The Real You

by Forevermore Fiction

Summary

Henry Bowers x Denbrough!Reader

A/N: Hello all! Since Tumblr has forced me away, I will begin posting my stories onto here, starting with The Real You. If you've followed me from Tumblr, I will be going through the story to fix typos and grammar errors, but will not change anything about the plot, of course! For new readers: welcome! I hope you enjoy my story. I'm originally forevermore-fiction from Tumblr, but I've been flagged.
Prelude: Lost in the Rains of August

Chapter Summary

Prelude: Lost in the Rains of August
(Henry x Denbrough!Reader)

Chapter Notes

Word Count: 2064
Rating: SFW
Warnings: canon death

August was when the rain always came to Derry. Whole streets would get flooded and closed down, and the power would sometimes go out and every Derry Public Worker would say that in terms of tedious repairs, the August rains were one of the worst parts of the year, a close second to the brutal Maine winters.

But you never minded the rain. Closed road and power outages didn't bother you at all. On the contrary, it gave you the perfect opportunity to sit by your bedroom window, wrapped up in a comforter, and read while you listened the the rain falling just outside. You only had a few weeks left until your annual family trip to Acadia State Park, and then school, and you wanted to catch up on your books before you had to read school assigned novels.

The Denbrough family had always been known as a nice, respectable family. The perfect family, some would say. You were one of few families in Derry where both parents were still married-- or alive --and both of them were responsible, and loving. Zack and Sharon were both praised for their success in running a family that modeled the American Dream: a lovely, well-kept house and yard, complete with a little picket fence around it. Zack had a good, well-paying job, and Sharon was the stay-at-home mother of the three perfect, polite Denbrough children.

Well, you weren't all perfect you had to admit. Your little brother, Bill, had a stutter that had raised some questions in the older Derry citizens, who thought Sharon must have done something to affect him during pregnancy (something that anyone with a brain told her was ridiculous), and it got him bullied pretty badly at school, but he still behaved better than most kids in town. And you had to admit that you often longed to take risks, but you never did. You didn't see what good could come out of doing dangerous things. You just wished for something interesting to happen to you, and that in itself was frowned upon.
The only person in your family that had no faults was Georgie. He could do no wrong, it seemed, he was one of the few pure things in Derry, and there wasn't a soul who wished him harm. He was the baby of the family, loved and cherished by everyone in your family, and everyone who knew him. As soon as he was born, he became your parents favorite, and both you and Bill's favorite sibling. Not that any of you minded. You all silently, mutually agreed that Georgie was worth the love he got.

Much to your jealousy, he looked up to Bill much more than you, but you couldn't blame him. Bill was a cool kid, always drawing and writing and having fun with his little misfit group of friends. And Georgie wanted to be just like him. Hell, you wished you could have the skill and friends that Bill had. Bill was an amazing big brother to Georgie, typical in that he got annoyed when he hung around too much, but overall patient with him, and loving.

Georgie loved the rain like you did. Sometimes he would come in while you were reading, and you would put your book down and the two of you would look outside at the rain, and he would ask you about it, and ask where it went and why there was so much, and why it always rained so much right before the family went to Acadia. You told him it was to fill up the river, and clean up the town. You told him it was like an alarm clock to tell Mom and Dad it was time to start packing for Acadia.

In the August rain of 1988, Georgie had skipped in excitedly, and had climbed up to sit next to you in your window, and had put his hands on your knees, and had smiled his big, contagious smile, a few baby teeth missing, his eyes lit up in excitement.

“Y/N, Billy's building me a boat, n' I'm gonna go out a sail it!” he told you happily.

“A boat?” You closed your book and looked at him.

“Uh huh! Made’a paper!” he explained. “Can you come out and sail it with me?”

You sighed and looked out in the pouring rain. “Billy can't go with you?” you wondered. He rolled his eyes, pouting a little.

“Billy says he's dying ,” he said with a slight groan. You nodded a little.

“Well he does have the flu…” you pointed out. “He'd get pneumonia going out in this cold rain,
“What's new-moan-ya?” he asked, tilting his head a little.

“Bad sick,” you chuckled, pulling him on to your lap. He groaned in annoyance, trying to wriggle out of your grip. “You know I get sick like Billy, we'd both go outside if we could.”

“Please?” he begged. You put on an exaggerated brooding expression, then smiled.

“How about this?” you started. “Instead of going out, I'll make hot chocolate for when you get back, and we'll make a big blanket fort in front of the fire to warm you up, and I'll tell you some stories.” His eyes lit up again.

“Pinky promise?” he pleaded. You nodded, holding out your pinky. He quickly hooked it with his and you squeezed it to his.

“Pinky promise,” you agreed. He let go of your pinky and hopped off your lap.

“I gotta go get the wax from the cellar, so it'll float,” he explained, skip-running towards the door. “Oh! Can my hot chocolate have extra marshmallows? And whipped cream?”

“Before dinner?” you teased. He nodded eagerly. “Well… I guess, but only if you don't say anything to Mom.” He jumped happily, then hurried downstairs. You chuckled a bit, and picked up your book again.

You heard him run back up into Bill's room a few minutes later, then skip back out a little later, his walkie talkie and brand new paper boat in his hands. “See ya later! Bye!” he called. He grabbed onto the railing of the stairs and waved his boat at you. “Get my extra special blanket for the fort, Y/N!”

“Will do, buddy,” you agreed, saluting him. “Safe sailing!” He started hopping down the steps. You set your book down and looked out at the rain. It really was coming down hard….

You saw Georgie hurry out of the house with his yellow rain jacket and his boat, his walkie talkie
in his front pocket and his boat tight in his hand. You heard Bill tell him to “Be careful” into his walkie from across the hall, and you opened your window a bit.

“And don't be out too late, we don't want you getting sick too, buddy!” you called out to him. He nodded quickly, then set his boat into the gutter and started chasing after it laughing happily. You shut your window, and watched him run off down the street.

That was the last time you ever saw Georgie. That was the last time anyone ever saw Georgie.

He didn't come home before the sun set, and when your Dad had gotten home, your Mom was already in a panic, calling up neighbors and asking if they'd seen Georgie playing anywhere nearby. Dad had gone out to look, along with Bill and a few neighbors, shining flashlights all over Jackson Street, and Witcham Street and all the surrounding streets. The hot chocolate you had made had gone cold hours ago, and you had to dump it out, listening to your mom calling anyone she could think of to see if anyone knew where her baby was.

You remembered going to the living room and picking up Georgie’s “special blanket” from where you had folded it on the couch for when he got back. It was a blanket he had had since he was a baby, just a little soft, fleece square with little turtles and stars on it, but it was special to him. You held onto it as you walked back into the kitchen, seeing your mother sitting at the kitchen table, her head in her hands as she cried. You held it to your chest as the phone rang, and she sprung up to answer it, her face falling more and more with every word the person on the other line said.

It had been a police officer. A woman on Witcham Street had seen a little boy a little earlier looking down into a storm drain in front of her house, and she had turned around for a moment, then she had looked again and all she had seen was blood.

“Was the boy wearing a yellow rain jacket?” your mother had asked desperately. Then her face had paled, and she had held onto the phone until she had thanked him and hung up. Then she sat down at the kitchen table again and had just stared at the table until your Dad and Bill came home, saying that Georgie was nowhere to be found.

After days of searching, the police had asked your parents to sit tight while they investigated Witcham Street and the storm drain. It only took them until the end of the first “investigation day” to come back to your house, telling your heartbroken parents, and by extension you and Bill, who were standing in just behind them holding onto each other, that they had determined that Georgie had been washed away in the storm drain.

Your mother had started wailing, and had fallen against your father, who just stood in stunned
silence, holding his wife weakly. “T-there’s no chance?” he asked softly.

“That he’s alive? Well… I s’ppose he could'a washed up somewhere but that ain't likely. With the amount’a water runnin’ through them drains, he prob’ly drowned…” the cop had told them. Your mother had pretty much collapsed then, your father just barely catching her as she screamed and sobbed and slammed her hands against the floor in front of the front door. You felt Bill squeeze your arm, and you could feel him shaking. You looked down at him, then looked back at the cop, glaring at him a little. He was staring down at your mother almost tiredly, his hands in his pockets, and his stance casual. Not like he was delivering a family news that their baby had died. It was like he didn't care. To add to that, all he offered your parents was a far too calm, “Sorry.”

“Did you even look?” you spat. You saw his cold blue eyes dart up to look at you, and you trembled a little.

“We'll keep the missin’ posters up if you want us to. Don't think it'll be’a much use, though,” he pressed. He looked back at your parents. “If it makes any difference, I heard drownin’ s the most peaceful way to die--”

“Thank you, Officer Bowers, you don't need to say anymore,” your father cut him off, abruptly shutting the door on him. You were now holding onto Bill as tightly as he was holding onto you.

It took your mother hours to get off of that floor, her screams and sobs turning to quiet crying and finally just her shaking as she lay with her hands over her face. Bill had let go of you suddenly and had run upstairs shortly after the officer had left, and your father had been idling around the kitchen aimlessly, pouring himself a surprisingly small glass of whiskey given the situation. You were still staring at the door, anger in your heart. They hadn't even looked for Georgie. He was dead because the Derry Police were a joke, because they hadn't looked hard enough, and he had drowned because they were selfish and lazy and…

Georgie was dead.

That had hit you very suddenly and you hadn't remembered much in the days after that. They had kept the missing posters up, and had kept them up until mid-September, when Veronica Grogan had gone missing. Your family had naturally cancelled the Acadia trip, and you and Bill had missed your first two weeks of school as the late August rain disappeared into a dry September.

You were never really fond of the August rain after 1988...
The first year without Georgie was a strange one. Things happened in Derry that you would never be able to explain. Things happened to you that you never would have expected.

More children went missing after Georgie. First Veronica Grogan, then a girl in Bill’s grade named Betty Ripsom, and three other kids back to back over the course of a month. A curfew was put into place, telling everyone--mostly kids--to be home and stay inside by 7PM on the dot. No one knew what was going on, or why kids were going missing. And, not surprisingly, no one seemed to be trying to figure out why they were going missing.

Getting back to school that first month hadn't been easy, for you or Bill. Everyone kept telling you how sorry they were about Georgie, and it made the hole in your heart even deeper.

Bill insisted that Georgie was missing, not dead. He was still alright and they just needed to find him. He would find him, if he had to. His friends agreed to help him, and they went out after school everyday. Not that your parents cared anymore…

They had both been painfully distant since the disappearance. And with Bill gone everyday and your parents effectively absent, you had never felt so alone.

So walking into school, and having people who had never in your life given you a second glance
come up and tell you they were sorry about your brother, it made it hurt more. *Yeah*, you thought, *I'm sure you are*.

You had a few good friends, and one best friend. Not like Bill and his friends, but you were still close. Your best friend, Mia, while initially expressing her sympathy for you, understood the importance of making you feel normal again. As normal as you could feel. She took you to the bookstore, and to the diner, and all the things you had loved to do before. It didn't feel nearly as fun now, but it was still a welcome change from the grief and the sympathy.

“So I think Mark Peterson is into you,” Mia told you quietly, hugging her books to her chest as you put the books you wouldn't need for class into your locker. You glanced at her, then over at the group of football jocks a little ways down the hall. “Colleen told me, that Jenny told her, that Liam told Rachel, that--”

“He likes me?” you guessed.

“That he wants to invite you to Connie Marie's party Friday night!” she hissed. “This is a big deal, Y/N, a hunk like Mark wants to invite you to a party!”

“We'll see if he says anything. I'm not really into parties, Mia…” you pointed out skeptically. She groaned and rolled her eyes. “Look, I have to worry about a quiz that I have in English, that I have to take on my first day back at school.” You turned to look at her. “And I have a mountain of homework to catch up on, I don't have time for parties.” You shut your locker, and she shook her head.

“You need this. You need this break,” she insisted. “If you get asked out to this party, you say…”

“I'll think about it!” you called to her as you hurried down the hall to your English class.

As you walked into the room, you tensed up a little, seeing a lot of people look at you and start whispering to each other. You walked over to the teacher, who explained that there was a quiz, but since you hadn't been at school she would accept it late if you needed to wait. You explained that you had read the poem that the quiz was on many times, and you would be fine on the quiz, and you moved to take your seat. The rest of the class was already in their seats, so you walked over to the only empty seat. You ignored the person next to you, getting your pencil out of your bag, and taking the quiz as the teacher handed it out. You wrote your name at the top and started immediately, knocking off the first few questions quickly, then starting on a matching section.
“Pst!”

You hesitated, keeping your eyes on your quiz. You heard the noise again, and felt a pencil eraser run along the edge of your skirt. You looked over at the boy next to you and frowned a little. He was leaned back in his chair, his legs open casually, and he was eyeing the teacher cautiously.

When he noticed you looking at him, Henry licked his lips a little and nodded at the paper on your desk. You glanced at the teacher, then moved the paper over so that he could see it while you finished. He brought his pencil back to his paper, and started writing the answers down quickly. You kept glancing at the teacher, your heart pounding. What the hell were you doing?! If you got caught letting Henry Bowers cheat off of your quiz, you would get in so much trouble…

But you didn't get caught. You finished your quiz, then Henry. You brought your quiz up first, and he waited till the last person handed theirs in to bring up his. Once he sat down and the teacher told the class to start the homework until the end of class, Henry moved his desk over towards yours silently.

“Thanks, Peach,” he whispered, bringing his pencil back to your skirt slyly, pulling it up a bit so that your thigh was exposed. “I owe you one…”

You blushed, the color dark on your cheeks. “N-No, it’s fine…” you laughed softly, pushing the pencil away gently.

“I insist…” he argued. “Meet me in the locker room before lunch, I’ll make up for that quiz, princess…” You looked down, pushing your hair behind your ear quickly. You heard him chuckle, then felt his hand on your thigh. You knew he was a jerk. There was no questioning it. But it was so nice for just a moment to not be the girl whose brother had died. You were just Y/N Denbrough, the pretty-enough-for-Henry-Bowers girl who had let him cheat on his quiz. You were just meat for him to put his hands all over. And that sick sense of normal felt better than everything everyone else had been doing. You could just let him leave his hand on your thigh for now… it couldn’t hurt.

You quickly got your homework out, starting to fill it out. You could see him writing on the desk out of the corner of your eye When the bell rang, he moved his hand back quickly, and you hurried to put your homework away, putting your stuff in your bag and standing up, putting it over your shoulder. You felt a smack on your ass, and you jumped, your eyes widening in shock.

“See ya around, Denbrough,” Henry said, winking at you before walking out of the classroom. You glanced around, glad no one had seemed to notice. You took a breath and walked out of class, hurrying to your locker again.
“Really? Y/N Denbrough? Ain’t she a li’le too stuck up f’r you, Henry?” Belch asked skeptically.

“Yeah, you’d think so. But she let me copy her quiz, then I had my hand on her leg the whol e rest’a class,” he told them proudly.

“No! She let you?” Vic gasped. He hummed in agreement, watching you down the hall.

“She's into me. Watch,” he ordered, nodding forward as you started walking by. You were mainly avoiding eye contact, but you did glance up at him as you went passed, and saw him wink at you. You looked back down quickly, blushing brightly and trying to look in the other direction. The four boys watched you pass, then they looked back at Henry.

“She's inta ya,” Belch agreed, excitement in his voice.

“See that blush? Bet she blushes like that all over,” Vic grinned, looking back at you again.

“Ain’t no doubt ‘bout that. 'n damn, that's a nice ass,” Belch added, also turning to look at you.

“I've seen fatter,” Patrick teased. “You sure about that Henry? I can think of four girls off the top’a my head that have a fatter ass than that chick…”

“It's round and it moves she walks, that's fat enough for me,” Henry chuckled, licking his lips as he talked. “Bounced when I smacked it too.” His friends laughed loudly, and he smirked a little towards you.

“She's the one whose brother died, right?” Patrick wondered. Henry nodded slowly. “Think of all the shit she'd let you do to her…” He grabbed his arm and pouted mockingly. “Please, Henry, make me feel better. Please, Henry, all I want is your fat dick, and your arms around me --”

“Shut up, Hockstetter,” Belch cut him off.
“Think of it, Henry, she's broken, you can take her easy. Her heart's yours if you make it seem like you want her, and she'll fall in love with you, and you can do whatever the fuck you want. You could beat her to hell and she'd still fuck you,” he continued softly. Henry shrugged a little.

“You think?” he wondered.

“I know. If you don't do it, I will,” he told him with a grin towards you. You glanced in his direction from your locker and quickly looked away nervously.

“She's mine. Don't touch,” Henry ordered. Patrick glared at him a little then stood back up straight next to him, watching you walk past them again towards a group of kids with your friend. “I'll be late for lunch. Told her I'd thank her for letting me look at her quiz.”

“Tell me if she bleeds,” Patrick mumbled, watching you curiously. Henry glared at him, then glanced at his other two friends as they watched you with just as much interest.

“Yeah, Henry, bet she's a virgin…” Belch agreed, his gaze focused right on your ass as you walked, and Vic had his head tilted as he watched you.

“No doubt she is,” Vic agreed softly. “She's a prep, nobody's nailed that yet. If you pop her cherry she's yours for good…” He glanced up at Henry with a smirk, and Patrick laughed mischievously.

“Think she'll let me?” he wondered, his voice low.

“Don't matter,” Patrick pointed out. “She needs a good dicking, whether she knows it or not. Best you inform her before one of those football bucks takes her.”

Henry glanced over at where your friend and you were practically surrounded by a few of the football players, your friend talking up a storm with one, while you shifted impatiently and looked at your friend coldly while another football player tried to talk to you.

“Invite her to Connie Miller's party on Friday,” Vic suggested. Henry glanced at him. “We're gonna crash it anyway, might as well pick up a chick.”
“Or we can just go to my place,” Patrick added. “Peter and Marcia wanna hang out, we could all skip the party and we'll have a bonfire at my house.”

The bell rang for lunch period, and Henry nodded slowly. “Maybe…” he agreed. He saw you glance at him, then look down and say something to the football player and your friend before walking away. “I'll see you guys in a minute.”

They wished him luck as he walked after you, glaring down the football player that had been trying to talk to you. He made his way to the gym locker rooms, looking up and down the deserted hallways, slowing his pace so that he moved more silently. He spotted you at the end of the hall, near the girl's locker room, and he straightened himself up, fixing his shirt and taking a deep breath before walking over to you.

You were looking around nervously, your eyes trained through the windows of the gymnasium doors to make sure no one could see that you were meeting Henry Bowers outside the locker rooms. **Henry Bowers**. What the fuck were you thinking? You glanced to the other side and jumped a bit, seeing him walk up to you.

“Hey,” he greeted.

“Um… hi,” you said nervously, holding your bag on your shoulder. He stopped right in front of you, looking down on you and biting his lip a bit. You took a step back and cleared your throat. “I really didn't mind you looking at my quiz, it's no problem, really. I wasn't expecting anything back."

He brought his hands to your waist and pulled the two of you closer together. “But I'd feel like a douchebag if I didn't give you somethin' back…” he explained. You blushed and looked down and away from him. “Hey, you ain't gotta be scared around me, Peach, I won't hurtcha…” You gulped and shrugged a little. “I ain't a bad guy, really… Look, Connie Marie Miller's havin' a party on Friday, me and my boys are goin', I was wonderin’ if you wanted to tag along?” You looked up at him.

“I… I dunno, I already told my friends I couldn't go…” you told him. “And I turned down Mark Peterson when he asked me to go… I don't wanna deal with seeing him or my friends…”

Henry thought, nodding. “No worries… Plan B was to hang at Patrick's place, would’ja do that instead?” he tried. You hesitated. “We might get Peter and Marcia over too, so it wouldn't just be
me and you. I'd *love* it if you came to hang with us…” You took a breath, shrugging a little.

“I'm not sure, Henry, my parents wouldn't want me out with a bunch of guys I barely know. And besides, there's a curfew--”

“Just say you're havin’ a sleepover with Mia,” he told you. You blinked and opened your mouth as you tried to think of a response. “Come on, ain'tcha ever sneaked out before?”

You shook your head. “No, I've never snuck out,” you sighed. “I don't really *do* parties and stuff, I have a lot of homework to catch up on, and--”

“Come on, who's it gonna hurt? I'll getcha home before sunrise, I promise,” he pleaded.

You thought for a minute. Would it really kill you to sneak out? It's not like your parents were going to notice, they barely said goodnight to you anymore. That thought hurt your heart… it would be as easy as mumbling a ‘goodnight’ and going upstairs, locking your bedroom door and sneaking out the side window. Bill would either have locked himself in his room or would be out with friends, and your parents wouldn't come in to see you. No one would even know you were gone…

“Yeah…” you agreed. “Yeah, alright. I can sneak out.” His mouth twitched into a smirk, and you cleared your throat. “Just… I dunno, don't park the car in front of my house.”

“Got it,” he said. You felt one of his hands slide back to rest on your ass, and your face flushed red. “Got a little side tracked there, didn't we? Forgot I still gotta thank you.”

“Henry, it's really--”

He shushed you and brought his other hand to the nape of your neck, running his fingers through your hair, then holding you in place as he pressed his lips to yours. You let out a small gasp through your nose and you grabbed onto his biceps to try and get him off of you. Instead of moving off of you, though, he walked you backwards until your back was pressed up against the wall, and his body was pressed up against you. But he did move his lips away from yours, and he looked down at you expectantly. You felt yourself shiver a little, and you brought your attention to your hand on his bicep.
You felt his hand start lifting up your dress a little, and your eyes quickly met his. “Henry, wait--”

“Don't worry, I know a good place for us to get some time alone,” he cut you off. You shook your head. “Baby, you ain't gotta worry, nobody's gonna see us.” He stuck his hand under the waistband of your panties, and you grabbed his hand quickly.

“Henry stop,” you ordered, staring at him seriously. “I… I can't.”

“It'll just be a quickie, come on--”

“I've never had sex,” you admitted almost silently. He paused. “I-I don't want to do it here. I want it to be special…”

“I'll make it plenty special…” he tried, starting to pull your panties down. You moved away from him, pushing his hands off of you.

“Henry, listen, I don't need to explain this to you. But I want my first time to be with someone I like, and not at school,” you explained. “I don't even know you, and I'm really not sure what you want from me.”

“I don't want nothin' from you, baby girl,” he shrugged. “You're just cute.” He stuck his hands in his pockets and walked up to you again, taking one hand out of his pocket so you could lean his arm on the wall behind you. “We ain't gotta do nothin’ much, if you don't wanna. How 'bout another kiss, though?” You took a deep breath and looked around. “Come on, nobody's around, I promise. Just wanna kiss you a little more before I go to lunch.” Your face was bright red, and you pulled your bag up on your shoulder again, then nodded sheepishly. He smirked a little more and brought his other hand back to your cheek, kissing you gently. You hesitated, putting your hands on his shoulder and letting him bring his hand down from the wall to rest it on your waist.

It occurred to you that this had come out of nowhere, and you and Henry had never really talked before today. It occurred to you that he was the boy that terrorized your brother and his friends, and that he was known as a pretty terrible person. And now you were kissing him outside the school locker rooms.

You were about to push him away, but he moved back on his own, looking down at you for a moment before standing up straight and smirking. “I'll see you in class tomorrow,” he said. You blinked in surprise, then nodded in agreement. He gave a quick once over, then started walking
As soon as he turned the corner, you let out a breath you hadn't even known you were holding. You hadn't expected him to just kiss you out of the blue like that. You knew he just wanted to have sex with you, that he was just using you for his own need. But his kiss had left you feeling a strange surge of excitement. You weren't the Denbrough's girl who had just lost her youngest brother to him. He hadn't even mentioned Georgie's disappearance to you, and it wasn't like he didn't know. To Henry, you were just a cute girl. At any other time in your life, you would have been disgusted, but now it was kind of endearing, in its own way.

You had no idea his attention would grow over the next year, and turn your world upside down. You had no idea what letting him in meant for how you lived the rest of your life. All you knew was there was something different in the air, and in the lights above your head. Everything seemed a little darker, a little heavier, and little colder. Your head was swimming with thoughts of confusion over the situation, and anger at your parents’ sudden neglectful behavior, and your sorrow over losing Georgie, and the distance it put between you and Bill. Swimming above those thoughts was lust. Empowerment. Rage. Some sense of purpose, purpose for something you didn't know about yet.

You felt like you were a part of a bigger something. Just what that something was, would come with time.
Bill had been moving a little slower on Friday morning, seeming to be deep in thought. You moved around him carefully, getting yourself ready quickly and sitting at the table to eat breakfast, watching him as he swirled his spoon around in his cereal.

You glanced at the clock on the wall, then cleared your throat. “Do you wanna walk with me this morning?” you asked hopefully. He hesitated, then looked up at you.

“No,” he said carefully. “I’m t-t-taking the long way so I can c-catch up with R-R-Richie and Eddie.” Your smile faltered a bit, but you looked down at your cereal and nodded.

“Okay…” you sighed. “Just thought I’d ask… I miss you, you know…”

“No,” he said carefully. “I’m t-taking the long way so I can c-catch up with R-R-Richie and Eddie.” Your smile faltered a bit, but you looked down at your cereal and nodded.

“Oh…” you sighed. “Just thought I’d ask… I miss you, you know…”

“Yeah…” he agreed absentmindedly, standing up and going to the sink to dump out his uneaten cereal in the sink. “T-Tell Mom and Dad I’m g-going to Eddie’s after school, i-if they a-a-ask.”

“They won’t,” you mumbled, standing up and walking up next to him. You set your bowl in the sink heavily, then walked quickly to the door, grabbing your backpack from next to the door and hurrying outside.
You started walking to school, looking down at the sidewalk. You hadn't meant to storm out on Bill like that. But you couldn't stand the way your entire family was torn apart by Georgie's death. You needed each other more than ever, but it was like there was a wedge between all of you, forcing you apart.

Your day started to improve a little once you got into classes. You figured you were the only kid in America who would say that classes made you feel better, but they were a good distraction. English class was a little more interesting now, and being your first class of the day, it helped you forget the things that were bothering you at home.

You walked over to your empty desk near the back of the room, and set your bag down next to the desk as you sat down. You smiled wryly at Henry, who watched you as you sat down. He glanced up at the teacher, then leaned over to you.

“So you're still comin’ to Patrick's with me tonight, right?” he asked. You looked around, then looked at him and nodded quickly. He smirked and nodded slowly. “Can't wait.”

“Yeah, me too,” you agreed, not really sure what else to say. He sat up quickly and started scribbling on his desk again as the teacher started class. You got your notebook out and started taking notes. You felt him watching you throughout class, but kept your gaze between the board at the front of the room, and your notes.

Near the end of class, the teacher started handing out a worksheet, explaining that you would work with the person next to you to analyze and discuss some short stories that had been assigned earlier in the week. As the teacher sat back behind his desk, Henry moved his desk over towards yours, waiting for you as you read over the worksheet.

“Okay, so… Edgar Allan Poe, huh?” you said, glancing at him.

“Who?” he frowned. You smirked a little before you could stop yourself, and looked at the paper.

“The author who wrote the stories we were supposed to read,” you explained.

“Oh.” You chuckled a bit and reached for your pencil, writing both of your names on the paper. “Yeah, I didn't read 'em.”
“You should, he's really interesting,” you told him. “Very dark.”

“Don't really read,” he shrugged. You sighed and looked at the teacher. Seeing him immersed in a book, you started filling out the worksheet.

“It's alright, I'll just do it for us,” you said. He nodded slowly, drumming his fingers on his desk as he watched you. He liked the way you had written his name, it was so much smoother and neater than the way he wrote it. When he wrote it, you could barely figure out that there were letters. He wouldn't have been in Sophomore English if it weren't for the Summer school he had been forced into last summer. He barely passed it, only getting a D as a passing grade because the teacher didn't want to deal with him for another summer. He was practically illiterate by all definitions, only really able to read and write the most basic of words, the ones he had to read in stores and in movies, and the ones he had to write to get through school with a passing grade. Not that English was the only subject he couldn't get through, but for some reason the school pushed it on him more than they pushed Math and Science and History.

He stared at the words you were writing on the paper, and tried to read what you had already written. “Cask of… Am-own-till-aido…?” he read, frowning a little as he tried to sound out the last word. “The fuck is that?”

“The Cask of Amontillado. The name of the story,” you explained, sounding out the title’s Um-on-tee-auto for him slowly. He turned a little red and shook his head.

“Nuh-uh, what’re them L’s there for if you ain't gonna say 'em?” he pointed out, pointing at them on the paper. You smiled a little.

“It’s Spanish,” you told him calmly.

“Why? We're in English class,” he scoffed. “Why we gotta say shit that ain't even in English?”

You shrugged. “The story takes place in Italy,” you added.

“Then why the fuck’s it in Spanish?” he asked shortly. You laughed a little, and he felt his face heat up even more. “What's so funny?”

“Nothing. Some people say it um-un-teal-yah-doe, so you aren't completely wrong.” You smiled
at him and he blinked, looking down. “Don't worry, Henry, I'm just messing with you.”

“Yeah, well, it ain't funny. I ain't good at this reading stuff,” he mumbled. Your smile fell a little and you looked down at the paper again.

“I'm sorry…” you said softly. You hadn't meant to upset him. You knew he didn't do well with English, but you hadn't thought that he took it badly. You figured he didn't really care.

“Hey, maybe you can help me,” he suggested. You looked up at him in surprise. “Yeah, you read a lot, and your writing looks nice, you could help me with it.”

You thought for a minute, then shook your head slightly. “I don't… I mean, I don't know…” you said, sounding nervous. It was one thing to talk to him in class, but to spend so much time outside of school helping him… it might be too much.

“Please? Come on, I'll really try, I promise,” he pleaded. You took a breath, then shrugged.

“Sure. Yeah, why not,” you agreed with a sigh. He grinned and nodded slowly.

“Hell yeah. No way I'm failin’ English this year,” he said happily, looking towards the clock on the wall. You smiled lightly and finished filling out the worksheet.

Once the bell rang, you got your things together, listening to the teacher quickly explain the homework before anyone could leave. You brought the worksheet up to the teacher, feeling Henry close behind you as you walked out the classroom door.

You turned to look at him once you were out of the way of the students leaving class. He waited until all the kids were out of class, then looked at you with a light smirk. You looked around, seeing that most students had already gone to their next class, only Henry's group of friends stood across the hall. You looked back at him when you saw him lean his arm against the locker next to you out of the corner of your eye.

“So, me and the guys’ll pick you up at seven, 'kay?” he told you. You smiled a little and nodded. “Sweet… and, uh… maybe we can hang out this weekend to work on that homework, yeah?” You gulped and nodded again. He licked his lips, giving you a quick once over while he tried to think of exactly what he wanted to say.
“Hey!”

You turned around, seeing Mark Peterson, the one Mia had said liked you, walking over to you. You looked at Henry as he stood up straight from the locker, and glared at the taller boy. “This punk bothering you?” the football player asked you, stopping right next to you.

“No!” you quickly denied, shaking your head. “No, no, everything’s fine.”

“Yeah, Peterson, mind your own fuckin’ business,” Henry warned him. You glanced at him nervously, then looked at Mark. He was tall and broad, his dark brown hair neatly combed back and his eyes far too dark to read.

“Why don't I walk you to your next class, Y/N?” he suggested, putting his hand on your shoulder gently.

You shrugged away from him, having not expected him to touch you, and you cleared your throat. “Mark, that’s really sweet, but I'm alright. We're just talking about homework.”

Mark licked his teeth, looking at Henry skeptically. “Alright... hey, you're sure you can't come to Connie's party tonight?” he asked, giving you a hopeful look. You blushed a little and shook your head. He nodded slowly, looking down. “No problem... maybe we can hang out another time?”

You opened your mouth to respond, feeling Henry's eyes on you, interested to see how you’d answer. “Um... maybe, I have a lot of homework to catch up on... and I'm not sure if I'm ready to hang out with anyone yet,” you told him nervously. “You know... with everything that happened, I'm still trying to catch my breath.”

Mark nodded quickly. “Of course,” he agreed. “No worries, Y/N. Feel free to talk to me if you need to.” You smiled wryly and nodded in thanks. He glanced at Henry, who had started chewing on his thumbnail impatiently. “Well... I'd better get to class--”

“Can you fucking leave ?” Patrick spoke up from where Henry's group waited behind him. You heard the other two laugh and you looked down. Mark glared back at him, then started walking away to his class.
As soon as he walked around the corner you looked up at Henry, shaking your head a little. “Ain’t got time to hang out, huh?” Henry teased.

“I really don't, you're just more… intimidating…” you shot back with a small smile. He smirked a little. “I have to go to class, I don't wanna be too late.” You pulled your backpack up over your shoulder, starting to turn away.

“See you tonight, princess,” he said. You blushed and nodded, walking away to your class.

As soon as Henry saw you hurry around the corner of the hallway, his friends hurried over to him.

“What a cutie, you gonna hit that tonight?” Vic wondered with a smirk.

“Fuck yeah, I am,” Henry chuckled.

“Sure she's gonna let you?” Patrick teased.

“We're gonna have beer ain't we? Ain't that hard to get a drunk girl in bed,” he pointed out softly.

“Just be careful, ‘lright, if she starts screamin’ ’r somethin’, someone's gonna call the cops,” Belch said carefully.

“Only thing she's gonna be screamin’ is my name,” Henry grinned. Vic and Patrick laughed, and Belch shrugged, looking down and nodding his head. “Come on, I need a cig.” He started walking towards one of the side doors, assuming that his friends were right behind him.

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Henry hesitated as soon as he walked into his house that afternoon. He had forgotten that his Dad got home early on Fridays, and he stared at him for a minute as he just sat in his chair, watching TV.

“Hi Dad…” he finally said.
Butch glanced back at him in annoyance. “What’re you doin’?” he asked coldly. Henry gulped.

“Goin’ out with the guys… we're hangin’ at Patrick's house tonight…” he explained honestly. Honesty always went farther with Butch than lies.

“How you…?” his Dad mumbled, glancing back at the TV. “Better not get any calls 'bout you boys throwin’ some big shindig and makin’ a bunch'a noise. Ain't gonna be a lotta people, right?"

“No. Just me and the guys. Peter and Marcia might be there too,” he told him, deciding it best to leave you out of it. “I'm just gonna go get ready, then I'll--”

“Go ahead and heat me up somethin’ to eat too,” Butch cut him off, turning back to the TV. Henry tensed up, but nodded and hurried to change his shirt, putting in a slight effort to freshen up as well.

He didn't have a toothbrush, but his Dad had an old bottle of mouthwash in the medicine cabinet, so he quickly swished it around his mouth. He winced a bit at the burn it caused, and spit it out as soon as the sensation reached his tongue. He rinsed his mouth quickly, wiping his mouth off with his hand. He opened his mouth a bit, just to make sure nothing was stuck between his crooked teeth. He winced a little and quickly closed his mouth. You weren't going to like that, no girl liked that. But he never had a girl around long enough to see the toll never going to the dentist had put on his mouth.

He lifted up his shirt a bit, making sure it smelled okay, and to make sure he was clean. He grabbed his deodorant off the counter and rolled it on quickly, then grabbed cologne out of the cupboard, looking it over quickly, then getting a little on his wrist, rubbing some on his chest, then neck, then on his lower stomach. It couldn't hurt, at least he would smell nice for you.

“Quit jerkin’ off to y’rself, faggot,” his Dad called from the living room. Henry quickly shut the medicine cabinet and hurried out of the bathroom. “I better get somethin’ to eat in the next five minutes 'r you're gonna get your ass beat.”

Henry didn't respond, simply going to the fridge and getting what his Dad wanted.

It took another five minutes of his Dad complaining and calling him out on how long it was taking before Henry gave him his food and was allowed to leave. He hurried to Belch's car, quickly getting into the front seat and groaning.
“Fucker thinks I got time for his bullshit,” he mumbled. “We ain't late, are we?”

“Nah, we’ll get to her house right on time,” Belch assured him. Without another word, he pulled out of the driveway and started speeding towards your house.

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You glanced out the kitchen window, then looked back into the house. Your Mom was in the kitchen, slowly rubbing a sponge along one of the plates from dinner. Your Dad was finishing some work in the study, and Bill was at Eddie's for the night, so you just stood silently next to your mother, drying the dishes as she handed them to you.

The silence was killing you. You had barely spoken since the night you had been told Georgie died, and you had to stop yourself from sighing out with relief when your Mom finally turned the sink off. You glanced at the kitchen clock, seeing that it said six forty five.

“Mom, I'm staying at Mia’s tonight, I'll be home tomorrow alright?” you told her, handing her the towel so that she could dry off her hands. She didn't look at you, staring down at the sink and nodding before walking briskly towards the living room. You ground your teeth a bit and walked upstairs, looking through your closet and grabbing a clean dress, changing into it quickly and grabbing your sneakers from the end of your bed. You sat at your desk to get them on and lace them up, and glanced out the window again.

You knew your parents didn't care that you were leaving. You very easily could have said that you were going to hang out with Henry Bowers tonight, and your mother would have responded in the same way. You grabbed a jean jacket off the back of your chair, checking to make sure your hair looked alright, then you hurried back downstairs.

You started to call out to your parents to let them know you were leaving, then you stopped in the entryway to the living room, seeing them sitting close to each other on the couch. Your Mom was shaking slightly, and your Dad had his arm around her, rubbing her arm gently with his thumb.

“I keep having dreams, Zack…” she whimpered. You realized that she was crying. “I keep having dreams about when he was a baby… it feels so new, like we get a fresh start… like I might have a chance to protect him…” Your father looked down silently. “I just don't know how much longer I can do this…” She broke down, her shoulders heaving as she sobbed. “I feel so empty, I feel like there's nothing left to live for… I can't even face them, Zack, I can't help but wonder why it had to
be him … why did it have to be my baby?"

“Sharon…” you Dad started weakly.

“I can't help it, honey, I can't do this…” she breathed.

Your shoulders were tensed up, and you felt tears well up in your eyes. Your mom didn't feel like you and Bill were enough to live for… she would have rather had you or Bill go missing than Georgie… how could she say that, how could she think it? And how could your Dad let her say that?

You took a shaky breath and walked to the front door quietly. You made sure that the door didn’t make a sound behind you, then you hurried down to the road, walking to the end of the road and waiting at the street sign.
There was quiet in the neighborhood. In the distance you could hear children, hurrying home on their bikes so that they wouldn't miss curfew. They're bicycle bells rang, and they yelled and laughed to each other. In the trees you heard a mixture of sweet bird songs and the crude, harsh cawing of crows and ravens. Dusk had fallen upon Derry, the sun starting to fall behind the trees, lighting up the sky with brilliant oranges and pinks, as if to try and convince the night to let him stay with his beautiful display. But night pushed through, purple darkness starting to wash over the streets. By the time the Trans-Am came roaring around the corner, Belch had turned the headlights on.

The yellow, synthetic light flashed over you as the car turned, coming to a stop next to you. You saw Henry in the front passenger seat, his arm partially out the window, a cigarette between his fingers. Once he put the car in park, Belch turned to look at you, his arm resting on the headrest behind him. Victor had the whole backseat to himself, and had himself spread out lazily, one leg on the seat, his back against the door behind him. One had rested on the back headrest, and you could see his fingers drumming to the beat of whatever loud, angry music wash screaming out of the car radio. All eyes were on you, hungry and expectant, and you felt yourself take a small step back.

“Hey, Peach,” Henry greeted, flicking ashes off the end of his cigarette. “You look hot.”

You knew you were blushing heavily, but you smiled a little bit, taking a deep breath. Your mind was screaming at you to go back home, get into bed, and stick to the routine, the way things were
supposed to be. But your stomach and your heart and your bones urged you to walk up to the car.

“Hop in the back, babe, Vicky won't hurtcha,” Belch told you, a little tease in his tone. Henry opened the door and got out quickly, pulling the seat up. He touched your waist to lead you into the backseat, and you nodded in thanks, carefully climbing in and sitting in the seat. Vic moved his leg, and you kept your eyes on Henry as he moved his seat back and got in again, closing the door. Belch put the car in drive and peeled out of the parking spot, speeding down the road and around the corner.

You held onto the seat, not sure how safe it was to be going so fast in a residential area. You could feel Vic looking you up and down, and you glanced over at him nervously.

“So why'd you decide to hang with us tonight, princess?” he wondered innocently.

“Um…” you started. You saw Henry glance at you through the side view mirror. “H-Henry invited me…”

“You like him?” Belch spoke up, and you could see him grinning through the rear view mirror.

“Leave her alone,” Henry ordered. You looked down at your lap, playing nervously with your hands.

“Just teasin’, sweetheart,” Vic whispered, leaning close to you. “Just wanted to make you blush…” He sat back up, and you gulped, looking out the window and hoping the ride would be over soon.

You knew the Hockstetter’s were a fairly well-off family, so you weren't surprised that the trip didn't carry the four of you to the other side of town, but only to the end of your neighborhood. Belch parked the car in front of the house, and shut the car off, getting out and opened the trunk of his car.

Henry got out as well, pulling his seat forward to let you and Vic out of the car. You both got out, and you felt Henry pull you against him, glaring at Vic a bit as he and Belch walked by towards the house.

“Don't worry about him, baby,” he told you, leading you up the lawn to the house. “Any of these guys give you trouble, just tell me, ’n I'll deal with ’em, ’kay?”
“Okay…” you said softly, nodding and keeping yourself upright so that you wouldn't be leaning against him.

As you got closer to the house, you could hear music playing from the backyard, and the front door opened suddenly. “Right on time, guys!” Patrick called, sounding almost uninterested. His eyes landed on you and he grinned. “Oh good, you brought the party treats…” You leaned against Henry slightly before you could think better of it, and he wrapped his arm around you.

“Hands off, Hockstetter,” Henry warned him, taking your hand and pushing past Patrick to go inside, pulling you after him. Patrick was too close as you went by him, you felt the fabric of his shirt against your arm, your chest brushed against his, and you could smell the strange mix of damp earth, the odd medical and menthol scent of his Carmex chapstick, the sour, heaviness of lighter fluid, and something distinctly metallic on him. For just a moment, your eyes met his dull green ones, and the apathy in them contradicted the suggestive way he licked his curled lips at you. You had never understood him. There had always been something strangely charming and inviting about him, but there was something clearly lurking in his eyes that you couldn't miss. He reminded you of killers you'd read of in books: they look normal on the outside, but they're secretly a psychopathic killer, luring people into their trap only to end their life. That's what Patrick Hockstetter looked like to you. He grinned slowly as if reading the discomfort and fear in your gaze.

You walked after Henry quickly, pressing yourself against him as you kept your eyes on the taller boy. Patrick looked away, starting to talk to Vic as he came in. Vic pulled a small plastic bag out of his pocket, which Patrick took, before walking to the kitchen. Vic followed him, and Belch closed the door behind himself, holding two crates of beer under each arm.

Henry nudged your shoulder and you looked up at him. “What're they doing?” you asked curiously, looking towards Patrick's kitchen.

“Don't worry about it, Peach, Vic just brought us somethin’ fun to do,” he explained vaguely. You gulped and looked ahead as Henry walked you through the open back door into the back porch.

“Hey! Hank!” You saw Peter Gordon sitting on a beach chair next to a lit fire pit. Peter was dressed far too nicely for the occasion. His dark hair was combed back, and his light blue button up shirt was tucked into his blue jeans. “I see Patrick wasn't lying about you bringing some eye candy of your own.” You were glad to see that his girlfriend, Marcia Fadden, hadn't tagged along. Marcia was ugly down to her personality. She hung out with girls like Greta Keene, and Sally Mueller. Girls who try to break your self-esteem and reputation.
“Y’re lucky Marci ain't here t'hear you say that,” Belch laughed from behind you.

“Hey, not eye-candy for me,” Peter laughed, as he eyed you up and down. “Marci went to that party with Gretta... I told her I had practice tomorrow morning and couldn't go.” Henry let go of your hand to tap one of the chairs around the circle. You sat down in it, and he sat down in the chair next to you. “So, you two an item now?” You blinked and looked at Henry, then back at Peter.

Your mouth fell open. “What? No, we're not an item, we're just hanging out,” you explained quickly. “We just started hanging out, I'm just...” You thought about your next words. “Trying to... make some friends, I guess. Take some risks.” You knew you didn't sound very convincing, but he just winked and turned his attention to Patrick and Vic as they walked out of the house.

Belch set the crates of beer down near Henry, who grabbed two cans right away and handed one to you. You held it nervously as Henry passed cans out to everyone else. Patrick and Vic took their seats among their friends, and Henry handed them beers too. As all of his friends started drinking, Peter looked at you, seeing that you held the can, unopened, in both hands.

“What's the matter, Y/N?” Peter spoke up. You looked around the fire at him. “Can't open your can?” You shook your head.

“Yeah, what's wrong, Buttercup, you ever had a beer before?” Vic added. Again, you shook your head.

“Wait, you never had beer?” Belch asked in shock. You glanced at him. “Y'ever... drunk before?” You shrugged then shook your head.

“Who locked you in a full-body chastity cage, huh?” Patrick scoffed, taking a long sip of his drink. “Go on, it ain't so bad.”

You looked down at the can and opened it, jumping a bit at the hissing sound it made. You felt all eyes on you, everyone's faces lit up by the fire. You took a sip of the drink and grimaced, causing them all to laugh.

“You get used to it,” Henry told you, touching your shoulder gently. He set down an empty can, and Belch and Patrick tossed their cans in a pile with it. You knew the only reason Vic and Peter hadn't finished was because they started talking about Peter's lacrosse meet. Which left you the odd
one out. So you took another sip, hating the way the carbonation burned your tongue, even though
the flavor was dull and bitter.

Your lack of experience seemed to put you out of place in a lot of ways. They all talked about
drinking, and partying, and getting high, and the boys talked about fucking girls. Henry stayed
quiet about this, but Peter was suggesting girls to the other boys, and saying who he would be with
if it weren't for Marcia.

“You got your flower picked yet?”

You stared at Patrick blankly until you realized he was saying it to you. “W-What?” you asked.

“Have you had sex?” he clarified, his face blank.

“What? No, I haven't,” you told him, shaking your head quickly.

“Good girl, it hurts your first time,” he said, his lips curling into a grin. “It's real nice after that…”

The other four boys laughed quietly, and you felt your face turned red. You looked up at Henry for
help, and he quickly suppressed his laughter. “Come on, Pat, that ain't cool,” he scolded him
lightly. “She's our guest, you can't pull out the weird shit yet.”

“You can't expect me to be polite in my own damn house. And besides…” He looked at you. “I'm
just curious… for a friend.” The boys laughing around you. You looked around at them in
confusion, and Patrick licked his lips, moving to pull something out of his pocket. He held up the
bag that Vic had handed him earlier, showing off what looked like brown, wrapped cigarettes.

He pulled out his lighter as well, and took one of the sticks out of the bag, putting it between his
lips and lighting it up. He breathed in deeply, then took the stick out of his mouth, handing it to Vic
as he breathed out a cloud of smoke, coughing lightly. Vic did the same as Patrick, and handed it to
Henry.

The heavy smell of marijuana hit you, and you felt a bubble of anxiety rise in your throat. Living in
Northern Maine made it hard to avoid the illegal plant, but you had never actually seen it or used it,
only smelled it. You watched Henry breathe it in, then he blew it up into the air, glancing at you.
“Want some?” he asked, his voice deep and husky from the smoke. You blinked and shook your head. “Oh come on, it's nice. Real easy, too.”

“Yeah, give it to her, Hank,” Patrick pressed, standing up. Henry handed you the joint, and you pinched it between your fingers nervously. Patrick walked up to you. “Put it between your lips, I'll light it again for you.” You hesitated, then did as he said. He flicked on his lighter and lit the end of the joint. “Suck it in, almost like you're swallowin’...” He stepped back to let you do this, and you once again did as he said. You immediately felt a burning feeling in your lungs, and pulled the joint out as you choked out the smoke. Henry scoffed.

“That was mean, Hockstetter, shoulda had her keep it in her mouth the first few times…” he scolded. Your eyes were tightly closed as you coughed, and every time you opened your eyes you saw the world through a blur of tears. Patrick was still right above you, laughing at your struggle, but another coughing fit hit you and you shut your eyes again. He took the joint from you to hand it to Belch, who put his hand up in refusal. Patrick took it for himself and watched you.

“Drink a little more, you'll feel better,” he instructed gently, handing your can back to you before walking back to his seat. You took a sip of the beer, finishing it off quickly to try and relieve the soreness in your throat.

The boys passed the joint between each other, finishing off the first and starting on the second. You sat in awkward silence, drinking as they talked to each other about things you couldn't understand. You started to feel an odd mix of haziness and warmth, but you felt your heart start beating quickly, and you put your hand on your chest. You sat back in your seat, pretending to listen to them talk while you tried to push away the sudden rush of anxiety you were feeling. What if they got too drunk to take you home? What if you got too drunk? You were starting to feel giggly, after all, you were probably high, and drunk, and they were just waiting to take advantage of you. What if one of them had drugged you?

“Hand it to her again, Henry,” Vic said softly, staring towards you. You frowned, your eyes furrowed in confusion, then looked at Henry as he handed you the joint again.

“Here, Peach. Take another hit, it'll help you calm down” he offered. You hesitated, then shook your head quickly.

“No, no thank you, I--” you started, quickly standing up and playing with your hands. “Where's your bathroom?”
“Through the kitchen, to the left,” Patrick explained, before taking a deep, long drag of the joint.

“Y’alright, Princess?” Henry asked, looking up at you curiously.

“U-Um, yeah… I just um… need a minute. And some water. I feel weird…” you blurted nervously before hurrying towards the house. Henry watched you, then looked at Patrick.

“You put somethin’ in her drink?” he wondered, suspicious and worried about your sudden nervousness.

Patrick smirked. “Not yet. Want me to? I got a little bit’a MDMA with her name on it,” he offered. Henry scoffed and stood up. “Condoms are in my top drawer, big guy.”

“Whatever,” Henry mumbled. “I'll be back in a minute, don't bother us.” Belch nodded and Vic saluted him with a grin. Henry rolled his eyes, turning and walking into the house.

You were standing at Patrick's kitchen counter, biting your thumb nail and holding a glass of water in your hand. You looked at him when he walked into the room, and set the glass down, clearing your throat. “Hi…”

“Y’alright?” he asked curiously, leaning against the counter across from you. You took a breath and nodded. “Somethin’ happen? Somebody make you uncomfortable?” You shook your head. “So what's up?”

You shrugged and looked down. “I just…” you started, picking at your fingernail. He could see your hands shaking, and he walked over to you, taking your hands gently. “I-I just haven't done anything like this before…”


“A-And snuck out... and hung out with guys alone... a-and I'm scared, because I feel weird, and I think maybe Patrick drugged me--”

“He didn't. I was watchin’ ‘im,” Henry told you seriously. You looked up at him sheepishly. “I
promise, nothin's wrong. You ain't even high, maybe a little contact high, but nothin’ serious. And you ain't drunk neither, you barely had a whole can.”

“You're sure?” you wondered nervously.

“Trust me,” he chuckled. “I seen plenty’a drunks in my life, you ain't drunk.” You looked down, now a little embarrassed. “You don't like the beer, huh?” You shook your head. “I'll make you somethin’ else.” He let go of your hand and grabbed a island chair, setting it next to the refrigerator and climbing up to get to the cupboard on over the fridge. He opened it up, displaying an assortment of alcohols. You frowned, but sat at the counter, sipping your water.

Henry shifted some things around, then pulled out a bottle and jumped down, setting them on the counter in front of you. He moved the chair back next to you and opened the fridge, getting out a bottle of Coca Cola. He went to the cupboards and opened one, pulling out two glasses and setting them on the counter. Then he went to the freezer and got out an ice tray, dropping three cubes in each glass.

You relaxed as you watched him get the drinks together, feeling a little safer knowing exactly what he was putting in the drinks, and knowing that whatever you had he would have the exact same thing. He also seemed to know what he was doing, and you realized that you did trust him. He would keep you safe.

“Here we are,” he said, sliding one of the glasses to you once it was filled. “Ain't got any limes, should have a lime in it, but it'll have to do. Tell me if you like it, otherwise I can make somethin’ else.” You nodded in thanks, picking up the glass and taking a sip. You hummed and smiled. “Yeah? Better?”

“Much better,” you agreed happily. “Thanks…”

“Course,” he smirked. “To, uh… make up for that quiz, yeah?”

“Thought that's what that kiss was for,” you reminded him. He shrugged and picked up his own glass.

“Nah, that's 'cause I wanted to kiss ya,” he admitted, taking a sip and smirking right at you. You blushed a little and took another sip, running your hand on the counter absentmindedly.
The two of you drank, making light conversation. You could tell that he wanted you to be more comfortable around him, he didn't like that you were so nervous. He asked you about what you liked to do, and what you did for fun, and you gave him sort of vague answers at first, getting a little more into the conversation as you swallowed the last of your drink.

“*I'll make you another one,*” he offered, taking your glass once you set it down. You leaned on your hand, watching him. Your face felt warm to your touch, and you giggled a little.

“You're good at that. How’d you know how to do that?” you wondered. He glanced at you and shrugged.

“Dunno. Just watched other people, caught onto it,” he explained honestly. “Good thing for parties, y’know?”

“What else can you make?” you continued, taking your glass as he handed it back to you.

He sighed and thought. “You know… basic stuff, margaritas, Bloody Mary’s, Long Island Iced Teas…” he listed.

“Long Island Iced Tea?” you questioned, furrowing your brow. He chuckled.

“I'll make you one sometime,” he offered, watching you drink the drink he had made you. After a moment, he cleared his throat. “So why’re you savin’ yourself?” You tensed and set your glass down, looking at the table. “Sorry, I just… I don't get why somebody would do that. What’s there to wait for?”

“Um…” you started, shrugging. “I dunno. I just… my parents always said it's good for a girl to wait until marriage to lose her virginity. I guess it's so you're sure you're giving it to the right person.”

“I guess, but you ain't givin’ nothin’ to nobody,” he pointed out. “Even though he was bein’ a dick, Patrick was right. It hurts a little your first time, if you don't do it right. But after that fuckin’ feels so fuckin’ good.” You laughed lightly, nodding slowly.

“So I've heard,” you sighed. “Look, I know you're coming onto me, it's really… sweet… but…” You thought. “I want my first time to be with someone who's going to want to be around for more
than just a one night stand.”

Henry stared at you for a moment. Did that mean that you wanted to see him more than once? You wanted to fuck him more than once? You wanted to…? No, you didn't want to date him. There was no way that's what you meant. “I can stick around if you want.”

You frowned and looked at him. “What?”

“I'll stick around, babe, if that's what you want,” he told you seriously. You blinked then laughed a little, shaking your head.

“You're not serious…” you guessed, taking a long drink from your glass.

“Sure I am. I think you're real cute, and most girls don't want me around after one night. So if you still want me after one night, I'm down to stick around,” he explained. You shook your head in disbelief, then smiled a bit.

“Do you like me?” you asked him softly. He blinked, opening his mouth then closing it. He looked down and shrugged, not wanting you to see his face turn red.

“Yeah, I like you. Sure, I do,” he agreed honestly. You felt yourself smile, and you laughed lightly, holding your drink tightly in your hand.

“Good…” you smiled breathlessly, finishing off your second glass and setting it down. “I like you too.” Henry smiled a bit, and tried to finish his own drink. You slid out of your seat and walked over to him, giggling a little and touching his arm. “So… when you kissed me at school the other day… that was just because you wanted to?” You leaned against him, so he put his arm around you, nodding. “And you wanted to because you like me.”

“That's right.”

“Not just because you wanna have sex?” you smirked.

He shrugged. “Not entirely because I wanna have sex,” he teased. You laughed a little, then bit
“Does it really hurt the first time? Like… really hurt?” you wondered nervously. He thought, then shrugged.

“I ain't a girl, I ain't had to go through that,” he pointed out. “But they usually seem to be a little uncomfortable. It's just like… you ain't stretched out or whatever, so the first dick you take is too big.”

“Yeah, I know that,” you mumbled, a little embarrassed.

“That's why I think it's worth it to just get it over with. That way you can get it out of the way and never have to deal with the pain again,” he shrugged. You stared at him, feeling anxiety rush through you again. But you brushed it out of your head, pressing yourself against Henry, wrapping your arms over his shoulders.

“I want to get it over with...” you said softly. He raised his eyebrows in surprise. “Will you... um... will you help me get it over with?”

“You sure?” he wondered. You nodded quickly and he licked his lips. “Fuck yeah, I will, baby. I'll take real good care of you.”

You took a breath, glancing out towards the yard, where his friends were still hanging out. Then you looked at him and pressed your lips together in a kiss. “Kiss me a little first,” you pleaded, feeling his hands already trying to lift up your dress. “A-And bring me somewhere where your friends won't walk in on us…” Without another word said between you, he didn't waste any time getting you downstairs, to the basement which Patrick called his room.

It was a strange sight. A girl who had no idea what you wanted or what you were supposed to do, and a boy who had always had to fight for and take what he needed by force, confident and calm and sure of what you wanted in the dead of night. For the first time you both felt free, tangled in bed together, together. Drawn together like magnets. But there was no control. Whether the alcohol had gotten to the both of you, or it was something in the night that pushed the two of you together, you didn't know. You never would.
You barely had to turn around, Mia jumping next to you and leaning against the lockers. You smiled a little and sighed. “Sorry,” you chuckled, putting the rest of your books away and shutting your locker.

“You missed an amazing weekend!”

“Connie's party was incredible, and then Saturday night a bunch of us went down to the Quarry, I wish you had been there,” she pouted. “Mark wishes you had been there too…”

You rolled your eyes a little. “Well… sorry I couldn't make it,” you told her again.

“You're gonna make it up to me, right?” she pleaded, crossing her arms. “You're gonna go to Gretta’s party next weekend?” You stared at her, then shrugged.

“Maybe. I have to help someone study,” you explained. She groaned.

“By someone you mean Bowers ,” she scoffed. You blinked. “Jack White saw the two of you at
the library on Saturday. I'm so sorry.”

“Oh it's fine,” you told her. “He just asked me to help him get his English grade up.”

“That's not fair of him to waste your time like that,” she laughed. “He's gonna drop out by the middle of next year.”

“He wants to try, that counts for something,” you argued. “He's putting an effort in, I think he can do it if he puts his mind to it.”

“You're kidding, right?”

“No,” you chuckled. Mia shook her head. “Look, don't worry about it, it's a way to spend my afternoons.”

“A shitty way,” she scoffed. “You definitely have to go to Gretta's party now. You need a nice guy in your life that can protect you when that creep decides he's bored of studying and tries to get in your pants.”

“I'm fine, I can take care of myself,” you sighed. “Come on, it's lunch time.” She sighed and started walking with you to the cafeteria. You smiled to yourself as you walked, your mind flashing back to Friday night, to things you didn't think you could ever tell Mia.

You didn’t think you could ever forget how that first night had felt, even if little of the fine details were there.

Everything had become a little blurry after you and Henry had gone down to Patrick’s room. It had been dark, you remembered that. The only light shining in was through the spaces around his blacked out windows. Henry had turned on a lamp at the bottom of the stairs, and you had seen that it looked like the average teenage boy’s room, Patrick's dirty clothes covered the floor, and his bed was unmade and wrinkled, but other than that it was fairly plain and simple. Nothing like you would have expected.

You had been nervous to use his bed, afraid that that was crossing a line, but Henry had assured you that he wouldn’t mind in the slightest. He had grabbed your hips and pulled you against him tightly.
“You ain't gonna remember why you was so scared once I'm done with you,” he had told you softly, and you had felt his thumb brush against your jaw as you looked up at him sheepishly.

He was right, though. He started kissing you so furiously that you felt light-headed by the time he had pushed your jacket over your shoulders and moved back to pull your dress over your head, throwing both of them somewhere in the room before grabbing your ass in one hand, and pushing your closer to him with a hand on your lower back. Your heart had thundered in your chest and your hands had moved without control, running along his arms as you fell back into each other. Your stomach was doing somersaults, and your heart was rising in your throat, tears threatening to fall from your eyes.

You didn't understand why you were so scared, you didn’t understand how you could be when the way he was touching you sent thrilling chills down your spine. You had never felt like this before with anyone. And you had never thought you would feel so comfortable with someone seeing you in nothing but your underwear. Soon he was in nothing but his underwear, and the both of you were on the bed, you underneath him, your hand in his hair as he kissed down your neck. And in no time at all the two of you were naked, and you moaned out loudly as he pumped two of his fingers in and out of you quickly, one of your nipples in his mouth.

And then he held your legs apart, and you had gripped the sheets under you until your knuckles turned white, tears pricking at your eyes as Henry slowly pushed himself into you. You couldn’t see it but you knew there was blood, and god could you feel it. It had felt like you were being ripped open, like he was doing something that he wasn't supposed to be doing. Well in a sense, he had been doing something he wasn't supposed to do. He had torn down the walls of your innocence and forced himself inside. Granted, you had let him, you had wanted him to, practically begged him to. But the pain was like a punishment for giving into temptation.

He was impatient, and you knew that. He had had trouble giving you time to let the pain subside, moving until your whimpers reminded him that he needed to go painfully slow. But at some point he had started thrusting in and out of you, and he had used his fingers to help you get the most out of the experience.

It ended with him next to you, kissing you and covering you up with a blanket. It all blurred together, the nerves, the togetherness, the rawness and the pain, right up until the surprising tenderness of him laying next to you as you both drifted off to sleep. It was like you had both been drunk on the night and on each other, leaving behind hazy memories of being together for the first time.

“Y/N!”
You jumped a bit and looked over at Mia, who looked annoyed. “Sorry, what?” you asked. You looked ahead and saw that one of the school lunch ladies was waiting for you to hand her your lunch money. You hadn't even realized that you'd gone through the line. “O-Oh, sorry…” You quickly pulled out your money and handed it to her, then moved ahead with Mia to go sit outside.

“What the hell’s wrong with you?” she asked nervously. “Is it about what happened in August…?” You sighed, annoyed that she avoided saying it outright.

“No, it's not about Georgie. I'm just tired,” you lied. She rolled her eyes.

“Yeah, well, can you warn me next time you're gonna go catatonic, it's creepy,” she said. You laughed and followed her outside.

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“She let you go all the way, though?” Vic asked excitedly. The four boys were sitting in or on the Trans-Am while they ate their lunches. Everyone offered Henry bits of their lunch as they talked, making it seem like they didn't like it, or they weren't going to eat it so that he wouldn't get upset over their charity. “She didn't blue ball you half way through?”

“Nah, we went all the way,” Henry told him, his mouth full with an egg salad sandwich that Belch had given him. He swallowed, gulping down a bit of Patrick's extra cola, then he cleared his throat. “She was beggin’ me to take it all the way.”

“Yeah? And you was her first?” Belch wondered.

“Sure was.”

“Yeah, you should’a seen the mess she left in my bed,” Patrick grinned. “Left her little virgin juice all over my sheets.”

“Gross,” Belch scoffed, making Patrick laugh.

Vic sighed. “You gonna stick around with her now? She's gonna be all attached and shit, want you
to stay 'cause you're special or whatever,” he teased.

“Yeah… maybe,” Henry told them. Vic and Belch looked right at him in shock. “She's gonna help me pass English… I might’a just found myself a way to pay her for helpin’.”

“Yeah? You think she's that much of a whore?” Vic asked.

“For me she is. After we left your house Saturday after studyin’, she was askin’ when we were gonna hang out again. Think she wants to make a thing outta this. And I mean, she's hot ain't she?” he pointed out. The boys nodded. “She's got a great body… wish you guys could’a seen her.”

“That mean you're gonna share?” Patrick spoke up hopefully. Henry scoffed.

“Maybe. Bet I could get her drunk enough to let y’all fuck her,” he joked. They laughed darkly and he licked his lips. “Don't know if I wanna share though… kinda like her all to myself.”

“Yeah? You like her, Henry?” Belch asked. It wasn't teasing though, Henry knew he was asking it genuinely.

“I dunno,” he told him honestly, looking towards the school. “I want her to hang with us sometime, see how she does.” He sighed. “Don't go around tellin’ everybody, a’right? We're stayin’ on the down low about hookin’ up and stuff.” They all grumbled in agreement and continued to eat.

“Hey, Henry?” Vic spoke up after a moment. “Can we still beat up her kid brother?”

Henry thought. “I think we should take it easy on him this year… just ‘cause a their baby brother… wouldn't look good to beat up a kid who's brother died,” he explained. “We'll mess with the other Losers though. And we ain't gotta go too easy on ‘im. He still gotta remember who's in charge.” He heard his friends laugh in agreement, and he assumed that he had given them good enough of an answer. He finished his borrowed lunch, looking back at the building and sighing. “Come on, lunch is over. I can't miss another P.E. class this week or I'll get detention.”

This wasn't entirely true, but he needed to convince his friends to go to class so that he could find you before he went to class.
Once they had gotten back inside, and the other three had gone to class, he went towards the cafeteria, catching you just as you were saying goodbye to your friend. He moved off to the side, waiting until a few other students had walked by, then following you to your locker. He stopped behind you and cleared his throat. You turned in surprise, then smiled. That made his heart do strange things. People didn't smile when they saw him… but you did.

“Hey, what's your next class?” he asked.

“I have a free period,” you explained. He smirked.

“Perfect. Wanna hang out?”

The two of you ended up out by the football field, going up to the top of the bleachers, where you could see the school, and some of the town. He sat down and you continued to stand and look out over the town.

You had always been able to feel things. You didn't think much of it, it wasn't something you talked about. But you could feel when things were going to happen. You could feel things around you that weren't exactly there.

Derry had always been an active place. The history of this place was dark, filled with so much death. Other places weren't like Derry. Whenever you went to Bangor, or anywhere else, you felt peace, quiet, and content in the air. It was light, and it was free. When someone passed, they truly passed. In Derry, the air was heavy with the souls of everyone who had ever died here. In Derry, souls became trapped.

The air of Derry had been so much heavier since Georgie had gone missing. It was like every missing child followed you, stood next to you. They were screaming for your attention.

That's how you knew that Georgie was dead. That August afternoon, the rain had started pouring so heavily after he had left, the sky had become dark, and it had become so loud, like static, white noise all around you. You knew now that it was something trying to hide him, so that you could never find him.

As you stared out at the town, you could feel something dark rolling towards you, threatening to wash over you at any moment.
“It's gonna get cold soon,” you sighed.


“That's not what I meant…” you said, sitting down next to him.

“Whatever. We live in Maine, you ain't used to the cold yet?” he asked. You laughed a little and leaned back against the gate behind you. He stared at you, then turned so he was facing you. “Gotta question for you.” You looked at him curiously. “Why’re you helpin’ me? With English? You ain't gotta.”

You shrugged, shaking your head. “Because I think you can improve. I think you can do a lot more than you think you can,” you told him. He nodded slowly.

“'n about the other night… and Saturday…” he continued. You blushed a little and looked down, pushing some of your hair behind your ear. “Why'd you do that? Thought you wanted your first time to be with somebody special?”

“It was,” you told him, looking over at him with a smile. He looked shocked by this, and you touched his hand rubbing your thumb over his knuckles. He felt his face heat up and you moved closer to him. “Do you… feel something between us?”

He hesitated, starting to shake his head. “What'dya mean?” he questioned.

“I don't really know,” you laughed honestly. “There's just something pulling us together.” He stared at you and you gulped, thinking that maybe you were wrong. Maybe you were overthinking things. He didn't really like you, there was no connection. He just wanted to sleep with you. But you were so sure that you felt something. “It's like… we're supposed to be together…”

He took a deep breath and started to stand up. Your smile faltered a bit, and you stood up too. “Look, baby, you're real sweet…” he started, moving past you towards the stairs. He turned to look at you and had to look down, seeing the hurt look on your face. “And this weekend… the things we did, it was real cool. I wanna keep doin’ that with you, love screwin’ around with you. But when I said I'd stick around…”
“You meant just… screwing around,” you finished softly, looking down. He hesitated. “Y-Yeah, of course… sorry, I knew that's what you meant…” You looked up as he moved closer to you. “I just thought it would be nice, that's all. It's no big deal.”

“Yeah, I'm glad you feel that way,” he sighed. “'Cause I ain't really a relationship kinda guy, y'know?”

“Yeah, of course…”

“But we can still hang out, and stuff. You can help me study, and as payment…” He grabbed your hips and pulled you against him. “I'll give you somethin’ nice.” You smiled wryly and nodded. “Yeah?”

“Sure…” you agreed softly. “We still have to keep it a secret though…”

Henry stared at you, slightly surprised that you had agreed so quickly. Part of him, somewhere in his gut and in his heart, was telling him not to let you go, that he needed you, and that you would be good for him. But something in his head told him to say wicked things to you. It was easier to hear the things in his head.

“You're really that desperate, huh?” he chuckled. Your face fell a bit and his heart ached, but he continued. “Jesus, who'd’a thought you was such a slut?”

“Henry, stop it,” you tried, looking down. He laughed a little.

“Don't feel bad, Peach, I know how it is for you girls, I know you like that romance stuff,” he told you, brushing some of your hair behind your ear. “You keep thinkin’ that if you want, whatever keeps your panties from twistin’. Just know that this…” He pointed between the two of you. “Is an open boat. You find some other guy to fuck, by all means, I won't stop ya. And I'm gonna fuck who I want, when I want. I'll still pay up for the study help though, promise.” You felt like you were going to burst out crying, but you just kept your weak smile on your face and nodded. “Gotta head back. I'll see you tomorrow in English.” He cupped your cheek in his hand, and kissed you gently. It was all so delicate… and sweet, as sweet as the kisses you had shared this weekend. It just proved that you had been stupid to trust him, and that you meant nothing to him. When he pulled away, he smirked a little and nipped at your lip. “Maybe we can meet up tomorrow at lunch, yeah? I still know some quiet places we can go.” You nodded quickly, and he let go of you, moving back and starting to walk away.
As soon as he reached the building, you burst out crying, and sat down on the bleachers. You didn't know why you had been so stupid. You had never been so stupid in your life, and now you had gone and let Henry Bowers, someone known for being unreliable, and petty, and rude, and sadistic, and an overall scumbag, take advantage of you. You had thought that he actually cared…

And you were still going to see him. That was the worst part, you actually liked him. You wanted so desperately for what you had to mean something, that you were willing to take any attention he was willing to give you. You really were desperate… and now you felt like you didn't deserve any better than him. You had given yourself, your first time, your innocence, over to someone who wanted nothing more than to use you…. And you had given it all over so eagerly.

Didn't that give him the right to do so?

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That hadn't been what Henry had meant to do. He hadn't meant to say all those things.

You had looked so heartbroken, and let down, he hadn't wanted you to feel like that. The first girl to want him to stay, the first girl that smiled when you saw him… and he had brushed you aside like you were nothing.

But you weren't nothing to him, that's why he was so angry at himself. You were right, there was something between you, there was something drawing you together. He wanted that, he wanted to be with you.

It was too late now, of course, he had already hurt you. And maybe this was for the best… now you didn't have to be hurt later down the road because you were too close to him.

For the rest of the week things were off. You still helped him study, but you seemed nervous again, and sad. And he tried to get everything done as quickly as possible. He never brought you to those quiet places, figuring that you'd want to get away from him as soon as you could.

The two of you left each other without saying much after class on Friday, and he realized that it was the silence that was killing him. He missed being around you, and talking, hearing you talk about the things you loved. You looked so pretty when you were excited…
But again, that voice in his brain was telling him to let you go. He had no place with a girl like you, you would move on as quickly as you had fallen for him, with someone better. His head-voice told him that you were nothing but a desperate slut, that what he needed was to go pick up chicks with the guys.

Gretta's party was that Friday night, and he told his friends that he wanted to go, so at eight thirty, the four of them walked into the back yard, and greeted their overzealous hostess, thanking her for letting them show up, promising not to set anything on fire or hurt anyone too bad, then heading inside to get drinks.

Henry wasn't feeling a party tonight, he really wasn't. So getting some alcohol in his system, maybe some weed too, was the best option for him right now. There were a lot of people at the party, most of them dancing and drinking in the cleared out living room floor, some couples were making out in the hallway, on the stairs, out on the porch, but mostly it was just a big glob of drunk teenage hormones. Vic and Patrick went off, Vic to dance and Patrick to sell some merchandise, whatever that meant, so Henry stood with Belch in the kitchen, drinking a beer while Belch sipped on a solo cup of cola.

“See anybody?” his larger friend asked.

“Not yet…” he sighed, scanning the room. “You?”

“Eh… maybe. Got my eye on Mia Hersch….” he shrugged, glancing at the long haired girl, dancing with a football player. “Too preppy, though, might try for someone like Connie, or Dani, or--”

“Yeah. Hey I'm gonna go have a smoke,” he cut him off, setting his beer down behind him. Belch just grunted in agreement, and Henry went out to the back porch, pulling out a cigarette and lighting it once it was between his lips.

What the hell was going on with him? Everything felt wrong, like things weren't the way they were supposed to be. What was he missing? Was he forgetting something from school? Did his Dad tell him something that he was supposed to remember? What, what was it, it was driving him--

“Hey.”

He looked up towards the door and raised an eyebrow in shock when he saw you standing there.
“Hey,” he responded, watching you walk over to him. “Didn't think I'd see you here.”

“I promised Mia I’d go,” you explained, leaning against the railing next to him. “And then Mark asked me out again, and I felt too bad to say no…”

“Fuckin’ prick…”

“Oh stop it, he's a nice guy, he's just…” you sighed. “Not my type…” He chuckled and took another drag from his cigarette. “Can I try?” He looked down at you, surprised. “Please, I wanna try…”

“Nah, these things ain't good for you… better not to start on ’em,” he told you. You pouted and crossed your arms, shrugging. “You drunk?”

“No,” you denied. “Just thought you'd let me try.”

He thought, glancing into the house. “Tell you what, I could get a joint ’r two off Patrick,” he said. “Meet me upstairs in Gretta's bedroom, we'll smoke that instead.”

“Gretta's bed?” you hissed. He smirked and you blushed a bit, looking down.

“Been thinkin’ about what you said on Monday,” he started, flicking cigarette ash over the railing. “About, uh… there bein’ somethin’ between us.” You looked up at him in shock, your nerves showing through clearly.

“Y-Yeah, that was stupid, I'm sorry I said that, I didn't mean to freak you out,” you said quickly, looking down and shaking your head.

“Shut up and listen for a minute,” he sighed, turning to look at you, then looking down. “It weren't… stupid. You was right, and I don't know what it is neither but I can't stop thinkin’ about you, and…” You looked up at him in surprise. “And I don't want’cha bein’ with nobody but me…”

“Really?” you asked hopefully.
“Yeah and… same goes for me too, I guess,” he continued. You smiled brightly and threw your arms over his shoulders, kissing his cheek. “Hey, come on, somebody’s gonna see.”

“You mean it, Henry?” you pressed, putting your hand on his cheek. “You wanna be with only me?” He nodded. “Promise?”

“Yeah, just as long as you're only with me,” he agreed. You nodded quickly and kissed him hard on the lips, making him chuckle. “Go on upstairs, and I'll be right there.”

You nodded again, and kissed him a little more gently. “Let's skip the weed,” you said breathlessly. He nodded in agreement, and you kissed him again quickly before letting go of him and hurrying inside. As you started ascending the stairs, you heard someone behind you call out your name.

When you looked down, you saw Mark standing at the bottom of the stairs, holding two drinks in his hands. That's right, you had asked him to go get you a drink so that you could go talk to Henry. “Hi, Mark,” you greeted, walking back down a bit.

“Where’re you going?” he asked, glancing up the stairs.

“Um… I just… I needed a minute to myself,” you lied. You glanced behind him, then smiled and took the drink he held out for you.

“You alright? Something happen?” he asked, grabbing the handle of the stairs.

“No! No, it's just… I'm not used to parties, you know?” you told him, looking behind him again, and seeing Henry standing impatiently, a ways behind Mark, with his hands in his pockets. “I just need to go upstairs to cool off.”

“Want me to sit with you? I'm a good listener,” he tried, starting to ascend the stairs a bit.

“No!” you said quickly, blocking his path up the stairs. “I-I wanna be alone, okay? I'm sorry, just…” You looked back at Henry again as you thought, and you panicked when Mark started to look back to see what you were looking at. “Mark!” He looked back at you quickly, concerned. “J-
“Y/N, what's going on?” he asked shortly. “Did someone hurt you? Was it that prick Bowers or one of his friends?”

“Mark, no,” you sighed, starting to get anxious. “I'm fine, I promise.”

“Then why are you stuttering?”

You blinked, having not noticed. You stuttered when you got really nervous or panicked or scared, similar to the way Bill stuttered all the time. “Because you're making me nervous, okay?” you admitted. He looked surprised. “Just please leave me alone.” Without another word you hurried upstairs, going into Gretta's room and sitting on the bed.

Downstairs, Henry watched as Mark waited at the bottom of the stairs for a minute, then went off somewhere in the room. Henry looked around, then went to the stairs, hurrying up before anyone could notice, and going to Gretta's room, seeing you sitting on the bed, gripping the comforter anxiously. As soon as he closed the door, you looked right at him and gulped.

“Did anyone see you?” you asked, standing up. He gave you a long, slow once over, taking in what he could with the lack of light in the room. Either of you could have turned a light on, but it didn't feel right. You both felt that darkness would help with the mask that covered what was really going on behind the closed door.

“Nah,” he told you, walking up to you and grabbing your hips. You held his arm out of reflex, and felt his nose brush against yours. “We got the upstairs to ourselves for a while.”

“Yeah…” you said, keeping your eyes on his for a moment, then letting them fall closed. “You really want us to be exclusive?” He didn't answer right away, bringing his lips to your jaw and neck. “I don't want you to feel like you have to… I just feel like I need to be with you.”

“Yeah, me too. Fuckin’ sucked not knowin’ you were mine this week,” he admitted. “Somethin’ was off…”

“I know,” you agreed, running your hands along his chest. “Can we have sex…?”
“Fuck yeah,” he said, grabbing your ass and lifting you up. You squealed and held onto him tightly, your eyes wide and your legs wrapped around his hips. He didn't break eye contact with you, and the intensity of his gaze made you shiver.

He climbed up on the bed and lay you on your back. “C-Can I try being on top?” you asked nervously.

“No.”

“Oh…” you said softly, running your hands along his arms.

“Why?” he asked nervously.

