Ava glanced around the store nervously, her eyes scanning the isle of food. The pop tarts seemed like a welcomed treat. No one would know, but she wasn’t sure she could. She’d never done something like this before.

She took the box off the shelf fast, stuffing it under her arm, hiding it under her jacket. With that, she began walking, head down, not wanting to call attention to herself. As she walked towards the doors, a worker stepped in her path.

"You’re planning on paying for that, right?" The lady asked, pointing to the box hiding under her jacket.

Ava froze, her life was over, ruined. She was going to jail. She’d been caught.

"Hey, there you are." A girl appeared suddenly, smiling at her, a basket of food in her hand. "I've been looking for you everywhere. Why'd you disappear like that on me?"
Ava was confused. She didn't know the girl.

The girl leaned close, taking the box from her. "Go with it." She whispered in her ear. "Thank you for grabbing that for me. You know how much I love pop tarts." The girl spoke so the worker could hear.

"You two are together?" The store worker asked.

"Yep!" The random blonde hair girl leaned up against Ava.

"Where are your parents?"

"Our car’s being fixed. They gave us some money to go do groceries well they picked up the car." The girl held up a credit card as if to prove her claim.

The worker nodded and walked off.

Ava breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank you for that. You really saved me."

"You have to be more discreet next time, trust me. I mean, having money is better than stealing."

"Yeah, well, I won't be trying that again." Ava took the box of pop tarts out of the basket the girl was carrying, planning on putting it back on the shelf.

"Wait. I could buy it for you. If you want."

Ava paused. "You'd do that for me?"

"You seem like you need it. It’s the least I can do."

"You really don't have to."

"I insist. People like us, we have to stick together."

"What do you mean, people like us?"

"You’re on the run, aren't you?" The girl accurately deduced.

"Maybe." Ava shuffled her foot nervously.

"Don't worry. So am I. Clearly I have more experience than you do. It's my duty to help you."

Ava smiled.

"What's your name?"

"Ava."

"Sara. It’s a pleasure to meet you, Ava." Sara put out her hand, Ava shook it. "Now what do you want? It’s on me." Sara waved her credit card in the air, wearing a smirk.

Ava had followed her strange new friend as she picked out groceries and checked out without a care in the world. She was calm and collected. Every once and awhile, Sara looked over at Ava and would smile.
Ava was unsure of the girl, hesitant to trust her so quickly. But when they left the store, Ava helped her carry some bags, following behind her.

Sara led Ava to a park, saying that it was her favourite spot. She beckoned Ava to come sit with her, facing the water. Ava placed down the bags, and Sara took off her jacket, offering it so that she and Ava could both sit on top of it.

Ava sat on the jacket in the park, her arm brushing against a strange girl she’d just. Her heart picked up a little. It was hard not to be nervously excited. The girl was a stranger, and she was stunning.

Sara began to open a bag of chips, handing Ava the pop tarts.

"Thank you again," Ava said taking the box and opening it.

"No problem. So what's your story Ava? Why are you on the run?"

"I'm an orphan," Ava admitted. “I've been jumping around from foster home to foster home my whole life. In the place I’m at right now, this little girl just got adopted. I watched her go home with this perfect-looking couple. That's when I realized that no one was ever gonna look at me the way those parents looked at her. I'm too old. I missed my chance. There was no point in me staying another day if I was just gonna keep feeling…” Ava trailed off, feeling emotional.

“ Invisible?” Sara offered. “I know what it’s like to live someplace where it feels like no one cares about you, let alone understands you. “

“Were you in a home, too? Is that why you’re running?”

Sara paused, looking out at the water. “Yeah.”

“How long have you been running for?”

“Not very long,” Sara admitted. “I'm just smart.”

“So, what are you going to do now?” Ava was curious. She wasn’t sure she could survive by herself out on her own. Sara seemed like she knew what she was doing. Perhaps they could help each other.

“See those houses over there?” Sara pointed across the water at the expensive-looking houses on the lakefront. “People use them in the summer. But now that it's fall, they'll be empty. I figured I'll pick the nicest one, and I'll crash there for a while.” She smiled as she looked over at Ava. “Here's an idea. Come with me.”

“Really?” Ava was shocked to see how willing Sara was to help her. But she was also happy by the offer.

“Why not? We'd be better off if we stick together.”

Ava hovered behind Sara, their bags in her hands. She was lookout as Sara broke into the house. Ava couldn’t believe she was doing this. She’d never broken any rules, let alone laws, in her life. Now in one day not only had she stolen from a grocery store, but she was trespassing on private
property and breaking into someone's house.

