

Strawberry Fields

When Jessica Williams, notorious sensationalist, leaned over so far in her chair that I thought she would fall out of it, I knew she had something interesting to say. I wasn't a part of her friend group, but I at least sat close enough to them to eavesdrop on her relentless stream of gossip. Typically, it was exactly the kind of gossip you'd expect to hear from the human equivalent of the National Enquirer, like *oh my God, Brad gave the entire volleyball team Chlamydia*. But this time it felt different. Jessica sounded serious – almost scared. I averted my gaze so that I didn't appear to be listening but leaned in slightly.

"Joe Montgomery brought a bag of grapes to school," Jessica whispered.

"You're so full of shit," the girl who sat two seats in front of me laughed. "Joe Montgomery is like, twelve. There's no way he could get grapes."

"I swear to God," Jessica insisted. "He let Caroline try one. She said it was better than sex."

"Caroline's a virgin." The group erupted into a fit of giggles, but my heart sank. I usually wouldn't have cared – people bring fruit to school all the time. Granted, they usually get caught, but it's not exactly a rare occurrence for someone to pass around a bag of grapes in the bathroom before class. I usually wouldn't have cared, but Joe Montgomery is my little brother.

I couldn't decide if I was more offended that he brought them in the first place, or that he kept them a secret from me. I might have been Senior Class President, but I wouldn't have tattled on my little brother for bringing drugs to school. Hell, when I was a freshman, I used to buy bananas from a guy in my statistics class all the time. Personally, I had no problem with fruit – it's natural, and as long as he was able to balance his homework and his sugar highs, I could have cared less. But the fact that he went behind my back and thought I wouldn't find out was disconcerting – we usually told each other everything. Even worse, he shared with *Caroline*? She would do anything for her fructose fix.