HIGHLY COMMENDED
YEAR 7 AND 8 CATEGORY

Fifteenth Photo

Ruby Mills, Marian College Myrtleford

Today was the fifteenth time we had taken a photo of this street.

I'm still walking over when Jessica crouches down beside the train tracks and opens her army-pattern duffle bag. The bag itself had drawn quite a lot of side-eye from people as we walked through main-street. Despite the fact that Jess and I had no ill-intentions, we still lived in the rougher part of town.

I am curious to see what Jess has brought with her this time. For the last fourteen days, she brings a new item- something random. I watch as she reaches into the duffle bag and pulls out a bright red radio. She fiddles with the knobs and dials for a moment, a crackling emits from the radio, before she manages to fix the frequency and find the right channel. A punchy guitar riff starts to play out of the radio. Instantly, I start to tap my foot along to the rhythm of the music when I recognise it.

'Rock out, Brittney!'

I turn to find Taylor standing a few paces away, her cheeks red and breath heavy from running all the way here. She's still in her work uniform.

Jess is still focused on setting up a scene. She points to a small pile of dried autumn leaves that she had gathered earlier.

'Can you throw them at me when we take the photo?' Her question is directed at Taylor, given that I am the one behind the camera. Taylor nods and scoops up a handful of the leaves and stands to the side of the train tracks.

I check the camera lens. 'I'm all good to go,' I tell Jess.

Jess nods and takes position. She sits down on the blue milkcrate that we had previously set up in the middle of the train tracks. She stares dead into the camera with a practised blank expression as she balances the radio on her left knee. I give Taylor a thumbs up, my eyes still trained on the lens. The leaves fall in flickering shades of red, orange and brown.

One. Two. Three.

Click.

The camera makes a mechanical whirring noise, the sound familiar by now. Jess and Taylor quickly walk over and stand on either side of me as I hold the camera. A rectangular blank photo prints out of the camera, and I gently pick it up, careful only to touch the edges of it. The next minute is a long wait. That was what I found the most anticipating about taking photos- you had a whole minute where you wouldn't know if you had a good photo or whether you would need to retake it.

Slowly, the image began to develop as colour bleeds into the photo. I smile proudly. I had managed to capture the exact moment when the leaves fell, and they were dotting the foreground. The timing was what I had been worried about most. But it was brilliant.

Another perfect snapshot of time.

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