

Fall Forever: SIDE #1 – Leah and Lorenzo

LORENZO

I assume he's in there?

LEAH

I think he's sleeping in there again. The mail was stacked up.

LORENZO

Is he eating?

LEAH

Some of the casserole dishes are empty; others are untouched.

At least he puts his dishes in the dishwasher, even if he doesn't remember to turn it on.

I'm going to have to get someone to mow the lawn soon.

LORENZO

I'm worried.

LEAH

You think I'm not?

LORENZO

Professionally.

Yeah, I'm worried personally, too, of course I am. But, on a professional level, he's in trouble. We're in trouble. People want more from him than the same painting over and over again.

LEAH

He's working through his grief.

LORENZO

Lily's been gone for six months.

LEAH

Died. She died, Lorenzo.

LORENZO

Yeah, I know. I—

LEAH

Euphemisms don't make it easier. She didn't leave by choice. She was killed by a drunk driver. You can't expect us to have a date when

we don't still love her. Miss her. Mourn her.

LORENZO

We're not in grief competition.

(Leah glares at him)

Painting their last perfect day together before she got into the car and had her accident, over and over again, for six months, is not a healthy response.

LEAH

You mean it's not a lucrative response.

LORENZO

It's not variations on a theme. It's the exact same painting. Over and over and over again. I'm calling them the "fall foliage forays" because it's Lily dancing among the autumn leaves in the yard. I can't number them and sell them as limited editions, because there doesn't seem to be a limit on how often he'll paint it.

LEAH

He needs to get it out of his system.

LORENZO

He needs to earn a living.

LEAH

He needs time.

Fall Forever: SIDE #2 – Lilly and Leah

LEAH

I can't believe I didn't know this. I can't believe you didn't confide in me.
Lily comes around the side of the house and sits on the railing, swinging her legs.

LILY

Talking about it would only make you feel bad.

LEAH

Not talking about it made you feel bad. I never knew you wanted children.

LILY

You didn't want them. Alan didn't want them. Wanting them made me a cliché.

LEAH

It's not a cliché to be honest about what you want.

LILY

At the time, I wanted Alan more than anything else. The choice was between having Alan and having kids. I chose Alan. (*shrugs*)
They always told us marriage was about compromise. Look how much you've compromised.

LEAH

This isn't about me.

LILY

Why not?

(*Beat.*)

LEAH

I don't know. But it's not.

LILY

You miss me, right?

LEAH

Every minute of every day. I feel like part of me has been torn away and will never heal.

LILY

Part of you. You see, it is about you.

LEAH

If I'd known you wanted children so badly—

LILY

What? You would have offered to have some?

LEAH

No. I wouldn't have gone that far.

LILY

Good. Wanting to be a mother for me wouldn't have worked.
You have to want to be a mother for you. And you don't.

LEAH

I don't.

LILY

Is that why you stay with Darrin? Because he won't pressure you to change your mind about having kids?

LEAH

No!

LILY

Darrin and Alan are a lot alike. That's probably why they've never gotten along.

LEAH

Alike? They're completely different.

LILY

They both need to be the center of their partner's attention. *(Wistful)*
I wish I'd lived long enough to teach art at the summer camp.
Six-year-olds and paint!

LEAH

Messy.

LILY

Joyful.

(they laugh)

You told them I couldn't, didn't you? And, and. . .why?

LEAH

I found the letter confirming you as a teacher, and wrote to them.

They'd already seen your obit—

(catches a sob)

Your obituary in the paper.

(Beat.)

LILY

Well, that's that. It's not like I can teach from here.

Fall Forever: SIDE #3 – Darrin, Alan, and Lily

DARRIN

Leah! Leah!

*(Alan comes out of his studio, wiping his hands on a paint rag.
Darrin comes out of the house and glares at him.)*

DARRIN

Where is she?

ALAN

Leah? I don't know. She's usually out here on the porch.

LILY

Not today.

