

I will always be by your side.



Anne

29th August 1974

The sound of my alarm woke me up. I shot out of bed and ran downstairs to eat. My little sister comes running down the stairs as well and joins me in the kitchen. We both wait for our toast patiently and talk about how we feel about the first day back at school. This is my last year; I am so excited to finally finish and be free. I finish my breakfast and start packing for school. I say goodbye to my parents and my sister and head out the door. Denzel, my best friend lives just down the street, we meet up every morning and walk together. I meet him outside his door, say a quick good morning to his family and we are off. Denzel is black, people think our friendship is odd. It's not everyday that you see a white woman and black male hanging out together but that doesn't mean anything to me or my family. Over the past few years, he has been struggling with the way people treat him. He is the sweetest man I have ever met but people do not like him because of his race. He says to me "I just have to get through this year, it may be hard, but I'll always have you beside me and I'll never leave your side. You are my best friend, and I won't be able to do this without you." We arrive at school; Denzel looks like he has just seen a ghost. Everyone is staring at us but that doesn't and will never stop me from being by his side. We are lucky this year we have all the same classes, meaning I will always be there.

We headed to history for our first class. The teacher introduces herself and immediately starts ignoring Denzel. This is not the first time a teacher has done this. We start our work when the teacher comes up and tells Denzel to restart because he was using the wrong colour pen, we were confused as we were all using the same colour. "You should be using a black pen because it is the same as you," said the teacher. Denzel never looked up for the rest of the lesson, he didn't even look up during lunch or any other class. The school day was over, I was trying to talk to him on the way back home, but he just shut off from the world. The only thing he said was goodbye, see you tomorrow. I continued walking home where I was greeted by my sister, running up to tell me about her day at school. Dinner came around quickly. Mum and Dad told us about their day, dad went to work and sold a few cars, mum was at home cleaning and preparing dinner for us. Mum then asked me how my day was. 'Nothing different, I got all my work done and nothing changes. People were staring and Denzel shut off from the world' I say.

Anne

17th of October 1974

School is still the same, people staring and Denzel shutting himself off from everyone else. We had a field trip today; we went to a chocolate factory. Denzel and I walked to school, got on the bus, and just talked. People were still staring. "Why are you sitting next to him, you are going to get infected" some girl said to me. I replied saying "He is my best friend I can sit next to him if I want to." We arrived at the factory, and we were greeted by the tour guide. Immediately he gave Denzel and a few others a look, almost as if he was saying get out of here. The tour was interesting, and we were all having so much fun, even Denzel. We walked into the room with a chocolate fountain, everything was great until some boy said, "Look Denzel, if you melted this would be you." Everyone started laughing, even the teachers and the tour guide. Denzel walked off as fast as he could, of course I followed him, he needed me there. After the tour was done the rest of the class came and met us outside. The whole bus ride home Denzel was quiet, he looked out of the window the whole way home. You could see the pain in his eyes. We got off the bus and started walking home, he still didn't say a thing. I walked him to his front door, he said thank you and walked inside. I feel that this is really getting to him, but I don't know how to help him.

Anne

30th of November 1974

It is now Thanksgiving. Every year we join Denzel's family and enjoy it together. Nothing feels any different, but you can tell something is wrong. We sit down at the table and my mum brings out the food. Turkey, potatoes, roast vegetables, gravy, pasta. We start eating when my dad decides to ask us how school is going. Denzel immediately goes pale. Since our families are close, Denzel opens up about the way other people treat him. My parents are horrified and call out this racism. My parents have never had a problem with people of colour and do not understand why people treat others like this. My mum tells us we should go as each other's date to graduation. "It won't solve anything but who knows, it might change their opinions. You don't have to show off anything, just have a fun time and enjoy your night."

Anne

2nd of May 1974

Graduation has rolled around; I am finishing getting ready. Denzel is downstairs waiting for me with our families. As I started walking down the stairs everyone stops, it made me feel happy. Everyone is complimenting Denzel and me. My dad drops Denzel and I at

graduation and we wait for the rest of them to arrive. We take our spots as graduation is about to start. My nerves start kicking in, I don't know why I have nothing to be nervous about. A few people keep turning their heads looking in mine and Denzel's direction. I told Denzel to ignore it. It looked like he was. Towards the end of the awards, it took me by surprise that my name was called. I had won an award; I can't believe it. I go up to accept it and I am told I need to give a speech. "Thank you for considering me for this award, I am incredibly grateful and honored to accept this. There is one person who deserves this more than me and that is Denzel. This one is for you" I say. Both of our families got up and cheered, a few others joined in. I go back and take my seat and give my award to Denzel saying this was for him.

Anne

7th of May 1974

I get a knock on the door, I go to open it, and Denzel is there, he looks worried. "I got accepted, I move tomorrow. I didn't want to tell you until the day before because I know you will be beside yourself" Denzel said. "I will come and visit you when I can, but I want you to have this. It's an award I made for you for being the best person to ever exist. I want you to keep it next to your bed because I will always be beside you" he added. I burst into tears and gave him the biggest hug. "Take the award I gave you and do the same. I will never leave your side" I replied. He turned and left. "I'll always be by your side" I yelled.

Denzel

20th of February 1975

College has been better than I thought. I've made some new friends and am finally starting to enjoy school life. Today I was looking around my room when I stopped at the photo of Anne and me. I miss her so much, I decided to call her... ring ring.