You shrugged pulling at his shirt a bit. “I dunno… I just wanna try…” you explained. “I-I just wanna try riding you I guess…”

You gasped as he flipped you both over so that he was on his back and you were over him. “Yeah, alright…” he agreed shortly. You smiled brightly and started fiddling with his belt. He pulled off his shirt as you pulled his pants down a little. “Baby, take off your dress.” You pulled off your dress and tossed it on the ground, then got his pants the rest of the way off. “And take off everything else, too…” You looked up at him and smirked a little, sitting up straight to pull off your bra.

---

Henry had asked Patrick to look out and make sure no one followed you and Henry upstairs. So naturally, Patrick had asked Belch to make sure no one followed you and Henry upstairs, while Patrick did just that. He told Belch he was just standing outside to guard the door, because he knew he was slow enough to fall for that excuse.

The reality of the situation was that he wasn't sure about you. He didn't understand why Henry was suddenly so obsessed over you. He didn't understand why you were special. When you had been over last weekend, he had sensed your fear, and your discomfort. For just a moment, as you had walked through his door past him, he had felt you. You were different in a way he couldn't explain, but he hadn't thought of it as anything of interest. You had seen through him as if he were made of glass, and he had seen you just the same, just in that split second. You felt the heaviness in the air
too, you knew people who died here became trapped. But you did nothing with that. You didn't watch and listen. You were secluded and boring, and you played a safe game with the world. What did Henry want with someone who couldn't even handle a fun night in, let alone the way things truly were?

And to add on to it all, you were a new presence. He had been fine seeing you from a distance, and fine with Henry wanting to fuck you, he would have gone after you himself, just for the sex. But he could only imagine that you were just plain boring. Henry didn't even seem to want to use you for just sex, he didn't want to control you or have you beg for him. He just wanted you to be his, he wanted your attention and your heart. The sex was secondary, for some reason.

He crept up next to the door and leaned his ear against it. A bed creaking, grunting and moaning, gasps and whines. It had been Patrick's idea to fuck the virgin to get her attached, but he hadn't thought it was going to consume Henry's thoughts… without you, this last week, Henry had seemed off, out of it… so what the fuck was it about you that kept him so grounded. Was the pussy really that good?

He opened the door slowly and silently, peaking in. He could see the smooth arch of your back, your hair bouncing in time with your breasts as you rode Henry on Gretta Keene’s bed. Your ass smacked down on his thighs every time your hips fell, the ripple of your flesh admittedly mesmerizing. Henry had his hands on your waist, guiding you back and forth, on and off of his dick as quickly as he wanted you. Patrick heard him groan, but he was focused on the soft whines that escaped your throat everytime Henry fucked into you.

There was nothing kinky about the sex, not even as Henry flipped you over and started jackhammering into you. It was so basic. So boring. There was no blood, no asphyxiation, no pain. So what the hell was the point? Henry wasn't attracted to you because you let him hurt you… it was incomprehensible to him.

“Fuck, Henry,” you whined, grabbing at his shoulders and scratching at his skin slightly. “Promise you'll never be like this with anyone else…”

Patrick had to hold in a laugh. As if Henry was going to be exclusive with you--

“I promise… don't want nobody else,” he heard him tell you before leaning down and kissing you.

What?
There was no way that was true… Henry was just saying that so he could get off. Part of what he admired about Henry was his insistence on being independent, making his own choices, and getting what he wanted. That's all he wanted out of life, was to not be tied down. You wanted love, Patrick recognized. You wanted Henry to give you love that he couldn't give. He didn't have any to give. He held onto every ounce of love he was given, and he was given so little.

You were a threat, he thought. You were going to try to take all of Henry's attention and focus for yourself. That's just what girls did. You needed to be pushed out of the way, so that Henry could go back to his friends and the happy dynamics they all shared.

With Vic, Henry's attacks were smart and thoughtful and careful. With Belch things were brutal and slow and thorough. Whenever Henry and Patrick worked together, the outcome was a perfect mix of precision, chaos, careful planning and brutality. What the hell could you bring to the table? You'd shut down the way things were, you would change everything.

You cried out loud as you orgasmed, louder than you'd meant to, for sure. Henry followed you, almost as loudly. After a few seconds, he fell next to you, pulling you to him, and kissing you softly. It was too soft for him. Already you were trying to change who Henry was… there was no way you could stay around them and ruin everything that was.

No. You had to be removed from the picture entirely.
September ended sooner than you could have expected, and October rolled through just as fast. People still avoided you awkwardly in the halls, and acted like you were delicate and needed careful handling.

Your family was still distant from you, your parents saying very little to you, family meals so quiet that both you and Bill often opted to skip them and find food on your own time. Bill was distant from you too, either spending time alone in his room or out with his friends.

Your house didn't feel like a home anymore. And you were so glad that you had connected with Henry, so that you'd always have a place to not be at your house. Not that you ever went to Henry's house. But he and his friends always had plans, and Henry was more than happy to have you tag along.

You watched as Vic and Patrick played some kind of video game on Belch's TV in his basement. It looked like something Richie and Bill would play, but you could never place a name to the characters on screen. All you knew was that Vic was certain that he was going to beat Patrick at this round, and Patrick knew that it would be the other way around.

Belch was laying in one of the chairs, his hat over his eyes, and Henry was sat next to you, his arm
around you while he watched his friends. You leaned against him and sighed, trying to let him know that you were bored.

“What day is it?” he mumbled suddenly.

“Friday,” Patrick spoke up, not looking away from the screen.

Henry tsked. “I mean what day is it? Like the number?” he clarified.

“The twenty-eighth,” you yawned. He grunted then nodded.

“So Halloween's comin’ up,” he said. “Just a couple days now. On Monday night.” You looked up at him, waiting for him to get to the point. “You wanna hang with us?”

You saw Patrick look up from his game, and you hesitated. “I mean... I don't wanna get in the way… and besides, it's a school night,” you pointed out.

“Screw school. Me and the boys are gonna go to the old house on Neibolt and see which one of us pisses ourself first. Wanna come along?” You could practically feel the blood drain from your face, and you quickly shook your head. “What, 're you scared’a ghosts?”

“You can feel 'em, huh?” Henry chuckled. You nodded. “Alright, ghost hunter, are there nice ghosts here or mean ones?”

You hesitated, knowing that he didn't take you seriously. “There are nice spirits, but not in Derry.
In Derry there's only dark… it takes the good souls and feeds on them…” you told him softly. He frowned. “They're still here… but they're trapped, and scared and they can't leave--”

“Wait, yer just fuckin' around, ain'tcha?” Belch spoke up. You shook your head. “No way… come on, it's bullshit…”

“I can feel my brother sometimes… he wants to go home, but he can't…” you whispered. They all hesitated. “They're all stuck somewhere dark and cold and wet… like the bottom of a well… I see it in my dreams sometimes…”

“You really ain't fuckin' with us?” Henry asked nervously. You shook your head again. He took a breath, then sat up straight. “Well I ain't scared. I'll protect you if you come along.”

You sighed and looked away from him. “Maybe…” you mumbled. “It's not safe. They can try to take over your body and stuff.”

He laughed skeptically, glancing at his friends. “Patrick said the same thing,” he told you. You looked over at Patrick, who was glaring at you. “Vic's bringin’ one'a them ghost boards or whatever to freak him out.”

“Don't use it unless you know how…” you insisted quickly. He rolled his eyes. “I'm serious, this town is filled with evil a-and someone's gonna get possessed, and--”

“We'll be fine,” he sighed. You gulped and took a breath.

“You really want her to come along?” Patrick spoke up. Henry looked over at him again. “You think it's gonna be any fun with her tryin'a make everything safe and shit?”

You got the message loud and clear. You didn't want to impose on any of them, you tried to stay out of their way, but anytime you were around Patrick started acting cold and angry. He didn't want you around, and how could you blame him...

“You guys go, you'll have more fun without me,” you agreed, sitting up.

“But they don't,” you pointed out softly. He looked over at his friends again, glaring at Patrick.

“I dun mind if ya come with us, Y/N,” Belch argued, sitting up. “I-I mean it might be good to have y'round in case somethin’ bad happens… besides, y'ain't gonna ruin the fun, we're all gonna be scared.”


Patrick shrugged heavily and leaned back on the couch. “It's settled then, Y/N’s comin’ with us,” Henry announced. You looked up at him nervously. “Everythin’l be fine, Peach.”

The plan was set and there was no discussion for the rest of the weekend. You found that his friends didn't argue unless it was to make a plan more efficient-- often this was done by Vic, who you noticed Henry looked to for a second opinion almost all of the time. If he didn't look to Vic, he looked to Patrick. Belch was just along for the ride, but he didn't seem to mind. He seemed to like following Henry's every word, he did everything he said with little to no complaint.

At school on Monday you did as you usually did: pretended nothing was going on. It was integral that no one knew that anything was going on between you and Henry. Not yet. You didn't want anyone looking at you like you were impulsive. You needed time, so that it didn't look like you were using him to get over your brother. You knew that that's what Mia would think.

You smiled quickly at him as you passed the group in the hall, then met Mia at your locker, sighing at the almost angry expression on her face.

“Where were you this weekend?” she asked coldly. You shrugged. “Mark said you told him to leave you alone at the party, and you were gone until we all left.”

“Yeah, I wasn't feelin’ it,” you explained, opening your locker.

“You hurt his feelings,” she scoffed.
You glanced at her. “Is that my problem?” you chuckled. She threw her hands up in the air.

“He likes you! Like a lot!” she said. You started putting your things away. “Don't you wanna date him?”

“He's not really my type, Mia,” you admitted. “The only reason I said yes to him in the first place is because you wouldn't let it go, and I felt bad. I'm not gonna date him.”

“Not your type?” Mia scoffed, crossing her arms. “What exactly is your type, Y/N?”

You thought for a moment, then shrugged. “Not sure. I like feeling connected to people,” you explained. “I like… I like someone who's strong, and handsome—”

“Yeah, but what’s handsome to you?” she pressed.

“It depends,” you smirked. She groaned. “I gotta get to class, see you tomorrow.”

“Wait, you aren't gonna to Tammy's Halloween Party?” she asked sadly. You sighed.

“Wasn't invited. Besides, I have homework, and we have school tomorrow,” you explained. “Have fun though—”

“Can I sleep over then?” she suggested. You hesitated.

“Um… m-my parents won't want me to have someone over on a school night,” you said.

“Well then can I just come over until curfew?” she pressed. You opened your mouth as you tried to think of what to say. “Y/N, please, we haven't hung out since last month, I miss you…”

“I miss you too… just… maybe later this week,” you told her. She looked a little hurt. The bell rang for class and you touched her shoulder. “We’ll hang out this week, I promise. You have class, don't make yourself late.”
She smiled wryly and nodded, hurrying off to class. You watched her go, then looked down sadly. You didn't want to lie to her. You never thought you would keep a secret like this from her, you always shared everything with her, but this wasn't just any guy... this was Henry. She wouldn't understand.

The hallway cleared up, except for Henry and his gang across the hall, and you walked over to them slowly, holding your books in front of you.

“Hey,” you said softly, smiling up at Henry. He was leaning against his locker the way he usually did, his friends on either side of him.

“Hi, baby,” he greeted. You glanced at his friends, then held up your book.

“Ready to go study?” you asked. He chuckled.

“Sure am,” he agreed. You heard Belch and Vic laugh a little and you looked around at them in confusion. Patrick was staring at you blankly, his face completely void of emotion, his eyes cold and full of spite. You gulped and looked back at Henry, taking his hand. He stood up from the locker and glanced at his friends. “See you guys later…”

“Have fun studying, Henry,” Vic called out.

“See you tonight, Y/N,” Patrick added calmly. You glanced at him nervously, then turned and pulled Henry in the direction of the library.

“He doesn't like me…” you said softly, once you were a ways away from them.

“Who, Patrick?” he wondered. You nodded. “Don't worry about him, Peach.”

“I have to... he's your friend and... I don't want them to feel like I'm trying to snake my way into your group, I'm really not, I want you to have your space,” you insisted. “But I want them to be okay if I'm around…”
“Baby, don't worry,” he sighed, pulling you towards him. He grabbed your hip and pulled you against him, seeing how worried you looked. “You wanna be around us and stuff?”

“Yeah, well, I wanna be around you,” you agreed. “I wanna spend my time with you.”

Henry tensed up a bit, trying to allow this to sink in. It wasn't working, your words reflecting off of a sturdy, long-built up shield around his heart. You had already broken your way through a little, by saying you wanted to be with him, but spending time with him was different. No one ever wanted to just sit with him, just to be with him. So he couldn't hear it as that.

“Hey, how about we skip the studyin’, ‘n spend some time together, then?” he suggested quietly, grabbing your ass and squeezing it, before giving it a quick smack. You gasped quietly and moved closer to him.

“Henry, we're at school,” you whispered. He shrugged, starting to pull your dress up a little. “Henry, stop, what if someone sees?”

“Ain't nobody gonna see… were gonna go someplace else for a little while, just you and me…” he explained softly. “One’a them quiet places I mentioned…” You blushed a little and felt his hand run over your waist. He nudged your nose with his, and you shivered, holding his arm and sighing.

“Fine…”

Henry's 'quiet place' for the two of you ended up being one of the lesser used bathrooms near the theater wing of the school. You gave him a look as soon as he stopped outside the doors, and he gave you a cheeky grin before pulling you into the boys room.

“This is so dangerous,” you whispered, your voice echoing around the peeling, green-painted walls. “I'm not even supposed to be in here, and what if some kid comes in to use the bathroom?”

Henry pulled you into the handicapped stall and closed the door behind the two of you, locking it. “No worries, baby, I'm gonna be holding you up against the wall here…” he explained quietly.

It took you a few minutes, but soon he had you pressed up against the wall, holding you up as he fucked into you. You had your face buried in his shoulder so that you wouldn't be too loud, and you let your nails scratch up his back.
“H-Henry, you're sure no one's gonna hear us?” gasped out, sitting up and grabbing your hair.

“Yeah, baby, of course, I'm bein' careful,” he agreed quickly, starting to pick up the pace a little.

“Okay…” you said quietly. He grunted softly, and started kissing at your neck. “B-Because it would be really really bad if we got caught.”

“Yep,” he sighed. You gulped and shivered a bit.

You couldn't help but listen for any little noise, and you thought for a moment. “When do the janitors come to--”

“Fuck, Y/N, you wanna stop?” he hissed, standing still. You blushed and shook your head. “Then can you chill out and shut the fuck up? You're gonna make me lose it, I'm almost there.”

He pressed harder against the wall and started fucking you quickly, not hearing you mumble a soft, “Sorry.”

He finished pretty quickly, and pulled out of you slowly before setting you down silently. “You're so fuckin’ hot,” he chuckled, pulling off his condom and tossing it in the toilet. He glanced at you as you straightened yourself out, seeing that you looked upset, like you might cry. He sighed. “You okay? What's wrong?”

“Nothing,” you lied softly. He pushed you back against the wall and tilted your chin up so that you could look at him. You gulped and shrugged, bringing your gaze to his chest. “Fine, it's just… can you maybe not tell me to shut up like that? It's really mean…”

It looked like it took all his effort not to roll his eyes. “I'm sorry,” he chuckled. You glared up at him and crossed your arms once you had your clothes back in order. “You worry too much, baby. You were takin’ the fun outta it…”

“We'll I'm sorry that I don't wanna get caught,” you hissed. You took a breath. “And… and I'm sorry, I didn't mean to ruin things. But that doesn't give you the right to be a jerk to me, there are nicer ways to say it.”
He hesitated, then shrugged. “I ain't a nice person,” he pointed out. You bit your tongue and sighed heavily starting to rush out of the stall. “Wait, wait, I don't want cha to leave and be upset for the rest of the day…” He grabbed you arm and pulled you back to him before you could open the stall door you looked at him expectedly and he sighed. “I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry…” You gulped and nodded a little, shrugging. “I just don't know how to talk to pretty girls…” You shook your head, smirking before you could stop yourself.

“No, you don't,” you agreed lightly, touching his cheek and going on your toes to kiss him. He kissed you back, then pulled away and rubbed your arm.

“Let's get outta here before we get caught,” he said, taking your hand. You nodded and let him lead you out of the stall, silently out of the bathroom and then quickly through the halls until you reached the gym area. It was always quiet and deserted in the gym hallways, so the two of you could hold hands and talk alone. “That weren't so bad, was it?”

“No, but I was scared we were gonna get caught,” you pointed out. He sighed.

“You ain't got nothin' to be scared of, baby girl. Not when I'm around,” he told you. “Which reminds me… can the boys and I pick you up at eight?”

You took a shaky breath and nodded. “Promise me you're all gonna be careful tonight,” you said. “You're dealing with dangerous stuff, and I can't stand the thought of someone getting hurt when they could avoid it--”

“We'll be careful, Peach,” he chuckled, spinning you towards him and catching your hip. “Besides, we'll have you there, we'll let you set the ghost safety rules.” You looked up at him nervously, and he leaned down to give you a quick kiss. “Come on, the periods almost over.”

He brought you to the main hallway, looking around before kissing you again, a bit more deeply this time. “Eight o'clock?” you clarified softly.

“You got it,” he agreed, grabbing at your ass quickly. “I'll see you're cute ass then.” You rolled your eyes, but blushed and cracked a small smile before turning and quickly walking to your locker, taking the unused English book from your backpack and getting out the books you needed for your next few classes.
“Fuck, this place is nasty,” Vic scoffed as he made his way up the steps of the old Neibolt House. It definitely wasn't in the best shape, the wood rotting, the windows broken and boarded up. Ivy vined up the walls on one side, and mold grew on another.

Belch shone his flashlight on the ground quickly, kicking an old beer bottle across the yard and chuckling when it shattered somewhere in the grass. He held their case of new ones in his other hands. “Ain't nobody lived here for decades,” he said, looking up at the house. “E’rbody in town says it's haunted. Some people say they see people movin’ around through them windows upstairs.”

“We'll see how haunted it is,” Henry scoffed, rubbing your shoulders as you both ascended the stairs. Belch easily pried a few of the boards off the door so that they could sneak through, then they easily opened the door. “Scared, baby girl?”

“Yes,” you agreed softly. He sighed. “There's evil here, I can feel it--”

“Whatch’er feelin’ is scared, sweetheart,” he argued. You sighed heavily and watched Vic, then Belch go inside. Henry pushed you inside and followed right after you, and you held onto his hand as tightly as you could.

“Patrick, come on,” Vic said, shining his flashlight at his friend, who hadn't even ascended the stairs to the porch yet.

“Don't tell me you're pussyin’ out on us!?” Henry grinned. Patrick just stared blankly at the four of you, then sucked hard on his cigarette, the end burning into ash. He dropped it on the ground and stomped it out before he walked up to the porch and bent under the remaining boards to get inside.

“I ain't pussyin’ outta nothin’,” he said calmly. “Just wanted to finish my cig…”

He brushed past you, shoulder-checking you hard enough that you stumbled back. You looked down quickly and rubbed your arm. Henry didn't seem to notice, shining his light around the old dusty house. Cobwebs hung from every corner, and the floorboards creaked loudly under the feet of the four boys as they wandered around. You stood completely still where Henry had left you, hugging yourself and trying to breathe at the heaviness you felt around you.
This wasn't good. There was something here, in this house, and it was really *really* bad…

“Y/N, baby, come on, we'll set up in here!”

You snapped out of your trance and looked around, quickly following Henry's voice to what must have been the houses kitchen and dining room in the past. There was a refrigerator against one wall, and a dining room table. Vic had set the Ouija board box down on the table, and was getting everything out. He set the planchette down on the board, and you hurried over to pick it up.

“You're not supposed to put it on the board, it'll start the session,” you explained nervously.

“Jesus, you really are superstitious, ain'tcha?” Henry chuckled, putting his arm around you. You blushed and shrugged. “Don't worry, baby. Remember, I said I'd take care of you.”

You took a breath and started to respond. “It's a fuckin’ game, can we get to playin’ it already?” Patrick scoffed, pulling over a rocking chair and sitting down in it on one side of the table. You sighed, and Henry pulled over an old crate for you to sit on, putting it so that you were sitting so the board was facing you, across from Patrick. You looked up at him, seeing him giving you that blank stare. You quickly looked down, playing with the planchette nervously.

The other boys found things to sit on, and pulled them over around the table. Vic announced that he was going to write down whatever the board said, and then they all looked at you. You looked around and took a breath.

“For the record, *again*, I think this is a really, *really* bad idea,” you told them quickly. “And if I say we need to close the session, we say Goodbye, understand? No one take your hands off of this until it's over goodbye.” You held up the planchette. They all nodded, except for Patrick who just blinked at you with boredom. “P-Patrick, you promise?”

He raised an eyebrow and shrugged. “Sure, I guess…” he mumbled. “If you wanna be a pussy about it…”

“Watch it, Hockstetter,” Henry warned him. You glanced at him, then took another breath before setting the planchette on the board over the letter G, keeping your finger on it.

“Okay… put your hands on it, guys,” you instructed. Henry and Belch moved forward and put their
fingers on it, then Patrick leaned forward slowly and put his on as well. “Okay, now move it in a circle for a moment.” Again, they did as you said, moving the little plastic device in a circle a few times before settling back on the G. “Don't press down too hard. Just have your fingers rest on it. Now…. You took a shaky breath. “I-Is there anyone here who wants to speak with us?”

It took a moment, then the planchette began to slide over to the left. “Woah, holy shit, you guys doin’ that?!” Belch hissed.

“Nah, it's like it's movin’ on it's own!” Henry laughed, watching it land over yes. You gulped and nodded. Before you could ask anything else Henry cut you off. “You a bad ghost?!”

The pointer didn't move, then it started sliding over to the no. You felt cold all of a sudden, and like you might cry. All you could think was that….

What if it was….?

“What's your name?” Patrick asked. You looked up, seeing that he was looking right at you. The pointer moved back over to the G… then the E… then the O… then the R… then the G again… then the I… then the E…

You felt them all look at you, the room suddenly silent. You opened your mouth to say something, but nothing came out. You closed it quickly, feeling a few tears roll down your cheeks.

“Patrick, what the fuck, that ain't funny,” Henry snapped at him.

“It wasn't me, it was the board,” Patrick said calmly.

“Bullshit, we both know this ain't real,” he scoffed.

“Well I didn't do nothin',” Patrick insisted.

“Maybe the board is real, what if…” Belch started, looking nervous. “What if it's really--?”
“It ain’t, it’s just Patrick playin’ some fucked up joke ‘cause he's butthurt ‘bout Y/N bein’ here,” Vic spoke up. Patrick glanced at him, then took his hands off the planchette, sitting back and crossing his arms.

“Fine. If it was me, then ask it somethin’ and see what happens,” he suggested coldly. Henry looked at you, seeing that you were staring ahead at the open doorway across the room.

“Go on, Y/N, ask it somethin’ only you would know,” Henry told you. You quickly looked back at him, then back at the board.

“U-Um…” you started, taking a shaky breath. “W-W-What did you want me to make for you when you got b-b-back?”

Henry kept his eye on, then looked down at the board as the pointer started moving again. C. O. C. O. A.


“I told you it wasn't me,” Patrick scoffed.

“Fuck off, Pat,” Henry scoffed. “Alright, so what do we do?” He looked at you and you just shrugged, staring with glossy eyes at the board. “Should we end it, Y/N, put it over the Goodbye?”

You shook your head quickly. “N-No, I don't want to leave him…” you said quickly, your voice cracking. The boys looked at each other, and you sniffed. “Where are you?”

“Like he fuckin’ knows,” Patrick mumbled.

“Fuck off, Patrick,” Henry told him sternly. Patrick just rolled his eyes, watching the planchette start moving again, more quickly this time.

1. E. L. P.
“H-Help?” you asked softly.

“What's it mean, help?” Belch wondered, looking at you.

Everyone looked at the board as it moved again to spell out H. E. L. P. Then again. And again. And again, and again, and again, getting quicker each time.

“Belch, cut it out,” Henry ordered.

“It ain't me!” his friend, cried, looking frantic and quickly taking his fingers off and holding them up to show that he had no control over how quickly the pointer was moving. “This is too fuckin’ weird, man.”

“Y/N, it ain't me, I swear--” Henry told you.

“He needs help,” you whimpered. “H-He’s scared, I have to help him.”

“Y/N--” he started, taking his hands off the planchette to touch your arm.

“Wait don't--!!” you gasped. The planchette moved over to the moon in the top right corner and stopped there. They all stared at it expectedly.

“Why'd it stop?” Henry asked. “What's the moon mean?”

“Somethin’ bad…” Patrick said softly. Henry looked up at him and frowned. “Means somethin’ bad took over.”

“Somethin’ bad? Like a demon?” he chuckled. “Cool, what's it want?”

“W-Why’d you take your fingers off?” you whimpered. They all looked at you again. “W-Why’d you leave me alone with it?”
“Just say Goodbye to it, Y/N,” Vic said. “Quick, before--”

You cried out as the planchette flew out from under your fingers and landed across the room, near the open door. You grabbed onto Henry and whined, shaking your head.

“What the fuck? Who did that? How’d you do that?” he asked worriedly. Belch and Vic both got up and moved around the table behind Henry and you.

“A’right, this is really too fuckin’ weird, man, this ain't fun no more,” Belch said quickly. “Let's get outta here.”

“Don't be a pussy, Belch it just… it slipped out front under her hand, that's all,” he tried. “Right, Y/N, it just--?” He looked at you, seeing you staring back at the doorway across the room, looking a little horrified, your mouth open wide like you might scream. “What?” He looked at Patrick, seeing the he turned in his chair and was staring at the door too, with his average blank expression. “What the fuck are you guys lookin’ at?”

“W-W-What the fuck… is that?” you whimpered, grabbing at his shirt and standing up. He didn't get up, looking at you in confusion. “Henry, we shouldn't have come here, I told you, we have to go now!”

“Baby, what the fuck's the matter with you?”

You let go of him, running out towards the front of the house as you started crying. Henry groaned in frustration and stood up.

“Fine, come on guys,” he sighed. “Vic, get the game together and let's go.” He looked over at Patrick, who stood up slowly, not looking away from the doorway. “Pat, seriously, what the fuck are you looking at?”

Patrick took another minute, then looked over at his friends, raising an eyebrow. “Nothing.”

---
Almost as soon as you ran into the front room, you turned around to see if Henry was following you. And when you turned back around, you weren't in the front room anymore.

“What?” you breathed, backing up and looking around the empty, dark room. You felt your back hit a wall, and you gasped, turning around and seeing the door to the room. You grabbed the handle and turned it, finding it locked. Your heart rose into your throat and you tried turning it again, trying to pull it open.

No matter how hard you tried, you couldn't get it to open. You hit the door a few time and sobbed. “Henry!?”

“Y/N…”

You gasped and turned around, seeing Henry standing in the middle of the room. You let out a breath and wiped your eyes quickly. “J-Jesus, you scared me,” you admitted, looking up at him. Then you thought. “H-How did you get in here--?”

“Whatcha doin’ in here, Y/N?” he cut you off coldly. You stopped walking and frowned a little. “Why the fuck did you run off like that?”

You gulped and shook your head. “I wouldn't expect you to understand, Henry…” you told him. “But I can't stay here-- we can't stay here. There's evil, and it's going to take control of us, and possess us, and--”

“Would you shut up about that bullshit ghost stuff,” he snapped. You blinked and took a step back. “You embarrassed me in front of my friends back there!”

You opened your mouth in surprise. “H-Henry, I'm sorry, I didn't--”

“You didn't what?” he hissed, starting to walk up to you. “You didn't mean to act like a total freak? You didn't mean to pull that bullshit about your brother?”

“Henry I didn't!” you insisted, feeling your back hit the door again. You desperately grabbed at the handle behind you. He stopped right in front of you, looking down at you.
“You want my friends to think you're cool… you try so fuckin’ hard to not just be the girl whose brother died. But you go and pull shit like this for attention,” he spat. You shook your head quickly, then gasped as he grabbed your throat.

“H-Henry--!”

“What’d you want, you stupid bitch?” he hissed, getting in your face. You suddenly noticed the way his blue eyes were wide and frantic, the moon reflecting a bright orange through the window and into his eyes. Your own widened as he tightened his grip on your throat, lifting you off of the ground. “You stay outta my fuckin’ way, you hear me? I’m in charge, you listen to me, and you obey me, understand?” You shook your head and he let go of you, letting you fall back against the door and gasp for air. “I want you to say it, Y/N…”

“H-Henry, you hurt my neck…” you sobbed. Then you felt him grab your hair and pull you to stand up straight. You sobbed loudly and grabbed his arm.

“Tell me you understand me. You stay out of my way, you listen to me, you do what I say,” he repeated. “Or your other brother goes too…”


“Tell me you understand and you ain’t gotta find out,” he pressed.

“What are you gonna do to him?!” you gasped. “What--?”

You barely had time to react to him letting go of your hair before you backhanded your cheek. You cried out and fell to the side, catching yourself on the floor and sobbing. “H-Henry,” you sobbed, looking up at him as you touched your cheek. He was grinning at you, and he clenched his hands into fists.

“I won’t ask again, Y/N…” he warned. You trembled and started getting up.

“I-I understand…” you whimpered softly.
“What was that?” he said, getting in your face again.

“I understand,” you repeated, a little louder. He smirked a little and tucked some of your hair behind your ear.

“Good girl,” he said, moving your hand from your cheek and brushing his fingers against the bruising skin. “Bet you can't wait for me to be like this, huh?”

You frowned and started to respond. Then the door opened behind you and someone grabbed you and pulled you through. You turned to look at who it was, and you were surprised to see Patrick, pulling you down the hall.

“W-What’s happening, what’re you doing?”

“We're getting out of this house, Henry's looking for you,” he explained. You frowned deeply. “It wasn't Henry. In that room with you, it wasn't really Henry.”

“What does that mean? How was that not really Henry, it was Henry,” you insisted.

“Well Henry's looking outside for you,” he told you, stopping abruptly and turning. “So if that was him in there then he's fuckin’ fast.”

“No… no, I saw him, he talked to me… he…” you trailed off. Patrick reached up with the tips of his fingers and touched your cheek, which was slightly bruised from being hit. His fingers were ice cold, but damp, and all you could think of was that he felt like he was dead… You quickly turned your head to get his fingers off of you, and backed away from him, looking at him nervously. He had that blank look on his face and he tilted his head down and to the side slightly as he stared at you. “W-Why aren't you scared?”

“Why would I be scared?” he asked calmly.

“B-Because of the spirits… and the demons…” you pointed out, crossing your arms.
He blinked and looked over to the side. “You see them too, don't you?” he guessed. You gulped and slowly uncrossed your arms. “Do you believe in God?” He looked back at you, seeing the way you looked at him in confusion. “I do… my Ma makes me go to mass every Sunday morning. I'm sure you know how it goes, there's the father, the son, and the holy spirit…” He glanced up. “He's my father for real, though…”

“W-W-What, you think you're Jesus?” you scoffed, shaking your head in disbelief.

“No. I think they got the story wrong… I know they did, because I'm here now, ain't I? I didn't get nailed up to no cross by my arms and feet…” he chuckled. “But that ain't the point. The priest talks about how Satan comes to hurt us but I know that's not true. Satan's the reason I'm here. Satan shows me great things.” He laughed at the way your wide eyes stared at him and your jaw trembled. “It's funny how you all think… you're scared of demons that take over you and monsters that try and kill you, but isn't that what your God does? Doesn't he take over your every thought? Don't you fear whether God's gonna send you to Heaven or Hell? And because of that fear, your life wastes away…” He laughed lightly, and looked down the hall.

“Patrick, what the fuck is wrong with you?” you pressed. He shrugged.

“Fuck if I know…” he told you honestly. He slowly turned to look at you. “You feel It, don't you…? That's why you're scared because you've never be able to see them before…”

“See what?”

“Those spirits you say you feel… and the demons…” he said. He tilted his head. “You didn't see your brother when you were playin’ with the board?” Your eyes widened and you shook your head. “Well it was really him, I'll tell you that… at first, at least… then It came and took him again…” He hesitated. “You saw It too, didn't you? In the doorway--”

“Fuck, Patrick, stop it! T-There’s nothing there, there was nothing there, this is f-f-fucking insane…” you snapped.

“That's what they tell me,” he sighed, walking up to you. You tried to breathe, clenching your hands into fists. You looked up at him once he stopped in front of him. The way his hair hung in his face as he stared down at you, the shadows that covered and outlined his face intimidated you in ways that you couldn't explain. But you gulped and stood your ground. “I knew there was somethin’ different about you…”
“What?”

“I didn't know what it was, I thought you were just some stuck up bitch... I couldn't figure out what Henry liked about you so much, but now I see...” he smirked. You shook your head in confusion. “He thinks you're gonna save him...” You straightened up and stared him in the eye. “Do you think you can?” He laughed lightly and tilted his head again, keeping perfect eye contact. “Do you even know what you're gonna save him from, sunshine...?” He moved even closer to you, so close that you could smell the damp earth, and the staleness of his cigarettes and the Carmex... And the blood.

It was blood, that's what smelled so metallic on him... he reached up to brush your hair out of your face, and you quickly caught his hand, looking at his fingers. They were pale and long, rings on his thumb and middle finger, and dirt between his fingernails. Dirt and blood, you thought. It was dirt and blood.

“I know what I'm saving him from,” you told him, letting go of his hand and looking up at him. He raised an eyebrow. “The board stopped on the moon. I'm gonna save him from--”

“Somethin’ bad...” Patrick grinned. “He don't even know that's what he sees in you... he doesn't know how much he's gonna need you. And I can help. I wanna help save him too... from the bad things...” He shook his head a little as he thought, his grin falling into a slight curl of his lips. “You can see them too...”

“Y/N!”

Both of you looked to the side, then he looked at you again. “You can't tell them. About seein’ things, and knowin’ things. They'll think you're crazy, trust me...” he told you. “And Henry can't know what you're here for....”

You looked up at him in confusion. “What I'm here for?” you questioned.

“You're an angel, aren't you? You were sent here to save him,” he explained. You frowned and stared at him in shock, your mouth open slightly as you tried to think of a response.

Then you both looked over again as Henry rushed up the stairs. “Y/N, Jesus,” he sighed, walking
over to you and hugging you. “You okay? What happened? We was lookin’ all over for you…” You just shook your head, not knowing what to say. “Pat, what happened? Where’d you find her?”

“She was lost up here, looked scared. We need to get her outta here,” he sighed. Henry looked at you and held you to him. “Takes guts to come in here even when you're scared… that's cool…” Henry looked at him and nodded.

“Yeah… yeah, baby, it was super cool of you to come with us even though you're scared… sorry I made you come with us, though, let's get outta here,” he said, leading you to the stairs. You held onto him and heard Patrick follow the two of you. “I'll make it up to you, promise….”

You didn't respond, letting him take you downstairs and out of the house. Belch and Vic were waiting by the car, and Belch sighed with relief when he saw the three of you come outside.

“Thank Christ, I thought she'd gone missin’ too,” he said taking his hat off and rubbing his brow. “Where'd you go, Y/N? One minute you was there, and the next you was gone.”

“Patrick found her wanderin’ around upstairs… I think we need to get her home--”

“C-Can I stay with you?” you spoke up quietly. He looked down at you in dismay. “I-I don't wanna be alone tonight, I wanna stay with you.”

He thought. “Uh… Belch, you think we could stay at your place tonight?” he asked his friend hopefully. Belch to thought, then shrugged.

“Yeah… I mean, I think my Mama might be home, but I'll say it's just you, Henry,” he explained. “She won't ask questions if I say it's just you…”

Henry nodded in thanks and felt you hold onto him. He thought. “Vic sit up front,” he told him. Vic looked more than happy to get the front seat for once, and climbed in once Patrick had gotten in and sat in the back. Henry let you in then climbed in next to you.

He held you as you dropped off Vic, who left with a quick goodbye to you all. Then Belch dropped off Patrick. Before he went into his house, he leaned against the car and looked at you.
“She's cool,” he told Henry. Henry frowned slightly. “She can hang with us…” Without another word, he walked to his house.

No one said anything for the rest of the drive to Belch's house. Once you got there, he let you in and into his guest room, saying goodnight to the both of you before closing the door.

Henry turned to look at you, seeing you sitting on the bed, staring at the floor. “What happened in there?” he asked quietly. You looked up at him, and he saw that you were crying slightly. You quickly wiped your eyes and sniffed. “Why'd you go upstairs like that?”

“Sometimes when I get scared I get disoriented…” you told him honestly. “I ended up upstairs and I didn't know where I was…”

“What about… that other stuff. With the board and with… you know…?"

“You can say his name, I know he's dead,” you snapped. He blinked. “I don't know, Henry, maybe… maybe it was something psychological, maybe it was my brain tricking me into thinking it was him, and my fingers moved, I dunno…” You put your hands over your face.

“No… no, you wouldn'ta done that to yourself, not in front of me and the guys,” he pointed out. “Y/N, if it really was… Georgie, and he asked you for help, I get why you'd get upset. I just…” He sat down next to you and put his hand on your back. “I want you to know, you ain't gotta be scared when I'm with you. I won't ever let anything hurt you…” You looked up at him sadly, and he sighed, pulling you in to hug him. “That thing we got between us… it… it's strong. I couldn't ignore it if I wanted to… and part of it's that I don't want anything to ever happen to you.”

“Henry…” you started, not really knowing what you needed to say. You looked up at him, seeing that he was staring back at you curiously. “I don't want anything to happen to you either…”

He chuckled. “Don't worry about me, Peach,” he argued. “I'm a man, I can take care’a myself just fine. Come on, you should get some sleep.”

You didn't argue with him about whether or not he could take care of himself. You knew that was a lost cause. So you let him undress you at least partially, and pull you carefully to lay down. He pulled off his shirt and dropped his jeans before climbing in next to you, pulling the covers over the both of you.
Your eyelids were already starting to droop, heavy from exhaustion, and you could feel yourself already starting to forget, things were already getting fuzzy. Like the first night that you and Henry slept together, tonight was becoming something of a blur.

You couldn't remember exactly what you'd seen, or what had happened. All you knew was the beginning, going into the house with Henry and his friends, and now, laying next to him and drifting off to sleep while he gently brushed his fingers along your arm.

Henry watched you, staying completely silent as you let sleep take you. The finger that he used to stroke your arm moved to so, so gently touch the outline of your jaw, then your lips. You were so beautiful to him, and he couldn't figure out why. Every part of you was perfect and soft, and you were so gentle and full of love. Maybe that's what he found so attractive about you… he craved your gentle words and touch and wanted the love and attention you gave him.

_God_ , how he wanted things to be like this forever with you. But that voice in his head was getting louder, and louder. It told him that he was just a phase for you, a pretty, perfect girl like you. You would leave him and go off with someone like Mark Peterson… it wasn't fair. Why couldn't he have something he wanted?

That voice was so loud now… he had heard it in the Neibolt House, telling him that you could be beaten and controlled like any person. That you needed to be held down, and have your free spirit crushed so that he could take over everything in your life. And when he had found himself in that upstairs room, he had listened to it, just for a moment, and had gotten lost in the frightened way you had submit to him, the terror you had felt when he had gotten physical and grabbed you. The heartbreak in your eyes when he had slapped you. He barely remembered it, but it was there. It was all there.

And as soon as the door had shut behind you, he had been back downstairs, confused and angry and worried for you. Because he couldn't ever let anything hurt you the way that he would some day…

Laying beside you, feeling your warmth and your trust in him, he fought the voice in his head, and moved next to you to hold you close. He had to tell himself that you were going to stay. That he would never hurt you again, and that you would one day cure him of the monster that had made itself at home in his head and in his heart. If anyone could do it, it was you…

For now, all he could do was fall asleep, holding you in his arms and praying that Derry wouldn't take you away.
Not What It Seems

Chapter Summary

Part 2: The Last Weeks Of School, 1989

Chapter 6: Not What It Seems

(Henry x Denbrough!Reader)

Chapter Notes

Word Count: 8,219 (I KNOW, I’M SORRY!)

Rating: NSFW

Warnings: lots of talk about missing kids, self-esteem issues, minor harassment, drug use (and probably bad/unrealistic descriptions of being high), implied sex, slight mention of Daddy kink, implied abuse, more creepy Derry stuff (possibly graphic, I tried to make it more implied)

Part 2: The Last Weeks Of School, 1989

The day after Halloween, missing posters for Veronica Grogan went up. In January, once school started back up after Christmas break, three more kids went missing. First it was a freshman named Tabitha Morrison, who was last seen on her way home from school on the first day back at school; a week later, a kindergartener named Toby McIntire disappeared from his front yard, his half made snowman the only clue that he had been there; then, barely two days later, a quiet boy in your grade, Hollis Flanagan, never made it home from the library.

February slipped by, then March. No one else went missing, and posters for January's missing kids washed away down storm drains with the melting snow, to join Veronica's posters, and Georgie's. People started to relax, they started to forget, without the faces of their dead children smiling innocently on every telephone pole and store window.

Then, halfway through April, Betty Ripsom went missing.
Her mother told the police that it wasn't possible, that she had been supervised at all times and that there was no way someone could have taken her. The police, per usual, listened only partially to what the frantic woman had to say, and put up the posters.

And so April rolled on, and May was stale with false silence. Everyone was waiting in terror for another Georgie, another Veronica, another Betty. Another lost child to break the silence.

The kids felt it the most, yet thought of it the least. The curfew was still going strong, there were multiple assemblies about going out in groups and making sure that parents knew their children's whereabouts at all times. But the kids didn't think like that. The kids wanted to be kids. They wanted to have fun and be free. After all, every kid thought, it couldn't be them that went missing. They would never go missing.

For Henry, you were almost sure, he didn't care if he went missing. But he knew that he wouldn't. He had stated multiple times over the last six months that no one wanted to take him, that no one would kill him because no one would miss him. You always argued, you always told him that you would miss him. He would say not to argue, because it almost sounded like you wanted him to go missing.

You were shocked by how long the two of you had kept your relationship a secret. With all the looks you gave each other, with the secret meet-ups whenever you could find the time, with all the time you spent together outside of school. But no one had a clue. At this point, you almost thought that it couldn't hurt to tell people that the two of you were together. The only thing keeping you from doing so was Bill. He hated Henry, and Henry hated him.

You had been careful to split your time accordingly, between Henry, Bill, and Mia. Henry demanded almost constant attention from you, but you made sure that he understood that you needed to spend time with Bill and Mia to keep your secret safe. Not that Bill spent much time with you. He still went out all the time with his friends, leaving you at home alone. But Mia was more than happy to spend any time with you.

“So,” your friend said happily, pulling a dress out of your closet and holding it up. “I'm gonna dress you up tonight, for the party. You need a man, Y/N.”

You chuckled, sitting up on your bed. “I ain't need no man,” you responded, mocking a deep, fake Southern accent. Mia snorted as she laughed, and turned to pull out a few more dresses.

“You know what I mean. You're gorgeous, and no boys have asked you out since Mark, and it's
because—no offense!—everyone thinks you're depressed,” she told you, mumbling out the last part quickly. You chuckled.

“I probably am. And I'm so picky with boys, I'm glad I'm not flocked by them like you are,” you pointed out.

Mia groaned. “Oh, right. Your *type* ,” she sighed. “What was it again? You like their personality?”

“Something like that, yeah,” you shrugged.


“Mia, I don't know,” you laughed. “As long as he's handsome…” She shook her head and turned back to the closet. You licked your lips and took a breath. “Although…” She turned to look at you quickly. “Blue eyes… sandy blond hair… tan, strong…”

Mia squealed and hurried over to the bed, jumping on next to you. “Who is he?!” she pressed. You looked at her in shock. “There's a boy! I knew it, I knew you liked someone!”

“No, no, it's…” you started. She stared at you with wide sparkling eyes, and you licked your teeth. “You're gonna think I'm crazy.” She scoffed. “No, I mean it, you're gonna think I'm a freak… I shouldn't even tell you, it's nothing…”

“You *have* to tell me now!” She grabbed your arm. “Do I know him, does he go to our school?”

“Yes and yes…” you mumbled, covering your face with your arm. “Everybody knows him…”

“Just fucking tell me already!”

“Henry…” you admitted quickly. She froze and shook her head. “Yeah…”

“Yeah, Mia, that one,” you agreed softly. She looked shocked.

“Wow, you are a freak,” she teased, laughing softly. You crossed your arms. “No, seriously, what the hell?”

“He's cute,” you explained, sitting up. She wrinkled her nose at you. “He is! He's handsome, and he's strong, and he's tough…”

“Yeah. And he's an asshole,” she reminded you. You sighed. “And he's kinda gross…”

“Well he hasn't been so bad lately, has he?” you tried.

“Yeah, probably 'cause he's trying to lay low so he can get away with all these murders…” she mumbled. You glared at her. “I mean… it's probably him, Y/N, think about it.”

“Why would it be him? He's a little violent but he wouldn't kill anybody, he's not that crazy,” you chuckled, standing up and looking through the dresses that Mia had picked out. She sat silently, so you turned to look at her. “See, I knew I shouldn't have said anything, this is why I didn't wanna tell you.”

“No, no, I'm glad you did…” she argued, crossing her arms slowly as she thought. “So… so what, you're into bad boys? Is that what this means?” You laughed a bit. “I mean, we're gonna have to go with that, because otherwise you're just plain crazy, Y/N, if you have a thing for Bowers or any of his friends…”

“Oh come on, you don't like his friends either?” you joked. She shook her head slowly at you. “You mean to tell me you've never wanted Patrick Hockstetter to stalk you and break into your house to murder you?” You laughed at your own joke and she shivered.

“He is,” you laughed. “What about Belch? What do you think of him?”

She thought, shrugging. “I mean… I think he's pretty hot…” she admitted. You turned and grinned.

“Hot?” you asked hopefully. She blushed and waved your question off, glaring at you.

“You're changing the subject. You don't just think Henry's cute you like him,” she reminded you. You sighed and turned back to your closet, pulling out a black, quarter length sleeved tee-shirt dress that fell at your knees. You held it up and looked at her for approval. She nodded and you smiled.

“What about it? Sure, I like him,” you agreed. “I'm thinking of wearing my letterman over this, the one we bought in Portland last summer?”

“That'll look cute, but Y/N--”

“And maybe my Vans, those look good with this dress. And my black hat, the one with the brim--?”

“Y/N, I think he likes you too!” she cut you off. You froze and looked at her. “Yeah, I've seen him give you looks in the hall and at lunch and stuff…” You blushed a little and quickly turned back to your closet as you smiled. Henry looked at you even when you didn't notice? That felt nice… “If he asks you out, you cannot say yes.”

You blinked and pulled your jacket out of your closet. “Why not?” you mumbled.

“Because it's Henry Bowers. I mean, can you imagine what people would think? What they would say? And what about Bill, he would hate you,” she tried.

“Bill would get over it,” you argued quietly.
“And think about it. Do you really wanna lose your virginity to someone like Henry? Can you imagine how much you would hate yourself--?”

“Can we stop talking about this? I didn't judge you for liking Belch, I say fucking go for it, Mia,” you snapped at her. She looked shocked and you licked your lips. “I'm sorry… I just… I don't want you to worry, I can take care of myself…,”

“I know, Y/N…” she said softly. “But I can still worry about you. I do.” You blinked and nodded, turning to face the closet as you pulled off the dress you were wearing. You had a few hickeys on your breasts that you couldn't let Mia see. “Y/N, I feel like you're hiding things from me… like, secrets…”

“Why would I hide things from you?” you asked calmly, pulling the tee-shirt dress on and straightening it out. You pulled your jacket on and grabbed your Vans, sitting at your desk to pull them on. She watched you.

“I dunno… you just seem to be avoiding me…” she explained. “We never hang out outside of school anymore, and I don't know where you go…”

“Yes you do,” you told her, rolling the cuffs of your socks a bit. “I tutor Henry after school.”

“Right…” she said softly, staring at your shoes for a moment, even as you sat up. Then she looked at you worriedly. “You… you aren't already seeing him, are you?”

You blinked and opened your mouth slightly. Something inside you told you to lie, told you that telling Mia would hurt the way things were. No matter how much you wanted to tell her, something wasn't letting you…

“No,” you lied, smiling tightly. “I would have told you.” She nodded slowly, staring at you for any signs that you might be lying. “Come on, we should go…” You stood up and quickly went to the bedroom door. You heard her stand up and follow you out of the house.

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Parties were still strange to you… no matter how many Mia dragged you to, you felt out of place.
Everyone got drunk, or high, or both, and the music was so loud, and it was hot and crowded.

Mia tried to get you to go dance, but, you insisted on staying near the kitchen. She stuck around for a little while, then you told her to go ahead and dance, and she listened, saying that she'd be right back. You smiled at her when she looked over from across the room, then sighed and rested your head against the wall behind you.

You felt someone lean against the wall next to you and you frowned, looking over in surprise. Mark smiled weakly down at you, taking a sip of his drink. You sighed and looked ahead.

“What'd I do to make you hate me?” he asked calmly. You glanced at him.

“I don't hate you, Mark,” you told him honestly. “Sorry, I'm just really tired… not feeling this party tonight…”

“Me neither, honestly,” he laughed. You chuckled weakly. “Wanna get outta here?” You looked up at him, then looked at the ground.

“No, thanks,” you said. He stayed silent for a minute, then sighed heavily.

“If you're not interested, just say it,” he mumbled. You frowned and looked up at him. “I mean, you can beat around the bush all you want, but you know I like you, so if you really aren't interested, can you just fuckin’ tell me?”

You could hear the tiredness and frustration in his voice, and you stood up off the wall. “I'm not interested, Mark,” you said simply before walking away. You heard him scoff behind you, and you shook your head, walking outside to the porch, leaning heavily on the rail when you got outside.

“Rough night?”

You turned, seeing Vic sitting up on the rail, his back against the house, and his cigarette hanging from his lips. You relaxed a bit and walked up to him. “Just not in the mood to be around everyone…” you explained. “Mark's bothering me again.”
Vic was Henry's eyes and ears on the social scene and the goings on in Derry. He told Henry everything there was to know about everyone. Since you had started hanging out with them, you had grown to like Vic a lot. He seemed to like having you around, and you thought it was nice to have someone just a little more down to earth around. Not that he was any less of a jerk than Henry when it came down to it, but out of the four boys he seemed to be the only one with his head fully on his shoulders.

He hummed as he took in what you said, rolling his hazel eyes in disgust at the mention of Mark Peterson. "Kid's an asshole," he told you. "Acts all nice, but when he's with his friends, you can tell he thinks he's better than everybody else."

You hopped up to sit on the railing next to him, and he pulled a joint out of his shirt pocket. You had gotten a little more used to that since you started hanging with them, too. You had tried weed a few more times since the first time last September, and it got easier and easier each time.

You took it from him and let him light it once it was between your lips. You sucked in a deep breath of it and pulled the joint away, handing it to him to let him do the same. You held the smoke in your mouth, then let yourself breathe it in. You weren't sure if you could ever get used to the burning feeling that filled your lungs, then crept back up your throat. You blew the smoke out in a thin stream, and quickly put your hand in front of your mouth as you started coughing.

You heard Vic do the same next to you, and after a minute you both quieted down. You sighed and closed your eyes slightly, letting the feeling of warm haziness overtake you.

"Where's Henry?" you wondered after a long silence.

"Him and Patrick had something to do, I dunno what," he explained. "Probably drugs…"

"Geez," you scoffed, taking the joint back from him and taking a deep hit from it. You blew out the smoke and coughed again. "I hope you mean these drugs…"

"Nope…" Vic said slowly. You frowned and looked at him. "Patrick gets his hands on some pretty heavy shit… makes good money selling it too… I get my weed from him, but I know he's the main coke dealer in Derry."

"No fucking way, really?" you breathed, looking worried. "H-Henry's not doing that kinda thing, is he?"
Something in his eyes and the way he hesitated let you know that whatever he said wasn't going to be true. “No, Y/N,” he told you. “Henry wouldn't do that…” You took a breath, then took another hit of the joint, finishing it off. “Be careful tonight, okay? Pat's selling some of his stuff tonight and it might get a little crazy in there…”

“What is it?” He looked at you in confusion. “He's selling weed? Coke? What?”

“Um... yeah, that stuff and... and I mean there's a lot of stuff, Y/N, I know he's got shrooms and shit like that too, I just don't know what he's got right now...” he told you. “Don't worry too much about it, I just thought you should know people were gonna be really high tonight.”


You scanned the room for Henry, then walked around, looking down the hall and in rooms. Every room had a couple making out or a few kids doing some assortment of drugs. But none of them held Henry or Patrick. You sighed and started to make your way to the bathroom.

“Hey, Y/N!”

You turned and sighed with relief, seeing Henry walking towards you, Patrick not far behind him, talking to some kid. “Henry,” you said, touching his arm once he reached you. He kissed you and you moved back quickly looking around to make sure no one was around. “Where've you been? I was looking for you.”

“You were? Sorry?” he said quickly, touching your hair and looking around. “Hey, I know we can't really be around each other, but stay where I can see you, okay?” You blinked and felt him tap your arm a few times.

“What's the matter with you?” you asked nervously.

He looked right at you. “Nothin', why?” he wondered, jumping a bit when Patrick walked up behind him. “Hey, yeah, so just... stay low, okay. Patrick's sellin' some stuff tonight 'n I don't wantcha gettin’ on any'a that...”
“What’re you on?” you asked calmly. He hesitated.

“I ain't on nothin’,” he lied, smiling a bit. You shook your head and moved past him, going to the kitchen. You got yourself a drink, wincing when you took the first sip and tasted alcohol mixed in the fruit punch.

“Don't be mad at Henry, it ain't his fault.”

You turned, seeing Patrick come in and push you out of the way to get punch. “What's he on?” you insisted. He chuckled. “I'm serious, it's dangerous--”

“Fuck, I know that,” he laughed. “It's just a little cocaine, not even that much.” He saw you glare at him and look out towards Henry. “Trust me, this ain't the worst thing he could be on. He's had a rough day, just let him have this…”

“But he could get addicted…” you tried. He shrugged.

“What's the point’a life if you ain't gonna have a little fun?” he pointed out. You opened your mouth to argue, and he pulled something out of his pocket. “Here, take this. It'll make you feel better.” He grabbed your hand and set a little yellow pill in your palm. You glared at him. “Trust me, I wouldn't give you anything that would kill you, just take it.”

You shook your head and looked out at the party going on in the other room. “What is it?” you wondered, looking down at it. It was bright yellow, and almost looked like candy.

“Don't worry, just take it.”

“Patrick--”

“Y/N, just take it,” he sighed, leaning back on the counter and pulling another one out of his pocket. “It’ll calm you down…”

You were skeptical of him, but you looked down at the pill and contemplated your options. Maybe
it was the impulsivity from the teenage hormones running through your veins, or maybe it was the thought of calming down, but something told you that it couldn't hurt to take this little yellow pill. Whatever it was. It had a smiley face on it, so it couldn't be that bad, right?

You put it in your mouth and swallowed it with a sip of your punch. Patrick nodded slowly and took the one he had pulled out as well. “There you go…” he mumbled. “That weren't so bad, was it?”

“Will you tell me what it is?” you tried. He laughed lightly, sipping his own punch.

“Are you always this stuck up at parties?” he asked. You just stared at him. “Go on in there, dance up on your boy toy, I wanna see you get dirty…”

“Jesus, Patrick,” you sighed, walking out of the kitchen. You wanted to find somewhere quiet where no one was around to bother you, but you doubted you were going to find anywhere. You went to the stairs and sat down, leaning against the wall and watching the party.

Whatever you had taken wasn't making the anxiety go away. On the contrary, your heart seemed to be beating faster than normal and you put your hand on your chest, trying to take a few deep breaths. You shook your head a little and stretched out your arms, feeling a little restless. You looked around for Henry again, but couldn't see him, so you put your hands over your face, feeling strange.

When you uncovered your face, the kitchen lights seemed to glare into the dark room and you rubbed your eyes a little bit as a wave of nausea washed over you. You looked around, then stood up and hurried towards the bathroom, only partially closing the door as you sat down against the wall.

You leaned your head back against the wall and groaned, feeling more relaxed now, the nausea already relaxing into butterflies in your stomach. You didn't like this, you decided. Whatever Patrick had given you, it made you feel like you were melting into the wall behind you. It wasn't until you moved slightly that the feeling switched dramatically. From the top of your head to your toes tingled with a soft, warm feeling, and you shivered slightly, letting your eyes fall closed.

All of a sudden it was like all your anxiety was gone. You didn't care that you didn't know what drug you had taken, you didn't care that no one knew where you were. You didn't care when the bathroom door opened slightly, then closed and someone knelt down in front of you, saying something that you couldn't quite wrap your head around.
“W-What?” you asked softly. Your eyes started falling closed, and you whined a bit, opening your eyes and vaguely recognizing Mark through the too bright bathroom lights. He was saying something that was getting partially drowned out by the music out in the living room and you shook your head. “I can't hear you… I took something…”

“Yeah, I can see that,” he said softly, his thumb brushing against your arm gently. “Do you know what you took?” You shook your head slowly and felt your eyes fall closed. “Let's get you somewhere more comfortable okay?”

“No, no… I'm happy right here....” you argued, trying to push his hand away from you. “I'm fine…” He kept his hand on your arm, rubbing at your skin slightly as he looked around. You felt him bring his other hand to your waist as he tried to pull you to stand up. You pushed against him. “Mark, I'm okay, really…”

He sighed and sat you back down as he debated his options. “Yeah, I know, Y/N, everything's fine…” he agreed calmly, backing up a bit and scratching his head. “But you can't stay in the bathroom…” He put his hands under your knees and tried to lift you up that way.

He moved away from you suddenly as the bathroom door opened. It hit you slightly, and you grunted, moving away from it. “What the fuck's goin’ on in here…?”

You looked up at Henry, then looked at Mark as he stood up quickly and motioned towards you. “She's high on something… I was just gonna help her upstairs so she could get more comfortable… so nobody can come hurt her while she's like this,” he explained coldly.

“Who’d wanna hurt her?” he questioned suspiciously. They glared at each other for a moment, then Henry turned to you and grabbed you under the armpits to pull you up. “Come on, Peach, let's go somewhere else.”

“Can we dance a little?” you asked hopefully, wrapping your arms over his shoulders.

“Yeah, sure, baby, whatever you want,” he sighed. He glared at Mark. “Go ahead and find Mia or one of the boys, okay? Somebody oughta keep an eye on you.”

“Okay, Henry, just don't take too long, okay?” you told him, kissing his cheek gently before
hurrying out to the party.

Henry grabbed Mark by the collar as soon as you were gone and slammed him back against the counter. “What the fuck did you do to her you, prick?” you hissed.

“I didn't do shit! I was tryin'a help her!” he insisted.

“That's bullshit, Peterson, you was tryin'a get under her skirt,” he accused, making sure that he loomed over him. “You know what that looks like, you leanin’ over a chick who’s high outta her mind with your hands on her? Looks pretty sketchy to me…”

“Yeah, that's what you think? Cause I was wondering why you came in here when the door was closed. And who gave got her high in the first place,” he countered. Henry glared at him. “If anyone's sketchy, it's you! Why don't you leave her alone, Bowers?” Henry chuckled slightly and let go of him, walking to the door.

“If you ever try’n pull some shit with her, you better hope it ain't me that finds you,” he said, giving him one last glare before storming out.

He saw you almost immediately, dancing with Mia across the room. You looked completely blissed out, swaying and jumping to the music, not a care in the world. He envied you, but just a little. It was wonderful how someone so smart could be so clueless.

He made his way over to you, noting the weary look that Mia gave him as he walked over. You turned and looked at him, smiling brightly. “Everything okay?” you wondered.

“Everything's fine,” he told you. “Just stay where someone can see you, you'll be fine.”

“Oh,” you grinned. “I'll stay where someone can see me…” You grabbed his hand and tried to pull him to sway with the music.

“Fuck no, I ain't dancin’,” he scoffed. You pouted.
“Why not? What fun is a party if you just sulk on the sidelines?” you pointed out, putting his hands on your hips. “And besides… you said you’d dance with me.”

“I did say that, didn't I?” he sighed. You smiled brightly and nodded. “Well I was hopin’ we could do somethin’ more one on one than dancing…”

“Yeah, okay, let's back up a little, buddy,” Mia spoke up, putting his arm around you and pulling you back. You pouted a little.

“Aw, Mia, come on,” you argued. “How can you say no to that face?” You looked at Henry's almost deadpanned face and laughed, taking his hand again and kissing his cheek. Mia hesitated by your side, and you looked over at her. “I'll be back, okay?”

“Wait, where're you going?” she asked worriedly. “You should stay here…”

“I'll be okay,” you laughed, hugging Henry's arm. “I've got this big strong guy to protect me…” Henry tsked and rubbed your back. Mia glared at him warily, and you laughed, leaning up and kissing his cheek again.

“Hey now, baby, you're gonna start somethin','” he joked. You hummed and put your head on his shoulder. “I'm gonna take her upstairs and try and let her sleep this off. I'll make sure my boys keep anyone from coming up and startin' shit…” Mia just stared at him, and he frowned, starting to lead you to the stairs. “You don't gotta wait for her neither, we'll get her home…”

“If anything happens to her--”

“Yeah, yeah,” he cut her off. “Don't worry about it, she's safe with me.” With that, he led you up the stairs and into an empty bedroom.

---

“Hockstetter!”
The room was darker and louder than it had been when the party had first started. Kids were
dancing everywhere, now drunk, and high, and reckless. Tonight, Patrick had gotten his hands on a
pretty good shipment, plenty of weed, coke, speed, you name it, he had it. He knew ecstasy was
getting more popular at parties, so he had gotten a good amount of that too, giving one to you for
free hadn't even put a dent in his merchandise, and neither had the coke he had given Henry to
snort.

Patrick now stood in the hallway, between the bathroom and the living room where the party was
happening. He had sold most of it, so now he was watching for any last minute buyers, and seeing
the different mixtures of stoned and high from each drug he had given out. Henry had taken you
upstairs to let you rest out your eventually crash, so he was stuck here until Henry came down
wanting to leave.

Hearing a voice call his name, he looked over to the side, seeing that dumb jock Mark Peterson
storming towards him. Patrick was pretty sure he hadn't screwed around with any whore Mark
might be seeing, so he couldn't imagine what the idiot might be mad at him about.

“Hockstetter,” Mark repeated once he stopped next to him. “What's the deal with Bowers?”

“I dunno, what is the deal with Bowers?” he responded shortly.

“You know what I mean,” he hissed. Patrick stared down at him blankly. “With Y/N. He gotta
thing for her?”

“Not my business. Ask him yourself,” Patrick scoffed, standing up from the wall.

“Look, dude, I think he's bothering her, if you know something about it--”

“Peterson, don't worry about it,” he snapped. “She's a big girl, she can take care of herself. Look at
what she's been through, you think she's afraid of somebody like Bowers?”

The boy tensed up and shoved Patrick back against the wall. “Where is he?” he demanded. Patrick
glared daggers at him, standing up straight and shoving him back.

“Touch me again and I'll cut your fingers off and shove 'em down your throat” he told him coldly.
“I don't fuckin’ know where Henry's at, I don't keep tabs on him. All I saw was you goin’ in the bathroom after Y/N, and I told him so he could stop you from doin’ whatever it was you were gonna do. If you want my input, the only person who seems to be bothering her is you. So why don’t you step the fuck back and mind your own fuckin’ business.” He shoved him back again, staring down at him.

Mark took a shaky breath. “Chill out, freak,” he said, although he sounded uncertain now. Patrick's lips curled into a grin.

“I am chilled out.”

He pushed him into the opposite wall and walked off. Mark glared after him, but decided to leave him be. He straightened out his jacket and walked over back into the room where the party was. He saw Patrick in the kitchen, saying something to Belch. Both of whom where glaring at him. He tsked and started walking towards the stairs.

Before he could reach them, Belch met him at the bottom, blocking the entryway. Mark sighed and crossed his arms over his chest. “What's your problem?” he asked angrily.

“Wha’s yrs?” Belch countered mirroring the way he crossed his arms. Peterson licked his teeth.

“I'm just tryin’a check on my date, dude, move,” he ordered.

“Yer date? Y/N ain't come here with you,” he argued coldly. “’n Patrick says yer askin’ 'bout Henry. Ya got nothin’ ta worry 'bout, man, what Henry does ain't yer business. 'n what Y/N does ain'tcher business neither.”

Mark raised an eyebrow. “What're you guys tryin'a hide? He doin’ something to her?” he asked. Belch just glared at him. “Is that what this is, you guys are protecting him ’cause he’s up there raping her?” He heard Patrick scoff from next to him.

“Henry ain't like that,” he told him calmly. “Ain't nothin’ fun to him about forcin’ it. Likes to know they like it.”

“Cut the shit,” Mark snapped. Belch stepped towards him and he stood his ground, glaring up at
“Why don'tcha head on home, Peterson,” he suggested seriously. Mark opened his mouth to respond. “Want me ta say it slow and simple like?”

“I'm not scared of you, Huggins, you ain't that much bigger than me, I could take you down easy,” he scoffed.

“Belch ain't the one you're gonna have to worry about if you do anything to Y/N,” Patrick told him, grabbing his arm. Mark glared up at him, but Patrick could see the fear in his eyes and he grinned. “It's gonna be either Henry… or me… you should hope it's Henry… he won't make it hurt for too long…”

“I-I ain't scared'a you, freak,” he spat. Patrick hummed. “Get your hands off me.” He shoved him off. “Whatever, she ain't worth the trouble anyway.” He stormed off, shoving his way to the front door and slammed it closed behind him.

Patrick watched him storm off, then he looked up at Belch. “Should I follow him?” he wondered, his eyes lit up. “Show him how serious we are?” Belch hesitated, glancing up the stairs. “Yeah, Yeah, I know… Henry doesn't want us to start anything over her… he doesn't want it to look like he's fighting for her… go find Vic, I'll stay here and wait for them…” Belch nodded and left to go find their friend, and Patrick glanced up the stairs, then looked towards the front door thoughtfully.

---

You hummed and grabbed onto Henry's hair as you felt his hips grind just lightly against yours now. He had gone more frantically and quickly than he ever had before, and you had just let him fuck you how he needed and wanted to, unable to keep up with him, but perfectly able to enjoy every sensitive, rough movement he made.

Everything felt more intense right now, and he had made you come three times since the two of you had come upstairs. He fell next to you with a heavy sigh, and kissed at your neck tiredly. “Think we should head back down, baby?” he wondered. You shrugged and turned to snuggle against him.

“You make me feel really good,” you told him softly. He chuckled. “Want you to keep touching
me forever…”

He sat up quickly and got back between your legs. “Sure… I'll keep touchin’ you, I'll keep goin’ forever…” he agreed, then started kissing at your knees and down your thighs. You whined a little and he groaned. “Yeah, baby… but let's go to Belch's or Patrick’s place. You can be as loud as you want there. I'll eat you out if you're a good girl and you wait patiently for Daddy until we get home…” You blushed and giggled a little.

“You wanna be my Daddy…?” you wondered, opening your eyes enough to look at him. He smirked and leaned over you, kissing you roughly. You gripped at his arms and moaned. “You're so strong, and brave, and sexy…”

“You better behave, baby, I ain't gonna make it to the house if you talk to me like that,” he joked, sitting up again and getting up out of the bed. “Come on, let's go.” You watched him get dressed, and felt yourself almost drifting off to sleep. He turned around to get his shirt, and you saw how the moonlight lit up his back. Under the muscles you could see his ribs, prominent and pulling against his skin. Over his skin you could see scars, dark against his tanned skin. You frowned and sat up, then stood up and walked over to him.

“You're so brave…” you told him again. He stood up straight when he felt your fingers touch one scar that crossed over his spine. Now that you were closer, you could see healing bruises on his skin as well, and you moved your fingers to touch one on his rib. He jerked away from the touch and turned to look at you.

“You're so brave…” he mumbled dismissively, looking down and quickly pulling his shirt on. “Come on, get dressed.”

You just stared at him for a moment, then you touched his cheek and kissed him softly. He held still, then touched your hand. “You don't always have to be,” you said gently. “It's okay to be scared sometimes…” He shook his head.
“When you let yourself get scared, you get hurt or you die…” he argued. “Get dressed.” You finally listened, letting go of him and getting your clothes off the floor, sliding on your dress and sitting on the bed to tie up your shoes then looking at him again.

“I wasn’t saying that you should be scared. I just meant that you should let someone take care of you every once in awhile,” you explained, putting your hand on his face. “I can be brave for you sometimes…” He just stared at you with a blank face and you touched your nose to his. “I want to…”

“You don’t gotta…” he mumbled, taking your hand and holding it tightly in his. “I don’t need you to. Let’s go.” You frowned sadly, and grabbed your jacket and let him pull you out of the room.

“Hey…” you said softly as he brought you down the stairs. He stopped and looked up at you. You moved down the steps so that you were next to him, and you squeezed his hand, bringing your free hand to his hair and running it through gently. “You’re so beautiful, Henry…”

“Beautiful?” he chuckled in surprised. You nodded silently.

“On the outside and the inside…” you told him softly.

“Fuck, baby, I ain't so pretty on the inside, I'll tell you that…” he sighed. You frowned slightly and looked in his eyes. “I'm a real mess on the inside… got a lotta bad thoughts on the inside…”

It was the closest to opening up that he had ever gotten with you, and you brushed your fingers along his face. “I know…” you admitted gently. He hesitated. “It's beautiful, and terrifying, and sad…” You watched him tense up a bit, and you leaned against him, your ear to his chest as you listened to the sound of his rage-filled, cocaine-fueled heartbeat, the frantic thunder of it and the way it paired with his quick breathing. “I am really lucky to have you…” You could hear him relax, just slightly, and he moved you back so that he could kiss you gently. When he pulled away, he just stared down at you, thoughtfully.

“Yeah, I'm lucky to have you too,” he agreed quietly. You smiled lightly and leaned against him again. “Let's find the guys and get you somewhere before you get too sleepy, okay?” You nodded and let him lead you down the hall. He was going to pretend you hadn't said anything. He was going to pretend he hadn't opened up to you. But you knew. You had known all along. He had too much going on in his head, and it scared him. It had been getting worse and worse since the night
at the Neibolt House. It had been getting worse and worse with every increasingly more common bruise or black eye he showed up to school with.…

He could tell you he got into a fight with some punk all he wanted, but the lack of cuts on his knuckles and the shame in his eyes told you all you needed. His father was breaking him apart, slowly and painfully, and it was starting to take its toll…

So he could pretend that nothing was wrong. But you were going to be gentle with him, and show him all the kindness and love you could. It was all you could do to balance it out, and try and piece this broken boy back together.

---

It had been an overcast day, which lead to an overcast night. The moon wasn't in the sky to light up the streets of Derry, and the street lights only lit up a few feet at a time.

Mark walked alone along the dark road towards his house. He hadn't even wanted to go to this party. He had been hurt when Mia had told him that you weren't interested, and he hadn't believed it until you had said it yourself. Truth be told, he still didn't believe it. If he asked you out enough, eventually you'd have to wear down and let him take you on a real date. And it would be the best decision you would ever make.

But now it looked like Bowers was in the way. What the hell was that about? There was no way you were actually interested in a scumbag like Henry Bowers. You, sweet little Y/N. If anything, it was one of Henry's sick plans. He wanted you alone so that he and his friends could rape you… it hurt his stomach to think about it, about how he had left you behind with those horrible kids… but then he remembered the way that Patrick had looked at him… those dead green eyes, that deadly smile… there was something off about that freak, he was sick in the head.

Tomorrow at school, he would ask you out again, alone, without the Bowers Gang getting in his way. He would ask you out to dinner, and maybe to go see a movie, and--

He froze as he turned a corner, his house just two blocks away. There was a figure standing under one of the street lamps, cigarette smoke floating in wispy clouds above their head. He recognized them… tall, thin, gangly… even from this distance, Mark could see the dark hair covering his face…
He backed away a little, hurrying straight ahead instead of around the corner. He could get home just as quickly this way as taking a turn, anything to avoid Patrick Hockstetter. What was he doing there, anyway? Was he following him home?

Mark stopped as this occurred to him, and he turned to look behind him, gasping and stumbling back when he saw the taller boy right behind him. Fuck, he was so tall… had he always been that tall? He towered over him so much that he cast a shadow over Mark… and he was so so thin, like he hadn't eaten a meal in weeks, and pale enough that his skin was translucent, almost grey and blue. Those green eyes were piercing and violating, and that smile …

"Hi, Mark," he said sweetly. "I hope you're getting home alright?"

Mark didn't even know what to say. "W-What the fuck do you want, Patrick? Are you following me home?" he asked seriously. Patrick just grinned at him. "You fucking psycho, get lost before I beat your ass."

He turned to continue walking, trying to walk quickly to lose him. He felt a hand reach over and grab his shoulder… it was too big, the fingers impossibly long, and when he looked down at them, he saw the blackness at the tips.

"Don't go so soon, Peterson, we haven't even had a chance to chat, one on one…” he pointed out, the hand creeping up and covering Mark's mouth with a grip so strong that he couldn't break free of it. "I had so much fun making plans with you… what do you think we should do first, should I cut off all your fingers, or should we see how long I can hurt you before you pass out?" Mark tried to cry out, but it was muffled through Patrick's cold hand. "Hm? What was that? I didn't quite hear you…” He carefully uncovered the smaller boy’s mouth and leaned in close to him.

"W-What do you want from me, dude?" Mark whimpered. He was shaking violently and hot tears dripped down onto the cold hand holding his chin. "P-Please don't hurt me, I'll leave Y/N alone, I swear!"

"Y/N?" he laughed. "Oh, don't worry about her. I have my own set of plans for her, but she has nothing to do with you. The time we spend together is going to be special…”

Mark smacked his hand away from his face and started running. He hated how scared he was of
just one kid, but he *knew* something was wrong with Patrick. What kind of psycho threatened to torture someone?! A psycho, obviously… one that would definitely kill him!

All he needed to do was get home and lock all the doors, and call the police. His parents were gone for the next three days, so he would have to get his Dad's gun out of the safe, and--

He looked back as he reached the corner of the street, and stopped in his tracks. He looked around him, turning in a complete circle, but Hockstetter was nowhere to be found… Mark stood alone in the middle of the dark street, panting and crying to himself.

“What the *fuck*?” he his, grabbing at his hair. He hadn't had *that* much to drink at the party, and he hadn't taken anything… There was no way he had hallucinated all of that. He tried to take a breath, continuing his walk home.

As he turned the corner to his road, usually a quiet, cozy little cul-de-sac, he felt his stomach drop, and he came to a dead stop. His entire neighborhood was pitch black, except for the streetlight in the very middle of the cul-de-sac, which was flickering it's orange light.

Patrick Hockstetter stood under the flickering light, his head tilted to the side and his face broken into a grin… And he held you against his chest. Mark’s mouth fell open as he watched you sob and try to pull away from your captor, then he stumbled back as Patrick leaned his head down and took a massive bite out of your shoulder. You shrieked in pain, which turned into choking as you stopped struggling, your wide, frantic eyes stuck open and your mouth gapping, the only noise able to escape a horrible gurgling sound as blood poured from your mouth. Patrick ripped your flesh out with his jaw, a huge chunk that took out the soft flesh in your shoulder and almost half of your neck, and Mark saw him start chewing as he let your limp body fall to the grass at his feet.

He was hyperventilating, never feeling so scared in his life. His stomach was turning like he might throw up, and he cried out, quickly backing up until he bumped into the curb, stumbling to get his balance back. Patrick started walking slowly towards him, and he moved along the curb, starting to turn and run the other way.

He never saw the hand reach out of the sewer drain to grab his ankle.

As he started to run, the hand closed around his leg, gripping him and pulling, causing the star football player to cry out as he fell forward. He hit his face off the pavement, and blacked out for a split second before the world came back into focus. He could taste blood on his tongue, and his nose throbbed. As soon as his vision cleared up, he saw Patrick standing over him with that
horrible, blood-covered grin and those dead eyes.

And then he realized that he was moving.

He groaned and looked down at his leg, seeing hands pulling him down into the sewer, a pair of bright orange eyes peering at him through the dark. As his head started clearing up, he realized that there was a searing pain in the leg the creature held, and it was then that he saw that everything below the knee was gone, bitten off and devoured.

He moaned out and turned weakly, yelling out some slurred cry for help. He clawed pathetically at the pavement, numbly feeling the creature pull his legs, then his torso into the sewers. It occurred to him that the horrible pain was up to his hip now, and that he was no longer able to feel his left leg. The pain was starting to spread to his other leg, and he realized what was happening.

It was eating him alive.

He couldn't even scream anymore, too weak and delirious from the pain. He looked up one last time before he was pulled to his death, the demented, dead-eyes, grinning face of Patrick Hockstetter the last thing he saw before he blacked out.
As the school year started creeping to a close, the school was starting to buzz with the excitement caused by the anticipation of summer. Finals were coming to a close, and you could tell that it was hard for everyone to sit through their exams as they got ready for two whole months of freedom.

Mark Peterson’s disappearance was glossed over during the morning announcements on the Monday after the party. His parents had been away for the weekend, and the only clue that he had gone missing was that he had stood up plans with his best friend, Tommy Jones.

“If anyone has any information regarding the whereabouts of Mark Peterson, please notify an administrator or the police immediately,” the principal said over the intercom, before continuing on with a few, brief morning announcements.

“This is so scary…” Mia said softly, looking over at you. You glanced at her and shrugged a bit. “Are you okay? Tommy said you were one of the last people Mark talked to the other night, before he left the party.”

“I'm fine,” you told her with a sigh. “I barely knew the guy… I just wish people would be as upset about the six other kids that went missing as the big football star.”
Mia hushed you as a few kids glanced back nervously at you. “Y/N, why would you say that?” she whispered. “You know people were upset about Georgie, it's not--”

“It's not just about Georgie either,” you argued. You glanced up as you saw Patrick and Henry walk into your math class-- which you now remembered was also their class. You gave them a questioning look, wondering why they had decided to come to class today when they had showed up maybe twice all year. Patrick shrugged at you and walked between you and Mia's desks, sitting in the one right behind her’s, Henry sitting behind you. Mia gave them a weary look as you continued. “What about Veronica? Or Toby? Or Betty? Do we just forget about them because of Mark?”

“No, of course not, Y/N…” Mia sighed. You looked down at your desk for a minute. “Who do you think is doing this? Where do you think they all are?”

“What do you mean?” you asked with a frown.

“Where do you think the missing kids are?” she clarified. You looked over at her and frowned deeply.

