

III Dayna

Some people walk away from a mess like it's not their problem. Dayna walked into mine and claimed it as her own.

I first met Dayna when I was dating Carter. Dayna and her best friend, Calvin, were close with Carter's older sister. They treated Carter like a younger sister.

I had my suspicions about Dayna's intentions but they weren't confirmed until the week I was ignoring Amelia. She was doing her semi-monthly check-in with me. She texted me, "Hey babe. Just wanted to see how you are?"

Sometimes the most random person will text you in the middle of a huge crisis and you end up telling them way too much. I caught her up on what went down with Amelia. Dayna immediately pulled the plug, "You absolutely have to end that. It's not healthy at all."

We began texting every day that week. She helped me figure out the best way to end things. But one question was lingering, *why was she so invested?*

Amelia walked out of my house and I was still standing with my back against my bathroom wall. She walked over to me and pulled me into her chest. "You're going to be okay," she assured me.

Dayna had to leave for work and I was alone with my thoughts. I felt relief that everything with Amelia was over. Her existence slipped from my mind faster than it should have. Dayna took her place before I had time to question it.

"Hey thanks for saving me today. She was acting fucking crazy," I texted Dayna.

"Babe, I gotchu. I'll always be there for you," she replied.

"I appreciate it. But I can't help wondering... like why? Why have you been so invested in my situation?"

"You're a nice person. I care about you. I have to admit, talking to you has been fun..."

"Fun, as in..? Do you like girls??"

"I've never put much thought into it. I've been with a boy before but I've been curious. Talking to you has made me a little more curious."

I got my answer and I liked it. I just ended things with one girl and here comes another just casually entering my life.

Dayna made me nervous in a way that Amelia and Carter never could. Dayna was edgy. She was laid-back. Being chill wasn't an act, it was the way she lived.

She came from a very independent household. It was her, her younger sister, and her mom. Her dad wasn't involved. Her mom loved her but was never around. Her mom was always busy with her boyfriend and work.

Dayna was three years older than me. People who didn't know her well would have pinned her as stone cold. Once you talked to her, you found out that she was caring, warm, and funny. She looked like someone my dad would hate and I'd try too hard to impress. She lived life to have fun.

My dad is a catholic, conservative businessman. He hates tattoos and piercings. The only thing he respected was Dayna's work ethic.

My mom had a soft spot for her because Dayna was in our high school's nursing program. My mom encouraged every friend of mine to pursue nursing because of how much she loved her job. It didn't take long for my mom to start inviting Dayna to things before I even knew they were happening.

The only time I felt cool around Dayna was when it came to sex. I can't lie, I realized that I enjoyed being a girl's first girl. I felt like a teacher. Other than that, I was a complete nerd in comparison to Dayna.

On Valentine's Day of 2015, she had a surprise for me. She planned to sleep over at my house. She came over that night and my mom was home. My mom screamed, "Yay, Dayna! Let's all watch a movie together."

I apologized to Dayna, but I couldn't say no to my mom. I have absolutely no recollection of what movie we watched that night but I'll never forget the text I got from Dayna as we were snuggled up on the couch, "Babe... I'm so uncomfortable right now."

We watched movies with my mom all the time. "It's almost over, then we can go to the basement and hang out," I texted back.

"You don't understand," she wrote.

As I was reading that text, she grabbed my hand under the blanket and moved it under her shirt. I felt lace going up her stomach. She was wearing lingerie for me.

I let out a laugh loud enough for my mom to hear over the movie. "What are you two doing over there?" She asked.

It must have been torture for Dayna. I got a good laugh throughout the movie and then I got to enjoy it even more once it ended. No girl had worn lingerie for me before.

Our sex was very un-serious in the best way. We could laugh while staying turned on. It was fun to teach her and it was even more fun to reap the benefits of my teachings.

Dayna and I never really argued. We enjoyed each other's company. She liked that I was her nerdy little girlfriend. I liked that she was my edgy, older (but still appropriately aged) girlfriend. There was *one* thing we disagreed on.

Remember how I said at the beginning of high school, I was very straight edge? Well, Dayna was a well-known stoner. I had a bit of a problem with that.

In Dayna's nursing program, they were told that they were going to be drug tested regularly. That sounded good to me because I wanted to be with Dayna but I hated the thought of her smoking weed.

