### Untold Thoughts

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Mature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>F/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>Original Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship:</td>
<td>Boyfriend/Girlfriend, Brother/Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character:</td>
<td>Original Characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series:</td>
<td>Part 4 of Halloween 2017, Part 2 of Storytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats:</td>
<td>Published: 2017-10-26 Completed: 2017-11-09 Chapters: 8/8 Words: 6745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Summary

Six teenagers gather together at a birthday party and end up sharing horror stories.
Zach withdrew the large knife from it's stand and placed it on the bench before heading to the fridge to retrieve a daintily iced chocolate cake.

"Happy seventeenth to me..." He thought while carefully arranging the right amount of candles in a circle. "...Noah said he was going to be here."

His cellphone rang on cue and he picked up to learn that his longtime friend was on their way at that very moment.

Noah arrived just a couple of minutes later and Zach immediately allowed him inside, only to be surprised by the additional presence of fifteen year old Alicia.

"Oh, hi Alicia. I almost forgot you existed."

Alicia blinked and opened her mouth a little as if lost for words, before the apparent absence of Noah restored some courage in her.

"Really? Because I'd never forget you..."

"Well, I guess that makes you a better friend than me, right?"

"Yeah, that's totally what I want to be..."

"Great. It would suck to lose you after all these years."

"Um..." Alicia muttered in disappointment as she gazed into Zach's bright blue eyes and wondered how he could have missed the obvious hints she'd dropped.

To make matters more frustrating, Noah emerged from the bathroom a moment later to impatiently call her name and demand that they have a conversation in private.

"So, what was that all about?" Zach asked Noah rather innocently after Alicia had inexplicably stormed past with a bitter pout on her face. "Did you say something mean?"

"No, of course not. She's just been having a hard time expressing her feelings lately."

"Oh. I guess we've all been there, right?"

Noah didn't answer and stared back in disbelief for a full minute before finally making a reply.

"God, Zach. We've known each other for almost ten years, but I never thought you could be this thick."

"What? Are you calling me stupid?"

Zach shifted his hand towards the knife without realizing, which prompted to Noah to swallow in fear and take a large step back.

"No, I'm saying that you're emotionally slow, not unintelligent."
"Oh. Michelle said that to me once too."

Zach's fingers instead wrapped around an empty glass and he picked it up while remembering there was a birthday to celebrate.

"We'd better start getting drinks and snacks ready. Is anybody else coming?"

"Yeah, Jared and Brittany both said they'd be here, but I guess they're running late. I don't know about the others, though."

"Well, I guess we're going to need a whole keg, then."

"A keg?"

"Yeah. Have you seen Jared and his friends?"

"Hm, you do have a point. But how are we going to get one?"

"From the basement? My Mom keeps a few down there in case of emergencies."

"Emergencies?"

"Hey, it's my birthday. That counts."

Zach purposefully strode out of the kitchen and Noah gave a heavy sigh upon being left alone with the birthday cake.

Five voices cheered in unison thirty minutes later as Zach placed his own birthday cake on the coffee table and knelt down to blow out the candles.

Once that was over, he fetched his knife from the kitchen to divide the cake into six roughly equal portions.

The plates were distributed around the room, though Brittany declined her serving and offered it to Kyle instead.

She watched with steely determination while everybody else dug in, despite her stomach screaming otherwise and the look of concern Jared fired in her direction.

"Sure you don't want any? You could have the rest of mine, if you want..."

"Nope, Jared. Think of all the sex we have yet to have..."

"Oh yeah, you do have a point. Gotta keep up appearances."

At that, Jared pushed aside his unfinished cake and wiped his mouth clean with a napkin before stretching both arms.

"So, are we going to drink or not? You said there'd be a keg..."

"Yeah, we will. As soon as I've finished." Zach replied apathetically while sinking his spoon down.

"You know what would also be fun?" Brittany spoke up brightly to get attention. "We could tell scary stories..."

"But Halloween's like eight months away!" Kyle protested.
"Who cares? I said it would be fun, didn't I?"

"Fine, I'm in. As long as the birthday boy agrees."

All eyes then slowly shifted towards Zach and he paused upon finally realizing what was expected from him.