“There we go.”

Ava looked over to see that Sara had managed to pick the lock open. The two girls stepped inside. The summer home was large and beautiful. Everything looked expensive and nice. Ava had never seen anything like it in her life.

“Not too shabby, huh?” Sara smiled at her, running inside to explore the house.

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They’d explored the house fully and put their bags of food on the living room table. Sara was opening drawers and cupboards like she owned the place. Ava was more hesitant to touch anything in fear that she’d get in trouble.

“Look what they got!” Sara held up a disk for a video game. It looked like some racing game from the cars on the front. “You want to play?”

Ava shrugged as Sara began setting it up.

“I’m gonna beat you!” Sara taunted as her car raced alongside Ava’s on the screen.

“No! No, no, no.” Ava jumped up and down, trying to get the car to go faster. The controls of the game were foreign to her.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” Sara jumped up in the air, celebrating as her car passed the line before Ava’s another time.

“No! Game over.” Ava pouted.

Sara laughed, falling back down on the couch, grabbing a hand full of chips. Their food was thrown everywhere and had created quite the mess.

“I suck at this!” Ava declared, sitting on the couch beside Sara and tossing the controller down gently.

“Haven't you ever played before?”

“No. I’ve never lived in a place that could afford one of these,” Ava told her.

“You’ll get the hang of it,” Sara promised her. She let out a yawn. “You want to play some more, or do something else?” She asked.

“Let’s see what movies they have.”

Sara got up and looked through the movies on the shelf. She named them off till Ava heard one she liked.

“Let’s watch that one.” She decided.

Sara nodded and set up the movie, returning to the couch to sit next to Ava.
Ava woke up to find herself asleep on the couch. She hadn’t planned on falling asleep there, but it seemed she’d drifted off during the movie. Sara lay on the other side of the couch, sleeping, while the movie played the menu screen.

“Sara,” Ava spoke quietly.

Sara stirred, almost falling off the couch before stopping herself.

“Careful.” Ava laughed. “What do we want for breakfast?”

Sara smiled, and for the first time in a long time Ava knew she had a friend.

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The first few nights, they’d fallen asleep on the couch watching moves. By the third night the couch had become too uncomfortable to sleep on.

The fourth night they both choose rooms to sleep in. As Ava tried to sleep in the stranger’s bed, noises kept her up. She heard the creaking of the floor and jumped up, scared that someone else had broken in. To her relief it was just Sara.

“Sara, what are you doing up? You scared me.”

“Sorry. I couldn’t sleep. It’s freezing in there. I was going to see if I could find the thermostat.”

Ava nodded, and they walked around the house until they found the thermostat. Sara turned it up, and they walked back to the rooms. Ava didn’t even think as she followed Sara back to the room Sara had been sleeping in.

“Ava, what are you doing?” Sara asked. “You’re rooms that way.”

“Oh.” Ava looked back, realizing she had passed it. “Right.” She paused. “Can I sleep with you?” She asked. “I’m not used to having my own room.”

Sara nodded, and Ava followed after her.

The two girls settled down, snuggled under the blankets next to each other.

“Good night Ava.”

“Good night Sara.”

- 

A week passed. Sara and Ava had settled into the stranger home, making it their own. Ava tried to keep it tidy, even though Sara didn’t see the point.

Their limited food supply had all but run out, and they went to the store to buy some more. It was at the store that Sara suggested they make cookies. When they returned to the house, they started their baking. Both girls had were not the best cooks, and they didn’t have a recipe, so they made it
from what they could remember. Flour and dough got everywhere, both girls were laughing away as they joked around and attempted to make cookies.

When they were done, they succeed in making something edible, whether they were cookies was left up for debate.

- Ava woke up the next morning to find Sara not sleeping in the bed they had claimed as their own. Sara had not said anything about Ava and her sharing a bed and Ava was glad. She slept much better while Sara was at her side.

“Sara.” She called out as she walked down the stairs.

The mess from yesterday’s baking was still there. Ava sighed and began cleaning up. By the time she was done she heard the door creak open. She froze, holding a knife in defence.

“Ava, put the knife down. It’s just me,” Sara reassured her.

“Where were you?” Ava asked.

“I went to the store. I wanted to get us real cookies.” Sara held up a bag she was holding.

Ava gave a sigh of relief as Sara put down the bag.

“I got you something.” Sara pulled out a necklace form the bag. “It’s a friendship necklace.”

