

she reached the top of the hill: ~~where~~ the carefully mowed grass and the swaying trees stood over numerous stone slabs, all with names of people long dead.

Her grandfather used to say there was a lot of history in a graveyard. It wasn't just a place where dead people were placed to get them out of the way. And in the shining summer sun, it wasn't even creepy, just peaceful. Her grandfather used to come up there regularly to put flags out for the soldiers that died, even the forgotten ones. Whenever they faded, he'd be up there to replace them. He often said that no one deserved to be forgotten. No one.

Katy's feet traveled from stone to stone. She looked at each grave marker. Not a single one marked was her ancestor. Her grandfather was a stranger to those parts, and she often wondered why he wanted to settle in a town hostile to outsiders. She had asked him once, and he just smiled and said, "I knew a town like this once in my younger years, and they treated me badly as this one sometimes does now. I left that town, but I am determined to do it right in this one."

Do it right. That's what he had said. Katy never really knew what he meant by that.

She stopped at the edge of one grave. The stone was not the usual grave marker but elaborately carved granite in the shape of a boy with a flute, much like Pan would look, except this one didn't have had no goat feet. He had a mischievous shape to his eyes, and he held an exact replica of the wooden carved pipe her grandfather loved to play in his spare time. Around him on the stone, crawling up it, were rats all carved too expertly to not believe they weren't real. Katy peered at the name engraved there: Peter Wilhelm Schmidt. It only had his death date. No birth date. Grandpa was like that. He never said when he was born. He only smiled and said that he was very, very old.

Katy sat down on the grass and stared at the face of the boy and sighed as she, looked ing at the carved grapevines also etched near his name. "Grandpa?"

There was only a breeze. She had wished he were there so she could talk to him, but it really had been a silly notion. Still, she spoke aloud anyway.

"Grandpa. I've missed you."

A bird landed in the tree near by and started its call, which was echoed from another tree by another bird.

"The kids at school won't leave me alone. They say I'm a goody-two-shoes geek if I keep going to band practice like you want me to."

She knew how what he would answer:—It was not important what others thought about her, only if she loved music. Katy started to cry.

----LATER on-----

"Smart mouth," Mark snapped back and shook her hard. "I oughta beat you up for that."

But Katy refused to be intimidated. Having dealt with Robert Brinsky, she knew that showing any amount of fear only made it worse. She had to keep cool to win this fight.

Commented [K1]: I thought I remembered reading in Chapter 1 that Katy asked her grandpa why he settled in this town as a stranger, but he gave a different answer....

Commented [K2]: You have a tendency to throw in a lot of participial phrases as sentence modifiers, but this particular one sounded like a new sentence. It didn't fit the rest of the sentence so I put the word "as" in there to put it together.

Commented [KC3]: This seems a bit random to me. Yes, it is good to be descriptive, but it seemed a bit out of place in between her dialogue without a real reason to notice the birds.

“We were gonna bring you along,” Carley said, “But if you are going to keep acting all goody-two-shoes on us—”

“I’m not a goody-goody,” Katy bit back, glaring at her.

That made all three grin.

“Good.” Mark quickly wrapped his arm around her, making sure she wasn’t going to run away. “Then come with us.”

“I don’t waste my time either,” Katy said, slipping out from under his arm.

But Carley still had a firm hold on her, and she jerked Katy back, shaking her head to make it clear Katy could not get away. Mark was ready to put her in a chokehold.

Trent pointed across the lawn to a gravestone. “Let’s take her over there.”

Immediately they dragged Katy across the grass where Trent already skipped over. Katy kicked out, striking Carley first in the shins and then Mark, aiming for his groin. Both let go. Katy ran for it.

“Get her!” Carley shouted to Trent, rubbing her legs as Mark rolled over on the ground.

Dodging gravestones, Katy darted straight to the tall, chain-linked fence. ~~Fall chain link. On the other side of the fence, there~~ was nothing but tangled, undeveloped land covered in underbrush. Travis ~~had~~ grabbed at her heel just as she was about to pull herself over, latching his fingers onto her shoe.

“Let go!” Katy kicked out, flopping over the wire top headfirst.

Her legs swung over, but her shoe loosened and flipped off, dropping straight into the bramble on the other side. She flipped over and fell to the ground. Trent glared at her, not quite ready to follow her ~~yet~~ into the shrubbery that was too much like a forest rather than an unused yard. Carley was running to join him, swearing at him and her.

“We’ll get you, Schmidt!”

But Katy did not stop. She dashed into the bushes to find her shoe. Carley was already climbing the fence when ~~she Katy finally found grabbed it her shoe at last got it, and, —She Katy~~ ducked under the low branches as soon as she saw ~~Carley and Trent the girl was~~ on her side of the fence. ~~Trent was right with her.~~

Without even trying to put on her shoe, Katy scrambled down the hill. The bushes scratched her, clawing at her like they also wanted her to get caught and beaten up. But Katy fought with all that she had, scraping up her legs, tearing her socks, and scratching up her arms and face. It was downhill all the way to the small, dry ravine that divided the land from the road. Tumbling to the dilapidated wooden fence mostly constructed out of dried and cracked tree trunks and metal wire, she slid through the slats and dropped down.

Katy scurried up the other side of the ravine and sprinted over the road. It was just one block away from her grandparents’ farm from there. Clenching her shoe in her hand, Katy ran with all that she had, pummeling the ground over the Hickerson’s lawn, across the Hinckley’s wide stubble where they normally grew wheat, and through the still growing patches of squash in the Layton’s yard. She

Commented [KC4]: Didn’t understand beginning the sentence with “Tall chain link, on the other side” Tall chain link doesn’t work as a sentence intro here

Commented [KC5]: Redundant

Commented [KC6]: Vague pronoun-she, and awkward wording.

Commented [KC7]: Oxford comma. Sometimes you have it, sometimes you don’t. Stay consistent.

could see the wooden barrier between their lots; ~~an~~ an old farmer's corral for a fence. Katy climbed it into her grandma's yard, hearing the pairs of feet pounding the ground after her. Snatching up the first garden tool she could see, a hoe, Katy lifted it and swung around for a fight.

"Oh, so you decided to help me garden after all. That's good."

Dropping her shoe, Katy stared at her grandmother. She had not seen her weeding among the onions, but her grandmother was calmly doing so, her hat flopping over her face to keep out the sun. Carley and the two boys ran up to the fence, but screeched to a halt the moment their eyes fixed on Grandma Schmidt. They looked at Katy once more, hate on each of their faces as they turned back.

"We'll get you—later."

Katy did not let go of the hoe, watching them cross the Layton's yard ~~back the other way~~. Undoubtedly, they were going back to desecrate some graves.

"You know, if you are going to hold that hoe, I'd rather that you used it to weed out the beets."

It had been easy to forget ~~that~~ her grandmother was there. She was so silent. Katy was half tempted to just drop the hoe and go indoors. However, Katy sighed and did as Grandma Schmidt requested, searching for the beet marker in the ground.

"I'm glad you came back," Grandma Schmidt said, bending over the carrots now. "I'd hate it if you missed lunch also."

Katy blinked. Would her grandmother just do that? Make her miss lunch even though she didn't have breakfast just because she wouldn't do a stupid bit of weeding? Looking at her, Katy began to realize that she might.

Commented [KC8]: Semi-colon doesn't make sense here as it isn't two complete sentence, but a colon makes sense or the em dash.

Commented [KC9]: Earlier in this paragraph you called it the grandparents' farm, and now it is just the grandma's yard....not consistent.