

FLASHBACK  
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Bradley woke in a brightly lit room to sighs of relief. The lights blinded him. He tried to get up but once again fell into unconsciousness.

“Bradley, Bradley,” a voice said. Bradley slowly opened his eyes. “Good, the sedative is wearing off”, said the doctor helping him up. As Bradley came round again, memories hit him as hard as a battering ram: glass shattering, tires screeching, a warm wet feeling on his body. But as quickly as they appeared they disappeared, taking Bradley’s breath away.

“Where’s mom,” Bradley asked; scared.

“She’s ... sleeping,” the doctor replied.

“Can I see her?”

“Maybe later,” the doctor replied unusually quickly. “You need rest..”

Bradley’s father came in. He helped ease Bradley onto a wheelchair and they went down the corridor, into a room with what looked to be two white boxes. There were many people around them, some crying, some not, all with sad expressions. Bradley looked at his mother’s face, eyes closed and, not understanding, asked his father, “Is she sleeping?”

“Yes” his father replied.

“When will she wake up?”

“Never,” his father whispered, hoping Bradley wouldn’t hear.

“What was that dad?”

“Oh, she’ll wake up soon,” his father said sounding artificial.

“ Stop it! Tell him the truth already! She’s dead and never coming back!” His sister shouted, tearfully.

“No.... she’s just sleeping right?” he asked, his eyes emitting a silent plea. His father turned away, lost for words. Bradley, in denial, stayed silent, tears streaming down his cheeks. His father pushed him back and placed him on his bed.

“You’ll have rehab from tomorrow so rest.” He gently closed the door. Bradley fell into a deep slumber.

That night Bradley’s memories hit him even harder. Shattered glass and crushed steel. His mother’s body cut open. Bradley and his best friend Jeff’s legs lacerated. Body parts stuck to the crumpled car walls. He crawled over to his mother and tried to rouse her. “Mom, mo.....” He then collapsed.

Bradley sat upright. He was covered in cold sweat and the sudden movement caused excruciating pain. He waited for a few minutes. Then a nurse came in. “Bradley, onto the wheelchair please?” Bradley silently complied.

Jeff sat waiting for Bradley to show up. When Bradley finally appeared, they sat down in front of the physiotherapist. She told them, “This will be the first day of your rehab. Are you boys ready?” Jeff nodded but Bradley turned away and exhaled sharply. “Bradley?” she asked.

“It won’t succeed anyway,” Bradley replied. “What’s the point?”

“Look if you don’t want to do it they won’t force you,” Jeff said.

“Byeeeeee” Bradley replied sarcastically, grabbing the wheels of his chair, pushing himself back to his room.

## One Month Later

Bradley looked down the hallway and saw Jeff walking around. "Bradley shrugged and told himself, "That'll never be me," He then looked out a window and saw children chasing each other in the carpark. The kids reminded him of something he couldn't quite remember but then the flashback hit him. "Let's race, Bradley" Jeff urged. Both of them ran down a gravel path. Bradley tripped and bruised his legs and arms. Bradley's mother rushed over. "Be more careful next time," his mother cautioned.

With that, Bradley began sobbing again. He remembered the wind on his face and the thrill of speed. Something shifted inside him. He accepted what had happened and stopped blaming himself. "Might as well try." He thought, getting out of bed and onto his wheelchair. On the way, he could have sworn that he felt his mother beside him.

Jeff was sitting there in rehab when suddenly Bradley appeared at the doorway. "Jeff I'm giving it a try," Bradley whispered. Jeff walked over and eased him onto the two rails.

## Two months later

Bradley and Jeff sprinted victoriously out of the hospital towards their families into their arms. "I did it!" Jeff said. "Was I really that bad?" Bradley asked. "No you were worse than bad." Jeff joked. Both of them walked to an awaiting car. They drove to a graveyard and laid flowers onto their mother's graves. "This is what they would've wanted, but it doesn't make it hurt any less," Bradley whispered. He turned away and started walking but heard a rustle of leaves and a gentle breeze behind him. "You're still watching over us mom. I know that and I will always love you," He thought, walking into the sunset welcoming the future..