And Burn

Ivy hated this feeling. Maybe it was more about the contradiction of multiple feelings. She couldn’t seem to get her head and heart on the same page. They both physically ached. It just didn’t make sense to her.

“I never needed him, he never needed me,” she stated, almost robotically. “I was just an ego boost to him.” If you repeat something enough times, you’ll start to believe it. That’s what Ivy told herself, anyways.

She scrolled through the long list of music on her phone, placing both earbuds in, and began singing along, “If we were meant to be, we would’ve been by now.”

Her walk picked up until it was at a jog. Evening runs had become a therapy of sorts lately. Feet falling into a steady rhythm, the world could be drowned out by music. There’s nothing like a good ‘screw-you’ playlist after a messy breakup.

“Your love feels so fake,” her singing became airier, a cramp plaguing her side. “And my demands aren’t high to make.”

She scowled, feeling her chest ache at the surplus of nostalgias, at the serpent tightening its hold around her heart. All of Ivy’s close friends told her that embracing the sadness she felt was good, that she should let herself grieve.

“To hell with that,” she muttered, rolling her eyes at no one in particular. “It’s not exactly sadness, more anger, regret…” Her arms pumped faster, legs following their lead.

Sadness is a weakness, and always would be in Ivy’s mind. *She* was the one who kicked *him* to the curb, not the other way around. He should be the ‘sad’ one.

The one issue, he wasn’t. He was already out and about with the other girl. The one he had been seeing for months at a time while still calling Ivy his girlfriend. It was like he used that damn title to keep her chained up, tame. At least his new girlfriend fit the role better, she seemed happy to let him mold her however he pleases. These thoughts eased Ivy’s hurt; she was no one’s party favor.

A bead of sweat rolled down the side of her face, and off her chin. *Good*, she thought, that rewarding feeling only exercise can bring running through her veins. *Better than tears.* Resolve spread through her body with every planted step on the concrete road.

Today was the last day Ivy would remain hung up on him, he didn’t deserve that kind of power over her. He wasn’t hurting, as much as she wanted to make him, so why should she?

“Your lies will never keep, I think you need to blow ‘em out.” The bass and her heartbeat grew louder, thumping in her ears, at Ivy’s favorite part of the song. The chorus would come up soon.

Runners barely touching the concrete, her mind shut off, and shut out, all conflicting thoughts in her brain. But her body, now on auto pilot, knew exactly where to go.

The setting suns streaks of light were just dropping below the horizon as Ivy arrived at her destination. She paused for one heartbeat, and then ran down the gravel driveway, stopping in front of a car. *His* car. Her stomach roiled, brows furrowed, and tears pricking her eyes. She imagined the bittersweet memories going up in flames, along with her heart.

Maybe he wasn’t hurting, yet at least. But that didn’t mean she couldn’t speed up the process.

“I’ll sit and watch your car burn,” she smiled, increasing the volume of the chorus. “With the fire that you started in me.”

And so she did.