Sara came over, showing the necklace to Ava. It was two pieces of a heart.

“One for you, and one for me.” Sara handed her one half of the necklace. “Cute, isn’t it?”

Ava nodded, inspecting the necklace.

Sara took Ava’s hands. “Let’s promise to stay friends, okay? No matter what. We’ll always be there for each other, okay?”

“Okay, yeah. Promise.” Ava nodded, her heart full.

Sara smiled and hugged Ava. “Good. Friends forever then.”

“Forever.” Ava agreed.

They broke apart and put on their necklaces. Each girl held the charm up to the other half.

“See, together we are better,” Sara said as each half of the heart came together to form a whole.

- One week turned to two and Ava was happier then she’d ever been. One day they sat outside in the cool autumn weather, looking out at the water.

“Sara, what are we going to do when summer comes?” Ava asked hesitantly. It was something she’d been thinking about a lot recently. She didn’t want to lose Sara, she had grown very close to
her new friend.

“Don’t worry,” Sara said, taking her hands. “We have to stick together, remember. I’ll figure something out, I’ll take care of us.”

-

Ava was trying hard to not fall for Sara. It was hard though. She was so pretty and funny, and she made Ava feel happy, like she was finally at home. She enjoyed being with her, laughing with her, sleeping by her side. It made her feel all sorts of things, things she was scared of feeling.

Sara and Ava were playing a game by the water, laughing and chasing each other. Ava ran after Sara as they ran into the house. She ran after Sara up the stairs, cornering Sara into one of the bedrooms. Sara jumped on top of the bed, throwing one of the pillows at Ava.

“I’ll get you.” Ava declared jumping on the bed after her.

“No!” Sara giggled as Ava tackled her.

Sara was giggling away beneath her. Ava’s breath was taken away, she was so beautiful. It was unfair.

“I love you,” Ava whispered, without really thinking.

Sara’s features softened.

“Sorry.” Ava moved off of her, turning away.

“Hey Ava, what’s wrong?” Sara sat up, putting a hand on Ava’s arm.

“It’s nothing.” Ava shook her head.

“Hey.” Sara pushed Ava’s hair behind Ava’s ear. “I love you too. Best friends, remember?” Sara held up her half of the necklace.

Ava smiled softly. “I just…”

“Hey, Ava. You can tell me anything.”

“I like you as a friend. I really do, but…” Ava’s voice trembled, she’d never told anyone this before.

“What is it Ava?”

“I think you’re really pretty, and I may have a crush on you.” Ava spat out, closing her eyes tight.

Sara said nothing and Ava cracked her eyes open in fear. To her surprise, Sara cupped her face and leaned in to kiss her. Ava’s breath was taken away.

“I’m really glad you said that because I have a crush on you too.” Sara smiled.

“Really?” Ava didn’t believe her, she couldn’t believe that this was actually happening.

“Yeah.” Sara leaned in a kissed her again.
Ava and Sara fell asleep on the bed, cuddled up together that night. Ava didn’t dare move even as the light seeped through the blinds in the early morning.

Then she heard a noise, the sound of the door opening.

“Sara.” She shook Sara. “Sara, there’s someone in the house.”

“What!” Sara jumped up, grabbing the flashlight by the bed.

They walked down the stairs quietly, holding the flashlight as a weapon.

“Sneak out the back,” Sara whispered.

They began to head to the back door when suddenly, a man in a police uniform, stood before them.

“Hey, stop!” The man shouted.

“Run!” Sara yelled, taking Ava’s hand as she began to run the other direction.

Ava ran to catch up, but another police officer jumped in front of their path.

“Stop!” He yelled.

Sara let go of Ava’s hand to kick the man’s shins. The officer made a grab for her, but she ducked under, managing to run past him.

“Ava, come on!”

Ava began to run, but the officer grabbed her before she could catch up.

“No, let me go!” Ava kicked and squirmed in the officer’s grasp. “Sara!”

“Sara! Come back here!” Another officer ran to where the others stood in the house. His hands were held up to show he meant no harm. “Sara please.”

“You’re not taking us anywhere. We’re not going back into the system.” Ava kicked some more.

“Sara, sweetheart, what nonsense you been telling this girl?” The officer looked concerned.

“Sara, what’s going on?” Ava asked, giving up her attempts to escape the officer’s grasp. She wondered how the officer knew Sara.

“Sara, honey, tell her the truth.” The officer spoke. “I’m your father. And you’re coming home with me. Your family has been worried sick about you.”

“Your father? You have a family?” Ava spat. “I thought you were like me.”

