

The Fall

The girl stares over the cliff into the darkness. She feels a nudge on her right shoulder as her foot slips. “Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” the girl screams as she plummets toward the rocky terrain below. Her khaki shorts are completely covered with dirt, and her pale arms are covered in deep cuts and scratches. The poor girl’s long blond hair lies lifelessly over the rocks. The guy that had been with her looks over the edge at her screaming figure. *It had to be done. There was no going back...*

Night had begun to fall on that warm July night while four best friends were camping out about a mile from the hiking trail. When they got tired from the long day of hiking, they pitched two tents. One was for Ian and Maggie, and the other for Xavier and Spencer. After they put up the tents, they started a fire. Red, orange, and yellow flames blazed 4 feet in the air from the pile of burning logs as Ian got the sticks and Xavier got the weenies and marshmallows. The moon and the stars rose in the nighttime sky as they made dinner. After they ate their hotdogs and s’mores, they zipped up their tents and went to sleep.

When morning came, Ian, Xavier, Maggie, and Spencer packed up their tents and headed back onto the trail. “Okay guys, it’s time to say goodbye for now,” Xavier began, “Spence and I will be going up that way.” Xavier pointed to the trail to the left.

“Well, Maggie and I will be going that way,” Ian pointed to the trail to the right. “We’ll see you guys when we get to Otter’s Point tomorrow.” Even though they were taking different trails, their destination would end up being the same because both trails lead to a little town just

outside of Boston, Massachusetts. From there, you can either catch a train to go back home or you can go on past the train station to begin the last fifteen miles of the trail.

After departing from Ian and Maggie, Xavier and Spencer began hiking once again. “These bugs are absolutely eating me up!” Spencer complained.

“You know why the bugs keep biting you, don’t you?” Spencer shakes her head. “It’s because you’re just so sweet!” Xavier flashed that million dollar smile that, most of the time, gets him everything he wants and rubbed his hand over his short brown hair that was slightly spiked in the front. After he made sure that every hair was intact, he straightened his navy blue shirt so that it barely brushed the top of his khaki cargo shorts.

“You’re so full of it, Xavier! You just know what to say to pacify me,” Spencer said as she shoved Xavier, wrinkling his shirt again. He stepped back a couple of steps as Spencer walked ahead. It wasn’t long until darkness began to fall again, and they pitched their tent once more. Like every other morning for the last three days, they packed up their tent, and started hiking up the trail again. Although unlike every other morning, the trail led them into the mountains this time. As they hiked up the, now, mountain trail, they passed bikers, runners, and families walking their dogs. With every step, they heard dirt and rocks crumble underneath. “Hey hun,” Spencer said quietly, “Xavier!”

“What? What is it? What’s wrong?” Xavier had zoned out and wasn’t paying attention to her until she shouted. When he looked over at her, her face grew pale, weary. He stopped walking up the mountain trail and walked over to Spencer. “Are you okay, Spence?”

“Yeah... I’m fine, I guess. But haven’t you ever wondered what would happen if we fell?” As he walked over to her, rocks crumbled down the ledge to the weed covered terrain below.

Xavier kneeled beside her and wrapped his arm around her shoulders and lightly patted her right arm. “Honey, it’ll be okay. Just watch your back, and don’t look down.” Without even pausing for a moment, he stood back up and began walking once again. On that note, Spencer stood back up and followed closely after Xavier, who suppressed a grimace. His bright green eyes turned cold, dark.

For hours, Xavier and Spencer hiked up the mountain trail, and then hiked back down the other side. Every few minutes, Spencer would look behind her to see Xavier stopped and staring behind him. Although, every time she asked him what was wrong, he played it off like he didn’t know what she was talking about. Around 4 p.m., they stopped near a ravine and ate something for dinner. When they finished, it wasn’t even close to being dark, so they continued. They were almost to the end of that part of the trail when it began getting dark. Once it got dark, they pitched their tent about twenty yards from the cliff and about five yards from the pathway. Xavier was out like a light, but Spencer was restless. Since she couldn’t sleep, she decided to go outside, and lie under the stars. She unzipped the tent and dragged her sleeping bag out and left it a few feet from the campfire. It was so close she could still feel its warmth, hear the pops from the burning logs, and see the flames flicker from the corners of her eyes.

