

Messy Obsession

By Leah Shosteck

A girl named Zara went to the lake. **B**ellowing winds rushed through her hair as she pulled out her kayak from the hidden beach cove. **C**overed in seaweed and a layer of lake slime, Zara sat in the kayak, overlooking the great silence of the mountains and the smooth, crashing waves. **D**etermined to get out of the sight of the lakeside houses, she paddled towards a hidden river nearing the forest. **E**ven though Zara was alone, Zara knew that he would be searching for her soon. **F**rom her kayak, she made out the sound of him revving up his motorboat.

“Grow up,” Zara recited in Xavier’s thick voice as she started paddling more aggressively. **H**atred is a strong word, but Zara knew that someone who chased their ex to their summer camp across the country was not deserving of love.

Indigo fish swam near Zara’s kayak as she heard Xaiver screaming her name in the distance. **J**ack is with him on his motorboat, speeding towards the center of the lake, the morning light reflected off the silver lining of the boat.

“Kayaks aren’t as fast, dude; she’s probably just hiding behind some tree somewhere,” Jack yelled over the motor to Xavier.

“Let’s go there then,” Xavier said while pointing almost directly at Zara. **M**essy obsession, that was what this was. **N**o place Zara escaped to would be safe from Xavier’s reign over her life.

Ocean-like waters covered Zara as she abandoned her kayak for the safety of the dark lake. **P**anting, she swam to the shore and ran. **Q**uickly, Xavier and Jack sped over to the kayak.

Rusty hinges creaked as they spotted the evidence of Zara’s existence. **S**weat and water droplets rushed down her cheeks.

They got out of the boat and marched onto the soft forest floor. Under the treetops, Zara tried to assure herself that she was safe and would not get back together with Xavier even if he found her. Violet light beamed from Xavier's phone, illuminating his dark, cold eyes as he unknowingly neared Zara.

"Whatcha waiting for, sweetheart?" Xavier suddenly jumped out of nowhere, grabbing Zara by the arm.

"You have no plan, and if you're going to force me to go back to Vermont, don't think for a second that I won't report you to the police because I will," Zara said confidently, but that quickly faded.

Zara watched as Xavier faded back into the forest just as the bullet impaled her chest.