**so emotional**

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org) at [http://archiveofourown.org/works/12319767](http://archiveofourown.org/works/12319767).

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**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences  
**Archive Warning:** No Archive Warnings Apply  
**Category:** M/M  
**Fandom:** IT - Stephen King, IT (2017)  
**Relationship:** Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh (slight), Bill Denbrough/Stanley Uris (slight)  
**Character:** Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier, Bill Denbrough, Beverly Marsh, Mike Hanlon, Ben Hanscom, Stanley Uris  
**Additional Tags:** College AU, slow burn ?? hopefully who knows, none of this is edited so expect a lot of mistakes!!!, tags will come as it goes on, diner au, like this entire fic so far is in the diner uefjir, um richie threw up on a cat so...warning yall, Parties, Alcohol, heated makeouts, anything besides that will fade to black so no smut or anything like that!!, Slow Burn, Mentions of Death, Mentions of Murder, too much clueless references, inconsistencies because i tak e 5 years between writing chapters and forget shit whoops, pretty OOC, literally its been a while since ive read the book or seen the movie is pretty ooc whoops, This is Bad, v cheese, cheesy omg, v cringe  
**Stats:** Published: 2017-10-10 Updated: 2019-08-09 Chapters: 11/? Words: 36930

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**so emotional**

by [melliesgrant](http://archiveofourown.org/users/melliesgrant)

**Summary**

Eddie Kaspbrak is crushing on the school's radio host 'Records Tozier', it's too bad they've never met.
meeting records and miss marsh

“good morning washington university students, it’s your host records tozier here on your college radio station along with my co-host miss marsh. today we have a special guest, one of my closest friends and our best football player here on campus, mike hanlon!”

eddie turned up the radio as he sat in his apartment he shared with his best friend bill. he was sitting at his desk, homework scattered around along with a box of pills in the corner, but his main focus was on the voice coming out of the radio.

it was safe to say eddie kaspbrak was obsessed with the university of washington’s radio station. it was hosted by records tozier and miss marsh, that was their radio names at least, but everyone knew who they were due to the popularity of the station. for years it had been a flop, until tozier and marsh took over, their witty dynamic and raunchy comedy along with great music taste made them an instant hit.

now they were juniors in college and maintained their status after three years, each one becoming more and more popular until they were campus celebrities. it was nearly impossible to not recognize them. when you walked on campus and saw that fiery red hair and lanky boy at her side you just knew who it was. beverly marsh and richie tozier, the unofficial celebrities of the university of washington.

eddie saw the appeal, he too was a great fan of them, perhaps more than most. he was always listening when they had their designated time. waiting to hear tozier’s deep voice and throaty laugh as he made jokes that made eddie roll his eyes, and marsh’s annoyed response followed by a friendly giggle. he danced to the music they played and laughed alongside them as if they were friends, except he had never actually met them.

eddie was small and shy and stuck to his small group of friends (bill, stan, and ben). he wasn’t apart of their lifestyle. he didn’t go to football games or to frat parties, he wasn’t going to class hungover and he wasn’t their idea of fun. he just knew he wouldn’t get along with that group, so why try?

yet it wasn’t just him that loved them, his entire group did. stan thought they were annoying, but still listened nonetheless. ben had a crush on bev marsh, claiming to have even spoken to her once or twice, saying she was gorgeous and the kindest girl he had ever met. bill on the other hand had a bit of a flirtationship with her, but after a few kisses they resigned to being friends.

bill was the link between those two worlds, and yet they never mixed. he always offered to introduce them all, claiming they would love beverly, and that richie was okay from the times he had met them, but that group wasn’t cut out for it. ben was shy and scared to actually meet her, stan couldn’t care less, and eddie had a different reason.

he had a reason that he kept secret from all of them. you see, eddie kaspbrak, was totally in love with richie ‘records’ tozier.

well, maybe it wasn’t love, the two had never spoken so how could he love him? it was more a schoolboy crush, simple and pathetic, at least that’s what eddie told himself.

he had a big fat crush on a boy he didn’t know, and he never wanted to know.

he felt so ashamed, embarrassed, like a kid having a crush on a celebrity and hanging posters up on their walls.

eddie kaspbrak was starstruck and in love with a man he didn’t know, but felt like he did.

when he saw richie tozier walking on campus, all tall and glorious and so attractive eddie felt weak in the knees. he was tall, lanky, and gorgeous. a male snow white with that pale, fair skin, pure black curls, and those rosy pink lips that eddie could only imagine pressed up against his.
those rare moments when eddie saw the boy walking around left him with red cheeks and his lip red from biting it so hard. he couldn’t deny his attraction, the boy was seemingly perfect. he wanted to feel what those curly black locks would feel like as they ran in between his fingers, he wanted to feel how soft that fair skin felt as he looked in those big brown eyes. he wanted to see just how plump those pink lips are, and he wanted to know if they were chapped or not.

eddie always had to physically shake his head when these thoughts creeped in, trying to shake it out and deny his feelings for the boy he didn’t know. he was attractive, and if he was anything like his radio persona he was immature and annoying and everything eddie hated and yet found himself crushing on.

he didn’t understand his own feelings, but there seemed to be no way to get rid of them.

his thoughts made him blank out on the station, and he went to put the volume higher as a way to force these thoughts out and distract himself with the person he needed distracting from.

“well, richie. shit, i mean ‘records’, i think tonight’s game will be great no matter what. win or lose we are all proud to have made it this far, and i’m just glad to be on such a great team of guys i know i can lean on when i need it.” it was mike hanlon talking, the school’s quarterback and probably one of the kindest guys at school.

eddie had only heard good things about mike, and he himself was even a contributor to the good stories of michael hanlon. it wasn’t much, he only ever had a few experiences with mike, but all were good. it all started when he dropped his books while rushing to class and mike helped to pick them up. it wasn’t much, just a “let me help you.” and a “what’s your name?”, but eddie could tell he was genuine as he helped him.

after that whenever eddie saw mike, mike always said hi and always remembered his name. he didn’t really know mike, but he knew he liked him.

“listening to the station again, are we?” bill walked into their study room, teasing eddie for his obsession with the station. he could only imagine what the teasing would be like if bill knew eddie was crushing on tozier.

“i’m interested in what’s happening with the game tonight, that’s all.” he tried to play it off cool, but when was eddie kaspbrak cool?

“you’ve never been to a football game in your entire life, what the hell are you talking about?” bill pointed out, his childhood stutter gone, he was a new man in college.

“well i’m thinking about going tonight.” he wasn’t until now, when he got caught doing, well, nothing bad. he was so defensive, it was a bad trait of his he couldn’t seem to shake.

“really? well we were planning on going anyway, so you can most definitely join the rest of us. it’ll be nice to have you ignore studying for a night and actually go to a game with us.” bill sat down at his desk next to eddie’s, beginning his homework before he had to leave in another few hours.

“great, then the whole group is going.” eddie regretted this immediately, worried he’d be behind on schoolwork if he skipped it for the night.

it was time for the ‘big game’, and eddie hated that term because every football game was called the ‘big game’. it made no sense to him, and yet everyone still got excited for each and every ‘big game’ for the school.

eddie followed behind big bill as they walked to where the rest of their friends were. he was in a jacket that was too big for him but did the job of keeping him warm, his hands shoved in the pockets for some type of warmth, and his hair pushed up.
it was absolutely freezing, and eddie didn’t know how long he’d stay out in the cold for this game.

following bill they made their way to where stan and ben sat, two spaces next to them for bill and eddie. taking a seat alongside their friends eddie was filled with more regret, the bleacher was even colder and he thought his ass was going to get frostbite.

“look who finally came to support his school. welcome to the full university of washington experience, eddie kaspbrak.” stan teased, his usual sarcastic voice with the visible cold showing with every breath he took in between his words.

“shut up, stan. this is my first and probably last game, if they’re all like this. i’m going to get fucking hypothermia out here!” overdramatic and afraid as always, eddie worried for something that was most likely not going to happen.

“Well i’m glad you’re here eddie, are you coming with us after to the diner?” ben, always kind, asked.

“Well i don’t know what this supposed diner you’re talking about is, so i don’t know.” eddie was realizing just how much he was missing out on when he stayed home studying rather than going out with his friends.

bill was the one to speak next. “after every game the team and almost everyone from the school goes to this diner just about five minutes from here. we go too, it’s just a tradition for the school i guess.”

eddie nodded, a sign of agreement that he might join them, and a sign of understanding what he meant.

“If you come to the game you might as well come to the diner too, get the full experience.” stan teased. he was draped in a scarf that seemed to swallow him whole.

“maybe, if i make it through this game i’ll go. might leave early though, who knows.” eddie seemed to not be able to give a definite answer, though in his heart and mind he knew he would probably join his friends.

it was now that things took a turn for the strange, or at least for eddie and the rest of his loser gang.

“bill!” was shouted by a pale red head the entire school would recognize as the miss beverly marsh. she was a beautiful girl, big blue eyes and red hair that captured everyone’s attention, if eddie wasn’t gay he might have joined every other male in the school by having a crush on her.

“hey beverly.” bill responded with a smile. he was always the coolest of the group, the rest of their little losers club would never have been able to talk to such a popular person.

“It’s been so long since i’ve seen you, we need to hang out some time.” she leaned in to give him a hug which bill returned, and eddie could just see the look of shock and jealousy in ben’s eyes.

“Of course you’ll see me there, who would i be if i didn’t go? so i’ll see you all there?” she questioned, smiling at the boys. “hey stan, hey ben.” she greeted the two she had met a couple of times through bill, and smiled as she noticed the blush on ben’s cheeks.

eddie sat awkwardly, never having met the girl, and undeniably starstruck. he didn’t know what to do, did he look at her or look at his feet? he didn’t know, so he went back and forth between the two.

“I don’t think we’ve met, i’m beverly marsh.” she stuck her thin hand out in front of eddie’s face, the girl was chipper and social and everything she seemed to be on the radio show.
“eddie. kaspbrak.” he responded in a way that made his entire group cringe, taking her hand in his and shaking it briefly before resigning it back into his pocket.

“nice to meet you. well i’ll see you all at the diner. later.” she walked away at a sound that made eddie’s heart beat.

“bev! bev! up here!” there it was, the voice that had eddie’s heart pumping whenever he turned on the radio. he followed the noise and bev’s footsteps, spotting the beautiful boy he admired from afar. he stared in awe, only moving when richie made brief eye contact with the boy.

eddie whipped his head around and away, his face red as he mentally cursed himself for being so obvious.

the game ended with another, no surprise, another win for washington. it was all thanks to mike, and the game ended with the team picking him up and cheering. eddie was flustered the entire game, hearing richie screaming behind him and cheering constantly. his friends questioned why he was so red throughout the game, his response always that it was just so cold, and yet he continued to turn backwards to look at those brown eyes and pink lips.

he almost didn’t want to go to the diner, just knowing that bev would be there meant that richie would be there, and he was still ashamed from all the times richie caught him staring. he had never felt more embarrassed, well yes he had, but that still didn’t erase how much he regretted looking back at richie when he knew what would happen.

it was too late now to leave though, he had told his friends he would go with them if he made it through the game and he did, and with them all squeezed into bill’s car it was too late to ask them to turn around.

so this is how eddie found himself here, in a classic 50’s eque diner filled with the famous football team, cheerleaders, and a whole array of other students from the university. he looked around the room for the person he swore he wouldn’t be looking for again, but found nothing. the diner was missing the dynamic duo, the tall dark haired man and the short red haired beauty. eddie felt himself relax, and the group found one of the last booths in the diner.

eddie and ben took one side and stan and bill took the other, awaiting some service in the overflowing diner. eddie could only guess it would take a while, and that was only confirmed by ben.

“usually it takes a while, so many people come in here and they don’t have enough workers to handle it all. it’s too bad, so many people love it here but barely anyone works here.” ben looked down at the menu as he said all this, though he already knew he would just get a salad.

“eddie, didn’t you say you were looking for a job? why don’t you apply here?” stan asked, drinking out of his own water bottle (he refused to drink out of anything else).

“yeah, maybe i will.” he would ask before he left, it seemed too busy now to ask for an application. “though i don’t know if i’ll be able to handle how busy it is.”

“well you need help paying rent and your mom isn’t going to raise your allowance.” bill pointed out, teasing him for still leaning on his mother after all these years.

“shut it, denbrough. i know, i know. i’ll ask for an application later.” he really needed to start working and get on his own two feet. he was going to be graduating in a year and he still was leaning on his overbearing mother for everything.

it was then that eddie remembered why he didn’t want to come here, hearing the ring of the diner door opening and the loud noise of the school’s resident trashmouth. he turned to the door and the world seemed to be going in slow motion like a sitcom or all those cheesy rom coms he seemed to have a guilty pleasure for.
the world was spinning and slow as he saw the boy walk in, a wide smile that reached those bright brown eyes. his hands in the air as he screamed rejoices for the win. “another win for washington, and it’s all thanks to my main man mike hanlon!” he screamed, and eddie couldn’t help but feel a pang of jealousy. his man? were they dating?

he watched as mike stood up, laughing at the boy, hugging him and making space in the teams multiple booths for bev and tozier.

the rest of their conversation was blurred out by the multiple voices speaking, and eddie had to force himself to look down at the menu and away from richie tozier.

“bill! there you are!” he could hear the voice of beverly marsh shout through the diner. eddie still refused to look up, even when he heard the sound of footsteps reach their booth. “there you are!”

“hey bev.” bill smiled at her, and eddie wondered if he’d ever ditch them for a more popular life.

“okay, next weekend, you’re coming with me to the alpha deta phi party.” bev seemed to make the plans for them without asking, but knowing bill he’d be fine with it.

“sounds great.” noticing his friends, mainly ben’s, jealous faces he added onto his response. “can my friends join?”

bev looked at them all, a big smile showing her pearly whites, and eddie finally looked up to her. “of course! you didn’t even have to ask, bill, any of your friends are my friends.”

such a kind girl, eddie was surprised. back in high school anyone popular was immediately synonymous with being a bully, he just assumed it would be the same in college. yet people seemed kinder here, so unlike derry.

“bevvy bear, they’re taking our orders, what do you want?” and there came what eddie was so desperately trying to avoid, richie tozier. looking up at the boy bent over with his face on beverly’s shoulders, eddie’s mouth was agape, actually seeing the boy upclose. so desperately wanting to analyze those features he always looked at from afar eddie had to force himself to look away.

“and have the decency to introduce me to your friends, you’re being so rude bev.” he could hear that deep voice that he was so used to hearing over the radio, and he wanted to just hear it whispering sweet nothings in his ear.

“shut up and don’t call me bevvy bear, that’s so...weird.” beverly laughed, and eddie was struck by the fact that their banter showed in real life too. it seemed radio wasn’t fake. “you’ve met bill, and this is ben, stan, and eddie.” she pointed them out one by one along with the names, and eddie thought he would have a heart attack knowing that richie tozier now knew his name.

“nice to meet you all, i am sir richie of the house of tozier, pleased to make your acquaintance.” he spoke in a british accent, and eddie rolled his eyes at it. he was so used to hearing that bullshit on the radio, but even in person it was annoying, bad, and everything eddie liked about him.

“nice to meet you, too.” ben and stan responded, while eddie stayed silent.

“hm, seems your little buddy here isn’t so happy to meet me.” richie spoke, giving a joking punch to eddie’s face that left him sneering.

“well if you talk in a headache inducing accent like that how can i be?” eddie spoke with venom, he was always quick with his wit.

richie gave a laugh of surprise at the response, clapping his hands with his chuckle. “fuck, that was hilarious. little spitfire over here, love it. well we’ve been keeping them waiting too long and i’m starving. see you later, gang.”

sauntering away, eddie watched that tall god walk away and felt lightheaded from that brief conversation.
his life was never going to be the same.
eddie's first day

Chapter Summary

eddie has his first day of work at freese's diner

“yes i can start working soon. i can send you my school schedule and go from there? i can bring it tomorrow and start working at the same time. is that okay? okay! awesome, great, thank you. i won’t let you guys down. see you tomorrow. thank you, bye.” eddie spoke, attempting to be calm and hide the excitement in his voice, as he made eye contact with a questioning bill.

he hung up the phone call and jumped up and down with excitement, cliche and cheesy and everything eddie kaspbrak was. “i got the job, i got the job!”

bill smiled, sharing the excitement his best friend showed. “at the diner? really?” he gave a little jump with his best friend, though bill’s normal height was how high up eddie could even jump. “i don’t know why we’re surprised though, we both knew they were desperate to hire anyone.”

eddie continued to jump up and down, though his face was a whole other story, one of annoyance. “shut the fuck up and let me be happy!” it was all in good nature, both boys knew this.

“you’re right, you’re right. i’m happy for you. just make sure you aren’t late on rent.” bill smiled as he looked down on eddie, he towered over eddie.

eddie had always been small, his growth stunted by the amount of medicines he was put on at such a young age, and he stopped growing at 5’6”. bill on the other hand had always been tall, and was now at his full height of 6’4”.

eddie’s jumping stopped and he resigned back to his normal position of having to look up at bill whenever they spoke. “now i need some advice. do i tell my mom i got a job knowing she’ll stop sending me money and i will have to provide for myself, or do i keep telling her i don’t have a job so she will send me money and i can have double?”

“interesting scenario, it seems you have a little angel and devil on your shoulder. well i don’t know if i’m the man to ask for this, because all i care about is that you pay rent on time.” bill teased, slapping his hand on eddie’s shoulder. “tell her you got the job, if you don’t you’re going to feel guilty and it’s going to eat you up, then you’ll confess and have to deal with your mother’s wrath.”

eddie nodded, knowing the answer but asking anyway. “i know. thanks bill.”

“you’re welcome. well i have to go work on a short story for class, so please don’t distract me. my professor and peers are being assholes. i just want to write some scary books, not the next great american novel, but if i don’t start shoving symbolism and great messages and themes in i’m going to keep getting C’s. wish me luck.” eddie had heard bill’s rantings about this specific topic plenty of times, so he knew just how annoyed bill was with it.

“good luck, or break a leg. i don’t know, what’s proper writer etiquette?” eddie gave a questioning tease as he watched bill make his way to their study room.

“no idea, guess my professor is right, i’m not a real writer.” he shrugged, laughing it off as he walked into the room.

eddie retreated back to his own room, glad that now as juniors they didn’t have to squeeze into those small dorms and have bunk beds. they had been planning to live in an apartment like this since they were kids, and after saving money
and Bill working job after job they could finally afford one. Their parents chipped in but also wanted the two to learn how to be functioning adults, or at least Bill’s did. Eddie’s mother was still relying on him desperately, trying to convince him to come home where rent was free and she could make all his meals.

He always had to find a polite way to decline, he was finally escaping her smothering, he couldn’t be trapped in it again.

Making his way to his room he turned the radio on, prepared to get lost in the voice of the man he found himself dreaming of every night.

“Hello Washington, records here, and might I say that was a great game last night.”

“A fun one too, but this isn’t the sports station so if you’re hoping for that get the fuck out.” It was Beverly speaking now.

“Shit, bev, someone’s grumpy. Grumpy, wumpy little baby.”

“Get your hands off me, Tozier.”

This walking annoyance was the boy Eddie was crazy about.

It was Sunday and Eddie’s first day working at Freese’s diner, and it wasn’t until he got there that he realized just how popular it was.

Changing into the uniform, a blue t-shirt with the diner’s logo on it and matching blue shorts, Eddie signed in and handed his boss the schedule. He was given a tour of the place and shown how everything works, though he was told he would mainly be working as a waiter. He was placed under the care of a waitress, who he was going to be shadowing for the day and maybe longer if he didn’t get the hang of it.

He hated it, so much, he hated shadowing under another person. He knew he had to do it so he did his job smoothly, he knew it was what was best, but it was so embarrassing. He had to just follow the girl around and copy everything she did while she introduced him to every customer as “Eddie, my shadow”. Whatever they ordered she wrote down and so did he, when they brought the food they both carried it out, and while he knew had he not shadowed her he would have fucked up, he still felt extremely embarrassed. Especially when Richie Tozier came in.

