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## A Bloody Proposal

Angie Bissonnette

*Western Michigan University*, [angelina.e.bissonnette@wmich.edu](mailto:angelina.e.bissonnette@wmich.edu)

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# Angie Binn

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"Sara, will you marry me?" The question hung in the air waiting for the correct reply, the penthouse apartment surrounded with his expectations and my doubts. My life was built around answering Ethan's questions correctly. "Are you seeing anyone?" "Can I have your number?" "Are you a virgin?" "Do you like that?" "Do you love me?" Say yes, say no, say what he wants to hear.

With each answer I lost another piece of myself, my body an unwilling shrine of devotion to him. Every morning I enfolded myself in the scent of Chanel No. 5 mixed with the mango shampoo he picked out for me. My expensive pastel clothes, minimal makeup, and long blonde curls that I straightened every morning were all dictated by him. Every choice deliberately made so I could be perfect. I opened my mouth to answer, and his words poured out.

"Yes, I'll marry you," I replied.

As soon as I said it a knot began tightening in my stomach, my heart sped up and I could feel tears building. I bit my tongue to force my emotions in place and was greeted with an unsettling taste of iron. Blood began to pool from behind my teeth, pushing against my cheeks and rising to the roof of my mouth. Pursing my lips together, I tried to keep it contained and hoped that the droplets that escaped were mistaken for lipstick.

I felt the blood thickening. Racing to the bathroom, I opened my mouth, hoping to discard the mess that was bubbling up. The arrival of something smooth and sharp stood out amidst the liquid drowning me. Reaching inside I discovered my front tooth had been uprooted. As I stood staring at it, more teeth started to spill out. One after another, my hands frantically tried to push them back in place, but they slipped through my fingertips until handfuls of them fell to the floor. A crisp clinking sound as each one connected with the porcelain tiles. I tried to scream but the blood silenced the noise. A desperate gurgling sound was all that I could muster as tears ran down my face. My heart pounded faster and faster, the beat drumming underneath my skin, dislodging it from my chest and rising past my lungs. Slowly inching its way up my throat, each pulse vibrating through me, stealing my breath and pushing more blood forward. My fingers clawed at my neck as I gasped for air that would not come, until I felt a thick round weight land on my tongue. I quickly spit it onto the ground and watched in horror as my severed heart continued to beat.

How long had I been in the bathroom—seconds, hours, years—I don't know. The pounding of my heart, the clatter of fallen teeth, and my gasps for air