

Title: Paranoia

Soundtrack link: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLFTdrU6FhY_zgST5UQIqUeOAXLzA88OF

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She was paranoia. Her sleek, straight hair dazzling under the lights, oh her eyes were so mesmerizing: a warm honey dripping down the softest of silk. A slightly crooked nose, on which perched a pair of oval shaped glasses that molded onto her face so perfectly. I notice a shiny new earring in place of her normally bare ear lobe. In the midst of my daydreaming, my face that sat comfortably on my hand, slips on the table with a flick of someone's hand. That hand owned by the person who I was fawning over a second ago. In other words, Salvia Rubrum.

I snap out of my shock and clumsily sit upright; she smiles fondly and my heart palpitates. *Badump! Badump! Badump!* My hearts so loud I can hear it.

She waves her hand in my face, "Hey, Opal, you there?"

Her voice is so smooth, it melts me. I force myself to answer her question, "Hey Sal, what's up?"

She replies quickly with a tired edge to her voice. "Nothing new, just a lot of work. Oh yeah never mind that," her expression turns worried, "any updates on that creep who keeps harassing you?"

My mind clears up, fast and I start to sweat, as if being around so many people didn't already make me nervous, Sal is quick to remind me of my biggest problem at the moment. A stalker.

I look around anxiously and whisper to her, "No, they're still harmless right now." Sal consoles me and her words of reassurance are comfort to me. We part ways and I make my way to my destination.

Mama has been in the hospital as long as I can remember. I enter her room, she's there as always staring out the window, a faraway look in her eyes. She's currently sick and though it pains me she has to stay here until she gets better. It was the usual talk, me chattering on and her small echoes. I get ready to make my way back home. It's getting dark.

My faded footsteps are all I can hear in the silent night. No, that's a lie, I can hear many other things. Voices, so many voices. I just want to crawl into my mother's warm arms once more. Her arms are too cold now: due to the hospital's blankness. Another pair of footsteps, right behind mine, so, so close. I stop. I turn around so fast, it gives me whiplash. No-one.

There's someone on the pavement across from me, I recognize that build. My stalker. A shiny earring glistens under the moonlight and I take off. I run and run and run as fast as I can back to my home, though there's no point. A gift box lays on my doorstep, a beautiful rose shade.

Who? Who? Who? Who?

I haven't been able to sleep properly for the last few years but these three weeks have been even worse, with the addition of a stalker. Who could it be? The mailman? The supermarket lady? No, no this is all absurd. I glue my hands to my ears, the impact ringing my ears. In this delusional house I'm able to hear the voice of my mum, the dad who left me, the friends I used to have. All of them taunting me. *What has your life come to? Why do you isolate yourself further? Open the gift, Opal.* Stop it. Stop it. STOP IT! The voices stop, it's just me and the box now.

I visit the hospital, I needed to have a clear mind before I open that damn box. My thoughts were too hazy. I see Salvia speaking to some of her coworkers gossiping. I only hear bits and pieces, something about a visitor speaking to no-one. Like an oil painting, she's blended perfectly and sometimes I think she's too good to be true. Her earrings shine under the fluorescent lights. Her earrings. They're new. She just wore them yesterday. I recognize them from somewhere....

I run back home.

With uncontrollable suspense, I tear open the wrapping paper and without even lifting the lid, a rotten smell exuded from it. It was so putrid, I had to hold on to the ledge of the door to stop myself from toppling. Blood. Blood. Blood All over the rabbit, the dead rabbit that my stalker sent to me. A note was taped on.

"Your favourite." Only Salvia and my mum know my favourite animal.

I scream. I scream so loud and the note echoes back to me, all I hear is Salvia's voice. My vision is blurry and I'm tumbling.

I wake up, too groggy to complete a thought. I must've been out for a few hours. I look around. Somethings wrong. Everything looks normal. Like the box was never there, no hint of blood, no note, no anything. My hands grasp for air to make sure this is reality. There's no way... I can still feel everything and see everything clearly in my head.

Salvia.

I'm at the hospital yet again. My heart is beating so fast I can feel the blood aggressively running through me and I stumble over to the receptionist. I ask about Salvia, she doesn't know. I ask the few workers scattered around, the same response. What? Did she run away, guilty for what she did? You can hear my heart shatter into a billion pieces over every angry blood cell in my body. I slump over and visit my mum; all I want is to hug her once more.

I enter the room, she lays there awake, same position, same look, same everything. I'm sick; sick of it. My ears prick, I hear mumbling, two nurses gossiping.

“I heard someone came in here looking for someone who supposedly worked here though no-one knew who.”

“Oh, that poor girl, she still talks to her mother knowing she’s in a coma.”

I look over to my mama, she’s sleeping.

I can’t hug her anymore.