Summary

When Robert watches Kristen's short film, he decides to go after her. Once more, they look at and relive the past, but they’ll have to deal with the consequences of who they are today and their actions in present time.
Author's note

Once more, here we are! The sequence of Secret Series is here, because of things that happened last year!

To read this story, you don't need to have read Collided, the other fanfic part of this series. However, it's important that the reader have some knowledge of what happened with these characters in this universe. The previous story is here on my page.

There are also a lot of Come Swim references, which is a short film written and directed by Kristen. The whole story is about this movie's scenes, and you can find it on Youtube. You just need to type "Come Swim - Kristen Stewart" and search. The movie is around 18 minutes long.

Besides, on a specific scene of this fanfic, I recommend a song. Listen to it, it helps you to get into the mood of the scene and its' lyrics goes perfectly with the moment.

Again, I need to say a few thank you's:

The first one goes to my beta reader. Adri, who revised this story and supports me with all the fantasies I have with this real life couple and some more that exist only in fiction. I love you, Adri, thanks for everything.

The second one goes, once more, to Vanessa. She is my guide to everything that happened throughout the years, to the dialogues, and everything else. The personality of these two characters is built in the closest possible way of their real personalities, with Vanessa's help. Thank you for going into this madness with me! Daydreams about the past are easy to do... But make it "real" with the present time, put new events together and find justifications... Oh, this is so hard, and with you help, it's possible!

DISCLAIMER: Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson are not mine, and will never be. Everything in this fanfic is creative work, therefore, it has never happened. There are some references to real cases and dates that can be related with real events, but all of the work that involves these two characters physically are mine. I explicit here all of my respect for these two artists, and for all of the people involved in their personal lives.

IMPORTANT: In this story, there are scenes of explicit sex, even between characters who are involved in a loving relationship with others. If that offends you in some way, please, don't read it, or just skip the scene whenever it comes through. Again, this is a fictional work and the events narrated here are not real (not that I know of).
Heels

*Only with you I get down from high heels*

*Take off my makeup*

*Raise up my voice*

*Bring down the tone of my portuguese*

*I can reveal myself*

*As failed and imperfect*

*And trust my glories*

*And like that I make myself complete*

*Decode me and translate me*

*In my shadows you see the light*

*You know everything and that’s fine*

*What I truly am*

*And only stuck with you*

*I feel free*

*Only with you I dream higher*

*I face my limits*

*I listen to my voice*

*Raise up the tone of my songs*

*I can forgive myself*

*Dare my fears*

*And smile just with the want to*

*Throw myself in completely*
Decode me and translate me

In my shadows you see the light

You know everything and that’s fine

What I truly am

And only stuck with you

I feel free

Salto* - Sandy

*Heels
November 2017

I put my bottle of beer down and looked at my left side, towards the laugh that was louder than the others. I swallowed the beer, feeling it coming down my throat in a weird way, as I looked at Jamie some chairs away from me. He was looking at his phone screen and had his face red and eyes wet because of all the laughing. I frowned, watching the scene.

“No,” He repeated, still laughing to the phone screen, “Stop that, I’ll fucking wet myself! I’ve been drinking since early and you- Stop that!”

It wasn’t my intention to snort out a laugh. But the way Jamie was doing it himself only looking at a screen was kinda bizarre, specially because of the hysterical tone he was using and for how much of alcohol he had in his blood. I sipped my beer once more while watching his body curling down and leaning to the side on the chair. I laughed, holding the bottle of beer close to my lips and touched Jamie’s shoulder, pulling him, so he wouldn’t fall off his seat.

“Thanks, man,” he said, cleaning off the tears on the corner of his eyes, “Those two make me die of laughing.”

I nodded, not knowing who he was talking about, but not really interested in it either. I looked at Tom again, with whom I was talking before being distracted by Jamie, but he himself was already concentrated on a Facetime conversation. I rolled my eyes, ready to call him up for that, but resolved to forgive it when I heard him talk in the Marlowe Special Tone.

“No, wait. Of course, I’m so stupid! Rob! Rob, come here!”

Jamie’s dragged voice came along with nudges on my arm that were far too hard. I raised my eyebrows looking at him.

But there was no response. All he did was hold out his arm to put me on screen and, at the same time, make me see the people who he was talking to.

“Rob!” said the girly voice with that american accent and almost white blonde haired girl, “It’s nice to see your face!”

I laughed lowly, waving to the screen.

“Hi, Suzie. How are you?”

She shrugged, smiling.

“Good! CJ! CJ, come back here now! Leave the beers for later, come see who came to say ‘hi’”. The male voice said something on the other side, and a loud laugh from Suzie was heard, “Well, he’s a bit jealous of you guys right now, so he went to see if he gets to find a beer buried in Kristen’s fridge. Same old.”

Some months ago, the mention to that name probably would make me change my expression. It
would make me freeze, stop laughing. It would bring me back hurting memories that I tried to forget about. It would wake up the pain that I used to like to keep in my own intimacy. Some months ago, the mention to that name would make my fiancée go mad, it would bring us more fights and headaches.

But not anymore. And it was so natural, that I almost got surprised when I didn’t see myself moving my expression on bit when her name was mentioned with that kind of naturality. And her best friend was looking for beer in her fridge. In other words, they were in her house. And she herself could be there and show off her face at anytime.

And that’s alright. Because it wouldn’t our first contact in years.

Because we’d secretly seen each other in a hotel in France. Because we’d seen each other again in a tortuous flight because her current girlfriend was there. Because we accomplished our promise to make out babies (our dogs, Bear and Bernie) to spend a weekend with me two months ago. Because I didn’t have a fiancée who I should give any explanations anymore.

Even though she still had a girlfriend and a completely different life that was build away from me.

Even though absolutely nothing had changed.

“He’s right to be jealous,” I shrugged and showed my own beer, “We’re having fun.”

“It’s not a Corona, but that’s fine,” CJ’s figure came up on screen, “Rob?” his expression as kinda incredulous.

“Hi,” I chucked, “How’s everything, CJ?”

“Good,” he smiled, giving Suzie a bottle and saying quiet and quick ‘cheers’ before swallowing a sip. “What about you? What have you been doing?”

“Not much,” I shrugged, “Just chilling with the guys here,” I pointed at Jamie with my chin.

“Because we’re all single again!” Jamie laughed and threw an arm around my shoulders. Suddenly, his laugh was over and he pointed at the screen with the same hand he was holding his bottle, still around my body, “You’re single too! Aren’t you?”

