

The Colors of Forever

Chapter 1: the crash that changed everything

Before the accident, I never really thought about my legs. They were just there. They kicked, ran, and jumped when I wanted them to. One moment, they were mine.

And the next, they weren't.

It all happened so quickly. I was riding my bike down my street. The wind in my hair, my mind somewhere else entirely. The next thing I know, I'm flying in the air. I don't remember the impact on the ground but I do remember the screech of tires and my body hitting the pavement. I remember the pain. It wasn't the kind of pain when you touch a hot pan or scrape your knee on the ground. This was different. This was everywhere at the same time.

I tried to move.

I couldn't.

Something was wrong. I couldn't feel my legs, I remember people shouting, loud sirens, and someone telling me help is on the way, I don't remember who, though. I just remember looking at the sky, bright and endless before I passed out.

Chapter 2: The hospital becomes home

When I had woken up, I realized I wasn't at home. I was in a hospital bed. Tons of machines and the smell of antiseptic. My head hurt and my ears ached. When I tried to move, nothing happened. Panic washed over me, I looked at my legs, trying to get them to move.

Nothing.

I kept trying to move them. Come on, please. Move. By the time the doctor started talking to my mom, I heard the worst thing I had ever heard. I have a spinal cord injury. I'll have permanent paralysis. I need a wheelchair. These words didn't make sense at first. I was supposed to get up, walk out of here and get back on my bike. I wasn't supposed to be stuck in this bed. I surprisingly didn't cry, I just nodded, stared at the ceiling, and let my mind understand everything I had just heard.

Chapter 3: A girl who didn't belong here either.

I hated all of it. I hated the wheelchair I had to use forever. I hated that no one really understood it. And then, one lucky afternoon, I met her.

Brynn.

She walked into my room without knocking, a huge smirk and a bunch of snacks. "You look like you hate it here," she said. I looked at her, confused. "What?" She sat on the chair next to my bed, setting down a bag of pretzels as if she owned the place. "I said, you look miserable. And honestly, me too." I stared at her. She was my age, maybe a bit younger, short brown hair, cut as if she had done it herself. Something in her spirit felt like she didn't belong here. "Who are you?" I asked. "Brynn" she said, "And you're Avery, the guy who ,technically, lost his legs."

"Why are you here?" I asked her. "Same reason as you. Life's unfair." That was the first honest thing someone has told me in a while. And for the first time since the accident, I felt better about myself.

Chapter 4: Some people just get it

Brynn kept showing up at my room, every day. I never invited her, she just kept coming. She'd bring snacks, bad jokes, and stories about crazy stuff she heard in the hallways. And I didn't mind. She didn't try to fill the silence with comfort that didn't actually make

anything better, she didn't tell me everything would work out. She talked to me like I was still me.

"So, what did you do before all this?" She asked one afternoon, sitting on my bed. "What do you mean?" I asked. "What did you do? Hobbies? Deep dark secrets?" I snorted "I played soccer." She frowned. "Boring." I blinked. "What?"

"Soccer's fine, I guess." She said, "I was hoping for something interesting. Like, I don't know, skydiving or illegal street racing." I actually laughed, a real, honest laugh. "What kind of life do you think I lived?" She grinned. "One that was exciting." And just like that, Brynn became the only part of the hospital I didn't hate.

Chapter 5: She was dying, and she knew it

Brynn was always moving—talking, thinking, and laughing fast. It was like she was afraid to slow down. One day, I rolled into her room and saw her hooked up to a new machine, looking pale. "Brynn?" I asked. She looked at me, sighed, and said, "Well, guess that cat's out of the bag." "It's my heart," she explained, "Some disease with a really long name. Basically, it sucks at its job." A lump formed in my throat. "What does that mean?" "It means one day, it's just going to stop." I gripped my chair. "There's medicine, right?" "Yeah." She pointed to her IV. "Doctors, treatments, all that. But it won't last forever." She smirked. "Guess that means I have to live faster than most people, huh?"

And in that moment, Brynn taught me something I'd never understood: Some people get months, others years, or decades. But time doesn't matter as much as what you do with it. Brynn? She was going to make every second count.

Chapter 6: The list

Around a week after she told me about her heart, she walked into my room with a crumpled piece of paper in her hand and a determined look. "Avery?" She said, dropping

the paper onto my lap. "We have work to do." I unfolded it. "What's this?" She plopped onto my bed and grinned. "My bucket list."

Brynn's List Of Things To Do Before Time Runs Out:

1. Sneak onto a rooftop and watch the sunrise.
2. Paint a mural somewhere people will actually see it.
3. Eat an entire pizza by myself.
4. Dance in the rain.
5. Make the nurses regret giving me access to the hospital's supply closet.
6. Find the best burger in the world
7. See the ocean
8. Do something that actually matters.

