

Precious *little* Secrets

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An Excerpt from the Novel

Chapter 1

I don't remember how I got to my car, yet I found myself driving the two-lane rickety road. Massive trees whipped past and the illuminating moon guided my way home. Bits of the evening flashed through my mind like speeding headlights blurring the landscape. I'd lost the last couple hours of my life.

Dried tears caked my cheeks. My heart sank somewhere deep in my gut. Although my eyes ached, I opened them wide, pushing myself to keep driving. The thought of my mother's face upon discovering I'd wrangled with an oak, forced me to stay alert.

A text popping up on my iPhone caught my attention. I grabbed it. Scott's name appeared on the screen. Disgustedly, I tossed the cell phone onto the passenger's seat.

Seconds later, my foot pressed firm on the break pedal. A screeching sound cut the silence. And then, nothing.

I raised my head. Blood smeared the steering wheel. A pounding erupted in my forehead. Lightheaded and nauseous, I struggled to balance. I drew in a huge breath and examined the situation. The car sat slanted in the other lane. *What the hell?* All the air escaped from my lungs, fogging the windshield. *Did I hit something?*

I wiped the glass with the back of my hand. Through the streaks, I saw a boy standing a few feet in front of the car. He held his arm out, his palm up, like he was

telling me to stop. His dark green eyes cut into me. A chill worked its way up my spine. I closed my eyes tight. When I opened them, the boy had vanished. *My imagination.*

But, what made me stop so suddenly? I got out of the car. I don't know why. It was so unlike me. The car looked fine. It was quiet, only the wind shuffling the leaves in the trees. I glanced at the moon, noticing that the sky had more stars than usual.

“Natalie?” a voice whispered against my neck.