

**Monday, November 25th: 12:00 AM**

**Chapter One: “Burning Bridges with Brockhampton in Boston’s Most Boring Borough”**

This story begins in the streets of Allston, Massachusetts, arguably the most lackluster place for any story to start. It begins with me, the protagonist and arguably the most lackluster character of this story, aimlessly weaving through Allston’s streets of gray building after gray building, all the same in the way they crowd these already-crowded streets. Each of them looms over the already dark night, casting a shadow over the empty train tracks and the empty hearts of the young dumb people that inhabit them. I shutter in the harsh weather and a light coat, a stubborn attempt to preserve the integrity of my outfit and my shitty stubborn behavior.

As I leave a concert for a band who my love and affection for has long since evaporated, lost in the shuffle of my newfound ability to be unable to love anything, I admire and examine Allston, with bodega after bodega and window after window of string lights illuminating through the streets, a sign of the youthful life that lives behind its walls and their shitty ignorance to gentrification and all being exactly the same.

I wonder if these people know they’re all the same, with their vapid personalities and Target string lights, or if they too think they’re all special. Do they see that it’s all a farce like I do? That we’re all like members of a generation rooted in the idea that we’re all different, unique? Do they too lament that if everyone’s special, no one is special? Or are they all still caught in an illusion of their delusions and years of being loved too much by their parents? Is this

too many questions to be asking in Allston, Massachusetts at midnight on a Monday? Hell, I wouldn't know, I'm just looking for somewhere to buy cigarettes.

In the frigid cold, I drag my best friend and her boyfriend through these unfamiliar sidewalks. They hold hands and kiss one another often, a sign of the unadulterated love and affection they hold for one another. I'm not jealous, I couldn't be. She has been my best friend since I was 12. She knew me when we didn't know anything, she saw me through the ugliest of outfits and the dumbest of opinions. Though we drifted in high school, due to a divergence of paths, hers being popular and mine being an eating disorder and light suicidal tendencies, we've become closer than ever in our periods of higher education, bonded over being a part of the select few that ventured out of our hometown for college. Since I've begun my college career and the quest to never make eye contact or forced small talk with anyone I attended high school with ever again, she has stayed the only sane and cool person I can still stomach after spending everyday for four years locked in a vapid cinder block prison filled with equally vapid prisoners. Prisoners who, now released to freedom, still crave the false power and allure they held during their incarceration, wishing there were a way to be shackled again.

She and I go to school an hour apart from one another, four hours away from said hometown, no longer a home to me but a place that invokes a nostalgia for pain and regret. And, really, it's nice to see her so happy with this boy. He's sweet, nearly too sweet, like Halloween candy or the employees at my regular 7/11. He's naive, a straightedge country boy who finds my abuse of drugs, alcohol, and the vices that cause me fleeting joy and lasting distress "wild." He's

soft spoken, a poet and an artist. He's good for her, the first person worthy of her after years of shitty men who used and abused her love and trust. To me, she is the greatest person in the world. To them, she's a vessel for their sexual aggression and internal frustration. But this boy, who, tonight, attended his first concert ever and who does not indulge in any of the vices I call home and with whom I have nearly nothing in common, is good to her. And that's what matters.

We enter a grocery store and I watch as they prance through the aisles together, intertwined, playing pretend in this false air of domesticity. They buy fattening sweet treats and snacks my eating disorder has trained me to believe are rat poison, sweet treats and snacks I could only imagine they'll later feed to one another over naked bodies by candlelight, as this is how I imagine all relationships operate in private. As they weave their hands together and weave through the chip aisle, I scan the shelves for my companion of the night, some sort of fattening treat with the obligatory **REDUCED FAT** emblazoned on the front, something to temporarily fill me with the satisfaction they give one another, something to then send me into an hours-long guilt trip about my uncontrollable eating habits.

At some point tonight, I'll ponder the implications of vomiting all of this back up and having cigarettes for dinner instead. At some point tonight, I'll ponder dying while I lay on the cold floor on my living room, a closet with a coffee table, four old couch cushions, and a perpetual chill in the air. But I cannot die now, because I still need my cigarettes. And I also cannot die now because I just saw four of my classmates in this godforsaken Star Mart. I'll

notice them from a distance and then pretend to see them for the first time up close, with a curt nod, brief hello, and the pestering feeling that they too wouldn't notice if I was gone.

As I grapple with the neverending abysmal monologue that is both my everyday thoughts and ongoing suicide note, externally I smile and joke, offering them empty entertainment much like a birthday party princess or a jester on the way to the guillotine. Sometimes, ever so briefly, I feel a pang of sadness when looking at their intertwined hands, a reminder that I'll never be the girl for anyone. However, this sadness is nothing new, a street sign I pass everyday on my commute to impending doom. It's much duller now than it has been, after years of trying to ignore it and reassuring myself that, "If everyone was beautiful, no one would be beautiful. Some people just have to take that sacrifice to let others, the beautiful ones, shine. So, I may be undesirable, unlovable, and perpetually alone, but, if nothing else, I'm technically a martyr, so you're all welcome."

