

Saturn's Rings

By. A.K.

The jet-black space illuminated with small orbs engulfed me. I floated throughout the solar system, making occasional stops on Saturn's seven rings. Milo, my family's golden retriever, accompanied me on the adventure; he was not much help as he only sniffed the chunks of rock and ice on the rings. Suddenly, the force of gravity pulled me down. My eyes were wide open as my gaze met the gaping abyss that formed under me. I was pulled into the dark emptiness, plummeting at intense speeds.

Andrew.

"Andrew!" A familiar voice rang through my ears. I lay in the back of my family's automobile as Milo took a nap on my chest. The familiar voice continued to call my name as I sobered from my hazy state. I assumed the car had been at rest for quite some time due to how irritated the voice had sounded, so I rose from the back seat, gently removing Milo and placing him next to me.

"Guess who's finally awake!" A booming laugh filled the small vehicle. "Your mom tried her best to wake you, but you weren't budging," the man grinned. "I guess you were too invested in your dream that you didn't want to hang out with your mom and papa." The man, Papa, joked as Mom swatted at him.

"Well, it isn't much of a 'hang out,'" Mom started, "we're just moving our items into the new house." Mom turned to me, "You aren't old enough to help us with moving yet, but I believe this neighborhood has children your age." I winced. I am not good at meeting new people. "Andy...I know it's scary, but you got to talk to others, not just me or Papa." She smiled as she got out of the car and walked to my door. She opened the

door as I hopped out and carried Milo in my arms while I shut the door behind me and looked around. The soul in my body nearly jumped out as I came face to face with a boy with light brown hair who looked around the same age as me. When did he get there?

“So you’re the new kid on the block!” The boy gave a toothy grin, showing his missing canine. “I’m Theodore, but it sounds too grown up, so you can call me Theo!” He energetically brought out his hand for a handshake. My tense frame soon melted, and I felt I could trust him.

I reached to shake his hand as I opened my mouth to respond. Even though we were five years of age, I knew this boy would be by my side forever.

“I’m Andrew... but you can call me Andy.”

August 12, 1934-- End.

“Ugh! I hate all these dumb assignments! Who even uses the midpoint formula in real life?” Theo had come over to my house to study together. We had known each other for about twelve years now. To be honest, I had no idea what we were doing. We both knew that we tended to resort to doing everything but study, so we ate plenty of snacks as we listened to the radio in my room.

Milo climbed into Theo’s lap as I got up to change the tune. As I scrolled, Frank Sinatra’s “I Fall In Love Too Easily” started to play, filling the room with the jazz melody. I paused and turned to Theo, who was preoccupied with Milo. A faint smile formed as I walked over to my bed and crashed into the pillows as the music filled the air. Theo closed his eyes, humming to the song while keeping his attention on Milo. My eyes had

fixated on the scene, fascinated as Theo inched closer. At that very second, a thought formed in my head that would soon haunt me for the rest of my life.

I want him.

My throat had closed, aching as my face had warmed. How could I ever have thought something as vulgar as that? But it felt so right. I wanted him to be in my life for as long as we lived. However, I did not want to ruin the years of friendship we had built together. I jerked my head away. I refocused on the radio as I hummed along with Theo. The golden light of the sunset filled the room alongside the music, illuminating the wood on my bed frame. My heart beat faster by the second. I closed my eyes, blocking the sun's rays as I drifted to my dreams.

No matter how long I live, I will not let my feelings get the best of me.

September 23, 1946-- End.

"I'm getting married."

My heart dropped. I was standing in the kitchen of our shared apartment, washing our dishes. Theo calmly sat on the unmade sofa bed in the living room, reading his business class textbook. We were twenty-two years old and living off minimum wage, so we were roommates. Theo and I had known each other for nineteen years, yet my feelings for him had not changed. But now, out of nowhere, he decided he wanted to get married.

"Oh," I winced. My tone sounded a bit harsh.