“You're kidding, right?” you chuckled darkly. She blinked in confusion, so you lowered your voice. “They're dead, Mia…” Her mouth fell open and you heard Patrick cackle behind you.

“I didn't think you were a pessimist…” he spoke up. You shrugged and turned to look at him.

“It's not pessimism when it's the truth,” you pointed out. He took this in and nodded slowly in agreement. Henry stared at you emotionlessly. “So wouldn't that make me more of a realist than a pessimist?”

“Y/N, that's so sad, though…” Mia said sadly. You looked at her. “D-Don’t you hope that he's still out there?”

“Why would I hurt myself like that?” you wondered. She hesitated. “I already have to hear Bill talk about it all the time… he knows Georgie's out there, he’s going to find him and bring him home. One day Bill's going to realize that these kids are gone for good and it's going to break his heart. I felt it the moment he was gone, and I'm not going to act like things are going to turn out fine, because…” You trailed off. “Because they're dead, and that's all there is to it. Whoever it is is just
“Y/N, that’s terrible…” she said softly. You shrugged. “I know you liked Mark, and I know this is hard—”

“Oh my gosh, I didn't like Mark. One of the last things I told him was that I wasn't interested,” you argued. Henry snickered at this. “I don't wanna talk about it Mia, about any of it. I don't wanna think about it when I don't have to.”

The four of you looked to your right as Tommy Jones sat down in the seat next to you. Like Mark, he wasn't a bad looking guy, tall, and muscular from his sports. His dark hair was cut in a quiff hairstyle, the top long enough that it had to be combed back to keep out of his blue eyes. You heard Mia sigh happily behind you.

“Hi, Tommy,” she greeted sweetly. He glanced over at her, giving her a sad smile. “How are you?”

“I'm… you know…” he shrugged, opening his backpack and pulling out a pencil. “Just tryin’a get through finals…”

“Yeah…” she sighed sadly. “Let me know if you need any help with anything.”

“Thanks, Mia…” he said, then glanced back at Henry and Patrick. “Bowers? You're in this class?” Henry glared at him. “You know you have to know actual geometry to pass this exam, right?”

“I got a good tutor, don't even gotta come to class,” he shot back coldly. Tommy glanced at you. “Teaches me everything I gotta know…”

“Better leave her alone next year, she doesn't need to be around a piece of shit like you,” he warned.

“Tommy, stop,” you spoke up, glaring at him. He looked at you, and turned back around, still looking at you.

“Sorry… I'm just kinda out of it…” he mumbled, looking down at his desk. You gulped and
nodded. The teacher started explaining the final exam to the class, and Tommy leaned toward you. “Mark liked you a lot, you know? You were all he ever talked about…” You looked down sadly and mumbled an apology. “No, no… it's just… I see what he saw in you… you're sweet, Y/N…” You felt his hand slide over your knee and your eyes widened. You didn't need to look back at Henry, you could feel his gaze burning in your direction. You sat completely still as the teacher passed out the exams. When the teacher sat back down, and Tommy still didn't move his hand, you carefully and slowly grabbed his hand and lifted it off of your leg, dropping it next to you.

You heard Mia sigh heavily and you prayed that Henry would be able to focus on his exam enough to pass.

You finished the exam fairly quickly and brought it up to the teacher, who thanked you and told you to have a good summer. You went back to your seat and got your things together, looking back at Henry, who was glaring daggers at Tommy. He caught your eye and you motioned to the paper on his desk. He sighed and looked down at it, continuing his work as you left the room.

You waited out in the hall until the bell rang. As soon as it did you stood up straight and waited by the door. Mia came out first and gave you an excited look, and you saw that she was followed closely by Tommy, who hurried up to you and took a deep breath.

“Hey, I'm glad I caught you out here,” he said quickly. “I was thinking maybe we could hang out at Gretta's End-of-the-Year party tomorrow night. It's gonna be weird there without my friend, and I really like you, so…”

You saw Henry talking to the teacher in the room, and you hesitated. “Tommy, I'm really sorry about Mark, but… I'm not really looking to date anyone right now--”

“Well, it'll just be as friends then,” he insisted. You tried to argue, but some of his football friends came up and started pulling him away. “I'll see you Friday, Y/N, I'll pick you up at 7!”

“What?” you hissed. Mia squealed, and Henry glared at her in annoyance as he walked out of the classroom. “No, Mia--!”

“I can't believe you have a date with Tommy Jones! Y/N, he is such a hunk!” she said happily. Henry looked at you in shock.

“Mia, it is not a date, I couldn't even tell him I might not go to that stupid party,” you insisted,
giving Henry a quick glance.

“Oh come on, Y/N, it's--”

“Y/N, I need to talk to you about my English final. Now,” Henry cut her off, grabbing your arm and dragging you towards the locker rooms.

“Baby, what's wrong? What did you get on your final?” you asked quietly.

“What? Oh, a 65, teacher passed me 'cause I came to class, but fuck, babe, who’s that fucktard think he is, puttin’ his hands on you like that?” He let go of you and turned to you. “What kind of fuckin’ cuck puts his hands on a girl that ain't his?!”

“Henry he didn't know,” you reminded him softly. “I told him I'm not interested.”

“Right, and that works so well with Peterson,” he scoffed. “Tell a guy you ain't interested and he fuckin’ molests you…”

“Nobody molested me, Henry,” you insisted calmly, putting your hands on either side of his face. “Listen, if you're worried about some other guy trying to take me from you, you don't have to be. I'm not going anywhere, okay?” He relaxed a little and kissed you. You happily kissed him back and touched your forehead to his. “We need to get to English, baby… you have an exam to pass.”

“I ain't gonna pass…” he mumbled, looking down.

“Sure you are,” you argued. “Do you wanna go over it one more time before you take the test?”

“No, it's just…” he started, shifting nervously. “What if I can't read the stuff? I can get through it easy if you're readin’ it to me. When I look at it, all the letters get mixed up, 'n…” He closed his eyes tightly. “My Dad's right, I am an idiot, I'm not gonna pass this test… He said so last night…”

You tensed up. You couldn't tell believe that Henry's Dad talked to him the way he did. Henry clearly had some kind of reading disability, you were surprised no one had ever caught it and gotten him help. Henry had spent his whole life being told he was an idiot when you knew he
wasn't. But it was just so easy for him to believe it when no one told him otherwise.

“Henry you're going to pass. I believe in you, I know you can do it,” you told him seriously. He shrugged. “Hey, just relax and do your best. I'll stay with you after I'm done, if you want?”

Henry took a breath and shook his head at you. “Nah… nah, I can do it by myself,” he argued. You smiled lightly. “Don't let that Jones kid touch you again, got it? He puts his hands on you and I’ll beat his fuckin’ face in.”

“Henry,” you sighed, taking his hand. “Come on, let's go to class.” He let you pull him to class, but stopped you outside the door, letting go of your hand. “Henry…”

“I'm just gonna skip… I ain't gonna pass it anyway,” he said sadly. You sighed and looked around, grabbing his hand and moving closer to him.

“I'll give you a blowjob if you go in and take this test, whether you pass it or not,” you promised him. He cracked a smirk and you smiled a little. “Yeah…?”

“Not gonna pass that up,” he agreed. You chuckled and kissed his forehead quickly. “Alright, let's go…” He let go of your hand and you went into the classroom, sitting down in your seat. He waited for a minute so that it didn't look like the two of you were coming in together, and took his seat next to you.

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Henry took longer than the allotted class time to finish the test, but the teacher seemed to be fine giving him the five extra minutes between classes to finish it up. Your locker wasn't too far away so you went there to wait for him until he was done.

You felt bad that you hadn't stayed, but he had been so insistent on finishing it by himself. So you gave him his space, trying to send encouraging thoughts his way.

You started cleaning out your locker, figuring it would help pass the time. You were startled by the bell signaling the start of classes halfway through cleaning, and you swore slightly, grateful that you would only be late to check into study hall and not late for an exam. You turned quickly, a huge pile of old papers in your arms, and you saw Henry hurrying down the hall towards you, a
single paper in his grip. He looked excited, and it made you smile.

“Guess what I got on the exam?” he grinned once he reached you. You shrugged and looked around quickly. “You'll never ever guess.”

“So tell me,” you laughed, tossing the old papers from your locker into a waste bin against a nearby wall.

“I got a 70!” he told you proudly. Your smile brightened and you clapped happily for him. “Highest grade I ever gotten!”

“That's amazing, I knew you could do it!” you told him honestly. “Doesn't that feel good? And guess what? Now you don't have to take summer school.”

“Fuck yes,” he groaned happily. He leaned against the lockers next to yours as you turned to keep cleaning up. “You wanna come to my place to celebrate? My Dad and the police troop have some big meetin' tonight, you know because of Peterson…” You looked a little sad, so he cleared his throat and quickly continued. “Then he's goin’ a Bangor to see his girlfriend, I think, so I'll have the house all to myself…” He punctuated the last part with a quick wiggle of his eyebrows. You giggled a bit and looked around quickly.

“Wanna have a date?” you asked hopefully. He raised one eyebrow. “Come on, we've never been on a date before, it'll be fun! We can have dinner and watch a movie and then… you know…” He hesitated a little and you smiled hopefully.

“Dinner? I don't, um… I don't got a whole lotta money to pay for dinner, even to bring home,” he said softly, looking away a bit in shame. You felt a pang of guilt hit you and you quickly tried to recover the idea. “I mean, I got a little bit saved, I guess I could--”

“That's ok! We could cook something!” you suggested hopefully.

“… I can't cook good,” he told you honestly. “And even if I could, we ain't got much at my place… I can make like… box macaroni, that's about it…”

“I like box macaroni,” you laughed lightly. He looked a little relieved. “We don't have to do this, if you don't want, it was just--”
“Do you like chocolate?” he cut you off. You smiled a little.

“I love chocolate,” you said sweetly.

“Perfect. Be at my house at quarter to five,” he told you, standing up a bit taller. You felt yourself blush a little and you couldn't have stopped smiling if you had tried.

“It's a date,” you agreed. He seemed almost surprised by this, and you went up on your toes, kissing his cheek gently. “You made me super late for class, so I really have to go, but I'll see you after school, kay?” He nodded, and you let go of his hand quickly, looking around the hall before leaning up to kiss his cheek again. “Good job on your exam, baby…” His smile brightened and you kissed him quickly before hurrying towards your class.

---

You knew where the Bowers’ farm was, and it barely took you any time to walk yourself there. You had put on a knee length tee-shirt dress that Henry had mentioned he liked on more than one occasion (it was a little tight around the ass and boobs; Mia had once told you it could make a stick figure look like an hourglass, so it looked incredible on you), and had fixed your hair and makeup a little. You didn't expect him to dress up at all, but you felt like you should make yourself pretty for him.

Once you reached his house, and you'd walked down the driveway, you went up his porch a few steps, looking at yourself through one of his house’s dirty windows, then hurrying down his porch to the front door.

You knocked on the door, looking around a little. After a moment, the door opened and Henry stood at the door, taking a breath. “Hey,” he greeted.

“Hi,” you said, smiling up at him. He had on his blue button-up sleeveless shirt and his least ripped jeans, and looked a little nervous.

“You look hot,” he told you.
“So do you,” you laughed lightly. He took a breath, looking around, then taking your hand and pulling you inside.

“If my Dad ain't goin’ to his girlfriend's, he'll be back at around ten or so… goes out and drinks with other cops on Friday nights, so he'd do that after his meetin’,” he explained. You nodded, looking around his house while he brought you to the kitchen. “My house is kinda a shitty place to have a date, sorry.”

“Don't be. I understand,” you told him gently. He nodded, stopping in the kitchen. “So Mac and Cheese?”

“Yeah. And we got soda too, if you want some,” he offered, pulling out one of his kitchen chairs for you. You smiled brightly and sat down, letting him push you in.

He brought over two chipped, mismatching bowls full of macaroni, then grabbed a bottle of orange soda out of the fridge, pouring some into two plastic cups which he brought to the table as he sat down. You smiled at him, and he looked around at what he had prepared for you.

“Jesus, I'm sorry…” he mumbled. “This ain't much of a date…”

“Baby, it's fine,” you smiled.

“And sorry I ain't got matchin’ dishes 'n stuff. My Dad threw the last couple matchin’ dishes at me last week…” he explained, laughing slightly at his own misfortune. Your smile faltered, and you sat up.

“Oh, honey…”

“No, no, it's fine… and we ain't had glass cups in a few years, not since the night Mama left… Daddy-- Dad broke those ones too, couldn't break the plastic cups though, no matter how many times he threw 'em at us--” he cut himself off. “I'm sorry, I don't know why I'm talkin’ about that I just-- just don't want you to think you deserve this kinda stuff, you deserve nicer stuff than this--”

“It's perfect, Henry, really,” you told him honestly, reaching across the table and touching his hand. “It's not about the food or the dishes, or how fancy it is, or if it matches. Just as long as we're together having a nice time, I'm happy.” He took this in and nodded slowly.
“Yeah… yeah, okay,” he agreed. “I better make this a nice time then.” You laughed lightly and the two of you began eating.

You small-talked while you ate, just talking about school and about people you knew. He relaxed more and more with each passing moment, and you kept your hand on his the whole time.

“You said you like chocolate, right?” he wondered, finishing the rest of what was in his bowl. His third bowl. You had finished your first small bowl and had been done, so he had set himself on a course of finishing the rest of what he had cooked. But you didn't mind, and waited patiently for him to eat as much as he needed. You took a sip of your drink and nodded in response to his question. “So… if I got chocolate ice cream you'd be cool with that?” You smiled brightly and nodded again. “Wanna head out to the living room, I'll clean up and bring some out to you.” You stood up, keeping your hand on his as he stood up as well.

“Just don't take too long, 'kay?” You went up on your toes and kissed him gently, then let go of his hand and walked out to his living room. You heard him bustling around the kitchen and you looked around the front room slowly. It didn't look like Henry spent much time in here, the exercise equipment and old couch the only clue that anyone other than his Dad lived here. His Dad's chair was right in front of the TV, an ashtray sitting on the arm of it, and everything set up to surround him. You could see that there was a blanket covering the seat of the couch when you walked over to it. You sat down carefully, noticing how cluttered and, frankly, dirty the house looked, like no one bothered to dust or clean the floors, or get rid of trash. You looked up as Henry walked into the room, and smiled again.

“Sorry my house’s a dump…” he mumbled, holding a two small plastic bowls, one in each hand. “We ain't got nobody to clean for us.” You wanted to say that he could clean it, but you didn't want to get into that argument right now. He set one bowl down on the heavily beer-stained coffee table in front of you, then sat down on the couch next to you and took a big bite of his ice cream. You picked up your bowl and took a bite, humming and leaning against him.

“You don't have to apologise, I don't mind,” you told him. You nodded to the workout equipment across the room and smiled a little. “Is that yours?” He followed your gaze, then nodded.

“Yeah, my Dad uses it sometimes but it's mostly mine,” he agreed, his mouth slightly full. “Why?”

“I didn't know you worked out,” you chuckled. He shrugged and nodded, finishing his dessert and setting the bowl down. You finished your ice cream a minute after him, setting the bowl back on the table next to his. You could see how he had scraped the bowl almost completely clean while you had left what was on the bowl there, and you smiled lightly. You turned slightly to look at
him, and you could feel the nerves radiating off of him. You put your hands on his bicep gently, rubbing his arm a bit. “Should’ve guessed, you have nice arms.”

“You think?” he wondered hopefully. You hummed in agreement and leaned up to kiss at his neck. His breathing quickened, and he reached forward, scooping up some of the left over ice cream from your bowl and pushing it against your lips. You giggled a little and licked it a little before taking his finger in your mouth and sucking the sweet dessert off. He groaned a little and you pulled his finger out of your mouth.

“Let's get these bowls to the kitchen, then we can keep going okay?” you said. He grunted a little but got up, grabbing the bowls and you got up, following him back to the kitchen. He set the bowls in the sink, then hesitated, turning on the water and starting to wash them quickly. You took the chance to go farther into the house.

“Hey, Y/N, the fuck're you goin’?” he called.

“I'm looking for your room,” you explained, walking down the hallway and opening the door at the end of the hall. You jumped as he pushed past you and pulled the door closed.

“Not my room,” he snapped at you. His hands were still wet from washing the bowls and he wiped them on his pants. “Dad's room…”

“Oh,” you said, looking at the door to your right. “That one?”

“Why we gotta go in my room?” he countered. You hurried over to the door to the right and opened it, going in before he could catch you. He grunted and stopped in the doorway. You looked around the sunny room, walking to his dresser and picking up a monster truck toy.

“I didn't know you liked monster trucks…” you said, slightly teasingly but mostly interested.

“Yeah, always have,” he mumbled. You turned to look at him, seeing that he was looking towards the front of the house. He looked back at you and his gaze hardened. “Come on, now, let's go back to the living room.”

“But I like your room,” you argued sweetly, setting the monster truck back down and going over to his bed, leaning on the rusty metal footboard slightly. He sighed in annoyance and walked into his
“Thanks, now come on out,” he pressed, grabbing your hand and trying to pull you out. You held onto the bedframe and he grunted angrily. “Now, Y/N.”

“Come on, Henry,” you pouted, grabbing him by the belt and pulling him closer to you. “It's so much better to fuck on a bed than on a couch…”

“How'd you know, we ain't ever fucked on a couch,” he pointed out.

“Yeah, the one in Belch's basement,” you reminded him. He sighed. “We fell off, remember? You had to fuck me on the floor.”

“Weren't so bad…”

“It hurt… and it was cold,” you argued, pressing yourself up against him and starting to unbutton the top few buttons of his shirt. “You have a perfectly good bed, we should use it…” He grumbled something to himself. “What was that? I can't hear you, I'm too horny…”

“I said you're a fuckin’ brat,” he chuckled, touching your cheek and kissing you roughly, shoving his tongue into your mouth before you could react.

You let him suck at your mouth, and draped your arms over his shoulder when he brought his hands to squeeze at your breasts. You whined a little and kept unbuttoning his shirt, trying to get it undone as quickly as you could. He pulled your dress up, pulling away from the kiss to pull it over your head and throw it somewhere across the room. You giggled a little and hurried to unclip your bra and toss that aside as well. He sucked a mark on your collar bone, as you pushed his shirt open, grabbing the sides of his face and pulling him to look at you so that you could kiss him again. You caught his lower lip between your teeth gently and tugged at it carefully. He shivered a little and you let his lip go, touching your nose to his, just looking into his ice blue eyes for a moment.

You felt his thumbs run across your nipples, and you took a shaky breath. “You still owe me a blowjob, princess,” he mumbled. You laughed a little, surprised, and he pulled you so that you could feel the bulge in the crotch of his pants. “Then I'm gonna fuck you till you can't walk.” He grabbed your hips and lifted you up, walking to his bed and dropping you on, climbing over you even as the old bed creaked loudly in protest, the thin mattress not doing much to protect the rusting old springs.
Henry stared down between you as he started to grind his clothed crotch against yours, feeling himself getting excited from the wetness that was soaking through your panties and onto the front of his jeans. You felt your heart beating faster and faster, and you rolled yourself out from under him, standing up and grabbing the thin blanket off of his bed to use as a cushion for your knees. You folded it in half and he turned to sit at the edge of the bed. He had barely gotten there before he froze in place, his eyes widening and his mouth falling open.

You turned, falling back against the bed, and holding the blanket over your chest frantically to hide your bare breasts. Henry stood up quickly, trying to fix the crotch of his pants as he stared towards the door in terror. You kept your eyes on the man in the doorway, then looked up at Henry, seeing his face was bright red.

“D-Dad…” he started, his voice sounding soft and vulnerable. You didn't like that. You didn't like how quickly he had shifted from being content and in control to being petrified. His Dad didn't move, nor did he say anything, staying leaned in the doorway with his cigarette between his lips loosely. You gulped and looked around for where Henry had tossed your dress.

“At least clean up your shithole of a room if you're gonna have chicks over…” his Dad finally said, sounding almost calm, but there was an edge to his voice that you couldn't miss. “You didn't tell me you was gonna have anybody over tonight.”

Henry looked at a loss for words, like he was trying desperately to think of what to say. “I-I… we-”

“Don't give me no shit, that's why you was askin’ me if I were gonna be home,” he scoffed. “I knew you was up to somethin’, just didn't know it were a girl.”

“We just had dinner, and we was--”

“I weren't done!” he barked, making Henry jump and look down. “You should know better… ain't I taught you nothin’? What good’s lyin’ do?” Henry looked up slightly and gulped, starting to move forward.

“Dad, I weren't tryin'a take her for myself or nothin’,” he tried. Henry bent down a bit and picked up your dress from the floor. His Dad moved towards him and he straightened up quickly. “We both wanted to, I promise, I weren't tryin'a hurt her, Dad, I promise--”
His Dad smacked him across the face and you gasped sharply, hesitating. Henry let out a quiet sob, and looked down quickly. His Dad grabbed your dress out of his hand and glared down at him.

“You ain't both want it…” he hissed at him. You could see Henry's eyes closed tightly. “You think a girl like her wants anything to do with a scumbag like you? Fuckin’ pervert, tryin'a touch up a girl like her…. Poor thing probably couldn't even say no, could she? No matter how much she wants to, fuckin’ scumbag, probably made her keep her damn mouth shut didn't you?”

“Dad--” His Dad punched him in the jaw as if it were a normal thing to do, and Henry cried out in pain. His Dad grabbed his hair, and forced him to look at him.

“I heard you tell that girl she owes you a blowjob, you fuckin’ asshole,” he spat at him. “I oughta break your fuckin’ teeth.”

“Stop!” you pleaded, standing up quickly and looking at Henry's Dad in horror. He glared at Henry, then glanced up at you. “P-Please… it's not his fault. It was my idea to come over, I-I didn't mean any harm… I-I-I di-di-didn’t-- I d-didn’t know!” You tried to stop yourself from stuttering, so you took a shaky breath, holding the blanket against your chest tightly. “P-P-Please, stop hur-hurting him, it w-w-w-was all my idea…”

If you thought you hated him before, because of the way he had handled your brother's death, you couldn't describe the hatred you felt towards him now, watching him beat Henry up for having you over. It wasn't right… but he was also much larger than you. And you were almost naked in his house. And the way the red-hot anger in his gaze had changed so quickly when he looked at you. The way his body language switched from tense and violent to relaxed and controlled. He let go of Henry and walked over to you slowly, stopping just in front of you, your dress tightly held in his fist.

“It was your idea, huh?” he asked skeptically. You gulped and nodded. “Really? You wanted to come over and be around this shitbag? You?” You trembled and nodded. “And it was your idea for you to owe him a cock-suckin’? Come on, sweetheart--”

“He's not a shitbag, he's nice to me,” you insisted. He scoffed in disbelief. “I like him. I wanted to come over. I-I told him that if he got through his test today, I-I would g-give him…” You we're stuttering too much to get the words out, but you hoped he would understand.

“I'll be damned… Pretty little good girl like you? You're the Denbrough’s oldest brat, ain'tcha?” he
wondered. You nodded. “’s what I thought. Got that weird thing when you talk, too... Y/N, right...?” You winced a little at the way he let your name melt off of his tongue. “So let me get this straight. A little straight A, preppy girl like you wanted to come here and fuck my kid? And you just casually offered to put his junk in your mouth?” You blinked a little, feeling your cheeks turn red, and you looked over at Henry, seeing that he was staring down at the ground. “’r did the little fucker touch you and make you take off your clothes.”

“No,” you said shortly, but softly. “No, I wanted to.”

He chuckled a little, looking back at Henry. “Well ain't this somethin’. Never thought I'd see a girl give him the time’a day. Pretty girl too,” he added, looking back at you. “Bet your Daddy wouldn't be too keen on you bein’ down here tryin'a fuck around with a fuckin’ Bowers, would he?” You felt your blush reach your ears, and you hugged yourself tighter. “Bet your Daddy thinks we're dirt, huh? Bet he wouldn't be happy to hear you're not a perfect little virgin cunt 'cause'a someone like Henry, huh? Bet he'd be pretty mad that you're sneakin’ around with boys… I'd hate to be the one to tell him our kids are screwin’.”

“P-Please don't,” you begged, looking up at him. “Please don't tell my Dad, h-he wouldn't understand...” You choked a little on a sob you didn't realize you had been holding in, and you shut your eyes tightly, looking down. “I promise I won't c-c-come around here again, I'm s-s-s… s-sorry if I disrespected you in some way, I didn't mean any h-harm, really!”

He sighed a little and you felt his hand on your chin. “I won't tell your Daddy, princess... and I don't mind you bein’ around here,” he told you. The hand on your face moved to grab your arm, and he tosses your dress on the bed, grabbing the blanket and trying to pull it away from you. Your lip trembled and you tried weakly to keep the blanket covering yourself, but he was so strong and he easily uncovered you, throwing the blanket on the ground and pulling you against him. “I don't mind you bein’ around here at all, 'specially if you're gonna be like this when I get home.” You opened your mouth in horror and tried to pull away from him. You looked over at Henry, wanting him to help you, but he was holding his jaw and shaking, staring intently at the ground. “How old're you, again?”

“P-Please let me go,” you tried. He tilted his head and grabbed your chin again.

“I asked you a question, don't be rude,” he ordered. “How old're you, Y/N?”

You took a shaky breath. “F-Fifteen, almost sixteen, just like Henry,” you told him. He hummed a little, letting go of your chin and bringing his hand to your breast instead, his thumb brushing against your nipple. Your mouth fell open again. “S-Stop--!”
“Do me a favor, Y/N,” he cut you off calmly. You looked over at Henry again, seeing that he had finally looked up, and was now frozen in place, seeing what his Dad was doing to you. “Look at me.” You looked up at him again. “I don't gotta tell your Daddy about all this… okay?” You frowned deeply, looking at him in confusion. He moved his hand away from your breast and instead, ran his thumb across your bottom lip. “Just do me a favor, okay? If you're gonna be spendin’ a lotta time with this idiot -- and it's none’a my business, you wanna suck his scrawny cock, be my fuckin’ guest.” You trembled and tried to move away from him, but he held you in place. “But if you're gonna be with him, watch your back. He's about as nice as he is smart, the only reason he ain't being a shitbag to you is so he can get some pussy… I'm sure he's being a little sweetheart to you 'cause you popped his cherry 'n all…” You tensed up a little, and kept eye contact with him. Now you were getting angry. He wasn't just scaring you, he was doing everything he could to embarrass Henry. “One’a these days you're gonna get smacked, baby girl. You ain't gonna be so happy with him when you got a black eye…” You blinked and gulped slightly and he raised an eyebrow. “Oh… you already got hit, didn't you…? Maybe you ain't as smart as you look…” He let you go and you stumbled back, covering yourself again and glaring at him. “Just watch your back, Y/N. Don't waste your sweet ass on this prick…” He glanced at Henry and shoved past him out the door.

As soon as he was gone Henry let out a soft sigh of relief, but he stayed still, looking firmly down at the ground. You let out a shaky breath and quickly grabbed your bra from the ground, pulling it on and clipping it in the back. You watched him as you grabbed your dress from the bed and pulled it over your head.

“Are you alright?” you asked him softly. You saw him bring his arm up and wipe his nose. Then he looked up and cleared his throat.

“Fine, why?” he lied, his voice cracking slightly. You could see tears rolling down his face, and you hurried over to him, touching his face and wiping the tears away with your thumbs. He pushed you hands away and took a wavering breath.

“I'm sorry, Henry, I didn't--”

“That's why I didn't wanna be in here,” he whispered. “I can't hear when he comes in if I'm in my room…” He cleared his throat and held your arms. “That's why you gotta listen to me, okay? You gotta do what I tell you to when I tell you to, understand?” You blinked and nodded quickly. “I-I didn't want you meetin' him... he thinks girls my age are cute…” You wrinkled your nose a bit in disgust and he chuckled slightly. “J-Just... you'll tell me if he ever touches you again, right? 'cause I'll deal with him if he does. I can take him down just fine, I just... Didn't wanna make a scene in front’a you…” You looked at him sadly. “You better get on home, it's almost curfew.” He stepped away from the doorway and you stared at him. “Y/N, now. Go, I'll see you tomorrow, promise…”

You gulped and straightened out your dress, walking up to him and going on your toes to kiss his
cheek quickly. “I’m sorry…” you told him carefully. He looked down at his bedroom floor and nodded quickly. You walked carefully out of his room, seeing his Dad leaning against the wall right around the corner, his belt in his hand and a new cigarette lit between his lips.

“Thanks for stoppin’ by, sweetheart,” he mumbled, sounding too smug. You whimpered and rushed past him, running out of the house and down the driveway so you wouldn’t have to hear what Henry’s Dad did to him.
You would be lying if you said that you weren't upset about what had happened at Henry's house. It wasn't his fault that his Dad had been a creep, but you were scared to see him today, to face him after you had left him to get beaten. You had just been so afraid, you still couldn't quite comprehend what had happened. The way Butch had looked at you… you shivered at the thought. Henry was the only other person that ever looked at you like that, maybe Patrick too but you didn't take anything he did to heart. And when Henry looked at you like that it was exciting, and alluring. Butch made that feeling go away… it scared you how much he and Henry looked alike. It had been the same lust in the same blue eyes, but in an older man's body. And when he had touched you…

As you approached the school, you could see a few cop cars sitting around, watching as kids went in for their last day. You didn't know if Butch was there, but you held your cardigan so that it almost covered your neck.

“W-What's wrong, Y/N, are you a-alright?” Bill asked. You looked over at him, remembering suddenly that he was next to you, and realizing he had probably been talking to you this whole time.

“Y-Y-Yeah, I'm okay…” you lied. He heard the stutter, and knew you were lying, but you shrugged. “Good l-l-luck on your exams, Bill, I'll see you after class okay? Maybe I can meet you for lunch?” He lit up, a smile spreading across his face. He nodded as the two of you reached the
front door, and he hurried off towards the Middle School side of the building, while you turned towards the High School, going upstairs towards your locker.

You grabbed the last few things out of it and took the lock off, then started towards advisory. You saw Henry and Vic going into their advisory down the hall, and you waved with a small smile at Henry when he caught your eye. He quickly put his head down and ducked into the room. Your smile fell, and Vic gave you an apologetic look before following his friend.

You went into your advisory and gave the teacher your lock as he checked off your name on the attendance sheet, telling you to have a good summer. You nodded and hurried out of the room, going down the hall near Henry's advisory and waiting across the hall. Sometimes he came out to see you before you both had to go to class, and you hoped maybe he'd want to come talk to you before class. But when you looked in through the window on the door, Vic and Henry were already gone. You had no idea how they had left sooner than you, but you felt an ache in your stomach and your heart. Was he avoiding you? Did he blame you for getting beaten last night? You wouldn't blame him, it technically was your fault… but you hoped he wasn't too mad at you… what if he was mad at you, and didn't want to talk? Would he ever want to talk again? What if he decided that you weren't worth it, that he didn't want to see you anymore? You weren't sure you could deal with that…

“Hey, Y/N!”

You looked over as Vic jogged over next to you. You smiled weakly, and mumbled a hello. “Hey, Henry wanted me to tell you he's gonna have a to skip lunch with you today… he figured you'd want space,” he told you, sounding uncertain. “Did something happen? Everything okay?”

You shrugged. “Yeah, everything's great,” you lied. “He just… doesn't wanna talk to me, I guess…”

“He made it seem like something happened…” he insisted. You sighed and looked down. “Hey, why don't you come over to my place after school? You can talk to me and stuff, and I have some clothes that I think would fit you.” You looked around and shrugged again.

“Sure… if you think Henry won't mind,” you agreed. He chuckled.

“Henry's got nothin’ to worry about,” he told you. “He'd probably prefer if you came to my place, Tommy Jones’ been telling everyone he's taking you to Keene’s party tonight, so you should plan to come with me.”
“Fuck…” you sighed. “That kid won't leave me alone…”

“Henry's good at keeping people off your back. Trust me…” he told you. “Just head to my place after school, I'll let him know what's up.”

“Thanks Vic,” you told him. You glanced at the clock and sighed heavily. “I have to get to my exam, just… tell him I'll talk to him whenever he's ready, okay?”

“Sounds good,” he agreed “Just know, with the kinda mood he's in, there isn't gonna be much talking…”

You shook your head worriedly and he waved at you before walking off. You started walking to class quickly in the other direction. You just needed to get through your last exam, then you could find Henry before you went to have lunch with Bill.

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Your exam took a little longer than you wanted, as you couldn't stop thinking about Henry, and what you wanted to say to him. As soon as you handed the exam in, you hurried out of the classroom and towards Henry's history class downstairs.

Halfway down the stairwell, you ran into Bill, who smiled brightly. “Hey, you're done early!” he said excitedly. “R-Ready to g-g-g-go eat lunch with us? Stan and Eddie are done too, R-Richie's in Language Arts, he should be d-d-d-do-done in a minute.”

You blinked then nodded. “Uh, okay, where are we eating?” you wondered, adjusting your backpack and following him down the stairs.

“The lawn. We found a n-n-nice spot,” he explained, leading you toward the door. You looked worriedly towards Henry's classroom, but followed Bill.

It was a nice day and it was a nice spot, under one of the trees on the lawn, facing away from the school. You sat down next to Stan and put an arm around him. “Hello, my little friends,” you greeted. “The Boy-Who-Knows-Every-Bird-There-Is, and The Boy-Who-Has-Everything-You-
Could-Ever-Need-In-His-Fanny-Pack. How did I get so lucky?” Stan scoffed but smiled and straightened out his lunch in front of him.

“Was Junior year really that busy, Y/N? You couldn't spend one lunch with us?” Eddie wondered, feigning offense. He sniffled and pouted mockingly. “I thought we were your favorite kids…”

“You are, Eddie, you're my favorite kids in the whole world,” you told him, leaning over to ruffle his hair. He let out a horrified noise and leaned back, unzipping his fanny pack and pulling out a small bottle. You sighed and held out your hand. “What is it?”

“Isopropyl alcohol, it'll disinfect your hands. I'll give you some after you touch my hair too, so you can eat,” he explained, carefully dropping a little on your hand. You heard the bell ring to signal the end of class, and you quickly rubbed the alcohol onto your hands, making sure it got on your palms, then reached forward and ruffled his hair. He sighed and looked annoyed, as if he hadn't known it was coming, and you laughed, holding your hands back out.

“I missed you, Eddie,” you told him. He hummed and put more of the alcohol in your hands. Students started walking in the lawn around you, making their way to whatever dry, shady spot they could find in the grass. It was fairly quiet, almost peaceful. Almost.

“What's up, fuckers!?”

The three of you looked over as Richie ran over, jumping on you once he made it to the group. You laughed as you fell over onto the grass, then sat up once Richie rolled over towards Eddie. “Maybe you should put some’a that disinfectant in his mouth,” you joked, before sticking your tongue out at Richie.

“You just don't wanna admit that I'm your favorite,” Richie said proudly.

“Richie, that has nothing to do with anything,” Stan pointed out with a slight frown. Richie rolled his eyes, not seeing Stan's slight smirk. “It's also not true, I'm her favorite.”

“What?!” Eddie gasped. “Nuh-uh, no way, I'm her favorite! Right, Y/N?!”

“Sh-Sh-Shou-Shouldn't I be her favorite, I mean I-I-I am her b-brother,” Bill spoke up with a smirk. Richie scoffed.
“You have an unfair advantage, Sir Bill!” he cried, mocking an over the top British accent. You laughed and Richie crawled back over to you, resting between you and Stan, taking your hand and holding it dramatically to his chest. “My lady, please say I'm your favorite. I'll treat you the best out of everyone! Who's your favorite, Y/N?”

“Thats a fuckin’ stupid question….” You heard all the boys gasp, and you looked up to see who was talking, then over as Patrick sat down in the grass next to you. “It’s me, obviously…” You rolled your eyes a little, and felt Richie let go of your hand and move back from you quickly. You looked over, seeing Bill and his friends had gone completely pale and were frozen in place. “I'm your favorite, ain't I, princess?”

“Can I help you?” you asked in confusion, looking back at him.

“Two things,” he explained. “First, hold out your hand.”

“Fuck, why?” you questioned. He just grinned and you sighed, holding out your hand, ignoring Eddie's quiet protests. Patrick grabbed your hand and gently put his other over your palm, dropping something in, then moving back. You blinked, then sighed. “Oh my God…”

“I caught it for you. It’s the same color as your eyes,” he told you calmly. You stared down at the butterfly in your hand, not really sure what to do with it, still holding your hand out.

“Wow, um… Was it… dead when you caught it?” you dared to ask. He scoffed and raised an eyebrow.

“Of course it wasn't, I don't just give girls dead bugs I find lyin’ around,” he laughed, as if it were obvious.

“No, of course you don't, how silly of me to ask,” you laughed nervously. “What else did you need, Patrick?”

He looked over to his right, and you saw Henry sitting a ways away with Vic and Belch. “He wants to know when you wanna talk to him,” he said quietly.
You blinked and looked at him. “So why didn't he come over here himself?” you wondered. Patrick sent you a quick smirk, then turned and lay back, resting his head it your lap. “Patrick…”

“He's pissed today, just look at his face,” he pointed out. “If he came over with all these losers around, it would be a fuckin’ blood bath. Not that I would mind…”


“So are you gonna go talk to him?”

“Well not now.” He turned his head and sighed, touching your arm and tracing along your elbow. You sighed and reached over him so that you could grab your sandwich out of your lunch box, carefully opening the plastic bag and pulling the sandwich out setting it on the lunch box. Then you put the butterfly in your hand into the plastic bag and put it in the front pocket of your backpack. “Do you need anything else, or are you--?”

“Are you going to the party tonight?” he cut you off, looking up at you.

Your heart skipped a beat. “What party?” you questioned, glancing up at Bill and his friends, who were beginning to be more annoyed and uncertain about Patrick being there than scared.

“Gretta’s? The one Jones invited you to?” he reminded you, pulling out his pack of cigarettes and holding one up for you while his other hand dug his lighter out of his pocket. You blinked and sighed.

“I don't smoke… and I never said I was going to that. I don't go to parties,” you said shortly, quickly glancing at Bill again. Patrick smirked and giggled slightly as he lit his cigarette.

“How could I forget? You don't wanna go to a party with that pretty boy Tommy Jones, anyway, you'd have a shitty time,” he grinned, blowing out a puff of smoke towards Bill and his friends.

“Can you not be rude please?” you tried. It only seemed to spur him on, and he turned slightly, reaching over with lightning speed to grab Stan’s red and white kippah off of his head, pulling his hair in the process.
Stan cried out in pain and quickly tried to reach out for his kippah, but Patrick held his arm out as far as it could stretch and settled his head back in your lap.

“Please, give it back, my Dad’ll kill me if I lose another one,” Stan pleaded, before looking at you for help. You were glaring down at Patrick, who was making perfect, smug eye contact with you.

“Push, Patrick,” you dared him. There was a hint of fire in his dead eyes, and you knew he would, you didn't know why you tempted him.

“What's the magic word, kike?” he grinned keeping that perfect eye contact. You grabbed his hair, and he laughed lightly as you yanked him off of your lap. He had to bend his arm to catch himself, and you grabbed Stan's kippah out of his hand, handing it back to the timid boy, who quickly put it back on. Patrick tried to move but you had your grip firmly in his hair, the only movement he was able to make was grabbing your arm when you pulled him up so that you could look him in the eye.

“Apologize,” you demanded. His chest was heaving, and he licked his lips. “Now.”

“I'm sorry, Stanley,” he said tauntingly, still keeping eye contact with you. “Won't happen again.”

“It better not. If you or any of your friends ever call him that again, you're gonna regret it,” you warned him coldly. He giggled a bit and you yanked his hair. He groaned a little.

“Baby, I'll do anything you want if you keep pullin' my hair like that,” he told you. You just blinked and gripped his hair tighter, completely ignoring how he situated himself up on his knees so that you could see the bulge in the crotch of his jeans, and the way he bit his bottom lip.

“Take what you can get, babe,” you taunted, letting go of his hair and running your fingers through it gently. “Now go tell Henry to leave my brother and his friends alone.”

“Anything for you, Princess,” he agreed breathlessly, pulling his cigarette out of his mouth and tapping off the ash that had been accumulating on the end, then leaning over and kissing your cheek. He stayed still so that he could whisper in your ear, and you had to put your hand on his shoulder so that he wouldn't get any closer. “He wants to talk to you next period, stay at your locker…. ” Then he stuck one of his unlit cigarettes in your mouth before standing up.
He blew you a kiss, then he walked away back to his friends, and you shook your head slowly, pulling the unlit cigarette out with your free hand. “It would’ve been so much easier if he’d just come and talked to me himself…” you sighed to yourself.

You heard Eddie let out a gagging noise, and you looked over at him, seeing his inhaler in his mouth and his face red. Bill growled quietly. “I hate that creep…” he said.

“I’m surprised you didn’t throw up as soon as he sat down next to you,” Eddie whimpered. “God, Y/N, how could you even let him touch you without flipping out?! Y-You had your hands all over his hair and ugh, wasn’t it greasy?! I’m gonna throw up, Y/N, I’m so sorry!” He grabbed his inhaler and held it down, sucking in its contents.

“You didn’t have to do that for me…” Stan spoke up. You looked at him. “Of course I did,” you argued. “They can't treat you like that, I won't let them. I'm not scared of him, and he knows it.” You looked over at the older boys across the lawn, finding Henry glaring at you. You sighed and quickly looked down, sticking the cigarette into the breast pocket of your cardigan.

“What is that?!” Richie cried suddenly. You looked over at him in confusion, then looked down at yourself. “Y/N, is that a hickey?!”

As if he didn’t yell it loud enough for the whole front lawn to hear, he crawled over to you and pushed your hair out of the way to get a better look. You pushed him back and reached for your makeup bag in your backpack, quickly unzipping it and pulling out your compact, using the mirror inside to see what he was talking about. Your mouth fell open when you saw the hickey on your collarbone. You had forgotten that Henry had done that last night. Usually he marked you up in places that you could easily cover up.

“Oh my god…” you groaned, quickly getting some liquid foundation on your finger and dabbing some onto the hickey.

“Who gave you that?! Why didn’t you tell us you have a secret lover?!” Richie continued.

You shushed him quickly, and looked around, seeing a few people laughing around you, and seeing Henry looking even more angry than he had before, and his friends trying to hold in their laughter. “Richie, please stop,” you hissed at him.
“I’m just surprised! People don’t say you sneak around with boys,” he pointed out.

“Yeah, well they will now, since you just told the whole fucking lawn that I have a goddamn hickey,” you snapped. He hesitated.

“And after what just happened with Hockstetter…” Stan added. You froze as you started using powder to finish covering up the mark. “People are gonna start saying he’s the one that gave her that....” You looked at him, trying not to look too horrified. “H-He didn’t, did he?”

“Of course not!” you denied, putting away your makeup. “Jesus Christ, Richie, what the fuck?”

He looked stunned, and looked around at his friends as you gathered your stuff. “W-Wait, where are you going, Y-Y-Y/N?” Bill asked, stuttering over your name.

“I’m getting a head start back to school,” you mumbled, grabbing your backpack and standing up. “And I wanna get inside before Richie screams something about me meeting someone, and since Patrick's out here, it can't be him... I really just can't have the whole school thinking I'm screwing two guys at once.” Richie looked a little taken aback.

“Y/N, I’m sorry, I didn’t think--” Richie started softly.

“No, you’re right, Rich, you didn’t. You didn’t think,” you cut him off coldly, starting quickly back towards the school. You glanced at Henry quickly as you passed he and his friends, and just as quickly looked back down, wiping your eyes as you started running towards the school.

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You were crying by the time your free period started, standing against your locker, waiting for Henry. You kept it fairly under control, pretending to go through your empty locker while people moved through the halls. But as soon as the halls emptied and classes started, you leaned back against the lockers and sobbed.

You looked over just as Henry came around the corner to the hallway and you looked back down, wiping your face with both hands and hugging yourself. He stopped in front of you and you looked
“What, you’re upset ‘cause the whole fuckin’ school thinks you’re screwin’ Patrick Hockstetter?”
he scoffed. You frowned deeply. Had the rumor already been spread that quickly? You whimpered. “Jesus, would you shut up, everybody gets rumors spread about ‘em. It’s the last fuckin’ day of school, by the start of next year, nobody’s gonna remember some stupid rumor.”

“I-I just don’t want people thinking badly about me…” you told him softly. He tsked.

“Well maybe be a little more careful next time,” he scoffed. “Maybe cover up your fuckin’ hickeys, and people won't think you're a slut.” You turned red and looked down sadly. “And maybe if you wouldn't give him those pretty doe eyes whenever the two of you talk, or touch him like it's no big fuckin' thing. I mean, I'm almost tempted to believe the rumors, babe.”

“I don't give him doe eyes!” you argued. “And it takes a lot for him to get comfortable with someone enough to let them put their hands on him, I'm just showing him he's safe with me.”

“Safe enough to fuck you?”

“Henry--”

“Keep your hands off him, Y/N, I'm the only guy you touch, understand?” he demanded. You blinked and nodded. “Good. You're mine, you know.” You nodded again, unsure where his sudden insecurity had come from. He knew you weren't seeing Patrick behind his back, why would he even imply that you might be? He was the one who had just told you not to listen to the stupid rumor.

You put your hands on his face and kissed him gently. “I know I'm yours… trust me, okay, I'm not the kind of person to cheat, you should know that,” you insisted. He sighed and shrugged. “I wanna be with you, Henry, you must know that… I don't care about anyone else…”

“'s that why we gotta keep it a secret that we're together?” he mumbled. “Wouldn't want to ruin your perfect reputation even more by being public about this thing we've been doin' for almost a year… makes me feel like you don't mean it.”

Your brow furrowed. “No, Henry, that's not it at all,” you argued. “It’s just that… Bill would never
“Screw Bill, he’s got bigger problems then his big sister screwin’ around with me,” Henry said.


“You gotta be fuckin’ kidding me, right?” he growled. You looked up at him in confusion. “I mean what the fuck d’you think this is, just ‘cause I’m gettin’ your snatch every couple’a days, you think you get to tell me what to do?” Your mouth fell open, unsure as to why he had just gotten hostile again. “You’re supposed to listen to me, remember. I’m the fuckin’ man here, you keep your fuckin’ head down and do what I say.”

You tried to hold back your eye roll, you really did. But it happened so naturally and so quickly that you barely had time to stop yourself. He uncrossed his arms and tensed up, looming over you, and you took a quick breath. “Fine, Henry, whatever you say,” you agreed sarcastically. “I’ll obey your every command, like a fucking dog, is that what you want? I have to obey you?”

“Yeah, you do gotta obey me, Y/N, ’cause when you don't, you fuck stuff up. Like, when I tell you not to go in my room, you gotta listen to me, ’cause otherwise, you get us caught,” he pointed out coldly. Your face paled a little and you looked down.

“You know I didn’t--”

“If you had just listened to what I said, my Dad wouldn't'a caught us, and everythin’ would'a been fine. But no, you just had to do what you wanted,” he snapped at you. “Next time be a little more considerate of me, for once. You really fucked me over, Y/N…”

“I-I’m sorry, Henry,” you told him honestly.

“You fuckin’ should be…” he mumbled. “That sucked, Y/N, that fuckin’ sucked…”

“I'm so sorry,” you said again, wiping your eyes then going on your toes to kiss his cheek. “You know I never want you to get hurt, I wouldn't have done it if I knew…”
“It's fine, Y/N, just…” he sighed. “Don't be cryin' about some stupid rumor when there are bigger problems…” You leaned against him until he wrapped his arms around you, then you put your hand on his cheek and kissed him. You were glad you had gotten him to stop being angry. He could be so cruel to you when he was angry, his sexism and dominance coming out twice as much. But you could take the little bit of verbal abuse if it made him feel a little better about the situation.

“Are you okay?” you asked gently. He shrugged and you kissed his jaw gently. “D-Did he hurt you?”

“Nah. That fucker can't hurt me, no matter how hard he tries. He knows if he pushes me too far I'll break him in half,” he said, trying to sound certain, but ending up sounding a little nervous. You pouted and he shrugged you off of him. “I can take care of myself, Y/N, I don't need you treating me like a baby. Jesus, you got any clue how patronizin’ you can be?”

“Do you have any clue how mean you can be?” you countered softly. He glared at you and crossed his arms.

“Yeah, well you're bossy,” he shot back. You looked surprised. “Come on, let's get outta the hall…”

He grabbed your hand before you could respond and pulled you down the hall towards the gym locker rooms. You sighed and shook your head. “Henry, I don't wanna have sex right now…” you told him softly, pulling your hand away from his and stopping outside the door. He turned and glared at you. “I'm just… not in that kind of mood, sorry…”


“I don't owe you anything Henry,” you disagreed. He scoffed and looked around, then turned and pulled up his shirt so that you could see his back. It was covered in welts and there was a massive, fresh bruise from his left side all the way over his rib and across to his opposite shoulder. You gasped and put your hands over your mouth in shock, then hurried forward. He quickly dropped his shirt back down when he felt your hand touch his skin, and turned to look at you.

“Yeah, you do owe me, Y/N. 'cause that shit’s your fault,” he pressed. You looked worried, but nodded and kept your head down. “I mean, you're the one who seduced me into staying in the room--”
“Okay, Henry, I get it,” you cut him off quickly. “We can have sex, it's fine…”

He hesitated, then nodded shortly and grabbed your hand again, pulling you inside. He looked around, then shut the door behind the two of you, locking it, then turning to you. You were playing with the hem of your sweater, focusing down on your hands. He sighed and walked over to you, putting his hands on your waist and kissing your forehead.

“Hey, I didn't mean to make you feel bad…” he said quietly.

“Yeah, you did…” you disagreed softly. He stayed silent for a minute, then let go of you and walked around the locker room for a minute. “You always do this, you make me feel bad so you can get what you want…”

“Oh come on, Y/N, you know that ain't true. I know you like fuckin’ me as much as I like fuckin’ you, and I don't wanna fight no more, I'm fuckin’ sick of fighting… I don't want that with you, that's all,” he explained quickly. “I just wanna do fun shit with you, 'cause you're nice to me, and bein' around you is nice, and when we're together I feel a little better. And when we fight it ruins everything… so can we just not fight, and be together, or whatever, I dunno….”

You didn't want to mention that he was the one that came to you and started arguing, you knew he needed a safe space right now. You walked over to him and went up on your toes to kiss him quickly. He stared down at you and you put one hand on his cheek, rubbing your thumb on his cheek bone, while your other hand gently took hold of his.

“I want to be with you for a long time…” you told him honestly. He tensed up a little, and you hushed him, moving closer to him. “I mean it. I want only you for as long as you'll let me stay. And I don't ever wanna fight with you, I want you to feel safe with me…” He just stared at you. “I know we're going to argue sometimes, it's just how this works. But I don't ever want you to be scared that something we bicker about is going to make it so we aren't together… I'll stay as long as you want me.” He seemed to be relaxing a little so you kissed him gently, moving your hand to the back of his head and feeling him let go of your hand so that he could hold your waist. You pulled away slowly and nuzzled your face into his neck. “I…” You felt a wave of anxiety hit you, your heart jumping into your throat and your stomach turning, and you took a quick breath. “Um… I care a lot about you…”

“Yeah,” he mumbled quickly. “You and nobody else….”

You pulled him closer to you and kissed along his jaw. “Don't say that. What about Vic and Belch? And even Patrick cares about you. I know they would do anything for you and so would I,” you
insisted. He scoffed and you moved back to look at him. “I'm serious.”

“I know you're serious, it's just that it ain't true,” he said. You frowned as he let go of you and went to sit down on one of the benches sadly. You watched him cross his arms over his knees and lean onto them. “All y'all like me now, while we're kids, but pretty soon, Vic's gonna go off to some fancy college, and Belch is gonna start workin’ all the time, and Patrick's probably gonna be dead or some shit…” He chuckled and you walked over to him, kneeling down in front of him. “And they won't have time for me no more. They'll forget all about me… and you will too.”

“Hey, there's no way I could forget about you,” you argued, taking his hands in yours.

“You say that now, but you're leaving too. You're gonna go to college, like Vic, and you're gonna find other friends you like better, and… other guys…” he sighed. “And I'll be here. Alone. With my Dad… for the rest of my fuckin’ life. Until he kills me…” He scoffed again. “Unless I beat him to it…”

“Jesus, Henry…” you gasped, touching his face. He tried to move it, but you held him firmly. “Please don't say things like that… don't ever think like that, I won't leave you. Okay?” He just stared at you. “We have a whole year to figure this all out. But maybe I can go to Orono, it's only thirty or so minutes from here, I could commute to school, then come home and take care of you…”

His eyes narrowed a bit. “Take care of me?” he asked skeptically.

You thought, then brushed your fingers over his cheek. “Make you dinner… talk with you…” you explained softly. “Whatever you want me to do…”

“Whatever I want…?”

“Yeah,” you agreed. “I wanna make you happy…”

He didn't respond right away, staring at you in disbelief. “You wanna do stuff for me?” he wondered. You nodded. “To make me… happy? Me?”

“Of course you,” you chuckled, sitting up a bit and kissing him. He didn't reciprocate, so you sighed and moved back, rubbing your nose against his. “You really think I'd lie about how much I
care about you? Fine… I'll prove it to you, somehow. For right now, let me just cheer you up, okay?"

As you said this, you brought your hand down to circle the button of his jeans with your finger. He leaned back on his hands and you moved between his legs, glancing up at him again before moving to kiss at his jean covered crotch, licking at fabric and running your lips over what you could feel through his pants. He grunted and you felt his hand run through your hair.

“I'm gonna destroy you…” he said quietly. You chose not to respond, instead unbuttoning his jeans and grabbing the zipper between your teeth and pulling it down. You could hear and feel his breathing become faster and heavier, and he gripped your hair gently. “I don't wanna, but I'm gonna…”

“Just don't make it hurt too much,” you agreed calmly. With this soft agreement met, he used his grip on your hair to push your face into his crotch.

It only took you a few seconds to get his jeans pulled past his hips a bit, followed by his boxers. He only had three pairs of boxers, and all of them were too many years old, patched and stained and worn out. You knew they were probably dirty, just knowing him, but you always pushed them out of the way anyway. He didn't need to feel any more self-conscious than he already did right now.

You weren't sure why you felt so obligated to him, why you would do almost anything to make him happy, even if it was at your expense. You weren't really comfortable or confident in your ability to give him a blowjob, but you did anyway. You kept him in your mouth, awkwardly bobbing your head and carefully keeping your teeth away from the sensitive skin. He seemed to enjoy it, his head rolling back every so often and his hand running through your hair. Every so often he would grip it and hold you down and let out a guttural moan that you could feel all the way down his body.

“Fuck, baby, come up here,” he finally said. As relieved as you were to stop pretending that you knew what you were doing, you knew he wanted to have sex now. You pulled him out of your mouth slowly, then even more slowly stood up in front of him, letting him unbutton your cardigan. He pushed it over your shoulders, then stood up and started pulling your dress up passed your hips. “Babe, I'm gonna screw you so hard…”

“Can you…” you started softly. He raised an eyebrow and pulled your dress up over your head. He tossed it aside and grabbed your boobs, squishing and squeezing them together, and you blushed. “I just… need some help getting… in the mood…”
“We can use spit, it'll be fine,” he disagreed, reaching behind you and unclipping your bra. You let it slide off of you, and he grabbed at your chest again, rolling your nipples between his fingers. You whined a bit and moved closer to him. “What, I don't make you wet enough, Peach?”

“I'm just not in the mood, I told you that…” you reminded him. He pouted mockingly and stuck his fingers down the front of your panties, starting to rub against your clit in circles. You gasped, and grabbed his forearm.

“Let Daddy get you in the mood then…” he mumbled, leaning so that he could bite on your earlobe gently. You grabbed his other arm and let out a soft moan. “You like that, don't you, Princess?”

“Henry…” you started. He dipped his fingers farther down, hooking them up to stick into you slightly. You looked up at him and he licked his lips, turning you around so that your back was pressed against him, and he ground himself against your ass while he rubbed at you.

It made you feel bad, because no matter how, or how long he touched you, you couldn't get into it. Every time he grabbed at your breast with one hand, and rubbed your clit with the other, you would let out little noises, because it did feel good. But you couldn't stop thinking about the night before….

“Fuck, baby, come on…” he mumbled shortly. You felt him push you to bend over, and you put your hands out to catch yourself on the gym lockers. You were trying to think of how to tell him that you just couldn't get into it, starting to stand back up, but he put his hand on your back to hold you down. “I'm gonna fuckin’ loose it if you don't hurry up…”

“I'm sorry…” you said quietly. There it was again… he had jumped from emotional and soft to angry and impatient with you in a split second, again. You knew he did it on purpose, you weren't sure why you kept falling for it…

You gasped when you felt the head of his cock push into you, the lack of lubrication causing a burning sensation rather than a pleasant one. You moved away from him and he growled, pulling your hips back. You heard him spit into his hand, then two of his fingers pushed into you, slightly wet from the spit. He started fucking them into you, rapidly and roughly, and swore when all that came out of it was a little blood on his fingers.

“What the fuck are you this dry for?” he snapped. You honestly felt like crying, but you stood up straight and turned, looking down. You winced a little from the slight sting that was between your legs, and shifted awkwardly. “What the hell’s your problem? Don't be a little fuckin’ tease then blue ball me that.”
You felt a few tears slip down your cheek. “I-I-I'm s-sorry…” you whimpered. “I-I just can't stop thinking about last night, the wa-way your Dad…” Your throat closed up and you started crying. He didn't say anything. “W-What he did--”

“Yeah, what he did…” he mumbled, putting himself back in his jeans and zipping them up. “Everything he fuckin' does… look, I ain't my fuckin' Dad, okay? I ain't like that, I wouldn't do shit to hurt you.” He looked at the way you shifted and kept your legs together tightly. “Did… did I hurt you…?" Your lip trembled and you looked down. “I’m… I mean, I didn't… I wasn't trying… I-I was just frustrated, Y/N, I wasn't trying to…”

“It's okay, Henry…” you told him, sitting down on one of the benches. “I'm sorry I disappointed you…”

“What, no, it's not…” he sighed, sitting down on the bench next to you. He didn't say anything for a minute, looking down. Truth be told, he was aching to bend you over the bench and make you take him whether you were wet enough or not. If you were any other girl, he probably would have. He was so angry, bitter that he had been so careless with bringing you to his house, and livid that his Dad had touched the one thing he could really claim as his. He was mad that his friends were planning their future without him, mad that he didn't have any skills to get himself a job to support you, mad that you were so much better than him yet thought he was worth your time.

He was mad that his Mom had left him alone, he was mad that his Dad hated him, that he had no one to take care of him the way he knew other parents did.

Belch's Dad had left when he was only an infant, but his Mom was the most supportive, friendly person you'd ever meet. She taught Belch how to cook, and how to drive, and how to treat girls, and how to pay taxes and save money. And she baked the best cookies, and always welcomed Belch's friends when they came over. Belch wanted to stay in Derry, so that he could take care of his Mom when she retired.

Vic's parents were uptight and snobbish, and tended to judge Vic on his choice of friends, and his fashion choices and everything else they could pick on, but they paid for him to go to dance class, and for almost anything else he wanted, and they were going to pay for him to go to whatever college he wanted, plus an apartment. Henry knew that Vic's Dad had left them on three separate occasions for other women, but he had always come back after a few months, and Vic's Mom was too desperate of a woman to turn him away. Henry didn't blame Vic for being bitter towards his Dad, but he was slightly jealous that his absent parent had come back.

Even Patrick's parents weren't too bad. Sure, they were far more neglectful than Vic's, and entirely
less present than Belch's, almost always leaving Patrick alone at home for days, sometimes weeks at a time for his Dad's job. Henry knew for a fact that Patrick hadn't had a conversation with his Dad since he was a little kid, he only telling Patrick that they were leaving again, don't burn the house down. And his Mom didn't talk much with him either, the only things she ever said was that she had dinner ready, or that there was money for a few weeks’ worth of food on the counter, and that they'd see him whenever they got back. But they always left him money and food, and they gave him anything and everything he wanted. Henry was pretty sure Patrick's parents were afraid of him, and that's why they avoided him and spoiled him, but still. He wanted to get whatever he wanted…

He didn't have anything he wanted, not really. He didn't have anything paid for, or any money to get what he needed. He had two pairs of pants, five shirts, and three pairs of underwear. He shared socks with his Dad, and had had the same bed sheets since he was seven years old. His Mom had decided that he wasn't worth coming back for, and his Dad had never wanted him. His Dad had never taught him how to do anything except fight, and hate, and hurt others. He knew that no one in Derry had a perfect life, but he wanted to know why, why the fuck God had pulled the shortest short straw with him. His family was the least respected, least educated, poorest, and cruelest because of it all.

“Henry?”

He looked over at you, then glared down at the ground. “Yeah… yeah, sorry,” he mumbled. “It's not you, you aren't what's pissing me off…”

“So tell me…” you pleaded. “I'm sorry I'm not in the mood to have sex, Henry, but let me help you… tell me what I can do…”

_Love me? Save me? Run away with me?_ He shook his head and scoffed, feeling his bitter anger rise back up into his chest. As much as he wanted to dream, he had learned a long time ago that his dreams were ignored. All he could do was be as realistic as possible, and that made him even more bitter. All he wanted was a little control over his own life.

“Get me off, I guess,” he mumbled. You stared at him sadly and he licked his lips, trying to ignore the pity in your eyes. _That_ made him angry with you. You were a girl, and a submissive girl, at that, and your brother had been killed, yet you felt bad for him? He needed you to see that he had control, that he wasn't afraid to take it. “Like, now, before I fuckin’ lose it.”

He watched as you cowered a little and moved back in front of him on the floor while he unzipped his jeans again. Making you get on your knees on the dirty locker room floor would do. And God, you were so willing to do it for him…
You wiped your mouth quickly before Henry turned back around to face you. He put his hands on your hips and kissed you deeply. He moved back and wiped some of your tears away with his pointer finger, kissing your forehead.

“Don't cry, sweetheart, everything's alright,” he tried. You sniffled and wiped your eyes carefully. “And hey, that was probably the best blowie you've ever given, you saw how hard I came…”

“Yeah, I did…” you laughed softly. You touched his arms. “Um… the bells probably gonna ring soon, you should get to your locker.”

“Alright, sweetheart, whatever you say,” he chuckled. “Hey, could you go ahead there and let Vic and Belch know I'm gettin’ Patrick. I gotta piss too…”

“Oh, yeah, sure,” you agreed. He smirked a little and kissed you again.

“I'll see you at the party tonight, Princess. Head to Vic's after we drop him off okay?” he explained. You nodded and he kissed you again quickly before letting go and heading towards the male bathroom.

You walked down the hall towards Henry's locker, hugging yourself and trying to take deep breaths. Henry hadn't meant to be so crude and demanding… you knew he hadn't meant to force you into anything, you just hadn't been able to please him the way he had wanted, so he was frustrated…

No, that didn't sound right. You knew you were feeding into his delusion, into his sexism and his awful superiority complex, but you just felt so bad about last night, that you wanted to make it up to him in any way you could… you had promised to make him happy, after all.

You wiped your eyes quickly as you neared the hallway where Henry's locker was. You turned the corner and froze, backing up slightly to hide around the corner.

Vic had his back against the lockers, and Belch was standing barely an inch away from him,
looking down at him with the most *intense* bedroom eyes you had ever seen. You peaked carefully around the corner, watching Belch run his fingers along Vic's waist.

“*Reg,* what if someone sees…” Vic whispered, the sound echoing just enough around the walls for you to hear. “What if Henry comes around the corner and sees us…?”

“He ain't comin' yet, we'll be able to hear him…” Belch argued, low and deep in his throat. “I ain't kissed y'all day, come on, quick, Vicky…”

“Don't call me Vicky, you know I hate that…”

“Sorry, darlin',” Belch smirked. “Just had to get a peek at that cute blush on your cheeks…” You saw Vic's face redden, and he chuckled quietly. “Come on baby, quick, we won't get to tonight, you know Henry's gonna wanna bring Y/N back to my place.”

“Say *no,*” Vic suggested quietly. “Tell him it's been too long since you've gotten laid, and you need a night in with your baby…”

“I can't just say no to Henry,” he argued. “No matter how bad I need my baby…”

They were so close now, Belch's big hand holding Vic's small, thin waist. Belch nuzzled his nose against his jaw, then kissed at the skin gently.

“Fuck, *Reg…*” he breathed, grabbing at his shoulders. He bit his lip as he grabbed his face, then pulled him into a kiss. You could see the smile on the larger boys face, and see the love in the way they were holding each other.

You weren't entirely sure what was happening, or why. You had never seen anything like this in real life before, only on TV or in the newspaper when angry reporters and people talked about the gays spreading AIDS. Your Dad said it was garbage, that gay people were the victims, that no one deserved to be treated the way society treated the gays. Your Mom explained that he had lost a cousin to homophobic violence.

You realized that they were keeping this secret very carefully, in fear that they might face violence of their own, and that you were probably the only one that wasn't them that knew now. You knew you had to alert them that you were there, before Henry came and stumbled onto the scene and beat
someone up in a homophobic tantrum.

You took a deep breath just as Belch pulled away from the kiss and brought his hand down to hold Vic's. You stepped out of your hiding spot slowly and walked into view a bit. “Maybe we should-.” Vic started, before spotting you and standing up off the locker, his eyes going wide.

Belch pulled his hand away quickly and stood up straight, crossing his arms over his chest. “Hey, there, Y/N!” he greeted loudly. You smiled weakly. “Is uh, Henry comin’?”

You looked at Vic who was wiping his mouth quickly and looking down to hide his blush. “Yeah, he's just getting Patrick, and he should be here really soon. He told me to come let you guys know,” you explained nervously.

“Right, yeah, um…” Belch started. He gulped. “Um… thanks. We're meetin’ you and Vic at the party?”

“Yep, we'll be there,” you agreed. He nodded and looked at the ground. “I’d better go, I wanna get home before the halls get too busy.” They nodded and you smiled weakly, starting to walk towards the front door. You glanced back at them, seeing them staring at each other anxiously, then glancing at you. “Hey, uh… don't look so nervous, okay? Makes you look suspicious, and you don't want them thinking you have something to hide…”

“Fuck…” you heard Belch hiss. You felt a pang of guilt in your chest as you turned and hurried quickly down the hall, and almost ran down the stairs when you reached them. You would see Vic later, he would have a chance to explain, and you would have a chance to assure him that everything was alright. Because everything was alright.

And you wanted Vic to tell you how to get Henry to look at you the way Belch looked at him...
Vic had answered his back door almost as soon as you had knocked, and had pulled you inside and upstairs to his bedroom. He locked the door, then turned to look at you, his face bright red.

“Y/N, whatever you think you saw, you just… you don't understand, Belch and me are just close friends, okay? Sometimes we… touch hands, but it's not anything to worry about, okay? He was just messing around,” he explained quickly. You frowned and crossed your arms. “I-I just don't want you getting the wrong idea, okay?”

“You did?” he gasped. You nodded and he leaned back against the door. “F-Fuck, um…” He stood up straight and ran his fingers through his hair, starting to pace around the room. He turned to looked at you again after a while. “Alright, I can explain, will you let me explain?”

“Vic--”
“Y/N, please, you have to understand that Reg is perfect,” he blurted. “He’s kind, and strong, and handsome, and he’s the sweetest person on the planet, and even thinking about him makes me feel butterflies in my stomach, and I’ve never felt this way about anyone else in my whole life, and I know the world thinks it’s wrong, but I’m completely in love with him, Y/N.” He took a deep breath. “You can't tell anyone about us, please, my parents will send me away to boarding school, then to a college overseas, and we won't ever see each other again, and I can't handle that. And if Henry ever found out, he would kill us both, or tell his Dad, and his Dad would torch both of our houses in our sleep, and Y/N, I'm begging you, please you can't tell a soul.”

“Vic, it's o--”

“I'll give you anything you want, name it and it's yours,” he tried. You could see tears welling up in his eyes, and his voice cracked a few times. “What'd you want, anything, I-I’ll give you half of my allowance every week, or… or um…” He stared at you frantically. “I dunno, just tell me, anything you want Y/N.”

“Vic calm down, okay?” you said. He took a shaky breath and looked down. “Okay, let's just sit down on the bed for a minute and take a breath.” He was standing next to his bed so he sat down heavily and watched you nervously as you sat down to face him.

“You don't understand, Y/N, if anyone finds out about this, our lives will be over… Reg will never get a job around here, and I’ll have to move far away, a-and we won't get to see each other, and I-I can't lose him…” he whimpered, tears welling up in his eyes.

“You know what you can do for me?” you asked. He sat up straight.

“Anything, Y/N, I'll do it,” he pressed. You sighed.

“Tell me how you get him to look at you like that,” you said. He blinked and hesitated. “Belch… Reg. The way he was looking at you…” Vic blushed, and looked down slightly. “It was so… I-I don't know, I just want Henry to look at me like that…”

He looked surprised. “I don't know what you mean, exactly,” he admitted.

“Just… when you were together, before you kissed. He was looking at you like… like he loves you. Like you matter to him…” you explained.
Vic blushed and smiled a little. “Oh… yeah…” he chuckled. “He's something…” He cleared his throat. “Y/N, Henry does look at you like that…”

You frowned and shook your head. “I've never seen him look at me like that…” you argued, looking down.

Vic didn't say anything for a minute, then cleared his throat again. “So, um… you're not gonna tell Henry?” he asked.

You looked at him. “No, of course not, Vic,” you told him, you saw him visibly relax and lay back on the bed. “I personally think the whole anti-gay thing is a big fuss over nothing. If you're in love with someone, what's it matter if they're a guy or a girl?” He sat up and moved to hug you then hesitated. You held your arms out and he hugged you tightly.

“You have no idea how much this means to me, Y/N,” he said weakly. “I feel like I owe you my life, I just…”

“You don't owe me anything, Vic, you don't have anything to worry about.” You pat his back gently. “Your secret's safe with me…” He stood up off of the bed and looked at you.

“Clothes. I'm gonna give you so many clothes, you won't have room for them,” he insisted, going to his closet. You moved to lay on your stomach while he started sorting through his clothes.

“So, how long have you guys been together?” you wondered. He glanced back at you.

“A little longer than you and Henry. He kissed me last July, under the kissing bridge…” he bit his lip and leaned his head against the closet door. “I had accidentally outed myself to him, that was about a year ago. He found some of my Torso and MEN magazines…” He sighed. “And I told him I couldn't get off looking at girls… we were both a little drunk, so, you know…” He pulled a couple jackets out of the closet. “Anyway, he was kinda freaked out, and I told him it was fine if he never wanted to see me again… which was a lie, 'cause I've had the biggest crush on him since before we were even friends. So anyway, he brought me down under the kissing bridge at the end of last July, and kissed me, and it was so fuckin'... I can't even describe it, it was beautiful … and he told me he liked me, and didn't know what to do, because he'd never really understood that he liked guys until I told him…”

You were fine letting him ramble, it sounded like he really needed to get it off his chest. You felt a
little bad that he had never been able to tell anyone about this. You looked around his room as he
talked, noting that if you hadn’t caught him and Belch, and if he hadn’t told you that he was gay,
you wouldn’t have had any clue. He had a few movie posters on the wall, with beautiful movie
stars like Molly Ringwald and Jennifer Grey and Winona Ryder. You supposed if you took into
consideration that those posters also had Michael Schoeffling and Patrick Swayze, and Christian
Slater on them you had yourself an argument, but that might have been a stretch. Knowing Vic, it
seemed like the kind of subtle little detail that he would use to his advantage.

You cleared your throat as you looked back at him. “Yeah, um… yeah, I didn’t know he liked
guys,” you said. He shrugged.

“He's still kinda figuring it all out, trying to understand what he likes and stuff. He says he likes
girls too, so I dunno. I've always liked guys, I never even looked at girls like that. I used to have a
crush on Henry too, in like, pre-school, but he punched some kid and called him a faggot, so you
know… figured that was a lost cause. We became friends after that, and I realized I did not wanna
get with that--” He cut himself off. “I mean… no offense?” You shrugged sadly and picked at his
blanket. “Um… I'm sorry, I didn't mean to go off like that, you were saying something earlier…”
He brought the jackets over and lay them out on the pillows, then sat down next to you. “Did you
guys get in a fight or something? He wouldn't tell us anything…”

“No, we didn't fight… just… I met his Dad last night,” you explained. His eyes widened and he
nodded. “And he um… he was really weird… and mean.”

“Oh, that's Butch for you,” he sighed, rubbing the back of his head. “Just don't ever let him
corner you when you're on your own…”

You picked your head up. “What d'you mean?” you asked worriedly. He looked down and
shrugged.

“Just… whatever he does when Henry's there, he'll do… worse when he gets the chance to be alone
with you…” he mumbled. You stared at him and he shook his head. “Did he get Henry?” You
nodded sadly. “And so Henry blamed it on you…”

“And said I owe him…” you added sadly. He rolled his eyes a little. “And I mean, I guess I do owe
him, it's my fault, I didn't know his Dad would freak out if I was there, I assumed he knew…”

“It's a tricky game to play…” Vic told you.
“Yeah, but isn't he supposed to be the one who's sorry? I mean, I didn't know, how was I supposed to know?” you tried. He hesitated and shrugged, and you sighed. “I'm sorry, I know he's your friend before me, I'm not trying to make you choose sides… it's just so frustrating, I don't know why he always has to blame things on me…”

“You haven't figured it out yet? Henry's never to blame,” he chuckled. You groaned and sat up. “You just kinda learn not to take it personally after a while.”

“I guess,” you agreed. He sighed. “I just feel like he’s really mean to me, even though I’m his girlfriend….”

“I feel like Henry doesn't know how to be anything except mean… like, he literally wasn't taught anything else…” he explained. “His life has been really shitty…”

“I know that, and I would do anything to make him happy,” you agreed. “But he's ungrateful about it… you do one nice thing and he just expects it of you after that…”

“That's Henry for you,” he sighed. “Is the sex good?” You looked a little taken aback and he laughed putting his hands up defensively. “Ok, sorry, you don't have to answer!”

You laughed lightly. “I just… I dunno, I think it's good…” you tried. “I've never been with anyone else, remember?”

“You would know if he made you feel good…”

You thought. “He does… sometimes… lately he's been wanting more attention, he's been more demanding about what he wants from me… even if it hurts me…” you explained. He sighed.

“I know it's weird and confusing, but I know Henry would never wanna hurt you. I mean, he's kind of obsessed with you…” You looked up at him. “Seriously, Y/N, when you aren't around, he talks about you like you're a princess or a goddess or something…” You blushed and smiled a little. “I think maybe he just… doesn't know how to make you feel like you're a princess. And he forgets who he's dealing with… I mean, it's not okay that he treats you bad, but I know he just isn't used to this.”

“Yeah, maybe,” you agreed, thinking about this. He sat there for a minute, looking conflicted.
“I… um… here, I have more clothes,” he said quickly, standing up and rushing back over to his closet. You sighed and started looking through the jackets he had laid out for you.

“Tell me about you and Reg, Vic,” you insisted. He looked back at you. “I wanna hear something happy…”

He thought, then cleared his throat. “I mean… I dunno, it’s just a normal relationship, Y/N,” he shrugged.

“No, I know that just… what do you guys do for fun? When you’re alone, do you watch movies, do you talk, what?” you explained. He shrugged, then chuckled a little, pulling out some shirts.

“We don’t get a lot of time to ourselves… Henry needs a lot of attention,” he sighed. You looked a little sad. “But usually at least once a month we get to have some time by ourselves at his house… when we do get to be alone it’s really nice. He usually puts on a movie and we cuddle up on his bed together with the door locked so his Mom doesn’t come in… I wish we could go out on dates, you know? Hold hands and kiss and stuff, out in public…”

“Yeah, I know…”

“I mean, I think I’m in love with this kid, Y/N, but it’s like, how am I supposed to treat him like I’m in love with him when the only time we’re safe together is when we’re in his bedroom?” He pulled the shirts out and walked over to you again, sitting down on the bed. “I mean… it’s almost like we aren’t even together, and I hate it. He’s so sweet though, when we get time together he holds me so close… and kisses me really sweet, and does everything so slow… I know he’s afraid he’s gonna hurt me, but he’s just so considerate, Y/N, he’s like, the perfect man.”

You couldn’t help but feel a little jealous. You knew you had a huge advantage over him, in that if anyone found out about you and Henry, the worst that would happen would be that your parents would be angry, and Bill wouldn’t want to talk to you; while if Belch and Vic were outed, they wouldn’t be able to get jobs, or go to the store, or do anything without being judged or maybe even attacked.

No, you were thankful for that advantage, but you were jealous of how in love they were with each other. It sounded like they cherished their time together and wanted to be with each other forever. You only kind of got that sense from Henry. With Henry, it was more like he expected you to stay, and wanted you to be there for him, without him being there for you. Vic was probably right, he
probably didn't know how to do this… honestly, you didn't either. It was worth talking about with Henry, if he would let you.

“Y/N, I think you should tell Henry how you feel,” he spoke up. You looked surprised. “I think it'll mean a lot to him, and it'll get him going in the right direction.” You nodded slowly.

“Yeah… yeah maybe I will. Thanks, Vic,” you said. He nodded and nudged your arm.

You both jumped when you heard a car horn outside, and Vic swore, standing up and pulling off his shirt. You saw few hickeys scattered across his chest, and you gasped.

“Vic,” you said teasingly. He looked down and smirked.

“At least I know how to hide mine,” he teased back. Your mouth fell open and you threw one of his pillows at him as he laughed and pulled on a cleaner shirt. “But I know, I can imagine Henry gets pretty rough, but you wouldn't believe how Reggie can get in bed.” You shook your head. “The other night, we only had a little time, and he lifted me up off the bed and started kissing and licking and sucking everywhere he could, and the whole time he was fucking me.”

“Is the sex good?” you joked. He laughed lightly.

“*Is the sex good*,” he repeated in a mocking tone. “I'm pretty good at hiding it, but Reg makes it hurt to walk the day after we fuck.” You laughed at this, then heard the car horn again, so he grabbed one of his jackets and looked at you. “*Promise* you aren't going to tell anyone?”

“Of course, Vic, I won't say a word,” you agreed. He nodded and sighed with relief, and you both hurried downstairs to the Trans-Am.

Belch was standing outside the car, and smiled when Vic walked out, quickly letting it drop when you remembered you were right behind him. “Hey, you guys, nice of you to finally show up,” he laughed, opening his door to let you both in. You climbed in before Vic, settling yourself close enough next to Patrick that Vic had room to settle in.

