

autumn

Having to close the door quietly when you get home is a burden I wouldn't wish on anyone. Unless you're trying not to interrupt a phone call between teen girls or wake up a younger sibling. But I can't make excuses for the reason being either of those. I wish I could.

If the door makes a sound, my parents will hear and come out of their offices or bedrooms. And then they'll want to talk. No, I'm not an angsty teen that wants to avoid her parents because they annoy her. It's because I can't stand to look at them, let alone make intelligent conversation with them. Thank god I don't look like my parents. My hair is lighter and my eyes are a different color. And I'm missing the freckles across the bridge of my nose that signify being a Pike. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to stand in front of a mirror.

Thankfully, the front door closes silently and the keys don't jingle as I drop them in the long-dry watering can and walk to my room, the first door in the long hallway. I am careful not to look down the hallway at the empty photo frames or the bad paint cover-up on and nail holes in the second door. If I look too hard, I'll see stripes of orange and pink peeking out from the white overcoat.

My room is soft brown and orange tones to match my name. No matter how careful I am not to look at the doors, I can still imagine exactly what's behind the doors. An almost-empty blue and huge room with a crib in the middle and an open closet. And a saige and plum room to match her name.

I have no homework, so I go to my bookshelf. I've read everything twice. So, instead I open a yearbook and look at my fourth grade class. Melody Hollister. My best friend. Ethan Lee. The straight A student. Olivia Mason. The soccer star. I almost rip the page when I get to the next name.

Natalie Taylors.

The girl who ruined my life.

