



Hallows Eve (The Grimstone Collection #1)

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Category: Romance

Description: Autumn

Exactly one year ago I did something I never thought I would.....I broke his heart. He was the best thing that ever happened to me and I ruined it.

But tonight one year later, he's lurking and I can feel it. But I don't know why he's here. Watching me, or better yet hunting me. I thought he wouldn't hurt me....then I got his note.

He chose me.

Heath

My Little Traitor is going to feel the pain she caused me. She hurt me, broke me, and now I'm back. I've been watching her, paying attention, and planning my revenge. Now I'm ready to make her pay.

She's alone.

And unprotected.

The opportunity is right in front of me but just as I'm getting my revenge we uncover a few dark secrets about our small town that may have been meant to stay buried.

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AUTUMN

He's watching me and I know it.

I don't know why he's here or better yet why he's back. He hasn't come this close to me in a year and now on Hallow's Eve he's here, watching me. Wearing that darn black and orange mask he wears every Halloween.

I don't understand.

I gulp down more of the fruit punch from my cup, ignoring the burning of his eyes on the back of my head.

I need to move from this spot. I carefully weave through the crowd of bodies, as they are not really paying attention to me trying to get through.

I try to blend in with the crowd to get away from Heath.

Last time I caught him in the corner of my eye, he was outside glaring at me through the window.

It made my stomach twist into knots. I haven't felt the nervousness of having him around for months, I suppose I never lost the butterflies he gave me. I finally spot Maya by the beer pong table and go over to her. Thankfully, I am able to find her again, I haven't seen her much since we arrived at this party.

"Autumn! Finally, you're back." She hugs me.

“He’s here.” I tell her.

“Who?”

“Heath. My ex.” I reply. I look around, trying to find him in the crowd. I can’t lose sight of him. If I can’t see him, then he can get me alone and lord knows why he is here.

I turn back facing Maya when I accept, I can’t find him.

“Maybe he just heard about the party and came.” Maya says, shrugging.

“No, he doesn’t like parties.” I say. He’s always hated loud and crowded events. He only ever went to parties for me.

“Maybe you should get your mind off of Heath and go find Cole.” She suggests.

“Okay, I’ll try.” I sigh and go off to find my current boyfriend. We separated when I went to get punch because he wanted to stay and talk to his friends. I was thirsty, so I let him be. But that’s when I realized I wasn’t going crazy, and Heath was here.

I take in a breath, hoping to ease my nerves. I have a feeling I know where I’ll find Cole. We’ve been having problems lately, plus he’s been hanging out with his project partner, Nema, a lot. I just know he’s up to something.

I find Cole talking to Tyler by the staircase.

“Hey babe.” I greet him, grabbing his hand and locking our hands together.

“Autumn, you’re back.” He says, taking his hand out of mine.

“Yeah, I just went to get some punch.” I say.

“You look hot tonight.” His friend Tyler says.

“Doesn’t she.” Cole laughs. It’s always slightly weirded me out.

He let's his friends, especially Tyler, say things like that. I’m so used to someone telling his friends to shut up.

Or not look at me. Heath was very possessive.

Cole is very dismissive. We’ve been together for about a year and over time, it seems he cares less and less.

“You getting some tonight?” Tyler asks. Cole shrugs.

“We can.” I smile at him, batting my eyes, hoping it works. We haven’t had sex in weeks and it’s worrying me.

I want to be touched.

I need to be touched.

I’m deprived.

“You can have sex with me,” Tyler suggests, wiggling his eyebrows. Gross.

“Ew no.” I don’t know why he tries; I would never sleep with him.

“Hey Cole, can we talk?” Nema asks, rubbing up his arm seductively. It causes me to grimace internally. I hate her. And I hate that he pays attention to her.

“Yeah. I’ll be back.” He tells us.

They are definitely up to something. Now he’s just brushing me off for her and I know I’m not ugly, so why is he just all over her? I mean for God’s sake I’m trying to have sex here and I’m dressed as slutty Red Riding Hood.

“We can sneak away.” Tyler says, but I ignore him following Cole and Nema upstairs. I couldn’t care less about Tyler.

I need to see for myself what Cole is doing. They have already made it upstairs, as I waited around a bit before following them. Once I am upstairs, I begin opening doors.

I make it to the second to last door on the right and my hands start shaking as I hear moaning on the other side of the door. I can do this. I knew this was happening.

So why is it so hard?

In a rush of courage, I turn the golden knob and push the door open, finding Cole and Nema making out heavily with Cole’s hand under Nema’s skirt.

He’s fingering her!

“You shit faced asshole!” I yell at them.

“You weren’t supposed to find out.” Cole says as he whips around, looking at me.

“Well, next time do a better job at hiding it or better yet, don’t cheat on your girlfriend.” I say marching up to him.

“I just didn’t...” I don’t give him time to finish as I punch square in the face before turning around and leaving with tears streaming down my face.

That bastard. I hate him. I hate her. But most of all, I hate myself. I wasn't good enough, and it came back and bit me in the ass, he cheated because of me.

I couldn't please him. Make him happy.

I'm nothing.

I may feel like shit right now, but I can not go back downstairs with tears streaming down my face and my makeup ruined like this, I'll look horrible.

I must be classy about this, so people think I'm the innocent girlfriend who was betrayed and they'll have no choice but to feel bad for me.

I find the bathroom and pat my face dry with a towel before grabbing my mini bag I strapped to my thigh and begin fixing my makeup.

I cover the tear strikes with powder, fix my mascara, add more blush and highlighter. Before I know it, I look brand new and really fucking hot.

I open the bathroom door only to see a man in all black standing there; I don't dare look up catching a whiff of a smell I only associate with one person.

"Excuse me." I slide past him and run downstairs. It can't be, why would he come that close to me? But God he still smells like the bourbon cologne with the faint scent of tires from his dad's workshop. I adore that smell.

I find Maya standing in the living room, which now has a crowd lingering around. "Maya!" I call out to her.

"Autumn, it's starting." She pulls me to her side as I get closer.

“What?” I ask.

“Predator. Ya know the maze game. The one where the guy hunts down the girl.”

Yes, I know the game. It’s played every single year in Grimstone.

The guy chooses his girl, and you have to hide and run like prey, hoping he doesn’t catch you because if he does, he can have his way with you, although some want to be caught.

The goal is for the male to return with a token from the female.

It’s an extremely popular game for Halloween here.

No one knows who invented it. The game has been handed down through generations.

There is a legend that goes around that says in 1984 at Camp Grimstone some old town leaders made it.

Just for shits and giggles during summer and then they took it to Halloween, and it became this tradition that all the teens and college kids look forward to.

“Cole is cheating on me.” I blurt out. Maya turns towards me slowly.

“That asshole. He doesn’t deserve your sexy ass.” Maya hugs me tight.

“Alright, you horny fucks, listen up!” I look to the front of the room, seeing Justin Raves standing on a table. “We are handing out the papers now! After you get yours, get on one of the hayrides outside.”

“I’m so nervous.” Maya clenches onto me. She’s been crushing on this guy for the last month, and they only really interact when she goes to her favorite smoothie shop, which he works at and in their graphic design class. It’s still super cute though.

“He will choose you.” I reassure her.

“You’re the best.” Maya says.

Justin and a couple of other guys go around handing out the slips of paper to the girls at the party. As the crowd gets smaller, my stomach starts to churn. “Maya.” Justin hands Maya her paper and she opens it rapidly.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” She cheers, bouncing up and down. “He chose me.” She says, showing me her paper that says ‘ You have been chosen by D.J.’

“I’m so happy for you.” I smile.

“I’ll see you outside. I’m saving you a seat.

” Maya says before running outside. I’m one of the very few girls left as the last rounds are made.

I have no idea what to think right now. There’s no way Cole is choosing me after I caught him with Nema and as far as everyone knows, I’m taken so I’ll probably be left alone.

“Autumn.” I look up, seeing Justin hand me a paper.

“I gotta say, I wish it was me.” He says as I take the paper.

“Thank you.” He lightly smiles and retreats outside, probably to get ready to

blindfold all the girls. We aren't allowed to know where the maze is.

I open the paper carefully, revealing my note.

I'm coming for you tonight.

-Yours Truly

They didn't put a name, but I've been chosen. It's not Cole that's for sure and there is only one other person I know that was here at this party that would do this.

Heath chose me.

But why?

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AUTUMN

FLASHBACK: SOPHOMORE YEAR HIGH SCHOOL

I fling my ponytail over my shoulder as I walk down the hallway. I try my best to avoid bumping into anyone as I make my way to Molly as quickly as possible. I hate the early morning crowd where everyone runs me over. I both love and hate that I'm never really noticed.

I spot my locker in the distance, but Molly isn't at hers like she normally is instead there's a boy.

A really tall one leaning against my locker.

I clutch the straps of my cheer bag tighter and walk up to my locker.

"Excuse me?" I try to get his attention.

Nothing, so I tap him. As soon as his eyes meet mine, it's as if electricity has hit me.

He has the most gorgeous eyes I've ever seen.

Perfectly baby blue.

"I...need to...get to my... locker." I stammer, pointing behind him.

He stares at me for a few moments before stepping to the side.

With the guy staring me down I open my locker, put my cheer bag inside, then grab my books for morning classes preparing my book bag for class.

My heart races as his eyes burn holes through the side of my skull.

Is this what it feels like to have a boy look at you?

I mean I don't mind; he's the most gorgeous boy I've ever seen, but my dad would kill me if I said I met a boy.

Plus, he looks like a person who would be into one of the more popular girls or prettier girls.

My face is covered in freckles; I have frizzy curly hair and I'm not confident enough to show my body like the others outside of this uniform.

Only my diary would hear about how he makes my heart race, how the blush is taking over my face. I hope he doesn't see me blushing, and how I can smell his cologne. I can't quite place the smell, but it's something smooth. If this is the last time, he's near me, I want to savor it.

The 8:30 bell rings, signaling school beginning and he disappears into the moving crowd. I close my locker slowly, feeling my heartbeat in my ears as I go to class. I can barely focus all day, but at least I probably won't see him again, at least that's what I thought.

Rain came after cheer practice. I tried calling both of my parents, but no answer. My dad must be in a meeting and my mom is probably at the country club.

I love my parents, but sometimes they lose track of time.

My house isn't far so maybe I can walk there. It's warm enough and since I'm wearing shorts and a t-shirt, I think I should be fine.

The fear of being kidnapped feels like it's becoming a reality as an old orange rusted truck pulls up beside me. I look over, hearing the window creek seeing the boy from earlier.

My heart races again. "You need a ride. Get in." He speaks.

"Oh, I'm okay." I try to wave him off, not wanting to burden him.

"I wasn't asking, Freckles." He says with much more bass in his voice. This shakes me in a way I've never felt. My stomach flutters hearing his voice like this. I continue to look at him as he reaches over and opens the door for me. He has long arms. He could easily cage me into him.

I can't believe he wants me to get in.

Wow.

I know my parents said not to talk to strangers, so I shouldn't. "I'll get your seat wet."

"I'll live." He shrugs. He's not going to go away.

I saunter up to the truck. Okay, no weapons in sight.

It's clean. Smells fresh. Maybe he's safe, plus my parents track my phone.

I get inside and he reaches over me, closing the door.

His hands flex as he does so. He also has large hands. Veiny hands too.

“Who are you?” I ask. I should know his info in case.

“Heath. We’ve gone to school together since kindergarten.” There’s no way I wouldn’t notice someone as gorgeous as him.

“Oh. Well, I’m Autumn. Autumn Scott.” I introduce myself. He chuckles; the sound makes my stomach flutter. That’s the most beautiful sound I’ve ever heard.

“I know Freckles. My dad fixes your dad’s cars.” That’s it! He’s the boy at the mechanic shop who used to come to school in dirty and greasy clothes, always smelling of oil. Then I stopped noticing him, because the girls on the cheer team said I stared too much and now he looks like this.

“I remember you.” I tell him. “Thank you for the ride.” I can’t forget my manners, my mom would say I was rude.

He drives me home and I don’t bother telling him the address because my dad pays for the monthly pick up and drop off car service, so I know Heath knows my address. In no time, he’s pulling into my driveway.

“This was kind of you.” I gather my bags, giving him a light smile.

“You should be careful with that smile; it’ll make guys think about other things.” Heath tells me.

“Like what?” I ask as he reaches across me, opening the door for me.

“You’ll never find out as long as you keep me around.” His blue eyes capture mine again before I stumble out of his truck.

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AUTUMN

I sit down beside Maya on the hayride, feeling incredibly nervous. My stomach is swirly like I could throw up everything I've eaten today. "Who did you get?" Maya asks.

"I can only guess." I tell her truthfully; I don't think there's any reason to not tell her. Plus, if Heath tries to kidnap me, at least someone knows something.

"What do you mean?" I hand Maya the paper, making it easier to explain. I look around as she unfolds the slip of paper. Justin and his helpers have started going around, handing out the blindfolds.

I've always wondered what gets you chosen to run this thing, but some things are better unknown, I guess.

I spot Nema in the first wagon, laughing with her friends. I wish I could cut that smile off her face, leaving nothing but blood dripping. How would Cole like that? His precious little side dish all cut up. That would be lovely to see.

"So, Heath is coming for you." Maya laughs slightly.

"That's what it says." I don't blame Maya for laughing, she only talked to Heath maybe twice, so she doesn't know about his obsessive nature.

How he is so possessive he leaves marks on me, how he even had a giant poster of me printed and taped onto his bedroom wall.

Or how he carved my initials into his chest when we were eighteen because as he said, “I made a forever mark on his heart.”

At the time, I thought he was fucking insane, but now I miss it. His craziness, his scent, his beautiful baby blue eyes, him . He’s a nightmare to others, but he’s, my dream.

“This guy is totally obsessed with you. Tell me why you broke up with him again?” Maya asks, handing me the note back.

“You know why. I regret it now anyway. Cole is definitely a downgrade.” I roll my eyes.

I hate how this turned out, I broke up with my amazing boyfriend for a man who turned out to be nothing but a cheating jerk.

At the time, Cole was a handsome football player who seemed like a refresher.

He was fun, kind, and charming. Now I don’t know who I ended up with.

Man, life fucked me over. I fucked me over.

“Major downgrade...on the bright side you could rekindle your love with your ex.” Maya nudges me.

“Heath holds grudges, he doesn’t love me anymore.” I tell her, sadly. When I was in high school, I never thought I’d lose his love even if we broke up but now, it’s definitely over.

