

"A Short Story in Five Tenses"

By: Iván Brave

For: Intermediate 2

TWO BEST FRIENDS AND THE ACCIDENT

Part One - "The Present"

Let me tell you about a dog with the name Sam.

Sam is a happy dog, full of fur, and with big brown eyes. His best friend is Rodger, another happy dog, but with shorter fur than Sam, and with big green eyes.

Together they walk the streets of the Upper West Side. All the city's dogs know them as the two best friends. Together they share stories, jokes and laughs. When one smiles, the other smiles back. When both smile, it feels like the whole world smiles back. They are almost always like this, happy.

Until one day, Rodger says something mean to Sam. So, Sam bites Rodger on the nose, but doesn't say, "Sorry." Rodger's nose starts to bleed, and his eyes fill with water. Rodger runs away.

Now Sam is alone. He feels sad. He has no best friend to walk the streets of the Upper West side. He walks alone.

Eight weeks go by.

Sam is still alone. He does not remember why he is alone. He tries hard to remember, but he can't remember the accident. He can only remember that far away day on the beach.

Part Two - "The Past"

Sam first met Rodger at Rockaway Beach. It was a beautiful day, full of hot sun and salty water. All the dogs in the city were there. The Poodles wore pretty bikinis, and swam in the water. The Golden Retrievers wanted to exercise, so they rollerbladed on the sidewalks. It was such a beautiful day that even the biggest Rottweilers played soccer in the sand with the smallest Chihuahuas.

"What a beautiful day," said Sam. He licked his strawberry ice cream. He had two scopes of strawberry ice cream that day, instead of just one scope like he used to buy. Unfortunately for Sam, it was so bright outside that sunshine got into his eyes and blinded him. So when he licked the ice cream a second time, the top scoop fell and hit the sidewalk. Sam barked at the ground. Then he started to cry.

"Excuse me," said a voice.

Although tears covered his brown eyes, Sam looked up from the floor to find the voice. In front of Sam was a strange dog with short fur and big green eyes. The strange dog spoke again.

"I am sorry about your ice cream," said the dog with green eyes. "Let me buy you another one."

The dog with green eyes told Sam his name, "Rodger," and bought him a new scoop of strawberry ice cream. After that, Rodger bought himself two scoops of vanilla ice cream.

They walked along the beach, licked their ice creams, and watched the Poodles and the Golden Retrievers have fun. That was how Sam and Rodger first met. They became best friends after that, and continued to be best friends until, of course, the accident.

Part Three - "Back to the Present, with Present Perfect"

Sam has tried to remember what happened, but he has not been able to remember. He has forgotten how or when exactly Rodger ran away. It has been about eight weeks since the accident.

Sam, now in search of his best friend, has asked himself this: "What has happened before now? Where has Rodger gone to? Has he left the city?"

By now, Sam has walked all the way from the Upper West Side to the Brooklyn Bridge. He has walked for hours, but doesn't remember how long. His memory hasn't been good lately, and the hours of the day have slipped away.

By sunset, he has crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, and tears have filled his eyes. By night time, he has reached Rockaway Beach, and here the familiar smell of strawberry and vanilla ice cream have filled his nose. He has remembered the accident.

"It has been so long since I last smiled," Sam says to himself. "I should not have bitten Rodger this morning."

Part Four - "Conditional"

"A dog should never bite his best friend," Sam thinks. "Or else he will run away like Rodger."

At first, Sam has hope, and he thinks of two likely situations:

"If I find Rodger, I will say sorry ten times."

"If Rodger forgives me, we will be best friends again."

But then, Sam gets nervous. He begins to guess unlikely situations:

"If I had one wish, I would wish Rodger were here with me now."

"If I were smarter, I would know where to look for Rodger."

It is midnight. The sun went down five hours ago. Sam has never felt so alone. He fights himself; he is conflicted. He imagines impossible situations:

"If I hadn't bitten Rodger, he would not have run away. But I did bite Rodger, and he did run away."

"If I had been a good friend, I would have said sorry right after the accident. But I was not a good friend, and I did not say sorry."

Sam needs help. If only someone could give him advice..

What would you do if you were Sam? Would you give up on Rodger? Would you forget about him? Or would you try to find your best friend?

Part Five - "The Future"

*What do you think will happen between the two best friends? Write only
in the Future Tense...*