

VII Marissa

Marissa was the new girl senior year. I had a habit of chasing new things, and she was exactly that. I impulsively stalked her on social media. I realized she dated a girl at her last school. That gave me enough of a reason to message her.

I convinced myself I was going to be casual with her, “Hey. I saw you at school and noticed you used to have a girlfriend, what happened?”

“Hi. Yeah I had a girlfriend at my last school until I met my boyfriend. My boyfriend and I actually just broke up. I’ve heard about you though.”

Am I famous? I messaged her back, “How have you heard about me?”

“My ex-girlfriend knew your ex, Lauren? I think that was her name.”

“Oh yeah. That would be my ex,” I replied.

“I’m bad at messaging on here. Text me instead,” and just like that, I had Marissa’s phone number.

She came on stronger than anyone I’d ever met before. She asked to hang out almost immediately, like she already decided something about me.

Two days after my first message, she was in my car. I drove her to my smoke spot, a dirt parking lot off of a dead end road. The longer we sat there, the louder my anxiety got. We smoked from my bowl. I barely spoke. At one point, I jolted out of the car to throw up. She walked over to try to rub my back but I waved her away.

I dropped her off at her house and apologized for the worst first hangout imaginable.

On the drive home, I tried to make sense of it.

Paige and I had broken up four days earlier. Maybe it was guilt. Or maybe my anxiety was because Marissa moved faster than I did. That’s saying something because I was the stereotypical U-Haul lesbian.

That night she texted me, “Dude this is weird. I like really like you already.”

That was the beginning of September. I retreated for two months. I still gave Marissa attention but not to a satisfying extent. She felt pulled in then pushed away. We didn’t hang out much. If at all. But we were texting constantly. Our texts sounded like we were already a couple, “I love you. Don’t forget that I’m always here. You’re everything to me,” she said.

She stuck around even when I didn’t have much to give. If I wanted to give her what she deserved then I needed to focus on getting out of my

looped panic attacks. I was missing a lot of school and decided to reconnect with my close friends.

In November, I found my soulmate. Not romantically, but in a completely platonic way. Myles and I met through a mutual friend. All three of us were hanging out until she had a family emergency that she had to deal with. She hopped out of my car, which left Myles and I alone.

We looked at each other in silence until I asked, "Want to go get KFC?"

It was a night full of laughter, the type that leaves your stomach hurting. We ate KFC and he almost shit himself.

I was speeding the entire way to my house. I pulled into my driveway and he ran straight in. I yelled to him, "Second door on your right!"

I went inside. My mom came out of her office and my dad came down the stairs. My dad said, "Jesus, what is that smell?"

I put a big smile on my face, "Oh that's my new friend Myles."

"That poor boy," my dad replied with a pity laugh.

Myles flushed the toilet and came out to be greeted by both my parents, "You guys have a lovely home."

Laughing with Myles was healing.

By the end of November, I felt like I could finally give Marissa what she'd been patiently waiting for... me.

Once her chase was over, she acted differently. I went to hang out with Myles and she sent me a long text, "I don't mean to send this and have it ruin your day but you need to act right or I can't do this because you're sucking the life out of me."

I told Myles that I had to go and drove to Marissa's house. I went to see her to tell her I would give her anything she needed - attention, effort, time.

I started driving her to school, which meant leaving my house fifteen minutes earlier. I gave her any free time I had. We became a pair. If I was going to hang out with Myles, Marissa would be there.

There's one thing I'll never deny about Marissa, we had the best sexual chemistry. She had devilish, green eyes. She had a cute little birth mark underneath her eye and a Monroe piercing above her lip. She was an artist when it came to her makeup. My favorite was when she would put on wine red lipstick. She had an intoxicating allure.

I set up a perfect date for us. I drove a Dodge Avenger. I called him Ricky. I set up the back seat with a soft blanket, pillows, and battery powered Christmas lights. I got her favorite snacks - cosmic brownies, smart food, and

sour patch kids. I folded PJs for us on the floor and rolled two blunts. I picked her up and brought her back to the dirt parking lot.

We started by smoking the blunts while listening to our favorite music. We moved to the backseat and I put a movie on my laptop. The movie became background noise because we instantly undressed each other. I'm thankful a cop never showed up because we were there for hours.

One night in February, I was listening to Selfish by PnB Rock when she blew up my instagram by commenting "mine" on all of my instagram pictures. I loved how possessive she was with me.

On Valentine's Day, Marissa made up an excuse for why she couldn't ride with me to school. I was annoyed but I also didn't mind the extra fifteen minutes of sleep. I got to school and she met me in the lobby to walk me to my first class. She kissed me, waved, and said, "enjoy your first class," with a big grin.

I walked through the door and all of my classmates were staring at me. *Jesus, did we all decide to be homophobic today?* As I made my way to my desk, I saw a giant stuffed monkey in my seat. That was the first time a girl made me feel like a princess. All my friends started screaming, "Isn't that so freaking cute! I'm so jealous."