“Ladies, your blindfolds.” The wagon shakes as Justin jumps onto it. Justin walks down the line, handing one to each girl. I take the black cloth from him letting out a

breath. I've never played before. Heath didn't want another man trying to take advantage of me.

My first Halloween at college, I spent it with Heath watching horror movies and having sex. The next year I was too sick to go out and watched sad rom coms on my dorm sofa and threw up as Cole tried and failed at making my favorite soup.

"Place the blindfolds on now, once they are on, we will move!" Justin yells out.

"One step closer to being in his arms." Maya says, putting her blindfold on.

All the other girls follow eagerly, covering their eyes with the black fabric, but I wait.

I watch the others cover their eyes before I lightly place mine over my eyes.

I thin it out, leaving it slightly see through.

I refuse to be completely blind. I listen to the sound of the boys going around and checking to see if everyone has their blindfolds on.

"I'm getting nervous. Are you nervous?" Maya asks.

"No." I lie. Maya reaches over and grabs my hand. "You're going to be fine." I tell her.

"I know." She replies.

"Okay, we're moving!" I hear Justin yell.

The wagon shakes a bit as someone gets in the front to steer.

I jerk a little as the ride begins. They don't drive us out of the back road the house is on, but instead we turn deeper into the woods, going down a trail.

There are a few back trails in Grimstone that will take you to many of the farms and homes owned by the rich.

This leads me to think I know exactly where we are going.

We bump and jerk into each other as the wagons make their way down the bumpy trail, then a song starts to play, Bodies by Drowning Pool.

I've never been a fan of rock music, so the blasting music is not enjoyable in the slightest. This must mean we are close.

The path becomes more stable as we enter a grass field.

From what I've heard around, this was a location used before.

Finally, we cross the grass field into the back of what I believe to be Mcentire Orchid.

Mcentire Orchid is owned by the Mcentire family, known as the crazy hillbillies of Grimstone. Most of them never graduated high school, if they did, they didn't go to college and they all live in the family orchid back up in the woods of town surrounded by a maze of elaborate booby-traps.

The wagon comes to a jerking stop, causing us all to bump into each other.

"Ladies! We have arrived, please be patient as we get you all unloaded and to your groups." Another voice says, I recognize it as one of the Mcentire brothers, Hudson, I think.

There are six boys in total and Theodora makes seven, but she's the only girl.

This time there is much more movement around as many people are upon the wagons helping girls out and putting them into groups before taking them off into the woods.

"I wonder what's going on?" Maya says.

"You totally blinded yourself?" I ask.

"Of course, I love the mystery, it's going to make it more exciting.

"That's Maya for you; she loves a good thrill.

The wagon shakes under us, and I look over to the front, seeing two boys and a girl enter.

They start pointing out girls, then lead them off the wagon.

They make their way down the line then they pick off me and Maya.

"I'll add these two to my group." One of the boys says.

"K, I'll take these." The girl replies.

"Get up." He demands. Maya stands up, pulling me with her, as she's still holding my hand.

He leads us off the wagon. "I'm Anders. If you ever feel unsafe, I want you to shout "candy" as loud as you can, and I'll come for you.

I'll be riding the maze, watching for safety.

” Anders tells us. “Remember your safe word.”

Candy is the safe word, got it.

Anders takes us to a path that’s on the far left of the wagons. “I am going to move to holding your hands for this to make sure you don’t get caught in any traps.” Anders tells us, while moving his hand from our lower back to hold our hands.

“What a gentleman.” Maya flirts.

“I treat my girls right.” Anders replies.

I wish Cole understood that. I let him guide me through the woods, even though I can partially see.

Anders weaves us through the trees like he’s studied this path a million times before leading us out into a small clearing with an entrance to the corn maze that already has three other girls I recognize there.

Nema is one of them, unfortunately. Cole probably chose her.

Nancy Felch, she’s dating a guy on the water polo team and Theodora Macentire are also here.

She’s this family’s little prized possession.

I’m surprised her brothers let her out or better yet how she got out without them knowing.

“Alright ladies, wait here till you hear the blare of the air horn, then you can run into the maze.” Anders tells us. “Also, you all can take the blindfolds off now.”

He didn't have to tell me twice. I rip it off without a second thought and toss it to the ground. "Oh look, it's Cole's supposed to be girlfriend. Who chose you because Cole chose me?" Nema says. I know she just wants to get a rise out of me.

"Aren't you his hidden side piece?" I say. Little bitch. Who does she think she is?

"I won't be hidden for long." Nema says, walking closer to me. What does she mean? Is he dumping me for her? Not that I'd stay with a cheater, but I should be dumping him.

"Too bad he'll be downgrading." Maya fires back, getting between us. "He's trading a golden goose for some slop anyone can have."

"Maybe we can calm down." Nancy says.

"Stay out of it Nancy." Nema glares at her.

"I'm not some guy's side chick; I'm just trying to stop you from embarrassing yourself." Nancy tells Nema.

"The only one who will be embarrassed is Autumn." Nema says.

"I wouldn't be so sure," Maya says. Knowing Maya, she is going to pose some kind of revenge because she feels like it's necessary and funny.

"Isn't that just cute. you playing the little mother role, which is strange because aren't you the same tramp who got caught having a threesome in the quad sophomore year?" No one ever brings that up anymore after Maya ripped a girl's hair out for trying to bully her about it, but Nema just did.

None of us get the chance to stop her, Maya knees her in the stomach and Nema goes

down groaning. Maya doesn't stop there; she crouches down to Nema and punches her in the face, busting her lip.

"Holy shit," Nancy says.

"Oh god, this is bad." Theodora gasps. The air horn blares out at this moment and Nancy runs into the maze without looking back at any of us.

"You'll be fine." Maya tells Nema before kicking her harshly repeatedly. After Maya starts to run into the maze, I grab Theodora's arm, pulling her into the maze as well.

"You're leaving her there?" Theodora questions.

"She'll be fine." I say. I can't believe I'm leaving her there too, but I don't want to stay behind with her either.

We continue running through the maze, trying to find our way around.

Twists and turns come out of nowhere. As we're running, Maya gets snatched to the left into the corn stalks by a rope getting caught around her ankle.

Her screams echo through the air causing us to scream.

"Do you know where the traps are?" I ask Theodora.

"No, my brothers change them for the game." She answers. Fuck. I begin to hear the ground creek below us and before I know it, I'm falling through the ground.

"Are you okay?" Theodora yells. I just fell through the fucking ground, and it really hurt but at least it wasn't too far. I look around seeing some torches lighting the tunnel.

“Yeah, I’m good!” I yell back. “There’s some light down here I’ll be able to get out. You should go on!”

“I don’t want to leave you!”

“I’ll be fine, Thea. Go!” I’m not sure who chose her but, if she keeps waiting around, she’ll be caught, and I doubt her brothers will be happy about that.

“Okay, I’ll see you later!”

“Yeah.” I stand up, brushing myself off.

Great, now I’m covered in dirt. At least I fell on my ass so not much of the rest of my body hurts.

I look down the underground tunnel knowing this had to be very thought out.

I can’t believe I fell down here. Nonetheless I have to walk down the tunnel if I want to get out, so I start moving.

A slight feeling of fear creeps up in me as I round a corner seeing a staircase leading to a trapped door. The exit. I’m almost out.

Then he steps out an alcove by the stairs, he's here. Standing in front of me dressed in his classic black aged jeans, and a black hoodie with his mask on.

I remember the day I painted the mask for him. He worked at a haunted house one October, and he kept it for himself afterwards. That mask still haunts my dreams.

“Speechless?” He says. His voice is still smooth and just as direct as it used to be.

“How’d... you find me?” I ask. I knew it wasn’t hard considering I’m in the same place as everyone else. And if he chose me, he’d be chasing me.

“I believe since I found you, I can do whatever I want to you, Little Traitor.” Heath says, walking closer to me. A slight tinge of fear goes through me as I’m a bit nervous to find out what he will do to me. I back away from him as he gets closer.

“What do you want?” I ask, glancing behind me making sure the tunnel is still there.

“Revenge.” That’s all it took for me to get distracted, Heath effortlessly tackles me onto the ground pinning me below him.

Now I’m trapped.

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AUTUMN

“Now tell me Little Traitor, was it worth it?” He asks.

“No.” I confess. I know exactly what he’s talking about. Breaking up with Heath for Cole turned out to be a horrible mistake but it wasn’t one I could take back so all I could do was be honest about it.

“You broke my heart for nothing and all he did was cheat on you.” The words sting as he tightens his hands around my wrists making it impossible for me to move them.

“I didn’t think.”

“Yeah, you didn’t.... now you’ll pay. You’ll know how I have felt this past year.

Mourning our relationship.” I’ve always known Heath was a person who loves revenge.

I just never thought I’d be on the receiving end.

Now that I am, I don’t like it. Heath gathers my wrists into one hand causing a bit of pain as they are now clutched together even tighter than they were before causing me to wince, but he doesn’t care.

I feel Heath push my legs apart with his knee then take his other hand and slowly travel up my leg under my mini skirt.

“You can’t.” I whisper.

“Why? Does he do it better than me?” he asks.

No but I’m not admitting that. “Does Cole know all your sweet spots?” Heath squeezes my upper thigh tightly and I know that will leave a mark.

He releases my thigh and trails upward even more reaching my panties.

A shiver travels down my spine as a familiar feeling enters my body.

The ache of want spreads through me. I’ve missed his touch. I’ve missed the feeling of wanting touch, needing it on my body and Heath is giving me that right now. Heath begins to trace the outline of my lacy panties as I arch up from the ground of the tunnel into his chest.

“I see you’re still as needy as you’ve always been.

Tell me Autumn, do you still like being treated like the good little slut you are?

” His words are like music to my ears. I’ve missed this.

He knows just how to push my buttons and arouse me in the most feral ways possible, and I love every second of it.

“Answer me.” He clutches my wrists tighter.

“I do.” I admit.

“Then this should be easy, Little Traitor.” Heath says as he slips his hand under the fabric of my panties.

His cool hand against my sensitive skin is a feeling I haven't felt in a while.

It's almost like a silent attack. Heath lightly traces my outer folds, arousing me more as he does so.

I squirm under him wanting to get loose from this before I become too invested with no way out.

"I'm going to leave you thinking about me, how I've thought about you for the last year." He says before slipping two fingers into me.

He slowly moves inside me, at a painfully slow pace before applying pressure to my clit with his thumb.

I arch up into him more as he presses my clit, causing his fingers to fill me even more.

"It seems like you've missed me more than I thought..."

. even if that's the case you're still getting punished." He whispers coming close to my ear as he starts to pump his fingers in and out without a warning.

The intense feeling almost overwhelms me as it feels like an orgasm is about to crash through me.

I hate that he knows all of my spots. He knows my body so well that he has me in pieces underneath him making a mess of myself in only seconds.

"That's right, your body is mine." His voice echoes in my ear, without warning he bites down hard on my shoulder leaving a mark causing me to scream out, then the feeling is gone, and I'm left with the faint sensation of the crashing orgasm.

I still want it, but his fingers are gone, the pressure of his body on me is gone and my hands are now free.

I open my eyes to look above me and see that Heath isn't on top of me anymore, but the trapped door is opening. "Autumn?" Cole peeks down into the tunnel. He looks confused as if he's shocked to see me. He was probably looking for Nema.

"Why are you on the ground?" He asks, coming down the steps.

"I fell." I lie. I can't tell him my ex tackled me onto the ground and proceeded to finger me.

"Come on, let's get you up." Cole comes over and holds his hand out for me. I'm still infuriated with him but I'm more shook by what just happened and where Heath ran off to so fast. It's like he disappeared into thin air.

Cole helps me up the stairs and we venture out of the maze. "Come on, let's take you to the apartment." I know he's talking about his place, but I don't care right now, sleep is sleep regardless of where it is.

The slam of the door wakes me up. I look around seeing the green numbers plastered on the alarm clock, 3:15a.m. It's the middle of the night, who could that be? I quickly remember this isn't my apartment and stay in bed.

Cole's bed.

I hate that I'm staying but I have no idea who is out there. Then someone says, "You brought her here!" Nema yells.

"Shhh be quiet, Autumn is sleeping." Cole says.

“I don’t care about that bitch, why is she here? You said I was spending the night.”

“I found her in a tunnel when I was looking for you and she looked really fucked up. I may not want to date her anymore, but I still care about her.” Yeah, you care so much you fucking cheated.

It’s crazy how people say they care about you and do crazy shit to you. “Get her out!” Nema yells again.

“I told you to be quiet.”

“Then you’ll have to shut me up.” Nema threatens, then the sound of smacking and scuffling feels my ears.

You’ve got to be kidding me. I’m in his bed and he’s going to fuck another girl in his living room.

I hear them crash onto the couch knocking over something out there, but I just turn over and try to go back to sleep.

It doesn’t work, I didn’t sleep for the rest of the night as her moans and his grunts filled my ears but when 6 a.m. hit, I finally got a way out. I left them both naked on the couch with the door open, so everyone could see them and her clothes scattered in the elevator to the bottom floor.

I make my way back to my on-campus apartment that I share with Maya.

I know she’s not home because she stayed with DJ so it’s just me, myself, and I.

As I enter, the morning light shines through the cream curtains of our small living room giving the space some light then I spot something that I know wasn’t here

before.

A small glass figurine of a spider. I walk closer to the black glass figure knowing only one person left it here.

It sits on top of a note with a vase of roses beside it.

The spider looks like Heath's pet tarantula named Tundra that I got him in our junior year of high school.

Spiders are his favorite animal, a fascination of his if you will.

I pick up the mini-Tundra and set her aside to read the note.

Welcome home, Little Traitor, this isn't over. I'm not done with you yet.

Now he's just taunting me.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

AUTUMN

FLASHBACK: SOPHOMORE YEAR HIGH SCHOOL

My parents went to sleep a couple hours ago.

I've also changed outfits several times until I finally decided on some leggings and a red cropped shirt with my Victoria's Secret zip up. I've been friends with Heath for a little over a month now and he drives me home occasionally.

We even have lunch together sometimes. I think we have a nice little friendship going on here, but I really like him, like a lot.

I don't think I want to be just his friend anymore. I apply my red apple lip gloss again for the tenth time making sure my lips are glossed.

My phone vibrates on my vanity, and I look down seeing his message.

Heath:

I'm here, Freckles

I love when he calls me that nickname. Then again, he's also never really used my actual name before.