He was already planning his escape, saying he had to go to the bathroom so she could go on without him, or he had to ask their boss about something very important and it just couldn’t wait. Yet she did something unexpected, and he was so shocked by it he couldn’t even come up with any excuse. It was these next words that shattered Eddie Kaspbrak to his core.

“Why don’t you get that table on your own?” It was this that made him speechless, followed by a. “I won’t be too far behind, so if you need help I’ll be there, but you gotta let go of the training wheels soon.”

He just nodded in reply, still unable to speak as he looked over at the booth occupied by Richie and Mike. This just brought back the jealousy he felt on Friday, and he was left wondering again if they were dating.

He took a deep breath of courage and wished he still had his inhaler, but he left that and all those unwanted and unnecessary meds back home, yet he still felt his lungs seemingly close up and grasp for air.

He shook his head, reminding himself he doesn’t need it, it’s all in his mind. He breathed as he walked and hoped to calm down. He made it to the booth.
“hi, i’m eddie and i’ll be your server today. is there anything i can get you?” he asked, his voice surprisingly calm, though he cringed at how quiet it was.

mike looked up and spoke first, that kind smile reaching his eyes somehow managed to both comfort and intimidate eddie. “hey, eddie, i didn’t know you worked here.”

“i just started today.” his voice wavered a bit this time, and he had to stop himself from physically cringing.

“first day on the job, we gotta make sure we don’t piss him off and have him piss in our sodas.” richie joked, weak but still so richie. “hey, didn’t we meet on friday? you’re friends with beverly, right?”

“i’m friends with a friend of beverly, i only met her friday too.” eddie didn’t want to be having a conversation with richie, he just wanted to get his order and get out of here. he thought he might swoon and pass out at the sight, he was in ripped jeans and a shirt that was too big for him, and with those welcoming curls all eddie could imagine is being cuddled up with the beautiful boy.

he hated this, he really hated this.

“well if you’re friends with someone that’s friends with beverly it means you’re friends with beverly. it’s weird but it’s how she works. she’s my little social butterfly, i raised her so well.” he jokingly wiped the fake tears away from his eyes, he always went for the cheap humor but he did it so well.

eddie gave a quick smile back, unsure what to say and changed the subject. “well can i get you guys something to drink or are you ready to order?”

“we’re ready, we always get the same thing.” thankfully mike responded. “i’ll get a coke and a bacon cheeseburger.”

“dr. pepper for me, and a regular cheeseburger.” richie responded, finally going once without a shitty joke, and passed eddie their menu’s. doing this their hands brushed together, and while richie ignored it, eddie felt a shock wave through him and he bolted away from their booth as quickly as possible.

“that was weird.” mike pointed out, concerned but not doing anything about it.

“seems like a weird boy, he is cute though, and look at him in those shorts. damn.” richie spoke, being richie again, gained a slap on his hand from mike. “ow! what was that for?”

“you know what was that for.” mike and richie’s laughter filled the diner, making eddie turn back and wonder just what it was they were talking about.

eddie went the rest of his day with only brief conversations with tozier, giving him his food and drinks, and that was it. he served other customers, followed the other employees, and in the rare moments he had to just sit he stole glances in the direction of records tozier.

fluffy black curls were what always drew his attention the most. he was so desperate to touch them, see if they were as soft as they looked, brush them with his fingers and see if richie liked his touch. he shouldn’t be thinking these things, but it was nearly impossible not to when his dream man was sitting right there.

it came time for the two boys to leave, they payed the check and were on their way out, leaving eddie to clean their mess.

trying to balance their plates and cups and clean the table eddie was about to retreat, but a hand on his waist stopped him and made a ‘yelp’ find it’s way out of his lips.
“excuse me.” tozier was back, hand on eddie’s waist as he moved him to the side and reached down into the booth. “forgot my wallet, gotta make sure you don’t steal anything from me.”

eddie was worried he might be shaking, feeling the other boys large hand briefly touch his waist was something eddie would be fantasizing about for weeks. this weekend was a dream come true and a nightmare all at the same time.

“i’m not going to steal from you, well, wasn’t going to steal from you. i didn’t even see it there, i hadn’t checked their yet.” eddie explained, serious as always and anxious around his crush.

hoping richie would just grab his wallet and leave, eddie was never lucky. richie stayed back, leaned against the booth until he was somewhat eddie’s height, a big drop for the boy who was almost as tall as bill.

“with you working here it means we’re going to be seeing a lot more of each other.” the handsome boy spoke, leaving eddie speechless once more that day. “this is my go to place, so you better get ready to remember my order, eddie my boy.”

“i’m not your boy.” eddie rolled his eyes, and noticed a pattern of him being rude to the boy he was crushing on. got to be cruel to be kind, right?

richie chuckled, getting up once more to his full height, that throaty laugh hypnotizing eddie. “you’re so cute.” he pinched eddie’s cheeks in a way he found patronizing, and smacked the taller boys hands away. “sorry, eds.”

“don’t call me eds.” eddie’s hard but small voice spoke out, and he noticed the smile on richie’s face was still plastered there.

“nah, i think ed’s is gonna stick.” he began to walk away with this comment “see you later, eds!” richie tozier was the most infuriating boy he had ever met, and he thinks he just fell for him even more.

his first day at work was done and eddie was already exhausted, and he already was considering quitting. he knew he couldn’t and he wouldn’t though, he needed the job and it would be pathetic to quit after one day.

slumped back and curls falling in front of his face, eddie quickly unlocked the door to his apartment and dropped in. changing out of the clothes given to him for work he put them in the washer, replacing it with pajamas and getting ready to finish the work he left untouched.

it was all still there from when he left for work, papers a mess on the desk, and the little radio humming a small tune. his heart began to beat as he knew what was on, and he turned it up to hear the usual song on the college radio station that indicated it was just starting. ‘straight up’ by paula abdul played, a song that was now synonymous here for richie and beverly’s song. they opened their show with it and ended it with it, and even sang it mid show sometimes. the two loved it, and rumors had spread that they might even have a dance for the song.

eddie could only imagine, watching richie dance and sing his heart out to paula abdul, nerdy and cute and eddie almost fell asleep to the thought. the noise of the radio kept him from closing his eyes, listening to the usual entrance spoken by records tozier, it was music to his ears that voice, and he never wanted it to end.

“i honestly wish i could start every morning by putting my dick inside a baja blast freeze from taco bell.” was the next thing eddie heard richie say, and though he cringed from his crude behavior a chuckle still found its way out of his lips.

“what the fuck richie? i’m drinking a baja and now all i can imagine is you doing that. why do you have to ruin all good things for me?” beverly questioned, annoyance and laughter in her voice.
“just seeing it made me think of that, and since when did i not speak my mind? if i didn’t this show would be a lot more boring.” richie, cocky attitude and all, responded. “anyway, a baja dick twirl just seems refreshing, like it will wake me up for the day and get me ready for whatever happens.”

“you know what, how about we do that then. tomorrow i wake you up with a baja blast freeze and you have to put your dick in it first thing.” beverly dared richie, and eddie listening, enthralled.

“deal. i’ve never been more down for anything.” eddie laughed alongside the two as if they were friends, continuing to listen as he began the last few pages of homework he had to do.

“tomorrow we will give you an update on the baja dick scenario.” it was beverly speaking.

“i’ll give my full dick in baja blast freeze review, along with their new breakfast naked egg taco.” richie now.

“why do you know so much about taco bell’s menu?”

“bitch don’t act like you’re not the scarfing down ten tacos like your damn life depends on it.”

“beep beep, richie.” it was a catchphrase typically used on the show, a way of beverly and guests to tell richie to shut the fuck up without having to actually say it.

eddie found it hilarious.

“i’m just stating the fucking facts here, okay, miss marsh.” had someone been listening and never heard the show before they would have thought the two hated each other, which was sometimes the appeal for some listeners.

“oh, you’re back.” his work and show was interrupted by bill, and eddie turned down the volume to talk.

“yeah, first day of work done, already want to end it all.” eddie teased, using his small flair for overdramatics (richie’s flair was much bigger).

“that bad?” bill questioned, taking his own seat in the room and rolling his chair closer to eddie.

“no, actually. it was just busy, a lot to do and memorize and remember. a lot of work, but i knew what i was getting into when i applied so i can’t complain.” eddie shrugged it off, knowing he shouldn’t complain about it.

“eddie’s first job, so sweet.” bill joked, and eddie rolled his eyes. “well i hope it only gets better, not worse. though no matter what you’re not going to like any job you get. i can’t think of anyone who does like their job at this point in their lives.”

turning his head in the direction of the radio and hearing the faint mumbling of record tozier come out of it his mouth turned up a bit. “yeah, i think it might get better.”

or at least he hoped.
a regular work week at freese's

Chapter Summary

a day by day play by play of eddie's first week at work

tuesday:

it’s his first day of work since sunday and eddie has decided to wear the diner’s sweats instead of shorts, since those were in the wash. he was already making a plan, when the shorts were in the wash he wore the sweats, and when the sweats were in the wash he wore the shorts. he wasn’t about to go out wearing the same thing almost two days in a row without it being cleaned.

he had worked out a schedule around his classes, glad they were so flexible since they were so desperate. he would work on saturdays and sundays since he had no class then and he needed as much money as he could get (it wasn’t like he had a social life it would take away from), but he wouldn’t work mondays, thursdays, or fridays because of classes. they told him if he ever had free time and just wanted to work a couple of hours those days he could, but for now he was fine with only working tuesdays and wednesday nights on the actual weekdays.

so this was the beginning of a regular work week for the now working man version of eddie kaspbrak, and boy was he glad he had bill driving him to work today.

“you know i probably won’t be able to drive you everyday, you’re gonna have to start finding other rides, or actually get your license.” he was always on eddie’s case about getting his license and being able to drive, which eddie could understand since bill was pretty much his chauffeur, but after hearing all the horrible stories about car accidents from his mother he never wanted to get it.

it was just another manipulative tactic she would use, and he should have caught on sooner, because if it was really so dangerous then why was she driving? he was so young and naive, and maybe he still was, but he at least liked to hope he had grown from that and learned from all the bullshit his mother spewed.

that’s why he left (almost) all his pills and inhalers back in his mothers house, only having some in the apartment for emergencies.

he was trying so hard to escape that deathly grip her fat fingers had on him but it was so hard. she had her hands choking him, squeezing on his neck, telling him the only way out was through unneeded and unwanted pills and inhalers, and even when he took it her grip only got stronger and stronger.

that’s why being here, being free, was so...weird. he didn’t know how to act as a free man now, that once deadly grip only the smallest of touch on his delicate neck, barely there, barely visible. only squeezing him in his mind, where the trauma still lies from her years of bullshit and placebos.

“you’re like a parent, billy. first you’re telling me to get a job, now my license.” he said with a huff of annoyance, but immediately felt guilty. “but in a good way. you’re looking out for me.”

bill just nodded, but he didn’t say anything.

“if i can’t get a ride from you i’ll just get an uber, or ask ben to pick me up. it’s fine.” he was so tired of people worrying about him...but he wouldn’t know what to do if they stopped.
“i can pick you up later today, so don’t worry about that, but i’m talking about other days that i might not be able to. i’m just letting you know, i don’t want to leave you in the dust.” bill spoke with that calm and cool voice he had spent so much of his life striving for.

“thanks billy.” eddie gave him a smile, and bill only turned away from the road to give him a smile quickly, then he was back to being a good driver and keeping his eyes on the road.

with the new silence bill quickly moved his hand to the radio, clicking on number two, programmed already to go to the college radio station.

it was the end of a song, too close to the end for eddie to tell what it was, but his mind drifted from that once he heard richie’s voice. “well marsh and i are here for another hour, but after that you will be saved from hearing our bullshit with the lovely music we have on our playlist for today, but until then you’ve got to deal with us.”

“if they didn’t want to hear us they would change the station, but if they’re still here there is no complaints.” marsh countered.

“you’re so right, bevvy. anyway, this is our show, not theirs, so we can do whatever the fuck we want.”

“why are you hyping yourself up for a show we’ve been doing for three years now?”

“no fucking clue, let’s move on.” he continued to speak by repeating a number that people could call in for song requests or to speak, something that had been done frequently on the show, but this time it left eddie curious.

“do you think that’s actually one of their numbers?” he questioned, getting a puzzled look from bill.

“i don’t know, if you remember it i can see if it’s bev’s, why?”

“no reason, just wondering.” they pulled up to freese’s, saving eddie from his regrettable question. “thanks for the ride, bill, i owe you.

“yeah you do.” bill laughed. “text me when you’re done.”

hopping out of his car and closing the door, he spoke through the open window. “will do, see you later!”

“bye!” bill waved his goodbye and eddie waved back, the two leaving in opposite directions.

eddie walked in, already clad in his work ‘uniform’, all in baby blue clothing that he didn’t think really went with him. he thought the color clashed, not that he was going to complain about it.

he clocked in and was quickly told to clean up some tables and begin taking orders, that it was tuesday so it may be slower than usual but it would still have some action.

it was in moments like these where being a clean freak came in handy, because cleaning the tables with spilt milkshakes and left over fries was something eddie would gladly do, so long as it got rid of that hideous sight of the chaos in the table.

going in-between wiping down tables and taking orders eddie realized just how desperate they were for new people, he was one of the only people working that day which meant he was screwed. he had to take orders, give it to the kitchen, be able to clean an entire table to make it ready for the next people that entered, get the other table their food, and repeat repeat repeat.

he doesn’t realize how long he’s been there until the door opens once more, and he looks expecting to see another stranger but he’s struck by his favorite dream and his worst nightmare walking in, again.

richie really wasn’t kidding when he said he came in here a lot.
of course rather than with mike this time, he was with beverly. it seems they had finished the show for the day and decided to come to freese’s (something eddie would later find out was tradition).

they took a seat at one of the freshly cleaned tables (eddie was so glad he cleaned that just a few minutes ago), and looked over the menu. eddie knew he had to go up and ask for their order, but that would involve talking to them, and even though he had twice now it was still a borderline traumatic experience for the boy.

crushes, he hated them.

it took him a few seconds to gain the confidence to speak to them, deep breaths and a bit of uttering “i can do this, i can do this” under his breath. he could. couldn’t he?

he nodded his head and closed his eyes, opening them with a fake smile plastered on his face and a notepad in his hand. he strutted towards the table, blue sweats too big for him, and his curled hair pushed back sloppily. “hi, i’m eddie and i’ll be your waiter today. can i get you anything to drink?”

“oh come on, eds, i thought i told you last time to memorize my order? you already forgot i want a dr. pepper. i think i might have to get you fired for this, it’s excusable.” eddie almost fainted just knowing richie remembered who he was, even if he was using that horrendous nickname. of course the comments about getting him fired erased that all, and he thought he might faint from that.

“oh, uh, i’m so sorry i’ll try to remember that next time.” he almost stuttered, boy would bill have gotten a kick of that.

richie began to laugh maniacally, and bev began to swat and hit at him with the menu. eddie watched the scene with big eyes, still terrified at the thought of getting fired, and the fact that it was richie tozier.

“richie you are so evil!” she shouted at him as he tried to block her hits. “beep fucking beep!”

“wow, wow, stop stop! i get it, chill on the abuse baby.” he laughed with his words, something typical of richie.

now beverly turned to eddie, still confused and it was all shown all over his baby face. “i am so sorry, eddie, he is an asshole who doesn’t know when a joke goes too far. he isn’t going to get you fired and i would hope he isn’t that pretentious that he expects you to memorize his order.”

richie nodded in agreement, though his face showed he wasn’t taking anything seriously. “she is right you know, i am an asshole who lets my humor take control. it’s a major flaw, i’m so ashamed by it.” his overdramatics were ensued one more, as he held his heart and shook his head directed at the floor.

eddie nodded silently, unsure what to say to the two other than write down a dr. pepper on the piece of paper. “and what do you want to drink?” he turned to beverly, getting his job done rather than actually socializing.

beverly gave him a sad smile, still feeling guilty for richie’s actions, but responding anyway. “a strawberry shake please.”

that’s what stan always gets, and eddie jots it down quickly. “i’ll get that for you right now and come back to take your order.”

he walked away with the note, giving it to the kitchen to make the milkshake and filling up the dr. pepper himself. he wanted to slap himself across the face, he was so stupid, he thought richie was serious, didn’t talk to them when they tried, and didn’t even ask if they were ready to order yet or not. maybe he would be fired.

the milkshake was quickly done and eddie had it in one hand and the dr. pepper in the other, and his notepad in his pocket. giving the right drinks to the right person he took his notepad out, trying not to listen in on their conversation. “so are you guys ready to order or do you need more time?”
“we’re ready.” beverly spoke. “i’ll have a grilled cheese, thanks.” she gave him her menu once she finished talking, and he stumbled over writing her order and stuffing the menu under his armpit.

“and i’ll just have a cheeseburger. jot that down and remember it, eddie boy, we come here almost every day.” he wasn’t sure if this was more of richie’s jokes or a warning.

“i’ll have that out soon.” he took richie’s menu and walked away, glad that that was down for now, and he passed their order to the kitchen and went back to his usual work while trying to avoid the two.

it wasn’t until the food was ready that eddie spoke to them again that tuesday, it was brief and quick and nothing worth remembering, and yet eddie would go home that night still thinking about the way richie’s lips moved when he spoke to him, the calmness of his voice when he said “thank you”.

he had it bad.

wednesday:

eddie works wednesday night after class and he kind of regrets saying he could do it, because he’s so used to doing his homework right after class and pushing it back already has him stressed. this is all apart of his new eddie lifestyle, getting out of his cage and trying something new.

so he had walked to freese’s, a fifteen minute walk from his last class, and walking that distance reminded him of being a child in gym class. it reminded him how he wanted to run with the other kids and walk to school, but his mother never let him.

he was going to start walking more, it was apart of the new and improved eddie kaspbrak lifestyle.

he made it and changed in the back into the blue shorts and shirt and went out to grab the little notepad and pencil ready to work for his third day.

walking out the chef pulled him to the side, “we got an order to go, it’s almost done and when they come in i’ll have the bag ready for you to give.”

eddie just nodded his hand and went on with the rest of his work, cleaning and writing and serving and waiting and he thinks he’s starting to get the hang of it.

there is the same jingle of the door opening and eddie doesn’t look, but the chef is wiggling the bag of food and multiple drinks for eddie to take. he knows it means the to go order is here, so he grabs the bag and the milkshakes and begins to see how much it is when his mother calls.

he tries to ignore it but he knows it’s his mother, and if he doesn’t pick up she won’t stop calling.

“mom, i’m working right now, i can’t talk.” he tried to multitask, speaking while ringing the person up.

“yes, mom, i got a job. because i’m in college and i’m going to be out soon and i need to be able to provide for myself.”

“mom i really can’t talk right now. no, i’m not avoiding you, but i’m working and this is unprofessional and i need to get back to work.”

“i’ll call you later. goodbye, mom. yes, i love you mommy. bye.”

eddie hung up and quickly and finished ringing the order up. “i am so sorry.” he continued as he pulled the receipt out to give it to the person, and as he looked up with his arm out and his mouth went dry.

of course.
of fucking course.

it was richie fucking tozier, and he was leaning on the counter with a smirk on his face and eddie never wanted more to disappear.

“here’s the receipt.” eddie’s voice cracked as he spoke, because that’s just the luck he has. richie takes it and pulls out some cash, they switch and eddie hands him the bag and wants him to just leave already.

“thanks.” he smiles, and eddie just knows something’s coming. “so, uh, what’s your mommy like? is she hot? do you have a picture?”

eddie glares at him, annoyed by the boy he wanted so badly. “shut up.”

“hey, i’m just wondering. i wouldn’t mind having her calling me all the time like that. mhm, don’t hang up mommy.” he moans when he speaks and grabs his crotch, making eddie grimace in disgust. “spank me mommy, spank me!”

“you’re disgusting.” the drinks are still on the table and once richie is finished laughing he grabs the drinks.

