The Other Conversation

by housebigbangmod (zulu)

Summary

This story was written by imissimissyou. He understands her mute conversations with everyone. She is on the edge of a cliff.

Notes

Endless thank yous to jlneveloff who looked over this story at the last minute!! Spoilers through Human Error.
City of dark lights

Life works out differently for everyone; that was what she knew. She also knew there was a plan for everyone. It did not have to be ruled by some god serving out injustice. It was just what was. Now she felt like this couldn't be right, because this was not how her life should turn out.

It was all blinding lights, everything surrounding her, but nothing including her. Fall was something that came every year, but this year it seemed so unexpected; too soon. The years had passed, just like that. Forgotten, dusty lobby art in the storage room. Her glory days long over.

A car slowed down in front of her. The rain a few minutes ago had been left rain drops to dry on the windshields, and the light from the streetlights reflected in them. The man inside rolled down the window and looked out at her, his eyes squinted at her fragile frame curled up on the bench. The bus stop sign dug into her small back.

Without any words shared between them, she stood up and let her worries grow in the pit of her stomach. Picking up her bag that had rested next to her, she put it by her feet on the floor of the car, closing the car door behind her. Inside was much warmer than on the outside, and almost instantly she started sweating.

The man put a hand on her thigh, squeezing it softly as he started the car again, driving away from the bus stop and leaving the mess behind them.

Life had a plan for her, she truly believed that, but she was not so sure the plan was working out so well for her.

She locked herself inside the guest room for five days. A blind offered darkness and the thick cover offered warmth she had not felt for a long while. It was something other than the biting cold that never left her, that grew and seemed to settle inside her. Somehow, it was still there, in her chest, spreading out in her body with every heartbeat. Chilling. Nothing could warm her anymore; she felt she was forever banned to be frozen.

She picked at the food she was given. She knew she had to eat, she had left to survive. What would be the point in starving to death then?

He stood in the door way and watched her sometimes. All life had seemed to have been blown out of her; all she did was stare at the dark walls, boring holes into it. Once she had been so alive. Now as she lay there, he thought she could've been dead.

Not even the tears could fall, she found when the alarm clock in the room next to her made itself known for the sixth day. The eerie silence within her startled her suddenly and she knew she should cry; it would be the natural reaction for her, but instead she continued to stare at the same wall, listening to the sound of life just outside the door.

"No, Less, don't disturb her, she needs rest," a man said in a low, but stern voice.

"But she's been sleeping for very long Daddy. She needs to wake up now," a little girl said, her voice just as innocent as she wished to be.

Something should get a reaction out of her, but she had put everything in order inside of her and nothing seemed to be able to put one thing out of its place. Structure was her friend and enemy, keeping her sane but locked up.
"I know, but she's sick. Remember when you were sick and needed to rest?" The girl did not answer. "Well, now Ally needs to rest too, so that she can get healthy and play with you soon." Sick was what they called her. Locking herself in a room that wasn't even hers, running away from the family she had created. Bit by bit she had left that place, until only her body stood in the doorway, waiting for that step to take, the signal to be given. Was it strange that it did not come, or was she waiting for something inevitable?

Tears would not come, but she had cried too many times, so maybe she had dried up. Maybe there was no emotion left in her anymore.

Words weren't anything until she met him; not in the same sense anyway. She knew how to speak, how to write, how to read. Somehow he had learned a new way to use these words. Eyes, body and soul, everything could speak. Kind and gentle was his approach, his words could be vicious, but his body could be soft. Anger wasn't a part of him. He was hard to grasp. With a scar running down his cheek, he was vulnerable; his story more sad than most. She wanted to protect him and to be a part of this strange communication. The first time they saw each other, her simple way of approaching him and speaking to him did not impress him. To him, she was like all the rest. She was no beauty in his eyes, and it was a breath of fresh air; he was looking into her more than looking at her. Despite being easy on the eyes, she had a gentle and frail posture, and he saw this. Saw her smooth way of moving her arms, her soft smile put on her face without any strain, the way her chest would rise as she let out a sad sigh. He saw everything yet nothing at the same time.

He was not handsome, but his body language was a charming beauty that had any woman wanting him. He did not act through words, he did not say any lies, but his body did every day. All women could be his to collect in a box inside a dusty drawer. Young and old, they were all his if he wanted, but she enchanted him in her mystery. Words could tell him what her body did not, but that was nothing that interested him. He wanted her body, but not for her beauty, but for the story only it could tell him.

The floor was hard and cold underneath her feet as she sat up suddenly. Quickly, she ran across the wooden floor, the balls of her feet bouncing loudly, startling the man and his wife from their sleep, who wondered where the source of this sound could be when their daughter was lying between them drooling in her sleep.

Her sweaty palms were freezing against the porcelain, gripping it as hard as she could, thinking that maybe she was close to breaking it.

He grabbed a hold of a baseball bat, slowly inching down the hallway, paranoid as he looked around for an intruder. The house was dead quiet now; gone were the sounds of feet, gone were the sounds of painful sobbing. Left was this silence.

Every room was searched by him, slowly opening every door to get a thief caught in action. Empty rooms were all that faced him, until he opened the bathroom and saw a lithe figure looking down into the shallow depth of the toilet bowl, frozen. In one second he had raised his bat, and in the next it had fallen to the ground, clattering loudly, and his wife came running, expecting the worst.

He did not know if this was good or if this was bad at that time, the shock of seeing her outside the confines of their guest room was too much for him to take. Despite that her gaze was just as dead as before, now he could see that she was breathing, that she had enough power in her body to keep herself up. But this was not natural, the way she was holding the porcelain bowl with a deathly grip,
her body tense in a way he had never seen before. Fear was what he saw, fear of something he could not understand.

She gaped, gasped, her mouth forming but no words falling from them. There was a need to explain all of this, but it was gone before it was uttered. He ran up to her, took a hold of her body, and hugged her to his chest like she was a small child again. Her body was small and almost weightless on his knee, her bones hard against his chest. The smell of sweat and vomit tickled his nose, but he did not notice as she collapsed against him. His wife flushed the toilet as silent sobs wrecked her body. This was bad, he decided, as he carried her back to the darkness, even though all he wanted was to take her out of there.

It confused her now, how they managed to say so many things with only a few words. But the looks they passed as they put her in bed spoke volumes, they were so loud that she had to close her eyes. They weren't silent, they couldn't be silent, because they didn't know what silence was. A part of her looked down on them, but a part of her wanted this simple life where bodies couldn't scream.

Once again in the soft and warm bed she quickly turned on her side, curling up in a ball hugging her stomach. Tears started to press behind her eyelids, but they wouldn't fall. Nausea was holding a soft grip on her stomach, constantly threatening to grow into something more. This was wrong, she was sure of it, but somehow everything that was wrong managed to happen anyway. She did not believe in God, and this was possibly one of the reasons why.

It was a grey zone. Nothing seemed to matter; every reaction was stored as soon as it could be taken under control. Nothing was black and nothing was white. She floated there, in and out of consciousness, noticing some things, and others slipping past her attention.

Together, he and his wife took her to the bathroom, and slowly his wife took off her clothes and put her in the bathtub. The water hit her naked skin, and suddenly there was life in her. She tried to push his wife away, tried to get away from the water, and no one could understand why. She sobbed, cried for the first time, her cries couldn't be translated as anything other than fear.

"It's only me, Allison, it's Dana," she soothed her, ignoring her husband's worried knocking on the door. Soon she calmed down again, and Dana once again tried to wash her. This time she stared at the tiled wall, her body tense and uncooperative.

Dana's heart broke as she washed her body, she had no idea what had happened, she did not want to know. Seeing what it all had done to her was enough.

When he had carried her back to bed, she once again curled up in a ball, hugging her stomach tightly, and Dana and he shared a look. Something more was going on, their looks said, and then she threw up again.

The second time she met him she was running around in the ER in search for something that had gone missing. Frantically, she opened every storage space she could find, expressing her aggravation at the nurses from time to time. Then she bumped into him, and he smiled at her, his body radiating such calm that she instantly could smile back at him without any strain.

"Charlie," he said, smiling at her. Every letter seemed to be pronounced softly, and she felt like a puddle on the floor.

"Yeah, I remember you from last week," she responded, "I'm Allison."

"Yes, it's a very noble name, isn't it?" He laughed in a bored way at his own joke, his voice still as
smooth and clear as before, and his laugh softer than any laugh she had ever heard before.

Despite the scar running across his cheek, despite the fact that appearances were nothing extravagant; she found that he was the most beautiful man she had ever laid eyes on, and she couldn’t for the life of her understand why in that moment. Later on she would learn, the secret would be hers too, she would be captured in this beauty, but not as a companion standing by its side, but as a prisoner for life.

"Well Allison," he flashed a crooked smile, "I'll be off, but I will see you soon." There was no doubt in his voice, and this made her strangely happy. He confused her, this man, because barely minutes after meeting him for the second time she would marry him if he just asked her. It scared her, how easy he could pursue her to do anything, but at the same time she did not care, this man had caught her interest more than any other man before him.

She turned around again as a nurse announced that she had found what she had been looking for, and she flashed an absent smile at her, and started towards the bathroom.

She passed House on the way to the bathroom, barely noticing him, just offering him a weak smile. It did not occur to her then that this was the first time he’d seen her since she quit three weeks ago. Charlie was stuck on her mind.

There was nothing wrong with her memory- she could remember the words, how to form her lips and force the sound from her throat. She knew how to grip a pen, and how each letter was drawn, like a painting, scribbled down on a paper. She could easily make letters words and sentences, write a short story and a poem if she forced herself. Maybe not well, but it could be done. But it was the purpose behind this she had forgotten - the meaning of that sort of communication. It was the shrieks, the shouts that startled her, they were the cause of words, but the harmony of the silent shouting was amazingly less stressing, and she did not want to cause stress.

