

**KYLE**

Now - December

9:17 P.M.

You did this. You know you did this. One of the most horrible and wretched things I could ever imagine. I never thought *you*, of all people would be capable of this. It makes me sick to my stomach even thinking about the details. You will never be forgiven. Never.

**SAM**

12 Hours before - December

8:56 A.M.

I heard Kyle mutter under his breath, "You are way too high to even be touching the ground at this point." He knows I heard him, and we both looked at each other in laughter. Dilated pupil to dilated pupil, as we dizzily strolled onto the concrete school grounds. I managed to walk straight into the black and rusted school gates in the process; some of the dried up paint was stuck to my eyebrow and I didn't notice for at least another five minutes.

I loved it when he was stoned. It got his mind off of his abomination of a life for a while and he could enjoy himself like he used to, before everything started, or ended to be precise.

Kyle and I have been best friends since we could first walk. We weren't always stoners- obviously -but he was the one that started this whole 'smoke some grass to have a blast' idea in the first place. In all fairness, I don't blame him for choosing this path, I would have too if I had gone through what he has. I wanted to help him as much as I could. Weed seemed like the easy way out for both of us. No matter the circumstances.

I had a great upbringing, had good grades, everything, other than the fact I have a stutter. It may not seem like much, but it

drains you of confidence when it comes to communication. When I get stoned it goes away, and I don't know why, but it does. I then feel like the true me- that is trapped behind my vocals, desperately trying to break past the mental barrier in my mind -is finally being released from its speechless entrapment. It is free to speak however it wants and free to speak whatever it wants. It becomes attached to me for a while and the connection forms between me, and it. Then the cycle starts again. I go back behind the barriers; trapped. Until I get high; once again.

I had a French exam a few months ago, I knew everything. I also knew I wouldn't have gotten through it with a stutter. That's when I first took full advantage of the drugs, and myself, and smoked half of a joint before school just to get through the exam as best I could. I knew I was capable. Unfortunately, my French teacher didn't and I got sent home almost immediately. Kyle never warned me how obvious it was that I was out of my head. He was too stoned to notice. That's when it all kind of started. It all went downhill from there. I never meant for it to go this far, it was for leisure purposes in the beginning.

Smoking and getting as high as a kite became a daily thing after that. I was so confident that it would help me through exams and studying. Either that, or just the fact that all of my confidence was drained after my stupid mistake. I was completely and utterly wrong to make that decision. I became hopeless in school. I became

even more of an outsider than I already was. Worst of all, I became a target; an easy one at that. I was so pathetically high all of the time that I let a girl, a teenage girl, bully me until I felt the emptiness that I feel on every day ending with 'y'.

Poppy Summers; *the* Poppy Summers. She pushed me to the sharpest of my edges, to the ends of my wits, hanging on by a tether, every single day. I have no idea what happened! She used to be a normal, quiet girl that you wouldn't even notice if she walked past you. Something changed her, and I didn't want to know what did. I wanted nothing to do with her but she keeps coming back. I have scars. Literal scars, but also mental ones. She's marked me for life. I want her gone out of my life for good. I'll do whatever it takes. I'll try at least.

I stumbled through the big, red outlined, clear school doors. I saw her waiting. She had already planned what she would do to me today. I knew by her face- that wickedly Perfect face.

"He-he-hello there Samuel!" she screamed furiously, mocking me.

I ignored her and walked straight past her; something she wasn't expecting. Her pace quickened and her insults got worse- as usual -and it wasn't long before everybody in that endless, dark hall of lockers and racks, was leering at us. They pitied me because they saw this on a daily basis and know they can do nothing about it. Kyle nudged me to leave, but I didn't want to give her the pleasure of winning, like she does every day. I was going to win

today. I promise Kyle that I won't let her hurt me ever again, and he believed me. I assured myself, *'It is all going to end today.'*

## **POPPY**

3 Months Before - September

7:55 A.M.

Dear Diary,

Perfect Poppy. Pretty Poppy. Precious Poppy. They all describe me perfectly but I'm not sure which one I should write on all of my books for the new school year. It's an extremely difficult choice, especially when you're all of them at once... Maybe I'll do them all.

'P' is such an underrated letter. I don't understand why people don't show any interest to its value. It describes all of my favourite things, such as, phones, polyester (just kidding) and of course the one that I like to get my hands on once in a while, (and no I'm not talking about penis) pills! (dieting pills duh). I like to diet a lot. It helps me feel great about myself and my perfection and also to laugh at the poor overweight people in my school, makes me feel more like perfect, pretty, precious Poppy. HA!! Anyway, thanks for listening diary! See you soon xoxo

\*

Poppy gets out of her sparkling white marble shower. She sees herself in the mirror directly across from the shower door and she is proud. She is proud of her perfect body with her perfect golden hair, just barely touching her shoulders, her perfectly shaped,

perky breasts, being the perfect irresistible size and her perfectly waxed body, ready for her first perfect day of school.