“thanks.” he drops a tip and gives eddie a smile that erases all the annoyance he once felt, and eddie watches as he walks out, all gangly limbs and curls bouncing.

richie tozier is going to be either the best or worst part about working here.

saturday:

it’s saturday and he has to work instead of go to the party beverly invited them all too, and he isn’t sure if he should be happy for that or disappointed.

bill said it was a bust anyway, someone called the cops early and everyone scattered. stan left early anyway and ben was just happy to talk to bev for a minute or so. bill says there’s another one next friday which they swear won’t be as much of a bust, and since eddie doesn’t work that day he just has to go.

stan says he’ll go only if eddie does, because he knows eddie won’t ditch him and get drunk, and stan was never a fan of parties anyway.

he says he’ll think about it, but he knows he’ll cave under the pressure of his friends begging and go eventually.

it’s empty since so many are busy at the bust of the frat house, and most people in are either drunk or high or looking for some munchies. so all he has to worry about is keeping the fries going.

and that’s when a drunk richie tozier and a sober beverly marsh walk in, and eddie really doesn’t want to have to deal with this.

“hey eddie, bill told me you couldn’t come cuz you were working, that’s too bad.” beverly spoke with a big smile as she directed richie to the counter for food.

eddie nodded, never knowing what to say when they spoke to him. anyone else he could speak to, but when it came to those so far above him he was struck with silence.

“What can i get you guys?” he questions, remembering richie’s order but not wanting him to know that he remembered.

“eds, come on! you still don’t remember, you may be the cutest waiter but you are the worst.” richie slurred out, leaning on beverly at the counter. “get me a damn dr. pepper and a cheeseburger, stat, i need to grease to sober me up.

eddie felt dizzy and gripped the counter tightly, richie ‘records’ tozier just called him cute. sure, he may be drunk and
out of his mind but he said he was cute. maybe he didn’t realize it was eddie, maybe he thought it was someone else.
eddie had no idea, he just couldn’t believe richie said that.

he was starting to think he hallucinated it, and he was coming up with every reason why richie may not have actually
meant it. eddie couldn’t believe that happened, so he chose not to.

eddie let go of the counter and wrote down his order with shaking hands, nodding to show he got it. “are you getting
anything?” he didn’t say beverly’s name, he didn’t feel worthy.

“no, i’m more in a taco bell mood right now.” bev gave a smirk with her words, finding it funny.

“i want taco bell after this, i want a baja freeze.” richie continued to slur, and eddie blushed remembering the crude
things he said about those drinks.

eddie nodded, giving a minuscule smile. “okay, i’ll have that right out.”

so he gives him his dr. pepper and his burger later on, and he tries to avoid them the rest of the night. he didn’t think
he was ready for a drunk richie tozier, he wasn’t even ready for a sober richie tozier.

he only talks to them again when beverly calls him over to pay, and he rings them up and and tells them “have a good
night”.

“goodbye, eds.” richie’s slurred voice spoke in a sing song tune, and eddie leans on his palm and watches the
beautiful boy walk out the door.

he may hate having to talk to him, but boy did he love the view.

sunday:

it’s his last day of work that week and the only one when richie tozier doesn’t come in.

he assumes he’s too hungover, and while he doesn’t know how that feels he’s seen bill in that position and knows how
horrible it can be.

so he does his usual thing at work and it’s a busy day, especially around breakfast when everyone comes in for
pancakes and waffles and eggs and every other breakfast food they serve.

he obviously didn’t realize just how busy the weekends would be, and he was signed up for the two most busy days.
hes signed up for the two most busy days.

he unintentionally screwed himself again.

the best part of the day is when his group comes in for lunch, they come in to visit him and he likes it. he likes the
idea of working and his friends visiting, distracting him for a few minutes in the day and making him laugh and
reminding him of all the good things in his life.

“so what’s it like now missing almost all of the radio station now that you’re always working?” bill asked, a teasing
tone in his voice. “your addiction was tripped away from you and now you have to go cold turkey, what’s that like?”

eddie rolled his eyes, and while he did miss listening to it he got to have some of it in person most days. anyway, on
his days off he could listen, and sometimes during break he would change the channel on the radio to hear what
records and miss marsh had to say that day.

“Well they come in almost every day, so why do i need that when i see them all the time now?”

“Oh really, are you suddenly best friends with them?” stan asked, and eddie had no idea what he did to deserve the
teasing from his friends.
“as if, i rarely talk to them outside of a ‘what can i get you?’ and ‘have a nice day’. which reminds me, what can i get you guys?” he remembered he actually had to work, his friends were a positive distraction. notepad in hand and pencil in the other, he had to get back to working before he got called out.

so bill got a burger and stan got a hot dog and ben got a chili dog, and eddie survived the long day of work through the few moments he got to speak with his friends that day.

and as he checked out and was about to leave he found himself wishing richie did come in today, because as much as he dreaded speaking to him, being able to see him and watch the curve of his lips when he laughed and his eyes scrunch when something was really funny was the best thing eddie could get out of working here.

fuck, he was starting to confuse himself. he much preferred liking richie from afar, rather than closely. and if this was a regular work week for eddie kaspbrak, he had no idea how he was going to handle it.
“records here got fucking wasted saturday. he was gone, lost, done, a complete and utter mess! i had to hold his hair back while he threw up vodka and taco bell, which reminds me, you need to get a haircut.” marsh spoke, and eddie found it funny that now he could actually visualize what they were talking about, he saw it first hand.

it had been a few days since he was able to listen to the radio station fully, but it was his day off and as he caught up on his school work he listened to the voices and music of his crush of now three years and his friend.

“well if i go to a party i’m gonna be getting lit, i’m not gonna be a little pussy and drink some fucking water.” eddie cringed, knowing that’s what he would do. “if i’m at a party its to get drunk or high and have some fun. sometimes that ends with some vomit, but it’s worth it.”

“maybe for you, but not for me when i have to be the designated driver and help wash the taco bell chunks out of your hair.”

“no one’s gonna listen if you keep talking about my vomit, marsh.”

“Well if i had to suffer through it so does everyone else.”

“You are cruel beverly marsh, people come here to laugh and listen to some bops, not hear about vomit chunks in my hair.”

“It was horrible, and you owe me money for buying you food at freese’s and taco bell. after this when we eat, you pay for everything. deal?”

“deal.” richie spoke.

Eddie was glad and disappointed they didn’t talk anymore about his drunked night at freese’s, but he didn’t know what he expected. what did he want, richie to say that when he said he was cute that was him confessing that he was in love with him? did he want richie to say ‘there was a super cute waiter and i want to marry him so if he’s listening meet me in vegas i have the rings’? eddie felt so pathetic for feeling this way, and as they transitioned to music he payed less attention to the radio and more to his homework.

As much as he liked the music, he liked hearing richie more.

Typical of a college radio station they played alternative music no one else knew, or at least eddie and his friends didn’t know. he didn’t mind, he liked some of it, and it was good background noise for when he was doing his homework. it also made him almost swoon knowing that this was the type of music richie was into, and he’s found himself daydreaming of being in whatever car richie has and driving to nowhere and listening to these songs.

These are dreams he had before he met the boy in those brief few times, dreams with a blurry face lacking details he had desperately wanted, and he made up some random car that they would drive in and sit on it while they star gazed and he listened to richie sing along to whatever obscure song he wanted to play.

He was whipped before he even met the boy, and even now when he had only spoken a few words to him, he still was.
god, how horrible it was to be whipped by someone who barely know your name, so crazy in love with a campus celebrity you had no chance with. eddie was never the type to get crushes like this, he rarely got crushes at all, and yet the one he got it lasted until now and would probably last longer.

fuck, he hoped he would get over this soon, because he doesn’t think he can stand all this unrequited love bullshit. he’s not a writer like bill, a poet, an artist, all this unrequited love gives him is unnecessary pain and feelings rather than a muse for some tragedy.

eddie just wanted to live a simple life, become a nurse in a children hospital and help take care of children and distract them from the horrors taking over their bodies. he wanted to find a nice boy to fall in love with and live the rest of his life with, adopt some kids and live in a picket fence suburbs with a nice public school down the street. he wanted the perfect life that he was sure was impossible. he often found himself daydreaming of this impossible future, and he wish he didn’t.

it was a good thing he had the music drowning out in his ears and homework to distract from it all, and there was always bill who was just sitting in the other room watching whatever halloween themed movie abc family was playing.

it seemed bill never did any work, and eddie would have to ask him later how that was.

he cursed himself as he attempted to do his work, some book about the development of childrens bodies and how that can be hindered due to disease. nothing was processing through his head and the work took longer than expected, and he wished this music break would end already so he could hear what marsh and records had to say next. he wanted to hear their crazy stories they never seemed to run out of, and their endless bickering.

and yet he was stuck doing some essay he couldn’t find, and he knew he would end up calling bill for help since he was the writer of the group. usually these things were so easy for him to do, he loved nursing and children, and even though the topic was sad he knew what to do and how to write about it. today was an off day for eddie, and he hated it.

he didn’t have to turn in the essay for a while, but he always got his work done immediately so he wouldn’t have to worry about it, but it seems procrastinating will be another thing to add onto the new and improved eddie kaspbrak (this time for the worst).

he flipped through the pages over and over again, rereading passages, putting sticky notes on what to remember, while some indie band drowned in the background. he preferred when they listened to paula abdul then this, he was always more of a 80s music fan than indie rock, and it seemed like richie was somewhere in the middle.

he could just imagine, the two of them dancing to cheesy 80s songs, serenading each other with the overly dramatic love songs he liked so much.

another impossible fantasy for mr. eddie kaspbrak.

“and we are back, listeners, so if you missed hearing our lovely voices you don’t have to worry anymore!” richie shouted and his voice came out through the radio, releasing eddie and making him intrigued once more.

“we were reminiscing on some good times while we were on break, and frankly whenever we do that i question why i’m still friends with richie.” marsh spoke.

“and by that she means she’s still mad at me for getting us banned from her favorite club.”

“we went there almost every weekend and now we can never go again, all because this fucker wanted to do our synchronized dance to hollaback girl.”

“okay, it was a lot more than that.”
“tell it then, records, tell them how you ruined my life.”

“hey, i’m supposed to be the dramatic one here, and you’re the level-headed one. don’t take my claim to fame.”

“shut up and tell the fucking story.”

“okay, so we are up in da club getting lit, as we do. we’re taking body shots, grinding to some rihanna, we’re having fun. so suddenly hollaback girl by gwen stefani comes on, and bev and i make eye contact and we know what must be done. you see me and my girl here have a few choreographed dances together, as best friends do, and hollaback girl was one of them. so i want to do my fucking dance with my best friend, and i want everyone to see, like in white chicks or coyote ugly. so i pull bev up on the bar and we’re fucking dancing our hearts out, but apparently that shit only happens in the movies. apparently, we aren’t allowed to dance on the fucking bar, so they kicked us out.”

“yeah, not to mention while on the bar richie chugged half a bottle of rum, broke it, then didn’t pay for it and proceeded to throw the glass around.”

“and that’s the best performance that club has ever seen.”

“yeah, well now we can’t go back because richie’s a ‘hazard’.”

“it was worth it.”

“no, it wasn’t.”

eddie chuckled as he listened to the story, the delivery between the two was priceless, and he found himself wishing he could have seen that. of course had he been there he would have been screaming at the top of his lungs for them to get out, and he would have hated richie for throwing glass around and not paying for his mess. yet he wished he could see that dance, see the gangly mess of limbs dance to some shitty early 2000s song and put way too much effort into it.

he didn’t think he could handle hanging out with richie tozier, but he so desperately wanted to.

“stan and i are going out to eat, want to join?” eddie asked bill, his jacket already in hand and ready to leave.

“no, i’ve got to do some writing and i’m halfway through the exorcist so i can’t stop now.” so that was what was playing right now.

“okay, i’ll see you later. make sure you eat dinner though, find something to make.” eddie in typical mom friend fashion spoke, opening the door but getting those last words in.

“i will, don’t worry about me. have fun!”

“bye.”

gripping his jacket in case it got cold, eddie was clad in jeans that were too big on him and a pale yellow shirt (his favorite color). he knew by the end of the night he’d have his jacket zipped up and regret not wearing a long sleeve, but stan was waiting in the uber and he couldn’t turn around now without feeling guilty for making them wait.

eddie ran down the stairs, trying to ease his fear that he would run too fast and fall down them, and got into the back of the uber with stan.

“about time.” stan’s annoyed voice spoke, but he knew he didn’t really mean it.
“sorry, i was asking bill if he wanted to come or not.”

“it’s okay.” stan gave him one of his kind smiles, rarely seen but could make anyone else in the room smile at the sight, letting go of that sarcastic facade he had developed as a defense for years of bullying.

stan and eddie were similar, almost two similar to really get along. it might be why they weren’t as close as many would expect them to be, because eddie thinks he’s a bit afraid of seeing himself in stan.

the two are both very fearful boys, strong but afraid of the world, years of torment from bullies and a fear of sickness and dirt disrupting regular life.

sometimes he worries for stan, like right now, watching as he scrubbed his hands with hand sanitizer because he couldn’t trust who had been in this uber before. the way he only drank out of his water bottle, knowing it was clean and his and he didn’t have to worry about anyone else contaminating it. god, eddie had no idea how he survived boy scouts when he was a kid (it was something stanley often brought up, very proud of the fact).

but he also liked stan for all these reasons, because he was someone who could understand him and the way he functioned. he would find no judgement from stan, because stan knew what it was all like.

which is why when stan invited him out to go to their favorite little mexican place he said yes, it was one the two had found one day and it was almost always empty, but it was the best mexican food they had ever had and whenever they had a craving they always went their.

ben and bill still hadn’t taken them up on their offer to go, so for now it was their place.

reaching their and stan rating their uber driver as they walked in, eddie ordered his food and awaited stan to order his.

they took a seat at a table, only two other people in the quiet restaurant, and ate the chips they always had on the tables as they awaited their tacos and burritos.

“So how is your new job?” stan questioned, even though he had already gone to visit him at work.

“pretty good actually, i’m getting used to it now so it isn’t as stressful as it was before. i can even handle how busy it is.” eddie ate the guac covered chip once he finished his sentence.

“How is it working where your two favorite celebrities always go?” stan asked, making eddie almost choke on his chip.

“What do you mean?”

“come on, i listen to the school station too, records and marsh are always at freese’s. i even heard they went after that shit party, which you are so lucky you missed. by the time we got there everyone was already wasted and everyone was dry humping each other, it was horrible. an hour or so later we had to run away from the cops, not very fun. did you see them after though?”

eddie never knew stan to be so curious about them before, and he was undeniably shocked.

“yeah, i did actually. i served them, but didn’t talk to them outside of asking for their order. records was really drunk, that’s all i know.” he doesn’t mention he called him cute, for the second time. he’s sure richie meant nothing by it, they don’t even really know each other, and he would die if any of his friends found out he had a crush on records tozier.

“sounds annoying, i don’t think i’d want to deal with a drunk customer.”

“wasn’t too much work, beverly marsh did most of the talking.” he didn’t know what to call her, bev? beverly? marsh?
“well are you coming with us to the party friday? supposedly it’ll be better, but i’m only going if you are. i need someone to talk to that won’t get drunk and ditch.”

“maybe, if bill keeps pressuring me to go.” eddie jokes.

“then you’re definitely going, because we both know he will.” stan jokes alongside him, leaving the two boys laughing and having a fun night.

it’s tuesday and he has to work again, and he’s in his sweats cuz it’s freezing in freese’s and he wishes he had a sweatshirt to wear on top of his blue shirt with the diner’s logo on it.

he comes in and the kitchen chef tells him they have another order to go in, and eddie just somehow knows it’s richie because that’s his luck.

so he does his work and he cleans tables and he serves food. he spills some coke on him when he gets distracted and it overflows onto him, and he has to wipe it up before it gets sticky and quickly clean his shirt before he gets in trouble for not being out and working.

he puts napkins underneath the shirt as he wets it and wipes the coke away, keeping it underneath so the napkins take the coke and stain rather than his shirt, then he finds himself drying it underneath the hand dryer. he never thought he’d have to do this before, and he is so glad this is a one person bathroom and no one can walk in to see this.

as he finishes drying and cleaning himself he goes back to the diner and spots that white greasy bag indicating the to-go food is done and the culprit of it will be in soon.

he keeps the bag where it won’t be taken and looks at what’s inside so he knows what to ring up, and he’s glad he doesn’t have to worry about drinks this time around (that’s weird, he thinks).

and then there is the indicator that his object of idolatry has walked in, that bell ringing above the halo of curls that is richie ‘records’ tozier, and eddie can imagine this being a scene in a rom com. walking in all slow motion, his curls bouncing, and he turns to look at eddie with that plump bottom pink lip captured under his teeth.

eddie blushes at the sight, and thinks ‘is that for me?’, even though he knows it isn’t.

“hi, i ordered something to go.” that deep voice breaks him out of the trance, and eddie gives the most humiliating, dorky, lovestruck smile to the boy.

“yeah, here it is.” he hands him the bag along with the receipt, and takes richie’s card to pay for it.

“hey, you were my waiter when i came in really drunk right?” richie asked, and all eddie could do was nod as a sign of yes. “shit, did i do anything weird? beverly says i didn’t but i gotta make sure, sometimes only god knows the dumb shit i do when i’m blacked out drunk. well, god and anyone else watching. one time i was just chilling and some random girl comes up to me, turns out she was at a party i was at when i was drunk, and i apparently threw up on the hosts cat. what the fuck?” his laughter would have been contagious, had it not been throwing up on a cat.

eddie just shakes his head, along with a look of disgust he was trying to shake. “no, you didn’t do anything weird.”

“did i say anything weird?” he questioned, leaning in with interest, making eddie obviously blush.

“no, no, didn’t say anything weird either.” that lovestruck smile was still on his face as he continued to shake his head, trying to forget that he called him cute.
Richie gave him a look he couldn’t read, suspicious maybe? Intrigued? Eddie wasn’t sure, but he watched as Richie took his bag and leaned back with his lip turning up into a smirk. “Ok, good. I guess I’ll see you around Eds. Bye.”

Eddie smiled, mumbling “bye.” in a soft voice, and as Richie walked out the door he shouted once more “And don’t call me Eds!”

In reality, he didn’t mind it that much.
it was on a lonely wednesday night when it happened, a rare empty night for freese’s and eddie was looking at the
door from behind the counter wishing records tozier would walk through.

he hated it when he was here, but when he wasn’t he desperately wanted him there. maybe just for some eye candy,
maybe because he liked being this close to his crush of three years, maybe because he’s already called him twice and
eddie is hoping for a third time. he doesn’t really know, except for the fact that it’s all he can think about.

which is why he’s so shocked when he sees beverly marsh walk into freese’s…alone. one of the most popular girls in
school and she never came in alone, and eddie doesn’t understand what he’s witnessing. he’s still stuck in a high
school mindset when it comes to popularity, and back then the pretty popular girl wasn’t nice and didn’t go out
alone.

yet here she was, and he waited and waited for someone to follow behind her but they never did. and as she walked to
the counter eddie was leaning on and took a seat and grabbed a menu she wasn’t frantically texting her phone asking
where somebody was or looking at the door, she just sat there alone and was content with it.

eddie was still in shock when he heard a “hey eddie.” from behind her menu. he didn’t even answer for a while, still
leaning a few spots away from her and just staring, god he must seem so creepy. this time she looked at him and
laughed when she said “hey eddie.”

he almost jumped, and he had to do a quick look around to make sure she was talking to him. “hey bev…erly.” did he
call her by her nickname or her full name? he didn’t know how these things worked.

he should be thankful beverly understood what that was like, and she gave him a comforting laugh and smile. “i knew
you worked here but i didn’t realize how often, i mean you’re here almost every time i come now.”

he moved slowly over to where she was on the counter, him leaning over on the employee side of it. “yeah well i need
the money and there isn’t much else to do.” he had to resist a cringe, why did he have to say that? might as well tell
the most popular girl at school that he does nothing with his free time other than talk to his mother on the phone or
watch bullshit movies on abc family with his friends.

“makes sense, of course. i’m just surprised we’ve never met before, i mean you’re bill’s best friend and roommate. bill
and i are pretty close and i met the rest of your group, and now i’m finding out that you’re pretty much attached to the
hip with them all and yet i haven’t met you until now.” beverly spoke enough for the both of them, or at least for now.
eddie was always shy when first meeting someone, but once you were close with him he always had some snarky
remark or rant to give you.

