

To Reader – Green Text represents M (Main Character's) thoughts

Intro and Day 1:

It's a rather normal day when I enter the gym.

Though out of the corner of my eye is a one of a kind sight

--CG: Lysandra attempting to walk with bar support --

M: She's...

--Graphic Change: CG Lysandra looking up at M

Ly (Unknown): You know, it's..*grunts*

--JPG: Gym; Sprite: Ly in Gym attire

Ly (Unknown):...not polite to stare.

M: Call me rude then.

Lysandra laughs heartily.

Ly: Call me, Lysandra. So, what made you look?

Frivolous Choice

1. M: Your legs are killer!
 - a. Ly: Ha! They came with the job.
2. M: This isn't an everyday sight.
 - a. Ly: I suppose not.
3. M: I saw you, and hoped you'd make it across.
 - a. Ly: I always will. When you see me again, I will make sure to cross that much faster.

Ly: This might be surprising, but I'm a gymnast.

M: A—

Ly: Shhhhh, I already know what you're going to say.

M: You're a mind reader too??

Ly: Wha-, shut it.

Ly: I AM a gymnast.

Ly: Never will I ever say "was".

Ly: I'm just a bittt out of practice.

M: How's that?

Ly: A story for another day. But, you're good company. Why don't you come back sometime?

1. Yea, maybe I will.
 - a. Ly: Alright, big guy. Wait, what did you say your name was? M: (Replies) Ly: See you around, M!
2. Eh, no promises. (Rejection)
 - a. Ly: Ah, bye then.

Day 2:

Ly: Hiya!

M: You look exhausted.

Ly: Hehe, thank you. It means the day was well spent.

Ly: Could you pass me that water bottle over there?

It's on the other side of the gym. Ugh.

A barbell blocked part of the path, but the process only took 30 seconds.

Ly: Thank youu!

M: Not a problem.

Ly: Every day I get stronger, so every day forward gets easier.

Ly: Haha, if I look exhausted now just imagine me on the first day this happened.

Ly: Yea...about 2 years ago now. I was confined to this chair.

Ly: Will you stop looking that way? This is temporary, of course!

Her smile almost looked strained.

M: The more I see the more I believe that.

Ly: Shouldn't you be doing squats? Legs looking kinda leannnn.

M: OH! Ughhh.

Lysandra's playful glare oversees the rest of my workout.

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I'm still stuck on something. My thoughts when I got that bottle.

“She’s asking me to do what?” But, *how* would she have gotten the bottle herself?

She would’ve had to roll there, but even then someone’s barbell was in the way.

Would she have to lift it? Figure a way to move around it?

I must have realized something about this to even consider doing such a favor. But what does this conclude about me?

Day 3: Struggle

I walk in today and she’s not at the usual spot.

I look left and right, and aside from a towel, the place is empty.

I take a step forward and then –

Ly: Hey big guy, you’re blocking the sun.

She’s right under my legs.

M: Aw jeez. What are you doing down there?

Ly: My training is over. So I like to relax.

Ly: Sip on some juice.

In her hand is a grape juice carton with a bendy straw attached.

I sit down before I start to feel like a middle school teacher.

M: How was it today?

Ly: Better than ever!

Ly: I cleared the bars and still had time to spare.

M: Between today and the last day I came?

Ly: Mmmmhm

M: There has to be something in that juice box.

Ly: Hahahaha

I get here the same time I always do. To see she’s already done is really impressive.

M: Say, is it hard for you to just sit like this?

M: I’ve heard it’s a lot different once the sensitivity is gone.

Ly: Ahhh, don't worry about me. This isn't forever.

Ly: But yea. Sometimes I get distracted and forget I have to reposition myself.

Ly: Haha, you could just tip my foot over and it falls flat.

And she does just that.

M: Ugh.

She laughs with an even bigger smile.

Ly: I'm going to get my chair, just wait a sec.

I look and it's all the way over by the bars.

Did it roll back or something?

M: I could get that for –

Ly: No! I got this!

