

Wall flowers

By Lindsey Miga

She didn't bother blocking the first blow. Nor the second. Nor the third. Instead, she just let each hit land on her body and make its mark. She could feel the bruises forming on her legs, felt a cut forming along her side, and pain all over. Yet she didn't fight.

There was nowhere to go. Nothing she could do to stop it. The Other Woman blocked the only entrance to Ella's barren closet of a room, and crying out would merely be screaming underwater, desperate and futile. To some degree, Ella felt as if she deserved it. She had failed again, and the price of failure was always steep. The Other Woman snapped her wrist back and the belt once again struck her skin, this time sending Ella's mind spinning. Spots flew through her vision and for a moment she dared to hope that she might pass into the blissful safety of unconsciousness, yet the world was rarely so kind.

The Other Woman looked down at the bloodied younger one and frowned as if suddenly struck by an unpleasant thought. She wore her hair down in elegant ringlets that reminded Ella of a storybook princess, but she knew this to be far from the truth. The Other Woman did bear an eerie resemblance to Ella, but lacked softness and any sort of compassion. She may have been beautiful once, but now her eyes had turned an unnatural shade of darkness, and when she smiled, it reeked of madness.

Staring down at Ella, The Other Woman smiled her twisted grin. Ella remained lying helplessly on the floor, blue eyes closed tight, and covered in deep red stains only avoiding her face. The Other Woman delivered a final set of jabs before her high-heeled feet carried her out of Ella's room and into the hallway.

Ella stayed put. The Other Woman was likely hunting for her next victim. Ella's gaze found the small stack of books in the corner of her practically empty room. She thought of the brave heroes and the bold princesses. They would fight. They would go after The Other Woman. Stop her before she hurt someone else, but Ella was no hero and no princess.

Slowly, she pushed herself off the floor, and leaning against the bed, she looked into the mirror. The Other Woman greeted her there. Her eyes nearly black and her crimson lips dripping with insanity.