“i don’t know, guess i’m just never with them when you see them. not much of a football game or party goer, or
wherever else you see them.” eddie spoke, unsure exactly when they all met and where beverly hung out.

“you do know i do more than party right?” she questioned, but she can’t really blame eddie for not knowing her social
activities.

“i don’t know, what do you do?” eddie asked, unsure if that’s what he’s supposed to do.
“i see them all over the place, the library, here, one time a bowling alley.” bev spoke, not even realizing why she was doing this, but both were trying to keep the conversation going anyway.

“well it seems we’ll be seeing a lot more of each other since i’m working here, and bill’s forcing me to go out more.” he’s realizing just how anti social he had gotten in college, which usually did the opposite for most. he was just so stressed about doing well in his career he never made any time for an actual social life.

“good, i want you to go out more with us.” eddie didn’t really know what she meant by us, and his face showed it.

“what do you mean?” he questioned.

“well i want you to hang out with us more, as in when i hang out with bill and his group.” she was so kind and understanding, remembering how it was for her in a similar situation.

“why?” he couldn’t understand why the beverly marsh would want to hang out with him.

“why not? you’re cool, plus i owe you for having to deal with richie whenever we come in.” eddie could feel a smile coming, and he didn’t want to seem too enthusiastic but he just couldn’t help it.

“no harm, it’s entertaining. keeps the day fresh.” eddie hoped to whatever god was out there he wasn’t blushing right now.

“good, but if he ever goes too far let me know. i don’t want him to make you uncomfortable or anything.” bev spoke, and eddie could just tell she was genuine and he felt like he could trust her. he was starting to get why bill and ben liked her so much.

“will do, thanks.” he nodded, always unsure what to say.

“anyway, whenever i come in here alone like tonight i’m going to need you to keep me company.” bev gave that dazzling smile everyone seemed to love, and eddie thought that maybe, just maybe, they could really be friends.

“What if you get to know me and you end up hating me?” eddie questioned, paranoid as always, imagine how he would be on drugs.

“I doubt it, from everything i’ve heard from your group you don’t seem like the type of person i’d hate.” he had to remember to ask bill, stan, and ben what they had said about him to her (and if richie was around when it happened).

“Oh god, they better have only said good things.” eddie smiled teasingly, trying to hide his anxiousness and more importantly his embarrassment.

“Of course they did, and my favorite story they’ve told me of yours was when you thought you were having an asthma attack and used your inhaler so much all at once you got extremely high. i mean, that’s lit goals.” she pointed at him with her joke, cracking herself up.

he covered his face with his hands, shaking his head in embarrassment. “oh my god, kill me now. how did that even come up?”

“We were talking about the first time we all got high and bill felt the need to share that story.” she laughed along with him, and eddie was very comfortable with her now.

“I’m going to kill him when i get home, so i hope you don’t miss him too much.” he was really glad they were talking now, she was everything he expected and more.

“Oh come on, don’t kill him. no harm was done, it was funny, i love that story now.” bev convinced him, going along with the jokes.
“fine, but don’t tell anyone. i better not hear other people talking about that kid who got high off his inhaler.” he was already acting like they were friends, they just seemed to click.

“i can keep a secret, and i’m not a total dick. i got you, pinky promise.” she let her small pinky out to him, and he wrapped his around hers to form the bond and secret.

“i feel like a kid doing this.” he laughed, doing it nonetheless.

“good, gotta feel like a kid every now and then.” bev spoke, and eddie could see the friendship blossoming in front of him.

“guess that’s true, well i should probably actually do my job and get you food now.” eddie was so thankful it was a slow night.

“almost forgot about that. i’ll just get a grilled cheese and a strawberry milkshake.” she didn’t even need to look at the menu and just handed it back to him.

“i’ll get right on that.” he nodded, thinking he wasn’t going to mind having her coming in now.

“and here is a grilled cheese and strawberry milkshake for miss beverly marsh.” he spoke enthusiastically, already comfortable being (somewhat) himself with bev.

“about time, eddie!” she laughed, taking the plate as he dropped the drink next to him.

“you keep coming in here like this i’m gonna get fired, distracting me from my job and everything.”

“i won’t let them fire you, i’m their main source of income!” she did come in almost every day.

“better defend me if they get on my ass for not cleaning the tables and talking to you instead.” he could get used to this.

“i got you, eddie, i fucking got you.” she spoke with emphasis, taking a sip of her milkshake after.

“well while you’re helping me out, tell your friend to stop calling me eds. my name is strictly eddie.” he had to try and play it cool and act as if he didn’t know richie’s name.

“hey, once richie gets his mind set on something there is no stopping. i can try, but no promises with that one.” she lifted her arms up in resignation as she spoke.

“damn, i hate nicknames.” any type of nickname eddie tried to thwart.

“isn’t eddie a nickname?” bev questioned, eyebrow raised.

“shut up.” he tried to hold back his laugh and smile to seem like he was mad, but he couldn’t help it.

“got ya.” bev pointed out, laughing alongside him.

“you shouldn’t be teasing your server, i can fuck with your food if you do.” eddie threatened, both knowing it’s a joke.

“oh shit, eddie’s getting crazy up in here. okay, i don’t want any piss in my food so i’ll stop.” she chuckled, eating her grilled cheese. “shit, please tell me you didn’t do anything to this.”
eddie shook his head, laughing. “of course not, i want to keep my job and you didn’t do anything when that was made.”

“good.”

“well i need to do my actual job and clean, but i’ll be back.” eddie grabbed his washcloth and sashayed to the booths still filled with clutter of plates and empty cups.

bev gave him a quick smile, alone with her grilled cheese and milkshake and content with it.

eddie was glad this happened, glad he was able to talk to beverly alone and get what it was that his friends all loved. she was just like her radio persona, and he was starting to think all those daydreams of being popular and cool and hanging out with beverly and richie might come true.

he never thought it was possible, but if him and beverly clicked like this whos to say him and richie wouldn’t? god, he shouldn’t get his hopes up like this, trick himself into thinking he had a chance with the records tozier. even if he did become friends with him he wouldn’t know how to act, he’d be so crazy about him he’d be like bill and stutter over his words.

at least now he could look forward to that party now that he’s actually friends with the person who invited him.

picking up the cups and plates he juggled them on his arms and too the dishwasher, cleaning down the table before going back to wash the plates. since it was such a slow night there weren’t many workers, leaving eddie to do most of the work. he didn’t mind, it was his job, he had no reason to complain.

there was only two other people there besides bev, and they had been sitting there for a while even after they finished their food. he didn’t mind, they had the check and all he had to worry about was them leaving and cleaning their table. he had barely started working there but this was the most empty the diner had ever been since he had worked there, which was saying something.

looking from the kitchen to bev sitting alone at the counter he gave her a small smile, even though she wasn’t looking. he wondered if they’d ever talk like this again, and he had a feeling they would and more.

this was a big development in his life, for good and for bad.
tonight was the night, eddie’s first real college party by the invite of beverly marsh and bill denbrough, and he was far more anxious than he thought he’d be. what did he wear to these type of things? he was asking bill, harassing him really, because he actually had experience with this.

“bill, what do i do? what do i wear? oh god, maybe i just shouldn’t go.” he was freaking out and resigned to sitting on his bed.

“relax, eddie.” he put his hands on his shoulders, pulling eddie back up. “you just have to put on regular clothes like you’re going out to any other place. stick with us, it’s not like you’re not gonna know anyone else there.”

eddie huffed in reply, starting to regret saying yes to this. he was already in his jeans and a pajama shirt, stripping that off to get a better shirt on. searching through his closet he was anxious, he wanted to leave a good impression, especially since richie was supposed to be there.

“i don’t know what to wear, i don’t want to look bad but i don’t want to look like i’m trying to hard either.” those insecurities ran wild at the moment, as he looked through all his shirts which seemed horrible now.

bill sighed, moving into the closet with eddie and grabbing a pale blue shirt. “here, just wear this.”

eddie shook his head but put it on anyway, looking at himself in the mirror and thinking about how he needed a haircut. his hair was falling in front of his eyes, and he had to push it back and up and hope it would stay continuously. “this will do, let’s go.”

“about time.” bill rolled his eyes, teasing eddie as he put an arm around his shoulder and walked to the door. “your very first college party, i’m so glad i’ll be here to see this.”

“don’t get too surprised, it will probably just be me and stan talking about random shit and being the only sober ones there.” he rolled his eyes at the thought.

“your logic on these parties is strictly movie, it’s not animal house eddie. not all the time at least.” there were a wide array of frat parties, though the movies seemingly only knew one.

“i’m putting my trust in you bill, this better not fuck me up.” eddie was such a scared boy, brave and terrified of everything in the world.

“you’re not going to get fucked up, you’re probably not even going to drink.” bill unlocked the car and they both hopped in, eddie’s heart racing.

“i know but...still. this shit is risky, anything can happen.” he’d also seen too many lifetime movies.

“oh god, eddie, if stan can go and be fine so can you.” everyone saw how similar eddie and stan were, and bill used it to his advantage in this argument.

“fine, no need to convince me, i’m already in your car and on our way to the party.”
“yup, too late to back out now.” they both knew if he really wanted to bill would turn around though.

“you’re not going to get drunk, are you? you’re my designated driver, and i can’t drive us home.” he was like cher in clueless, he was a virgin who can’t drive.

“i never drink too much at these parties, especially if i’m driving. come on eddie, do you really think i’d drunk drive?” bill questioned, turning to eddie quickly as he spoke.

“no, i’m just making sure. better to be safe than sorry.” that might as well be on eddie kaspbrak’s gravestone.

“you need to start letting loose, eddie. hopefully this party will help you with that.” bill was right, eddie was always saying he was going to let loose but then those troubling thoughts and his mothers voice found its way inside his head screaming of all the dangers in whatever activity he wanted to do.

he said he was over it, but years of that manipulation was hard to shake off.

bill turned the radio up, both of them smiling and singing along to the song claiming that they were ‘bitches and lovers’ amongst other things.

he remembered the simple days, bill and eddie in high school, losers together and having fun just like that. sitting in bill’s bedroom and blasting music, playing in the barrens, helping him mourn the death of georgie at the hands of henry bowers.

now that was something he did not want to reminisce on, the thoughts of their biggest nightmare. henry bowers was the boy who spent their entire lives bullying them, and as the years went on he became more and more unhinged. breaking eddie’s arm, punching bill’s and breaking his nose. they thought it was simple bullying, until they found poor georgie stabbed to death and henry bowers covered in his blood. it was a traumatic experience for the both of them, and even though bill seems to have been over it he knows he never will be.

they were comforted by the thought of henry still in prison, and they never had to worry about that anymore. eddie hadn’t thought of him for so long, but it was random times like these when those nightmares would pop up again to haunt him.

as if he needed another thing to make him more anxious tonight.

“you okay, eddie?” bill asked, turning to him, confused by his silence.

eddie turned to him and nodded frantically. “yeah, just worried.”

bill put one hand on eddie’s shoulder and squeezed, trying to reassure him. “we’re almost there, and there is really nothing to worry about. it’s college, there’s no petty high school party shit.”

“i hope so.” he knew bill wouldn’t lie, but being anxious was just apart of his character.

the car stopped and eddie looked around seeing no party in sight, confusion obvious on his face. “the party isn’t here, is it?”

“no, but there’s almost never any parking near the house so we’re just gonna walk.” bill turned the car off and walked out, eddie following behind.

walking alongside bill as he took lead eddie rubbed his arms to keep warm and to just have something to do with his hands as they walked. he felt like a little kid, so afraid of these social interactions.

he could tell when he got near the party, hearing the music muffled from outside and and people on the lawn. bill was right, there were cars parked everywhere near it, and as they walked into the party eddie looked at the people smoking
on the porch and even one topless man laying on the grass.

“okay, maybe this one is kind of animal house-esque.” bill said ahead of him as they walked into the frat house.

“are stan and ben already here?” eddie questioned, ready to just sit somewhere with them and ignore everyone else.

bill nodded, “i think so, text them.”

eddie did as he said and texted them quickly begging them for where they were.

following bill around the party eddie hated it, the humidity of a mixture of all the bodies in the room and the smell of marijuana in the air. he felt like he was hot boxing just being there, and he hated it.

he really didn’t understand what all the hype was, but he was thankful when he heard bill shout “bev!”

looking up with a smile at his newfound friend, eddie got a hug from the redhead after she hugged bill. “eddie, you came!”

“i said i would.” eddie smiled at her, pulling away from their hug. she was almost the same height as him, but he himself was already short.

“i know, i know. sorry for doubting you.” she teased, and bill looked between them with a confused look.

“since when were the two of you so chummy?” bill asked, a smile on his face, happy to see two of his friends bonding.

“we had some bonding time. i think eddie’s going to replace you billy.” bev punched bill in the shoulder as she spoke, making the trio laugh.

it was then that eddie got a text back from stan, telling him they were in the kitchen getting something to drink. “ben and stan are in the kitchen, i’m gonna go meet with them. wanna come?” he questioned, not even knowing where the kitchen was himself and hoping one of them would come.

“i’ll text you where you are later, see you.” bill smiled, and eddie gave a fake smile back to try and hide his anxiousness of looking through the house of drunkards on his own.

“bye.” eddie waved to his friends, walking and pushing his way through the crowds of people to try and find his way to the kitchen. the house was large, and it seemed like a maze with so many people in here.

pushing through the crowds he began to pass the staircase, and looking up it he saw a sight he didn’t even know how to react to. walking down the stairs was richie tozier, his curls bouncing as he looked down at his steps, and eddie ran to the side of the staircase to hide. he didn’t know why he was hiding, he was always desperate to see richie but when he got the chance he ran like a child. leaning on the side he closed his eyes, hoping this would be the last time he saw richie that night, but he always had bad luck didn’t he?

he opened his eyes right as richie passed him, and when he thought he was in the clear that tall god spotted eddie in the corner of his eye, and watching that smirk form on richie’s face eddie knew he was in a pile of quicksand he didn’t know if he wanted escaping from.

“who knew my little eds was going to be here?” richie questioned as he turned his way towards eddie, and eddie’s breath hitched at the sight. god, richie just seemed to get better looking every time he saw him. black curls fluffy and sweet as it covered his face, and jeans and a oversized jacket that made him look delectable. god, eddie wanted to put his jacket on and see what it would feel like to be in richie’s clothes. wear that jacket to keep him warm, and smell whatever it was richie smelt like the entire time. he had these fantasies playing in his head whenever he saw the man, and right now they seemed to not be stopping.
‘i’m not your eds, and don’t call me that.’ he tried to sound strong, but his voice came out weak. his heart was racing and his palms felt sweaty, he can’t help it.

‘oh come on, eds, play nice.’ richie moved closer to him, his arms resting on either side of eddie on the wall, and the panic in eddie’s eyes could be seen a mile away as he looked at richie’s hands and the fact that he was currently trapped between them. ‘i didn’t think i’d see you here.’

‘well i’m here, and you’re seeing me, so...’ eddie didn’t know how to speak to him, the minute he was around records tozier he became even more timid and shy and scared and somehow more snarky? either way he never thought he’d be in a situation like this with him, even though so far it was pretty harmless.

‘i’m shocked, but i don’t mind.’ he was leaning closer so they could hear each other through the loud music and chatter throughout the party, and eddie briefly closed his eyes as richie got so close to him.

‘why?’ eddie questioned, confused, he didn’t even think richie knew him other than eddie the diner boy.

richie moved even closer, and eddie could smell the alcohol on his lips. he didn’t seem drunk, but it was obvious he was drinking. eddie felt disappointed at this, richie seemed to only do this when he was under the influence. it really killed him, the thought that he was only appealing to tozier when drunk. it didn’t stop his heart from being out of his chest, and the slight feeling that his hands were shaking. “i wasn’t kidding when i told you you were cute.”

eddie’s breathing stopped, he thought his heart might have too. “i thought you said you didn’t remember.” god, he made a fool of himself, but in a position like this he didn’t need to.

“o-oh.” he stuttered, his voice seemingly too quiet for richie to hear, but he’s sure he did anyway. he didn’t respond though, so eddie will never know. instead richie moves closer and closer as eddie is still pinned to the wall. richie towers over eddie, and god eddie hopes this isn’t the last time they’ll be in this position. he wants to just grab richie’s neck and pull him down to him, feel those plump lips against his own and feel his tongue graze his. he’d only been kissed a few times before and they went almost nowhere, and just having richie this close to him had more heat than any of those kisses. just imagining them kissing had more heat, and god he wanted to feel his body against his as they kiss and run his hands through those black curls that looked so inviting.

usually he would try to shake those thoughts out of his head, but with his eyes closed and the smell of richie all over him he thought that his dream would finally become a reality and then his bad luck strikes again, because right then ‘straight up’ by paula abdul begins to play. anyone who listens to the radio station knows what that means, and eddie is a cruel victim of it.

“fuck.” grunts out of richie’s lips and into eddie’s ear, and he opens his eyes and his dream is crushed by a has been 80s star. “can’t miss my dance with bev, sorry eds.” he pulls away and eddie had never been so disappointed in his life.

“bye.” forces it’s way out of eddie’s mouth, his small voice dripping with sadness at the loss of the thing he had been wanting for three years. he forced himself to give richie a small smile, still trying to look anywhere but richie.

not looking at him resulting in eddie jumping at the sudden feeling of those pink lips he was desperate for against his ear. “hope i see you at more of these parties, they’ll be so much more fun if you’re here.”
and it was just those words that lifted eddie’s heart, mind, and soul once more, even as richie ran away to dance to his song with beverly, eddie stayed still against that wall and had to stop himself from just dropping right there. he never had a moment like that in his entire life, and he was going to go to a lot more of these parties if that was what was going to happen.

he knew he should go and see richie dance, he always wanted to see one of the records and marsh famous coordinated dances, but as he pulled his phone out it was filled with texts from stan and ben asking where he was.

he texted them back with a semi-true response of ‘i got lost looking for the kitchen’, and he wondered just how long he had been with richie in that position.

thankfully his friends were still in the kitchen, and after continuous searching he spotted the two. stan was leaning against the island with a water bottle and ben stood across from him, a red solo cup with a liquid eddie couldn’t identify. as he walks in ben spots him, giving him a big smile and a wave.

“hey eddie!” ben, always the welcoming one, smiled wide. that was one thing eddie loved about ben, there was just something about him that was so kind and welcoming and warm. he made anyone around him comfortable, and if it wasn’t for how shy he was he might have been friends with almost everyone here.

eddie smiled at his two friends, still shaking slightly from the experience that just happened, and made his way to them. “hey guys, sorry to keep you waiting, i got lost.” he would have been embarrassed if his mind still wasn’t replaying everything that just happened. he had a smile on his face that his friends had never seen before, leaving them both looking confused at each other but not questioning it.

“having fun, eddie?” stan teases, bumping his arm into his side at reference to the big smile occupying eddie’s face. he tried desperately to hide the smile, but whenever he tried to forget what happened something made it come back into his mind. “it’s fine, i don’t get the hype.” trying to keep it cool and hide what just happened, eddie really hoped he suddenly had great acting chops.

“mhm.” stan spoke under his breath, giving him a teasing glare that made eddie give him a weak punch.

“What have you two been doing?” eddie questions, grabbing himself a water bottle rather than the bottles of beer amongst other things in the kitchen.

“Nothing really, just talking. we haven’t seen bill all night.” eddie wasn’t surprised by that, even though him and beverly had no more romantic or sexual feelings, they were still inseparable whenever they did hang out together.

“I haven’t since i left him with bev earlier, but he said he’d text us asking where we are soon.” eddie couldn’t help but see the look of sad envy on ben’s face at the comment, something ben could never get over seemingly.

eddie might say that his crush was pathetic, but it wasn’t nearly as bad as his on richie’s. eddie even wanted to help ben with his crush on beverly, but he didn’t know how. he may be cher horowitz in the fact that they’re both virgins who can’t drive, but he doesn’t have her matchmaking skills.

“Well let’s go find him, i’m getting tired of standing around the kitchen.” ben spoke, getting up and ready to leave, and stan and eddie looked at each other both knowing it was just because he wanted to see bev (they followed him anyway).

“I suffer through pushing through crowds of people and getting lost to get here, just to leave right when i get there.” eddie teases.

