

## Sam—A Scary Story

It started small as most things do. Just a small seed. Like a little-harmless yellow flower that was carelessly planted in the backyard. But what sometimes fails to be considered is that plants can overgrow. Spreading to everything it sees, and eventually killing everything it touches.

It all started with a text message. An unknown number, asking me how I was, “Hello Cora, how are you?” I looked at the message with a puzzled expression.

The person who messaged me was not somebody I knew. So, I clicked on their profile to get a closer look. When I opened their description, I saw pictures of a boy with bleach-blond hair and a big smile. He was about my age and lived around the same area as me. And his name was Sam.

After a long pause I decided that his pictures looked real enough. So, I texted him back. I wrote, “Hey, Are you, Sam?”

After the message was sent, I thought about all of the things I had been taught about online safety. Thinking things like “What did I just do?” and “This goes against every rule I believe in!”

But, I waved those thoughts away and decided I would be okay.

*Little did I know, how wrong I was.*

A few hours later, Sam finally responded to my text message. I jumped as my phone buzzed in my pocket. The message he sent back to me read, “Yes, this Sam. How are you doing today, Cora?”

I responded with “I’m feeling good. What about you?”

We texted one another back and forth for the remainder of the day. I found out his favorite color and foods, what his favorite color was, and even found out that he went to a school

in the same district as me! Our conversation was so engaging that we finally had to call it off at midnight because Sam had a soccer game in the morning.

I went to bed with a new-strange curiosity building up inside of me. It felt good to have someone give me their attention. I fell asleep with a smile on my face.

The next day, Sam texted me around Breakfast time. He said, “Good morning Cora!”

I looked at his text as I poured my bowl of cereal. My big sister Mya looked at me as I smiled at my buzzing phone. She raised one eyebrow towards me, and grabbed my phone. “Who’s Sam?” she said with a smirk on her face.

Then, she began to type with a mischievous look on her face. I blushed as I tried to snatch my phone from my sister’s hands. As soon as I saw the text message she sent to Sam, I cursed my lack of strength. She wrote, “Ur Cute” with a wink emoji.

As soon as I saw his text bubble appear, I felt my stomach drop. I glared at Mya and said “Why did you do that, jerk?”

She winked at me and said, “Lo Siento”, but I don’t think she was very sorry at all.

I yelled out in anger as I walked away from Mya.

Later in the afternoon, Sam texted me back. He said, “Do you actually think I’m cute? Because I think you are”

I blushed and looked around the living room. I saw my Mom listening to some Facebook videos on full volume. I didn’t want her to know about Sam, so I ran up to my room. My heart was beating so fast from a combination of running up the stairs and Sam calling me cute.

I walked over to my bed and sat down. After gently sitting myself down on my bed, I responded to Sam. My reply was, “Yes, I do.”

Even though I had only seen pictures of him, he looked cute enough. And personality wins over everything, right?

That night, I stayed up all night texting Sam. *Little did I know that that was the last time I would ever be able to do anything by myself.*

The following weeks went by in what felt like an instant. It was as if texting Sam had brought me into a never ending loop of days. Spinning around me like I was on a merry-go-round. Soon, all I felt like doing was texting Sam.

No more school, or eating or going out with my friends. Just Sam.

I started acting less and less as the Cora everybody had known. I was more irritable, I would lash out, yell, and break things if I didn't get my way.

*However, this was not the worst of things that I got roped into because of Sam.*

One night I was in my room angry because my Mom said I had to shower, when my sister came in. Mya came up to me with warm eyes and a tired expression. She walked up to my bed where I was laying down and started to stroke my matted-down hair. She said to me in a calm voice "I know that you like to text your new "Boyfriend" Sam, but this has gotten out of control Cora" She shook her head.

I didn't respond.

"My advice to you is to give Mom your phone and never text him again."

At the time I thought she was crazy, but I wish I had taken her advice in the end.

She looked at me with her now-watering eyes. Then she whispered with a small voice and said "Please?"

I looked at her, enraged. Something started to bubble up inside me. Like I was a bone about to break, like an overflowing sink. I was about to blow.

I grabbed Mya's wrist away from my hair and twisted it until she screamed. Then, I pushed her away from my bed. "I will never listen to you ever again! I'm leaving you!"

Then I kicked Mya and grabbed my phone. I sneered at her as I saw her lying on the floor, clearly hurt and deflated. I stepped over her and went into my bathroom, making sure the door was locked. I then grabbed my phone out of my pocket and texted Sam. I said “Want to meet outside of your school? If so, I can be there in an hour.”

A few minutes later, he answered with one word. The one word that changed my life. The singular seed that planted yellow flowers over my grave. “*Okay.*”

I read his message and excitement started to shower over me. I got myself ready, and packed my bags. I was prepared to never see my family ever again.

On my way out, Mya and my Mom tried to stop me, but I just shook them off and continued to walk.

“Mi vida!” my Mother Exclaimed. “Please don’t leave us!”

*I wish I had never exited my home. I wish I had never started walking the path to that unfamiliar school. I wish I had listened.*

When I made it to the spot where Sam was supposed to be, nobody was there. Then, I heard the gentle padding of footsteps, followed by one man in all black walking towards me. When he was about ten feet away from me stopped in his tracks and said “Cora?”

I felt shock and adrenaline wash through my body like a wave. That man was *not* Sam.

I started to back away slowly, trying not to alarm the man. Then, I dropped my bags and started to sprint. I ran as fast and as hard as I could. But, my body was too weak from refusing to eat. My bones, brittle. My stamina, low. Without any strength, was soon caught.

The man scooped me up, bound my hands and feet with zip-ties, and covered my mouth with heavy duty-black duct tape. “I love you, Cora.” He said to me with a grim-malicious expression on his face.

He then put me in the back of his small, red car. One tear left my eye as I realized my horrible mistake.

*That was the last time Cora was ever seen again.*