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The Shapes of Fate (Part Four)

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The Shapes of Fate

(Part Four)

Liz Harbaugh

September 29, 2004
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

When I woke up this morning, she was gone. I woke up alone in our bed, her familiar perfume lingering on the sheets that we'd slept on for years. That was all she left. Everything she owned—her photo albums, picture frames, and stuffed animals—were gone. There were no clothes in her drawer and no makeup in the medicine chest and no shampoo in the shower. Everything was gone.

Except one magnet—a photo of us from our high school's prom. That had been before her eyes changed, before she hid herself away. She hadn't let me help her for months. It seemed unlikely that she'd left that by coincidence. I pulled it from refrigerator and held it to my heart. On the other side was a small Post-it. On it were the words "ring ring."

The phone jumped. Uneasily I raced to it—answered.

"Hello?"

Nothing. No breathing, no dial tone. And then her voice.

"Matthew."

"Where are you? What's going on? Can't we talk—"

"Please. Wait for me."

"Until when?" I screamed.

"Good-bye."

The dial tone was harsh in my ear—I don't know how long I stood there, praying she'd pick up. Then a voice startled me.

"If you'd like to make a call, please hang up and try again. If you need help—"

I quietly hung up the phone, crumpled in a heap on the floor, and wept.