“Helluva dress, babydoll,” Patrick commented, putting his hand on your knee. You quickly pushed it off as Henry looked back at you to get a closer look at your little black dress.
“I’d say,” he agreed, before turning back around in his seat. “That for me, Peach?”

You blushed a little and glanced at Vic quickly. He nudged you gently and you gulped. “Everything I wear is for you,” you told him softly.

Patrick laughed darkly, and Belch whistled in appreciation. “Lucky man,” Patrick said, throwing his arm over your shoulder. “What I’d give for a hot babe who put out for me, huh, Belchy?”

Belch started the car and hesitated. “Huh? Oh, yeah, for sure,” he agreed.

“We're gonna find you a chick tonight, Belch,” Henry said, slapping him on the back. “And we'll clear outta Amy so you can rock some lucky girl's world tonight.”

“Sounds like a plan,” he responded calmly. You glanced at Vic, who was smirking slightly at Belch from the driver's side mirror as he pulled out onto the road.

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“And so I caught the ball at the very last minute, and I didn't even think *twice* before running, I'm telling you, Y/N, it was the ultimate Quarterback sneak, Coach was pulling his hair out on the sidelines! But then I sprinted half the field to their side, and won the whole game!”

You were rolling your solo cup between your hands out of boredom as you half-listened to Tommy Jones tell you about his winning touchdown last fall. You sighed and smiled weakly. “That's great,” you lied. “Sorry I couldn't see it.”

“You'll have to come to some of the games next season,” he suggested. “I know I'll win a lot more games if I have you there to cheer me on.”

You laughed weakly and shifted uncomfortably as he took a sip from his beer. You scanned the room for any of the boys, sure that at least one of them would be nearby to keep an eye on you. You could see Belch standing in the kitchen with a cola, politely talking with some girl who seemed very interested in him. Vic was dancing, most likely completely wasted and high, so no chance of either of them saving you. Patrick was across the room and slightly down the hallway.
near the stairs, making out with and touching up on a very drunk girl who probably had no idea who was making out with her, and probably no sense to stop him from fingering her under her skirt, just happy that someone was paying attention to her.

You couldn't find Henry, though, he was nowhere to be found. It worried you, like it always did. Was he somewhere getting high on some intense, harmful drugs? You knew he had a bad habit of doing coke at parties… you hoped he wasn't doing that. But if he wasn't, what if he was off with some other girl? In a similar position as Patrick, or worse, having sex? You couldn't rule that out, since you had been around a few times when he would accidentally slip up around the boys and tell them in too much detail what he thought of the pretty girl they were all checking out.

You just hoped that he would come soon, because Tommy was a horribly boring person to be stuck with. He was also known to be a huge flirt, and it made you uneasy the way he was looking at you when you would glance over at him.

You froze when you felt his hand on your knee. “Hey, so, you wanna get outta here?” he wondered casually. Your eyes widened and you looked over at him. “My parents are down in Portland for the night, so I have the house all to myself…”

Your mouth fell open as you looked around at the guys again, hoping they would be paying attention. Nope. Practically having sex with a girl. Hammered. Small and limited attention span.

“Ummm…” you started, trying to think of how to respond. You sat up as he saw Henry come in from the porch, and you cleared your throat. “Sorry, um… Excuse me, I need to use the bathroom…” You stood up and hurried towards the bathroom, catching Henry’s eye in your quick journey down the hall. You didn't actually go to the bathroom, but waited at the end of the hall.

After a few minutes you saw him squeeze past some of the partying kids into the hall, and he walked down the hall to you. “I didn't think you'd miss me that much, I was only gone for half an hour,” he chuckled.

“That was half an hour?” you hissed. “Feels like I've been sitting there was six hours!”

“Why?”

“Because Jones has nothing to talk about except football,” you explained. He smirked. “And all of the guys are otherwise preoccupied, and I couldn't find you anywhere. He asked me if I wanted to
get outta here and I couldn't get anyone's attention, so I panicked and ran down here… where were you?"

“Been smokin’ my way through this pack’a cigs,” he explained, taping his pocket. “Not in the mood to drink tonight…”

“I wish I had known, I would have gone outside…” you sighed, shaking your head. He looked around and moved closer to you.

“Wanna get outta here?” he asked quietly. You chuckled.

“He sounded just like that, plus with his hand on my knee,” you agreed.

“No, I-- he put his hand on your knee?” he wondered angrily. You nodded. “Fuckin’ perv, I'm gonna beat the living shit outta him this summer.”

“Henry--”

“But no, I'm serious,” he continued. “Wanna sneak outta here for a bit? We could go down to the Quarry for a while, so we can be alone. You blushed a little and looked around.

“Oh… o-okay,” you agreed, smiling a little. He told you to go outside and wait at the side of the house for him and he’d follow a minute after, so you carefully ran outside to your meeting place, looking around anxiously. After a minute he walked quickly outside and you lit up, taking his hand and smiling. He kissed you, then looked around and started leading you away from the party.

It was surprisingly easy to sneak through Derry after curfew. Henry took you down back roads, close enough to the road that you could still see it, but with enough tree-cover that any passing cops wouldn't see you if you both stood very still.

He kept his hand in yours as he lead down the dirt paths to the Quarry, somehow knowing the way in the barely moon-lit darkness of the forest. You trusted that he knew where to go, that he would keep you safe. You held his hand tightly, keeping close to him.
After about a ten minute walk, the two of you found your way to a clearing, fallen pine-needles in the path and large, grey boulders lit up by the moon. You didn't need to look down over the edge of the drop off ahead of you to know that it was the Quarry. The white of the moon reflected off the dark water below and lit everything up. It was almost like the florescent lights at school, but less harsh, and below you as well as above you.

Henry looked around, then led you over to a huge, flat topped boulder, keeping his hand in yours, and bringing his free hand to your waist so that he could help you climb up to the top of the rock. He leaned against it, next to you, and you lay on your stomach, keeping your hand in his.

“What're we doing here?” you whispered.

“Whatever we want,” he smirked. You rolled your eyes a bit and rolled over onto your back. His smirk fell as he studied you, the way you were laying, the way the moonlight shone on your face. You were so perfect and so beautiful in that moment.

His mind flashed suddenly to the image of white light, and he held onto the rock so that he wouldn't fall back. He closed his eyes quickly, but it was as if he hadn't closed his eyes at all. You were still lying there, looking at him, but your eyes were glazed, your skin was grey, and there was blood all over the rocks and ground. His throat closed up as he gazed at you like this, feeling like he might be sick. Your stomach looked like it had been ripped open, there were deep, bleeding scratch marks on your inner thighs… and you still looked so beautiful, so serene. Even like this.

“Henry?”

He opened his eyes-- no. He didn't open them they had never really closed. The horrible image of you a minute ago was gone, and he saw you sitting up, leaning on your elbow, looking at him with concern.

“What…? Yeah?” he questioned, shaking his head.

“I asked if you were gonna come and sit with me,” you repeated, frowning a bit. “Are you okay?”

“Fine,” he lied, nodding quickly. He moved around the rock, taking a breath and looking at the ground. It wasn’t the first time he had seen something like that, but it had never been so... real. And they never involved you. Lately he had been having dreams that looked like that, with various people around town dead in a variety of violent, bloody ways. He had even had dreams of Belch.
and Vic and Patrick like that, but they had been more tame, Belch and Vic with their throats slit, Patrick with bleeding bite marks all over him, every ounce of blood drained from his body. But never had he seen you. He didn’t know why he needed to be awake to see you like that...

You watched him worriedly. “You know you can tell me anything, right?” you told him seriously. He glanced at you. “I'll always be here for you if you wanna get something off your chest.”

He hesitated, then nodded. “Yeah… I know…” he agreed quietly. “I'm alright… I was just… thinkin’ bout what my Dad said… about you wastin’ you’re time with me... I just felt like he was right about you bein’ too good for me…”

“I've never hated someone so much in my life, Henry,” you said coldly. He looked up at you. “First the way he handled my brother's death… and then seeing what he did to you. The way he treated you!” He looked down slightly. “I hate him. I'm not too good for you, I think we're perfect together.” You turned and lay on your back, looking at the sky.

He felt his face turn a bit red. “Yeah?” he chuckled.

“Yeah. I don't ever wanna be with anybody else,” you shrugged, looking over at him with a bright smile. He looked a little shocked at this, and you sighed slightly looking at the sky again. He didn't know what to say to that. Nobody had ever wanted him around forever before, except for maybe Vic and Belch. There was no way you could mean that… you had a life ahead of you, and he was going to be stuck in this town forever, under his Dad's thumb, and you and his friends were going to move away and forget about him.

Just thinking about it, made his heart jump into his throat and he had to lightly punch the rock to try and distract himself.

“Oh wow, Henry look!” you gasped, pointing up above you. He jumped up onto the rock with you and lay down next to you so that he could see what had caught your eye. “See? Do you see?”

“The stars?” he questioned, glancing at you. You shook your head and moved your head closer to him, lacing your fingers in his and pointing at a more specific area with your other hand.

“Meteors!” you exclaimed softly. You felt him shake his head. “Shooting stars-- see, there!”
He saw what you were talking about now. Among the pinpoints of stars in the sky, small streaks of light would occasionally dart by for just an instant before disappearing. “Woah…” he breathed. You smiled and looked at him. “Never seen shootin’ stars before…”

“You see a lot of things when you look at the sky,” you told him happily. “See there?” You waved your hand across the sky, pointing out the area in the sky where the stars were closer together and clustered, and the sky faded from black to slightly white and purple and yellow. “That's one of the arms of the galaxy…”

You kept talking, your voice hushed so that you wouldn't ruin the sweet quiet of the night. He didn't understand half of what you were telling him, but the excitement and wonder in the way you spoke, the way the stars you loved so much reflected in your wide eyes, the bright smile on your face. You were full of a childlike wonder that he had never been allowed to feel.

Henry felt like you could make him feel that wonder. The way you talked about the things you loved made his heart beat a little faster, and made him want to smile just because of how happy you were. You were the key to his happiness, he realized. He realized how intensely he needed you to stay with him, how much he depended on you to give him just a little bit of joy, and to give him the love that barely anyone else would give him. He needed you around to keep him just a little bit sane.

He wished he had told you all of that, that night. He wished he had told you that he loved you. But he didn't. He just watched you appreciate the things and life around you, not knowing how dark it really was. You would never understand how dark the world really was, he wouldn't let you see that. He couldn't let you. You knew of darkness, you knew of pain and mourning, you had lost your baby brother, after all. But that was the only pain you had ever felt. You didn't know what it was like to live in pain, in suffering, in sadness and guilt, wondering why you weren't good enough to get love and appreciation, you didn't know what it was like to be constantly beaten down. God, you could never know what that was like.

“Make a wish, Henry.” He blinked, seeing that you'd turned your head to look at him. You were smiling, the stars still in your eyes. “Shooting stars make your dreams come true, don't you know?” You were joking a little now, and the both of you laughed lightly. Henry turned on his side and touched your hip.

“I already made a wish,” he told you gently. You raised an eyebrow. He looked at the sky. “Work your magic, stars!” You laughed and touched his cheek, kissing him as soon as he was facing you again. He hummed a bit and rubbed your hip gently. His Mama had told him saying a wish out loud jinxed it, that's why he hadn't gotten the presents he had wanted for his sixth birthday. He knew now that he hadn't gotten presents because they had no money to spend on anything that they didn't
absolutely need. But her words rang in his ear regardless. After all, he had told his Dad that he wished Mama would come back, and six years later she was still gone. He had also gotten slapped for saying that, and since then he had kept all his dreams to himself, to keep them safe.

That's why it had shaken him so violently when you moved back a bit and brushed your nose against his, looking into his eyes and saying, “Well, my wish is that Derry doesn't take you away from me… I wish that we're together for a very long time.”

You clearly hadn't seen how his face had paled, you hadn't felt how his heart had started thundering in his chest. You had just kissed him again, and he had impulsively pulled you close. While your eyes were closed, he glared up at the stars, holding you tightly to him.

*Don't you dare jinx her wish. You better make her fucking wish come true. Or you'll have me to deal with.*

You moved back from him and touched his cheek, looking into his anxious, angry eyes. You thought about what Vic had said earlier, about not knowing how any of this worked, about being obsessed with you, about how he just needed a little push in the right direction. You wanted to give him that push, and you wanted him to know how much you meant to him.

Maybe it was just the beautiful night, or the slight bit of alcohol in your veins, but you felt ready to take the next step with him, and give him what he deserved.

“Henry, I love you,” told him honestly, feeling your heart start hammering in your chest as it slipped past your lips.

He stared at you blankly, as though he hadn't heard what you had said. Then he cleared his throat and sat up, rubbing the back of his head. “Uh… maybe we should head back now, before someone starts wondering where we went,” he suggested, climbing off the rock quickly.

Mentally you here hitting yourself. On the inside you could feel your heart aching and breaking into a million pieces. You felt really stupid for saying it now, when he had just brushed it off like it was nothing. You figured that meant that voice in the back of your mind had been right all along, that you were nothing to him, really, just a toy, just a girl to fuck around with. You felt stupid for falling so deeply in love with him when he didn't even feel the same way.

As the two of you walked back, Henry could see you looking down at the ground, your face a little
red and your lip trembling slightly. Enough that he noticed. It made him feel bad…. He hadn't meant to hurt your feelings but… you loved him? He knew you liked being around him, why else would you have stuck around so long. Love was a whole nother level. Nobody loved him, or at least nobody said it. He figured that was the same thing. He had had a weird feeling that that was going to come out of your mouth after he had looked in your eyes for a moment. He had thought it was a silly thing to assume but then-- BAM there it was.

He swore his heart had stopped for a moment, and he had had to sit up so you couldn't see the panic in his eyes. There was no way you could mean it… but you weren't the kind of person to make such a mean joke… which left him with either that you really meant it, or you didn't know what love meant… and you had helped him with English at school, so he figured you could recite the dictionary definition of the word love. Which left…

You loved him? Him?

It seemed too good to be true. He wondered what his Dad would have said if he had been there to hear it…. He would have laughed and told you you'd regret it, probably… and he was probably right, because as much as he liked you, maybe even loved you back, and as much as he loved having you around, he didn't want things to turn out the way they had with his Mama… he didn't want you to get your heart broken when his anger got the best of him, and you were the closest thing to him…

He heard you snuffle next to him, and he glanced back at you, seeing you wiping your eyes with the back of your hand. He sighed and took your free one, hoping it would get across that he was sorry without having to say anything. He decided that the best course of action was to not openly reciprocate your feelings for now. He would talk to Vic about it, Vic was always really insightful about this kind of thing. Or maybe Patrick. He didn't have the emotional capacity that Vic had-- or anyone else for that matter --but he might have a more logical idea about what to do. He would ask them tomorrow, for sure.

The two of you made it back to the house, and saw Belch helping a stumbling Vic into the car, and Patrick already in the backseat. You let go of Henry’s hand and he looked back at you.

“Um… I-I’m really sorry for what I said back there…” you told him. “I understand that you don't feel the same… it’s alright…” He gulped and nodded quickly. That was all the confirmation you needed, and you felt your heart completely shatter in your chest. You took a shaky breath and felt a few tears slip down your cheeks. “Wow, I feel so stupid… h-has it been like this the whole time?”

“Has what been like what?” he asked, confused. You stared at him, realizing that he couldn't understand the love you felt for him when he had never felt the same way. He didn't understand that this whole time you had been picturing a life with him, because he had been in it for the sex,
and only the sex. That explained this afternoon, why he had been so uncaring of your feelings. It explained a lot, actually, it was all starting to come together. You had been playing a silly game with yourself, pretending you and Henry were in love, when all along he had been using you.

You cleared your throat and shook your head. “Nevermind,” you told him with a small smile. He frowned and tried to take your hand. You quickly moved it away. “Um… I think we should stop doing this…”

He looked shocked. “What? But you just told me you loved me,” he reminded you, looking completely lost. Your face turned red and you tensed up.

“Look, I'm not as stupid as you seem to think I am,” you snapped. “I'm glad you've had fun these last few months, but I've really been falling in love with you this whole time!” He just stared at you. “I know that probably makes me seem even more stupid than you thought, but I don't care. I don't know exactly your little game was about, but you won. You got me to fall for you, Bowers. Jesus, I was even stupid enough to fall for that whole connection bullshit. Bravo, Henry, I hope you're really happy with yourself. Just… just know that we really could have had something good.”

You looked towards the car as Belch called out for the two of you. “Y/N, what the fuck are you talking about?” Henry wondered.

“And you had your friends in on it, too,” you realized, shaking your head. “Wow, I'm just… I really am stupid. When Vic told me to talk to you today, to tell you how I feel, I thought he was being my friend, but he was just trying to help you out…”

“Hey, Hank!” Belch called again. Henry looked over at him and you sighed.

“I'm not really mad, Henry… I should have known better… I'm sorry about what happened the other night, with your Dad, I really deserved this, didn't I? He was right, you don't deserve me… you deserve someone better than me…” You trailed off and gulped. “I… I'm sorry I wasn't enough for you,” you told him. “Tell the guys to have a good night, okay?” He couldn't even get a word in before you turned and started walking off in the direction of your house.

“What…? Y/N, wait!” he tried. You ignored him, pulling your jacket farther around you. He was completely lost. You had gotten all that from him not telling you he loved you back? Jesus, girls were melodramatic. And of course… of course he had nodded when you said it was okay if he didn't feel the same. *Fuck*. He hadn't been agreeing, he had just been working through it in his head, trying to stall until he could talk things through with his friends and figure out what to say to you. You had pretty much just solved his problem for him though…
This was probably for the best. It wasn’t worth fighting for you, because you deserved so much better. He thought of what he had seen, on the rock at the Quarry...maybe that had been a sign. If you stayed with him, it would kill you. Maybe he had saved your life by not telling you how he felt. The heartbreak you felt now was going to be worth it in the long run, when he was going to watch you graduate as top of the class, and right after that you were going to go to some big Ivy League school and graduate from there at the top of your class. Then you would come back to Derry with some rich, handsome guy, and have a huge wedding in the church on the corner of Neibolt Street, and you and your new husband were going to move away and start a huge family, and forget all about all of this. He was going to see your name in the newspaper one day, saying you had won the Nobel Peace Prize, or had been voted in as a US Senator or something.

He could never provide that life for you. If you had chosen to stay with him, all he could have given you was stress over whether or not you could pay for rent every month, and you would have been so unhappy…

This was definitely for the best.

He walked over to the car slowly, getting into the passenger seat. Belch started the car and frowned. “Where’s Y/N goin’?” he asked. “And where’d y’all go? I was freakin’ out ‘cause Vic’s fuckin’ hammered, can’t even stand up on his own.”

“Nuh- uh ! ’m fine ,” Vic slurred. “Y-Y’u’re jus’ jealous ’cause ya can’t drink!”

“I could’a drank, but ain't nobody else’s got their license, and therefore ain't nobody else can drive Amy,” he argued. “Now lean against the window ’n try to sleep, buddy.” Vic hummed and leaned against the window. “Anyways, should I wait for Y/N--?”

“Fuck that little bitch,” he snapped, pushing off the guilt and hurt he felt and projecting it as anger. “Take us the fuck home. Now.”

“Okay, Henry…” Belch agreed in confusion, starting to drive to Patrick’s house. He cleared his throat. “Is everything okay?”

“Fine,” he lied. “She's just a raging cunt, who fuckin’ needs her?”

“Woah, okay,” Belch said worriedly. “That don't sound fine to me--”
“Belch, drop it,” he demanded shortly. Belch looked ahead, mumbling an apology. Vic had woken up slightly and was watching the situation with concern, and Patrick was trying to hold back his smirk at the drama that was clearly unfolding. They stopped in front of Patrick's house, and Henry saw through the mirror that they were watching him and he scoffed. “You know what? Screw her. She wants to get butthurt over stupid shit, I say let her.”


“She just broke up with me,” he told them.

“Holy shit, what ?!” Vic asked, sitting up straight. “Why?! She was just telling me how much she cared about you.”

“Yeah, she told me she loved me,” he growled. “Said you told her to say it. Then got all sad when I didn't say it back.”

“Oh man !” Belch gasped. “She dropped the L word?”

“Yeah, then got mad when I didn't say it back,” he repeated. He didn't want to think about your whole rant, how upset and heartbroken you had been over nothing. How you had had so little faith in him that you assumed he was just playing with your heart. He scoffed. “What a fuckin’ joke, right? As if I'd ever actually be in love with her.”

Patrick cackled in agreement and leaned forward to slap his shoulder. “Told ya she'd get all love you dovey, didn't I? Didn't think she'd actually say it,” he laughed. “Good on ya for dodging the bullet, big guy. By the end’a the summer, she would’a been expecting a ring, at this rate. Better to keep her in her fuckin’ place.” Henry grunted in agreement, trying to hear this and change his memory of what had really happened.

“I dunno…” Vic argued, sounding sleepy. “She really cares about you… could’a been nice to have that with her…”

“Oh please ,” Patrick scoffed. “You think Henry wants to settle down with her? There's so many other chicks to fuck around with, I'm surprised you lasted this long with just the one pussy.”
Henry thought, feeling Vic’s words hit him. “I dunno, it was kinda nice. And she did take good care’a me, I could’a gotten used to that,” he pointed out, pulling out a cigarette. “I mean… she said she loves me, dude… don’t that count for somethin’? And I just fuckin’ stood there… I acted like she didn't say anything, Jesus, now she probably hates me…”

“Well, yeah, what else would you say?” Patrick scoffed, watching him light his cigarette and pulling out his own. “But come on, it’s not like she actually expected you to say it back, I mean, she's not an idiot.”

Henry didn't say anything for a minute, then he looked down at his hands. “I dunno, man, I mean… I think I really like her…” he admitted.

“Well then you should tell her--” Vic started.

“You think?” Patrick cut him off, sounding skeptical. Henry glanced back at him. “And what the hell does really like mean? You either like her, or love her, which is it?”

Henry shrugged. “You think you love her,” Vic answered for him. He shrugged again. “Dude, there's nothing wrong with that, that's awesome--”

“You don't just think you love someone, Hank, you either do, or you don't,” Patrick argued. Henry took a breath and tried to get give him a more confident answer.

“I mean. I think, once we're outta school, I wanna marry her…” he told him. Although it came out more sheepishly than he wanted it to. Patrick made a gagging noise.

“Really?! Since when've you wanted to marry someone? I thought you thought marriage was bullshit?”

“Yeah but… but it's her, Patrick, you think any other girl’s gonna wanna spend time with me the way she does? She’s the only girl who’s ever loved me…” he pointed out seriously. “Feels nice… and she'd be a good wife, she’d cook ‘n clean ‘n stuff, and I'd go to work, and she'd have dinner ready when I got home, and she'd give me head whenever I want…”

Patrick chuckled. “You sure about that?” he wondered. “She's one’a them career womans, Hank, she's goin’a college, 'cause she wants a job. She's one’a them girls that wants a job so she can tell it
to the man kinda thing.”

Henry thought, pulling his cigarette out from between his lips and blowing the smoke up into the cool air. “If I talk to her, I could get her to stay home for me,” he insisted. “That's another good thing about her, she does what she's told.” Patrick shrugged, looking down and flicking his cigarette out the window.

“I think it's great,” Vic told Henry. “You found someone that you wanna be with, and she really wants to be with you. That usually takes years! Sometimes it never happens! You shouldn't let that go, you should go to her right now and tell her how you feel.”

Patrick groaned. “Whatever, man, I still think it's bullshit. You're young, you still got plenty'a time before you even need to think about settling down. She's gonna go off to college in a few years, you think she's really gonna wanna wait for you?” he pointed out.

Henry was listening to both of them, taking in both viewpoints and ideas. He liked the way Patrick’s thoughts sounded. It made him sound more like a man, more independent and in charge of his own life. He didn't need you tying him down, he still had two years of high school left, why would he settle for just you?

But what Vic was saying made him feel butterflies in his stomach. He did love you, and you loved him. He was lucky to have found one person-- maybe the only person who would ever want to be with him forever. Was he going to let you go so easily?

He tried to think of what his Dad would do. He was a dick, but he was the one role model he had. He knew what his Dad would do, and it hurt his heart a little. He knew you had burrowed your way in there, breaking through sixteen years of barriers and walls and making your home in his heart. His Dad would scold him for that, telling him that falling in love was for sissies. He would tell him to think about Mama, and how she had left them, and say that you would do the same. You would find someone better than him, and you would leave him in the dust like everything you had said and done meant nothing.

He sat up straight, his mind set that if he let you go now, you would be over him by the month’s end, and it would prove everything he was thinking right. You were just some silly girl daydreaming about love. You didn't mean it, because you didn't know what love meant yet.

“Hey, Pat, your parents home?” he asked. Patrick raised an eyebrow. “Wanna borrow their car and head back to that party?”
“Hell yeah, I do,” Patrick agreed.

“Good. There were some hot chicks there with my name all over ‘em,” he grinned, opening his door and getting out. Patrick cackled and got out behind him, hurrying inside to get the keys to his parents’ car. Henry noted how sad Vic looked, but chose to ignore it. “You got ’im, Belch?”

“Sure thing, Henry, I’ll get him home safe,” he agreed quietly. “So uh… does this mean you’re really done with Y/N?”

Henry hesitated then licked his lips and shrugged. “I dunno,” he said honestly. Patrick hurried back with the keys and looked at Henry excitedly. He cleared his throat. “I mean she broke up with me, didn’t she? Why, you thinkin’a hookin’ up with her?”

“What? No, I was just wonderin’,” he denied quickly.

“Go for it, bud, you deserve a good lay,” Henry told him, crossing his arms. “You know what, fuck it. Yeah, I’m done with that bitch, she’s open season.”

“For real? Fuck yes,” Patrick said excitedly. “That’a boy, Hank, let’s go live a little!” He roughly shook his shoulder and started leading him towards his parent’s car.

Vic and Belch watched them, then Belch started driving away. Vic climbed up into the front seat and touched his hand. “You think he’s really gonna let her go?” he wondered softly.

Belch shrugged. “Sounded that way to me,” he said. Vic sighed.

“It’s so sad…” he mumbled. “I thought he really liked her… she must be heartbroken…” Belch looked over at him and squeezed his hand quickly.

“Henry’ll figure it all out. He always knows what’s best,” he insisted. Vic smiled wryly at this and looked down, feeling partially responsible for this whole thing. He just hoped you would be okay...
Broken Beyond Repair

Chapter Summary

Part 2: The Last Weeks Of School, 1989

Chapter 10: Broken Beyond Repair

(Henry x Denbrough!Reader)

Chapter Notes

Word Count: 9,139

Rating: NSFW

Warnings: cheesy breakup stuff, canon movie bullying/violence, changes from movie canon, some book canon-inspired material, Patrick being gross, implied suicide, implied past sexual assault, genre-canon gore, homophobic slurs

You didn’t want to get up the next morning. You hadn’t slept at all when you got home last night anyway, you had just come home and immediately went upstairs to the bathroom, taking a long, hot shower. The hot water burned your skin just enough to distract you from the pain in your chest, and the water hitting the porcelain tub drowned out your soft crying.

It was the ultimate, most cheesy break up thing to do. And technically you were the only one at fault for feeling this way. Henry had barely had a chance to talk last night. It was like your logical brain had taken over your love-fogged one and had pulled you out of an neglectful and potentially abusive situation before it could actually get abusive. You supposed you should thank your logical brain for doing it’s thing, but you hated every bit of it. Now your heart felt empty. You felt like you had lost the last eight and a half months of your life, like you had lost everything you had, like you had lost everything you ever would have.

You were in the shower until around one AM, when it started to get cold, and even then you sat in the water for a moment, trying to freeze your body so that you wouldn't have to feel anything. You wondered if you could fix this. You wondered if you could get him to take you back… you wondered if Vic still wanted to be your friend, if he had really been your friend in the first place.

You finally got yourself out of the shower, and wrapped yourself and your hair towels, quietly opening the door and stepping out. You were surprised to see your Mom standing outside the bathroom in her bathrobe, looking concerned, and you stopped in the doorway.
“Did I wake you up? I'm sorry…” you whispered. She blinked and moved forward, hugging you tightly. You trembled a bit and hugged her back. You had forgotten what this felt like… your parents hadn't hugged you in months….

“Are you okay, sweetie?” she asked quietly. You sniffed and nodded. She stared at you until you shook your head and broke down in tears. She sighed sadly and hugged you to her again. “Is it a boy?”

You laughed through your tears and looked up at her. “How’d you know?” you wondered.

“I was a teenager back when I was your age,” she teased. You sighed and wiped your face. “He's not worth the tears, sweetie, trust me…”

“It's just… I messed up, Mom, I really messed up, and I think I lost him,” you told her, hoping she wouldn't ask any questions.

She took a deep breath. “If you're meant to be with him, you'll find your way back to each other. If he really cares, he’ll fight to get you back, and if you really care, you won't let him go, and you'll tell him how you feel…” she said, touching your cheek. You breathed in shakily and nodded slowly. “But honestly, honey, you're young. You might go through tons more of these situations, and that's okay. Eventually, the right one is going to come along.” You wanted to tell her that you wanted Henry to be the right one, but you just nodded and let her hug you again. “I love you, honey.”

“Love you too, Mom,” you told her quietly. She moved back and touched your face thoughtfully then kissed your forehead and watched you walk towards your bedroom. As soon as you closed the door you started crying again. Would she still love you if she found out who you were in love with?

You kept thinking that until the sun started to come up and the birds started to sing. The world was moving forward without you.

You sighed and sat up, looking at your clock and seeing 9:00AM lit up in red letters. You rubbed your face and brought your feet to the floor. You needed to get up, that much you knew. You got up and started getting yourself dressed. You couldn't let Henry break you… you needed to get up and live to show him that you were okay. If he loved you back, he would come after you. It was just a matter of what to do until then...
The library sounded nice today. Mia and her family had left for a week long vacation right after school yesterday, so you couldn’t hang out with her… not that you had been talking to her much anyway. You had spent most of your free time over the last few months with Henry, and it had pushed you apart. In previous years, you had been able to blame your distance on softball practice during the season, but she understood that because of her own absence during track season. This was a very different situation, you had been distant all year…

With no one else to hang out with, the library was sounding like the best option. You grabbed your empty backpack as you finished getting yourself dressed, the shirt you chose tighter than you usually would have worn, and your skirt shorter. You hoped that Henry would see you out and see that you were fine, out and about, looking good. Maybe you would see Tommy Jones or something, and he would invite you to hang out with he and his friends, and Henry would see you with them. You hoped it hurt him the way he hurt you…

No. You didn’t.

The truth was, you felt stupid for everything you had said last night, and you couldn't get over it. Henry had looked so confused about everything you were saying and you didn't even think that maybe he just needed time to process his feelings. His first reaction to most things was to either completely blank out the situation or to punch the stimuli. You supposed you should have been grateful that he had chosen the first response.

Your parents had already gone off to work for the day, and Bill was sitting in the kitchen, writing something in his notebook at the table. He had his backpack on the chair next to him and had his shoes on and everything. “Where’re you headed today, Bill?” you asked with a sigh, opening the fridge and looking around before grabbing a peach. Your heart hurt a little, thinking about how Henry called you Peach…

“Um… o-out with Richie and Eddie. Stan should be done with his T-T-To-Torrah reading stuff soon, so he'll probably be coming too…” he explained. You nodded and leaned against the counter. “I heard Mom tell D-Dad you were having boy problems. Is it the h-hickey boy?”

“Oh juh-geeze,” he groaned. “Sorry I asked.” You scoffed and finished off your peach, tossing it in the garbage can. “R-Richie’s r-really sorry about yesterday… Y-You know how he is, he j-just wasn't th-thinking…”
“Yeah, I know… yesterday just sucked, I didn't mean to get so mad… it just wasn't my day, everything just kept getting worse and worse, and that wasn't even the worst thing, he just ended up being what I took it out on. Tell him everything's okay, and I know he didn't mean it…” you told him. He nodded, starting at you. “Love you, Bill.”

“Y-Yeah, love you t-t-t-to-too,” he agreed. You smiled weakly and went over to him, kissing his head and walking towards the door. “L-Library?”

“How'd you know?”

“Th-That's always where you go wh-when you need to be a-a-alone…” he explained. You smiled sadly and waved at him quickly before hurrying out.

It wasn't the hottest day, so walking to the library wasn't as bad as it could have been. It was hot enough to make you break a sweat, but not enough that you were drenched by the time you reached the library.

As expected, there weren't many people there, mostly adults with no better place to spend their day, their noses stuck in thick old books. There was one kid, a chubby boy who you didn't recognize. You had heard that there was a new kid in Bill's grade, Hanscom or something like that, you figured this must be him. You figured either he must have no other kids to hang out with yet, or must really like books to be in the library on a day like today. Most kids took the not-too-hot heat to their advantage. Unless, of course, he was being chased…

You could only imagine that he was a perfect target for Henry and the gang. He was new and had no one to protect him. You supposed you and the new kid had something in common, then. You both came to the library to avoid Henry Bowers.

You smiled as you walked past him towards the bookshelves, and he gave you a quick, sweet little smile back. He was a good kid, you could tell. You thought that you should mention him to Bill later and encourage him to talk to him.

You picked out a couple of books, some that you'd already read, and some that you hadn't yet read, and checked them out at the front desk. The librarian told you to enjoy the summer day and you told her to do the same, then you walked out the doors, deciding that it would be cool enough under some tree-cover to read outside.
You saw Belch's Trans-Am parked a little ways down the street, and you hesitated, looking around. Maybe it was just Belch, and he was in one of the stores to get something for his mom… probably not, though, Henry usually insisted on Belch driving him around places… so maybe they were all in a store. You would just make sure to stay away from the main road.

You found a nice tree a little ways away from the library, a good ways away from the foot traffic past the monument, and the traffic on the street. You settled down there and put your books in your backpack, except for one, which you kept out and held as you sat back against the tree.

You tried to read it, but you still couldn't focus. Henry was somewhere nearby, you just knew it, and your heart was hammering in your chest. You kept your eyes focused on the book, on the words but just the way they curled and angled on the soft paper, the context was lost on you. You wondered if this was what it was like for Henry to read… just a bunch of curved, crossed lines with no meaning.

You snapped your head up and sat up when you heard yelling and laughing, and you looked around curiously. It didn't take you long before your eyes fell on Henry and his friends grabbing the kid from the library near the monument and starting to drag him away.

You sighed loudly and got up, grabbing your bag and hurrying towards them. You glanced at Belch's car parked on the road and you thought, then hurried over to it and pushed your bag in through the top before jogging after them.

“Just leave me alone!” you heard the kid yell, followed by a cackle that most likely came from Patrick. You saw them moving quickly towards the kissing bridge, with the chubby kid being dragged with them in a headlock by Henry. “Help!”

You watched them start shoving him around, lifting his shirt up to cover his face and passing him around each other and picking on him before shoving him back against the fence.

“Look at all this blubber!” Belch laughed. He pulled the new kid's shirt back down, then looked up, and his face fell. “Aw shit, Henry…” He was holding the kid’s arm but looking up at you.

Henry looked back at you and glared as you hurried towards him. The kid looked at you desperately. “Help!” he cried. “Please!”
“Shut up, tits,” Vic said, smacking him upside the head. Belch chuckled. Both of them looked at you nervously, though, as if they were worried about your presence there.

“The fuck are you doin’ here, Denbrough?” Henry asked coldly as you stopped in front of him. “This one’a your brother's little faggot friends?” Patrick laughed darkly and you crossed your arms. “Well, guess he's not so little, is he?”

“I don't know him,” you admitted. He raised an eyebrow. “Come on, what'd he do to deserve this, Henry?”

Henry scoffed. “Why don't you step back, sweetheart, before you get hurt too,” he warned. You both looked back as Patrick shot a stream of fire right over the kid's head with his Zippo and a can of hairspray. You made a quiet, nervous noise, and Henry stormed past Patrick up to the poor kid and grabbed him by his shirt.

“Get off me!” he screamed. “Get off me !!!

Henry and his friends looked towards you, and you turned to looked back and moved out of the road as a car came down the road. Everyone kept their eyes on the car, and the kid took a shaky breath then yelled out for help. Whoever was in the car didn't stop, to your horror, and when the kid yelled for help again, Henry brought his fist back and punched him twice in the face, making the kid look dazed for a few seconds.

“Henry!” you tried.

“You better fuck off,” he warned.

You shoved Patrick back and grabbed Henry's arm, trying to drag him back. “Henry, cut it out, he's a fucking kid,” you insisted. He ignored you, keeping his eyes on the kid as he shook you off his arm. You grabbed his shoulder and pulled as roughly as you could. He growled and let go of the kid, confident that Belch and Vic were holding him.

“I said you better fuck off, skank,” he repeated coldly. You backed away a little as he loomed towards you, his knife tightly in his hand. “Unless you wanna take his place.” You stared at him in shock, then grabbed him as he started turning back towards the kid. He growled and reached over, shoving you down to the ground roughly. You cried out, feeling the pavement cut up some of the flesh on your legs and arms as you fell. “What'd I just say?! I said fuck off, Y/N! Fuck! Off!”
You sat up lightly and winced, holding your arm. “H-H-Henry,” you whimpered. He hesitated, seeing how scared you were, and then he shook his head, turning back to the kid and punching him again just as he screamed. The way the little fucker’s head flew back got him going.

He growled excitedly and grabbed the kid's face to get his attention. “Okay there, kid,” he sneered. Patrick grabbed your arm and pulled you to stand up, wrapping his arms around your waist and resting his chin on your shoulder to keep you in place. “This is what us locals call the kissing bridge.” Vic and Belch chuckled. “It stands for two things: sucking face…” Belch made kissing noises right in the kid's ear and he tried to pull away, but Vic pinched at his cheek. You watched Henry pull out his pocket knife and pop it open. “And carving names.”

“Henry,” the kid whimpered. “Please--”

You gasped and started moving forward as Henry brought his knife to the kid's chubby belly, carving an H write into the flesh. The boy shrieked in pain and the only thing that kept you for dragging Henry off of him was Patrick’s hold on you tightening. He moved his head though, looking around Henry and laughing excitedly.

“Woah, woah, woah, Henry !” Belch tried worriedly. Vic looked concerned as well, and they both stared at him in shock.

“Henry, let him go--!” you started.

“ Shut up !” Henry screamed. Patrick was looming impatiently right behind him, waiting to get his turn with the poor kid, and eager to see Henry carve into him more. “I'm gonna carve my whole name into this cottage cheese!” Vic and Belch loosened their grip slightly, looking towards you for help, as if you could maybe talk some sense into Henry.

Before you could say anything, the kid brought his foot up and kicked Henry in the thigh, just a few centimeters away from getting him in the balls. The kick gave him leverage to roll backwards over the fence and start rolling down the steep hill below. Belch and Vic backed up in shock, and Patrick let go of you to pushed Henry forward to keep him from falling back on his ass.

Henry growled and rushed forward to the fence grabbing on and looking down as the boy rolled down. “I'm gonna cut your fuckin’ tits off, I swear to God !” he screamed at him, before jumping over the fence and starting to slide after him down the hill.
Patrick laughed excitedly and jumped after him. Belch and Vic looked at each other, then followed. “Guys!” you cried, leaning over the fence to watch them, hearing their laughing in the distance. You swore to yourself and looked around, then ran back up the road towards the edge of the fence, knowing that the beginning of the path started further up the road.

Once you reached it, you hurried down it as fast as you could, trying to listen for sounds of struggling, or crying, or laughter. You slid to a halt at a small clearing and doubled over slightly, trying to catch your breath. You heard a cackle, and you looked up in time for Patrick to run right into you. You fell back on the ground and winced as the forest floor cut up the palms of your hands slightly when you put them out to break your fall.

Patrick held out his arm to stop Belch from running into you, then pointed for him to go ahead while he grabbed your arm and pulled you to stand.

“How’d you get down here before us, sweets?” he asked suspiciously, as he brushed some dirt off your back.

“The path,” you explained, still taking deep breaths. He looked at the path, then put his arm over your shoulder.

“Well since you're here, you're gonna help me find the fatty boy,” he said matter-of-factly, leading you down another path toward the stream.

“What's your problem, anyway? What'd this kid do? Who is he?” you asked worriedly.

“He's a new kid,” he told you with a chuckle, as he let go of you to walk along the stream, looking around. “Perfect to pick on, too. Not only is he a fucking loser with no friends, but he's a big fatass too.”

“You guys are so cruel,” you scoffed, watching your step around the rocks. “Why don't you try being kind to people for once?”

“Eh, what's the fun in that?” he mumbled, clearly deep in thought. He kept walking for a while, and you followed him silently. “So why’d you break it off with Henry?”

You sighed heavily. “Really?” you asked.
“Yeah, really, that was a shitty thing to do, tellin’ him you loved him then dumpin’ him,” he chuckled. “Who knew you were a heartless bitch under all that sweetheart-attitude?”

“I’m not a heartless bitch!” you argued. He shrugged and you looked down. “Was he… upset?”

“Very.”

“I just felt so stupid! If I had known he didn’t love me back I wouldn’t have said it,” you explained. “I was heartbroken, Patrick, can you blame me for being done with it?”

“Okay, first of all, how’d ya think he feels? Which leads into my second of all, who said he didn’t love you back?” he pointed out. You blinked.

“He did. He nodded when I told him it was okay if he didn’t love me back,” you told him. He just shook his head. “That means he doesn’t love me, right?”

“That’s not what he said in the car,” he smirked. You looked shocked. “Said he was pretty sure he loved you too, said he thought he might wanna marry you after high school.”

You felt your heart drop. “Oh no…” you said softly. “He said that?”

“Jesus Christ, for all that book-smart you got, you ain’t very smart, are you?” he sighed. “Kid’s fuckin’ gone for you, dumbass.” You stopped and Patrick stopped as well, looking back at you. “I wouldn’t just expect him to forgive you and take you back, you owe him a big fuckin’ apology.”

“I know…” you agreed.

“And that is if his fuckin’ pride let’s him take you back. You better be ready to get on your fuckin’ knees in front’a this kid and beg him to forgive you. He’s pissed Y/N,” he told you.

“He is?”
He scoffed. “Do you even know this kid?” he laughed. “Me and him went back to the party last night to pick up chicks, he was so pissed at you. Henry’s the kinda guy that skips the hurt and goes straight to petty revenge fucking apparently.”

“Did he hook up with anyone?” you wondered worriedly.

“Sure, he did two person push-ups with Gretta Keene last night,” he said, starting to walk again. You quickly followed him.

“He did?” you asked sadly.

“No.”

You rolled your eyes, although you were relieved that he was lying to you. “Fuck you, Patrick,” you growled, hitting his arm. He grabbed your wrist and put his arm back over your shoulder to keep you in place.

“What’s it to you if he fucks some other chick, anyway? You broke up with him, that’s whatcha get,” he pointed out. “You still gotta chance to get deep-dicked by somebody before you go back to him, wanna feel my half-Asian cock in that pussy?”

“Ew, off,” you cried, pushing him off of you. He stuck his tongue at you, then smirked, biting his tongue mischievously.

“Wanna know a secret?” he asked quietly, moving closer to you. You frowned. “You were his first.” You blinked and started to shake your head. “That’s why he likes you so much, 'cause as much as he denies it, you were the only one willing to pop his cherry…”

“No,” you scoffed, blushing and crossing your arms over your chest.

“Let’s be real, Princess, you were the first person who ever wanted to deal with that fuckin’ hot mess,” he told you. Your mouth fell open. “You just had to go with the one with Daddy and Mommy issues, didn't you?”
“Wait… are you serious?” you wondered. He nodded. “No way… but… but he sounded like he knew what he was talking about!”

“It’s not that hard to trick a virgin into thinkin’ you ain’t a virgin,” he pointed out. You covered your mouth and blinked. “You were each other’s firsts, it was cute to hear how excited he was about it…”

You stared at him, then sighed. “What did he want me for?”

You saw Patrick turn his head to look towards you. “What’d ya mean?”

“Nothing… I’m just being stupid…” you mumbled, looking down at the water.

“I hang around with Belch Huggins all day, and trust me when I say you won't ever say anything as stupid as the shit he says,” he pointed out with a slight smirk. “Duuuuh, Patrick? How long’s it take to sail here from Canada? I just don't get how all them Canadians get all the way here to Maine by boat all the time!” He snickered as you rolled your eyes.

“Don't be mean…”

“He ain't here to hear it,” he laughed, kicking a rock across the stream. “What silly things are goin’ on in your head, girlie? Tell it to me.” You watched him kick at another rock, only kicking it far enough that he would catch up to it to kick it again.

“Did Henry really want me to stay? Or was he gonna get bored with me eventually and drop me?” you explained. He sighed. “I know, I told you, it's stupid… you probably all thought I was a fun game to play, right? You were seeing if I would stay with him long enough for him to break my heart and tell the whole school what a slut I am…” You sniffed and quickly brought your hands up to wipe the tears forming in the corners of your eyes. “It must be so fun for you guys to know that I'm never gonna be enough for him…” Patrick just hummed as he kicked his rock farther away into the running water.

He stretched his arms above his head, his stomach showing slightly where his yellow shirt pulled up. You couldn’t get over how incredibly tall he was, sometimes. “Nobody was waiting for you to get your heart broken, baby,” he said honestly. “I thought it might happen, but nobody was waitin’. He's just bein’ a dick right now, chill out, sweets.” You sighed and stared at him.
“If I'm the only person he's ever been with, what if I'm not good enough for him? What if there's another girl that fucks him better than I can?”

“Then there's another boy that'll fuck you better than he does,” he chuckled. “You never know if you don't try…”

“I don't want to try. I love--” you started, quickly cutting yourself off. He smirked a little and waited for you to finish. “I love him.”

“Oh, I know you do, darling,” he said smugly. “That's what's funny to watch…” You glared at him. “Henry doesn't know how to love… he's gonna try so fuckin’ hard, but he'll never be able to…”

“Everyone can love,” you scoffed. He shrugged.

“It's a learned skill. Who's gonna teach it to him, this late? You think you still can?”

“I do.” He shook his head. You sighed and looked towards the forest. “If he even still wants me.”

“You want my honest, unpsychotic opinion?” he asked. You looked at him.

“No…” you answered. He smirked. “You're tryin' too damn hard to fix a kid who's beyond repair, little angel,” he told you. You glared at him. “Don't get mad, just listen. I'm not saying to give up, or to let him go or whatever. I'm just sayin’ he's gonna snap one’a these days. I know you know… when he does, if you're still in the blast zone, you're gonna get burned.”

“If you care so much, you should try to help him,” you pointed out.

“Well… No. I'm the enabler, not the savior, baby,” he said. “You're the angel, remember? I'm a Satan spawn…”
“You're so fucking weird, Patrick,” you sighed, hitting his arm. “Can you just get your head in the real world for two minutes?!”

“What real world?” he grinned. You glared at him. “You're the one that needs a fuckin’ wake up call, princess. You think you're gonna love and live with that poor bastard forever, but you ain't seen the shit I've seen. He's either gonna end up in jail, or he's gonna shoot his brains out.”

“Stop it, that's not funny!” you cried, stopping in your tracks. He stopped a little ways ahead of you and looked back at you impatiently. “How can you say that?! And if anyone's gonna end up in jail, it's you!”

“Sure. You know why I ain't gotten caught doin’ what I do? Cause I'm smart, and I'm careful. Henry's reckless and impulsive and it gets him into trouble that he could avoid,” he explained. You sighed and looked down. “One day he's gonna pull a gun on somebody, maybe himself, and he's gonna do somethin’ he can't take back.”

“You don't know that,” you insisted.

He opened his mouth to respond, then closed it. His face suddenly went blank and he continued forward. You were about to question what was wrong, but then you felt it too-- like a punch in the stomach.

Sometimes, with your teenage angst drama full-blown, you forgot that there was a heavy darkness covering Derry, Maine.

As the two of you approached one of the sewer drains, Patrick stopped and looked around.

“What is it?” you wondered, stopping behind him. He didn't say anything, then you both looked towards the drain as you heard what sounded like something falling. He reached into his back pocket and pulled out the can of hairspray, shaking it up and walking toward the sewer drain. “Patrick, where're you going?”

“In,” he said quietly. “Come on.”

“Really?” you sighed, hurrying after him. You felt a rush of cold hit you as you stared into the mouth of the pipe, and you shivered, getting a rush of paranoia with it. “Th-The sewer?”
“Betcha tits’ in there…” he explained. He stared at the drain but stood still. His face was completely void of expression, his eyes searching around in the darkness. “Do you feel that?”

“Yes,” you agreed nervously. “Makes me think we shouldn't go in…” He stepped up into the drain, shoving some vines out of the way and ducking inside. You looked around nervously, then shook your head and followed him in. “Patrick--”

He put a finger to his lips, then pulled out his lighter quietly, flicking it on as he moved through the murky water beneath you. You wrinkled your nose at the smell, and scoffed as you felt the water splash your ankles, but you followed him closely.

There was another noise up ahead and he smirked, shaking his can of hairspray again and licking his lips as he moved forward. “I hear ya, tits …” he taunted. You rolled your eyes and he laughed excitedly to himself before spraying the hairspray over the flame, causing a stream of fire to shoot out in front of you, lighting up the drain around you and showing just how black and gross the water was. You gagged a little, and groaned as the water got deeper and drenched your shoes. He kept moving forward, shooting another stream of fire down a side drain.

You both turned a corner and moved forward. “Don't think you can stay down here all damn day, now,” he called out, grinning slightly and shooting more flames. You cried out suddenly and tried to get to a shallower area of water.

“Something just touched my ankle!” you whimpered. He stared at you skeptically, then gasped and backed away from where he was.

“Fuck!” he cried out, surprised. He smacked at his neck and ran into you. “What the hell?!” He held up his makeshift flamethrower and shot it off again, and you both cried out as a giant slug-like creature flying right at him. He dropped his hairspray can into the water as he held up his arm and the thing latched it's sharp-toothed mouth onto him. He shrieked and tried to shake it off, then another flew and latched onto his hand and he ran into you again, knocking you down into the water as he smacked the things off of him and ran.

“Patrick!” you screamed, getting yourself up and running after him. You had no idea where he had gone, so you stopped at the intersection of the tunnels, your lungs tight and painful in your chest. “Patrick ?!”

You heard him screaming from somewhere to your left, so you ran down the left tunnel and looked
around frantically, feeling tears running down your cheeks. You reached a dead end and ran into the grate, grabbing it and gasping for air.

“Y/N!!”

You turned around and froze. It had been Patrick who had yelled for you, and the scream had been distant. But there was a figure standing right in front of you, shrouded in shadow. You froze in place and gripped the rungs of the grate tightly, trying to breathe.

“I'm sorry, Y/N…” he said. You hesitated, surprised to hear Henry's voice. You supposed from what you could see, the outline of the figure looked kind of like him. But he looked a little taller, and a little bigger around.

“Henry?” you asked softly.

“I love you so much, baby, I'm sorry,” he continued, sounding like he was crying. You shook your head in confusion, and saw him reach toward his hip, and heard the sound of a gun cocking…

You gasped pushing yourself back against the grate as you heard the gun shoot off, and he threw his head back--

Your mouth fell open as you saw him fall back into the water, and you saw blood starting to flow through the water around your feet. You were frozen in place, completely unsure what to do… that didn't just happen… it couldn’t have…

You looked up as you saw movement, and saw the figure it front of you stand back up. But it was… unnatural. It was like he floated back into standing position, it was the same motion as when he had fallen back, but in reverse. You whimpered in confusion, and started shaking. The figure sucked in a breath and made a slurping noise, like he was trying to keep himself from drooling.

“You shouldn't be down here, sweetheart, what're you doin’ here,” he asked sweetly. You hesitated, the voice you were hearing not the one you had heard just moments earlier. It still sounded like Henry, but… not Henry at the same time. He started moving forward and you could see the blue of his pants. “You'd think you wanted to be alone down here with me…”

It was then that your realized who it was… well, sort of. You couldn't place it, you knew it was
Butch Bowers, but the voice still sounded so much like Henry… you still couldn't see his face, honestly you didn't want to.

“I-I didn't know you were d-d-down here,” you said softly. You frowned deeply and gulped. “Why are you down here?”

“That Criss faggot tell you not to get stuck alone with me?” he chuckled. Your eyes widened a bit and your mouth fell open. “He should be scared of me… with that bone structure and that tight ass, he might as well be a pretty little girl for me to fuck around with…” He laughed as you made a horrified expression. “No wonder he don't wanna be alone with me, huh? Bet it hurt gettin’ stretched that much… and that was just my fingers.”

“Oh my god…” you gasped, letting go of the sewer grate. “Vic…”

“Oh, but that was years ago. Couldn't stand the little sissy starin’ at my son's ass no more, had to teach him what he gets for bein’ a fag,” he explained. “He ain't here now, though, is he? Nobody is, but you and me…”

He walked into view and you gasped sharply, seeing his mouth split open right in half, the hinge of the jaw completely shattered and gone since that side of his head was seemingly blown off. Where his eye should have been was just a mess of blood, and his cheekbone was shattered like his jaw. It was horrifically bloody and mangled. There was still enough of his jaw that his tongue rested on the bottom of his mouth, but it was dripping blood, and he vainly tried slurping it back into his mouth again.

The thing was… it was Butch, it was definitely Butch… but it looked so much like Henry. Whenever the light reflecting off the water hit his face you could see Henry. His sandy blond hair, his face smooth and free from any facial hair, even a five o'clock shadow, his soft blue eyes...

But where the light didn't touch was the face of a man who wanted nothing more than to hurt anyone he touched. A man who had been abandoned and beaten and had never had any luck in his life. A man who had been to war, who had killed and that had been his breaking point. You knew Butch wasn't all there, you had only really met him once and you knew that. And he was passing it on to Henry. He was passing on the abandonment, the beatings, the unluckiness, the need to hurt other, and eventually he was going to pass on the lack of sanity. That's what you saw in his face as he stood before: the face of a man you despised, and feared, and tried to avoid, and the face of a boy who you loved, and worshipped, and pitied… a boy who was going to become everything that you hated about his father, in time. And he was going to drag you down with him.
The mixture of Henry and Butch suddenly moved forward very quickly, and you screamed, trying to run past him, but he grabbed you. You screamed out for help and felt him turn you around to face him. Now he looked like Butch, and only Butch.

“Let me go!!” you screamed. “Patrick, help!”

“Patrick ain't gonna help you…” he grinned. “If you weren't so fun, he'd be dead already… let's finish what I started the other night, baby…” You whimpered as he shoved you back against the pipe wall and started undoing your clothes. “Bet you can't wait to marry me in a few years…”

“What?” you hissed, freezing in place. You stared right at him and realized that something was wrong. His eyes were glowing yellow-- just like Henry's had in the Neibolt House. Not Henry. It hadn't been real, Patrick had assured you it wasn't real.

“Well I mean, when you marry Henry, it's gonna be as if you were marryin’ me. You didn't think he was gonna be nice to you, did'ya?” he teased. “Oh sweetheart, he's gonna kill you.” You tensed up and yanked yourself out of his grip, falling down into the water but quickly picking yourself up and running down the pipe again.

“Patrick!” you cried. You reached the edge of the pipe and found yourself at the intersection again. You looked behind you, seeing nothing behind you, and you hesitated. “Pat!”

You heard him cry out again to your right, and you hesitated. “Y/N--!” you heard him scream. You shook your head and ran in that direction.

You slid to a stop at another pipe, and saw him sitting on the ground and whimpering. “Oh my god…” you said softly, hurrying towards him. He let out a weak noise and you stopped near him. The water rippled and some of the light from behind him reflected over him, making you gasp. He was covered with the flying slug-like things, about nine of the giant things latched onto his body. He had his back against the pipe, but his legs, and his stomach and his arms were covered in the bugs. His arms were covering his face, but one was latched onto his head near his ear. “Fuck…”

You hurried over to him and pulled his arms away from his face. He looked delirious, both from fear and from blood loss. He was definitely losing blood, his pale skin impossibly paler, almost blue. “Help…” he gasped. “L-Leeches…”

Leeches. That’s what they were, they were giant, flying leeches.
“Hold still, okay, I’m gonna get them off,” you said calmly. He moaned a bit and his eyes started to close. “No, no, Patrick, keep your eyes open…” You took a shaky breath and grabbed one of the parasites on his arm and grabbing it's head, squeezing until it let go with a wet pop. You gagged a little and threw it away. You did it again with the next few, then you saw them start flying back towards you. You swore and carefully grabbed the one on his head, the last one, and squeezing it until it let go, throwing it in the direction of the others without looking as you started to cover Patrick with your own body.

You heard noise in the water and you felt something touch your shoulder. “Sweetheart…” you heard Butch Bowers say. You froze, and you saw Patrick's face scrunch up in confusion. “Go ahead and let him die… and come with me, I'll keep you plenty safe down here…”

“Get away from us! Whatever you are, get away!” you warned. You saw Patrick's eyes flutter open and he leaned his head back against the sewer weakly. You turned around but continued to block Patrick from Henry's father, or whatever was pretending to be him. “Get away!”

“No…” he said simply. “I like playin' with you, Y/N, you're so fun when you're afraid, but still think you're in control…” He lunged toward you and you held up your arm, surprised when you felt his teeth bite into the flesh. You didn't react for a minute, not really understanding what was happening. A huge mouth of razor sharp teeth was biting your arm… huge… razor sharp… blood…. Yellow eyes. Not Butch Bowers. Not Butch Bowers. Blood. A lot of blood. Pain… oh god, the pain--

You screamed and tried to push his face away, panicking from the intense pain in your arm. He let go but went towards you again, going for your shoulder this time. You kicked him in the face, and he fell backwards.

“Patrick, come on, let's go, let's get out of here…” you said gently, standing up and carefully helping Patrick stand as well. He shook violently and stumbled, but you got his arm over your shoulder and started getting him moving towards the way out. “Come on, Patrick, you can--”

“Y/N…”

You looked back and hesitated. Patrick looked back as well, and the two of you turned around and stared at the red balloon floating right in the middle of the sewer.

“What the fuck is this…?” Patrick slurred weakly. “What's happening?”
“Come on, let's go, Patrick,” you urged, turning him back around and freezing again.

Ahead of you was… you didn't even know what it was. There weren't words to describe it. It was kind of like the light from a flood-light, only impossibly brighter. It was horrific and mesmerizing and sickening and incredible all at once. It made you feel the most horrible fear you'd ever felt before, it was like hearing the screams of a billion tortured souls, it made your skin feel like it was burning off of your bones, which felt like they were breaking and tearing through your skin. It made your mind start to question whether anything was even real anymore.

You only saw it for a split second, before Patrick grabbed your hair and shoved you face first into the filthy water beneath you. Even as you closed your eyes before hitting the water, you let out a piercing shriek of pain and fear. Patrick let go of you as fell backwards, and you sat up, gasping for air and crying keeping your eyes closed and crawling to him. You grabbed him and held on tightly rubbing your eyes and opening them, holding Patrick so that neither of you were facing it. Whatever it was.

“Y/N…” he groaned, still shaking violently. He looked at you with the most wide, frantic eyes you had ever seen, and you saw blood dripping from both of his nostrils and from his ears. You wondered if you were bleeding like that too, your head hurt enough that you thought you might be. “Y/N, I think we're gonna die…”

You felt like that too. Like this was the moment before death took you both. You moved closer to him and whimpered. That's all the sound you could make. You couldn't find the words that you needed, your brain wouldn't form them.

He grabbed your face and pulled you into a kiss, and you grabbed his arms, wanting someone, anyone to hold you if your were going to die. It would make it less scary, if you didn't have to do it alone.

What must have been a thousand thoughts raced through your head in that moment. Thoughts of your parents, of Bill, of how they were going to be destroyed that they had lost another child, and another sibling. You thought of Georgie, and how it would be to see him again. Things would be okay if you could see Georgie again, that would make this worth while. You thought of Mia, and how she would never know the truth about why you had been such a bad friend. You thought of Vic, and what a good friend he had been to you these last few months, even if it had been fake. You thought of Butch Bowers, and how you were leaving Henry alone with him again, with no love or compassion… you couldn't do that, you couldn't leave Henry. Henry… you were sure you were going to marry him someday, if you made it through this. You had to make it through this for him. You were going to be the one to save him from the painful life he had been forced into, and you were going to love him more than he could ask for. Because God you loved him. You were
It occurred to you that your lips were moving softly against Patrick's, and that he had a delicate hand on the nape of your neck, and it brought your thoughts away from Henry for a moment… it was nice, the way he was kissing you. It felt like more than kissing, it felt so incredibly good that you cried out against his lips, and moved closer to him. You didn't want him to stop, you almost wanted him to stay with you right here and kiss you forever…

You pulled away and opened your eyes to look at him, watching him do the same. You shivered and looked to your left, seeing that whatever it was was gone. You gulped and held onto Patrick, burying your head in his shoulder for a moment while you tried to get yourself together. You couldn't even fathom what had just happened. It hadn't seemed real, it couldn't have been real. You gagged a little and you felt Patrick start falling over sideways. You swore and got up carefully, pulling him to stand again. He stumbled even more now and you fell with him against the wall as he leaned against it.

“Fuck…” you gasped, trying to ignore the pain in your arm as you held onto him. “Come on Patrick, hold onto the wall and walk, okay?” He shakily put a hand out onto the wall and you both slowly started moving out of the drain. As soon as you saw sunlight you laughed out loud in relief, getting a better grip on him to help him out.

“Patrick?!”

You heard Henry yell it, then Belch, and you couldn't help it that you started crying, you were just so relieved that you were both still alive. Well, Patrick wasn't looking so good. He was still bleeding heavily out of his wounds, and you could see now that blood was covering you both. Your own arm was bleeding heavily, and it was swollen from the irritation. You hadn't realized how bad it was until now, and seeing it made you dizzy and even more nauseated. You didn't know if you could carry Patrick much farther.

“Help!” you screamed. Patrick moaned and started falling forward. You moved closer to try and hold him up, but he started slipping onto his knees. “Fuck, no, Patrick, get up, we're almost there…”

“Can't…” he slurred, his eyes starting to fall shut. He was starting to turn grey from his loss of blood, and you whimpered and screamed for help again.

“'s that Y/N?” you heard Belch ask from close by.
“Y/N?!?” Henry yelled into the tunnel.

“Henry!” you sobbed, trying to pick up Patrick's head from the water. “Help, he's dying!”

After a few seconds you heard splashing in the water and Henry and Belch came around the bend in the pipe. “Fuck,” Belch gasped.

“What the hell happened?!” Henry asked frantically.

“He's dying, we gotta get him out!” you insisted. Belch hurried over and effortlessly picked up his now unconscious friend from the water.

“Shit,” he hissed, realizing how much blood was on him. “Hey, Henry, he don't look so good.”

“Well get him the fuck outta here then! Go, get him a doctor!” Henry ordered. Belch rushed out with Patrick, and you heard him yell something at probably Vic outside. Henry picked you up from the water and held your arms to keep you balanced, quickly picking his hand up from your injured arm when he felt blood. “Y/N, what the hell happened? Are you okay, what happened?”

“We were looking for the kid, he thought he might be in here…. A-And they just came out of nowhere, a-and they were all over him, and-- and-- and you shot yourself, but then it was your Dad-”

“My Dad? Wait, what, I didn't shoot myself,” he questioned, shocked. “Y/N what the fuck are you talkin’ about?”

“It was h-him! And then… V-Vic, I had no idea… a-and it tried to touch me, and I got away, a-and they were all over Patrick--”

“What were all over Patrick?”

“Leeches!”
“Leeches?” he asked.

“They were huge, a-and they were sucking his blood, and Henry, what if he dies? And then he bit me!” you rambled.

“Patrick bit you?” he questioned.

“No! It was your Dad!” you tried. He was staring at you like you had two heads, which you supposed was fair. “This must sound crazy… I-It made itself look like leeches, and like you, and like your Dad, and it was trying to kill us.”

“What did?”

You stared at him, trying to figure out how to answer. “I-It, ” you explained. “I-I don't know what it is, Henry, but it's still here, and I wanna get outta here, please can we go.”

“You go ahead, I'm gonna check it out--” he told you, starting to wander into the tunnel. You grabbed his arm and pulled him back.

“No, no, no, no! Henry, no!” you cried, holding onto him. “No you can't go in there, it'll kill you!” He just stared at you as you sobbed lightly and started rambling quietly about what had happened again. “I-It wanted to kill us, it wanted us to be scared…”

“Okay, baby… let's get you to a doctor, alright, just don't talk,” he said. “Maybe they can give you something to calm you down…”

“I saw it…” you tried.

“I know, Y/N, let's just get out of here into the fresh air,” he insisted dismissively. He lead you out of the sewer and out into the stream again. The sun looked like it was setting, and you realized that the two of you must have been in there for hours. “Alright, we're gonna talk to the police, okay, so they know you're okay.”
“The police?” you wondered quietly.

“Yeah, babe, your parents and everybody’s out lookin’ for you,” he explained. You stared at him and started feeling light headed. “Oh no, hang on baby, stay with me--”

You felt him catch you as your legs gave out, and you moaned lightly as your head started slipping out of consciousness. “Henry…” you tried.

“Hey, just keep your eyes open, okay? You're probably shocked or somethin’, just stay with me okay?” he insisted, carrying you out of the tunnel and starting to carry you down the stream a bit.

“I love you…” you told him weakly. He didn't respond, just staring ahead as he carried you. “I'm sorry I hurt you… didn't mean to hurt you, Henry, love you so... much…”

“It's fine, baby,” he mumbled.

“Can’t be without you…” you whimpered. “Please take me back Henry…”

“We'll talk about this another time, Y/N…” he told you sternly.

“Don’t wanna lose you…” You felt your eyes start rolling back, and you heard him swear and felt him pick you up and start rushing you out of the tunnel. “Didn’t… mean to do this to us…”

“Everything’s fine, Y/N, just shut up and keep your fuckin’ eyes open,” he ordered.

“Please don’t let It take you,” you said. You looked down at you, shocked by how clearly you had said it, what with how close you were to passing out. “Don’t let him break you, Henry, you have to come out above everything.”

“Uh... yeah, yeah, sure I will,” he agreed absentmindedly, carefully bringing you through the forest.

“It wants you so badly…” you whispered. He gave you a confused look and you reached up to
touch his cheek. “I don’t know how to save you, Henry, I’m sorry… I don’t think anything can save us…” Henry didn’t say anything to that, and you saw police and ambulance lights up ahead.

Henry carried you through the clearing and onto the road, and he yelled out for help. An ambulance sped by the two of you-- Patrick was in that one, you thought. The other ambulance was for you. Faintly you heard your parents yell out your name, and you whined and curled up against Henry as tightly as you could. You were afraid to let him go, afraid that you wouldn’t ever get the chance for him to hold you again, afraid that if you let go he would become the Henry you knew It wanted him. He looked down at you and you tried to tell him that you loved him, that you wanted him to stay with you, that you would do anything for him, that you would *die* for him.

None of it came out, though, nothing but a few whimpers and sobs. Your vision was starting to tunnel, and the sounds around you were fading away. You weren’t dying, you knew what that felt like now… but your brain was trying desperately to shut down so that you wouldn’t have to remember what it felt like… you didn’t think you could ever forget that feeling though. The last thing to make it into your senses was Henry’s lips moving with the muffled words that he spoke to you. You were being passed over to someone else as he said it, but you kept your eyes on him.

“Everything’s gonna be okay, baby.”

You could hear those words echoing around in your head as you faded out of consciousness, knowing that him taking you back was the least of either of your problems.

*No, Henry*, you thought. *Nothing will ever be okay again.*
“You can see me now, can't you?”

You blinked and stared ahead of you, the water of the sewer drain tinted red. Light from the night sky shined through a grate above you, and lit up the little boy standing not three feet away, one arm clearly torn off of his blood stained yellow rain jacket.

“Youngie?” you breathed, backing away slightly.

“The black haired boy could see me,” he told you. “On Halloween, at the scary house. You were talking to me, but you couldn't see me. He could... and he saw it take me away again...”

“What took you away?” you questioned, stepping slowly towards him. He stared up at you, with his sweet, pale face and his sad little eyes.
“You already saw it, YlN…” he said softly. “You saw it... and now it’ll never go away…”

“But what is it?” you insisted, moving closer to him. He sniffled and backed away. “Georgie, what killed you?”

“I have to go now, before it finds me…” he whimpered. “I miss you all so much, I wanna come home but... but I can't get outta here... I have to hide, or it'll find me…”

“Georgie--”

“Don't let Henry kill his Dad, YlN…”

You froze, your eyes widening and your limbs going numb.

“I wish I could make you all better, sissy…” he continued. “But it went into your head... and it doesn't go away... so you gotta make sure he doesn't kill anybody…”

“Georgie--”

“Maybe I can see you later,” he cut you off. “I love you, tell Bill--”

You woke up sobbing and frantic, hearing rapid *beeping* and feeling bright lights all around you. You heard a soft voice hushing you and telling you that everything was alright. You looked over and saw your Mom standing next to you, and realized that she was holding your hand. You took a shaky breath and realized that your Dad was right behind her, and Bill was next to them.

“Sweetheart, it's okay, we're here,” your Mom said.

“M-Mama…” you whimpered, leaning against her, she touched your head and ran her fingers through your hair gently. “.. h-hospital... we're at the hospital?”
“It’s okay, honey, they gave you some pain medicine for your arm, and you’re all bandaged up, okay?” your Dad spoke up.

“I’m dizzy,” you told them, holding onto your Mom. “Where’s Henry?”

No one responded for a few seconds then your Dad cleared his throat. “At the police station, Y/N,” he explained. You frowned and sat up. “Look, no one was really sure what happened, all we saw was him carrying you out of the woods, and you were unconscious, and--”

“And we can't lose you, baby, it would kill us, when you didn't come home, and we got the call that you and Patrick were nowhere to be found, we thought--” she choked on her words. “We thought you were gone, like....” She trailed off and closed her eyes tightly.

“I-I’m sorry, Mom…” you said. All of her words caught up to you and you frowned. “Patrick…?” Your heart skipped a beat. “Patrick, oh my god!” You gasped, grabbing her arm. “Is he okay? H-He was dying, is he okay?” Your mom sniffed and looked down.

“H-He’s in stable condition,” she explained. You sighed in relief and sat back on the bed, closing your eyes. “He lost a lot of blood, and had to get a blood transfusion, but he's alright now, just in a lot of pain.”

“Thank God…” you said, putting a hand on your head. “Mom, I'm sorry… I told him not to go in there…”

“Why were you with them, Y/N?” your Dad asked.

“What happened?” your Mom added. You opened your mouth to respond but you realized that you didn't know what to say.

“I-I don't know…” you responded honestly. “I-I don't know what happened…” They looked at each other. “I-I just… I told him not to go in there, I told him it was a bad idea…”

Your Dad sighed and your Mom looked back at him worriedly. She started whispering something to him and you stared towards the open door, still a little dazed from whatever pain medication that you were on and confused about the entire situation. You tried desperately to rack your brain and
remember what had happened…

The kid, you remembered, the chubby one that you had seen at the library. He had started it, by running off on Henry and his friends… they had gone after him, and you had gone after them. You caught up with Patrick and went with him to look for the kid, hopeful that you could stop him from hurting the kid too badly. You had followed him into the sewer drain and then…

Then what? Everything had been fine at first, but then… the leeches. They had attacked Patrick and you had been left all alone with… Henry? No, not Henry it was with…

“Officer Bowers, can we help you with something?” you heard your Dad asked. It snapped you out of your high-mind-tangent, and you realized that as you had been thinking about it all, you had been blankly staring towards the door, and consequently, right at Butch Bowers, who was staring right back at you. You blinked in surprise feeling your skin crawl, fear coursing through your veins and causing your heart monitor to start speeding up. He looked up at your Dad with a bored expression.

“Sure. Wanted to come see how your kid was doin’,” he said. Your Dad stared at him, then looked down at you, shaking his head and scoffing as he looked up at the oddly calm officer.

“She’s fine, thanks. What do you really want?”

“Wan’er ta tell ‘em my kid had nothin’a do with this shit,” he admitted. “They think he raped her ‘r some shit, ‘n I know he didn’t. He’s too much of a pussy for that…” He looked towards you again and your heart monitor started speeding up again. “He didn’t do nothin’ to you, did he, sweetheart?”

You took a shaky breath in. “N-No, he didn’t do anything t-t-to me,” you agreed. “He s-s-saved me…”

“Y/N, wh-what’s wrong?” Bill asked worriedly. You felt your Mom’s thumb brush against your hand. You risked looking over at them. “You’re sc-scared…?”

“You’re not scared’a me, are you, honey?” Butch asked, sounding almost teasing. You looked at him again and shivered. “Y’a got nothin’ to be scared of…” Your jaw tensed and you did your best to glare at him. He clearly held back a smirk, glancing at your Dad before sighing and shrugging. “I mean, I won't blame ya if ya lie, my kid's a dick, I wouldn't put it past ya ta say he
forced himself on ya…”

“Why would I do that?” you asked calmly. He shrugged again. “Some people actually care about his wellbeing, you know?”

“And by some people you mean you?” he guessed. You licked your lips.

“Should mean you too, but who am I to pass moral judgement?” you said, glaring at him. This time he didn't hold back his smirk. You quirked an eyebrow, then looked at your Mom “Can you tell the police that Henry's innocent? He saved me, he didn't do anything to me. A-And can I see Patrick? I wanna see Patrick…”

It took a bit more convincing for your second request, but eventually you were cleared to take out your IV and get dressed enough to go down and see Patrick. As soon as you were dressed, you were brought towards Patrick's room. Officer Bowers was nearby through the entire process, and waited by the door to Patrick's room before you went in.

“You're right to be scared’a me,” he whispered to you, glancing at your parents who were sitting in the chairs across the hall. “You're lucky I didn't tell your Daddy about you're little fuck-buddy thing with the boys… what with that bitchy attitude you got goin’, I could’a said a few things.”

“What, like how you touched me?” you countered in a whisper of your own. He raised an eyebrow and licked his lower lip nervously, glancing at your parents again and shifting his stance. “Tell anyone about me and Henry, and I’ll get you a sexual assault charge.”

“You grow them balls any bigger, girl, it's gonna make it all the easier to kick ya where it hurts,” he warned. “See who has the upperhand then, little bitch.”

He smiled weakly towards your parents and nodded his goodbye before storming off down the hall. You glanced back at them, seeing their concerned faces, and you smiled, before opening the door to Patrick's room and going inside.

You noticed that no one was in the room with him. All the curtains were drawn over the windows, and when you closed the door he opened one eye.
“You're awake?” you asked softly, going over to him. “The doctor said you haven't woken up yet.”

“Please, like I'd miss the chance to get stabbed by a bunch of needles and feel ‘em sew my skin up,” he chuckled weakly. He winced and moved to sit up. “It takes a lot more than a little oxy to knock me out…” He swore under his breath.

“Hey, stop, just stay laying down,” you insisted, hurrying over to him and touching his shoulder. He hissed and you quickly pulled your hand away, surprised that he had responded at all.

“Those fuckers got me good,” he explained. “Left a tooth in my shoulder and everything.”

“Holy shit,” you gasped.

“I know, right?” he chuckled. He closed his eyes tightly. “The docs were confused as hell, I’ll tell you that.”

“Did you tell them?” you wondered.

“No. Did you?”

“I didn't know what to say,” you explained. He coughed slightly and lay his head back.

“They won't understand, baby…” He sighed. You looked down nervously, and he cleared his throat. “You're the only person who's come to see me.”

You frowned. “What about your parents?”

“Mom’s visiting family in Japan,” he told you. You looked shocked. “I'm half Asian, can't you tell?”

“No, I know, Patrick, I've seen your parents. And you told me yesterday, remember?” you
reminded him. He thought, then laughed as he remembered his ‘half-Asian cock’ joke. “But… I mean, I didn't know you were Japanese, I guess. Why didn't you go with them?”

“I went when I was little, my Baba and Jiji are fuckin’ strict as all hell, and told my parents that they should be the ones raising me. Think they'd have a heart attack if they saw me now,” he laughed. You sighed and pulled up a chair to sit next to him. “Plus, I think American girls are hotter. Y’all have nice fat asses to look at.”

“Glad to see you're okay,” you chuckled. He licked his lips and stared at you. “Do you… remember that we kissed.”

“Of course I do,” he said softly.

You nodded and played with the arms of the chair. “Why did you do that?” you asked.

“I was about to die, I wanted kissing you to be the last thing that happened to me,” he explained. You blushed. “It was nice, wasn't it?”

You stared at him then looked at your lap. “Yeah, it was…” you agreed. He raised an eyebrow and waited for you to say more. “B-But it can't ever happen again.”

“What can't?” he wondered.

“Us kissing,” you explained. He seemed to think about this for a moment, then he pouted.

“You don't think I'm a good kisser?” he teased, making a kissy face. “Maybe I can give you a ride on that half-Asian cock after all, to make up for my sucky kissing skills?”

You scoffed “Oh my God, Patrick, I have a boyf--,” you started, before freezing and feeling your eyes water. His face went blank and you sniffled, wiping your eyes quickly. “We, um… we can't ever tell him about… about you kissing me, or me… reciprocating…”

“Well duh,” he scoffed. “I made it out alive, I don't have a death wish.” You crossed your arms
and looked down. “But I mean…. You don’t have a boyfriend anymore, what’d be the harm of us getting together?”

“Patrick…” was all you could say. He shrugged and closed his eyes tightly before yawning. “Do you need me to leave so that you can rest?”

“No, no, I want you to stay,” he insisted. “But if you could get a nurse and tell ‘em I need more painkillers. They’re thirty minutes late.”

“I don’t think you need anymore painkillers, Pat,” you sighed, standing up. “But yeah, I will.”

“Are you gonna come back after you tell them?” he wondered quickly. You blinked.

“If you want me to…” you agreed.

“I do. I wanna keep talking to you,” he explained. You smiled lightly and nodded, opening the door and walking towards one of the doctors in the hall.

He watched you as you told the doctor about his medication, and he licked his lips in excitement.

You didn’t remember… how interesting…

You remembered the kiss sure, but you didn’t remember anything after it… You thought all that had happened was the kiss…

He tried to decide whether or not to try jogging your memory about what had happened in that odd stretch of time between the moment your lips had touched and whenever you had both come back to your senses… he couldn’t believe that you couldn’t remember, he didn’t think he could ever forget it. How you had kissed him so softly, how you had touched him so gently… how you felt on the inside….