I spray perfume on myself and get up. I peek into the hallway seeing it's empty before sneaking out of my room and creeping down the stairs.

My house doesn't creak much and lucky for me my parents sleep heavily.

They never really worry about me doing anything like this because I'm a "good kid," so I don't have to worry about them being onto me sneaking out.

I use the side sliding door to sneak out because the camera has a blindspot.

I run through the neighbor's yard and down the road. I've never ran so fast down my street before.

I feel like I'm running from a killer. I spot the old truck parked only a couple houses down and finally slow my pace as he opens the door for me.

"You know you can take your time." I take a moment to catch my breath.

"I've never snuck out before." I say as I get inside.

"I've corrupted the good girl, haven't I.

" He smirks at me only causing me to blush.

"I'll make it worth it." he reaches across me and closes my door.

Lord, he makes my heart flutter. I silently watch as he smoothly turns the truck around then goes back up the road away from my house.

At night, this town looks like the perfect little, small town to live in, but Grimstone is far from that.

It's full of sneaky people, rich underground families, and secrets. If you love a good small-town scandal covered by money and blood, then you should live here.

Like five years ago the mayor was sleeping with young girls and giving the families money if they got pregnant to keep it a secret.

If they didn't, he sent them to reform school.

Mayor Keen is no longer mayor of Grimstone.

He also never investigated the mysterious death of two teens on the railroad track, but I suppose that was a cover up.

Heath drives us to a large magnolia tree that sits on a hill in a little field of flowers. The place looks over Divinci's Graveyard. "I've never been here before." I say, to myself.

"I found it the other day, and figured you'd love it." He thinks about me. My heart speeds up almost breaking from my chest knowing this. He opens my door once again like he always does so I can get out. Heath reaches back and grabs a flashlight before getting out of the truck himself.

"Come on, get out." I slide out of the truck, closing the door and follow him to the top of the hill.

Little flowers are littered everywhere, making it feel magical.

I've never had a place before other than my room.

Heath takes off his jacket and lays it on the ground.

I sit on it without arguing knowing he's going to suggest it.

"What are we supposed to do out here?"

“Talk, look at the stars, other stuff.” he answers, sitting down himself. He sits the flashlight in front of us, and I can now see the road a bit. It makes me feel less uneasy about being in the dark, at almost midnight.

I listen to the crickets' chirp as a light wind blows over us. This is peaceful. I like it here.

“Do you have a boyfriend?” He asks, randomly.

“No. Do you have a girlfriend?” Please say no.

“No.” Thank God or else I’d feel really dumb. Do I tell him I like him? Do I make a move, or does he make a move?

“I like you.” I blurt out. I guess that’s solved. Maya is going to say I have no smoothness about me but then again, she’s still pestering me to tell her who the secret guy I’m texting is. I should tell her after I find out if he likes me.

“Okay.” he replies, causing my heart to sink. I look away as tears start to burn my eyes. Oh god I should have shut the fuck up. Now he thinks I’m some lovesick girl. His hand grazes my jawline pulling my face to him. I let him turn my face and now I’m nose to nose with the most gorgeous boy ever.

“Then you’re mine now.” He says before kissing me. It’s soft and gentle conveying a feeling of tension and passion. If this is what a first kiss is supposed to be like I never want it to stop.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

HEATH

A utumn had been in my head enough; it was time for me to be in hers .

She said she was so fucking sorry on those damn voicemails.

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. She was crying, upset that she hurt me and didn't get to say she didn't want me to my face, but she doesn't look sorry.

Not all the times I've seen her on campus walking with her friends smiling, laughing.

Kissing and hugging Cole the dirtbag. She looks so damn happy even on her social media which I never unfollowed because I didn't have the guts to.

I hate that she is happy. I should make her happy.

I want her to only smile with me. I want her to be happy because I made her happy.

It's mostly because she made me so happy.

She was the light in my life but when she broke up with me it was like my world crashed.

I used to think she was so kind, so gentle, so sweet, but now it's all over.

She is none of those things anymore. At least I don't see her as those things. I believe she may still be kind but she's not gentle or sweet.

My girl has learned how to stand up to people.

She's really grown into herself. She's not the Autumn I dated before.

The shy cheerleader who just wanted to make mommy and daddy happy, now she's confident, slightly bold, and her jealous tendencies are more apparent.

After last night I'm sure she's thinking about me.

I know she is thinking about everything I can make her feel.

Everything I made her feel. She doesn't look like she did before, although not much time has passed since we saw each other.

She doesn't look as innocent or shy. Her beauty nearly stopped me in my tracks when I saw her in that sexy costume at the party with her wavy auburn hair and beautiful green eyes.

She's just how I remember her. A gorgeous vixen.

My Freckles. They still dart around her cheeks in a beautiful pattern that I have memorized a thousand times. I've counted them too; she has forty-one freckles. which earned her the nickname in high school.

"Hey, you alive under there?" I feel Jared kick my boot. Fuck I must have been under this damn car daydreaming about my Little Traitor far too long.

"Yeah, I am, and now everything is perfect." I slide out and wipe my hands on my coveralls.

"Why are we breaking it instead of fixing it?" Jared asks, he's somewhat new. He

started about five months ago. He's still in high school, but my dad is too sick to work, and he was already training him, so I stepped up being the oldest son and all.

"Because the man who owns this jeep is a cheater." I explain simply.

Cole is in for it when he gets back in his sweet jeep.

I shouldn't care that Autumn got fucked over when she broke my heart, but I do.

At least she dumped me before getting with someone else.

This guy didn't even have the decency to do that.

Cole has been bringing his jeep in for oil changes monthly since last year and today was no different.

Normally, I'm not around for his appointments but after everything that went down yesterday, I have special plans for him.

"Call 'em. Tell him it's done." Jared goes into the office to do as I say. I close the hood of Cole's jeep, getting it already for him. I can't wait for this one.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

AUTUMN

Grabbing a caramel latte from Marletta's brightens my day. Normally I would get a green tea and a jelly cookie but today I need the coffee. I take a sip of the sweet, caffeinated liquid, letting it refresh me as I do so. I really needed this.

"Autumn!" Maya bursts through the door looking frantic. "Guess what happened about an hour ago?"

An hour ago, I was catching up on sleep so I wouldn't know. "What?"

"Cole, his car went haywire, and he crashed." Maya tells me.

My world starts spinning, as I process the news.

There's no way, I know I said a lot of things, but I never wanted him to get hurt.

Then again today was his oil change day.

Fuck you, Heath. Of course he would be in today, it's Halloween and almost no one wants to work.

"Thanks for telling me. Where is he?"

"Grimstone Medical." I march past her and out of Marletta's tossing my coffee away no longer needing it for energy as I have adrenaline coursing through me right now. Before I go to the auto shop, I have to at least visit Cole, after all he did save me last

night.

I walk into the room carrying a bouquet of flowers and I sit them on his bedside table.

“You came.” Cole says.

“I wanted to see the cheater breathing so I could kill you myself.” I tell him. I can’t be too soft.

“So, you heard last night?” He asks and I just nod in response. That bitch was loud as fuck so yeah.

“Don’t say you’re sorry because you’re not.” I stop him before he can speak. “You really hurt me and a part of me is glad you have broken ribs, swollen eyes, a sprained ankle, and two broken limbs. You won’t be doing sports anymore that’s for sure and I want to laugh at you, but I won’t.”

“You are brutal Autumn Scott.” Cole laughs.

“I’m glad you’re good and thanks for saving me but this is over. I hope you have the life you deserve.” I tell him as I turn around, I spot Nema walking in.

“He’s all yours.” I slide past her leaving without a second thought. Cole is officially her problem now and even though I still feel like shit from being cheated on at least I can move on now.

Once in my car I start the drive to Heath’s auto shop, Motorway.

I haven’t been there in months, not since Cole went to get his jeep serviced and I saw Heath and hid in a nearby coffee shop till Cole was done but now I’m going there on purpose and going inside.

The last time we were on good terms and I was inside that shop, we had sex in the back of an old Camaro.

I'm starting to rethink my decision because I know I'm not going to really get in his head about about what he did but at least maybe he can give me some sort of answer.

I park close to the entrance so, if necessary, I can quickly make an escape to my car.

With one deep breath I step out of my car and walk inside.

The smell of tires and oil fill my nose. I forgot how strong the scent is. "I'm looking for Heath Dyer." I say, walking up to the counter. Behind is a boy dressed in the mechanic uniform with a label of Jared on it. The boy looks at me sideways a bit before answering.

"He's outside."

"Thank you." I take his answer and head for the workshop. I push open the heavy glass door and work my way around a couple of cars before spotting him wiping off his tools near the back. "You committed a crime, ya know."

He most likely heard me walk inside but of course he didn't turn around to acknowledge me. "You came to my shop to defend your cheating boyfriend?"

"We aren't together anymore." For some reason telling him this makes my cheeks burn in redness and my stomach swarms at his possible response.

"Hmm." Is all he says though. "So, you came to defend your cheating ex."

"I came to find out why." I correct him.

“He’s a dick and he got karma, simple.” Heath shrugs, finally turning around to look at me. He’s so unreasonably calm about this considering he could go to jail.

“You could go to jail.”

“I’d live.” He’s impossible, his response only makes me angry as he doesn’t see the potential of what could happen if anyone else figured it out.

“Are you worried about me?” Heath asks, mockingly. I narrow my eyes at him as he studies my face.

“I’m worried you’re being stupid.”

“Then you haven’t seen anything yet.” I’m done. I huff and turn around marching out of the workshop. I can’t believe him. He’s so infuriating and nonchalant about this.

“Come back again.” I hear Jared say behind me as I leave almost like a taunt. I shouldn’t have come here.

I know some frat is throwing a party on campus because it’s Halloween.

Most people are going to that, but I think I’ve had enough scary activities for one month.

First the Predator game, then Heath surprised me in the maze, and now this car crash I’m staying home tonight.

My super cute playboy bunny costume is going to have to stay in the closet.

“I left some champagne on the coffee table for you.” Maya says as I enter the apartment. I see her dressed in her sexy nurse outfit. I look over to the living room

seeing the bottle of champagne on the coffee table along with a flute glass. “Thank you.” I say as I hang my keys on the key rack.

I take off my shoes and place them under the table beside the door. “Are you sure you aren’t coming?” She asks.

“No way. I need to mentally calm down.” I reassure Maya as I take off my jacket and put it up on the other side of the door where our jackets are kept.

“Well, if you change your mind, text me.”

“I will. And you look hot, have fun.” I walk into the living room and pour myself a glass of champagne. The bubbles pop up as they hit the glass forming a sizzling sound. This is the perfect start to a calming evening.

“I’ll text you when I’m on the way back.” Maya tells me as she leaves.

“Okay, be careful.” I blow her a kiss as she closes the door leaving me alone.

I sit the bottle down and lean back on the couch sipping my champagne.

After a couple sips I just down the whole glass then pour another and down that one too.

Before drinking too much, I get up and take a shower letting it wash away all the stress from the day.

Somehow, I start to feel extremely tired and end my shower early. I get dressed in my Halloween Roller Rabbit pajamas and turn on my noise machine. I can’t say I even remember laying down in my bed.

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HEATH

D rugging her drinks isn't the most gentlemanly thing I've ever done but I never said I was one. Which makes me feel much better about doing it. It wasn't hard either. It's surprising how these people don't pay much attention to a guy going into a women's apartment, but it is a college campus.

I knew Autumn wouldn't be able to sleep knowing I caused Cole's accident.

Even though she has grown and has some edge to her now she is still somewhat caring and sweet at the core.

He may have done her dirty, but she of course wouldn't want him to be in pain.

Me on the other hand I was aiming for the morgue, but the lucky bastard survived.

After Maya bought the two small bottles of champagne and brought them home, she just left again to go to class, so I snuck in as I do sometimes to check on Autumn, leave roses, or watch her sleep.

It only took a syringe and a small needle through the cork.

It's even easier having a friend who is a tech genius to wipe the tape for you and make it seem like you were never there.

I sneak into the apartment for the second time today.

The place has clothes tossed around, dishes could be done but overall, not too bad.

I peek inside Autumn's room seeing her asleep laid across her bed.

I walk inside and move her legs onto the bed and place a blanket on her so she can sleep more comfortably.

Now that she is cozy in bed, I begin to clean up her apartment making sure to put things in the right places and I leave a fresh set of roses on the counter as I always do. She doesn't know they are from me but now that she's single again she will be able to take a guess at who did this.

The order of pastries and her tea arrive along with her favorite chicken Alfredo. I place the pastries on the counter beside the flowers, the tea on her nightstand and the Alfredo in the fridge making sure to leave a note on top with her name.

Perfect. She's all taken care of and just in time for me to get home and make sure my dad takes his medication.

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AUTUMN

He has only sent roses to replace the last batch, which almost makes me relax. At the same time, it makes my heart twist in an uncomfortable way. I should just ignore the feeling, but I can't. I want him to send more.

Chase me.

Want me.

Maybe I can make it through the rest of the semester without thinking of it too much. Maybe I won't even deal with him. At least I thought that until I look back to see him waltzing into my history class and sitting beside me.

You're joking.

"What are you doing here?" I ask him in a chipped tone.

"Going to school." He answers, leaning back, tossing an arm around my chair. My heart skips a beat feeling this close to him again.

"You got into Grimstone?" I ask, even though he is obviously here.

"Yep." he pops the P at the end. The rest of this semester is going to be shit. "Also, Happy Birthday, Freckles."

The nickname brings back so many memories, it feels as if they are flashing before

my eyes.

The kiss at our graduation.

Our first date under the magnolia tree.

When I gave him Tundra.

Everything we experienced together is going through my head, I haven't heard him say that in so long. I didn't realize I missed it till now.

"Happy Birthday Heath." I whisper. Our birthday has always been a special day we share together.

We watch our favorite horror movie, go on a romantic date and exchange gifts.

It's always been like that till last year when he randomly showed up and I had just sent a letter breaking up with him, but he came bringing me flowers and a gift.

A gift I still wear. A golden necklace with a pendent of a magnolia flower with my birthstone in the center. It's extremely thoughtful because that's the same place I became his girlfriend, where we had our first kiss and more. It was our place.

"You still wear that." He lifts the necklace with his pointer finger lightly grazing my collarbone.

"It's my favorite piece of jewelry." I say honestly. I haven't taken it off since I found it on my bed one year ago. I also haven't told anyone where I got it from. I think only Maya knows.

