

THE ARTIST AND THE MUSICIAN

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EXT. PARK - DAY

SKYE, age 15, sits at a bench in the middle of a forested park. She pulls out a sketchbook and graphite pencils from her backpack next to her. She opens her sketchbook to a blank page and grabs a pencil.

A pause. SKYE looks up from her sketchbook at the trees around her. She then sighs and attempts to start a sketch.

Then a soft flute melody is heard. SKYE looks up from her sketchbook again and takes a quick glance around before starting to draw.

She draws music notes floating through a forest.

Suddenly, the flute melody stops. SKYE pauses in her drawing and looks up.

As the flute melody starts again, SKYE hastily grabs her sketchbook and pencils and briskly walks through the trees, towards the source of the melody.

SKYE reaches a clearing surrounded by blossom trees and sees a boy her age standing and playing the flute. SKYE stops in her tracks and watches the boy as a light breeze passes through, causing the blossom petals to fly around.

When the boy finishes playing, he jumps a little and gives a smile at SKYE.

SKYE

Um... Hi.

Silence. The breeze calms down.

SKYE

Uh... I was just passing through and I heard your flute and... I thought it sounded beautiful.

BOY

Ah, thanks.

The boy looks at SKYE'S sketchbook in her hands.

BOY

(pointing at SKYE's sketchbook)
You draw?

SKYE

Oh, yeah. I was actually just drawing while listening to you play and... I wanted to know where it came from.

The BOY raises his hand and scratches the back of his head.

BOY

I'm flattered that you enjoyed my playing.

SKYE nods and looks down nervously.

BOY

Can I see what you're drawing?

SKYE

Um, sure. It's still a work in progress.

SKYE hands the sketchbook to the BOY. The BOY's eyes widen in amazement.

BOY

Wow! This is really good!

He hands the sketchbook back to SKYE.

SKYE

Can I keep drawing while you play? If you're going to be here a while, of course.

The BOY looks at SKYE with widened eyes and then looks away with his head down.

BOY

Well... being here in nature away from people and all that... It helps me.

SKYE

You don't like playing in front of people?

BOY

Um... what do you think?

SKYE looks around at their surroundings and then gives an awkward nod. She looks back directly at the BOY, with no intention of leaving.

SKYE

I actually come here to draw by myself too. It's lonely though and... your music inspired me, so I want to keep drawing while listening to you!

The BOY looks up at SKYE. His eyes seem filled with something like wonder. SKYE looks away awkwardly.

SKYE

Only if you're okay with it. I can move away from you--

BOY

No wait, it's fine. I might mess up though.

SKYE

(smiling slightly)
I don't mind.

SKYE sits against a nearby blossom tree and pulls out her materials to start drawing.

BOY

You're the first person who's called my music 'inspiring.' I'm Ryland, by the way.

SKYE

Oh, I'm Skye.

CUT TO:

INT. ART CLASSROOM - EVENING

SKYE is now 22 and painting a black-and-white ink piece on an easel in an art classroom. She is quietly humming a melody to herself as she draws. Otherwise, there is hardly any sound to be heard except for the light scratching of pencil on paper. Only one other person is there with SKYE,

her classmate and friend LILY. SKYE stops and sighs and sits on a nearby stool to look at her phone.

One of her classmates, LILY, walks over to where SKYE is sitting.

LILY
Hey Skye, you seem tired.

SKYE turns to LILY.

SKYE
Oh, hi Lily.

SKYE turns to look back at the art piece she's working on in front of her. The piece is of photorealistic skyscrapers.

SKYE
Not really making much progress. I have to submit it tomorrow.

SKYE sighs.

LILY
I'd say it looks really good. So real too. You should take a break though.

SKYE nods before looking back at her phone while LILY starts walking away. After looking at her phone with a blank expression, she suddenly blinks a few times and shakes her head.

SKYE
(under her breath)
No. Wait, no. How?

The hand holding her phone trembles ever so slightly.

SKYE
How is this possible? You can't be dead.

SKYE starts shuddering slightly and her breathing becomes somewhat shallow. LILY looks up from her work and walks back over to SKYE.

LILY
Skye, are you okay?