DARRIN

Then where is she?

ALAN

I don't know.

DARRIN

She's always here.

ALAN

I'm not hiding her.

DARRIN

It wouldn't surprise me if you were.

ALAN

What's that supposed to mean?

DARRIN

Never mind. I don't know. Where could she be?

ALAN

At work?

DARRIN

I called over at the library. She's not there.

ALAN

You tried her cell?

DARRIN

Yes, I tried her cell. Over and over and over again.

ALAN

Is there a reason you're so worried?

DARRIN

I need to know where she is!

ALAN

Maybe she's out with a friend. Taking a break.

DARRIN

She needs to take a break from all this.

ALAN

I know.

DARRIN

She needs to be done with this. With you.

ALAN

What are you talking about?

DARRIN

Do you have any idea how much she does for you? Every damn day?

ALAN

Yes. And I'm grateful.

DARRIN

No, you're not. You're taking advantage of her. Lily's not here to pick up after you and pay attention to you every waking moment—

LILY

Well, actually—

DARRIN

(without noticing)

So you're using Leah as a replacement.

ALAN

I'm what?

DARRIN

Leah is my wife, not yours, and that's not going to change.

Fall Forever: SIDE #4 – Leah

LEAH

It's been building for years. I didn't want to face it. And then—

SELENA

Lily died.

LEAH

I was so smug, you know? I married a successful guy and we had all this stuff. He earned a lot of money, so it was okay if my job didn't bring in that much. I could buy books and knit and work a job I love at the library and go to conferences and spend time with my sister. I liked to tell myself that my marriage was better than hers. I didn't give up my art, step back to let my husband shine. I didn't devote my life to running the daily details of existence so he could be some great artist. But slowly, slowly, I gave away pieces of myself. I diminished myself to make my husband comfortable. I want to be the person I was before I got married.

SELENA

But you've changed.

LEAH

I don't want to be in my twenties again. Surviving it once was enough. And I've learned a lot over the years. But I want my sense of adventure back. My sense that I have the skills to try new things, the capacity to learn. Not start something, and then have to retreat because my husband doesn't like that it takes the time away from him. I didn't even notice it was happening, inch by inch.

(beat)

I'm a boiled frog.

SELENA

As long as you're trying to be you, and not trying to fulfill things Lily didn't have a chance to do before she died.

LEAH

I want to be myself again, and grow into more of myself. As far as what Lily didn't get to do, I'm not going to start wearing sundresses and dance in meadows. That's very Lily and not me. But I want the world to see her sketches and her work.

Fall Forever: SIDE #5 – Basil and Leah

BASIL

--but you were the first woman I was ever in love with.

LEAH

Is that why you're here?

BASIL

Yes.

LEAH

To have one last fling with your first love?

BASIL

No! I'm not here to cheat on Emma or to hurt you with revenge sex. I was in love with you once. When you left, I was hurt and angry. But I still cared. I still care.

LEAH

Even though you haven't been in touch for fifteen years?

BASIL

I didn't know how. Every time I started to compose a letter, it felt wrong. But when I heard that your sister died, all I could think of was how much pain you must be in. You talked about Lily with such luminosity.

LEAH

She was the light of all our lives. She was smart and funny and loving. Kind. She forgave everything. Everyone fell in love with her as soon as they met her.

(beat)

That's why I never let the two of you meet.

BASIL

Because she was a good person?

LEAH

Because if you met her, you'd fall in love with her, like everyone did. You'd choose her and forget about me. Like everyone did. Because when I was beside her, all anyone could see was her perfection and my flaws.

BASIL

You trusted me so little?

LEAH

Any time someone met Lily, I just faded into the background. It wasn't malicious on her part, it's just who we are.

BASIL

Why can't you see what a vibrant, wonderful woman you are? I wouldn't have left you for Lily. Even if I'd been attracted to her, dumping you to be with your sister is inappropriate. It's not something I do. Besides, wasn't she already with Alan?