“‘Oh?’ This is a life-changing moment, and your response is ‘Oh?’” Theo raised his eyebrows in a joking manner. “Aw, Andy! Are you depressed that I won’t be with you every day?” He jested, “It’s fine! You can come over whenever you want! Of course, you’ll have to tell us beforehand,” he winked.

“Gross. I’m sure I’ll be fine without you living in my room.” I lied.

“Well, you’re going to be missing out,” he grinned a stupid grin I say I despise. In reality, I cannot get enough of it. “You’re going to love Alice. You’ll understand why I fell in love with her,” his eyes comically widened. “Oh, but you are not going to hit on her. She’s already with me.” His laughter filled the apartment.

“I wasn’t planning on it.” I turned back to the dishes.

I love you.

May 16, 1953-- End.

My eyes fixated on Theo as he stood on the altar. He had asked me to be his best man, of course. Suddenly, the orchestra started to play as the most stunning woman slowly walked through the entrance. She wore a gorgeous ivory lace dress, as her veil steadily followed behind her. She was adorned with many pearls and diamonds, all of which complemented her greatly.

Theo reached for her, and she happily accepted, interlocking their hands together. They held each other’s hands as the priest said his opening statement. They recited the priest’s words as everyone admired the soon-to-be-married couple.

“I, Theodore Clifton, take you, Alice Booker, to be my lawfully wedded wife,” he smiled with such tenderness. “I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.” Tears formed in my eyes. “I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”

Tears silently ran down my face as Alice said her vows.

I still love you.

July 28, 1953-- End.

I grabbed my keys and hurriedly walked to my house; the frigid temperature outside had nearly frozen my entire body into ice. Theo and I had known each other for thirty-three years. As I walked through my door, my landline filled the room while it rang nonstop. I grimaced as I picked up the line, trying to warm myself when I did so.

“Andrew Baker speaking?”

“Andrew?” It was a woman’s voice. She held back a sob.

“Alice? What’s going on?”

“It’s about...Theo. He’s in the hospital. He...” She inhaled deeply. “He got into a car accident.”

I dropped the telephone.

December 14, 1967-- End.

I stood in front of the casket, studying Theo's features. The mortician had embalmed the body, giving life to his face. He looked as if he was in a deep slumber, but we knew he would never awake. Tears flooded my eyes. I crashed to my knees, letting my tears stain the wooden floors.

I'm sorry I couldn't tell you.

December 20, 1967-- End.

I had known Theo for seventy-eight years, forty-five of which I could not spend with him. I lay on the hospital mattress as I looked out the window. The doctors knew I would not last any longer, and I had already accepted my fate. No matter how many get-well-soon cards and flowers I accumulated, my life would still hang by a thread. A faint knock came in the direction of my door.

"Uncle Andy?" A woman walked in, a worried look on her face.

"Jen," a faint smile appeared on my face. Jen was Theo and Alice's daughter. She had been only ten years old when her father died. Due to Alice having to raise Jen alone, I took care of her whenever Alice needed help.

"How are you holding up?" She asked, anxious as she already knew my answer.

"Not well... Everything hurts. I'm just waiting until I finally kick the bucket." I joked, but I could not help but feel dejected. I turned back to the window, staring at the parked vehicles. I winced as my body ached. I closed my eyes, feeling parched.

"Jen... Can you please get some water for me?" I said in a dry, hoarse voice.

“Sure thing!” She got up from her chair and walked back towards the door. She turned to see if I was still on the bed. She feared I would no longer be there.

Memories of my childhood crashed into me like a meteorite. Memories of Theo had filled them. My life had always revolved around him, and I would not regret the moments I had with him. I closed my eyes, suddenly feeling exhausted.

Finally, it's time.

I had been engulfed in darkness, floating through space. The stars of my youth had twinkled throughout the solar system, memories I would always cherish. My family's dog had crashed into me, and his eyes had shined as if he was asking to go on an adventure. As I took my final breath, I leaped onto one of Saturn's seven rings.

February 28, 2012-- Story End.