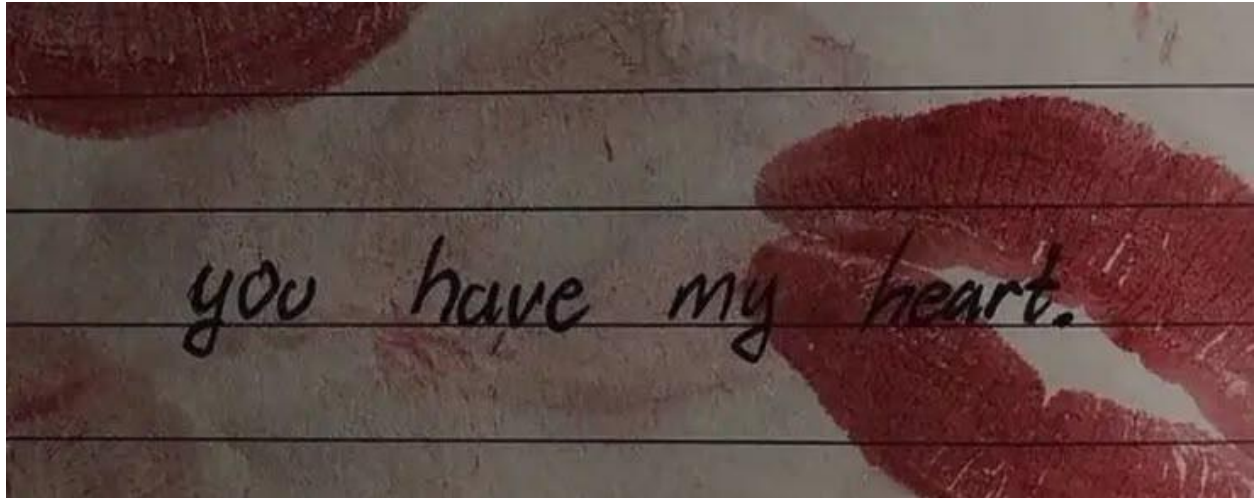




August 5th 2021

There I was on the roof contemplating it all. Taking a drag of my cigarette as it is one of the only things that brings me comfort. My dad would be home at any time and find out I was not there. What would I do once he called me?

Would I be calm and collected, or would I freak out? Those thoughts crowd my head, then blur as I realize none of it matters to me. Not when I'm here on Amber's roof, taking drags of my cigarette as she scrolls on her phone. Not while I can look over and see the moonlight shine in her dark ash-colored eyes. Not while I can see the faint curve of a smile on her lips through the smoke. Nothing could ruin this moment.

Amber and I had only been together for 5 months, but it felt like eternity. Every day my love for her grew. It's like we were two souls intertwined. As if the universe picked us as soulmates. Usually I'd have my walls up, but not with her, never with her, never since April 15th.



It was April 15th. Prom was three weeks away. I was in math class, drowning out the teacher with my AirPods. Listening to "Your Love" by She Wants Revenge. I've been waiting all week for someone to ask me to junior prom, but it seemed no one would. Especially not the person I want to ask me, Amber. We are in the same group and have been friends since freshman year. She is so gorgeous, sweet, and hilarious. Exactly my type, yet it seemed I wasn't hers. She never had that look in her eyes when she looked at me. You know the look. The one in my father's eyes whenever my mother came on tv during the 5 o'clock news or the one in Wes's eyes when I mentioned Tara.

In this past year, I had spent so much time trying to at least get her to like me a little bit. Just enough where she'd ask me on a date, yet it seemed useless. No matter what I tried, she wouldn't look at me with a spark in her eyes. I tried dressing down, dressing up, wearing makeup, going all natural, curling my hair, crimping my hair. Nothing worked.

So I just decided to be myself, usually wearing a dark color palette. Sticking to skirts, tank tops, and flannels. Wearing some makeup but not a lot, just some eyeliner, mascara, and lip tint. Keeping my hair its natural brown color with light copper undertones and keeping it its straight mid-length.

At this point, I've basically given up hope. I might as well just try to trick myself into thinking she's straight, even though she's not. I feel a tug at my hair. Turning around, I see my best friend, Olivia, handing me a note. That's odd. Olivia's basically illiterate, so she'd rather die than write a note. I open it, and it reads:

Meet me at the park on State street at 5pm. DONT BE LATE
From, your secret admirer.

Holy shit, I have a secret admirer. My cheeks flush, and I take a sip out of my water to calm myself down. My heart feels like it's beating out of my chest. Sure, I may not have been able to get Amber, but at least I'll get someone else. I can feel the corner of my mouth curving into a smile unintentionally.



It was 5 on the dot. I got here barely in time. With Olivia in the bushes in case this "secret admirer" is a creep. I explored the park searching for a sign of this person. When I saw it, a big ass sign, written in a fancy font. Reading "You have captured my heart. Would you go to prom with me, Georgia?" My mouth falls agape. Looking at the sunflower-decorated sign. How did they know my favorite flower? I feel a hand on my shoulder, and I see a glimpse of jet-black hair. There she was, the woman of my dreams, Amber.

She looks at me with a grin on her face. "Georgia Riley, will you do me the honor of accompanying me to prom?" I can't hold in my squeal as I jump up and down. "YES, YES, YESSSS!" She pulls me into a tight hug. I pinch myself to make sure this wasn't a dream. Luckily for me, it wasn't. We pull away from the hug, and I stare into her ash-colored eyes. My eyes flicker down to her plump, rosy lips, and her eyes do the same. We both lean in at the same time. As our lips collide, I feel sparks. All my emotions rushing through my body and coming out through my lips. This was my first real kiss. This wasn't like that time I kissed Chad on a dare in 9th grade. This was real and romantic, full of passion. We pulled away once we were both out of breath.

I look at her, and I can already tell she had my heart.



I still remember every single detail of that day. Just looking at the girl next to me on this rooftop brings back the memories. I look over at her phone screen, and she leans to hide it. Odd. All it looked like was some horror Reddit forum. Why would she need to hide that? It's not like I'll judge her? She's already told me about all her nerdy slasher stuff. Oh well, I might as well not dwell on it. I trust her.

"Amby, what are you doingggggg?" I ask, elongating my g, showing how high as a kite I am.

"Nothing, Georgie," she responded dismissively.

She's been acting more odd the closer we get to senior year. We only had one month till we started on September 1st. I feel like I should just blame her behavior on the anxiety of the SATs, college applications, and athletics this year would bring.

I knew Amber better than that, though. She didn't give a shit about any of that stuff. Amber naturally got good grades, and when she didn't, she'd just shrug it off. She wasn't planning on applying to colleges since her parents were loaded, and she'd probably just get a job at her dad's company. Then, to top it all off, the only sport she attempted was track, and after last year, she said, "I'll never do something so pointless and time-consuming again."

So what possibly could be making her act this way?