

"How should I recognize that voice? Why would I know a killer?" Asked Josephine.

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“You were almost one once yourself,” said the voice.

Now the voice was starting to sound familiar to Josephine. *It can't be Cody.*

“Why don't you come see for yourself? I'm over here by the diving board.”

Josephine slowly walked around the corner and towards the pool. She could make out a hazy figure from the moonlight. As she walked closer, she did a double take because she couldn't believe what she saw: Cody. Even after not seeing her for ten years, Cody's golden hair gave her away. But now, Cody looked like she hadn't seen daylight in months. Her clothes looked like they were too big on her.

“They told me you were dead,” whispered Josephine.

“You wish,” said Cody. “Is that why you made that feeble attempt to save me? So you wouldn't get the blame? At the hospital, you weren't even there when I woke up.”

“So you're the one who's been killing those girls?”

“For a smart girl, it took you a while to figure it out.”

Josephine came closer to Cody, her gun at her side.

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"I think it's time for your swim," grinned Cody.

Before Josephine could do anything, Cody lunged at her and had her in a headlock. Cody plunged her into the deep end and through the tarp over her head.

"Everything doesn't go your way, Josephine Michaels."

As Josephine struggled for air, Cody held her down until there was no life left in her. Cody walked away into the dimming light.