

# Open Water

A Short Play  
by  
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(Anna and Sydney are sitting on a hill overlooking a lake. It is dawn on a late August morning. Sydney looks out at the lake through a pair of binoculars. Anna clutches a phone.)

ANNA

Can you still see her?

SYDNEY

Shh.

(Beat.)

ANNA

Can I look?

SYDNEY

Stop. I have to concentrate.

ANNA

(Tries to get the binoculars)

Just let me see for a sec.

SYDNEY

(Searching.)

You made me lose her.

ANNA

Should I call?

SYDNEY

No... wait. Got her.

ANNA

How far is she?

SYDNEY

Maybe a maybe a quarter across? Not that far. How big's the lake?

ANNA

What is it, like three miles around? A little less?

SYDNEY

I mean across.

ANNA

I know. So the circumference is pi-r-squared.

SYDNEY

Never mind. Let's just say a mile.

ANNA

It's shorter than that.

SYDNEY

It doesn't matter. Stop doing math.

(Back through the binoculars)

She's not going that fast.

ANNA

It's got to be freezing.

SYDNEY

Think she's hypothermic?

ANNA

If she's hypothermic I should call. Her blood'll stop circulating.

SYDNEY

Is that what hypothermic means?

ANNA

Yeah. It's like when you're so cold your heart slows down to conserve energy.

SYDNEY

You're like walking school. It's supposed to be summer.

ANNA

Just for one more day.

SYDNEY

So we should try to enjoy it while it's still here.

ANNA

I don't mind school. Is she still moving?

SYDNEY

Her legs are kicking I think. There's like little waves behind her.

ANNA

Who do you have for English?

SYDNEY

I don't know. It's on my schedule.

ANNA

I have Ms. Baxter. Brad had her. He said she's really hard but if she likes you she'll let you eat lunch in her room.

SYDNEY

How is old Brad? He's in Chicago, right?

ANNA

Northwestern. I thought it sounded fun.

SYDNEY

College?

ANNA

No. Eating lunch in Ms. Baxter's room.

SYDNEY

You want to spend your senior year eating lunch with your English teacher?

ANNA

I thought-

SYDNEY

-I can't tell if she's still kicking.

ANNA

Let me see.

(Sydney passes the binoculars to Anna who looks through them.)

ANNA

It doesn't look like she's kicking that much, but I think her arms are moving. She hasn't gotten very far.

SYDNEY

She isn't a very good swimmer. It takes time.

ANNA

It's really cold. She should hurry up or she's going to freeze.

SYDNEY

Yeah. Probably.

ANNA

How are we going to tell if she's freezing?

SYDNEY

If she sinks, I guess.

ANNA

If she's already submerged she's going to drown before anybody gets here.

SYDNEY

Then what was the point of coming out here to begin with?

ANNA

The point was to not let Kate go and do something that could kill her without anyone around to keep an eye out. We'll call as soon as she stops moving.

SYDNEY

Give me the binoculars back.

(Sydney takes them from Anna.)

SYDNEY

This was a stupid idea. We should have told her not to do it.

ANNA

She wouldn't have listened.

SYDNEY

She should have done it in the middle of the day with lots of people around.

ANNA

She didn't want to do it with lots of people around. She didn't even want us around.

SYDNEY

So she'd rather become a human popsicle than be embarrassed because she has to be rescued because she can't swim.

ANNA

She can swim. Just not very well.

SYDNEY

Would you want to swim across the lake after you only just learned how? No. Better question. Would you let us teach you how to swim?

ANNA

I did all the research. I taught her what any professional would have taught her.

SYDNEY

Did you teach her to always swim with a buddy?

ANNA  
Are you still watching?

SYDNEY  
(Shoves the binoculars at Anna.)  
You take a turn. I'm going cross-eyed.

ANNA  
At least we'll be in math together. There's only one AP calc class.

SYDNEY  
I'm not taking AP calc.

ANNA  
What are you taking?

SYDNEY  
Pre-calc again.

ANNA  
Oh. Well that's okay.