"Sure, that's a great idea..." He remarked with a sigh, placing his plate down. "Who's going first?"

"You, of course." Brittany replied restlessly while huddling closer against Jared. "It's your party..."
"Me?" Zach asked Brittany in surprise while pointing to himself and trying to ignore the stares of the others.

"Yeah, do I have to repeat myself? We're all here because of you anyway."

"Fine. Just give me a minute to think..."

He scanned slowly around the room at the faces of each of his friends as he attempted to form a sufficiently frightening premise in his mind.

He sat up straight after putting a rather sketchy framework together and laid his eyes on Brittany before beginning.

"How should I start? Well, I heard this story once from my sister Jennifer, though I'm gonna have to change names and details..."

At the age of twenty-three, Danny was your typical down-on-his-luck college graduate. He spent each day delivering pizzas to restless housewives and each night watching TV while cursing a system that had forced him to take up such a lousy job just to make ends meet.

One of the few things that still made him happy was managing to snare some nice movie from the video store every now and then. Whenever that happened, he wouldn't hesitate to rent it at the counter and stay up late to watch it till the end.

Things proved different one evening however, as he noticed that the store was having a rather large sale, due in part to the declining popularity of videotapes.

It was on that night that Danny made the rare decision to give a mainstream film a chance and prepared to pay for it, only to unexpectedly have his path blocked by a desperate looking blonde.

"Zach..." Brittany interrupted, withdrawing her hand from around Jared's shoulder. "Is the blonde supposed to be me, by any chance?"

"No, of course not." Zach found himself saying. "This was my sister's story, remember?"

"Sorry. It just sounds like the setup to one of those dumb blonde jokes, you know?"

"Yeah, those things are pretty offensive. Now, where was I? Oh right..."

"Hey, I'm Jessica..." The blonde introduced herself as she stopped in front of Danny. "You know that movie you're holding? I want...no, I need it."

Danny paused to look her up and down for a few seconds before making a firm reply.

"Sorry, babe. I'm not giving it up without a fight."

At that, he slipped on a pair of sunglasses and pushed Jessica aside to make his way forward, only to be hit head-on by a runaway truck crashing straight through the front windows.
The force was enough to bisect poor Danny and send Jessica flying into the nearby wall. She then fell to the floor and slowly stood up with a painful gasp.

What was left of Danny's once mildly attractive form was the first thing to greet her in the ensuing chaos and she gave a piercing scream before emergency staff rushed to her aid.

"That...that's it?" Jared remarked in disappointment. "Pretty anticlimactic if you ask me..."

"Well, this is what you get for making me go first."

Zach crossed his arms to defend his point while Noah turned to whisper to Alicia, whom then looked up to make direct eye contact.

"Well, Zach, you did work yourself into a corner by killing off the main character. Who else would we root for?"

"Yeah, this Danny did sound pretty cool..." Brittany agreed with a nod. "He deserves better."

Zach sighed deeply in response to the feedback and leaned back in his chair, an act that didn't fail to catch Alicia's attention. She clenched her fists while he reluctantly thought of a proper ending to his story.

Jessica was sent to the hospital with minor injuries in the wake of the unfortunate truck accident.

She was visited by her mother and younger brother, both of whom were immensely grateful that she wasn't one of the two people dead as a result of the freak event.

Nevertheless, memories of the young man she'd met in the video store resurfaced and she begged to be left alone, finding it terrifying how quickly death could come to anybody.

"If only I'd taken some time to know you. I never even found out your name..." She muttered quietly through her tears before lying down to hopefully get some sleep.

A nurse entered the room to check on Jessica's wellbeing a few minutes before midnight, as well as drop off a videotape intended as a get-well present by her family.

Loud scratching against the window eventually prompted Jessica to sit up in fear and call for assistance, though nobody was available to heed her call.

A cold hand smashed it's way in moments later, bombarding her with broken glass before violently yanking her up by the hair.

"It's me, Danny..." A raspy voice whispered in her ear. "...where's my videotape?!"
"Woah, that was disturbing..." Brittany muttered tensely as soon as Zach finished. She extended her hand toward Jared's and he twitched in surprise.

