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I stepped out of the car door, hefting my school bag onto my shoulder and picking up my binder. I closed the door, not caring that my eyes were still red, my cheeks sticky and blotched from crying. *I hate everyone. I hate everything.* The thoughts were like a fog, coating my usually rosy perception of life. The only thing that felt remotely familiar to me was the AirPods in my ears, repeating the same song since I got into the car.

Walking down the same pathway to the library that I took every morning, albeit slightly earlier this time, I let the internal anguish eat away at me. There was nothing I could do, nothing I wanted to do, to change it. And nothing did change until something else changed it. Because an object in motion tends to stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force, right? Fortunately for me, I was no different.

Minutes seemed to drag on in the library despite the reprieve from the chilly winter morning air. And with every passing one, my perception of reality drifted further away until the sound of strings in my ears was the only thing keeping me tethered to this world. I had no better way to cope with the anger and upset that overwhelmed me with a few harrowing words.

Then the sound of the door opening snagged my attention as if it were a string that had been tugged on by an outside force. Them.

Recognition flared in the expression of the two girls who walked in together as they saw me. They took a beeline in my direction and I couldn't help but feel lighter. The fog that had pulled me into its depths began to float away and as they reached me it was barely a mist. They're smiles felt like basking in the warm sunlight on a freezing winter afternoon. And they were contagious, I hated that my lips tugged up for the first time today. Because I hated everyone and I hated everything but I couldn't bring myself to hate them.

They were the force that knocked me out of motion. Brought me back down. And never fail to do so, without even knowing they're doing anything.

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