Ly: I need all the strength I can get.

She folds over and begins to crawl, just with her forearms.

I guess it's about ten paces over, but I could hardly imagine how long her journey is.

After a good minute of seeing her legs drag, she finally makes it to the chair.

Ly: And NOW my workout is over!

I can only sigh and shake my head.

Ly: I have to get back to classes, but I'll see you!

M: Haha I guess you will.

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It's weird.

Thinking back, I was never this type of person.

I was almost brooding for a second.

Screen goes dark to realize a flashback

I grew up in a rather common family.

A mother, sister, and I.

I was the oldest sibling. Of course that left me playing the caretaker whenever mom was away.

Mother: M!

Mother: M!!!

M: Yea?

Mother: Could you get your sister some candy when you get back from the library?

Mother: Grape chewies are her favorite. Please?

M: I'll try, yea.

I love my sister.

Mother: Get it, she feels down today!

M: Yea, yea.

But enough to think she needed to do more things on her own.

I guess I forgot about that candy on the return.

I slipped her a dollar instead.

Just enough push for her to go out on her own.

Sis: For me?

Her eyes light up.

M: Yep. Go and do what you like.

Sis: Thanks!!!

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Screen returns

I wonder what changed.

Day 4: Buildup

Aside from being out of breath from a brisk walk, I made it in a bit early.

I haven't seen her train in the past few days, so I've been wondering how she's been making up.

I walk in.

And there she is – collapsed.

Barely hanging on to the bars.

Usually she would have seen me by now. But her eyes are focused on one target.

Her goal, the chair on the other side.

She raises her head and lifts her body, forcing her legs to stand once more.

With all her effort, she gets one leg to move forward.

On its own it can hardly stand.

Yet just when I think it'll give out her other leg moves for support.

Come on, you can make it.

Should I say that out loud? Do I need to?

I don't know how she'll respond but I –

1. Say it loud!

- a. M: You can make it!!
- b. Ly: Wah? Ah–!
- c. *She looks to the side just for a moment, well enough time for her to drop like a rock.*
- d. *Did I do that?*
- e. M: Uh, sorry about that!
- f. Ly: No, it's alright.
- g. Ly: Just didn't notice ya at all.
- h. M: I probably shouldn't have startled you.
- i. Ly: Yea, well, the cat's out of the bag.
- j. Ly: I'm not zooming across like I thought.
- k. M: You're doing just fine. I'm sure.
- l. Ly: Haha, I wasn't the one shouting was I?
- m. M: Ugh.
- n. M: You know, why are you doing this all on your own?

2. No, she can't lose focus.

- a. *Yea, what would I do if I made her lose all her progress?*
- b. *I can wait just a bit until she's done.*
- c. *It looks like she has about seven paces left.*
- d. *Each one she takes feels longer than the last.*

- e. By the time she's reached the end, she's in a full sweat.
- f. She positions herself to sit in her chair. That's when she finally notices you.
- g. Ly: Oh!
- h. M: Hey, haha
- i. Ly: Were you there this whole time?
- j. Ly: You could've said hi or something. Not like I'll bite you.
- k. Yea, why were my only choices shouting or staying silent?

(1 Cond) She's gets up to lean on the bars she hasn't surpassed yet.

Ly: Help isn't my strong point.

Ly: Unless I really, really need it.

She looks away as if not to draw attention to herself.

M: That'll only make it harder for you.

M: You know, you're a friend.

M: You're *my* friend.

M: Now I can't think of a better reason to be here.

I can believe that, right? Right.

Ly: Fineee, but no shouting. Mmkay?

She flashes a smile.

M: Yea, yea. (To Reader: For Choice 1 skip down past untabbed section to Day 5)

(2 Conditional cont.)

M: You looked pretty determined, so I didn't want to bother you.

Ly: Well, yea.

Ly: This takes a lot of effort for me. Someday I want to race across.

Ly: That'll be the day I get out of this chair.

M: I want to see that day too.