SKYE doesn't see or notice LILY behind her. She remains hunched over her phone.

SKYE
(quickly under her breath)
No, no, no. I'll go see you and we can talk and figure something out. You can't just die on me like this!

LILY
Skye... what happened?

SKYE tries to take deep breaths. Without turning around, she answers LILY.

SKYE
My-a friend from high school, Ryland... they say he's dead.

LILY quietly gasps.

LILY
Oh God... Skye, I'm so sorry...

SKYE
(voice shaking)
And they're saying he committed suicide.

SKYE draws her legs up into a fetal position on her stool.

SKYE
What have I done? We promised to keep in touch and... after I forget about him for four years, he dies!

SKYE'S breathing becomes more erratic as small sobs rack her body.

LILY
It... it wasn't your fault. You couldn't have known.

SKYE just shakes her head while rubbing her eyes against her arms. She looks at her phone again. On the phone screen, there are multiple unread emails from RYLAND.

SKYE

He was my best friend... and I thought as much. But I just forgot about him as soon as I came here.

The sounds in the room become faint and only SKYE'S quiet sobs can be heard.

EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAY

Church bells ring, their sound reverberating and repeating in a melancholy tone. A few people wearing black are gathered at entrance to the church. Faint organ music can be heard among the bells' rings, but it sounds distorted. SKYE, who is carrying a small backpack and wearing black, is standing a great distance away from the church and the people gathered there.

SKYE

(whispering to herself)

I still can't believe you're... gone.

She walks to a nearby bench and opens her backpack, pulling out a sketchbook and a graphite pencil set. She opens her sketchbook to a blank page and holds her pencil above the page. Her hand freezes.

SKYE

C'mon Skye, this'll help you calm down.

Regardless of her attempts to force her hand to move while encouraging herself, she is unable to draw anything. She looks up at the church and the people gathering outside. The organ music still drones on.

SKYE

(frustrated)

I can't stay here.

SKYE zips up her backpack and puts it on her shoulders. She carries the sketchbook and pencil and starts walking down the path outside the church. She walks aimlessly down away from the church, sketching erratically. She only stops drawing when crossing streets.

The first picture SKYE manages to roughly draw is that of an empty classroom.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

SKYE sits at a desk and draws in her notebook, waiting for class to start. Several students walk in and take their seats at empty desks that are away from SKYE'S. SKYE doesn't look up and keeps drawing. Her doodle is a tree filled with blossoms with flower petals in the air, some forming into the shapes of birds.

A larger group of students enters the classroom. Some take their seats, and some go to their friends to talk with them. SKYE briefly looks up to check out the now full classroom as the students' chatter fills the classroom. She then continues drawing.

A teacher walks inside and sets his folders and documents on his desk. The door opens again. RYLAND accidentally bumps into his classmate while making his way to a desk.

RYLAND
I'm sorry!

SKYE suddenly looks up from her drawing in surprise when she sees RYLAND. She waves at RYLAND. RYLAND looks over at SKYE and waves back. He walks over to her.

SKYE
Hey, I thought I heard you.

RYLAND
Hey. Um... didn't expect to see you here.
How's it going?

SKYE

Alright. It's good to see you though.

The bell rings. SKYE points at the empty desk next to her.

SKYE

Wanna sit here?

RYLAND

Sure.

He catches a glimpse of SKYE'S doodle in her notebook. Then he sits down next to SKYE.

RYLAND

Nice tree. And birds too.

SKYE

(startled)

Oh, thanks.

They turn to face themselves forward. SKYE continues her doodle of the tree. RYLAND switches between looking at the front of the classroom and at SKYE'S notebook as she draws until his gaze settles on SKYE'S drawing.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

SKYE stops walking and rubs at her nose and sniffles. A few tears land on her classroom sketch.

For the first time since she started walking aimlessly, SKYE looks up at her surroundings. She sees she's in a park with plenty of trees. It is the same park where she first met RYLAND.

SKYE stares around her. She rubs her eyes and walks over to a bench and opens her sketchbook to a blank page. She starts drawing again.