"You serious? Because I saw that ending coming from a mile away." Kyle countered with a cross of his arms. "Nobody really stays dead when they have unfinished business..."

"Even if it's as trivial as some videotape?"

"Hey, it wasn't just any movie. It was *The Matrix.*" Zach protested before Jared's question could be answered.

"Wait, are you saying there's some actual truth to that story?! Oh my God..."

Brittany shuddered and tightened her grip against Jared's wrist, prompting him to begin wincing in pain.

"Speaking of the Matrix, that movie is so six years ago." Noah spoke up, laying his eyes upon Zach amidst the restlessness. "But I have something in mind that's even older. Care to hear it?"

"Yeah, go ahead. Never mind everyone else."

"Fine."

Noah cleared his throat to signal that he was about to start while Alicia tried to draw attention in vain.

"This tale begins on a ship heading towards a land known as the Deep South..."

One of Abigail's earliest memories was being paraded alongside her family before a pale faced man, whom recited a string of words that she could not comprehend.

Something about what the man had said must have hurt Abigail's mother, for the woman burst into tears and began to scream while trying un成功fully to prevent them all from being dragged away one by one.

"Mommy..." She whimpered in fear after seeing her older brothers being roughly herded into the next room. "I'm scared..."

A strong hand latched itself around her arm and she stared up at her mother pleadingly as the woman's lips trembled.

She was then yanked away to the sound of a cry filled with complete despair, before being brought in front of an imposing young man.

His smile seemed benevolent, though when he knelt down to inspect her face, Abigail felt like she was looking into the eyes of a monster.

Abigail was bought as a house slave by one Master Jackson and made to serve his wife, Mistress Jackson.

Mistress Jackson was a gaunt and humorless woman whom ran the household with an iron fist. She
was also the sort to abuse those below her with the ultimate goal of preventing them from ever finding advantage with their situation.

For most of her childhood, Abigail was able to avoid the worst of the mistress' temper, though things changed for the worse as she approached adulthood.

Her lighter skin and now womanly figure were enough to attract the attention of Master Jackson, and he would spend many a mealtime leering at her from behind.

She did her best to carry on with duties and hope that he would soon move on, until one night when he ordered her to his bedside.

Mistress Jackson found out what had happened the next day and flew into a jealous rage, during which she struck Abigail relentlessly in front of the other slaves before denying her two days' worth of food.

It was while getting dressed early one morning that Abigail realized she had long since ceased her monthly bleeding. This, along with her swelling stomach and the number of times she'd lain with Master Jackson made it clear that there was only one possible cause.

She remembered her mother and how much love had been lavished upon her in the short time they'd been together.

In contrast, she was unable to feel anything but hatred for the child growing inside of her and all that it represented.

The beatings and threats from Mistress Jackson grew steadily worse until Abigail feared greatly for her own life, as well as the possibility that she would never be free from her dire situation.

Temptation eventually got the better of her one humid evening and instead of going to keep Master Jackson company, she stealthily escaped through a window and fled through the cotton field.

The crops brushed roughly against her legs and bare feet. She winced in pain but pressed on until Master Jackson's land had been left far behind and a rushing river stretched ahead.

She stopped right at the bank and stared down into the shimmering water while running a hand against her belly.

It took several deep breaths and driving all rational thoughts from her mind before she mustered up the courage to slide down feet first.

The water came up to her waist and she took one step after the other, forcing herself to keep going even as it rapidly rose to lap around her neck and shoulders.

A sudden contraction in her chest was the last thing she felt before losing her footing and slipping beneath the surface, not to be seen until the next morning when a fisherman would discover her floating corpse.
Black Water

Noah paused for dramatic effect as everyone fell silent. Jared and Kyle stared blankly at each other in guilt before both getting up to get beer from the keg.

"I didn't catch all of your story, but it didn't sound scary. Just sad." Brittany remarked with a forlorn look on her face. "I'm glad my ancestors weren't part of that system. Probably."

"Yeah, believe that all you want. The truth is, we don't need fake shit to scare each other. We just need to look at ourselves and what we're capable of."

Awkward silence fell as Kyle and Jared returned with three drinks between them. They noticed the discomfort and sat down rather nervously, unsure what to make of the tension.

