

Sickly Green

by

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INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

ALEX CRAWFORD, 16, sits in a school desk chair. In rapid motion, her leg bounces underneath the table. She picks at her nails and fumbles with the hem of her sleeves.

TEACHER, late 50s, sits upright, hunches, crosses her arms, and leans over the desk.

TEACHER

Alright, listen up. Your partners have already been chosen for the project due on Wednesday.

WHOLE CLASS (EN MASSE)

[GROANS]

TEACHER

The first group presenting is Alex and Claire. After them goes...

Teacher's voice fades away into the background.

Alex lookays at CLAIRE JACKSON, 16.

Claire tries to avoid Alex's stare. She fails as she gives Alex the side-eye.

Teacher's glance shifts between Claire and Alex.

BELL RINGS.

Students stream out, Claire being the first.

Alex walks up to Teacher's desk.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

I'd take this opportunity you've been given to... smooth things over with her.

Alex takes a folder from her bag and lays it on the desk.

ALEX

Is that why you did me dirty like that?

TEACHER

You really need to talk to her. I'm tired of seeing you two be sad in my classroom.

ALEX

I'm not-- She lookays sad?

TEACHER

I'm not giving you another essay topic
until you talk to Claire and fix whatever
happened between you.

Alex stands frozen with confusion.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Go on! Before you lose her in the halls.

Alex shakes her head and exits.

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex steps in and lookays at Claire shuffling past the
masses.

THEO, 15, enters behind Alex and stands next to her.

THEO

Al, seriously, you gotta stop.

ALEX

No idea what you're talking about.

THEO

Man, you've been crushing on Claire
since middle school.

ALEX

You say that like it's a bad thing--

THEO

It is a bad thing. You're wasting
your time, Al.

ALEX

You don't know that.

THEO

Dude, every guy in this building
has asked her out.

ALEX

And yet, she's never gone out with
any of them.

THEO

I don't even... you know it's
creepy you know that, right?

Alex lookays down the way Claire went, transfixed.

ALEX
I'm going to do it. I'm going to
ask her out.

THEO
What? No, you don't even know if
she's--

Alex walks off down the way Claire went in full stride.

ALEX
Thanks for the advice, Theo.

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - LATER

Claire sits at a big library table alone. She leans her
head on her hand and fumbles with a pencil on the other.

Alex enters. She hesitates before walking up to her.

ALEX
Hey.

CLAIRE
Oh, hey.

ALEX
I... I thought maybe... maybe we could
talk-- about the project.

Claire shifts in her seat.

CLAIRE
Well--

ALEX
--I see you've already started. If we do
it together, we'll be done faster.

Claire hesitates.

CLAIRE
You're right.

Alex slides into the chair across from Claire and pulls
her bookbags from her backpack.

LATER

Alex peeks at Claire from underneath her brow. Once,
twice, and then again.

Claire lets out an exasperated sigh and puts her pen down.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What?

ALEX

I didn't say anything.

CLAIRE

Exactly. Just say it, whatever it is.

ALEX

Well... I wanted to ask why... why did you quick the swim team?

Claire is taken aback by the question.

CLAIRE

That was back in middle school. Why do you care?

ALEX

It was unexpected, right before the state tournament too.

CLAIRE

My mom thought you and I-- never mind.

Claire goes back to her book. Her leg taps fast underneath the table. The table shakes with her leg.

ALEX

You practiced so hard for the 200 freestyle relay... You were such a good swimmer, and I know you loved it.

Claire lowers her pen.

CLAIRE

I do-- did. I don't want to talk about it, Alex.

Claire continues to write. Alex's eyes stay on Claire before going back to the book she was reading.

Not a moment later, Alex slams her book down and bursts.

ALEX

Seriously, you were on the swimming team since grade school--

CLAIRE

--Lookay, Alex, I really don't want to talk about it, okayay? You liked swimming, and you quit.

ALEX

Only because you weren't there.

CLAIRE

What?

ALEX

We used to be friends, Claire, don't you remember? I thought we were close.

Claire stays silent and has a lookay of sorrow on her face.

CLAIRE

Yeah, we were... but we were kids; things have changed. We've changed.

ALEX

I know you still use food erasers, you still sign your name with a heart, and you only drink chocolate milk at lunch.

CLAIRE

You still carry around that rabbit's foot in your bag.

ALEX

[LAUGHS] Yeah, so?

CLAIRE

[LAUGHS] I guess we haven't changed much.

MONTAGE - ALEX AND CLAIRE RECONNECTING

-- They laugh together at the library table.

-- They eat lunch together and share second glances.

-- Their hands touch. They linger before pulling away.