“We don’t do boyfriends,” Suzie explained while drinking.

“Then we need to see each other! This week! This week is perfect, we have nothing to do, and we’re in the same city and-”

“I can’t,” I cut, “We’ll need to wait a bit more.”

“Oh, it’s always you to mess up with the meetings,” Jamie complained, “We need to do it already, we never know when one of us will be tied again! Single’s meeting, ASAP!”

I chuckled quietly, thinking about how wrong Jamie was in his last comment. Getting into another relationship was not in my plans for this or for the next year. The end of my engagement was tiring enough because of all the complications that my separation from Tahliah entailed for both of us. I definitely needed to spend some time alone before thinking about established relationships once again. So, as far as I was concerned, that “single’s meeting” still had a long run for happening.

“I had a couple of movie stuff to resolve,” I explained, “And set something with Katy on my only day free.”
“Perry?” CJ asked.

“Perry,” assenti tomando um gole de cerveja.

“Perry,” I nodded sipping my beer.

“But we’re going too! I mean, Suzie, Alicia, Kris and I! When are you going to be there?”

I frowned. Alicia was Kristen's ex-girlfriend, wasn’t she? I’m sure she was. The first one after me, I’d never forget her face. Besides, CJ had not mentioned Stella. Going out with the ex when the girlfriend was not with them?

Apparently, I was not that privileged.

“8th.” I responded, still kinda confused.

“Booooo, damn it,” Suzie complained, “We’re going one day before. The universe doesn’t want us together.”

I laughed softly, thinking that the universe had already been mean enough with meeting involving Kristen and people who had involvement with her. I guess I could say that was a help. Surely Alicia would have more to talk about and to me than Stella had in our meeting on the plane last July.

“Fuck the universe!” Jamie retorted, pulling his arm away from my body, “Suzie, tell Rob that thing you just told me! It almost made me piss myself.”

But when Suzie told me about an adventure involving the roof of a university building, I couldn’t concentrate or laugh as much as Jamie, who seemed to be listening the story for the first time again.

I could only think I'd need to get in touch with Katy in her concert. Because there was an attempt of helping there, and it was not from the universe. After all, I knew the friend I had, and she was not happy when I told her about the airplane incident.

She really mentioned to be in a debt with me.

[...]

“Oh, no, no, don’t worry about that,” I heard Katy talking as soon as I entered backstage. She had a bottle of water in hands and nodded to someone, the sparkling silver dress she was wearing during the concert still on her body. “I’ll be there soon.”

I couldn’t understand what the staff said, but he left talking to someone else through the phone. Then, Katy turned around to face me.

“Rob!” she smiled and opened her arms, the bottle of water still in her arms making a feel drops touch the ground, “Oh, I couldn’t wait to give you a hug! I’ve seen you from the stage, thank you so much for coming!”

She was shaking me from one side to another as we laughed together.

“Sit here!” she said, pointing out to the white sofa a few steps away from me, “I can’t stay here for long, but can do whatever you want later. It’s just that there’s a line of fans down there, and the stagg are going to kill me if I take too long.”
“We can do anything, if you want, of course,” I nodded and took the bottle of beer she was giving me, “The concert was great. When you fly in and out of that mouth during I Kissed A Girl, it’s just awesome.”

“Kristen said the exact same thing last night!” She laughed, sitting beside me, “She was here last night.”

“Yeah, I know,” I nodded, remembering what Suzi and CJ said in our last conversation,” CJ and Suzie told me.”

“‘They came along. With Alicia,” Kary rolled her eyes, laughing as she stole the beer from my hands, taking a long sip, “I can’t drink, but nobody said anything about stealing a couple of sips of my buddy’s beer. Shut up, you haven’t seen a thing,” I laughed with her, watching as she drank more, “Here, take that away from me,” she pushed the bottle back in my hands again. I finished the remaining liquid from it. “That’s right, drink it all so you can’t try me. Anyway, about Kristen! She’s so different Rob! Even more than the last time I’ve seen her, in July.”

“I know,” I searched from recent pictures of Kristen in my mind, “I’ve seen on Twitter.”

Katy put her hands on her own waist. Then reached out to poke my own.

“Stalking your ex on internet, Pattinson?”

I shrugged, weak to deny.

I mean, of course I wasn’t stalking her on internet. I was just following a few sites and accounts that would normally talk about stuff she’d make in her career, but sometimes they’d end up posting paparazzi pictures of her on the streets. It happened.

“Then you probably know the reason she was so excited and nervous too… There’s this movie, written and directed by her coming out this week.”

“Yeah, I know.”

“It’s called Come Swim. As for she said, it’s based in paintings and poems she did five years ago.”

Yeah, I know that too. Katy’s eyes showed that she was expecting me speak, hoping I could know more about the project. Especially because of the time mentioned by Kristen. I mean, five years ago, we had been through the hardest moments of our lives, and, then, she had converted her thoughts in poems and paintings, just like I had converted mine in songs, for the most part. As Katy hoped, I knew the reason of that works’ existence. I was part of them. I’ve seen them.

“I know.”

“Are you going to watch it?”

I took a deep breath, leaning against the sofa and looking at the ceiling. The empty bottle in my hands was keeping them busy while I was thinking. I had already thought about the possibility of watching her movie, but, honestly, I was kinda afraid. Afraid, because I know all of the work the movie had came from. I know the reason for its’ existence. There was no way to know how much of me would be there, because since then Kristen had lived another experiences according to her herself. She herself said all of her experiences influenced the final version of her movie. Even then, I knew I could see myself on whatever she had done. And I didn’t know the consequences it would bring me.
Because now I had nothing to hold me back. I was engaged before. I had a compromise with someone else, with myself. So there was an almost physical barrier stopping me to lose myself in thoughts and memories. Memories of possibilities that had never turned into reality. In the “memories of the future we deserved”.

Because of all of that and because I knew myself enough, I knew it was dangerous to watch something coming from her, from her nowadays, with references of me.

“I still don’t know, Katy. This whole situation is so complicated…”

“Less now…” she said softly, “That you’re not with Tah anymore.”

“I know, but she still has her girlfriend. And a completely different life. I don’t know, you remember how everything happened five years ago. I don’t know how I’ll react when I watch her side of the story, after so long.”

Katy took a deep breath and came closer to me. When her body was by my side, she touched my shoulder with her head.

“I shouldn’t tell you that. Promise me you won’t tell anyone.”