She explained to me that she was going to quit smoking for school and for herself. I was so proud of her and I told her that all the time.

About six months into our relationship, Dayna got into a car accident on her way home from work. She totaled her car. She called me and sounded devastated. She needed that car because she had a job she needed to get to. She needed the money, she practically supported herself.

I still didn't have a license or a car because I was too young, so she called Calvin. He picked her up and brought her to my house.

She couldn't stop crying. She came up to my room with tears running down her cheeks. I hugged her in an attempt to comfort her. Then, I leaned in for a kiss. I quickly pulled back and raised an eyebrow at her. When I kissed her, all I could taste and smell was weed.

I said nothing. I told her that I had to shower. I got in the shower and decided that I didn't want to jump to a conclusion. I texted her, "Did I just smell weed on your breath?"

She didn't hesitate to tell me the truth. She told me that it was weed. That's when I freaked out on her. I texted her again, "you're not supposed to be fucking smoking during your program. You've been hiding this from me. I can't believe you."

When I got out of the shower and walked back into my room she tried to explain to me that when Calvin picked her up, he handed her a packed bowl and told her to take a hit because of how upset she was. As valid as that sounds to me now, back then I was not having it. I yelled at her even though she was already upset about her car. Later that night, I calmed down and we made up. I was still upset but I could see that it wasn't the right time to be fighting.

My parents had an understanding of Dayna's living situation. They knew that losing her car had a huge impact on her life. It took me off guard but they offered to let her take Claire's car while she was off at college. My sister wasn't allowed to have her car on campus as a freshman. Dayna was hesitant but knew that my parents weren't going to take no as an answer when she had no other options.

My parents didn't know about Dayna's history with weed. I took it upon myself to give her one rule with my sister's car: no weed inside of it. I set that rule for her sister at the time. Dayna was respectful and enforced it on her sister. She took it very seriously.

About a month later, we got a bad snowstorm and school was cancelled for a few days. I had the house to myself because my dad was traveling for work and my mom stayed with my grandparents when the weather was bad because it was only a few minutes from her job. I didn't want to be alone so I told Dayna to stay with me. My parents were always okay with me having my girlfriends stay over, but this time we were alone.

I was laying next to her in my bed. It was around one in the morning when I noticed her phone was going off. She was dead asleep. I could see from the screen that her sister was texting her. I was curious. Her phone went black. I pushed the thought back. Then it lit up again. *What could her sister be texting her about at this time?* "Don't do it" kept repeating in my head. It went against my better judgment. I held my breath and reached over her, grabbed her phone, and got to reading.

"Yo I picked up your weed for you," the first text said.

"Are you ever going to tell her that you still smoke??" the second read.

I couldn't figure out which feeling to land on because I was feeling about a million things at once - betrayal, guilt, confusion, anger. I softly placed her phone down, laid back, and felt a tear fall down my face.

The next morning, when we woke up, she could feel that I wanted nothing to do with her. She couldn't figure out why. I said nothing.

It was on the fourth or fifth, "what's wrong," that it came fumbling out. I yelled, then she yelled. She kept trying to explain but no explanation could have soothed the sickening feeling in my stomach. I needed time to myself.

I went into the bathroom and locked the door behind me. She followed me. She was banging on the door so hard that I watched as it shook on the hinges. I'd never seen that side of her. That anger was foreign to me.

She calmed down. I could hear it in her voice. Her hands were frozen to the door, "I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. Please come talk to me about this. Please."

I opened the door. She apologized again and again.

I eventually forgave her. She assured me that she wasn't going to smoke. She told me that it had only been a few times. In many ways, our relationship was never the same again. I lost my trust in her. I couldn't see the same girl that was standing in the doorway of my bathroom sending Amelia away. I started living with a constant knot in my stomach.

Two more weeks went by. We were off. We stopped being fun. She betrayed me, I betrayed her. The more I thought about it, I was less mad that she smoked and more mad that she just kept lying to me.

I looked and felt like a fool being with her. When full honesty came out, I found out that she smoked every single day that we were together. It wasn't that I just lost trust in her, I lost a lot of trust in myself. *How did I not notice? Am I that naive? Were her and her friends laughing at me behind my back?*

It was time to accept that our relationship had no trust. I was trying to control things that were never mine to control. I wasn't replacing the mess, I was repeating it. Dayna took Amelia's place before I had time to question it. I didn't take my time. I never did.