Ly: I'm glad you didn't say anything. I don't like looking like I need help.

Ly: Unless I really, really need it.

M: Haha, and the day you needed that water bottle was just an exception?

Ly: Jussssst one.

M: Ack, soooo thirsty. M, save mee!

Ly: Never again hahaha.

Day 5b:

(2 Continued – further days on)

I decided to stop coming by to the gym.

It's not like I don't like her or anything.

It's just that I know she needs as much focus as she can get right now.

I want to see her succeed.

She never told me how she got in that chair. But that's alright, I can always get to know later.

LY END - It ends, suddenly, because you realize you care so much you think it best if you left her alone.

(2 Cont. Coming after X days)

I come back in what seems like the first time in forever.

To my surprise, the bars are gone.

They're gone.

Things like that don't just disappear.

They only get put away when the user no longer needs them.

This means she's walking again!

My heart starts pounding. I'm thinking all types of things.

When did this happen?

I wonder if she went somewhere special.

Has she started practicing gymnastics again??

She looks so short, but she *has* to at least reach my shoulders when she stands.

I rush around the gymnasium looking for something, anything that can give me a clue to her being.

I find a maintenance man of all people.

M: Hey!

Custodian: Oh?

M: Yea, excuse me, those bars are gone right?

M: Have you heard about the girl that used them?

Custodian: Ah, Lysandra?

He looks somewhat surprised.

M: Yea, her, what happened to her?

His face burrows for a bit.

Custodian: She's no longer usin 'em. But ya won't like why.

Custodian: Bout two days ago now...

My heart drops.

The world is spinning around me.

The man in front of me is describing an unreal scene.

Custodian: An' so she slipped. Nothin unusual at first.

Cust: Then I saw she wasn't gettin backup.

Cust: She ain't no quitter so I walk over there, and she says...

Cust: She says...

His voice gets raspy.

Cust: "I can't feel my legs any more."

Cust: "Help me."

He's fighting back tears now.

Cust: Always told her not to go alone. But she could never wait on an old man like me.

Cust: Never was a quitter, that's right.

She was pushing her body to the limit.
She had spent the day trying to finish three laps at once.
When I saw her last she had barely finished one.
She was straining herself, but wouldn't stop until she met her challenge.
It wasn't a regular fall. She fell backwards.
On the part of her body she needs most to walk.
She can't feel a thing any more. Not her feet. Not her toes.
She'll never be able to walk again.
Should I have done something?
Could I have done something?
I can't regret anything about leaving.
I'm sure she couldn't have regrets either.
If I see her again...I'll make sure her life isn't just the chair she's in.

Day 5: Progression

M: No. No. You have to stand upright. Like this.

I puff out my chest in the most exaggerated standing position.

Ly: Ugh ok.

She fiddles on the bars to assume my position.

Her position is better now, at least somewhat.

M: Before, you always looked so hunched over.

M: It was hurting my back.

Ly: Shut ittttt!

M: No shouting!

Ever since that day I've felt like helping Ly more often.

I feel like I've made a difference. Or that I'm *making* a difference.

It feels good.

It feels...rewarding.

M: Ok, I have an idea.

Ly: Yea?

I walk up to the set of bars.

M: I want you to follow me just like this.

Using the rail as a guide I slowly start to walk as an example.

I'm hoping that by seeing a person walk beside her she can mimic.

And fix that horrid posture.

Ly: Ack, you know I hate asking for help.

M: Think of it as free advice.

M: Complimentary service.

Ly: Fineee, you got me.

Slowly we walk together.

She follows me almost perfectly.

Left, right. Left, right.

Her stance shifts to support one leg then the other.

It wasn't long at all before we realized we made it all the way across.

I'm betting we made a record.

Day 6: Buildup 2

Today is a new day.

The sky seems a bit brighter. The air a little bit lighter.

Ly said she had something to show me.

Seeing as I've been working with her the past few days now, I can't really imagine what that could be.

I finally get to the gym, and I see her.

