

I Didn't Kill Your Brother

"Listen to me Jules, I didn't kill your brother," shouted Clara, as she wiped tears from her eyes.

Clara Wells had only been left alone with her ex best friend, Julianna Hernández, for a few seconds before she was blamed.

"You were there! You found his body," shouted Jules, as she shoved the miscellaneous items off the table

"Jules, please, think about this, why would I kill Mateo? I have no motive! He invited me there," replied Clara, who was handling the situation as well as she could.

"I know he invited you! That's what the police said! And for some reason, they won't say where! Why is that Clara!" Clara tried everything within her power to not get physically angry like Jules was.

"Please, Jules, I'll help you fix the table and we can talk like civilized people."

Jules scoffed and left the room while Clara was left to her lonesome in the kitchen. This wasn't particularly formidable, which could likely be attributed to the fact that Clara was twice the size of Jules.

"Well, I'll just clean this up for you!"

Clara was slow in picking up the items from the table, mostly because she was still hoping Jules would come back and help her. That way they could talk about everything and make up. This, unfortunately, never happened, and instead, Clara just ended up taking a really long time to do a really simple thing.

"Hey!"

It wasn't long, until Jules returned to the room with her brother's phone in her hands.

"What is that," asked Clara, as she got up to move a chair so Jules could sit down in it. Jules recognized this, and instead sat in Clara's one.

"It's my Mateo's phone, obviously, and it's got all the proof I need," replied Jules, as she started typing on the phone, guessing random numbers as his password.

"Shouldn't that be with the police," asked Jules.

"No."

"But, isn't it evidence?"

"Yes, it is, which is why I'm keeping it. Now, if I could just remember his password," Jules muttered on her breath. She still hadn't even looked at Clara.

"Can I," asked Clara, reaching out for the phone, to which Jules responded by scooching the chair farther away and glaring at Clara again.

"No, you cannot."

"Jules! Please! Work with me here! I found the bloody body of the guy I'm going out with! Try 3-5-2-1," suggested Clara, clearly doing everything in her power to not start

crying. There was a silence while Jules tried the code, and then a sigh of relief when it worked.

“How did you know?”

“It’s the day we first started talking. March 5, 2021,” replied Clara, “And he told me.”

Jules started scrolling through her brother’s messages with Clara, looking for something she could present to the police as evidence. Clara knew there was no evidence against her, because she hadn’t done anything.

“You said he invited you!”

Clara raised her eyebrows and looked at Jules, who was finally allowing her eyes to meet Clara’s. Jules looked completely confident now, whereas Clara only looked confused.

“He did,” she replied, staring at the phone in Jules’s hands.

“And why is it so awfully confusing, and coded?”

“What do you mean?”

“You said, and I quote, wanna meet at the place after?”

Clara sighed and took a drink of water simultaneously tapping her hands on the glass of water during the awkward silence. She was, again, trying to refocus her thoughts so she wouldn’t burst into a fit of tears.

“Look at the texts above, please,” Clara replied quickly, doing everything she could to suppress her emotions. Jules responded by doing so, reluctantly.

“Hey, do you wanna go somewhere later,” repeated Jules, as she read from Mateo’s phone.

“Told you.”

“Okay, you’re right, I’m sorry,” said Jules, who was clearly not even close to being genuinely sorry.

“It’s okay, I forgive you.”

“What!”

“I mean you were only angry at me because you lost your brother, and I know how hard that can be,” replied Clara, trying to smile so it would lighten up the mood and make her stop wanting to cry.

“Okay! I take back my apology,” shouted Jules.

“What! Why?”

“You have no idea what it’s like to lose your best friend, and your brother,” replied Jules, squeezing her hands into fists and slamming them into the table.

“I lost my brother too, and my aunt and uncle!”

“You were two! I’m sixteen!”

Clara thought about clapping back, but decided against it. She knew encouraging anger was a bad idea. Jules was surprised by this for she expected Clara to say something, but instead there was just another pause.

