

Prompt 1 Final Draft

The wooden planks probably felt stiff against Jonah's ankles. He sat cross-legged at the end of the dock, his back against one of the metal polls that kept the platforms firmly planted in the watery ground. He took a breath, pulling the cigar smoke into his mouth, holding it there, then barely opening his lips to let it drift lazily up into the atmosphere. He exhaled, and the curls that hung in the air were swept out over the water in a miniature whirlwind of carbon dioxide.

"I can't believe it's almost over," he said in a philosophical tone suitable to the way he was smoking his cigar.

"I know," I replied from beside him. "We have, like, ten days left, then we're done."

Silence. Then,

"Will?" Jonah asked almost in a whisper, as if to make sure I was still there and hadn't drifted away like the smoke.

"Yeah?"

I was laying on my back, looking up at the stars and listening to the sounds of the highway, the cars faintly humming in the distance as they sped to wherever they needed to be. I sat up, and as I did the cigar I had been smoking slipped from my mouth. I reached out to catch it, succeeded, and realized very quickly that the tip of a cigar is hot. I swore and juggled it onto the dock, then picked it up and returned it to my lips. To celebrate my victory, I took a sip of my beer. It was cheap, but good. We had bought it that day; neither of us was twenty one, but Jonah, with his excessive chest hair and receding hairline, was able to walk into the liquor store in Moose Lake, Minnesota, grab

a twenty-four pack of PBR, pay, and walk out. He didn't even have a fake ID. He wasn't wearing shoes either, and had a green v-neck t-shirt on and green short shorts that made him look like a crazy person. The guy at the register had almost carded him, but Jonah had made a quick remark about the weather and cut him off. I had been waiting in the van outside, and seeing him strut out of those glass doors with the twenty-four pack in one hand, the change in the other, and a grin of pure triumph spread across his face is a moment I'll never forget. We had bought the cigars at a gas station a few blocks down. One pack of Black & Milds and one of Backwoods. I like the Backwoods better, mostly because those are the ones my dad like. That's what I was smoking now.

“You think we'll still be friends in a few years?” Jonah asked. “I mean, we're going to different colleges in different parts of the country, who knows what will happen.”

“I don't know. I hope so.” I replied. After a moment I continued. “You know my dad and his high school friends stayed close by going on a road trip after their sophomore year.”

I began to retell all my dad's road trip stories. About how he worked on a ranch in North Dakota, then how he hiked a volcano in Hawaii.

“And they carried this giant box of vocab cards, and every day they would learn a new word, its definition, and use it in a sentence. Isn't that cool?”

“Yeah,” Jonah mumbled. “Ya know, we should do something like that. Take a road trip somewhere.”

I agreed.

So we made this promise that after sophomore year we would take the summer off

and road trip somewhere. We didn't really figure out the details, but it was the promise that counted. Then Jonah's ankles started to ache, so we got up, and went to find our other friends, who were off drinking somewhere else in the campsite. We had smoked our cigars down past the last inch, and so we threw them in the water, listening for the sizzle that comes when the two matters meet.