She has a big grin on her face, I could see it from the entrance.

M: Hey

It's surprising she's in a chair this time and not pushing herself on the bars.

M: So what's this all about? You can hardly hide yourself.

Ly: You'll see.

She wheels over to the bars and readies herself.

Ly: One, two, three!

And she's on her feet.

She doesn't walk this time.

She's still just for a moment.

Then, she slowly raises her arms. Both of them.

She extends like a bird learning to fly on its own.

Ly's standing with only her legs!!

M: Woah. Since when?

Ly responds with a grin.

Ly: I just felt I could one day! And so I did!

Ly: I'll be back to practice in no –

She wobbles and has to lean back on the bars.

Ly: – time!

M: Hahaha, maybe not today.

Ly: Ugh.

She pouts.

As happy as I am, something still bothers me.

She still hasn't said how she got in this wheelchair.

I'm not sure how to ask so I –

1. Blurt it out.

- a. M: Ly, I'm sorry but, how did it get like this?
- b. There's an awkward silence.
- c. It's understandable.
- d. It's so quiet I could hear the custodian cleaning the floors.
- e. I never knew there was one until now.
- f. Ly: Ah, hmm.
- g. Ly: Well, I'm a gymnast.
- h. Ly: It's not like I was just a looker or a fan, I was sort of born into it.
- i. Ly: You know how kids take on the beliefs of their parents and all? That's me.
- j. Ly: My dad is a designer for gymnastic equipment.
- k. Ly: He would spend hours tinkering with new designs and ways to advance the sport.
- l. Ly: My parents split not long after I was born. My dad ended up being the only one I had.
- m. Ly: And watching him day after day, I wanted to help. So at the age of 8 decided to become a gymnast.
- n. Ly: Haha, but not a designer. I was pretty bad at math.
- o. Ly: When he came out with new material, I would be the first to try it out. He was so excited. And I was so happy.
- p. Ly: When I landed on an international team some years later, he couldn't stop smiling. I still can't remember the last time his face was so bright.
- q. Ly: That same year he debuted his new invention – moving uneven bars.
- r. Ly: It was a transformation of the traditional high bar and low bar. These new bars would now move and small circular motions.
- s. Ly: One would move clockwise and the other would move counterclockwise.
- t. Ly: You look lost haha, just think about the motions of a jump rope or something.
- u. Ly: Anyway, it was a big thing. They moved at just the right speed for an experienced gymnast to perform a routine. Mastery of strength, motion, and style.
- v. Ly: Being me, I wanted to be the first known master. My dad worked so hard on it, and I wanted him to feel proud.
- w. Ly: I worked on them each day. No excuses. Just like my dad.
- x. Ly: I kept thinking about bigger, bolder routines to practice.
- y. Ly: If I were to set the first standard, it'll have to be good.
- z. Ly: And eventually, I became unhappy with the speed. They were too slow and predictable for me. They went only slightly faster than the second-hand of a clock.
- aa. Ly: I made it 10% faster, 20%, 25%, 50%. My goal was 100%.

- bb. Ly: My routine was perfect. I wanted to double-turn on the high bar, do a 360° flip and grab on the low bar, and land with a swing half-turn dismount.
 - cc. Ly: I was getting better and better, but maybe I was going too fast.
 - dd. Ly: I spent hours perfecting myself at 50%. I'd usually end it there, but I still felt energized. So I went up to 75%. A new set!
 - ee. Ly: But that's when it happened. I misjudged where the low bar would be. Instead of nailing the flip to grab the bars, I got off too early and landed on my lower spine.
 - ff. Ly: That was two years ago and it left me like this ever since.
 - gg. Ly: It was worse on my dad. When he heard the news, he just shrunk away. He stopped creating. He hardly eats.
 - hh. Ly: But I think the worst thing is I haven't seen him smile. That really gets me.
 - ii. Ly: I'm just out of practice right now. That's all. I know I can still master his creation. But because of a simple mistake, it's gonna take longer for me to get there.
2. Keep it to myself for now.
- a. I swallow it down.
 - b. I remember the first time I asked. *Flashback scene*
 - c. Ly: This might be surprising, but I'm a gymnast.
 - d. M: A—
 - e. Ly: Shhhhh, I already know what you're going to say.
 - f. M: You're a mind reader??
 - g. Ly: Wha-, shut it.
 - h. Ly: I AM a gymnast.
 - i. Ly: Never will I ever say "was".
 - j. Ly: I'm just a bittt out of practice.
 - k. M: How's that?
 - l. Ly: A story for another day. *End Flashback scene*
 - m. She'll tell me when she's ready. There's no need to pressure someone about a topic so sensitive.

