

*SWEAR BY THE MOON*

Nina starts the tour of our apartment by showing me where we keep the scissors. They're in a kitchen drawer, between a roll of pencils bound together with a rubber band and a stack of opened bills. She hands them to me, and I cut off my hospital wristband.

The skin around my wrist feels clammy and a little cold without it.

"The garbage is under the sink," Nina says, but I've already opened the cupboard and thrown the wristband away.

Some stuff's like that. If she'd asked me where we kept the garbage, I probably would've had to guess, but I just kinda knew where to throw something away when I wasn't thinking about it.

"So," Nina says, "Mom says I'm supposed to show you around. Or do you still remember where everything is?"

"Um," I say, "No. Sorry."

"Just where we keep the garbage? That's the only thing that's making its way through the haze?"

I can't tell if she's being sarcastic. So far, the garbage can *is* the only thing I remember about this place. Having retrograde amnesia is sort of like having to take a test on a physics class you took three years ago. Even if the questions look familiar, I'm only going to know one or two right answers. A teacher is going to have to sit me down and help me review.

“Memory’s an imperfect science, son,” Dr. Nolan said over and over yesterday. He said I might start remembering some things as soon as I saw them. He said other things might take a few months to feel familiar.

“Okay,” Nina says, “Right this way.”

She leads me out of the kitchen and down the hall. She shows me the rack in the closet where my muddy sneakers are kept suspended, so they don’t destroy the carpet. She shows me the bedroom she shares with our mom, and then the room I share with the washer and dryer. She says if the dryer starts to shake in the middle of a load, a kick to the base will get it going.

She reaches under my bed to show me the Adidas shoebox where I keep my savings: loose bills, swimming in college brochures and old polaroid photos. She says I want to go to Northwestern after I graduate in June. She says the photos are of dad.

I probably could have worked that stuff out for myself, but I don’t say anything.

As soon as Nina explains something to me, it feels like I should have already known it. Like, I should have known where we keep the food for Nina’s fish. I should have known that we have to turn the TV on before the cable box, or none of it will work.

I do remember that we’re not supposed to leave the window open at night, because the neighbors like to smoke outside, and Mom hates the smell of weed.

“It makes her gag sometimes,” I say, almost in harmony with Nina.

Just like the single answer I would know on that sophomore physics test. I know Newton’s second law of motion, because of course mass times force equals acceleration.

I mean, I’m pretty sure that’s what Newton’s second law is, anyway. Don’t quote me on that.