

NICKNAMES

Most people just call me Sophie
(which is the name
on my birth certificate),

or Sof,

or sometimes Sofa.

Zak and Danny think it's cute
to call me Couch,

as in:

"How're your cushions doing today, Couch?"

Or sometimes they call me Syphillis,
which I don't find one bit funny.

My parents usually call me

Sophie Dophie or Soso.

And Rachel and Grace call me Fifi,
or sometimes just Fee.

But Dylan calls me Sapphire.

He says it's because of my eyes.

I love the way his voice sounds
when he says it.

Sapphire.

I like whispering it to myself.

His name for me.

Sapphire.

It's like the secret password
to my heart.

SIXTH SENSE

Sometimes I just know things.

Like when Lou asked me to go on that walk
down by the reservoir last year
on the last day of eighth grade.

I knew he was going to say
he wanted to break up with me.

And I knew my heart
would shatter
when he did.

I just know things.
I can feel them coming.

Like a couple of weeks ago
when I went to the Labor Day party at Zak's.
Something perfect was going to happen.
I just knew it.

That was the night I met Dylan.

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HOW IT HAPPENED

After Zak's party,
Rachel's big sister
came to drive a bunch of us home,
with her friend
and her friend's younger brother.

I was the last one to get in the car
and it turned out
all the other laps were taken,
so I had to sit on
Rachel's sister's friend's brother's lap.

It was
Dylan's lap,
but even though he goes to my school
I'd never seen him before.

And he had such smoldering dark eyes
that I felt like I'd been zapped
smack into the middle
of some R-rated movie
and everyone else in the car
was just going to fade away
and this guy and I
were going to start making out,
right then and there,

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without ever having said
one word to each other.

But what really happened
was that he blushed and said,
"Hi. I'm Dylan."

And I blushed back and said,
"I'm Sophie."

And he said, "Nice name."
And I said, "Thanks."

After that we didn't say anything else
but our bodies seemed to be
carrying on a conversation of their own,
leaning together
into every curve of the road,
sharing skin secrets.

And just before we got to my house,
I thought I felt him
give my waist an almost squeeze.

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Then the car rolled to a stop
and I climbed out
with my whole body buzzing.

I said good night,
headed up the front walk,
and when I heard the car pulling away,
I looked back over my shoulder
and saw Dylan looking over his shoulder
at me.

When our eyes connected,
this miracle smile lit up his face
and I practically had
a religious experience.

Then I went upstairs to bed
and tried to fall asleep,
but I felt permanently wide awake.
And I kept on seeing that smile of his
and feeling that almost squeeze.

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