The last time she had used these words were when she messaged her brother the week before. She had been desperate, and no one had understood what she was shouting at them, no one could see that she was missing. Her eyes had found theirs, pleading to them to see her, but somehow they managed to see past her, see past everything.

She had turned invisible.
It is at the hospital she ended up later as she rapidly lost weight because her inability to keep food down. The room she stayed in was lighter than the guest room at his house even though the blinds were drawn and she drew the covers high above her head. This was too close to the world, and it all scared her, all the noises surrounding her scared her.

Breathing in her own hot breath, she felt suffocated but safe. She could hear him sitting next to her, felt his presence close, guarding her from everything with a hopeless lump growing in his stomach, tears pressing behind his eyelids.

"I need a crash cart in here!" Someone was yelling, and the familiar sound of cardiac arrest seeped into her room, reminding her of a life just like that. Once she had been brilliant, she could listen to her voice without feeling discomfort, could move her body without trying to hide what she was feeling, without trying to lie.

She could feel his body moving, touching her. She knew what he was saying; she knew that he was scared for her, that he was close to giving up on her.

Shouting intruded on her world, worthless reviving into a world of noise. She traced a scar on her left wrist, slowly caressing the uneven skin.

A shaking breath next to her told her that he was now crying silently. Not that she minded, she only envied him, because her own cheeks were dry. She shivered.

Suddenly everything was very quiet. Only him breathing next to her, and her own breath against the sheet above her could be heard. This part she remembered, when everything was shut off, and the stillness that wrapped around you. Sadness and disappointment, the thought of relatives and friends.

"What the hell are you doing?" A very familiar voice called, barked, and she gripped the covers hard, bracing herself for his voice again.

"House, we've been trying to get her heart to start again for too long," a stranger's voice explained, patience and tiredness hiding beneath.

"Don't care!" She jumped, the loud voice intruding too much. Why was this happening to her? Coincidence didn't seem to fit.

Sunlight broke through the window, washing over her curled up in a wheelchair next to Dana and him who were eating, she too was supposed to eat, but the sandwich that they'd bought for her stood in the middle of the table, and she was curled up in her chair covering her head under her arms.

Sound was everywhere. Plates crashing into each other, people talking over tables filled with food, the line reaching well outside the door filled with talking people, the hollow and mechanical beeping of the cashier. Everything had been so quiet before this, she had forgotten how loud sound could be, how close it could get to you, how it almost became you.

"What did the doctors say?" Dana asked him as a worried frown creased her eyebrows as she glanced over at her, curled up in the wheelchair, looking more and more scared as she constantly searched the cafeteria they were sitting in. He sighed patiently, having explained this several times already.

"They will call us when the results come back, and then we're going to go up to Ally's room and
meet the doctors there," he smiled a sweet smile at his wife, carefully stroking her hair out of her forehead and then kissing her quickly on the lips before returning to his food.

"Did you call Mrs. Andersen about picking Less, you know she forgets."

It could not have been that long ago she too sat in this cafeteria, with her own lab coat on, or scrubs, proudly calling herself a doctor. She couldn't understand why they had brought her here, out of all places, could they not understand the humiliation of meeting them now? If they noticed her they would strike up a conversation with her, and then Dana and him would have to explain everything, and it would get awkward.

Outside, the last leaves had left the trees, leaving them naked as they tried to reach the grey sky with their naked branches. She tilted her head and squinted her eyes to look at the trees more closely, but they were just as scary as before. There was no beauty in the dead.

"Allison," a voice called behind her suddenly, and she turned around and saw him standing there, "nice to meet you again," he said it like it was a funny joke, his smile widening across his face.

"Charlie," she breathed out in a happy greeting, smiling back at him.

"A cup of coffee?" He held up a steaming cup of coffee in front of her so that she could smell it from where she stood, making it impossible for her to refuse him. Nodding eagerly, she took a step towards him and grabbed the cup, taking it from his hands.

"Mhm, very nice," she said as soon as she had taken a sip from it and looked up at him again. "How come I always meet you here?" She asked, tilting her head, which caused blond locks of hair to fall in her face.

"I work here," he said, blinking slowly, his long eyelashes touching his scarred cheek, and he almost looked adorable.

"You do?"

"Yes," his eyes were smaller when he smiled, almost hiding the green-brown eyes behind thick brown lashes. Then he stood there, quiet, his shoulders relaxed, head tilted, and eyes boring into hers. It amazed her, how well she understood what he was trying to say, like her own thoughts whispered it to her. Who are you? With widened eyes she could not come up with a way to answer this question. She thought she was going crazy.

Then suddenly her view wasn't of naked trees, depressingly dark and dead, standing on a frozen ground, it was black, but yet she knew she could still see. After blinking a few times she understood she was looking at a jacket, but did not dare to look up and meet this man's face. This was a man for sure, no doubt about it at all, and really, she didn't need to look up to know who this man was. Maybe she should have been scared, or worried, but she wasn't feeling anything at all, so she just continued staring straight forward. Not even curiosity took a hold of her.

"Lovely jacket," he said in an agreeing voice, "Can't say the same about yours though." And in her mind she could see his childish scrunched up face and she almost felt resentment towards him.

"Who are you?" Dana interrupted him with her sharp voice, annoyance cutting through it like a knife.

"Dr. House, I'm surprised she hasn't told you already," House said, like he didn't believe that she did
not know. Dana's husband cleared his throat in an uncomfortable way, trying not to get mad at this man. "Wheelchair, huh? Too heavy for your legs to carry you?"

"Please, Dr. House, stop," Dana begged, her voice a little less sharp, but just as biting. She could imagine her face, eyes trying to conquer a staring battle with House. The truth was that she did not know who was more stubborn of the two of them, and who would win. Probably House, since Dana knew better than to waste her time.

After that he was quiet for a while, and everything else became so much louder. But he did not leave, he simply stood there, and she knew he was thinking, his body still in the same pose.

"What's wrong with her?" House demanded, and she could feel Dana's husband stiffen beside her. This was something that you did not speak of, at least not in front of her.

"None of your business," Dana spoke up again, her voice betraying how rude she thought this man was.

"I can find out what she has," he was smug now, so sure of himself, so sure that he could cure her.

"We are going to meet with her doctor soon, and they will tell us," suddenly Dana's husband spoke up, and House turned his whole body to look at him, and stayed quiet a while.

"You're her brother."

"Half-brother," he corrected him.

"Did I introduce myself? Oh, how rude I am; Greg House!"

"John," Dana's husband answered, "John Smith," he continued with a smug tone, and she could almost see his smile.

"Why did you take her to the hospital?" House reached over the table and took her sandwich. She watched him under her arms as he inspected the sandwich quietly, and then looked at her, his eyebrows knitted together in a perfect frown. "You gonna eat this?" To answer him she leaned back and lowered her head. To anyone else this would've been a gesture of shyness, or avoidance maybe, but to him as he stood there watching her reaction, her response was so clear she might've just screamed it at him.

No, you take it.

It stunned him; he suddenly had nothing to say. It wasn't telepathy, or anything supernatural, but still he couldn't explain it. Never before had he experienced this, so he looked at her stunned, putting down the sandwich again.

"What happened to her?" House asked in a softer voice, knowing this would get him more information than any other technique. The reactions were alarming to him; both her brother and his wife glanced down on the table.

"We don't know really, she doesn't... speak," John finally managed to get out, his voice low and sad. It angered her a bit, that they couldn't understand that she was speaking to them all the time, but they were too blind to see. Her body tensed a bit, leaning back further, pressing into the back of the wheelchair causing it to roll backwards a bit. House jerked away from her suddenly freaked by it, how quickly he could feel her anger washing over him by just glancing at her.

John and Dana looked at him in confusion as he quickly nodded his head and left them. She watched
him as he left, quickly trying to escape the cafeteria. Calmly watching him, thinking back at the
House she used to know. This was him, but still he was so different.

She started to meet him more and more often, he was suddenly appearing everywhere. Later she
learned that he was a lawyer, and the hospital's most liked one, so he was always running errands
everywhere, and he did not mind it. He minded it even less when he ran into her.

Everything was easy around him, even though few things were said, the conversation never seemed
too light or meaningless. Each word was pronounced with great importance. Nothing was said in
vain.

He bought her coffee, and little by little he took on a role in her life, starting to creep his way into her
mind after work hours when she was sitting at home. At home she would muse over the thought of
him, of him and her, and she would smile because it seemed so right.

He bought her coffee and she smiled.
Morning, the blinds were open, and yellow light, colored by the leaves, filled the room. He sat on the bed, looking down at her, his gaze almost piercing her, his mouth tense, not smiling. She looked up at him, her eyes big question marks, but he just sat there looking at her.

Welcoming the silence, she found herself under covers once again, staring at the same wall she had stared at only two days ago. The warmth was comforting, pulling her into a haze, where days and nights didn't matter and time didn't exist. Only haze could brush out the lines that separated her from the past, when she was happy, when she could cry, where a constant shadow of silence didn't follow her everywhere.

Every morning John came into the room, letting in the strong light from the hallway outside light up the room and sting in her eyes. Compared to him, she was powerless, as he picked her up and carried her out of her room, put her on the couch in their living room where he left her while he went to get something for her to eat. Then he would sit next to her until she'd eaten up everything, it didn't matter if she'd throw up half of it later, or all of it, he still sat with her, feeding her until nothing was left on the plate.

She felt paralyzed, cut off from the world, and she knew she needed to go back to it soon, but she had nothing to go on. The bridge had been burned a long time ago. There she was, lost inside of herself, and she had no idea how to find her way out.