“Get over it, eddie, that’s life.” stan goes along with the teasing, the two walking side by side and laughing alongside each other.
searching through the crowds it seemed richie and beverly’s song was over, and some remixed song that eddie had never heard of. the main room was filled with sweaty bodies dancing, and if they had more rhythm it might have been that one scene from dirty dancing. everyone else was much less coordinated, and they looked around for the two redheads in the crowd. beverly’s hair was more obvious, while bill’s passed off more as a brunette from a distance. thankfully bill was tall, and with the three of them searching they all found bill eventually. “bill! bill!” the three of them screamed out until they reached him.

“Oh, hey guys.” bill smiles at them, stopping his conversation with some stranger eddie didn’t know and speaking to them instead.

“Bout time we find you, billy.” stan moved next to bill, their height difference crazy as stan barely made it above bill’s shoulder. he looked up at him and eddie looked at him with curiosity. it seemed this was the night for feelings to go haywire, and eddie would have to ask stan about this later.

“didn’t know you were looking, stan.” he wrapped his arm around stan, dancing along with the music. “come on guys, we’re here so lets have fun!”

eddie wondered if he was tipsy, but him and ben followed anyway and laughed as the four of them all danced **horribly**.

maybe these parties weren’t so bad after all, and eddie knew he would be going to a **lot** more of them after tonight.
a friendly interrogation

Chapter Summary

eddie's been acting weird and his friends want to know why

eddie just couldn’t get over what happened, his dreams were filled with the memory from the party with a different ending, and his days were spent with him replaying it in his mind over and over again. god, what he would do to smell richie once more and feel his hands creating a mess of his hair and those lips brushing against his skin again. it was something he had always dreamed about and in reality it was even better than he expected, and even though nothing really happened he was addicted to richie tozier already.

he was starting to wish it never happened because it was the only thing that played in his head now, and his days were spent with sweaty palms and red cheeks because it replayed over and over again in his mind. he was tied between desperately wanting to forget it and wanting to forget everything but that. his emotions were hard to unravel, and he was hoping it would be richie tozier to solve the puzzle that was his heart.

he didn’t think things would be the same again after that, even if nothing happened between him and records. now he would listen to the radio station and hear richie’s voice and remember when that deep voice was whispering in his ear. he would serve him at the diner and take the menu out of his hands and remember what his hands felt like tangled in his hair. he would see him talk and remember what those lips felt like when they grazed his ear.

he was going to go crazy with these thoughts running through his head at full speed, and he had no one to talk to it about. he couldn’t tell his friends about his crush and the shared moment between the two, he just couldn’t. he knew them too well, and by that he knew they would do everything in their power to help him get with the man of his dreams. usually that would be a good thing, but eddie couldn’t have that. as much as he wanted it he was equally scared of it, and if it did happen he would want it without constant questioning from bill and ben and the inevitable awkward scenarios they would force eddie into.

so he had to allow this to fester in his heart and in his mind, his love for the boy he doesn’t truly know eat him alive.

the only problem was his friends knew him so well, too well, and they knew something was going on with eddie. they could sense that something was off, that something was bothering him, and they were not afraid to question him about it.

“eddie, are you okay?” ben questioned him, his hand hitting his shoulder taking eddie out of his lovestruck dream.

he gave him a forced smile and frantically nodded. “yeah, i’m fine. why?” he was trying so hard to seem like everything was normal.

ben gave him a questioning look, showing he thought eddie’s behavior to be...odd. “are you sure? you just seem...different today.” typical ben, always worried for his friends.

“No, i’m fine. really, ben. i don’t know, i couldn’t sleep very well, maybe that’s why i seem different. i’m tired.” he came up with some bullshit excuse to appease his friend, hopefully it would do the job.

ben gave him one of those heartwarming smiles, seemingly believing eddie’s lie. “okay, just making sure.”

“thanks ben.” eddie spoke, giving his hand a small squeeze to show his appreciation.
ben was such a nice guy, so genuinely kind, and sometimes eddie feels guilty that he doesn’t appreciate him as much as he should. ben is the friend that will always be there for you, through thick and thin, and eddie would do anything for ben in return. he deserves that, and he deserves so much more.

dthis is just the beginning of the slow interrogation by his friends.

the second time it happens is a day or two later when eddie got back to his apartment with bill after an uneventful day at the diner. he just wanted to get into his pajamas, finish his homework, and rest. he was hoping to just run in and do that, but the tall being that was bill denbrough stopped him at the door before he could take another step.

“What’s wrong with you?” bill questioned, leaving eddie with his eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

“What do you mean?” eddie responded with a question, walking to his room and knowing bill was following behind.

“You’ve been acting weird. all jittery and distracted, more than usual. what’s going on?” bill continued to question him, and eddie felt uncomfortable changing in front of him.

“Bill, i have no idea what you’re talking about. i’m acting like i always do.” he took his shoes off as he spoke, the only layer he was comfortable shedding in front of his friend.

“Bullshit, i’ve known you my entire life, so i know how you act normally.” bill confronted him, moving closer to his friend. “eddie, you know you can tell me anything that’s going on.”

eddie looked up at his tall, redheaded friend with a smile. he was like a brother to him, he loved him so much, which is why lying hurt so much. “Bill, you know i would if something was going on.”

bill gave him a pointed look, one that screams that he knew he wasn’t telling the truth. eddie thought if he looked into his pointed eyes any longer he would give in and reveal his secret, he had to show some strength and resist. thankfully before he could give up on his resolve bill did first, his eyes showing he was relaxed and his hand hitting eddie’s shoulder. “well if you need to talk you know you’ve got me.”

eddie gave him a smile, feeling the same love for him he did for ben. “i will bill, but for now there’s nothing to talk about.”

bill nodded, and eddie knew he didn’t believe him but would leave him alone anyway. that was the type of guy bill was, he wouldn’t push him unless he felt it to be necessary. he gave him another nod and a smile as he walked out the door of eddie’s room.

eddie let out a relaxed breath once his door closed, glad he no longer had to deal with the questions and he could finally change his clothes. he got into one of his many pajama shorts and a loose shirt, deciding to do his remaining homework on the comfort of his own bed rather than his desk. he knew it wasn’t very smart, being on his bed would lead to him either falling asleep early or getting easily distracted.

the first is what ended up happening, thankfully he was able to get most of his work done before his eyes felt heavy and he slowly found himself leaning more and more onto his bed.

he fell asleep quickly, with his papers a mess around his unconscious body, and with dreams of curly black hair and a deep voice whispering sweet nothings in his ear. he falls asleep with dreams of a future he’s starting to have hope for, just because of a drunken moment in a hazy party that must have been easily forgotten by records tozier.

he falls asleep momentarily a hopeless romantic like ben, and he knows in the morning he will wake up once more pessimistic as always.
the third and final time it happens within his friend group is, of course, with stanley uris, but things go much differently than expected.

eddie kaspbrak is going crazy. he is losing in mind not being able to tell anyone about what happened between him and richie. it’s all he can think about, followed by question after question. does richie like him? did he only do it because he was drunk? would he do it sober? will something happen soon? would anything between them happen ever again? what did it mean? eddie had never been in a long term relationship, only going on brief dates with boys and a few kisses in the dark, but he was far from having experience. he had no idea what any of this meant, and he desperately needed someone to help him through this.

the person to go to for these things would be bill, he had plenty of experience. he had been in many relationships, had many flings, and he knew how things worked. eddie knew he couldn’t go to bill because of this, he might tell eddie something he didn’t want to hear and shatter his heart, or tell him what he did want to hear and make him the most anxious he would ever be in his entire life.

he couldn’t tell anyone without thinking of a way it would backfire on him, but he was desperate to let these words slip out his mouth and scream it to someone else.

resist, resist, resist.

he had to, he knows he does, that doesn’t make the struggle of it any less of just that, a struggle.

stan had just gotten out of one of his accounting classes around the same time eddie got out of one of his classes, and the two decided to get lunch together. bill was frantically writing a new horror story about a little boy and a monster, and eddie could recognize traces of georgie in all his writing. it made him sad, it made his heart break, but it was bill’s way of coping and honoring his lost brother. ben on the other hand always went on a run, still used to the routine of his high school track team. that left the two boys with far too many similarities to go out to eat, the two of them already mid conversation about their classes as they awaited their uber to pick them up.

“i’m so annoyed in this class, this kid sits in front of me and just plays games on his laptop and never pays attention and makes way too much noise and i can’t help but get distracted. i want to strangle him, he obviously doesn’t care.” eddie doesn’t understand how stan could be so passionate about accounting, but to each their own.

“i know what you mean, i hate when there are people in the class who obviously couldn’t care less about what’s going on. all they do is waste time for the rest of us.” eddie agreed.

the uber pulls up as they continue speaking, the two getting into the back seat and telling each other about annoying classmates or their problems with their teachers or something fun they had learned in class that day. the two didn’t care much for the others major, but they were glad to hear about it to support their friend.

they had made it to some small restaurant stan said he heard great things about, though neither had gone. they were meant to make the best grilled cheese which is what the two boys were ordering.

“So.” stan spoke, taking a sip out of his water bottle.

“So...what?” eddie questioned, drinking out of the restaurants water himself.

“you’ve been acting weird. ben and bill keep talking about it. what’s up?” stan questioned, though he seemed not to care much.

eddie rolled his eyes at his sentence, getting more annoyed than anxious now. “i told them nothing was going on! i haven’t even been acting weird!” who was he trying to convince?
“come on eddie, you’ve been so out of it. just tell me what’s going on. i won’t tell them if you really don’t want me to, but you can trust me.” it’s similar to what they all had said, and eddie found himself trying so hard to resist once more.

except now it was harder than ever, because he is so desperate to just scream out in the small restaurant I HAD A MOMENT WITH RICHIE ‘RECORDS’ TOZIER AND I’VE HAD A CRUSH ON HIM FOR YEARS AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS. he thinks he might go crazy if he doesn’t spill it out to stan, but he has to resist.

“nothing, really.” they both could tell he was lying, and his eyes showed how desperate he was to talk.

“eddie, come on, just tell me. i promise i won’t tell anyone. i swear on my moms life.” eddie was surprised stan was pushing it so much, but god he was thankful.

he let it all slip out his lips, feeling like he had no control over what was coming out his mouth. “i’ve had a crush on records tozier ever since i listened to the radio station and at the party he pinned me against a wall and was leaning close to me and was saying i was cute and he was glad i was there but nothing really happened after that but i’ve been freaking out about it since and i have no idea what to do.” it all came out in one long, run on sentence that would have bill appalled.

stan’s face only showed the smallest amount of shock, but stan was always the calmest one in their group. “that’s it? okay, well i won’t tell them, though i don’t get why you’re hiding it from them.”

“They wouldn’t leave me alone about it, and they’d do everything to get us together. it’s too awkward, it’s too embarrassing.” eddie looked down to the menu in harassment, both glad and regretting telling stan.

“yeah, i get it. well if you need to talk about it, you’ve got me. and what he did is kind of a big deal, i’m going to be expecting a play by play once we’re in private.” stan was now more intrigued, mainly because eddie never had anything like this go on in his life.

“fine, but you can’t tell anyone. i don’t even know if he likes me or meant any of that, i’m pretty sure he was tipsy or drunk. we’ve only ever spoken when i’ve asked for his order too, it might mean nothing.” there was eddie the pessimist, back to crush his own dreams.

“maybe he doesn’t know and like you, but it seems he wants to hook up. people tend to be more real when they’re drunk, so if he’s pinning you to a wall and leaning in he at least wants to kiss you.” stan explained, though they both knew he wasn’t qualified.

eddie perked up, even though he already knew that, but hearing it from someone else made it more real. “really?”

stan nodded, his face showing close to no emotion. “yes really.”

eddie smiled and looked to nowhere, already daydreaming at the thought of records tozier wanting him.

“oh great, does this mean i have to see your love eyes when you daydream about this guy.” stan teased, laughing at eddie.

eddie laughed, swatting his menu at stan to hit him for his teasing. “you’re making me regret telling you now.”

“just kidding, just kidding.” stan laughed, continuing to drink out of his water bottle.

looking at stan eddie remembered what he had to question him on, another event that happened at the party. “so, you and bill?”

stan was now the one with a look of confusion on his face. “what about me and bill?”
“well...do you like him?” eddie questioned, glad he now had the higher ground since he already confessed his crush.

“What? no! we’re just friends, obviously.” stan was too defensive, and now eddie knew what it must have been like for his friends when they questioned him.

“okay, sure.” eddie gave him a knowing look, but dropped the idea.

stan gave him a glare and gave him a single hit with the menu.

“hey! what was that for?” eddie asks him.

“you know what that’s for.” stan points at him.

the two try to seem serious but their smiles grow and they laugh about unspoken loves and crushes no one knows.

their both lovestruck boys with no end goal in sight, and hopeful none the less.
the true beginning

Chapter Summary

eddie has an epiphany

Chapter Notes

hey guys, this took a long time and frankly it isn't good. i'm not just saying that, i haven't written in a while so i forgot a lot of what i wrote in so emotional and this chapter has been written over weeks so things might seem out of place or writing may shift idk. i apologize for the hot mess that this is and hopefully with future chapters it can get better but it probably won't.

dead serious updates will take longer and will NOT be very good, i've lost a lot of muse and i've forgotten a lot in this fic but i will try to continue nonetheless

not edited like the rest of the chapters excuse any mistakes

eddie hadn’t seen richie, or beverly, since the party. it had been almost a week and he was working at freese’s once more that week, only one more day left and his work week would be finished. they hadn't come in at all that week, and from listening to their radio show he knew it was because they were more in a taco bell or chick-fil-a mood this week. he tried to not let it get to him, but he couldn’t help it. richie tozier created a moment between the two at the party and nothing has come of it since, much to eddie’s dismay. he was starting to think it was all a one time thing, more so than before, that richie had forgotten about it and soon it would just become something similar to all the dreams eddie had about the man.

but of course, as he started to lose hope, faith would have it that following that angelic bell on the diner door comes beverly, mike, and richie. eddie’s heart was pounding so loud he thinks they might hear it if they go in his direction, and with his newfound friendship with beverly they do.

“eddie!” bev yelled in his direction, making her way to him and holding him in her arms. he returned the hug despite his small shock, happy nonetheless. “i’m so glad you're working tonight. i need to start to memorize your schedule.”

mike spoke next, joining in the conversation. “yeah, we'll only come in when you're working and always request you.” he gave eddie a friendly punch in the arm, one eddie wishes he could say didn't hurt.

“you guys would make my shifts much more entertaining, so i won't stop you.” he responded, happy but anxiously awaiting richie to speak. he had to resist touching his combed down hair out of anxiousness, trying to look good for his crush.

“you know, eds, i really like the uniform here. never realized how sexy it was.” there it was, the long awaited sentence from records tozier, and as eddie felt the urge to pull down the blue shorts with the diner’s logo on the corner, he hoped to god his cheeks weren’t as red as he thought they were.

“gross, are you going to be creeping on every waiter here now? you might get banned for sexual harassment.” eddie
joked, snapping at richie to defend his blushing cheeks and racing heart.

the trio laughed, making eddie feel much more confident in his interaction with them.

“oh shit, records is finally being put in his fucking place.” mike laughed, high fiving eddie for the comment.

eddie hoped his hand wasn’t shaking, he just high fived one of the most popular kid at his school in front of two of
the other most popular kids.

god, he wished this happened in high school when people cared, rather than in college where who you fucked with
didn’t matter to anyone elses lives.

“eddie has a lot more venom than you would think.” bev pointed out, and eddie wondered how close she considered
them. he didn’t consider them very close, but she treated him as if they’d been friends for a while.

he was only looking at richie though, waiting for his reaction. all he got from the tall boy was an eyeroll and a “i’m
not creeping on every waiter here, just you eds.” he moved to pinch eddie’s cheeks as he said this, making eddie move
his head back in an attempt to keep his cheeks safe.

“well you guys can take a seat wherever and i’ll take your order soon.” eddie smiled at them, walking away to get his
notepad to take their order.

when he came back out he could see them all in a booth, richie and bev on one side and mike on the other, and eddie
could just imagine a world where he took the place next to mike and be in their group. a true dream would be if bill,
stan, and ben were there too. the dream team, in eddie’s mind, and in his mind this coupled with him and richie as
a couple.

but he said it himself, it was just a dream, no more no less. he was the friendly waiter, and they were the most popular
kids in school. even as they called him friend and flirted he still saw himself as so much lesser, years of teasing forcing
this upon his mind.

so he had to put that smile back on his face as he walked out in his loose shirt and tight shorts and his notepad in
hand. “so what can i get you guys today?”

they gave their usual order, not without teasing from richie once more, and eddie telling him he had far too many
customers to remember theirs.

in reality he didn’t want to seem creepy, even though they asked him to remember it, because he most definitely did
remember their orders.

he thought this would be a regular day at work with occasional gazing at richie.

he was wrong.

and it was all because of richie.

richie who kept looking over at eddie making him struggle to hide the red that was moving from his cheeks to the rest
of his body.

richie who’s hands grazed his too many times to be a coincidence.

richie who asked him as he walked by their booth “what type of milkshake do you like?”

that had left eddie confused, deeply confused to be specific, and for a moment he stood there wondering if the
question was truly directed towards him or not. of course it was, eddie knew that, but he couldn’t help but internally
question it. he quickly tried to hide his embarrassment and answered the question.
“vanilla.” he quickly uttered out, and somehow he was embarrassed by his answer. there was no reason to be embarrassed by the type of milkshake you liked, but it was richie and vanilla was so boring and he could already feel richie make fun of it.

he was right.

“vanilla? i don’t know if we’re going to work out then baby, i got over that vanilla shit in the eighth grade. you know how it is, you’re young and naive, then you get to high school and the world is all spanking and the closest thing to kinky sex a freshmen can get.” richie’s words leave eddie somewhat traumatized, he’s not naive but hearing such things out loud never fails to leave him speechless and almost stuttering like bill.

of course he can’t do that in front of not only records tozier, but also beverly and mike. he has to play it cool, which is something he finds himself trying to do every time he’s around richie.

“one more comment like that and you’re out of here for sexual harassment.” he uses the pen in his hand to point at richie, smile on his face to soften the blow and show there is no real blow. they both know it’s all jokes and eddie wouldn’t actually kick him out, even if he tried bev and mike would find a way to fix it, but eddie could never be too careful.

he can hear mike and beverly laughing, but it’s all background noise as he looks at richie and richie looks at him and he realizes richie’s eyes are dark and hypnotizing and his hair is messier than normal and needs to be trimmed but it’s sweet nonetheless and he can somehow feel himself falling for him even more. it’s like a cheesy movie, when you look at the boy of your dreams and everything blurs with bad 90s effects and everything, and eddie hates the goosebumps he feels forming on his arms from the emotional electricity shooting from richie’s eyes into his heart.

“only for you, eds. anyway, if this ‘sexual harassment’ gets me one step closer to getting with you it’ll be worth being banned from this place.” richie flirts, and eddie thinks his heart might have skipped a beat and he might need to go to the hospital for that, but he’s too struck in the moment that he can’t even think about that.

he’s so struck he just walks away, hands shaking and mouth slightly agape, and for that one moment he doesn’t immediately think it’s all jokes. vulgar as it may be, and he knows it’s meant to be vulgar, he just feels something. some vibration in the air, some energy, aura, anything that tells him something.

it tells him for that one moment eddie kaspbrak thinks he has a chance, and he may be right.

he finds himself with this realization, this epiphany, and with it he finds himself just staring at richie. he just stares, shock and puppy love in his eyes and he’s too crazy (possibly) in love with him to even stop himself cuz god. he might have a chance, he might have a chance with his dream guy. he might have a chance with the raunchy, tall, annoying, scrawny, guy he had found himself wanting for years.

he might have stared at richie in that moment, his cheeks red from the cold and his hair in desperate need of a haircut, forever. he might have, if he hadn’t been taken out of his trance.

“richie, i think you broke eddie.” mike called out, hitting the back of richie’s head. “nice going.”

eddie gives an uncomfortable laugh, there goes trying to act cool.

he doesn’t know how he’ll explain that or get away with it, but for now he’s going with the ‘act witty and cool so richie likes you more’ route.