Her father, Will Summers, calls her downstairs to leave. She puts on all of her favourite, perfect, dashing clothes in her walk-in closet on the third floor and she is ready. She gallops down the spiral staircase at the perfect pace, with her perfect features bouncing along with her. She's ready for what's to come, and she's excited to see all of the familiar faces again, so she can ruin them in order to perfect them, and eat at their confidence to feed her own ego, like a vampire feeding on blood.

After a thirty second commute, she arrives in her Ramsay approved kitchen. She makes one slice of wholegrain toast and butters it with fake, flower-made butter. She eats half of the slice and grabs her bag; full of her 'Perfect Poppy' new school books.

Her father drives her to school; a surprise to her. As she leaves through the tall, steel gates, she notices her favourite flower, ironically not a poppy. The tree dahlia is almost eight feet tall, it stands out greatly. But the reason why Poppy loves this flower so much is because it is vibrant, with the shimmering whiteness of the bud fading into sharp purple shades, and they are beautiful, original and perfect, like her.

When she arrives to school she notices the rusty old gates prickling through their own paint-job, and fixes her ponytail, straightens the creases in her jumper, and takes a deep breath to not let it bother her. She gets out of the blacked chrome car and

leaves her father without a 'see you later' or a simple 'goodbye'. Simply because she doesn't want to.

She arrived at the perfect time of eight thirty and still has half an hour to spare. She cleans out her locker, signs up for extra-curriculum activities first- to show initiative -because Poppy Summers is not somebody who has her name on No.2 on a list. She is perfect. When she does all of that she still has fifteen minutes to spare until her first day of her final year of school, before college, in a town of great diversity (in her eyes).

When she pictures her town of Newlin, she pictures X's and O's, rich and poor, a cliché town of people with class and prestige, and people with drugs and hate. She loves the power that the diversity of the town gives her and father. She rules when she wants to rule and nothing will stop her, because her life has to be perfect, like her.

The bell rings to get ready for her first class and she smiles; her glossy pink lipstick perfectly applied. Her first class was French with Ms. Smith; her favourite subject. It was her favourite subject right up until he walked in; exactly seven minutes late, she noted, making her pens and books completely parallel to distract her own discomfort and unease. Samuel. Samuel Jenkins. She despised the sight of that boy. She also couldn't stand the sound of him.

Him and his 'stupid stutter', as she likes to call it. She never really could understand why his voice couldn't be normal and



perfect, like hers was. It frustrated her so much that she knew that she had to fix him, she believes it's what the world needs. She almost liked that he hated her, it gave her ease. It gave her power.

\*

4:30 P.M.

Dear Diary,

Two entries in one day. Not perfect but it will have to do. I NEED to get this out of my system. I HATE HIM SO MUCH. I am furious. I can literally feel my blood boiling through my veins, puncturing them. His stupid stutter and his greasy, dirty blonde hair (is it that hard to shampoo and condition?)(is it that hard to just sp-sp-speak?).

Basically, I hurt him. It wasn't too bad, only a few slaps- my new designer nails may have done some damage -and he cried, so I slapped him more to just shut up. He should shut up for good in my opinion. I will ruin him like I have ruined others until he gives up on his buffering voice for good. Pathetic (That should be on *his* new school books). I want to make his life a misery. It's not

like I have anything better to do other than walk around school, being feared. I might as well straighten out the issues that this world has. I am a servant of perfectionism. I fix (or break) those who are damaged. I have a fair idea of how to break this one. It's going to be tough, I might have to go to extreme lengths, but I know I will do it.

That's all for today xo

## **KYLE**

3 Months Before - September

2:37 P.M.

The happiest day of my life. That is the best way to describe it. I didn't even go to my first day of sixth year in school, it's that important to me. I might be exaggerating a little bit, but still, what a day. No drama, no worries, just us as a family, together. We had finally moved to a nicer house nearer to the school, the town, everything. We are only two doors down from

Sam's house! I couldn't wait to see him more often. We could, and would be, even better friends!

Finally, I'd seen a smile on my Mum's face for the first time in I don't know how long. It's almost as if her face cracked.

"What are you looking at?" she said laughingly, knowing the answer.

"You've got a new colour lipstick?" I muttered; half a sandwich in my mouth, trying to be funny.

She didn't have any lipstick on apparently. She prefers to call it 'lip eraser', suggesting it just reveals her true colour. I got my wittiness from her.

We laughed the night away, packing the shelves, unpacking boxes, planning the layout, picking our bedrooms. My little brother, Ben, was not quick enough this time! I got the bigger room, finally! He was devastated but he gets the big room every time we move so I thought it was my turn this time. He would have another chance anyway, it's not like we would be here for more than a year or two. Well, at least I hoped it would be that long anyway.

We were always moving. New season, new home, it felt like. We always managed to stay in the same area but Mum was insistent that we moved regularly. She said she was just a believer of change. Nowhere was permanent. I think that our record was 18 months in a

city house, back when Ben was just born. It was probably a lie, I was too young to remember.