Inside of her was life, growing into a small baby, innocence brought on by what she had escaped. She pressed her palm against her lower stomach, against the place where apparently life existed now, her and his child. It was ironic, that when she was slowly dying, someone else was given life, feeding off of her sanity. Betrayal, it was that too; how she could let this happen to herself, how she betrayed herself.

It was strange how she had managed to miss something this big, how could she not have noticed that she had not been getting her period?

Charlie wanted children, she remembered that they'd talked about it, before it all had gone so silent and bad. One little boy or little girl, only one child, and then he would be happy. While he had spoken about it, these dreams about the future, he had rubbed small circles on her stomach, kissed her neck softly. Thinking back to days like that, it both hurt and made her warm inside, that person was who she had fallen for, not this man he became, letting her slowly close herself inside herself, making her create her own prison.

This child, it should've come a long time ago, maybe then everything would've turned out better, or she would've left him sooner. Thinking back at it now, there wasn't a start to it; it gradually became more and more painful to be around him. It was like around him she wasn't just mute, but she was deaf and blind too, paralyzed by his control.

That morning when John came into her room and went to pick her up, she fought him, scratching his skin, tearing at his shirt, kicking. But not screaming, not crying, no matter how hard she tried, it did not come natural, and she could not force herself. It was impossible, futile.

"Allie, calm down!" He yelled, his voice demanding, shaped in a way it had not been since she was a young girl throwing a tantrum. She could remember those tantrums vaguely. It was a life time ago, when her hair had been so blond and her face and been round. Then she had a temper that was not to
be challenged, a will impossible to fight.

Inside, she was drowning on all the tears she kept there. Breathing was difficult and it hurt to draw each breath, but still she fought him as hard as she could, just so that she could stay in the one place she was safe.

She was lithe in his arms, it didn't take much to hold her down, but he didn't want to; he didn't want to force her. It hurt him too, to watch her fall apart like this so silently, and being so helpless, not being able to do anything.

"Allie, please," he whispered in her ear, but she continued to fight him until he let her down. She fell down on the bed, curled up in a ball, suddenly still, staring into the darkness.

It was nice sitting curled up against him on his couch, and being able to be herself, no pretending, no illusions, just them. Silently she watched his scar than ran across his face, an angry reminder of a car crash twenty years ago, one that took his mother away from him, and put his father in a wheelchair.

"I like it this way," she told him, holding his hand tighter in hers, "to just sit here, just the two of us." His eyes searched hers, soft brown eyes, melting hers.

"Yeah, it is," he agreed after a while, a soft sigh escaping with his answer, and then he kissed her cheek.

"I could sit like this forever," she sighed too, pulling his arms around her, leaning her back against his chest, watching the news with mild interest, she had all she needed here, nothing could distract her from him.

"That would be ideal, but I would like something more than just this couch and this TV."

"Like what?"

"First of all, I would like to buy an apartment with you, then marry you, and sometime I would like to have a child," he said softly, his hand brushing against her stomach, drawing small circles with the palm of his hand, imagining her stomach expanded, carrying his child, and the thought made his whole face light up.

"A two bedroom apartment, with a big living room, a light kitchen, and a big bathroom," she said dreamily, her hand closing over his again, resting on top of her stomach as she mused over the idea of carrying a child sometime in the near future, a child that would be his. "That wouldn't be so bad."

"Allie, what do you think about ham. You like ham." Dana tried, setting down a plate with a few peas on it, rolling around aimlessly. On a chair opposite her Leslie sat, her green eyes focusing on Cameron, no one was too young to worry, and Leslie felt a feeling that reminded her of being sick, but she didn't need to throw up, as she watched Cameron stare at the peas with no interest at all.

"Allie, eat your ham," John demanded as he set another plate in front of Leslie. They thought that if they treated her like they had control over her, maybe they could get her to eat, at least, and even though it hurt John so much to treat his younger sister like a little girl again, he couldn't abandon her. He couldn't just sit there and watch her die slowly. "Eat it, now," he wanted to scream in frustration, but around her he needed to be calm, to keep himself under wraps, to protect Cameron from further pain. It was impossible for him to know that his frustration was radiating off of him, shining in his eyes like red eyed monsters, his body language screaming at her desperately, wordlessly.
She wanted to be deaf and blind, to fall asleep and never wake up again. There was no wish for dying, just to rest, to let the pain roll off of her, let the muzzle ease up and let the words escape. She knew she didn't have a choice, so she picked up a fork and stabbed the ham before bringing it to her mouth. It didn't taste good, but it didn't taste bad either, it only tasted of salty tears, hopelessness. Leslie tilted her head and watched Cameron quietly for a while, she understood, somehow, what Cameron was trying to say.

"Don't worry Allie, daddy can blow on your booboo and make it better, it always makes me better," she assured her aunt, her head still tilted and a small smile on her face.

"Leslie...," John began, but was interrupted by Leslie.

"Look daddy, she's smiling!" Both John and Dana turned around to look at Cameron, but she was not smiling, but there was definitely something more peaceful about her now. "You're pretty when you're happy."

He would watch her at the kitchen table when they ate dinner, his eyebrows furrowed in concentration. In those moments, she could feel a distance from between them and she would try to grasp his hand, to bring him into the world she could understand.

His fingers could count the years, not even a whole hand. Three, that was the number, years, so long, but nothing compared to a lifetime. Their time had ended when she brushed her hand against his sleeve, telling him goodbye. Maybe now, he thought, was the time to start over again, to pick up the cliffhanger and continue on with their lives, properly this time.

He could actually remember her, and it scared him in a way, because all his other fellows had been mixed together to an incoherent mess. There was something special about her, something that lit up a part of a memory, directing his thoughts there, like a mosquito to a lamp. Her beauty could not be denied, but there was something else. He wanted to define it so he could get over it, but his ever search for answers kept him hooked.

Once she had been crystal clear, he had thought he knew everything he needed to know about her. Back then she had been a broken beauty, damaged by loss of something he could vaguely understand and had somehow managed to keep on going. But now it was all ripped to pieces, and now she was a mystery he wasn't sure he wanted to know about. But even though he knew that the truth would burn him hard, he needed to know it, because without the truth he wasn't going to have a good night's sleep ever again.

Suddenly his dark office was intruded by light reflecting off of the glass door, and crashing against the walls. There stood his boss, the person he had mastered to manipulate years ago and she did not even notice. Her skirt was tight, as always, showing the curves of a beautiful body, and so was her shirt and jacket. He smirked at her.

"Fancy seeing you in here," he weighed on his chair, tilting his head to check her out, showing his appreciation that she was wearing one of the outfits he liked the most on her. Why? He did not know.

"You need to take on a new case," she said in an urging voice, pushing his feet off of his desk and sat down where his feet had been.

"I refuse," he said overdramatically, putting on a shocked face.
"I don't care what you think," she pointed out while shaking her head, pulling out a file from under her arm. "You are going to take this case because it is important... for this hospital," she mumbled the last part before putting the case file on his lap.

"Publicity now?"

"House, just...," she sighed and stood up, looking longingly at the blinds surrounding the office, on the bookshelves containing all kinds of medical books, then back at him. She hoped her look would say it all, that he would understand that there was more to it than a good reputation. Sometimes she grew tired of his antics and childish refusal to refuse to do his duty, and now she did not want to get annoyed, there were already too many lines on her face.

She left his office, dropping the playfulness that usually existed between them. Today was not a day for things like that. As she stepped into the elevator, she remembered that her mother would make pancakes for dinner whenever she came home and visited, which hardly ever happened anymore. It was her favorite dish. Now, there was no mother that would make her pancakes when she stepped into the warm house that she called her home so many years ago.
Something woke her up, and her eyes fluttered open to meet complete darkness. One moment, two moments, she had no idea where she was or why she had woken up. The pain etched into her soul wasn't there then. For a short second she realized where she was, and the pain of it consumed her mind until something so much stronger took place in her stomach. There was the pain she had been waiting for, and a strange sort of relief washed over her mixing with a pain she couldn't control.

A gasp escaped from her lips as her body curled into a fetal position, her arms hugging her stomach.

In the darkness she lost her, she was sure it was a girl, and didn't even feel a twinge of extra sadness. Maybe because her heart was aching too much already. Her thighs, pajama pants and sheets turned crimson by the sticky liquid.

This was when she should've yelled something, told them that it was over now, that they did not need to worry about this anymore. But outside of her body everything was silent, not disturbed by the chaos wrecking inside of her body.

It felt wrong to be happy. It was a misplaced feeling, but she couldn't help it. There would be no child of his living in this world; she would not take care of a child he created. Gone was the thing that had been growing in her stomach without her wanting it, gone was the child he forced upon her. No physical evidence would be left of him; he would only be a memory that could fade with time. This pain was a savior for her, how horrible it may sound.

The moonlight broke through the window, it was still early in the morning, but soon John would wake up. He would check up on her and he would see the blood that stained the sheets. It would pain him more than it pained her, since he knew how she would've reacted to this all those years ago, but now she could not tell him that she was a different person now. That this was good.

The door creaked open, she did not really know how much time that had passed, maybe twenty minutes, and there he stood. Maybe he could smell it in the air, or maybe he understood by the way she was lying curled up on the bed, gasping quietly still. He ran up to her, yelling at Dana that he was taking Cameron to the hospital, yelling that something was wrong with the baby. She wanted to tell him that there was no baby anymore, that it was all over now; there was nothing they could do. He picked her up, didn't even care about her blood soaked pajamas, only put a blanket on top of her, like it would do any difference, like she would care if she got a little cold.

He had driven to the hospital has quickly as he could, swearing at the traffic lights, never looking at her stoic frame. All that mattered then was the baby. It seemed her body was just something he took along for the ride, baby and her made a package, but not anymore.

It had been a while since she had been there, the ER, but nothing had changed. Only some new people, but most of them she recognized. She watched them numbly as they passed around the ER with faked calm written on their faces.