“sorry, i was just so stunned by the stupidity of that sentence that i couldn’t function. does something like that actually work?” eddie questioned, and he knew the answer. yes, yes it did.

richie was eating his fries, the same ones that when eddie had given them to his long and warm fingers brushed against eddie’s smaller ones and he swears richie let that happen on purpose, as he replied. “i don’t know, you tell me.”
Eddie knows Richie knows, and he feels both weaker and confident at the same time.

He knows Richie knows that he isn’t as cool as he acts, Richie knows that Eddie is putting on a show but when it comes down to it his knees are shaking and the closer Richie gets to him the more his entire body will shake.

He wants to be cool but he’s not, and Richie knows this, and he’s flirting with him nonetheless.

And Eddie can only assume it’s because Richie’s used to guys and girls being like this with him, acting cool but desperate for him in private. He feels like one of the many conquests Richie has had, but he wants some type of intimacy, some type of chance that he might take it.

He wants to trick himself into thinking he’s special, that Richie knows him (even though they’ve barely talked), and that Richie feels something for him.

He knows it isn’t true, but God he can pretend until it is or until he moves on.

But he knows Richie knows, which is why it doesn’t matter when he responds with “no, it doesn’t work.”

Because Richie knows the truth, and the truth is that it does.

The rest of the night Eddie keeps his distance, afraid mainly, afraid of having anymore moments with Richie.

He can’t handle too much in one night, his legs would go weak and his head would get woozy and he’d pass out if Richie spoke to him once more that night.

So he doesn’t talk to them until he gives them the check, and even then he makes it quick. He worries (per usual) that they’ll take offense, but he has a feeling they won’t. He sure hopes so, he’s finally getting somewhat close to them and he doesn’t want his overwhelming crush on Richie Tozier to ruin the potential friendship he’s been developing with the most popular and kindest kids on campus.

It’s getting late at the diner and it empties out besides them and a couple in the corner booth, and frankly Eddie’s afraid to look at them and see whatever gratuitous act of PDA is going on in the booth he’ll end up having to clean. He hopes he can resist from gagging while doing it.

He’s getting tired and texting Bill in hopes he’ll pick him up when his shift’s over soon, and he knows Bill will but he still has to hope. It just feels wrong to assume his friend will pick him up, even when he knows he will.

He’s going back and forth from sitting on the workers side of the bar and going in the back, sometimes talking to the chef. He’s a sweet man who’s getting too old to work, but he says he loves working there and he won’t quit until he’s forced to. Eddie likes him, he has a grandfather like quality that makes him comfortable in his presence, which is part of why he enjoys talking to him on the quieter hours like this.

Their conversation about the old man’s children was briefly interrupted as the couple came to pay and leave, but once that was done they continued. Eddie would wait until Beverly, Mike, and Richie left before cleaning the booths, and until then he had another hour or so to speak to the chef.

“My daughter’s name is Suzanne, but we all call her little Suzy, of course she isn’t very little anymore.” The way he speaks of his children makes Eddie’s heart beat and his smile grow, the man really loved his kids, and it made Eddie dream of a day that he too would one day have his adopted children to brag about and call his own.

He loved kids more than anything, and he wanted to save them and their innocence from the world. A way of saving what he lost too early, a way to make up for the mistakes everyone seemed to make in his past.
that was what his entire life seemed to be, constant attempts of making up for the mistakes that had shaped him into the boy he was today. not a boy though, but not a man either.

“eddie!” he heard beverly shout out.

“one second.” eddie smiled to the old man, moving to the front where the trio awaited him. they had their money out, and it was waiting for eddie to take.

“thanks, eddie. it was good seeing you, we all need to hang out soon.” beverly spoke as he took their money, getting the change and trying not to notice richie disappearing somewhere behind him.

“i’ll get bill to plan everything out, he’s my ride for almost anything so it’s all up to him.” eddie responded, multi tasking.

“why is he your ride?” mike questioned.

“don’t have my license.” eddie replied, trying to hide the embarrassment in his voice.

“what?” there was blatant shock in mike’s voice, and eddie didn’t even want to see it on his face. “how have you survived without it?”

“bill, he is a life saver. that and uber.” eddie jokes, giving their change and finally looking to mike and his kind eyes.
no judgement, just surprise in them.

richie came out then, from wherever in the back he had gone to. he wasn’t allowed, and eddie wondered what it was he was doing there. “okay guys, let’s bounce.”

eddie only looked at him through the side of his eye, trying not to give him the satisfaction of looking at him, and trying not to kill himself by looking at the giant of a man.

“bye eds, and give kisses to your mommy.” richie teased, and even with how shit his goodbye was eddie still found himself looking to his feet and trying to hide the blush.

“oh, fuck off richie.” he tries so hard to seem unaffected by the entire day, but with his blushing face on the floor everyone knows the truth.

he just hears a laugh, that deep vibrating chuckle richie tended to give, and he only looked up to catch him leaving the ringing door, his hand kissed and blown in his direction.

eddie is glad the day is over, especially because all he wants now is to get in bed and dream about the potential future he has with richie in his dream world.

“eddie, here.” his daydreaming interrupted by the chef, who is currently handing him a vanilla milkshake.

his eyebrows furrow in confusion, he hadn’t asked for a milkshake. “what’s this for?”

the old man had a slight hunched back and a weak smile, but he tried to make it stronger. “someone ordered it for you.”

his confusion only grew, but he took it and the napkin that was underneath, numbers written on it with a note underneath.

_text me, mama’s boy._

and if he wasn’t blushing before his entire body was red and on fire as he read the note which could only have been from richie.
at least he had a shake to cool him down.
**game night**

Chapter Summary

eddie works his first shift after a big game

eddie makes sure to bring a full bottle of handsanitizer today, because he knows with the amount of dishes and booths he’s going to have to clean he’s going to need it.

it’s a game night, and almost everybody that works at freese’s asked for the night off, so eddie has to work even if he didn’t want to. he knew this was going to happen when he got the job, everyone warned him, even he came in on a game night the first time there so he’s seen it all first hand. he knows how chaotic it can be, and while many see eddie as made of glass he isn’t. he’s made of something stronger, metal, maybe? he isn’t sure, but he’s strong, and he can be both strong and scared.

his past has shown it, he’s survived beatings from henry bowers and even gotten a slap in before, so he can survive working at the diner on a game night.

anyway, richie will be there, and just the thought of seeing him both reassures and scares the shit out of him.

they’ve been briefly texting since he got his number, but nothing big. hellos, how are yous, raunchy messages from richie, but it’s always rare. richie takes forever to respond, and eddie thinks it’s because he just isn’t *that* important yet, where richie will respond immediately. he’s records tozier, his phone is probably constantly blowing up, and with much more important and interesting people than eddie kaspbrak.

but he can’t ignore the text he got that night, a simple one from richie reading ‘*r u working tonight?’* even if he wasn’t working that night, he would have after getting that text.

so many things had been running through his head after that one message, mainly the fact that richie may want him there that night, which is why he asked. his heads were shaking as he replied saying he was, and even though it’s been almost an hour and the game should be up and richie still hasn’t texted back he’s still so excited.

he’s so excited he has his phone on him even though he shouldn’t, he’s working, he can’t have those distractions. it’s pretty dead at the moment, almost empty, awaiting the stampede of students to rush in all at once. once that happens he’ll put it away, but for now he’s awaiting a text from richie and only getting ones from his friends.

all of the texts mainly asking about him working there tonight, to save a table for them, and a never mind they’re coming early to get one. he gives them generic responses, too busy waiting for a text he probably won’t get, because that’s what boys like him do.

boys like him who rarely get attention from the ones they like, and don’t know what to do when they finally do.

boys like him who don’t realize what boys like richie tozier are *really* about, though they pretend they do.

boys like him who will probably get their heart broken along the way, but say they can handle it and put it on themselves.

boys like him who wash their hands all the time and are getting *too* optimistic.

boys like eddie kaspbrak, who is really hoping for another moment with richie tozier tonight.
it helps that his personal hype man, Stanley Uris, is texting him privately about his secret crush. Now that Stan knows he hears all about it, every moment, every comment, every daydream and hope Eddie has. He’s even starting to think Richie might have a thing for Eddie, and while he warns Eddie at every turn that Richie isn’t the type of guy to do relationships and love, nothing he says will thwart Eddie’s dreams.

Anyway, Eddie promises him that if anything happens and Richie doesn’t want a relationship he’ll understand. He’s an adult, or so he claims, and he can handle a little flirting and possible one night stand without falling in love with the guy.

Only problem is he already is in love with him, so Eddie and Stan both know he’s screwed.

At least, Eddie doesn’t fully know that yet, but he will come to learn that eventually.

Until then he’ll just continue to break his own heart with optimism for a relationship he so desperately wants, but for now he’s distracted by the bell on the door ringing to indicate someone entering the diner.

“Time to put that phone away, Eddie.” The cook shouts from the kitchen, his voice small and frail but travelling nonetheless, and Eddie stuffs his phone under the bar and puts hand sanitizer on to prepare for the chaos that was sure to ensue.

He was thankful the people walking through were his friends, Bill, Ben, and Stan arriving early like they said, which was a perfect way for him to ease into the pandemonium.

“Hey guys.” He walks up to his friends, both in business and pleasure terms as he leads them to a booth. “Good thing you came early like you said, now you don’t have to wait as long as everyone else...hopefully.”

“Hence why we came in.” Stan spoke, typical with his dry humor that sometimes came off cold.

It doesn’t pass Eddie that Stan and Bill are sitting together, something he will have to bring up later.

Or now.

“I feel bad that Ben has to sit alone, because of course you and Bill will sit together.” Eddie teases, giving Stan a knowing look with a smirk.

And only he sees the glare in Stan’s eyes, and if he was sitting across the booth he probably would have been getting kicked right then and there.

“It’s okay Eddie, I’m fine.” Ben, sweet as always, was making Eddie feel guilty for his joke. It was meant to call out Stan, not Ben for being alone.

“I know, I’m just saying, Stan and Bill are pretty much attached at the hip now.” Eddie teased, as if he was asking for Stan to just hate him.

“Hey, Eddie, is records coming tonight? Thought you would know, you are pretty obsessed with the radio station, and...well...” Stan stopped talking before it was too late, returning that knowing smirk to Eddie.

Eddie’s smile dropped quickly, and now it was his turn to glare at Stan. He changed the subject quickly, hoping the confusion on Bill’s face would drop. “Well you guys ought to order now if you want to get your food sometime soon, the game is about to end.”

“Shit, you’re right.” Bill responded, leading the them all to spout their orders for Eddie to quickly write down and get to the kitchen, and before he knew it that bell began to ring.

And ring.
and ring.

and that only meant one thing.

“go dubs!” was shouted out, and the sound of multiple feet stomping into the building and shouts for the school made it easy to realize that they had won.

it also got eddie on his feet and running to get everything in order.

his friends orders were in, his hands were coated in hand sanitizer, and he had a new pen to write the orders on. he was nervous for his first day working after a game, and if he didn’t quit after this then he’d have to get used to it.

with how busy it was and how frequently most of these people came in they all just took a seat, booth, bar, wherever was open without going to a waiter first. there was only one other person working, other than the cook, a girl who had already graduated and was doing this part time. she got one side of the diner to work for and he got the other.

she got the bar and loose tables and he got the booths, where most were at. she gave him the choice so he can’t really blame her, and he chose it for a reason.

that reason, of course, being richie tozier. he knew richie would sit in the booths with his friends, so he knew that if he served him there was a higher chance that they would talk.

and he knew richie wanted to talk to him, why else would he have texted asking if he was working that night? if he didn’t want to talk or wasn’t interested then why would he have texted him? eddie really was getting his hopes up too high, but he was new to these things. he’s had brief crushes before, he’s kissed others, but never had anything serious. him considering this to be ‘serious’ is proof in itself of his pathetic love life.

well, he ends up being right, because richie is there sitting in a booth. it’s one of the larger one, it needs to be to fit everyone in it, because that whole friend group is huge. it’s richie, bev, mike, and other guys on the team and people in that group. veronica grogan is there, everyone knows richie dated her and they still fuck around sometimes, along with beverly’s lookalike audra phillips and butch carrington. those are just a few, but it’s filled to the brim with people and eddie knows that’s the last one he’ll go to.

he goes to the smaller booths first to get their orders, quickly rushing to the kitchen to give the orders, get orders, and he manages to get almost everyone’s drinks done in one round. he’s getting good at his job, and he decides the medical world isn’t for him he’s sure he could make it as a waiter for the rest of his life.

of course he’d need constant hand sanitizer on him and a sugar daddy to keep him afloat, but he would ignore those things while living out this fantasy.

eddie does his job, every last bit, until he comes to the inevitable table. biggest booth in the diner with the most people, and next to mike in the center is richie ‘records’ tozier. he’s sitting there, one arm around mike the other around veronica (eddie can’t deny he’s jealous at the night, because everyone knows about their tumultuous relationship) and he looks amazing.

he did end up getting a haircut, eddie can tell, and everyone is laughing including him and his face contorts as he laughs and eddie loves it. his nose scrunches up and his eyes shut as he opens his pink lips to laugh, and eddie wishes he could’ve been there to hear that joke. he wishes he was veronica grogan, with richie’s arm wrapped around him as they laughed together.

he has to take a deep breath before greeting the table, taking long strides to get their with his shaking hand holding a pen, and it’s all routine and out of a script as he speaks to them.

“hi, i’m eddie and i’ll be your server today. can i start you off with any drinks today?” he asks, his voice so fake and chipper, as he puts the pen to the paper to start writing everything down.
“bout time, we’ve been waiting.” someone in the group shouts out, and eddie hopes to get it doesn’t show how much more he’s shaking now. he hates this, he really hates this, and he can’t even look up. he doesn’t want to see who shouted that, and he really doesn’t want to see richie’s face. he’s mortified, over that little comment.

“shut up.” mike speaks out, eddie doesn’t look up still but he recognizes his voice, and god is he thankful for mike fucking hanlon. “sorry eddie, i’ll just get a water tonight.”

that starts everyone taking turns for their drinks respectively. water, coke, milkshakes, etc, etc.

he doesn’t really care what most say, he just writes it down quickly, until the person he was looking forward to ordered.

that’s when he looked up, when richie began to speak, ready for some moment. ready for their eyes to lock into each other, see the curl of richie’s lip as he speaks, unspoken words between them.

that doesn’t come, richie stays looking towards veronica from when they spoke before, busting out a quick “chocolate milkshake.” before continuing his conversation with ronnie grogan.

eddie’s heart could have broken right then and there if they actually had something, because richie didn’t even look at him. nothing, he gave him nothing. not a hello, not a crude joke, not a flirtatious comment, not even fucking eye contact.

eddie is equally heartbroken and pissed, but he writes it down and moves on because he’s working and richie tozier owes him nothing. they’ve talked a few times, had a drunken moment and a milkshake, but nothing else. they weren’t really friends, they weren’t together, everything between them was in eddie’s (delusional, he was thinking) head. he knew that now, and so would stan by the end of the night.

he quickly gets the rest of the drinks down, only getting some kindness from beverly and mike, which he’s thankful for.

he’s about to walk away to get their drinks and serve others when beverly stopped him with a quick “eddie!”

it’s a good thing she’s near the end of the booth, making it easier for them to talk as they lean into each other to speak over the crowd.

“there’s another frat party tomorrow, you should come. i’ll text you the details and we can meet up there, and maybe we can all make plans to hang out sometime.” she spoke in his ear, and he thought her to be so nice for including him but he doesn’t think he’ll go.

the only good thing about the last frat party was the moment he had with richie, but now that he knew there was nothing what was the point. he didn’t want to tell beverly that, so he just gave her a simple “maybe.”

she tilts her head to the side, her red hair falling along with it, giving him a look. “i’m texting you the details and you better go.”

he might, for her.

he rolls his eyes at her in a friendly manner, making her chuckle as she turns back to her friends and he goes to get the drinks. it doesn’t take long to get the water and soft drinks, the milkshakes taking longer, but he gets it out to them quickly and rushes back to the kitchen to get others their food.

things go by quickly from there, and every time he goes to that table nothing exciting happens. they all ignore him, treat him as most do their waiters, only beverly and mike briefly talking to him.

still nothing from richie, and he’s starting to hate him in that moment.
he flirts with him every time he sees him, texts him to see if he’s going to be working that night, then ignores him and blatantly flirts with veronica grogan in front of him the entire time. he’s livid, and he regrets wanting a guy he knew he had no chance with all this time.

at least now the crowds are thinning out and he’s gotten everyone their food, so he has a brief moment to relax.

“eddie, stan and i are heading out.” ben speaks in his soft voice that could put him to sleep on a crazy night like this. “bill’s gonna wait here for you to be done, but we’ll see you later. thanks a lot eddie. bye.”

“bye, eddie. thanks!” stan reiterates after ben, the two walking out of the diner as he gives them a wave.

he was into richie, ben was into bev, and stan was into bill. they were all into the ones they couldn’t have, and eddie didn’t know who or what bill was into at the moment.

he hopes they don’t have to feel the way eddie’s feeling right now, and he’s feeling very dramatic at that moment for his thoughts. he doesn’t want them to feel how he feels, which is a sweet sentiment, but idiotic considering these feelings are all ones of his own devices.

he’s just glad the night is almost done, all he has to do is wait for everyone to leave and to clean up, then him and bill can go to the comfort of their apartment and go to sleep.

he goes to bill before he goes to grab the dirty plates on empty tables, guilty for making his friend sit there and wait to drive him home.

"thanks, bill. hopefully people will leave soon so we can get going, i don't want you to have to sit here alone." eddie speaks his thoughts, grabbing the plates at the table as he talks to his best friend and roommate.

"it's no problem, eddie. stop feeling so guilty about these things, it's what friends do. i'll probably sit at the bar waiting or go with bev, i'm all good." he gets out of the booth to make it easier for eddie to grab things, getting his wallet out to be ready to pay.

his coworker is working on the register mainly that night, knowing eddie will be busy cleaning. he always wants to clean, he doesn’t trust the rest to do it correctly, so he makes sure he has a clean rag when he cleans down the tables and the seats and he is such a pro at washing dishes now he can rinse those plates in a heartbeat.

which is what he does, trying to be even quicker that night, because after everything he really just wants to go home.

he watches people walk by him and to the register, each step he is more and more thankful for people leaving, even as he cringes at the touch of wet food in the dishwasher and his now raisiny hands.

it gets to the point where the only people left are the big group surrounding mike hanlon, featuring richie tozier. they slowly disperse until it’s just richie, beverly, and veronica. he thinks it’s because richie and beverly live together, and veronica is either going home with richie or getting a ride from him.

eddie ‘hates’ richie now, but he is still hoping it’s the latter. (please don’t take veronica home. please don’t get her into you’re bed. please don’t love her.)

beverly pays for the three as they make their way to his car, and eddie is filled with even more resentment.

“hey eddie, sorry to keep you here.” she gives him her sweet smile, naturally curved to one side every time, but always sweet.

“it’s fine, beverly, it’s my job.” he can’t fully force his fake work voice, because he’s so damn tired and so ready to get out of there.
“I still feel bad. Thank you, Eddie. You’re already my favorite waiter here, and I’m not just saying that because we’re friends.” Beverly tells him, and he’s still surprised that they’re ‘friends’. They aren’t truly friends, but if she wants to call it that he sure as hell won’t stop it. Who doesn’t want to be friends with Beverly Marsh?

She hands him all their cash combined, and he already let the girl working there leave with a promise that he would close up. Sometimes he’s just too damn nice, because he could be home by now if he just let her do everything.

That’s not the Eddie Kaspbrak way though, so here he is. “It’s fine, and here’s your change.” He hands her a dollar and a few cents, not lucid enough to have a full conversation.

“Thanks.” She takes it and shoves it into her bag, moving to leave. “See you tomorrow!” She shouts out the door, leaving him no time to say no, you probably won’t.

With her gone he is quick to clean everything up and shove the rinsed plates in the dishwasher and ready to lock up.

Bill was waiting in the car for him and the chef was gone, leaving Eddie alone in the dinner.