It wasn't a good surprise, Jules was counting on Clara responding so she could be distracted from everything else. The distraction from her feelings, other than anger, was important to Jules, because being vulnerable in front of people wasn't easy for her.

It wasn't easy for Clara either.

"Say something," shouted Jules.

Silence.

"Say something god dammit!"

Silence.

"Say something!"

"Say something! NOW!"

"PLEASE!"

Jules curled into a ball in her chair and buried her face in her knees, practically begging for another noise.

"Please," she said, her voice breaking as she broke into a sob. Clara tried thinking of something to say, to comfort Jules, but since the last thing she tried didn't work, she didn't know what to do.

"I'm sorry," said Clara, who was starting to shed tears as well, but was better at holding it in.

"Is that a confession?"

"No, I'm sorry for saying that. It was irresponsible of me to imply I knew how you felt, and it was wrong of me to act like I did. You're grieving, and I shouldn't be saying things that aren't true, and filling you with a false sense of security. I'm sorry."

Silence.

"Are you hungry? I can make something," said Clara, as she got up and walked over to the kitchen counter and took an apple from the fruit bowl. Cooking had always been a thing Clara did to escape intense situations, "I know a recipe my tía taught me that's really good. Well, really it's just apples and cinnamon, but I think it tastes really good."

"No."

"Okay, can I ask why?"

"I don't trust you, Clara," replied Jules, glaring at Clara.

"Where's the knife? I can't cut up this apple with my hands," replied Clara, ignoring Jules last comment.

"There aren't any, my parents don't cook anymore so they have no reason to have cooking utensils like that. Did Mateo never tell you we only eat take out now," replied Jules, sitting up and wiping some tears from her eyes.

"I guess I won't be making cinnamon apples then," replied Clara, sitting down at the table again and just eating the apple as it was.

"Cinnamon apples, sure," replied Jules, scoffing again.

“Jules, what are you insinuating? I don’t have alternative intentions, you know that, right,” said Clara, or at least she hoped she did. Talking without crying was so incredibly hard for her that her heart skipped beats in the middle of her sentences.

“No, I don’t. Because as of now, you are still the number one...”

“I understand that you think I murdered your brother, and I understand you think there is no one else who could have. But I liked him, Jules, I mean I really, really liked him. We were planning on going somewhere later to stargaze. Tell me what my motive could have been.”

“Maybe you found out that he was cheating on you, or was gonna dump you,” implied Jules.

“He didn’t.”

“Why does it matter, he’s dead! He’s fucking dead and you fucking killed him!”

“No I didn’t, Jules!”

“And he didn’t cheat on you, and he wasn’t going to dump you! Not to my knowledge!”

“Thank you...”

“You don’t know if I’m lying Clara! You don’t know if I’m GOD DAMN FUCKING LYING!”

“You can’t be, he wouldn’t do that!”

“How do you know that!”

“Because I know him! Or, I knew him. He was an amazing guy, he wouldn’t hurt anyone, he wouldn’t do that to me. He wouldn’t. Mateo couldn’t hurt anyone! He apologized to the bug he killed for us on our field trip to Arizona. How could he do something horrible, like cheat on someone,” replied Clara.

“You dated him for three months! I’ve been his best friend for sixteen years!”

“I’m not a murderer, Jules.”

“You are, Clara, and I’m gonna prove it, and I’m gonna turn you into the police, and I’m gonna speak at your trial, and I’m gonna watch you fall apart in jail, and I’m gonna visit every so often to rub it in your face that you were caught.”

“Look, I’d love to help you find the actual murderer, but we can’t. Our parents and the police told us to stay here. Even if we are sixteen, we have to obey the law, that’s not something we can bargain with,” said Clara, throwing what remained of her apple into the trash can.

Jules started tapping her finger on the table, over and over. She wasn’t focusing on the tapping, she was focusing on Clara, and Clara alone. Jules was afraid, completely, that if she turned around Clara would do something to harm or kill her. That’s because Jules knew too much. That’s all Jules could think about.

She knew too much.