LEAH

Lily wanted children. You wanted children.

BASIL

Again, you create scenarios that have nothing to do with me. It's your fantasy version of a me I would thoroughly despise if I met him, and despise even more if I was him.

LEAH

Lily gave up her dream of having children when she married Alan.

BASIL

But what if she got pregnant?

LEAH

Alan got a vasectomy the month before their wedding. Lily gave up her dream of children to keep the man she loved. I would have to give up my dream of not having children to keep the man I loved.

BASIL

I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

LEAH

You know why I married Darrin?

BASIL

I hope there was love involved.

Fall Forever: SIDE #6 – Selena and Lily

(Selena sits in the chair Leah usually used.)

SELENA

Okay, Lily, come on out. It's time to get things settled.

(Beat.

Lily enters, as though she doesn't want to be there.)

LILY

I always loved Summer Solstice.

SELENA

That's why they chose today to honor you.

LILY

Will there be more summer solstices wherever's. . .next?

SELENA

I can't answer that.

(beat)

But I do believe that you can create the afterlife you want.

It's not a wave in the ocean that just sweeps you away.

LILY

I hope there are roses.

SELENA

You haven't been around as much as you used to.

LILY

Not much reason to be here. Leah's got everything organized.

As usual. Alan, I don't know how to help Alan. He still doesn't listen to me.

SELENA

Where are you when you're not here?

LILY

I don't know. I can't remember where I was when I get back.

That's one of the reasons I'm scared to leave for good. What

If there's . . .nothing? What if I just cease to exist?

SELENA

Do you believe that?

LILY

I don't know what I believe any more. I was never much of a church goer. But I always believed there was something. Now I'm afraid I'll find out I was wrong.

(looks at Selena).

I don't want to hear any platitudes about how I'm not really gone as long as someone remembers me.

SELENA

I wasn't going to offer any.

LILY

Oh.

SELENA

If what you want isn't where you're going, then create it. Isn't that what you did here? In the fabrics you chose, the way you decorated, the garden you created. You chose colors and scents and textures to create beauty and joy. Everyone who walks up to the house smiles when they see what you've created.

LILY

A legacy of domestic happiness. Gee, how original.

SELENA

It made you happy.

LILY

Sometimes.

Yes. It made me happy. Sometimes I was ashamed of how happy it made me.

SELENA

You used this garden as the basis for a lot of your sketches. You saw beyond the tangible, and your sketches teach others to see.

LILY

Teaching six-year-olds to paint somehow seems more tangible.

SELENA

But this is where you are now. You'll create wherever you go.

That's who you are.

LILY

You're right. But how do we shake Alan up?

SELENA

Let's go in and convince him to attend the solstice celebration.

LILY

Will you help me? With everything?

SELENA

(holding her hand out)

Yes.

Fall Forever: SIDE #7 – Alan and Lily

ALAN

Lily, I always made fun of people who claimed they fell in love at first sight. Then, I walked into the group student show at the end of your first semester. You were the only freshman who got a few pieces in. You were trying to hang that multi-media piece of the mermaid dancing in the waves on the tips of her tail, and it wouldn't hang straight.

LILY

I'd made her scales out of pieces of soda cans I'd cut up and painted. Since she wasn't in the center of the painting, one side was heavier than the other, and I couldn't get it to hang straight.

ALAN

You were the most beautiful, luminous creature I'd ever seen. I wasn't sure how to get you to notice me. I came over to help you with the painting and figure out how to attach weights to the back the frame to make it hang straight.

LILY

You were my hero, that night and forever forward, even during the rough times.

ALAN

I regret every word said in anger or through lack of understanding. Know that I loved you with everything I had, and I will always miss you. I still have a lot of work to do to learn to be without you. But I don't want you trapped here, in my misery. I want you to continue your soul's journey in joy.

LILY

I love you, Alan.

ALAN

I love you, Lily.