"Please, someone, my sister, " he pleaded to a woman at the admission desk, "she's pregnant and now she's bleeding."

"Come along here, sir, and we'll have a look at her," the woman urged, standing up and at the same time motioning for a doctor to come.

They rushed her to a trauma room, closed off from the rest of the ER. There she had saved lives
once, lost lives, and now they were going to try to save a life that was already lost.

"How far along is she?"

"Uh," John ran a hand across his face, forcing himself to think what the doctor had said at the last appointment, "Eighteen or nineteen weeks."

"Ok, is she on any medication that we need to know about?"

"No, she takes that prenatal thing. I don't know what it's called..."

"It's ok, we're going to take care of your sister and we will try to save the fetus, but we can't make any promises," a doctor called from beside Cameron.

"What is her name?" A nurse asked, holding a form in front of her.

"Allison, her name is Allison Cameron." For a moment they stopped and looked at each other and looked down at the woman on the bed who was staring stubbornly straight in front of herself. Could it really be her, they wondered, she looked so different.

"I love you," she whispered desperately into his ears, but he was still as tense as before. Silent anger at something she couldn't understand. It didn't matter how many times she said it, he still just stood there, looking at the food she had made for the two of them.

"Don't talk," he finally said, his anger biting into his words like poison.

"But-," he turned towards her and looked down at her, a wildness appeared in his eyes, one she hadn't seen before, and she bit her tongue, hoping that maybe if she was quiet his anger would die.

"Listen to me!" She shrank away, bowing her head in shame at something she couldn't understand. Why was he hurting her this way? It hurt so much when he yelled at her. She just wanted him to be happy. "You don't talk around me. You have no right to talk. If you can't love me with your body, don't try to fool me with your words!" For a moment she thought he was crazy, that he had completely lost his mind, but then she realized what had been going on for all these months. His body was what kept her around, not the few words he uttered here and there, not his appearance, scarred and ugly. It was something that could not be explained, and now she needed to convince him of her love towards him.

So, to comply with his wishes, she nodded and wrapped her arms around him, he wouldn't hear her voice again, if that was what he wanted. She was sure that she was physically hurting him by merely talking.

Suddenly, he was there, tall, beautiful, grey and blue. Blue eyes criticized her, as she opened her eyes after a welcomed sleep, and she wasn't sure if he was mad at her, or if she was simply an unfinished puzzle to him again. Her body felt sore and as she moved, she remembered the events of that morning, and once again she felt relief.

"You lost your baby," she looked at him. He wasn't apologizing like the rest were, he was only stating the facts. She reached out and touched him, put her hands on his sleeves, then ran her hand down to touch his hand. There he was, he was real. This was no imagination, nothing her mind had made up to comfort her. He was real, and he was looking at her with furrowed eyebrows, watching her hand as it curled around his hand.
He squeezed her hand, and she looked up and into his eyes. There she saw everything, she saw into his mind as a vulnerability so fragile settled on his face. His soul was bared in front of her, and he let it hang out there, letting her see the scars of time, the loneliness he had chosen to live in.

He put on hand on her shoulder, a gesture so unexpected of him that she found herself stunned, even her mind silent.

"It's ok to cry," he promised, his voice soft, not raw as it usually was, no underlying motive, only the two of them and her tears to cry. He squeezed her shoulder and then her hand, too. He would be there if she fell. Here, she could fall and someone would catch her. There was no possibility to fall any further now, someone would catch here. He was there to catch her.

One tear finally fell from her eye, falling down on the white pillow underneath her head, and then another. And there they stood, an awkward pose for an outsider, but an intimate for them.

Don't leave me, she asked him as she held on tighter, clinging onto him as she grabbed the arm holding her shoulder.

"I won't," he whispered, his voice barely carrying and she gasped, letting more tears falling freely, because now she knew for a fact that someone finally could understand her. For first time in ages she wanted someone to wrap their arms around her, and it was his, to lean her head against his chest and hear his heart beating under his shirt against his ribcage, to find that his heart wasn't as broken as she thought. He wanted to hold her too, to hear her breathing and find that she would be alright, to find her pulse, to look her in the eyes and find her there again. He wouldn't mind getting lost in those eyes if she was still in there.

It was something that stopped both of them though, as his hands held on to her tightly, and she felt herself falling into his delicate care. There was a boundary not to be stepped on, she was crying and he was worried, something that was alien to them now. When he was younger he worried. He worried about World War III, he worried that he wouldn't live up to his father's expectations, and he worried until he couldn't feel anything else other than that sour feeling in the bottom of his stomach.

She kissed him as he passed her, and he embraced her wordlessly and for the first time, she could feel comfort in the silence.
Underneath her hands, the blinds rustled restlessly as she pulled them up, and watched the brown grass that was still as dead as the day before. She didn't let her eyes settle anywhere until she found her, the little angel full of life. Leslie, a blond beauty with two missing teeth missing, throwing the leaves up in the air, letting them fall down over her. It was a joy so simple that she could feel it growing in her stomach, like a flower fighting through concrete, blossoming in the polluted air.

To open the window was so easy that she wondered what had stopped her for so long, a physical obstacle made so much harder by her mind. The air was too cold still, but as it circled around her it didn't bother her. Inside her she was still as cold as this air. It didn't matter how much she put on her, it didn't matter how many days she laid under covers. But there inside of her, was the scary feeling that she thought had died, but was now fighting for another breath, it was faith and dreams.

She turned around and walked out of the bedroom, her feet bare and cold against the wooden floor, but she did not mind, it was a part of her everyday life now, and she would not let it stop her.

As she came into the living room she spotted Dana outside with Leslie, and they hugged each other in spontaneous happiness. This was something that she was so close to having, this relationship with her own child, but it was pulled away from her with not enough grief.

She picked up a doll from the couch. It was dressed in the clothes Leslie had when she was a baby. Leslie carried this doll around when she was home, always having it pressed against her chest. With a sigh she put it back on the couch, trying to remember if she was this attached to a doll when she was a child, but she had no memory of it.

It had been a while, but she needed this, she told herself as she pulled into an empty parking space. She needed to do this, and maybe she was too demanding and clingy, but she deserved something like this. For the past months she had thought about him, thought back at the moment they'd spent in the hospital room after she had lost her baby. The memory scared her, because something bigger had been lying underneath it all. In the rearview mirror she saw herself, her blonde hair that had grown long and had needed to be cut for a long time now, big eyes with black circles under them, and her skin too tight. With a sigh she looked away, there in the mirror was no beauty anymore, and inside she didn't harbor the same emotions anymore. She had changed so much and it scared her, and she hoped he could bring her back again, bring back the one she was before all of this.

She exited her car and walked towards the hospital. For the first time in years she walked through the lobby to get in, not arriving through the ER. She juggled the keys in her hand, listening to her steps, trying to concentrate on that instead of everything that looked just like it did when she left. Someone familiar stopped next to her while she waited for the elevator to arrive, but she could place his face, so she assumed he wasn't anyone she was supposed to remember.

Heading up to his office was slightly eerie, she had made this trip so many times before in another lifetime. Her mission had been completely different then. The time that had passed had changed her so much.

The familiar man stepped off at the same floor as her and walked in front of her in the direction of House's office. There it was suddenly - his office.

It was only glass separating them now, and as she put her hand on the glass door and opened it. There he was, in the same room. It felt surreal, standing there in his office again. He did not have the same chair and the desk was different, but other than that, everything was exactly the same.
"Cameron," he greeted with raised eyebrows, clearly very surprised by her very unexpected visit. All she had to give him was a smile that she timidly offered while she sat down opposite him. The past months had not changed him at all. The weathered look was from the years she had been absent, playing happy in a bubble. His eyes were grey in the dim light and she felt strangely comfortable when he scanned her like an x-ray. She was his puzzle, just like when he scribbled symptoms down on the whiteboard, he memorized everything about her to later pull out and try to fix. There were obvious signs of trauma, but he could not understand in what context.

"What brings you here this fine day?" The silence that followed was expected and he simply leaned forward without missing a beat and picked up his coffee cup. "Coffee is yummy," he told her as he sipped it slowly. "And you're not getting any," he said smugly. Her eyebrows knitted in confusion as to why she would not get any coffee. "You have to be able to speak to drink coffee. Actually, you need to be full grown too, so no can do."

She could not help the smile that found itself on her face, she had forgotten the humour he could find in most situations, forgotten that he could make her smile. He watched her carefully as she smiled. It surprised him; this one was a smile of actual amusement. It made him glad that she was smiling again.

From the office next to him he could see the surprised glances of his fellows as he extended his hand in a gesture for her to sit down. This would be fun, he thought to himself. He would be able to answer the question of what had happened to Cameron and he would confuse his fellows at the same time.

The dress fluttered around her feet, making a plastic sound. It was too much fabric and she was sure she would fall halfway down the aisle. It seemed a bit pointless going through all of this a second time, but he had not been through this process.

She looked up as the doors opened in front of her, her eyes sought out his and instantaneously, it all felt right. He smiled at her and she took the first step forward.

She watched him as he stood up from his chair and walked around his desk, towards the glass that separated his office from the shared office his fellows had. When she had been a fellow, she had wondered if she would ever have her own office, leading her own department. Back then it seemed impossible and now, it was.

He knocked on the wall, gaining the attention of his fellows as they glanced up. One of them was the man she saw by the elevator. The man from the elevator seemed very displeased by House knocking on the window, pointing them all out of the room.

"Clinic, all of you, now," he ordered, staring at them as they slowly stood up from their chairs, dragging their feet behind them as they walked towards the elevators. "You should see them when our patients flat line. They're slower than the slowest snail then!" He barked a fake laugh then stopped abruptly and quickly walked towards his chair again. She watched him in mild amusement, with a silent smirk on her face. It still seemed odd to her, smiling. After such a long time were smiling seemed like a crime, the liberty was almost too good.

