

“Everything is gonna be alright”

by Mckya Rhodes

“Wow...this *has* to be the best chicken quesadilla I’ve ever had,” Rachael announced, shoving the last half in her mouth; consequently getting the hiccups because she ate too fast.

“Slow your roll, goodness gracious you are gonna make yourself sick,” Cierra said wide-eyed. I laughed at the comment knowing that I was going to miss these late night Taco Bell runs. Rachael’s labored breathing came to a stop making the hiccups finally vanish as if they weren’t even there in the first place.

“Shut up Cierra, it was worth it,” Rachael said as she playfully punching Cierra’s arm.

Are they still going to have Taco Bell on Friday nights when I’m not here? I thought to myself, causing a pang of jealousy that overcame what once was a happy mood. Rachael and Cierra noticed my smile drop and knew something was wrong. *Of course they know something’s wrong*, I told myself, because if anyone could read me like a book, it’s definitely these two.

A tsunami of emotions hit me all at once. I could feel the tears welling up, forcing me to look away because I couldn’t show them how much I was grieving inside.

I recognized Rachael’s soft and smooth voice, “Mckya, I promise, it’ll be alright.” She knew exactly the reason for my tears.

My anxiety had taken over, controlling everything that came out of my mouth, “You don’t know that. What if I hate Texas? What if I never find friends as good as you guys?” Cierra comfortably laid her head on my shoulder. I’ll never forget the luscious vanilla scent of Cierra’s sandy, brown hair.

“If I’m being honest,” Rachael took a deep breath, stopping the newly built-up tears from falling, “you probably won’t find friends better than us.” A chuckle escaped my shaky lips as a single tear rolled down my cheek. Rachael always knew the right words to say at the right time in just the right way to make me laugh. I caught myself rolling my eyes as I thought about what a ridiculous relationship I had with these two, who as of 5 years ago, were complete strangers I never would have imagined myself hanging out with. Now, here we were, eating Taco Bell on a Friday night, at 11:30 pm, on the front porch, wrapped in blankets, trying to hide from the 48-degree weather.

“But I’m being serious. You are going to be just fine.” Rachael’s fake southern accent came through, “Anyone down in good ol’ Texas would be the luckiest darn person to be your pal.” This got all of us into a giggling fit, laughing at how stupid she sounded.

“Just don’t forget about me, okay?” I asked because as of right now, that was my biggest fear. I was afraid they were going to become closer than I ever was with either of them. *I’m just going to be a person in their past who they only occasionally bring up in conversation--“Hey, remember that girl...”*

“Um that has to be a joke. You did not just ask that?” Cierra said dumbfounded, lifting her head off my shoulder.

“Well... you never know. Just promise you’ll still tell me everything and text me every day,” I reached out, snatching the half-drunken Baja Blast out of Rachael’s hands.

“Mckya... you worry too much. This is going to be a great opportunity for you. You will meet new people, you’ll live in a new, gorgeous house, you’ll find a new dance team, maybe even find a boyfriend,” She winked at me, pointing finger guns at me.

“Wowza, okay *Mom*,” I mocked, “But thanks for advice anyways,” It sounded sarcastic but I really meant it. Being able to get all of these thoughts and emotions off my chest felt like an enormous weight was being lifted off my shoulders. We read each other’s minds, forming a very much needed group hug. Their warm embrace made me forget about any worries I had about moving halfway across the country. If a genie were to grant me three wishes, I don’t even care

what the other two wishes were; my number one wish would be to stay here... in Montana, with Cierra and Rachael– my chosen family.

I can't believe this is my last night with them.

Tomorrow was the start of a new era—a new life.