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The Hallow

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It felt warm, the hazy sun shining through the leaves kissing my bare skin. A light breeze tugged at my curls. Sunny and warm, what more could you ask for on a sunny day at the beach. The waves gently lapped against the shore. The hot, dry sand beneath my feet grounded me. Children were laughing in the distance. I could see their shadows out of the corner of my eyes. If she turned to look, they were gone. Like a game of hide and seek. The day wore on; the sun kissed the waves dancing around on the lake. The water was icy cold I didn't have to touch it to know that. It's Lake Superior water; it was always icy cold. The fish and lake creatures thrived in it.

My eyes were drawn to the water, the waves dancing a dance that was just for me. I felt my heart being tugged back into time. A performance beyond words and time. It transported me back today to where he smiled and melted my heart and soul. Only that man could do that every time he looked at me with his crooked grin. I could live in that grin, that moment of perfection.

"Lucy," he grinned at me. His smile reached his eyes. Shining like the sun.

I said nothing but smiled back at him.

"Lucy, I have been thinking," he began.

"A dangerous thing," she teased.

"No seriously Lucy, hear me out."

"Travis lets just enjoy the sun today."

He sighed, "Lucy it's not a bad thing I promise."

“I know.” She was going to continue but paused, she could hear someone calling in the distance. A familiar voice but she couldn’t place it. Looking around she couldn’t place the voice, which was a little annoying. All day long it whispered in her ear lost in the shadows of time, just a little out of reach. Swallowing hard, she turned her attention back to Travis.

He was pacing back and forth in front of her. “We’ve been friends for a long time Lucy, and I know you know I have deep feelings for you. Very deep feelings.”

“Travis you should come sit down; you’re going to give yourself a heart attack.” There it was again, behind her a little bit louder this time. She turned around and scanned the tree line, trees, vehicles, shadows. Lots of shadows. Was it coming from the shadows.

“Lucy you’re going to give me a heart attack if you don’t listen to what I have to say.”

“Yes, yes, I’m listening.” Swallowing, she turned back to Travis.

“I don’t see you with anyone else and I don’t see me with anyone else.”

“What are you saying? That no one wants me?” she heard it again someone calling her name. She stood up and turned around to the shadowy tree line. Scanning it for a familiar face that belonged to that voice. Who was calling her?

“Lucy don’t be ridiculous you are so brilliant and beautiful I know several guys are interested in you.”

“Several?” She turned and looked at him, raising an eyebrow. “Like who?”

“No Lucy, stay focus here with me.” He got down on knee. “Lucy Patterson, will you marry me?”

“Travis?” she smiled. “Of course.”

He jumped up, kissed her wrapping her in a hug. Sweeping her off her feet, spinning her around. “You just made me the happiest man alive!”

“LUCY!” the voice screamed. Pulling away from Travis and turning around just as a shadow from the tree line swept across the hot sandy beach and plowed into her. Knocking the wind out of her.

Lucy blinked, gasping for air, she looked around her. Where was she? There was a sense of familiarity about it. Then just as quickly as that feeling came to her, it disappeared. The room was white, sterile, and clean. It reminded her of a hospital. The wall in front of her was glass, beyond it appeared to be a viewing area of sorts which was dark and full of shadows. Lucy froze as she saw her reflection in the window. It was her head but not her body! It wasn't her body! Looking down she found that her body looked like it belonged to some animal and her arms and legs were gone! Just three hairy long thick insect legs. Tears sprung to her eyes. She had to be still dreaming. This was some kind of nightmare, wasn't it? Why?

She heard voices and looked up. There was a man on the other side of the window in black coveralls and beside him was only what she could describe as an alien. It was tall, with long white hair, insect eyes and the body of a humanoid. It looked at her and it could read her and hear her thoughts. It sensed that she was scared and confused. Did its mouth grin at her? Was it taking pleasure in her circumstances!

She kept repeating to herself this wasn't real, it was just a nightmare like being on the beach. It wasn't real. This couldn't possibly be real. Lucy felt the room spinning, everything went dark.

Blinking, she heard someone calling her name. She couldn't move her body. The man in the black overalls was standing over her. Was he real? What was real?

“Where am I?” She croaked.

“You're at the Hallow Lucy. Don't you remember?”

“The Hallow? What is that?”

“Your home. Do you remember me Dr. Milton?”

“Dr. Travis Milton?” She gasped. It was Travis.

“Yes Lucy, it’s me Travis,” he smiled and nodded at her.

“I had such a horrible dream.”

“Tell me about it?” He gently caressed her cheek.

“I was on the beach with you then I was,” she paused as she thought about that room and her body wasn’t her body. She tried to lift her hand up in front of her face, but nothing happened.

“What’s wrong with my hands?”

“I just have you strapped down for your own good, just for now. What happened next Lucy?”

“My body,” she paused as her eyes welled up. “My body wasn’t mine. I had no arms and legs.” Lucy began to sob.

“Lucy it’s okay. Remember you and I are a team, right?”

She nodded slowly.

“We are in this together.”

She looked away from him and studied the white wall beside her. The Hallow was something Travis and her were working in together. Regret, every fiber in her body reeked of it.

“Lucy,” he caressed her cheek again. “We are doing things no one else has ever done before. We are making history. I owe it all to my beautiful and talented wife.”

Lucy turned and saw his eyes, adoration, and love. “Do I have my arms and legs Travis?”

“Lucy we are superstars here at the Hallow.”

It was coming back to her. The Hallow was a place that conducted scientific research that wasn't like anything in human history. This was on a secret underground base that was in Greenland. Several governments were aware of what they were doing but they weren't aware to what extent that they were experimenting on human subjects. Recently, they had several setbacks and were told to put their project on hold, too many human deaths. They worked alongside the Vankis an alien race who were trying to create hybrids with several different races. They had over thirty alien subjects that their team were genetically splicing and dicing. Trying to create hybrids. The Vanki wasn't a race to trifle with. They wanted results. Results at any cost. Oh god what did she agree to? She was just so eager to be the shining star, the superstar of the Hallow. It was her idea. Travis was such an idiot.

"It worked?" She smiled at Travis.

He nodded. "I thought you were crazy but you're brilliant. You aren't human anymore you're half human and half Vanki."

She closed her eyes. The reason she wasn't staying lucid was because the surgery was successful but being half Vanki and half human wasn't compatible. She was dying. Looking at Travis, he didn't know that yet. Lucy slipped again into the unconscious world.

"Lucy!" She heard him screaming her name and shaking her, but she couldn't open her eyes this time.