The drawing is of the dirt path in the park, veiled by a sheet of rain. SKYE breathes heavily as she draws in two figures walking on the path under an umbrella.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT PARK - NIGHT

It is raining hard. The sound of the rain pattering against the ground is loud and overpowers all other sounds in the park. There are no people at the park except for SKYE AND RYLAND, who are walking down a dirt path together, huddled under one umbrella. RYLAND is holding the umbrella and shivering. SKYE has her arms crossed over her and she is also shivering.

SKYE barely holds back a sneeze.

SKYE
(shouting over the rain)
It's so cold! Why are we doing this?!

RYLAND stifles a laugh.

RYLAND
It was your idea!

SKYE
I admit that it sounded more exciting in my head! Even Gene Kelly made skipping and dancing through the rain seem so carefree and fun!

RYLAND
You know he filmed that scene with a really bad fever, right?!

SKYE
Wait, really?

RYLAND
I'm not kidding. It's impressive, that's for sure! But not so carefree now, huh?

RYLAND pauses and looks with focused eyes at the road ahead of him.

RYLAND

With that in mind, isn't it true for a lot of things? That they're better in your head?

A pause. SKYE looks over with concern at RYLAND'S face. She opens her mouth to speak but closes it immediately. In order to lighten the mood, SKYE quickly chimes in with a response.

SKYE

I get what you mean. All those paintings with rain... They're so deceiving! The artists made heavy rain look so much prettier than the real thing! Maybe they're glamorizing their rainy days? I doubt they actually went outside to paint.

RYLAND

Then I guess you could say I'm glamorizing a professional music career.

As SKYE tries to respond, thunder roars and SKYE and RYLAND stop walking. They turn to face each other with wide eyes and exaggerated looks of fear.

Suddenly, they start laughing.

RYLAND

You know what? This is actually fun!

SKYE

Hahaha! Finally turned you to the dark side!

SKYE reaches out a hand to the rain. Then she steps out from under the umbrella and raises her arms in the air. She turns back to RYLAND.

SKYE

I say we ditch the umbrella!

RYLAND

Seriously?!

SKYE
Of course!

SKYE dashes ahead on the path, kicking up rainwater and mud as a stunned RYLAND looks on with his jaw dropped. However, he forms a slight open-mouthed smile and brings the umbrella down.

END FLASHBACK.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - EVENING

Three years later. RYLAND and SKYE are wearing their graduation caps. They are standing and facing each other.

SKYE
Congratulations.

RYLAND
Thanks. And congratulations.

The two shake hands and laugh a little. RYLAND looks down slightly.

SKYE
I can't believe high school's over already.
Time really flies.

RYLAND
Yeah...

RYLAND turns his gaze downward and SKYE looks at him in concern. She leans down slightly and waves a hand over his eyes to get his attention.

SKYE
You okay?

RYLAND

I'm happy you get to pursue your dreams. Your art is amazing, and you have a talent for it.

SKYE

Thank you. But aren't you going to study music though?

RYLAND shakes his head sadly.

RYLAND

My flute-playing is not up to par. I love it, but... I'll never be able to do it professionally.

SKYE steps forward and clasps RYLAND'S hand in both of her own and looks directly at him.

SKYE

But... your music is beautiful and for what it's worth... it moves me.

A pause. A light breeze picks up and RYLAND looks down. RYLAND sighs.

RYLAND

You're a good friend. I'm gonna miss you.

SKYE sighs at RYLAND'S change of subject. She grips his hand tighter.

SKYE

I'm gonna miss you too.

RYLAND and SKYE pull each other in for a hug.

RYLAND

Keep in touch? You can tell me all about your art projects and I can complain about my premed classes. Haha.

SKYE

Of course. I do hope you keep playing flute.

RYLAND

I'll try to keep up with it. And I know you'll keep drawing.

SKYE
Yeah, definitely. Hopefully I don't end up hating it.

RYLAND
You'll be fine.

The sky grows dimmer. SKYE and RYLAND give each other a final hug. RYLAND walks out of the clearing and SKYE watches him as he leaves.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

SKYE looks at her finished sketch of a forest with falling leaves and a sunset behind it.

SKYE
(sadly)
If only I'd asked what was bothering you back then.

