

Crystalyn Delgado

08/28/22

Masterwork

Literary Techniques & Story Development

Narrative Format: Freytag

Point Of View: Third Person Limited

Tension Building Technique: Time-Dependent Developments

This is the story of Atlas who wants to give Esmeralda, his childhood crush a love letter and does get it.

Flight Seventy-Seven

As Atlas sat there, shoveling eggs into his mouth, his older sister, Eliana, walked into the kitchen and began pouring herself a glass of orange juice from the craft a few inches in front of him.

“Hey, little brother, did you hear Esmeralda is leaving for college tonight? She’s going to some fancy school in Spain.”

Leaving?

Atlas couldn’t believe Esmeralda was leaving.

If the last ten years of avoiding telling her how he felt didn’t make him feel bad, he most definitely did now.

“Oh my god, Atlas. I swear you’re made of glass.”

“What?”

“I assume you’re probably getting in your head about never asking Esmeralda out.”

“How did you-”

“You’re made of glass, Atlas,” she said as she walked out of the kitchen.

I can’t waste any more time. I have to tell Eliana how I feel, regardless of if she rejects me or not.

I can’t risk losing her to some charming European guy. I have to do this.

As Atlas stumbled out of the house, left shoe still in hand, he scrambled to think about how he would be able to even get to Esmeralda.

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Atlas' car had been totaled two weeks prior in an accident. The mere thought of it made him flinch.

Mom took her car to work, so I can't ask her, and Eliana left hers in Connecticut.

Atlas paced the garage weighing his possible alternatives.

Public transport is too risky, can't bank that it'll be there on time. Taxi is way too expensive...

Atlas' thoughts trailed off as his eyes fell on Calum, his eleven-year-old brother's bike.

"I'm taking the bike." He declared

Atlas was a lanky, 6'5, while Calum still had yet to hit his growth spurt. Calum's head only reached Atlas' ribcage, so as Atlas rode the bike, he was uncomfortably hunched over with his knees taking a semi-permanent station in his armpits as he rode.

By the time Atlas had managed to dodge all the racing cars and wandering pedestrians, the muscles in his calves ached, and the sweat that beaded on his forehead burned his eyes. His legs pumped away at the pedals as he whizzed through the cars that seemed to race with him toward the sign that read 'DEPARTURES' in big block letters.

Barely bringing the under-sized bike to a halt, Atlas flung himself from its seat and took off running inside.

At this moment, the ache in his calves screamed at him to stop and give up, but he continued to sprint through the airport; he hurried to security, flinging his shoes, phone, wallet, and house keys into the bin.

The conveyor belt inched along, and in went a duffle bag.

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BEEP

Back out came the duffle bag.

In went the duffle bag.

BEEP

The TSA took his time unzipping, not bothered to move the duffle bag off the belt to keep things moving.

The agent sifted through the bag, checking between t-shirts, jeans, and the inside of shoes. He gave his coworker beside him a leisureed shrug and sent it back through the belt.

Atlas rubbed his hands along his thighs and bounced on his heels as he watched two, three, four, and *five* bins chugged along before his.

The agent allowed Atlas through the metal detector, nothing sounded, and Atlas was sent on his way. He snatched up his things and sprinted barefoot through the crowded hordes.

Breathlessly, Atlas stopped and scanned the digital signs that boasted the departures.

“Spain Spain Spain,” Atlas murmured as he scanned each sign meticulously, “flight seventy-seven, Barcelona, Spain, gate four, boarding at... 7:45 PM.”

He yanked his phone from his pocket “what time is it? 7:45!”

Atlas raced toward the gates, and far in the distance, he could see Esmeralda’s long, blue curls swaying in the distance, beginning to board her plane.

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“Oh shit! Esmeralda!” he yelled, scrambling through the crowd, “Esme! Esme, wait!” As he pushed past the other travelers, he had a thought; trying to reach Esmeralda was like swimming in a riptide; it seemed that no matter how hard he tried, he ended up farther away from shore.

