

Eva

The next morning was seemingly the same as every fall day the world had ever seen. The sun rose, and the cool of the night transformed into another day. Students got up and went to their classes, wearing sweaters, and drinking coffee that they prayed would get them through the day. Conversations stirred about the upcoming holiday, and the football game the night before. Seniors discussed plans for their final Halloween before college, as the teachers hushed them for the thousandth time. From the outside looking in, it appeared to be a normal day. However, it was far from normal, and I was the first to notice their absence.

I sat down in English, itching to tell Amy, Dan, and Jenny about my plan for Halloween. As the minutes passed I began to wonder where Jenny and Amy were. They were never late. Jenny picked Amy up every morning before school, and never once had they walked in after the bell. Dan sat down seconds before the bell rang, his tardiness did not surprise me. All through English I looked up at the door, expecting to see them walk in. I texted Amy at lunch, asking her where she was, assuming Jenny was with her as usual. I expected to receive a message back, but never did. Neither of them came to school that day.

I stopped by Amy's house after school, expecting to find that she was either sick or grounded, neither of which would shock me. Instead, I pulled up to see two police cars in the driveway, their lights flashing. I ran inside to find Amy's mother sitting on the couch with Jenny's parents. Their heads were buried in their hands, and I heard sniffles form across the room. Behind them, two police officers searched the house. Amy and Jenny were nowhere in sight. As a matter of fact, they were gone. Both of their rooms mostly empty, presences ceasing to exist. The only thing that remained was a small note on each of their beds which read, *"Gone to the windy city with my best friend. There is nothing here for us anymore. We need an adventure. It's no one's fault but our own. We need freedom."*

It came as a shock to everyone in our families and at school that Amy and Jenny would run away. They were both model students and athletes. Their families had already made their college arrangements, the world was at their fingertips. But they wanted more than any of us could offer.

That was the day I discovered Amy Bender and Jenny Lynch had a secret. They were like the moon. Cratered by flaws, alone in a sea of black. A part of them always hidden in the dark. A part of them that wanted to be free. Free from the pressure of having to conform to others. They had dreams, and they were willing to do what it took to accomplish them. Amy and Jenny were just like everyone else. They had the potential to reach their dreams. Unlike others however, they recognized it and were willing to take the step to attain them.

Amy Bender called me a week later, from Chicago. She told me that she and Jenny were safe and living in a small apartment. She asked me not to tell anyone where they were, just simply say they were safe. I asked if I could come visit her soon. She simply said, "Someday," before hanging up the phone.

I figured someday, could be any day. So, I sat down at my computer and booked a ticket to Chicago the next morning.