-- They talk as they walk together down the hall.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex stands in front of her locker, exchanging her books.

Theo enters and walks up to her side.

THEO
So, how's it going with Claire?

ALEX
[CHUCKLES] Really good. We have so much more in common than when we were kids.

THEO
Uh-huh, how's the project?

ALEX
Good, we'll probably finish it today.

Alex closes her locker and walks down the hall with Theo.

THEO
Well, you better ask her out before then.

ALEX
Why?

THEO
Think about it; you won't have an excuse to keep meeting up with her after this.

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD

Alex paces back and forth in front of a fountain.

Claire enters and walks up to Alex.

CLAIRE
Why'd you want me to meet you here?

ALEX
There's something I've been wanting to get out of my chest.

CLAIRE
Okay?

ALEX
Right, okay. So.. what I wanted to say was... can you turn around? I can't do this with you staring.

Claire turns and raises her arms in a 'now what' way.

Alex takes a deep breath.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I know that things have been rocky between us in the past, but these past two days have been the best days I've had in a long time.

Alex hesitates before saying the following words.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I've missed you a lot. And I was hoping you'd go out with me this Friday?

Alex waits for an answer, but Claire doesn't respond, nor has she turned around. She walks forward and places her hand on Claire's shoulder.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Claire?

Claire jerks away from Alex's touch. She looks back at her with a horrified look.

CLAIRE

You... you're a lesbian?

ALEX

I-- I guess.

CLAIRE

Why? Why would you choose that?
It's a sin, Alex.

Alex is in complete disbelief at Claire's response.

ALEX

What? I didn't choose--

CLAIRE

I don't want you to go to hell-- I
don't want to go to hell.

Claire runs her hands over her head and breaths in shakily.

Alex stares at Claire with sadness and disappointment.

ALEX

I thought--

WOMAN, mid-40s, walks into the courtyard. She carries a big expensive handbag and has a long necklace with a cross.

WOMAN

Claire, honey, we have to go--

Woman looks at Alex and furrows her brows with anger. She shoots Claire a look.

CLAIRE

Mom?

CLAIRE'S MOTHER

You are grounded, young lady. I told you I didn't want you with this girl anymore and alone? I don't think so!

Claire's mother grabs her by the arms and drags her away.

Claire looks back at Alex with tears before she exits.

Alex is alone in the courtyard.

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex walks down an empty hall. Her footsteps echo. She fumbles and messes around with a bathroom pass.

She walks past the main office and sees Claire inside.

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE

Alex walks past the receptionist and sits next to Claire.

Claire motions for Alex to leave.

ALEX

Claire, why did you say those things?

Claire doesn't face Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Why was your mother so angry that you were with me? That we were alone?

Claire bites her nails and bounces her legs.

Alex waits for Claire.

CLAIRE

You wouldn't understand, Alex.

ALEX

Claire--

CLAIRE

You wouldn't... our moms are so different. Your mom is kind and loving. She encourages you and cares for you.

ALEX

I'm sure your mom--

CLAIRE

Yours wouldn't make you quit, would she? My mom made me quit... because of a girl from the team.

ALEX

What? Why would she--

CLAIRE

She thought... I was like you.

Realization falls on Alex.

ALEX

Are you? Like me?

CLAIRE

I... I don't know.

ALEX

Who was the girl?

CLAIRE

[CHUCKLES] You.

Alex's face drops.

ALEX

Claire, I'm so sorry--

CLAIRE

It's not your fault. I never blamed you for that, Alex.

Claire and Alex sit in silence.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I admire you, Alex. You don't hesitate to express what you're thinking or how you're feeling.

ALEX

[CHUCKLES] You're the same, you know.

CLAIRE

My mom isn't like yours. As long as I'm under her roof, I can't be... me.

Alex looks at Claire.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Maybe when I'm older, when I graduate and go to university. Maybe then I'll be me, and I'll be able to answer your question.

Claire faces Alex. She gives her a hopeful smile.

ALEX

Sorry I got you grounded.

CLAIRE

[CHUCKLES] It's okay. I don't mind spending a couple of days on house arrest.

ALEX

If you'd like, we can keep talking... through texts, maybe?

CLAIRE

I'd like that.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Now go, my mom is still here. If she sees you, she'll make me change schools.

ALEX

And go where? This is the only high school for at least another 100 miles.

Alex gets up and heads for the door.

CLAIRE

[CHUCKLES] Don't forget your hall pass.

Claire hands it out to Alex.

Alex's hand graces Claire's. They linger for a moment before breaking apart. She leaves the main office red-faced.

INT. SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY

Alex walks down the hall with a smile on her face and with a spring in her step.