"So, does anyone want to go next?" Noah asked while glancing expectantly between Alicia and Jared. "Or are we just going to get drunk instead?"

Jared opened his mouth to reply, only to be interrupted by Kyle raising one hand and offering to take his turn.

"It seems we're following some historical theme, so I'm gonna say this first; I was visiting my great-grandpa's grave last month and I noticed something at the very back of the cemetery."

He turned to gaze straight at Jared with a mischievous grin on his face.

"There was a headstone for some guy named Brent Donovan. Same surname as you."

"You're kidding. What else was written on it?"

"I can't remember, but it did say that he died last century or something. No surprise you wouldn't know about him."

Jared leaned back and sighed in disbelief.

"I guess my family goes back further than I thought..."

"Yeah, and that's why I thought I'd take a page from Noah's book..."

"No, leave my possible ancestors alone!"

"Sorry..." Kyle apologized sarcastically before demanding everybody's attention.

At the mere age of nineteen, Brent Donovan was already trapped in a marriage with a woman he despised and forced to toil in the field each day from dawn to dusk.

Despite the rough life that he lead, Brent was known all around the village for his charming smile and good looks. Young girls whom passed by would often stop just to ogle him as he worked.

Some even went so far as to flirt with him, but in the end they would all be scared away by Brent's ill-tempered wife, whom simply wanted him to herself despite her own prudishness.

Brent wasn't one to accept a pious life though. He hatched an elaborate plan to lure his wife into a false sense of security by pretending to be a loving husband and treating her like a queen.
He ended up handling everything from cooking and going to the market, while also using his extended time away to fulfil personal pleasures.

It so happened one morning that he met a lovely young woman by the name of Ruth. They were instantly attracted to each other and she organized a special meeting place for them to express their love.

They lay together in a secluded clearing and once the act was over, Ruth revealed herself to be nothing more than a harlot by asking for payment.

Brent swallowed in dismay as he handed over what little money he had. She smiled and gave him a final kiss on the cheek before setting off to continue her business.

He sought after Ruth's company several more times in the following months and to his surprise, she willingly lowered the price whenever he came, until the day she allowed him into bed for no charge at all.

"You're crazy..." Brent muttered as she pinned him down in a fit of passion. "How will you make a living?"

"Don't you understand?! You're worth more than all my clients combined, because...I love you..."

"No, you can't say that!" Brent cried out in horror. "I'm a married man!"

He shoved Ruth aside before she could protest and rushed out of the seedy establishment as fast as he could, determined to put it all in the past.

However, fate wouldn't allow for things to be so simple. Brent was confronted by a shocking sight one summer's evening as he went out to draw water from the village well.

Ruth stood alone up ahead, wearing an uncharacteristically plain white gown while her eyes were full of desperation.

"Please, Brent..." She pleaded, making her way towards him. "You have to help me. I'm with child..."

"With child?"

"Yes."

"How...how do you know I'm the father?"

"I..."

Ruth hesitated and realized the futility of her claim. A deranged smile then spread across her face and she seized Brent by the shoulders without warning.

"Run away with me! We'll start a new life together!"

"No!"

Brent pushed her away with all of his might. She slipped backwards and lost her balance before crashing through the side of the well to fall straight to her death.

He panicked upon realizing what he'd done and rushed back home to his wife, where she
immediately felt suspicious of his change in demeanor.

He, of course, denied that anything was wrong while settling back into his typical duties and finding it difficult to stay focused.

A week passed before the first deaths occurred as a result of the village's tainted water supply.
"Hey, Kyle?"

"Yeah, Jared?"

"Remind me to kill you later. For now, me and Brittany are gonna..."

Jared hiccuped and stumbled, prompting Brittany to firmly raise him back up before they made their way out of the living room.

Kyle rolled his eyes once they were gone and refilled his glass. He took slow sips while eyeing his three companions.

"None of you are thirsty?"

"I'm underage..." Alicia replied shyly, glancing between Noah and Zach in the hope they'd come to her support. They both remained silent however, as if they were expecting her to handle the situation alone.

"Aren't we all?"

"Yeah, but I'm only fifteen. I'm far from ready."

"Fine, stay the baby of the group. It's your loss..."