"Looks good on you but is that really something you should be wearing in a

relationship,” He drops it back on my skin, removing his hand.

“No but it doesn’t matter anymore, does it?” I whisper. He hums to himself.

My heart picks up speed wondering what he’ll do next, but nothing happens. He just turns away to start paying attention to the professor leaving me in thought.

Once the professor announces class is over Heath leaves without sparing me a second glance.

It makes me sad, like the thought of him forgetting about me hurts.

I leave class and go to Marletta’s to get a chocolate croissant and green tea.

This is what I need to forget about it all.

I just need to sit in one of my favorite places and eat comfort food.

But my thoughts begin to drift back to the one thing I didn’t want.

The spider crawls over my stomach as the pressure builds inside me. The tingles from the spider mixes with the want of more. Heath presses down on my stomach making me feel more of him inside of me. I feel incredibly full.

“You’re taking me so well, baby.” Heath whispers in my ear smoothly. His voice sends shivers down my spine when he talks like this. I don’t know if I can hold off my orgasm much longer. I need to release it too badly.

Tundra moves her way up my body now crawling over my breasts, but the opposite of fear happens.

I'm aroused. The tickling sensation of the spider crawling on my breasts does wonders for the orgasm that's building inside of me.

"That's it. I want you to unravel." His voice makes its way into my ears again.

I arch up into him, needing more contact with him. I need to feel more of him.

I tug on the red ropes used to tie me to the bed. Heath is barely in contact with my body. I need the contact. I need him to touch me. I need to touch him.

"Please," I say, finding my voice dripping with desperation.

"You're begging now? You must really be desperate today."

"Yes, I.... need more." My breath becomes hitched as he slams into me.

"I guess I can be nice. Cum for me beautiful," He doesn't have to tell me twice as my body shakes relieving itself.

I can feel the sweat building up on my forehead, remembering the time we had sex while his spider Tundra crawled on me. That was one of my favorite times and it just so happens to be one of the last times we had sex. I need to think of something else.

"Finally, you're back." Maya groans as I close the door behind me. Maya is spread out over our small sofa with a Youtube video playing on the TV.

"You act as if you've been waiting all day.

"I set down the small cake I bought for myself before coming home.

"I basically have," She over exaggerates as she gets up off the sofa.

That's a lie she had two back-to-back classes.

"I've been waiting for hours to tell you that me and your family are taking you out. "

I slowly turn to face Maya processing the news.

I'm not against going anywhere, it's just very sudden. I bought the cake so I could stay in my room because being hit with Heath now attending Grimstone University and sitting next to me in class was a lot. I thought I could go visit my parents back in Grimstone in a couple days since it's only a few minutes away, but I guess not.

"Where would we go?" I ask.

"Boudlgard's." The fancy steakhouse that my dad takes me to every birthday, and we'd always get the white chocolate raspberry cake for dessert. I should have known.

"Can you be ready by five?"

"Yes." I don't want to let my father down, so I agree to go.

"Excellent, I'll go call your mom and tell her we will meet her there at five -thirty." Maya bounces out of the living room. I sigh looking at the clock on the wall seeing it's currently 2:15.

If I want to look as good as I plan on then I better start now.

I place my personal cake in the fridge for later and head to my room.

A long everything shower should start the process nicely.

I turn on the hot water and place a lavender shower steamer inside then close the

curtain and wait for it to steam up as I set my towels in the towel warmer and my slippers by the shower.

Next, I go over to my closet to find the dress I bought for my birthday about a month ago.

I purchased it because I knew it would be perfect, and I fully planned on going on a date tonight but at the time I didn't think Cole was cheating on me.

I pull out the light green mid-thigh length dress that has gold accents and a puffy skirt.

It's strapless and just perfectly sexy for a twenty-first birthday.

I lay the dress out over my bed and place the matching gold heels with it before picking out a matching bra and panty set in black.

I slip into the shower, letting the scorching water run all over my body. The lavender fills my nose causing a slight burn, but it feels nice. I wet my body before applying my coconut Tree Hut body scrub.

I remember when I first tried this. Heath got it for me and ever since I've been hooked.

It's become one of my favorite scents. I try not to linger on the thoughts of Heath too much because then I'll think of his perfectly ruffled black hair, and his jarring blue eyes, his slightly crooked but perfect smile and of course his irresistible scent.

Everything about him just screams perfection and I still find myself caught in it even though I broke up with him.

I fiddle with the necklace around my neck trying, and failing, at snapping myself out of any thoughts related to him.

“Autumn you’re going to use all the hot water!” Maya screams, banging on my door. I’m yanked from my thoughts quickly. I no longer feel the warmth of Heath in my memories. Instead, I just feel empty and confused, which leads me to take a quick shower so I can get out and focus on my birthday.

Which happens to be shared with the man I can’t stop thinking of.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

HEATH

FLASHBACK: ONE YEAR AGO

I don't do a lot of things, especially show emotions, but I'm under a spell when it comes to Autumn Scott.

God I would get down on my knees and worship her if she asked me to.

I seriously have a problem, but my mom used to say this is what love feels like before she passed my freshman year of high school.

I open the box one more time looking at the piece of jewelry I bought about a week ago. A perfect golden magnolia flower just like the one on our tree. With this I hope she always remembers our place, remembers me.

"Good luck!" I hear my sister yell as I walk out the door. She helped me pick it saying it would be so sentimental, and I agreed.

I get inside my new truck and start the drive to Grimstone University in Sleepy Hollow, New York.

I want to surprise Autumn eventually with the fact that I've been taking side community college classes and applied to go in fall of junior year there.

We will finally be together and can have sleepovers.

I can cherish her everyday, all day and I couldn't be more excited.

I arrive at the college in no time with the flowers and gift in my hands.

Walking up to her dorm building I start to feel as if my heart is in my ass.

Recently things have been amazing, so I don't know why I'm nervous, I mean sure she goes out and she's made a ton of friends but she's just social like that.

She became such a little social butterfly our junior year of high school.

But then again, I haven't been able to give her the attention she deserves because my dad has been so sick but hopefully this helps.

I enter Lingam Hall and check in, grabbing a visitor's sticker before going up to the fourth floor. The elevator moves incredibly slow today like it wants to stop me, and I anxiously bounce on my heels as it finally dings opening. I walk out, finally reaching her dorm and knock.

"Hey Heath." Her roommate, Maya, opens the door.

"Is Autumn here?" I ask looking behind her, seeing their dorm looking empty. Could she be in the restroom?

"Are those for her?" She asks and I nod. "Oh god, she's out with Cole right now but here is this." Maya reaches to the side and hands me a light pink envelope with my name written on it in Autumn's handwriting.

"What's this?"

"Just read it and check your messages when you get the chance." I give her an odd

look because this extremely confuses me. “Give this to her for me.” I hand her the flowers and gift I bought for Autumn.

“I will.” Maya closes the door, and I’m left in the hallway. What the hell. I open the envelope and take out Autumn’s letter to try and get some clarity.

Dear Heath,

If you are reading this, it’s because you didn’t see my text.

I really wanted to mail this to you or tell you in person, but I just needed to get it off my chest and I’m afraid if I see your face I won’t do it.

Heath, I have loved you since I first saw you and you have truly been the love of my life.

My first love. You always will be. I treasure the time we’ve been together, and I don’t think anyone could have loved me like you.

You made me feel seen, heard me, listened to me.

Showed me so many new things. I can’t even begin to tell you how amazing you are, but I like someone else.

It wouldn’t be fair to you to stay in the relationship when I think I’m forming a new connection with someone else so I’m breaking up with you.

I am beyond sorry, and I never expected this but it’s for the best my love. I love you.

-Autumn

I feel my heart crack into a million pieces. She's fucking dumping me. I thought everything was okay and we were in love but no, only I was in love. She didn't love me as much as I thought.

I've lost her.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

HEATH

I used to hate my birthday because it was never about me, then I grew to love it because of Autumn and now I'm back to hating it because it's the day she broke my heart.

When I applied to Grimstone University of course I knew Autumn already attended, I was there the day we dropped her off freshman and Sophomore year.

I wanted to drop out of going when she dumped me but something in me just can't be too far from her.

Knowing my dad is sick, I decided a business degree would do me some good since I'm taking over this place so I took some online classes at the community college and got my GPA up and applied and I got in but I didn't know I'd get tossed back in the ringer with my ex who stabbed me in the heart a year ago, exactly.

I hated seeing her when I walked into class but seeing her already staring at me sent a spark through me and I knew my revenge was working.

I'm plaguing Autumn Scott's mind, and I don't intend to stop anytime soon.

"Are you listening?" My dad asks, sounding even more country than normal which signifies he's pissed at my lack of attention.

"Yeah, I got it. Order everything on this list." I say, breaking his explanation down to the simple version.

“This is very important Heath.” He’s supposed to be resting but he’s having a tough time taking a step back from the shop, but I don’t blame him.

He's been running Motorway since he was seventeen after his dad died in a motorcycle crash and then he really needed to succeed when he got my mom pregnant at nineteen with me.

This place has been his everything since mom died.

“I got it dad. You need to be resting. You know your kidneys are failing.”

“Can’t. I have to go to Crew’s school. Teacher-parent meeting.” He tells me while helping himself turn around using his cane.

“Just take it easy.”

“You just get them things ordered. I’ll be fine.

See you boys later.” He hobbles out of the auto shop and crawls into his old blue truck and rides off.

I hate seeing him broken down like this.

I could just beat those doctors bloody for not getting him a damn kidney just cause he’s a smoker. Those rich fuckers don’t know shit.

“This the car?” Rex walks in holding up his computer showing me a picture of Autumn's car on it. I knew he would find it.

“Yep, where is it?” I ask him to know he can tell me. Rex is one of the smartest nerds I know who also somehow is on the wrong side of the tracks but having someone this

smart willing to do terrible things with you is an asset.

“Heading to some steak house. It’s typed into the GPS I hacked into from the car.

” She’s going to Boudlgard’s for her birthday.

Her family is probably taking her out. I remember that damned birthday dinner she used to ask me to go to when we were together and of course I’d go once I saw her bat them beautiful brown lashes.

It was a thing her dad loved to do. I have to admit the free fancy meal was nice.

“I know just where that is. Jared let’s go!

” I grab my leather coat from behind the counter.

“Thanks for the help, and here’s the number.

” I pass Rex the number to Beala Throne, who he has been trying to get to look his way for years but she’s always too stuck in her sorority shit or flirting with athletes to look at him but the one thing she doesn’t do is give out her number but now he has it.

“Thanks, tell me how it goes.” Rex says while putting on his mechanic shirt.

“Thank Thatcher and I will.” I smirk and make my way outside to one of the tow trucks.

“So how are we doing this?” Jared asks.

“We tow the car and take it out back behind the shop, then you’re done, and I carry on.” I explain. I don’t give him too much detail of anything because all Jared needs to

know is we are towing a car. If anyone does find out at least he's innocent.

I drive us to Boudlgard's and while Jared hooks up Autumn's car, I make sure they don't notice. She tends to park her car right at the front of entrances because she feels it's safer. I've always tried to tell her dangerous things will happen either way, but she doesn't listen.

That's her downfall tonight. "Done."

"Alright let's get out of here." I quickly drive back to the shop and drop Jared off along with Autumn's car, making sure to cover her BMW with a tarp and keep the keys on me so no one messes with it then I head to my red GMC Sierra 1500 AT4x.

This truck is my pride and joy; I first got a hold of it because a man brought it into my dad my freshman year of high school because it was old and broken down and he knew my dad scrapped and sold car parts too.

He figured he was getting rid of the truck and earning some cash, but me and my dad fixed it together and it became mine.

That's one of my greatest memories with him.

I drive back to the steak restaurant while blasting 'Black Honey' by Thrice and 'Control' by Puddle of Mudd.

Two of my favorite songs and they get me in the mood for this.

I arrive back at the restaurant. I sit patiently in the parking lot; I can see her sitting so perfectly in her little dress laughing with her friends and family.

My chest tightens as I remember when that used to be me until she broke my heart.

I was so confident that day driving to see her after selecting the perfect gift to show her how much she meant to me.

I had her favorite flowers in hand when I made my way to her dorm and checked in downstairs.

I thought everything was perfect and it was until I knocked on her door and her roommate answered telling me she was out with Cole.

I knew they were friends, but she had never done anything like this before.

That's when I found out she had sent me a message breaking up with me and she thought I saw it and chose not to reply.

I didn't see it and got a handwritten note from her given to me by her roommate that explained everything.

That day I broke. I let my barrier down for her and she hurt me. I vowed it'd never happen again. I would get revenge on her for doing this to me. She would know how I felt all this time and that's what I'm doing now. Reminding her who she fucked with.

When the wait is over, she walks out, arms linked with her friend Maya. I exit my truck and stand at the front of it. Her parents hug and say bye to her before they leave. Autumn and Maya begin to go to the spot her car was in, but it's gone, and my truck is in its place.

"Where's my car?" She asks, first.

"Somewhere safe. I came to take you somewhere." I tell her.

“I could call the cops.” Autumn crosses her arms trying to look intimidating, but it doesn’t phase me. Cute.

“You won’t. Now get in the truck or you won’t get your car back.”

“You psycho!” Maya yells but Autumn stops her. I knew she would.

“Fine but what about Maya?” Autumn asks. I pull out my wallet and hand Maya some cash.

“I reserved you a car with the valet service.” I tell her and give her the car ticket also. Autumn turns to Maya and whispers in her ear while hugging her. Maya glares at me before going off to the valet building.

“Let’s get this over with.” Autumn huffs, rolling her eyes.

I walk behind her making sure she heads to my truck, and I open the door for her.

She may have broken me, but I am still a gentleman.

Autumn gets inside with a glare on her face causing me to smirk.

I go to the driver's side and get inside.

“Where are we going?” She asks. Oh, this will be fun. I look over at her, slightly getting caught in her green eyes. They are absolutely perfect like emeralds. They are for sure my favorite color.

“You’ll see.” I say and start up the truck.

“You’re sick.” Autumn spats. I love it when she’s pissed. She gets this red blush on

her cheeks that just highlights her freckles.

“You love it.” I tease her because I know she used to mention how much she loved when I would spontaneously show up and take her somewhere. Autumn says nothing and just turns to look out the window.

I smirk to myself fully satisfied with the annoyance I’ve managed to make her feel. Tonight, I’m going to make her feel far more than that. I want to scare her, truly show her what I am capable of, and she will feel my wrath.

