

March Eleventh

The loud music, the multicoloured flashing lights, the sounds of the party around me, begin to fade away with no warning at all. Everything becomes a blur as I slump onto the couch.

Then the images form in my mind. I can see familiar green eyes, curly brown hair, and a dimpled grin. The first four scenes are normal enough. They're all lighthearted and happy, and all of them feature *him* in the images.

But in the last one, I can taste salty tears and blood, the overwhelming smell of it making me want to gag. I hear sirens ringing in my ears.

There's so much blood. Too much blood.

That's the only scene he wasn't in.

Finally my mind clears, and the party comes back into focus, a little too suddenly for my liking. A sharp headache pounds behind my eyes, and I rub my temples in a fruitless attempt to ease the pain.

I know exactly why this just happened. It's happened to me so many times before that I know not to doubt it, but this time... if my interpretation of the vision was right...

I stand up, searching the crowd of people until I meet Evan's eyes from where he stands halfway across the room. He grins at me, then notices my panicked expression and frowns, quickly making his way towards me.

It's Evan's seventeenth birthday today; it's his party that I'm attending. Why did this have to happen *today* of all days?

"Liv, what's up?" he asks. I can't say anything, not while so many other people are in earshot, so I just stare at him meaningfully until he understands. He takes my arm and leads me to a quieter area, away from the chaos of the party. "Was it a vision?" he asks, concerned.

I simply nod. Evan knows about my visions, about how they come and go without warning. He's been my closest friend since childhood and he's seen me go through this enough to know that I need time to process and figure out what to do next. He's seen how accurate my visions can be.

"Okay, talk to me, Olivia," Evan says gently, pulling me close to him. "What did you see?"

"I-" Words fail me yet again. I *can't* tell him what I saw, not yet, at least. So I carefully continue with, "I don't know... I just... it's not... it wasn't good, Evan," I finish lamely.

He sighs, his green eyes searching mine. "Are you okay?"

I wish I could reassure him that I was. But I shake my head, tears forming in my eyes.

I avoid his gaze, staring blankly at a point beyond his shoulder.

As much as I want it to be false, I know Evan isn't going to be around for long after this.

Sometimes one year seems like ages. Other times it goes past in a flash. I'm sure in this case it'll be the latter - time always works in the ways we least want it to.

“Well, whatever it is, we’ll figure it out,” Evan says, giving my hand a reassuring squeeze, bringing me back to the present. “We always do.”

I try to take comfort in his words, but deep down I know that this time it’s different. I have a sinking feeling that this time, we won’t be able to stop whatever is coming. And that terrifies me.

. . .

I shiver as the flakes of snow begin falling even more thickly.

“Snow is cold,” I mumble into the fabric of my scarf.

Evan laughs, reaching over to ruffle up my already messy hair. “Yeah, it does tend to be like that,”

It’s been a week since the day I had the vision. I’ve decided all I can do at the moment is make the most of the time I have while it’s still here.

According to my vision and the nightmares that have plagued me since, he’s going to die on the 11th of March, his 18th birthday. I don’t know how, or *when* on that day, but by now I’m one hundred percent certain that it’s going to happen then.

We hurriedly cross the street towards the warmth of a café, the snow crunching beneath our boots. It’s warm inside, and I let out a sigh of relief.

Evan heads to the counter to order, while I find us a table. I watch as the snow falls outside, the flakes dancing in the wind. My thoughts drift to my vision.

I don’t know how to tell Evan. If I tell him in advance, will it make everything worse? It’d be just like Evan to try to push me away if he found out, so that it’d hurt me less when he died. And I wanted our last times together to be as normal as possible; it’d feel so different, so *wrong*, if we both knew what was ahead.

Evan returns to the table with our drinks, breaking me out of my thoughts, a blissfully ignorant smile on his face. He sets down my coffee and I take a sip, letting the warmth spread through me.

I’ll tell him soon. But not today.

. . .

I scream and leap backwards as I see something moving out of the corner of my eye. But it’s just Evan, hiding in one of the bushes to jumpscare me.

Evan cracks up laughing as I glare crossly. Hiking is definitely *not* my thing, but it was Evan’s turn to pick out a date for us to go on, and he loves hiking and nature, so that’s what he picked.

“That was *not* funny.” I fail to suppress a grin.

