Claire Hillard

Professor McKenna

Writing 1010

12 October 2015

Things Are Only Different

“Claire!” A pause, “Do two one-fourth cups make a half?” Another distressed pause. I look over at Kyla who just asked the mind-boggling math problem. Her eyes are squeezed closed and her head is thrown back; causing her long brown hair to cascade toward the floor. A look of angst and confusion.

After thinking about it for a few seconds, I respond “I… think so….”

Kyla groans and throws herself onto the counter. “Why math! I just want to *cook*!” Emphasizing the word “cook,” she dramatically collapses back onto the counter. Granted, this is a fairly easy math problem, to which, in a fully conscious state, we both know the answer. However, it is 1:45 in the morning and our brains are a bit fried. After much debate and deep contemplation of the workings of the world, we decide that two one-fourth cups do indeed equal one-half and added the sugar to the gooey batch of chocolate chip cookies.

We mix in the rest of the ingredients with a limited number of groans of exhaustion and scoop a healthy spoonful of dough for each of us to try. We lift the soft, caramel colored goop up to our mouths and taste it.

We both look at each other for a long time until I finally speak, “Well, it’s not *that* bad.”

Kyla starts laughing and says, “They’re better than last time! Still really salty though! Did we even add salt this time?”

We are great bakers. No, really. Cookies however, are the bane of our existence. Somehow, no matter what we do, our chocolate chip cookies never turn out. Ever. We stopped adding salt many batches ago but somehow they still turn out too salty. That, or the proportions are off and they become hard, sad, disks. We stopped making cookies.

I look back over at Kyla who has now woken up a little bit and is dancing around the kitchen with the flour pot. A huge smile is spread across her face as she dances around. Her long hair flying around in a chocolate blur. As her hair sails past, the warm, familiar sent of vanilla catches my nose. A smile instantly breaks out across my face. She looks so beautiful and happy. She sets down the flour pot and grabs my arms and suddenly we’re twirling around the room. We swing back and forth, stumbling and laughing. This is the way life has always been for us. Kyla moved in next door five years ago; we’ve been inseparable since. Claire and Kyla, side by side. This is the way life should be all the time. Until, it wasn’t anymore.

One new text message: Sent at 9:48pm. From: *Kyla!!! <3*

I open the message.

 “Claireyyy. My dad got the job. We’re going. I don’t know what to do. What am I going to do without you?” My heart sinks. No. I quickly text her back despite my loss for words. Less than a minute later there is a tiny tap at my door. I run to open it. We walk into my room, like our lives aren’t changing, right before our eyes. We sit on my floor like always. Silence. Neither one wanting to bring up what is eating us both up inside.

Finally I ask, “So, your dad got the job? You’re moving?”

She pauses for a second before responding. “Yeah. We’re moving to Ohio. Middle of no-where, cornfield, Ohio.” We talk about the kinds of things she’ll do there, if she is going to be home-schooled, and when she will leave. We sit in silence for a long time while we try to soak it all in. Eventually, Kyla speaks; an obvious crack in her voice.

“I’m going to miss you, Claire.” I turn my head to look up at her. Her head is down and her jaw is clenched. Then I see something I have never seen before in our five years of friendship. Kyla’s eyes start tearing up and then she’s crying. The pain clear in her eyes. I feel a slight jerk in my chest. I put my arms around her and hold her tight. Soon, the tension I didn’t realize I was holding in, releases. The tears start pouring down my cheeks and I’m gasping for air. I tighten my hug around her and hide my face in her shoulder. I breathe in and the smell of warm vanilla and sugar comforts me. It tugs at the edges of my lips, making the smallest of smiles. I hold on to her and refuse to let go; even as the embrace starts to get warm and a little wet. We sit there, holding each other; like it will be the last time.

We spent our last couple months together just like normal. Baking goodies, watching movies, sitting on my bed and talking for hours. We knew what was coming but it did not feel real. Even if it was real, we did not want to admit it. We enjoyed as much time together as possible.

 On July 16, 2013, Kyla left. It was a rough night when we said goodbye, but it still didn’t seem very real. It felt like such a big change couldn’t happen in one night. Surely we would go to sleep, wake up, and spend another lazy day together. The next morning I looked at her house. It was still her house, light brown with lush green grass. But it wasn’t the same. It was quiet and calm. It was empty. I could no longer send her a text and have a little tap at my bedroom door after she already let herself into the house. It was hard. It took a lot of adjusting. But, even though she is hundreds of miles away, I didn’t lose my Kyla.

One new text message: Sent at 4:24pm. From: *Kyla!!! <3*

“Clairey! How are you??? I miss you so much! How was your day???”

 I smile and pick up my phone to text her back. “Kylaaa! It was good! How about yours??? And I miss you too. Do you want to Skype???” I get a reply within the minute, smile, and run to get my laptop. Soon enough, the loud, obnoxious ringing of Skype brings a smiling Kyla back into my bedroom

 We talk for a long time; just like always. Until we get bored. Just like always. Then, we decide to bake! We began to make our favorite homemade brownies. Even though it’s through the computer, we are together. Side by side once again; we’re baking together. Me with my supplies, her with her own; only 1,686 miles apart. It is just like normal. Even though she moved away three years ago, it’s like nothing’s changed. Our relationship apart hasn’t changed for the worst; things are only different. I play some music and Kyla’s here again, dancing in my kitchen. The brownies smell like warm vanilla. I smile.