Kyle took a heavy gulp and stared straight across the room at Zach.

"What about you, birthday boy? Aren't you gonna let loose?"

"No, I'm the host, remember? That means I'm cleaning up after you people..."

Zach lowered his head miserably before Noah cleared his throat.

"You could say something like that about me too. Someone's going to have to drive when this is over. I'm guessing it'll be me again..."

The four remaining teenagers drifted into their own corners of self-pity for the next few minutes, eventually being brought back to their senses by a loud crash from upstairs.

"Oh crap..." Zach muttered urgently while getting to his feet. "I thought I told them to stay downstairs..."

At that, he fled the living room to find Jared and Brittany before they caused further trouble, leaving Noah to keep things at bay.

"So, I guess it's just the three of us now..." Kyle said suggestively, raising an eyebrow while inching ever so closer to Alicia. "What do you say we do?"

"Back off, Kyle." Noah intervened upon sensing his sister's discomfort. "Give her some space. It's her turn now."

"My turn?"
"Yeah. Get a move on..."

"Okay..."

Alicia swallowed and tried not to worry too much about Kyle's unwanted attention as she began.

Zeke was sitting quietly in the cafeteria when a certain girl strutted past, dazzling him with the combination of her dark hair and blue eyes.

"Michaela..." He sighed in bliss once she was gone, turning back around while failing to conceal the love-struck look in his eyes.

The attractive senior was all that he could think of for the rest of the day and night, regardless of the fact that she was the sister of a close friend and rumored to be somewhat difficult to please.

This did not deter him in the slightest. On the contrary, it instead drove him to constantly better himself in the hope that she would one day also be awestruck.

However, life went on just the same despite his best efforts and he was eventually driven mad by desire, resorting to unethical means to acquire what he wanted.

He traveled several miles one weekend to purchase a love potion from a mysterious street vendor and vowed to use it on Michaela the next week.

He approached her table in the cafeteria while she was distracted by gossipy friends and poured a few drops into her diet coke before stepping back to loiter around inconspicuously.

As Michaela finished her drink, the other girls noticed an instant change in her posture and demeanor. She spun around to stare lustfully at Zeke despite her friends' questions of concern and promptly wrapped both arms forcefully around his body.

"Oh my God, Zeke..." She panted, all sense of shame gone. "You are so hot, I just wanna do you right here, right now."

"Um, Michaela...this is great, but don't you think you're being a bit-"

"Forget everybody else! Let's screw like rabbits!"

"Oh God, this is priceless!" Kyle exclaimed while failing to suppress a laugh. "Good thing Jared's not around to hear you dissing his sister!"

"I...I'm not trying to!"

"You were saying?"

Jared appeared in the doorway and Alicia froze in shock before doubting that it was wise to continue.

"It's not what you think..." She attempted to explain upon regaining her composure. "She was just the first person to come to-"

"Relax, it's fine." Jared reassured her as he leaned against the door frame for support. "Michelle does need to be knocked down once in a while, even if she is fucking hot...wait, what did I say?"
"Seriously, Jared. If you actually have the hots for your sister, then I'm worried..."

"Hey, there's a much bigger problem than whether it's normal to be attracted to be your sister." Noah interrupted brashly, disregarding Alicia's sense of security in a rare act of carelessness. "Where's Zach and Brittany?"

"Oh shit..."

Jared turned around to clumsily stumble back the way he came, only for another loud crash to sound moments later. Noah rolled his eyes before turning back to Alicia and Kyle.

"Hopefully, he'll be fine. Want to continue?"

"I...I'll try." Alicia replied in uncertainty while hoping that Zach was safe and that everyone would soon be safely back together.

Zeke pushed Michaela aside with all of his strength and sprinted straight into the hall in search of the nearest exit. She gave chase while foaming at the mouth and to his horror, proved to be quite the athlete as she caught up to him with ease.

He found a large rock once outside and hurled it towards her. It hit her in the chest and she stumbled backwards, which bought him enough time to leap over the school gate before waiting desperately for traffic to clear.

The road grew quiet just as Michaela prepared to lunge at him and he charged straight across without looking back.

He reached the other side rather short of breath and smiled in relief at the sound of cars rushing behind him, only to feel his stomach turn when he heard a deafening screech.