Katy’s blue eyes watched me asking for trust, just as they begged me to allow her to say whatever she was fighting to do. I smirked, knowing the friend I had.

“I won’t.”

“Great!” She smiled, “Kris confessed me yesterday she’s kinda nervous, you know? Especially to know what you’ll think.”

I frowned.

“Did she tell you that?”

“Away from Alice, but, yes, she did,” she laughed and put her arms on her knees to look at me, “Are you going to disappoint her?”

I bit the inner part of my cheeks, sighing.

“I hate you.”

Katy’s laugh sounded through the backstage, and it was the complete opposite of the staff’s expression when he entered the place, charging Katy to see her fans.

[...]

In the morning of November 10th, I opened my eyes knowing I’d be watching to that movie more times than I’d like to admit. Of course Katy contributed with all of her talk about me to watch the movie, and it included the exchange of texts with Kristen during the dinner we had together after she talked to her fans. Kristen, on that moment, was at the premiere of the damn movie and, by the tone of her words, I could feel how nervous she was.

All of her nervousness, plus the pressure coming from Katy, plus the curiosity that lived into me besides any other factor - and it came only by the fact that the movie was something hers that probably had that temporal context.
Maybe because of that, I wanted to postpone that moment. After waking up, I made a coffee taking longer than normal. I leaned against the window - something I never did - to look at the city from the high place where my house was and had my coffee slowly. I even wanted to call to my parents’ house and make plans about Christmas, just because, well, I needed to keep myself busy. My work meetings were on a pause for the next few weeks, so I’d need to find stuff to keep me from jumping into my computer to watch *Come Swim*.

My curiosity was killing me, but the fear to see myself there was doing just the same.

By the end of the morning I saw myself on bed with my computer, searching her name on Google to find the website where I could watch the movie though. I left a new tab with the frozen video, and it showed a man underwater, as I opened my e-mails. I cleaned all sales and spams, invented anything to send Steph, only to give me a few minutes and postpone that as much as I could.

And then my curiosity won. I sighed and pressed play.

The first scene bothered me already. The wave was growing bigger and bigger and the light haired, light skinned and blue eyed man watched the immensity of the ocean building a wall of black water and it was agonizing. The message was clear: the pain that was coming, and it was close, wouldn’t give him any chance to scape.

I saw myself frowning as the wave grew bigger. Almost like that character, I wanted that moment to freeze or that it would happen already. All at once.

And it did happen. The wave hit him and made him sink. Deeper and deeper.

And then he wasn’t in the ocean anymore. The water was inside him though. He wanted to run, as I myself did lots of times in my life, on that specific moment the movie showed.

But he couldn’t.

And neither could I.

And when he appealed to the water, drinking it from the faucet, drinking it from bottles, drinking it from the rain, it was clear that those were references to memories. The water was the memory, and it was coming hard and strong at each time he gave away to the wanting. The voices were louder, her voice in the memories - and it reminded me so much of *her* voice and the tone *she* used in our most intimate memories - was frequent. I saw myself in him at each time the water bottles accumulated around him, showing it was never enough. And it never was. At each time I let myself to see pictures again, to revive moments in my mind before sleeping, to see her stuff that were still in my place, or to reread old texts, I thought it would be enough. I would swear it would be the last time. But I never could keep my promises and swears, because it was never enough. It would never be. It was only the vicious circle that would bring me to the same place: it would bring me to thirst. It would sink me into the ocean the wave brought me to.

It seemed absolutely selfish and arrogant that I’d see myself in that movie, a movie written by *her*, directed by *her*. But I did. I was in the character’s clothes and expressions, in the situations he’d been through. I could see myself in his memories. In the whispered words of his memories, because they were literally equals to the ones I kept myself. And at each time the voice in his memory said “*you stink*”, it was *her* voice echoing in my head, saying exactly the same thing. Old words, old memories.

In a certain moment of the movie, I obliged myself to stop. I pressed space on my laptop keyboard to freeze the image, because the damn wave from the first scene was growing in me again. It was
stupid, ridiculous, almost anachronic. But it was also real.

I took a deep breath, looking at the ceiling and swallowing dry. I should stop here. I should stop and throw the laptop aside. Not seeing those scenes that would ruin my day, ruin the rest of my week, my month. They would make me languish in memories just like the character did. Like I did myself already. They’d make me ignore the current context of my life to come back to the past like I’ve done before. But in a worse way, because as I realized, there was nothing to keep me away and to stop my thoughtless actions that couldn’t hurt anyone else but me.

For a moment, I decided not to watch the rest of the movie. But I needed to know how it ended. Maybe it could help me to leave the storm I just put myself into.

It wasn’t like those images wouldn’t disturb me anyway. I shouldn’t have started.

I ran my hands through my face, nervous, and pulled the laptop again, pressing the space key, watching it back in action. The character was now sitting in an office, slowly trying to come back to reality.

And then someone passes by, wishing him a happy birthday.

On that moment, I felt my chest tight. It had to be a joke. Kristen had to be kidding. It wasn’t possible that she’d put that in that movie, because… It was too cruel.

As if all the stupid resemblances that only I would understand while watching this damn movie wasn’t enough, she needed to be that explicit saying it was the character’s birthday. As if breaking up with her on my birthday wasn’t the hardest thing I’ve done in life.

*N/A: There’s a theory between Robsteners saying they broke up on Robert’s birthday in 2013. There are registers of them together until May, and then reports of a serious fight during his birthday party. After that, they haven’t been seen together anymore.

If my vision was got a bit blurred after that, I’d never admit its’ reason. Just like I’d never admit I got deeply bothered and touched every time the actress would mimic Kristen’s tone of voice, in a whisper the most delicious accent saying “A lie is never a lie” or “You can’t breathe underwater. That’s weird.”

It bothered me deeply when he tried to smoke, looking at the cigarette, throwing it inside the toilet just when he decided to close the window - the voices went shut.

It was exactly what I did four years ago.

But the movie ended up showing me what to do to free me from everything I’ve just watched. Fine, I got it, he gave the water another meaning, and he understands that’s an unexceptional feeling, by which everybody has been or will be through, he gets free. That was explicit when the character, back to the first scene, gets to leave the ocean.

But I couldn’t give my own memories another meaning. Is that what she wanted to say? That she got do to that - to give her memories another meaning? Honestly, I wish so. I couldn’t want her needing to avoid that kind of stuff just not to hurt herself like I needed to do.