I turn down all the back roads leading to what everyone in Grimstone knows leads to the old historical district that’s full of old manors that rich people used to live in, now they all live in town and these homes are left out here.

They were supposed to go to grandchildren but even they don’t use them so eventually teens started breaking in making them hangout spots.

“Why are we way out here?” Autumn asks as I turn down one last road to take me to my destination.

“So, no one can hear you scream, Little Traitor.” I answer, confidently. I notice her slightly twitch, causing my smirk to widen farther in delight. I slow down, pulling into the driveway of an old white colonial style home. I drive around back and park before cutting all the lights off.

“You have one minute to run inside and hide. Don’t let me find you or else.”

“Why? What are we doing?”

“Playing predator.” Autumn's eyes widen.

“You’re losing time.” I inform her, letting her know I’ve already started counting the time. Autumn scrabbles to get out of my truck and runs to the house almost tripping as she does. I reach into the backseat and grab my mask. I pull it over my face and prepare to get out.

Time to catch my Little Traitor.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

AUTUMN

The predatory look in his eye made me run.

I've never had a doubt in my mind that Heath wouldn't hurt me...

. until now. His gaze is so different, it's like he wants to rip me apart instead of holding me close.

I dash out of the truck so fast I nearly fall as I run up to the old home.

I've personally never been out here because I just do not like getting involved in teen raging activities, even when I was in high school, I just couldn't do it.

I burst through the front door letting the knob hit the wall as I do.

I don't have much time to run anywhere. I could go towards the kitchen and dining room, but I doubt that leads to anything and going upstairs is asking to be trapped.

With all my knowledge of the horror movies I've watched, I decide the grand living room is my best bet.

I run though and find a small alcove between the stairs and a wall that's just big enough to fit my body. Even if he does find me, he can't fit back here. I nestle in the corner just in time.

"Little Traitor, your time is up!" Heath comes into the house.

I listen to the sound of his boots move around.

He's going the opposite way, but he could be trying to trick me in case I was still running around, I'd be caught.

I shrink back farther into the corner as his boots change direction and now, they come towards me.

Shit.

Fear streaks through me now as it is a possibility for him to find me but still, I do not move a muscle. I suck in a breath. "Autumn, come out." He hums walking around the living room.

"You've gotten better at this game." He says and tosses something causing it to break.

I have gotten better. I used to suck at hiding.

Maybe the fear is what's keeping me quiet and hidden.

Whatever it is, I'm glad it's working. Heath walks slowly down the small hallway where I'm located, like he's calculating his steps. He knows I'm nearby.

For some reason Heath has always been exceptionally and annoyingly good at finding me. I'm not sure how he always knows where to find me, but he does. This time he surprises me as he walks right past my hiding spot.

"Fuck." He curses, annoyed he didn't find me as fast as he had hoped for. I smile to myself feeling proud I managed to escape him. I wait until I don't hear very much in the distance before peeking out of the alcove.

He's gone.

I slip off my heels and gently pull myself out then stand up.

I must move because I know if he doesn't find me anywhere else, he will come back, and I'll be a sitting duck.

I carefully tiptoe out of the living room and decide upstairs is the best choice right now considering he may still be downstairs.

I creep up the stairs carefully, staying in the center as that area most likely creaks the least.

As I ascend the stairs small little electric candles come into view lighting up the hall dimly.

They line each side of the hall with flower petals leading down the center of the hall.

Against my better judgement I go down the flower path.

I know this is most likely a trap, but Heath isn't up here and what's the harm in looking.

Maybe I could even slip back out before he comes up.

I glance behind me making sure Heath didn't sneak up on me. He didn't. I move forward down the hall, letting the little lights guide me to the last door. The door is left slightly open. This is most definitely a trap, but I can't help but push the door open.

Inside is a large room with a four-poster king sized bed at the front between two

arched windows fully made.

Candles are placed around the room and a little space heater is on the side.

There's a fireplace in the center of the left wall but it's unlit with a little table in front that has bottles of water and Cool Ranch Doritos.

My favorite chips. I walk inside farther looking around.

This was done recently as everything looks brand new.

I run my hand along the covers of the bed feeling the velvet texture of it. So luxurious. I wonder how he got these here and why?

"Found you." I look up seeing Heath standing in the doorway holding handcuffs, with a mask on his face. Fuck. I knew I shouldn't have done this, but curiosity kills the cat. "I figured this would catch your attention." He walks closer coming into the room and closes the door.

I'm completely trapped now. What did I get myself into?

"Now I get to have you."

"What are you playing at?" I ask. He slowly walks towards me, the pit inside my stomach growing heavier.

"I want you to be as consumed by me as I have been you." He answers and chills spread across my body.

I take in a deep breath backing myself up until I hit the wall.

Shit. He gets closer towering over me as I press myself into the wall.

Seeing him in the mask makes me weak in the knees. I love it so much I think I hate it.

“How will you do that?” I unfortunately stammer.

His hands slam on the wall behind me, trapping me between him and it.

“By giving you a craving and taking it away.” He smirks, pressing himself into me.

The thinness of my dress allows me to feel all the parts of him making me tingle inside.

His smell overwhelms my nose, suddenly causing me to relax into him.

I should be ashamed that my body reacts the way it does when it comes to him, but I’m not.

He takes his finger and places it under my chin lifting it, so I look into his eyes. The most perfect eyes I’ve ever seen. “Drop the shoes.” He commands. It takes me a few seconds, but I do it. They clatter onto the floor, and he immediately snatches my arm up and puts on one of the cuffs.

“Tonight, I own you.” His words melt me. I know this is supposed to be revenge but at this moment I don’t care. “You will take everything I give you.” Heath removes his hand from my chin and places it on my waist guiding me to the bed.

Now the fear is back but arousal is here too.

I can feel my panties growing wetter as he pushes me to lay across the poster bed on

my stomach.

He spreads my legs apart and handcuffs me to the poster bed.

“Stay like this.” He demands. I listen to him reach into his leather jacket pocket before bending down.

His hands lightly brush my leg before I feel a scratchy object work itself around my ankle.

He’s tying my feet, oh my god.

“Heath what are you doing?” I ask, the worry is evident in my voice. No response. He finishes and stands back up while grabbing my waist. He glides his hands down my waist and under my dress then snatches my panties down all in one seamless motion.

“Heath?” I try again. I know where this is going and as much as it excites me, I’ve never been on the receiving end of hate sex.

I want to say no, but I can’t. It feels too good; the anticipation is too good.

My mouth can’t even form the words to stop him.

I want this and I know it. I want him to fuck me while wearing his mask from behind.

I jerk forward as his fingers glide over my outer lips.

With his spare hand he slides it up my back and latches onto my neck, squeezing it tightly.

“I can’t believe you’re already so wet for me.

” He whispers in my ear as he continues to rub my clit.

A clumsy moan escapes my mouth when he pushes the tip of his finger inside me.

“Perfect.” He whispers to himself and pulls his finger out.

I go cold, missing the warmth of his finger inside me.

Heath shuffles behind me and I hear his belt come undone.

My stomach flutters in delight hearing the sound of his pants and belt hit the floor.

Within seconds he has his tip rubbing against my entrance causing my body to warm in anticipation.

Without warning Heath plunges inside of me pushing me forward flat onto the bed.

“Fuck,” is the only thing I manage to say as the sudden feeling of being full takes over. There's a bit of pain mixed with the pleasure as he starts to pull out and plunge right back into me. His grip on my neck increases along with his thrusts.

“Heath, that’s.... too.... fast.” I tell him, breathlessly.

“Take it.” He demands, gripping my neck harder and thrusting into me with more force than before.

My legs buckle because of the rapid pace he is going, leaving me a whimpering mess.

I yank at the handcuffs but with no avail.

A dazed feeling overcomes me and my orgasm crashes through me.

I bask in the sensations as Heath hits my cervix.

This isn't like the gentle sex we used to have where I could see the love in his eyes, instead he's using me. Making me his, causing me to cum over and over again as he pounds into me.

"That's right, cum for me Little Traitor.

" He whispers in my ear, pushing me farther into the bed causing himself to go deeper.

I moan out, unable to hold in the pleasure I feel.

My body is worn out as he continues ravishing me and I feel myself go slightly limp.

Another orgasm rips through me and I have an out of body experience as I cry out in tandem with Heath hitting my cervix.

Tears start to stream down my face as he keeps relentlessly pounding into me.

My vision begins to go fuzzy, and my legs weaken. "I'm done with you." Heath pulls out of me and I slump down onto the bed. Heath shuffles around, I'm guessing to pull up his pants and then I hear him walk away. A bottle of water gets tossed beside me onto the bed.

"Drink." With the little strength I have I open it and try to drink it.

Our mixed fluids drip down my leg as I try to scoot myself onto the bed.

Oh my god he didn't use a condom. I am on the pill but it's scary.

I need a Plan B as soon as possible. I toss the water aside and I try to lay down as comfortably as possible on the bed.

I look over my shoulder to look around and see that Heath is gone.

He left me here. Alone .

I wasn't good enough for Cole and now I'm not good enough for Heath anymore. Silent tears start to form as I turn my head away facing the window still tied to the bed.

Maybe he will come back.

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Source Creation Date: July 20, 2025, 8:44 am

HEATH

Leaving her there hurts like hell but it's the last step.

All I want to do is clean her up, hold her, kiss her, but she needs to know how it feels to be used and left just as I have felt.

After this she will be broken because I know she already feels like she's not good enough. She hates being left, always has.

I stomp out of the old house and make my way to my truck. I need to get away. Getting inside I immediately check my phone and find my dad texted and so did Rex.

Dad:

Can you grab me some soup? And if possible, something for your siblings.

Rex:

How did it go?

I let my dad know I will grab the food. Luckily, he just texted me five minutes ago so I can still do it in a decent amount of time.

I reply to Rex who texted an hour ago and tell him it went fine.

No one needs details. I toss my phone to the side and start up my truck.

First, I need to get the soup for my dad and food for Teaghan and Crew.

I think they should be okay with pizza because I'm not cooking anything.

Better yet, I could pick up their favorite Wendy's orders.

I reverse out the driveway and head back into Grimstone.

I get the soup for my dad first and then run by Wendy's to get their food.

It doesn't take me long to arrive at our triple wide trailer that sits on its own little two acres of land.

I still remember the day dad replaced our single wide with this house, it was a big surprise for mom.

The single wide now sits further back on the property and I live in it alone.

I park in front of my dad's trailer and grab all the bags then head inside. "You're back." Teaghan beams from the couch.

"Here's your food." I hand her the bags from Wendy's. Teaghan's eyes widen as a smile creep onto her face.

"One is Crew's. Where's Dad?" I close the front door and walk through the living room to place the soup on the dining table.

"His room." I nod and go into the kitchen.

I work to prepare Dad's soup and start his coffee for in the morning.

I place the soup in the microwave and find Crew and Teaghan's lunch boxes.

Unfortunately, this school system feels they are so high and mighty we either have to pay a weekly fee for lunch which is twenty dollars or bring our own.

There was no way our parents would or could pay eighty dollars a month per kid.

I place their lunch boxes on the counter and begin to work through the kitchen to find something for them to take for lunch.

"Teaghan, can you take the soup to Dad?" I call out once the microwave starts beeping.

"Of course, I'll have him take his meds too.

" She smiles and starts to prepare his dinner tray.

She's always been so kind and helpful in these situations.

She's so much like mom, always believing things will get better and has such a positive outlook on things.

Even though she's fifteen and knows what's going on she stays happy and hopeful. I admire her for that.

"Thanks Tea." She smiles at me, and I turn back around looking at the items I found. Looks like they will get some sandwiches, a granola bar, fruit cup, and some chips. It's not much but it's what we have. I'll see if I can pick up some groceries tomorrow.

I make sure to fix Crew three peanut butter and banana sandwiches and add in a protein bar of Dad's on top of his granola bar, red Doritos, and an orange fruit cup.

Teaghan gets three ham and mayo sandwiches with all the same sides, but I also add in ten bucks because I know her softball team loves to go out for frozen yogurt after practice on Fridays and she's had to turn down going the last couple of times.

I close both lunch bags and put them in the fridge for tomorrow.

"Dad is eating now."

"Good. Your lunches are ready to go in the morning and so is dad's coffee." Teaghan nods, walking closer to me.

"Heath, are you leaving?" She asks, sounding hopeful. I know she would prefer me to stay here in this house, but I like having my own spot.

"Yeah, I'm hanging with some friends actually.

"I tell her, hoping it will ease the pain.

If she knew I was seeing Autumn, she would want to see her.

The breakup didn't only affect me, but Tea really liked Autumn, and I know she texts her from time to time but it was better when she was around. Teaghan misses her.

"Please be careful." She wraps her arms around me.

"I will Tea. Now go get ready for bed." I smooth her hair down as she continues to hug me. She lets go reluctantly, and heads to the other side of the house where her and Crew's rooms are. I let out a breath preparing myself, trying to switch off my brother mode.

Now that everything is handled here, I can finally head out. I walk out of the house

now back in the mindset to deal with Autumn, but first I need a drink.

AUTUMN

FLASHBACK: SENIOR YEAR

I leave the dance floor and head over to Heath where he's been perched for the last fifteen minutes watching me dance with Maya.

I love when Maya and I get to hang out. We don't go to the same school, as I go to Grimstone Prep, and she goes to Sleepy Hollow High only a few minutes away. Her parents weren't willing to pay for the higher education.

I'm so happy I have Heath though; he goes to prep only because his mom is an alumni so he got a scholarship.

"I could feel you staring all the way over there," I tell him. Heath grabs the base of my neck pulling me to him.

"You're teasing me, Freckles," He whispers in my ear. A shiver goes down my spine at the words. I love it when he starts to lose it over me.

"I'm sorry," I apologize looking into his eyes. I break out into a smile and stand on my tippy toes and plant a kiss on his cheek. As I begin to find the ground again, I feel a pair of hands on my waist.

"Excuse me." a guy says behind me. Way too close behind me.

Heath's eyes darken and I know exactly what he's going to do.

But if I let him, do it here, he'll get arrested.

This is different than last year when he beat up three football players.

He got a warning; this time it's jail time for assault. We're eighteen.

"Heath, you can't." I place my hand on his chest, moving his attention back to me.

"He fucking touched you." He says, through gritted teeth.

"I'm aware and while I don't appreciate it, I would appreciate it more if you didn't go to jail."

"This one time," he says, and I jump up hugging him.

I know how hard it is sometimes for him to control his anger, so I appreciate this.