He turned around to see Michaela being hit by a car and sent flying. She landed against the tarmac so hard that her skull cracked open, resulting in a heavy stream of blood running down her once beautiful face.

Several drivers stopped and exited their vehicles to stare at the seemingly dead girl, only for her to abruptly get back to her feet as if nothing was wrong.

"Marry me, Zeke! We'll be together forever and ever!"
"Oh, there you two are..." Jared mumbled unsteadily, entering the kitchen to find Zach on the phone while Brittany leaned idly against the bench. "You said you were..."

Zach lowered his phone and turned to face Jared with a relieved smile on his face.

"Great news. Michelle's coming to pick up you and Kyle in half an hour. That means less trouble for Noah."

"What?! No, it's too early!"

Jared regained alertness as he flew into a mild panic over having to leave the party so soon. He glanced pleadingly towards Brittany and she shook her head in resignation, prompting him to try bargaining with Zach.

"Can't you call her back?! Tell her that I'm seventeen! I'm not a little kid anymore!"

"Alright, calm down! You can talk to her yourself."

Zach handed over the phone in frustration and Jared answered rather anxiously, listening to his sister explaining how he'd already breached the curfew set by their parents.

"Well, damn you, Michelle. And damn Mom and Dad too..."

"Shut up, you ungrateful little shit..."

Jared hung up with a dejected sigh and bitterly returned the phone to Zach, before sullenly trudging back to the living room to break the news to Kyle.

"If my watch is right, we have roughly twenty seven minutes before she arrives." Noah explained while a song by 50 Cent played loudly on the speakers. "If you want to tell a story, now's the time. Should be fun, considering how drunk you are."

"Wh-what?" Jared blurted out in confusion with eyes all glazed over. Brittany found herself feeling sympathy for his disoriented state and gathered up the patience to explain things in simple terms.

"Tell. A. Scary. Story. It's your turn."

"Okay..."

A loud chuckle came from Kyle as he observed his friend's flushed face and predicted much incoherent rambling.

"Come on, bro. We can't wait to see you screw up."

"Shut up, Kyle!"

"Whatever you say..."

Kyle quickly composed himself at the sight of Brittany's enraged face and gave Jared some space, while also mentally cursing his own uptight parents.
"Oh my God, Kenny! You're such a crazy guy..." Barb squealed after her boyfriend slipped a hand beneath her blouse a second time. "Just hurry up and take me already..."

"Alright, babe. Whatever you say..."

At that, Kenny straightened and began unbuttoning his perfectly ironed shirt, revealing a sculpted six-pack chest completely unbefitting of the average repressed young man from the 1950s.

"Wow, Kenny. You're like a Greek statue!"

"Shut up, bitch. Wait till you see my-"

Barb silenced her boyfriend with a deep and filthy kiss, before she unhooked her pointed bra so that they could unleash a lifetime of pent up horniness.

Their lovemaking was so wild that the entire car ended up shaking and Barb's attempt to grab on to something resulted in her hand smashing through the nearby window.

"You guys..." Brittany whispered in horror, a mortified look on her face as everybody laid eyes upon her. "Stop staring. Me and Jared are nothing like that!"

"You sure? Because isn't beer supposed to bring out the truth in people?"

"No! It's all just his dirty imagination!"

Brittany seized Jared by the shoulders and shook him violently so that he would stop describing the graphic sex scene.

"...and then she ran a finger against his rippling biceps...huh?"

He blinked in confusion before gazing deeply into her eyes in the way that always made her heart flutter. She bit her lip and reminded herself to focus on speaking to him clearly.

"Jump to the actual horror. We can't wait."

"Fine..."

"Thanks."

Brittany let go of him and resumed her earlier position while trying to ignore the remaining looks of amusement from Alicia and Zach.

"Kenny?" Barb called out as she tiptoed out of the car and adjusted her blonde wig while in search of the missing man.

There was no reply and her pulse began to race as she slipped between the trees. She shouted her boyfriend's name a few more times in futility before giving up and retreating to the safety of his car.

The sight of it's shattered window greeted her and she climbed into the driver's seat to find in relief that the keys were still stuck in the ignition.

