

and that was it

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last rev: 5 feb 2010

he would later call me and swear that he'd never forget the way i looked in the rearview mirror. i stood there in the dar, illuminated by his red rear running lights, one hand at the waist of my washed out and threadbare jeans, the other shading my eyes from the halo of the street lamps while i watched him turn onto the exit ramp. i had the same look on my face when he told me that i couldn't stay over at his new place when he first moved in because his housemate's twelve year old dog sitter would be around all week and it wouldn't be right for her to see us together.

that wasn't even the start of it, now that i think about it, but it certainly was a hint.

but we were in his car on our way out from my place to visit some of his friends in the next town over when i suddenly decided i'd had enough

"can i at least drive you back to your place?"

"no. please stop the car."

and he did, and i got out, determined to walk the eight miles back to my apartment rather than spend another five minutes near him.

and, as i probably should have anticipated, the phone call came four hours later.

"jackson, i really think we're making a mistake. i couldn't take my eyes off you when i drove away."

"you should have kept them on the road instead. it's rutting season out there."

and just like that, i was willing to let him go.

he called me again, and again every couple of days. just to keep up the guise of a friendship, he said. i let him do it until he moved again, to pick up a job several states away.

he called me the day before he was planning on leaving, and i didn't even let him speak.

"charles, stop."

and that was it; he drove off into horny deer territory while i stood in the middle of the deserted road, watching his lights fade. surely he could see me until he got too far away for his lights to illuminate me anymore; i couldn't see anything besides the outline of the back of his head past the driver's seat.