She knew too much.

She knew too much.

She knew too much!
She knew too much!
SHE KNEW TOO MUCH!!!
Right?

“I know you did it, Clara,” said Jules, realizing then she had been rocking back and forth in her chair, and stopping quickly.

“Are you okay, Jules? You don’t seem well,” replied Clara.

“That doesn’t answer my question,” shouted Jules, who was sweating, and was somehow zoned out and extremely focused at the same time.

“You didn’t ask a question,” said Clara, slowly. It was easier for her to talk now, maybe because she was more worried about Julianna’s present than Mateo’s past.

“Oh.”

“Jules! Are you sure you’re okay?”

“My brother just died, Clara, no I am not okay!”

“Jules, I loved him, I understand! I...”

“And don’t call me Jules! Call me Julianna, you don’t get to call me Jules,” shouted Julianna. Clara sighed and placed her hands in her pockets, fidgeting with something to keep her mind distracted.

“What is that? A gun?”

“Julianna please! I know you hate me! And I know you think I’m a murderer! But could you please give me the benefit of the doubt!” Jules continued to side eye her. Which caused Clara to reach into her right pocket and pull out a keychain, which had her car keys and house keys on it, amongst other things.

“You can apologize too, you know.”

“Apologize for what, Clara! Mateo is dead!”

“And I get that! He was my friend too!”

“But he was my brother! He was my best friend! He was the one and only person who was there for me my entire life! He was the best person in my life! Even when I hated him I wanted to hug him and make up, and play video games with him, and go to the park with him, and make chilaquiles with him!”

“I believe you! He was the only one that would talk to me, and understood me about everything! When I felt lost, when I felt like I might end it, he was there for me too!”

“Then why did you kill him!”

The two girls stopped arguing when Clara’s phone rang, and she put it on speaker phone so both of them could hear.

“Hi, sweetie, is Jules there?”

“Yeah mom, she’s next to me,” replied Clara.

“Good good, can you two drive over? Something came up and the police needs you two here at the crime scene right away. Can you do that for me honey?”

“Okay, we’ll be right over.”

“It’s going to be okay sweetie, you can talk to me later if you want, okay?”

“Yeah mom, we gotta go now though.”

“Okay.”

“We’ll see you in front of the mall in thirty minutes,” said Jules. Clara immediately hung up the phone and turned it off, staring at Jules directly, her eyes wide and chills slowly caressing down her spine.

“Julianna, how did you know where Mateo was killed? How did you know where he died?”

Jules stood up and took a deep breath, glaring at Clara, who was still sitting in her chair. She wiped any everlasting tears from her eyes, and turned around so she was facing the kitchen again.

“I was there too, Clara,” she said, as she opened a cupboard above the counters and pulled the knife block down from the shelf.

“You did it? You killed your brother!”

“I know who killed him, Clara. I witnessed the whole thing! I was right there!”

“You murdered your brother!”

“No, you did,” replied Jules, as she pulled a knife from the block and walked slowly over to Clara.

“What do you mean, Jules, no I didn’t.”

“I was there, when you killed my brother, and told him that you would kill everyone else he ever loved,” replied Jules, who looked more terrifying than the sea.

But Clara?

She looked mortified, even confused. Jules was lying, she had to be.

“Admit it.”

“Fine,” said Clara, as she stood up, grabbed the pistol out of her left pocket and shot Jules in the arm which was holding the knife.

Immediately, Jules dropped her weapon and collapsed onto the ground, trying to cover the gunshot wound with her hands.

“I killed Mateo! I stabbed him with a knife, then I shot him in the head, then I left his body at the mall so I could call the police and have my alibi.”

“Where was the...”

“You forgot to check my left pocket genius!”

“How?”

“I’ll be crossing you off my list,” replied Clara, ignoring Jules’s comment while she paced up and down the room.

“Clara, why?”

“I killed your brother, Julianna, because it was fun. That was my motive, that **is** my motive,” she said, before she shot Jules in the head once more and watched her body go limp.