Now wasn’t the ideal time to get a hard on, what with the thinnest of thin blankets covering his body, but what could he do? He just hoped you wouldn’t notice when you came back in. He
decided he wouldn’t tell you for now, feign innocence until you knew that there was something for him to be guilty of.

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Henry sighed heavily as he walked out of the police station behind his Dad. His Dad turned to glare down at him and he looked down quickly.

“What were you boys doin’ down there with that girl, kid?” he asked coldly. Henry shook his head.

“We weren't doin’ nothin’, Dad. I already told you and I already told the cops: we was messin’ with this lard-ass new kid and Y/N came along and got all up in our business. Then the kid ran off and we started chasin’ after him. I didn't know Y/N followed us, I thought she was still on the road. Didn't know she followed Patrick till Belch came back and told me and Vic. Me and Belch and Vic waited up at the bridge for Patrick and he never came back, so we started lookin’, none of us hurt Y/N, or Patrick, we don't know what happened.”

“You don't know what happened?” he repeated.

“Yes, Dad, I swear to God,” he insisted. His Dad let out a harsh breath.

“Now why do I find that hard to believe, you little shit?” he mumbled. Henry gulped and kept his eyes down. “Whatever did happen, you're lucky your girlfriend covered for you. I would’a let your dumbass get thrown in jail, if I were her.” Henry took a shaky breath, holding himself back from giving him a snappy response.

“She ain't my girlfriend…” he told him softly. He heard his Dad laugh and he gulped.

“She ain't? Can't say that's a surprise,” he laughed. “What'd I say the other night, huh? She's too good for you. She was wastin’ her time on a scrawny little idiot like you. She'd be better off with any'a your other friends, honestly. Hockstetter's at least a clever kid, and Huggins ain't smart but he's strong and got a good head on his shoulders. I ain't gonna mention that little blond twink you insist on keepin’ around.”

“Dad…”
“You don't deserve a girl like her, Henry. She's smart, and nice, and fuckin’ sexy… people like you don't get a perfect woman like that. You don't get to be the thing holdin’ her back from the life she deserves,” he continued. “You’d take a girl like that and waste her away to nothin’… So what I’m sayin’ is, don’t be a fuckin’ crybaby ’cause she broke it off with you. Fuckin’ man up and work on yourself. Maybe one day you'll be the kinda person somebody could love…” He looked him up and down as if he didn't believe that would ever happen, then he turned and started walking towards the car.

Henry sighed and looked down, keeping his head down as he walked after his Dad. Deep down, he knew he was right. He had known all along that you were too good for him, that he was holding you back and that nobody would ever really love him. It still sucked to hear though.

But then, of course… you had said you loved him… several times… and as mad as he was that you had broken up with him so inconsiderately, he also wanted to talk this out with you… sort of. It was more that he wanted to ask you why the fuck you hadn't let him talk. He wanted to tell you that you were wrong. That he did love you back and you had been really silly to just go off on him like that…

“Hey, Dad?” he asked as his Dad got into his cruiser. His Dad turned to look at him, holding the door. “Can I wait here for Belch? I wanna see if he’ll bring me to the hospital to check on Patrick and Y/N…”

“You’re gonna be back tonight?” he questioned harshly. Henry nodded curtly and his Dad sighed. “Fine. If you’re gonna be back late tonight, you make sure you keep it down, you wake me up every fuckin’ time, dumbass.” He got in the cruiser and slammed the door, rolling down the window as soon as it was on. “You stay away from the girl, kid. She’s got a second chance at a better guy, and you shouldn’t try to force somethin’ that ain’t ever gonna be there.”

Without another word, he backed out of the parking spot, speeding off and leaving Henry behind. Henry sighed and walked over to the police station again, sitting on the curb and lighting a cigarette while he waited for Vic and Belch to come out. He hoped that Belch would be able to bring him to see you. Honestly, he wanted nothing more than to get you back. He had been so cruel to you earlier… he needed to apologize, maybe work things out. Things had gone over pretty smoothly the last time the two of you had broken up, and after the crazy things that had happened today, he figured the two of you would come back together seamlessly.

“I sure hope Patrick's okay…” Henry heard Belch say hesitantly as he and Vic walked out of the police station
“We could go see him. I wanna check on Y/N, too, I wonder what happened,” Vic agreed. He glanced over and stopped when he saw Henry standing up. “Hey, Hank, everything okay?”

Belch quickly turned to look at Henry and stood up straight. “Yeah, what happened in there?” he asked.

“They just asked a bunch’a bullshit questions, asked if we raped her ’n shit,” he explained with a shrug. “What about you?”

“Yeah, they thought we hurt her or somethin’, but then they let us go,” Belch nodded.

Vic crossed his arms. “We wanted to go see her and Patrick,” he said. “Maybe they can explain what happened.”

“Yeah, maybe… let’s go,” he ordered, walking towards Belch's car. He didn't see Vic and Belch look at each other after he passed them, getting into the driver's seat and closing the door just as the two of them reached the car.

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The boys waited for each other to sign in, then they all walked down the hall that the nurse had directed them in.

Henry saw your parents sitting out in the waiting area, and they made eye contact with him, making him freeze. Vic and Belch stopped behind him, and he cleared his throat.

“We uh… we wanted to see Patrick. And Y/N…” he explained nervously. Your parents glanced at each other. “We ain't heard nothin’, are they okay?”

“They're fine,” your Dad spoke up. “They're both awake, she's in his room now. Tell her it’s getting late and that we need to get home...” Henry blinked and he felt his friends hesitate.

“She's outta the hospital?”
“No. She’s visiting him,” he explained, sounding rather upset about that. He stood up and Henry felt Belch and Vic hesitate behind him even more, but he stood his ground, staring at your Dad patiently as he walked up to him. “I don’t know what you boys did to her out there—”

“We ain’t do nothin’, we told the police everythin’ we know, if you wanna know what happened, you’re gonna have to ask her, that’s what we’re here to do,” he snapped at him. No one said anything for a minute, then your Dad laughed under his breath and shrugged, walking back over towards your Mom and crossing his arms.

Henry looked back at his friends and nodded for them to follow him. The three boys walked up to Patrick’s room, Henry opening the door and letting Belch catch it behind him to let Vic in. You looked up as soon as the door open, and Henry saw your face pale before you looked back down.

“Hey, look who it is,” Patrick greeted, his voice slightly slurred. “It’s my best friends, nice of you to show up.”

“Hey, they showed up,” you spoke up quietly.

“Yeah, shut the fuck up, Hockstetter,” Henry scoffed, pulling up the other visitor chair and sitting in it backwards on the other side of his friend’s hospital bed. “We were stuck in the police station tryin’ a explain your fuckin’ mess.”

“Yeah, what happened down there, anyway?” Vic asked curiously. Patrick didn’t say anything, looking over at you in amusement.

“Wanna explain what happened?” he suggested. You looked startled.

“Me? Why do I have to explain, I don’t know any more than you,” you hissed. You felt Henry’s eyes on you and you quickly looked back down. “I-I don’t know… it didn’t even feel… real…”

“What didn’t?” Henry pressed.

You shook your head. “Everything. I-I can barely remember being down there, I just…” I
remember we felt trapped... and I thought we were gonna die…” you told them.

“Yeah, me too,” Patrick agreed.

“Did you see him?” Vic wondered. You looked up at him. “The guy that’s been doing this… you know… killing kids?”

You frowned and looked at Patrick, who had his eyes closed and his brow furrowed in thought. “There wasn’t anyone else down there… just us and…” he trailed off and laughed, opening his eyes. “This town is *fucked*, dude, I’ll tell ya…”

“Well what the fuck happened, dumbass?” Henry snapped. “Y’all ain’t makin’ any fuckin’ sense, just tell us what the fuck happened!”

“Calm down, Henry,” you tried. He glanced over at you and hesitated slightly before sitting back. “We’re telling you: we don’t *know* what happened…”

No one said anything for a few moments, then Patrick let out a long sigh. Belch cleared his throat and crossed his arms. “So, uh... how ya feelin’?” he wondered. Patrick struggled to lay down a little more and he chuckled.

“I shouldn’t even be awake,” he explained quietly. “I had to get filled with somebody else’s blood ‘cause I almost ran outta my own.”

“Holy shit,” Vic gasped. Patrick hummed and closed his eyes. “Do you need to rest? We can come visit you tomorrow if you need some sleep…”

“You guy’s’ll come visit me?” he asked tauntingly, yawning. “You’re so sweet…”

Henry stood up, keeping his eyes on you for a moment before looking at Vic and Belch. “Can you guys wait for me outside...? I need a minute,” he told them. They nodded and Belch told you he hoped you felt better. Vic tried to say goodbye to Patrick but the boy didn’t respond, clearly knocked out by the narcotics being pumped into his veins.
As soon as the two boys left, Henry glanced at Patrick, poking his cheek to see if he would wake up. When Patrick’s head fell limply to the side, he cleared his throat and stuck his hands in his pockets, looking at you.

“So how’re you feelin’?” he asked, trying to sound casual.

“Fine,” you said honestly. “Just my arm hurts… and I’m exhausted, but… I’m alive, right?”

“Right,” he agreed. You looked down and touched your injured arm gently.

“Thank you, by the way,” you told him softly. He didn’t respond, so you looked up at his confused expression. “For saving me… and him, I thought… I thought we were gonna die…”

“I wouldn’t let you die,” he said quickly. You smiled weakly and looked down. “I, uh… can we talk?”

“About us?”

“Yeah…”

“Of course we can,” you sighed, looking up at him. “I’m sorry--”

“I just wanted--”

You stared at each other, thrown off that you had both started speaking at the same time, and you shook your head. “You go first, I said enough,” you insisted quietly.

He grunted in agreement and looked down at Patrick again, clearing his throat. “I just wanted to say…” he started, looking up at you and trailing off. He sighed through his nose and licked his teeth. “The thing is… no, it’s just--” He growled in his throat. “Why didn’t you let me say anythin’, Y/N? I didn’t even get a chance to talk and you just decided everythin’. You had no idea how I felt or what I wanted, ‘cause I didn’t know. I still dunno what I want…”
Henry shook his head and looked at you, letting you know that now was the time to answer. You took a breath and looked down. “Henry, I’m so sorry,” you told him. “I don’t know what came over me, I-- I just felt so hurt all of a sudden, I felt scared…” You looked up at him. “Because I love you, and I finally felt ready to tell you, and you didn’t say anything about it, you just acted like I didn’t say anything, and it hurt me. I was afraid that you didn’t have feelings for me at all, that you just wanted to use me, and I couldn’t handle it, and--” You cut yourself off and took a breath. “And I dunno… I just know that I wanna be with you, and I was stupid to do that to you…”

“Yeah,” he mumbled, looking at the blinded window in thought. He didn’t say anything for a long minute, then looked back at you. “But maybe this is good… maybe we ain’t supposed to be with each other.” He saw your expression go from hopeful to saddened, and you looked down at your lap. He cleared his throat, forcing himself to remember what his Dad had told him: you deserved better than him.

“We are supposed to be together,” you tried, standing up and going to the other side of the bed towards him. He tensed up as you took his hand. “I love spending time with you, and I love getting to think of you as mine--”

“We ain’t supposed to be together, Peach, trust me,” he laughed nervously, staring down at your hand in his. He couldn’t find the heart to let it go, wanting to hold onto you just a little longer. “I ain’t got what it takes to be with you, think about it… you can’t even tell your family about us, how long’s that supposed to last?”

“Well then we’ll tell them,” you insisted, moving closer to him and touching his cheek. He closed his eyes, wanting to just feel you near him. “I don’t wanna be a secret anymore, either, Henry, I want to be yours and I want the world to know it…”

You had no idea how much you were killing him right now, how hard you were making this for him… he had to use every ounce of strength he had to deny you what you were asking for.

“I mean, think about it, baby, you really wanna spend your time with me? I mean, I had a lotta fun with you, and I liked having you around, and maybe I even--” he started. He opened his eyes to see you staring at him hopefully again, and he rolled his eyes at himself, letting go of your hand and covering his face with a growl. “I dunno, I think this is what was supposed to happen…”

You didn’t respond, so he risked uncovering his face and looking at you. Disappointment. Hurt. Heartbreak. Whatever was on your face hurt his heart a little… a lot.
“Just say you love me, Henry,” you pleaded quietly, putting your hands on his arms. He sighed and
looked at the ceiling. “Please, just once…. Just say you love me, then tell me honestly that you
don’t think we should be together…."

It was torture. Maybe this is what his Dad had been planning, maybe he knew this was going to
happen, and that’s why he was so insistent on making sure the two of you weren’t together.
Because it was going to kill Henry, in the end, and what more did his Dad want, really?

“I… I love you…” he admitted, more quietly than he meant it. He paused, because his words
caught in his throat when he saw the way that you flushed at those words, how your hands gripped
his arms hopefully and you smiled softly at his hesitation. He had to close his eyes for a minute and
clear his throat. He couldn’t let your beauty and your sweetness control him… He was stronger
than that. He made sure his eyes were open as he continued.

“But I really don’t think we should be together,” he said, watching your eyes start to water and
trying his hardest to use it as fuel to hurt you… it was what he was best at after all, using other
people’s fear and pain to fuel his own anger, to hurt them more. Why not hurt you just this once so
that he could never do it while he called you his… because hurting what was his was so much
worse than just hurting some girl.

“I think it would be for the best if we both just… forgot about what happened at the Quarry, and
forgot about what happened the other night, and… and let’s just try and forget about the last few
months, okay, because it was nothin’, Y/N, alright? We’re just two kids who needed somebody to
fuck, and now we should move on, alright?”

You hesitated, more tears welling up in your eyes. “But… but you said you loved me--”

“Yeah, you said it too,” he scoffed. “You said it and broke up with me, I’m just returnin’ the favor.
Off.” He pushed your hands off of him and backed up, clenching his hands into fists and breathing
in and out quickly. “I only just said it ‘cause you told me to, that’s all. I didn’t mean it. I didn’t
mean it, and I didn’t mean nothin’ I said for the past few months, it was all just a lie. You’re just
some girl, and I’m not interested in settlin’ for just some girl. I’m sorry if I gotcher hopes up
wantin’ to talk about it--”

“You did…” you told him quietly. “Henry, why’re you doing this?”
He stared at you, blinking slowly and feeling anger tingling all across his body. “It’s for the best, Y/N, trust me… you belong with somebody like Tommy Jones, and I belong with… well, I don’t know yet. Guess I’m gonna have to fuck around with a bunch’a girls till I can figure it out.” You shook your head slowly, and he forced himself to chuckle. “I won’t get jealous if you don’t, okay? And I won’t tell nobody we was ever a thing. ‘ll make sure the boys don’t say nothin’ neither.”

“You really don’t care about me?” you wondered, sounding completely broken. He huffed and crossed his arms.

“Sorry,” he told you. You sucked in a breath suddenly and quickly brought your hands to your eyes to wipe your tears away, turning and walking back over to your seat next to Patrick’s bed.

“No, no, don’t be, um…” you started, moving your hands away from your eyes and looking up at him with a wry smile. “I should have known that, I guess… I’m sorry, if I wasted your time…. But I guess you were probably happy to have someone stupid to sleep with for so long, right?” You scoffed and looked down. “You should probably look for a new tutor for next year… I don’t really feel comfortable helping you…”

“Sure thing,” he nodded, staring at you with a longing look that you weren’t looking at. “Tell him we’ll be back to visit soon, okay? Feel better…”

He quickly started retreating towards the door. “Fuck you, Henry,” you hissed. He stopped and looked at you. “You’re an asshole, you know that? I can’t believe I fell for you.”

“I can’t believe it either,” he said honestly, turning to look at you and crossing his arms. “You wanna be mad, that’s fine, I don’t blame you--”

“I’m not mad,” you snapped, standing up and turning to look at him. “I’m fucking livid. How can you just ask me to act like nothing happened between us? How can you just leave like that? Are you really that heartless?”

“Yeah, I am, Y/N, you don’t know that yet? I’m a fuckin’ asshole, I’m known for that,” he said coldly. You looked taken aback. “I know you’re a girl, and you’re more emotional and shit, but I’m done talkin’ about this… see you around.”

Without another word, he opened the door and walked out into the hall towards his friends. Your parents stood up when they saw you in the doorway, and Bill stared at Henry and his gang wearily as Henry encouraged them to leave.
“It’s getting really late, hun, let’s get you back to your room so we can say goodnight,” your Mom said gently, putting a hand on your back. You glanced at Henry and shook your head.

“I wanna stay with Patrick a little longer,” you told them. They looked at each other, and you saw Henry glance back at you. “I can walk myself back to my room a little later, I don’t need you to wait up for me….”

“I don’t know… I don’t feel comfortable leaving you alone with him…” your Dad pointed out.

“What’s he gonna do, he’s bedridden? I trust him, Dad, don’t worry, please,” you insisted, going on your toes and kissing his cheek. “Get home safe, okay? I should be out of here tomorrow or the next day, you can come visit…” You turned and kissed your Mom’s cheek and hugged her, then walked over to Bill and kissed his head. “Love you, Billy…”

He nodded in confusion and you walked back into Patrick’s room, seeing his nurse walking over with a rolling tray of medication and medical equipment to check on him. You left the door open for her, and waved to your thrown off parents and brother before they walked away. You didn’t know why Henry was still waiting around with his friends, so you sat down as the nurse came in and took Patrick’s hand in yours, telling the nurse that he had fallen asleep a little while ago.

You knew that Henry saw you hold Patrick’s hand, and you heard him scoff and say, “Fuck her, come on guys, let’s go home,” to his friends before leading them off. You caught Vic’s confused eye before he followed his leader out of the hospital.

You watched the nurse check Patrick’s vital signs for a bit, then looked at the sleeping boy next to you, absentmindedly running your thumb over the back of his hand as you held it. You listened to his heart monitor beeping in time with his chest rising and falling under the blanket, watched over him as he lay in a rare state of vulnerability.

Maybe you could find comfort in him, you thought. If Henry didn’t care about you, maybe Patrick would… even as you thought it you knew it could never be… he could be a good friend, though, that’s all you could ask of him...

The nurse told you to get some rest as she rolled her cart out and closed the door behind herself, and you moved your chair closer to Patrick’s bed as you started silently crying.
“Did you mean anything when you kissed me? Or were you using me too?” you whispered to him, knowing that he wouldn’t hear you, nor would he answer. “It was a nice kiss, though…” You sighed and put your elbow on his bed, resting your head in your hand and closing your eyes, your hand still holding his.
When Patrick woke up in the early hours of the next morning, and his eyes opened to the sight of you laying with your head on the edge of his bed, your hand loosely holding his, he felt something in his chest that he had never in his life felt before.

It was like his heart skipped a beat-- in fact he heard it jump and speed up on his heart monitor. Even in the darkness of the room, he could see your gentle sleeping form, almost certainly uncomfortable in the position that you were in, but you had stayed… you had stayed just for him…

Patrick didn’t feel things, per say, he merely thought them. At least up until this point. The pounding in his chest was new. He figured it meant he was feeling something, and he knew it wasn’t horny, he knew all too well what that felt like.

He wondered… was it… love? Is that what he felt when he looked at you? He didn’t know if he was capable of such a thing, but he was certain in that moment that he needed you to be his. He didn’t care how long it took, he would make it so that you woke up next to him every morning, that everyday your lips were the ones that he would kiss, and every night he would bury his cock deep inside you. It had to be you… you were the closest thing to reality that he had ever found…

He very gently and slowly moved his hand out from under yours, and brought his hand to touch
your hair, feeling you stir slightly and take a breath before going still again. You were so fucking beautiful… and Henry was so fucking stupid for letting you go so easily. Of course he had been listening to your conversation, and you were right to be mad at him. Henry was a confusing beast, but to act like he didn’t want to be broken up, to say that he loved you back, only to tell you that he hadn’t meant anything that had happened over the last few months? Not only was that a lie in itself, but it didn’t make any sense, especially for Henry. In any other situation, he would never let go of something that actually cared to stick around him. But he had let you go so carelessly…

Patrick was determined to keep it that way. He was determined to keep the two of you apart. After all, if anyone was going to wear you down until you were nothing but an empty shell, it was going to be him, not Henry. He was going to make you his, and make you need him the way he needed you.

But not yet. Everything would fall into place with time...

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As you expected, it took about two days for the doctors to clear you to leave the hospital. You stayed with Patrick every chance you got, staying right by his side until your doctor told you that he needed to check up on you. As soon as you were cleared, and prescribed a pain medication for your arm, and escorted out of your hospital room, you went right back to him.

It was difficult, and it made you feel sick to your stomach in confusion, but you felt a strange connection to Patrick now… whatever had happened in the sewers-- and you couldn’t help it, but the memory was already starting to fade --had connected the two of you. The closeness that you had felt, the way his lips had felt against yours… it had been strangely beautiful, and terrifyingly overwhelming. And it made you feel incredibly guilty.

You loved Henry… no matter what he said, no matter how much it killed you that he had told you he didn’t love you back, you loved him with all your heart, and you were certain that you always would. Your connection to him was so strong, and it had happened so suddenly. You figured that’s just how love worked. It crept up and attacked out of nowhere, smothering you and overtaking you until it was all you could feel, whether the other person felt it in return or not…

So you couldn’t understand why this connection to Patrick was almost just as strong, and felt so similar. You couldn’t understand it at all. He didn’t seem to have any more of a clue than you did, often making jokes about how you seemed to want to be around him more now, not that he minded, followed by a quick remark about how he wanted you to stay.
“Why do you want me to stay?” you wondered, about a week after being released from the hospital. He was doing a lot better now, able to sit up with less struggle, and able to move himself enough to eat on his own. The first few days he had admitted to you that he hadn’t eaten just to spite the nurses and doctors, and you had immediately insisted that he eat something and stop trying to hurt himself. So now he was slowly eating a cup of cherry jello with a little plastic spoon.

He pulled the spoon out of his mouth and stared at the gelatin in the cup. “I dunno, who else would stay with me?” he pointed out calmly, glancing at you. You shrugged and glanced down at the healing cuts on his arms.

“I mean, Henry… and Belch and Vic, too, they wanted to see you,” you reminded him.

“Yeah, they came back on Wednesday,” he told you. “In the afternoon, after you left.”

“What about your parents? I would have thought they would rush back to see you as soon as they heard you were hurt,” you pressed. He chuckled.

“My mom called, asked if I was okay,” he shrugged. “I said I was, she said to be more careful, and she’s still coming back at the end of next week.” He stuck another spoonful of jello into his mouth.

“What about your Dad?” you asked. He raised an eyebrow and shrugged. As soon as he swallowed he rolled his head to the side to crack his neck.

“I dunno,” he mumbled. “He’s at home, guess this wasn’t a big enough deal to come see me.”

“Wait, your Dad’s at home?”

“That’s what I just said,” he agreed, almost coldly. “I don’t care, I haven’t talked to him in over ten years, I wasn’t expecting him to come see me.”

“Oh…” you said in surprise. He blinked and sighed.

“Anyway, I like you better than all’a them combined. That’s why I want you to stay,” he explained quickly, taking another bite of his dessert. You nodded and looked down at your hands.
You supposed there was a lot that you didn’t know about Patrick. It hadn’t occurred to you that even though his family was on the richer side, maybe they weren’t all that supportive or present. It hadn’t occurred to you that maybe he was so clingy to people-- either Henry or yourself, specifically--because he was all alone and you were the only people to give him any attention. It didn’t occur to you until right now that maybe he was so touchy-feely because he was starved of anyone’s love, whether he knew it or not…

“I like being around you,” you told him honestly, standing up and sitting back down on his bed after letting him finish eating.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, you’re not so bad,” you teased.

He smiled wryly and stared at you for a moment. “Let’s go out,” he suggested calmly. You glanced at him and scoffed.

“Shut up,” you told him.

“No, I’m serious. Let me take you out to dinner when I finally get outta here,” he insisted, reaching over and touching your leg. You blinked in surprise. “Anywhere you wanna go, then we can walk around town or something.”

“Patrick…” you sighed, looking out the door nervously. You weren’t sure if you could do another eight months of secrecy like you had with Henry--especially since the breakup was still a fresh wound. Especially since you were still in love with him…

“That’s not a no,” he pointed out hopefully. “Can I take that as a yes?”

“I just… I don’t know if I’m ready to start a whole nother relationship so soon, you know… I still really care about him,” you explained apologetically. No matter how hard he tried to hide it, you could tell that he was annoyed by this, his tongue running against his top teeth and his gaze moving away from you.
“That’s fine, just let me take you out to dinner, then. It doesn’t have to be a date,” he tried. You opened your mouth to deny him again, but he cut you off. “To thank you for saving my life, you know? It’s the least I can do… and I wanna hang out with you more anyway, if you won’t go out with me will you at least let me be your friend?”

You thought about this. You supposed there was nothing wrong with that. He was going to try pulling something whether you went to dinner with him as a date or as a friend, and besides, it couldn’t hurt being friends with him. You were friends with Vic, after all…or at least you hoped you still were, you still had that awful fear that he had been stringing you along to help Henry hurt you… you couldn’t believe that, though, almost as much as you couldn’t believe that the last eight months with Henry had really been for nothing.

And anyway, Patrick seemed to be comfortable with you, and you supposed the two of you could already be considered ‘friends’.

“As long as it’s as friends…” you agreed, smiling lightly. He smirked a little and nodded.

“This’ll give me something to look forward to at least,” he said. “I’m gonna miss you hanging out with us…”

“Yeah, I’m gonna miss it too…” you mumbled, looking down. He sighed and adjusted himself to sit up more.

“Henry and the guys are planning a little thing for me when I get out, I kinda want you there,” he added. You looked at him and shrugged.

“I dunno, I don’t think he’ll want me there,” you pointed out.

“Screw him, this is about me. I want you there, you’re gonna be there,” he insisted. You looked at him worriedly and he raised an eyebrow. “Please? I really want you there.”

You took a breath then nodded reluctantly. “Fine…” you agreed. “It’s gonna be really weird though, you know that right? Me being there is gonna make things awkward…”

Patrick chuckled. “That’s what Henry said when I said I wanted you there,” he admitted. You looked surprised. “Then he said he didn’t care, as long as you stay out of the way. You won’t be in
the way though, baby, you’re tougher than you look.”

You gave him a nervous look then nodded. You just hoped that whatever they were planning wasn’t too dangerous, or too violent…

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Henry’s back felt like it was on fire. He had expected to get a beating for losing his knife, he had had no doubt about it happening, and had held off telling his Dad as long as possible to avoid it. But the beating had been bad, worse than usual.

It didn’t help at all that he was absolutely starving. It felt like something was clawing at the walls of his stomach, and the sounds it made were like an animal begging to be fed. He fucking hated it.

His Mama had once told him that his stomach made the loudest noises she had ever heard, and he knew she hadn’t been kidding. The only other person he had heard with a stomach that growled like his was Belch, but his only did it for a little while, when he first started getting hungry. Belch also got food as soon as he got home. Henry's stomach growled from the first pang of hunger, and the growls only got louder for days and days until his father finally decided to get him food.

He hated it so much. It was a punishment his father liked to use more often than most others, about as much as the beatings. But he usually didn't know what he did wrong. He would come home, see that the fridge had nothing but beer and whatever was on his dad's shelf, and his cupboard was bare. That's how he knew that the next few days were gonna be hell.

It was okay during the school year, his friends always had enough extra food to at least tide him over until lunch the next day. The weekends were almost too long to handle, two full days where nobody brought lunch with them, so he had to suffer from lunch on Friday until lunch on Monday.

But summers were the absolute worst. He swore his dad tested to see how long he could last before he begged him. He never addressed it, never told him how long it was going to be until he got him food again. When he was younger, before he had figured out how to safely steal, he had gone two full weeks with nothing but water. It had hurt like hell, everyday, and it had weakened him significantly, but he knew now that it was fight and steal, kiss his Dad's ass, or die.

His Dad had cleared out his cupboard this morning, after Henry had finally told him that he lost his knife. He had figured if he told him right before he left for work, it would get him out of a beating, at least right away. Granted, he had been right, but he still got all of his food taken away.
So he had been at home all day with nothing to eat, and hours worth of chores to do, and it had left him so hungry that it hurt to move.

And then his Dad had come home from work.

He really couldn’t remember the last time his Dad had beaten him so badly. He had used the buckle of his belt and everything, smacking and cutting him up until his skin was raw and bleeding. Now it felt like he couldn’t move at all…

His stomach roared loudly at him and he reflexively tensed up, causing him to hiss in pain and snivel as the cuts on his back were pulled back open and the open air hit them with a dizzying burn.

He tried to think about something else, anything else. Patrick was out of the hospital today, he and the guys were going to get together to celebrate. You were invited too, of fucking course. Patrick just had to have you there, he had practically demanded it. You were just going to slow them down, and besides that it was going to be weird as hell having you there after everything the two of you had been through…

*You fuckin’ bitch.*

You had been extremely worried about Patrick after what had happened down in the sewer. Whatever had happened. He had never gotten a straight answer out of either of you. It had fucked you and Patrick up pretty bad, yet both of you claimed to have forgotten what happened. Patrick had to get a fucking blood transfusion since he had lost so much blood, for fuck’s sake, and had to get several stitches on his arms and legs and torso. And then there was that sharp tooth-like shard in his shoulder… people don’t just forget stuff like that. Eventually, Henry was going to force one of you to explain exactly what had happened, but for now he could tell that neither of you wanted to talk about it.

His stomach growled again and he scoffed, sitting up slowly and carefully, whimpering at the pain it caused his back. He wondered what you were up to right now…. Probably at the hospital at Patrick’s bedside, fawning over him like he was some delicate little thing while the doctor’s cleared him to go home. It was bullshit, Patrick had been ready to go home a week ago. He had been perfectly fine when Henry and the guys had gone to see him, he said he felt good as new, in fact, he just liked the amount of painkillers they were giving him, and wasn’t ready to leave…

He couldn’t even get through the thought as his stomach roared at him again. He could smell
something coming from the kitchen and he swore to himself, quickly moving to close his door in a vain attempt to block out the smell. It was the worst torture. His Dad would cook for himself—well, he would heat something up for himself in the microwave. He always bought the premade dinners that smelled the best, just to drive him crazy. It was definitely something with meat, it smelled smoky and juicy and warm…

He licked his lips and closed his eyes, trying to force himself to think of anything but food. But it was so hard, with his mouth watering the way it was, and his belly begging him to eat.

He had never known any other person that didn’t eat for as long as he was forced to. At least not without control. He tensed up, thinking about how Vic sometimes starved himself on purpose, complaining about his chubby hips or his big thighs or whatever. It made him wanna kill Vic sometimes. And then, on the other hand, Belch would go through phases where he would eat so much that his mom would bring him to the doctor because she was scared that his stomach might explode, since he said it felt like it might. He knew Belch couldn't help that, and he never rubbed it in his face. His body would just get uncontrollably hungry, and he couldn't stop himself. Vic didn't rub his issue in his face either, he always tried to be quiet about it, to keep it out of Henry’s attention.

The only person who rubbed anything in his face was Patrick, which was to be expected. He would complain that he had spent the last of the money his parents had left him and now all he had to eat was leftovers, or box Mac and cheese, or a full kitchen of other things. Or he would talk about how his parents had made some expensive dish that he didn't like, and how they were so inconsiderate of what he wanted. Henry had actually punched Patrick a few times over his spoiled attitude, but he had figured out that it only spurred the other boy on.

*The fuckin’ asshole.*

Patrick actually wasn’t the best friend. He was manipulative, and bratty, and pushed way to many boundaries for Henry’s comfort. He had even tricked him into… no, he didn’t want to think about that. He hadn’t told Vic and Belch, he hadn’t told you, and he never would… he couldn’t have anyone thinking that he was… *gay*. Which he absolutely wasn’t. He had just been drunk, and had had his guard down, and Patrick had taken advantage of that. And the next day he had gotten that blowjob from you in the locker room, and that had gotten him off even more, and that proved it didn’t it? If a girl made him cum harder than a guy could, it made him straight? That made sense, he was sticking to that.

“Henry!”

He sat up straight when he heard his Dad yelling to him and he hesitated, feeling a cold wave of fear rush over his body over the burning pain, and his mind shut out every other thought except the
things that his Dad would want to hear. His Dad usually only yelled to him for two reasons: either he was about to get beat up again, or Belch and Vic were here. He was going to pray for the latter, and the rumbling sound of the Trans-Am’s engine near the front of the house answered his prayers.

He stood up carefully and took a deep breath before moving to pull off his shirt, whimpering at the excruciating pain he felt when he lifted his arms up and pulled it weakly over his head. He would need to wear his button up, for sure, he couldn’t move to pull a shirt over his head.

He walked over to his dresser, crying lightly in pain and discomfort as he reached for a tube of antibiotic ointment among his monster truck toys. It reminded him that he couldn’t be a kid, he couldn’t be careless the way he had been with his knife. He wanted to have fun, and enjoy stupid things like monster trucks and wrestling, but he had to remember to be smart, be careful, and be prepared. If he was stupid and reckless, he needed to be prepared to take care of the wounds he would get.

He carefully squeezed some of the white ointment out of the tube, then stiffly reached back, hissing in pain as he gently spread the cream across the open wounds.

As soon as he was satisfied that every cut was covered, his dug through his dirty clothes pile until he found his blue button up. It was a lot easier to get on, and he started buttoning, quickly stepping into his shoes as he walked to his door.

When he opened his door, the delicious smell of his Dad’s food hit him right in the face, making him feel horribly nauseated. He swallowed heavily and walked out timidly into the kitchen, seeing that his Dad was no longer in there. He let out a breath, then took another deep one before walking out to the living room, finishing up the buttons on his shirt.

His Dad was sitting in his chair, his police uniform off, except for his unbuttoned and unzipped pants. His belt was out of the loops, laid still folded on the couch, resting comfortably after being used for beating. The now empty tray of his Dad’s microwave dinner lay with a dirty fork on the cigarette-burned, bottle covered dinner tray table next to his Dad’s chair. Meatloaf with mashed potatoes and corn... fuck, that sounded good.

The Derry Children’s Hour was on the TV, the static-covered, under saturated picture of the outdated television. His Dad hadn’t gotten the TV until ‘81-- the last family in town to buy one, according to a lot of kids at school --and it hadn’t even been a brand new one. Sure, in 1970, it was new and state of the art, but in 1981, it was behind in the game, and didn’t show picture nearly as well as the brightly colored TVs now. The news had even said that in some place in the world, they were testing a new technology called high-definition television, which was supposed to make the picture a lot more clear. Vic’s family had gotten something like that, and so had Gretta Keene’s family. He knew him and his Dad would never get a TV like that, not in a million years.
His Dad never actually watched the Derry Children’s Hour, no matter how severely and seriously he seemed to be staring at it. With a beer in one hand and a cigarette in between the fingers of the other, he was in his own head as opposed to watching what was on the screen. It was a good excuse, to pretend that he was looking at the silly children’s show, when in reality, Henry knew that his father was thinking some dark, demented thoughts…

“What’re you goin’?” his Dad questioned as Henry reached the front door. He paused, thrown off that his Dad was still in the present moment enough to speak to him, even if it sounded uninterested. He turned very slightly towards the bitter man and gulped as he reached for the door handle.

“Out with the guys… Patrick’s outta the hospital, and Belch went to get him so we--”

“Why don’t you get me another beer?” he cut him off, looking over after a slight pause and his eyes falling on Henry’s hand on the door before giving him a cold, expecting look. He wanted him to push, he wanted him to complain that he was about to walk out the door and that he didn’t want to waste his time doing things that his Dad was perfectly capable of doing.

This lazy, evil motherfucker…

Of course Henry didn’t argue. He just kept his gaze on the ground and walked back to the kitchen to get his Dad what he wanted. That’s all he could do. All he could do was keep his Dad happy— or try to, at least --, kiss his ass and bend to his will. He had this awful feeling that it was going to be like this until one of them died… especially without you around… without you, he was certain that he was going to be stuck here for the rest of his life…

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“You’re absolutely positive Henry said she could be here?”

You glanced at Patrick as Vic looked into the backseat at him. Belch sighed and you all looked at him. “He really did, I was there,” he answered for Patrick. “Said he ain’t give a fuck as long as she ain’t in the way.” Vic gave you a nervous look.

“And you’re okay being here?” he added, clearly concerned for your wellbeing as well as his friend’s.
“Of course she is, and it doesn’t fuckin’ matter how Henry feels about it,” Patrick spoke up. “This is celebrating me, and I want her here.”

Vic mumbled something in disagreement, then the four of you looked towards Henry’s run down house as he came out the front door and started walking down the porch. You quickly looked down, then glanced towards the front seat as Henry walked closer.

“Out,” he ordered. You looked towards him, then at Vic when you realized that he was the one being scolded. The blond boy looked taken aback, looking back at Patrick, having thought that Henry would want to sit with his friend… he and Belch both thought that he valued Patrick over them, you were even pretty sure that he put him in a higher place than his other two friends.

“Oh, I-I thought you’d--” Vic started.

“Did I fuckin’ stutter?” Henry snapped. Vic didn’t hesitate before moving up and grabbing the seats to move between them into the back. You felt Patrick’s hand on your waist as he pulled you closer to him, so that you were sharing his seat with him so that Vic could take the passenger side backseat. Henry opened the passenger side door and sat down in the front seat heavily before slamming the door behind him. “Glad to see you back up and about, Hockstetter…”

Not even a glance at you, let alone a hello, but that’s what you had expected. You felt Patrick squeeze at your hip before answering his friend. “Well thanks for the hang out plans, bud, I can tell it’s gonna be a happy day,” Patrick laughed teasingly. Henry didn’t respond. “I’m so glad to have a friend like--”

“Yeah, yeah, don’t jizz yourself over me, it’s just a ride around town,” Henry said shortly, sounding unwilling to talk any more to Patrick. Patrick chuckled through his nose and glanced down at you before looking out at the dirty front yard.

No one said anything for a moment, then Vic gulped. “Did your old man get on you about the knife?” he wondered curiously. Henry visibly tensed up, but shrugged, glancing back at him through the side view mirror.

“Fat fuck knows if he touches me I’ll rip his head off,” he mumbled. Vic looked forward at him nervously, and Belch looked over curiously. Henry glanced over at him. “Now would you fuckin’ drive please, thank you very fuckin’ much?”
Belch quickly sat to face the road, starting up the car. “Sure thing, Henry, where to?” he asked obediently.

Henry thought. “Any ideas, Hockstetter?” he wondered.

“Oh I dunno, let’s go find some kid to fuck around with,” he suggested with a grin. You looked up at him wearily.

“Looks like you might be in luck,” Henry said calmly, leaning back in his seat and looking ahead. You looked forward, seeing Mike Hanlon, a very nice boy whose family owned the big farm at the very edge of Derry, riding his bike down the road with a delivery of fresh sheep meat. Mike was a common target for Henry, and the torment was worse than the average bullying that Henry and his friends inflicted on people, because Mike was black, and his family were more successful farmers. Those two things did not go hand-in-hand according to Henry and his Dad, who you were certain were just bitter about the competition, and you knew they were driven by ignorance and hate. Sometimes you wondered why you cared so much about him...

“Perfect,” Patrick said excitedly, leaning forward to look around the seat.

“Drive,” Henry ordered, not taking his eyes off of his soon to be victim.

Belch put the car into drive quickly, mumbling, “Yeah,” in agreement before stepping on the gas, burning out of the driveway. You held onto the seat in front of you so that you wouldn’t fall back into the seat, and looked at the boys nervously.

You should have guessed that they were going to do something like this. All you could do now was hope that you could do something to stop them from hurting Mike Hanlon too badly.
The Trans-Am made a sharp, swift turn around a bend, causing the tires to skid and a loud screeching sound all around you.

Belch’s hands were firmly on the steering wheel, his eyes just as hungry as Henry’s as their eyes once again caught sight of their soon-to-be prize: Mike Hanlon. The boy on the red bike looked back at the car, the echoing screech of the tires and the roaring engine startling him. He looked completely terrified, and shocked that the car must have been following him. He stood up on the bike to get some more speed, turning another corner towards a neighborhood area near the Barrens, and Belch sped up to follow him.

You saw Henry reach up to grab the handle above the door, his hand clenched closed so tightly that his knuckles were white.

“Faster, Belch,” he ordered harshly, keeping his eyes right on the target. “Don’t you let that n****r outta your sight again. Today’s the day I kill ‘im.”

You stared at the back of his head in disbelief and horror. You had heard Henry say that word before, and you always told him how much you hated it. He tried not to say it too much around you after that. It was hard for him not to slip up, but you could at least see his effort. But now he was saying it in a way you hadn’t really heard. You had heard him throw it around casually, you had
heard him rant and rant about “them” constantly, you had even heard it in real anger. But this was different. The way Henry said it now… it sounded dangerous. It sounded like he was going to kill this boy, really kill him.

You looked up at Patrick, who was watching Henry’s reactions and expressions through the side view mirror out his window, with a slight sneer on his lips. He felt your eyes on him and he looked down at you, winking and setting his hand on your knee. You blushed, and felt the whole area tingle, looking away from him as he spread his legs a little and sat back.

Vic was staring at Patrick’s hand on your leg and looked at you when he caught your eye. He raised an eyebrow and you shook your head. He narrowed his eyes and glanced up at Patrick before looking ahead at Mike.

“I almost got ‘im, Henry!” Belch exclaimed, leaning forward.

“Pull up next to him, I’ll knock him off,” Patrick instructed. Henry chuckled from the front seat, and Patrick moved his hand from your knee to lean out the completely open side of the Trans-Am. You grabbed his shirt to try and pull him back into the car, but he moved too quickly and instead your fingers grabbed him around his belt, now to hold him from falling out of the speeding car.

Patrick leaned over in perfect timing with Belch pulling up to the boy, and he smacked him hard enough in the side of the head to make him jerk the wheels of his bike violently and he slid over onto his side through the gravel filled ditch.

“Oh my God!” you cried in horror, pulling a laughing Patrick into the car again as Belch violently turned the car to a quick stop a little ways ahead of the boy. Mike was just getting himself up and stable again as the Trans-Am screeched to a halt in front of where he and his bike had landed. You could see him staring at the car with a terrified look on his face, and wincing at he grabbed the elbow of the side he had fallen and slid against the gravel and road. You could only imagine that it was roadburned and was causing him an immense amount of pain.

Seeing the he was blocked from going straight, and wasn’t going to be able to turn himself and the bike around quick enough to go back the way he had came before the four horrible boys got out of the car and caught him, Mike dropped the bike and ran as quickly as he could into the woods towards the edge of the barrens.

Henry leapt out of the car first, followed almost immediately by Patrick. Belch took the longest to get out of the car, but Vic jumped right out of the car and looked at Henry for orders.
“Fuckin’ get him!” Henry shouted at him, and Vic immediately darted off, quicker than you had ever seen him run, after the boy. “Belch go, help hold him down!”

Belch took off after Vic, not really as fast, but making good distance nonetheless.

You had gotten out behind Patrick, who had gone over to Mike’s bike and was pocketing a large stack of money that was no doubt what Mike had earned from selling his family’s sheep meat around town.

“Patrick stop, put that back!” you hissed, trying to take it from him. He held it away from you then quickly stuffed it in his jeans pocket. “This is robbery, a-and assault--!”

“Yeah, towards a n****r,” he laughed, looking at you with a wicked grin. You growled and went to slap him but he caught your wrist, pulling you closer to him. “Oh you’re gonna see a whole new side of Henry… you won’t believe what you’ve been fucking for the last eight months--”

“Shut up!” you cried, pulling your wrist away from him and moving away from him. He pressed his lips together to smirk mischievously at you and he winked, and you shook your head in disgust, then looked over at Henry who was waiting by the car, quickly pretending to be looking over his closed pocket knife.

“Look what we got, Hank,” Patrick said excitedly, picking up some of the wrapped raw sheep meat from where it had rolled out of Mike Hanlon’s bicycle basket. “Let’s make him eat it.” Henry looked up and glanced up at him, seeing what he was holding in his hands and smiling tightly. He walked up to him and yanked them from out of his arms as Patrick smirked down at him tauntingly.

Henry visibly tensed up, and stood up straight, moving up the hill and shoving him back. “You think you’re better than me, Hockstetter?” he snapped. Patrick raised an eyebrow excitedly, and Henry dropped the meat to grab Patrick’s shirt. “You think this is funny, motherfucker?! I asked you a goddamn question, you think you’re fuckin’ better than me?!”

“No, Henry, what would make you think that?” he responded innocently. Henry tensed up even more, his face turning red, and he suddenly punched Patrick in the face. It wasn’t hard enough to break any bones or draw any blood, but Patrick’s head flew back from the force of it.
“You think you’re better than me ‘cause you’re fuckin’ my ex?” he spat at him, looking over at you in disgust. “Why would I give a fuck what you do with her? I said she was open season didn’t I?”

You opened your mouth in surprise, and shook your head. “N-No, Henry, no, we’re not--” you tried.

“You think you’re better than me ‘cause you’re fuckin’ my ex?” he spat at him, looking over at you in disgust. “Why would I give a fuck what you do with her? I said she was open season didn’t I?”

“Shut up, stupid whore,” he scoffed before looking back at Patrick. “I don’t give a fuck about her, is that what you wanted me to say?! Is that what you want me to tell her?! She knows that, Patrick, I fuckin’ told her, she don’t mean nothin’ to me, she ain’t ever did, and she ain’t ever will, so if you think you’re gonna use this bitch as leverage over me, or if you think this makes you special for some fuckin’ reason, you’re wrong!”

“I didn’t say nothin’ about her, Henry, what the fuck are you on? We’re not together, she made it pretty clear that’s what she wants, right babydoll?” Patrick laughed, amused by his friend’s outburst. You blinked in confusion, then nodded. His lips curled up into a mischievous smirk, and his gaze darkened. “I bet I could give her pretty good head though, if she’d let me… what’dyou think Henry, you think I could give her pretty good head, huh?”

You blushed darkly, and glanced at Henry to see if he would get angry at this. He maintained his annoyed expression, but seemed to hesitate, and you could see his eyes change slightly. He almost looked afraid…

“I don’t give a fuck what you do to her, dude, just… just keep it outta my fuckin’ face…” Henry grumbled, making quick eye contact with you, before turning quickly and jogging towards his other friends. “Come on, asshole, bring that sheep meat with you!”

Patrick gave you a quick, affirming smile, then leaned down and picked up the meat in one hand, touching your waist with the other. You could hear yelling a little ways ahead of you and you tried to move forward quickly to help Mike, but Patrick’s hand on your waist turned into a grip.

“There’s a party tonight at Jason McCormack’s house tonight, to celebrate tomorrow being the first official day of summer or some shit like that,” he explained, ignoring your attempts to escape his grasp as the two of you walked towards the other boys. “Henry and the guys and I are going, you wanna come with me?”

You looked up at him and hesitated. “With you?” you asked. He smirked a little and looked down at you. “Patrick…” You heard a rather pained cry from up ahead and you tried to run ahead but Patrick grabbed ahold of your arm. You stopped short and turned to him, and he let your arm go
out of surprise. “Why would I want to go anywhere with you? You’re torturing this boy, and enjoying it!”

“I’m not doing anything but talking to you, dear,” he argued. You glared at him. “You think we didn’t do this while you and Henry were together? He just hid it from you, sweetheart, he didn’t change for you.” You were a bit taken aback by this statement.

You hadn’t really thought that Henry had changed at all… well, you hadn’t really thought about it, you supposed. You hadn’t thought about the awful things that Henry was known for doing. It was like something had clouded your judgement and your reality so much that you had been under the illusion that Henry had been less violent when the two of you were together… but he hadn’t. You had never seen it, sure, but Henry was selective when taking you out with him and the boys, only when they were all staying out of the public eye.

You heard Henry yell orders at Vic or Belch, and another awful cry from Mike Hanlon, and you turned and ran towards the scene. You didn’t care what Henry was like, you had a better understanding of Henry than Patrick, you could stop this situation. You could get Henry to stop this, you had to.

You ran into the clearing of the Barrens near one of the streams, slipping a bit on the rocks as you stopped. Belch had Mike held up off the ground by his arms, which he was holding tightly behind the boy’s back. Henry grabbed the boy in a headlock, pulling him harshly away from Belch. You looked over as Patrick ran out of the woods after you and you got yourself back into motion.

“Stop!” you cried, hurrying over. Henry looked up just as Patrick grabbed you, and he just held Mike up for you to see the gash in his forehead and the fear in his eyes. “Henry, stop, this is insane.”

“What is this your new boyfriend too, Y/N?” he spat at you. You blinked and shook your head in confusion. Mike winced in pain and furrowed his brow in his own confusion. You tried to get Henry to look you in the eye, but every time you would make contact he would look behind you at Patrick with a look of burning anger. “You like n****r and ch*nk dick, Y/N?”

“Henry,” you snapped. “This isn’t about that—any of that, and you know it.” You tried to reach forward and take Mike’s arm, but Patrick held you back. You looked back and glared at him, then elbowed him in the stomach. It knocked the wind out of him enough that he let you go and tried to grab Mike away from Henry. Vic moved forward from where he had been waiting for orders from Henry and grabbed your forearms, pushing you back. “Vic—”
“Y/N, stop,” he hissed, getting you to look at him in the eye. You blinked, seeing him look a little worried, and side glancing at Henry and Belch, who had gone back to picking at the boy. He looked you in the eye again, and continued to whisper. “Please, don’t get involved, it’ll just end bad for you…” You shook your head and watched Patrick lay the sheep meat on the rocks in front of Mike. You tried to push past Vic but he held your arms tightly. “Y/N, please …”

Henry kicked the back of Mike’s knees, making him fall onto his hands and knees on the sharp rocks, his face inches from the raw meat. Mike barely had time to react to the pain in his hands and knees from the rocks before Henry had his boot to the back of his head and was pushing him face down towards the meat. Patrick had recovered himself and moved to Henry’s side, stepping on the back of Mike’s legs to keep him down.

Vic let go of you and turned to the scene, looking at Belch a little worriedly. Belch wasn’t looking at him at all, shouting abuse at Mike. Patrick was looking at him though, and he was curious. You watched him follow Vic’s gaze to Belch, then he looked back at Vic and tilted his head. Suddenly he caught your stare in his direction and he looked over at you with an innocent little wry smile. You blinked and looked at Vic, seeing that he was now looking down at Mike as well, yelling at him.

Henry pushed his face against the meat, and you backed away a little, looking at the boys in horror, then looking at Mike again, trying to think of how you could help him. The boys were just going to grab you and get you out of the way if you kept coming at them.

“Eat that meat!” Belch screamed at him. It caught you by surprise, as it had been so loud that his voice had cracked. “Eat it, bitch!” You looked up at him, seeing the glee on his face, seeing him look to Henry for approval.

“You little fucker!” Henry screamed at him, his face completely red and his eyes filled with rage. You felt yourself start shaking, unsure of what you could do to help him. Henry shoved his face down harshly one more time, leaning on Vic’s shoulder for leverage, then finally picked up his foot, allowing Mike to weakly get onto his forearms. He was practically spitting at the boy. “You mother fucker!”

“Eat it you little bitch!” Belch added on again, again, his voice cracking with the intensity of it.

“You pussy !” Vic chimed in, the smirk on his face catching you off guard. You covered your mouth with your hand, realizing that all of them were enjoying this… the situation was completely out of your control. You looked at Mike, seeing that he looked completely terrified. But not by the boys… by something behind you.
You hesitated, then looked behind you…

It wasn’t that you saw anything, but you felt something awful wash over you, something that made you afraid. You looked back at the boys quickly, wanting to see if something was wrong, but all you saw was Belch bring his foot up and kick Mike right in the side of the face, making the boy fall backwards as he tried to get up and run from whatever had scared him so badly. And you felt the fear wash away into anger… no, into rage.

“Hey!” you screamed, moving forward and shoving Belch back, somehow getting enough strength to actually make him stumble back. He stared at you in surprise, and Vic went to grab you, but you shoved him back too, wanting to grab at Henry, but Belch got ahold of himself again and lifted you off the ground. “Put me down!”

Belch dropped you on your feet near Patrick, and looked you in the eye. “Stay out of the way, Y/N,” he warned seriously, before turning back to Henry and the other boys. Patrick grabbed you and dragged you farther away from the scene.

“Stop it! Stop doing--”

“Y/N, I think we should go,” he told you. You looked up at him, seeing that his face was very pale, and he kept glancing in the direction that Mike had been earlier. You frowned, and he looked at you in surprise. “You didn’t see…?” He trailed off and looked in the random direction again, gulping.

You looked back at Henry, and saw that he had tackle Mike onto his back on the ground, and had his arms pinned under his knees to keep him from fighting as he held a rock above his head, holding his jaw to try and keep him still so that he could smash the rock into his skull.

“Come on, Y/N, let’s go,” Patrick insisted, trying to pull you back towards the car.

“We have to stop, Henry!” you argued. “He’s gonna kill--”

The two of you stopped and looked over, seeing Henry fall off of Mike, his forehead now bleeding slightly. Vic and Belch backed away and looked over at the person who had thrown the rock. You were surprised to see Beverly Marsh, still slightly stanced after her throw, and next to her-- Stan? You glanced next to her as Eddie and Richie ran into the clearing, then Bill, and the boy that you had tried to help last time, Ben Hanscom.
“Nice throw,” Stan said, giving Beverly an impressed look.

“Thanks,” she said as they all started gathering rocks into their hands. Mike got up quickly and made his way across the waterway, to his saviors.

Belch and Vic snapped out of their surprise and hurried to help Henry up. He cleared his throat and dusted himself off, trying to get himself together as he watched Mike struggle up the embankment on the other side.

“You Loser’s are trying to hard,” he called out, smirking a little and looking at the kids with a taunting expression. “She’ll do you, you just gotta ask nicely… like I did…” He bit his lower lip and grabbed at his crotch, looking right at Beverly.

You knew perfectly well that Henry had never slept with Beverly Marsh. He had started that rumor back when she was a freshman, and anyone who cared enough knew that. Still, she looked embarrassed, knowing that it was the one thing he held against her, even though it didn’t even really exist.

For some reason, in that moment, you decided that you had had enough. You were so, so angry at Henry right now that you could feel your whole face flushed red, and you knew you had to do something, especially now, with your brother and his friends watching.

As soon as he finished his aggressive grabbing at himself, you sighed loudly and pulled your arm out of Patrick’s grip easily, marching over to Henry. His friends were chuckling at the implication that Beverly was a slut, and as you got right in front of Henry and held your hands at your sides, you saw Ben Hanscom yell out in rage over Henry’s crude comment.

It just made your hands ball into fists at your side and give him the most anger-filled stare you could muster. He was hurting these kids without a care, and you couldn’t say this was something that you could overlook…

“Henry—” you started harshly. You barely had time to react, let alone finish your scolding, before you found yourself on the jagged-rocked ground of the Barrens. You felt a terrible, stinging and aching pain just below your left eye, and you felt light headed as you tried to sit up and look at him.

“HEY!” you heard Bill scream, his voice a bit distant sounding in your dazed state, but you knew it
was your brother. “How *d-dare* you hit her!!”

Before you knew it there was a frenzy around you. Henry, Belch, and Vic were quickly moving around a few feet to the side of you, and you could see fast moving objects flying through the air towards them, occasionally hitting them.

You watched one hit Belch in the nose, and another hit Vic’s chest, and a particularly sharp one cut into one of Henry’s arms, and all you could think was *good*, they deserved this.

You felt someone—Patrick, you assumed, lift you up into his arms and you felt your vision blur from the movement, leaning your head against his shoulder. You soon found yourself back out near the road, a little ways from the car.

He made his way over to the car quickly and carefully, leaning over the backseat and setting you down into his seat. “Damn, he got you good…” Patrick mumbled, leaning towards you and touching your throbbing cheek lightly with his thumb. You winced but he reached forward and touched the back of your head to keep you in place again. “I’m sorry, baby, I didn’t think he would hit you… *you*…” He shook his head and you could see his jaw tense. “Makes me happy you ain’t with him anymore… I ain’t ever gonna let him do this to you again, got it? Nobody’s ever gonna hurt you again. If anybody even tries…”

You stared at him as he said this and you frowned slightly in confusion. “I can take care of myself…” you mumbled, pushing his hand away. He stared at you as you tried to sit up, moving over towards the middle of the seat before slumping over into Vic’s seat. You groaned, then heard Patrick sigh and climb into the car, feeling him seat himself next to you. His hands gently grabbed your waist and your shoulder.

“I know you can, baby,” he chuckled. “Never seen anybody take a punch like that from him and not get knocked out. You’re a tough girl.”

You looked up at him with a slight frown, then looked over as Vic and Belch came running out of the woods towards the car. You just stared at them as they came over, panting and sweating, covered in dirt and blood. Vic leaned onto the door of the car with his hands, and closed his eyes, his face red as he sucked in a heavy breath. Sweat gleamed around a good sized gash in his forehead.

Belch leaned on one of the nearby trees, doubling over has he tried to catch his breath. He looked down the path that they had come from, then looked over at Vic and held out a questioning hand. “Why… why the hell did you run, Vic?” he asked breathlessly, pausing to breath. “We left Henry
behind!"

Vic looked back at him, raising an eyebrow and grimacing. “You ran too, Reg, why are you making it seem like it’s my idea?” he shot back defensively. “Jesus Christ, those kids put up a fight, I didn’t think we’d get beaten that bad by those Losers, ever.”

“Dude, we shouldn’ta lost that, this’s bull,” Belch said angrily, standing up straight. “They’re fuckin’ kids! One of ‘em’s a cripple. And one of ‘em’s a girl --!”

“Will you grow up,” you sighed in anger. Belch looked at you and Vic looked back at you. “You’re sixteen years old, you’re gonna be graduating high school in a few years and you’re still immature enough to find bullying a bunch of preteens fun.”

Belch’s face turned red. “They fuckin’ threw first! It was self defense! ‘N it was more’n that, it was our fuckin’ honor. Henry’s fuckin’ honor…,” he told you proudly. He trailed off at the end of his statement and looked down. “We let ‘im down, Vic… we really let ‘im down, we shouldn’ta ran, we should’a killed those bastards.”

“One of those little bastards is my little brother, and if you so much as lay a finger on him, or any of those kids, you’re gonna pay for it, I promise you,” you snapped at him. He just glared at you and shook his head.

“What’re you even doin’ here, stupid bitch, we ain’t want you here,” he scoffed at you. You were surprised by this, and you saw Vic whip his head back towards Belch as he said this.

“Excuse me?” you asked, shocked and angered by his words.

“Reg, stop it,” Vic spoke up, sounding shocked. “Why would you say that to her?”

“It’s true! Henry don’t wan’er here, so neither do I, you should feel the same way, Vic,” he insisted. He looked back at you again. “You deserved that punch in the face after what you did to him, Y/N. You ain’t no good little school girl, you’re a lyin’, selfish little bitch, and Henry can do so much better than you.” Vic looked absolutely stunned by his lover’s harsh words towards you, and he looked at you again, seeing that you looked hurt by his words.

You didn’t know why, but hearing Belch say those things to you was like a knife in the heart. Because in all honesty, he was probably right… all you were was some girl, you weren’t fun or exciting, you weren’t risky. You had held Henry back for so long, and there was nothing that you
could ever do for him… someone else could help him and love him better than you could… no matter how much you wanted to believe otherwise.

“I’m gonna go…” you mumbled, looking down and pushing Patrick’s hands off of you so that you could climb over him out of the car. He quickly climbed out after you.

“Let me help you home,” he offered, touching your arm. You heard Belch scoff behind you and you ignored him this time.

“I’m fine, Patrick, I don’t live too far,” you insisted, moving your arm away from him. “I’m just a buzzkill anyway, go be with your friends…”

“You think it’s gonna be fun after all that? Fuck no, come on, baby, let’s take you home,” he chuckled, putting his hand on your lower back and pushing you forwards to walk.

“Hey Patrick…”

You both stopped, and looked behind you, and Vic and Belch quickly turned around as well. “Henry!” Belch said, hurrying over to him. “You okay?”

Henry waved his hand dismissively, staring blankly at the ground. “I don’t want her around… she don’t hang around with us no more, got it. If you’re gonna make her your new little lap dog, I don’t want it in my face,” he demanded. You stared at him, even though he wasn’t looking at you, and you felt your eyes tear up. “It’s her fault those Losers beat us… if she hadn’t been in the fuckin’ way they wouldn’a attacked us like that.”

“Aw, come on, Hank, it weren’t her fault. Those little fuckers think they’re so tough, but they ain’t shit. We’ll get him, Henry, we will,” Patrick insisted.

“’Course we will, but she ain’t comin’ with us,” he insisted, walking stiffly to the passenger side of the car and climbing it, looking down at the floor blankly.

You saw Vic hesitating, unsure if it would be worth it to stand up for you, but Belch stepped forward before he could say anything, getting right up in front of Patrick and glaring down at him.
“You heard him. She ain’t welcome ‘round us no more,” he said harshly. Patrick raised an eyebrow, then smirked.

“Aren’t you good muscle to have around, so obedient,” he said tauntingly. Belch narrowed his eyes. “Gosh, if you were any more of a kiss ass, I’d say you were gay for him.”

“Go fuck yourself, Patrick,” he snapped. “Or better yet, go fuck your little bitch.” And then he spit at your feet. You saw Vic’s jaw drop in surprise, and Patrick and Henry glanced back at you curiously. You looked down at it, then looked up at him, your jaw tensing.

“Seriously?” you scoffed, shoving Patrick out of the way and getting in Belch’s face. “Why don’t you go fuck yourself, Reg. You think spitting at me is gonna scare me, make me cry? I can’t spit too, babe.” And then you spit right in his face. He quickly closed his eyes and tried to wipe the spit from his face. Patrick laughed and you heard Henry chuckle too.

“*You little fuckin’—*” Belch yelled.

“Leave her alone, Belch,” Henry told him flatly. Belch cut himself off and stopped with his fists clenched and his face red. You just glared right back at him. “Don’t be stupid, Y/N. Don’t try ‘n be something you ain’t.”

“Oh, trust me, Henry, I won’t,” you snapped at him. “Don’t you worry.” He just stared at you and you stood up straight, turning quickly and starting to storm off in the direction of your home.
When Things Start to Change

Chapter Summary

Part 3: The Summer of 1989

Chapter 14: When Things Start to Change

(Henry x Denbrough!Reader)

Chapter Notes

Word Count: 5659
Rating: SFW (mostly)
Warnings: drug use, implied sex

Henry watched you leave the gang quickly, your stance filled with anger. He couldn’t understand it: what was going on with you? He had never seen you this angry or defiant the entire time the two of you had been together. He had never seen you stand up against anyone, and he never expected you to spit in Belch’s face. He had to hand it to you, it had been pretty badass the way you had stood up for yourself, completely unfazed that you were angering the biggest beast in Derry, not even thinking how Henry might react.

“She’s really somethin’, ain’t she?” Patrick spoke up suddenly, looking back at you, as you were now well out of earshot. Henry looked over at him, his face turning a little red. You were still his afterall… even though he said you were open season, Patrick should have known better than to jump at you so quickly… Henry was still trying to recover from the heartbreak, and the anger. Not that he was in any rush to make that known.

“Yeah. And she ain’t hangin’ around us anymore,” he told him shortly.

“Oh, come on, Henry,” Patrick sighed heavily. “I mean, after that, I’d think you’d want her in the group. She’s a tough girly, even got a punch from you and didn’t even blackout, I mean, that’s badass…”

“It was pretty badass…” Vic spoke up.
“Shut up, Vic,” Belch grumbled, going over to the driver’s side door. Patrick side eyed Vic with a smirk, seeing the small blond boy wilt a little bit at his larger friend’s dismissal of him. “That cunt spit in my face. It ain’t badass, it’s just fuckin’ rude.”

“You did spit at her first,” Henry pointed out, shifting slightly. Belch tensed up but didn’t say anything. “Take a breather, big guy, she’s just a weak little girl. Pats, the minute I see her punch somebody in the mouth, she can get back in the car. But until then, she’s just my ex-girlfriend, and some bitch I don’t want around. Got it?”

“Yessir,” Patrick agreed, saluting him. “I’ll train her well… real well…”

“Great, have fun with that,” Henry grumbled, biting at his thumbnail unconsciously.

“Cheer up, buddy. Come over later, I got some new stuff and plenty’a drinks…” Henry looked over at Patrick, who was grinning so wide that it made him suspicious.

“Sure. We’ll be over at eight. You can fuck off now,” Henry told him. Patrick snickered and stuck his hands in his pockets, turning and jogging after you. “Fuckin’ prick.” Vic walked over and climbed into the car, leaning against his door and crossing his arms. “Oh come on, Criss, don’t be such a crybaby, just cause your little friend is gone.”

“Yeah, Vic, Henry’ll get another girl for you to relate to,” Belch mumbled. Vic turned red and sat up.

“What the fuck, Belch? Why’re bein’ such an asshole to me?” he questioned, sounding angry but undoubtedly hiding his hurt.

“Yeah, big guy, come on, we ain’t mad at Vic,” Henry sighed, touching his bleeding forehead and shutting his eyes. His head was pounding from the rocks those Losers had thrown at him, and his entire body ached, the open cuts on his back stinging to the point that he felt like he couldn’t move. “What’s up with you right now…?”

Belch looked at Vic through the rear view mirror quickly, then looked over at Henry, opening and closing and reopening his fists around the steering wheel. “Sorry, Henry… just hate seein’ you like this… I shouldn’ta ran like that, I should’a gone over to ‘em and ripped ‘em to shreds for you…” he said sadly. “…I just don’t ever want somethin’ like that to happen to you again, you know? Next time, we’re gonna kill those Losers, I’m gonna kill ‘em. And I’m gonna bring you their
severed heads as trophies.” This made Henry chuckle a bit and Belch’s face lit up a little. He was so happy that he had gotten Henry to laugh. Vic watched them curiously. “I promise, Henry, we ain’t ever, ever gonna lose to those little shits again. And I won’t let Patrick give you any shit either.”

“Yeah, Belch, you really gotta step your game up,” Henry said with a slight laugh. Belch sat up straight and held the steering wheel.

“Seriously, though, I gotta. I ain’t been tryin’ my best,” he agreed. “You know I’ll never letcha down. You know I’d do anythin’ you asked me to, anythin’, Henry, just name it and it’s yours.”

Henry thought about this for a minute silently. Vic watched Belch, his anxious face looking at Henry to see how he would react to his diehard dedication… his love for him, Vic thought. He had always known how devoted to Henry Belch was. But the way Belch was looking at him right now… gosh, he felt like you. He would give anything for Belch to look at him the way he looked at Henry. Belch would die for Henry, he would do it himself if he was asked to… Vic doubted he would do the same for him, and he leaned back against the door, looking blankly out the window.

“I know you would, Belch. You’re a good friend,” Henry told him. Vic side glanced at his lover as he blushed slightly and melted at the approval, looking ahead and started the car. “Let’s just go to your house for a bit… Not sure if I’m up for the party tonight…”

“Course, Hank. I got plenty to drink, and Mama just went shopping so you can eat anything you want,” he told him happily, starting to drive towards his house. Vic saw Henry look over at Belch with a slight smile pulling at the corner of his lips. It made Vic’s stomach flip. Henry wasn’t gay, he never had been and never would be. But he wanted Belch to follow him to the end of time, expected it, really. And Vic knew perfectly well that Belch would do that, even if it meant breaking up with Vic to go with Henry wherever he needed him. And Henry would never have any idea that Belch was completely, madly infatuated with him. Vic doubted Belch even realized it…

“What would I do without you, Reg?” Henry sighed, leaning his head back against the seat and closing his eyes. Vic could see that Belch couldn’t stop himself from smiling, and the blush that went all the way to his ears told Vic what hearing his real name from Henry did for him… he could just imagine what the front of his pants looked like right now. It made him scoff. Belch quickly looked at him through the rear view mirror again, almost like he had completely forgotten that he was there. Vic quickly looked through the window, still keeping his peripheral vision on his boyfriend, who, as soon as he thought Vic wasn’t looking, looked right back at Henry with the most loving gaze he had ever seen. He knew he couldn’t cry right now, but God… he didn’t know if he could stop his tears if they started to fall.
“Hey!”

You looked behind you, and saw Patrick running after you, still a little ways away. You sighed and looked forward again, continuing your quick pace.

“Hey, Y/N, wait up, come on,” he tried again. You ignored him, even as he ran up past you and got in front of you, turning to look at you and walking backwards. “Jesus, slow down, I’m gonna trip or somethin’.”

“Leave me alone,” you told him coldly, trying to go around him. He grabbed your arm to stop you and you shoved him off. “Seriously, what’s your problem??”

“What’s yours, sugar?” he laughed, letting go of you. You stopped and glared at him.

“Okay, Patrick, first of all: don’t call me sugar,” you insisted.

“Noted,” he agreed with a smirk.

“And second, I want you to leave me the fuck alone. I’m tired, I’m sore, my fucking eye hurts,” you snapped at him, touching your face. “And honestly, I’m not interested in you.”

“Aw, come on, you can’t say “honestly”, and then lie,” he said, looking at you expectantly. Your jaw tensed and your face turned red. “My God, pumpkin, you really are worked up, ain’tcha.”

“Aw, come on, you can’t say “honestly”, and then lie,” he said, looking at you expectantly. Your jaw tensed and your face turned red. “My God, pumpkin, you really are worked up, ain’tcha.”

“Of course I am!” you screamed at him, getting right in his face. “Of course I’m worked up! I just wasted the last eight and a half months of my life with some-- some fucking dickhole who doesn’t even give a fuck about me, and he just punched me in the face! I barely talk to my best friend because I’ve been spending more time with Vic, and now Vic won’t even hang out with me anymore! My brother’s fucking dead --” You cut yourself off as your eyes started to water, and you groaned quickly wiping them. “I just don’t have time for a relationship right now, okay, Patrick, I just…”

“Hey, who said anything about a relationship?” he questioned, putting his hands up defensively. “I just wanna hang around you, sweetheart, nothin’ more.” You chuckled a bit to yourself. “Although,
I have to tell you, Get Down Make Love from Queen came on the radio last night and I touched myself to it thinking about you…”

Your eyes widened a little and you felt your face turn red. “Patrick,” you said with a tight jaw. He tried to hold back a smirk. “Jesus, I just… I don’t even know what to say to that.”

“Oh, you don’t gotta say anything, I just wanted to tell you,” he shrugged. You shook your head and sighed. “But really baby, you don’t need a relationship for sex--”

“Patrick, just stop,” you told him quickly. “Stop. I’m not having sex with you, it’s not going to happen.”

“It already happened…” he mumbled, looking around calmly. You frowned deeply.

“No it didn’t,” you told him seriously, although your heart skipped a beat. “We-- what the fuck are you talking about?”

He clearly forced himself not to smirk. “You mean you don’t remember? Really?” he asked, sounding surprised. You blinked and shook your head. “That day in the sewers… when I kissed you… I can’t believe you don’t remember that.”

“Because nothing happened, Patrick,” you insisted, although now you weren’t so sure. You had blacked out, after all… and it had felt like more than just a kiss…

“Don’t even know how I had enough blood to get it up, but yeah, we fucked hard,” he told you. You looked a little horrified. “Hey, you came onto me, don’t act like this was some rape shit.”

“I-I did…?” you breathed.

“Yeah, you literally came onto me, like, you climbed onto me and rode me, babe,” he explained. You covered your mouth with your hand. “I mean, I think you liked it, at least. Never heard a girl make noises like that before.”

“Yeah, well, you're a lot bigger than I'm used--” you cut yourself off and he grinned. “Oh my
“I know,” he said. “It felt incredible, princess, probably the only thing that kept me alive. Could’ve died happy knowin’ what that pussy felt like…”

“I didn’t… I-I mean I don’t know why I…” you tried, suddenly looking very flustered and embarrassed. Your face was bright red now, and he laughed despite trying to hold it in. You huffed and crossed your arms. “M-Maybe I thought you were, Henry.”

“Nope. You were screaming my name…” he argued. Your face couldn’t get any redder, so it started to travel to your ears and to your neck. You quickly turned and started walking away from him, completely unsure of what to do. “If it makes you feel any better you were the best fuck I’ve ever had…”

“Patrick…”

“I’m on a fuck ton of pain killers right now, high as a fuckin’ kite,” he admitted. You glared at him. “Relax, princess, it ain’t like I nutted or nothin’, but I mean… you ever wanna squirt the way you did again… just let me know…” He saw you become even more tense, and he cackled a little.

“You can’t just— Patrick, what we did… it can’t ever happen again,” you insisted.

“I don’t know if I can live like that, baby…” he sighed. “The rest of my life dreaming about that sweet tight cunt and never getting to touch…”

“Patrick,” you said.

“Alright, alright, I’ll stop,” he told you, laughing and wrapping his arms around your waist as you walked. “I’ll keep you company, baby, you don’t need no friends but me.”

You scoffed and shrugged him off. “Look, Patrick—” you started. Before you could react, he grabbed your chin and pulled your face over so that he could kiss you. Your eyes widened, but when you went to push him away he jumped back. Your face turned red and you glared at him, walking over to him and punching him in the shoulder.
His mouth opened in pain, and his eyes closed tightly. “Ow,” he wheezed after a minute. “Jesus, babe, I know you didn’t mean nothin’ but… I just got those stitches out, like two weeks ago…”

You froze and your mouth fell open. “O-Oh my God, Patrick, I-I’m so sorry!” you gasped, carefully touching his arm. “Are you okay, I-I didn’t mean—”

“Oh sure you didn’t, babe,” he teased, trying to stand up straight, only for his entire face to pale and his eyes to look a little glossy. “How ‘bout, uh… how ‘bout you just help me home, sweetheart?”

You nodded quickly and started helping him towards his house.

—

“Patrick, I’m really sorry,” you told him for the millionth time as you watched him stumble weakly towards the basement-bedroom’s finished bathroom. You heard him open the medicine cabinet and chuckle.

“Y/N, quit apologizing, you need to calm down,” he told you. You took a quick breath and walked over to the bathroom, standing slightly behind him to make sure he didn’t fall over. He took a breath and winced, trying to roll his shoulder back, then he grabbed a pill bottle off of the sink counter, opening it and pouring two into his hands. “Just… just give me a sec, okay…” He moved over towards the closed toilet, sitting on the lid so that he could lean against the sink counter. He grabbed an old, dusty looking sandwich bag out of the small garbage can and dropped the pills into it.

“What are you doing?” you asked worriedly. He mumbled something to you before grabbing his toothbrush holder and starting to crush the pills up in the bag. “Patrick what is that?”

“Relax, babe, relax. It’s the meds for my shoulder,” he explained dumping some of the now powdered medicine onto the back of one of his hands. You could see that he was shaking rather violently, and he glanced at you, then, didn’t even try to hide the fact that he was snorting the powdered medication. Once everything he could snort from his hand was gone, he sucked in a deep breath through his nose and winced. He felt an electric thrill shoot through his brain, then down his entire body in waves. He groaned at the pleasure it gave him, and let his head roll back as he leaned back against the counter, feeling every part of his body relax and practically pulsing with wonderful pleasure. Then his head fell forward onto his good arm.
He realized after a minute that you were still in the room, watching him worriedly, and he picked his head up enough that he could move his eyes to look up at you. “That’s better… everything’s all better now, ya see, baby?” he sighed happily, slurring a little at the end before closing his eyes again.

You had noticed that his pupils had become pinpointed, and that some of the white powder from his medication was still on his nose. You felt anxious tears prick at the corners of your eyes, and you closed them quickly, taking a deep breath. You closed your eyes tightly, looking down. You couldn’t believe this kid… you couldn’t believe Patrick had just snorted his prescribed medications instead of just taking them like a normal person. Well, actually you could, but why did he have to do it with you here?!

“P-Patrick, I’m really not comfortable with this, I wanna go,” you told him seriously, backing up and starting to turn away. He sat up with a disapproving whine and grabbed your arm. “I’m serious, Patrick!”

“Y/N, wait, please don’t go,” he begged, standing up and opening his eyes. They were a bit bloodshot and his pupils were like pinpoints in his dull, hazel eyes. You shivered nervously. “Please, love, you trust me, don’t you? You know I’d never put you in danger, you know that, right?”

You hesitated, then nodded, because for some reason you did trust him… he would never hurt you… he would take care of you, and treat you like an adult, not like some little girl that needed to be protected….

“I know you wouldn’t,” you agreed bashfully. He smiled slightly. “I-I just don’t want you to get hurt, it’s dangerous to do things like that—”

“Y/N,” he chuckled. “I first snorted coke when I was eleven years old. I think I can handle myself around a little OxyContin.” You stared at him for a second in unamusement as he started giggling at your reaction. “Baby, it just helps it stop the pain faster, don’t worry. I won’t put myself in danger, but more importantly, I won’t put you in danger, got it? You gotta stop worrying so much, you have a whole second chance at life! We both do, that’s not somethin’ that happens everyday! We shoulda died in that sewer, but we got a second chance, and I ain’t wastin’ it bein’ safe!” He touched your shoulders and got himself to focus on your face long enough to smile at you. “Don’t you wanna live, Y/N? This is your chance to live your life, do what you wanna do… be the real you.”

You stared at him with uncertainty for a moment, and he just smiled a little brighter, turning you around and walking you towards his bed. “Let’s get you somethin’, okay?” he suggested, sitting you on the bed and going to grab his bong off the dresser.
“Come on, Patrick--” you started.

“Relax!” he insisted with a laugh, starting to pack it for you. You watched him nervously. “That’s all I want, baby, I just want you to relax, and enjoy today.”

He walked over to you and handed you the glass piece. You took it but just stared up at him worriedly. He rolled his eyes slightly and pulled his lighter out of his pocket, sitting next to you. “Patrick, I don’t know who I am,” you said quietly. He raised an eyebrow and lowered the hand with his lighter in it, tilting his head to the side curiously. “I’ve always been… the oldest Denborough, nothing more… I’ve always been expected to be who everyone wants me to be… I know they’re just trying to keep me safe but… who am I?” You felt tears prick at your eyes again, and you took a shaky breath before looking over at him. “Why did I get a second chance? I didn’t want to, Patrick, I wanted to die down there in the sewer. I don’t feel like I have anything to live for, Patrick, I had Henry, but…” You sucked in a dry sob. “But he hates me--”

“Fuck Henry, Y/N,” he cut you off. “Fuck. Him. What did he ever do for you, huh? He was holding you back from living, just like everyone else! Like your parents, like your brother, this whole fucking world wants you to be their puppet. I say fuck ‘em.” He held up the lighter, flicking it open to light it, and you stared at it for a moment before bringing your mouth to the glass bong and sucking in as he lit it. You closed your eyes tightly at the burning sensation that you were very much unused to, and when you opened them you saw him lift off the bowl, and you sucked in the rest of the smoke, hard. You felt the burn in your lungs billow throughout your whole body, slight tingles hitting your face before you coughed out violently, doubling over.

