The Loss of Anna

Beau awoke to the sound of a piano cutting through the rainstorm pounding outside his window. He hadn't slept more than an hour that night, he didn't like storms. There was no particular reason, he just wasn't a fan. After he woke up a little more, he noticed the song coming from the piano downstairs; it was *Clair de lune* by Claude Debussy. That was the song his sister Anna always played, her favorite. The only thing, Anna died four years ago and no one played that piano anymore. Anna was always trying to get their dad to play again, he was the one that taught her, but he never wanted to.

Who could be playing? Is it dad? Beau thought as he arose from his bed. He stepped over his dog Jake, sleeping in the doorway as he walked out of his room and down the stairs. Each step creaked and groaned as he descended them, he stepped carefully trying not to wake his parents if the piano hadn't already. The second his foot left the final step and touched down on the dark wood floor, the song stopped. Beau peered around the corner, he stood behind and looked at the piano, no one was there. Not his dad and definitely not his mom, she didn't know how to play. The house was silent once again except for the violent rain and thunder outside.

He was lost in his thoughts until Jake rushed down the stairs, running into his legs as he jumped from two steps up. The golden retriever ran straight to the piano and sat where he always did when Anna played. After she died, Jake stayed away from the instrument, but now there he sat, looking at the space Anna used to occupy as if she was there again. *How weird* Beau thought, he didn’t know what to make of this, the music, Jake, the storm. Anna loved it when it stormed, she loved to play her song when the weather tried to outdo her sound outside, it was like a battle for the loudest sound. Anna always won the battle; she pounded the keys as hard as

she could in turn with the bellows outside that seemed like they came from Zeus himself. She always won no matter the violence happening on the other side of the window.

"Beau, what are you doing, honey?"

He whipped his head around, exhaling abruptly when he saw his mom standing a few stairs above him, "Mom, you scared me," he braced his chest, catching his breath.

"Oh, sorry," she let out a soft giggle, "What are you doing up so early, it's Sunday?" she questioned.

"I don't-I don't know I thought I heard something." Beau trailed off.

"Heard something? What do you mean?" a worried look twisted her smile into a grimace.

"Anna's song," Beau admitted, "It woke me up…must've just been my dream or the storm or something."

His mom just nodded; she still has a hard time with Anna being gone.

"It's okay, Mom, just a dream. Sorry I woke you."

"Oh, I know sweetie, you should try to go back to bed for a while," she fought a smile back on her face.

Beau smiled back and his mom went back up to her bed. He turned back to the piano; Jake was still there, starting to fall asleep in his spot by Anna's chair. Beau sat himself on the bottom stair and watched the rain slap the window above Jake. He waited for the song to start playing again, but the piano stayed silent. Almost an hour went by before he moved from the stairs and went into the living room. He dropped onto the large brown leather couch, the cold

material causing his flesh to crawl. He laid his head on the arm of the couch and listened to the silence.

He woke along with a blaring roll of thunder and, once again, *Clair de Lune* carrying from Anna's keys. He startled up and turned to look at the empty piano. This time he could still hear the song despite the vacant area. Jake woke up as well, sitting up and resting his chin on the chair where Anna would scratch his head between songs.

"Jake," Beau called, "Jake, come here."

Jake didn't move.

As soon as Beau stood up off the icy leather, it stopped again, "What the heck--" he started. What was happening here?

His parents then came down the stairs, a big creak with each descent. He looked up at them with a flick of confusion in his eyes.

"Beau, I thought I told you to go back to bed," his mom said.

"Yeah, I fell asleep on the couch. Just woke up." He answered.

"What's Jake doing over there?" his dad chimed in.

"He ran down there this morning, seems like he thinks Anna's there." Beau replied.

"Hmm," his dad thought, rubbing a hand over his stubbled chin.

"Better go get the coffee started, dear, seems it's going to be a chilly morning," his mom changed the subject. They both walked to the kitchen and left Beau and Jake in the silence of the ferocity outside.

He stood at the window, flinching with every roll and rumble of the sky. He looked up to the almost black clouds above him and saw something. Everything, even the storm, went quiet and he had to squint to make out the shape in the sky. He saw a hand, pitch black and rushing toward him. It picked up speed and shattered the window in less than five seconds. Everything went black, everything stayed silent.

. . . .

She woke in a cold sweat, her blankets plastered to her legs. She couldn't find her breath, couldn't calm down. Today was February 18th, Beau's funeral. Beau was dead, Anna wasn't. She was alive, sitting up in her bed now, crying into her sheets. He died last week. Car accident: it was raining, he was driving, someone was drunk and out of control with the weather. He was on his way to Anna's piano concert. The storm outside was tempting her, mocking her as if to say 'I killed your brother, still like me now? Still want to see who can be the loudest?'

She gave up the piano that day, stayed inside when the storms came. Nothing could make her, not even when Jake whined and sat alone by the piano all day. Not even when she had dreams of Beau begging her to play just once, just for him. Not when the rain was so beautiful and perfect to go out in, she gave it all up when she had to give up her brother.