I almost sighed in relief when the movie ended. It was almost unbearable. I was starting to get afraid at each second, because, fuck, if this fucking movie hadn’t the intention to talk to me, I don’t know what Kristen wanted. Because only I could understand a good part of the things written on that fucking script and materialized on those images.
I reached out for my phone, intending to call Katy, because it was her fault that I’ve watched his (even when I knew I would anyway), so she needed to do something with me to keep me from getting crazy today.

But I had no time. Because I started to pay attention to credit’s song lyrics.

“I’ll no longer hide it/ yes, you move me to tears, over and over/every time I get it settled you excite it/ Every time I get my face dry you sing”

My vision got blurred again and I stood on my feet, but the focus of my reach wasn’t my phone.

But the car keys.

[...]

I was driving without even realize where I was going. As soon as I entered the car, a rando song started to play, and I almost broke a piece of the car dashboard with a punch. I didn’t want to hear anything. Because the verses of that song repeated in my head all the time, and they gave me insurance of what I was doing.

Even though I wasn’t sure about whatever I was doing.

I drove as crazy for fifteen minutes, taking a way I didn’t even know I knew. I mean, of course I knew it, because that was my address of living before. But that was years ago, and I was sure I had blocked that way from my mind, because the memory of going through those streets was stuffed of a time when all of my stuff were in my old car. I was coming back from the place I was going to now, and, I thought I would never come back again then.

That that insurance was real when, when I came here to take the dogs that I’ve raised with her to spend some time with me, I had to appeal to GPS.

But it never came into my mind that GPS existed. The movie scenes repeated in my head as I drove automatically.

I would may get a few traffic tickets for speeding.

Well, fuck that.

Driving in silence, looking for the same water the character did in his car, almost instinctively. Maybe it was because of the outbreak I was passing through, I was seeing myself in that character more and more, at each second. But there wasn’t any water in my car. Because that kind of thing, of allusion, haven’t occurred me before that damn movie.

But it was only when I reached another semaphore, one that I couldn’t risk the traffic ticket without risking getting involved in a serious car accident, I had to think. The movement that ceased the car did the same within myself.

I was going to her house. ut why?

Tell her all the shit that movie made me think about, all the shit in that movie that talked to me, and ask her to tell me face on face everything she put on that script. And on that song. That fucking song. If she was brave enough to put it in a movie and spread it around, she could do the same to throw it all on my face. Face to face. It would be more honest like that. More mature. More us.

But us wasn’t real anymore.
But what if she wasn’t home? Worse: what if her girlfriend were home?

It would be really great. After that ridiculous meeting on the plain, I’d see myself at her girlfriend’s place to talk after a movie the said girlfriend did and that talked to me. Would have Kristen told her about all the references to me?

Probably not. I rolled my eyes as I started the car again. If the answer to my last question was yes, I’d have to admire Stella so much more now, because her stomach was so much more stronger than mine. And her blood, far colder than mine too.

But she could be home. Stella could be there too. That would make me want to turn around and run back home. Realize that, even though that video had a lot of me, of us, and about what our end represented to both of us, it didn’t matter anymore, because, above it all, it was about the end. Her life wasn’t the same, and it was built with someone else, just like mine was.

That thought made me sigh to frighten the anger away from my chest. I was angry with myself, for feeling the way I did. Angry with her, for remembering me of those stupid feelings. Angry with Stella for taking the place I wish I never had to leave. Angry with the world for contributing to our end. Angry with life, for putting me in her way in first place.

In a sudden maneuver, I stopped the car and pulled the phone out of my pocket. From here, I could see her house. I swallowed dry, listening to the phone.

I almost hoped she wouldn’t answer. Almost hoped she would just ignore me or that she’d be on a work meeting, or having sex with her girlfriend, I don’t know. But of course she would do the opposite of what I expected, as always. I didn’t have to wait for long until her flushed voice came on the other side of the line.

“Rob?”

“Hi.”

I should have said something, of course I had. But I didn’t even know if I wanted to initiate a conversation about the movie or ask her to tell me that bullshit through the phone, or if I wanted to see her face to face.

“You okay?”

Her voice was hesitant, and I think she kinda expected for the same thing. To be confronted. Maybe she was really expecting for that, and maybe that was the reason of Katy’s comment in first place. I was tense to know of what I thought of the movie because she was expecting to be confronted.

Because she knew me well, and she knew I couldn’t keep all those questions and all that angst inside of me when she was the reason for it. Countless times, in countless different ways.

It was always her fault.

And she knew that.

“Listen, are you home?”

Her surprise as hearing my question was explicit with the following gasp coming from her. I could perfectly see in my mind the way her lips would part and close, as she always did when uncertain of her next move, or when she was caught with a question she wasn’t exactly ready to respond. I heard the sound of her saliva being sent down her throat, and then her words stuttered to the phone.
“I, hm, yeah. Yeah. I’m home.”

“Okay. What about your girlfriend?”

“Girlfriend?” she said a few seconds later, once more surprised by my question, “No. She’s not here.”

“Alright,” I felt a wave of relief coming into me. “Right. I… Hm… Can I go there?”

The pause was longer this time around.

“Sure,” just as the stutter in her words was more intense. “Of course. I’m… I’m… I’m waiting.”

“See you.”

I finished the call with no more wait, and started the car again, driving over the speed limit on a street of a luxury residential condominium. I could care less.

[...]

When she opened the door, her eyes were wide and a cigarette pendant between her lips. Her hair was a total disorder, and it wasn’t worse only because it was too short. Differently from the last time I’d seen her, her hair was dark, though, except for the tips on the front and on the bottom of her neck nape - thee, the hair was colored in dirty blonde. Her eyes still had traces of the makeup she wore the night before, and she was wearing long sweatpants and a short white shirt full of holes.

Symbolic, I’d say.

“Rob! I, hm. Thought you’d take longer, I-”

The cigarette moved between her lips as she talked, and she pointed behind herself with her thumb, and, for a second, I was afraid she lied about Stella not being here. I thought I’d see the blonde figure, tall and perfect coming out from somewhere. Coming out from nowhere, as she did on that airplane.

“She’s still here?”

Kristen frowned, thinking weird of my question.

“Who?”

“Your girlfriend.’

Her frown was deeper and her lips were pressed together for a moment.

“No, I told you she wasn’t.”

I shrugged. She probably understood the message, because snorted a laugh and opened the door more.

“Come in,” she stepped aside, “I just meant I thought you’d take longer because you called, like, five minutes ago.”

