

Rachael Wilding

From the moment I met him, I knew I would never be able to escape. Just the way he looked at me, the way he introduced me to people. I knew his type. I was already drowning in despair, I was already half alive.

I was breathing, but I wasn't living. What did it matter, he couldn't make it any worse, could he? I didn't understand how much worse everything in my life would become. I didn't know that my entire life would collapse at my feet, and fall far, far out of reach.

Taking me months to finally regain hold of my life again, becoming an entirely different person. Someone many people from my past would not recognize.

I wasn't invited to many people's birthday parties, in fact, I wasn't invited over to many people's houses at all. Everyone liked me, but not that much. When my friend Kayla invited me over to her house for her birthday, I didn't hesitate to say yes. I probably sounded a little too desperate, but oh well.

We went dress shopping for the eighth grade formal and played cards against humanity. I had a good time. I could finally forget about my life for a night. My body systems had kind of shut down. I didn't get hungry anymore, I didn't need to go to the bathroom, and I didn't feel the need to sleep. I'm sure I did need all of these, but I just couldn't feel the physical sensations anymore.

Everyone was asleep by two AM, but I stayed up because I couldn't sleep. Around four AM I got a text from someone who used to go to my school. He was two grades ahead of me, and we used to be pretty close friends but had drifted apart.

He talked to me about being under the influence of marijuana, but this did not block the dark creature living inside him. We were snapping back and forth, sending pointless pictures. I put up boundaries, becoming his friend again, and being around him more.

After hearing how he talked about me to his friends, I started to rethink his intentions. I turned down his requests to hang out with me.

He got angry and possessive of me. He showed up at my house when I had never told him where I lived nor had he dropped me off there.

After asking my friend for advice, she warned me not to block him. By doing this, I would just be fueling the fire. He was prideful and would do whatever it took to get what he wanted. But at that moment,



I didn't know the full extent of what he wanted.

Thinking I was protecting myself, I tried to just make excuses whenever he wanted to hang out and I kept talking to him. However, these excuses were not going to stop him.

Fed up of my excuses, he decided to take matters into his own hands. On the night of July 12, 2018, I received a text from him saying, "I'm coming over." In response, I told him absolutely not, my mom and her then boyfriend were passed out, and I didn't even want him over in the first place. It was 11 o'clock at night.

My texts went unopened, unanswered, leaving me with no idea what to do. I didn't know that he was dangerous, I figured I could just tell him to leave.

I stood by the front door with a baseball bat, but after twenty minutes I heard the back door opening, cursing my sister for leaving it unlocked. My thoughts were going a mile a minute, I didn't think to check the back door.

It was always kept locked, but my sister had recently had a friend over and they had played hide and seek. Hands shaking I dropped the baseball bat on the floor and the sound reverberated in my skull. I looked around the corner into my kitchen and saw the biggest shadow I had ever seen inching towards me. I crumpled into myself as he pushed me into my room, my scream getting lost in my throat.