She fired up the engine and drove off into the night. A full moon rose up ahead and the blood coursed faster through her body, though she attributed it to a heightened sense of fear.
A few hours later, Kenny was found wet and bleeding in the middle of the woods by a local gamekeeper, whom provided the young man with temporary shelter and first aid.

"I don't know how I can thank you." Kenny said with a smile after having his arm patched up. "But my girlfriend's still out there. She'd be scared out of her mind."

"I'd stay put if I were you, son. Thanks to men like me, these woods have become quite the safe haven over the past ten years. The worst thing your girl will come across is a rabbit in heat."

"A rabbit?"

"Aye."

While the two males enjoyed each other's company in the cabin, a furry beast wrestled itself free from some wreckage, feasting it's yellow eyes upon a puzzled young bunny before letting out an anguished growl.
"I...I'm gonna be sick..." Jared muttered weakly to the dread of everyone as soon as he'd finished his story.

He shrugged off Brittany's attempt to comfort him before rushing off in search of the bathroom. The sound of vomiting moments later made Zach twitch in frustration.

"That's it, guys. No more parties ever again at my place."

"Oh yeah? Weren't you the one whining about being lonely on Thursday?!" Brittany snapped back, eager to defend her boyfriend through any means necessary.

"Yeah, but I didn't think it would get out of hand like this..."

"Seriously, you call this out of hand?" Kyle interjected in disbelief. "You're lucky that Jared's the only one throwing up."

"But my Mom-"

"Forget your Mom. Remember fourth grade? You used to be such a little prankster, but now you're like an old man stuck in a teenage body."

"Well, why don't you try having-"

"Enough about your Dad, Zach. I thought being responsible was my job."

"You too, Noah?"

"Yeah, it's your birthday. So have a beer and start getting drunk already..."

"What?"

"You heard me. Now I need to take Alicia home, since our Mom gets really worried."

"But, Noah-"

"Another time, Alicia. You already blew all of your chances."

Alicia frowned and fired one last longing glance at Zach, before getting up to follow her brother out of the living room.

Jared returned soon after the front door slammed shut and sat back down beside Brittany while already looking re-energised.

"Zach, is that a beer in your hand?"

"Yeah, it's about time I had some fun too..."

Zach raised the glass and took a couple of heavy gulps, which prompted him to wrinkle his face in disgust. A mischievous idea then dawned on him and he stood up to mercilessly pour the rest of the drink over Kyle's pants.

"Hey, look who just peed himself?"
"Motherfucker, that's the best you can do?" Kyle remarked while raising an eyebrow in surprise. "I'll show you crazy..."

Kyle threw himself off the couch and slammed Zach to the floor, much to the shock of Jared and Brittany. They gaped for a few seconds before rushing forward to break up the tussle.

"On second thought, maybe you should just stick to what you're comfortable with." Brittany said with a sigh after the two boys had been separated. "Plus, it's about time I had my turn..."

"Wait, we're still doing that thing?"

"Hey, it was my idea, remember? Now, let me show you how a real horror story should go..."

There once lived a widowed dollmaker whom had lost her husband in the World War. As such, the only joys she had left in life were her young daughter Betsy and the various dolls she sold for a living.

The post-war strife faded away over the years as mother and daughter managed to rebuild their lives to match earlier stability. Betsy was able to attend school, make friends and become loved for her beauty and kind nature.

Unfortunately, tragedy stuck once again just when the future seemed bright. Betsy contracted a terminal illness and passed away at home just a few months after being diagnosed.

The dollmaker went permanently mad over the loss of the last person she'd loved and as a result, retreated so deeply into her work that the dolls replaced flesh and blood humans in her mind.

A day passed before she took yet another look at Betsy's placid face and realized that time was fast running out.

She got to work and transformed the girl's body into her greatest creation yet; a life-sized doll whom would sit prettily in the bedroom upstairs while awaiting a nonexistent suitor.

Jake frequently rode the bus to and from college, for he juggled his studies and dream of playing in a band with a job at a diner.

The dollmaker happened to notice him one evening while under the guise of a harmless old lady and despite initially dismissing him as a typical crude modern teenager, changed her mind once she saw him in a uniform.

