



The world that faded
behind

The sun dipped low on the horizon, leaving behind a mural of crimson shades swirling in the sky. The clouds danced along the wind as the colours slowly drained into darkness. Eva took out her phone. The screen illuminated as it came to life: 10:45 pm. "Where is she?" she thought impatiently as she stood at the side walk.

Harper was supposed to pick her up two hours ago from the library. But yet again she was late. Eva couldn't exactly say she is surprised. Harper is always late. Always. For someone who claims to be her best friend, Harper forgets everything about her. Her birthday? Forgot it. Her graduation party? Forgot it. But when she does remember... of course, she's late.

With a deep sigh, Eva called her. She answered on the third ring. "Harper! Where are you?! I've been waiting for hours at the library!" Eva asked, annoyed. The line went silent for a...



I was
minute. "Oh... I forgot. I'm suppose to pick you
up..." Harper replied. Though she didn't sound exac-
tly convincing. "You know... I'm too tired to
come pick you up, why don't you take the bus?
Or maybe walk home?" The dismissal tone in
Harper's voice hurt Eva just a bit, but she was
mostly angry with her. "Harper! You can't just--"
But before she could even finish, Harper hung
up.

Eva stared down at her phone,
there is no way she can catch a bus this late.
But her apartment wasn't near the library
at either. The sun had already left for its
slumber and she had no choice but to walk. So
she did.

The streets were empty and silent.
The darkness had engulfed the lively city, Her
steps echoed in the silence, steady and rhythmic
as she walked down the sidewalk.

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Eva couldn't help but let her mind drift back to Harper's dismissal. Her chest tightened as her mind swirled with thoughts: Harper has been her side-or-die since middle school. Closest friend, closest ally. But ~~ever since~~ But sometimes Harper acted so ~~was~~ unkindly.

Eva found herself thinking back to the many arguments they've had over the years. Every unnecessarily hurtful word Harper would say, every secret she would use against her. Eva had always dismissed it as "heat of the moment." But lately it feels personal. More forgotten.

The sound of water droplets hitting the dry asphalt snapped Eva out of her thoughts. Her gaze fell on the tiny wet spots on the road illuminated by the soft glow of the street lamp.



The rain began pouring slowly and Eva quickly took shelter at the bus stop near the corner. The rain intensified almost immediately, soaking every dry surface there was. Eva sat heavily, slumping against the metal frame of the seat.

As she waited for the rain to pass, she thought of Harper again. 'Maybe I should call her....' She thought sadly. There is definitely something broken between them and she yearned to mend it. She took out her phone from her pocket and dialed Harper's number.

One ring. & Two ring. Three ring. Voicemail. Eva sighed heavily again. She felt the last glimmer of hope fading from within her. 'How can she possibly fix this if she didn't even know what's broken?'



She sat there watching the rain droplets collide and splatter against the hard asphalt for what seemed to be hours. The rain didn't show any signs of stopping and as it was getting late, after a jaking a moment to think she decided to continue her walk... even through the rain.

Eva slowly stepped into the pour. The drops sank into the fabric of her dress, making it cling to her body like a second skin. The rain felt like pellets against her body, sending jolts of pain suppling through her. Eva quickened her pace, wanting to reach the warmth and comfort of her home quickly.

The rain however, showed no mercy on her. It poured harder and heavier, drenching her completely from head to toe.



She started running as fast as she could. Not to reach home - She is nowhere close to her apartment - ~~but~~ but to find a shelter again. She regretted ever deciding to walk through the rain and ~~was~~ desperately wished to be dry again. But a shelter was nowhere to be found.

Eventually though, the rain ~~did~~ seemed to be dying down. Eva decreased the pace of her run so she was walking again. She ~~let~~ let out a deep breath. She ~~was is~~ was about 20 minutes away from her house.

She continued her journey down the empty street, taking a sight from Kings street to 3rd avenue. ~~But~~ However, an unsettling feeling wound itself up in her chest. A feeling of being watched. Of being followed.



She looked behind her over her
her shoulder a few times. 'Nobody's there.'
Don't be ridiculous. She reassured herself though
the feeling never really went away. She
could hear this sound. Almost like a footstep.
But there is no one behind her. She thought
she might be going crazy and tried to ignore
her thoughts.

Though that decision later proved
to be a mistake. The pace of the footsteps
she heard ~~was~~ quickened. And before she got
a chance to look back a hand wrapped around
her neck from behind keeping her mouth shut.
Then she felt something sharp pierce the skin
of her neck and suddenly everything felt dizzy
and blurry. The tight street lights swirled around
as her vision became unsteady. Then... darkness



She could hear the sound of water dripping down somewhere. Drop by drop. Eva's head felt heavy, and Eva opened her eyes, slowly, hesitantly. She blinked rapidly, trying to adjust to the harsh fluorescent light. Her gaze swept across the strange yet familiar place she found herself at.