I should be embarrassed. But I wasn’t.

“I was around.”
It wasn’t a lie.

“Got it,” she laughed lowly, “Come in. Be my guest. Do you wanna drink anything? I’ve got beer, coffee, water… Anything you want.”

“Coffee is good.” I said when as we stepped into the living room.

“Coffee, okay.” She nodded, blowing the cigarette smoke away, leaving it between her right index and middle fingers. “Sit down’, just be my guest. I’ll be right back.”

She was gone into the kitchen and I let myself admire the place. There was this dark red carpet on the ground, a low center table made of light wood and it had almost the same color of the wood on the floor. Glass windows and doors occupied all of the side wall and they let see a balcony. That one had the most beautiful vision of Los Feliz.

I sat on the sofa, sighing. Everything smelled like her, naturally. It was always like that, everything that was hers had this damn smell, the same one that came out of her skin. This was my particular hell.

I pressed my elbows against my knees and ran my hands through my face, thinking again about what I was doing here. About what I wanted to say. I didn’t even know. There was a billion of feelings in my chest and head, disconnected scenes of the movie running over and over, endless questions, but I couldn’t put them in words.

“Here,” she came back walking fast with a steamy cup in hand, a new cigarette, still not lighted, was stuck behind her ear. She handed me the cup.

“Thank you.”

She nodded and I sipped the coffee, trying to organize my thoughts. I made a face to the cup after the first taste, because, just like everything else about her, it was the exact same. The same taste.

“Too strong,” I showed her the cup, smirking.

Her eyes went wide, and she reached out for the cup.

“Sorry, I’ll-”

I shook my head, laughing and shoving her hand away.

“I’m just kidding,” I took one more sip. “It’s great.”

“Oh,” she gasped. Kristen looked at me for a couple more seconds, her hands on her waist, and then shook her head, sitting in front of me.

I still had the rest of the coffee, softly, because I was hoping caffeine would help me to elaborate the mess inside of me in words to say something that would make sense. She looked impatient, knocking her foot on the ground, her leg unquiet, smashing her bottom lip between teeth.

There was reminiscent of coffee inside the porcelain cup, but her impatience was transferred to me.

“I’ve watched the movie.”

She took a deep breath and nodded slowly with all of her body, waiting me me to say more. I was silent. Kristen looked at me for a few seconds.
“And?”

I sighed, opening my mouth lots of times to say the words I could never make. “Why?”, “For what?”, “What did you want?”, “What’s the purpose?”

All of that was corroded my chest, but it didn’t feel right to express it like that. It wasn’t equivalent.

“Kristen, I honestly don’t know what I’m doing here,” I took a deep breath, leaning against the sofa and looking at the sofa. The beautiful chandelier was still the same, and I remember the choice to preserve it after the house makeover was mine. I rolled my eyes and tried to keep on with my thought “It’s just that… I’ve watched that all and… And then I saw myself getting into the car to come here.”

She nodded again.

“I’ve done that,” I carried on, slowly, “Because the movie bothered me. It wasn’t one or two things that bothered me, it was just lots of them. Not because of the quality, because that was a damn good piece of work, fucking deep, but… I don’t understand.” I shut my eyes, shaking my head, “But I the same time I do. I understand it all. And it makes me understand nothing. Can you get it?” She opened her lips, but I kept talking. “I can’t understand a thing, Kristen, because it makes no sense. I mean, you just continued your life so long ago, and I get it that what happened was a big, big thing, really representative, and maybe it parted your life in two, because that’s what happened to me. But… Kristen, you’re too talented. You can create a thousand different worlds. But you still chose me to put in that movie. Because that’s me there. And it might sound ridiculous if that was not your intention, but I saw myself there, you know? Not simply because of the situation, or for the wave, that damn wave, it angsted me because it reminded me exactly of what I felt when I knew we were walking towards the end, with no more chance of escaping. I felt all of that shit again when I watched that scene, Kristen, and, as if that wasn’t enough, it was that guy’s birthday, and throwing a cigarette away… And there’s still that inside joke… With water! With fucking water! And I remembered all the fucking times we had sex in that fucking bathroom upstairs, and in the fucking pool outside, and I remembered Breaking Dawn shooting and- It was cruel!”

It was only when I stopped talking that I realized how much I said. And how loud my voice was. And how affected she looked by everything I said. I saw Kristen’s throat move as she smashed between her fingers the cigarette that was behind her ear before. Her hair was in a bigger mess, probably because of how many times she reached for it to run her hands through. I closed my eyes hard, feeling the actual weight of everything I said.

“I’m sorry,” I shook my head with closed eyes, my head towards the ground. I put myself on my feet, “I’m leaving.”

“No, you won’t,” she jumped on her feet, reaching out towards me. The tip of her middle finger touched my arm. “I… Fuck, you’re not wrong.”

I raised my eyebrows.

“I’m not?”

Kristen scratched my eyebrow and then walked until she was standing in front of me. The difference of height between us was always big, but it felt bigger now. Maybe because she was thinner, but the situation made us like this. It was each one of us represented now. It was the confront.

“You’re not.” She touched the tip of my fingers, holding them tall. “I’ve done… I don’t know why I’ve done that. I mean, of course I know. I wanted to… Bring that out of me, and I wanted to show that I’ve been through the same shit, you know? That guy is you, but he’s also me. I’ve lived the
same memories as you, Robert. I was there for all of them, I suffered the same pain as you did. I suffered with a bizarre guilt, a guilt I still carry around with me. Because it was me who fucked up.”

I should say she was wrong. I should do as I did before, back on our first meeting after the break up, and say I’d probably fuck it up at some point too. I should say I wasn’t better than her in any way, and that the mistake she made could happen to any human being.

I should say people have been through that before, they are passing through that every day, just like the movie wanted to express.

But I didn’t.

“Yes, it was.”

Those words tasted bitter, but they were true. The truth in them has been ripping my chest for years now, and I couldn’t just ignore the fact that we’d probably be well and together if none of that happened in first place. We wouldn’t need to get over a traumatic break up if the trauma hadn't happened in first place.

“I won’t ask you to forgive me,” she shook her head, “Because I like to believe you already did. You’ve said you did.” She looked at me with wet, intense eyes. “I’ve tried to forgive myself, and I like to think that I got to. I’m dealing with this, Rob. And what I am today is a consequence of what happened. Everything I do… This is me trying to deal with the consequences of what I’ve done. Of what I’ve become after all of that. The consequences of your absence, and the fact that it’s my responsibility.”