She suddenly felt the urge to tell him that he was doing fine, that he had not crashed and burned yet as she had expected. When she was a fellow, working under him, she had thought he would make it much longer in life. Even though only a few years had passed and there were several more to go through before she could easily say that he made it out alright, he had survived much longer than she'd expected.
This was her chance to speak. She knew that and she wanted more than anything to open her mouth and let the words spill, like they had such a long time ago, such a short time ago.

She opened her mouth with the intention to speak, but she could not form the words. Instead of words, she felt fear running through her veins, paralyzing everything inside of her. Her heart sped up and she knew that it would be a futile attempt to speak, because the fear that Charlie would find out was much greater than the will to speak.

She stood up instead and he watched her in surprise as she stormed out of his office, down the corridor and down the stairs. She ran because if she stood still she knew she knew the fear would catch her, that she would fall to the ground and shake uncontrollably. The last time she had run was ages ago, long before she married again, about the same time she met her husband. When she reached her car her breathing was ragged, she could hardly get enough air into her lungs. Before the tremors in her body intensified, she pushed her key into the lock of the old car, and opened the door as quickly as she could.

In the safety of her car, with her hands pressing down on the wheel, her breathing shallow and her body protesting, her whole body started trembling in fear. It felt as if her heart was pounding its way out of her chest. The fear bringing back memories she had tried so hard to forget. Her whole body hurt, and it was all because she wanted to speak only a few words.

In his office, House was left watching her as she ran down the hallway. Her movements shouted panic as they were all over the place, leaving doctors and patients dodging her as she tried to get out as quickly as possible. It confused him, how she one minute seemed almost carefree, and the next she seemed to be running for her life.

He slumped down further in his chair and promised himself he was definitely going to figure this one out.
House drummed his fingers against the table, looking at the clock on his computer screen. She was late, he thought with amused disappointment. It was then he saw her walking down the hallway, dressed in her usual attire; jeans and a t-shirt. Once she was in his office, giving him an apologetic smile as she tossed her keys from hand to hand. There was something so simple about playing with keys that made him realize that she was probably making more progress than he had thought in the first place.

"You're late," he scolded and she gave him the same apologetic smile, but this time she seemed more smug about it. It would not have surprised him if he had found out she had come late on purpose. "And we have a case." She nodded solemnly as he walked towards the conference room, where symptoms were scribbled on with a blue marker. With a loud sigh he stepped towards her and gently took a hold of her upper arm, and pushed her into the conference room, pushing her down on the chair she usually occupied, where she had done their department's charting.

"Any news people?" He asked as he slipped her the patient file. She looked at him in confusion as she lost the grip of the file and it fell to the floor. "Read it, so you know what we're talking about," he whispered loudly and she nodded quickly while she reached for the file on the floor, cleverly hiding herself from view as Cuddy rushed by the office.

The force behind the push sent her to the floor, leaving black spots in her vision as his hands cradled her face gently, kissing her cheek as she blinked, trying to clear her vision. The shock was still holding her still as he picked her up from the floor, holding her to his chest as he carried her to their couch. His kisses were everywhere on her face, trying to be comforting, trying to apologize.

Her head was throbbing, and she realized that she must have cracked it against the floor. Numbly, she reached to touch the back of her head and felt the sticky blood soak her fingertips. With a groan she realized that she would have to go to the hospital.

What would she tell them? She asked herself as she felt a tear spill from his eyes and down on her cheek. It did not matter anyway. She did not have to tell them anything, she concluded as he pulled her head up from the couch, his hands touching the back of her head so gently that she could not believe that he had done this.

Once again he picked her up, giving her a towel and pressed it against the wound then taking her hand and pressing it to it. Wordlessly, he told her what she already knew she had to do, keep pressure to minimize the bleeding.

Her head was spinning from the realization of what had happened. One minute they were having a great time, the next minute she was on the floor with her skull cracked open. She closed her eyes. It was her fault, she thought. She should have known better than to make him angry; she was supposed to be his wife, she was supposed to know what made him angry. It was stupid to provoke him.

The world seemed strange and blinding as they stepped into the noisy ER, everyone speaking a language she did not understand. It was so different from their condo, where everything was still and silent, only nature dared to make a sound there.

People rushed towards her as they caught the sight of the soaked white towel, pulling her and Charlie towards the back, towards a quiet room where the heat was not smoldering, and instead of sweating she felt frozen as the air-conditioning blew against her clammy skin.
The nurses muttered and glared at Charlie, shaking their heads in pity. It did not take a genius to figure out what they were thinking. She reached out to hold Charlie's hand as a doctor with rough hands started to stitch the wound up, but Charlie discreetly pulled his hand away, laying it on his lap.

"There you go," the doctor said with a broad accent and a smile as he rolled away on his chair.

"Thank you," she answered, her voice thick with unshed tears that threatened to spill as she thought over the fact that Charlie might still be mad. Once the doctor had left, she started to sit up again, only to be stopped by Charlie who leaned over her, pressing her shoulders against the mattress.

"Don't you ever dare to speak again," he whispered so quietly against her ear that she at first did not understand what he had said, and as she realized her mistake, her eyes widened in fear. She nodded quickly. How could she speak when it obviously caused him so much pain?

As his fellows walked out of the room, he spun around and looked at her. She was still reading through the file, flipping pages, going back and forth, before putting it down with a sigh.

"Miss the brain teasing?" He asked with a smirk, reaching for the file. He had actually hoped that something would come out of this, that she would realize what was wrong with the patient and it would somehow magically make her talk again. He had known better than to hope though, but still, he felt a twinge of disappointment when she just stared at her feet with a stubborn look on her face.

"You know what fascinates me?" He asked, and she looked at him quickly, before glancing sideways at the white board, where three different diseases were now scribbled, all of them crossed out. "Yeah, a forty year old male that stinks more than a dump really makes me wonder what has gone wrong in our world," he quipped. As he said this she glanced away, at the papers that filled the glass table in the middle of the room, the patterns the sun made as it shone through the drapes, making the room look dusky.

"It was bad, right?" He asked suddenly, his voice much tender, but he could not disguise his curiosity. It lived in him like a little child and nothing seemed to make the kid inside of him consider his approach, to maybe reconsider even bringing it up. Though, he felt like he was going to burst if he did not get the answer soon.

Her eyes landed on his as soon as he finished his question, her face went blank. Her eyes watched him with a coolness that frightened him.

"What happened?" She did not even tense as he asked. Her eyes just kept staring into his, as if she was looking through him, past him. Inside her, the memories of her husband resurfaced again, for the second time in a short while. Only this time she remembered the good times. She remembered when they drove to her parents' house and he helped her mother with the food and they joked. Then he had gone out with her father to a neighbor's and they played poker. Charlie won over them all. It was hard to think that the same man had ruined her in so many ways.

While House waited for an answer, she tried to figure it out herself.

The plates were broken. She had dropped them and they were on the floor in pieces. There was no time to pick them up. No time to hide the fact that she had broken them. He would be home any minute. Slowly, she closed her eyes and breathed through her mouth, trying to calm down and think rationally.

There was nothing she could do, she concluded. He was going to find her in here with the broken
plates around her feet, see her in a mess and he would be angry. He would be furious.

She stared at the plates, knowing that any attempt to clean it up would be futile since he would get just as angry anyway. It had been a wedding present from his best friend. Still, she picked the plates up, her arms trembling with fear as she listened after his footsteps outside their apartment. But it was silent. She couldn't help the tears that spilled, couldn't help it as she started to sob when she continued to dish the rest of the dishes. She could hardly see what she was dishing through her tears.
Pink, blue, yellow and green balloons. There were balloons everywhere, donning every surface. It was either the actual thing or a table cloth and napkins with balloon prints on them. Children were running around with balloons attached to their wrists. The sound of a popping balloon was not rare and it was usually followed by a cry. It had been a long time since she had been surrounded by this much sound, but the trips to House during the weekdays had prepared her for this, slowly letting her get used to outside noises. However, this did not sound like outside noises, it felt like every sound was piercing into her.

Dana stood by the candy, making sure that there was no hard candy or anything dangerous that other mothers had brought with them. She walked over there, so she would not have to stand alone in the huge crowd of children. It was amazing how many people they managed to get into this room, even though there was a lot of people standing outside in the spring air that was slowly getting warmer. Today was the warmest day so far this year, and people were taking advantage of that by standing outside with no jackets. She shuddered at the thought of going outside in no jacket; she was cold enough as it was.

"Ally, can you take these into the kitchen? I don't feel comfortable having children eat them," Dana asked, holding out a small tray filled with various candy, none of it looking dangerous for a children's birthday party. She could not tell Dana that she was being ludicrous, so she took the plate with a tight smile and made a beeline towards the kitchen.

Her parents would come soon, they were supposed to be there at ten am, but their plane was delayed. It made her a bit angry that they would come to Leslie's birthday, just because she is John's daughter, but wouldn't come when she had left her husband and needed support. The tray filled with candy slammed down on the kitchen table, sending candy all over the table. No one heard; it was drowned out by the children's cries and laughter.

When her parents appeared, it's like everything shifted in the room. Leslie came running to them, throwing her arms around her grandmother's leg, rambling up all of the presents she had gotten from the people at the party. Cameron's mother pats Leslie's head in a lovingly gesture before pulling herself free from the grasp of the small child to look at her son who was coming towards them.

"How do you feel about another present, Les?" Cameron's father asked, and Leslie squealed in happiness, knowing that this present was going to be better than the rest, since her grandparents had more money than her parents.

"You're spoiling her," John said as he hugged the two of them, shaking his head as his father led Leslie outside to get the present, probably because it was so big.