I was drunk in love but I was getting too close to alcohol poisoning. Myles pulled me aside and told me, "I don't think what you and Marissa have is healthy. You're with her all the time and all I ever see you two doing is fighting."

Instead of listening to him, I told Marissa that he was talking shit about us. That's when she made me choose. It was Myles or her.

For a high schooler, it was an easy choice.

A couple weeks later, I was planning Marissa's birthday surprise when I texted her that I missed Myles. I must have triggered her because she texted me, "You can just have Myles honestly. I'm so over everything. I just want to be done and leave."

I replied, "I already picked you. Just cause I miss Myles doesn't mean I want him over you. I really don't know what you want from me."

No reply from her.

At the end of the school day, I waited for her in the hallway but she never came. I walked to the senior parking lot by myself. As I walked to my car, I heard her laugh. I looked up to try to find her. A car sped by me and I watched Marissa duck down. *No fucking way.* I knew exactly whose car she was in. *Fucking Kim.*

I didn't bother texting her again that day. I could feel tension in every muscle. She called me when she got home but I ignored it. She kept calling until I finally gave in, "Hello?"

"Why haven't you been answering me?"

"Are you serious? Marissa, come on."

"So I can't make friends now?"

"Make friends? You want to be friends with the only person at school that hates everything about me? It's not fucking fair. You did it out of spite. I don't deserve that."

"Not true. I have a class with her. She's funny. She asked to hang out and I had a good time. You don't get to choose who I can and can't be friends with."

"You have to be fucking kidding me. Do you not understand that you made me choose between you and my best friend but now you're going to be friends with Kim. That's so hypocritical."

"She won't get in the way of us, I promise. I won't hang out with her again if it's that big of a deal. I'm sorry."

"It's whatever, honestly. I just don't want to talk about her anymore."

Marissa turned eighteen on March 1, 2017. I painted a box and put a bunch of wrapped gifts inside. I blew up black and green balloons to fill my car. I picked her up for school that morning. She covered her mouth and shouted, "Baby, you did not have to do this. I love you so much."

I promised her that I would take her home with me after school. We got to my house and went right up to my bedroom. I asked what she wanted to do and she replied, "I just want to lay here with you and take a nice nap before the game."

She was a cheerleader and had a basketball game to go to that night. We fell asleep but were abruptly awoken with a phone call from her mom. I couldn't make out the words but I could hear that her mom was screaming at her and she was screaming back, "Mom I had a headache. I didn't mean to miss the game. I'm sorry."

She hung up, started crying, and told me that her mom wants her home. I apologized that her mom freaked out on her on her birthday.

I drove Marissa home. Her mom was standing in the driveway, scowling with her arms crossed. She came up to my window and tapped on it. She motioned to roll my window down.

Her mom was leaning in my window and started yelling, “You’re a fucking liar, Marissa. I’m done with you. All you do is lie. I’ve had enough of it. You missed the game on purpose-”

“It was just a fucking basketball game, like it’s not a big deal,” Marissa pleaded.

“No, Marissa. This is it. I’m done. You’re eighteen now so pack your stuff and go. Fucking leave.”

I turned to Marissa, I had no idea what to do. My eyes were wide and I said, “Um go grab some stuff. I can take you back to my house.”

She was bawling her eyes out when she walked out of the house with a packed bag. She cried the entire way back to my house.

We got home and she went to find my mom. She fell into my mom’s arms and said, “My mom kicked me out. I have no idea what to do.”

My mom was furious, “You’re just a child. What does she expect you to do? Honey, you’re more than welcome to stay here for now. We’ll do whatever we can for you.”

That week, Marissa moved in. Her mom blocked her phone number but messaged me on Facebook, “Please let Marissa know she is not allowed at my house unless I am home. Her room will be packed up for her by Sunday. Now you can deal with a liar. Enjoy.”

I never messaged her mom back. We moved her stuff into my parent’s basement and hung up a bunch of tapestries to hide the cement walls. We turned it into our little studio apartment.

I felt like an adult getting to live with my partner. We were inspired to start saving for our future. I got a couple jars and labeled them, “date nights” and “our future.”

We would throw cash in there every time one of us worked to start saving money together. We had a couple hundred in them after a few weeks. One night, Marissa complained to me, “Hey, some of my money is missing from the jar. There should be like a hundred more dollars. I don’t know where it went.”

I tried to think of what could have happened. I couldn’t think of any logical reason. My solution was to tell my parents. Marissa and I called my parents into the kitchen and I started explaining the situation, “We’ve been saving money in these jars and there’s about a hundred dollars missing. We don’t know what happened.”

My dad got serious, “What? Do you think someone broke in? I hope you two know that we would never touch your money.”

I replied, "I know you guys wouldn't take it. I don't know what happened but I figured I would tell you."

My mom chimed in, "One hundred dollars is a lot of money. I don't know what happened either but the least we can do is give you the money that you're missing."

Marissa chimed in, "You don't have to do that."

My dad insisted and wrote Marissa a check.

Prom was right around the corner. I had absolutely no interest in attending. Marissa kept telling me that she wanted to go, "Why won't you just come with me? It's not a big deal."

