

## Nightmare on Halloween

**9:35 PM**

“Mom,” Caroline yelled from the kitchen, “we’re heading out now!”

I rose from the living room couch and made my way to the kitchen. Caroline and her friend, Madeline, stood decked out in Halloween costumes, ready for a local Halloween party.

“Wow, you guys look great!” Caroline finished tying her shoes and pulled the front door open as I spoke, “Have so much fun, and please call me if you need anything.” I grabbed Caroline’s arm and made her acknowledge what I was saying.

She rolled her eyes and turned away from me, walking down our front steps. “I know, I know.”

I closed the door behind them and went back to the living room, where my true crime show still blared on the TV. I made myself comfortable on the couch, and before I knew it, sleep pulled at my eyelids, and they fluttered closed.

**11:54 PM**

*I woke up to the sound of my phone vibrating on the coffee table. I sat up groggily, and everything shifted into focus around me. A silly picture Caroline had taken a few months ago shone in the middle of my screen; her name lined the top. My body buzzed with anxiety as I snatched my phone. What if something was wrong?*

*“Caroline, is everything okay?”*

*“I’m in the car, Mom!” She shouted into the phone. I noticed how her words slurred slightly as she spoke, causing my heart rate to escalate.*

*“Caroline, are you drunk?” A part of me didn’t want to know the answer, but I asked anyway.*

*“Yes, **mom**, of course I’m drunk,” she announced, then started laughing to herself.*

*“Caroline, you can’t be driving while you’re drunk, you’re going to get yourself hurt, I mean what if something happens to you, you need to pul-”*

*“SHHHHH,” she cut me off, “you’re being way over dramatic, calm down.” Before I could say anything else, she turned her video on. The mask she wore when she left the house was nowhere to be seen, and her eyes were hooded and tired looking. Melanie sat in the passenger seat and leaned over to get into the frame.*

*“Hiiii, Ms. Jacobss!” she chirped while giggling.*

*“Caroline!” I yelled, shocking even myself. I was off the couch, pacing the floor of my living room. “You seriously need to pull over, this isn’t funny.” Suddenly, both of their faces reflected a bright yellow light. My heart dropped when I realized where the lights were coming from; another car’s headlights. In an instant my biggest fear became a reality.*

*“CAROLINE!” Madeline’s scream sent shivers down my spine. The ear-piercing sounds of screeching tires, roaring car horns, and shattering glass exploded through the speakers of my phone. I watched as Caroline’s phone flew around the inside of her car and eventually through the windshield with a crash. Tight knots formed in my stomach as I watched, frozen with horror. My heartbeat crescendoed in my ears, drowning out all other noise. Buh boom, BUH BOOM, **BUH BOOM**.*

**11:57 PM**

Bzz bzz. BZZ BZZ. **BZZ BZZ**. The sound of my phone vibrating on the coffee table shocked me awake. I shot straight up, frantically reaching for my phone.

“Caroline?” I tried my best to conceal the panic in my voice.

“Hi Mom! Me and Madeline just left the party, we’re on our way home,” her words slurred together the same way they had in my dream.

“You’re not driving, are you?” I held my breath, waiting for her response.

“No, **Mom**, we called an Uber. We’ll be home in like 15 minutes.” My breath came out in a sharp exhale, and I felt my heartbeat slowing.

“Sounds good,” I replied. “Let me know when you get home! Love you Caroline.”

“Okay, love you too!” As she hung up the phone, I sank back into the couch and allowed my heart to return to its normal rhythm. I couldn’t shake the images from my mind, the collision and the shattered windshield. Yet, here she was, safe and sound, choosing a responsible way to get home. I closed my eyes and fell back into a more peaceful sleep.