

Not Love

by bellus_extraneus

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November

Chapter 1 of 1

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It was not love. Helen had never been in love before, so therefore that was totally out of the question. It had been two months since the summer had drawn to a close, and now she was back at school a senior and a Prefect. Her parents had never been so proud of her, and it pleased her they were not disappointed that she had not been made the Head Prefect. Helen was dating Timothy Simmons simply because it was expected of her to be seen with someone of importance. She had never actually liked him as anything more than a friend.

It was difficult attending this school. Private school life was far different to being stuck in the public school system. Sometimes she would yearn to be any normal person and go to school with average students, yearn to live their lives instead of her own demanding one where everyone set such high expectations for her. Her friends were fake; the people that fawned over her were fake, and her boyfriend was fake. Everything about her life seemed to be so superficial. The only part she actually enjoyed was sitting in class and doing work only to come out on top.

But no matter how hard she tried to be normal, she would always top her subjects and outshine people academically just because she studied harder. In all honesty, the only reason why Helen was not the Head Prefect was because she had turned the job down in favor of being cast into the shadow of someone else who could do the job just as well as she would have if not better. Everything frustrated her to no end and there was still another seven and a half months left the torture.

Sighing heavily, Helen looked out the window to the Chapel beyond the thick, old glass windows of the classroom. It was only Wednesday, and she did not know if she would make it to the end of the week before she would have exhausted her supply of polite concern for her fellow students. Once she exhausted this, there was no knowing how she would act towards people. It was so hard being the centre of attention when one was born an introvert.

Glancing up at the board, she saw that it had accumulated quite a few more notes on it since the last time she had looked up. Setting her jaw, she diligently paid attention for the rest of class. It wouldn't do for her to be getting so far behind especially in chemistry as it was one of the more difficult subjects. Everyone expected her to become a doctor. She had won so many science awards and was guaranteed a position at Oxford there was still a fair few months left until she would graduate from school, and she already had universities offering for her.

"Helen?" whispered a voice from beside her.

She turned and saw that it was Sophia Schultz her "best friend". Sighing, she quickly finished taking down the notes before passing them to the shorter, tan-skinned

brunette. In comparison to Helen, who was tall, slim, had the fairest skin and darkest black hair, Sophia was a voluptuous girl and had wide brown eyes. Boys threw themselves at her feet as if they were sacrificing themselves to a goddess, and it made Helen violently ill just thinking about it. Her bright blue eyes were her most attractive feature. Her lips were a little too thin, and her nose was a little too long to call her beautiful. Sophia had full lips and a pert nose that made her gorgeous.

Helen had let the school Governor's make Sophia the Head Prefect.

She was an extrovert who loved attention and being held in a place of great importance. It was clear that she had always wanted the position. The only reason why Helen still remained friends with her was because the girl had never betrayed her. She was annoying, but at least she was honest. Sophia was the only one Helen did not think of as fake simply because she was honest about her vanity.

'Thanks for that,' Sophia said, handing back her notebook.

'Think nothing of it,' Helen replied.

And before too long, the bell sounded, signaling that their class was over, and it was time to move on to the last class of the day. Packing all of her books into a meticulous pile, she lifted them into her arms and left the class with the wave of other students that were also leaving. She knew without looking at her timetable that she had Physics. This was a class that she had come to have a love-hate relationship with. She loved the subject as it was, but her teacher was a wholly different matter.

Mr. Neil Johnson was a 30-year-old, tall, dark and moody man. He was well proportioned and had broad shoulders with the physique of a seasoned athlete with long brown hair that he tied back. He had been married once, but had been divorced for nearly three years by that point. Sometimes people from the school would see him with his four-year-old daughter on weekends, as that was the only time he had with her. Helen had heard that it was the only time he ever smiled. From the first day that she had ever seen him, he had intrigued her. He had been teaching at her school for only four years, and during his divorce, she had seen him at his worst.

Now as he walked around the school or stood before a class, he only appeared to be stern and bitter. When she looked at him sometimes, she felt a longing to know how he felt inside at that moment. Those were moments when she had enough time to simply contemplate her indescribable attraction to him. He was handsome to be sure, but it was not a good thing for a girl to desire another when she was already attached to another especially Timothy.

'Helen, are you alright today? You seem a little out of sorts,' Sophia asked as they entered their Physics classroom and took their customary seats in the back corner.