Ben and I have been best friends since we first met. We would just talk and play until the sun dropped and the hours jumped. No day was ever long enough. Mum always called us twins even though there was almost four years between us. We did look pretty much alike. He had my brown, curly, short hair, the brown eyes, the slight gap in his teeth, the smaller than most his age kind of height, all the way down to even the same nose. It was like looking into a younger version of myself sometimes, a more innocent, unbroken version. *What he doesn't know won't hurt him*, that's what Mum says.

My new room was in the front of the house, overlooking the driveway and the front door. The window was huge! I loved the placement of everything in the room, I couldn't have done it better myself. The bed was the right size to go under the window without covering any of it, and there was more than enough room to fit a TV on the left side of the room, right beside my bedside table that I made in school. Hopefully Mum can afford one.

It was already eleven at night and I was knackered, so I slept in my new double bed with an old blanket. I was happy.

11:46 The Next Day

I woke up with genuine fear in me. I had a terrible nightmare. A nightmare that exposed my truth. I can hardly remember most of the details other than it was so frightening that it made me jolt up out of my bed so fast, I hit my elbow off of my bedside table and fell on the ground. I'm pretty sure I have a splinter from that stupid woodwork project. I heard quick and loud stomps coming towards my door, like a dinosaur hunting its prey. The door swung open and my room filled with the smell of sausages and eggs (burnt).

"Good, you're up. Breakfast is ready, my special treat!" Mum chirped

"Right, right Paula. I'm on my way" I say with a smile of relief on my face.

"I hope you're in the mood for--"

"For, some fancy home-made breakfast for kings?" I interrupted, trying to bring up her confidence, and make her laugh.

"Ha! How does take-away sound? I burned the sausages" she stated, almost proud.

Ben was still sound asleep even though it was almost noon, and he never sleeps that late. We rushed down to the local café and got way too much food for three people, but we were happy. At least we

could save some for tomorrow as well, for when breakfast gets burnt again.

He was just awake as we arrived home, starving by the looks of it. He was rummaging through the presses, probably in search for food that we didn't have, and he was as pale as a ghost.. His face gained colour as he saw us and squeezed us- like juicy oranges -as if he hadn't seen us for years. He was so happy to see me, but he didn't know the truth about me. He was so happy to see Mum, but he didn't know the truth about her. I wonder if he will ever know any of our secrets, the secrets that change your opinion of someone completely, whether they are a stranger, or your mother, or your big beloved brother. The truth isn't ready to be told. Nobody is ready to unravel his innocence, layer by layer, especially my mother. She has told me everything by accident when she was drunk a few months ago. I was so shocked by what she had told me, I knew I had to keep it bottled up. She doesn't remember telling me. I will never forget it, but I will never tell. It isn't my responsibility, it's her own. Also, I have my own secret that needs to be told, I don't know when I will tell, *if* I will ever tell.

We all sat down at the table, in the bare kitchen at the back of the house, and nobody said a word. We just ate our deli food in quietness and it was peaceful. 'The happiest day of my life'.

**BEN**

3 Months Before - September

3:09 P.M.

I let him have the bigger room this time. I knew he wanted it, so I just wanted to be a good and loveable little brother and let him appreciate his 'victory'. I now had the back room right beside the toilet. It was quite spacious, so I didn't mind at all, I would be grateful no matter what. Once my family has a roof over their heads I will happy. It's so early but I've spent the whole day unpacking boxes and I am so tired. I have my first year of secondary school- only a five minute walk from the new house -in

the morning, and I couldn't wait. I don't have any friends, but I could see my big brother all of the time now, I am so excited!

3:53 A.M. That Night

I wake up in the middle of the night to the sound of someone shouting. It's Kyle. I rush into his bedroom and he's asleep; having a nightmare. The words I can make out are 'DON'T TELL!' repeated over and over in a worrying voice. I might've heard some other things too; things that I wasn't supposed to hear maybe, but it wasn't my fault, I was worried about him, he's my big brother and I love him. I went back to bed after a few minutes, I couldn't stand to hear him hurt. I curled up like a shrimp in my single bed by the door and stared at the wall for, I don't know how long. I suppose I eventually did fall asleep.

12:18 P.M. The Next Day

I woke up and the sun was blinding my eyes; we still haven't put up curtains, we will when we buy some. There was no noise. You could hear a pin drop if you listened. My clip-on watch said it was nearly a quarter past twelve. 'Shit!' I thought to myself, 'I've already missed the first two days of school!'. I hopped up out of bed and sprinted down the narrow, dusty hallway to my mum's



room to wake her up. She was gone. My heart stopped racing, and sunk to my stomach. I was scared of the things I heard last night, I was frightened. I ran straight into Kyle's room after and it was also empty. As I jumped down the stairs the goosebumps all over my body rose, and the hairs on the back of my neck erected, giving me a chilling sensation all over my body. Downstairs was empty too, I didn't know what to do so I tried looking for anything that would help; a phone, a note, anything. Then the door opened and my family had returned, as happy as ever. I couldn't help but squeeze them until I couldn't feel the pulse in my arms any more. I love them so much, I would do anything for them, but I need honesty.

I think I should get involved more in my brother's life. I know I can help, he just needs to be more open. I love him too much to see him hurt. No more secrets.