

A Love Like No Other

The walls were thrumming, the beat was thumping, and the room was filled with a smoky haze. Amanda stood in the kitchen, ladling herself some punch when a popular jock named Matt swaggered up to her. She vaguely knew of him, her only knowledge gleaned from echoes of conversations and rumors in the halls at school- a typical social outcast who lived on the fringe of school gossip. She turned, and guardedly said hello to him. In response, he confidently asked, “Wanna dance?” Seeming that there was no other option, Amanda joined him on the dance floor. She was robotic and inhibited. After a while, Amanda thought, *Stop being so uptight. Is it too difficult for you to enjoy a few minutes with someone who seems remotely interested in you?* She then began to loosen up.

Little did she know, her older sister, Rachel, was watching her from afar, silently gauging when it was appropriate to intervene. When Amanda finally broke to **sati**ate herself, Rachel accosted her.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

Amanda retorted, “What does it look like I’m doing? I’m having the time of my life with one of the coolest guys at our school.” Rachel sighed, and said, “Do you know anything about him? He lies, he blackmails, he cheats. We’re leaving. Right. Now.” Rachel latched herself on to Amanda’s arm and began to guide her to the rear of the house, so they could escape unnoticed.

Amanda tore herself from her sister’s vise-like grip and hissed, “You’re just jealous. I honestly don’t care about what you think and no one’s stopping me from living my life, not even you. I’ll see you later.” Amanda ran back and disappeared into the pulsating throng of people. Rachel sighed, and thought, *It’s just one night. She’ll come to her senses and I’ll be waiting for her right at home to console her and pick up the pieces, as usual.*

Meanwhile, as Amanda was heading back to the kitchen, she saw Matt onto his next prey, chatting up two other girls from her grade and soaking up their attention like a perverse, revolting sponge. Matt turned, locked eyes with her, and *grinned*. Amanda narrowed her eyes, and spun on her heel. For the remainder of the party, she stood in the shadows, deliberating over when the right time was to return home. She thought about the definite prospect of hanging her head in shame and listening to Rachel’s *I told you so* while being burned by her accusing eyes.

Amanda mentally rewinded to her initial encounter with Matt. That glint of the eye? Not happiness, but one of malicious, wretched intent. That toothy smile? A sinister, wicked thought. That arm looping around her waist? One of property and possession. She realized how incredibly inept she was, to have missed all the signs, or possibly to have

ignored them- a combination of her not wanting to **spoil the magical** moment with Matt and not wanting to surrender to the satisfaction of Rachel.

Amanda walked home and collapsed into her sister's arms. Rachel? Not one word. She simply rubbed her back and smoothed down her sister's hair. She said, "He'll realize soon enough what he's lost. Next thing you know, you'll be leaving a trail of broken hearts wherever you go." Amanda smiled up at her appreciatively. She now realized that Rachel was in all but name her cradle, her rocking chair, her bassinet, her rattle, her pacifier, her soothing lullaby. Amanda held her as near to her heart as a beloved teddy bear and clutched her as tightly as a worn out, threadbare security blanket.

Rachel possessed and embodied everything Amanda could ever dare hope to be as a person and wouldn't be who she was without her. She had a visceral, unconditional love towards Rachel, a truly beautiful woman in every sense of the word. They were cut from the same cloth and held that truth to be self-evident. This constancy of Rachel was so true; it had her laughing within a matter of seconds after possibly one of the worst experiences of her life. She couldn't pin down exactly what it was. It was a love so genuine, so nuanced, but so massive. It was a love like no other.