Double checking everything for a minute too long, and it seemed that was what fate had in mind, because during that extra minute the bell rang.

“Sorry, we’re closed.” Eddie mindlessly responded, going through the bottom of the bar to find where he had put his phone.

“I know, I forgot my wallet.” Hearing the deep voice, Eddie recognized it immediately, and he almost didn’t want to get up from the bar to see the face that belonged to it.

He did anyway, and there he was. Six foot something and the dream to Eddie Kaspbrak, there was Richie Tozier standing alone, in front of him, across the bar.

“Oh, uh, I didn’t see it but you can check your booth.” Eddie stumbles out, because even if he supposedly hated him now he was still flustered around him.

“Thanks...eds.” Richie smirks as he moves to the booth, knowing Eddie hated that, and Eddie didn’t even know what to say.

He just stood there, waiting for Richie to leave, grabbing for his phone. He really wanted Richie to leave already, he really didn’t want to be in a dark diner alone with the guy he could easily fall in love with that he knows could easily break his heart.

He tries not to look over at Richie looking for his wallet, knowing it’ll be hard to look away when he does.

The only way he’ll look at him is if he has to, which he does when Richie steps in front of him. “Got it, thanks eds.”

“Don’t call me eds.” He looks down, mumbling his response, not wanting to have to look at his dream guy he has no chance with.

“Oh, come on eds.” Richie has that teasing tone in his voice, and Eddie both loves and hates it.

Maybe if he looked up rather than at his feet he would’ve seen Richie come from behind into the worker side of the bar, and he’s not allowed, but Eddie doesn’t say anything because Richie’s hand is on his waist and he might pass out right then and there.

“Are you mad at me, eds?” Richie asks, his voice is deep and sexy and god Eddie suddenly has a reassurance of hope once more.

Eddie looks up after staring at the hand on his waist, so big in comparison to him and he doesn’t think he’ll ever get
over richie’s touch on him. He looks up, into this borderline black eyes that match his hair, and eddie feels like he’s back at that party with richie so close to him.

“no, no...i’m not mad at you.” it’s all bullshit because he was, but in this moment how can he be?

“good, i don’t want my eds hating me.” he gets how richie pulls so much, and he gets why veronica was all over him tonight. if richie keeps talking to him like this with that voice he’d be eating out of the palm of his hand.

he’s much shorter than him, and eddie has to look up to see him, and it’s dark in the diner and he can not see him fully and he thinks that’s perfect to describe whatever it is that they had.

dark and hard to see, and even harder to understand.

“your eds?” he questioned, remembering the last time he said that was at the party, and eddie was quick to thwart it.

now, not so much.

“hopefully.” richie squeezes eddie’s waist making him hold his breath at the feeling, but it’s all gone as his hand moves and he’s walking away. “bye eds.”

“bye, richie.” eddie gives in a breathy response, in awe at the moment.

it isn’t until richie walks out he realized what happened, and now he’s just left with more questions than answers and an optimistic and idiotic hope.
eddie goes to another party, and he is so fucked

sorry for the super late update!! i just wanted to let you guys know as i’ve seen a lot of comments asking if i was ever going to update and asking me not to abandon this, i won't guys!! it may take me a month and possibly much more to get updates out like this, but i always will update so don't worry about my abandoning this. i will try to finish this fic and i really can't see myself abandoning it, and if i do it isn't anytime soon. you don't need to comment about it if i don't update for a while, because i will eventually!!

eddie read the text in his mind, knowing beverly said she would text him the details but still shocked she did. usually it came through bill, who she was much closer with, but he appreciated her actually giving it to him. it made him feel really wanted there, and maybe go.

he was still unsure, indecisive, confused as to what was going on between him and richie and where he fell in the world of frat parties and studying all night.

did he go, in hopes that he’d find out what richie meant the night before? did he go, just to have fun with friends? did he go at all?

he needed to get a grip on his life, make a fucking decision, but he was torn.

he was so used to his regular, mundane life, and now he had to worry about parties straight out of animal house and the most popular boy in school being cryptic and playing his heart.

eddie always said he wanted this, but now he wished he could take it back because he thinks wishing is better than receiving and he can’t handle his heart being played with anymore.

then he remembers richie squeezing his side, calling him his eds, and suddenly he remembers why he signed up for all of this.

“eddie, are you coming tonight?” bill questions, obviously having gotten a similar text from beverly, who might as well be the advertiser for frat parties.

“not sure, i’m not much of a party goer and the last one was only okay.” eddie is so full of bullshit, because richie being so close to him that night was more than okay.

“beverly really wants you to go.” bill leaned on the doorway of eddie’s bedroom, almost filling it all with his height. “she really wants to get to know you, you should come.”
eddie thinks beverly is the type of person he should be friends with, that if they had the time alone together to really just hang out she could become his best friend. he appreciates her effort, because if she didn’t put any in he probably wouldn’t have.

“maybe. it matters if i get my homework done.” not that he had much, but it was enough of an excuse in case he did decide not to go.

“well i better not catch you watching she’s all that instead of doing homework, because you’re coming.” bill pointed at him, trying to get eddie out of his shell like a turtle.

“no 90s movies, i promise.” eddie smiled at him, knowing his saturday nights typically were spent with pretty woman and 10 things i hate about you. sometimes it was easier to live vicariously through the movies romance rather than get his own.

he wanted to be clueless, but he was more romy and michele’s high school reunion.

except he hopes by the time his real high school reunion comes he won’t have to lie to seem cool for once.

he doesn’t have time to be thinking of reunions that won’t be happening for another seven years, not when he has an essay to write and the schools radio show playing. he had to focus, because deep down his subconscious was begging to go to that party and get that work done so he could be stress free.

laptop open, radio turned up with a song he hadn’t heard before playing, and eddie was ready to work.

at least he will be as long as they only play music, because the conversations between records and miss marsh distracted him more than anything else could.

it had been so long since he had gotten to listen to the radio station, work and school work getting in the way now that he was taking control over his life, and he got to watch the show live now rather than on the radio.

he had to write about common illnesses in children then specify on one specifically, with a lot more elaboration he already had planned not only in his mind but in paper too. stan had taught him his fool proof guide to getting good grades and writing the perfect essay, more importantly staying organized, and if it weren’t for stan his anxiety would have been on overdrive for the past few years.

the sound of his fingers hitting the keys were muddled out by the radio, though his eyes stayed on the screen as he quickly typed, copying statements from his rough draft and knowing he would have to ask bill to edit it for him after. he didn’t like most people looking at his schoolwork, he wasn’t a writer like bill, but since bill was a writer he was the perfect candidate to edit his essay to assure a good grade for him.

without his friends college would have kicked his ass long ago, and he couldn’t be more thankful for his support system.

“we hoped you like that song, it was requested by a mister james to a lovely lady named veronica. hopefully it isn’t the same veronica i woke up with last week cuz then this would be awkward as hell.” richie’s voice comes in like static after the song ends, making eddie’s typing soften, his fingers move slower across the keyboard as he attempted to work but keep his ears open as well.

he couldn’t deny jealousy filling his veins and a gut punch of emotions hit his heart. he shook his head to attempt to shake it off, he had work to do, and he had no reason to be hurt by that.

“records, do you have to promote your sexual escapades every chance you get?” miss marsh questioned, a teasing and annoyed tone at once.

“yes, of course. i have to make sure the audience knows that not only do i get a lot off ass and pussy, but that i’m open
for many in case i have some audience members thirstin for me.” richie spoke, and he was right, because eddie was one of probably many audience members thirsting for him.

“you are so gross, richie.” marsh laughed, making eddie smile as he heard it, thinking he needed to text her soon about the party.

“hey, it’s records when we’re on air, and don’t act so innocent marsh. i’ve heard you moaning in your bedroom, it is right next to mine. i hope it’s from an actual person causing that and not just your fingers.” records teased, going a bit too far for eddie’s tastes. he could typically handle richie’s inappropriate nature, but when he got too detailed eddie found it tasteless. he could only imagine beverly’s embarrassment, but he definitely could hear it.

“well tonight the only noises you’ll be hearing is you choking on your own blood when i kill you.” beverly threatened, laughing along with it, though he could tell she was embarrassed.

“you know i’m not into blood play, beverly.” richie changed his voice as he said this, not one of his over dramatic accents, but something different. eddie couldn’t quite put his finger on it.

“play the next song before you say something you’re going to regret, records.” beverly’s voice was the embodiment of rolling ones eyes, which seemed to always be the case with richie.

“more like something you’ll wish i hadn’t said, i live my life with no regrets. no regrets know what i’m sayin.” his last sentence was in a voice, something eddie was sure was a reference to something he didn’t understand. “miss marsh here is right though, as we now need to put on another song. here is africa by toto.”

while eddie missed hearing the two talking, richie’s voice particularly, he enjoyed the song and was glad he would be able to concentrate on his writing fully once more, even if he was singing along to the song.

almost an hour later eddie finally finished a rough draft of his essay, having listened to a mixture of the music and laughter of records and marsh throughout it all, and letting out a large huff of air as he finally finished his work. saving it in word and shutting his laptop down, he moved out of his bedroom and into the living room where bill would be.

“hey.” eddie took a seat next to him on the couch, bill had been watching the brady bunch reruns. “why are you watching this?”

“nothing else on.” bill replied monotonously, taking a bite out of the bag of chips he was eating.

“i can think of a million and one other things to watch than the drama between jan and her sister.” eddie scoffed, never a fan of these types of shows.

“whatever, are you done with your work?” bill questioned, eyes still on the screen.

“yeah, for now at least.” eddie moved his legs up and curled them underneath his thighs to keep warm.

he moved the bags of chips towards eddie, but with a swish of his hands he said no, going back to their conversation.

“have you come to a decision about tonight?”

eddie’s lips quirked up slightly, a questioning look in his big brown eyes. “i’m thinking about it.” followed with a “maybe.”

“well it’s happening soon, so you better decide.” bill told him, eyes on the screen as jan had a tantrum.

“are stan and ben going?” eddie questioned, knowing that would affect his decision.
“of course, we always go together. you don’t come you’re going to slowly be kicked out of the group.” bill teased, hitting eddie in the side with his elbow.

“ow.” eddie rubbed his side. “how awkward will it be when you kick me out of the group but live with me?”

“Well i’ll obviously kick you out of the apartment along with kicking you out of the group, don’t be dumb eddie.” bill’s mouth was quirked to a side smile, teasing him.

“Oh yes, how stupid of me to think i would be allowed to still live in the apartment i pay rent for. excuse my stupidity.” eddie’s fake apology was spoken with a fake voice.

“It shall be excused, for now.” another jab into his side, leaving eddie slightly annoyed.

“Well i’ll text the boys about the party.” eddie responded, taking his phone out to text in the group chat between the four losers.

“Oh, the boys.” typical banter between the two best friends.

“Shut up bill.” he smiled as he spoke, texting away.

to go to the party or not to go, that is the question

Eddie typed out sending in the group chat with the now ill fitted title of ‘losers’, hearing bill’s phone beep next to him as he got the text.

Isn’t bill supposed to be the pretentious writer of the group? stan sent out, followed by another text from him. go

“Hey.” he heard bill mumble under his breath as he read stan’s text, reminding eddie of stan’s crush on bill, and the fact that he hadn’t done anything to help.

Maybe he could try now? he didn’t know how to help other peoples love lives very well, he could barely handle his own.

“Stan hurt your feelings there, bill?” he questioned, eyes still trained on his phone as he saw ben typing.

You should go eddie! it’ll be fun! he wrote out, eddie smiling at how excited his friend always seemed to be.

“No, i’m just offended.” bill spoke, his lips in a pout.

“Mhm, sure bill.” eddie smirked, typing a response to the group chat.

“What’s that mhm supposed to mean, eddie?” bill taunted, leaning in to get an answer out of him.

“Oh, nothing, you just seem a bit dejected by it since stan said it.” eddie was really trying here.

Bill gave a small chuckle and leaned back into the couch, focusing on the tv. “You can be so silly sometimes, eddie.”

Eddie didn’t respond to bill, rather opening his phone once more to respond to beverly’s text.

I’m coming.

The four friends walk into the party having all driven together, which in hindsight eddie realized was not the smartest idea in case any of them wanted or needed to leave early for any reason. ben already said he would be the designated driver, he always was, and the four boys made their way in to the already lit party.
the room was seemingly foggy, dense, hard to see. he didn't know if it was from a fog machine itself or from the amount of smoking that had inevitably happened, though he knew the dense feeling was from the sweat dripping out of the drunkards pores as they grinded out of rhythm to the music blaring through the speakers, mainly rap with an occasional throw back song for kicks.

eddie did not fit in with the crowd, feeling like laney boggs at the party in she’s all that. he liked going to say he went, to put himself out there and watch the crowds, but he could never imagine himself out in the crowd smoking weed and grinding on a stranger.

the only time he would ever do it is if stan did, and he only says that because he knows stan would never.

“let’s find beverly.” bill spoke, using his height to their advantage as he looked around the room for her.

eddie watched ben as he said this, rubbing his hands together out of anxiousness at the thought of seeing beverly, and eddie wondered if bill was the only one in their group not hopelessly and haplessly in love with someone they couldn’t have.

he’d have to ask later, he was starting to make a habit of getting crossed in his friends love lives.

“talk to her.” his whispered into ben’s ear, just enough for him to hear.

“i don’t know what you mean.” ben spoke, trying so hard to play it off like it was nothing.

“ben.” eddie spoke, head tilting to the side knowingly.

ben looked down at eddie, eyes heartbreaking and so obviously in love with a girl he barely knew except that in his heart they were meant to be.

“eddie, you know i can’t.” he was crippled from talking to her due to his shyness and her popularity.

“yes, you can. she’s really nice, very easy to talk to.” she had easily integrated him into talking to her with ease, and he was almost as shy as ben when it came to such college high society.

“i know i just...can’t.” ben spoke, and eddie saw too much of his own emotions in his friends eyes.

“you can and you will, and you have to.” eddie patted him on the back as they followed stan and bill’s leads, hoping he helped in some way.

following the lead in a row similar to ducks, bill was the leader as he brought them to their fiery haired friend that was the sole reason he was there that night.

“hey bev.” eddie gave his greeting, going in to hug her hello.

“i was worried you would end up backing out, but i’m glad you’re not.” beverly hugged him back, surprisingly alone as she leaned against a chair.

“why are you alone?” bill questioned, everyone knowing it was an odd sight to behold.

“got here earlier than all my friends i guess. one friend is getting me a drink right now but richie and others are coming later on.” she explained, leaning more on bill now, which eddie could tell must have had ben’s heart breaking once more.

“well you’ve got us here.” there it was, ben finally speaking, a bit too enthusiastic but sweet nonetheless.

beverly gave him a sweet smile and a head tilted, an obvious look in her face as she didn’t quite recognize ben, and eddie didn’t miss bill whispering his name into her ear.
“thanks, ben.” she gave as much of a sincere reply to him as she could, considering she was confused as to who he was.

eddie felt guilty now, telling ben to shoot his shot, and now she didn’t even remember who he was. he knew she knew of him, having seen them all together so often, but with ben having never said a word to her (at least when eddie was around), it was no wonder she forgot his name.

eddie would have to fix this, otherwise ben would never try again.

“You know bev, i would ask you to dance later but i’m a horrible dancer.” eddie began, thinking something like this would work in one of his favorite 90s rom coms so it might work now. “but ben is a great dancer, so maybe he could take my place?”

he looked between bev and ben, witnessing a shade of red similar to beverly’s hair make it’s way on ben’s cheeks, and bev’s usual kind smile.

“sure, whenever he wants i’m down.” she spoke, to ben but through eddie, and god he hoped this would work.

“Well shit, i didn’t know you would have a harem surrounding you when i got back bev, i would have gotten more drinks.” came an unfamiliar voice, and eddie might have passed out at the sight of the owner if he wasn’t already so far up richie’s ass.

he was tall (not as tall as richie), and handsome. his skin was tan, he looked like he could have been a surfer with the way his naturally dark skin was so sunkissed he seemed to glow, and he was gorgeous.

“thanks.” bev responded to him as she took a drink from him. “these are some friends, bill, eddie, stan, and ben.”

she remembered ben, there was something.

“nice to meet you guys, i’m peter.” he shook their hands, his overcoming eddie’s in size. “i can go back and get you guys some drinks, if you’d like?”

he was kind to offer, and eddie didn’t deny his attraction to him nor that he felt he shouldn’t be left alone to get drinks for strangers.

“I’ll go with you, make it easier.” eddie quickly offered, feeling too enthusiastic like ben.

“thanks, eddie right?” peter asked, looking down to eddie’s big brown eyes.

“yeah, eddie.” smiling, glad for a distraction from richie.

“Well what do you guys want?” peter asked the three boys surrounding them, which followed with a beer from bill, and two waters for ben and stan.

“Well that won’t be too hard.” eddie spoke, as if getting any drink would be hard. “let’s go.”

following behind peter’s taller form into the kitchen, eddie was really no help at all other than to hold the cups as peter’s the one who knew where everything was.

“So you’re friends with bev?” peter asked as he got the drinks.

“Yeah, i met her through my friend bill.” eddie responded, leaning against the island in the center of the kitchen.

“I met her freshman year, but we barely see each other. isn’t that funny?” peter asks, laughing at his statement.

“It is a big college.” eddie commented, trying to say something and not sound like a complete loser.
“like, how have i not seen a guy as cute as you before?” peter questioned, smirking down at eddie as he poured bill’s beer, leaving eddie choking on nothing.

now it was his turn to blush, because he did not expect this to happen.

“oh, um, well.” eddie couldn’t hold back a smile on his face, unsure what to say as he forced himself more into the island out of embarrassment.

peter smiled as he watched eddie’s reaction, obviously enjoying it, and passing eddie two cups. “well here are the drinks, let’s head back.”

eddie could only nod at that, following his lead once more back to their little group.

“here you go.” eddie mumbled to stan and ben as he passed them their drinks, watching as peter took a sip of his own.

“So eddie, do you want to go dance with me?” peter asked, pointing to the crowd.

“Oh, eddie isn’t a good dancer.” bev cut in, teasing him on his earlier comment.

“I don’t mind teaching him some moves.” peter spoke to bev, but looked down at eddie with a predatory look that made him weak in the knees, and slightly tempted to take him up on his offer.

“If anyone is going to be dancing with eds, it’s me.” came a new voice, one eddie would recognize anywhere, and made his heart leap a thousand times more than peter ever could.

richie ‘records’ tozier.

“richie, about time.” beverly spoke first, going in to give him a hug, while eddie continued to stare up at him with a shocked look in his eyes and his jaw most likely dropped.

“Sorry, lost track of time at my little pregame with betty.” and there goes eddie’s heart, dropping once more at the mention of possibly another one of richie’s sexual escapades. “But what is this about my eddie dancing?”

“I’m not yours.” eddie responded, unsure what richie’s intentions were with comments like that in front of not only his friends but richie’s too.

“Sure you aren’t, eds, keep saying that.” richie wrapped his arm around eddie’s smaller frame, giving him a noogie and messing up his brushed hair.

“Stop it!” eddie’s hands hit richie’s as they ruined his hair, all perfectly placed like bree van de kamp.

“Oh hush, eds. you don’t like anything i do.” richie let up, allowing eddie to look up to his face and that smug look he had pouted his lips down at eddie.

“Well maybe i just don’t like you.” eddie was in one of the rare moments of bravery, perhaps too much gumption, and a bit of 10 things i hate about you in his system. Pretending they hated each other worked well for them, maybe it would for him?

“Now i know that just isn’t true, my sweet eds. you like me, i know you do.” cocky richie, always so confident that whatever he said was true, and in this situation it was.

“You’re delusional if you think that.” eddie spit back, trying to seem intimidating despite his height and innocent features, though he has been told he could be terrifying if he wanted to.

“Hopefully by the end of the night i’ll take something that will give me delusions.” richie scoffed, looking around the party seemingly for said thing. “Wanna come with me to get a drink?”
this question reminded eddie that peter was still there, now looking uncomfortable as he watched the two.

“fine.” he may pretend that he hated richie, but by god he would do anything to be near him a moment longer.

“see! if you hated me you wouldn’t have agreed.” richie spoke as he began to watch, looking at eddie as he took lead with eddie quickly following behind.