She gets up off the bench shakily. SKYE walks slowly in the direction of the forest clearing. She's looking down at her feet and her hands grip her sketchbook and pencil nervously.

SKYE arrives at the clearing's entrance and stops. She takes several deep breaths.

SKYE
All the important moments between us took place here. Our first meeting, end of each school year, graduation, and now... your... departure. Now that I'm here, maybe I can say a proper goodbye.

Then SKYE takes a few steps forward through the trees. She does not slow her pace until she arrives at the clearing, with its blossom trees in full bloom.

A breeze passes through and rustles the grass and trees. SKYE slowly brings her head up to look at the blossom trees. Her eyes widen. She looks at RYLAND, who is sitting under a tree with a flute in his hands. He gives a small smile at SKYE.

SKYE

Ryland...

RYLAND nods. SKYE starts walking forward slowly.

SKYE

Ryland, if that's you, well... First, I...

SKYE stops walking and pauses to collect herself.

SKYE

I'm sorry that I didn't talk to you for all those years.

RYLAND keeps looking on.

SKYE

I should've been there for you! You meant so much to me, but I just... left you alone...

SKYE takes a few more unsteady steps forward.

SKYE

I don't know if you'll accept me, but there's something...

As she walks, SKYE forces herself to look directly at RYLAND. She nearly turns her head to look away but manages to turn her head back.

SKYE

I wish I told you sooner.

A gentle breeze picks up, blowing a few flower petals off their trees. RYLAND picks himself off the ground and stands up. He keeps staring at SKYE.

SKYE

I should've told you that it wasn't just
your music. You inspired me too.

The wind picks up and flower petals fly around wildly. The
wind's sound momentarily becomes audible.

SKYE

Thank you for being my friend. And I'm sorry
I wasn't there for you. I should've been a
better friend in return.

RYLAND takes a few steps forward, closing the distance
between himself and SKYE. He places a hand on her shoulder.
SKYE closes her eyes and her body trembles. SKYE breathes
heavily to stop herself from crying.

RYLAND

Skye. It's okay.

SKYE opens her eyes and there are small tears forming in
them.

RYLAND

Do you want me to play the flute while you
draw? Like when we first met?

SKYE

... Yeah, I think... I would like that... a lot.

SKYE looks down at RYLAND'S flute in his hands.

SKYE

Are you okay with me listening?

RYLAND

If it'll help you.

SKYE opens her mouth as if to protest. She stops when she
looks over RYLAND and notices that he doesn't look any
older than when she last saw him. She simply nods at
RYLAND.

SKYE

... Thank you.

RYLAND smiles and raises his flute to his lips. SKYE walks around him to sit against the blossom tree he was initially sitting against.

SKYE
Ryland?

RYLAND
Hm?

SKYE
I promise I won't forget you after this.

RYLAND
Alright.

RYLAND starts playing his flute. The melody he plays is a calm, peaceful melody with a sense of wistfulness à la "Kainé / Salvation" from *Nier*.

SKYE opens to a blank page and puts her pencil to the paper. She looks between RYLAND and her paper while drawing. She draws the outline of a person on her paper. Then she focuses her gaze on RYLAND and keeps drawing.

As RYLAND plays, the flower petals appear to swirl around him, making him appear mystical. SKYE'S expression turns into one of awe as she witnesses this phenomenon. With her gaze transfixed on RYLAND, she doesn't look down at her paper. She keeps her pencil moving regardless. This continues for as long as RYLAND'S song goes on.

RYLAND plays the last notes of his song and the flower petals fall away and scatter around him. SKYE draws a few more lines before looking down at her piece. SKYE'S lips curve up into a small smile. She looks back up RYLAND.

RYLAND
I feel so at ease with you here.

SKYE
I... do too.

RYLAND starts to fade. SKYE remains where she is, while a few tears fall down her face.

RYLAND

Looks like I have to go. Before I leave,
thank you. I'll miss you, Skye.

SKYE brings her head down to rub her eyes. When she looks up, RYLAND has vanished. However, SKYE gives a small smile.

SKYE

See you, Ryland.

She looks down at her drawing. It is a pencil drawing of RYLAND playing the flute as flower petals dance around him.

FADE OUT.

THE END.