Crunch. Pop. Crunch. Pop. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. Pop. Spencer thought she heard footsteps coming up behind her. She sat up and looked over her left shoulder. *How did Ian and*

Maggie get here? Weren't they on the other trail? “Well, well, well. I’m glad to see you awake,” Ian said as he and Maggie walked closer.

“I couldn’t sleep. I tossed and turned for at least an hour. What are you guys doing here? I thought you took the other trail?” By this time, Spencer had unzipped her sleeping bag and stood up to face them. Alarm filled her every muscle, every thought. Something was not right here. She could feel it.

“Well, isn’t that nice? Say, have you and Xavier enjoyed your hike up here? The view sure is beautiful, isn’t it?” Ian spoke in a rather calm, soothing, creepy voice. Spencer was unable to tell what exactly the grin on his face meant, but it sparked her curiosity, especially with Maggie lurking in the shadows. At first glance, you may not even see her. Her black shorts and grey shirt blended into the darkness, and not to mention her dark red hair.

“It has been nice. Until now... Now there’s something that you’re not telling me! Tell me why are you here and not on the other trail? And better yet, how did you find us?” Spencer backed up as she spoke, but Ian drew closer and Maggie continued to stalk in the shadow of the trees.

“You know, we would’ve thought that you would be more excited to see us. Is there a reason why you’re acting like you’ve seen a ghost?” His voice was almost dreamlike. His blue eyes seemed almost seductive. The slight wind gave his blond hair the windblown look. Perfection.

“You’re not answering my question, Ian.” Ian made awkward eye contact with Spencer, but she stared him right back. Her lower lip quivered, but he was unable to see it in the small light from the moon and stars. She was determined to know what was going on.

“And you’re not answering mine,” Ian taunted. His slight grin soon grew into a full-teeth smile. She could even see dimples on either side of his face.

“Well, Ian. You answer my question, and I’ll answer yours. How about that? Huh?” Spencer wouldn’t back down. Realizing that he was going to have to finally tell her what she wanted to know, he finally decided to comply.

“Okay, you want to know why? Hmm. Well, I have a feeling that it’s more than you want to know. But I’ll tell you anyway...” He trailed off as he walked closer to the edge of the cliff and looked over with her.

Spencer stared over the cliff into the darkness. She felt a nudge on her right shoulder as her foot slipped. “Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” the girl screamed as she plummeted toward the rocky terrain below. Her khaki shorts are completely covered with dirt, and her pale arms are covered in deep cuts and scratches. The poor girl’s long blond hair lies lifelessly over the rocks. Xavier looked over the edge at her screaming figure. *It had to be done. There was no going back...*

As she is falling through the air, she felt weightless. She felt like a bird, soaring to the bottom. *Crash. Craaaaaaack. Thump. Smack.* Spencer crashed into a short, bushy tree. As she fell through the tree, she broke the small, thin branches, and finally, hit the ground. For a moment, she couldn’t move. Every bone in her body hurt. It even hurt to breathe. As she lay there, she moved her eyes to look up to the cliff where she had fallen from. Ian, Maggie, and... *Xavier* stood looking over the edge at her. She closed her eyes and breathed slowly so that they couldn’t see her stomach move. A few minutes later, they walked away from the edge. Xavier was the last one to leave. She could see his face slowly turn red and a tear glisten on his jaw.

How could Xavier do this to me? What happened to him? He has deserted me when I need him the most. No. Scratch that. I don't need someone that would "kill" me and walk away...

A few moments later, a middle-aged couple came over. "Honey! Honey, come quick! There's a young girl over here! Hurry! Call an ambulance!" The woman shouted at her husband. *Beep beep beep.* Spencer assumed that he was dialing 9-1-1. "Yes! Yes, I'm here! Can you hear me? There's a hiker that has fallen off of the ledge at Toke's Ledge. Send an ambulance here, quickly!" The woman checked her pulse by pressing two fingers underneath Spencer's jaw line. Spencer went in and out of consciousness. The woman assured her that everything was going to be okay. She made Spencer feel at ease. She reminded Spencer of her mother with her strawberry blond hair that smelled like coconut. Spencer had a flashback, but when she came back, she remembered. She became uneasy again. It wasn't long after that when the ambulance finally came. Paramedics worked on Spencer for thirty minutes before loading her into the ambulance to take her to the hospital. Spencer spent about two weeks in the local hospital before they released her. On the day she was released, she put her hiking clothes back on. *You can run, but you can't hide...*