

Nothing Gold Can Stay (4-1)

The house was silent. Not the kind of peaceful silent that people talk about, like the night before Christmas, where all the children slumber peacefully in their beds. It was the kind of silence that made a racing heartbeat fill the air, and the pulse of the setting sun, which was drifting like a sail at sea through a window. An unnatural warmth in these walls. The house creaked uneasily, she only knew the sounds of screaming and fighting, the slamming of doors, and cars tearing out of the gravel driveway.

The only sound was the soft humming of a little girl as she tried to still her racing heart and the rustling of her party city princess dress. She loved the way the light reflected of the teal glittery skirt. It was the kind of dress that had no real princess to it, but it made it feel more like her own.

She hated the room at the end of the dingy hallway. Cigarette burns carved into the walls like tattoos and a claim. She mostly hated the way that when she opened that door, she would see all of the secrets. Things that were only know to the girls of that house and no one else. She pressed a warm almost damp palm to the golden knob. When she pulled away gold painted flakes drifted to the matted down carpet and her hands smelled like dirty pennies. She pushed her golden curls away from her face and gripped her skirt.

Green long necked bottles littered the floor like coral in an ocean. Broken glass and crushed up cans. Nausea overcame the little princess as the smell of death hung in the air. Stale, old, and sour. She took a step forward. There was no light in here, not even a little danced across the stale yellow walls. The little princess glanced over to the nightstand and her heart

collided against her ribcage. A bird trying desperately to escape. She could feel bile rising in her throat at the sight of orange bottles. Piled up, orange, blaring and loud. All these small little pharmacy bottles of orange. A warning, a sign of caution, one of danger. Laying on their sides, one rolled off slowly and plunked down onto the carpet. Her eyes followed to bottle as it stopped. It had rolled into a pale limp form. A hand. Dangling and pale. White as snow.

The little princess gathered her fear, her eyes trembling, hands sweating, legs tingling, fighting the urge to run. But she had to look. The limp body of her mother splayed out across the bed. But she saw none of that. She only saw the dead eyed stare of her mother. Eyes that had turned a milky yellow hue. Unblinking and dry. She felt a new wave of nausea and some sort of banging all around her.

Run.

And that door slammed shut. Gold flakes falling.