"Go get some water. You've sweat a lot." I nod at his instructions overcome with joy and head into the kitchen for water.

He can see me from where he is since the wall he's leaning on is in front of the living room but beside the kitchen.

I grab a red solo cup and head over to the fridge.

I know Macy keeps some filtered water in here somewhere.

I remember her telling me only a couple weeks ago when I was here for the cheer team sleepover.

I find it right at the top and pour myself some.

I place the pitcher back in the fridge and turn around.

The scene before me isn't something I've never witnessed before.

A girl is talking to Heath. Twirling her hair, touching his arm.

She's flirting. A deep burn fills my body unlike anything I've felt before.

I'm pretty secure in my relationship. Everyone knows he's my boyfriend and for some reason this tramp thinks she can talk to him.

Never mind the fact he's ignoring her; I want her head on a stick.

I guess this is how he feels all the time.

I flip my hair over my shoulder and walk over to them. "I thought people said you had a girlfriend. I don't see her." She speaks.

"I'm his girlfriend." I say, swatting her hand off of him.

"Aw you're so cute." she says. Excuse me.

"You should walk away," I tell her

"Or what?" She tilts her head. This makes my blood boil even more. She doesn't even care that I'm standing here now! I grab her by the hair, yanking her down to me and force my water into her mouth causing her to choke as some got up her nose.

"Walk. The. Fuck. Away." This gets her attention as she leaves stumbling and coughing.

“Why did you let her touch you?” I ask, turning to Heath.

He never really lets anyone but me and his family touch him so I’m feeling a bit worried.

He doesn’t respond, he just grabs my hand and guides me to the nearest bathroom.

He closes the door. I look at him confused as he pulls out his pocketknife and lifts his shirt.

“What are you doing?”

“You’re worried someone else could have me. I’m going to show you they can’t,” with that he begins cutting into his chest.

“Oh my god, stop.” I may have been jealous, but I don’t want him to cut himself.

“Wait.” He demands. Within seconds he stops and there sits my initials carved into his chest. I stumble back into the wall, slightly confused and terrified of what just happened.

“Are you fucking crazy!”

“Only for you, baby.” He walks closer to me pressing his hands above the wall behind me.

“You Autumn have left a permanent mark on my heart. No one else could ever have me like you do and believe me they never will. I’m going to marry you one day, and I may not have a mansion to put you in, but I’ll make you feel like a queen everyday.”

AUTUMN

The door opens but only after the sun rises, revealing Heath standing there but this time he isn't wearing the mask. I can see his deviled look, shaggy black hair, and his blue eyes.

"You left." I state, turning away. I shouldn't let him know how bad that hurt but he can probably already tell.

"You needed to learn a lesson." He closes the door and starts walking over to me. I feel him untie my legs and begin to rub a cold gel-like substance on my ankles. I look down at him seeing its just ointment. I let him finish without a word, then he uncuffs me and rubs the same gel on my wrists.

"Do you have to pee?"

"No." I do but I'd rather hold it in until I'm back at my apartment.

"Then get up." He demands and walks out the door.

I hope he takes me back; I just want to be alone in the comfort of my room.

I'm not quite sure why he chose this way to "punish" me, but I feel even used more and more broken than I did before.

I slowly push myself up and grab my shoes to walk out.

I stumble my way to the hall where Heath stands.

I walk past him and down the stairs, I just need to get in the car then I can go home.

“I want to go home.” I tell him, knowing he’s following me.

“No, I have to take you somewhere.”

“Like where? The graveyard to bury me?” I ask sarcastically, glancing at him. Heath opens the door for me, and I snatch it from him before he can close it. He goes around his truck and gets inside.

“No, not to bury you. You’ll like it.” He says as he turns on the ignition. So, we are going to the graveyard?

“Doubt it.” I mummer. I stay silent as he backs out and drives back into town.

I don’t bother to look for my phone because I know he has hidden somewhere most likely, and I don’t have the energy to even fight for it right now.

I didn’t sleep last night; I just looked around and daydreamed about being anywhere else but in that house.

I notice we start driving towards the old flower field that has the magnolia tree.

Our tree. It’s where we would meet after school because it was only down the road.

We would hang out there for hours until he had to go to his dad’s shop, and I went home.

Why would he bring me here?

Heath pulls up at the edge of the field and gets out. He goes to the back of his truck and grabs something before coming around. I don't give him the chance, and I open my door before he can and jump out.

"Why did you do that?" He asks. I look up at him to see him visibly angry.

"Because I can. I'm upset with you." I turn around, whipping my hair and heading for the tree.

"You know you're being a brat."

"You're used to it."

He only chuckles and walks around me. I see now he has a blanket and picnic basket. Oh my...he's not.

"You didn't." I stop walking as he puts the basket aside under the tree and lays out the blanket.

"You don't want breakfast?" He asks, grabbing the basket as if nothing is wrong.

This is wrong. We shouldn't be back here together having a picnic like we used to.

Like how our first date was. He was adamant about being the one to take me out first, but he didn't have a lot of money, so I offered, and he rejected only to invite me here and a picnic was already set up.

It was a dream date.

"I know what you're doing and it's wrong." I tell him.

“Why don’t you tell me how wrong it is as you sit down and eat.

” I roll my eyes. Fucking dickhead. Unfortunately, he’s my way home, he has my phone, my car and I’m very hungry so I sit.

Heath begins to take out a pack of strawberries, a little cheese wheel, mini toast, sandwiches, a bottle of apple juice, waffles, jam, and little cups of syrup.

He still eats his waffles with jam spread on them. I smile at the thought and grab a strawberry.

“Thanks.” I don’t like it but it’s still polite to say thank you.

“No problem, Freckles.”

“Don’t call me that. It’s too intimate.”

“Figured it wouldn’t bother you considering you’ve been in another relationship and probably have more nicknames.” He shrugs while spreading jam on his waffle.

“Cole never called me a nickname.” I admit. I found it weird at first then, I asked Cole why, but he said it simply wasn’t his thing, and I let it go. I figured it was something everyone wasn’t comfortable with.

“He’s dumb anyways, Freckles.” I laugh a little. Heath’s voice has become gentler and kinder like how he used to speak to me.

“Yeah, doesn’t change the fact I wasn’t enough.” I say. He lunges over and grabs my neck. I’m taken by surprise as he does this.

“ Never, ever say that again.” I openly stare back at him, surprised he’d even say

something like that. “Do you understand?” Heath squeezes my throat. I nod in response.

“Words.”

“Yes, I understand.” Only then, does Heath release my neck and go back to his waffle. I spread syrup onto mine and pick it up, beginning to eat. I glance up at Heath noticing he’s fully calm now. I eat my waffle and then a couple strawberries.

“Where is my car?”

“Your apartment,” I don’t even bother to ask how he got it back there.

The food is really good. I still want to go home though.

Heath has stopped eating, now he’s just watching me eat. I reach to grab the juice, but he grabs it first and pulls out a glass. I wait watching him as he pours the juice and hands it to me.

“Thank you.” I whisper and take the glass. He nods and reaches back into the basket pulling out a box.

“Happy birthday.” Heath hands me the box.

“You didn’t have to.” I shake my head pushing it away, but he pushes it to me.

I take the small box and gulp down the rest of my juice preparing myself.

I slowly open the box, and it reveals a gold ring with the center stone being a big ruby.

Around it are little clusters of yellow diamonds shaped like flower petals. It's a flower. It's my dream ring.

"Why?" I look up at him. I always figured if I was to be receiving this, I'd be getting married.

"Planned to propose but you dumped me before Christmas." He shrugs. I've always thought a Christmas proposal would be fantastic.

"Is this your way of doing it now?" He tilts his head. "What if I don't want to marry you?" It's a very confident thing to give a girl a ring randomly after, you just had her tied up and left. This feels very not thought through.

"Then too bad. I'll keep coming back, scaring everyone else away, because I'll always watch over you. You are mine whether you want to be or not. I'll cherish you until I die and even after death, you'll be mine." I didn't think he'd say that. I didn't think he'd say something so sweet. So perfect.

I take a few seconds to look him over. He's staring me dead in the eyes, my green to his blue. He is fully confident, and I can see the admiration in his pupils that he had before. He means what he said.

I never pictured myself exactly getting back together with him. Not because I lost all feelings or because I don't love him, but I figured he'd hate me too much. I guess he doesn't. I slide the ring onto my ring finger and hand him the box back.

"We'll have to date for a while before marrying." I tell him and grab a strawberry.

"Whatever you want, Freckles."

We arrive at my apartment around noon to find Maya cuddling up on the couch with

DJ in a fluffy blanket. Both asleep. She must have been waiting for me and called him. “I should get her something.” I say. I’ll get her a coffee and her favorite donuts.

“We will get whatever you want after we shower.” Heath ushers me in my room.

“You know which one is mine?” I ask as he closes the door. He’s never been here so that’s odd.

“I stalked you. Who do you think left you flowers every week?” I always assumed Cole did. I turn around to him.

“You did that?”

“Yes, you like fresh flowers and always kept some in your room, so I figured you’d want some here.” My heart swells and I pull Heath into a hug. He is so incredibly sweet, and I can’t believe I took it for granted.

“What’s this for? You’re hugging me really tight.” I pull away unaware of how hard I was actually holding him.

“You’re just really sweet.” I tell him. Heath pulls me to him and kisses my forehead.

“Pick out some clothes, I’ll start the shower.” Heath walks into the bathroom and I go over to my dresser. I pull out a white lounge set that has little purple flowers all over it and take out matching panties too. “Water is hot.” Heath calls out.

I slip off my heels and toss them to the side.

Walking into the bathroom I see he already set out two large towels.

I place my clothes on the counter and brush my hair out then run a hair mask through

it.

I need to refresh my hair. After the mask is on I undress, and pee; finally.

I wash my hands quickly, then grab my towel, and head to the shower.

I slip open the side of the curtain finding Heath already inside.

His body is fully drenched in water looking as if he's oiled and glowing.

He's gotten fitter, his abs are more prominent, almost staring at me and his arms hold much more bulk than before.

His shoulders are broad, and legs toned. He's completely jacked now.

"Are you going to get in or just stand there and gawk at me?" He asks, I blush at the fact that I've been caught staring and slip in, closing the curtain behind me. I turn around facing the water and away from him. I wet my towel then grab my body wash placing it on the towel.

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“Let me.” Heath takes my towel and starts to wash my neck.

“You have to turn to me.” I stay under the water and slowly turn to him.

He continues to wash me completely unbothered by the fact that I’m naked meanwhile I’m trying my hardest to keep staring at the wall.

I feel the warm towel glide over my shoulders and down to my breasts which he carefully goes over.

He drags the towel over the little bouquet of flowers I have tattooed between my breasts before working his way down my torso.

I notice his body has new editions, not only are my initials carved in his chest and an A on his thumb, but he now has a magnolia tree tattoo on his shoulder.

“You act as if we’ve never showered together.” He says.

“It’s odd. You’re being so casual as if we aren’t broken up.” I blink a few times as he goes out to my arms, slightly grazing my nipple as he does.

“We’re not. I proposed, now we are engaged.” He replies effortlessly. It’s like he’s already taken in everything and I’m the only one of us completely shocked. I need to process I’m engaged and in another relationship but it’s like I’m alone in that.

“Turn around.” I obey and let Heath wash my back.

“When did you get the magnolia tree tattoo?”

“Last year a couple days before our birthday,” Was the tattoo supposed to be a gift too? “It reminds me of you. That I can have good things.”

“That’s a beautiful meaning,” He deserves good things. He was in this rut for a while after his mom died and his dad got sick that he’ll never have anything good. I’m happy he has worked through that. I feel Heath getting lower to my butt. Nope.

“I’ll wash my bottom.” I tell him, turning around to grab the towel from him.

I turn back around and rinse out the towel and begin to wash my lower half and then I rinse and lather my body again.

Finally, I use a body scrub, and I officially feel completely clean.

When I reach up to my head, Heath pushes my hands aside and begins to rub my scalp himself.

I lean back into him as he does, loving the feeling of his hands on me.

He rinses my hair thoroughly, combing out my curls as well with my shower brush.

Once he’s done, I step aside so Heath can rinse the soap off his body.

I step out and grab my towel, drying myself off then apply my body lotion. I hear Heath step out of the shower. I continue my routine and slip my clothes on then start to wash my face. “Are you uncomfortable?”

“Nervous.” I answer. I don’t know what to do or say. It’s like I’m being pulled in so many different directions and I can’t think of one thing to do. I pat my face dry with

my face towel, standing up straight. Heath is right behind me staring at me through the mirror. “What?”

“Why are you nervous? You know everything about me.”

“I knew everything about you before I broke your heart.”

“Then we will get to know each other again.” Heath wraps his arms around my shoulders. I turn around in his arms and stand on my toes to kiss him. He pulls me in closer, deepening the kiss. I put my arms around his neck, letting myself melt into him. I’ve missed this.

Kissing him.

Feeling completely wanted.

Heath picks me and places me on the counter, sliding his hands down to my waist gripping me tightly as he slips his tongue into my mouth.

I moan into his mouth pressing myself against him.

I need more. I pull him in closer, wrapping my legs around his waist. Heath moves his hand from my face sliding his hand up into my hair, tightly gripping it.

He grips my hair so tightly that it slightly hurts but I love it.

I kiss him harder, sliding my hands down his body to his waist band.

Oh god he’s still naked and I’m not. I lightly push him away, “You should get dressed. I think I still have some of your clothes here.” I jump off the counter and leave the bathroom.

I feel embarrassed because of my neediness but also the fact I forgot he was naked.

I go into my closet and dig in the small plastic organizer.

I pull out a pair of sweatpants, underwear, and a t-shirt of his.

I kept all the clothes of his he gave me even after we broke up.

I still would wash them every so often and put them back up.

I turn around to see Heath standing in the door.

“Sorry I didn’t want us to get carried away.”

“Well then, I’ll just fuck you after your nap. Order whatever you want for your friend, I’ll make sure I get it, and you sleep.” He says as I hand him his clothes.

“I don’t know your password.”

“It’s your birthday.” He answers and starts to put on his clothes.

I smile to myself and go over to his phone which he left on the bathroom counter.

As I type in the password it occurs to me, he’s never changed it, even after the breakup.

It’s still my birthday. I never changed mine either, which is our anniversary.

I guess we’re both still obsessed with each other.

Being with Heath is a consuming feeling really.

A feeling that has always seemed to be the only feeling my mind can fully understand. I know he's the only person for me.