“Esme!”

Finally, she turned, her eyebrows knit close together, and her nose scrunched as her eyes searched for the voice that urgently called her.

Atlas waved his arms, frantic as if, at any moment, he could drown.

When her eyes fell upon his panicked face, her eyes lit up.

“Wait, Esmeralda, Please!”

Her excitement quickly turned to concern as they finally reached one another.

“Atlas, what happened? is everything okay? My goodness, Atlas. You’re a sweaty mess; what happened? Why are you barefoot?”

“I rode... Calum’s... bike,” Atlas wheezed out.

“All the way here? You’re insane! Why would you do that?”

“I needed...to give you... this” Atlas shoved his hand into his pocket, fishing out the tattered, wrinkled love note that had sat in his room for six years.

Esmeralda slowly began to open it and murmured the words to herself, a habit she’d had since they were kids. Whenever Atlas would ask why she *had* to read them aloud, she would simply say, “well, if I don’t, the words might go away.” she’d been so sure of herself when she said it; he had never argued it.

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“Atlas...”

“I know, Esmeralda, I know you may not feel the same way—”

“Atlas—”

“But I couldn’t stand not telling you before you left that... that... I love you, Esmeralda Nadine. I’ve loved you since the 1st grade, and I just can’t let you go without saying—”

“Atlas!”

Esmeralda’s outburst halted his rambling in its tracks. She slipped her backpack off her shoulders and began to dig around, sifted through its contents, and she turned to see the last of her flight had started to board.

“Last call for flight seventy-seven to Barcelona. Last call for flight seventy-seven to Barcelona.”

Her search became frantic.

“Found it!” she cried. She balled up whatever she’d been looking for in her fist.

“Took you long enough, don’t you think?” she placed it in Atlas’ palm, closed his fingers around it, and kissed his cheek. She turned away one last time and bolted to the gate, making it just in time before the doors closed.

Atlas looked down, and in his hand was the little pink seashell he’d gifted her fifteen years ago.

“Took me long enough....”

A few months had passed when Atlas had received a letter in the mail. When he opened it, it read;

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Atlas,

Thank you so much for the origami swans. I made them into a mosaic above my bed (there's a picture in the envelope). I'm so happy you told me what you did, even if your timing is awful! Remember when we were little when your mom took us to the lake, and we saw that swan family? That's the day your mom told us that swans mated for life. They have one mate they stay with until death. I always liked to think about how I wanted someone to love me like that. To love me until the very end. On the plane ride here, I was thinking about how you're that person. You've always been that person. You've loved me since we were little, and it took so long for you to be able to tell me, but you never loved me any less no matter what happened, and when you sent me those swans, well, it made my heart just about leap out of my chest. Seventy-seven baby blue swans, I thought the letter stole my heart, but this...this was so so special. Thank you for loving me the way you do, Atlas, and to return the favor, there's a special gift for you in the envelope.

Love, Esmeralda

When Atlas peeked inside the envelope, he could see a stack of photos; when he caught a glimpse of the first photo, he saw Esmeralda's smiling face. Atlas flipped through each photo; he took great care in admiring every detail of her face. Her hair was now a fiery red and cut short to her shoulders. Atlas felt a squeeze in his chest as he gazed down at the last photo of Esmeralda, who sat in front of a white wall decorated with his baby blue swans.

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Atlas let out a final sigh and picked up the envelope one last time to put back the photos when he heard

something shift in the envelope. Atlas' fingers brushed the bottom of the envelope and felt something cool

and thin against his fingertips.

Atlas pulled out a thin, golden chain threaded through an equally dainty lock. Engraved on the back of this lock, it read, *'to my swan.'*

Atlas clasped the necklace around his neck and held it for a moment. He closed his eyes and thought about Esmeralda. How, six years ago, he never would have guessed he'd have been able to do what he'd done. Now he had someone that would come back to him and someone who made all these years of waiting worth it. And it was all thanks to flight seventy-seven.