

The headstone is a wet grey. Rain trickles through the lettering, throwing the white stone engraving into sharp relief. The smell of rain and wet grass clogs the air and I can hardly stand to breathe.

Standing in front of the grave, looking down at the words barely visible in the downpour, a familiar pain stings my eyes. Dropping to my knees, I trail numb fingers across the stone, digging into the letters - spelling his name with my hands.

*Aiden Winter*

It's been five years since he died. Five years and I'm still lost.

*July thirteenth.*

Birth and death dates almost the same. The only difference is the year. My fingers trail to the numbers, following the water as it runs in rivulets over the stone.

*July thirteenth.*

I want to tear at the letters. I hate that date. I hate Fridays. Every remark about luck, or lack of it, grinds my teeth and tears fresh holes in my heart. How do I move on?

The rain disappears and I look up.

She's standing there, a rainbow coloured umbrella in both hands, shielding us both from the rain. We are the same height, her standing and me kneeling. There is a bandage on her hand. It has dinosaurs on it.

For the first time I notice that she has his eyes... my eyes. My chest constricts, my fingers dig into stone, hurting and yet feeling better than looking at her.

She shifts away from me, not cowering but nervous of me. Nervous as two people who hardly know each other are. There is a little badge on her jacket. *Happy 4th Birthday* flashes bright in the grey of the day. She looks down at the badge, seeing me stare, and shifts away again. How do I get back the time I've lost?

She looks at the headstone. Her eyes run across the name. *Aiden*. She touches the necklace around her neck, and I don't think she realises she's done it. *Addison*.

Then her eyes settle on the date. The date my fingers are still clawing at.

*July thirteenth.*

Something flashes in her eyes, those eyes that were also his, also mine, and she takes two steps back. The rain comes back down on me in full. Our eyes meet. Her lips tremble, and her knuckles go white from her grip around the umbrella. The tears don't fall though.

I think I ought to reach out to her, comfort her, cuddle her maybe.

Those eyes frighten me though. Her eyes, and her name, and her entire existence. She is a replication of what he would have been and yet I know nothing about either of them.

How do I move on?

How do I find the time I've lost?

How do I be a father?