"That's what grandchildren are for," his mother said, smiling happily as she put her hands on her son's cheek. "She's lovely."

Her parents were used to being in the center of attention; they thrived on it. Even though the people in the room did not know it, they could sense that these people who had just entered the room were important, so everyone seemed to gravitate towards her parents, listening to what was said.

"Allison," her mother stepped up to her after a while, her hands on her hips in a condescending way. "Where is that husband of yours?" She looked around the room, searching for the scarred face that was Charlie's, but did not find him. This surprised Cameron, because she was sure that her mother had known she left her husband a long time ago now.
"Ah, mom...," John started, wincing slightly as he caught Cameron's pained expression when she thought about her husband.

"Schych, John, I'm talking to your little sister now." Cameron closed her eyes, tried to force away the memories of the two years after she had married Charlie. She tried to remember the way it smelled during the spring back home, how she would run out on her birthday to the fields and sit and wait on a rock for her friend Jane to come and play with her. Jane always brought a gift, mostly it was a pen or a cupcake, but it always made it tingle inside of Cameron as she held up a glittery pen towards the sparkling sun, or shared a cupcake under a tree with the rain drenching their clothes. It was just before the grass turned green, when the leaves on the trees had just started to grow out again, casting a green shadow above them.

"Mom, uh, Ally has left her husband." Those were the words that caused her mother to freeze, to stop and look at her only daughter in a way she had not done in years, if ever.

"Why?" She asked, the confusion lacing her voice, changing it into a high pitch scowl. Her mother was never big on divorces, despite the fact that she herself had one at an early age, a marriage that resulted in John.

"Mom, it's nothing to bring up at a party," John said pointedly, looking around at the people who very discreetly listening to what was said by this impressive elder woman that had walked into the room, but luckily there wasn't many within hearing distance.

"I didn't bring it up, you did," her mother stated, this time dramatically showing that she was hurt by the accusation. She was so different from her mother, she realized suddenly. Her mother conveyed what she wanted people to believe in her voice. What she did though, was completely deny her words, to let her body show what she was feeling. It was harder to lie with your body, and this her mother did not seem to know, since her body showed that she was lying. She knew herself that she had brought it up.

"Fine, but I'm not going to say anything here," John said and pushed a plate in his mother's direction so that she could eat.

"Leaving your husband is not the brightest choice you have made, especially at your age," her mother scolded her as they sat in a couch far away from everyone else. She looked up from her plate and looked at her mother, preparing herself for a lecture.

"When you're this age you have to settled with what you get. There won't be many other men out there. They may say that there are many fishes in the pond, but many of these fishes are useless now." Her mother stopped as she put a lettuce in her mouth, thinking over what she was going to say next.

"You should go back to him, Allison," her mother put a hand on her thigh and smiled a reassuring smile. "You might be bright when it comes to science and medicine, but when it comes to family life; trust my word." And with that her mother stood up and headed towards the kitchen with her plate.

People only see what they wanted to see, and in her mother's case she could not see the consequences of an abusive relationship in her daughter. All she saw was a person who gave up too soon, a woman afraid of a long lasting commitment. It might be true, but it was not the case here, or so she thought. Had all of this happened just because she was afraid to make an effort, afraid to have a functional and happy marriage? Had she unintentionally ruined it for him, made everything worse so that he had no choice but to hit her? She looked out of the window, watching the children run around, radiating happiness, squealing with delight. Suddenly she felt a pang of regret. By now she could have had a big bump on her stomach, inside of her womb her little baby could have lived.
How could she have been happy when the child died? Was she so cruel? If she had not left him, she was sure their child would have lived, that he would have been happy with her if she had simply stayed. What if, she wondered, a child was exactly what they needed, what he needed her to give him? What if that had been the thing that would cure their relationship? She would never know now, she thought, as a lump grew in her stomach. She could have become a mother, but now she probably would never have a chance to.

She had ruined her marriage.

"I talked with Allison," her mother announced to John when she thought that Cameron was out of hearing distance, putting her plate down on the kitchen counter.

"Really?" John asked surprised, his voice edging on sarcasm.

"Yes, sarcasm is not a favorable feature John, so please stop with it now. At least in your old mother's presence," she answered dramatically, rolling her eyes at her son's behavior.

"No, it's just that Ally hasn't spoken a word in over a year mom," he said in a hushed voice, taking her plate from the counter and putting it in the sink which was piling up with dishes.

"Don't be silly, John, of course she has," her mother waved her hand dismissingly in his direction.

"No, Mom, I don't know what that Charlie guy did to her, but she won't speak," he sighed, throwing the towel he had wiped off the counter with over his shoulder. "I don't know if she just won't speak, or if there is something else...," he shook his head, rubbing his eyes. "The doctors say that there is nothing physically wrong with her, mentally though...," he shook his head more violently this time, as if he tried to get rid of the thoughts.

"Take her to a psychologist then," she said accusingly, something that resembled worry glimmered in her eyes.

"That requires her being able to talk, Mom," he bit back angrily. "All that we can do now is to support her, keep her included in conversations, try to bring her back to the real world again," he said tiredly, the anger wearing down with each word he said until nothing of it was left.

"She should come and live with me and her dad, not live here. I'm sure it has to be terrible for her to see a happy marriage," she shook her head, the mother in her taking over every rational thought, already planning on how she could get her daughter to speak again.

"No, she's staying here. Leslie and her are getting along really well," John argued, closing the door to the kitchen so that potential eavesdroppers were shut out of the conversation.

"We are talking about what is best for Allison, not who she is getting along with or not." Each one of the words pronounced with an edge, as if they all were equally important, so not a word would be missed.

"What is best for Ally is to stay here. She has a friend at the hospital she visits every weekday. Here she gets out of the house, building up her life, while someone takes care of the parts she cannot manage yet," he answered her, mimicking her tone, his voice even sharper than his mother's.

"It's her choice, isn't it?" She put her hand on her hips, pushing her shoulders forward, her chin up. It was a classical Mrs. Cameron look, the woman who never backed down, did not let anyone walk over her. It was the look that reminded him how easily she had walked over them in the past, walked over his little sister, and he stared at her, because he needed to save his sister from another crash and burn.
"Mom, she's staying here," he said after a long silence, finality in his tone that not even his mother could argue against. There was no way to budge him.

It pained her, how she could not be the mother she wanted to be, how she always tried and it came out wrong. She, however, was not one to admit her mistake. She watched her child with dismay, wondering when they had gotten so big, when they had started to realize that fighting back was an option. It made her proud, in one way, but in the other she knew that from now on everything would be a big struggle for power. It made her glad then that her daughter would not fight, at least, since she had always been the nice and humble one.

As she stepped out of the kitchen she looked at her daughter as she stepped out of the front door, car keys in her hand, and wondered if this all could possibly be her fault.

As she reached her car outside of her brother's house, the grey clouds that had hovered above let a soft rain fall, the raindrops falling softly on her cheeks as she for the first time since she had lost her baby felt the tears building up behind her eye lids.

Everything seemed different now. The colors jumped out, the dead grass, the birds in the trees. It was too real. She had made a mistake when she blamed him for everything, and now there was nothing to go back to.

She sat down in front of the wheel, gritting her teeth at the rain that was falling more heavily now against the windows. This mess had taken her only child away from her, and there was no one to blame but herself.

She slammed her hands down on the wheel, wanting to scream, but all she could do was gasp through her teeth, her chest heaving. She needed to get away from here, get perspective of things. She needed to see House.

The faces were all the same, the same emotion seemed to be written across them. Boring, normal, healthy. The mere look at them had him speeding towards his office again. It was the boredom of how stupid people could be, how easily he could diagnose them, that he knew he could empty that room in only a minute, but he needed to go through an unnecessary speech of what is wrong with them in a private room, that would steal valuable time from him. If they would just be smart enough to drop the act of being kind doctors and just tell patients straight away what was wrong with them, he could only imagine of much time he would have left to watch General Hospital, for example.

Today, he did not feel like obeying Cuddy, despite the fact that she had been down his throat about it. Nothing would make him face that humongous moron that hid out in the clinic. He had been there before, the moron, several times in fact, claiming that something was wrong with him. Pneumonia, he claimed when House had seen him, coughing poorly and was sent away with crude remarks. Only ten minutes later had House caught him running up and down the street in only a t-shirt when it was freezing cold.

He look forward to an afternoon spent watching his precious TV, but just as he put his feet up on the table his door opened. Quickly he closed his eyes, hoping that it would not be Cuddy, but could not figure it was futile, since who else could it be, if not Wilson, but he was definitely with a patient at the moment.

"I can't see you, you are not there," he shook his head stubbornly, but was only met with silence. This surprised him, since she usually had something snide to say to him when he acted like a kid. Still, he refused to open his eyes, just in case she was playing him.

A pair of cold hands touched his fingers that were wrapped around his cane, since he had not had the
time to put it away yet. The hands were surprisingly gentle and tentative, and he had to admit that if this was Cuddy, she had succeeded in scaring him into open his eyes. No way Cuddy would do that!

It was not Cuddy. In front of him stood a very disheveled Cameron, something in her eyes screamed desperation. Silence, right, it was Cameron's trademark, he thought bitterly, gently pulling his bum leg off of the table before putting down his good leg. He watched her in confusion and scratched his scruff.

"You are not supposed to be here today," he stated, his eyes squinting as he looked her up and down. She was wearing a pink silk shirt and a pair of dark jeans, definitely not her usual attire. Maybe the kids got to her, he thought as he looked at her hair which was still in a perfect shape. Everything seemed fine, except her face. She had obviously tried to wipe away mascara lines, her eyes were puffy and swollen, and so was the rest of her face.

She lifted her hands up and shrugged her shoulders. I can't, she clearly said.