There was a hole inside of my chest again. A hole sunked by her again. Because of the same old reason. The same old problem.

“That fucked me up again, Kristen.”

“I know,” she closed her eyes, her fist repeatedly knocking against her forehead, “I know. This is me trying to deal with that shit, Robert. I needed to bring it out of me.”

She was suffering with all of that too, of course. I sighed, stepping forward. My arms surrounded her shoulders and I pressed her back until the fist once knocking against her forehead was against my chest. She remained in the same position for a couple longer, her crying was loud. I closed my eyes, holding her body against mine.

“Calm down,” i said lowly.

“Sorry. Again because of this. I mean, I just want to- Just want to deal with this, I just want to… I don’t know! But I keep hitting you, and hurting you, and I-”

“Calm down”, I shook her body side to side, bringing my hands down her back to press her tighter, “It’ll go away and-”

“It won’t!” she brought her fist away from her face and pressed her forehead to my chest, “It will never go away! It will follow me around until I die, Robert, you don’t fucking understand!”

“I do,” I said low, “Because I’m through the same.”

Kristen sighed and turned her head on my chest, her chest against the fabric of my shirt. I caressed her hair, and I don’t know how long I’ve been there. It lasted until her sobs stopped, until her breathe was calm again.
“This is all.. Ridiculous. I sound ridiculous to you. But I don’t know, I was just so excited with the idea of… Doing this, doing something mine, coming from my own experiences and from yours and show you that I can… Understand you. Everything that happened still matters to me, I just didn’t think about the pain it could cause you. I mean, I did, but when we were productioning the movie, we were still engaged and… And I thought all of that was gone for you. I thought you wouldn’t even… Think about me anymore.”

I rolled my eyes, finding it fun of the absurd she said.

“As if that was even possible.”

Kristen took a deep breath and turned her face away from my chest, looking at me in the eye, her body still on mine.

“I think- Fuck.” She ran her hands through her wet face, “I’m sorry, I keep embarrassing myself in front of you.”

She laughed lowly and I followed her, even though I didn’t think that was any funny or that would make any sense. I shook my head and pulled her closer.

“Come here.”

She sighed when our bodies touched in that hug, one that I made really tight. Her body was skinnier than I was used to, shorter than I remembered, as I’ve noticed on our last meeting in July. Her smell was still the same, but the cigarette was stronger in her scent, because she had been smoking not long ago.

“This whole situation is just shitty,” I whispered in her ear, bouncing her from side to side. “I think I’ve exaggerated too.”

“No, you didn’t,” she responded on the same tone, “I’d do worst, if I was in your shoes.”

“Because you’ve always been the most explosive of both of us.”

My intention was to make the atmosphere lighter, and it seemed to work. There was a laugh coming from the deep of Kristen’s chest, and I laughed with her, watching her bite her bottom lip.

“You’re very important to me, Rob.”

“I just told you how important you are to me,” I lightly smiled, “In some sorta weird way, but I think you got that between the lines.”

“Yeah, I did,” she smiled and looked down. “Thanks for watching the movie. And for coming. I… Needed that.”

I nodded, squeezing her hand.

“Me too.”

I don’t really know what happened next, or how long it was between one thing and another. In a minute we were looking at each other, and then we were kissing. Exactly like that. As it has always been. In all of our first kisses.

And all of them had the same taste. The taste of her. Since the very first time. It was always the same. It would always start slowly, because we were realizing what we were doing, and then we’d
ask ourselves how we ended up there. And then we would realize what was really happening, and
would just enjoy, regardless of all the ties that would be holding us back in real life. But on that
moment, and on all of the others we had together, it wasn’t real life. It was just both of us. The world
outside didn’t exist.

“Enjoying it” meant we’d throw ourselves in the kiss in a insane way, and, fuck, I was satiating a
thirst I didn’t even realized I had. Thirst and hunger of her lips, of her tongue, of her taste. And I felt
like she was going through the same, judging by the intensity her hands were holding my face, the
desperation of her tongue, of her breath, of her feet putting her taller to reach me better. I held her
waist tighter, getting her stuck against my own, and leaned by body towards her’s. Her back curled
behind, but she didn’t let herself stutter, holding my neck, never stopping the kiss.

I don’t know where we were going. I just felt us walking, my back hitting some of her furniture and
walls sometimes. When we made it until the stairs, I saw in sidevision the white walls, a paint on the
sidewall of the stairs, the word LOVE colorful. My lips would kiss her sweaty neck, feeling her
hands invading my shirt, running through my back.

Stumbling, we made it to her bedroom, and the bed was put in a different way than I remembered.
There was no time to notice the clothes thrown around, the open curtain to the glass window though.
Kristen pulled out her own shirt, doing the same to mine before looking at me straight in the eye. She
was gasping, her breasts free and naked up and down fast.

It was wrong, of course it was.

But what else wasn’t already wrong in my life, anyway? Fuck that, I thought, pushing her on the bed
before laying down on top of her.

Never Let me Go - Florence + The Machine

There was a latent desperation between our bodies. Deep into our minds, we knew this was the
temporary of temporary. This was one more of the countless adventures we’ve had in life, almost as
if we had returned to the past to revive the physical love between two people who couldn’t live it.

The difference, beyond our skins that no longer had the same young glow and softness, was in the
bitterness of each kiss, in the sadness inside of our eyes, in the knowledge of each other’s body.
Though the said knowledge was an advantage before; today it would only reveal how desperate we
were to reveal ourselves that there was still something good. In the middle of a suffocating feeling,
the water that represented our torturous memories, the sorrow coming from all of the disappointments
and from everything that haven’t worked out, there was something that still did. Us. Physically.

Our clothes were flying to different places in the bedroom. It was hot in here, but, for that, the air
conditioning was on. There was the light sound of the raindrops against the glass wall right in front
of the bed, but the only drops in which I was paying attention were the ones coming out of her skin.
The sweat coming out of her neck and shoulders, running until they were on her collarbones. I let my
short beard run through her delicate skin, as my mouth would look for each new drop of sweat
coming out of her. It was precious, unique, mine, because it has come because of me.

Her hands grabbed my short hair as I would distribute kisses from her neck, to collar bones and
down. I let myself admire her breasts again. There were there. Up and down. Hardened because of
how turned on I made her. I held one in hand as I leaned my mouth on another, and the moan
coming out of her was a vibration against my lips. I felt it before listening. Her hands grabbed my hair harder, she pulled my head backwards, intending to make me look at her. I did. Serious, firm, as I let my tongue visibly tease the pink skin.

