

Heart's Desire

It was an ordinary room, simply adorned. In one corner sat a maple desk, piled high with notebooks, worn from years of use. The bed lay off to the side, a simple twin, covered with a periwinkle comforter and three fluffy pillows. The nightstand held a motley array of candles. A cream colored bookshelf lined the wall, bursting with novels. At its base rested a cardboard box. Moonlight filtered in through the cracks in the blinds and illuminated Rachel, sitting on the floor. Rachel rested in the center of her room, directly below her dreamcatcher, which dangled from the ceiling. In her hands, she held a stuffed polar bear. It had pure white fur, with a small garnet scarf wrapped around its neck. She clutched the toy tightly to her chest and reflected fondly on thoughts of her love, Andrew. The very thought of him was enough to make her cheeks flush and her lips draw into a shy smile. There was something about him that drove her crazy. Perhaps it was his tousled brown hair that always made him look like he had just rolled out of bed. It could be his soft, tender smile that always accompanied the crinkles around his pale green eyes, which seemed to glow in the sunlight. Maybe it was the way the smattering of freckles across his face reminded her of the stars in the sky. He was perfect in every way.

Rachel had always known the two of them were destined to be together. She had often fantasized what their life together would be like after college. He would take her out to dinner one night, to The Lavender Garden, her favorite restaurant. After dessert, they would take a walk through the park and suddenly, he would get down on one knee. He would present her with a diamond ring with a gold band, dotted with tiny rubies. The wedding would have a red and gold theme; those were her favorite colors. She would walk down the aisle in a strapless white ball gown, holding a bouquet of lush scarlet flowers, and he would be waiting for her in a tuxedo with a rose pinned on his lapel. His eyes would gleam as he saw her approach and he would

know that he was the luckiest man in the world. All of their friends and family would attend, and her beauty would move them all to tears. When they got older, they would move to the suburbs and get a house of their very own. It wouldn't be the best house when they first got it, a bit of a fixer upper, but they would make it perfect. They would have a rich green lawn and flowers blooming in the garden. They would have three kids: Amanda, Mitchell, and Jacob. Their children would be every bit as stunning as their parents. Every Christmas, they would take the kids into the city to go ice skating and gaze at the lighting of the tree. They would watch their kids grow up. They would fall further in love each day. She and Andrew were the perfect couple. They were meant to be.

Rachel set her stuffed animal down, and rose to face her reflection in her mirror. Her forehead creased as she frowned slightly and touched her face. Her slightly chubby cheeks were marred by a large gash crossing from the bridge of her nose to her left earlobe. It was still fresh and a scarlet stream worked its way slowly down the side of her face. The skin around the wound was becoming discolored and puffing up. She would need to take care of it soon, but she waited. She studied her walnut hair in the mirror, tangled and windblown, and absentmindedly plucked a twig from between the strands. There was dirt smudged beneath her eyes, but she didn't mind. She knew that Andrew would love her no matter what she looked like. Her cheeks grew warm at the thought.

Rachel crossed towards her bookshelf and lifted up the cardboard box, moving to place it on her bed. She raised the lid, gently removed the contents of the box, and held it gingerly to her chest.

“Oh Andrew,” Rachel whispered tenderly, “If only you had loved me back.”

Rachel held the jar up to admire it in the moonlight. The organ inside lay in a thick pool of crimson blood.

“You did put up quite a fight, my love,” Rachel giggled to herself, “You left a nasty mark on my face, but I forgive you. I’m certain that was just you being overly excited to see me. You probably didn’t expect to run into me again. But my love for you is too great, I just couldn’t keep away.”

Rachel raised the jar up to her face and kissed its side complacently. As she pulled it away, she gave a coy pout.

“You know, it would have been easier if you had just admitted that you loved me,” she sighed softly, “I had to wait in that tree for *three hours*. I was beginning to think that you wouldn’t show. But luckily you didn’t let me down.”

Rachel grinned as she reminisced about the events that had occurred earlier that night. After the numerous unanswered texts and phone calls, she had decided to wait for Andrew in the forest by his house. There lay a trail that he often used as a shortcut home. She decided that the best way to surprise him was to wait in a maple tree, as it was his favorite. She remained there motionless for what seemed to be an eternity. Then suddenly, there he was: her true love, emerging along the path. The moment he drew near, she leapt out of the tree and tackled him to the ground. His adorable struggling was futile against her, although he did manage to catch her face with a rock. She saw the terror grow in his beautiful eyes as her dagger glinted in the cold moonlight. His sweet shrieks for help were cut short by a swift flick of her wrist. She watched as the cute little bubbles floated in the blood pouring out of his throat. She wiped the precious tears from his sallow lifeless face and placed a kiss on the lips growing colder before her. Working deftly, she plunged her knife into his chest and began slicing her way to his heart. When she

finally separated the muscle from the rest of his body, she set it gently into a clear jar.

Afterwards, all that was left to do was dispose of the body and skip home.

Through Rachel's window, signs of dawn were beginning to emerge. She opened up the box and placed the jar carefully back inside. It fit perfectly among the others. Rachel smiled softly to herself as she lovingly put the lid back over her prized collection. She laughed gaily and tended to the laceration on her face. As the crimson liquid streaked her fingertips, she reflected on how the blood on her hands was similar to love. Although at times it could be messy, it was always there. It always brought joy. When people were unwilling to share their hearts with her, she would take them. As long as her love flowed, so would their blood.