

It was great fun until we had realised it's almost 6 o'clock. My buddies Jackson, Reece, Dale and I were exploring through the Quarry, climbing jagged rocks and seeing who could skim a rock the furthest along our favourite place to be, the creek. Nearly every afternoon we would ride our rusty old pushbikes out to the glossy creek, bare feet and all. There was a huge over-hanging gum tree, which would hang over the creek. We called it Jump Tree, it was our getaway, our own little place where we could get away from our nagging mothers and our whiny sisters and it's where we could be boys. I had realised I had to get home quick fast, it was my sisters dance concert, she's a total whinger but I had to go. I quickly dry myself, grab my dusty old bike and pedal off along the rocky old road. "See ya later Nic!" Reece yells, that's my name by the way, Nic Frasier. I had no time to turn around and say goodbye, it was 5:50 and it's a solid 15 minute ride home, I had to really push myself to get home in time, mom would go nuts if I didn't get home in time. I'm furiously pedalling trying to go as fast as I could, it seems like this tiny, wimpy old bike was going nowhere but I had to keep trying. I couldn't stand to be yelled at again by mom. I knew I was close now, just rode past the dirt jumps we made, we used to ride them a lot until Jackson broke his arm trying to jump them, so all our parents won't let us ride there anymore. I can see my house now, surely I've made it, I squint my eyes and see Mom and Dad standing on the veranda, they seem very cross at me, I knew I was in for it but hey, I made it.

I ditch my bike on the Lawn and walk up the stairs, "Get in your room, put on a nice shirt and comb your hair, we're leaving in two minutes" Stated Dad with a straight face, I nod and quickly run into my room, and get changed into these tacky button up shirts Mum had bought me. I look so stupid, but I didn't care. My sister, Cassie was dressed as a pirate, torn pyjama pants, a crinkly old top and a moustache which looks as if it were drawn on by a 2

Baeden Pettersson Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College Berkeley Vale Campus Jump Tree

year old. It must be the theme for her performance, she was only 9 so I guess she didn't know how funny she looked. We all step into the family car, a lofty old Ford wagon, the engine rattled and coughed. The car backs out and we're on the way. I sit quietly in the backseat, wondering what the boys got up to when I left, probably the usual, throwing themselves into the Creek off the Jump Tree. We're nearly at my sisters School, I slide out of the car and we walk together, we sit in a row at the very front, and I have to sit next to some beardy old man who smelt of wood lacquer. The lights turn off, and the stage lights up, I hope this goes fast, I don't want to be here, I'd rather be home playing my PS2 or something. My sister walks out onto stage, along with her class. The stage lights seem to bright, all of them have to squint, but they continue their little dance. I start daydreaming, I can't focus on anything. Before I know it the show is over, we get up and shuffle our way out of the seats, and make our way to pick up Cassie, It's time to get home.

I wake up, it's a new day and oh how terrible it is, time to get ready for school. I put my uniform on, and pack my school bag, Mum kissed me goodbye and said "Don't forget your jumper, its cold today, and might rain." I nod, and I'm out the door. I walk to the bus stop, and Reece joins me. Reece really is my best friend, he's a mate who I love being around, we're like inseparable. We both realise the bus comes any minute, and the bus stop is ages away, we both run as fast as we could, we make it to the stop to find no one else was there, we're exhausted. We sit at the stop for about an hour, we both agree to walk. We both know it was going to be a long boring walk, but we needed to get to school. Reece told me he knew a shortcut, we had to walk through thick scrub of bush though, we knew it was faster, so why not? I wasn't enjoying this at all, prickly plants have made my legs all red and itchy. I hope this is worth it, we keep making our way through and seems as if there's no

end. Reece was in front and out of nowhere, he fell into a deep treacherous manhole. It was so sudden and quick, "Reece!" I yell, I get no response, I can see him curled up in a ball, groaning in pain. "Reece are you okay?!" He rolls onto his back, "uuuggghh, my leg Nic, it's broken". I start to panic, the pit was far too deep for me to jump in, it was at least 10 meters deep. He lays there in agony, moaning and beginning to cry, I have no idea what to do, where to go. I seem lost in this forsaken bush. I stay with him for an hour or two, I tell him I'm going to get help, I told him everything's going to be okay. At that moment, a roar of thunder shakes the Earth, the sky has turned a dark grey, and it begins to rain. The gentle, cold drops of water give me Goosebumps, I run along the tracks we made. The scrubby bushes whip my legs, no time to stop. The rain gets real heavy, my shoes are drenched and feel like moon boots. I start to worry, I have no idea where I'm going, and the rain isn't helping at all. I find my way out, I come to the familiar old main road. I run along the road, it's beginning to flood. I'm getting close now, I can see my house in the distance. I trip up the stairs and stumble through the door, "Mum!?" "Dad!?" I yell, I run around the house like a mad man, searching through all the rooms. Where are they? I check the garage, the cars gone. I quickly drop my bag and run to Reece's house, it's not too far away. I open the door, and stepped into what seems an empty house. "Hello?" I ask, I don't know where everyone is. "What, hello?" someone replies. It's music to my ears, its Reece's mom. I take a deep breath, and tell her what happened, without spitting out a bunch of gibberish. She understands, and grabs her keys. She has a pale look in her face, she seems so worried. We walk over to her car, she has already called an ambulance, and her husband. She speeds along the road, her car pushes through the deep puddles, the road has been flooded. I lead her along the path, both of our hearts are racing, it hasn't stopped raining since I left him. We come to where it all happened, we look down the pit and find Reece, face down in the

Baeden Pettersson Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College Berkeley Vale Campus Jump Tree

water. Reece's mom bursts out with tears, "Reece! Reece! My precious boy!" She stands on the edge looking down, I feel a strong feeling in my gut, feels almost as if I've been punched in the stomach over and over, I sit down, Tears rolling down my face. The ambulance officers come through, and I walk out. I just wanted to get home. It's been a week now, I haven't spoke much since, haven't been at school. The parents have been with each other, sharing memories and such. I go to school the next week, the boys are all here. We plan to go to Jump Tree, like we did every afternoon. We ride along the dusty trail, it's not the same with Reece gone. We're at the tree, the tall swinging tree. I pick up a stone, and engrave "R.I.P. REECE" the boys engrave other things, such as "you will never be forgotten" and "we miss you Reece".

It's been three years now, we're all grown up, but we'll never forget. It's our last year at school, everyone has been affected by Reece's death. Nothing is the same, but everything has gotten better, we have let it go. But we'll never forget him.