

Someone's Story

By B.A. Bellec

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Sheila, thank you for the push and help. You knew this weirdo didn't belong where he was.

Jessica, your love and support changed me into a better person.

Mom, among many things, you taught me how to learn, which is invaluable and everlasting.

Michaela and Peter, thank you for the years of friendship when I wasn't my best self.

Bruce and Dad, I felt like I had to put distance between me and my past to grow, but I lost you guys along the way.

To the people who saw this before I published, your feedback was so important. Thank you for being a part of the process.

Everyone else...sorry. This is an apology for not being present. This was me learning. It hurt to write this, but I am so glad I felt all your pain.

Foreword

THIS one day I decided to befriend a smart, capable, loner weirdo that I worked with. It turned out to be one of the best decisions I've ever made. Even though he had a lot of barriers, I managed to get closer than anybody had in a very long time. A few months later, he handed me an envelope with a USB stick and a letter. The letter was such a compelling statement of friendship and trust that it brought me to tears. On the USB stick was a novel that he had written, and the letter mentioned how I was the first person outside of his immediate family to read this novel. I was super surprised and so grateful for the level of trust. I'll be honest, I was a little scared too – what if it wasn't good? I am an avid reader with a critical eye and I was worried that I would have to choose between hurting my friend with bad news or giving him false hopes. I feel that most of us have been in that situation at one time or another. So that same day I started on the book after dinner with my family, and it's the only thing I did until it was finished. When I was done, I was a mess of emotions. Shocked and pleased at how good it was. Grateful for the level of trust and sharing. Honored to be asked to be his editor. Jealous because

I've always wanted to be a writer. I did a lot of thinking on that last point and I've had a revelation about it. They say that you are a leader if you have followers. B.A. Bellec is a writer because he writes.

Someone's Story really spoke to me. We all have our journey, full of trials and tribulations. We all want things to end well, but we struggle with uncertainty and self-esteem. Even though I am far along as an adult, I don't know how things will end and it causes anxiety. It's even harder for a young person because so much is changing and they are still new to this journey we call life. If I could give advice, I would say to talk to yourself like you would talk to a friend. If you make a mistake - as we all do - it's not about self-blame, but helping to pick yourself up and dust yourself off. Failure is the first step to success. But the best advice I could probably give you is this: If you meet a smart, capable, loner weirdo – you should befriend them.

Sheila Harris

Editor

Determination

WHITE snow, two feet deep, as far as the eye can see. Cutting right through the middle is a small, cleared path. It's straight as an arrow into the horizon. Along the path are little orange flags every five hundred metres or so. You can only see a few of them as they are quite small.

Off in the distance, a black dot. A big exhale. The hot air billows out against the blue, icy winter sky. Steam follows a man like a vapour trail. The snow is crunching under the force of his electric yellow shoes, and the pace is like a metronome, always on point and never missing a beat.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

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Exhale.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Inhale.

The man is slender, but you can barely tell under what looks like three layers of clothes and a balaclava. All black except for the electric yellow gloves and armband, to match the shoes, of course. His facial hair is slightly overgrown. Not a beard but rather a long stubble. Adorning his chest is a giant eighty-eight on a square that looks pinned on.

Strangely, his eyes shut for two or three steps at a time, then open slowly. His feet are moving furiously, but he is completely relaxed, almost meditative. The black dot on the horizon is now more visible. It's another runner, and the gap shrinks with every step.

With a flurry of energy, the pace quickens and his stride lengthens. The black dot is now right in front of him. A few quick jump steps and it is as if the other runner was frozen in place by the frigid winter air.

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A glance back reveals someone fading and a vast white plain of snow. Nothing else. No other black dots. Alone again, just the way he likes it. His pace slows back to his metronome, and his mind fades away to another place.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Exhale.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Crunch.

Inhale.