

The signs are all there, the butterflies, the nervous smile, the trapped beating of my heart trying to escape the imprisonment of my chest.

It's beautiful, magical almost.

But then it changes, the fingers that were once intertwined in mine are now gripped tightly around my throat,

His face so red with fury.

Every word, every movement, every breath, seems to enrage him more and more each day.

But why? I never can quite understand, why is he punishing me? What for? Loving him? That can't be right, surely. I'm so broken up inside, he knows this. Yet he throws me around, like the fur toy you drag around the supermarket as a kid.

I am nothing to him. Whilst he is my universe, I am all but a speck of dust in his world. Irrelevant.

I scream, try to fight back. I want him to feel how he makes me feel every day- small, needy. I meet his eyes, I pray that he sees the damage, has a change of heart.

But he doesn't. Instead his grip tightens. There's a lump lodged uneasily at the back of my throat, my eyes glistening with tears, I know the worst is to come.

My tiny body; exhausted, subdued, forsaken.

He lifts me up and flashes me a dirty smirk, I kick and scream.

My dignity is slowly but surely being ripped from me, torn by the seams.

"Let's have some fun "he says, his voice dark.

I know that this is the end, it's my time now.

He raises a tightly clenched fist above my head, and quickly releases its force on my face.

Bang.

He doesn't stop there.

This time I don't fight back, I don't cry or scream, or even flinch.

Bang.

I don't want to. I don't want to fight anymore.

Bang.

The room is getting darker.

Fragments of my life start to fade to black, I allow myself to let them slip through my fingers.

It's my time now.

My skin becomes numb to the pain of my harsh reality.

Bang.

I feel myself drift, slowly, away from it all, and fall into a place where my soul can be at peace.

I let my last breath of oxygen slip into my lungs.

Bang.

“MUMMY!”

And then I remember

Ariella...