Girlfriends

by Elizabeth Kate Switaj

—That was harsh, said Jen as the bathroom door slammed behind Melanie.

—Mel's my best friend, not yours. She needed to know that shade of blue doesn't go with olive skin.

—Viv, you said she looked like a whore.

—That's how our friendship works. Remember eighth grade when she warned me about my muffin top?

—You passed out in PE from not eating.

—Whatever. We're gonna be late for chemistry. Mel can find her own way there.

Melanie never made it to class. After twenty minutes, Mr. Schmidt asked if they'd seen her.

Jen denied it. Viv said she was probably with her boyfriend. Jen snickered. Melanie had only ever gone on one date, at Viv's urging, to dispel rumors of lesbianism.

After another twenty minutes, they heard ambulance sirens.

—Some goth must've cut her wrists too deep, Jen stage-whispered. Half the class laughed.

Ten minutes later came an announcement: the period would end early for an emergency staff meeting. Viv took advantage of the break to smoke a cigarette behind the school. When Viv sat down in

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study hall, Jen leaned over and said she was right about the wrists. —The senior hall bathroom's a fucking crime scene.

Ms. Lee came in five minutes late with red eyes. Jen had been wrong. It wasn't a goth.

Viv, sobbing, ran out of the room.

—So they really were dykes, whispered Jen, quietly so that only Viv's boyfriend could hear.