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Calculations

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CALCULATIONS

Elizabeth Pode

The fringes of the velvet petals brush up against the timeless bone-white bark. Her slender hand

trembles, naked as it is without the gleaming ring she had dreamt of so often. There were two roses. One stark and wilting with its fleeting beauty, covering up the gaping scar. It was left at the graveside.

And then there was this one. Conveying all the feelings that she couldn't put into words, laid at

the site where they met, played, and laughed all those years ago. This is where he really

is. Somewhere around these trees and she can feel it. The wind blows, her hair dances,
and she knows.

Visions flash in whirls of color, fading to black and white. Two roses, two places. The graveyard

and the woods. Two people, her and him. Two ages, two views, two beating hearts, two

loves, two sets of blazing lungs to scream names, two worlds, two deaths. But only one
right now.

Just one.

One hand, one heart, one mind, one soul, one rose, one tear... The days flash before her mind,

and she remembers. One embrace, one smile, one laugh, one kiss, one lie, one hate, one

heartbreak, one pill, one fall, one truth, one realization, one illness that took him away...

One insanity that poisons her mind.

She goes through the figures and the numbers scramble.

Eighteen years of life for him. Eighteen years, three months, and twenty-two days. For her, only

fifteen years, eleven months, and thirteen days. She stopped counting after that. The sixteenth day of the ninth month of 2006 and she stopped counting, because it really didn't matter anymore. 4:17 in the morning. Two hands clasped, two bodies present, but only one pulse. Three minute delay, one kiss on the forehead, two eyes closed.

There had been eight years without him. There had been eight years with him. He loved her

for three years, she loved him for one. They only knew it for nine months. Two years of lying, keeping secrets. Four months of the truth. One funeral, six pole bearers in eleventh and twelfth grade. Only three days since, and she still didn't know what she was going to do. Too many sleepless night to count...

One day she knew that she would come back alive. But today...

Today was a day for calculations.