

A Mark With a Past

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It's 1920. A woman, confident in her flapper dress, is strutting through a smokey speakeasy. She walks up to the bar, leans close to a man who is admiring the entertainment on stage. She takes the cigarette from his hand. Looking into his eyes, she takes a puff, blows into his face, and sets the cigarette back into his fingers with a smirk. The man is mesmerized. She continues to walk through the speakeasy, turning every head as she passes. One bold man gets up from a table and pulls her close by the waist. With an inch between their lips he says, "The way I admire how the wrinkle of your smile falls perfectly into the dip of your cheek only shows a fragment of my love for you." She responds softly, "In the farthest reaches of your dreams," and pushes him back into his seat. He smiles, at least he tried. She continues through the crowd and meets eyes with a man, an unhappy one. She tries to pass by him nonchalantly, but he gets up, puts a hand on her arm and leads her into a back room. The frosted window on the door only shows their shadows. Muffled voices, waving arms. It looks like an argument. She turns to walk away, but he pulls something out of his jacket. With a silenced gunshot, the woman falls to the floor. The man holsters his gun and walks out of the room. He buttons his jacket covering the blood splatter. As the door swings open and closed, only the women's heels are shown in flashes, while blood is slowly pooling around them.

It's now 2020. A girl, quietly walking in her uniform, is shuffling through the halls of high school. She turns into a classroom. As she sits at her desk in the back of the room and asks a boy next her for a pencil. Without thinking, she puts it to her mouth out of habit but her mask stops her. When she's done writing she gives the pencil back to the boy. They barely make eye contact. She gets up to hand in her paper. As she walks back to her seat, everyone's head is

down, writing, fidgeting, sleeping. She settles back down and feels a buzz in her pocket. She discreetly pulls out her phone to see a notification. A boy DM'd her on instagram saying "ur cute." Not amused she responds, "u wish." She puts her phone away and thinks about the paper she handed in. The prompt was, "What historical time period are you emotionally drawn to." She sighs: the Roaring 20s--what is it about that decade? The confidence in the women? The awe of the men? The poetry in speech? She doesn't really know why she feels a connection to that time. Maybe she lived there in a past life. Maybe she died in the smoke of a speakeasy. Maybe that birthmark on her shoulder blade was the wound of a bullet.