

Paper Plane (ESL-10581)

From the doorway, you see him sitting by the window across the room, a little silhouette against the dull grey sky in its grand oak frame. He hasn't noticed you yet, so you are content to just watch him for now. He's determined; he has that look on his face. What he's doing now, the words he's hunched over writing in his notebook are important to him, and perhaps even to you and the rest of the family.

He's the one holding the only spark of colour left in this household. You can almost see it, as if even now, instead of pen and paper, that is what he's holding in his hands, protecting, kindling with his hopeful whispers. With every word, it glows a little brighter, flares with colours before settling back into his palm. Its warm light reflects in his eyes, making them ripple with a hundred shades of that wild green. You could watch him forever.

You wonder for a moment, what if it was just the two of you? You're his older brother, and he looks up to you. No one else in this family seems to care about him. You could take him away from all of this. You would have each other, you could both be happy.

But he doesn't understand what's happening. He holds the fantasy of a warm, loving family in high regard. You remember days from before he was born, when the people living in the house were a family. You don't want to tear him further away from this place and take away his hope for good.

He has finished writing, and straightens up. So as not to rip the page, he gently tears it from the book's binding. And he starts to fold it. You realise what he's planning, and you can't help but smile.

With some trouble, he manages to force open the windows against the wild wind. It relents for only a moment, seemingly surrendering, before bursting into the room. Books fall off their shelves, flipping open, and notes tucked into the pages are greedily snatched away. His clothes bellow and his hair whips about his face, but he's smiling. You want to tell him to get away from the edge, that he might fall, but you don't want to interrupt.

With as much force as he can muster, he flings the paper plane into the open air. The wind seizes it and is gone before either of you can take its new plaything away.

He watches in awe, as the clouds swirl low to greet the newcomer into the sky. It's such a small thing, and so frail. But the look on his face makes you believe its paper wings could carry it to even the edge of the world.

You think, watching him grin in awe as the paper plane soars away, that when all else fails, he will be the one to pick up the pieces and bring this family back together.