Then, Kristen’s hip, still wearing black panties, met mine. I let my other hand run down to caress her thigh, waist, bum cheeks, as I’d concentrate my attention on the other nipple. Just like before, the sighs and moans coming out of her lips were louder when I’d let my teeth play too.

And when my fingers finally met the center of her body, it was my turn to gasp, because the wetness there was making my fingers wet, even through the fabric of her panties. I teased her clit, her feet firmer against the mattress to make her round her hips to meet my hand.

That was satisfaction. See, she still had not touched me. And I was ready to cum, to declare that one of our best turns. From all of them, one of the best, because of everything it involved, because of all the complexity and intensity.

I traced a way to her umid heat, and took out her panties carefully, letting the tip of my fingers run through the soft skin of her legs. I still pulled a laugh out of her when grabbed hard her butt.

“My robust butt…”

“I’ve lost most of it,” she said, her cheeks pink, her eyes sparkling, her breath heavy. Beautiful. Beautiful as before, as now, as later. As always.


She closed her eyes, biting her bottom lip.

*I know, I thought, I need to appreciate those words while they’re still true too. Because now, they are.

“We’re coming back to that conversation we had back in July,” I whispered, running the tip of my index finger through her wet, naked intimacy. “You’ll need to forgive me for my probable mistakes… I’m up for learning new techniques though.”

I was expecting a laugh. A laugh followed by a “shut up, Rob” and a push on my head. Well, her hand actually reached for my hair and her teeth appeared for a pretty smile. But she pulled me, only to look at her in the eye, to make me pay attention to what she was about to say.

“Do it as you please. The way you’ve always done. Nobody has ever done better, nobody knows me better than you. I’m the same, and you’re the same.”

But the moan I was hoping to come out of her, came out of myself. I had to take a deep breathe and squeeze myself through my pants, to stop me from coming right there. Untouched.

Once under control again, I reacted the way I know better. With my mouth taking her entirely, in the most intimate way as possible. The way I remembered she likes. And my muscle memory acted with my olfactory memory, and with my tasting memory, because it was her. I knew what to do to make drive her insane, to take her to the most intense pleasure. As I’d let myself taste her, I didn’t dare close my eyes, so I wouldn’t lose a second of her surrender. Of the way her arms would go over her head, her eyes closing only to open again, stubborn to watch me. When our eyes met, I’d tease her, letting her see each move of my tongue.

“Rob… Robert, fucking fuck!”
“Good?” I smiled, licking my lips, pressing her sensible point with my middle finger.

“G-good. g-ood…Fuck!”

I laughed low, because she didn’t change a thing with this thing of cursing while losing herself in pleasure. Even though I knew the cursing moments would shortly end.

I considered myself as satisfied only when I felt her thrusts against my face turning faster and more intense. Her moans were louder, her lens shaking over my shoulders. The shout coming out of her when the orgasm finally arrived was still the sexiest thing I could ever imagine.

I laughed, lying by her side, only because of the look on her face. It showed absolute pleasure and satisfaction. Her chest would go up and down, and I couldn’t resist but take a nipple in my mouth, once more massaging myself over my pants.

“Am I approved, then?”

“A+!”

I laughed again, but she didn’t let me enjoy the taste of her breast for long. With a quick move, she was on top of me, kissing me hungry, anxiously. Her hornyness wasn’t satisfied by the recent orgasm. It too little, and it was too little for me too. We still had too much to do. It was still early.

I confess I had fun when she ran her lips through my body, taking longer on my nipples, tracing a way of kisses to my right armpit. I sighed, her fingers and lips pressing my ribs. Her teeth bit my belly, her tongue playing with the hair there.

And then she was pushing my pants along my legs. And she was between them. Taking me in her hands, manipulating me in the way she knew I liked - slowly, with a firm hold, her thumb going along the superior extremity.

But when her eyes looked at me, intense and sparking, before she put me in her mouth for the first time in years, I thought I’d go insane. Truly. It couldn’t be that good. Not that intense. It felt like each part of my body was pulsing, with a ridiculous sensibility and the center of it was my own erection, and it was devoured by her mouth on that bed. The bed and the room were we’d had our last time, not knowing it was the last one.

She was trying to put deeper me inside of her mouth, of her throat, I opened my eyes deliriously, and everything was twisting around me. I needed to memorize. For a long time I’ve hurt myself thinking about how much I should have enjoyed our last time if I knew it would be the last one. This was my opportunity.

But how could I focus on anything else when he was there? In as intimate caress, delicious, so hot and wet, in a latent try to make me feel good? I sighed, putting my hand on her hair, caressing her and meeting her eyes. She put me out of her mouth, letting her tongue run all over my extension before smiling.

“I haven’t practiced this for the last…” she closed her eyes, looking at her left, thinking. “Four and a half years. Forgive me for anything.”

I shook my head.

“That’s delicious. Delicious, Kris…”

That seemed to excite her, because one minute later she was trying to put me deep inside of her
throat. Of course she messed up and coughed, making both of us laugh.

“C’me here.”

I didn’t need to call her twice. In two seconds she was on top of me, kissing me as thirsty as I. I squeezes her breasts, then run down my hands over her bum and then to the center of her body. She opened her legs lightly, letting me invade her with one and then two fingers. Slippery, tight and hot as always.

“Do you have any condoms here?”

She looked confused for a moment, but then bit her bottom lip. Shook her head no with tight lips, passing her fingers around her mouth.

“No.”

I nodded quickly and looked around for my pants on the ground. My wallet. There must be something in my wallet.

And there was. She smiled when saw me taking the square package, throwing the leather wallet on the ground again. I sat on my legs, sliding the latex through my extension. Kristen was on the mattress, a space between her legs and feet on the bed.

“Hold on,” she said when I positioned myself on her and got closer to kiss her, “I told you I haven’t had sex with any guy after you. And I wasn’t lying.”

“Right,” I smiled, trying to put my ego down as it screamed.

“That means it will probably hurt. It’s one thing to put a couple of fingers and toys inside there sometimes. It’s another one, completely different to put a dick in there. And a dick like yours.”

“A dick like mine” I laughed and kissed her jaw, “And how’s a dick like mine?”

“Big,” she responded in a whisper, “Real. Yours.”

“Damn it, Kristen….”

“Slowly, okay?”