Day 7: Walking

Now that I think about it, I've really come a long way. Not just with Ly but with myself.

Of all the things I could be doing right now, I don't think I ever could have been convinced to watch a girl walk again.

What would I be doing?

Am I needed here?

How could I best improve myself instead?

Such thoughts would always rage through my head.

But Ly isn't just *some girl* and her first steps aren't just *some topic*. It's real.

Things progress. Actions have reactions. A life is being renewed.

I'm actually having fun for a change.

Today Ly's working on her walking.

She wants to take a lot more steps than the few she did before.

I enter the gym with these thoughts in mind.

Intro to arrow key mini-game to simulate walking

Potentially Day 7-9:

**Arrow key mini-game to simulate walking* - Each day gets progressively easier until the 10th day where she can fully walk on her own.*

Day 10: Inspiration

Note for zmm: Excitement she can walk for real, video chatting her dad for news, fresh inspiration for gymnastic practice

I should really get a pair of sunglasses. The sun is shining right in my face.

I can hardly see in front of me. I have to squint to find my way to the usual spot on the usual place.

Out of this sunlight I see Ly. Standing in front of the gym.

M: I never thought I'd see this day so soon.

Ly: Hahaha, well I couldn't stay on the sidelines forever could I?

M: Oh I could never think that.

Ly: I walked all the way here too! I haven't needed that chair – not even a walker!

M: Ha! So what's today about? The first real practice?

Ly: No! No! No! Something bigger!

Ly: I really want to show my dad how I am right now. This is almost a promise I've made to him.

M: You're right. But how? Does he live around here?

Ly: This is the 21st century, big guy! I want you to hold this while I video chat him.

She hands me her cell phone, and starts pressing digits.

I guess I never really needed her number. I always just kinda showed up.

Ly: Don't press call yet. I want to position myself first.

She finds a regular chair and sits down.

Ly: This'll surprise him for sure.

Ly: Ok, now!

Ring ring ring

Ring ring ring

Ly: I hope this works...

Ring ring rin-

A groggy voice picks up the phone.

Dad: H-hello

From what I can see, he looks to be a gentle man. Though his hair is disheveled. His eyes barely look awake.

Ly: Hiiiiii. Long time huh?

Dad:

Ly: It's alright. I've been well anyway.

Ly: Been up to anything new?

Dad: Home...

Ly: I can see that, sleepyhead. Haha

The slightest smiles creeps on his face.

Ly: Look, I really want to show you something.

She gets up and walks toward the small field in front of the building. She crouches next to a flower patch.

Ly: The flowers here...

Ly: They're really beautiful aren't they?

All I hear then on is sobbing. Tears wash down his muddled face.

Dad: Lysandra!!!

Ly starts to tear up as well.

Ly: I'm all better now, Dad. Told ya it wouldn't be long.

Ly: It wasn't long at all right?

Dad: I love you so much, sweetheart. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

...

I was really a part of that.

Her whole life.

It's an unimaginable feeling. There's just this tingling from my heart to my head.

I've done something good for once. I want to do more.

There's just one last thing to do.

Her big day.

Arrival at the gym

M: You ready?

Ly: Born ready.

I blow a whistle, and Ly sprints toward the uneven bars.

Toward her future... ***CG of her on the uneven bars***