

“Cheers!” Kevin replied. There was a moment of silence before Kevin broke an awkward staring match and turned his head to the music emanating from the living room. “David Bowie,” he said with a nod of approval. He turned back. “I heard Van Halen coming in and now Bowie? You have an eclectic taste in music.”

“I like all kinds,” Sarah said. She eyed Kevin over her beer as she drank it. “You?”

“I like—”

“Coming through!” a voice boomed out, interrupting Kevin’s response. Kevin looked over to a commotion at the kitchen doorway, ~~and~~ saw two sets of arms holding beer cases high over everyone’s heads, ~~and~~ pushing people out of the way.

Doug broke off his conversation with Gillian and leaned over to Kevin. “Shit, who invited those assholes to fuck up this party?” he whispered.

Kevin took a deep breath as he stared at Denni Quinlan and Dusty headed their way. Denni was wearing his trademark tight, black ~~t-shirt~~ T-shirt over his ~~muscle-bound~~ muscle-bound chest and arms—an obvious product of hours of working out in the school ~~universal~~ gym. His black hair was perfectly divided down the ~~center~~ centre of his scalp, with sculpted identical waves falling to either side. Dusty’s blonde hair was the exact opposite: ~~a~~ a chaotic, tangled mess. He was wearing an oversized, stained, gray hoody with a rip in one of the sleeves.

Kevin ~~leaned~~ toward Doug and whispered back. “Since when does DQ wait for an invitation to fuck up anything?”

Kevin shifted his attention back to Sarah. “Hey, where is your music collection? Wouldn’t mind taking a look at it.”

“Yeah, for sure,” Sarah replied. “It’s in the basement. Let’s go.”

“He is probably in shock,” Sarah said. “Most likely, the whole family is. I’ll call him and Laura and offer any support I can. I have a few connections in the ~~health-care~~ health-care field that can probably help.”

“That would be nice, Sarah,” Art said. He leaned back and rubbed the armrests of his chair. “There is one other thing, though, that we should tell you about before you talk to Doug. ~~and w~~ We know this might be a little sensitive.”

Sarah leaned into the table and stared at Art. “Art, tell me everything. You know who you’re ~~you are~~ talking to, right? I think I can handle sensitive things in my life at this point. Tell me.”

“You’re right,” Art replied. He nervously tapped the sides of his chair. “Well, apparently this disease Doug suffers from has been linked to childhood trauma. And, as you have so eloquently stated about our high school years, Doug has logically traced it to—”

“Denni Quinlan,” Sarah said, interrupting.

“Yeah, exactly,” Art said, exhaling with relief.

Sarah shrugged her shoulders. “Doesn’t surprise me at all. On all fronts. DQ and his gang were a perfect source for that trauma. Why is that so hard to tell me?”

“I just ~~... ..~~” Art furrowed his forehead as he stumbled on his words. “I don’t know ~~... ..~~ I was ~~... ..~~”

“Thinking it would bring ~~was bringing~~ up bad memories for me?” Sarah asked, glancing at both Art and Nelson. “Something too close to home?” She sat back and placed her hands in her lap. “Let me tell you something, boys. The fact that all that crap every one of you went through with DQ may now be linked to Doug’s disease does not bring up bad memories for me. In fact, it makes me angry. It makes me angry that nobody recognized what that man and his

friends did to you and so many others ~~that then rears its ugly head years later.~~ You know, if bullying was recognized as a crime, they would be searching out Denni and Blake and Henry and Dusty to lay charges. To make them take ownership of the psychological hell, they showered on others. But that's not to be, right? ~~The ownership is what people go through decades later in mental health problems, and today, from what you are telling me, maybe Doug, in the form of a cancer."~~

Commented [LB1]: Awkward. Consider beginning a new sentence here so it doesn't sound confusing.

Sarah glanced down and ~~briefly pressed her thumbs together.~~ She let out a sigh and then looked up. "You know, I volunteer on the high school council here in town, even though I have no kids. I am a hawk for watching out for anything that resembles the hell Kevin went through. It's not going to happen if I have anything to say about it, unlike what they did back when we were in school.

Commented [LB2]: Awkward. Consider reworking.

Commented [LB3]: Odd image. Just her thumbs? Or are her hands clasped in her lap prior to that? You did say that she put her hands in her lap, but just having the thumbs touch seems a bit odd. I think you can leave the whole first sentence out and not lose anything. Just start the paragraph with her sigh.

Blake walked to the back of the tow truck. He checked ~~to ensure there were for two five gallon~~ ~~five-gallon~~ gas cans stored in the locker box, a tire repair kit, and his tools. He gave the truck a once over, checking the tires, and finally hopped into the driver's seat. He threw his half-eaten lunch onto the passenger seat and then took the service slip out of the front pocket of his work shirt. He glanced at the vehicle description and laughed. "Unbelievable," he said as he placed the paper on the dash and started the truck. "Probably thought it had four-wheel drive."

~~Blake slowed as he glanced at the odometer reading and kept an eye out for signs.~~ He spotted the small green arrow sign for Fabandawan Lake and made a hard right off the logging road onto a ~~one-lane~~ ~~one-lane~~ path with a grassy center median. He felt the truck bounce as he hit potholes. "Son-of-a-bitch," he said as he steered the truck. "God~~damn~~ ~~damn~~ guy is probably without a suspension instead of a battery." He drove another half-kilometer and broke ~~out~~ into a clearing overlooking Fabandawan ~~L~~ake. He stopped the truck and stepped out. ~~He~~

Commented [LB4]: A significant period of time has passed here, right? Pas said it would take about an hour to get out there, and it seems like he's close to the presumed location of the car? I think it would be a good idea to give the reader a sense of the passage of time because in the previous paragraph he had just pulled out of the office. Something as simple as,

"Forty-five minutes later, Blake slowed. . .

Alternatively, you can add a scene break between this sentence and the previous one since time has passed.

Copy Editing #1 — Closure

~~shaded~~Shading his eyes and ~~scanning~~scanned the surroundings, ~~he~~and spotted a few trucks with empty boat trailers down near the shoreline. A voice called out ~~to~~from his far right.

“I’m over here!” someone hollered.

Blake glanced over and saw ~~someone~~a-person waving their arms, standing beside a black pickup truck. The truck was near an embankment on the lake and the hood was up.