

The Trip

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Aubrey Sinclair wants to be a model so she attends a lot of Industry parties. She has networked enough in the past to where she knows people who can give her some important passes to some big industry events. That is how she got into a big New York fashion week after-party last year, where she met up-and-coming R&B singer Noi. They hit it off talking about their dreams and shared insider gossip. Fortunately for Noi within a year of that night, she would not be an up & comer anymore. Her career skyrocketed and she had one of the biggest hits of the summer. Noi never became a bigheaded entertainer though and maintained her friendship with Aubrey, inviting her to accompany her to free concerts, dinner parties, and the like. One wild night Noi introduced Aubrey to James, the manager for her favorite singer Mary Morris. Mary Morris had been famous for the past twenty years and Aubrey practically grew up on her music. Aubrey knew this was the connection that could open so many doors for her and take her from a wannabe to fashion icon. While Aubrey and Noi were on their way home Noi told Aubrey a secret and made her promise not to tell. James was secretly in love with Mary and had been for the past ten years but just never had the courage to tell her. Noi also told Aubrey that she had it on good faith that Mary would give James a chance if he were interested.

Most people may not know this but Aubrey Sinclair was a hopeless romantic. She believed in all those romances she had seen in Disney movies as a kid. She believed in soul mates and believed that the greatest achievement in life could be helping two people find the power of a love that lasts and explodes through the ages. She believed in cupid, and not just metaphorically. She literally believed there was a magic fairy floating around helping people find love. She never told anyone this of course. She did not want people to think she was crazy. Would you tell anyone that? Anyway, Aubrey truly believed that Mr. Cupid needed help from the ground sometimes, like some sort of "love missionaries". Knowing this fact may allow you to understand her next act. If I did not know her way of thinking I would have assumed Aubrey's actions to be malicious too, but that is not the way her heart worked.

One night after Aubrey and Noi partied until the sun came up, Aubrey left to go home but went to where James lived instead. Noi once pointed out James' apartment when they rode pass in her limousine. Noi also informed Aubrey that James lived in that same brownstone as Mary, just he on the first floor and Mary in the penthouse suite. Aubrey looked on the intercom to find James's apartment code and pressed the button. When James answered she told him to meet at Mary's apartment in five minutes. Enough time for her to run upstairs to Mary's to set everything up she thought. She managed to get inside and run to the fifth floor where Mary lived and rang the doorbell. She placed a dozen roses in front of her door with a note supposedly from James and ran back downstairs. As she was making an attempt to flee James spotted her and chased her. The thought of some crazy stalker knowing where Mary lived and making an attempt to get to her infuriated James; for he loved her and would do anything to protect her. He vowed to follow this crazed fan to the end of the Earth, capture her and bring her in to the authorities.

Meanwhile, Mary came to the door and found the roses and read the note. As she read

her heart jumped. She had been wondering when James would say something. She knew there was something magic between them but wasn't sure. James always referred to Mary as his "little sis" and she feared he might actually see her as a relative. She raced down to the ground floor to where James's apartment was and rang the doorbell feverishly to no avail. She began to wonder if it was just a cruel joke. James was known for his practical jokes. Her heart sank, but before she shed a tear she decided to just wait until he came back to see what he had to say for himself.

Aubrey was running for her life because she did not think James saw her face but if he did this would be the end of her career before it even got started. She did not want to be labeled as some crazed psycho fanatic and she knew no matter how she explained it to James he wouldn't believe her because it just did not look right. She was running faster than she ever had but James was so fast, he was gaining on her. She panicked and grabbed a blue bicycle right from under a little kid, knocking him to the ground. As he cried and yelled, she cried a little too because Aubrey was sensitive like that. She never wanted to hurt anyone. Aubrey was pedaling so fast she feared the wheels might fall off and for a good twenty blocks she did not look back. She finally relaxed a little because she figured she must have lost him with all her maneuvering. As she calmed her pace she looked to the right and saw a yellow cab heading straight for her with James screaming out the window for her to stop. Good thing she was smart enough to have her shades and hoodie on to disguise her face because he would have recognized her. Aubrey's heart lept and she began pedaling fast again.

While in the car James angrily called Noi, accusing her of spilling the beans about his feelings for Mary. After all, she is the only one that he told over drunken cocktails two months ago. He had no proof it was her but that did not stop him from accusing her. Noi did what any guilty person would do.... She denied, denied, denied! She swore to James she never told anyone, while inside her mind hoping that the stalker was not who she suspected it was. She did not want to jump to conclusions but the only person she told was Aubrey. Noi needed to get to the bottom of this before she ended up having drama with an industry heavyweight.

