

Remember?

“You’re living in the caravan?”

I let the metal door swing shut behind me as my feet hit the gravel driveway. “You’re driving a Prius?”

She reaches up to push the sunglasses off her face and into her hair. It’s blonde now. “I came to pick up some of my things. I thought you’d be at work.”

I lean against the side of the van and run a hand over my face, feeling stubble and dirt beneath my fingertips. I can’t remember if I’ve shaved in the last week. “Surprise,” I deadpan.

“You look... Well, you look like shit, Cole.”

“Yeah, thanks.”

We’re both silent for a moment, just looking at each other. She seems better than she’s been in over a year. Tanned, healthy, relaxed. Happy.

“Well.” Nora hesitates. “I only have an hour, so I should...”. She trails off and gestures vaguely toward the house. I watch, silent, as she turns from me and walks up the incline to our porch, waiting until she lets herself in before I follow.

Just walking through the door knocks the wind out of me. Nothing’s been moved since the day she left. The remote control she threw at my head is still in pieces on the hardwood floor, the book I’d been reading is still on the coffee table. Nora stands in the middle of the living room, looking around. “This place is like a fucking museum,” she says. “You really have been living in the caravan.” She sounds surprised, and a little bit sad.

I shrug and walk over to the kitchen, nearly gagging on the smell as I get closer. The blender on the counter is coated with three-month-old smoothie remnants and white mold. The

air is filled with fumes of rotting vegetables, decaying cheese and ancient leftovers. In retrospect, I probably should have at least cleaned the fridge out.

When I look up, Nora's eyeing me carefully, like she's afraid to make any sudden movements.

"I'm going to use the blue suitcase," she says, putting her purse down on the couch.

I follow her down the hallway, keeping my gaze on the back of her head, averted from the family photos that litter the walls. I already know what's there, anyway. Our wedding photo, pictures of Dylan as a baby, the three of us at the zoo. I don't need the reminders.

Nora crouches and slides the luggage out from under our bed, putting it on top of the comforter and unzipping it.

"So," I say loudly into the silence, smirking as she jumps. "How's Robert?"

She opens the top drawer of our dresser and pulls two handfuls of socks out. "He's fine."

"Yeah? How's his divorce going? I can't imagine it's been messier than ours but he did have two kids and a wife when he screwed you, so who knows." I'm being petty, but at this point, it's really all I have left.

"His is almost over," she says. "Because, unlike you, his wife actually signed the papers."

I lean against the doorframe and watch her methodically go through drawer after drawer, extracting every item of clothing she owns.

"Do you remember that Christmas, before we had Dylan?" I say. Nora stills, a stack of sweaters in her hands. "We both had the flu and we'd spent three straight days vomiting, so my mom brought us soup and we just ate it in bed and watched Miracle on 34th Street five times in a row."

"Yeah, Cole. I remember." She puts the sweaters in the suitcase.

“And do you remember Dylan’s fourth birthday? With that stupid clown that scared the shit out of you?” I laugh. It comes out hollow. “Dyl shoved his entire face into the cake. Didn’t even wait to blow out the candles.”

Nora pretends to ignore me but I see a muscle in her jaw twitch as she straightens and moves across the room. She grabs an armful of blouses out of the closet.

“What about that night at the hospital? 10:48pm. Dylan’s exact time of death, right? Remember that?”

She drops the shirts, still attached to their hangers, onto the bed and turns to me, her eyes flashing. “What the fuck is your point?”

“Don’t have one.”

“I miss him too, Cole,” she spits. “You don’t have a monopoly on being a grieving parent.” She turns and starts shoving everything into the bag, any semblance of organization lost. “I cheated on you, so yeah, you get to be pissed, but I didn’t have a fucking lobotomy.” She slams the lid shut and zips it again, yanking it off the bed so hard it falls to the ground, wheels first, with a loud thud.

I push my weight off the doorframe and walk back down the hallway, to his room. If the rest of the house is a museum, Dylan’s room is a shrine. All his books are stacked neatly on the bookcase, his clothes folded in their drawers, his artwork scattered on every surface. I pick up the one nearest to me and bite the inside of my cheek until I taste blood. It’s of the ocean. Blue and green swirls, orange blobs with vague tails, and a boat. The finger-painted version of the murals Nora had drawn on the walls of his room. Just being in here is like standing in the middle of my nightmares. Dylan’s face, after we pulled him from the water, flashes in my mind. The

way the salt water matted his hair to his forehead, his pale skin and blue lips. He looked so small on the sand.

My stomach clenches and I put the drawing down, turning to the wooden chest at the foot of his bed. Mermaids and fish and rainbow-coloured seaweed cover its surface. Inside are Dylan's baby clothes, blankets my mother made for him when he was born, photo albums and a scrapbook. I pick it up and carry it into the living room.

Nora's standing by the door, purse across her body, a hand on the doorknob.

"Where's your stuff?"

"It's in the car."

"Right. The Prius."

"What are you doing with that?" She sounds tired now, like the last thirty minutes have taken years off her life.

"Giving it to you," I say, crossing the floor and pressing it into her arms, the hard edges digging into her stomach. My grip loosens and her hands close around the handles, briefly brushing mine. "Y'know, you almost forget to take it with you." My fake cheeriness does nothing to mask how bitter I am.

She holds my gaze for a split second before turning away, towards the door. "I'm going to go," she says. And then she's gone. No goodbye, no apology, but a lot more finality than the last time she'd walked out that door.

I look around the room and briefly contemplate cleaning up. Instead, I grab a bottle of warm beer from the counter and twist the cap off, throwing it over my shoulder as I take a swig.

When I walk back outside, Dylan's trunk is sitting on the front porch.