I door dash Maya's Starbucks order and have a pizza delivered for her.

I clean up our dirty clothes and put them in the dirty clothes basket.

Before going into the bedroom, I complete my five-step skincare routine: toner, moisturizer, eye cream, hydrating drops, and lip balm.

Then blow dry my hair, oil it, and tie it back. Now I'm perfect.

I take his phone to the bedroom with me. Walking into the bedroom I say, "There will be Starbucks and a pizza coming."

"Now you sleep, baby." Heath pulls the covers back for me, then turns on my noise machine.

It makes a perfect calming crackling sound that I love.

I slip into bed and get comfortable. Heath gets into bed as well, behind me and pulls me into his arms. Our warmth mixes and I start to feel safe again. I feel at home in his arms.

It's just like old times and it feels like we never broke up before. We're the same, connected forever in the moment.

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AUTUMN

FLASHBACK: JUNIOR YEAR HALLOWEEN

I open the front door revealing Heath standing there with a pizza box.

“Finally.” I pull him inside. I’ve been so bored here alone.

My parents went to this halloween party at the mayor's house, and I declined going to a party with Maya because I know Heath doesn’t really like parties.

He would go for me, but I’ve already asked him to go to like three parties this year already, so I don’t want to bother him with another party.

“So, what do you have in mind for the evening?” He asks, then kisses my head. I close the door behind him and turn to face him.

“Scary movies and an early birthday gift.” I answer and begin walking to the tv room.

“Ou, what kind of gift?”

“You’ll have to wait and see.” Heath sets the pizza down on the coffee table beside the bowl of popcorn. I sat some snacks and drinks out already for us to choose from.

“I picked out *Scream* for us to watch first. I’ll be back with your gift.

” I hurry out of the room and upstairs to grab the spider.

Heath loves spiders, they are his favorite animal so when the exotic animal expo happened, I begged my dad to go and bought a blue tarantula and everything it needs for Heath.

I really hope he loves it. I bring the spider down in its little carrying box and keep it behind my back as I enter the room.

“I missed you.” He pouts.

“I was gone for one minute.” I tell him. He’s so cute. “Okay surprise!” I pull the spider from behind my back.

“Is that-”

“Yep, and don’t say I shouldn’t have. You deserve it.” I know he believes I shouldn’t spend a lot of money on him, and he doesn't need anything fancy, but he truly deserves this. He treats me like I’m his most treasured possession, he deserves to know he’s mine too.

“How did I get so lucky to have you?” He asks. I smile at him and take the spider to its little habitat I made in the corner and put her inside it making sure to close it before going back over to Heath.

“You’ll be able to take everything home with you. I just wanted to spoil you for once.” I say as I approach the sofa. Heath reaches out and pulls me down onto his lap. I place both legs on each side of him to be a little bit more comfortable.

“How could I ever thank you?” He whispers, his voice sweet and husky. His blue eyes capture mine and I’m enthralled of course. The blue of his eyes sparkle as I see the joy all over his face.

“Kiss me.” I normally don’t ignite anything but tonight I want to. Heath pulls me in kissing me softly letting me set the pace and I choose to speed it up. His grip tightens around my waist, and I put my arms around his neck moving closer, speeding up the kiss.

Heath bites my lip hard causing me to gasp and he takes this as an opportunity to stick his tongue into my mouth.

I moan feeling his tongue sweep over the inside of my mouth.

The kiss grows more aggressive, and he turns us, so he is on top of me.

I let my hands wander down his chest and under his shirt touching his abs, as he moves his mouth from mine and begins to kiss my neck.

I feel him lightly suck the skin into his mouth, leaving hickeys again.

My body naturally arches into him. He drags his hand from my waist and cups one of my boobs into his hand giving it a squeeze.

Oh my god this is getting heated. Do I want it to get more heated?

I do but would that just happen. I decide to give him a hint and pull his shirt up.

I tug his blue shirt up and he leans up and takes it off.

Under is the most perfect body I’ve ever seen.

“Can I take yours off?” He asks and I nod. Heath reaches forward and lightly unbuttons my pajama top revealing my naked boobs. I’m not super insecure about my size. I mean I have B-cups but it's nerve wracking because what if he wants someone

with bigger boobs. He's never seen me naked before.

"You're so stunning." He compliments me, making me blush as he pushes the shirt off.

"I'm so lucky." My heart warms, making my stomach flutter hearing his praises.

Heath leans down, taking one of my nipples into his mouth.

As soon as his hot mouth caps itself over my nipple a ripple of pleasure goes through me causing me to warm on the inside. Holy fuck, this is amazing.

He switches nipples making sure they both get attention. I could cum from this feeling alone. I arch more into him gripping onto his back as he kisses down my body. "Can I?" He looks at me. I meet eyes with him; he wants to go down there.

"Yes." I whisper. Heath begins to pull my shorts and panties down.

I'm laying naked out in front of him feeling slightly nervous but also very wet and horny.

I need to be taken care of in some way. Heath starts by kissing my thighs getting me used to the sensation of him being between my legs first. His hands grip around my waist as he gets close, and he starts by placing kisses on my vagina.

After a couple kisses, he licks up slowly and I let out a loud moan at the unexpected pleasure feeling.

He takes this as a sign and continues to lick me slowly gripping my sides.

I dig my hands into the sofa beside me as this heated feeling rises inside me.

Heath begins to suck lightly, causing the feeling to build even more inside of me.

“I think I’m going to orgasm.” I tell him as he sucks more and more of me.

“Then cum into my mouth, beautiful.” That’s all it takes for me to unravel in his hands feeling a wave of immense pleasure go through me. His mouth parts from me and suddenly a cold feeling overtakes. I need him back on me.

Heath begins to pull out his penis and a condom and slips it on smoothly. This is going to be our first time. Oh my god. Will this be both of ours or just mine?

“I’ve never had sex either, Autumn. I’m all yours.

” Heath leans down and kisses me letting me taste myself.

He lines himself up with my entrance and lightly pushes in.

The feeling doesn’t feel nice. It slightly burns and feels like I’m being broken but he leans forward and holds my hands above my head.

“Tell me when to continue.” He leaves it up to me. I know if I don’t get it over with then I’ll never get to the good part.

“You can go.” I tell him and he pushes in more, filling me more. After a few more pushes he begins to form a pace that lightens up the pain. Now I’m filled with the same overwhelming feeling that I felt before. Holy shit he’s good at this.

He picks up the pace, noticing I’m comfortable and we fall into a rhythm of him moving in and out of me and me moaning into the emptiness of the house. I’m definitely going to be a pillow princess. “I love the sound of your moans.” he whispers in my ear, making the tingles over my body increase.

“There’s no way this is your first time.” I tell him breathlessly.

“I know what I like.” He’s right about that. In the next couple of strokes, we both finish, and I’ve successfully let out two orgasms.

“I’ll treasure you always.” He says before pulling me into the sweetest kiss.

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AUTUMN

“ A utumn, baby, wake up.” I groan at being shaken awake. What the hell? I finally get some sleep and now what? I roll over hoping it will stop but it doesn’t.

“Autumn please, I need you to tell me how to get to whatever The Crypt is.” The Crypt, no.

I shoot up, taken aback by the words. I haven’t went to that place since I was a cheerleader in high school and thank God for that.

It was hell on earth. The only reason it wasn’t so bad for me was because I was dating Heath and the two times someone tried to hit on me, he pushed them down the stairs and threatened them to never talk to me again or else.

Then he beat up football players the next time. Everyone stopped after that.

“What’s going on?”

“Montana called Grimm saying she had gotten taken along with Theodora and heard the guys say they were going there.” How the hell would they get taken? Theodora is guarded by her older brothers and Montana’s family is loaded; she has a private driver and a personal guard as her dad is the mayor.

“Let’s go.” I get out of bed and slip on socks along with my UGGS. I grab a jacket, and my phone.

“It’s like you’re going into battle.” Heath chuckles.

“You remember that old church we met at, when a party happened there.” He nods
“Under it are catacombs, that’s The Crypt, where boys take girls to do dirty things.”

“Did someone touch you there?”

“I was lucky, I was dating you.” I tell him, grabbing his hand. We leave my room, and I see Maya is no longer on the sofa, but the pizza is open. She saw it, good. I text Maya telling her what’s going on. She replies quickly.

Maya:

I took DJ to work. Be careful and good luck on your mission. I love you

Me:

I’ll give you all the details about last night when we both get back. We can have a girl’s night.

I put my phone into my pocket as we leave the apartment. “How is Grimm?” I ask Heath. He must feel horrible, knowing he couldn’t protect Montana. Or Thea.

“Pissed.” He answers. Grimm is Montana’s brother’s best friend, but I believe he’s always had some secret thing for her.

And her him. Heath quickly starts his truck up and leaves, speeding to St. Bernard’s Church. The place has been completely abandoned for years but oddly very up kept. We reach the old church seeing Grimm’s black jeep already outside, along with another car.

Heath randomly parks somewhere then jumps out beelining to Grimm's Jeep. Grimm gets out holding a baseball bat.

I turn off the truck, take the keys and get out myself. "Scottie hey, I didn't expect you two together." Grimm says as I approach.

"Let's just say we fixed things." Heath says. Grimm's eyes widen as if he's realizing something.

"You did the thing." Grimm says, patting his shoulder.

"Did everyone know you planned to torture me?" I ask before turning around and walking over to the church.

"Just the trusted circle Scottie." God, I've always hated that dumb nickname his friends gave me.

It's kind of cute when Rex does it but that is because he's all nerdy but from Grimm and Thatcher, it is degrading.

At least Thatcher is away in New York right now.

I roll my eyes and lead them to the side of the church that has the catacomb door and open it.

"This has been here the whole time?" Grimm asks.

"It's normally covered." I reply. Normally some of the football players cover it with a makeshift top that's covered in leaves and vines, concealing it.

"I'll go first." Grimm swings his baseball bat over his shoulder and slides his mask

over his face.

I forgot they all had one and I'm the one who made them.

Unlike Heath's black and orange colored mask, Grimm's is black and in the little dents it's gotten over time he's painted in silver.

Heath puts his mask as well and follows Grimm down into the catacombs.

"Keep straight. They are most likely in the third room." I tell Grimm as we descend the staircase lit by a couple of torches on the wall.

I hate this place, it's always given me a very creepy vibe with the cold stone walls, spider webs in the corners, the dirt floors, and dim lighting. It feels so enclosed.

The last time I was down here was senior year and there was the end of the year party for the athletes.

Grimm leads us close to the third room where we start to hear voices. "Now why don't you two tell us why you think you're too good for us. For god's sake you're cheerleaders." A guy laughs.

"I know I'm too good for you." Montana replies.

"She's not. She's an old dirty country rat." A new voice comments. They must be talking about Theodora.

"Leave her alone. She's way too fucking young," Montana says. It sounds like she's getting pissed.

"That's why she's a good one," That's so gross.

Heath quietly walks to the other side of the door and pulls out a pocketknife.

I stay where I am behind Grimm, too scared to move to the other side of the door.

Him and Grimm nod to each other before bursting into the room.

I peek through the doorway seeing Grimm hit the boy near Montana clear over the head with his bat and continue beating him while Heath fights the other.

I run over to the girls and start to untie them from the wooden poles they have them tied to.

“Thank fucking god.” Montana throws her head back, relieved.

“Why did they want you two?” I ask them as I untie her.

“They tried to talk to us in the hall after school and started talking about tonight's party down here and saying we should come because we know we are the compensation from the big man, but we refused so they said they would keep us here until then.” Theodora explains.

“The big man?” I move onto untying Theodora.

“Yeah, I guess some guy tries to pimp us out in exchange for his debts.” Montana says.

“Who is this guy?”

“His business card is somewhere on the ground.” Theodora says as I finish untying her.

“I didn’t think this would be when I see my estranged cousin,” referring to Grimm.

The Mcentire and Grimm family have always had some underlying issues.

I start to search the ground close to them and find a metal gray card.

I pick it up, observing it. I recognize the logo; it’s crossed axes with a skull in the center and the place is called The Exchange.

I know I’ve seen this before. Nothing seems off to me until I notice the name.

It’s a code name my father always used to identify himself when he was around shifty people: Jack Cobalt.

My fathers middle name is Jack, and his fathers was Cobalt, so he put them both together.

“This is my dad’s.”

“I’ve seen him around sometimes.” Montana says. Sometimes! He comes down here?

“Time to go ladies.” Grimm calls out. Theodora wastes no time leaving. Montana still stands in front of me as if she’s going to do something but doesn’t.

“Montana, let’s go.” Grimm says, demanding her to start moving.

“I’m sorry,” She whispers, walking away.

“You take them home, me and Autumn got this.” Heath tells Grimm. I turn around facing them in complete shock of what I’ve found.

My dad could be or is trafficking girls to some guy but for what? Why young girls? Why are the football players in on it? And who is he working for because I know my dad wouldn't do this alone.

I'm drawn away from my thoughts for a moment as I see the two high school boys laying on the ground unmoving.

Oh god. My chest tightens at the scene and a pit rises in my stomach. What the fuck. They are all bloodied and beaten. Their faces are barely recognizable anymore.

"Are they dead?" I ask Heath. I think they are, but I need confirmation.

"Yeah, we need to bury them." We?

We! I can't do this.

I'm not a criminal and last time I checked this was a first-class ticket to prison. My chest heaves up and down as I stare at the scene in front of me. Two teenagers just bleeding out on the ground while he's standing over them. Bile threatens to raise up my throat, but I swallow it down.

"Autumn?" Heath calls my name, but I'm stuck in tunnel vision backing away from the scene till my body collides with a solid surface. "Hey, you, okay?" Heath is now in front of my face in clear view. I still say nothing, only sliding down the wall and he follows.

"I can't do this.....it's too much. I can't be a part of a murder," I cry, tears streaming down my face.

"It's okay, Freckles, I can do it on my own. What do you need me to do for you?" My mind still whirls at the possibility of prison as I cry harder.

“Distract me.” I whisper. Yeah, that will help.

Heath leans in kissing me hard but I can’t kiss him back, I’m still in my thoughts.

It doesn’t bother him though he continues kissing me while slowly moving my body under him.

Now I lay on the ground. The coldness of the ground is slightly distracting, but I can still see the bodies behind me and the scene of Heath and Grimm hurting them pops into my head.

Heath holds my waist to the ground as he kisses my neck. This isn’t distracting enough. “I need something more. Please.” I cry.

