

devoured

Thunder roared in the background, the skies were dark and gray and full of misery and the raven that was spooked from the loud sounds. "Could it ever stop raining? Fuck it's been like over an hour," I gripped my hair in my hands, I was over the rain. Out of all the days for it to be this bad, it had to be today.

My friend, Lienna, chuckled, lips always pink from her vaseline, "God, could you be more dramatic? It's been five minutes, the world isn't gonna end if we take a break. You know it rains almost everyday, why would today be different?" She rolled her eyes tucking away her comic book, with her pressed lilac bookmark I made her, securing the page she left on.

My hand shifted from pulling at my hair to holding my head in my hands, smushing my glasses to the side a little, "Right. Because the impending doom of us being late to our homes isn't going to put me in the grave." I rolled my eyes, and bit my tongue from releasing anymore sarcasm.

Another chuckle was pulled from her lips, "Just tell you mom it was my fault, the study group ended late because I'm stupid." She leaned her head on the pole, next to the bench we sat at. The little solace of space from the rain, and being drenched further.

"My mom doesn't think you're stupid."

"Right, because she talks slowly to everyone."

I pursed my lips together, well my mom wasn't wrong; Lienna is a bit slow when you talk to her. She's always day dreaming about something, but that didn't mean she was stupid, it just meant she wasn't paying attention. I sucked my teeth and shrugged, "You know my mom can be a bitch sometimes, over passive aggressive and whatnot." My mind is reeling from the other day; when three knocks were heard from my door, and Lienna blurted that a ghost came to play ding-dong-ditch, my mother did not find it amusing. Not in the slightest. After that my mother really became vocal about me hanging out with the 'wrong type of people.'

I felt as Lienna leaned close, breaking away from the memories. Brown eyes met her hazel, "Maybe she's worried I'm going to infect you with it. 'Oh no, my poor Angela is stupid too now,'" she put her hands together. I wonder if they're as soft as they look?

She gave a fake cry, pulling my attention to her mouth again, shiny, but pink like a rose. I wonder if they were as soft as the petals?

"Angela, oh my poor Angela!" Her pointy teeth were long, a little too long, like they'd hurt if she bit you.

I shook my head, no more thinking of Lienna biting you, weirdo. "Lienna, I swear to all the Gods there is, I'm going to push you in the rain."

“Angela! Ang-,” a shriek left her lips and she toppled over.

“Wow would you look at that, gotta be careful Lienna. You’re so clumsy.” I looked away as she gathered herself up from the mud, what could you do, am I right?

Her body hung suspended hunched over, in an eerily way. I rolled my eyes at her theatrics, typical Lienna. Her voice was rough, “Angela, you have 10 seconds to start running before I get you.”

I scoffed, and rolled my eyes. “What are you going to do? Punch me? Wow, I’m shaking in my black loafers.”

There was a snap, like a branch snapping off a tree, I looked around but there was no other sign. Lienna was the only thing to move, as she straightened her back, but not fully. Her oil black hung in front of her eyes, shielding them in a way. I stepped slightly back, she reminded me of the girl that crawled out of the tv, just in a catholic school girl uniform, that made it creepier for some reason.

“10.” The forest behind us seemed to quiet as she spoke.

“9.” Her back cracked again, still not perfectly straight up. I shifted slightly again, my heart pounding a little faster.

“8.” My stomach dropped. But there was no way I was scared of Lienna, the girl I could beat wrestling any day of the week. Yeah, she grew slightly taller one weekend, became a little stronger the next but it was Lienna? The poor girl that would get bullied relentlessly because she had a boy’s bowl hair cut when she was 5. When she got glasses at 7 and had to wear an eyepatch to school.

“7.” My legs started to shake, they felt heavy, like hours and hours after practicing for volleyball.

“6.” I felt the blood rush to my legs finally, I turned and dashed away from the bus stop. The road was muddy, the ground clung to my feet, almost trying to hold me down. My long skirt pushed back on my legs as the wind picked up.

“5.” It was faint, a whisper really. But that made me want to vomit, it was like she was in my ear, right next to me.

Have you ever had your life flash before your eyes? Well neither did I in those moments, just a memory. One of Lienna and me, I? It’s I isn’t? God who cares, I’m probably about to be murdered by my longtime friend. Lienna sat there, maybe 10, maybe 12. Bored and eyes tired like usual, things weren’t good at home so we had her coming over that year a lot. I came, almost tripping over myself as I stared from her, no more bowl cut, no more eyepatch. She

looked pretty, well she always did, she just started to believe me now. I looked down, my hand soaked and stained from the pomegranate juice and pulp and seeds I was weaving through.

