

The Intervention
Gwen Tanner

The music blasting through Amanda's earbuds was nothing like what anyone looking at her would assume she'd listen to. Lyrics about misery, death, hatred and violence played constantly in her head. Nothing like how she presented - which was all rainbows and joy. She looked like she should be listening to Taylor Swift and Olivia Rodrigo. Not NIN, MCR and a new band she just found, The Rebels.

Sure, one could assume she just found this music on Spotify shuffle, and if anyone brought it up that would be what she'd said, but in actuality the truth was far less mundane...

"Amanda?"

A shrill voice interrupted the blonde girl from her thoughts. She ignored it, it was too early in the morning to deal with the girl the voice came from.

There was a tap on her shoulder.

"Amanda?"

Her name was repeated, with a sigh she pulled out her earbuds and turned around to see the annoying brunette who'd been tapping her. Gabby, her "friend."

"Hey! Sorry, my music was too loud, what's up?" Amanda's voice was chipper, too bright and cheery to be natural. Not that Gabby noticed.

"I've been trying to get your attention for like five minutes, what's gotten into you?" There was a scowl on Gabby's face, she was clearly annoyed by her blonde counterpart.

"Again, my music was a little too loud." Amanda kept up her positive mask, there would be more problems if she didn't.

"All you've been doing lately is listening to music, you're so weird." Amanda scrunched her nose, Gabby continued. "Anyways, Jace can't drive you home today. He asked me to do it. You know where my car is, yeah?"

"I guess? But why wouldn't he message me about it? He's *my* boyfriend, so why'd he tell you?"

Gabby paused, for a split second she looked like she was caught in a lie, before she laughed a little bit.

"He must have blanked, you know with his possible concussion and everything. You can't expect him to remember to do *everything* Amanda."

Amanda had already known that her friend was lying, but this just confirmed it. Jace's possible concussion was weeks ago, and it was only that - possible. The doctor had cleared him almost immediately.

"Sure, okay, let me just message him to double check."

"Fine, don't trust me, see if I care." Gabby huffed and sat back in her chair, clearly the conversation was over. Perfect for Amanda, who put her earbuds back in and shot off a quick message to her boyfriend.

Did you ask Gabby to drive me home today?

It wasn't long before she got a response confirming this — and an apology. She rolled her eyes and set down her phone, it's like the two of them weren't even hiding it anymore. Looks like it was going to be a long day.

And it was. It was long and it continued to be long until eventually she was in the passenger seat car of Gabby's red convertible while "Summertime Sadness" blasted through the speakers and wind rushed through her hair. She twirled the promise ring that Jace had given her three months ago around her finger. Some promise that was. She contemplated throwing it out of the car.

Her anger sat in her stomach like a weight the entire car ride home. Gabby's constant talking didn't help. Every time they hit a red light, Amanda almost got out and walked to her house. It was a relief when they pulled up to her driveway.

"Why are there so many cars?" she asked, glancing around the driveway and road. There were her parents' cars, obviously, but there was also Jace's, and a selection of other cars that she recognized as her friends'. Something was wrong.

"I don't know, we should go inside and find out." Gabby climbed out of the car and locked it, leaving Amanda to hop over the door. Thank God her friend hadn't put the top up.

The lights were on when they got inside, Amanda's family, friends and boyfriend were all gathered around the only empty chair in the living room.

"Amanda, sit, please," her mother said. Amanda sat. She wasn't about to say no to her mother — especially when she had such a concerned look on her face.

"What is this," she asked, motioning around the room, "all about?"

"It's an intervention, Amanda." Jace moved from his position against the wall to perch on the armrest on the chair she was on. She subconsciously leaned away from him.

"An intervention? Why do I need an intervention?" she laughs, mostly out of discomfort. "I'm not doing drugs or anything."

"To put it simply, bug, we think you're... well..." Her mother trailed off.

“A delinquent,” her father picked up where she left off. “You’ve been sneaking out at night, you’ve been ignoring your boyfriend and your friends to ‘listen to music.’ We think that you’re a part of one of those Satan summoning gangs.”

Now her laugh was genuine. This was absurd. Everyone just stared at her.

They *genuinely* thought this.

“No, no way, what is wrong with all of you? You think I’m a Satan worshipper? This is bullshit! I haven’t changed! I haven’t done anything to warrant these accusations!”

“Young lady, you *cannot* speak to your father like that. Once we’re done he-” Jace held up his hand at Amanda’s father. He went silent, although it was apparent he was still fuming.

Predictable. Amanda knew they loved Jace more than they loved her. He was the son they wanted but never had. It was the only reason she hadn’t dumped him yet.

“Bug, you’ve been leaving the house late at night in freakish clothes and taking the car with you. We’re just worried.” Amanda’s mom looked like she was about to burst into tears. The blonde mentally kicked herself for not being more careful.

“And you’ve been more distant lately,” Jace butted in, “ignoring me completely sometimes. You never have time to hang out, you’re always ‘doing things’ — and when you do finally hang out with me you’re always on your phone.”

It was Amanda’s turn to blow up. Christ, was this man so dense that he thought she was doing this because she was Satan’s wife or something?

“Fuck you Jace, you know exactly why I’ve been ignoring you. You *love* that I’ve been ignoring you. It means you can spend more time with your precious Gabby.”

“Woah, Amanda, what are you talking about? We’re all just concerned. You’ve been meaner lately, and using this language is like, so not you.” Gabby looked a little flustered, was that due to the accusation being true or false?

“You know exactly what I’m talking about, you whore. He’s *my* boyfriend, yet you’re the one who’s sleeping with him!”

The room erupts in chatters, apparently Amanda was the only one who realised this — regardless of how obvious the two of them made it. Considering both of them had faces of guilt and shock.

“That’s what I fucking thought,” Amanda growled as she got up from her chair — nearly shoving Jace off — and left the house.

As she walked down the street, she heard yelling and people jumping into their cars to either leave or chase her down. She didn't care, she put in her earbuds and kept walking. She had a show to get to.

She'd never walked there before. She'd take the bus or take one of her parent's cars. So the near three-hour walk really took a dent out of her day. However, the timing was almost perfect. Thank God such a big part of cheerleading was stamina.

The warehouse loomed over her, as it did most nights. She could hear them starting sound check inside — damnit, she was still too early.

Amanda took a second to gather herself. She didn't have the time before to put on her disguise before leaving, so she was still in the miniskirt and crop top from the day. She'd taken off her heels at some point during the walk. Her makeup was running down her face and her hair was thrown up in a messy ponytail - most strands of her hair had made it out of the elastic.

Why did she have to come here of all places? If anyone saw her here, like this, that she knew from school, her reputation would be ruined. Fuck it, she was already this far.

She opened the door, stepped inside, and it was silent. The band was staring at her, the techs were staring at her.

A couple seconds went by before anyone spoke,

“No. Fucking. Way.”

End.