“Okay, but you asked for it.” He says, slightly unsure but completely willing.

I feel my leggings and panties get slipped down first before he slips down his sweatpants.

I don’t have time to think about anything before he plunges inside of me.

My eyes widen. My mind is totally taken over by the sudden feeling of him inside of me.

“Holy shit,” I say.

“I told you, you asked for it,” Heath says, plowing into me hard. This was the perfect distraction.

“Fuck,” the word rolls out of my mouth slowly as I get overtaken by the pleasure.

“That right baby, put all your attention on me.” Heath says. I’m finally able to turn away from the bodies and look at Heath. His eyes get me every time. Staring into his eyes doesn’t last long as I feel him hit my cervix and my eyes roll back, and I moan out.

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I can't believe I'm having sex in the same room as dead people. This feels so wrong. Within a few more strokes my body starts to release into an orgasm, and I feel Heath finish along with me.

"Are you good and distracted?" He asks, pulling out of me.

"Absolutely," I reply, smiling at him. He leans down and kisses my forehead before standing up, pulling up his pants.

"Heath, you finished inside of me." I state. I can not get pregnant right now.

"I'll get you a Plan-B," He shrugs like it's not a big deal. I stand up and pull my panties and leggings up. I'm going to need another shower.

"It's so hot you're going to walk around with my cum inside of you," Heath says, looking at me in awe.

"I'm sure it is," I reply, shaking my head. Somehow, he's able to be lighthearted right now. I'm still freaked by the bodies but at least I'm not having a panic attack anymore.

"I won't help get rid of bodies. Their car is out there. We can't leave it, that would be a dead giveaway." It would be a reckless choice to bury them and leave the car.

"I can put them in the car and crash it."

"I'm going to the truck." I tell Heath and he tosses me the keys from his pocket. He

picks up the boys and puts them over his shoulders and we both leave out of The Crypt. Thankfully, I'm out of that dark and eerie place.

I unlock his truck and get inside. I didn't think they would kill them, but they did. I'm more shocked that I think I always knew they were capable of dangerous things but now I'm an accomplice.

Okay, Autumn shake this off. You didn't kill anyone, and no one will find out.

I let out a long breath before going through his truck and I find some matches and two bottles of beer.

Perfect. I hear a door and turn around to see Heath going around the car and placing the other boy in and crank up the car. He closes the door and gets behind it.

"Wait!" I jump out of the truck and run over and pour the bottles of beer over the car. "Now." Heath pushes the car into a giant tree crashing it and I strike a match and toss it onto the car.

I can't believe I'm doing this. I'm a criminal but more importantly Heath killed someone. "Why did you kill him?" I ask.

"Scared of me now?"

"No, I need to know you killed for a reason."

"These fuckers can't mess with anyone else." Heath says. "I'd do the same for you." That should scare me, but it doesn't. I'm not happy he killed someone, but I believe it was for a good reason.

The car goes up in flames and the windows blow out. I turn around and head for his

truck to get out of here. I need to go. Heath goes back over messing up our footprints before getting inside. Heath reverses out and drives to the road then he gets out again and messes up the tire tracks.

As he does this, I pull out my phone and dial my dad's number.

The phone starts to ring and a pit forms in my stomach.

The phone keeps ringing and no answer. So, I hang up and flip the card over and call that number.

I hope to God he doesn't answer. I don't know if I could handle him answering the phone.

I don't know if I could handle this being my dad.

My phone starts to ring again calling this number. "Password?" A voice asks but it's not my dad, thankfully. I quickly hang up just as Heath is getting into the truck.

"I need to go somewhere," Heath pauses for a moment, leaning back in his seat. This could be a really stupid decision, but I need to know if something there could explain it all.

"Where?"

"It's a place the football players would take their favorite cheerleaders; they called it The Club House. It's in the woods behind Divinci's graveyard." Heath's face contorts in a way to where I can tell he is debating how to feel.

"Let's go," Surprisingly I don't have to do any convincing.

He just starts the truck and drives to the graveyard.

We park outside the iron gates, and I lead him around to the back woods.

It's nestled just enough in the woods so no one will notice.

The place is just this old shed that has the red paint chipping off.

I haven't been here in so long. All the memories come flashing back of the drinking, the guys trying to get the girls on their laps, basically having sex in front of anyone in the room, and cheer ignition.

I turn the knob, finding the door unlocked.

It's hardly ever left open like this. I push the door open and walk inside seeing everything is mostly the same.

The same L-shaped cream sofa, the dining room table over in the corner with a mini fridge and microwave.

The old rug on the floor, the Christmas lights on the ceiling, everything is still here.

"Okay, they used to keep stuff in the safe in the little table over there." I tell Heath pointing to the brown table in the right corner.

Heath goes over, finding the safe. I find the secret key hidden in the sofa and pull it out.

I take it over to Heath and unlock the safe.

Inside is exactly what I thought I'd find.

Polaroids of the cheerleaders, a complete list of the current team and every past team, a map of the town including underground places, money, a contact list, and burner phones.

“What is all of that for?” Heath asks.

“For when they sell us off. I think this is how Molly Henry went missing.”

“Who?” I find the polaroid of her and show him. She was one of the quiet ones on the team when I was a freshman even though she was a junior.

“She never wanted to go out, or drink, she barely came to the team sleepovers. Then one day she just disappeared. Her family said she ran away but I never believed it because she wasn’t that type of girl, but it was well covered up.

” I tell Heath my theory. Maybe that’s why her picture has x’s over her eyes.

“This town has a lot of mysteries,”

“That it does,” I say, turning around from the safe. “I need to text Montana.”

I pull out my phone and text Montana. I want to get to the bottom of this, and she is going to help.

Theodora is going to be too hard to reach, and she may tell her brothers, but Montana would want to find out too.

She’s always been curious; that’s one thing I learned from the two years we were on the cheer team together.

Me:

I know this is maybe the last thing you want to talk about, but can I meet you? I need to talk to you about what happened. I have intel.

Montana:

Where?

Me:

The diner. Tomorrow night at ten.

“I’m meeting Montana tomorrow night.” I tell Heath.

“Good. I have a feeling this will get bad.” Heath says. I know deep down he’s right, I just wish it wasn’t true. It’s so much. So dark.

“I’ll give you a moment. Meet me in the truck, Freckles.” He kisses my forehead and leaves the shed.

AUTUMN

“Can you take me to my house?” I ask him, as I get inside his truck.

“Of course, Freckles, buckle up.” Heath replies.

I fasten my seatbelt. He reaches over and grabs my hand as he starts to drive.

We hold hands as he drives back into the main part of town and into the neighborhood, I have always lived in.

Large houses start to fill my view as we ride down the road.

We stop at my house, a large white two-story home that sticks out with a green door and a balcony on the second floor.

“Can you stay here? I need to have a private talk with my mom?” I ask him as he stops the truck.

“Whatever you need, baby.” Heath kisses my hand, and I get out of the truck. I wrap my jacket closely around me and go up to my house. I don’t bother to knock, instead I open the door with my key.

“Mom!” I call out entering. “Mom!”

“In the kitchen!” She calls back. I go into the kitchen to find my mom making her raspberry tea. “What’s the lovely reason you came over?” My mom asks, bringing

over a plate of brownies and her tea to the table.

“I need to talk to you about this.” I hand my mom the business card I found. She takes the card, sighing, flipping it over in her hands.

“I never wanted you to find out about this.”

“You knew!” I answer shocked and fully confused on why she would let dad do this. My mom has always been the top advocate for girls protecting themselves and she knew about this!

How could she?

“It’s not what you think. Autumn, when we wanted to have a baby, we couldn’t and IVF didn’t work then your dad found a young girl at a store, she was upset and crying.

She was about eighteen and she was pregnant with you, but a man owned her, so your father paid him to have the baby, have you.

” Mom explains. They bought me! What kind of consciousness do you have to have to do that?

It’s kind of insane to do that just because you can’t have kids.

I have no words for this kind of situation.

Who buys a child from a pregnant teenager and not buy the mom?

Especially with her being so young. “I know this is shocking but he only wanted to make me happy. I was becoming so depressed I couldn’t have a baby, and he said he

got something and told me everything.

We got the proper adoption papers too, but I didn't feel good about buying you.

That was wrong. When you reached high school, the man came back blackmailing us to work for him.

Your dad talked him out of messing with me and you but in exchange your dad must find people to do our jobs.

Thus, the other young girls and the football players. ” My mother pushes the card back to me.

“Does anyone else in the town do this? And why not buy my mother?”

“Yes, and when talking to your mother she begged us to only take you and never look back,”

“Who is the man?” I reluctantly ask.

“You can't tell anyone, but Caroline Dyer's and Nora Eros' fathers run the whole thing, but the head boss is only known as The Mole. It's an organization and their father's only run it in a few states.

They are only part of the big man role,” They are two powerful men.

I think they are even involved in organized crime.

One being a senator and the other is mayor and owns all the real estate in this town.

Owns the town really and like half of New Jersey.

“I’m not okay with any of this but we are done after this year.

Come December we will never have to deal with this again. ”

“I need air,” I get up and head for the door. “And time to process.”

“We really love you, Autumn. Regardless of where you came from. I know it’s not great but believe me, we love you.” My mom sounds desperate, and her voice almost sounds laced with sadness.

“What was my birth moms name?”

“Emily Johnson. She wasn’t from here. She ran away from her abusive family. She died from an overdose a year after having you.” My mom answers.

“I love you too. I just need some space right now” I say smiling at my mom then I leave out of the house. The cool air hits my face bringing me back to reality as if I’ve been in a dream.

It feels like a dream. It should've been a dream. So many things are unfolding, and I have no idea what to do. Or how to handle it.

“How was it?” I hear Heath ask and turn to see him sitting on the porch swing. I sigh and sit down beside him and begin to explain everything that I just found out myself.

“I’m sorry, Freckles.” Heath puts his arm on my shoulders and pulls me into him. I settle into the comfort of his arms letting the feeling totally take me over. Calmness takes over my body and warmth pairs with it.

“It’s okay. They are still my family. I’m not hurt about that but it’s just that I can’t believe they did all of that.” I lean my head onto his shoulder.

“Plus, you have me,” Heath kisses my head, “And we will get to the bottom of this.”

“Unless I become a little traitor again.” I joke, causing him to laugh.

I wouldn't dream of leaving him again. He's perfect and I feel perfectly at home with him.

I stare down at my ring thinking of what I could possibly do next.

How will we figure everything out? I hope my dad truly does get out of this dark ring in December.

I couldn't bare to see him stressing over this. I just want him to be happy.

“I dare you to leave me again, Little Traitor. I'd love to see you try.”

AUTUMN

The diner doesn't have anyone but rowdy teens in it this late. I guess that's a good thing considering the topic we are here to discuss.

"Do you want me to go in with you?" Heath asks, squeezing my thigh.

"No. I don't want to intimidate her or make her feel like it's a trap?"

"How would I do that?" Heath almost sounds offended, causing Grimm to chuckle in the backseat.

"I think we fall in the category of scary boyfriends," Grimm comments.

"You don't have a girlfriend," Rex says. Jesus why did I agree to them coming. These two are always bickering like brothers. Rex being the intelligent one and Grimm just being reckless. I look up spotting Montana walking into the diner wearing the red, white, and black cheer uniform.

"I have to go," I say, trying to rush out of the truck before anyone can ask questions, but his grip tightens on my thigh and the back of my neck.

I turn around to face Heath as he has caught my attention.

He places a firm kiss on my lips before letting me go.

I try my best not to fall out of the door considering the fact that he just made me weak

in the knees.

I tighten my jacket around me as the wind blows and run up to the front door.

A bell dings through the diner as I enter.

“Welcome to Concrete Kitchen!” One of the girl's yells as I walk in. She doesn't look up from cleaning the tables as I spot Montana in a booth in the back and another waitress taking her order.

The uniforms remain the same from when I worked here, black top with the diner symbol on it, short spandex checkered shorts, and white converse.

On chilly days if the long sleeves aren't working you can wear the cropped leather jacket.

I wait for the waitress to walk away before going to Montana. “I'm happy you came,” I say, sliding into the booth opposite of her.

“What is this about?” Okay, we are jumping right into action. I sigh, looking around us. The only other people in here are on the other side of the place.

“I found this,” I slide over the items I found in the safe. “Can you tell me what my dad does when you see him around,”

Montana sighs flipping through the pictures and papers.

“He mostly talks to the principal. But he always comes with Nora or Caroline's dad.

Nora finds it suspicious, which is odd because I know my best friend and she is shy and oblivious.

” Nora must not know anything but that doesn’t mean she hasn’t seen anything.

“And Caroline? She still cheers?”

“Yes, she's the captain. She’s met with Beala the cheer captain at Grimstone University because she’s getting a scholarship next year,” Montana slides the items back over to me just as the waitress comes back.

“One birthday cake milkshake. Can I get you anything?” I lookup at the waitress and shake my head. “Okay, enjoy!”

I wait till she’s gone to talk again. “Have the boys tried Caroline or Nora?”

“No, I think they are off limits,” Of course they would be. They are the daughters of the bosses. “I think something big is going to happen soon. I go to college next year, and everyone keeps talking about this conclave happening. I think that’s when we will find more answers.”

“How do you know that?”

“Nora. She spills everything plus she showed me this from her dad's office.” Montana hands her phone over to me and on it is a picture of a ripped paper with symbols on it. A code that has the decipher at the bottom.

You’re invited to the Hallows Eve Conclave 2026

“I’m not sure what it means but Nora said her dad will be out of town that day,” I guess the game isn’t the only thing we have to look forward to next year. “I also know the boys will be cooling off till then, this party that I was kidnapped for was a last hurrah for now.”

“What they are doing must call for big planning.”

“Why are you asking all of this?” Montana asks, leaning back in her seat.

“My dad is a part of it and I’m not sure if my mom is lying to me,” That catches her attention as she sits up smirking.

“I want something in return for what I know,” I nod, letting her continue. “I want in.” Grimm won’t like this but right now she has leads.

“Sorry to interrupt, someone came up to me round back and told me to give this to you both.” The waitress tells us, placing a folded paper on the table. She walks away and I immediately grab the paper leaning over the table opening it.

My breath hitches seeing the words, I look at Montana before looking out the window into Heath’s headlights before turning back.

“Fuck,” She whispers sitting the paper down. I look over it again confirming what I thought it said.

Teagan may be next, and you’re invited to the Hollow’s Eve Conclave 2026

James Eros