All of a sudden the sky opened up and rain came crashing down like a tsunami. It was like someone was flying overhead and dropped a bucket of water on Aubrey. She got soaked. It was now raining so hard it was difficult for her to peddle the bike or even see in the distance. Still needing to flee she hopped off the bike leaving it on the ground, ran into the street, and pulled open a random cab door. There was already an older woman in the cab but it did not matter, Aubrey just needed to get out of the rain and out of James' sights.

"I don't care where you're headed, just drive there. Fast!" Aubrey commanded the taxi driver. Aubrey looked down at her hands and noticed she was holding a plastic bag that contained all the contents of her life, items such as books, records, and combs. She had no idea how.

Something about this day seemed weird to Aubrey but she was too pumped with adrenaline to think clearly about it. She rested her head on the back seat and closed her eyes. As she leaned back Noi's new song came on the car radio. Her husky voice wrapped around Aubrey and massaged her soul. Noi's vibrato fingered her nerves sensually. The way her vocals danced on the notes of the piano sent Aubrey's mind spinning down a rabbit hole of ecstasy and into a place of peace and colors. She never felt so good. Noi's voice made love to her senses. Noi was like an angel to her. All of a

sudden she could see clearly again. All she had to do was get home and pretend she had been there the whole time.

"In life, you should never rush. When you rush, you forget things, you lose things, you make mistakes." The taxi driver said in an ominous tone, the older lady in the cab nodded her head. By now Aubrey had gotten far away from James because the cab did not stay on the main road with all the traffic and there had not been a car behind them for blocks. The car stops for the older lady to get out. Ironically this is Aubrey's stop too, she is only a few blocks from her house. When she gets out the plastic bag is gone and only a leash in her hand. There is a Maltese puppy at the end that she had never seen before. As she walked up the street with the puppy an old homeless man grabbed her "hey beautiful" he said, Aubrey screamed in his face and ran up the street and entered through an arch in the nearest building.

As she walked in it appeared to be a senior citizen's home with TVs on the wall and ping-pong tables set about. But these old people did not look like your typical seniors. They all had on hospital gowns and walked like zombies. They were drooling and making weird sounds. Aubrey was scared. She was trying to evade them and bumping into them at the same time, which only scared her even more. She was frantic. While Aubrey surveyed her surroundings she noticed snails growing on plants that were in ceramic pots. At one table across the room, two men were sucking on the snails and it was making them high. They were drunk with pleasure. She realized the snails were some kind of drug. While she was watching in awe (how many people can say they seen elderly people get high before?) an old lady grabbed her from behind and Aubrey jumped six feet with fear. She quickly grabbed a pot with some snails planted inside it and ran out of that zombie old people center.

She finally made it to her apartment and was about to open the door when James appeared out of nowhere. "Gotcha!" He yelled.

"How did you find me? I left you so far behind." Aubrey said to him.

"GPS, I dropped it on you when you ran past me," James responded. "And your friend Noi will be here shortly because I texted her this address. I want her to know what type of person she's been dealing with."

"Look it's not what you think, I know you and Mary love each other. I just wanted to help ya'll along." Aubrey said to James sincerely.

"And Noi told you this didn't she?" James further inquired.

"No! Anyone who pays attention can tell there is love there. Now, are you going to ruin me when I only wanted to bring you two together?"

Just then Noi ran up the stairs interrupting that crucial moment. Thinking fast Aubrey spouted out "Hey Noi, this is my boyfriend James. James this is Noi." Noi and James looked at each other confused. Aubrey continued "What are you doing here Noi?" Noi quickly turned to James "What is going on? I thought she was the stalker?"

"The stalker?" Aubrey interrupted acting as if this was all news to her. "What stalker?"

"Why did you text me this address then?" Noi interrogated James. James looked at Aubrey and Aubrey looked at James with eyes pleading for him to go along with her ruse and not ruin her life.

"We haven't been kicking it too long Noi, I just wanted us all to hang out." James covered and Aubrey breathed a hefty sigh of relief.

"I have been growing this new drug that looks like snails and sticks to things and gets you high." Aubrey pulled a snail from off the plant she was holding and threw it past

Noi's face and unto the wall. Noi pulled it off and licked it. Aubrey invited them inside her apartment and they spent the rest of the day growing more snails.

The End.