Patrick grabbed the bong from you and set it on the nightstand, rubbing your back. “Very good, baby,” he chuckled happily. “That’s it, sit up straight.” He pushed your shoulders to make you sit up. You shivered a little and coughed again, but took in a shaky, deep breath in, trying to get as much fresh air into your lungs as you could. “How’s that, huh? Feel any better?”

You shut your eyes again once you stopped coughing, and you breathed out of your nose. “I mean… I feel something, kinda…” you told him, rolling your shoulders back a little and opening your eyes to look at him. “What am I supposed to feel again?”

“You’ve never been stoned before?” he asked, a slight twinge of excitement in his tone. You shrugged.

“I’ve smoked with Vic, and I felt a little… fuzzy…” you explained slowly. Your eyes felt a bit heavy, and you took a deep breath, bringing your hands up to your face. “I-I’ve never felt anything like this, my face feels…” You squished your cheeks together and he laughed lightly, moving
closer to you and putting his hand on your leg.

“Is it good?” he wondered curiously, staring at you through his own heavy lidded eyes. You chuckled a bit and rolled your head back.

“Um… yeah, it is,” you admitted with a little breathy laugh. You looked over at him again, and he smiled lightly, before laying back on the bed and stretching.

“Good. You can have as much as you want, Princess, don’t be shy,” he told you, his voice strained a bit as he lifted his good arm above his head, and stretched the other one out to the side. “I’ll go get us some snacks, okay?”

He sat up rather quickly and you looked up at him, watching him grab his bong back off of the nightstand and hand it to you again before handing you his lighter. Then he touched just under your chin, very gently, and tilted your head up so that he could press his lips gently against yours. You blushed, but felt your heavy eyes fall closed for a moment, opening once he pulled and looked down at you. “Okay…” you agreed softly. He smiled again at your blush, then turned to go upstairs.

“Any requests? I got lots’a popcorn, fruit roll ups, hot pockets, uh… I got Red Bulls, lunchables, Cola, Teddy Grahams--” he listed, leaning against the stairs.

“You should just bring everything,” you told him, kicking off your shoes and bringing your feet up to the bed underneath you. You lifted the bong up to your lips and started smoking more. You were focused on watching the smoke build up behind the glass, and you weren’t paying attention to the way Patrick was watching you, possessive and predatory, with what he would consider swooning mixed in.

You were so cute, so new to this simple, normal world. And he was going to give you all of it, he was going to give you all the experiences that you needed, he was going to teach you how to live. And you were going to fall for him, and you would be his. You already were his, of course, but you would know it, and you would accept it…

He had it all planned out, you would finally see how Henry was wrong for you, he would get you anything you wanted, and more, he would flaunt you and show you off, and make you proud to do the same, he would do everything Henry hadn’t done for you…
Why, he wondered to himself in his thoughts as he turned and walked up the stairs to his kitchen, why would he do that to Henry? What had Henry done to deserve this? In all honesty, he didn’t know. He had been laying in his hospital bed, having just woke up when the thought first came into his head: break him. Push Henry to his limit, see how long it takes for him to snap. No motivation, no real gain. But Patrick saw this assignment from the universe as his way to pay for this second chance he had been given.

He heard you cough from downstairs, and he bit his lip. He started gathering up any snack food he could find and fitting them in his arms. As soon as they were full, he went back downstairs and dropped them on the couch before turning and looking at you.

You had set the bong on the nightstand again, and were wandering around his room, looking around at the surprisingly clean space. You looked over his small bookshelf, seeing the only books were on the bottom shelf, and that it was a lot of spiral notebooks and what looked like field and nature guides rather than novels. His top three shelves were filled with cassette tapes, vinyls, and tapes. You ran your hand across the cassette tapes and looked for any you knew, only recognizing a few Metallica albums from Belch’s car.

“Want me to put one in?” he offered, walking up behind you and wrapping his arms around your waist, resting his head on your shoulder. You tensed up a bit out of instinct, but almost subconsciously you found yourself leaning back against him, a soft hum leaving your throat. He chuckled, and kissed at your ear quickly before standing up straight and moving one of his arms to reach up and grab a cassette seemingly at random. “I think you’ll like this one a lot, it’s one of my favorites, I’ll pop it in, princess.” He leaned down and kissed your cheek, then let go of you and walked over to his tape player, on top of his dresser.

You watched him and walked over to the couch, sitting down and starting to move the snacks onto the coffee table in front of you, humming softly to yourself while you waited for him. You heard the click of the tape and you looked over at him, smiling when the music started. It wasn’t what you expected, the music playing softly through the speakers. “What’s this, hun?” you wondered, leaning back on the couch, watching him walk over to his bathroom, stretching slightly and touching the top of the doorframe with his good arm.

“The Cure. One’a Vic’s favorite bands, too,” he told you, although it was clear that his mind was somewhere else. You found yourself just staring at him, and he glanced over his shoulder turning around for a minute and crossing his arms while he looked at you with a smirk.

“What?” you laughed, hugging your knees to your chest.

He shrugged, then sighed and turned back around, going into the bathroom. “Don’t worry about knowing who you are, Y/N,” he told you, and you heard the cupboard over the sink open and
things start rattling around. “I know who you are. I’ve been waiting a long for you to come to me…”

“Come to you?” you wondered, chuckling slightly. “What do you mean you know who I am—?”

“Aha!” he cried with a slight laugh. He came out of the bathroom with a small envelope and a huge grin. You raised an eyebrow.

“What’s in that?” you questioned, suspiciously.

He licked his lower lip and sat down next to you on the couch, carefully opening the envelope. “This is gonna change your life,” he whispered, pulling out what looked like a little rectangle of printed paper.

“Um…” you said, your voice and face drenched in uncertainty. He took an almost shaky breath in and blindly reached up to the shelf next to his couch and grabbing a pair of scissors.

“You trust me, right, baby?” he asked you softly, not looking up as he cut a smaller rectangle out of the paper, sliding the larger piece back in the envelope, then cutting the tiny rectangle in half into two even smaller squares. “I just want you to see everything you’ve never known you’ve needed.”

Your heart jumped in your chest and started pumping quickly, your face heating up and your eyes blinking slightly, still heavy from your weed high. You had longed for adventure. You wanted to experience things, and step out of your comfort zone, and not worry about shortening your life. You had already been more scared than you had ever known you could be. You had stared death directly in the face—

It’s deadlights

—and now this was your second chance at life. He had said that all along. You didn’t want to take any moment for granted. And he wanted to help you, and be with you for that time. You found yourself looking at him, blinking as you thought this through slowly in your high state. You really couldn’t even think straight. What had he said again?

“I-I trust you more than anyone,” you told him honestly, your voice going slightly quiet with uncertainty. He smiled lightly and looked up at you as he carefully set the two little paper squares
You found yourself saying that completely seriously, and he stared at you while you said it, moving closer to you. You didn’t move, but looked down at his hand as it came down to rest on your upper thigh. It sent a chill across your body, and you knew that you couldn’t hide it, and he tensed up when he felt it.

You already knew he was going to lean in for a kiss, and you just closed your eyes gently when you saw him start leaning towards you, and you moved your hand to touch his face. You didn’t realize that you were shaking until you raised your hand, and he lifted the hand that wasn’t rubbing carefully at your thigh to tuck a piece of your hair behind your ear, then he moved it to wrap his arm around your waist to pull you closer.

Your body trembled against his and he moved his head to start kissing at your neck. And, for some reason, that’s when you started thinking about Henry. You held at Patrick’s shoulder as his mouth worked it’s way down your neck, his hands finding their way up your shirt to grab at your breast and to wrap around your waist again.

And all you could think about was Henry. How he never caressed you like this… was never this patient, or slow. Once the two of you started kissing, he started getting his pants off and wanted to jump on you right away, or have you suck him off. Patrick, on the other hand, was just kissing your skin and holding you, seemingly enjoying the feeling of your body on his hands. Henry never seemed to just enjoy you… he was always too angry…

“Would you let me make love to you tonight?” you heard Patrick whisper. It made your heart jump into your throat, and the hair on the back of your neck stand up, but you nodded. He hummed a little and moved back, reaching over to grab the little squares of paper off the envelope. “Let’s take these first…” You stared at him as he opened his mouth and placed one of the papers under his tongue. You furrowed your brow, but opened your mouth when he motioned for you to, and you let him place the little paper under your tongue. He smiled excitedly and grinned. “Tonight’s gonna be so fun. Now don’t swallow that, yet, I’ll tell you when.”

You smiled a little at his excitement, and watched him stand up from the couch. “I’m gonna run upstairs and get us a few drinks for later, okay?” he told you, looking down at you. He just stared at you while you nodded, then he leaned back down, touching your face and kissing you. “Jesus, I’m fuckin’ obsessed with you…” Your entire face turned red and he bit his lip a little, standing back up and hurrying towards the stairs. “Go ahead ‘n smoke more, if you want, I’ll be right back!”

You watched him go upstairs, surprised by the affection and attention he was giving you. More importantly, you were surprised by how much you trusted him, wanted to spend your time with
him, even *craved* his affection. You had used to feel that way about Henry… but now you felt a disconnection from him… it was like you didn’t even know who he was, like everything that you had done together was nothing… he had made that clear, you were *nothing* to him… Wasn’t it natural to move on, to fall head over heels for someone else, in that case?

So why did you still feel it in your heart that Henry was the one that you were going to end up with for the rest of your life?

It made tears well up in your eyes, knowing that no matter how much you tried to move on from him, he would always be your one true love. It killed you that as you started to fall a little for Patrick, Henry was still in your heart. It made you want to go numb, and that feeling made you reach forward for Patrick’s bong and his lighter on the coffee table.
You were a mystery to him, you really were.

Once minute you were hopelessly in love with him, the next you were going off at him and his friends, and now all this stuff with Patrick…

Henry took another sip of his beer. His fifth beer. He had really needed this today, he thought. Belch was a real lifesaver. He knew his friend would be there for him as long as he could be, but he knew he couldn’t stick around forever, no matter what he said. Eventually he was going to get a girlfriend, and he was gonna want to spend more time with her, and--

“Hey, Henry, y’ever wonder, if an orange’s orange, why ain’t a lime called a green or a lemon called a yellow?” Belch spoke up suddenly, cutting off his drunk friend’s dark train of thought.

Henry licked his teeth as his thoughts moved to this. Why wasn’t it called a yellow?

“Belch, why’dya gotta ask such weird questions?” Vic sighed.

“It’s a good question!” Belch argued. “I’m just sayin’, an orange’s an orange, so where the fuck’d
they come up with lemons and limes?"

“’s always been like that,” Henry told him, his speech slightly slurred. “God made it that way.”

Belch nodded slowly, seeming to take this as a good answer, and Vic rolled his eyes. “Is anyone else bored?” he wondered, glancing up at the clock. “I mean… it’s seven thirty--”

“We’re goin’a Pat’s at eight, right?” Henry wondered loudly. “Cause beer ain’t enough right now…”

“Yeah, I mean we can go whenever you want, Henry,” Belch told him. “It’s Patrick, what else would he be doin’ tonight?”

“Y/N…” Henry mumbled before finishing off his bottle. Neither of his friends said anything for a minute, so he sighed and stood up, stumbling a little. “It ain’t none’a my business, anyways… she don’ even like me no more…”

He set his empty bottle down on the table, and stretched. “I dunno, Henry, I think she still likes you,” Vic told him. “All you gotta do is apologize--”

“Henry ain’t got nothin’ to apologize for, Vic,” Belch cut him off. Vic bit his tongue, getting annoyed that neither of them were letting him get a full sentence out. “She got what she had comin’, if she didn’t wanna get hit, she shoulda stayed outta the way. We warned her, she just thought she was tough enough to tell him what to do. She was stupid, if y’ask me, right, Henry?”

Henry looked up when he repeated his name, and he gulped, nodding. “Yeah… yeah, I don’t give a fuck what she does,” he mumbled, clearly having been lost in thought. “She’s just in the way anyway…”

“Right,” Belch agreed, looking at Vic, who was glaring at him.

“Fuck, I gotta piss, I’ll meet you guys up there,” Henry sighed, stretching and starting to make his way upstairs.
Belch watched him, waiting until he went upstairs then looking at Vic again. “Babe, what’s your problem? Ya been crabby all day, what’s the matter?” he whispered. Vic raises an eyebrow and crossed his arm.

“My problem? What the hell is your problem, Reg?!?” he hissed. “You’ve been a total dirt bag to me all day, and I ain’t done anything! What the fuck?!”

Belch blinked. “I ain’t tryin’a, Vic, I just don’t want Henry to be suspicious, that’s all! If we act like we’re in love with each other all the time, he’ll see right through us!” he insisted quietly, glancing toward the stairs. “I’m just talkin’a you like I’d talk to Patrick, and Peter, ’r one’a the guys! ‘Cause as far as Henry knows, we’re just best buds, remember? You’re just one’a the guys…”

Vic thought about this, trying to let Belch’s excuse sink in. “You’re still an asshole,” he told him seriously. “Can’t you tone it down a little. I’m not just one’a the guys, Reg, I’m your boyfriend. I really need you to remember that…."

“Of course I remember that! But when Henry’s around, you ain’t nothin’ but one’a the guys. You know we gotta do that, Vic, you know,” he said, looking back towards the stairs again.

“But you’re being so mean…” Vic tried, but Belch was moving towards the bottom of the stairs, looking up to try and here if Henry was out of the bathroom yet. “Do you even wanna be with me, Reg…?”

“You think Henry’s okay?” Belch wondered, apparently not hearing Vic’s question. It made Vic tense up, jealous thoughts racing through his head. What about him, huh? Why didn’t Reg care if he was okay? What was so special about Henry, anyway? He was stupider, meaner, a natural blond, beautiful blue eyes… skinnier...

“I don’t care,” Vic told him, standing up from the couch and going to the basement door. “I’m gonna wait in the car.” Belch didn’t even look at him as he walked out into the yard and towards the car. His face was red with anger and jealousy and hurt. Vic had no doubt that Belch was just as physically attracted to Henry as he was to his soul. He had to admit, even he thought Henry was attractive… but he had never, until right now, thought of Henry as physical competition. Once he got home, he needed to rebleach his hair, he needed to workout, and he needed to weigh himself… he needed Belch to look at him again…

“‘re you still cranky, Vic?” he heard Henry say as he reached the car. He jumped when he felt his friend slap him on the back, and he turned around with a sigh. “Cheer up, kiddo. We’ll get you
stoned outta your mind, alright?"

Henry looked absolutely wasted already, and Vic knew he was planning on drinking more at Patrick’s, and he was probably gonna do coke too. He glanced back at Belch who was waiting patiently behind Henry, and he smiled wryly. “Sounds good, Henry,” he told him. Henry pat him on the back then moved to go sit in the passenger seat. Vic glared at Belch, then turned and opened his door, pushing the seat down and climbing into the back.

Belch sighed and pulled the seat back up once Vic was settled in the back, sulking. He didn’t really understand what was wrong with him, he never got this moody. And it seemed to be directed at Henry, which he didn’t think was very fair. Henry had just gotten his heart broken, gotten beaten up by his dad, and had lost to the Losers, he deserved a little slack right now.

He had been thinking a lot lately about Henry’s dad, and how awful he was. He was starting to think maybe it would be worthwhile to talk to his Mama, and get it so that Henry could move into their house with them. That way, he would be safe, he would get enough to eat, and he would be around all the time. He could be like his little brother! It sounded wonderful to him, but he knew Vic would be completely against it… because they would never, ever get time alone with each other if Henry was living in the house.

But Vic needed to be less selfish, Henry was suffering, and his safety needed to come before their time together, in his opinion. Henry was his best friend, practically his family, and Vic needed to understand that.

Henry looked over as Belch got in the car silently. “Not you too, Belch, what’s your issue?” he groaned. Belch looked over at him with a raised eyebrow.

“No, no, nothin’s wrong. Just thinkin’,” he mumbled.

“You’re thinking?” Henry laughed. Belch laughed wryly, deep in thought.

“Very funny… but really, I been thinkin’… I don’t want you to getcher hopes up’r nothin’ but… what if I talked to Mama, and you came here, to live with us?” he suggested, looking at his friend. Henry looked surprised, and he saw Vic sit up straight out of the corner of his eye. “It wouldn’t be right away, I bet, but that way you wouldn’t have to live with your Dad no more, and you’d be a lot happier--”
“I’m fine,” Henry argued quickly, staring at him. Belch blinked and looked down. “You think you could do that...?”

“Oh I’m sure I could, Mama says all the time how she would take you in in a heartbeat,” Belch told him. Henry perked up, and looked forward.

“So… so what she’d be like my new Mom, ‘r somethin’ like that?” he wondered, feeling a little excited just at the thought. Belch’s mom was so nice, and her cooking was to die for. Plus, she never hit Belch, except upside the head sometimes when she would catch him smoking cigarettes or drinking beer.

“Kinda… I think she’d have to get cust… cust…” he started, trying to think of the word.

“Custody,” Vic told him coldly.

“Yeah, that,” Belch agreed, glancing back at Vic nervously. “She’d get cust-oh-dee of you.” Henry smiled a little at how Belch pronounced every syllable of his new vocabulary word, the way he always did when he was trying to memorize a new word. He would love to come and live with them but...

“It’s a nice thought…” he started, sitting back in his seat and looking down at his hands. “My Dad’ll never go for it though… thanks anyway, Reg…”

“Oh… well, I’ll still talk to Mama, Henry, maybe she can do somethin’, you know her,” he insisted with a hopeful smile. Henry glanced up at him and smiled sadly.

“Thanks, Reg,” he repeated, before looking back down. Belch sighed and started the car. He could feel Vic’s gaze, red hot on the back of his head. He was going to have a talk with him about this later, for sure…. But Henry had to come first, Vic needed to understand that. Henry’s life was in danger every day, and Belch thought that no one should have to live the way he was living, so he wanted to fix it. Was that so bad?

They could all feel the tension as Belch started driving towards Patrick’s house, and all of them were thinking about what their destination could provide for them. A safe place, drugs, booze… a place to be with everyone he cared about, a place to get stoned and forget how he wasn’t good enough, a place to get trashed and forget about you…
You knew that at no time in your life had you ever felt like this. It felt like the world around you was moving, but not like usual. The walls were slowly melting and the ceiling above you was covered in illustrated faces, alternating between smiling and frowning. There was a green-blue hue to the room, coming from some source you couldn’t trace, and the cold air around you hit your naked body in warm, tingling waves.

You shivered and rolled your head to the side, and splayed yourself out on Patrick’s bed as you stretched a little and giggled. Patrick had gone somewhere else in the house a little while ago, you didn’t know where and you couldn’t remember when he had left…

You sat up and looked around, staring blankly at Patrick’s record player. He had put on some old timey music, that had been some time before you had had sex, the first time. Now it was standing still, the needle sitting still in the middle of the disc. You took a deep breath and trembled a little before standing up.

Your body was starting to ache, time was starting to go too slow. You groaned and touched your head.

“Patrick?” you called, walking towards the stairs. He was already halfway down them and stopped when you appeared in the doorway. He was naked too, as neither of you had felt like being clothed for several hours… or however long it had been since your high had started.

“Hi, baby,” he said, jumping down the remaining steps and right in front of you, you stumbled back and blinked. He pouted and touched your cheek. “Oh, you’re started to come down aren’t you?”

“I don’t feel good…” you agreed, leaning against him. He touched the back of your head and hugged you to him. “What time is it…?”

“The clock says seven thirty,” he told you. “But it’s forever in my mind, baby…”

“I don’t feel good,” you told him again. He hummed and moved back, looking at you with a smile.

“Then let’s make you feel better,” he insisted, grabbing your hand and pulling you to the bathroom.
He let go once you were both inside, and you watched him open up the cupboard again and start taking out several pill bottles. “I think I have just the thing…”

“What are we doing?” you wondered, slightly nervous, but your high making you more curious than anything.

“Right now?” he questioned, looking back at you, and you nodded. “LSD, my love. We dropped acid.”

It made your stomach flip a little to hear that, but you moved forward and touched his back. “And what are you getting now?” you asked. He leaned into your touch and turned to kiss you quickly, grinning.

“You pick,” he told you, turning you to a small line of pill bottles and bags that were lined up on the counter. You stared at them in confusion, then looked back at him. He saw how lost you looked, and laughed. “What do you wanna feel? Energetic, or relaxed?”

“Um… energetic.” You watched him look over the items, grab a couple of them, and put them back up in the cupboard. Now there were only three bottles left and you picked two of them up to look at them. “Should we be doing this…”?

He hushed you and took the bottles from you, looking at them. “Don’t think like that, sweetheart,” he said, setting one bottle down before starting to open the one that remained in his hand. “Don’t think at all…”

“How can I not think?” you laughed wryly, your body aching and shaking from the drugs cycling through your system. He poured two, blue colored pills out into his hand and picked one up between his pointer finger and thumb, then held it towards your mouth. You stared at him, then opened your mouth and let him give it to you.

“Like that, princess,” he smiled, popping the pill into his mouth before reaching behind you to grab a little paper cup, turning on the sink to fill it with water. He handed it to you, then leaned down and sipped water straight from the faucet. You watched him, shaking your head before sipping the water and swallowing the pill.

He turned the sink off and stood up straight, smiling brightly. You stared at him and hugged yourself, feeling slightly nervous about whatever it was you had just taken. He moved forward and
took your arms, pulling them down to your sides so that he could touch your breasts.

“Let’s smoke some weed, it’ll help pass the time,” he suggested, leaning down to kiss you again. You moved back and blinked at him.

“Why are we kissing?” you wondered. He raised an eyebrow. “A-And having s-sex? Why are we doing those things together? What are we now?”

He looked at you, then down at the pill bottle that he’d set on the counter. “Because I’m in love with you,” he admitted. You opened your mouth in surprise and shook your head, in slight disbelief that he had just said that. “It’s okay, Y/N, it’s okay if you don’t feel the same way yet, I get it, it’s so soon… but I’ve been waiting for you for so long…”

“In love…” you started, looking down at the pill bottle quickly as he looked at you. “H-How can you be in love with me, you don’t even know me… you don’t know me at all, Patrick, I’m--”

“No, I do. I do know you, trust me,” he cut you off, taking your hands. You stared at him with wide eyes and he chuckled before he could stop himself. “I know exactly who you are, gorgeous: you’re you. You’re beautiful, you’re smart, you’re perfect.” He ran his hands up your arms, looking down at your naked body. “I’m in love with you because I always want to be near you, because there’s no one like you, and there never will be. You’re everything I’ve never knew I needed, I need you, Y/N, I want you.”

“Patrick…” you tried, not really sure what to say to this confession. He shook his head, and you saw his tongue move to lick his top teeth.

“I know, baby. You need more time, I get it,” he sighed. “And I want you to have that time, I want you to be with different guys, and party, and break some rule…”

“So… you’re in love with me, but you want me to be with different guys…?” you questioned, getting even more confused. And your mind was starting to become very fuzzy, and the lights in the bathroom were starting to become very bright. “I don’t… Patrick, I don’t understand….”

“You need more time,” was all he said, running his hands back down your arms. “To make you feel better… think of us as kinda an… an open relationship kinda thing, alright? You’re mine, but not yet.” You blinked, then closed your eyes as he went to kiss you again. You let him this time, feeling like he had already decided what the two of you were. He had already claimed you, he had
probably claimed you even while you were still with Henry.

“Okay…” you agreed quietly, staring up at him. He looked happy with your agreement, and he kissed you again, moving his hands to your waist. He had his eyes closed and you were trying to let his words sink in, staring at him as the two of you kissed, until they started to feel heavy and close on their own.

Whatever you had taken with him started to sink in as he backed you over towards his bed, lifting you up slightly so that he could get you on your back. You lay down and closed your eyes, feeling your heart starting to beat quickly in your chest, and a tremor ran through your body. Patrick pulled himself away from you just long enough to get down on his knees on the floor in front of you. You picked your head up and looked down at him in slight confusion.

“I wanna taste you,” he explained quietly, resting his cheek on your thigh. “I wanna feel your legs shake while you cum in my mouth…”

You could feel your face redden at the boldness of his words, but your high made you feel more relaxed. Not relaxed, so much, as your body just wanted to move, get on top of him, grab at him, kiss him, do things with him. You laughed slightly and let yourself fall back on the bed, biting your lip and whining as he starting kissing at your inner thighs.

“I love touching you…” he whispered, lifting one of your legs up slightly so that he could rest it over his shoulder. “And I love making you feel good… love to hear you make noises…” He nipped at the delicate skin of your thigh and you whined, your legs impulsively closing around his head. He groaned and turned his head so that he could start licking at you. Your mouth fell open and you let out a soft moan, your head falling to the side.

You felt incredibly sensitive, and couldn’t help yourself from pushing your hips down so that more of his mouth was around you. He grabbed your thigh and turned to bite down on the leg he hadn’t been kissing before. It wasn’t a hard bite, not nearly hard enough to draw blood. But it had started out similarly to the little nip from earlier, then Patrick’s jaw started closing around your skin, enough to make you yelp at the sudden pinch his teeth gave you when he pulled away and turned his mouth back to you. The yelp turned into a moan and your head fell back, your hands going to tangle in his hair.

“P-Patrick,” you sighed. He hummed against you and you brought one hand to your forehead as you tried to comprehend the feeling of those vibrations against you.

“How’re you feeling, beautiful?” he wondered softly, his breath hot against your wet skin as he
You couldn’t think straight, you realized once he had stopped pleasuring you. Even without the mind numbing pleasure, whatever drugs he had given you were amplifying the pleasure, and dulling your mind. Not that you could care less. You didn’t want to care anymore. You wanted to feel like this, with him, forever. Because this felt right, like you had with Henry.

“Will you love me like I thought he did?” you questioned calmly, completely absent minded to the fact that you had even asked. He hesitated, then stood up and grabbed both of your ankles.

“I already do, baby,” he told you, leaning down to kiss you. You moved your head up slightly so that he didn’t have to bend too awkwardly, and your lips met in a quick, soft kiss. When you set your head down, you stared up at him with a big smile on your face and he smirked happily. “How do you feel, my love?”

“Good…” you told him, shivering slightly. “Really good…”

“Good,” he repeated quietly, leaning over you slightly again. “Fuck, I could just do this with you all--”

He was cut off by a knock on the door, and he blinked as he stared at it, trying to remember who would be at the door at this time…

“Who’s that?” you questioned with a giggle, rolling onto your stomach as he let go of you and grabbed his pants off of the floor. He glanced at you as he pulled them on and chuckled.

“Who do you think it is, beautiful?” he said, walking to the door and opening it.

You leaned your head over to look through the door, seeing Vic first, then noticing Belch behind him. “Oh!” you gasped, smiling brightly. They both looked a little confused to see you, and shocked to see you naked in Patrick’s bed.

And then Henry walked in behind them, and for a split second when your eyes met, you felt everything stop, your smile falling and your heart all but stopped. He actually did stop, right in the doorway, and he stared at you, his face turning red. You gulped and broke the eye contact to look at Patrick. Henry looked at him too, with a glare filled with burning hatred.
“Why the fuck is she here?” he growled, side eyeing you. “And why the fuck is she naked?”

“Oh--” you said quietly, starting to grab Patrick’s blanket to cover yourself up.

“No, no, babe, stay comfortable, he’ll be alright,” Patrick told you.

It apparently wasn’t the right thing to say, as Henry shoved him back enough that he fell onto his couch. “I knew it,” he snapped. “I knew you two were screwin’! You think this is funny?!” He glared at Patrick as he laughed, then he scoffed and seemed to relax, and he shrugged. “Whatever, slut, get dressed or don’t, don’t matter to me… Patrick get me a beer.”

“Yes, sir,” Patrick agreed, standing up and rushing to the stairs, taking them two at a time as he went up.

The four of you stood or sat silently, until Henry sighed heavily and fell back onto the couch. The drugs in your system were making it hard to concentrate, and you dropped the blanket to fix your hair. Belch gasped noticeably, and you looked up just as he looked away. Vic was looking at you with slight concern, and you looked down at your breasts before you burst out laughing, covering your chest with your arms.

“Are you high?” Henry scoffed. You shrugged, still laughing slightly. You moved your arms again without thinking, and lay back on the bed to close your eyes for a moment.

“Y/N, are you okay?” Vic spoke up. You hummed.

“I feel great,” you admitted.

“What’d you take?” Henry asked seriously.

“I don’t know,” you giggled, sitting up again before standing up. “Hey, does anyone wanna smoke? I learned how!”

“You’re just gettin’ all kind’sa learnin’ experiences here, ain’tcha?” Henry mumbled, watching you grab Patrick’s bong, which you had packed earlier and forgotten all about, and you handed it to
Vic, who sighed but took it and pulled out his lighter to take a hit.

“Hey, why doesn’t everybody stay over?” Patrick suggested as he came down the stairs with several bottles of liquor along with a carton of beer for Henry. Henry sat up and took it from him as he sat down next to him. He ripped one of the beers out and popped it open with just his thumb, starting to chug it down. Patrick side eyed him as he handed a bottle of Jack Daniels to Belch.

“Oh, that sounds good.” Belch agreed, unscrewing the bottle and taking a sip, not even wincing. None of them were looking at you, except for Vic who would occasionally give you a nervous glance, and Patrick who would smile and wink at you every so often.

After a while everyone had loosened up a bit, Belch drinking his liquor until his face was red, Vic smoking until his eyes were. Patrick brought Henry to the bathroom where you didn’t need to be sober to know that they both snorted cocaine, and he brought you out the little pill bottle, feeding you another.

Everyone seemed much more comfortable now, talking and laughing as if there wasn’t anything awkward, or bad, or uncomfortable going on. All there was was drinks, and drugs, and friends, and that’s how they all wanted it to stay.

The only thing was that no one was looking at you, or talking to you. You were seated on the bed, your knees to your chest, and you looked between them as they talked. You didn’t notice any of the glances that everyone would give you, lustful except for Vic’s curious, slightly anxious looks.

“Why isn’t anyone paying attention to me?” you wondered after a while, not really noticing how it sounded.

Henry scoffed again and finally looked at you. “Y/N, your tits are out, and you ain’t got nothin’ on down there neither, what’ya want from us?” he asked coldly. “You tryin’a start an orgy? You want it from everyone in this room, ‘s that it?”

“No!” you gasped, moving to tuck your knees under your bum. Now that you were uncovered, the whole vibe in the room changed, and you crossed your arms with a slight pout. “Why does it matter that I’m naked, I feel comfortable.”

“How’dya think Belch and Vic feel?” he countered. “You think they know what to do, some naked chick standing right in front of ‘em? Come on, sweetheart, you ain’t foolin’ nobody, you’re a little
slut and you wanna take it from ‘em, right?’

“No--!” you insisted, although you laughed slightly.

“Go ahead, fuck ‘em, see if I care,” he told you. You just shook your head. “Seriously, I want that for you. You’re startin’ this whole new life, right? Why don’t you just go ahead and fuck all my friends, do Belch next, he ain’t gotten any in the longest time.”

“How?” Belch slurred out, looking startled. “Nah, Henry, tha’s weird… she used to be your girl…”

“Why, she wants it, why else would she be naked? We should like… make her take it or somethin’...” he grumbled. It was then that you realized that he was drunk.

“Cut it out Henry,” Vic sighed. “Y/N, can’t you just… put a shirt on--?”

Henry stood up and grabbed your arm, pulling you close to him. You could feel your heart pounding in your chest, and he glared down at you. “Come on, we all know you put out for me, ‘n now you’re puttin’ out for Pats, don’t leave ‘em out, Y/N, get to it already. You got four dicks and you ain’t suckin’ any of ‘em…” he said, slurring his words slightly. If you had been thinking clearly, you would have slapped him in the face. But you weren’t and so you blinked in confusion and looked over at Vic and Belch. Henry growled impatiently and shoved you towards Belch, letting you fall on top of him, forcing him to grab your waist to catch you.

“Oh,” was all he said, his face too red from his intoxication for you to notice his blush. But Vic saw it, he saw his boyfriend blush on his ears and on his neck, and he saw his thumbs moving against your skin, and he saw his eyes keep darting down to look at your naked body.

You were staring only at his face, blushing a bit yourself, and shivering from the drugs and the chill of the room. “I-I’m not going to do that, Henry, he doesn’t want me to,” you tried.

“That fuckin’ tent says different,” Patrick laughed loudly. You looked down without thinking, and blushed even more at what you could tell was a boner pushing up against his pants, causing the crotch of his jeans to tent up slightly… a lot, if you were being honest… there was a lot of strain, and you could tell just from his jeans that he was massive under them…
You took a shaky breath and shook your head. “He doesn’t want me to,” you insisted, glancing at Vic, who was running his fingers over Patrick’s bong absentmindedly, looking very angry. When you looked back at Belch for confirmation that this wasn’t happening, you were a bit surprised to catch him staring back at your ass and licking his lips. “R-Right, Belch?”

“You want me to, Henry?” he asked, looking at his friend.

“I think we should all screw her,” Henry grinned. “If she’s gonna act like a slut, she’s gonna get treated like one.”

“Hey, but Belch can’t go first, he’s gonna stretch her out,” Patrick spoke up, standing up and wiping his hands on his jeans. “Vicky’s gotta go first, since his dick’s the smallest.”

Both Patrick and Henry snickered, and Belch snapped out of his daze at the mention of his boyfriend, looking over at him. Vic glanced up at him, then looked right back down and shrugged. “Not in the mood…” he mumbled, standing up. “I’m just gonna go sleep in the living room ‘r somethin’…”

“What the fuck’s your problem, thunder thighs? You got the chance to get some ass, and she ain’t even gonna complain, and you wanna go to bed? What’re you, some kinda fag?” Henry said loudly. Patrick cackled, and Vic looked at you sadly. It hit you, then, what you would be doing by sleeping with Belch, and you quickly moved back, running into Henry, who grabbed your arm again.

“H-Henry, I dunno if this is such a good idea,” you tried, before you were dragged over to the bed and pushed down onto your stomach.

“Shut up, Y/N,” he grumbled. You groaned and shut your eyes, not really caring if he did it or not. “Belch, over here, now.” You opened your eyes and watched as Belch got up without hesitation and walked over to you and Henry. “What’re you gonna do it with your pants on? Come on, dude-”

“Henry, you can’t make him do this, he doesn’t want—” you tried, but you stopped when Belch hurried to get his jeans off. You looked over at Vic, who looked extremely hurt, almost sick. He caught your eye and stood up, setting Patrick’s bong down on the table and hurrying upstairs. No one seemed to notice except you, and you tried to sit up but Henry grabbed the back of your head and shoved you down. Patrick was looking towards where Vic had gone, and stood up from the couch to follow him.
You were glad that someone was at least good enough to go and check on him. You felt Henry grab your hips and pull you back to the edge of the bed, and you took a shaky breath, closing your eyes. It would be easier to just let them, you thought, and besides, you didn’t really care except for how it would affect Vic and Belch. In terms of yourself, though, you couldn’t have cared less. Since Henry had already decided that this was what was happening, you knew all that you could do was wait and let them do what they wanted.

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Vic sat on Patrick’s living room couch, biting his too short nails even shorter, and shaking slightly.

Today couldn’t get any worse, he thought. Belch was definitely falling out of love with him, if he hadn’t fallen out of love already… if he had ever been in love with him. God, he honestly couldn’t tell. It had been so perfect and so beautiful at first, it had been like a dream. But maybe that’s all it had ever been, some kind of one sided dream. Maybe Vic’s passion and infatuation with Reg had overshadowed the fact that Reg didn’t have any feelings… maybe…

And it didn’t help that Patrick had called him thunder thighs, when you were standing there, so beautiful, with Reg completely unable to look away from you, and Henry so attractive and thin… Vic felt like he was no match for either of you, if he was being honest with himself. He grabbed at the loose skin of his thighs, seeing it as nothing but fat and extra weight… no wonder Reg wanted to be with you tonight…

But still, he couldn’t believe Reg was doing this… Vic knew he would do anything Henry said, but this? He was going to cheat on him with you, just because that’s what Henry wanted… Reg was about to cheat on him…

With that thought hitting him like a cement brick, he felt tears well up in his eyes and he tensed up, curling his knees to his chest as he started crying.

“Hey, pretty boy,” he heard Patrick say from somewhere behind him. He quickly wiped his eyes and put his legs back down, clearing his throat as Patrick jumped over the back of the couch to sit next to him. “How’s it goin’?”

“What’d you want?” Vic mumbled. “Aren’t you gonna go fuck Y/N? Everyone else seems so interested in her…”
“Eh, I’ll have her to myself later, I’m here for you,” Patrick explained. As casually as anything, he set his hand right down on Vic’s upper thigh, rubbing his thumb against it gently. Vic looked at him in confusion, but Patrick just continued. “I know how it is to watch the one you love be with someone else… it sucks.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Vic asked, looking at him in confusion, and just a slight bit of panic. Patrick smirked slightly, and licked his lower lip.

“You know what the fuck I’m talking about, princess,” he said softly, nodding towards the basement. “You and Belchy,” Vic turned impossibly pale, and his mouth fell open as he tried to get out some kind of argument. “Can’t say I’ve ever been so jealous… Pretty thing like you…” He reached up and wiped one stray tear from his cheek. Vic blinked and quickly looked away.

“I’m not pretty… I never have been and I never will be,” he told him. “And I don’t know what you’re talking about with me and Belch--”

“Has he ever said anything about your weight?” Patrick cut him off. Vic looked over at him quickly.

“My weight? What about my weight?” he asked defensively. Although Patrick could hear the insecurity, he knew Vic felt insecure about himself, and he thought about how to play this.

“I know how hard it is for you to cut out the junk food, Vicky, maybe I can help you? Make you a diet plan or something to get some of that extra weight off?” he offered. Vic looked down at himself, thinking that he did need to lose a few pounds… “Although I think it’s fine, I think you’re stunning…”

Vic felt his heart skip a beat. Stunning? No one had ever called him that before. He knew he blushed, and he looked away. “You would help me? Why?” he wondered softly. “Why do you even care, you’ve got Y/N now… she’s beautiful, you don’t need to waste your time with me… I don’t know why Reg even does…”

Patrick stared at him for a moment, tilting his head slightly as he stared at him. Then he reached forward and brushed some of his blond hair from his eyes, touching his chin to turn him to look at him. His hazel eyes were sad, and lonely, and the way his back arched and his skinny arms crossed over his stomach screamed low-self esteem. Patrick couldn’t help himself from leaning forward and kissing him gently on the lips.
Vic knew he should have pulled away but he couldn’t, he didn’t want to. He couldn’t remember the last time Reg had kissed him… it wasn’t like he didn’t have the chance, he just wanted to be “extra careful”. It felt good, it was sweet, and kind, and filled with so much love…

“My God you’re so beautiful…” Patrick whispered quietly. Vic felt his cheeks redden and he glanced away. Patrick brought one hand to his waist. “And sexy…. Can I make love to you…?”

Vic’s heart jumped again, but in an excited kind of way this time. He loved the compliments Patrick was giving him. Stunning, Beautiful, Sexy… sexy. No one had ever called him sexy before. It put a little pride back in him. If Patrick thought he was sexy now, he had to show him just what he had. He would give him everything if he would just call him those sweet names…

He leaned himself forward and grabbed his face, pulling him into a kiss. Patrick grunted in surprise, leaning closer to him and angling his head slightly so that their lips could lock with each other. Within a few moments, Vic had himself laid back on the couch, Patrick laying on top of him as their tongues ran against each other’s. It was passionate, and sensual, and Vic felt himself getting turned on in a way he hadn’t felt in a long time… since the first time he had been with Reg.

Reg… Belch… Belch didn’t love him… if Vic was important enough to him, he wouldn’t be sleeping with you right now. And by this point, he could hear the bed pounding against the wall downstairs with so much force, Vic knew that it was Reg— Belch. That’s all he was. Things would be better this way, if all he was was a best bud. A friend, that’s all they ever had been right? Except for all those years where he would have to hide his nervous glances at the boy when they were alone together… years where Vic was nothing but his friend…

“Patrick, I want you to make me yours…” he whispered suddenly running his hands through his hair. “But please… please just fuck me like a man, I want it like we’re really two boys, not like I’m some little girl, I’m gay, not a tranny.”

Patrick laughed at this and let his head hang down while he did, and Vic laughed as well, grabbing his hair and moving it to kiss him again. “As you wish, handsome,” Patrick told him.

And it made Vic feel so respected in that moment that the entire time they laid together on that couch, Vic forgot about Belch, and about how he had betrayed him.
You giggled as Henry kissed lightly at your neck, and you ran your fingers through his hair slightly. God, you had missed this… you had missed being with him so much. Just being this close to him made your stomach fill with butterflies and your heart soar.

“What, you ticklish ‘r somethin’?” he mumbled against your skin, starting to tease your sides with his finger tips. You started to flinch away, but he started his attack before you could get out of his grip, his fingers tickling at your sides. You cried out before bursting out into uncontrollable laughter, trying to push him away. He couldn’t help himself from smiling as he got on top of you to keep you from getting away from him.

You breathed heavily in relief as he stopped his assault to just look at you for a moment before kissing you. You melted into him like you always did, putting your hands on his face and trying to deepen the kiss. He pulled away almost as soon as you did that, and he looked down at you with a tense expression.

“I… fuck,” he said, sitting up and standing from the bed, rubbing his face while he thought. You frowned and sat up.
“What’s wrong?” you wondered, moving to touch his back. As soon as your hand touched him, he moved forward and turned around.

“I shouldn’a done that…” he told you, although it sounded mostly to himself. “We broke up, I shouldn’a fucked you.”

“It’s okay--”

“No, I fuckin-- look at your eye, Y/N, I did that,” he cut you off. He looked over at Belch, who was sitting rather awkwardly on the couch, not sure why he was still down there, and feeling incredibly guilty. “Bud, could you just… give us a second?”

Belch glanced at you before standing and going upstairs. Henry rubbed his face again, no doubt coming down from his high. “I loved tonight,” you told him. He paused and turned around. “No one turns me on as much as you do, Henry…”

“Patrick? You seem pretty into him,” he scoffed. You hesitated and he sighed. “Just… just forget it, Y/N, tonight was a mistake. It won’t happen again.”

“I want you, Henry,” you said softly. He sighed again, looking at you. “Henry, I love you--”

“Stop that,” he demanded quietly. You stood up and grabbed his hand.

“Henry, I-I know I’m nothing to you, I know everything we went through was nothing, just like you said,” you said sadly. He felt a pang of guilt, hearing your voice crack. “But… But please take me back, Henry, I’ll do anything to be yours again, I love you…”

He stared at you, shocked. “Y/N, that’s crazy, I punched you in the eye,” he reminded you. You took a breath and shook your head.

“It’s okay. It’s okay, Henry, I understand. Punch me again, punch me a hundred times, I’ll do anything to be yours again,” you insisted. He shook his head, trying to process this. “I wanna be with you forever… I’ll be a good wife, I promise, I’ll do whatever you want, just please--’’
“You’re high,” he realized. You hesitated and rolled your eyes. “No, don’t say anything else, you
don’t know what you’re talking about. Just… forget it, Y/N there’s nothing left for us…” He took his hand back and moved over to the couch, grabbing his jeans to pull them on. When he turned around you were getting off the bed and moving towards him. “Seriously, Y/N…”

“Let me please you,” you tried, looking frantic. He shook his head and put his hand out when you started getting closer to him. “Please, Henry--”

“Stay the fuck away from me, okay? You don’t wanna be with me,” he pressed. You felt tears well up in your eyes and your face turned red. “Just, stop…”

“Why?”

“Because I’m just gonna end up hurting you, okay?” he snapped. You blinked. “Look, I already did, and things are just gonna get worse, trust me… if I’m anything like my Dad--”

“You’re not,” you tried softly.

“Please,” he scoffed. “I’ll end up beatin’ on you, Y/N, if we get back together… a black eyes gonna be the least of your issues if you’re with me.”

“I’ll take the risk,” you pleaded. He stared at you, then he started getting dressed.

“Get some rest, Y/N,” he suggested quietly. “And ice your eye… looks pretty bad…” With that, he grabbed his shirt and started walking towards the stairs.

You watched him angrily as he ascended the steps, then you felt your jaw tremble and you rushed back over to the bed, getting in and curling into fetal position as you started crying. Why wouldn’t he just love you? Why couldn’t he see how the two of you were meant for each other?

You glanced at the stairs, then sat up and grabbed the pill bottles that Patrick had left on the nightstand. You looked at the labels… Oxycodone, and Amphetamine. You took a shaky breath and opened the oxycodone, seeing that the pill looked different from the one you had been taking. You tipped the bottle into your hand, pouring out one and quickly popping it into your mouth, feeling more tears well up in your eyes, and hoping that they wouldn’t fall before the drugs had a chance to sink in.
When Belch got upstairs, everything was very quiet. He hesitated, trying to hear where Vic was, then walked out towards the living room. He paused in the hall when he heard a soft moan, and quiet talking.

“Pat, don’t leave ‘em there, everyone’s gonna see,” he heard Vic giggle. Belch frowned deeply and moved forward, his heart dropping from what he saw around the wall.

Patrick and Vic were completely naked, Vic draped over Patrick, who was kissing gently at Vic’s neck. Patrick hummed and moved his gaze to Vic’s face. “Just say some girl did it, nobody has to know, sexy,” he chuckled before giving Vic a quick smack on the ass. Vic bit his lip and cuddled up closer to him.

“What--?” was all Belch could say. It startled Vic into jumping up and standing, staring wide eyed at his boyfriend as he came into the room. Belch didn’t even look angry, he just looked confused, and hurt. “What ?”

“What?” Patrick questioned, leaning back casually on the couch.

It took everything in Belch’s power not to jump on Patrick and strangle him to death right there for even putting a hand on Vic, but he just stared at his boyfriend, noticing how he now looked annoyed. “W-What’re you doin’, Vic, I-I…” he tried, having a hard time coming up with words. “Y-You didn’t… you-- with him, did you--?”

“We fucked, yes,” Vic agreed, crossing his arms. Belch felt tears well up in his eyes, and he knew Vic saw it because he uncrossed his arms.

“W-Why…? I thought… we’re together, Vic, I love you--”

“So why’d you fuck Y/N then?” he cut him off quickly. Belch paused. “We stopped being together the moment you decided that fucking her because he told you to was more important than us, Belch.”
Belch felt like his heart was being stabbed over and over again as he let his words sink in. He knew there was no fighting that…

“H-Henry told me to,” he tried weakly. “I didn’t wanna, you know that--”

“He’s more important than us, I get it,” Vic scoffed. “He always was and he always will be…”

“No… no, he’s not, you’re more important to me than anything, than any one,” he insisted, moving towards him. “Vic, I’m sorry, just… please, let’s just call it even, let’s just forget about this, and be together, just-- please, Vic…”

Vic hesitated, hearing Belch’s voice crack with emotion several times throughout his plea. It took a lot for Vic not to move towards him and hug him. “Maybe this is for the best. You don’t love me-…”

“I do! I do love you, more than anything--!” Belch cut him off loudly.

“Reg!” Vic hissed, glancing towards the stairs. “You need to go. Get Henry and we’re leaving.”

“Vic—”

“We’re done talking about this. I love you… I loved you… and you broke my heart. I’m not apologizing for moving on,” he looked back at Patrick and walked over to him, sitting on the couch next to him and draping himself over him slightly. “Can we see each other later today? I had a lotta fun…”

Patrick smirked and touched his chin. “Course we can, sexy,” he agreed quietly before kissed him gently. Belch felt his heart jump up into his throat, hearing Vic whine as he push his tongue against Patrick’s lips and was denied access. “Later, baby…” He brought a finger to Vic’s lips and pushed him away slightly. Vic pouted but got up and grabbed his baggy pants off the floor and slipping them on quickly, and pulling his belt to the tightest setting, which he had cut into the belt just a few hours after Reg had innocently told him that he had noticed how his baggy clothes made him look smaller than he really was…

Belch turned and hurriedly stormed away towards the basement door, stopping short so that he didn’t run into Henry, who was just about to cross the threshold into the upstairs. “Oh, good,
Henry—“I wanna fuckin go home,” Henry cut him off harshly. “Can we go back to your house?”

He hesitated, then cleared his mind throat. “Vic’s stayin here. I don’t want that fuckin little dickwad near me right now,” he growled, his fists shaking at his sides.

“Shit, bud, what the fuck’d he do?” Henry wondered, looking confused. Belch hesitated, deciding how to word his next sentence.

“I— he and Pat were talking bout some kinda weed stuff, ‘n I asked him a question, ya know, bout the weed stuff, and he… he uh called me a stupid fuckin idiot, cause I ain’t know what I’m talkin bout…” he told him. He saw Henry’s face twist with anger, and he glanced behind Belch.

“That little fuck,” he hissed. “That’s bullshit, Belch, and you know it. You ain’t no stupid fuckin idiot, and even if you is, I ain’t care, I know you got more to ya, got it? You got so much to ya, Belch.” He pat his friend on the shoulder, and even moved forward and gave him a quick hug. “You’re my bestest friend, Belch, ain’t nobody calls you a stupid fuckin idiot and gets away with it. Tomorrow, I’ll jump ‘im, teach him a lesson about callin’ my friend names.” He nodded and started going back downstairs.

Belch smiled just slightly. Henry would always be there for him, he thought. He was loyal, and a good friend… Vic had moved on already, so why couldn’t he? He felt sick to his stomach, he had the entire time he had been talking to Henry. He wasn’t even mad at Vic, he just felt… heartbroken, like a whole part of him was gone… and it was his fault. All of this was because he hadn’t put Vic first…

“Uh… Belch, Y/N didn’t come upstairs behind me, did she?” Henry asked worriedly.

Belch stopped at the bottom of the stairs. “Nope, didn’t see her,” he said bluntly, not even wanting to think about you right now, and how you were his ideal picture of a female: sweet, frisky, amazing body… damn that amazing body for tempting him, and damn himself for giving into that temptation…

“She’s high, she shouldn’t be out by herself,” Henry said, sounding a little frantic. He looked in Patrick’s bathroom, then hurried to the door and opened it to look around outside. “Where would she have gone??”
“Probably home, it’s almost 4AM,” he told him. Henry hesitated, then looked over at his friend. “If nobody’s heard from her by this afternoon, people’ll worry. She don’t need you to worry about her, Henry, she’s got her parents…”

Henry felt a pang in his chest at what that implied. Of course his Dad wouldn’t give two shits if he went missing, he had said that straight to him, said he wished for it. But the truth still hurt.

“Let’s just go,” he mumbled, going out the door towards Belch’s car. Belch followed him, touching his head, which was starting to pound from the hangover he was getting. He glanced back at the house as he walked to his car, seeing Vic staring at him through a window before quickly shuttling the shade. He was in love with Vic, and he couldn’t just ignore that… he couldn’t just let him go… but Vic made it seem like he would have no choice, which made this all hurt so much more…

---

You hurried home, anxious about the darkness around you, as the barely risen sun did nothing to make the atmosphere bright enough for you to see well. It was quiet, the early morning birds not yet awake, but the peepers finally drifting off to sleep.

You felt yourself getting dizzy again from the drugs you were on, and you stumbled a bit before falling heavily on your butt in the grass. You groaned and grabbed your head, trying to get ahold of yourself. You needed to just get home…. then you could sneak in, and go to bed—

Run.

You froze, hearing Georgie’s voice like a whisper in your ear. Run? You looked up and slowly looked to the side as you saw headlights coming your way. You tried to get yourself standing, stumbling a little but managing to gain enough balance to get upright. The car seemed to speed up when the driver saw you, and you blinked, backing up in confusion.

Y/N, Run—

The car screeched to a halt next to you and you stared at the passenger side window as it started to roll downs and your brain finally registered that it was a police car sitting in front of you in the darkness.
“Well, well,” the policeman said with a chuckle. “If it ain’t little Miss Y/N Denbrough… you know you ain’t supposed to be out before 5AM, curfew ain’t up yet…”

You didn’t respond, just staring at Butch Bowers in a kind of silent horror. Georgie has been warning you to run…

“Ya hear me, honey, you’re out past curfew, what’re ya doin’?” he asked, a bit louder. You shivered in fear, overwhelming fear, and backed away from him. He sighed and pushed the transition into park, getting out and walking around the front of the car towards you.

You started panicking, and turned to run away into the woods. You had barely even turned when you felt his hand in grab your arm and hold you in place. “Now come on, Y/N, what the hell’re you doin’?” he sighed, swinging you around to look at him. You whimpered and he frowned. “You high?” He reached one hand to his belt and pulled out a flashlight, flicking it on and shining it right in your face. You knew you couldn’t avoid him seeing that you were stoned out of your mind, but you winced your eyes shut and turned your head away anyway. “Alright, Ms. Denbrough, get in the car, I’ll bring you home.”

“Get away from me,” you argued weakly, trying to yank your arm away from him. He sighed and grabbed your other arm, pushing you towards his cruiser. “Butch--”

“That’s Officer or Mr. Bowers to you, sweetheart,” he chuckled, opening the passenger side door. “Least for now, ’nless you wanna get to know me on a first name basis. I wouldn’t mind that…”

“Let go of me,” you insisted, turning and trying more to rip yourself from his grip. He just chuckled again and pushed you into the car.

You stopped fighting once he closed the door to the car, but you hugged yourself and pressed yourself against the side of the car, wanting to be as far away from Butch Bowers as possible.

He came around the front of the car to his driver’s side, getting in and looking at you with a roll of his eyes. “What’re you so scared of, beautiful? You think I’m gonna rape ya?” he questioned. You jumped at even just the mention of it, and he tsked, looking ahead and putting his car in drive again. “You gonna tell me what you’re on?”

“I-I dunno…”
“You don’t know…?” he mumbled, starting to drive again. “Alright… tell me who gave ‘em to you, then.”

“No,” you said quietly. He didn’t respond right away, then he sighed.

“So you’re high. And you’re withholding evidence… I could bring you down to the station, for both’a those things, you know that right?” he told you. You didn’t answer, as you were taking this in and thinking what your parents would think, not noticing what streets he was bringing you down. “Ya hear me? You wanna spend your Sunday morning in a cell?”

You didn’t respond because you didn’t know how to… no, obviously you didn’t want to spend any time at all in a cell. But you weren’t about to give up Patrick, not after everything he’d done for you… not when the two of you were starting this new… relationship thing.

“Alright, you keep it to yourself.” You looked over at him as he spoke, and saw him just staring ahead at the road. “Not my problem.”

“Am I going to jail?” you wondered quietly. He laughed and you frowned deeply, looking ahead and feeling your heart skip when you saw that you were actually heading in the opposite directions of both the police station and your house. “Where are we going?”

“Not sure… tryin’a find somewhere quiet for us to… talk…” he explained vaguely. You felt your heart jump into your throat and stay there.

“I wanna get out,” you demanded, grabbing the door handle of the car. When you pulled it, of course it didn’t open, and you whimpered. “Please, take me home.”

“I’m gonna give you a choice, sweet thing,” he told you, stopping quickly in front of a house--

The Neibolt House…

“Let me out--”
“I can bring you to the station right now, file an order for you to get tested to see just what kinda drugs you’ve gotten yourself on, fill out a whole report, tell your parents, the whole mess,” he said, pushing his seat back a bit, and looking at you. “Or you can get in the backseat and wait patiently for me…”

“And then what?” you wondered, feeling like you already knew what he wanted from you. He didn’t answer, instead leaning back in his seat and unbuckling his seat belt, then unbuckling his belt… You sucked in a breath and looked towards the house quickly.

You didn’t know what to do, honestly… at 16 years old, your biggest fear was your parents finding out about you and Patrick, and you and Henry… and you and Belch… you felt your stomach flip, feeling a little used and a lot like a slut…. Your biggest fear was your parents finding out about the drugs, the booze, the weed, finding out about the sex… they would kill you…

But your biggest fear was also Butch Bowers, and here he was, with you locked in his car, requesting that he fuck you in the back seat of his cop cruiser so that he wouldn’t have to make your biggest fears come true…

“Y-You won’t tell my parents?” you wondered, feeling yourself start shaking. He raised an eyebrow, seemingly surprised that you were actually considering this.

“Not a thing,” he agreed. “As long as you ain’t gonna tell them anything…”

“I won’t…” you said, looking down as he reached over and grabbed your thigh.

“Get in the back then,” he ordered, moving suddenly to open his door. He unlocked the doors to the car and went around to your side as you slowly got out, wincing as you felt his hands hold your waist to keep you from running.

---

You whimpered a little as you climbed the steps to your front porch, hearing the cop cruiser speed off of your street. You could see that your parent’s car wasn’t in the driveway, and you wondered if they were out looking for you, and thought about what a mess this would be.

Now you really felt used… you were sore, you knew you were covered in bruises… and you didn’t
feel like you could ever tell anyone about what he had done… what he had done to you...

You opened the door and immediately heard footsteps running towards the door, and Bill ran into the entrance hall, looking overcome with relief.

“Y-Y-N!” he cried, running to you and hugging you. You stumbled a little, still very high, and very dazed and spaced out as you tried to focus on the real world again. Bill moved back and looked at you worriedly. “W-Where were you, y-you were gone all night, Mia said you weren’t with her… Y-Y/N, you look weird, w-what’s wrong?”

“Nothin’ ‘m fine…” you lied, wincing as it was a little slurred. He frowned deeply. “Where’re… Where’s mom ‘n dad?”

“They had a business trip, remember?” he said seriously, not stuttering. You started moving toward the stairs, stumbling into the fridge a bit. “Y/N, are you drunk?”

“Yes!” you snapped. “Now shut up, I just wanna go to bed…”

He looked a little taken aback, and he shook his head. “M-Mom and dad are gonna be really—”

“Nuh-uh, ‘cause Mom ‘n Dad’ll never know!” you cut him off loudly, grabbing the banister and starting to pull yourself upstairs. Bill tsked and followed you quickly, getting right behind you. “You aren’t gonna tell ‘em.”

“Oh yeah? W-What’s stop-stopping me? Y/N, I’m worried—”

You turned around suddenly and grabbed his shirt. “I swear to god, Bill, you better not tell them anything, or I’ll—” you started, before realizing what you were doing. “I’ll…” You quickly let go of him, you’re eyes almost as wide as his. You hesitated, then turned and hurried upstairs.
If Belch could take back that day of his life, he would sell his soul, his first born child, anything!

He was under a car at the moment, but his mind was somewhere else completely, and it had been all day. To the point that he’d spilled car oil all over himself and had cut up his hands pretty badly throughout the day. His boss had asked him where his head was at, and boy if he could have told him the truth…

Oh, Vic…

He had taken Vic for granted, or whatever it was called, and now he wouldn’t even look at him. It had been almost a month now, he thought, it was just about August. It felt like a lifetime, and today it was hitting him bad. It should have been he and Vic’s one year. If he hadn’t destroyed everything.

And Vic didn’t look good. He was getting thinner and thinner by the day, and he was starting to
look sick, and Belch just wanted to go to him and make him eat! Tell him that he needed to be healthy, and happy, and that he deserved to be…

As soon as he got out of work, collecting his pay for the day, he got in his car and started to drive towards Vic’s house. He had to fix this, he would get on his knees, with… flowers, he needed flowers for Vic, and chocolates, Vic’s favorite kind.

It only took a ten minute pit stop downtown to get what he needed, and then he was back on his way to beg for Vic’s forgiveness… this was gonna suck, but Vic deserved the most heartfelt apology, all the kisses in the world, and more love than Patrick could ever give him.

He swore when he saw Patrick’s dad’s black Ferrari-- which was way too nice for Patrick to be actually allowed to even touch --parked out front of Vic’s house. He parked behind it, and took a breath, getting out and going to the front door.

He hesitated under Vic’s bedroom window, hearing the two other boys talking above him. He knew that he shouldn’t eavesdrop, but he also wanted to hear if Patrick was really treating Vic well….

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“How many inches, Pat, just tell me!” Vic insisted anxiously as he turned around. Patrick was holding the tape measure with a disapproving look.

“It’s gone up two inches. You’re getting big again,” he sighed. Vic looked seriously disappointed by this, and Patrick shrugged. “Oh well, we’ll just have to adjust the diet and start over…”

“Baby, I don’t know how much longer I can do this…” he whimpered, sitting on the bed and putting a hand on his concave stomach. “I’m so hungry…”

“Of course you are, fatty,” Patrick scoffed. It made Vic wilt a little, and Patrick rolled his eyes. “Look, if you wanna give up, you should. But it’s ain’t worth it to me if you’re just gonna give up.”

“N-No, Patrick, of course I’m not gonna give up, I know I need to lose more, just a few more pounds until I’m the size I wanna be…” he told him seriously, although his voice sounded soft, and
“Good. Good, baby,” Patrick said, sighing with relief. “You know I love you, right? I wouldn’t be doing this if I didn’t have to, you know that, right?” He leaned over and touched Vic’s boney cheek, making him smile slightly before moving to kiss him quickly.

“Of course, Patrick,” he agreed, more out of obedience than truth. The truth was that he was angry at himself. He was angry that he couldn’t eat like a normal person and be skinny, and he was mad that he was so fucking hungry all the time, so much that it hurt, and he felt tired and just wanted to sleep all the time. He hated that he couldn’t be as skinny as he wanted to be without cutting out 90% of his diet…

“Let’s see what we can do about the food issue, huh?” Patrick suggested, noticing a change in confidence in Vic. He stood up straight and grabbed a composition notebook off of Vic’s desk, sitting on the desk as he flipped through it. “Let’s see… you’ve been eating once every day, right? Just once?”

“Yeah, at dinner. It helps me sleep--” Vic explained.

“Cut it in half,” Patrick ordered. Vic felt his heart skip a beat. The one thing he looked forward to all day, now only half of it… “I know, baby, I know you’re hungry, but think of how beautiful you’ll be…”

That cheered Vic up a bit. Patrick was right. If he wanted to be beautiful, he needed to do this right. He took a breath then smiled, and nodded. “Thank you, Patrick,” he said. “I don’t know what I would do without you…”

“Be fat, probably,” Patrick sighed, leaning down to kiss him. “I gotta go, okay? I’m picking my little queen up for the party at Bowie’s tonight, I gotta go get ready.”

Without another word, without an I love you, without another kiss, he tossed Vic’s notebook on the desk and rushed out. Vic sighed sadly and looked down at himself. He already felt so much sexier, he fit into a size 2 in women’s now, and it made him so much more confident… but he was starting to feel sick, his head was constantly pounding, his body hurt…

But part of him loved this feeling of being uncontrollably starving. Because he knew, at the end of this, one way or another, he was going to be absolutely perfect….
He cried out in surprise, dropping his shirt. He had been absent-mindedly admiring his new figure in the mirror, thinking about how close he was to perfection, he hadn’t even heard anyone come in, let alone up the stairs to his room.

Belch was standing outside of his room, he could see him through the partially open doorway. He looked concerned, almost frightened. He stared in, then pushed the door open. “C-Can I come in, Vic?” he asked softly.

“You’re already in, what the fuck do you want?” he asked coldly, crossing his arms and looking at his desk. He was starting to feel dizzy again, but he shrugged it off.

Belch came into the room slowly, ducking so that he didn’t hit the doorframe with his head, holding the flowers slightly in front of him and the candy in his other hand. But Vic didn’t see, since he kept his gaze anywhere but on his ex-lover.

“Vic I wanted to say that I’m sorry,” Belch told him seriously. Vic just sighed, so Belch cleared his throat and looked down. “A-And, um… I-I just wanted to say that I love you, and um… well… I dunno…” He sighed and let his hands fall to his sides, the flowers losing a few petals. “Vic, I don’t know, I love you… I’m so sorry… I guess you don’t have to forgive me, I just… fuck, I don’t feel like myself without you and I don’t think I ever will…” He sighed again, setting the flowers and the candy down on Vic’s desk. “That’s it, I guess… I just wanted you to know that I love you…”

Vic saw it now, he saw the flowers, the chocolate, how much Belch--Reg, how much Reg loved him and missed him… But it was too late, Patrick had a firm grip on him, and Vic was afraid that he might never let go. He wanted to say something to Reg, to tell him that he loved him, that he missed him too… but Reg had already gone back down the stairs and out of the house.

He sobbed heavily in his throat and stumbled as he felt his body start blacking out. That had been happening a lot lately, too, he had been shaking constantly and if he exerted himself too much, he would just pass out. He lay back on his bed and groaned, his head pounding and his heart aching…

He wanted to be with Reg… he wanted to eat again… he wanted Patrick to get the hell out of his life so that things could just go back to normal…
Patrick Hockstetter and Henry Bowers

Chapter Summary

Part 4: The Real You

Chapter 18: Patrick Hockstetter and Henry Bowers

(Henry x Denbrough!Reader)

Chapter Notes

Word Count: 3804
Rating: SFW
Warnings: psychopathy, drug use

Things with you were absolutely perfect. You were the perfect mix of dependant, out of control, and fuck, absolutely exquisite in bed. He didn’t know why the two of you hadn’t found each other sooner…

But of course, dependance took time, and patience… he had been training you, unbeknownst to you, to take the drugs, to kiss him, to fuck him, to love him, it was perfection.

And then there was little Vicky, sweet, sweet little Vicky… he wondered how long it would take for him to die…

Everything was perfectly according to plan. He didn’t know how many more times he could think the word perfect before it got annoying to him. Twice, he decided before leaning his head back against the headrest of his Dad’s driver seat and groaning the word “perfect…”, shutting his eyes and whispering “perfect…”, and flooring the gas pedal.

The car spun out a bit before taking off down the windy Derry roads. He knew he needed to open his eyes now, so he did, laughing hysterically as he sped the car in and out of the turns until he turned sharply into his driveway, still laughing, but slightly upset that he hadn’t had a little farther to drive.
Of course his parents weren’t home, so he walked into the side door of the house, yelled “I’m home!” to no one, and leaned against the wall to untie his boots. One at a time he got them untied, threw them towards his Dad’s shoes, and finally slid into the kitchen on his socks.

He walked around the counter, grabbing a half empty jar of peanut butter and a spoon that he had left neatly stacked under the hanging cupboards for him to snack on when he got home. His Mama had told him that if he didn’t stop eating so much American sugar, he was going to get fat like his friend Belch. His response was that no one could get as fat as Belch, and a laugh as he walked away from his disappointed mother… he missed his mother…

Not Daddy, though, he thought, Daddy was as good as dead to him, he couldn’t even remember the last time he’d actually talked to his Dad…

He could have had Avery…

That thought made him smack himself in the temple.

He tossed the peanut butter and spoon on the counter, then rushed down towards his bedroom, running into the bathroom and staring at himself in the mirror for a moment. He was fine. He was in control…

There were only somethings that he didn’t understand, and pain was one of them. The stabbing pain in his shoulder was unlike anything he had ever felt before, and the wound had long since healed. You had bite scars like him… the two of you were made for each other, he was convinced. He was addicted to you, he couldn’t go without you… but you didn’t feel it. You pretended to, but he knew. He knew you couldn’t get your mind off of Henry.

He knew that he needed to keep you away from Henry… permanently.

It might have to happen tonight, he thought. Tonight would be perfect, the night was supposed to be clear, and the stars were supposed to be out… he was going to make you his forever…

That damn stabbing pain in his shoulder started up again and he growled, grabbing his Oxy bottle from the counter. He was taking about two every twelve hours now, since you’d taken his Percocets. He chuckled, thinking of how much more you’d become yourself in the last month…
You had started out coming to his house everyday for a few hours everyday, but then your addiction to the drugs and to him had taken control, and you had spent most of your time with him, your parents never caring to double check that you were really with Mia, apparently rarely talking to you at all. It was killing you, to have lost your parents as well as your brother… that’s why you craved attention, that’s why he needed to convince you that you should crave his attention, not Henry’s…

Henry this, Henry that, you talked about him like he was all you ever thought about, and it was starting to get on his last nerve. You would obey him, you would submit to him--

You would love him, and stay with him forever.

He popped his two Oxycontins, then walked over to his dresser to get himself dressed for the party. He actually put in an effort to look good for you, as opposed to just looking good for himself, and it made him actually smile to think of you. Of course, it wasn’t happiness, per say, it was more about the control over you that he had, but still, it put a smile on his face.

He could get you to do and take just about anything he wanted, and he took advantage of that, to get you as dependant as possible… and it was working. This had to be true love, you were afraid enough of him still that he could scare you into things, he had enough influence over you to talk you into anything, you were the perfect body for him to bruise and bite and cut up, even if it was just a little, even if you were too drugged up to know what was happening...

Chuckling at that thought, he walked over to his phone, happy with the dark jeans and white tee-shirt he had picked out. He jumped on his bed and picked up his phone, dialing your number to let you know that he was on his way to get you.

You were barely able to talk on the phone when you picked up, slurring some kind of hello. “Hello, my little queen,” Patrick greeted with a grin. “Were you sleeping, beautiful, getting some beauty rest?” You just grunted. “I’ll be over in ten, okay, sweetheart.”

“And Patrick…”
“I’ll see you in ten,” he said again. “I love you princess…”

“Love you,” you mumbled before hanging up. He chuckled and stretched. Things with you were perfect… and after tonight, things would be perfect for the rest of your lives...

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It had been about a month since Belch and Vic had talked to each other, since Patrick had come and swept you off of your feet, and… his Dad…

His Dad had been in such a good mood for a few days, then had settled right back down to being an ass.

Henry knew it was worse now than it had ever been, he knew that with certainty. Without his gang together he was stuck at home. Alone. With him.

It wouldn’t have been so bad if he wasn’t having his hours— which meant pay —cut at work, so he was home all the time, and they were starving.

Well, Henry was starving, his Dad claimed it as all his since he’s the one who bought it. It was bullshit, honestly, he could very well get off his ass and try really farming pigs for once. But his bullshit TV programs were too important…

He wished he was dealing with this with grace…. but that much testosterone and PTSD flowing through him mixed with how goddamn hungry he was… he knew having violent, raging disputes with his father wasn’t exactly the best idea when he wanted to eat more than anything else…

He sat up in bed, happy that he had managed to keep most of his muscle still while he didn’t get nearly enough to eat. God, he could stop thinking about that, he couldn’t stop thinking about food

Henry took a shaky breath as he stood up, grabbing one of his shirts off the floor and smelling it quickly before throwing it on. Belch was finally coming to get him tonight, and they were going to a party… someone’s party he hadn’t asked whose, and he didn’t care. Belch had said over the
phone that shit was bad…

Belch had told him that Vic had started hanging around Patrick more, and he was getting really skinny again, like last time. To the point where it was scary…

And that Patrick and Y/N were constantly together now. It made Henry’s blood boil thinking of Patrick’s cold, clammy hands touching your body… he wanted to snap Patrick’s neck.

Apparently, you were completely drugged out all the time now, and snuck out every night to spend your time with Patrick… he didn’t see what you saw in him, how could you see anything in him, he was a nutcase, a complete empty, emotionless shell of a person. There was nothing to love about him… and yet you were drawn to him, and you were being risky with him, and breaking out of your shell… why hadn’t you blossomed with Henry? Because he hadn’t force fed you narcotics?

He walked quietly to his door, locking it and shutting off his light before walking to the window and opening it silently. He slowly climbed out then quickly closed the window again before starting to run towards he and Belch’s planned meeting spot.

His mind was still on you, though, on what was happening to you. Whatever it was that was happening to you… he wished he could see you, so that he could know what state you were in, and see with his own eyes how bad things had gotten.

You still meant everything to him. He knew you always would. And hearing the path you were taking was such a dark one scared him, being hopelessly in love with a girl that had already broken his heart once, and was breaking his heart again by apparently being a drug addict, it made him angry.

He stopped on the side of the road when he saw a car's headlights flashing towards him, accompanied by the roaring sound of an engine— the Trans-Am’s engine. Belch pulled up next to him and smiled at his friend as he stopped.

“Hey, Henry,” he greeted happily. But he looked a little sad. “How’ve things been, bud?”

“Eh, you know…” Henry sighed, walking around to the passenger side and getting in. He looked over at Belch and shrugged. “What about you, how've you been?”
“I’m… I been real worried, honestly…” he told him as he started driving again. “About you, ‘n about Vic… that fucker Patrick got ‘im ta stop eatin’ again…” He gulped. “Been beatin’ him up too… saw him earlier and he had bruises all over him…”

Neither of them were quite smart enough to realize that they were bruises from sex, but it made them both tense either way. “Poor Vic… he’s so stupid sometimes, why’s he gotta go and start this shit up again?” Henry groaned. “Remember last time? Fag fuckin’ passed out!” He scoffed and touched his head. “Which reminds me… there better be food at this party, I’m fuckin’ starving…”

“That again?” Belch wondered sadly. Henry licked his upper teeth and nodded.

“Yeah. Ain’t so bad, I can deal with it,” he lied, trying to sound tough for his gullible friend. Belch smiled a bit, then raised his eyebrows as Henry’s stomach growled loudly. Henry shut his eyes tightly and winced in pain, but quickly forced himself to relax-- to toughen up. Belch was watching, he couldn’t whimper and whine about his aching stomach right now. “It really ain’t so bad…”

“Sure, Henry,” his friend sighed, looking concerned. “If there ain’t food, we’ll dip and head to the diner, how’s that, bud? It’s on me--”

“Everything’s on you--”

“Cause you deserve it!” he insisted, glancing at him quickly. “Henry, you ain’t treated right at home, and I want you to have whatcha need--”

“I don’t need your help, Belch, I can handle myself just fine, you know that,” Henry argued, looking at him seriously. Belch hesitated, pulling onto the street that the party was on, and grimacing when he saw that damn black Ferrari parked on the street in front of the house. And Henry grimaced when he saw that the car was rocking around, as if someone where fucking in it.

“I ain’t parkin’ near ‘im,” Belch grumbled.

“Was just about to say…” Henry agreed coldly, glaring at the blacked out windows of the car as they drove past, trying to keep his imagination from wondering what you looked like in there right now.
Belch parked a little ways down the street, shutting off the car and taking a shaky breath. The house was dark except for some flashing, moving lights on the first floor, and the music was loud enough that they could hear what song was playing, albeit how muffled it was. “Man, I’m gonna get wasted tonight,” he told Henry.

“Good. So am I,” his friend sighed, opening the door and climbing out. Belch smirked a little and got out too.

“’n maybe we could beat up Patrick, too, if you’re up for it,” Belch added. Henry hissed out a slight laugh then raised an eyebrow in contemplation.

“Maybe later. Once we’re wasted. We’ll get ’im alone ‘n beat his teeth in,” he sneered. Belch chuckled darkly and locked his car, patting Henry on the shoulder quickly as they headed towards the front door of the house.

They glanced over at the blacked out car as the back door opened, hazy smoke pouring out into the warm night air, the smell carrying quickly over to Henry and Belch.

“Jesus Christ,” Henry scoffed at the heavy weed smell. “Maybe somma that too.”

“Yuh,” Belch agreed with a laugh. They watched you get out of the car and Belch could feel Henry’s entire body stiffen. You were still his love, of course, and you were still completely stunning and the perfect body but... But you had changed a lot over the last month. You actually looked like you had gained a little weight, and you were showing so much skin…. it made Henry nervous, because you never would have dressed like that before. In a Metallica t-shirt tucked into a short skirt, covered in a denim jacket, your feet clad with Doc Martens… just like his, but black… Your hair was parted differently, and was styled completely out of your style. Your makeup was heavier than he had ever seen it.

And you were completely sky high, out of your mind on drugs. Henry could see that from here… you were swaying and laughing loudly, your eyes barely able to open, and then you collapsed on your ass in the grass, still laughing uncontrollably.

“P-Patrick I fell over,” you slurred out. Henry rolled his eyes and turned to go inside. He felt like he could gag at that… you were morphing into Patrick’s perfect girl… sexy, gothy, and drugged up.

“Well then get on up, baby girl, we gotta go into the party now,” he heard Patrick laugh, sounding
just as fucked up as you. “Come on, Vicky, let’s go.”

Henry paused and looked back, seeing the front passenger side door open quickly and Vic get out.

“Hey, bud, I’m gonna go get somethin’ to drink, I’ll see you in there?” Belch said quickly. Henry pulled out a pack of cigarettes, deciding that he wanted to watch the shitshow Patrick had made you into.

“Sure thing, Belch,” he agreed sadly, watching Vic cross his arms and continue to glare at Patrick. Belch walked away inside without even a glance at Vic.

Henry looked back at the other kids as he lit up his cigarette and took a drag. “Don’t ever lock me in the car while you guys fuck ever again,” Vic demanded angrily, but weakly. He looked just… weak… he was nothing but skin and bones, and his hair was bleached to white, but his skin was impossibly more pail, almost translucent.

“Oh come on, Vicky, you coulda gotten off to it, if you’d just pull the stick outta your ass,” Patrick taunted him. Vic just sighed, knowing that he was too weak to argue, and that Patrick was too high to really care. “Look, my loves, our friend!”

As you struggled against the car to stand up, Henry saw you look up at him, and for one sobering second look sad and frightened, before you just looked away and stood yourself up, trying to get yourself together a little.

“Evenin’,” Henry greeted calmly, trying to take the imaginary upper hand. You just stared at Patrick, then at Vic, who was staring at the ground sadly, nervously…

“I was hoping to catch you, Hank,” Patrick spoke up confidently. “Have some stuff you’re gonna love.”

Henry glared up at Patrick slightly as he walked over and pulled a paper bag out of his jacket. You snuck in past Patrick so that you wouldn’t have to talk to Henry, and Vic did the same. “Better be good, jackass. I don’t wanna talk to you no more,” Henry told him seriously. Patrick looked mockingly shocked at this statement, and stared at his ‘friend’ in horror.

“I thought we were friends, Henry what’s wrong? Did I do something?” he asked innocently. It
made Henry’s face turn red and Patrick grinned. “Oh, is this about Y/N? It is, isn’t it?”

“Just show me what you need to show me and fuck off, alright?” Henry snapped at him, snatching the paper bag from him and looking inside.