Sara looked down, saying nothing.

“Sara, come on. It’s time to come home.” Her father walked over and went to grab her arm. Sara pulled away but the officer grabbed her the second time.
The police officers pulled Ava and Sara outside. Sara’s dad locked her inside the back of the police car.

Ava stood outside as the police went over Ava’s records, already contacting social services. Ava waited, anger bubbling up inside of her. She couldn’t believe Sara had played her like this. Sara had told her that she was an orphan too, but she had a father, a family. She had lied to her, everything had been a lie. Ava hated how easily she had trusted her, how easily she had fallen for her tricks, her trap.

“Ava, Ava!” Sara called out to her through the front window, which was rolled down.

Ava turned towards her.

“Don't worry about my dad. He’s just pissed I used his visa. When this blows over, come find me. We can run away together.”

“You tricked me.” Ava spat, walking closer only to show how angry she was.

“I'm sorry. I know I lied about my family, but everything else I said is true. I hate my home. I feel invisible there. I'm just like you. I am!” Sara tried to convince her, but Ava wasn’t having it. “You promised. Friends forever, no matter what.”

Ava pulled her necklace off, hatred coursing through her body. “Yeah, well, we’re not friends anymore.”

She clutched the necklace tight in her hands.

A policeman came over and gently took Ava by the shoulders, leading Ava to where social services was waiting with a car.

“Ava, please!” Ava could hear Sara call out behind her, but she wasn’t listening.

“Come on Ava.” The social service worker opened the door for her and Ava got into the car.

She sat down in the car, opening her hand, looking at the broken heart half in her hand.

Years later

“One coffee, black,” Ava grumbled as she sat down in the café, throwing her stuff down. “Make it a large.”

“Bad day huh?” The waitress noted.

“You have no idea.”

“I’ll get that for you.” She walked away, leaving Ava at the table alone.

Ava had a conference for her work. Normally she would have never have come to such a beat-up place like this, but her car had got a flat on the road mere minutes ago. It seemed like her day was only getting worse and worse as it went on. She hated road trips.

Her phone rang, and she picked it up, knowing it was the mechanic. The news wasn’t good, she groaned with annoyance.
The waitress returned with her drink. “Bad news?”

“That was the mechanic. My car’s more messed up than I thought. He said it’ll take a day to fix. Looks like I’m staying the night in this shit-hole, no offence.”

The waitress snorted. “It’s the truth. If you want, the motel is just across the street. I know the owners, I can get you a discount.”

“Oh, that’s too kind. I couldn’t.”

“It looks like you’re having a rough day, it’s the least I can do.”

“Thank you…” Ava looked up at the waitress’ name tag. “Sara.”

“No problem.” She smiled and headed off to serve the other customers.

The waitress returned shortly with a piece of paper. “Here, just tell Nora that I sent you.”

“Thanks again.” Ava got up and ventured across the street to the motel. She read the paper, which said no more than; “Hey Nora, can you give this woman a discount, she’s had a bad day.”

Ava handed the dark-haired woman on the other side of the counter the note. The woman smiled and said, “You must have caught Sara’s eye, she’s not nice to just anyone.”

Ava tried not to blush at the idea.

She was happy to find that the owner of the motel was nice enough to give her the discount though. The bed of the motel was uncomfortable. Ava got little to no sleep. She woke up early the next morning and walked back to the café, hoping for some coffee and anything to eat.

“Good morning.” The waitress from yesterday greeted her. “What would you like for breakfast?”

“I’ll have some toast and coffee please. Thanks again for yesterday, you got me a great discount.”

“No problem.” Sara smiled and disappeared to get her order.

Sara reappeared not much later. “I don’t believe I caught your name.” She said as she poured Ava’s coffee.

“Ava, Ava Sharpe.”

Sara nodded, smiling at her. “So, where are you going to? Not a lot of people stop in our little town unless their car breaks down.”

Ava chuckled. “I’m going to a conference for work.”

Sara stared at her, Ava felt uncomfortable under her gaze. “Sorry, you said your name was Ava, right?”

“Yes.” Ava was confused.

“It just…I knew someone named Ava once, but you can’t be her.” Sara shook her head.

“Why not?”

“That was when I lived back in Starling.”
Ava paused.

*Sara.* She had the same blonde hair and freckles that covered her skin. *It couldn’t be.*

“Sorry, I’ll leave you in peace.” Sara began to walk away.

Ava looked around at the empty café. “What would you say to her if you saw her again?”

