

Late Night Swim

by

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I dried my sweaty palms on my pants. Slowly and carefully in hope that Emily wouldn't notice. Her eyes were set on the road ahead and she was talking about how her day at work had been. She was distracted. It was our first date, only two weeks since we had met for the first time, a month since we started talking. Emily had promised to take me to her favourite swimming place for Valentine's Day. In the back of my head I could hear my mom warning me not to get in a car with a stranger. Emily took her hand off the gearstick and offered it out to me. I took it and squeezed it. It was warm and sticky.

We stopped and bought hamburgers that we ate in the car. The parking lot was empty. It was nine o'clock and none of us had eaten after work. After a while I took out the present I had prepared in my pocket. It wasn't wrapped and had only a pink bow attached to the top. An amethyst rock. Emily's birthstone. A pure coincidence actually since I had bought it last minute. She dried her hands on a napkin and took it carefully from me. She thanked me and then took out the present she had prepared for me. A bracelet made out of colourful macaronis. She admitted she had made it with the kids at the kindergarten she worked at the same day. A last minute present. I thanked her and she leaned forward to give me a hug. Neither of us could reach properly since our drinks were between us. The gearstick pressed against my stomach. I didn't pull away though until she did. I put the bracelet on my left wrist. Emily put the rock on the dashboard. We continued eating our food. When we were done we continued driving towards the lake. The rock fell a few times and the bracelet itched.

After an hour we arrived. Emily drove into a gravel path and parked the car. When she turned off the headlights it became pitch black. I couldn't see anything. There were no street lamps this far from the road and the high trees covered the moonlight. I exited the car and together we started walking with only the sound of the waves to guide us.

It was a long shallow beach. Big and wide with no houses nearby. I assumed that it was beautiful. It was hard to tell in the dark. The sand melted together with the water that in turn melted together with the night sky. Darkness and shimmer as long as the eye could see. Emily took a few steps away from me and started changing clothes. I did the same. I thanked the moon and the stars that they were weak tonight. When we were done Emily walked towards me and took my hand again. She smiled childishly with twinkling eyes. She led me along the beach towards the water.

The water was ice cold. Granted it was the middle of February. We screamed and ran as fast as we could. My legs grew numb quickly and eventually we sat down on the seafloor. I could barely see our clothing piles from here. We ran back after we had finally managed to make each other dip our heads beneath the surface. My whole body felt cold and hard. To breathe felt foreign. My heart was pounding so hard I could feel it in my ears. I realised I was laughing. Emily was laughing as well. We embraced each other and eventually our laughter died out. My heart calmed down. I stroked her soft back and arms. I could fall asleep with my head leaning against hers, I thought. She stroked the short hair on my nape with a shaking hand.

I lifted my head and looked down at Emily. Her eyes were still twinkling. Her cheeks matched her long hair. I asked her if she could kiss me because I didn't dare do it myself. She smiled and did as I asked. I couldn't feel the cold anymore. I told Emily that she was beautiful, Emily said she was the luckiest person in the world who had met me. We stood there and held each other and confessed our love in a hundred different ways over and over again.

Eventually we started to feel the cold. Our bodies had been shaking for a while without us noticing. I gave Emily a last kiss on her blue lips. We took our clothes and started moving towards the car. We went barefoot and started laughing once again. About the pain or our stupidity I didn't know. We took off our swimming clothes and put on our regular clothes again. They were covered in sand and stuck to my wet skin. It would take forever to get the car clean again. Emily started the car and drove off. As soon as we got on the main road she took her hand off the gearstick and offered her hand to me. I took it and squeezed it. It was cold and soft.