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Rebel Chick

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Secret “bang buddies.” Yeah. Classy. That’s the nicest name I could come up with without it sounding too dirty. She’s dirty. I don’t like her. But I’ve said that already.

Henry did a lot of stupid things as a kid that screwed him up for a real life. Julia. That speaks for itself. Most of it was to help his image, you know, become more accepted to the world, bullshit like that. The stereotypical things, pointless and dangerous tricks to impress, talked back to authority to prove himself. He was one of those guys who saw some older kids smoking and thought that he’d try it too. Henry kind of looked like he was fading away as time went on. In too many ways. I asked him to quit, but he saw no point. He didn’t care how long he lived, just as long as he enjoyed life while he was around. That was ridiculous to me, and not to mention, stupid.

“How about you enjoy a long life rather than a short one?” I said angrily.

“How about you enjoy a long life rather than a short one?” I said angrily. “A life is a life, Kim. If I know mine is going to be shorter than most, than that just gives me more of a reason to live it to the fullest, don’t you think?”

“My mom knew about us. But she thought that he was just some boy who was trying to steer me as close to hell as possible. When we were on the phone, she’d come into my room and tell me she needed to talk to me, but really she just wanted me to stop talking to him. Bad influences, you know.

“You’re a good kid.” My mom would say as she’d sit at the foot of my bed. I laughed at her way of telling me he was trouble. “Thanks, Mom...”

“But he likes you too much, and sooner you’re going to get to that point where you’re going to feel obligated to fall to his level. I don’t want to see you become that,” she said in a concerned tone.

There was an extreme explanation in need, but let’s be honest, she didn’t want to hear that. So I gave her this. “Mom, it’s not like that at all. We’re just friends. If anything I’m helping him get on the right track.”

“Yes, I love that you’re helping him.” But... “But, I don’t want you to get dragged into his life.”

“I won’t, Mom. Don’t worry.” She smiled back. Crisis averted.

Henry always fascinated me. Maybe that’s how I got so hooked on being included in his life in anyway I could. I had no idea how his mind could travel so far in so little time. He was a storyteller, that’s the real truth of it. When he started talking, everything became vivid. You were there. You were tasting it. You were feeling the ground between your toes. You escaped with him. It was almost unbelievable. I told him he could be a writer, but he said he didn’t want people to read about the world in his head. He liked keeping it a secret. It made me feel special knowing he shared it with me. Just me. I never knew why though, why me, that is. Why put up with me? I’d always ask him with this constant need to know, and the instant disbelief that what he said was true. You’re interesting. That’s what he would tell me. Though that’s not even remotely true. But I guess I went along with it, because I still had to be in his life, and him in mine.

Every other night we’d meet each other at this playground that was conveniently equal walking distance from our houses. I’d take the only rebelliousness that I had, and sneak out after dinner to go lay in that shitty plastic tunnel by the swing set. Then we’d talk. Whatever we wanted to say, we said it. No judgment. Just release. I remember one