Evan grins, clearly pleased with himself. “Sorry not sorry,” he says, still chuckling. “You have to admit, it *was* funny.”

“For you, maybe, *not* for me. No more heart-attacks for the rest of the day, okay?”

“If you insist...”

We continue walking along the trail. Evan points out different types of plants and birds, and I try my best to show some interest, even though I'm not really into that kind of thing.

As we reach the summit, I can't help but feel a sense of accomplishment. I may not love hiking, but I'm glad I pushed myself out of my comfort zone.

Evan wraps his arm around my shoulder and squeezes, and we stand there for a moment, taking in the view. "Thanks for enduring this hike with me," he says.

"Thanks for dragging me out here... it really wasn't all that bad." I say, smiling up at him. "I had a good time, *mostly*."

"It's not over yet... we still have to go back."

I groan. "Oh, yeah... ugh, no, why..."

"Race you there!" he says cheerfully, letting go of me and jogging towards the track leading back to the car park.

"Wait- Evan, *no!*"

With a sigh, I start following him, making my best effort not to trip over and sprain an ankle. I decide it's worth at least *trying* to race him back, because I have to make every moment count. Even if those moments are spent dashing like maniacs - or ten-year-olds - through a forest.

...

It's already October. Time seems to be slipping away like sand through my hands.

For Halloween, Evan and I dress up and go trick or treating together as usual - I go as a black cat, Evan as a vampire. We're probably "too old" for it, but I don't care... I just like the excuse to dress up. I'm not complaining about the free lollies, either.

The entire time, I can't stop thinking about how this is our last Halloween together. Lately I've been thinking a lot about what life *after* Evan's gone will be like, instead of just his death. However it's impossible for me to think of anything other than loneliness and misery; Evan's been with me for literally my entire life - we've known each other since we were toddlers.

I don't know how I'm going to go on. I feel so helpless, and so disappointed in myself; I rely on him so much that when he's eventually gone, I have no idea what I'm going to do with myself.

Because of this, I've also spent most of my time trying to figure out how, if there's *any* way, I can save his life.

I *can't* lose him.

...

It's today.

I'm a mess the entire morning as I try to get ready for the day, going through my usual morning routine which feels entirely foreign to me.

How is it already his birthday? I can remember the day of the vision as if it was yesterday. It can't have been that long ago, could it?

Evan got his driver's licence yesterday, and he said he was going to pick me up from my house to celebrate. We're going to the cinema to see a movie that just came out.

I'm planning on telling him during the car drive to the movies, about what's going to happen today. I've stalled for too long, and I *have* to do it now. I'll never forgive myself if I don't; I know I'll regret it.

At first, when he told me he got his licence, I thought he was going to die in a car crash sometime today, but I know it can't happen because I'm going to be in the car with him the entire time, so something's going to have to happen to him while I'm not there.

I'm scared of the unknown.

I hear him pull up in the driveway. He can tell that I'm feeling terrible, even though I try to hide it.

"Evan?" I say in a shaky voice after we both get in the car.

"Mmm?"

"I..." I take a deep breath, and start again. "Remember the vision I had at your party last year?"

"Yeah...?"

"I... lied. I knew exactly what it meant, and..." I'm fighting against tears now, and he's looking at me in concern. "You're... you're going to die, Evan. And I can't stop it. We can't stop it. And it's going to happen today. I don't know how, or when, but..." I trail off, blinking furiously.

There's a long silence. He's contemplating whether I'm telling the truth or not, I think.

"That's..." he swallows. "That's a lot to take in."

I blink. I didn't expect him to react so calmly. I'd convinced myself that he'd be furious with me.

"Olivia, we'll be together again soon... I love you." He keeps his eyes fixed on the road, but his choked voice gives him away.

"I love you too."

Finally, a shuddering sob escapes me, and Evan looks over, pain and concern written over his face.

I can't lose him.

"I'm sorry," we both whisper at the same time.

That's when it happens. A sudden screeching sound of brakes, a scream escaping my lips as what I *think* is a speeding truck comes out of nowhere and smashes into our car, until I can't hear anything apart from a ringing in my ears. And then that too fades into nothing.

He was only eighteen years old.

And I was only seventeen.

I didn't want this to happen.

But maybe it's better off this way.

After all... what is one without the other?