

Until Summer Came...

Lily Wilson sat sheepishly against an old blossoming apple tree and listened to the swallows diving in and out of its branches. Out of the corner of her eye she could see a rusty old paddock-basher leaning against a rotting brown fence and a young feral cat curled up on one of its mangled seats.

The grass was wet with dew and the sky was a lovely pale grey. She could think of nothing better than to sit here until Summer came, when she and her family would drive down to Sydney to go to the beaches and run around on the sandy shore. She loved the ocean and couldn't wait to paddle around in it.

Lily pulled out a glossy-covered blue book and turned to the first page. The golden strip on the side was mesmerising and the neatly printed words were clear and easy to read. She sat absent-mindedly curling her silky golden hair around her fingers and her baby-blue eyes skimmed swiftly along the lines of words. She loved reading stories and was quite good at writing her own. It was just one of her many talents. A distant call from the house made Lily stop and turn. She slowly got up and carefully made her way down the rocky hill, but as the grass was still quite wet, Lily slipped and violently tumbled down the hill.

Lily's mother came looking for her after about twenty minutes. The swallows were no longer singing and whistling, the cat had awoken at Lily's scream and stalked off and the tree no longer rustled in the wind. The sky became dark and grey and the sun was hidden behind the heavy clouds. All was quiet.

When she finally found Lily, she burst into tears. Lily was covered in cuts and bruises and she was unsurprisingly unconscious. Her hair was as mangled as the seat in the paddock-basher and her eyes were squeezed tightly shut. Her skin was extremely pale and as colourless as the sky.

Kelly Wilson rushed her daughter to the nearest hospital and called her husband to tell him that Lily had had an accident. When Lily awoke it was dark and quiet. She couldn't move her legs and a worried expression stuck itself on her face. She could hear her mother's startling sob next to her and called out for her.

"Mum, where am I? Why can't I see? Why can't I move my legs?"

"Lily," her mother cried, grabbing her hand. "You fell! Now you're in the hospital!"

"Well why can't I see or move my legs?" Lily questioned, tears forming in her eyes.

"I'll get the doctor!" Kelly cried, running out of the door.

It was confirmed that Lily was blind but the doctors weren't sure if it was permanent or not. She was also currently paralysed from the hips down.

"No! I don't want this!" Lily cried, tearing at her eyes.

"I know, but you'll be okay!" Her mother reassured.

Lily's eyes were a milky white and her skinny little legs were sore and numb.

It took Lily a few months to learn how to read braille. She couldn't write stories anymore and her imagination had almost died away. The glossy-covered blue book had been lost when she fell down the hill. So Lily hated reading too.

It was almost summer. She had been blind for three months now but at least she was no longer paralysed. She was allowed to play in the garden at home when she began to walk again in November. Colour began to return to her cheeks and a smile glued itself onto her mouth. As a treat, her parents decided to take her to the beaches in Sydney. Lily was very excited, in fact you could see a small sparkle glittering in her eyes.

Kelly and Tony had to explain to their daughter what everything looked like at the beach. Lily played around in the rough squelchy sand and built a terrible looking sandcastle, but Lily didn't care, she was happy.

Then Kelly took her daughter down to the ocean. The sky was a beautiful blue, the sand was hot and yellow and the sun was almost white with heat. Without thinking, Lily raced out to the sea. She didn't know where she was going so she listened for the water washing up on the shore. Once she reached the water she ran right out. The cool, warm water washed over her like a volcano erupting happiness.

All of a sudden, the sand underneath her gave way and she fell into the salty green water. She choked after each wave toppled onto her and kept her beneath the water. The last thing she heard was the high pitch sound of her mother's worried voice.

Lily awoke again in hospital. This time she could see. The beautiful baby-blue colour had returned to her eyes. Dozens of colourful flowers filled the hospital room and the walls were astonishingly white. The window was open and she could see the sun beaming in on her. The trees outside were bright green and the streets were filled with happy, smiling people.

She didn't realise how important life was until Summer came. She didn't realise how much reading and writing affected her life. As she never found the glossy-covered blue book, and as it had meant so much to her, her parents bought her a copy of the book. And she didn't read it until Summer came.