"Before you say anything, yes, I know I'm in a hospital. Yes, I know my heart is stupid. And no, I don't care." I clenched my jaw. "What if you get worse?" She sighed. "Avery, I'm already getting worse." The words hit me like a punch to the gut. She nudged me. "Come on. We can't let a little thing like a hospital stop us." I stared at her list. I added something at the bottom.

9. Help Avery figure out what the hell he's supposed to do now.

Brynn snorted. "Wow. Deep." I shrugged. "You're the one who says life should be exciting." And just like that, we had a plan.

Chapter 7: rules are meant to be broken

"Alright," she whispered, peeking into the hallway like some kind of undercover spy. "The coast is clear." I adjusted the blanket I had on my lap, hiding the stolen art supplies we snuck from the therapy room. "This is a terrible idea." Brynn smirked. "Avery, you need to live a little." We made our way through the halls, past the nurses' station, towards the east wing where an entire blank wall stretched near the children's unit. It was perfect. Brynn pulled out the paint cans and grinned. "Time to cross off number two." I hesitated, "Brynn, if we get caught—" "We will get caught," she corrected. "We just need to finish before then."

I grabbed a brush. We painted fast, our hands were moving without thinking. Bright colors, a sunrise, a girl standing with her arms stretched wide like she was ready to take flight. Brynn painted the girl's face. I painted the sky. "HEY!" a voice shouted. Brynn grabbed my wheelchair. "RUN." She pushed me down the hall as fast as my wheelchair could go, we were breathless, covered in paint, hearts pounding. And for the first time in months, I felt alive.

Chapter 8: The best night ever (even if it was in a hospital)

We got caught. Obviously. Two teenagers covered in paint, sprinting through a hospital? Not exactly subtle. I expected strict schedules and banned visits. Instead, the nurses just stared at our mural. Hospitals weren't meant to be messy or colorful. But our mural? It was alive. And instead of punishing us, they let it stay. Brynn grinned. "See? Told you we'd get away with it." I smirked. "Brynn, we literally got caught." "Yeah," she said, "but we still won."

That night, we celebrated the only way two hospital kids could—raiding the supply closet for pudding and building a blanket fort in my room. Brynn, eating pudding straight from the container, grinned. "Next up: best burger in the world." I sighed. "Brynn, we're in a hospital." "So?" She pointed her spoon at me. "We'll get creative." I shook my head, but I was smiling. Sitting in a ridiculous fort with a girl who made everything feel less impossible. For the first time in a long time, I wasn't scared of what came next.

Chapter 9: The moment I realized I needed her

One afternoon, Brynn didn't show up. I waited. I told myself she was probably stuck in a check-up or dealing with another stupid round of heart monitors. Hours passed. Dinner came and went. And then, for the first time in weeks, I felt it again. That awful, suffocating weight. The one that made me feel like I was sinking. Because the truth was, Brynn was the only one keeping me from drowning. And if she was gone— No. I tried to

shove that thought away. She was fine. She had to be fine. I rolled down the hall, I needed to see her. I needed proof she was still here, that she hadn't—

I stopped short in front of her room. Her bed was empty. The machines were gone. I just sat there, my heart was pounding so hard I thought it might explode. "She's okay." I turned. A nurse stood behind me, her face kind but tired. "She had a bad episode. They had to move her to intensive care for the night." I swallowed. "But she's..." "She's still here." she said. I nodded, gripping my wheels so tight my hands hurt. Still here. For now.

Chapter 10: "Promise me something"

The next day, Brynn was back. She looked awful—pale skin, blue lips, shaking hands as she picked at the blanket. But she smiled when she saw me. "Hey, stranger." I rolled up beside her. "I thought you finally got tired of me." She snorted. "Never." I frowned. "Are you okay?" She hesitated. That told me everything. After a minute, she sighed. "It is getting worse." I did not know what to say. "Avery?" she whispered.

"Promise me something."

"Anything." I said. "Promise me you'll live." I frowned. "Brynn—" "I'm serious. I don't care how. Just don't exist. Do something. Make something. Be something." I wanted to tell her she'd be okay, that she'd get to do those things too. But I couldn't lie. So I just nodded. And that was enough.

Chapter 11: We were infinite

Brynn never feared dying. "It's not scary," she said one night. "It just is." I sighed. "How are you able to be so calm about it?" She turned to me. "Because I can't change it." I hated that answer. "But you wanna know what's worse than dying?" she said. "Never really living." She smiled. "Promise me we'll do something insane before I go." "Like what?" I asked. Her grin widened. "Something we'll never forget."