“maybe i’m just too nice to say no.” eddie responded, knowing that sounded like a load of bullshit.

“i’ll pretend i believe that.” richie teased, leading him the same way back into the now empty kitchen.

“make this quick.” eddie crossed his arms and leaned against the island once more, trying to play it cool and make his checking out richie discreet.

he looked good today, tight sweatshirt with their college logo on it and jeans a bit too tight, both sexy and cuddle-able at the same time, which drove eddie crazy.

he didn’t know if he wanted to jump him or be held by him in that moment.

“do you want anything?” richie asked, a regular tone free of teasing for that moment.

“no thanks, i’m not thirsty.” nor did he feel like drinking.

he saw richie bop his head as a response, his curls bouncing along with it, making eddie give a small smile at the sight. it was cute, his hair curled when it grew out but never like richie’s, all bouncy and cute.

“so who was that guy asking you to dance?” richie asked, and eddie was surprised to find no weird voices or teasing tone attached to it, surprised he could go so long without doing so.

“some friend of bev’s, just wanted to dance. i don’t really dance though, so i wasn’t going to.” eddie didn’t know why he was explaining to richie, it was killing his ‘cool’ persona that he had taken on in this moment.

“good, i might not have been able to see you and do this with you if you had taken him up on his offer.” with a drink in hand, eddie thought they would have left but richie stayed.

“didn’t know you were so desperate to spend time with me.” eddie teased now, putting bait for richie though he didn’t know what response he expected himself.

“well you are my eds, and my favorite waiter.” richie teased, though rather than a friendly way there was some tension with it, his voice seeming deeper and his eyes darker as they looked into eddie’s own. eddie hadn’t even noticed him come in close, put his arms on either side of him on the island, trapping him once more like the last party they were at.

“why am i your favorite?” eddie asked, trying to keep his cool but knowing his resolve was deteriorating quickly.

“well you’re so damn cute, how can you not be?” it was meant to come out teasingly, but as richie’s dark eyes gazed down at eddie’s lips it came out breathy and made eddie’s eyes want to fall closed as he imagined what could be happening.

“i don’t think that’s reason enough.” eddie didn’t know what to say, distracted by dark eyes and plump lips and a tension so palpable and so hot it was making him sweat.

“i think so.” richie stared, just stared at him as he lowered himself to eddie’s level and fucking smirked.

eddie was going to pass out, being this close to him and not knowing what was going to happen might be the death of him.
“what are we doing? what are you doing?” eddie questioned, his voice small and confused, though he just wanted richie to take charge and kiss him.

“whatever you want.” richie spoke, teasing in a way no longer cruel but hot.

eddie didn’t know what to say, and he didn’t know how to take charge, just left his mouth agape as he tried to find some words and screamed with his eyes for richie to kiss him.

it seemed richie got the message, because that’s just what he did.

leaning down and cupping eddie's face with one hand he pressed those pink lips eddie had dreamed of so many times against his own, his other hand grabbing eddie’s waist and pulling him close.

eddie let out a gasp as this happened, shocked and excited and not sure if he believed this was happening, but kissed him back and let his hands roam all over richie as they tried to find somewhere to land until they went into his hair as what might have been a simple kiss turned heated and everything he ever dreamed of.

he couldn’t believe this was happening, richie’s hand on his bare skin as it went under his shirt, hot against his waist and his lips hot against his face, their bodies touching but clothed.

he was giving into his full desire, and even moved in for more when richie finally pulled away, hands still on each other and foreheads touching as they both breathed heavy.

when eddie was finally able to open his eyes he saw richie’s already were, fiery and passionate, with a devils smirk on his lips.

“we should do this more often.” his breathy voice spoke out to eddie.

if he thought he was fucked before, he didn’t realize what this would mean.

didn’t stop him from shaking his head yes though.
yo-yo

eddie was on the moon, and everyone could see it. he felt like he was walking on a cloud, drifting through heaven with every breath he took. he now got that song, heaven is a place on earth, or at least it is now that he’s kissed richie tozier.

“what’s up with you?” stan asks one day, sitting across from him as the group went out for dinner.

“what do you mean?” eddie questioned, glaring at stan, a look that said ‘you know damn well what’s up, and i’ll tell you later.’

he’s starting to regret allowing stan to know, but in turn he somewhat knows his secret crush.

“nevermind.” stan smiles, mischievous, glad he knows.

“you guys are being weird” ben points out, wrapping pasta around his fork and eating some.

“no we’re not.” eddie and stan say in unison, both cursing themselves in their mind for seeming so suspicious.

“weird.” bill mutters under his breath, laughing and elbowing eddie for it. “anyway, back to the conversation of stan getting his own car.”

“if you think i have the money to get my own car you’re crazy.” stan shot back, rolling his eyes and taking a drink from his water bottle.

“well if you stopped wasting your money on uber you could use that to save up for a car.” bill pointed back, and as eddie watched he started to see more of them together.

and he started to see more that stan was much better at hiding crushes than eddie.

“if i stopped using uber and waited who knows how long to get my own car, i would never have a way to get around.” stan spoke, an informal debate going on between the two.

“well i’ll just give you rides, stan. you know that.” bill’s voice was softer as he spoke, looking into stan, and hell even eddie felt the tension between the two.

“really?” stan questioned, looking up at bill with stars in his eyes and his heart on his sleeve.

eddie liked this, looking at a romance develop, it was almost as good as being in his own.

and looking at ben, who loved love so much and was so happy for all his friends, and not getting someone to love on his own.

eddie owed it to ben to help him with beverly, ben deserved that at least.

so he did that, pulled out his phone and began to text beverly.

hey, my friend ben needs some new clothes and i’m horrible at shopping. wanna help?

never did he think he’d feel so comfortable texting beverly marsh something like this, and yet here he was.

setting his phone aside as he awaited his reply he went back to the conversation with his friends.

“well thanks bill, it means a lot.” stan looked down, trying to hide his blushing cheeks underneath his curls.
“no problem, stan the man.” bill reached over and messed up stan’s hair as he said this, inevitably starting a fight with stan who always kept himself perfectly groomed, but eddie knew he secretly loved it.

eddie’s new favorite song is so emotional, whitney houston of course, because now that he continues to think back on it that was playing when richie kissed him at the party.

he feels ridiculous, over emotional, and maybe a bit psycho to go this far and inevitably listen to it on repeat and pretend that richie’s lips are on his once more.

he is crazy, he hates it, but he can’t stop thinking about it.

richie richie richie richie richie richie richie richie.

it’s all the runs through his mind since the kiss, more so than usual.

he feels so crazy, and delusional maybe, because a kiss in a frat party doesn’t mean a future and yet it means something and he can only be hopeful.

he was never very optimistic, but suddenly he’s found himself all sunshine and rainbows and ready for hope in the world.

maybe that’s what potential love does, or at least a damn good kiss.

he had a few hours to get to work, until then relaxing in his apartment alone until bill came back to give him a ride, and for once in his life not having any work to do. he was tied between sitting in bed and wistfully listening to the radio station, or watching tv.

hell, he knew what to do like the back of his hand, he had been obsessed with the radio station for two years and knew marsh and records wouldn’t begin speaking for another hour. it was just music right now, and he could get in an episode of a show before going to listen to two people he now considered friends.

or at least beverly was a friend, he had no idea what richie was to him, except that there was something.

sitting upon his shared couch with bill, usually filled with all his friends but alone to himself for once, and making it easy for him to watch whatever he wanted without a fight from his friends. failure to launch or pretty woman?

pretty woman.

playing the movie and risking missing some of their radio show to finish it, which he considered some self control on his part. a well needed break from his richie tozier addiction, one only heightened since he got a taste of his lips.

though his control wasn’t complete, because once the movie ended and the credits played, he jumped to his bed and turned the radio on, losing himself in the voice of the boy he was crazy for.

he woke up with a jolt, having dozed off after the show and still in his jeans with drool falling out of his mouth. he recoiled in disgust, rushing to the bathroom to clean himself and wash his hands, even his own saliva disgusting him.

he was so busy getting clean he almost forgot what it was that woke him up, the loud ping from his phone and an awaiting text on the screen.

wiping his hands dry and clean he eyed his phone, following it like a moth to the light, confused as to who could be texting him at this time. it’s only when he sees the name he remembers the text he sent early to beverly.

yeah, wanna go this weekend?

perfect, things were going just as he planned. if he was going to be happy shouldn’t his friends be too? it’d be unfair for him to be the only one finally getting some attention from his unattainable crush.
see you then!

life seemed so perfect, felt so perfect, the way richie’s lips felt perfect against his own. eddie was in heaven.

too bad he didn’t remember they weren’t official, they had only kissed once, but even just that tiny kiss was enough
to blind him from the potential that things might not go how he expected.

only time would tell, but either way eddie kaspbrak wasn’t prepared for the future in the slightest, he was too busy
living in his perfect present.

and just when he thought nothing could get better than this, that familiar ding of his phone getting a notification rang
in his ear, fully shooting him into the sky.

mind if i bring richie?

he responded right away to beverly’s text, not even caring about seeming cool anymore.

not at all.

“hey ben,” eddie started his devious plan with positive intentions breeding through, planting the seeds to set
everything up. “wanna go shopping with me this weekend? we both need some new clothes anyway, and richie and
beverly are coming.”

he tried to make it sound nonchalant, like richie and beverly were the same as stan and bill, not the two people they
had been crushing on since they first saw them walk by. it was nice to say it like that, making eddie think of a future
where it is casual, where they are normal friends or maybe more. if this plan went the way he wanted, then they would
be.

ben choked on the water eddie had given him, the liquid splashing on his face and falling to his shoes, and he rushed
to get a towel as he wiped his face clean and coughed the rest. eddie tried to suppress a laugh, knowing he would have
given the same reaction, but he couldn’t hold a chuckle back enough.

“oh thanks, asshole.” ben teased, finally composing himself and shoving eddie for laughing at his misfortune.

this only made eddie laugh more, tiny tears falling out of his eyes and he quickly wiped them away and took a deep
breath to calm down. “sorry, sorry, but it was funny. you gotta admit that,” he teased, giving an amiable smile to ben.
“anyway, do you wanna go or not?”

eddie can see the apprehension radiating off ben, and he was more sympathetic for his plight that he himself has been
through so many times than annoyed at him. ben looked down at his feet, like he was thinking it over but eddie could
see the wave of insecurity flash over his eyes.

“i don’t know eddie, it might be weird?” he tries to give a reason why not to go out of nervousness, but they both
know there’s no real reason that could work.

“Oh come on, ben. it won’t be weird. i’ll be there, and beverly’s so nice, and you’ve already met. it’s going to be fine.”
it was weird for eddie to be like this, but the world be damned if anyone got in the way of him seeing richie that night.

ben’s demeanor didn’t change even after eddie’s attempt at comforting words, and he continued to repeat “i don’t
know.” to him.

“ben, i already told beverly you were going. you can’t back out, please. it’ll be fun.” eddie was never once to
advocate for going outside ones comfort zone, but desperate times called for desperate measures. anyway, his most
uncomfortable zones had to do more with germs than socializing. he can go shopping with them, he’d just make sure
he had a mini hand sanitizer in his fanny pack.
“are you sure?” he questioned, but eddie could see he was finally getting through with him.

“yes, i’m sure, and if you hate it we can find some excuse to leave early.” eddie might have to do that himself, not fully sure how things would go with richie and him after their last interaction.

ben rubbed his face with his hands, hiding it behind them for a second before dragging them down with a huff. “fine, i’ll go.”

eddie almost squealed with excitement, almost, but he kept his cool and just smiled at him. “it’ll be fun. trust me.”

the rest of the days leading up to saturday maintained his normal schedule; work and study. all he did was work and study, that’s all he’d done for so many years of his life, but this saturday would be a reprieve from the mundane routine of his life and hopefully further push him into a world where he felt fulfilled or like he was doing something to be remembered.

or at least he would get to hang out with his crush, which is something he never could’ve said before. he had requested the full day of saturday off, not wanting to feel rushed or have to ruin what he hoped would be a good day with rowdy customers and cleaning sticky tables. while he had gotten much better with his hypochondria, the idea still threatened to push him into a borderline panic attack.

him and ben were waiting at the mall food court for their more popular counterparts, both of them twiddling their hands with nervous jitters, trying to find something to do as a distraction. they could barely even talk to each other, so busy being in their own heads to talk about their same feelings to each other.

finally they spotted them, both their postures immediately straightening as their eyes were drawn to the bright red hair like a flame that stood out amongst the crowd. eddie quickly looked to the right of her, being drawn to the boy who towered over her, black curls unruly and unkempt, and begging for eddie to touch them.

the two pairs waved at each other as they drew near, eddie and ben much more uncomfortable as richie and bev moved with ease, seemingly not a thought in their head. if anything this made the two more nervous, and while they both tried not to show it on their face, it was plastered all over it.

“hi guys.” bev greeted them, giving them each a hug, and eddie could see ben shaking at something as minimal as that.

both of the boys said hi together, and it felt like slow motion as eddie turned to look up at the one he had really been looking forward to seeing. there he was, the man who had taken over his mind and clouded all his judgement.

“hi richie.” eddie stuttered out, wanting to smack himself for seeming so pathetic.

richie hadn’t even fully looked at him until then, but when he did eddie almost melted on sight. those big brown eyes warm as they looked down at him, scanning his body with a look eddie had never seen before but it made his knees weak and he knew it was something good.

his smile was always wide, his big mouth causing it to be, and eddie found that fitting that not only did he have a big mouth figuratively but literally too. perfect for trash talking, heart stopping smiles, and the best kiss of his life.

“hey eddie.” richie’s voice came out almost in a sing song tune, teasing, flirting in such a subtle way only eddie could tell (and maybe beverly if she really focused). if eddie had taken a step back from richie’s deep brown eyes he would see beverly was too busy attempting a conversation with ben who mumbled under his breath as he tried to find the proper words in response to her. richie’s cool voice was broadcasted to the entire school, but for now it was just eddies to hear.

that tiny part of his brain that was reckless (and never got used) was now wishing it was just them two. wishing he had reached out to richie himself and asked him to hang out, or on a date, but he knew without the other two there he
would be like ben and just clam up around his crush.

then again he didn’t need to worry about his words if his lips were pressed against richie’s.

he wanted to chastise himself mentally for these thoughts, feeling dirty for focusing too intently on richie’s lips and wanting nothing more than to leave this place and make out in his car. he had to remind himself there was no reason to feel shame, they were technically adults, and his mother wasn’t here to judge him.

“it’s nice seeing you again.” eddie stumbled out while in his trance at richie’s mouth, finally breaking himself out of it to turn to beverly, “you too beverly.”

she smiles back at him, glad to have someone break the awkwardness between her and ben.

“well let’s chow down, i’m starving and if we don’t get some food in me my stomach will revolt.” richie rushed to the group, imitating the growls of his stomach as he rubbed it, only stopping when bev slapped his hand away with a quiet laugh.

“i’m supposed to help ben shop, and i’m not that hungry. we can, if you want though?” beverly turned to ask ben, who was glaring down at eddie for using him as the excuse for them all to hang out.

eddie could only hope ben would open his eyes and see he was helping him.

“um i’m not really hungry, we can shop.” ben forced out, unable to fully look at beverly only looking at her through brief glances, meanwhile his eyes begged eddie to come with them and not leave him alone with his crush.

eddie opened his mouth to agree and leave with them, but the feeling of richie’s arm falling around his shoulder and his loud voice cutting through stopped him dead in his tracks. “you two can shop and ed and i can eat. don’t make me eat alone, come on.”

he looked up at richie, who towered over him and who’s arm felt like a weight on his shoulders, as if he was an angel. an angel with unruly hair, a big mouth and crooked nose, but an angel none the less. his angel, if he was going to go full cheese (which he always did).

he couldn’t even bring himself to respond, just nodding his head in agreement and happy to see that made richie smile even more.

“okay, eddie and i will go eat while you two shop, perfect. i’ll text you when we’re done and want to meet up?” richie asked beverly, his arm not leaving eddie yet.

“sounds good, see ya later.” bev responded, smiling and waving at them, while ben gave eddie a look of distress.

ben, this is good for you, and this is definitely good for eddie.

once they were alone richie picked up his long legs and began to strut towards the food, his arm around eddie’s shoulder dragging him along and forcing him to go at the same speed of him, of course eddie didn’t mind. “come on eds, we’ll have some fun.”

“some fun just watching you eat?” he questioned, trying to ignore the racing heart and anxiety in his veins and talk to richie like he wasn’t the guy he had been crushing on for forever.

“well after i eat we can have some fun, duh.” richie stated as if it was so obvious, which it might have been to anyone but eddie.

“fun doing what?” it came off flirty to richie, like eddie was playing coy on purpose, when in actuality he was truly just clueless.
richie cocks his head to the side as he looks down at him, ordering his food quickly before answering his question. “what do you think?”

eddie honestly still had no idea, but stayed silent at the risk of sounding like an idiot in front of him.

they stayed silent as richie waited for his food, which wasn’t too long before he grabbed the tray and brought them to one of the few empty tables in the food court. looking around eddie wondered how anyone could eat here, the tables were rarely clean and people always left a mess, and it was so crowded. just breathing in the air here made him feel sick and want to run to the bathroom to throw up, but years of trying to heal from those instincts stopped him and instead he rubbed his hands on his thighs as a nervous tick.

“are you okay?” richie questioned, his mouth full and making eddie grimace in disgust.

“i’m fine, and you shouldn’t talk with your mouth open.” no crush would stop him from chastising such disgusting behavior.

richie answered back with a full, open smile showcasing every bit of food that was in his mouth. eddie shrieked with disgust making richie laugh, and if it was anyone else eddie would be running for the hills but since it was richie it was kind of...charming. how little he cared, how no stress or anxiety got to him, and how he didn’t care what people thought of him. it was refreshing, it was everything eddie liked about him.

eddie was surprised at the speed at which richie could eat, and the amount of food he could fit in his mouth. he ate like there was no time for it, like he had to rush and do it quickly, and not leave even the smallest bit on his plate.

he wiped his mouth quickly with a napkin as a pathetic attempt to get clean, getting up without a word and throwing the food away and setting the tray down. he walked away, leaving eddie to chase after him with plenty of questions.

“do you want to text beverly or do you want me to? or do you want me to text ben? so we know where to meet up with them?” he rushed the questions out quickly, the speed at which richie walked creating an odd sense of urgency.

richie walked through one of those doors that were spread around malls that were for employees only and didn’t lead to any stores rather the hallways things were exported. eddie had no time to ask what they were doing there as he followed him in before he felt his back be pressed up against the wall and richie’s lips crash onto him.

he shrieked at the suddenness of it all, his back hurting a little from the sudden force but all that was numbed once he realized who it was that was kissing him. maybe dreams do come true, and maybe they come true multiple times, and somehow kissing richie got even better.

richie was crouched down to meet eddie at his shorter height, making it able for eddie to wrap his arms around his neck and card his fingers through richie’s curly tangles.

his heart was racing so fast he thought it would burst out of his chest, both because richie was kissing him and out of fear that at any minute a worker could come in and yell at them or ban them from life. when looking at the two options, the fact that he was kissing richie made the risk of getting in trouble so worth it.

they only pulled away once they were out of breath and richie’s back ached from bending over to meet eddie’s height. eddie could feel his cheeks burning up, quickly touching them with the back of his palm to feel how hot they were and to hide the blush from richie, who was already back on his phone texting someone.

“bev’s on the second floor, let’s meet up with them.” hearing how quickly he changed subjects and moved on from what had just happened was disheartening for eddie, leaving him to wonder what exactly had just happened.

he stood where he was as richie went back to the door to leave, turning to look back and wait for eddie to follow. he did silently, dejected and hurt and ready to leave. he reached the door, waiting for richie to move the handle and let them out, because being so close to him was suffocating after all that just happened in such a short amount of time.
his body tensed up as he felt richie’s hot breath on his ear, whispering something down to him. “i hate to leave, because you’re just so addicting.”

every time he thinks he’s out, richie draws him back in again.

then again, eddie doesn’t mind being played like a yo yo if richie keeps kissing him like that.

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