"Interesting," he said, just as tears started to fall from her eyes. It reminded him of the night he had visited her when she had miscarried, how she had clung to him and he had not minded. He had actually liked being there for her then, but now?

He cleared his throat, his eyes averting from her and watched the rain falling outside. It had looked to be a nice day, so he had ridden on his bike to work, but now it looked like he would have to take a taxi home. He rubbed his forehead as he thought of what she could possibly want from him.

Once again her hand was touching his, but this time she was not so gentle, irritated that he was ignoring her.

"If I didn't know better I would say that you are crushing on me again," he sniggered, knowing that she was expecting him to scoop her up in his arms and tell her it all would be okay. This was not what she wanted though, she simple wanted his attention; that he would say sit down and she could sit in his recliner until she was ready to leave. She did not want to go home, because she believed her mother would convince her to go back to her husband, but she knew her husband would not forgive her now.

"You are supposed to be grown up, not cling to me like a monkey. You need to move on and get on with your life," he then said, feeling her fingers slip from his hand and once again he looked at her. Everything about her said disbelief, her frown and her mouth hanging open slightly. He did not regret his words; he did feel a bit sorry for hurting her though.

"This is your past - the last thing you need right now." The silence was expected, but it seemed fuller now, it did more than scream. His words hung in the air, falling down like daggers on them.

"Life sucks. You knew that a long time ago, so why do you act like it is a surprise to you?" This time she opened her mouth, as if she would actually say something, prove him wrong, but nothing came out. She stood there for a few seconds; it closed in on a minute

Just when he was about to open his mouth again, she put her hands on his shoulders, pressing him into his chair with a strength he did not know she had. Her eyes bore into his and he was surprised by this action because this was not something that he had expected from Cameron. All he had really expected was that she would run, or just take his insults and stubbornly stay, but there she was, staring into his eyes.

You know nothing. I hate you.
"Cameron,” he started, but he had no chance to say anything else, because she turned on her heel and left his office. There was nothing no denying in the fact that Cameron was beyond angry.

His breathing was still, he was calm in a way he had not been for ages during the days. Everywhere she turned, he was there, his body rigid. Her body felt battered and bruised; every movement reminded her of her mistakes during the past week. The plate she dropped, when she missed dinner, and that time when she stepped on a piece of broken glass and screamed out in pain. Everything she had done wrong was impossible to forget, because he wouldn't let her.

She hugged her knees to her body, pressing them against her bruised ribs. Before she had not known how it could be possible to love someone who caused you so much pain intentionally, someone who calculated the easiest way to hurt the person you loved. There were no words for what she felt for Charlie, she loved him more than anything in this world but still she hated him for what he was doing.

Before she could justify what he was doing, but that day, just eight hours earlier she had seen a woman fighting for her life after her husband and pushed her down a flight of stairs and then continued to beat her. Never could Charlie do that, she truly believed that, but to live with the possibility that one day he could hurt her more than he intended to, that when she was lying on the floor hugging her stomach she could have an internal bleeding, and he would not know.

There was only one way to make sure this would never happen, and that was to leave him. She loved him too much for that; she could not leave him even if she tried. Once she loved someone, gave someone a promise to be there for him until they died, she intended to stick to it. Promises were meant to be kept.

That was why, as she hugged her knees tighter, she forced herself to only remember the good times, before they exchanged vows, before it all turned out all wrong.
At the brink of summer

The crumbs on the table stuck to Dana's sleeve as she sat down on the chair heavily, thinking about the day facing her. John stood by the sink, yawning while staring down at the dishes with an empty look. It hadn't taken long for Dana to understand that John was not a morning person.

"Maybe we should... see if it is possible first," he said distracted, blinking as he turned around. There was still sleep in his eyes.

"I'm sure that it is. I mean, it is not the Stone Age anymore, they have therapy for dogs!" She said animatedly.

"Just don't say anything to Ally before you have looked it up," he said with a sigh, blinking again. "I need a shower and then I'll wake Les. Is there anything you have planned today?"

"No, I'll be home by half past five." She stood up from the table and brushed away the crumbs from her sleeves.

"Ok, good to know," he answered before turning to walk to the shower.

The summer was getting closer, leaving the winter behind, and everywhere the trees were finally getting leaves. The grass was getting greener, and children were running around. It reminded her a lot of the place she had grown up in, only this place was closer to a city and this was not the seventies.

She stood by the end of the street and stared at the forest, a piece of untouched land. It would be so easy to find a metaphor, she thought, and decided to just watch. It had taken a while to get here; she just walked straight until the road ended. Outside the house to the left of hers two children were running around, screaming in delight, just as the children had at Leslie's birthday party. It had been a while since then, and she hadn't seen House once.

She figured it was best that way, far away from each other. Neither did anything good in each other's lives.

The sun was high on the sky, shining down at her. It was all such a contrast from what she felt inside, this was sunny, perfect. Birds were singing, children were laughing, and flowers were fighting through the ground. Everything was abundant of life, but she was still dead alive. She was more living than this fall, but sometimes the pain crippled her, when she realized her own isolation, discovered the bars of her prison again.

House made moving on seem so simple, but he of all people should know the need to hold on.

Noise, it was everywhere, attacking her from all sides. It pressed her into a corner. Everyone demanded it from her too, they ran around, their eyes wild as a man was rolled into the ER on a stretcher. Her feet stuck to the ground, she knew it was time to act, to talk, but her mind was tired, and she was scared. What would happen if her husband came in here, and saw her talk? The fear crippled her even more.

Her breathing got louder until it was all she could hear, her head was spinning and her legs were tingling. She vaguely recognized the signs of a panic attack, as her eyes swept over the entrance door, but he was not standing there. Quickly, she closed her eyes, trying to block out all of the noises, trying to concentrate on work. Two seconds later she was running through the ER. Green,
blue, pink, red, purple, white, flashed by her. Color dots that she needed to escape, needed to flee. Seek refuge.

She sat down on the toilet lid in one of the stalls, her breathing still fast and irregular. Tears were springing to her eyes as she slammed her fists into the walls separating the stalls.

"Dr. Stanley, are you ok?" She recognized the voice as Nurse Paula, not a woman she often had a shift with, only on rare occasions. When she opened her mouth to answer the question, she found that no words would come, instead of tears violent silent sobs wrecked her body and she doubled over. This was the end, she knew it: there would be no more second or third chances. This had happened one too many times.

"Dr. Stanley?" Nurse Paula seemed genuinely worried as her knocks became more insistent. Before she had at least answered when spoken to, this was not how they would ever have thought she would act. Dr. Cameron who worked under House and was the kind one, the Dr. Cameron that married the charming Mr. Stanley that used to work in accounting. They were such a lovely couple.

As she turned the forest her back, and looked at the houses that passed her again, she thought of the apartment she had before she married Charlie. It had been the perfect apartment for one person, big enough to allow her to have a visitor every now and then. In that apartment she had grown so much as a person, many things that Charlie would strip her from in only a few months.

Having her own apartment was a liberty that she hadn't appreciated until she moved to New Jersey. Before, it was always associated with the loss of her husband until then. New Jersey had been her new start. She was finally smelling the roses again, hearing the birds in the trees, and nothing would take that away from her.

It was probably time for her to get her own apartment, to start her own life again, stand on her own feet. It scared her to go out alone to face the loud and violent world again, but she needed to do it. House was right, she needed to move on. First, she needed a job though, to pay for the apartment, since what she had in the bank would only cover the rent, and not food and other necessities.

"Dr. Ca- Stanley," Cuddy said with a cough, looking at the woman in front of her, a woman that looked like she was seconds from a breakdown. "I think that it would be best for you and this hospital if you took some time off, to deal with whatever is causing this, to give you time to seek medical help without your schedule interfering with it," she said with a sigh, trying to keep it all business. This woman in front of her was one of the doctors she had met the most at this hospital, mostly due to the fact that she had worked under the nuisance Dr. House who caused more trouble than any other doctor she had ever met. She wanted to ask her what was really going on, but that would be highly unprofessional.

"And I advise you to seek help, because I know this is not something you are known for doing." Despite her tries to keep too much sympathy to show, it was impossible to hold it back when the woman shrank further back into the seat she was sitting in. "And we want you to get better soon, not just because you are very valuable to the ER, and not to mention this hospital," Cuddy pointed out, smiling kindly at the woman.

"Ok," Cameron said with a nod, staring at the desk where a picture of a young child sat, a beautiful little girl.

"You can take vacation, see a doctor and get him to approve of a sickness leave, and once that is taken care of, we'll see when you can be estimated to come back to work," Cuddy, said, watching
Cameron with concerned eyes as Cameron avoided Cuddy's eyes.

"That, that sounds good," Cameron pressed out.

When Cameron walked to her locker and changed, shaking hands with Cuddy who wished her well, neither of them knew that Cameron would never return to this hospital as an employee. Neither knew that Cuddy was sending Cameron to hell.

When she rounded the corner to John's and Dana's house, she saw the three of them standing outside. Leslie was jumping up and down in front Dana, still in her pajamas, and Dana was standing there with a hand on the car door, looking down at Leslie with a smile on her face.

They were the family she had longed to have, the one that should have been hers. Her two marriages failed, the first one ending like expected, they knew he would die, and it happened in their apartment with a nurse living with them. Even though his death was expected, when his heart stopped beating the grief that struck her was more paralyzing than anything she had ever felt at the time. Now, she knew that not only physical death could paralyze you, but also when everything inside of you slowly falls away and turns to ashes.

Everything went wrong in her life; most of her dreams went unfulfilled. The dream of having a child seemed impossible now, because she was not sure she would ever let herself get near another man again. Her husband had ruined every living part inside of her, and now there were not much ground left to sow on.

