

Blah blah blah introduction, blah blah blah, some kind of preface to my prologue in which I go from the tale in front of me to my tale.

The commotion finally subsided. "I wish to tell a tale that may upset some of you, but I will tell it anyway for it is the only story I know. I apologize in advance for the common language I am about to use because I was told this story by one who is not of my social status and I do not know how to paraphrase and use my own words. Here begins the story of two 16 year olds who thought they were in love.

"Matthew stepped outside and took a breath of the fresh spring air. 'Finally ungrounded.' he thought to himself as he looked around wondering what to do next. It had been what seemed like an eternity since he had been outside, besides going to and from school and work. He was a junior at Brecham High School this year and even though he wasn't a senior, he had wanted to make it a memorable year since his parents were sending him away to military school in the fall. He had gotten together with a group of seniors that were planning a senior prank to the effect of releasing farm animals into the school. It was his task to steal a baby cow from his neighbor's farm and set it loose in the school. He had been caught in the act of cow napping and, although his neighbors didn't turn him in to the police, they did turn him in to his parents.

There was a boy. A very strange, enchanted boy. They say he wandered very far. Very far, over land and sea. And then one day, one magic day he passed my way. And while we spoke of many things, fools and kings, this he said to me. "The greatest thing you'll ever know is just to love, and to be loved in return." t was the first day in her 15 young years of life that she had ever been in detention. She was usually the perfect student,

with the perfect grades, and what seemed to be the perfect life. But she found out last night that what seemed to be a perfect relationship between her parents was now screeching to a halt, and her world was tumbling down around her. She had taken Tylenol PM in order to get some sleep that night.

For some reason that day her alarm didn't go off. I suppose it could have been that she forgot, or it could have been that she meant to leave it unset. Whatever the reason, at twenty minutes to eight she woke abruptly to the echo of a slamming door in the monstrous house in which she lived. Checking the clock she rolled back over on her side, deciding to take a "mental health day", as her mother usually let her skip school when she felt she really needed it. However, after only an hour of extra sleep she was again awoken, this time by her mother stripping the sheets off her bed and yelling at her to get up. "I got called in to work and Maria has the day off so I need to drive you to school."

"But mom, I don't need a maid to watch over me. I can stay at home by myself. I'm not a child anymore", she complained.

"Oh yes you are young lady. I am not leaving you home alone and that is the end of it! Now get ready." Moaning, the sleepy girl crawled out of bed and into the shower.

Arriving at school in the middle of fourth period English class, she entered the silent room, placed a pass on the teacher's desk, and reluctantly took her seat. "Psst! Kaleigh! Where were you this morning?" whispered Ashley. Her best friend had a questioning look on her face.

"I slept in late. No big deal." Kaleigh replied.

“Yes big deal,” retorted Ashley, “Kevin was asking about you this morning in homeroom. He wanted to talk to you. It sounded important...”

“Ladies! Is there a problem?”

“No Mr. Sumliner” the girls shook their heads.

“Then I’m sure that you wouldn’t mind answering the question I just asked Josh here.”

“Um... what question?” asked Ashley.

“Just as I thought. You girls weren’t paying attention. I’ll see you two in detention today after school.” The girls fell silent for the rest of the period, and instead of paying attention Kaleigh daydreamed ...

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The bell snapped her back to reality, and she quickly gathered her books and hurried out the door and toward her locker. When she got there he was leaning up against the wall with one foot crossed over the other, his hands in his blue jean pockets, and snapping a piece of bubblegum in his mouth. As she approached he stood up and greeted her, “Hey! I wasn’t sure if you were in school today.”

“I slept in late” she explained.

“Oh. Well, do you want to have lunch with me? I have my car, so we could go to Burger King or something.”

“Sure, sounds great. Let me get my jacket.”

After spending what seemed like a short lunch period with Kevin, she felt as though she already knew him intimately. He had opened up almost immediately and explained that he had liked her for a while and was hoping that she would consider

going steady with him. She happily accepted and they spent the rest of lunch learning all there was to know about each other. He was the only thing that kept Kaleigh sane throughout her parents' divorce.

Days turned into months, months into years, and before she knew it June of Kevin's senior year was upon them. As graduation approached they started talking of the future, and what was going to happen when Kevin went off to college in the far off city of Buffalo, New York. Should they remain together and try to hold together a long distance relationship? Neither of them wanted to accept the fact that they might not be together forever like they had often wished.

"Kaleigh," he began, "I think I know a way we could make our relationship stronger, and maybe we could last through this."

As Kaleigh was happy to hear the possibility that they might last, she eagerly leaned in closer as they sat in the deserted parking lot of the movie theater in their town. It was dark, about eleven at night, and they both had another hour before curfew.

