

### Submission Type: story

I opened my eyes halfway and thought I was dreaming because I was in a pink tinged room, and right next to me was my best friend Mitchel.

When I leaned in to ask him a question, I was pulled back by some of the wires that I just realized were there. The unexpectedness of it all made me yelp, not too loudly, but loud enough that it woke Mitchel up.

"Rose! You're all right! You had all of us so worried. What happened to you?" I rubbed my eyes a couple of times to make sure that I wasn't dreaming. "The dance!" I said, remembering how I got to the hospital, after collapsing at the dance he'd taken me to.

"Which dance?" Mitchel asked, and I almost believed him, but then I thought about how good it had felt dancing with Mitchel and how hard the floor was. Even if it had been a dream, I would never forget it. But I really hoped that it was real. Except for falling. I could've lived without that.

And if it wasn't, well then it was a really good dream. But I didn't think that it was, and was trying to explain this to Mitchel.

"The dance you took me to!" I said, exasperated.

"Which one?" He inquired, so irritatingly calm.

"You only asked me to one!"

"No I didn't. I asked you to all our high school and college dances."

What?! I thought. We're not even out of high school yet!

"What about your girlfriend that just broke up with you!" I shouted, even more annoyed.

"You didn't just tell me that you won't marry me just now, did you?" He asked. He looked like he was about to cry.

"No- wait, what did you just say?" I was extremely confused now. First there was the whole "Did that just really happen?" thing. Second, Mitchel was just telling me that I was his fiancée. And third, he thought that I just broke it off with him, even though we hadn't even been dating.

"I asked if you had just told me that you wouldn't marry me. I knew that you had had some doubts when I first asked you, but I thought we got through all of that." What the heck, why not just play along with it. Maybe this is just a dream. Or maybe this is just some really big hoax put on by one of my friends. I really wouldn't put it past them to do this. I thought.

I tried to get up, except that Mitchel pushed me back down. "Remember what the doctor said, Rose. You're not going to be able to do some of the things that you're used to, not after the accident. Just face, Rose, you need to get that. I'll try my best, but I'm not promising anything."

"Mitchel, what accident? And my name isn't Rose!" I yelled at him. And then added somewhat quieter than before, "You should know that by now."

"Calm down Rose. They said that you might have some slight amnesia after how traumatized you were. And you're not doing too well, so I'll let that Mitchel thing go, seeing how he was my best friend and all, but I'm sad that you don't remember my name. Just so that we don't get confused, my name is Alex Portan." said Mitchel/Alex

"You're not Alex! You're Mitchel!" I screamed. Not only was Mitchel not acting like himself, he was really starting to freak me out.

"Rose, I know that you've been through a hard time, but you have to admit it, Mitchel's not coming back. I know how you feel. The first few days after the funeral, I was a mess too. You wouldn't know this because you were still in a coma, and we weren't sure if you would ever wake up, and if you did if you would come out of this unscathed. It was hard to convince myself that you would. Those long months were torture for me. But you're awake, and that's what matters. If you want, later today we can go visit his grave."

WHAT! There's no way that Mitchel's dead, just no possible way. And now this guy, who looks like Mitchel, but claims to be Alex, is telling me that he is! There is no possible way! I thought, about to scream my head off.

"While we're there, we can put flowers next to Lilly and Questa's graves too. I know how close the three of you were. But only if you feel up to it." It was a little bit mesmerizing the way that Alex, as I was starting to think of him as, was saying all this, almost like he was explaining it to a five year old, but someone he loved as well. "Would you like to go to the graveyard with me?"

"I would like that Alex. It might give me a little time to think this through," I said.

"When would you like to leave?" he asked me.

"As soon as possible," I responded. Alex had to fight back a chuckle that had decided to make itself known.

"We'll need to make a few stops on the way, but I'll be ready to help you out to the car in a few minutes."

"Alright, that sounds good." A few minutes later Alex came back into the bedroom to help me out to the car.

When he came up to the bed, Alex pulled back the sheets, and I saw for the first time how bad of a condition I was in. My legs were bandaged up, but even though they covered the extent of the damage, I could tell that they were cut up pretty badly. No wonder Alex wants to keep me in bed. I can probably barely walk! I thought to myself.

About an hour later Alex and I had stopped at a nearby florist to pick up some flowers.

"Here, I'll show you where their graves are." He said, taking me by the waist and supporting most of my weight as he led me across the grass to a small set of headstones

Alex and I slowly bent down to sit on the grass. It was beautiful, but it seemed wrong at the same time, seeing the gravestones of my friends, if I believed Alex. But I was content to lean against his shoulder, the sun warming our backs as we sat together in silence.

Alex suddenly remembered that he had brought flowers and the two of us set the bouquets on the humble grave markers. With the help of Alex, I bent down to brush the fallen blossoms off the largest headstone.

As I took a closer look at it, I almost collapsed then and there. On it was written:

Here Lies Lilly Withers  
October 31, 1993 –April 15, 2009  
May She Rest in Peace

When I quickly brushed off the two other headstones, I saw the names of my best friends, Mitchel and Questa. Both whom were lying under the ground next to where I was supposedly laid to rest.

Suddenly, I felt a sense of pulling at my consciousness, almost if something was begging for my return somewhere.

Somewhere where of Alex didn't exist.

Two very strong emotions were battling against each other within me. The first one was the one that wanted to stay with Alex, who loved me. This emotion thought that it would be nice to make a life with him. The second, more prominent and sensible emotion, was the one that still wanted my friends to be alive.

I could easily make a life depending on Questa and Mitchel, who was closer to me than a brother.

A world without them was not one that I really wanted to be in.

On the other hand, I kind of enjoyed this world. But eventually, I just gave in wanted to go home. I laid back and closed my eyes, hoping that the simple gesture would send me home.

When I opened my eyes, I was still on the grass lying on Alex's shoulder, but when I looked up, I saw Mitchel smiling down at me.

Name: Brianna P

School: Golden West Middle School

Branch: Vacaville Cultural Center