She looked down when John leaned forward to kiss Dana, looked down at her left hand which was void of a ring. Before, she had been so proud. She was Mrs. Stanley and that meant something. When she left her husband she left her ring with him. The ring finger was naked now, as if she was completely free from him, as if he had never existed.

Divorce would be the next step, she wanted it. She wanted to be free of his name, and just be Cameron again. The only obstacle was that no one knew of this. No one knew that she wanted to divorce him. As long as she locked herself into this prison, as long as she wasn't talking, no one would ever know.

To be free again, she had to do what scared her more than anything; speak.
Birthday Girl

It was simple, just a few people for dinner. The candles were red, her favorite color, the food was junk, just like she wanted when she was a child, and the table was set for six. It didn't matter that the dinner felt unnecessary for her, that it had been a long time ago since she wanted this food for her birthday. It didn't matter that the color red made her feel queasy. All that matter was that someone had cared enough to do this; someone had seen her and dared to draw attention to her.

The dinner would be lively, she knew that, and she did not mind. There would be old friends of hers that she had not spoken to after she had gotten married, only occasionally on her cell on her way home from work, but then there was no work to go to, no place she could take any calls. They put away all the phones into a distant room that was only used when absolutely needed.

In the mirror in the guest room she watched herself with fascination, because there in front of her was a woman who started to resemble the person she had been before she met her husband. The blond her was falling down on her shoulders, more golden than grey now, as if colors were starting to seep into her now. Her eyes were blue green in this light, when the sun was starting to set just outside her window. Even though lines were starting to form on her face, around her eyes and mouth, she looked younger now. She felt younger. As she touched her hair, she couldn't help but to smile at how she looked; she looked like a woman who was going to be ok.

The fancy table cloth, the candles, the plates, the glasses, and the forks and knives, they were all such a contrast between the food. No one complained, they all laughed when hamburgers were served under the name Ham Du Burger. It was John who presented it, with a glint in his eyes. It reminded her of the time he had snuck out in the middle of the night and she had caught him. With a similar glint, he had talked her into not saying anything to mom and dad.

Everyone laughed; her friends hugged her, introducing her to their spouses. No one questioned her lack of speaking, though that could have had something to do with John or Dana, since they often took precautions to avoid anything ruining their plans. This was in this case Cameron's happiness.

It all was working perfectly, until that unexpected knock. That was when everyone was reminded of what had been going on the past years. When it all came running back to Cameron.

He thought it was silly at first, the secret phone call from Cameron's brother and how eager that John guy was for him to come, even if just for a minute. At first he had not planned to go, Cameron had after all not been so friendly the last time they had seen each other. However, it was Wilson who persuaded him to go. It could have had something to do with tickets to a monster truck rally. He could not argue when they were on the line.

The corsage though, that one was completely unnecessary, but it was a birthday party, and he could not show up empty handed. He stopped on the way to her brother's house, it was the same shop he had bought the corsage the last time. Back then he had mistaken her positive outlook on the world as naïve, seen her blind faith as stupid, and taken her for a coward. He had been mistaken.

As soon as he had paid for the corsage he pulled it out of the florist's hands and with a grumble he walked out into the warm spring air. It was only weeks before summer was here, all traces of winter were gone. Dandelions filled up all of the green patches as he speed by them.

The scene was a nightmare. Everything had been too good, she realized now as he stepped into her brother's house, his stature threatening. Her whole body cowered back into her seat as she watched her brother and her husband stand in the doorway. Charlie was tall, and her brother was not. The
scar on Charlie's cheek seemed like a battle scar, a reminder that he was capable of doing things that John could not even think of.

"I think it's time for my wife to come home now," he said, his voice smooth and clear, drowning all of her thoughts of fleeing. He was there now, and he would take her back to the home they had bought together, whether she wanted to or not. What she wanted was the ability to run away.

"She is home," John argued through clenched teeth, but when Charlie stepped into their house, John took a step backward, his eyes flickering over to the stunned group sitting by the table, glad that his daughter was at a friend's house.

"I am her husband. Where I am, her home is," he walked up to her, standing next to her chair, staring down at her small frame, dressed in pretty little clothes, looking almost like she had when they met so many years ago. Maybe this could be a new start, he thought, maybe this time she would actually learn.

"Her home is where she wants to be," John stood next to Charlie now, pushing his shoulder in the direction of the door.

"I am her husband! I decide where she should be!" He roared, his eyes were fixed on John's, his hand curling around Cameron's arm. There was something about the way he stood, the guests would ponder about later that made his anger more pronounced, more threatening than a man with a gun would have been. Everyone at the table instinctively tried to move away from him, pressing their bodies into the back of their chairs. Even John seemed to visibly shrink as he looked up at Charlie when he yanked Cameron out of her chair by the arm, and pulling her towards the door. She had not had a chance to react; her mind could not understand that she was seeing him again, after all this time.

That was when she saw a flash of blue, a blue shirt, a blue flower, blue eyes. The air flew out of her body, as she saw the rage in those eyes, saw him throw away his cane, saw him lunge towards the two of them, his right leg slower than the rest of his body.

It was when she saw his rage she realized really what was happening, she found that she was dead scared to go back to him, go back to the life he had made for her. Just when she was about to open her mouth and scream help, House raised his fist and soon both she and Charlie was tumbling to the floor.

It was in the middle of the day when she walked out from the kitchen. The dishes were washed, the clothes were folded into the drawers, yesterday's trash was taken out, the town house was sparkling. It looked like it did every day, she thought as she looked around the apartment one more time. Her bag was standing by the door, the only thing that differed from how everything always looked.

She looked down at her ring, the one she had proudly accepted, and easily pulled it off of her finger, laying it in the bowl that stood on the table by the door.

For weeks she had planned this, stared at the door as if it was something impossible to reach, and stared at the gloomy sky as if it was something to desire. She had wanted it to be perfect, to be final. Now she just wanted to go, forget.

She wanted to sleep.

The sun tried to peek through the thick grey clouds, tried to reach the cement, tried to warm up the ground that was almost frozen. It was impossible to find any warmth in this world anymore. As she
picked up the bag and slung it over her shoulders, she wanted nothing more than to curl up in her bed, turn off all the lights and just sleep.

The door opened easily, too easily, and she stopped on the threshold. Here she had two choices; walk out of this life forever, never see the man she loved again, or stay and slowly die. She wasn’t sure if there was much left of her, if there was anything worth saving in her. All she had was her lungs and heart; all of her organs, but not much more than that. Her body was battered, screaming with every step she took.

Her ring finger was empty, she just needed to take one step out of the door, out onto the pavement. Everyone seemed to pass so easily outside of her home, some stared at her as she stood there contemplating her future.

Only one decision could save her, and she wanted to live so badly it hurt.

When she took the first step outside of the home they had build themselves, she could swear she felt something shatter within her, possibly the last thing that had been intact. There was no going back, because she had been long gone for a while now.

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A small glimmer of hope suddenly sparkled inside of her as she stood up from the floor, and saw that this time it was not she who had been hit. It was him. She couldn't help but to feel a bit smug at the thought of him suffering.

The room suddenly burst into life, she was gently pulled up and sat on a couch, people were talking at the same time, but all she could concentrate was House who was holding a bag of frozen peas to his fist while wincing. He had saved her, literally saved her. Never in her wildest dreams had she thought it would be House who would be the one to do that. As people rushed around trying to make themselves helpful, the men pulling Charlie up from the floor and carrying him outside as he started to come to it again, she offered him a smile. He watched her intently, not a look of worry or curiosity. There was a frown on his face, that she misinterpreted as disappointment.

What she saw as disappointment, was actually confusion. When he came into apartment, the door had been wide open, and a man was holding Cameron's arm tightly, pulling her against her will towards the door where he stood, something had come over him. He could not explain it, it was more than rage; it was fear too. These feelings had no logical explanation; they just exploded out of nowhere. Thank God for that, though, he thought as he heard the man starting to pick a fight outside again.

The night was cool, reminding her that it was still just spring. Above her the sky was void of clouds, the stars shining brightly far away in the distance, letting her only see a glimmer of them; a glimmer of stars that probably were dead a long time ago.

She pushed herself off of the ground, letting her fly through the cold night for a few seconds before landing on the ground again. The swing under her could go high in the sky; let her fly next to the stars if she wanted to, if she let herself be up there. Just like a child, she closed her eyes, and imagined herself up there, feeling the air with her finger tips, flying next to the birds.

"It's better to look at once you open your eyes," she heard House say, and opened her eyes to look at him. Despite what happened today, she felt an unbelievable happiness that overwhelmed her, and all she could do was to smile back, give him the brightest smile he had ever seen on her.

God, she is beautiful, he thought as she lifted her head up to stare at the sky. The thought scared him, because before she had not been beautiful, not in this way. Her happiness seemed almost misplaced,
but that was what intrigued him now; the way she could smile after she had almost been kidnapped by her husband. Nothing could rob her of her happiness in the long run. He knew in that moment, she was happiness even if it was hidden.

He sat down on the swing next to her, and it creaked under his weight. His leg protested slightly, but he sat down despite the screaming muscle. He could name all of the star signs; he had a period in high school when he read everything he could get over about astronomy.

"Thank you," she suddenly said, and his eyes immediately looked away from the sky to look at her, wide with shock. For a moment he could not speak. It was his turn to be mute.

"I guess you can have coffee now, then," he said after a while, turning back to the sky, and she laughed.

He hoped she wouldn't go back to being mute, that she would start living again.

It was still spring. Everything had a potential to bloom or die prematurely. It did not matter to them, whose seed had just been planted. They, who just realized that they could start over. Summer was around the corner, if there was too much heat everything would dry out and if it was too wet they would drown.

Despite what would happen, the smile she offered him as they walked to the house again, was brighter than any sun in the universe, and he wasn't going to let her go again. They were going to have summer before fall came again.

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