But no, I am not jealous of their love. She deserves this. And, to be fair, I haven't been able to pay attention to much of their affection anyway. I've been on the hunt for cigarettes through these winding windy streets, desperately searching for the small stick of chemicals and burn that it'll bring me the closest to feeling the joy that they feel. It's the only thing I'll kiss, caress, and hold tonight and for all nights after that. I'm not one for being in relationships and I'm not one for being loved and desired. How could I be? A cigarette wielding, vice-indulging, mentally ill fiend? Speaking of which, we've finally reached the glorious haven of this 7/11.

Presenting the cashier with my real ID, which says I am underage, instead of my falsified one, which says I am of age but also a liar, and calling an Uber to an address on a street blocked off due to construction, it seems I am doing nothing but winning in this shitty 7/11 in this shitty neighborhood. It's at this point I begin to wonder why I didn't enjoy the concert. Perhaps it was that this band's allure, once electrifying to me, has since dulled. Perhaps I am really incapable of loving things like I used to, unable to be passionate or excited or alive anymore. Or perhaps it's because the last time I saw them perform I was drunk out of my mind and wildly in lust with someone I never had a chance with (though I didn't know that then) and, at the time, felt like I could accomplish anything in the world. Or perhaps it's just that they're a shitty band.

I think of the impending Thanksgiving holiday, the sweet release of a four-day break before I resume my cycle of stress and destruction. It'll be the first one I spend away from home, the first time I'll be visiting my roommate's hometown, one of three men I live with and refuse to understand, something I can't decide if I'll get into later and refuse to acknowledge for the rest of time. Thanksgiving will be a flurry of meeting strangers and smoking weed and pretending that I belong in a place I've never been and will never fit. I'm sure of this. But it'll be relaxing and fine, a brief interlude for my mania. That's what it'll be, nothing more, nothing less. I'm sure of it. Only 66 hours stands between me and this sweet release, only 66 hours of classes and sadness and work and weed. I can do the motions until then, I think. I can pretend to be alive just a little longer.

**Monday, November 25th: 12:35 AM**

**Chapter Two: “An Evening with Two Weary Travellers, Three Little Men, One Large Rabbit, and a Mentally Ill Lass”**

Looking around this apartment, filled to the brim with the people I love most in my life and my best friend’s boyfriend, I can’t understand why I’m so unhappy. Why I have these people who bring me so much immense joy, some who constantly remind me how loved I am, yet I feel like I can’t understand why. Why I’m the one they’ve chosen to befriend or co-inhabit with, what I offer that’s so alluring or interesting. I don’t find myself to be particularly charming, nor a wonderful conversationalist. I’m often unable to contribute to comedic bits, for during most of them I’m either too high to speak or too sad to find a reason to. You see, I’ve never been first choice, for good reason. I’m usually the afterthought, the one you catch up with briefly in public with a quick hug and speedy goodbye before jetting off to engage with much more important places and people. I’m the one you hook up with when the party’s already found itself to be over and the girl you were gunning for has left with someone else. I’m not ideal, but I’m there. I’m always just there. And, again, this is fair. It’s reasonable. It’s right.

But yet, here I am, in this cramped kitchen in this cramped apartment that’s begun to feel like the most wonderful palace in the world, surrounded by people whose love would have seemed like a foreign concept to me mere years ago, back in high school, when I donned fifty more pounds, a bad dye job, and a perpetual hatred for the world. In this cramped kitchen filled to the brim with infinite ideas, we sit on our wooden chairs, one of which broken from a one-sided duel with a defenseless mouse. We gather around our wooden kitchen table piled to

the brim with all of most beloved paraphernalia and garbage, sharing stories and cold pierogies. We laugh and we talk and we smile and we engage and, for a fleeting moment, it feels incredible.

Next to me sits my best friend and her boyfriend, whose names are unimportant to this tale but could be known as Raichle and Sam, respectively. They speak softly and sporadically, too busy trying to consume the way this apartment's residents scream at one another to communicate, talking in strange voices and memories of the past. We pass around marijuana and stories like it's the one thing tethering us all together, grounding us at these chairs and this table, covered with worthless trinkets and priceless memories. Yet, in a room illuminated with laughter and bright personalities, a room crowded with people using their soft, uncalloused hands to pass around a sturdy dirty bong, I feel myself floating further from the crowd at every puff. You see, as someone who uses marijuana every day, I've falsely trained myself to believe that I've built a tolerance to the drug designed to make me feel relaxed and happy, but, as someone who falsely trains themselves to believe a lot of nonsense, I know this, like most things, to be a whole bunch of bullshit.

Smoking weed daily, though it makes rad as shit, rarely invokes me to feel anything other than nothing or everything at all. With this recreational activity, the daily chore designed to make me appear effortlessly cool, I go in every time wishing for another outcome, hoping this time is the breakthrough where I'll see colors floating in the sky and Snoop Dogg descending from the heavens to give me a cold hug and warm blunt. However, marijuana, more often than not, puts

me in a mental state where I cannot imagine a world where anything is relaxed nor happy, where anything makes sense and conversations are able to be easily had. Marijuana puts my brain into an unbreakable gelatin mold, encased by the fear of my own demise and inability to comprehend how to complete even the most basic of tasks, like taking a phone call or cooking an egg or showing affection to those I love.

