she said that i don't look like me no more

by pondify

Summary

Finally, Brooke sighs. “Jeremy,” she begins, and he tenses. “I don’t think this is a good idea.”

Notes

sorry it's been a minute since i last updated! things have been crazy recently!

i encourage you to go check out the_doom_dahlia's fic "counsel", which is based off of this series and consequently inspired this part. it's an incredible fic!

i hope you enjoy! feedback is always appreciated!

(title is from matt maeson's "cringe")

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by counsel by The_Doom_Dahlia

Brooke Lohst is one of the wisest people Jeremy knows. The blonde girl is gentle and usually soft-spoken, but Jeremy knows she’s unflinchingly loyal to the people she cares about. And she would
never, ever tell a secret that someone had trusted her with.

They often come to each other for advice, and this time is no exception. Jeremy’s hesitant to tell anyone, at first, but the situation with Michael is escalating quickly, snowballing out of control. And he trusts Brooke wholeheartedly.

But that doesn’t mean he’s going to like what she tells him.

She’s currently curled up on one of the beanbags in Jeremy’s bedroom, wearing one of his cardigans and resting her chin on her hand. Her hair is braided over one shoulder, and her grey eyes are thoughtful. Jeremy fidgets anxiously, waiting for her response to the story he’s just spilled to her.

Finally, Brooke sighs. “Jeremy,” she begins, and he tenses at the use of his full name, which she rarely uses. “I don’t think this is a good idea.”

“Why not?” he asks defensively, shoulders rising a little.

She tilts her head. “This isn’t healthy for either of you,” she says. “You’re both my friends. I don’t want to see either of you hurt, and I can tell it’s hurting you.” At Jeremy’s frown, she softens a little, reaching over to take his hand. “Jeremy, do you want my advice?”

He simply shrugs, not looking at her.

“I’m not judging you or anything,” she says. “There’s nothing, like, wrong with what you and Michael are doing. But anytime there’s feelings involved in something like this, it’s kind of guaranteed that someone is going to get hurt. I know it’s fucking hard, having feelings, and you feel like you can’t do anything about it. But I don’t think it’s worth it. At the very least, you should tell him.”

Inexplicably, Jeremy’s eyes are stinging by the time she finishes talking. He inhales through the pain in his chest, shaking his head. “I can’t tell him.”

“Why not?”

“Because he’s going to fucking hate me!” Jeremy blinks rapidly, his eyes blurring. Annoyed with himself, he digs the heel of his palm into his eyes, trying to get rid of the tears. He laces his fingers with Brooke’s and squeezes her hand tightly.

“I doubt that,” she says.

He shakes his head again, his throat feeling tight. “I can’t. I can’t.”

Brooke is quiet, her thumb rubbing gently across his knuckles, and the tender action just makes him cry harder. He hasn’t cried over Michael in a long time, not since this whole thing started, but something about Brooke’s honest, straightforward advice paired with her soft compassion breaks him down.

Curling in on himself, Jeremy gives into the sobs wracking his body, and Brooke pulls him closer, wrapping her arms around him. It hurts, he wants to tell her, but the way she holds him tells him that she knows. His cries tear their way out of his throat, violent sobs pulling at something broken deep inside him as hot tears roll down his face. He buries his face in his hands, trying to breathe normally, but his breath is ragged and uneven.

Fingers run gently through his hair, and he jerks a little, startled, before relaxing into the touch. Brooke is murmuring softly, soothing whispers that are too quiet for him to comprehend but sound
comforting all the same. From the feel of it, she’s braiding strands of his curly hair, and the action is oddly relaxing. Gradually, Jeremy’s crying dies down, although he’s still trembling, a few tears still leaking from his eyes. He feels drained.

“Sorry,” he mumbles, wiping his eyes and looking up at Brooke.

Her eyes are filled with sympathy, and she touches his cheek gently, a slight smile on her lips. “It’s okay, Jeremy,” she says. “It’s okay to cry.”

Jeremy takes a shuddering breath, leaning into Brooke’s hand. It’s almost pathetic, how touch-starved he is, even though he and Michael touch each other all the time. When Brooke brushes a kiss to the top of his head, he mumbles a “thank you”. He doesn’t deserve her friendship and patience.

“You’re welcome,” she says. “And I promise I won’t tell him. Okay?”

Jeremy sighs, exhausted. “Okay.”

End Notes

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