But it was worth it, when Lienna saw the seeds in my hand, it was her favorite, so tart yet sweet. Smooth yet a crunch. It was something she always got anything flavored because it was her fruit, she loved it. Her eyes light up, crinkling and smiling as she jumped up from the chair. It was like for a moment she forgot all the world crushing things at home, and it was just her and I in the world, sharing a pomegranate.

She zoomed towards me, skipping and jumping and acting like Lienna, when she stopped in front of me she ate three, always three with her. She lifted three for me too to eat, which I obliged - this pomegranate was the sweetest I have ever tasted. She smiled again, her teeth showing. She leaned over and planted a kiss on my cheek. That was the day my mom started to be with us, never letting us out of her sight.

I missed that, compared to this. Being chased down to someone I thought was my best friend, someone I loved dearly.

I wasn't even given the full amount, I was tackled effortlessly. Like if she just shoved me with her finger. I tumbled in the wet mud. I laid there, as she hovered over me. Her eyes... were they red? No. Impossible. No fucking way. She gave a grin, somehow her canines were longer, way longer before; if she even hovered around your neck, she sliced your skin.

My throat tightened at her eerie smile, I gave a humorless chuckle, "Ha come on Lien, it was just a joke." I only ever called her Lien when I was apologizing for being an ass, which isn't uncommon.

Her thin face hovered over mine, eyes so red they rivaled fresh blood, "Does it look like I'm laughing?"

Our noses touched now, as she glanced down at my neck, my heart raced even more now. Ever since she left she left to the Philippines last summer to say bye to her aunt, every so often I would see her eyes turn red. I thought it was a trick of the light, it had to be. What the fuck was she, if they were red?

"Your blood smells sweet Angela. Would it be bad if I tasted it?"

Before I could even respond, her tongue elongated. Black figures sprouted behind her, and her torso disconnected. I felt the bile rise from my throat as I saw the blood strings, her torso floating while her lower half fell to the ground. I screamed, terror making my throat raw, and my vision dizzy.

Her black hair was raised, her mouth split open; fangs, with blood dripping from each corner. Her eyes were half lidded, no more hazel - no more light in the eyes I loved to look at. My breath

was heavy yet stilled, afraid if I made too much movement, too much noise she would... she would attack? Kill?

I stared at her, vision still blurry, stomach still churned. Her skin was ghostly pale, not the light tan she used to have, this was a sickly looking; paper white skin, her eyebags deep purple, cheeks sunken in. This wasn't the Lienna I knew.

She inched closer and my body was frozen, how could I move with this thing in front of me. She retracted her tongue, blood and saliva dripping from her mouth still. Her lips curled into a sinister smile, "What's wrong Angela? Don't like what you see?" Her voice was raspy, like she hadn't talked in over 10 years.

Smile still on her face, she was about a foot in front of me. "Ha, cat got your tongue?" I gulped, not knowing how to respond; it sounded just like Lienna but at the same time it didn't; lower, raspier, darker...sinister. In a second I felt her tongue on my neck, hot and wet.

"I can taste the fear of Angela, it tastes sweet and tart in a way. It tastes like honey and lemon on top of pomegranates ya know." As soon as I blinked she was gone, so was the lower half of her body. I blinked again, still no Lienna, one more time and nothing. I breathed out, regaining the feeling in my legs, torso, arms, hands... everywhere really. I spun around to be sure, nothing but rain, forest, and the muddy road.

I couldn't have imagined that, no fucking way. I took a step forward and she appeared again. The scream that left my lips echoed through the forest. Crows were startled, flying above us. This wasn't dismembered Lienna, it was normal - almost normal. Her eyes were blood shot, skin pale, mouth split; almost all the way to her ears. But she was intact at least. She stood there in her school girl uniform, it was now crimson stained. Like how my hands were cutting that damn pomegranate. Words caught in my throat, I knew whatever she wanted she would get eventually.

The same smile curled on her lips again. My stomach dropped, the peace I felt only a moment ago was replaced with dread. "Think I was going to let you go that easily? And I'm the stupid one."

Her voice was hollow, cold. She took her bony, pale hands and cupped my face. My eyes watered, I knew I wasn't going to be able to escape this. Eyes half lidded again, she smirked - faces were drawn closer and closer.

"Let me taste you Angela. I'm sure you're sweeter than the ripest pomegranate... I promise it'll feel good." What could I do except nod my head, maybe I was going to be the sweetest thing she ever tasted.