"Everyone at prom just drinks and it doesn't sound like a fun night to me. I don't want to see Myles and that entire friend group."

She went behind my back and whined to my parents, "I really want to go to prom but she's refusing. She won't listen to what I want to do. She keeps saying no."

My dad was mad, "Well that's not fair to you. Relationships are about making sacrifices for your partner. Her mother and I will talk to her."

It wasn't as much of a talk as it was them telling me that I need to take her. I turned to Marissa, "Why did you tell my parents about this? It wasn't their decision, it was supposed to be mine."

My mom gave Marissa her credit card and told her to take me to the mall to get an outfit. I went but I told Marissa to get whatever she wanted me to wear because I genuinely had no interest.

I didn't have fun at the dance. It was exactly how I thought it would be. A bunch of drunk teenagers being too loud and obnoxious. Luckily for me, our prom ended early because the cops came. They made us line up and went through everyone's limos to check for alcohol. Thank god they didn't check cars too because they would have found a lot of weed in mine.

Marissa and I were told we could leave and I brought her right to the parking lot off the dirt road. She thanked me for going to prom with her the only way she knew how...

The days after prom, Marissa was less affectionate. I was getting less kisses, less hugs, and our conversations were dull. She went to shower and left her phone on the charger in the basement. I sat on our bed and kept looking over to her phone. *No, I shouldn't.*

I stood up and tip-toed over to it like she was going to hear me. I clicked the screen to light up and saw that she had a notification that Kim texted her.

You're not going to find anything good by doing this. I wanted to believe I had more trust in Marissa. I didn't.

I unlocked her phone and quickly read the messages between her and Kim. Kim wrote, "I'm hungry."

Marissa replied, "Well, what do you want to eat?"

"I almost said something bad, but I figured I shouldn't."

"Say it," Marissa sent.

"I could eat you," Kim said.

"I'd love that."

I was immediately sick to my stomach. Marissa came down from the shower and I was too angry to hide the fact that I went through her phone, "What the fuck is this? You want Kim to eat you? Jesus Marissa."

She looked shocked. Her first response was, "Why are you going through my phone?"

I stood my ground, "I get it, I shouldn't have gone through your phone and I apologize for that but that doesn't change the fact that you were texting Kim... like this!"

She started crying, "I don't know why I said that. I don't want her at all. I'll block her and delete her number. I'll do it. I'm so sorry."

I sat on the edge of the bed. I went silent for a few minutes while tears slipped from my eyes.

I finally stood up and walked over to her while she was still crying. I hugged her and said, "I really am sorry I went through your phone but this hurts a lot. If you promise to never talk to her again, we can work through this."

I felt obligated to make things right. After all, she had nowhere else to live until something even weirder happened.

Marissa started hanging out with Myles' ex girlfriend, Hannah. They claimed that they found out they were cousins. I later found out that wasn't true. Hannah's mom invited Marissa to move in with them. Within two weeks, Marissa was fully moved out of my house and into theirs.

That gave me room to miss her. We started getting excited to see each other again. There was a lot less fighting and she even let me reconcile with Myles.

Marissa and Hannah got close quickly. They even sent me nudes together one night. Hannah and I weren't on great terms because I helped Myles break up with her when he realized he was gay. We put that aside because we had common ground, a love for Marissa.

My friend, Sofia, finally decided that it was time to get to know Marissa. She told me that she always had a bad feeling about Marissa but since we'd been together for a while, she was willing to give her a chance.

Sofia took Marissa to the mall while I was helping Myles pack up his Uncle's house. During our drive, I got a message from Hannah, "Hey, I need to tell you something. Marissa has your mom's credit card and has been using it."

I screamed, "What the fuck, Myles!"

He got so scared that he almost swerved the car, "What? What happened?"

My jaw was fully open with a partial smile and tears forming in my eyes, "Marissa stole my mom's credit card."

"I'm sorry, she what?" Myles replied.

I had to be sure that what Hannah said was true and I knew how to do that. I texted Sofia, "Hey, next time Marissa buys something today will you see if she is using a purple visa card?"

I got a text back, "Yes! She's been using it all day."

I called my mom and started sobbing to her. I couldn't stop apologizing because it felt like my fault. My mom and I were trying to make sense of everything. *Prom*. I remembered that my mom gave Marissa her card to get me a prom outfit and Marissa must have never given it back.

My mom pulled up her charges, "Yes, she's been using it. It's okay sweetie, it's not your fault. None of us knew she would do this."

I told my mom I had to go because I needed to break up with Marissa. I waited until Sofia and Marissa were done at the mall to send her a text, "We can't be together. I found out that you've been using my mom's credit card. You aren't allowed on our property anymore. I hope you're happy with your choices."

She replied, "Credit card? What are you talking about?"

That was the last text I ever received from Marissa. I tried to send another text and found out that she blocked me.

I wish I could say that love turned to hate when I found out what she did. I never got the closure that I needed. I felt heartbroken, embarrassed, and angry. There were so many things that had to be left unsaid. How could I let a person like that into my life? Into my parents' lives?