

The One You Remember
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Episode 1 (Prologue)

SARA SPEAKS

I spied an old Wakefield Middle School yearbook in the dusty display in the window of Treasure Trove Thrift shop. Except for the girls' stiff hairstyles, that book could have been from my year. The school looked just the same: same long brick face with set-in white columns that don't actually support anything.

It was clear right away which girl the yearbook belonged to. She had marked up the pages just like I would, drawing excited little arrows wherever she appeared in a photograph.

There she was blurry-faced in a crowd on the stage.

Or startled and cross-legged on the gymnasium floor.

She'd circled a string of school portraits too, kids she must have known, blackening out a tooth here and there with her pen. The blank final pages—the ones for collecting autographs—were marked by the standard have-a-great-summer and best-friends-forever. On the very last page, there was only one boy's name, written in her own loopy cursive, a heart wrapped like wire around it.

Those are days I guess I'll always remember. For everything that happened to me, and for my friends: Monica and Jarrod and the rest. Even for my teachers, even for our odd principal, Jackson was his name. Even for all those kids I barely knew, but who went

to my school too, so they were mine too in a way.

The thing is, in my memory, it all feels stranger—cut and cropped and re-arranged. Mesmerizing, too, like those sped-up pictures of a flower opening its petals or an insect metamorphosing: that tiny green inchworm into a moth. You know each time you see that silken cocoon, it's only going to turn out a moth in the end. What else could it become? But with the camera coming back so close, in those quiet, clicking moments, it feels like it could become anything at all.

What I mean to say is, it's funny what you remember. It's funny how things can feel so different after they're over and done.

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