

# CRAZY FOR YOU

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## BY ♦ ALEXIS RAPPAPORT

I hate this place. I pull my rusty jeep into the front lot at Pembroke Mental Institution. “Pembroke Mental Institution.” How pretentious can you get? With a name like that, you’d think you’re in for one of those antique brick buildings, crawling with ivy and full of ominous secrets, but instead all you get is a gray rectangle that might as well be wearing a nametag that says “Hello! I’m a prison!” I’d love to turn back, maybe go get a slice of pizza or something, but there’s one thing that keeps pulling me here.

“Hello, Michael!” the secretary chirps, handing me a visitor’s badge. “You’re here early! No car trouble today?”

“Not today Judy,” I say as I clip my ID to the collar of my oh-so-cool school blazer that I really should have left in the car. “Can I see her now?”

“Go right ahead,” she gestures to the corridor.

Every time I go inside, everything changes. My jokes, my sarcastic exterior, my happiness, shatter.

“Hi Emma,” I whisper, entering her room. She looks up, matted hair hanging over her confused expression, eyes hazy from her 3 o’clock dosage. It’s always hard seeing her like this. She squints at me.

“Hey Mikey!” she says, her face lighting up. She waits a couple moments, then stares at me expectantly, waiting for me to say more.

“I’m not saying hi to him,” I say,

“Why not?”

“Because...” Now, I really don’t want to hurt her feelings. She’s always been so sweet, so kind, and-now more than ever- so fragile.

“I know what you’re thinking Michael.”

“Emma...”

“Why won’t you believe me?” her once sunny face clouded, “Why won’t anyone believe me?”

“He’s not...”

“Adrian. His name’s Adrian.”

“Adrian isn’t real. You know that.”

“No.”

“Can’t you see that he’s hurting you? That this is hurting you?”

“We love each other,” she said after a moment of quiet, her hand hovering over the spot on the bed next to her where she believed her love to be, “we told each other last night. I need people to believe in him...believe in us.” There she goes, crushing my heart.

“I want to see you get better, the doctors want you to-“

“The doctors,” she spat, “they know nothing. Every day they try to tell me that I’m crazy, that this living, breathing person next to me doesn’t exist, but what’s even worse is that you’re just like them!”

“You know I’m not-“ I begin.

“Yes you are! But you know what? It doesn’t matter what you or anyone else thinks of us. As soon as I get out of here, we’re running away together. You won’t be able to stop us.”

“Emma...”

“I think you should leave now.”

It wasn’t until I was back in my car when I found the words I had been trying to say: “I love you, Emma.”