

A.M.D.G. **'Breakdown' - First Draft**

The wind howls with booming tones, shutters clatter against hollow buildings, a dusty window creaks out in pain. Rain clouds try in vain to wash away the veil of mourning draped over the village square. **Untended** flowerbeds lie strewn with weeds; rotten benches kneel on rickety joints. The High Street is lined with old, rusting cars and boarded windows. Shops lie empty. Not a soul stirs. In the distance, a rose window shines out like a warning beacon; the bloody pigment of the stained glass brings back memories of that gory carnage. As the relentless rain pours down, a cold, harsh curse seems to have been cast. This community has broken down, torn apart by the plot of a twisted mind.

As she lies in the hospital room. Gemma's eyes flicker with uncertainty. The shallow breath still rasps from her mouth, yet she can sense her spirit gently slipping away. Gasp. The heart stalls, the beating strains. For that split second, as the blood stops driving through her punctured veins, the oxygen fails to flow. The life energy within her seeps out through deep blue wounds, stitched up but beyond recovery. As the heart rhythm tries desperately to regain its momentum, her spirit - her young spirit - trapped in this self-destructing body, releases waves of desperation and fear. The heart monitor starts to gather speed. The organs slowly begin their shutdown process. Thoughts of life and death race **crazily** round her failing brain.

"Not me, not now, I'm not ready! It wasn't my fault."

Frantically, she gasps for breath; in vain. The fragile life-force has broken down.

Only a few brief hours ago she had changed the life of the village forever.

Mayhem had reigned as countless numbers of bodies had lain trapped in the twisted tomb. Still they had swerved round that corner with blistering speed, hurling themselves at that tomb of crumpled steel. Each crash had puffed a cloud of flaked paintwork up into the sky. Petrol gas had leaked out in flaming jets. Hours and hours of work, days of painting and polishing all destroyed in a flash.

Crunch.

Screams of pain and horror had echoed from the carnage and the smell of smoldering flesh filled the air. Green was awash with yellow and orange, and all engulfed in a grey backdrop. No one could escape. Toxic fumes and choking heat had streamed from the exhausts. Fifty cars all smashed, each bombarded by the one behind, assailant of the one in front; their drivers and passengers all frying to death along this country road. Ambulances and fire engines had been called but no one was left to help. This disaster had already taken all that Greenville could offer. Total breakdown.

"Keep going. God damn it, stupid car! Keep going!"

"Calm down. Gemma."

"Why? It's the second time in a week that this car has broken down. It's a worthless piece of junk and it's getting on my nerves."

"It doesn't matter. Just leave it here. We can walk back to the village and get someone out to see it."

"We can't just leave the car out in the middle of the road. It's bound to get hit."

"Don't be silly. Gemma. It's on a bend. *Everyone* goes slowly round a bend. They're bound to see it."

"But what about the village rally. It's going to set off in half an hour. The cars will be racing along here."

"It's only five miles to the village. We'll get back in plenty of time, and you can warn them then."

"Really?"

"Yes. Do the maths, Gemma. It's simple."

"Well, **if you** say so..."

Walking back along the country road. Gemma had seen the procession of cars whizzing by her. Friends and relatives had waved at her through speeding windows. She had always loved the Greenville rally; loved the shiny, bright cars, the roar of the engines, the smell of the burning fuel, loved how everyone in the village took part and everyone enjoyed it.

Then she had heard it.

The noise had torn through her, slicing all those pleasant thoughts. Again and again, one by one, she heard those deathly crashes, those fatal explosions. It was all her fault. Gemma had killed them. She had decimated her lovely little village, murdered all those people she knew and loved. It was too much for her. She had run and run, tears dripping, till she reached home. Then standing by her bedroom window, knife in hand, watching her work destroy all she knew and loved. Gemma had slashed away at that horrid, horrid thing staring back in the glass - her other self. Only death could free her from this torment. She could no longer live two lives, no longer fight her mental breakdown.