“Alright, Alright, calm down, Henry,” Patrick chuckled. “This is some good quality shit, it’s top dollar stuff. I think you’re gonna like it, it’ll send you so high--”

“What, and you’re just giving it to me?”

“Of course, from one friend to another,” he agreed happily. Henry glared some more, and he sighed. “I feel like I gotta make it up to you. You know, with taking your girlfriend--”

Patrick barely had time to comprehend how he ended up on his ass in the dirt. But once he was there, he just shook his head in shock, looking up at Henry, who still had his hand balled into a fist at his side.

“Stop talking about her, okay? I don’t care,” he insisted. “I don’t care that she’s with you, I don’t care that she’s on drugs, I don’t give a fuck. Bring it up again, and you’re gettin’ a broken nose, got it?”

“Got it, Henry,” Patrick said calmly, standing up carefully and rubbing his aching cheekbone, where Henry had hit him. He snatched the bag back from him and shoved it back in his jacket. “One thing, though…” He moved closer to him so that he could hear him clearly. “If you really don’t care, then I guess I can trust that you’ll never touch her again, right? Because if I come to find out that the two of you kissed, or hooked back up, or whatever it is, you’re dead…”

“Dead,” Henry scoffed.

Patrick hummed and raised an eyebrow. Then he grinned again. “But we don’t have anything to worry about, right?” he assumed. Behind his grin, Henry could see how serious Patrick was about this. In his eyes was an unstable anger, ready to come roaring out and tear apart whatever double crossed him.

“Right. Nothin’ to worry about,” Henry agreed, crossing his arms. Patrick stared at him for another second, then seemed to relax.
“Good,” he said. “Maybe I’ll see you inside…”

Without another word, he shoved past Henry into the house. Henry licked his teeth and flicked his cigarette onto the ground, stomping it out before looking up at the stars for a minute. Not really to look at the stars, but to try and put himself in a better mood. He just needed to calm down…

But of course he couldn’t get himself to calm down. He growled and turned, walking into the house. It was a party alright… it was dark, and smelled booze and sweat, and bodies were touching everywhere, and it was so damn loud. Love Shack by the B-52s was blaring over some speaker that he was sure wasn’t made to handle the volume it was at.

Henry shoved through the crowd-- although people moved aside for him, out of fear or disgust --to the kitchen, where Belch was chugging the contents of a beer bottle. He stood next to his friend as he set his bottle down and let out one of his signature belches. A few girls who were in the grade below then made disgusted noises and hurried out of the kitchen.

“How many ya had, there, big guy?” Henry wondered, looking behind his friend at the scattered empty beers on the counter. Belch shrugged.

“Let’s say four,” he mumbled, grabbing another case from the pile of beer cases on the kitchen floor. He opened it up and pulled out two bottles, handing one to Henry. Henry held it for a minute, looking out across the floor of the party to see if he couldn’t spot you.

And when he did spot you, he wished he hadn’t looked. You were on Tommy Jones’ lap, your arms draped over his shoulders with a drink in your hand and a sweet, flirtatious smile on your lips. What the fuck was this? Why the hell were you hanging off of Tommy Jones instead of Patrick?

“I heard her and Pats talkin’,” Belch spoke up, and Henry quickly looked at his friend. “He said she could fuck anybody who wants her tonight…”

“What the fuck…” Henry scoffed, daring to look back at you again just as Tommy grabbed at your ass. “Jesus… he was just tellin’ me to keep my hands off her…”

“Yeah, well, maybe tonight’s your chance to get her again… I’d take that chance…” his large friend said sadly. Henry glanced at him in confusion, and looked around for Patrick. He was no where to be seen… so you were off the leash and unsupervised… maybe he could find a way to--
No, it was stupid. You didn’t deserve the life he would give you, you deserved so much better…

But not this… not what Patrick had to give you…

“Maybe…” Henry sighed, looking down at his beer before chugging it again. Tonight was going to be a long night, he thought. Especially when he was going to have to watch you fuck around with a bunch of other boys…

It didn’t help that, with Patrick and himself at odds, and Belch and Vic not speaking for one reason or another, Henry felt like his gang was completely gone... broken apart for good.
After Patrick’s phone call, you didn’t really wake up, per say.

Sure, you got up out of bed, picked out a cute outfit for him to look at you in, and did your hair and makeup just the way he liked… you spritzed on his favorite scent of your perfumes, and rolled on a bright, red lipstick, rubbing your lips together and staring at yourself in the mirror… seeing if you were perfect for him…

You did all of those thing in a matter of seven minutes, but you weren’t really awake through it. Not with the drugs you had taken a few hours ago still flowing through your veins, along with the pills you had taken when you got up.

You hadn’t really been awake in a month. It had all been numbness to you. A hazy, euphoric numbess, with little bursts of highs, and long, painful bouts of lows…

And with all of it, you still couldn’t keep your mind off of Henry… you were numb to everyone else except for him. So you were happy that you hadn’t seen him at all, but you were anxious about tonight. He was going to be there, you just knew it, and you didn’t know if you were ready to see him again… you might just melt at his presence.
As soon as you were ready, you shut off your light and silently opened your door, pulling your pack of cigarettes out of your jacket pocket and pulling one out as you quietly crept down the stairs to the main entrance. It took you a second to pull and tie up your boots, but once you did you pulled out a lighter and moved to open the front door.

And then you heard someone clear their throat.

You froze, thinking about what excuse you could make as the light turned on.

“Are you going somewhere?” your Dad asked from the stairs. You stood up straight and very carefully pulled your cigarette out of your mouth, hiding it in your hand as you turned around. Your Dad glanced at the clock on the wall, and your Mom was standing right behind him looking worried. “At… quarter to midnight?”

“That was the plan,” you agreed nonchalantly. “You caught me, what's my punishment?”

“What is going on with you, Y/N?” he wondered sadly. “This isn’t like you, you… you're sneaking out?”

“To be fair, I've been sneaking out for almost year now, you just didn't care until now,” you argued. He glared at you. “Why is that, by the way? We both know you don't actually give a shit about us, you don't have to pretend.”

“What?” your Mom hissed. Your Dad looked back at her, then hesitated and sighed.

“Bill, go to bed,” he ordered. You glanced up around them and saw Bill at the top of the stairs. “Y/N, why would you even say that, of course we care about you.”

“No you don't,” you said. “Ever since Georgie died, it's been like we don't even exist. And it's fine. I get it. We were all destroyed over it, that's not the problem. The problem is that I heard Mom say that she wished it had been me or Bill, and not Georgie.” Your parents looked surprised. “You said 'why did it have to be him ?’ you said you felt like you had nothing left to live for.”

“Y-Y-You said that?” Bill wondered softly.
“No, I didn't, I wouldn't say that!” your Mom denied. She looked at you and came down the stairs. “Y/N, I did not say that!”

“Pretty sure you did. I remember it 'cause... well, not to be gross or anything, but I remember 'cause that's the night I lost my virginity,” you explained. Your Mom gasped and your Dad's face turned red. “Oh come on, I'm sixteen. This isn't the fifties anymore, people don't wait till marriage.”

“Was it that Hockstetter kid?” your Dad guessed, crossing his arms. “Is that why you were down in the sewers with him? Is he who you're going to see?”

You thought. “No it wasn't, no that's not why I was in the sewers with him. But yes, he is who I'm going to see,” you admitted, thinking.

“Why are you going to hang out with Hockstetter?” he wondered. “I mean... just bare with us, Y/N, it's like suddenly you're a completely different person.”

“It's nice. I needed this change,” you told him. “Patrick and I hang out a lot. I hang out with Vic too, he's a good friend...”

“Why them?” your Mom asked frantically. “They're... they're rotten...”

“They're good friends. They like me, and we have fun. And Patrick... well, Patrick’s really special...” you told them, blushing and smiling a little. They both looked disappointed, and you laughed. “You know what, screw it. I lost my virginity to Henry Bowers. And I was seeing him up until the day before the sewer thing.”

“What?!” Bill cried.

“Why?” your Mom questioned, sounding disgusted. “Oh, sweetheart, you... him?”

“Don't act like that, you fucked around with his Dad,” you accused. She looked startled by this, and your Dad looked at her.
“Y/N Denbrough, I did no such thing,” she denied, starting to blush. “That family is disgusting, and crude, and I would never --”

“You know I didn't believe him,” you cut her off, grinning. “But that's exactly what someone who did screw a Bowers would say.”

“Y/N, this is ridiculous,” your Dad spoke up, coming down the stairs as your Mom tried to think of a defense against your accusations. “Go upstairs right now and go to bed. We'll talk about this in the morning when we've all gotten some rest.”

“No,” you told him, glancing out the window and moving towards the door. “My ride’s here. I'll be back in the morning.”

“Don't you dare leave this house, young lady,” your Dad argued, hurrying to catch you as you opened the front door. You jumped outside onto the stairs before he could catch you. He ran outside after you and you stared at him. “Y/N, get back in the house now.”

“No,” you said again. “You don't get to start caring all of a sudden. It took me almost dying to get you to give a shit, and now I have a second chance to really live. I'm gonna live my life how I want, whether you want me to or not!”

You heard him call your name again as you ran to Patrick's car and jumped in quickly, yelling at him to go. Patrick grinned and sped off down the road quickly. You laughed and looked behind you, seeing Vic in the backseat.

“What the hell happened?” he asked.

“They caught me sneaking out,” you explained, feeling Patrick snake his arm around your shoulder. “I told 'em to fuck off.”

“That'a girl, baby,” Patrick praised. “You gotta live your own fuckin' life, nobody’s got the right to tell you what to do. Fuck parents!” He laughed and you cuddled up against him, nipping at his ear happily as he drove you both towards the party.

“Yeah, it's all fun and games,” Vic scoffed. “Till her parents call the cops on us, idiot.”
Patrick waved him off. “Cops, smops, what's life without a little danger, Vicky-pie? I'm gettin’ her to live a little, and she's havin’ the time of her life, aren't you, baby?” he grinned, petting your air gently. You hummed in agreement, and turned his face to kiss you. He groaned and kissed you back, closing his eyes slightly.

“Holy-- Patrick look out!” Vic cried.

Patrick quickly swerved to avoid a parked car on the side of the road, and he laughed. “Fuck, sorry, baby,” he said lightly. Vic just sighed heavily and sat back in his seat, crossing his arms. “We’ll have to pick this up in a second, honey bear…”

“Yeah, we’ll pick what up?” you asked innocently, leaning against him and playing with his hair. He ground his teeth impatiently, speeding up a bit.

“Oh, you wanna know, huh?” he mumbled. You bit your lips. “You’re gonna get dicked in the backseat’a Daddy's car, how’s that sound?”

You froze, staring at him in shock. Normally that would be fine, but… Butch Bowers had called himself Daddy… while he held you down in the back of his car and fucked you… it just sounded too similar…

But letting Patrick down was a big no-no. He always got what he wanted, one way or another, so you were going to get fucked in the back of ‘Daddy’’s car whether you wanted it or not. “Yes, Daddy, I’d love that,” you lied. He pouted, clearly hearing the hesitance in your tone. “I love you, Patrick, I just… I wanna go to the party…”

“Well we can fuck first, right?” he insisted. You sighed and looked down.

“Only if we can smoke first,” you nodded. He grinned.

“Good girl…”

It only took a few more minutes to get to the party, and when you did, Patrick shoved the shift into park and dove into the backseat. You had to laugh a little, at the silliness, the charm of it all, the
way Vic scoffed and leaned over to the side the get out of his boyfriend’s way… because Vicky was just as much a lover of Patrick’s as you were… well, somewhat. Patrick clearly favored you, spent most of his time with you, bought you expensive gifts and new outfits, and makeup, and shoes, and anything that you asked for. You felt bad for Vic, but he wouldn’t talk to you… not after what you had done with Belch…

“Get back here,” Patrick grinned, grabbing your arm and pulling you into the backseat. You squealed out a laugh, then couldn’t help but melt and kiss him once you were on top of him. Vic groaned and tried to open his door, finding it locked. He looked at Patrick who just smirked. “Get in the front if you don’t like it, sweetheart… I thought maybe you could… play with us…”

“Patrick, I don’t like girls, how many times can I say that?” he sighed. “I can’t have a threeway, I’m sorry,” he insisted, climbing into the front.

Now alone in the backseat, Patrick and you smoked two bongs between the two of you, then he started to have sex with you… which you didn’t quite remember. You were out of it for most of the experience, as you had wished to be.

At some point he finished with you, and finally unlocked the door to the car, letting the hotbox and you out. You got out and stumbled, falling on your bottom in the grass and starting to laugh.

“P-Patrick I fell,” you giggled, hoping he would like the cute way it sounded. He did seem to like it, finishing zipping up his pants as he slid out of the backseat.

“Well then get on up, baby girl, we gotta go into the party now,” Patrick laughed. “Come on, Vicky, let’s go.”

Vic got out of the car and growled, crossing his arms. “Don’t ever lock me in the car while you guys fuck ever again,” Vic demanded angrily… but you thought he sounded sick. He sounded off, somehow, and he was getting really thin… you thought maybe you could at least try to talk to him, to see what was wrong and if he needed help… but he wouldn’t let you help him now…

“Oh come on, Vicky, you coulda gotten off to it, if you’d just pull the stick outta your ass,” Patrick taunted him. Vic just sighed, knowing that he was too weak to argue, and that Patrick was too high to really care. “Look, my loves, our friend!”

As you struggled against the car to stand up, you looked over and saw Henry staring right at you,
looking disappointed and angry. You knew you let your fear of his opinion leak onto your face before you just looked away and stood yourself up, trying to get yourself together a little.

“Evenin’,” Henry greeted calmly from where he stood by the door. You just stared at Patrick, then at Vic, who was staring at the ground sadly, nervously...

“I was hoping to catch you, Hank,” Patrick spoke up confidently. “Have some stuff you’re gonna love.”

As Patrick walked over to Henry, you and Vic both followed him, slipping behind him to the front door so that you wouldn’t have to talk to Henry. As soon as you were inside you relaxed, walking over to the kitchen to get a drink.

Belch was standing against the kitchen counter, two beers, one in each hand, one of them being chugged down. You glanced at him then grabbed a beer for yourself.

“Is Vic alright?” he asked suddenly. You looked up at him. “Is he safe…? A-And happy…?” You looked sad, and he took a shaky breath, taking another sip of his beer. “I know I’ll never get him back… I know what we did was wrong and I wish I could take it back, but…. But now it’s too late… I ain’t ever gonna have him again cause’a what we did…”

A few freshman girls came into the kitchen, probably excited to be at their first high school party, and they each grabbed beers for themselves. You glanced at Belch again as he raised his beer at you in a sad farewell, and you turned to hurry away, only to run into Patrick. You smiled, then frowned when you saw that his cheek was bruised.

“Patrick, what happened to your face?” you wondered.

“What? Oh, don’t worry, babydoll, nothin’ major,” he brushed it off. “Hey, I want you to go wild tonight….” He pulled a pill bottle out of his pocket and discreetly pulled one out and gave it to you. “I want you to fuck any guy that wants you, okay? Just, loosen up a little…” You blinked, but smiled and took the pill from it, popping it into your mouth. You hoped that it would mix with your pill from earlier and the weed that you had smoked in the car, and the beer that you were drinking, make tonight a blur for you.

Once you were in agreement, he walked off and quickly disappeared in the crowd. You glanced back at Belch, who looked a bit disapproving, then you thought, turning to look at him. “Hey
Reg… if… if you wanna blow off some steam tonight, just let me know… I’ll be around, big guy,” you told him, winking before turning and walking away… you needed to find someone to give you the attention you needed, and you had really enjoyed the sex with him a month ago…

“Hey, Y/N!” you heard someone call from behind you. You turned, only to nearly fall over as Mia ran into you to hug you. “It feels like I haven’t seen you in years! How are you, what’s been happening?”

“M-Mia…?” you slurred, the drugs starting to kick in. She frowned and backed up a little as she realized that you weren’t sober.

“Y/N, are you okay? Did you take something?” she asked worriedly. She looked you up and down. “And what are you wearing, I mean it’s cute, but…”

“I’m just being me, Mia,” you laughed, shrugging. “This is who I really am…”

“Right…” she mumbled, nodding slowly as she stared at you. “Let’s get you to my place, you need some rest--”

“What? No, I just got here!” you told her. “Have you seen Tommy, I really think he’s going to like my skirt.”

“Tommy? Since when have you liked Tommy?” she wondered in confusion.

You saw Patrick come back out of the crowd and smile when he saw you, so you smiled back and perked up. He hurried over, pushing Mia a little without your notice and swooping in to wrap his arms around you and kiss at your neck. You giggled and closed your eyes to kiss him.

“Woah,” you heard Mia scoff. You pulled away from each other’s lips to look at her. “What the hell is this?”

“Oh,” you said, looking at Patrick, then back at Mia. “We’re… together…”

“When the hell were you planning on telling me?” she asked angrily.
“Mia, I haven’t seen you--”

“Yeah, I know that, Y/N… and now I know where you’ve been spending all your time…” she said coldly. You looked shocked and she just shook her head. “Forget it… I thought you were my friend, Y/N, but lately, it’s like you’re a completely different person… and now, I get why…..” She took a shaky breath as she looked at a grinning Patrick. “I’ll see you at school, I guess, Y/N…”

Without another word, she stormed off. You looked around, realizing that people were staring at you and Patrick, and you froze. He quickly pulled you out of the main room to the hallway, and you took a shaky breath.

“Don’t worry about it, princess,” he told you softly, running his hands over your soft hips and resting his forehead on yours. “You don’t need her, baby…”

Patrick smiled lightly and moved one hand to play with some of your hair. “This world is so fucked, Y/N, you know that? This town is… toxic. But me and you, Y/N… all we need is each other, baby.”

You thought about this as he brought his face to your hair and breathed in. A life with no one but Patrick… wow, would that be wild. Maybe not in a good way, he would probably convince you into some kind of Bonnie and Clyde routine, or into murdering someone, or something insane like that.

But god was he so handsome tonight, and he smelled sweet and inviting, and when he pulled you closer by a hand on your ass, you gasped, but used it as an excuse to get closer to his neck to smell his cologne. He hummed and hugged you close to him. “Promise me you’re mine…” he whispered.

You felt your heart skip a beat. Could you promise him that, when you were being allowed to have sex with several other boys? That seemed odd to you, but Patrick was Patrick…

“I found Tommy Jones,” Patrick told you, bypassing everything that had just happened. He held up a cup of punch, and you realized that somewhere along the way you had lost your beer bottle… had you even finished it, where had it gone? You took the punch— wait where had the punch come from? —and drained it quickly, wanting to be even more numb now than ever.
The next few hours went by in a blur. You knew you had sex… with more than one person, Tommy being one, the other… you couldn’t quite remember… of course, you slept with Patrick again at some point, and then he disappeared again…

You sat on the floor of the bedroom that you had used for all three people, and you sighed to yourself, feeling sick and tired. You just wanted tonight to end… you just wanted to go…

Well, not home… you didn’t ever want to go home again… not when your parents were going to actually kill you when you got there…. And Bill would never want to talk to you again, not now that he knew…

You started crying lightly, and you hugged your knees towards you, resting your head on your knees. Everything was falling apart… you felt like you needed to just run away…

“Y/N, what happened to you?”

You looked up and started crying heavily, letting your head fall back against the bed. Henry was walking over to you, you could hear the footsteps of his boots against the floor, then you felt him sit next to you. “I just want everything to be gone,” you told him sadly. “I lost Georgie… and when I lost Georgie, I lost my parents too, they barely talk to me… and Bill’s never around anymore, so I barely ever see him…”

“I know,” he said with a sigh. “I’m sorry, Y/N, but--”

“And then I lost you… and it was my own damn fault…” You took a shaky breath, rolling your eyes and wiping them dry. “I lost Vic as a friend, and even worse, I lost Mia…”

“Y/N, break up with him,” Henry whispered. You looked up at him in surprise. “It’s just… he’s fucked up, Y/N, you need someone better than him, someone who won’t use you or hurt you--”

“Someone like you…” you tried softly. He hesitated, then sighed.

“Y/N, I love you, but--”
“What?” you cut him off, your eyes widening.

“Y/N, listen--”

“You love me?”

“I’m just gonna end up hurtin’ you!” he hissed, finally looking right at you. And when he did he couldn’t look away. “I a’ready did hurt you, but next time, I might knock you out, ‘r somethin’, and I ain’t riskin’ somethin’ like that happenin’...”

“I love you, Henry,” you told him. He just stared at you, shaking his head.

“What…?”

“Because I can’t live without you,” you whispered, touching his hand. “Please, Henry, please give me another chance, I won’t ever hurt you like I did again, please…”

You knew he was going to say no, but you couldn’t help yourself. You loved him, no matter how hard you tried to stop the feeling. You had never been so happy as you were with him, and you hadn’t been happy since… it hadn’t been perfect, but it had been real… everything had felt so real, for once in your life, it felt right… and you wanted that realness back.

“Y/N, y-you mean the world to me…” he started quietly, sounding angry, except for the slight tremor in his voice. “That’s why I have to let you go. Don’t you understand that? I’m doing this because I love you so damn much…”

You stared at him sadly as he looked down at his hands. You moved up onto your knees, your private area very sore from everyone who had used you tonight, but you wanted him so badly. “I understand, Henry…” you said softly, after a moment pausing. “I’ll stop…”

The two of you sat quietly for a few seconds before you chuckled. “I… told my parents about us…” you told him with a sigh. “And about Patrick, but… I mentioned something about… you being the one who took my virginity, or something like that…”
“Fuck, that musta gone over well,” he laughed lightly.

“’ Oh, Y/N, how could you with him? ’” you mocked your mother, in a pitch higher than you own. Then you cleared your throat, looking down, “Yeah… they are not happy…”

“Yeah… my Dad was all fine and dandy around the time you and Patrick got together, then his fuckin’ pay got cut…” He laughed and covered his face. “But I finally got around to talkin’ to Vic, and we smoked some pot then raided Bowie’s kitchen. Boy was she pissed…” You both laughed a bit together before falling quiet. You took a shaky breath and looked at him. He was staring ahead at the wall, and in the dark you could see that he had one knee up, his arm draped over it, and a beer bottle in his hand. “I, uh… I slept with Bowie, tonight…”

“Oh…” you whispered, looking down. “I slept with Tommy Jones…”

“I know,” he scoffed. “Dickbag’s braggin’ about it to all his steroid-head football buddies…”

You blushed darkly and leaned your head back against the bed. “Fuck, you have to be joking,” you sighed.

“What’d you expect? He’s a fuckin’ cunt,” he spat. “Bastard needs to learn to keep his mouth shut… who else’d you fuck tonight, Y/N?”


“And?”

“And…?” you repeated. “There was someone else…”

“Who was it?” he snapped. You jumped and tried to remember who the other person had been. “Jesus Christ, you’re so high… what’s he force feedin’ you, anyways, is it Roxi? Percs?”

“Percs,” you told him. He scoffed but nodded. “And weed. His weed is incredible.”
“Yeah, he gets top notch stuff,” Henry mumbled. “I liked your outfit tonight, by the way, he bought it for you?” You blushed and nodded. He stared at you. “You know he’s tryin’ to buy you into lovin’ ‘im ‘n stayin’ with ‘im, right?”

“Of course I know that,” you agreed sadly. “But he’s… so good at talking me into things… and the things he does and gives me feel so good, so I trust him, even though deep down I know I’m…” You trailed off and sighed. “Well… lets just say, I know I’m just doing it to feel less…”

“Feel less? Y/N, you ain’t yourself no more…” he said seriously. “The Y/N I knew wouldn’t ever’a drugged herself out like this…”

“Well this is me now…” you chuckled with a wry smile. “Drugged out and fucked by anyone who wants me…” You looked down. “What else am I supposed to do? I couldn’t keep up the good girl shit forever, right?”

“Guess not… you sayin’ it was all an act?” he wondered.

“No, of course not… but I was bored, being like that… and now I’m not.”

“Congratulations…”

You looked at him with an unamused face, which he returned, and you sighed. “Henry, I can’t get you out of my head…” you told him weakly, smiling sadly and leaning your head back against the bed. “You really love me?”

“Course,” he agreed quietly, shyly, it sounded very unlike the tough persona he put on for his friends, or the awful monster he became when he was angry or on a rampage… this sounded so soft to you, so out of character.

“Then you’ll let me be with you,” you tried. He rolled his eyes, which made you growl in frustration. “Henry, fucking tell me why you think you’re so evil--”

“You covered it with makeup, but y’ain’t did a good job Y/N, I can see the fuckin’ bruises, ‘n your eye ain’t so swollen no more, but I can tell it’s still a little…” he told you. You blushed and touched your eye.
“I thought I did a pretty good job…”

“Ya didn’t.” He laughed lightly. Then he put his hand on his face. “I could kill ya, Y/N, don’t you get that…?”

You frowned deeply. “Why would you even say that…?” you asked worriedly. He shook his head.

“You ain’t seen the kinda shit I seen, Y/N, I seen my Mama so fuckin’ beat up she almost fuckin’ died…” he said, sounding like he was starting to tear up, and he stopped talking for a second, before continuing quietly. “I know how easy it would be for me to get as drunk as he was that night… I know how easy it would be for you to set me off…. I know how much stronger I am than you--”

“Henry, stop--”

“You have to hear this, Y/N, you have to know that’s how this’ll end…” he demanded, sounding almost angry. “I don’t want it to be like that--”

“It doesn’t have to be like that, sweetheart,” you insisted, tearing up. He gulped and looked away from you.

“You can deny it all you want, but I know what I have to do to protect you, Y/N…” he said sternly. “That’s the end of it, okay?”

You wanted to keep arguing. You wanted him to stop this stupidity… no, he was scared… you wondered if he saw you beaten to death like his mother in his dreams, the way you saw his looming over you in yours…

You sobbed a bit in your throat, and he took a shaky breath before moving to stand up. “Henry, wait,” you pleaded, your voice cracking. He continued to stand, so you stood up quickly and grabbed him before he could walk away, turning him to face you, then going up on your toes and kissing him. He didn’t move right away, letting you press your lips hard against his. When you moved back, he kept a straight face. You felt tears run down your face. “I love you, Henry…”
He stared at you, clearly debating his options, and you moved towards him again to kiss him. This time he kissed you back, gently. It was so nice like this, quiet, just the two of you…

You touched his shoulder and felt him put his hand on your waist, deepening the kiss. You sighed, letting your lips move against his, the softness of yours against his dry ones reminding you of the months that you’d spent together, and wanting many more to come.

It was him that actually moved you towards the bed, but once he got you both there he hesitated. You looked up at him hopefully, and he shook his head and kissed you deeply, immediately making it heated by nipping at your lip and bringing one hand to squeeze one of your breasts. You whimpered and moved yourself out of the kiss the try and remember how to breathe. Everything was so much more intense with Henry, every feeling, every emotion, every sensation… he made you so in need of him so quickly, it was nearly embarrassing, but you couldn’t be embarrassed right now, this was everything you wanted: him. Just him, raw, and wild, and passionate.

He loved you… he loved you, and he was afraid of hurting you… of course, you had known that all along, but you had chosen the wrong path… you had chosen to listen to the little voice in the back of your head that told you he didn’t love you… the anxiety had cost you two months of pain and abuse…

It started off with Patrick asking you pretty simple questions during sex. Stuff like *Is it okay if I pull your hair?* and *How do you feel about me biting your neck a little?* or *Can I put my hands around your neck?* and *Can I smack your ass?* It was pretty straightforward, Henry had asked the same questions, and had taken your agreement as permission to do those things whenever he felt like doing them. Patrick wasn't much different, in that way.

But then it started getting a little strange. He would ask if it was okay to handcuff you to the bed, or to use ropes to tie you up. He assured you it was a pretty normal thing to do, and you had reluctantly agreed. It didn't do much for you, other than restrict the movement of your hands. But you could still move, and he never tied you up enough that it hurt. At first, at least…

Around the time he started asking you to beg him to stop during sex, he tied the ropes so tight around your wrists that they left a light mark around your wrists for three painful days. Then he talked you into putting a gag in your mouth and letting him use his belt to spank you. No matter how much he tried to convince you that you loved it, you knew that all it did was hurt.

You were afraid of what Henry would think when he saw the bruises, and the cuts, and the welts. Tommy had thought they were sexy, the second person had been rather worried over them, and Patrick, of course, left more.
Luckily it was dark in the room, so when he lifted up your shirt, he didn’t notice them right away. Not until he accidentally dug his thumb into a rather fresh bruise. He stopped, and moved to turn the lamp on the the nightstand on. “Henry--”

You winced when the lights turned on and he looked at you worriedly. He moved towards you again and pulled your shirt over your head, and as you struggled to take it off, you could hear his breathing speed up.

“He beats you?” he asked angrily. You finally got your shirt off and he ran his finger over a fresh bite mark on your side, and you winced away from it. “He’s dead… he don’t know it yet--”

“He does it during sex…” you explained quietly. “They’re… hiccys…”

“Fuck, **those** are hiccys?” he scoffed. “Y/N, don’t fuck with me, those are fuckin’ bruises.”

“Shut up, I-I know…” you snapped. “Look, he lashes out sometimes, he doesn’t mean to--”

“Oh, **please**, Y/N, don’t make excuses for him… I’m gonna kill him…”

You hesitated, taking a shaky breath and smiling a little. “Will you… will you do that for me…?” you whispered, moving closer to him to kiss him. He grabbed at your unbruised waist and kissed you deeply.

“Gladly.” He kissed at your jaw lightly. “Fuck, you’re gorgeous…”

“Henry…”

“Could we…?” he started, before trailing off. You looked at him hopefully. “No… we can’t--”

“Please fuck me, Henry,” you pleaded, pressing yourself as close to him as you could, grabbing his hands and putting them on your ass. “Please… just one last time…”

He couldn’t deny that you were absolutely gorgeous, and that he was starting to get hard from the
way your hips rubbed up against his… and it would be his goodbye to you, before he let you go…

He had to have you this one last time.

He kissed you again and climbed over you, making you moan and wrap your arms around his shoulders. If this was truly to be your last time with Henry, you had to make it perfect...

---

Patrick had trusted that you were over Henry… at least that you wouldn’t do this with him…

Of course he was watching you through unlocked bedroom door. But this time it wasn’t out of curiosity, or interest. No, this time, he was watching you and fuming. He had never felt anger like this before, and it was Henry who was really causing it… you were practically begging for Henry, he had heard everything you told him…

It wouldn’t do, he thought. You loved Patrick, not Henry, at least you were supposed to. It wasn’t fair. All of his work and still, you were obsessed with him.

He would have to fix this… he would let you have your fun with him, one last time, and then you and Henry would never, ever see each other again. He would be sure of that
Once again, you sat alone in the dimly lit bedroom, trying to get yourself to stop crying.

Being with Henry had been incredible, and intimate, and loving… you had never felt so close to him in your life, but as soon as it had started, it had ended. He had made love to you, kissed your cheek, and he had said goodbye…

The rest of your life without him… what was even the point of that? It didn’t sound like a life worth living…

You got yourself to stop crying long enough that you stood up and walked out of the room to the bathroom, looking sadly at yourself in the mirror. Your face was rounder than it had been a month ago, and there was makeup running down your cheeks. You sighed and picked up a washcloth, dampening it under warm water and starting to clean yourself up.

Once you were satisfied that you didn’t look like a depressed raccoon anymore, you slowly walked towards the stairs. You stopped at the top when you saw Patrick about to ascend from the bottom. He smiled sweetly, and waved, and you sighed, going down the stairs towards him.

“Can we go home?” you asked softly, sniffing and wiping your nose on the back of your hand. He
pouted, touching your cheek once you were close enough.

“What’s wrong? You look upset,” he told you. You shrugged and kept your eyes on the floor. He sighed and kept his hand on your cheek, kissing your forehead. “Of course, let’s go home… but I wanna talk to you first, alone… is that okay?”

He asked it so sweetly, so softly, that you looked up at him worriedly. He just smiled, and you nodded in agreement, taking his hand and following him outside and towards the Quarry. It was only a short walk from Greta’s house, just about five or so minutes away.

It was quiet out here, the moon covered by clouds tonight making it dark and cool. You shivered and he rubbed your arms. “I love you,” he said, moving to rub at your arms, hoping to warm them up more than you could. “Do you want my jacket?”

“That’s okay,” you told him quietly, looking up at him. “What’s wrong, is everything okay?”

“Yeah. Yeah it is.” He seemed a little restless, looking around and squeezing your arm. “I have a proposition for you.”

“A proposition?” you wondered. “Alright, tell me.”

“Let’s get the hell outta here,” he suggested. You looked very confused.

“I know, I wanna go home--”

“No, I mean Derry,” he pressed. You frowned, and he reached into his jacket, pulling out an envelope. “I got two tickets for a bus to Portland, and from there… anywhere, as long as it’s with you…”

“Wait, back up,” you tried, shaking your head in disbelief. “You wanna run away?”

“Just the two of us,” he agreed, smiling brightly. “I wanna spend the rest of my life with you, Y/N… and I know you have no where to go, now that your parents know… so let’s fuck off together, we can start a new life together.”
You stared at him in complete shock, not sure how to respond to him. “Patrick, I-I don’t know what to say…” was all you could get out before he kissed you gently. You relaxed a little, thinking about this. You had said goodbye to Henry, presumably forever, your parents were completely against you… you felt like Patrick was all you had left. Besides, he had money, he could take care of the both of you…

“Don’t think so much, Y/N, just think about us… what we could be…” he smiled, taking your hand. “We’re perfect together, aren’t we…? We get into just the right amount of trouble, and we’re in love…”

“In love…” you whispered, mostly to yourself, feeling your eyes well up with tears. He hesitated.

“I wanna elope with you… tonight… I already forged our parents’ signatures, all the paperwork is ready, I even have a ring,” he told you, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a large ring box. Again, you were completely speechless, shocked at the randomness of this whole thing.

He opened up the ring box, and you were already blown away by the size of the diamond as he got down on one knee to do it properly. “Patrick,” you tried. “Patrick, wait, we’re only sixteen--”

“Who cares. Loads of people get married this young, and when we’re as in love as we are--”

“Patrick, I…” you started, trailing off as you saw him lower the ring in frustration. “I-I can’t, what about school, what about our parents, our friends--”

“What about Henry?” he mumbled. You frowned and he stood up, grabbing your arm. “I know what you did with him tonight. I know you fucked.”

“Oh…” was all you could think to say, and you felt his grip on your arm tighten. “Ow, Patrick--”

“Why would you do that to me, Y/N? Why can’t you just let him go?” he pressed. You were a little frightened now, and he could see it in your eyes, frowning darkly. “We’re leaving. Tonight, whether you want to or not. You’re mine, not his, not anyone else’s.”
“B-But you said I could--”

“I didn’t mean him,” he spat. His grip on your arm was already starting to bruise, and you tried to pull yourself away, but he held on. “You should have known better, I thought you knew better....”

“Patrick, I-I’m sorry, I-I didn’t know…” you tried to explain. He just glared at you. “I-It was just a goodbye, I promise, it was just goodbye…”

“Can you really promise me that? No,” he answered before you could respond. “That’s why we’re leaving. And that’s why you don’t have a choice in the matter…”

You stared at him, then your face turned red, and you yanked your arm out of his grip. “Patrick, I really like you, and I love spending time with you--” you started, only to have his hand slap over your mouth. You felt three little pills fall into your mouth, and you were surprised to feel him pull you against him.

“Swallow,” he demanded. You shook your head and tried to get out of his grip, refusing to swallow the pills this time. “Y/N, swallow them, they’ll calm you down.” He wouldn’t let go of you, and he wouldn’t take his hand off of your mouth. Saliva was starting to pool up on your tongue and dissolve the pills in your mouth. “Come on, baby…”

You yelled out behind his hand and tried to push him but he squeezed his arm around your middle and finally tipped your head back, forcing you to swallow so that you wouldn’t choke. You sobbed a little, tears starting to well up behind your eyes. He kept you held in place and kept your mouth covered, and you started hyperventilating, struggling against him. Within a few minutes, you started to feel dizzy from the lack of air, and you relaxed back against him. He hushed you and lifted you up in bridal style-- so fitting --, carrying you out of the woods and towards his car.

---

Henry had been sitting outside chain smoking cigarettes when he saw Patrick carry you out of the woods. You looked limp in his arms, and it immediately set off alarms in Henry’s head.

What had he done to you?

He stood up and walked over to the car angrily, ready to fight for you. He reached the black Ferrari
as Patrick was buckling you into the car. “Hey,” he barked. Patrick visibly sighed, and reached into
the glove compartment before standing up and turning around with his hands behind his back.
“What the fuck happened to her?”

“Maybe you fucked her too hard, Henry,” he suggested coldly. Henry raised an eyebrow. “Don’t
worry, Henry, she’s safe with me…”

“She’s passed out, what’s wrong with her?” he demanded, looking around him at you, seeing you
were definitely unconscious.

Patrick scoffed. “She took about four Percocets and drank half the punch, she’s piss drunk and high
off her ass. Back off,” he told him seriously. Henry looked at him skeptically. “You know Henry,
get in the car if you’re so worried.”

“Fuck off, Patrick,” he spat. “But if you think you’re leaving with her--”

Patrick brought his hands out from behind his back, and Henry shut up and froze when Patrick
pointed a small hand gun at him. “It’s fully loaded. Get in the car. We’re gonna wait for her to
come to,” he ordered. Henry put his hands up slowly and moved to open the back door of the car,
watching the gun as Patrick continued to point it at him…

“Pats, this is insane,” he said calmly, although he was terrified. Something was seriously wrong
with Patrick right now… his eyes were distant, and more empty than usual, they were wide and
frantic. “Just put that thing away, will you?”

“I will once we’re where we need to be,” Patrick told him. Henry just shook his head in disbelief,
and got into the backseat. Patrick shut the door and Henry watched him walk around the back of
the car to the driver’s seat.

“Y/N,” he hissed, pushing at your shoulder. You just groaned and slumped down a little more.
Patrick got in the driver’s seat and locked the doors, starting the car. “Hockstetter what the hell?
Dude, this is too much, don’t you think?”

“What makes something too much, when you’re in love?” he grinned in the rear view mirror
before speeding off down the road.
He must have driven around for an hour, around town and through neighborhoods. The two boys sat in an extremely tense, angry silence until Patrick turned on some static-filled, late night Catholic preaching radio station. The calm voiced priest was talking over a soft, old sounding music in the background about the Revelation-- the end of the world…

At long last, you stirred from your sleep with a whimper, and you opened your eyes slowly. “P-Patrick…?” your voice raspy. He reached over and turned the radio down, then touched your thigh.

“I’m here, princess,” he told you softly. You whimpered again and tried to move yourself away from him.

“Don’t touch her!” Henry snapped from the backseat, and Patrick lifted his gun without looking, right into his face, which went blank. You gasped and sat up.

“Henry,” you whispered, wiping your eyes and looking back at him, then looking at Patrick. “What’s going on?”

“We’re gonna be together forever, Y/N,” Patrick explained, bringing his hand and the gun back into his lap. You shook your head.

“I don’t want that,” you whispered. He didn’t say anything for a moment, so you gulped. “Patrick, I’m so sorry, I think you’re an amazing friend--”

“I’m more than a friend. I’m yours. And you’re mine.” He turned sharply onto a dirt road that led into the woods and you grabbed onto the door handle, gasping.

“Where are we going?” Henry asked worriedly.

“Me and Y/N are going to be together forever,” he said again. Henry grunted. “And you’re coming with us so I can see the look on your face when you realize you won’t ever have her again. And because I want you dead.”

“Great,” Henry scoffed. “You still ain’t told me where we’re goin’.”
“Here.”

He stopped the car shortly and you cried out in surprise as you were all jolted forward. You could see the Quarry through the clearing, and you frowned. “The Quarry?” you asked. He rolled down his window and hummed in agreement as he pulled out a cigarette and lit it quickly. “We were just here, why did we need to drive here?”

“You gonna let us out or what?” Henry questioned angrily. Patrick chuckled.

“Just relax, okay?” he told you both. “You won’t need to worry soon enough.”

“Why…? Patrick what are you gonna do?” you asked, sounding terrified. He looked over at you.

“We’re going to be together, Y/N. Forever,” he said, shifting the car’s gearshift. You looked down at it, then looked ahead, your breathing speeding up.

“Patrick, don’t do this,” you pleaded. You had barely finished before he floored the gas pedal.

You started screaming, and Henry grabbed onto the seats, quickly buckling himself into the seat. “What the hell are you doing?!” he cried, although he saw what was happening: Patrick was going to drive them right off the cliff into the water below… at this speed, and this height, it would almost certainly kill them. “Patrick, stop!”

But he wouldn’t stop. Patrick held his foot down on the gas until the car sped off the cliff, then he finally relaxed, and looked at you. Seeing the you were screaming and crying, he grabbed your hand, squeezing it and closing his eyes.

The moment the car hit the water, you all jolted forward violently, except that you and Henry had seatbelts on. Patrick didn’t. The two of you could say it hurt, but not like Patrick, who went straight through the windshield, although he was pulled partially back in by the water rushing into the car.

The shattered windshield poured in with the water and you felt some of the glass cut your face. You brought your head above the water quickly and you saw Henry do the same.
“Through the window, Y/N, go!” he ordered, and you both took big breaths in before the glassy water covered your heads.

You closed your eyes before the water could get in them, and you kicked at the windshield to break it more open. You felt it give, and you felt Henry’s hand push you forward. From there, you just remember swimming for your life.

Up, and up, and up… it felt neverending, your lungs burning from the excursion. All you wanted was to breathe fresh air again--

But when you opened your eyes, you were still at the bottom, with that car, with a hand around your ankle. You looked down and saw Patrick, his face horribly cut up and his head cut open from the windshield’s harsh glass, his bloody, cut up hand around your ankle, his yellow eyes--

No… Patrick’s eyes were hazel…

It had Patrick.

You stared down at him sadly before kicking his hand against a piece of glass. He cried out, the action causing thick, white bubbles to escape his mouth and float through the water. But he let go, and you swam away.

By the time you finally, at long last, hit the top of the water, you felt like you couldn’t hold your breath any longer, and you gasped violently for air as soon as your head was above water, thrashing for a moment before wiping your eyes and looking around. It was so dark, you couldn’t see a thing, other than the yellow rocks on the shore.

Where was Henry?


“Y/N!”
You heard a girl’s voice yell to you from above, and you saw Greta Bowie looking down at you in horror. “Greta! Get the police!”

“Are you okay?! We saw the car--! W-We heard you scream--!”

“Get the police!” you repeated, before shrieking, “Henry!”

He popped up suddenly, gasping loudly and coughing. He had Patrick over his shoulder, the unconscious boy looking almost blue from the lack of air. Henry was struggling to keep himself above water with the weight of Patrick, so you swam over and together, you pulled him to shore, laying him on the ground.

As soon as he was on the ground, you hugged Henry tightly, crying lightly. He just looked shocked, like he didn’t really understand what had just happened, and put his arms around you slowly. You looked down at Patrick and took a shaky breath.

“W-We have to do CPR,” you insisted, starting to pull away from Henry, but he held you in place. “Henry--”

“He tried to kill us, Y/N, he deserves this,” he tried. You looked horrified, and pushed him away from you so that you could quickly go on your knees and start performing CPR on Patrick. You weren’t very heavy, so you had to put all of your weight on his chest as you started doing compressions, doing them harsh and rapidly, just the way your mother had taught you last summer. “Is it workin’?”

“Shut up, I don’t know,” you snapped frantically, starting to give him mouth to mouth. At long last, he coughed and water spat out of his mouth. You quickly turned him over and rubbed at his back. “Breathe, Patrick, breathe…”

“Y/N,” he gasped, sounding raspy and weak. You hushed him and watched him cough up any water that was left in his lungs before he lay limp on the rocks as he fell unconscious again.

You just stared at him for a moment before looking up at Henry. He was glaring at Patrick, and you swore if he was awake, Henry would have killed him. You stood up and he finally looked at you. You took a shaky breath and looked over as you heard running footsteps.
“Henry!” you heard Belch cry from the woods. He came through into the clearing, Vic right on his heels, and they stopped short when they saw the scene in front of them. “Holy shit, what happened? We heard about the car—”

“What happened to Patrick?” Vic asked, sounding worried but not daring to go near the unconscious boy.

“He tried to kill us,” you whispered. They stared at you, although Belch refused to look at you for long, then they looked at Henry for confirmation. Once he nodded, they looked at each other, quickly looking away, then Belch moved to pick Patrick.

“The police are here, and an ambulance,” he explained, sounding almost angry. “We’re tellin’ the cops ev’rthin’ this bastard did, so as soon as he gets better his ass is in jail for a while. Nobody hurts my friends…” He mumbled the last part angrily as he slung Patrick over his shoulder and started stalking off back down the path. Vic stood awkwardly between the two of you, looking incredibly confused as you moved to hug Henry again, crying.

Your hair dripped water onto his already soaked shoulders, and he touched the back of your head as you rested it on his shoulder, crying softly. “Hey, everythin’s okay now, Y/N… you don’t gotta be scared no more, I gotcha…” he told you and you couldn’t help but smile.

“You fucking slut,” Vic scoffed. You and Henry both looked at him in shock. “Henry, you’re not seriously letting this bitch wrap you around her finger again, are you?”

You felt your heart drop and you frowned deeply. You felt Henry tense up and stand up straight. “Woah, Vic, you better watch you’re fuckin’ mouth,” he snapped. “You don’t get to talk about my girl like that.”

Vic visibly rolled his eyes. “Jesus Christ, don’t be an idiot, Henry! Don’t you see what’s happening? You have no idea who this… this snake really is, she’s just gonna end up screwin’ some other guy… sss. As in plural. How many did you fuck tonight, Y/N, huh? What was it, Patrick, Tommy Jones… Belch.”

You shivered when you heard that, and shook your head. Oh… no…

“Vic, I was so high tonight, I don’t remember anything,” you told him truthfully. He raised an eyebrow angrily.

“You really don’t care that this whore fucked your best friend?” he questioned, sounding disgusted.

“Crissy, we had an orgy, remember? Patrick, Belch, and I all screwed her brains out…” he reminded him. Meanwhile, his hand ran down your back and grabbed your ass. You gasped and moved closer to him. Vic looked like he was about to gag, and he turned around and started storming off through the woods. He stopped and turned around, taking a deep breath and putting his hands on his hips.

He looked down at his stomach, which you could see was bloated from his binge in Greta’s kitchen with Henry. Then he looked up at you, giving you a look of pure hatred. It made you start crying, and Henry looked down at you before looking at Vic, who smiled at him. “Fine. I understand, Henry, you love her anyway. Trust me, I get it,” he told him. “But when Patrick’s parents bail him outta jail, and he comes back for her, don’t think she’s gonna pick you…”

Henry hadn’t thought about that…. you were clearly crazy about Patrick, even though you didn’t love him. He had tried to literally murder you both violently, and you had given him yet another chance to live… to fuck up your life again, just like Vic had warned.

Vic had already started walking away, so Henry looked down at you. “Baby, you wouldn’t go with Patrick would you?” he asked worriedly. “Vic’s usually pretty spot on about things like this…”

“Henry, I never want to see him again…” you reassured him. “He… he’s evil…”

Henry saw police lights in the distance, and felt his heart jump into his throat. What if his father was here? He was going to be absolutely dead tomorrow either way…

“Baby, lets go talk to the police with Belch, okay?” he suggested, although he seemed apprehensive to the idea himself. You groaned.

“I’d rather stay here with you,” you whispered, turning and kissing him. He ran his hands across your hips and smirked slightly.
“Yeah, me too…” he agreed. He held you close and kissed you, deciding that he was never, ever losing you again. At the same time, you were deciding the same thing.

You loved him more than anything, and you never wanted to be apart from him again. No matter what your parents said, no matter what happened, you just wanted him.

Soon the police came and questioned you both, and started investigating the scene. Paramedics looked you both over and finally you were let go.

You walked through the woods together slowly, dreading the police lights up by the house. You were both thinking the same thing. Henry made this known when he cleared his throat and spoke up.

“Y/N, if my Dad’s here, you don’t gotta stick around,” he told you. You looked up at him and he cleared his throat. “He talks about you a lot. Asks how you are ‘n stuff… wants to know what you’ve been up to. I never fuckin’ know, but he asks anyway…”

You felt your heart drop into your stomach, and you felt ill. You didn’t want Butch Bowers to think about you, to ask about you and wonder what you were doing. It felt invasive, and made you feel uneasy about who was around you.

After a while, the two of you finally made it out of the woods, hand in hand. You saw Vic and Belch sitting on the front steps talking to each other, which made you smile quickly before your face paled and went blank when you saw Officer Bowers stalking towards you.

“What in the hell is goin’ on?!” he growled. Henry quickly let go of your hand and kept his head down as his father loomed over him. “Once again, here you are in trouble with the damn law—”

“Dad it wasn’t me, Patrick—”

“Yeah, yeah, I heard the story,” his father insisted. “And little Miss Denbrough… high again are we?"

Henry looked at you in confusion and saw that you were just staring at his father in terror. If he had been thinking a little more he would have realized that you had been abused by him. But he wasn’t that quick, and he didn’t realize anything, so he just looked back and forth between the two of you
as his father swaggered up to you.

“You must be half deaf ‘r somethin’, you ain’t answer any ‘a my questions,” he chuckled, grabbing your chin in his hand and looking in your eyes. “Hm… some kinda narcotics, huh, baby?”

“Y-Yessir,” you told him quietly. He smirked at your honesty, and let go of your chin, instead touching your hair, letting it run through his fingers.

“And who gave them to you?” he questioned calmly.

“Patrick,” you admitted.

“Thought so,” he mumbled, tucking your hair behind your ear and sighing. “Well, Patrick’s gonna be behind bars for a little while, so you’ll be plenty safe…” He ran his thumb along your cheek, then looked at Henry. “Lets go, we gotta bring you down to the station for questionin’ ‘n statements ‘n shit, come on, the both ‘a yous…”

He glared at Henry, then turned and started walking back over to his car. You took Henry’s hand and looked up at him. He looked frightened, but smiled lightly when you looked at him.

Everything would be alright. He would keep you safe, and happy, just like you always thought he would. He did love you… you had known that all along, you supposed, but he finally admitted it. He was finally willing to let go of his fear, and be with you.

And despite everything going on around you, you knew you could be happy knowing that once again, you were finally his. And you finally felt like you again...
You were grounded by your parents almost as soon as you got home from the police station, but you didn’t let that stop you from enjoying your summer.

Just because they grounded you didn’t mean that they stuck around to keep you grounded. Just like before, it was like you weren’t even there, and therefore, you could spend as much time with Henry as you wanted.

“Last one to the Quarry has to go off the biggest jump!”

“No! No big jumps!” you called, lagging behind to let Bill and his friends have their space.

“Excuse me! Who put you in charge?” Richie scoffed, turning and glaring at you as he pushed his glasses up his nose, the humid air fogging up the glass a bit.

“Me. When I was born before all of you,” you shrugged.

“I second that decision, we can have jumps, but not big ones, Richie,” Stan agreed, hugging his arms over his chest.

“No. But I know I'm gonna be the last there, and I'm not about to hurt myself,” he explained.

“Y-Y/N’s right, n-n-not the big jump, R-R-Richie,” your brother told his friend, turning to him with a serious look. You knew that Bill always had the last word, as the de facto leader of his group. Richie groaned.

“Come on, Big Bill, stand up to your sister!” he tried. “What the fuck's the last one there supposed to do then?” Richie jumped in front of the group to try and get their attention. “We haven't set terms!”

“You don't get to set the terms,” Eddie said, digging through his fanny pack. “Everything you wanna do is so dangerous.” Bill laughed at the almost offended look on Richie's face, then he glanced at Mike and Stan who were at the back of the group now.

“What?!” Richie cried. He tried to get the group to stop, but had to jog to get back to the front, almost tripping. “Where's your sense of adventure you buncha pussies?!” Eddie quickly shoved him over.

Mike had a hand on Stan's shoulder, as Stan kept glancing around. “What’s the matter, Stan?” you asked.

Stan glanced back at you. “Will you go swimming with us?” he asked.

“Maybe. I feel like I'm a little old for that,” you shrugged, although you were honestly just not ready to go back into the Quarry. Everytime you closed your eyes, you still saw Patrick, holding you down at the bottom, his eyes bright yellow and evil. “Why, what's wrong?”

“Something feels off…” Stan told you. You frowned a bit. “Can you… can you just stay nearby, just in case?”

“I'll be your look out. Got it,” you agreed with a small smile. That seemed to calm him down a bit, and he started talking to Mike about how he was probably going to be the last one to the Quarry, so
he should try to convince Richie to make the punishment less painful.

“It's alright, we'll jump in together,” Mike told him with a smile.

“We will?” Stan mumbled.

“Sure we will,” Ben Hanscom spoke up. He smiled at Mike and Stan. “We'll swim far away from that big jump.” Stan smiled a little, and nodded. “Plus, that way you won’t be anywhere near where Richie can push you in.” Stan laughed, causing Mike to laugh along with him.

You watched the seven kids with a smile. You're brother and his friends were fun to watch. They were so close to each other, they all loved each other so much, and they stuck together. You wished you had friends like that sometimes. Bill wasn’t really talking to you still, but was nice enough to let you tag along with them every so often, like this.

“Fuck!”

You looked ahead to see Richie at a complete standstill in the middle of the sidewalk, facing you. The rest of the kids stopped and looked either scared or angry. You turned your head to the sound of a car engine revving behind you, feeling your heart jump a little in your chest.

“Fuck indeed,” you sighed, turning back around and continuing to walk.

You could hear the engine of the Trans-Am roaring closer, and the kids turned and started walking faster to try and get to their destination before their bullies arrived.

The blue car soon pulled up beside you, and you heard Stan let out a nervous groan and swear. Bill got on the street-most side of the sidewalk, glaring the car down as it came to roll next to you. You heard the windows roll down and glanced to the side.

“Hey, baby,” Henry called, half leaning out the car window.

“G-Go away, B-B-Bowers--” Bill started.
“Not talkin’a you, kid, scram,” the older boy snapped at him. You rolled your eyes a little and continued looking forward. “Where you headed, babe?”

“The kids are going swimming,” you said calmly.

“Ditch the kids, come with us,” he tried.

“No.”

“Why not? You'd rather hang out with these Losers than me?” he scoffed.

“I’m not ditching my little brother for you,” you laughed, glancing over at him again. It's not like this would come as a surprise to him. But he had the rest of his gang with him, he wasn't going to respond gracefully. Belch revved the engine again, and you saw Stan tense up in front of you. You tsked, glancing over at the car. “Having a cool car doesn't make you a man, you know.”

“Too bad it's not my car you're insultin’,” Henry pointed out.

“No, you don't have a car,” you agreed lightly.

“Where're you swimmin’?” he asked quickly, changing the subject.

“Not here,” you shrugged.

You could practically hear him grit his teeth at that, and you glanced down at the sidewalk, kicking a rock along patiently as you continued to

“Come on, Y/N, come hang with us,” Vic spoke up, sitting up on his heel from the other side of the car. You looked back at him, seeing him giving you a nasty, hateful sneer. “We won't bite.”

“I won't let 'em bite you,” Henry agreed. “You don't even gotta sit in the back, you can sit up front
“Cute,” you laughed. He shrugged. You stopped and turned to the car. The car jolted to a stop, and Belch reversed it just a little so that Henry was back in front of you. “We have a book report due the first day of school, are you planning on putting any effort into that?”

“Haven't read the book,” he admitted. You sighed and looked over at Bill and his friends, who had stopped a ways ahead and were watching you worriedly.

You looked back at Henry and crossed your arms. “We’ll read the book then,” you told him. He scoffed. “Henry, it’s The Catcher in the Rye. It's short. I think you'll like it.”

“I don't read,” he mumbled. You sighed again.

“We'll read it together,” you repeated.

“I ain't allowed in the library, not since I tried to burn the books in the return box,” he told you. You rolled your eyes.

“You should try reading Fahrenheit 451, too,” you joked, although you knew he wouldn't get it. It definitely went right over his head, but Vic laughed at it quietly. “I wasn't suggesting we go to the library, though.”

“No?”

“My parents are off on a business trip this weekend,” you explained. You nodded towards Bill and the other kids. “As far as I know Billy’s going to be with Stan and Richie tonight, so…”


“We aren't fucking at my house,” you said quietly.

“Why not? Your parents ain't gonna be home,” he reminded you. You gulped.
“I-I dunno, I've never done anything like that there… I feel like it's so disrespectful, when they don't even know about it,” you mumbled.

“Shut up,” he scoffed. “It ain't like we're gonna be shootin' up or some shit, it's normal girlfriend boyfriend stuff. If they didn't want it to happen, they wouldn't leave you alone. Surprised they trust you home alone at all.”

“They know I won't do anything, and somebody has to watch Bill,” you explained.

“What thirteen year old still needs a babysitter? He's really that much of a dweeb?” he laughed. His friends laughed with him and you rolled your eyes again. “Baby, I passed English last year without yer parents knowin' about it, we been fuckin' without your parents knowin' about it, fuck baby, you was poppin’ pills for a while without your parents knowin’, what's there to worry about?”

“You need to pass English this year,” you reminded him, ignoring his point. He sighed.

“I know… and that's why I got you…” he pointed out. “That's why we're fuckin’ at your parents house tonight…” You looked towards your brother nervously, then back at Henry. “Baby, it's gonna be so good, you're gonna forget what you was worryin’ about.”

“We're really going to do the book report,” you told him.

He tipped his head back and sighed. “How's about you do the book report tomorrow, say I helped, and I pay you back with that dicking tonight…” he suggested, licking his lips slightly and reaching his hand out the window to run his fingers along the hem of your dress. “Come on, you said I gotta pass English…” You felt your cheeks heat up a little and you looked over at your brother again, thinking.

“Throw in a pack of cigs,” you told him. He raised his eyebrows.

“You don't smoke,” he said.

You shrugged. “But I know you have some…”

“Fuck you, I ain't givin' 'em to you,” he scoffed. “They're expensive, you're just gonna throw 'em away.”

“You don't buy them,” you chuckled. He hesitated.

“Whatever, it's my last pack, okay? And you ain't even gonna smoke 'em,” he insisted. You sighed loudly and shrugged, walking back towards Bill and his friends. You heard Henry swear, but the car didn't move, so you glanced back, bumping into Mike a little and putting your hand on Stan's shoulder to catch yourself.

“You okay?” Mike asked worriedly as you started apologizing to him.

“Fine, I had Stan to catch me,” you laughed, rubbing at the boy's hair through his hat.

“No, dumbass, he means with Bowers,” Richie told you as you all started walking again.

“Don't call me that,” you said coldly. He stuck his tongue out at you, and you did the same, then you shrugged. “I'm fine, you know I am. Are you guys okay?”

“I thought he was gonna drive up and throw cigarettes at us or something,” Stan mumbled. Mike nodded slowly. You shook your head a little, recognizing the reactions of two kids who had experienced just that.

You heard the car rev up and start driving again, and you barely had time to react to it. “Denbrough!” Henry yelled. You turned around in time to see him throw something out of the car. You had to jump in front of Mike to catch it between your hands. The car stopped next to you again and you sighed, staring at the unopened pack of cigarettes in your hands.

“Aim better next time,” you told him, still in front of Mike.

“I aimed just fine,” he chuckled, smirking. You glared at him a little. “Alright, I'm sorry, alright, but I threw in a pack of cigarettes, so how 'bout it?”
You hummed a little, then shrugged. He raised an eyebrow and you opened the plastic around the cigarette pack and throwing it into Belch's car. Belch made a quiet protest about it, but Vic was watching gleefully from the backseat, and Henry looked confused as you opened up the pack and pulled one out, sticking it between your lips.

“Gotta light?” you asked sweetly. Vic held out his lighter with such haste that you knew he must have been dying for you to ask. He popped it open and lit it, and you walked over to him, leaning over so that his flame could light your cigarette. You both cupped your hand around the flame to keep it from blowing out as the end of the cig lit, then you stood up straight and looked right at Henry as you inhaled some of the smoke and blew it out towards the sky effortlessly.

“Since when’ve you fuckin’ smoked?” Henry asked angrily.

“I'll think about tonight,” you said. He raised an eyebrow and laughed coldly. “Are you mad at me?”

“Nah, you're just bein’ bratty 'n it's gonna have consequences,” he explained, surprisingly calmly. He reached up and pulled your cigarette out of your mouth, sticking it in his own. “Throw in a pack'a cigs and them consequences won't be so bad…”

That made you swoon a little, how easily he had taken the upper hand from you. You had arguably let him, you had wanted to. You handed his pack of cigarettes back to him slowly and he chuckled, stuffing them into his front pocket.

“Be at my house by six,” you told him, leaning against the car and giving him your prettiest, most innocent look, complete with a little lip bite. He licked his bottom lip and smirked.

“Perfect, see you tonight, babe,” he agreed. He leaned up out of the car again and you giggled kissing him gently for a moment before he got back in his seat.

The car pulled away quickly and sped past the kids, then took a sharp-- and dangerous, you thought --turn around the corner of the road. You took a breath and rubbed at your face to try and cover up your blush. You turned to look at the group and shrugged.

“You guys are fucking disgusting,” Richie groaned as you walked back over.
“Y/N, you smoke…?” Eddie asked sadly. “Doesn't it hurt your lungs?”

“I don't usually smoke cigs, I just made a joke that he took seriously,” you explained. “Then I had to get on his nerves a little.”

“You made a joke about throwing cigarettes?” Stan wondered suspiciously.

“I told him to give me his cigs and I’d do his book report. The thing you said was just ironic timing,” you laughed.

“Probably told her he'd fuck her if she did his book report for him,” Richie scoffed.

You raised your eyebrows at how unknowingly close he was to the truth, and you shrugged. “None of your business what agreements we make,” you told him. Eddie gagged slightly from next to you.

“He's a pervert,” he spoke up, shaking his head. “I know he's your… boyfriend or whatever, but him and the creep-show you used to be with…” He shivered in disgust. “They're so disgusting and degrading.”

“Yeah, he kept reaching out and trying to pull up your skirt and stuff, we were ready to come over and…” Ben started. He trailed off. “You know, tell him off…”

You chuckled. “Thanks, Ben, but it’s alright, he’s just being silly. And stubborn… he's being so damn stubborn about this damn summer book report…”

“Of c-course he's not gonna do it, when he's got y-y-you to do it for him,” Bill mumbled, not looking at you.

You sighed. “I mean, I told him to give me cigarettes to do it for him, so I kinda dug myself my own grave there. He might help me this time, though. I told him he's gotta actually read the book to do the report, I could talk him into it, I bet,” you laughed. Eddie turned sharply, looking at you in shock.

“You told Henry Bowers to do his own book report?!” he gasped.
“I told him to do his part, sure. I said he might actually like the book,” you said.

“Are you crazy?!” Eddie wondered.

“Yeah, Bowers doesn't know how to fuckin’ read!” Richie said.

“No,” Eddie scoffed. “I just can’t believe you still have the nerves to tell that scumbag what to do after he… you know, hit you.” You saw Stan shake his head. “If I were you, I would be too scared to argue anything with him…”

“If I were her, I would have dumped his ass as soon as he put a hand on me,” Mike spoke up. “But maybe that’s just ‘cause Henry… well, we don’t get along very well…” He chuckled the last part angrily, not looking at you. Stan wasn’t looking at you either, and you noticed that Richie was the only one still giving you his full attention, with Bill farther ahead of the group now, and Eddie only giving you nervous side glances.

You took a breath, and shook your head. “It wasn’t on purpose, he told me he felt really bad about it,” you told them honestly. “And he did apologize… he was so sweet, and I know he felt bad, and—”

“You know, Y-Y-Y/N, that's not the point,” Bill spoke up, turning to look at you. “It doesn't fucking matter that he felt bad, it doesn't fucking matter that it wasn’t on purpose-- which it abso-fucking-lutely was, by the way! He hit you. He hurt you, and you still like him.”

“Of course I still like him, he's my boyfriend,” you agreed. “Couples fight—”

“Yeah, but Y/N, that's not a f-f-f-fight, that's abusive, and I know you know that! If Dad hit Mom, how would you feel about it?”

You thought and looked down. “I would be upset at Dad,” you said honestly. “But if Mom chose to stay with him, I would respect Mom's choice. Because I know they love each other, and I know he would do everything in his power to change for her.”

“Yeah, Dad would,” he scoffed. “Your b-b-boyfriend won't. By staying, you're telling him that's it's
okay to hit you, because you'll forgive him for it."

“I told him that if he ever hit me again, that we were going to take a long break,” you argued. “And besides, we weren’t together then, we were… taking a break. He has changed, he’s nicer to me, and he keeps his anger under control when I’m around.”

“You’re really fucking stupid, Y/N, seriously,” he said. You raised an eyebrow and scoffed. “M-Maybe he’s not so angry anymore, but he’s still controlling. He g-gets you to do his homework, he gets you to have s-s-sex even when you don’t want to…” You blushed and looked down. “He gets you hooked on fucking pills, and gets you to start smoking cigarettes, and who knows what else he’s getting you to do.”

“Okay, to be fair, the last two were Patrick, not him,” you argued. “And trust me, Henry’s gonna have a talk with me about the cigarettes. But I don’t mind the other stuff, honestly, you don’t know when I do or don’t wanna have sex with him.”

“Can we not talk about your sex life,” Richie spoke up with a groan. “Actually, can we not talk about Bowers’ sex life?” Eddie gagged.

“Yes, please, let's not talk about this,” he begged.

“What about Mia,” Bill pointed out. You froze. “She was your best friend, remember? And now you’ve completely forgotten about her. And you didn’t even remember her because you were too busy getting high with your new best friends.”

“If you're trying to get me to leave, and fucking hate you, then it's working,” you snapped at him. “If you’re going to judge me on my life choices, then I'll fucking leave.”

“I'm not judging you, I'm scared!” he admitted. “I-I'm scared I'm gonna l-lose my big sister, Y/N…”

You felt a pang of guilt in your chest and you felt your heart skip a beat. “You don't have to be scared,” you insisted. “Don't worry about me.” He shook his head and turned away from you. “Don't break your neck jumping off those cliffs, okay?” He glanced back at you.

“Y-You aren't coming?” he asked sadly.
“You don't want me to. Besides, I wanna clean up the house a little before Henry comes over. When are you going to Richie's?” you asked.

“He’s coming over tonight?” he asked. You nodded. “A-A-At the house?”

“You're going to Richie’s, don't worry about it,” you pointed out.

“Y-Y-Yeah, but Mom and D-D-D--”

“They don't need to know. It's no big deal,” you pressed. He glared at you. “Bill, they don't need to know.”

“W-W-Whatever…” he mumbled, turning around and continuing to walk towards the Quarry. You felt a tense silence overwhelm the group, and Mike and Stan walked farther ahead of you, then Richie followed them with a shrug.

“I'll tell them you headed home,” Eddie said sadly. “Be careful tonight, Y/N… please use protection.” He nodded and hurried after his friends. You watched them for a moment, then shook your head and turned around, walking home.

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“Aw baby, come on,” Henry groaned, dropping your copy of Catcher in the Rye upside down over his eyes and yawning. “You’re puttin’ me to sleep with this shit. When’re we gonna fuck?”

“Henry,” you sighed. He smirked and lifted the book up to see you sitting on the floor, the school’s copy of the book in your hand while you wrote down answers on a worksheet. You looked annoyed and disappointed, and you shook your head, going back to reading the book out loud to him.

“*Baaaaaabe*,” he groaned loudly. You stuck the bookmark in the book and shut it loudly, looking up at him.
“Look, Henry, I know you’re really in the mood to fuck, but my head is fucking pounding—”

“I knew somethin’ was up,” he sighed, sitting up. “You’re still comin’ off the Percs ain’tcha?”

You stared at him for a moment, then stood up and sat next to him on the bed. “And my brother hates me,” you added on sadly. “He thinks I’m making a mistake by being with you.”

“So do I,” he chuckled.

“And my parents hate me too,” you continued. “They’re still so disappointed in me…”

“So am I,” he admitted. You looked a little horrified by this so he sighed. “Look, I’m proud that you didn’t run off with Patrick but… what the fuck, Y/N, you turned into a different person, the drugs, the clothes…?”

You shrugged. “I don’t know… it felt good to act like that,” you told him nervously. He looked annoyed. “No really, I… I’ve never felt so free…”

He didn’t say anything, looking down at both of your feet. He wasn’t really sure what to say about that, let alone what to feel. He was absolutely jealous, it should be him that made you feel free. He wanted you to feel alive and brace and happy around him. But no, it was Patrick who had done that for you. Fucking skeezy-ass Patrick Hockstetter had opened your eyes to a whole new way of life, and you had loved him…

But at the same time, Henry felt sad for you. You felt like you needed drugs to feel free… he knew that feeling. He had hoped that you would escape that road… he had tried so hard to protect you. Maybe that had been part of the issue. Maybe he had been too overbearing. Maybe you had been too, by making the whole thing secret.

And he also felt kind of… he didn’t quite know how to describe the emotion. Something like fear. You had been dealing with your withdrawals too well, and he suspected that you were still taking some sort of prescription medication, how you got them now that Patrick was serving a month in jail— a damn month —was his guess.

And what about Patrick? His parents had gotten him an incredible lawyer who had shortened his sentence from 14 years to 1 month, then he was going to spend some time in a nice psych ward
down in Portland to get the mental health help he needed to be a successful member of society. As if. But Patrick was slick, Patrick could seduce as many nurses as he wanted into believing he was as sane as the sky is blue, and writing him off as a normal healthy patient. Boom. In two months time, he was going to be back to Derry, waiting like a vulture to prey on you again. Would you really run back out into the road again, sacrificing your family, and him for the free feeling you got when you were high with Patrick?

“Henry I love you,” you spoke up, sensing his tension. He looked over at you, looking worried.

“I need a smoke,” he mumbled, leaning over and kissing your cheek before standing up and starting to walk out of the room towards the stairs.

You got up quickly and followed him, taking his hand and pulling him to turn him around. He sighed and looked at you nervously. “Henry,” you whispered softly. “What’s wrong, Henry? Is it me?”

“No, ’s not you,” he denied, although you knew it had to be you, he wouldn’t even look you in the eye. “Just worryin’ about stuff, got a lot goin’ on…”

You moved closer to him and touched his cheek. “Will you trust me?” you asked him hopefully. “C-Can you trust me, please?”

“I dunno if I can. You broke my heart and a few weeks later you’re fuckin’ one’a my best friends like I wouldn’t notice,” he said, sounding angry. You hesitated. “Sure, say I trust you, Y/N.”

You felt yourself tearing up. “Fine. You don’t have to believe it but I love you. I love you more than anyone on this earth, Henry Bowers,” you told him, putting your other hand on his other cheek so that you were holding his face. “No one will ever come between us again. I’m not scared of what anyone has to say, not my parents, not my brother, not Vic, not Mia…” You took a shaky breath and he blinked sadly. “You’re mine, okay…. and I’m yours. You have my whole heart.” You took one of his hands and put in against your chest. “Without you, nothing felt right. I don’t need the drugs, or the parties to be happy. Because I know I have you to call my home.”

It reassured him a bit to hear you say this so sincerely. He loved you more than he had ever loved anyone, and the fact that he had already hit you twice and you still loved him back and wanted to be with him felt so wrong to him. But he had promised himself when you had finally gotten him to take you back that he would never lay a hand on you again, and if he did, he would go to the cops himself and turn himself in for hitting a girl.
“I love you, Y/N,” he told you, putting his hand on your face. You smiled brightly, moving as close to him as you possibly could. “Promise me all of that’s true.”

“I promise;” you said with a smile. He touched your hair and took a shaky breath.

“Alright. I believe you,” he agreed, and you giggled going on your toes and kissing him. You couldn’t have been happier as he held your waist and kissed you back. You threw your arms over his shoulders and rubbed your noses together before kissing again.

You heard a gagging noise and you gasped, looking down the stairs and seeing Bill with Richie and Stan at the bottom of the stairs. Bill looked livid, and Stan looked a mix of terrified and sad, and Richie just looked disgusted.

“Could you guys pick a more private place to shove your tongue down her throat?!?” he cried. Henry winced but kept his mouth shut, kissing your head and starting to walk away. “Hey, Y/N, how’s it feel to be with the littlest dick in town?”

“Beep beep, Richie,” Stan spoke up, seeing Henry stop and tense up and Richie’s teasing.

“Why? Not like he’s gonna do anything?” Richie pointed out in a loud mumble.

“Just cause I ain’t gonna do nothin’ now, don’t mean I can’t kill you later…” Henry spoke up coldly, turning around and looking down at them. “And any’a you losers who give her shit about bein’ with me, you gotta go through me .”

“Bill, why are you here?” you asked, pushing Henry back towards your room. Your little brother glared at you, then started ascending the stairs.

“I f-f-forgot something,” he told you quietly, looking down as he shoved past you. You sighed and followed him to his room.

“Bill, you don’t hate me do you?” you asked worriedly.

“Hey,” you gasped, crossing your arms.

“No I’m serious,” he said. “Y-You know what he does to us! You know how bad he is, and that’s who you want to be with? O-One of the worst people in the w-world and you chose him…”

“I’m in love with him, Bill,” you told him. He looked hurt for a moment, then he turned and started searching for what he had forgotten. “I’m sorry, but that’s just the way it is. I want to marry him someday.”

“Well don’t invite me to the we-we-we-wedding,” he snapped. You blinked in surprise. “As a matter of f-fact, don’t bother talking to me at all… if you r-really cared what I thought you wouldn’t be with him at all… but you don’t because you’re s-s-selfish.” He stopped and turned to look at you. “I miss my sister, just so you know… but as long as he’s i-in your life, you can stay o-out of mine.”

You took a shaky breath, but nodded. “I understand, Bill… I’m s-s-so sorry…” you told him quietly. He didn’t respond so you turned and walked out. Richie and Stan were at the bottom of the stairs waiting for Bill, and Henry was standing in your doorway looking almost angry, but you knew it was just his resting face. His arms were crossed impatiently and he raised an eyebrow at you as you walked over towards him.

“He okay?” he wondered, although he didn’t sound too concerned.

You gulped and shrugged. “I don’t have a little brother….” you explained sadly, feeling tears run down your face, as you pushed him into your bedroom. He uncrossed his arms and grabbed you.

“What’d he say to you?” he asked defensively. “I just told that fucker—”

“H-He said that as long as you’re in my life, I w-w-o-won’t be in his…” you explained, quieting your voice when you realized that Richie and Stan could probably hear you. Henry still looked genuinely upset about what Bill had done so you put a hand on his chest. “It’s fine… that’s his choice to make… and I made mine…”
You pushed him the rest of the way into the room, and turned as Bill came out of his room zipping up his backpack. “Please be safe tonight, Bill,” you pleaded. He glanced up at you and nodded before descending the stairs and leaving with his friends, leaving you with Henry.
Having Bill out of your life wasn’t what you had been hoping for. You had wanted everyone to be happy, but when was that ever the case. He had made it clear, as long as Henry was around, he wasn’t going to be.

It made dinner with your parents when they got home even more awkward than it had ever been before, the two of you not looking at each other, not talking to each other, Bill ignoring you when you asked him to pass the salt.

Ignoring you seemed to be doing just fine for him, and although your parents were a little confused, but they didn’t do anything to make the situation better.

“You seem quiet, Bill, did something happen when we were gone?” your mother asked curiously, looking mildly concerned.

Bill just shrugged so your father finished chewing what was in his mouth and swallowed, clearing his throat and leaning over to his son. “Is there something you’re not telling us?” he wondered calmly. Bill glanced at him and shrugged. “ Bill …”
“Y/N, did something happen?” your Mother asked you quietly. You gulped but shook your head. She sighed. “Alright, well if no one’s talking… Zack?”

Your father had stood up and walked with his empty plate to the sink, turning it on the start filling the sink for your mother and he to do dishes. “Y/N, your mother and I were thinking…” he started.

“Zack, not now…” she sighed.

“No, Sharon, we need to tell her,” he disagreed, shutting off the sink and turning around. “Y/N, you know that your mother and I don’t approve of your relationship with… him…”

“Are you serious? You won’t even say his name?” you scoffed, sitting up. You saw Bill roll his eyes heavily. “Look, whatever you’re going to say, it doesn’t matter, because I love him, and I’m not breaking up with him…”

“No, no, honey, it’s not that,” your mother said quickly. She sighed. “The thing is… Bill’s told us about some of the things he’s done to him and his friends and it’s just… awful.”

“I know,” you said quietly. You Mom blinked and looked at your Dad, who shook his head sadly.

“Yes… we know you know…” he said darkly. “That’s the issue.”

“How can you… not care about that happening to your little brother?” your Mom asked sadly.

You hesitated. “I-I do …” you argued. Bill got up from the table, bringing his plate to the sink and walking towards the stairs.

“Bill, please stay down with us,” your Mom tried. He just ignored her too, going upstairs, probably to his room to go draw or write his feelings away. “Do you see what you’re doing to him?”

“What I’m doing to him? Henry’s the asshole, not me!” you pointed out. Your mother tsked at the bad language and you rolled your eyes slightly. “I love Bill! You know that, he knows that, I’ve
told him! I tell him every night before I go to bed. It’s his choice if he doesn’t want to say it back…” You looked down and took a shaky breath.

“What kind of sixteen year old picks on thirteen year olds, Y/N?” you Dad asked with a scoff. “Oh right, he’s still at their grade level… so let’s list this off, he’s an asshole, he’s an idiot—”

“Dad, he has dyslexia! He can’t read like other people, sure, but who cares? There’s more to him than that,” you insisted.

Your dad just shook his head. “And that father of his, that scum…” he scoffed. “Their racist, abusive, ignorant pieces of shit, Y/N, that’s the truth, whether you accept it or not. And being with him associates you with that, and that’s not what we want for you, sweetheart, don’t you get that?”

You hesitated, then shook your head. “My first public boyfriend was Patrick Hockstetter. Do you know what he’s like? He’s so much worse than Henry, Mom, he’s evil…” you told them, looking at her, starting to tear up. “With Patrick, I became known as a drug addict and a slut…. do you want me to be like that, or how I am now?”

Your parents looked at each other, thinking of how much worse Patrick had made you, and how he was set to be freed in just a week and a half now. “We love you, Y/N, you know that right?” Mom asked. You nodded with a small smile. “Just be mindful of what Henry’s done to you too…” Your smile fell and you looked down slightly, touching the healing bruise under your eye. “He hurt you. And we can’t ever forgive him for that.”

