

Taos, NM 1982

“Maybe just the whole thing,” Amy says. She spills the entire bottle of pills onto the kitchen counter. We regard the pile of pharmaceuticals between us.

“Are you sure this is gonna work?” I ask.

“Totally!” Amy nods her head so enthusiastically that her red Dorothy Hamill bowl cut momentarily veils her pretty face. “My parents are *freaks* about it, ‘Don’t take too much,’” she imitates a spooky voice. “‘It will kill you!’”

“It just seems kinda stupid.”

“Why?”

I shrug.

“You don’t wanna be remembered as the girls who overdosed on aspirin?”

“Not very sexy,” I concede. “Have you ever told anyone?”

“Are you high? What do you think Victor would do to us if we told?”

“I don’t know—”

“He would fucking kill us.” Amy simply states the facts. “He’s a goddamn psycho. You see that, don’t you?”

I nod.

“I hate to say it, Justine, but this is *seriously* the only way out. And,” Amy adds quietly, “if we both do it together, it’ll send a message.”

“How much it sucked to be us?”

She shrugs. “I’m not looking for pity, I just can’t think of any other way for it to end.”

*You really should die, Justine. You pathetic piece of shit.*

“Let’s do it,” I say.

Amy reaches out a finger and slides one tablet towards her. “Pass me the tequila.”

Without a word, I hand her the bottle of Jose Cuervo. She places the pill on her tongue and knocks it back with the booze.

My turn. I copy her exactly.

Now both of us, mechanical as metronomes, slide pills from the center pile, plop them into our mouths and chase them down. Impatient to get the job done, we bump up the doses to two and three-pill increments. Minutes pass. When the heap is gone, Amy asks: “How many have you had?”

“Forty-three,” I reply. “You?”

“Fifty-two!” she slumps off the counter. Her head smacks the floor.

“You okay?” I fall down beside her.

“Never better!” We lie next to each other, on our backs, perfectly serene while the world spins madly on its axis. “You know what’s sad?” Amy asks.

“What?”

“I really wanted to turn thirteen.”