The room is near empty except the tiny mattress in the top far right corner. The concrete walls surrounding her is old and withered. Where is she? What happened? she isn't sure herself. Slowly the panic set in as she realised she has been abducted.

But she didn't scream, didn't shout for help. Because she recognised where she is. And she knew no one would hear her from down here. This is a bunker. A nuclear bunker. Under Harper's house.



Eva sat there, helpless and scared. Her heart beat loud in her ear. She kept her gaze fixed on the door of the bunker, knowing instinctively someone will come soon enough.

The large metal door squeaked open before a dark figure stepped in. Soft morning light streamed in through the open space before it was gone again. She recognized the figure almost immediately, Harper.

"Hello Eva" ~~Harper~~ Harper's voice said as her deep blue eyes fell on Eva. "Hope you didn't miss me too much." The twisted way Harper said those words and the hidden hint of satisfaction wasn't lost on Eva.

Harper felt different to her now. The victorious smirk on her face, the dark and murderous glint in her eyes. It

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It all seemed so different from the sweet, kind and untroubled Harper she knew. At least she thought she knew.

Eva stared blankly at Harper for a long time. She has one question for her. "Why...?" The question hung in the air for a long time. Then Harper's grin widened amicably. She walked over to Eva with a predatory look before kneeling down before her.

"Why?" She repeated dully. "Such a great question. I'll tell you why sweet Eva. Why I kidnapped you. Why I plan on torturing you." Her cold hand grasped Eva's chin, her nails digging into the soft flesh as she tilted her face up.



"I've put up with you for so long. Just waiting for an opportunity to take my revenge. You rich brats are all the same. Spoiled. Entitled. And so full of yourself. Flaunting around daddy's money like it's worthless. Do you know how hard some of us have to work for those privileges. The same privileges that has been handed to people like you on a silver platter? You would never understand the pain. Eva. Never."

Her words hit Eva like a freight train. Each letter searing & itself into her flesh. She never knew Harper felt this way. Never. But And although she understands her pain in a level what she doesn't understand is what she did in particular. But the answer was there all along. Eva isn't all squeaky clean as she thought she was.



..... She has treated others poorly over
states: But that was all the way back in
highschool: She had changed so much after that:
She looked at Harper: A part of her longed
to apologise and explain, but ~~for~~ another
part told her to not do that: To remain quite:

..... ~~But she~~ She choose to try and
explain to Harper: But before she even had
a chance, Harper stood up: "Saw it." The pain
in her voice was distinct: ~~but~~ Eva watched
helplessly as she walked out of the bunker without
another look at her:

..... Weeks passed: Or maybe months:
& Eva wasn't exactly sure: locked in this
bunker has made her loose her sense of time
entirely: Harper should be here any moment
to bring her food: like she always do every-
day: Eva had lost all hope of escaping:



She was chained to the wall and given barely any food to replenish her hunger. She longed to touch the grass again. To feel the world outside. But she is locked away from it all.

The metal door opened with a squeak again and Eva looked up expecting to see Harper with a tray of food. But it wasn't Harper. But an officer. Her eyes widened. "What?" she breathed out involuntarily. The more uniformed officers flooded in. They unchained her, took her outside.

Eva was confused. Very confused. But also excited and happy. The paramedics checked her out and soon ~~her~~ ^{her} she watched as they dragged out a cuffed Harper. Eva still wasn't sure how the cops knew where to find her but she felt relieved that they did.



A few moments later, her parents arrived. Her heart lept as she saw them, throwing herself into their arms. Tears flowed freely down her face, the salty water drops blurring her vision.

"How did you find me?" She asked them, breathlessly between sobs. Her father smiled at her softly. His fingers reached out and took the her necklace locket in his hand. "Through this"

She listened intently as they explained it was a tracker and that they picked up fragments of signal from it every day. She thought back to Harper bringing her food everyday. The signal must have been sent everytime she opened the door.



She didn't know whether to be happy or so angry with them for tracking her. But at that moment she felt relieved as her parents left her side to talk to the police she gazed around at the trees and birds around her.

Being away from this world made her realise just how beautiful and serene it all is. All these things she took for granted. With trembling fingers she picked up a ~~up~~ fallen leaf in her hand. Feeling its softness made her feel alive.

But deep inside she knew her world had changed completely. Even if the world around her seems normal, she wasn't. And she never will be. And And she knew ~~it is a~~ that that is a reality she now has to learn to live by.