



“What if it’s a mistake? What if someday I wake up every morning with the thought of it haunting me? I haven’t got a regret so far, and I plan to keep it that way.”

“Oh, my boy. I’m getting older and there’s something I wish someone’d told me. I’m going to spare you the trouble and be that someone for you. You see, middle age is the time when you look back on your mistakes,” Annise slipped a cigarette into her mouth, “and wish you could repeat them.” She took a match, and with a breath of sparks gave life to a flame. She lit her cigarette, breathing into her lungs, heart, and head. “You’ve always wanted to be in love anyway, haven’t you?” Since Franklin met Annise as a teenager, he had always gone to her for advice. He trusted her now just as he always had, and decided to chance a mistake.

Two months before, Lisa Sortey sat on a park bench, reading the paper. During his morning stroll, Franklin happened by her in an incident he would call fate. He did as many men would do, and introduced himself.

“Hello.” She did not look up from the text before her. “Let me introduce myself. Franklin Christopher.”

“Oh, you’re talking to me.” She glanced at him. “I don’t trust people with two first names.”

“If you’d get to know me better, I think you’d find that I’m entirely trustworthy.” He offered a disingenuous laugh to cover for her comment.

“If you’d like to go on a date, you can pick me up here Thursday.”

Franklin’s first experience with regret took the same spot in history as his last. These two events coincided with the major happening of Franklin’s death. At this moment, he lay there, watching his blood pool beneath him. With his body fading into uselessness, he was left to take sanctuary in his mind.

