Summary

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Notes

Set between The Lost Hero and Son of Neptune

[reuploading stories from my old ff.net account]

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It was a gradual process, she rationalizes, an attempt to escape the whispers that follow her and the concerned gazes.

*Percy is gone.* Well what else is new? She remembers that summer when he had disappeared for two weeks to Calypso's Island. She recalls all of the *son-of-Poseidon* duties, Percy would tell her about between sword practices. She remembers when he left without a word to take a dip in the Styx. Percy Jackson is known for leaving Camp Half-Blood on a whim.

Yet this is different. It is *oh-so-different.*
She doesn't really move out of Athena's cabin. Most of her stuff is still in its designated spots, she just took Daedalus' laptop and her knife and Yankees hat and a couple outfits. She didn't start living in Poseidon's cabin for just a change in scenery; she moved in to be surrounded by Percy. Because, it's Percy's bed that she claims; clinging to his sheets that still smells vaguely of Irish Spring soap and seawater.

And it's the perpetual mess that she walks around. She finds familiarity in empty Doritos chip bags and Coke cans and bronze armor (a formality mostly, stupid Achilles' curse) hastily stashed underneath empty bunk beds.

But most importantly, it's the memories she surrounds herself with. The Minotaur horn and the shield Tyson made hang on the wall by Percy's bed, while a couple picture frames stand on his nightstand. Annabeth even finds her birthday present (neatly wrapped in silver paper) hidden between a Goode High School sweatshirt and Giants jersey in his drawer.

She finds his iPod stashed between the headboard and the wall one night when sleep is avoiding her. She fingers the blue device, finding dents where he must have dropped it. Annabeth isn't normally one for Percy's taste in music but she slips on an earbud and presses play almost yelping when some rock song blares in her ear. She yanks out the offending electronic, a ringing in her left ear, before her heart sinks to her stomach again because it's too-damn-quiet.

She can surround herself with his scent and mess, but she can't surround herself with his voice.

No one at Camp talks to her like Percy does. Thalia has stopped by twice to play big sister (never mind Annabeth is older than the immortal daughter of Zeus) but that's not the same as the constant companionship that Annabeth has become used to. And as she prepares to traverse the country alone looking for him, Annabeth slips the music player into her pocket along with packing a couple of his shirts.

Rachel Elizabeth Dare catches her.

It's late. Annabeth had been discussing the predicament of Jason and the Roman Camp with Chiron before making her way to Cabin Three. She forgets to wear her Yankees hat. That's what Annabeth chalks Rachel's discovery up to. She has been so preoccupied with finding Percy that she doesn't remember the importance of being sneaky.

For her part, Rachel doesn't indicate that anything is out of the ordinary. The redhead just accompanies Annabeth to Poseidon's cabin and stretches out on an empty bunk bed facing Annabeth.

"It's okay you know," the Oracle of Delphi says. "It's okay to miss him."

Annabeth doesn't look at Rachel, choosing instead to industriously fold back the covers and slip into the bed. Percy's bed.

"I don't think anyone here will begrudge you for needing to be close to him, in a manner of speaking."
Rachel, Annabeth knows, is prodding her. The redhead is attempting to get her to talk; talk about her **feelings**, deconstruct the walls she has built around herself. But, Annabeth thinks spitefully, Rachel just doesn't **understand**.

Annabeth has come to expect nothing different than someone leaving her. Except, and she curses the gods for this, Annabeth had become reliant on the fact that he would never abandon her. It hurts, she admits to herself (and only to herself), it **hurts** to know that the one person she would seek comfort from in a situation like this is the one who is missing. Because **Percy** knows what it's like to have the person you love go missing. Rachel Elizabeth Dare, on the other hand, does **not**.

Annabeth doesn't mention any of this to Rachel and somehow interpreting her silence, Rachel doesn't broach the subject again, instead preferring to burrow into the bed and fall asleep.

In the silence, with Percy's fading scent surrounding her, Annabeth admits one last thing to herself: for all of her Athenian planning, she never factored memory loss into the equation and the thought that somewhere in California there is a Percy Jackson who doesn't remember anything scares Annabeth more that she could ever admit.

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