It was clear that poor manners aside, he had one of those wholesome faces befitting an educational film from the 1950s.

Identifying him as a rare possible candidate, the dollmaker administered a test that would also serve as a trap if he passed.

She positioned herself in front of him and once the bus came to a stop, feigned weakness by pretending that her bags were too difficult to carry.

Jake saw her struggling and left his seat to help, at which she took advantage of the situation by firmly gripping his arm and making another request.

"Aren't you a sweet boy? Unfortunately, I live on the third floor of this apartment."
"Uh, sure. I'll take your things upstairs..."

"Thank you. Just this way..."

The dollmaker lead him into a quiet alleyway and immediately pulled a syringe out from her purse. She plunged the needle straight into the side of his neck before he could react, causing him to promptly pass out and crumple heavily to the ground.

She cradled his body and dragged him out the other way towards where her small car waited.

Hardly anyone saw the sight of an unconscious young man being stuffed into a backseat as suspicious and those that did, were quick to believe the dollmaker's claims that Jake was her grandson.

Jake woke up to find himself on some operating table at the dollmaker's mercy and began to struggle against his restraints in a panic, while demanding to know what was happening.

"I don't know what's going on, but you'd better untie me now, you ugly old bitch!"

"Young man..." The dollmaker simply replied condescendingly as she produced a scalpel and held it right up to his face. "...you're going to have to stop the foul language if you want to win my daughter's heart."

"Let me go! I don't give a shit about your family!"

"Be silent! My daughter is a sweet, sweet girl..."

"Then fuck-"

A wet rag was stuffed into Jake's mouth to prevent him from speaking further before an even stronger sedative was injected into his body.

"Rrrfff!" He managed to cry out as he lost consciousness for what would be the last time.

The dollmaker cut away Jake's clothes before meticulously slicing him open and beginning the secret embalming process.

Jake expired halfway through the operation, though that only brightened the dollmaker's mood, for she knew that he would cooperate completely from that point on.

And so it was that after two days of hard work, the dollmaker redressed Jake in her husband's old clothes before putting some finishing touches to his hair and face.

She positioned him opposite Betsy at the large tea table upstairs and felt an immeasurable sense of accomplishment upon seeing just how handsome he looked.

She uttered a few words of blessing before shutting the door and leaving the happy couple to their own business.

"Marriage is never smooth sailing, but rest assured, mother will always be around to set things right again."
"Noah, what are you doing?" Alicia bluntly asked when her brother reopened the door as soon as he’d checked the rearview mirror.

"Think I just saw Jared's sister...I need to tell her something."

"What?"

Noah left the car and strode down the street towards where Michelle had just parked. Alicia undid her seatbelt and turned around just in time to see the two teenagers meet each other face to face.

"Wish I knew what they were talking about. I hope it's not about Zach..."

Michelle left the scene with what looked like a knowing smirk while Noah returned to sit beside her.

"So, what did you just do?"

"Nothing." He replied before letting out a chuckle and turning the keys.

"Dear God. No..."

Jared crept away from Brittany in fear while the details of her story were still fresh in his mind.

"What's the matter? His name was Jake..."

"Yeah, but I'm not an idiot. You based him on me!" He cried out, much to the amusement of Zach and Kyle.

"So?"

"You made up a story about me getting cut open and having my guts ripped out! Is that what you think about when we-"

All the lights in the house abruptly went out and put an end to Jared's sentence before four voices rung out simultaneously in panic.

"Oh my God. What just happened?!"

"Maybe a power out?"

"Then why is it just this house?!"

"How do you know that?!"

"Look out the window!"

"Okay, my Mom would have told me if something like this was going to happen..."

"Speaking of your Mom, Zach, why is she never around?"

"Shut up, you three! I think there's someone else in here right now! I can feel it..."

"You're just being paranoid. The door's locked, isn't it?"
"Actually, I think that Noah...crap, it's wide open!"

A high pitched scream suddenly sounded that drowned out the voices of the remaining three teenagers and drove fear into their hearts.

Zach fumbled around quietly in the darkness until he found a soft hand. It grasped onto his own and to his relief, Brittany piped up nervously.

"I guess it's just us two in here right now. Any idea who it was that ran out the door?"

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