'I'm just a tad distracted is all,' she replied with a smile.

'I'll say you didn't even complain when I borrowed your Chemistry notes,' her friend said with an unladylike snort.

'I've just had a lot on my mind,' Helen said absently, pulling her Physics notebook from the vast pile of books she had carried.

Sophia, knowing better than to try and pry it from her, simply nodded and did the same, pulling out a pen with obnoxious pink feathers protruding from the end of it. 'Did Tim manage to see you at Lunch?' she asked, changing the subject.

'No I was in a student council meeting, and then I had to go and see the music department about some complaints that band members have been nagging me about the last two weeks,' Helen replied, looking to the front of the room.

It was then that Mr. Johnson chose to emerge from his private office which was located beyond the door situated behind his teaching desk. She watched him as he crossed straight to the board and began sharply writing notes onto the board. He was a man of few words and often would begin class that way. Sometimes, when they had to do practical tasks, he would actually tell them instructions as he wrote theory notes, meaning that they would have to write as well as trying to remember his instructions for their practical task. Many of her classmates had complained about his methods, and Helen had simply shrugged.

'Wow, he certainly does look unhappy today,' Sophia commented idly.

'Hmmm... I'm sure he has his reasons,' Helen said simply. She had become very good at talking about him as though he meant nothing to her.

'Miss Morgan read out your answers for the assigned homework,' he said in a low voice that made her arms prickle from gooseflesh.

Helen nodded and swallowed quickly before reciting carefully all of her answers to him as he continued to scribble furiously. When she stopped he uttered one word 'Correct' and then turned back to face the rest of the class. He always picked on her for everything, homework or just general questions. He then proceeded to have the rest of them read out their answers, taking school house points away for incorrect answers. It was his method after all. Afterwards, they all copied down his notes and then waited as he handed out their semester assignment task sheet.

'You will all be submitting drafts for this in exactly three weeks time at the beginning of class,' he commanded quietly, and they all just sat and stared at him. 'Well, what are you waiting for? Get out your student diaries and write down what I just told you so that you do not forget. I will not excuse you for not handing the draft in now as I have informed you all in advance.'

'Excuse me, Sir?' James Hastings asked carefully.

'Yes, Mr. Hastings?' he replied wryly.

'What exactly do you mean by "the only excuse to not hand this task in on time is your gruesome demise or something similar to which"?' he asked numbly.

The rest of the boys snickered at this. Honestly, teenage boys could be unbearably immature at times. Mr. Johnson was obviously displeased by this and strode across the room to James in three steps, leaning down to be face-to-face with the now scared-looking boy. Gulping audibly, James loosened his collar a little as their teacher stood his full height glaring down at him.

'Mr. Hastings, you truly are a fool,' he commented which then made the boys burst forth with their barely-contained laughter.

Smiling at this, Helen simply took down her notes, ignoring the ruckus on the other side of the room as best she could. Sophia watched them all in amusement and then nudged Helen, pointing over to their teacher. She followed her finger to the place where she pointed and saw that he was sitting in his chair, leaning back casually with a smirk on his lips and his fingers forming a triangle. He was very handsome when he showed amusement like that.

When class ended, Helen packed up her things quietly and followed Sophia out the door the last one out of the room. Before she passed through the door, she glanced back one final time to see him stand from his desk and lean his head against the blackboard with his eyes closed tightly. She thought about it as she went to her locker and continued to contemplate it as she packed her bag. Even when she climbed into her sleek black BMW to drive herself home, she wondered at this behavior. She knew she was obsessing about it, but it was curiosity and concern.

He looked as though he was on the verge of losing himself on the verge of a serious breakdown. It didn't surprise her. It had been very hard for him especially as he could only see his only child on weekends. Helen might have only been 18, but she still knew that life was not easy and that if she were him, she might have already broken down. But he was made of tougher material than she was.

Sighing, she settled back for the thirty minute drive ahead of her. It was always hectic like this on the road in the afternoons. She hated this part of the day when she would be driving away. It was odd that Timothy had not sought her out after school as he used to do. The last few weeks he had not seen her as often and always had after-school training for sports. Timothy was a sports star at her school and already had been offered positions and scholarships at the best of Sports' Colleges in Europe and America. But it was odd that he did not even seek her out to say goodbye.

Shaking her head, she refocused on the road and put her foot down on the accelerator, driving straight ahead towards home. It didn't matter for the time being...