“He’s lucky that he and I haven’t talked yet,” your Dad agreed. You glanced up at him. “If he ever lays a hand on you again, he’s as good as dead. I’m not being over dramatic either, I’m getting my gun and shooting that punk, if he thinks he can lay his hands on my daughter.”

You stared at him for a moment and nodded. “I understand, I’m sorry,” you told him sadly. “He really is sweet… and he promised to never hurt me again.”

Your father sighed but your mother just smiled sadly. “Promise us you’ll get the hell away from him if he does,” she begged. You looked at her. “Please…”

“I will, Mom,” you told her quietly. Although you weren’t sure if you meant it or not. You loved Henry with all your heart, even after he’d hit you. Twice, he’d hit you and still you were head over heels for him. But you couldn’t change the way you felt about him, you didn’t know why, but you
never really would be able to lose your feelings for Henry, no matter what he did.

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Your first move being ungrounded was, naturally, to go visit Henry. The morning after the talk with your parents, you told them you were going to bike over to see your boyfriend, and they didn’t try to stop you, going right back to being in a disappointed, distant silence. It killed you, but you were glad they weren’t going to stop you from being with him.

It only took a few minutes to bike to the farm, and you pulled your bike up to lean against the rotted old porch. You walked in the steps to the front door, feeling rather confident in your jeans and teeshirt. You felt truly like yourself again, not just because of the clothes, but because you felt alive again. You knew it was Henry that had brought you back to life….

You knocked on the front door, then carefully pushed open the screen door when you saw Henry, standing tensely near the entry to the kitchen. He looked back when he heard you come in, looking confused and shocked.

“What? What is it?” you heard his Dad ask him impatiently.

“Y-Y/N’s here,” he said, looking into the kitchen again. You saw his Dad glance around the doorway, grunt a hello, then move back into the kitchen. You moved forward and stopped next to Henry, slightly behind him. His Dad was half dressed in his police uniform, his shirt unbuttoned so that you could see his dirty white wife-beater underneath. He had a cloth in his hand and he was cleaning his gun on the kitchen table. It made you shiver and hide a bit behind Henry to see him again. You had hoped he had gone to work by now, but it looked like he might be home for a while longer.

“How’re you, sweetheart, good?” He asked it so casually, like he was so familiar with you…

“Y-Yes, I’m good,” you told him quickly, holding Henry’s arm. Butch chuckled a little at your fear and yawned before looking back at his son.

“Look, kid, I need you here for the most part, that's all I'm sayin’,” his Dad said shortly, continuing whatever he had been saying before you walked in. “We’re halfway through pea and pea pod season, and we’re still sproutin’ beets, snaps and snows, ’n squashes til August… then I'mma need you for blueberries ’n corn, you know that.”
“Yeah, I know, Dad, it's just… I mean, I wanna help but there ain't ever that much to harvest,” Henry reminded him nervously. His Dad hesitated then looked up at him.

“Y’ever think that maybe if you worked that lazy ass’a yours out in the field we'd get a good damn harvest?” he said shortly. “’r maybe if those goddamn Hanlon’s didn't keep taking all the good seed… don't matter they ain't got pigs like we got. We get ’em fat enough, they'll outsell those n*****s by a fuckin’ landslide.”

You winced and Henry glanced at you. “She likes n*****s,” he told his Dad, who looked up at you.


“I'd rather get cozy with black people and gay people than with you,” you countered calmly. He laughed in disbelief, then kept cleaning his gun.

“Well next time you head up to the Hanlon farm, tell ’em my pork’s gonna whip ’em back to the fields this year,” he sneered. You just shook your head, and you heard Henry laugh lightly from next to you. “You gonna man up and help me slaughter this year, boy?”

“Slaughter ?” you asked, shocked.

“Pigs,” Henry explained.

“Jesus Christ …” you sighed in relief.

“Yeah, Henry ain't so big 'n brave when it comes to slaughterin’ our pigs. Little idiot named 'em 'n shit, like pets. Got two perfectly good hogs that this little shit won't let me kill. Starts cryin’ 'n sayin’ how his Mama said he could keep 'em.”

“Dad ,” Henry tried.
“When our gilt farrows, we ain't gonna have room for your pets. They'll make good meat, you're just a pain in the ass,” his Dad mumbled.

“They're good for breedin’, ain't they? We can keep 'em for breedin’ with the sows,” Henry tried.

“Sure. If you wanna go hungry so your pigs can have feed, by all means, starve,” he scoffed. “I mean it, don't come cryin’ ta me that you're hungry when you want me to keep feedin’ twelve pigs.”

Henry hesitated, thinking about this. “What about the two barrows, the ones we was gonna save for next year. Ain't no use of 'em if they ain't gonna breed,” he suggested.

“Yeah, if you can get 'em to up 110 pounds by the end’a the summer,” his Dad mumbled.

“I will,” Henry insisted. His Dad rolled his eyes. “I will, Dad, I promise!”

“Yeah, yeah, go do your chores,” he told him. Henry nodded and turned to you, grabbing your arm and pulling you outside with him.

“Him 'n his stupid crops,” he chuckled, walking over to what looked like a compost pile next to the house, except none of it was mixed in. He grabbed two buckets and dipped them to fill them both with the mix, which you could now see was liquidy. “We ain't ever had good crops, don't know why we still try.”

“Rotate them?” you suggested, not knowing what else to say. He stopped and looked at you in annoyance.

“Why didn't we think’a that?” he asked sarcastically. You rolled your eyes, and he started carrying the slop buckets towards the barn. “We rotate every fuckin’ year and there ain't ever enough to even harvest for a whole fuckin’ day. We ain't gotta good harvest since before the turn’a the century, 'n that was before my Dad was even born. Dad says when he was a kid, my grandpa was looking to buy the farm down the road after he got back from World War 2, but those fuckin’ Hanlon's moved up here 'n stole it from us. 'n right in the first year they grew the best harvest this town’s ever seen. Whatever, though, we still outdo 'em with pigs.”

You stared at him. “That's because they farm sheep, Henry,” you pointed out. He glared at you as
he kicked the door open. He carried the slop bucket over to one pen and poured it into the feeding trough. The three pigs in that pen ran up and started pushing each other so that they could all eat. “What are you feeding the other ones?”

He glanced at you as he walked towards a closed crate. “We give ‘em slop 'cause they're the girls we use to breed, and we ain't gotta get them fat to kill,” he explained. He opened the crate and grabbed a full bucket out of it, carrying it over to another pen with five larger pigs and pouring it into their troughs. “And we give these ones feed ‘cause these’re the ones that we gotta get fat.” He set the feed bucket down and grabbed the other slop bucket, pouring it into the last pen with the last four pigs. “n these’re the boys for breedin’.”

“Which ones are yours?” you asked. He sighed and pointed at the two boys that were stuck behind waiting for the bigger of the breeding males to eat. “What're their names?”

“Bip and Bop,” he mumbled.

“Bip and Bop ?” you gasped. He shushed you. “Aw, Henry, that's adorable.”

“Yeah, yeah, ten year old me couldn't come up with any badass names,” he brushed it off. You smiled and he sighed, turning to keep feeding his pigs. “My Mama and me came up with those names for them…”

“I love them,” you smiled. He chuckled and walked over to the two smaller pigs as they finally got to eat what was left at the bottom of the trough. Henry sighed and walked over to them, scratching their heads.

“My Dad wants ta kill 'em,” he said sadly. You frowned. “Thinks they’ll be good meat for us to use through the winter.” One of the pigs squealed and he cleared hi throat. “I don’t wanna talk about that shit, let me just finish my chores, then we can hang.” He leaned over and kissed you gently before turning and quickly starting to shovel out the soiled dirt in the pens.

You moved so that you were sitting on an old work bench, and you waatched him work, thinking of how strong and brave he was. He was going to save his pigs, he was determined to prove Butch wrong. He was going to work twice as hard on the pigs, and get Bip and Bop big enough to count as breeding pigs. God, Bip and Bop, wasn’t he just the cutest?

After he dug up the worst areas of the soiled floor, Henry lay new, fresher dirt in the back area of
the pen, patting it down. “This’ where I’ll put Bip ‘n Bop to keep ‘em kept apart,” he explained to you. “And I’ll use pieces of scrap for the fence, since I ain’t touching Dad’s fencin’…”

He started going on and on about how he was going to save his pigs and you smiled as you listened to him. It was so good to hear him be optimistic about something for once, instead of acting like every little thing was hopeless.

It was clear that he looked up to his father, but hated and feared him at the same time. The way his eyes would light up when he would talk about how much better his father’s pig farm was from any other in town-- despite them being the only pig farm left in town --and he would boast about all the deals and sales his father made with great pride.

But then he would go back to a darker look in his eye, his face and body tensing and shivering with anger. His father was undoubtedly the cruelest person you had ever met, and Henry didn’t even know the half of it for you. He had it arguably much worse, being beaten and screamed at daily. But you knew Butch was worse than he could imagine… you knew just how far he was willing to go.

“Hey, hand me that screw there, will you?” Henry asked you happily, watching you grab him a screw off of the pile he had put together. He was incredibly innovative and creative with this project, and it made you happy to look at him like this. Not angry or afraid. He was happy, and confident.

“I’ll give it to you,” you started with a sigh, and a slight smirk. He raised an eyebrow as he wiped sweat from his brow, and smirked as well, leaning on his newly made fence. “If you do something for me…”

“Oh yeah? That tiny screw really worth that much?” he joked. He jumped over his fence and walked over to you, pulling his work gloves off and tossing them on the hay covered ground. “You want me to screw ya for that tiny little screw, baby?” He smacked his hand against your ass and you yelped, then giggled as he pulled you against him. “Wanna, babe, right now? Doubt Dad’s gonna get off his ass to come check on us…” He glanced back at the barn door, seeing nothing and licking his lips. “Just in case, let’s go somewhere a little more secret….”

You blinked slowly and heavily as you looked up at him and he shivered before kissing you deeply. When he pulled away he moved some of your hair out of your face and smiled— really smiled, just a little. It was small, but genuine, and you smiled back at him. “I love you,” he told you quietly.
You sucked in a breath and threw your arms over his shoulders, kissing him so suddenly that he actually stumbled back a little and had to grab your hips to keep you from making you both fall over. You both laughed and he lifted you up a little in excitement before putting you back on your feet and kissing you again.

It felt like you were kissing Henry forever, in the best way. It felt so perfect and right, and you didn’t want it to end. He seemed to be enjoying it just as much, as you could feel his hands wandering your body, and his lips moving against yours so softly…

“What the hell is goin’ on here?”

You had never felt him move so quickly. One second he had his hand on your ass and moving up your shirt, and the next he was standing up straight, wide eyed, and about a foot away from you. You both looked flustered, though, and as you saw Butch in the doorway of the barn, now in his wife-beater and a dirty pair of jeans, and you froze and stared at him in fear.

He looked back and forth between the two of you, and moved forward towards the two of you. He noticed Henry move to stand in front of you, and he felt his blood boil. “Answer me, goddamnit,” he demanded, stopping in front of your boyfriend angrily.

Henry’s mouth fell open for a moment, then he shut it and gulped, shaking his head. “W-We was just messin’ around, Sir, I’m sorry,” he explained quietly. His Dad got closer to him.

“Speak up, ya pussy,” he hissed at him. Henry winced and cleared his throat.

“I… I said, I’m sorry, sir, we was.. we was just messin’ around, honest, just for a second,” he explained, raising his voice a bit as his father had instructed. But he still didn’t look him in the eye, and because of this, his father scoffed.

“You’re a coward, Henry,” he told him coldly. Henry shivered a little and looked down at the ground. Butch never called him by his actual name, he always called him some awful nickname like boy, or kid, or more likely he would call him a pussy, a little bitch, and the likes of that. To call Henry by his actual name implied how serious he was being, and it made Henry’s heart break a little more. “And you’re a little shit, too. You ain’t even close to finishin’ yer chores, and you think you got the time to get your dick wet, huh?”

“Dad—”
“And what’s this bullshit?” Butch wondered, walking over to Henry’s makeshift pen for his pigs. “You been wastin’ all this time out here on this ain’tcha?”

“I-I thought it would be good to separate them from—”

“You wanna know what I think?” he cut him off. He stared him right in the eyes, and Henry tried his best to keep himself from shaking at the pure hatred, the jealousy, the anger towards Henry in his father’s eyes.

Then, Butch moved around him, past you and into another area of the barn. You frowned and looked at Henry, who looked like he was about to cry. His father came back a moment later carrying a knife. Both of your eyes widened, and you moved back towards Henry, grabbing his hand in fear. He was shaking, and you looked up at him as you backed away to hide behind him.

“I think it’s time you learn to slaughter,” Butch told him darkly. He grabbed his son and dragged him over to the pig pen, throwing him against the fence. “Get in there, pussy!”

Henry stumbled to stay standing, and climbed over the fence to the pig pen. “D-Dad please don’t do this,” he begged, turning to look at the man. “I promise, it’s only 11 o’clock or so, Y/N will go home and I’ll finish my chores.”

Butch ignored him, handing him the knife angrily and backing up. “Grab one’a your little pets, Henry,” he ordered. Henry looked even more horrified.

“Dad, no…” he whispered. His father just stared at him. “Dad please, I’ll do anything—”

“Boy, grab your fuckin’ pig, and slit it’s throat,” Butch demanded. Henry started crying, not moving from the spot he was in, but dropping the knife in the hay.

“I don’t wanna do this, Dad, please, I’ll do anything,” he sobbed. “Just don’t hurt ‘em, please…”

He sucked in a breath and watched Butch climb himself over the fence. His father bent down and picked up the knife, looking at Henry in disappointment as he stood up straight. “What’d I tell ya? You’re a coward,” he told him angrily, pointing the knife right at him. Henry stared at it in terror,
so Butch put it right under his chin and forced him to look him in the eye “A damn coward who can’t grow the fuck up and do the one thing I ask, the one thing this farm really needs. You let me down every chance you get, and here you go again.” He scoffed and shook his head, pulling the knife away so quickly that Henry expected it to cut him. “You know I always wished for a son. I wanted a strong boy, one I could wanna spend quality time with and teach my lessons, a son I could be proud of. But no… all I got’s a coward and a disappointment with no damn balls.”

As Butch turned away from Henry, you saw your boyfriend tremble violently and shut his eyes as he cried slightly. You glared at Butch and balled your hands into fists at your sides. He was so cruel to Henry. You wanted to stand up for him, to scream some sense into Butch. But you knew how dangerous that was… and with the knife in his hand, you couldn’t help but feel sick with fear for Henry’s safety anyway.

Butch grabbed Bop from where he and Bip where standing near the now empty trough, and got him in a choke hold, making the pig start squealing. “Dad, please,” Henry begged, sobbing. You moved forward, deciding that you needed to step in, but it was too late. Without another word of warning, Butch slit the pig’s throat, splattering blood all over you and Henry, and all over his face. You gasped as the blood hit you in the face and neck, and you backed away, wide eyed and shocked.

“This what you wanted?!” he screamed at a horrified, shaken, blood-covered Henry. “You little pussy, stop cryin’!”

“Dad…” Henry managed to whimper out, watching his Dad grab the other pig and get him in a similar position. You snapped out of your shock long enough to jumped over the fence and move forward.

“Please, sir, stop,” you tried, but he ignored you, bringing his knife to the screaming pig’s throat and cutting right through. This time it was a lot more messy, and you and Henry were sprayed with it’s blood. He jumped and sobbed, and you just stared at his father in disgust and horror. He grinned at you, then stood up and grabbed Henry’s shoulders.

“Disappoint me like this again, and the consequences’ll be much, much worse…” he warned, before letting go and looking around. “Clean this up. Come on, clean ‘em up….”

But Henry couldn’t. He was frozen in place, staring at his dead pets. You gulped and moved forward, shaking, and struggling to grab one of the bleeding pigs to pick it up. You felt the hot blood soak into your clothes and cover your bare arms. You grunted and groaned as you started dragging it to the fence again, and ignored Butch as he watched and followed you as you jumped over the fence, dragging the pig under.
He looked up at Henry and shook his head. “You’re makin’ your girlfriend do all the work, boy,” he pointed out, grabbing the other pig and throwing it over his bare shoulder. He grunted slightly when Henry still didn’t move, and started carrying it out of the barn, so you followed him with the dead pig.

He brought it out around the back of the barn, and dropped it on the ground, sighing and wiping his brow. “Well… suppose we’ll have to bury ‘em,” he mumbled. “Get the little shit to dig the holes, I suppose….”

He turned to look down at you as you dropped the pig next to the other. You stood up straight and took a shaky breath as you looked down at your now bloodstained clothes, then looked up at him as you watched him lean against the wall of the barn.

“Sorry about your clothes, princess,” he sighed, looking down at them. You looked down at them again sadly. “If you want I could buy you a new outfit…”

“That’s fine--”

“No no, the Bangor mall’s only a thirty minute drive, it would be my pleasure,” he argued. “If you want we could go there today…”

“N-No thank--”

“I insist, sweetheart,” he cut you off again, standing up straight and moving closer to you. You froze in place and felt his hand brush against your arm. “You ain’t told anybody about us yet, have you…?” You winced at the word “us”, but shook your head. “I’m thinkin’ maybe… maybe I can take you out to dinner too, so we can talk…”

“I really don’t--”

“It’s really nothin’,” he insisted. You glanced up at him worriedly. “I know your parent’s are goin’ outta town this weekend, I’ll pick you up Friday night, six o’clock?”

You didn’t even get to respond before he leaned down and pressed his lips to yours, putting his hands on your hips. You froze in place again, but whimpered in your throat and felt tears start falling down your cheeks. He let go of you after what felt like forever, and you gulped back a gag.
as you opened your eyes to look at him. He pouted a little and wiped your tears with his thumbs, then he moved passed you back towards the barn. As soon as you heard him turn the corner, you hugged yourself and sobbed, wiping your lips with the back of your shaking hand.

After a moment, you turned and walked back around and into the barn, seeing that Butch had gone into the house instead. You walked back over to Henry, who was still standing in shock in the bloody pig pen, touching his arm.

“Henry, I’m so sorry--”

“Go home, Y/N…”

You stared at him sadly, seeing the look in his eyes when he dared to look at you. He looked broken, hurt, angry. You didn’t blame him of course, but you saw something else in his eyes. You saw what you saw in Butch’s eyes: evil, darkness, the desire to cause harm… You wanted to tell him that you would protect him, but you knew that would just make him feel worse… so you nodded and turned, hurrying out of the barn and towards your home as fast as you could run.

Henry was going to do something bad. You knew that much. You didn’t know what he was going to do, or when, but you knew it was going to be soon, and whatever it was going to be very, very bad.

You couldn’t really blame him for being angry as much as he was, what with the luck he had-- or rather, didn’t have --and the way that his Dad was. Butch was just a cruel being, there was nothing sane or just about any of the things that he did. It was like he was intent on destroying everything that Henry loved and cherished, like he could force his son to carry all the pain and anguish that he felt. It was driving Henry insane, whether that was the goal or not, and you were terrified that you were getting close to losing him…

“Y-Y/N?”

You looked up and over, taking a breath when you heard Bill say your name. You saw how concerned he looked, that he was looking down at the sink, which was running. You looked down hesitantly and saw your shaking, bloodstained hands hovering above the half full sink. You looked at yourself in the mirror and saw the extent of the blood covering your face and your clothes. You hadn’t realized that you had made it home, let alone come upstairs into the bathroom. You wondered if you had walked right past Bill, looking the way you did…

You stared at yourself for another minute, then looked back at him. “P-Pig’s blood…” you whispered, looking down as you started washing your hands. “It’s pig’s blood…”

He didn’t respond, then walked into the bathroom and stopped next to you. You glanced at him but didn’t make direct eye contact. “What happened in the-- the s-sewer that day? With Patrick?” he asked. You froze and stared down at the water. “You s-saw something, di-di-didn’t you? Som-Something that s-sc-scared you…”

Your mind flashed back to the day in the sewer, the horrible thing that you and Patrick had seen. The thing that you were certain would kill you, but didn’t. Then you thought of the night in the Neibolt House. The night when Patrick had told you that he saw those things too, that the two of you were different… You had both seen something in the doorway, but you hadn’t been able to process it then. It had been a part of it, you thought.

You snapped back into motion, quickly washing the blood off of your hands and grabbing a rag from the shelf, wetting it and trying to wash the blood from your face and neck. “I thought you didn’t wanna talk to me, Bill…” you reminded him softly.

“Y/N, wh-what was it? Wh-what did you s-s-see?” he asked, ignoring your reminder.

As you wiped the blood off, the makeup that covered your bruised face washed off too. He started to speak up about it and you reached over, touching his shoulder.

“Have you ever… have you ever seen things? That aren’t supposed to be there?” you questioned quietly. “Things that aren’t… real?” He stared at you. “I saw my future in the sewer that day… I saw what will happen if I don’t stop him…”

“Stop who?” he frowned. You glanced over at him and set the rag down, turning slowly to look at him. “Y/N, whatever you saw, it’s not real, it’s just--”

“It’s what I’m the most scared of, I know… that I won’t be enough to keep him safe…” you nodded slowly. “And then it was… i-it… the… the deadlights…”
“What?” he asked, clearly surprised.

“It’s deadlights…” You looked back at yourself in the mirror. “I’m afraid I won’t be enough to save him. I won’t stop him, and he’ll…” You trailed off, looking down at the bloodstained water swirling down the drain. “Don’t be afraid of it, Bill… It’s just gonna kill us all anyways…” You looked forward and moved past him slowly, going to your room to get changed out of your bloody clothes.
When you woke up the next morning you still felt like you were in a daze. The events of the previous day were still fresh in your mind, the memory of the slaughter of Henry’s precious pigs making you shiver with disgust and fear.

And that look in Henry’s eyes…

You looked down at yourself and sighed. You hadn’t been completely honest with Henry because of the looks like that, when he looked like a different person. You had thought the stretch marks on your thighs and stomach would have given it away… but no one seemed to notice, or maybe no one cared that you had gained a little weight. Maybe it just wasn’t as bad as you thought it was, but whatever the case, you had thought everyone would know...

You were startled into sitting up when you heard a slight knocking sound. You hesitated, looking around slightly, then looked at the window as you heard the noise again. You got up out of bed, grabbing your bathrobe and pulling it around yourself as you walked over to the window, freezing.

Patrick was sitting on one of the branches of the big oak tree outside your window, waving with a big dumb grin on his face. His face had a few cuts still healing, and you could see the huge cut on his hand where you had kicked it into the glass.
You moved forward and opened the window forcefully. “What are you doing here?” you asked angrily. His smile fell and he inched himself closer to your window.

“Well they let me out early, and I was just dying to see my girl,” he explained. You moved back in surprise as he moved forward to climb in your window. “I know it’s only been a month, it just seems like forever since I’ve seen—”

“Get out,” you cut him off, moving forward and grabbing the window as he went to shut it. He hesitated and frowned. “I’m serious, get out of my house.”

“I love you, Y/N,” he whispered. You hesitated. “Whatever happened last month… it wasn’t me—”

“It was you, I saw you with my own eyes, Patrick, I saw you drive that car into the Quarry and try to kill us,” you snapped at him.

He looked at you sadly and looked down. “Look, I know you don’t believe me, and you have every right to be angry, but… but look, please, you have to trust me, it wasn’t me, it was…” He trailed off when he realized that he didn’t have an explanation. You tsked, and pushed him towards the window.

“You really need to leave, if my parents find out you’re here—”

“You remember that day, in the sewer,” he reminded you, turning to look right at you. You frowned, but nodded. “You saw that… that thing, you remember what it was like… it was like it took over us, used us…”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” you said honestly.

“It used us! We should have never survived that, but we did,” he explained. “What if—”

“I don’t wanna hear your crazy conspiracies, Patrick, you need to leave. I want you to leave,” you demanded. He stared at you, then sighed.
“I really do love you, Y/N,” he told you.

“I know…”

“You’re the best thing that ever happened to me, we were… we were perfect together,” he continued sadly.

You shook your head. “You almost destroyed me,” you argued. “You got me addicted to drugs, you might have gotten me pregnant—”

“What?” he asked worriedly.

“Nothing don’t worry about it,” you sighed, shaking your head. But he moved closer to you, touching your arm.

“Y/N, are you pregnant?” he wondered, looking concerned.

You stared at him for a moment, then sighed again. “I-I missed my period…” you admitted. He sucked in a breath and nodded slowly, letting go of you and looking out the window.

“Oh… right, okay,” he said. “Are you and Henry back together?”

“Yes…”

“Could it be his?”

“Yes…”

Patrick looked a little disappointed by this, and he nodded again. “What if it’s Belch’s…?” he pointed out. “Or Tommy Jones?”

You trembled. “Look, I don’t even know if I’m pregnant, I just missed my period, okay? And it doesn’t matter, if I am, it’s Henry’s no matter what,” you told him seriously. “But again, I don’t
even know if I’m pregnant, I could get my period any day now…”

He stared at you skeptically, but nodded. “Yeah… does he know?” he wondered.

You assumed that “he” was referring to Henry, so you shook your head. “He doesn’t need to worry about something like that, especially if it’s a false alarm, which it probably is—”

“You wouldn’t have brought it up if it was probably a false alarm,” he pointed out. You stared at him, then looked down with a shaky breath. “Whatever happens… will you let me know?”

You thought, then nodded. “I don’t want to talk to you… but I understand, so yes, I’ll tell you,” you agreed apprehensively. He nodded in relief then gulped, taking a shaky breath.

“I know you won’t say it back, but… I love you… I want you to know that I mean that,” he told you sadly, turning and moving back towards the window. “I guess I’ll get out of your way…”

“Thank you,” you said, following him as he climbed back out into the tree.

“And if anything does happen, if you do end up being…” he trailed off and cleared his throat. “I want you to know, I can do anything you need me to… if you need money, or anything, you just let me know, I’ll help.”

“Thank you, Patrick,” you said again, moving to shut the window. He stared at you sadly for a minute, then started to climb down the tree.

You watched him hop down from the last branch and sneak out of your yard, and you started crying. Keeping in that secret for so long had made it seem unreal, but now that Patrick knew… everything seemed to hit you. The fact that you hadn’t bled this month terrified you, and you were even more terrified to tell Henry about it…

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“Fuck this shit, it’s gotta be the hottest day of the summer,” Henry sighed, rubbing his arm across his brow. You watched Belch yawn and nod, and Vic looked absolutely miserable in the heat. You wiped the sweat off your brow as well, then felt Henry snake his arm around your waist, moving his chair closer next to you.
You had been a little hesitant when he had told you he wanted you to come down to the farm to hang out with he and his friends. As far as you knew, Vic still hated you with a burning passion, and it was slightly awkward being around Belch when the two of you had slept together twice… and it had felt so good…

You cleared your throat and moved to kiss Henry on the cheek, smiling slightly. “We could go to the pond to swim?” you suggested, not wanting to go to the Quarry.

“Ew, the pond’s nasty,” Vic scoffed. “That’s a stupid idea.”

“Hey, she’s just thinkin’ a options, Vic,” Henry pointed out. “Bout to just get the hose out ‘n douse myself with that shit…”

“We could go to my place, my Mama put in an AC in my room,” Belch told you all.

“Nah, that room’s too small for all of us,” Vic groaned. “There’s nothing to do and it’s too hot.”

“Yeah, no shit, Criss,” Henry snapped at him, standing up from the kitchen table and stretching. He knew he needed to make the final decision, but he had a few chores to finish up first before he could do anything with any of you, really. “Look, I just gotta clean my Dad’s gun ‘n feed the pigs, then maybe Belch can drive us to the coast, it’s like an hour away.”

Vic and Belch looked at each other, then shrugged and nodded at him, so he looked at you. “If that’s what you wanna do,” you agreed with a smile.

“Don’t know yet. We’ll so how I feel in an hour;” he said, going towards the door. “I’ll go feed the pigs ‘n all that shit…” With that he went out the front door to the barn.

You all sat in silence for a minute, then you cleared your throat. “So are you two back together now?” you asked politely.

“What’s it to you?” Vic asked coldly.

“Yes,” Belch answered at the same time. They looked at each other, Vic glaring and Belch looking
annoyed, then they looked at you.

“Oh,” you nodded, looking away from them. “Well that’s great….”

“Is it?” Vic scoffed. “You’re not all pissy that you can’t fuck my boyfriend anymore?”

You sighed. “Vic, I’m sorry,” you told him. “I made a stupid mistake while I was on drugs, are you ever going to forgive me?”

“Forgive you?” he laughed, sounding disbelieving. “Oh, Y/N, sweetie…”

“Vic…” Belch started, warningly.

“No, she thinks she warrants my forgiveness,” Vic said, standing up and walking up to you. “Tell me, Y/N, why the fuck would I forgive you for fucking my boyfriend? Twice!”

You winced, then glanced at Belch. “Because both times he came onto me,” you pointed out, slightly passive aggressive in your tone. Both of them turned red, and Vic spun to look at Belch in anger.

“You came onto her?” he snapped. Belch looked away bashfully, and scratched the back of his head.

“And he came inside me even though I told him not to,” you added, glancing at a horrified looking Belch.

Vic looked absolutely livid as he stared at his boyfriend, walking up to him. “You came inside of her?” he asked quietly, sounding like he was about to go off.

“Y-You know how I am, it was an accident!” Belch tried, looking at you angrily. “I-I mean come on, this is not my fault, it’s not her’s either!”

“Oh, then who’s fault is it, Mr. Babymaker?” Vic asked angrily. He laughed darkly and shook his
head. “You’re so lucky she’s not pregnant… You’re not pregnant, are you?”

They both looked at you, then looked slightly shocked when you burst into tears. “I-I did miss a period…” you admitted to them. Vic’s face went from angry to shocked, and Belch’s was pale as a ghost. “I’m so sorry, Vic, I didn’t mean for any of this to happen, you were the best friend I’ve ever had--”

“You’re pregnant?” he asked, sounding more concerned now than mad.

And then you heard the door close.

“What?” The two boys looked back at Henry, and you froze in place. You heard Henry walk into the kitchen and he stood right next to you, his hands visibly shaking. “You’re not…”

“I-I missed a period--”

“No, no you didn’t…” he denied shaking his head. “You’re just fucking with me…”

“No…” you said. “I-I was going to tell you--”

Without warning he slammed his fist on the table, making all of you jump. Then he turned to you. “Tell me you’re jokin’,” he begged, his voice shaking. You felt tears well up in your eyes and when he saw that his face paled. He took a shaky breath and you could see his entire body start shaking.

“Henry, I’m…” But you didn’t know what to say… what could you say?

“I-I need some air…” was all he said, before quickly running back outside. Belch looked like he was going to be sick, and he wiped his hand across his face.

“Y-Yeah, me too,” he agreed, hurrying outside after Henry. Vic still looked shocked, and he sat back down in his chair.
“Holy shit, Y/N,” was all he said before you started crying again. The two of you sat in relative silence, other than your crying. “What’re you gonna do?”

“I-I dunno…” you admitted, sounding terrified. Vic looked a little sympathetic, putting his hand on your arm.

“Look I… I wouldn’ta yelled at you if I knew you were goin’ through that…” he said sadly. “I’m sorry.”

“No, don’t be,” you sighed, wiping your eyes. “It’s my own fault I just… I don’t want you to worry about Reg… even if it’s his, the two of you can pretend nothing happened…”

“No, no, this is…” he started, but trailed off, shaking his head. “I mean this is fucked, but… have you taken a test yet, I mean, to really know?” You shook your head. He sighed and ran a hand through his hair. “Okay… alright, I’ll get Reg to take me down to the pharmacy, we’ll pick up a pregnancy test, that way we know for sure… how long’s it been since you… um… bled?”

“T-Two months, I guess… close to two months…” you told him, your voice weak from crying.”Seventy nine days…” His eyes widened. “I’m supposed to get it every twenty eight or so days…”

“Oh fuck,” he sighed, hanging his head and thinking. He put his hand over yours and smiled lightly. “Maybe it’s nothing, Y/N. Periods are off all the time, right...?”

“I-I don’t know, sometimes…” you agreed.

“Well that’s all it is then, it’s just… late,” he insisted, smiling. “You haven’t been sick or anything or had that morning sickness shit?”

“I mean… I was sick last month but I thought it was just the drug withdrawal,” you told him. He hesitated. “I was getting sick and throwing up every morning, and now it’s not as bad…”

“Not as bad?”
“Yeah, now it’s only when I smell certain foods…” you mumbled. He stared at you. “So… yes, I have morning sickness…”

“Okay…” he sighed, standing up. “Belch and I will get a test for you. Just sit tight okay?” He pat your shoulder and walked quickly out the door.

---

It took Belch and Vic about thirty minutes to get to the pharmacy and back, and the most of time you sat at the kitchen table on your own. You could smell cigarette smoke and see the top of Henry’s head where he was sitting on the porch.

You stood up and slowly walked over to the screened in front door. “Henry?” you asked quietly. He grunted slightly in response so you opened the door and walked out to him. “Can I sit with you?”

“Sure…” he mumbled, almost silently. You gulped and moved to sit in the chair next to him. You looked down at your lap and sighed before looking over at him. He was leaning forward with his arms resting on his shaking, jittery legs, his cigarette tightly between his lips.

“Are you okay?”

“Uh… not really,” he chuckled, glancing over at you with a slight glare. “I knocked up my girlfriend… well, actually, I’m one of four dicks that might’a knocked up my girlfriend… either way my fuckin’ girlfriend’s knocked up…”

“We don’t know that, Vic’s going to get a test,” you reminded him. He licked his teeth.

“You’re pregnant, Y/N, admit it,” he insisted sadly. Your lip trembled and you looked down.

“Everything’s going to be okay—”

He scoffed and looked at you. “Yeah, maybe for you. When my Dad finds out… I’m dead, Y/N, I’m fuckin’ dead, I’m already dead…” he reminded you, sounding frantic. He put his head in his
hands and groaned. You put your hand on his back and he shrugged it off. “Don’t touch me right now…”

“I’m sorry, Henry, I thought it was nothing at first—” you started, cutting yourself off. “I should have told you as soon as I missed my period, I just didn’t want you to worry…”

“Oh yeah, thanks,” he scoffed. His head fell back into his hands and you stared at him worriedly, feeling awful for your dishonesty, and even worse for having told Patrick first… You saw the Trans-Am pull back into the driveway, and you stood up, looking down sadly at your boyfriend. “I think the worst part about it is… it ain’t even mine…”

You felt an overwhelming wave of guilt wash over you and you started crying as Vic and Belch ascended the stairs to the porch. Vic sighed and hurried over to you, taking your arm and bringing you inside the small house.

“Come on, honey, let’s go take this test…” he said quietly, bringing you to the bathroom. “You tell me when you’re done and I’ll come in and wait with you, okay?”

“Okay…” you whimpered. He gave you a sympathetic look, and leaned forward to hug you. You sobbed and hugged him back, then took the test from him and went into the bathroom.

It wasn’t that it was a confusing process, but your hands were shaking and every second felt like years were going by. As soon as you were ready, you got Vic and the two of you sat on the bathroom floor together.

“Maybe you can put it up for adoption?” he suggested. “There’s always an abortion but… I know how expensive that can be, so maybe adoption’s your best bet.”

“If it’s Henry’s I want to keep it,” you insisted quietly. He looked over at you. “I’ll only keep it if it’s his…”

“I mean, I get it but…” he started. “Y/N, a baby’s expensive. And hard work, you have to spend all your time, and your money, and you’ll be tired, and you won’t be able to go to college…. Y/N, if you keep this baby, now, it’s not going to work, I’m sorry…”

“I know,” you sighed, trembling slightly. “But if this is Henry’s baby, I want to raise it with
“Are you sure he wants that?” he questioned sadly. You stared at him, then looked back at the counter. “Do you want me to look?”

“I-I can’t do it…” you told him nervously. He nodded and stood up, walking over to the counter and picked up the test, staring at it blankly for a minute. “What? Is it negative?”

He gulped and looked at you. “It says you’re pregnant, Y/N…” he told you calmly. You felt your body freeze up and you immediately started crying. “I’m so sorry…”

You covered your face with your hands, and soon felt his hands on your shoulders, rubbing them comfortingly. You didn’t know what to say, or what to think. This didn’t make sense, it was too complicated. This wasn’t supposed to happen, this had been a huge mistake, how could this have happened?

“How am I going to tell him?” you gasped, putting your hands in your hair. He heard the terror in your voice when you said it, and it made him feel sad, to think that his best friend was that terrifying, and to his girlfriend no less. Henry was a good kid underneath it all, but his whole moral compass had been twisted, his temper and his bullying had been rewarded as signs of strength, and any kindness or gentleness beaten out of him. God, the amount of times Henry had come to school with his eye swollen shut, saying he got in a nasty fight with some kid but everyone knew it was Butch. It was Butch, beating his son, hammering into him his violence, his rage, his self-pity.
“I dunno, Y/N.... maybe if Reg and I are there he’ll be more calm?” he suggested. “Or at least he’ll keep his cool…”

“Yeah, maybe,” you agreed, although you sounded uncertain. “He hit me in front of you before, and my brother and his friends…. if Henry feels like he needs to take control, he will no matter what, you know that…”

Vic sighed. “I’m sorry, Y/N, me and Reg had no idea he would do that, honestly…” he told you, shaking his head. “I still can’t believe it… he nearly knocked you out—”

“I remember, Vic,” you sighed, putting your head in your hands again. He stared at you and cleared his throat.

“Reggie said, if the baby’s his, he wants to help as much as he can,” he told you nervously, sounding a bit annoyed. “I know neither of you meant for this to happen… and Y/N, I know you weren’t yourself when you fucked him, and I’m sorry for being such a bitch…”

“No, Vic, you have every right to hate me…” you argued, looking at him. “I almost destroyed your relationship…”

“Actually, Reg almost ruined our relationship. You didn’t help, though,” he smirked. You laughed lightly and gulped. “Patrick’s back in Derry, has he tried to see you?”

“Yes,” you told him. He nodded slowly. “He came to my bedroom window this morning saying how much he missed me, but when I told him I thought I was pregnant, he left…” You chuckled, then you frowned. “I wouldn’t blame Henry if he broke up with me… this isn’t something he should have to deal with….”

“Henry knows what he can handle, he’ll figure this out just like he figures out anything,” Vic tried. He watched you pull up your shirt a little and touch the slight bump that you had been convinced was just something to do with the drugs. “I’m sorry I called you a slut… and a whore…” he mumbled, looking away as you dropped your shirt and looked at him. “I was just so angry because… because you’re so beautiful to him… to all of them, and I can’t stand it…” He laughed a little. “I don’t know why they’re all so obsessed with you… I guess I was really jealous, is what I’m trying to say.”

“It’s okay, Vic, I understand…” you insisted. He stared at you and nodded.
“I don’t want you to feel like I’m still jealous of you. Reg and I talked for hours and he told me that no matter how pretty someone else might be, he only has eyes for me,” he sighed happily. You smiled a little, glad that he and Reg had worked things out. “Patrick really got me thin, though, didn’t he?”

You frowned and looked at him as he looked down at his thin body in dismay. “Yeah, Vic, you were almost sick you were so skinny,” you reminded him. He frowned and nodded, sighing heavily. “I trusted him too… we both fell for him…”

“What if the baby’s his?” he wondered quietly. You took a shaky breath and blinked slowly. “Whose do you think it is?”

“I have absolutely no idea…” you told him honestly. “I guess it could be his… but it could be Reg’s, or it could be Henry’s… or it…” You trailed off as a rather horrifying realization hit you.

Vic must have seen the horror on your face because he moved closer to you and rubbed your arms. “Y/N, you can tell me, I won’t tell anyone,” he whispered, moving to lock the door. He moved you to the back wall of the bathroom and cleared his throat so that he could whisper more clearly. “Did someone hurt you?” You opened your mouth, then closed it and just nodded in response. “Henry’ll have his ass, Y/N, you know that--”

“No!” you gasped, looking at him frantically. “You can’t tell him if I tell you, Vic, you have to promise me you’ll never tell anyone.” He stared at you but nodded.

“Okay, Y/N, I understand, someone hurt me too,” he told you gently. “I’ve… I’ve never told anyone before. If you tell me, I’ll tell you, and we never have to tell anyone else…”

You bit your lip nervously, but nodded. “Alright, fine… um…” you trailed off, taking a deep breath. “It was… Henry’s Dad…”

Vic looked completely shocked to hear this, and he put a shaking hand over his mouth. You frowned, remembering already what that thing in the sewers had told you about what Butch Bowers had done to Vic. “You don’t have to tell me, Vic--” you started as he began to cry.

“H-He touched me, Y/N,” he hissed, looking frantic. “H-He p-put his fingers--”

“H-He touched me, Y/N,” he hissed, looking frantic. “H-He p-put his fingers--”
“Vic stop,” you whispered, putting your hands on his face. He whimpered and closed his eyes tightly.

“It’s because I’m gay… he said he… he didn’t want my gay to rub off on Henry, so he was going to give me exactly what I wanted so that I could see what it felt like… it hurt so bad…”

“Vic…” you breathed, moving forward to hug him. He was shaking, and he hugged you back.

“What about you? When did this happen?” he wondered worriedly, his voice shaking.

“H-He raped me in the back of his cop car… out near the Neibolt house…” you explained. “The night that the boys all had me… I was on my way home, high as ever, and he pulled over and stopped me… and brought me there… and told me if I wanted the drugs to stay a secret, I should get in the backseat… because I didn’t want to rat Patrick out…”

“I’m so sorry…” he whispered.

“Me too,” you agreed. The two of you sat in silence for a while, holding each other’s hands as you tried to calm down. You sighed and looked at him before standing up, letting go of his hand and smiling sadly. “I guess I should tell him…” You touched your stomach and staring at yourself in the mirror. “Oh my God… I’m gonna be sick…”

“Just breathe, Y/N, you can stand right next to me when you tell him,” he said, standing up as well and putting his hand on your shoulder. “I wish I could do more…”

“You don’t need to do anything, Vic,” you told him quietly, turning to hug him quickly. He smiled a bit and hugged you back. It took you both a moment to let go of each other, but finally you let go of him slowly and turned to unlock and open the bathroom door.
“So what’s that gonna mean then?”

You were relieved that Henry hadn’t lashed out, but it hurt you how sad he sounded about the whole thing. “I don’t know, Henry, what do you want?” you wondered, feeling Vic back away from your side slightly. You looked back at him and nodded, and he and Belch both moved to go outside. “If you want an abortion, I-I’m sure my insurance will pay for some of that…”

“You wanna kill our baby?” he asked, sounding a little horrified. You were surprised that he was so against this, having no idea that he was so strongly against abortion, but glad to know that about him now.

“N-No of course not, but we can’t raise a baby right now Henry… we’ll have to put it up for adoption, then,” you sighed. He glanced at you then nodded. He was seated at one of the kitchen chairs with a beer, and you were still a little ways across the room, so you moved closer to the kitchen table.

“Yeah,” he agreed. Again, it was surprisingly calm, and you took a shaky breath as you moved a little closer to him. “I don’t think it’s… our baby, so you can do whatever you want, I guess…”
“I think it’s our baby,” you told him, taking his hand and placing it on your stomach. His body stiffened and he just stared at his hand. “I-I think I would know…”

“You can’t know that shit, Y/N,” Henry grumbled. He pulled his hand away from your belly and sighed heavily. “Look, if it was mine… even if it was mine…” He raised his hands in defeat as he found himself unsure of what to say. “I-I still can’t really believe this shit, Y/N, school starts in a month you’re gonna start getting a baby belly… so there ain’t no hiding’ it cause…” He motioned over your stomach area, then covered his face for a moment. “Jesus Christ, you’re pregnant…”

“I know, Henry,” you whispered, not sure what else to say to him.

“How many months do you think?” he wondered, looking up at you. “Right now, how old do you think the baby is?”

You gulped and really thought about this, before nodding. “Two months,” you told him. He thought for a second then blinked and scoffed. “So it’s either mine or Patrick’s, great.”

“I’m not having Patrick’s baby,” you insisted. Henry laughed darkly at this and sat back in his chair, shrugging.

“You ain’t got no choice, sweetheart,” he pointed out. You glared at him and crossed your arms. “If it’s Patrick’s baby, it’s Patrick’s baby.”

“I don’t care if it’s his, no matter what you’re going to be the father of my child, Henry. You’re my boyfriend, but you’re more than just that to me and you know it… I want to be with you for the rest of my life, and a baby isn’t going to change that.”

“You can think that all you want Y/N, but when that baby’s got jet black hair and squinty Asian eyes, don’t think people’ll really think I’m that kid’s Dad…” he laughed, sounding a little angry. You blinked, choosing to ignore his racist comment for now, knowing that he wouldn’t care whether you started arguing with him over it anyway. Right now, he was starting to get angry. And an angry Henry wasn’t what you wanted.

“I know that, Henry, I get it,” you sighed, moving so that you could kneel in front of him. He frowned and you kissed his hand and you took it in yours. “I just want you to be the father of my baby… can’t we just pretend…?”
“That’s fucked up. Y/N, this is all fucked up. You’re sixteen!” he snapped. “This whole goddamn thing--”

“Okay, I’m sorry,” you tried. He stopped and looked down at your teary eyes, rolling his own eyes slightly.

“Alright, don’t cry, babe…” he sighed, covering his face and groaning. “This is just gonna be a shitshow… will you be here when I tell my Dad? He might be less bad if you’re here…”

You took a shaky breath. You never wanted to be near Butch Bowers for the rest of your life, but if that’s what needed to happen… “Of course, Henry,” you agreed, kissing his hand a few more times. “I’ll be right next to you.”

He nodded and looked up and outside. “Alright… and we’re puttin’ it up for adoption?” he asked. You hesitated and looked down slightly. “Babe, you know we ain’t got no choice…”

“Yes,” you said quickly, clearing your throat. “I know…” He stared at you, then stood up and cleared his throat as well.

“We’ll get through this together,” he told you, waiting for you to stand up, then kissing you. You smiled slightly against his lips and he pulled away, his eyes closed tightly. “I’m still… not happy about this, okay? This sucks, and I don’t want this…”

“I know,” you said quietly, letting your smile fall quickly. He nodded once he opened his eyes and saw that you weren’t smiling anymore.

“Come on, let’s grab some beer, my friends are outside waiting for us,” he mumbled, moving past you and grabbing a case of beer off of the kitchen counter.

“What are we doing?” you asked curiously, but softly.

“Shootin’ my Dad’s gun…” he told you calmly. You stared at him as he turned around. “Screw it, right, I’m dead anyways…”
“Henry--”

“It’s what I wanna do, it’s what we’re doin’,” he snapped. You jumped and he sighed, moving to the kitchen table and picking up his Dad’s gun. “Don’t be scared, Y/N, please… I ain’t what you need to be scared of…”

With that he walked outside, and you had to hesitate before following him, unsure of what he was talking about.

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“Nice!” the boys cheered as Henry shot another bottle off the barrels that he had set up his targets on.

Henry chuckled, prideful in his ability to shoot, and he glanced at you, hoping that you had seen and been impressed. You had your hands over your ears, and looked a little upset, but when you saw him looking at you, you smiled brightly, a smile which he returned with a little one of his own.

It made you perk up and seem less upset, so he aimed his gun at his next target. “Think you can get these two back to back, Henry?” Belch dared him curiously. Henry licked his lips and glanced at the bottles he had left in front of him: An old beer bottle he and his friends had found lying around, and an empty Jack Daniels, which they had gotten out of the trash.

“You just stay quiet, I can do it,” he insisted. He took a deep breath before shooting off the gun again. He hit the beer bottle, and you jumped but smiled and watched as he dropped one of his hands, seeing that he looked far more casual now, and relaxed, like he knew his way around a gun. You gasped when he hit the Jack Daniels bottle, but broke out into a big smile and started clapping. His friends let out various cheers of congratulations and awe, and he seemed to gloat in it a bit, but you thought he deserved the little ego boost. You hurried over to him and hugged him, making him stumble back in surprise.

You smiled up at him and he couldn’t help it, his lips curled a little bit and he just looked down at you as you hugged him and laughed happily. You had really scared him this morning, but suddenly being pregnant and all… but it was moments like this with you, the real moments, when he knew everything would be okay.
“Hey, how’s about a moving target?” he suggested happily. You looked up at him in confusion, then followed his gaze to a chubby barn cat that was minding its own business, eating grass along the fence.

“God, Henry, no,” you scoffed, touching his chest. He looked at Belch, who looked confused and skeptical about the idea. Henry gave him one look and he hurried over to the cat to get it for his friend. “Henry--”

“Just put it up on the tractor,” Henry ordered, watching his friend nervously hold onto the cat as it struggled. Henry started to point his gun at the cat, and you backed away. “Hold it!”

“Henry, don’t--”

“What the hell’s goin’ on here?”

Everyone froze for a split second, then Belch let go of the cat, letting it sprint off into the barn. Vic stood up and turned around, backing towards Belch nervously, and you did the same, wanting to be as far away from Butch as possible as he walked over towards Henry.

You must not have heard his car pull up with the sounds of gunshots ringing in your ears, but you saw him now. Henry chewed on his lip as he slowly turned around, keeping his head down. Butch stood right up to his son, looking down at him expectantly.

“Just… cleanin’ your gun, like you asked…” he said weakly, knowing that it was no use.

“You’re cleanin’ my gun…” he scoffed, glaring at him.

“Dad--” he started, trying to think of an excuse. His Dad barked out at him, making all of you jump, and you saw both Belch and Vic starting to look almost angry with Butch. You gulped and watched his father take the gun out of his hands harshly, then he started walking back towards the house.

You all started to relax, until Butch turned himself back around, shooting the gun right at Henry’s feet. Henry jumped and you screamed, watching your friends jump at the loud noise as well. They glared at Butch once he finished and looked up at him. “Look at him now boys. Ain’t nothin’ like a little fear to make a man crumble…” he grumbled, glaring at his son before turning to really go
Henry was whimpering and you could see that the front of his pants were wet.... he had been so scared that he had wet himself.

You tensed up, then moved forward towards the house. You heard Henry say your name quietly in protest, but you ignored him, starting to cry as you ran up the porch and into the house.

You could see Butch in the entryway to the bathroom and you stormed over to him before freezing. “Sir,” you started sternly, although the fear in your voice was clear. He stared into the bathroom a second longer before looking at you. “You can’t do things like that to Henry—”

“Who’s pregnant?” he asked, shockingly calm even though he was turning red. You blinked and looked into the bathroom. The pregnancy test was in the garbage can but it was plain to see what it was. Right out in the open, what an idiot you were. What had you been thinking?

“S-Sir, please let me explain,” you started. He put his hand up, and you shut your mouth immediately.

“Are. You. Pregnant?” he asked between clenched teeth.

“I-It might be yours, sir, please don’t be mad at Henry,” you tried, whimpering as you finished and he let his shaking hand fall to his side in shock.

“It might be mine?” he repeated. You gulped and nodded. He raised an eyebrow and laughed. “I’m not a stupid sixteen year old boy, Y/N. I didn’t come inside you,” he scoffed. You blinked and let out a sigh of relief. “Can’t you even tell the difference?”

“Well then if it’s not yours, it’s Patrick’s. Not Henry’s. Please don’t be mad at him,” you begged. His father crossed his arms.

“It’s not his? Not a chance?” he questioned. You hesitated slightly and he laughed lightly. “You stupid whore, how many boys fucked you this summer? You don’t know what you’ve done to yourself do you?”
You felt your lip tremble and you started crying again. “Don’t ever hurt Henry again,” you demanded. He looked surprised, and laughed again. “I-I mean it, he didn’t do anything to deserve —”

“He disobeyed my fuckin’ rules,” he cut you off harshly. You cowered back and he grabbed you. “You ain’t got no idea what a disaster that boy really is. He’s sick in the head. He’s got problems. If somebody don’t keep his ass in line, he’ll either end up dead, or in jail wishin’ he was.”

“He’s not a disaster, he’s… he’s perfect to me,” you told him. He sighed angrily.

“Then maybe you’re just as fucked as he is,” he mumbled. You frowned and stared at him. “You know why I hate him so much, Y/N? ‘Cause he drove my Maggie away. I have a girlfriend and all but I ain’t had good pussy in years… not till you…” He reaches forward and touched your cheek and you sucked in a shaky breath. “And now you gone and got yerself knocked up… why’d you go and do that to me, huh?”

“I-I didn’t really anticipate this,” you pointed out, wanting him to stop touching your cheek and sliding his fingers along your hair. “I didn’t me-mean to get pregnant…”

“I sorta wish it was mine… is that fucked to say?” he chuckled casually, leaning against the wall and leaning down to touch your belly slightly. “Guess it could be mine… who knows I was pretty drunk that night, that’s how I ended up with Henry….”

“So it might be your baby?” You felt your stomach ache as he shrugged and nodded.

“Suppose… can’t rule it out I guess…. we’d make a beautiful baby don’t you think, honey…?” he smirked, watching you gag a little and start crying again. “Come on, baby, am I that bad to you?”

“Y-You’re like, fifty! And you’re my boyfriend’s Dad, it’s so wrong, it’s so— you’re a cop you should know how wrong this is!” you sobbed. He pouted mockingly.

“I’m forty eight. And I don’t think there’s anything wrong with an older man findin’ a younger girl attractive…” he told you honestly. You stared at him in disgust, and he shook his head. “You’re too young to understand.”

“Yeah, you’re right, I am too young to understand.” you agreed, crossing your arms. “I’m about as
“No, baby, you’re perfect,” he insisted. You shook your head. “Sixteen, seventeen years old, that’s when my Maggie was in her prime. She was smart, sexy, gentle. Everything a woman should be… just like you…” He tucked some of your hair behind your ear, clearly flirting with you, and your nose wrinkled. He chuckled. “Why can’t you take a damn compliment? You think I forgot you’re pregnant, we still gotta deal with that you fuckin’ whore.” He grabbed you by the front of your shirt and you gasped as he pulled you to the back of the house towards his room. Your eyes widened when you realized your destination and you fought him off. He growled and turned to grab you, slamming you back against the wall so that the wind was knocked out of you.

You were so confused by his sudden change in attitude, that you couldn’t even comprehend what was happening when he pressed his lips against yours and shoved his tongue in your mouth. You cried out against him and started wiggling around to try to get him off of you. He groaned and grabbed your breast in his hand, squeezing it and moving to kiss at your neck.

“Henry!” you shouted before he slapped his hand over your mouth.

“He won’t come,” he chuckled, looking up at you with heavy lidded eyes as he held you up against the wall by your hips and ass. You instinctively grabbed onto him, but it quickly turned into beating on his arms. “Aw come on, honey, don’t be like that…” He set you down but immediately tangled his fingers into your hair, starting to drag you to his room as you sobbed and screamed for Henry. “Baby girl, he’s not gonna come save you….”

“Get your fuckin’ hands off her…”

It didn’t come from Henry, but when Butch let go of you hastily and you were able to look at the front door again, you saw Vic, Belch standing right behind him, both of them red in the face with fear and anger. You hurried over to them, and Vic touched your arm as you passed by him. You hid behind Belch, who looked back at you worriedly. You were crying but you nodded at him that you were okay.

“What the fuck’d you just say, fag?” Butch barked at Vic. Belch looked forward and you all jumped at the volume of his voice. “You don’t even know what you was seein’ there, kid, why don’t you two scram and let me get back to my business?”

“You were gonna…” Belch started, hesitating. “Rape her, wasn’t ya? That was yer ‘business’, ain’t it?”
Butch glared at you, then scoffed and shook his head. “Fuck this shit, it ain’t worth it,” he grumbled, turning to go into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him.

You let out a sigh of relief then sobbed a little, and Vic turned and hurried over to you, hugging you and moving your hair back from where Butch had messed it all up. “Are you okay? Did he hurt you?” he asked worriedly, wiping some of your tears with his thumb.

“No,” he hiccuped. “I thought he was gonna though…”

“Well thank God he didn’t,” Belch sighed, putting his face in his hands. “You were screamin’, we heard ya yellin’ fer Henry, but he weren’t close enough to hear ya…”

“Yeah, he hasn’t moved from that spot,” Vic said sadly, pointing out the window where Henry was sitting in front of Belch’s car, on the ground.

The three of you made your way back outside, and the two boys leaned against the car while you went over to Henry, sitting down on the ground next to him and leaning your head on his arm.

He was staring off, seeming very stiff and clearly still upset. “How are you, my love?” you asked him quietly, pushing some of your hair out of your face as the wind blew it over your nose. He didn’t respond, still staring forward, and you sighed, sitting up and looking at him. “Henry, you know you can talk to me about anything…”

Again, he just stared ahead, not moving, or speaking, or acknowledging you in any way. You sighed and looked at him a little closer, seeing that his eyes were very distant, almost blank in appearance— like Patrick’s, you thought.

“Henry, baby, can you hear me?” you asked worriedly, putting your hand on his arm. When he didn’t respond, you just moved closer and leaned against him again.

The two of you sat like that— him unresponsive, you nearly crying —for quite some time, in silence. You wished you were like one of those superheroes Bill liked, with superpowers to tell Henry how much you loved him right into his mind: telepathically.
You rubbed at his arm and looked back at his friends, wondering what you should do. Vic raised an eyebrow and cleared his throat. “You okay, Henry?” he asked casually, wanting to make sure Henry didn’t think they were really pitying him.

Henry’s eyes seemed to widen, like he noticed something that startled him. You followed his line of vision but saw nothing, so you looked at him again and went to touch his face but he stood up quickly and started walking stiffly— fearfully —towards the farm’s red mailbox. You looked back at Vic and Belch again in confusion as he opened the mailbox and pulled something out.

His friends looked just as lost as you, and Belch shrugged a little. After a few minutes, the three of you watched him walk across the lawn to the house and you stood up, hurrying towards him.

“Y/N,” Vic protested nervously, but you went after him as the door closed. You felt your heart drop to your stomach and you hesitated, looking at the house before starting to run.

“Henry!” you called, running up the porch and pulling open the screen door.

It took you a moment to process everything that you were seeing. Henry was standing over his father, who was passed out drunk already in his chair, with the Derry Children's Hour on the TV. He had his knife in his hand— you hadn’t seen that knife in months, not since Henry had supposedly lost it when he was chasing Ben. It wasn’t open, but his hand was shaking and he was just staring down at his father.

It frightened you, to say the least. He looked like he was about to… murder his father…

“Henry—” you started softly, but you were cut off by a voice on the TV.

“…and you can too Henry….” the hostess in the show cut you off. You stopped and stared at the TV just as Henry did. “Kill him!”

The cheerful way she said it didn’t make you feel any better about the fact that the television had just spoken to Henry and had told him to kill his father ! You were speechless as the children started chanting kill him! Kill him! Kill him! over and over again and you watched Henry’s hand steady so you started to step forward.

“Henry!” you said sternly. He jolted and looked at you as you started walking over to him. He
looked down at his hand with the knife, then at his now awake father and he dropped the knife on the ground as the man stood up quickly and grabbed him by the throat.

You watched him punch him in the face and you covered your mouth, sobbing. “What the fuck?! You tryin’a kill me?!” he screamed at Henry, who just looked frightened and confused.

“S-Sir it made me—” he tried.

“I been tellin’ everyone for years you need’a be put away, boy! You believe me now, Y/N, you see he’s got problems?!” Butch snapped. He threw Henry on the floor and stepped on his hand as he went to grab his son’s knife. Henry groaned out in pain and tried to pull his fingers out, feeling his pinky break and crying out. “You fucking freak!”

His father kicked him in the face and he fell back with a grunt. “D-Dad,” he sobbed. “Please, I’m so sorry, just please don’t kill me! S-she’s pregnant, Dad please I gotta be with her through this, please don’t kill me….” He trailed off and his father stared down at him.

“It ain’t even your kid, dumbass,” he sneered, grinning slightly with pride. “Even your girlfriend don’t love you enough to stay with ya!”

Henry looked like he was about to cry, but he kept his face stern and brave. You watched him worriedly, but felt proud of him for at least trying to stand up to his Dad. “Yeah, maybe it ain’t my baby. It’s too bad,” he agreed. “But she does love me. Practically begged for me to take her back Dad! And I love her, I do!”

“You don’t love nobody, not even her,” he argued. Henry shook his head but his Dad stormed forward and grabbed him off the ground, making the boy gasp. “You’re a little psycho, ain’tcha? You wouldn’t care less if she dropped dead right now… you don’t give a shit it’s not your baby, neither. You ain’t feel nothin’. You never have, he never has felt nothin’ for nobody but his mother, Y/N, not really.” He looked back at you, then looked at his son in disgust. “Used to stare for hours at nothin’ when he was little... not talk to nobody or do nothin’, like a freak, remember that, Henry?!”

“Dad--”

“And you remember how you used to kill the Hanlon’s chickens for me? You loved doin’ that, loved killin’ ‘em,” he continued darkly. “And all those kids you beat up on, you do it cause you
like makin’ em bleed… he’s a killer, Y/N, I been tryin’a tell you from the start, and now you seen it with your own eyes, fucker tried to kill me!”

He threw Henry back on the ground and pulled his gun out of his holster. You gasped and rushed forward, grabbing his hand and trying to pull the gun away as he started pointing it at Henry. It went off but didn’t hit anyone. You screamed at the noise, but fought with him until he finally dropped the gun. You scrambled to get it but he jumped on top of you to grab it first.

“Dad get off her!” Henry demanded, hurrying over as Butch Bowers pinned you to the floor and grabbed the gun. He pointed it at your head and you and Henry both froze.

“Do I have both of yours’ damn attention?” he growled. You didn’t move but Henry nodded so he licked his lips, getting off of you to point the gun at Henry. Henry put his hands up but Butch wasn’t looking at him anymore. You followed his gaze to the TV, seeing--

The clown.

You shook your head in confusion and then shrieked as you heard the gun go off twice quickly. Henry looked shocked, falling back into the TV as two dark red circles started seeping through his red shirt, one on his stomach and one on his right shoulder, near where you supposed his heart might be.

“No!” you screamed, watching him start gasping and crying in pain.

And then you felt it, the sharpest, most intense pain you had ever felt. You barely realized what was happening until you fell back and put your hand on your stomach-- definitely the source of the pain. It felt hot, so you moved your hand to look at it as you slumped onto the floor… blood… your hand was absolutely covered in blood…

You looked over at Henry as your vision started going black, and saw that he was already unconscious… all you could hope was that if he was already dead, you were dying now too...
When you woke up, it was to the sound of a heart monitor, and an argument.

“We just don’t think it’s right,” you heard your mother sigh, sounding extremely frustrated. “And we don’t understand, it’s just… i-it’s just--”

“We just know that our Y/N would never do something like that,” your father finished for her.

You slowly opened your eyes and groaned when you tried to move, feeling your body ache, and your stomach pulsating in pain. You sighed out as you got in a comfortable enough position, and looked around at your parents, who were standing hand in and at your bedside, Butch Bowers who was standing at the foot of your bed, and Bill, who was sitting in a chair at the other side of your bed.

“Why don’t you ask her?” Butch grumbled, glaring at you. “Go on, princess, tell ‘em how you and my boy attacked me! Tell ‘em how I only shot in self-defense.”

“Y/N, tell us that isn’t true,” your mother said worriedly.
“W-What?” you groaned, still trying to get your eyes opened. “What happened?”

Everyone sighed, but your mother moved to sit on the bed next to you. Your father made a similar move, and you tried to sit up but they both moved forward to stop you. “You’re still healing, honey, just stay laying, it’s alright,” your Dad told you. “Thank God, you’re awake, we were so worried…”

“Do you remember what happened, Y/N, can you tell us?” your mother asked hopefully. You just stared at her for a moment, then you looked at Butch.

“He shot Henry… and then he shot me…” you told them. They both looked to glare at Butch who licked his teeth.

“In goddamn self-defense, you little brat, in self-defense! You and Henry came and tried to stab me, do you remember that, Y/N?!” he snapped, leaning towards you. “But fine, we can just put all the blame on me, make me out to be the bad guy…”

“I never tried to stab you, what the fuck are you talking about?” you scoffed, struggling to sit up again despite your parents’ protesting. “I stopped Henry from doing it, you idiot, but I wish he had, because you deserve it.”


“Wait… so he did shoot in self-defense?” your Dad asked, sounding confused and shocked.

“Not against me! And honestly, he didn’t need to shoot anyone, the situation was defused, you shot because you wanted us dead,” you argued. Butch glared at you.

“I don’t shoot to kill unless I gotta, I shot you to disarm,” he denied. “I don’t just go around shootin’ pregnant women for the fun of it.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” your Mom asked him worriedly. She looked at you and so did your Dad, and your mouth fell open. “Y/N, are you pregnant?!”
“Look, that’s not important right now, we’ll have a nice big family meetin’ about it when these two lovebirds get outta the hospital,” Butch started. “We’re clearin’ this up now. Why did I shoot, Y/N?”

It was a genuine, confused question, and it made you hesitate. He really didn’t know what he had shot you...

“Y/N!”

You looked behind him, and saw Henry wheeling himself over to you in a wheelchair. He moved into the room, putting himself next to Bill, who moved his chair far away and just glared into the back of Henry’s head.

“Baby,” you smiled, feeling all of your anxiety melt away as he took your hand. “You’re okay…”

“Barely,” he sighed, pulling his hospital gown sleeve down a little to show his bandaged shoulder.

“Self-defense,” Butch spoke up angrily. Henry glared at him, which caught him by surprise, and your parents stood up.

“Can we talk to you privately?” your Dad asked him coldly. Butch looked annoyed, but sighed and nodded, and the three of them left the room, closing the door. You and Henry held each other’s hands for a minute and kissed each other, then you started crying lightly at the pain in your stomach.

“Did I lose the baby?” you asked worriedly. He looked nervous and looked back at Bill. “I-I just don’t wanna lose the baby, Henry…”

“Y-Y/N, how can you be…?” Bill started, trailing off. “And w-w-with his baby?”

“Of course, his baby, Billy…” you said softly. “I love him…”

“I love you,” Henry agreed. “But the baby’s going up for adoption, kid, don’t worry about it…”
Bill stared at the two of you, then sighed. “F-f-fine… fine, Y/N, I’m so-sorry. If you want to be with him, it’s f-fine,” he said quietly. “And you can still be my sister…” You looked a little sad and he cleared his throat. “Don’t worry, Y/N…. e-everything will be okay now. It’s all over.”

The next few hours were long and tiresome. The police came and talked to both you and Henry, you both told your sides of the story, and they took from it what they wanted. Butch never would get arrested, or even fired for what he did…

Doctors checked on you and confirmed that you were, in fact, pregnant. It made your heart start jumping with fear, with excitement, with uncertainty and anxiety. They brought you and Henry to a small room with a huge machine and a bed, which they lay you down on and put a cold gel on your belly. Then they put a little wand looking instrument against your stomach and pictures started appearing on the screen. It was incredible, and scary, and you were amazed by the imperfect but innovative technology.

“Everything looks perfectly fine,” the doctor who was performing the ultrasound told you. You tried to see what he was looking at on your screen. “See here, this is the head, it’s a little hard to see--”

“That’s my baby?” you asked excitedly. Henry shifted nervously next to you as the doctor pointed to the screen and nodded. “Look Henry, look!”

“I see…”

“And everything appears to be in order, nothing harmed the child,” the doctor said. You were watching excitedly, and he smiled. “Would you like us to print out a picture for you to have?”

“You can do that?” you asked. He nodded and you looked at Henry, who was just staring worriedly at the screen.

“We don’t need that, we’re putting the baby up for adoption once it’s born,” he reminded you quietly. You looked a little disappointed, but the doctor nodded and turned off the machine, helping you up and back to your room.

You and Henry sat together in your bed until your parents and Butch came back in, and they all looked at each other before looking at you. “So what’s the plan here?” Butch finally spoke up.
Everyone looked at you and you blushed. “Abortion or adoption?”

“What he means is,” your mother started quickly. “You know you can’t keep this baby, Y/N…”

“I know…” you agreed sadly.

“And we can talk more about this later, when you’re better, of course, but we wanted to make sure that was clear to both of you,” your father added.

“We know,” Henry spoke up. “We’re putting it up for adoption.”

“And who’s paying for all the check ups and shit?” Butch questioned. “I mean, no offense, but I ain’t puttin’ money in for a baby.”

“I think you should pay for it,” you argued. He raised an eyebrow. “I mean, think about it, you need to take some form of responsibility for this…”

“Responsibility for you being pregnant?” your Dad wondered, not noticing the way Butch paled, or how he glared at you, or how you raised an eyebrow expectantly. “Y/N, I hate to come to his defense, but he’s not--”

“Fine,” Butch hissed. Your parents looked at him as he continued through clenched teeth. “Any money you need I’ll provide… bitch.” He scoffed and stormed out of the room. Your parents looked at each other in confusion, then looked at you. You smiled innocently, and all they could do was shrug their shoulders…

In the end, they would never know what he did to you. You kept it to yourself for the most part, other than the boys. They all knew that Butch had hurt you, they all knew he had tried to kill you, they knew everything. And they all knew there was nothing that they could do…

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-Six Months Later-
You hated walking down the school hallways now. You had to just ignore the stares that you got as you walked by your classmates. Ever since your belly had started growing, you had been getting stared at, and judged. But being with Henry had its perks, such as protection against bullying, as the top of the bully food chain was— as far as you were concerned --the father of your child. But you weren’t immune to it...

Now, eight months pregnant, it was hard to ignore all the hurtful, judgmental gazes in your direction as you struggled your way up the stairs to the second floor. You stopped to breathe once you reached the second floor, then gasped as you felt someone ram into your shoulder, nearly knocking you over.

You got your bearings and glared at your attacker, then your face fell when you saw Tommy Jones laughing, with all his football friends laughing around him.

“What’d you think would happen if you fell on that thing?” he asked with a grin.

You turned red. “That would really hurt the baby,” you explained worriedly. “Please don’t knock me over—”

“Hey, Y/N, who’s the Daddy?” one of his friends laughed at you. “How’s it feel to be the biggest slut in school. I heard you fucked almost every guy last summer.”

“She fucked the whole Bowers Gang last summer,” Tommy corrected, looking slightly disgusted. “And me… I can’t believe I hit that…”

“I’m calling Patrick as the Dad, they were fucking like rabbits all summer,” another boy chimed in.

“The baby is Henry’s,” you told them. “I made a lot of mistakes last summer, but being with you was the biggest, Tommy—”

“I heard the baby’s gonna be retarded,” one of them cut you off.

“Wouldn’t surprise me, especially if it’s Huggins’,” Tommy said, making all of his friend’s laugh and close in around you
“Hey Y/N, how much bigger can you get?”

“Y/N, you’re gonna pop any day now, what then?”

“Oh yeah, I heard she’s dropping out and moving to New Hampshire with it.”

“That’s bullshit, she’s gonna be stuck in Derry with her shitty boyfriend and their shitty baby, forever,” Tommy sneered. You stared at them all with tears in your eyes. “I wonder what it’s like with a pregnant girl…”

“Wanna find out?” someone asked, making them all laugh and get closer to you.

“Hey!”

The boys all moved away from you suddenly, and you saw Henry hurrying over to you, quickly taking you in his arms and holding you behind him. “Anybody else got anything to say?” you heard Belch growl from behind the group of boys.

“Or do we gotta take care of this?” Vic added, and you saw him coming to the side of you. Even though the football players were much bigger, and there were more of them, being surrounded seemed to spook them, and they scoffed and mumbled about what a slut you were, how you weren’t worth anything, anything mean they could say as they walked away.

“You okay?” Henry asked as you started crying. He hugged you and you held him as close as you could. “What’d they do to you, huh?”

“T-The usual…” you sighed, putting a hand on your belly. “They were making fun of the baby…”

“Damnit,” he said, shaking his head and starting to rub at your stomach. “Sorry, I got here as soon as I could--”

“It isn’t your fault,” you told him. “But Henry, I really need to talk to you.”
Vic and Belch went to their classes, while you and Henry skipped to go talk in the gym hallway. You told him everything on your mind, then waited patiently while he nodded and thought it over, not speaking for almost a full minute.

“So you’re really thinkin’ of keepin’ it…” he finally sighed, putting a hand on his face. “That’s um... wow…”

“I know, but we haven’t found anyone to adopt the baby, and usually by now we would have a set of parents dying for a newborn on my doorstep,” you explained. “And I can feel her, Henry… she’s a part of me, I love her.”

“Yeah, I heard all that,” he mumbled, running his hands through his hair. You watched him hopefully. He looked over at you and put his hands up. “I dunno what you want from me, baby…”

“I want you to raise our baby with me,” you told him straight out. He went silent again, then looked at you.

“Are you sure you want that?” he asked quietly. You started to defend your decision, so he continued. “I mean with me? Now? You still need to graduate, in a year, and then go to college, and--”

“Henry, I’ve been giving this a lot of thought, and I want this more than anything,” you insisted. He stared at you. “Please, Henry, I don’t want to lose our baby… I want her to grow up with us…”

“I want that too, but you know it’s more complicated, I mean, you work, but only part time, and I ain’t got a job…”

“So get a job,” you tried. It made him glare at you. “And besides, your Dad can help us.”

“Um, no offense, Y/N, but I’m not gettin’ my ass beat double time just for that baby,” he told you.

“You won’t,” you said. “I won’t let him--”
“Just… I don’t think we can do this, Y/N,” he said seriously. You sighed and looked down. “But if that’s what you want… then fuck it, we’ll raise the baby together… I know I gotta get a damn job anyways.”

You lit up and looked at him. “Really?!“ you gasped. “You want to?”

“Of course I wanna, the jobs ‘n finances shit I ain’t so sure of, but—” You cut him off by hugging him tightly. He just stopped babbling and hugged you back, but he couldn’t help but keep thinking. “Y/N what if it’s not my baby?” he asked.

“She is ,” you insisted. He winced as you used the pronoun again, still not sure why you insisted on calling the baby a she . You said you felt it. To him, it just made this shit feel too real. On the outside he was cool. For you. His bullying and harassment on his classmates, on the otherhand, had skyrocketed in the recent months. Almost no one was safe. No one except you, Vic and Belch, and finally, at long last, he had stopped targeting the Losers. Whether it was from your begging, or the fragile, strange understanding Henry and Bill had come to back when you and Henry were in the hospital, you didn’t know. But he left them alone, save the occasional jest between Richie and the gang, and the hateful glares between the groups.

Bill’s lucky seven had dropped back down to an awkward four. Beverly had moved down to Portland to live with her aunt after her father had been arrested, and Ben and his mother had moved to Nebraska. As for Mike, he was homeschooled, and had a lot of farm work. He usually could only hang out on the weekends… not that they ever did.

And Stan was a lot more distant, and quiet. He often skipped out on adventures now, and stayed home instead of hang out with his friends. So Bill, Richie and Eddie were all that was really left of The Losers Club…

So Henry pretended like the three little nerds weren’t worth his time and forgot about them. Now he targeted other kids. But he never did anything around you.

Because while he was cool around you, on the inside he was having a constant panic attack. He wasn’t ready to be a Dad! And besides, neither of you knew that it was even his to begin with.

“How….Do you know?” he questioned with a sigh. “How can you possibly know this baby’s mine, when you fucked like six other dudes?!"
“I know because I can feel it Henry!” you told him seriously. He just stared at you.

“Alright, Y/N. But let’s just… play with the idea that this baby pops out and it’s actually not mine. It’s Belch’s, or Patrick, or Tommy Jones, o-or my Dad…” His jaw tensed so you touched his cheek. “Y/N, if the kids’ Belch’s, he’s gonna wanna be a part of that kid’s life, whether he says it or not. He’ll feel like it’s his responsibility to take care of it… and if it’s Patrick’s…” He trailed off and shrugged, looking at his boots. You frowned, unsure of what he meant, and put your hand on his face, turning him to look at you again. “If it ain’t mine, Y/N, you can go with him, that’s all I’m sayin’, I’ll understand wantin’a have a kid with its real Dad and all…”

“Henry…”

“And I know you really loved him…” he added with a chuckle. You looked surprised. “Oh come on, I’m not stupid. You fell for him like that!” He snapped his fingers while he said this, and you blushed.

“I did not!” you denied quietly. “I loved you through every second with him. I couldn’t get my mind off of you, and I never feel whole unless I’m with you…”

“Really…?” he asked worriedly. “Y’ain’t just sayin’ that?”

“I love you, Henry… you’re the one I’m going to marry,” you told him. His eyes widened and you laughed. “One day? In the future, once we have lots of money.”

“Alright, maybe then,” he agreed jokingly. You giggled and he smiled. You were so pretty right now. You were practically glowing… so he leaned forward and kissed you. You quickly moved to kiss him back, both of you smiling happily as you shifted closer together. He pulled away from the kiss to slide down and kiss your belly, rubbing it again.

“Oh, Henry! She’s moving, she can feel you! Talk to her, baby,” you encouraged him. He looked nervous, looking at your stomach.

“Um… hi baby… it’s your Dad…” he said. You felt the baby kick near where his hand was, and you gasped in discomfort but grinned.

“Did you feel that?!” you gasped. His eyes were still wide as he nodded, rubbing where the little
foot had been. “Keep talking… what should we name her?”

“Uh… I dunno, what were you thinking?” he countered. You rolled your eyes but answered anyway.

“I’ve been thinking… something now, l-like Ashley, or Heather, or—” you started. He started kissing at your belly again and you stopped and smiled. He rubbed around where the baby had kicked, and gulped.

“What about Claire?” he wondered. You smiled even brighter and started running your hands through his hair.

“I love it,” you told him.

“Just came to me…” he admitted, shrugging slightly. He cupped his hands around his mouth and your belly, as if that would make it harder for you to hear him whisper, “Are you my little Claire-bear?” You teared up a little, feeling the baby start to kick again. He looked so excited to feel it, and he went on talking to the baby to get her to react. You watched him happily, thinking that this was where everything had started.

Henry had kissed you right here in this hallway, well over a year ago now. It had been set in stone then, he was to be yours and you were to be his.

Figuring out how to talk to your parents and Butch about the baby would be a struggle, but it was ultimately your choice, and you had already made it. A month later you would have a healthy baby girl that you named Claire, just like Henry had picked out.

The future was uncertain, but what you did know was that Henry was yours, and you were his. You were together for the next 27 years, and even with all the ups and downs the two of you had, you loved Henry. You always would.

No matter what happened.

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