"What's your idea Kevin?" she inquired.

"I think... I think that maybe if we sleep together, then we would be closer and be able to last through next year."

"... I don't know Kevin..."

"I know you've said before that you want to wait until marriage, but we are going to get married sometime right? So why not sooner rather than later? You know I love you..." He softly began kissing her cheek.

"I'm still not sure about this Kevin..."

“Shhh...” he kissed her to make her stop talking, and proceeded to start taking off her shirt.

“Kevin, please don’t. I don’t want to do this.”

“Don’t you love me baby? Don’t you want us to be happy?”

“Yes... but...”

“No buts.” He continued to move in closer. As he was unbuttoning her pants a million thoughts were running through her mind. It was like a war zone in there, one side pro, the other con, and she had no idea which way was up. Kevin seems to be sure about this, and I trust him, she reasoned. So, reluctantly she allowed him to test out his theory.

The next few weeks were the best she had ever experienced. Kevin treated her more like his princess than ever, and she felt sure that she loved him, and that he loved her. Maybe it was a good idea, she thought. But that nagging guilty feeling in her stomach wouldn’t leave her alone, no matter how much she chose to ignore it.

After about a month she realized something was wrong. She missed her time of the month, and she started feeling terribly sick in the mornings. She didn’t want to tell her mother, for fear that she would take her to a doctor and confirm her suspicions. She had to talk to Kevin.

Sitting down at their favorite table at their favorite restaurant, they each ordered their usual meals and Kaleigh started to talk. “Kevin, I know you’re not going to believe me, but I think I’m pregnant.”

“What? You’re joking right?”

“No, I’m not joking. I’ve missed having that monthly disappointment by three weeks, and I’m starting to feel sick in the morning. I don’t know what to do.”

“You didn’t tell your mother, did you?”

“No, not yet.”

“Good. Wait a little while. You can’t be sure yet that you are pregnant, and if you tell your mom now and it’s a false alarm she won’t be too happy.”

“Ok. How long do I wait?”

“I’m not sure. Let’s not think about it now and try to enjoy ourselves, ok?” But neither of them said much else, or ate much of their food.

Two months: “Kevin I really think we have a problem.”

“We? You mean you. You’re the one who’s pregnant, not me.”

“What?” shocked she paused for a moment to collect her thoughts. “You’re the father. It’s half your child too. You can’t just bail out on me.”

“I’m not bailing out on you.” He comforted her, and wiped away the newly formed tears that had begun to roll down her cheeks.

“Then what do you suggest we do?” She sniffled.

“I think you should have an abortion. Neither of us are ready to be parents, and you don’t want your parents to know that you had sex before marriage, do you?”

The tears stopped. Kaleigh couldn’t believe what she had just heard. “Kill our unborn child?” she questioned.

“Yes Kaleigh. I’m sorry, I don’t want to have to do this either, but it’s for the best.”

“No.”

“What?”

“I said ‘No’ Kevin. I will not kill this innocent little being inside of me. It didn’t do anything to us, and it’s our own fault it’s even alive anyway.”

At this point Kevin started to yell, “Hey, if it’s half my baby I should have a say in what happens to it too. And anyway, it’s not even alive yet. It’s just a fetus!”

“How can you say that? What if your parents had aborted you? That’s not fair. It has the potential to become a human being, and I won’t take that chance away from it” she argued.

“Yes you will! You will listen to what I tell you, and you will do as I say!” his face started to get bright red out of anger. By this time the entire restaurant was quiet, and everyone was staring at the couple, wondering what was going to happen next.

“No Kevin. I won’t.” Just as those words came out of her mouth he stood up and slapped her across the face. The force of the blow knocked her out of her chair and onto the ground. The manager of the restaurant had called the police at that point and had some of his employees restrain Kevin, while some were getting ice and helping Kaleigh. The entire time Kevin was putting up a fight and claiming that he hadn’t done anything wrong and that he still loved her, but it was too late. Her trust in him was completely gone, and her heart hurt much worse at that point than the pain in her swelling cheek ever could. When the police came they suggested that they could give her a ride home, and although dazed, she accepted.

When Kaleigh arrived at her house in a police car her father was extremely troubled, so she had to tell him the whole story. He made them both hot cocoa and they

sat down and talked about it. After hearing the whole thing he just held her in his arms and said, "It will be alright... it will be alright..."

Kaleigh decided to have the baby and give it up for adoption, because she knew she wasn't responsible enough yet to raise the child, and she wanted to be able to finish high school and go to college. She decided to set up an open adoption so she could pick the parents and keep in contact with the child as it grew and matured. The adoptive parents let Kaleigh name the baby, and when she found out it was a girl she decided to name her Hope.