

One Good Day with Bummy

You meet your friend, Will, for a day of skiing.

No big deal.

Just another Saturday.

Beautiful snowfall.

Cold but sunny out. Perfect for carving through moguls.

This is the first day you get to use Bummy's skis. It was less than a year ago your Grandfather died; heart attack on these very skis.

"Bummy always called you his little Hot Dog." My Grandmother told me at the wake. She knew he would have wanted me to have them.

The guy at the ski shop, the one with the pitted face who looks like that actor whose name you can never remember, says the skis should be good for another season, maybe two.

That's fine, you say. You don't need much, just one good day on Bummy's skis and you'll have that connection you never seemed to have when he was alive.

Living so far away made you feel like an outsider in your own family. You had a few days with Bummy when you were first learning. But Bummy was more about style, back then you were more about speed.

There's Will. He's with that group of guys on the ski team.

You know the ones.

The ones whose parents buy them new equipment every season.

Brad Johnson, he made fun of you 'cause your Dad bought his used skis for you last year.

But now you got Bummy's.

Bummy always bought the best. Always new, never used.

"Who's second hand crap you got this year?"

They all think that's funny, even Will.

Will's a good skier; he'll be on the ski team in a few years. But he didn't have to laugh too.

"Solomon 464's." you brag.

"464's were last year's model's you loser."

He's not worth the argument you tell yourself. Of course, you have no argument. 464's were last year's models.

"Let him ski with us." Will says. You knew he was good guy.

They tell you to get on the chair lift first. By yourself.

Oldest trick on the hill. Get the guy you want to ditch on the chair in front.

There are two places to get off, Halfway Point and Topside. You can either tell the guy to get off at Halfway and go to Topside yourself, or tell him you're going Topside and get off at Halfway. But you know the first run they wanted to make was Thunder Run. You can only get to that from Topside.

As you reached Halfway you look back, Will gives the signal to go all the way.

They're show off's. They need the double diamond run.

They wouldn't give up being the first of the day to hit Thunder Run. Not with the new snowfall. Being the first to make fresh tracks on Thunder Run was bragging rights around here.

You know if you want to hang with them you got to hit Thunder Run.

Making fresh tracks, that's your test.

All these years you've never hit a double diamond run?

Why?

What's wrong with you?

Scared?

Of snow?

After you pass Halfway you look back again, they're gone.

They ditched you after all.

Now it's you, Thunder Run and Bummy's skis, all alone.

You perch yourself at the top of the run, right in the narrow of trees that serves as the gateway to Thunder Run. The highest moguls of any mountain in Wyoming, Montana or Idaho.

Thunder Run has broken more bones than anywhere else.

You can't count the number of times you've seen the Ski Patrol bringing someone out of there on a sled.

You position yourself on the skis.

You feel it. You feel him. Right beside you.

You feel it coming.

The style. Bummy's style.

You look out across the valley.

Your little town surrounded by snow-covered mountains.

You hear nothing.

Just you and Bummy.

No one will see you fall.

No one will see you conquer.

But Bummy's there, watching.

And that's all that matters.

A deep breath.

A push off.

One good day with Bummy.

That's all you need.