SYDNEY  
You don't have to say it like that. I know I'm stupid in math.

ANNA  
Math isn't your strength/  
/Seriously drop it./

SYDNEY  
/Okay. Sorry.

SYDNEY  
Are you paying attention?  
(Anna quickly presses the binoculars back to her eyes.)

ANNA  
I can't find her. We should call...Wait. No, there she is. She's fine.

SYDNEY  
(Steals the binoculars back.)  
She got far.

ANNA  
So we might not have any classes together. Do you have your schedule with you?

SYDNEY

Oh my god. Drop it. It doesn't matter if we're in class together. It'll be fine either way.

ANNA

Okay.

SYDNEY

If me and Kate aren't in there you just have to talk to whoever's sitting next to you.

ANNA

I know.

SYDNEY

You're going to, right? You're going to talk and stuff.

ANNA

Of course I'll talk.

SYDNEY

I don't mean answering questions and borrowing pencils. I mean like "Hi, I'm Anna. I can't decide if I want to be an astrophysicist or a painter and my favorite pokemon is Charizard.

ANNA

Bulbasaur. But I understand what you're saying.

SYDNEY

And?

ANNA

And I promise I won't be a wallflower.

SYDNEY

And don't use weird words like wallflower.

(Anna looks out the binoculars.)

ANNA

I think she actually might make it.

SYDNEY

No freezing?

ANNA

No freezing, no drowning, no calling 911.

SYDNEY

It's a good thing.

I know. I'm happy.

ANNA

You don't sound happy.

SYDNEY

I'm pensive.

ANNA

Talking weird again.

SYDNEY

Pensive isn't weird. If I said I was cogitative, that'd be weird.

ANNA

No. Pensive is definitely weird too.

SYDNEY

Thoughtful. I'm thoughtful.

ANNA

Better. Why are you thoughtful?

SYDNEY

Maybe we should do something like that. Cross open water.

ANNA

We know how to swim.

SYDNEY

It's an analogy. We should set a goal. Work towards something.

ANNA

Like what?

SYDNEY

I don't see her.

ANNA

You don't want to tell me?

SYDNEY

No, I really can't find her.

ANNA

You can't start a conversation then back out.

SYDNEY

(Anna shoves the binoculars at Sydney.)



You try to find her.

ANNA

Seriously?

SYDNEY

(Sydney puts the binoculars up to her face.)

Okay. Call.

SYDNEY

(Anna doesn't move. Sydney puts the binoculars down.)

What are you doing? Call.

SYDNEY

You sure she's not out there?

ANNA

Yeah. What are you waiting for?

SYDNEY

I don't know, I just...

ANNA

Give me your phone.

SYDNEY

Just wait a sec, okay?

ANNA

Wait? For what?

SYDNEY

She didn't want this.

ANNA

Are you crazy?

SYDNEY

Kate told us she wanted to do this by herself. She didn't want to be rescued. She didn't even want us here.

ANNA

But we ignored her because she was being an idiot.

SYDNEY

ANNA

It's not like they'll be able to get to her anyway. We haven't seen her for two minutes, even if we call right now no one will get here and get to her for another five at least.

SYDNEY

Just stop. Jesus. We have to try.

ANNA

She knew it was dangerous going in. It's not our fault.

(Sydney tries to wrestle the phone from Anna.)

SYDNEY

Just give me your phone, crazy.

(Anna shoves the phone into Sydney's hand, Sydney starts to dial. Anna turns to face the lake.)

SYDNEY

Yes. Hello, my name is Sydney and my friend was swimming--

ANNA

Stop! Hang up the phone. Look.

(Anna pushes the binoculars into Sydney's face. Sydney hangs up the phone.)

SYDNEY

How'd she do that?

ANNA

Told you I taught her well.

(There is a pause. Anna and Sydney both take a minute to catch their breath.)

SYDNEY

What were you going to say before? About crossing open water?

ANNA

On second thought, I think I'm good.

SYDNEY

Okay if we pretend like this never happened?

ANNA

Shallow ends with water wings from here on in.