Three days later, we were on the hospital rooftop. Brynn had convinced a nurse to leave the door unlocked. Just us, the night sky, and the city everywhere we looked. "Holy crap," she said. I raised a brow. "We're just standing on a roof." "No," she corrected. "We're living." She spun in slow circles, arms wide, hair caught in the wind. For a moment, she looked weightless. Like she wasn't sick. Like she had all the time in the world. She turned to me, eyes bright. "Come on, Avery. Just for a second, forget everything." I didn't understand what she meant. Not until later. Not until it was too late.

Chapter 12: The ocean

Brynn never saw the ocean. Not in real life. She would talk about it, how it felt to spend her life in the same two places. The hospital and her home. "Can you imagine?" She asked me one night. "Standing in the sand on the shore, looking at the ocean in front of you going on forever." I tried to imagine it, but I couldn't. To Brynn, the ocean was proof the world is bigger than these walls, it was freedom. She wanted it more than anything.

So I did what I could, I grabbed a projector and some speakers. I found a video of the ocean, and set it up in her room. For a moment, Brynn wasn't in the hospital anymore, she was there. She looked over at me, tears in her eyes, "Avery," she whispered. "It's beautiful." in that moment, I knew I could never give her the life she truly deserved. And that broke me.

Chapter 13: When the world stopped

Brynn died on a Wednesday. Hospitals don't stop for things like death. The nurses still walked the halls. The loud intercom still buzzed with announcements. Someone in the room next door still watched some dumb reality show. The world kept going. Like it hadn't just ended. Like the most important person in it wasn't gone. She'd been bad for days. Worse than I'd ever seen her. But she still smiled. Still made jokes. The night before she died, I sat beside her. "I'm not ready," I said. "That makes two of us." Brynn replied. A lump formed in my throat. "Then don't go." She sighed, tilting her head toward me.

Her face was pale, her breathing uneven. She reached for my hand. "You remember what I told you?" I swallowed hard. She squeezed my fingers. "You live, Avery. For both of us." Tears burned my eyes. But I nodded. Because that's what she needed. And then, in a voice so quiet I almost missed it, she whispered, "Avery?" "Yeah?" She closed her eyes. And smiled. "Thank you." She was gone by morning. And for the first time since I met her, I didn't know how to breathe.

Chapter 14: The empty space she left behind

They took her away that morning. They moved like they'd done this before, like they knew how to handle the absence of a person. But I didn't. I sat in the corner of her room staring at the empty bed where she should have been. Brynn was gone. She was here, and then she wasn't. And I didn't know how I would exist in a world that didn't have her in it.

For the first time in months, I was alone. And I hated it. I don't remember much about the days after. They blurred together, long hours of nothing. Nurses asked if I needed anything. My parents called. People whispered and tiptoed around me like I was a bomb that might go off any second. I didn't go back to Brynn's room. I didn't go anywhere.

She was supposed to be here. She was supposed to make some dumb joke about haunting me. She was supposed to call me dramatic and tell me to get up already. But she didn't. She never would again. And that was the worst part. I didn't cry. Not at first. Not when they told me she was gone. Not when they took her away. Not even when they packed up the few things she had left in her room—a half-finished notebook, a pair of sneakers she'd barely worn, a stupid hospital ID bracelet she used to joke about like it was some kind of VIP pass. But then, one night, I found her list. Crumpled. Forgotten. Shoved into the back of my nightstand like it had been waiting for me. I smoothed out the paper with shaking hands, my vision blurring as I read the words she'd written.

Sneak onto a rooftop.

Paint a mural.

Eat an entire pizza.

Dance in the rain.

We had done so much.

But not everything.

Not enough. And right there, in the quiet of my empty room, I finally broke. I curled in on myself, fists clenched around that stupid list, and sobbed. Because Brynn was gone. Because she never got to finish. Because life wasn't fair, and no matter how much I hated it, no matter how much I wished I could change it— I couldn't. But maybe—maybe—I could do the only thing she asked me to. I could live. For both of us.

Chapter 15: The promise I kept

It took months—months of therapy, grief, and learning to live without her. But one day, I went outside. Really outside. No hospitals, no doctors—just the world.

I started crossing things off Brynn's list. I danced in the rain on a sidewalk. Ate an entire pizza by myself, nearly throwing up, but I finished it for her. I searched for the best burger, knowing none would ever be good enough for her.

Then, I went to the ocean. The waves crashed against the shore. Brynn had always wanted to feel this free. She never got to. But I did.

I pulled out her hospital bracelet, the one I'd kept all this time. I held it tight and let the wind take it, watching it disappear into the sky and sea, swallowed by a world bigger than both of us.

As I stood there, I whispered, "I did it, Brynn."

And for the first time since she left, I knew—she wasn't really gone. She was everywhere. In the sky, in the waves, in the paint still on a hospital wall. And in me. Always in me. And I would keep living.

For her.

For us.

For everything we never got to do.

The end.