But, alas, I'm perpetually unable to stop smoking marijuana, another example of my classic capability to get addicted to things that harm me the most. Sure, it could be fun, and sure, it makes my 16 year-old self who didn't know that "pot" referred to anything beyond a cooking dish feel sick as fuck. But I could also accomplish this by wearing cooler hats and making cooler art and creating cooler conversation. But that'd be too complicated. Hand me the lighter, will ya?

Billy hands me the lighter, the only one visible in our mountain of trash, the only one to survive months of living with four carelessly incapable adult infants. I light up the bong as I reflect on the idea that I should stop smoking it. I inhale the smoke as I decide to stop smoking ever again. I light up the bong again as I decide that tomorrow, tomorrow is when I'm definitely going to get my shit together this time. It may not have worked last Monday or the Monday before that or even six Mondays before that. But this Monday- this Monday's the day.

Then, as we clean up the pile of trash that has accumulated atop our already existing pile of trash, a metaphor I'll say, for the junkyard that is my biological makeup, I bid my nightly adieus to my roommates and best friends I love more than I've ever thought it'd be able to love

and my best friend's boyfriend. I shuffle into the living room, with mascara streaming down my face and wet hair stuck to the back of my neck, wearing the biggest clothes I can find to cover how small I always feel. I lay my soft body down on the harsh cold cushions on the harsh cold floor. I ponder washing my face, what it'd be like to go to sleep with a bare clean face and a blank clean mind. That's what normal people do, I think, normal people do shit like wash their face and do their laundry and wear cool turtlenecks. I could try these things. People who have their shit together do this. If I just do these three miniscule things, magically, my life will all make sense. Though, maybe not the turtleneck thing. My body dysmorphia informs me that I look like a Butterball turkey stuffed into an even larger Butterball turkey stuffed into a too tight Chris Farley costume in turtlenecks. And, boy golly, I simply have to agree.

*Bang, bang, bang.* As I ponder all of these harsh unrelenting thoughts as I drift into a harsh unrelenting sleep on this harsh unrelenting floor, I am kept awake not only by my own mental deterioration and its detrimental consequences, but also the homogeneous tyrannical rabbit in the room next door, thrashing and bashing around its cage like it's moshing at a solo, one-rabbit EDM concert. It disrupts the night with its own discomfort, a rabbit, with a mountain of white fur and a set of beady eyes the color of pain, raised to become food and born to die now forced to live a life of domesticity, owned by two strange men with long beards and inability to ever give it what it wants, its purchase the product of a skewed bit gone mad. It jumps at touch, noise, and any and all affection, it's probably blind and probably finds this apartment's tenants, a gaggle of gaggly children, to be a looming thundering herd of giants. It doesn't do much, the

rabbit, besides thrash in the night and shit on the slim amount of still clean services, but she's the princess of the house and she's goddamn perfect.

As the rabbit does its nightly acrobatic routine and I pray that I haven't laid atop her excrement, though I know I most certainly have, I wonder what would happen if I just didn't wake up tomorrow, as I often do before bed, like a bedtime story for the incurably ill. And it's here, on this floor, for not the first time nor last time today, I definitively and emptily decide to commit suicide. I think of my parents, sleeping in their Boston hotel room, laying twenty-two floors above the city that watched their only child break. I think of my roommates, who will have to grapple with reconfiguring our lease agreement in my permanent leave of absence, more of a hassle than a tragedy. I think of my best friend, who will have to wake up in my cramped apartment to find that her pal of eight years has up and died on one of the rare occasions they're together and rudely left her to pick up the pieces. I think of her boyfriend, who will find this all to be a bummer.

I think of what a tomorrow looks like without me. Who could call in for work for me? Who would tell my mother why I keep my social security card? Who will get my Sonny and Cher record, unplayable and useless? They'll figure it out, I'm sure. They're all smart people, unlike me, the dunce on the floor with the big clothes and small brain clouded with my own inadequacy and marijuana smoke. A small brain that has now, both definitively and emptily, decided to make a big choice, the only irreversible and permanent choice one can make, as some have said and I have disagreed with.

I get up to do it. For real this time. I glance at my makeup remover sitting on the coffee table, untouched. I feel the stale and cracked makeup seeping into my skin like expired honey. I look up at the ceiling, with its cracks and curves and silent stories. And it's there that I stop. Because I can't. I can't do it. Out of cowardice, sure, but everyone's a coward. Mostly out of my everlasting need to always be overly polite and accommodating, but only to those closest to me and strangers I'll never think about again. So I can't die. It'd be such an inconvenience. Billy's parents have already purchased my favorite iced tea for Thanksgiving and I've scheduled a meeting with peers I can't stand tomorrow. Maybe I'll find a time to pencil it in next week. Or not. I don't know. I know nothing.

I close my eyes to dream of what life could be if I was anyone else. We'll see. Tomorrow. That's when I'm really going to get my shit together. I promise. *BANG BANG BANG*. That fucking rabbit. Does it ever sleep? I sure don't.