

Sparks to Flames

I could tell he was hurting, and that pieces of him were raw and painful to the touch. Engulfed in a cloud of confidence and self-assured bravado, every room he entered changed course to revolve around his magnetic charm. Beneath him, a flame simmered softly, waiting for a kindling to burn it brighter. He towered over me, I looked up to him and noticed the spark that flickered.

He could tell I was hurting, pieces of me worn and fragile to the touch. I bent to whichever wind blew toward me, easily taken down by a gust of air. Lost and searching for solid ground, I clung to his feign safety. A papery interior, I was ready for ignition at any moment. As I stood beneath him, he looked down at me, thrilled by the sparks I had embraced.

I remember the first time he raised his voice, it took me by surprise. I remember expensive whiskey, a closed restaurant, as I ran out a kitchen's back door. It was not the voice of a man I knew, not the man who had seen my shattered spirit and had sworn to mend it. I remember tears and immeasurable apologies. A moment of insanity, a promise to stay sane. I embraced him as warmth poured over me, as a spark turned to flame, and I had begun to glow brighter.

Bottles littered the floor as smoke filled the air. He drank in secret to appease me, I drank in plain sight to spite him. Promises of sanity poured down the sink, I drenched myself in water hoping to extinguish a flame that burned like his cigarette on my skin. I begged him to release me from the grips of the powerful arms that had once embraced me with affection. He begged me to release him from the blemished arms that had once held him with delicate care. A blazing fire roared and ran through me, I welcomed the heat as I shone with light.

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Those that surrounded us tried endlessly to extinguish the flames, while we reveled in the chaos we created in one another. Every word filled with poison, every touch laced with a venomous drug that had swallowed me entirely. I had been pulled under a fire so intense, yet so familiar, that I craved burning as much as I craved release.

There was a day of sudden vivid clarity, as I came up for air, and became infatuated with the concept of freedom. I saw a map in my mind, a way to the cold lake shining in the distance of my mind. The feeling of relief overwhelmed me. I ran toward it with every ounce of strength I had left and dove in headfirst. I was light as air as I felt the flames suffocate under the weight of the water.

I remember the last time I heard him raise his voice, it was no surprise. I remember boxes lining walls, the slamming of a truck door, speeding down an open highway. He was still the man I knew, but I was no longer the girl he had towered over. My thirst was quenched and my soul was silent as I drowned out the noise with the wind's screams. Flying down gravel roads, I was a Phoenix rising over the collapsed remains of a structure never built to last. I was ashes, but a well of cool water ran beneath my surface as I welcomed the fresh chill of a new beginning.