

The 4-Way Test

It felt like just seconds ago that I finally closed my eyes, but blinking awake to my younger brother shaking my blanketed cave, it's as if they'd been rolled in sand when I wasn't looking, sleep crust like boulders in their corners. "Hurry!" my brother urges, his excitement brighter than the drowsy sun. Groaning inwardly, I try to muster up enthusiasm while hauling my body out of bed, one sleepy limb at a time.

I should be excited, with eyes wide open and my heart skipping with anticipation. Instead, I'm sluggish and exhausted, a victim of my own impatience. I could've waited to watch the new season of the sci-fi show my brother and I both adore, something we had planned to enjoy together, but my restless mind last night wouldn't let me. I'd logged onto our family Netflix account in the darkness of midnight, and with unbridled hastiness, I'd burned through every new episode by just after three o'clock in the morning. Now I'm pinning my eyelids open with barely two hours of sleep, and when my brother asks how excited I am, I lie through my teeth.

It wasn't fair to him, he'd anxiously awaited the show's release and the event of watching it together first thing in the morning. We never promised anything, because we didn't think we'd need to. I'd broken that unspoken pact, and now ache with regret. Since we were little he and I have only grown closer as siblings and friends, and now as teens we've bonded over action movies and sci-fi tv shows, such as the one that'd just released a new season. Our friendship was strengthened by this common love for the series, and the tradition of watching it together. However, binging on all the new episodes alone, frayed that bond between us in the same way that a piece of yarn begins to unravel after it's been untied.

My secret viewing of the new show was much more detrimental than beneficial. I had my whole life to watch the show, I didn't need to start it at the exact moment of its release, however I had only one chance to see it for the first time. Only one chance to watch it for the first time in the company of my younger brother, when in just two short years I'll be leaving for college. If I had only thought of the true consequences of my actions, and of the fact that they went against every principle of the 4-Way Test, I would have more thoroughly enjoyed the show and saved myself from many regrets. Just like the heroes in the very Netflix series I watched, the true dangers are often found within yourself; so it's essential to always fight for the truth and goodness in all of our hearts in order to become a better, happier human being.