“Hmm?” Sara turned around. She took Ava in as if realizing it was really her. “I’d apologize. I’d say that I was just a rebellious kid, and I meant what I said. She was the best friend I had, and I hated losing her. I hated what I had done to her, for lying.”

“You think she’d forgive you?”

“I wouldn’t expect her to. What I did was horrible. But I hope she’d give me another chance.”

Ava paused, her fingers finding the necklace she had worn her whole life since that day so long ago. The day she’d never get over, the one she’d never forget. She’d never thought she’d come face to face with the girl from all those years ago, it was surreal.

Sara took in a breath, crossing the floor. “You still have it.”

Ava stood up. “I kept it to remind me never to trust anyone ever again.” She began to walk out.

“Ava, wait!” Sara ran after her. “I’m sorry.”

“You’re sorry. You ruined my life Sara!” Ava spat. “You know what it’s like going back into the system with a record?”

“I’m sorry,” Sara spoke softly. “I tried to find you afterwards, but I couldn’t find you.”

“I got adopted, no thanks to you.”

“So, you found a family?”

“I guess.” Ava shrugged. She loved her parents, she was incredibly thankful for them, but she wasn’t going to give Sara the relief that her life had been fine after.

“I was messed up kid Ava, I’m sorry. I’ve been messed up my whole life. I’ve destroyed everything I touched. When I was with you I was happy. It was like things were better with you. I never meant to destroy you as well. We were too young, you didn’t deserve the shit I brought with me.”

“Why did you do it, why’d you lie to me?”

“I felt like that at the time. I hated my family, my life. My parents were going through a divorce, and I was scared. I ran off. When you heard that I was an orphan too, you trusted me. I was scared that if I told you the truth I’d lose you.”

“Well, you did.”

Sara nodded. “If I could take it all back, I would.”

“Everything?”

“Maybe not everything. We had fun, didn’t we? I often wonder what things would have been if we
stayed together.”

Ava couldn’t deny that she didn’t think of that as well.

“Is there a chance I could…” Sara took a breath. “Could we try again?”

Ava turned slowly, toying with her necklace.

“One chance, that’s all you get. I’m here till my car is fixed.”

Sara smiled. “I know the mechanic. I could call him up and stall your car being fixed.”

“That’s not a great first move.”

“Good point. Let me offer you a meal.” Sara waved her hands back towards the doors of the café.

“You’re taking me out to eat at your place of work?”

“Work with me Ava, this town is shit.”

Ava chuckled. “So, how’d you end up coming here anyway?”

They talked like no time had passed at all, like Sara hadn’t completely betrayed Ava. It wasn’t like Ava had forgotten, but it was clear that Sara had grown up, changed. By the time Ava received the call from the mechanic, she wasn’t quite ready to leave.

“I have to go.” She said.

Sara understood. “For what it’s worth, I am sorry.”

“I can tell.”

Sara began writing on the napkin of the café. “Here, my number.”

“What makes you think I want your number?”

Sara shrugged. “Hope.”

Ava smirked at that, she fiddled with her necklace. “Back when we were kids, you kissed me...”

Sara hummed. “I haven’t forgotten that.”

“Was that real?”

“Of course, it was,” Sara said seriously. “If it makes you feel better, I still like girls.”

Ava blushed at that. “So your number…” She trailed off.

“I want to make things up to you for what I did. I’d like it if things became more though.”

“You're very forward.”

“So I’ve been told.”

Ava took in a breath. “I’ll think about it.”
Sara smiled. “I’m glad. It was good meeting you again, Ava. Strange how fate works, huh?”

Ava nodded with a chuckle. “Indeed.”

“I hope you’ll call me.”

“You’ll just have to wait and see.”

Ava picked her car up from the mechanic and drove to the conference. It wasn’t till later when she was back in the hotel that she looked at the scrawled number on the napkin. She punched it into her phone slightly hesitant.

“Hey, Sara.” Ava spoke over the phone. “It’s Ava.”

“I thought it’d take a bit longer than this for you to call me.”

“Don’t be smart, I might just hang up.”

“Alright, alright. I’m sorry. I’m a jerk, I know.”

“Damn right you are.”

“So, why’d you call me?”

“My conference ends at the end of the weekend. I just thought that I might drive through your little town on the way back.”

“Were you now?”

“Maybe. And maybe you could take me on a proper date.”

“Well, I’ll have to see about finding somewhere nice, but I’d like that.”

“Good.” Ava smiled. “See you then.”

End Notes

This was just meant to be a one shot and I don't plan on expanding on it

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!