

Preface

Some say the world will end in a black hole. That may be myth. Others believe memories destroy lives. You decide who to trust.

Rewind

“Why?” she screeched. Her voice was hoarse. “Why take the only thing that gave me happiness and throw it away?” Her eyes were wet with tears. My heart pounded. I didn’t know her. Who was she? For some reason I felt ashamed.

“I’m sorry,” I cried, my words were slurred. I had no memory of why I was sorry. The only thing I knew was that it was dark.

I couldn’t see much, but from the shadows cast by the moon, I could make out a narrow street. I had no idea how I’d gotten here. Was I dreaming? “Where am I?” I asked. The girl stared at me, as if I was crazy.

“The same place you were when you killed him!” She burst into fresh floods of tears. I’d killed someone? I tried hard to remember, but nothing came to me.

There was a silence which lasted for a few moments. “This town was peaceful until you came along. In case you’re too intoxicated to remember, you killed *my* boyfriend. You killed him and now he’s gone forever.”

I couldn’t remember any of this, though I felt like I knew the sobbing girl. Behind the tear strewn cheeks and running mascara, I could pick out familiar features. Her blue eyes glinted with tears in the light of the moon. Her hair was a matted, a chestnut cloud that outlined her pale, heart-shaped face.

I glanced around to see the scene around me had changed. It was still pitch black. How had I moved? “Abigail,” I found myself saying. Where was I now? The same weeping girl stood next to me. I had my arm around her small shoulders, comforting her shaking body though I had no idea why.

I looked ahead of me. A large, white building stood proudly in front of us. It was too big to be a house. A large red cross was painted above the double doors. White lights lit the entrance. The frail body at my side had gotten suddenly quiet. I looked down to see her face inches from mine. I jumped away from her in surprise. She was glaring at me. Her piercing blue eyes never left mine.

“You,” she growled. Her eyes were wide and terrifying. I slowly backed away.

“You’re the reason he got hit by a car. You’re the reason he died. You were supposed to be my friend.” Her words didn’t make sense. None of this did. The building in front of us blurred and the world around me span. It was happening again.

This new room was completely white. A bed sat beside me. Resting his battered head on a plumped up pillow, a broken figure lay among the sheets. He looked young. His face was scarred, the largest running from his cheekbone to his bare shoulder. His head was bandaged and his right ankle was in a

boot. From his nose, a trickle of blood ran to his lip. He attempted to wipe it away with his bandaged hand. His hair fell around his face in a tangled mess.

The same girl was here. This time she was sitting opposite me beside the bed. She held the boy's hand and was whispering softly to him. He gazed into her eyes.

This was him. The boy I'd supposedly killed. It had to be. The way she acted around him. I watched them, taking in everything they did or said, in case their behaviour could tell me what was going on. He smiled at her. It was a warm, comforting smile, full of love, despite his injuries.

The girl looked at me. "Come and sit with us," she said. Her face was so gentle and kind, I felt compelled to obey her. I pulled a chair towards the bed and sat down. The boy looked at me, his eyes almost completely shut. He managed one last smile. Looking back at the girl, three single words left his lips. "I love you." Then his eyes shut forever.

I had to look away. A sharp intake of breath clarified what I already thought to be true. One long note replaced the repetitive beep of the monitor. Nurses pushed past me. A single tear made its way down my cheek. The girl took my hand and the room disappeared.

I was engulfed in gloom once again. A biting wind whipped past my cheeks and caught in my hair. The boy I'd seen die in hospital, just seconds ago, was sitting beside me. His eyes glinted in the eerie glow of a streetlight.

He looked at me, smiling. It was a smile that sent a shiver down my spine. He reached forward and lifted a strand of hair from my face. Still smiling, he leaned forward and kissed me. The touch was light and quick.

Almost immediately, he pulled away and stood up. I attempted to follow, struggling to find my feet. "Let's go," he said. This was the first time I'd heard him speak, at least in more than a whisper. His voice was husky. "I don't mind where, as long as I'm with you." He took my hand.

"What about her?"

He frowned, then laughed. "Come on."

I followed him along an unfamiliar street. I had no reason to be happy, but I was filled with a light feeling when I was with him. We walked along the hard concrete for a short while. He clasped my hand tightly in his.

Then everything changed. She appeared from around a corner ahead of us. I panicked. "We need to cross the road." My voice was filled with urgency. He allowed me to drag him into the road. The screech of rubber on tarmac and a scream that didn't come from me are the last things I recall before the scene was gone, like it had been turned off by a switch.

A small tunnel of light lay just out of my reach. Every time I tried to get closer, it moved further away.

A flash of blinding light, and I was back. This time, my destination was noisy and crowded. Loud music thundered from huge speakers around the room. Purple lights danced back and forth.

The strong scent of alcohol drifted through the air. I pushed my way through the heavy crowds. Hoards of people gathered round a bar.

A woman drunkenly stumbled to my side. "Fancy a drink?" she said, her words barely legible.

"No, thank you." The woman staggered away. I sighed. The change of scenery every five minutes had given me a headache and I didn't want to move again. I wished the noise would stop and I could be alone.

I let my head fall into my hands. I felt someone tap me on the shoulder. I barely needed to look into his pretty eyes to know who he was. "Wanna get out of here?" he said, in the same husky voice as before. His eyes held mine, so longingly that I gave up trying to ignore them. My throat was dry and my entire body ached.

"I want my life back," I replied, in barely a whisper. I found myself telling him everything. Utter nonsense poured from my cracked lips, but he seemed to understand.

"It'll be okay. I promise." He interrupted my endless rambling. I could feel his warm breath on my face. I felt like saying, "How do you know?", but somehow I trusted him.

"So, you believe me?" I murmured. He smiled and darkness took over.

Epilogue

A ghostly figure wanders the streets. Its eyes are the only thing human about it. It's always followed by two others. They never leave its side. The first has wild curls that surround its thin face like a halo. The second has no features. It's just a drifting breeze.