I nodded and she smiled, looking for my lips for a long kiss as she got comfortable on bed and opened her legs more. My lips were still on hers as I guided my erection into her opening, to feel her, to tease her, to excite her and to make me ready for what was about to come.

But nothing helped, because… Because the feeling was unique, intense, crazy. I got inside of her carefully, slowly. I felt her body tense up under my body, an angst noise coming out of her lips. I found her lips, in a silent question if she was alright. Kristen took a deep breath and nodded. She put a hand on her center, obliging herself to relax. And, slowly, I felt her walls getting more and more relaxed. Swallowing dry, I got in deeper. Very, very slowly. I watched every single one of her breathes, and then I was completely inside of her.

We lost ourselves on each other’s eyes. I was inside of her again. After so long. It was unbelievable for both of us, and that was explicit, with no need of words to express. Her hands squeezed my back and after a few moments, she nodded lightly for me to move.

And I did. Slowly at the beginning, and then letting that feeling dominate me and my body do
whatever it wanted. It was a physical memory, muscle memory, it was instinctive. The way she would grab my back, then her waist, and her legs to fasten them around my hips, and the way my mouth would lose itself in a constant exploration: lips, ears, neck, shoulders, collar bones, breasts… Anything else I could reach.

“Robert…” she sighed, rolling her eyes, “Yes!”

“Kris, I-”

“Yeah! Like this!”

Her posture was even more rigid in bed. It had not the same fluidity from past, it didn’t reveal the way she was comfortable with me in moments like these. Because, as much as her taste, her feeling, her smell and everything else was still the same, she wasn’t. And I wasn’t either. I wasn’t making love with my fiancée from the past; I was having sex with my ex girlfriend of the present.

But that didn’t mean it was bad, better or worse than past. It was what we had and, for because of that, it was intense and unique in its’ own mensuration. That was nothing to compare to, because there was nothing like this.

I thrusted inside her body harder, receiving a thankful moan from her. Her hands grabbed my buttcheeks, following my moves as I did the same with hers. Bringing us closer. The closeness wasn’t enough. Being inside of her, feeling me inside, wasn’t enough for any of us.

And I tried to hold back my orgasm for as long as I could, because I didn’t want that to end. I didn’t want to face the consequences of our actions, to be responsible, to be an adult again. I didn’t want to turn the exterior world on again. I wanted to stay inside of my bubble, with her, inside of her. For hours. Days. Weeks. Months. Years. Like we did before.

“Rob, I’m gonna cum… Don’t- Go slower… yeah, like this.”

She was touching herself, but not in a stimulation way. In a holding on way. We were sharing the same sensation. I sat on my legs, still inside of her, still thrusting. But I wanted to see her. I moved slowly, tasting each new entry of me in her. Each inch of her skin. Each bound of her breasts.

“Slowly…” she said, kinda delirious.

“So you’ll cum?” I whispered.

“Only with you inside of me… with me.”

It should be embarrassing, but I couldn’t last a second after that. My own orgasm caught me by surprise, and I heard myself sobbing and screaming her name, pushing against her body in deep thrusts, speeding up as the endless orgasm took me. And then slowing down when as I came down from high.

“No, no… Don’t stop, fuck me hard. The way you- Oooohhhhh! Robert!!!”

I didn’t even know that was possible but I felt her walls tightening me and my orgasm got intense again. I fell over her body, still moving and burying my face on her sweaty, good smelling neck.

She still said a couple of things that made no sense, still gasped and called my name. I was still taking deep breaths, recovering from what had just happened, still holding her hips in my hands. Still buried inside of her. Her fingers closed in my hair and she pulled me to face her.
“If this is not love… I don’t know what it is.”

Neither did I.

I also didn’t know that at age of 31 I’d still get hard again inside of her, and could start the intense sex again after changing the condom.

[...]

“Damn God,” she gasped, “Now go. Go away, I can’t take more than that.”

I laughed, rolling beside her in bed. She laughed too, running hands in hair, breathing heavily, blowing the air out of her mouth. I mimicked, looking to the window. The rain was still falling, but now it was light, making the whole glass wet.

“I like the bed like this better.”

“It’s good, right?” she moved, twisting her body to the right side. I heard a drawer opening and closing. Kristen put her back against the headboard again. “I like to look outside. At night, it’s so beautiful.”

“I remember.”

There was no response, but I heard the cigarette lighter. I rolled my head against the headboard to look at her. Kristen had her eyes half closed, holding the cigarette between her lips. The lighter burned the tip of the object, and it was thrown away to the bedside table by the end of its’ utilization.

“You have the same habit.”

“Habit?” she frowned after a long pull. She took the cigarette between her index and middle finger, blowing the smoke to the other side, “What habit?”

“Smoking after sex.”

Kristen’s eyebrows jumped in the middle of a pull, and she laughed, her body pending on mine, the smoke coming out of her breathe and hitting my skin.

“I swear I didn’t remember that habit. I mean… Stella has been trying to stop since a couple of months ago, so I avoid doing this next to her.”

“Oh, so you didn’t want to get into this with your partner? Repeating what we once tried to do?”

Her mouth twisted before she took the cigarette to her lips again to pull deeply. I felt my own mouth salivating, wanting to do the same for the first time in a long time.

“I’ve learned. I don’t do with her the stuff I used to do with you.”

I wanted to know if that meant she didn’t want to remember me so it would mess up her current relationship, or if that meant she didn’t want to mix up any memories. I recognize I was afraid of the answer.

“If you say so…”
She nodded, blowing the rest of he smoke out of her lungs to the other side. I bit my bottom lip, watching the scene: her thin face, the sharp jaw, the short hair, the sex sweaty skin, the relaxed expression on her face and the rainy city outside. Her elbow touched my shoulder, the cigarette pending between her fingers.

I considered for a second. Well, I was already doing a fucking amount of stuff I shouldn’t anyway.

I waited until Kristen took the cigarette to her lip, and, right after her pull, I took it from her lips. She looked at me, alarmed, and I smirked before taking the object to my own lips. Smoking again was weird, because the smoke was hotter than I remembered, but the relaxing feeling it brought instantly was more intense than my memories. But the better of it all was the alarmed expression still on her face. Her lips were parted, her eyes wide.

“Rob!” she tried to reach for the cigarette, but I turned away, holding it between my fingers, “Rob, don’t do that! You’re not smoking anymore! Stop it, I’ll think it’s my fault!”

I blowed the smoke out of my mouth to laugh, and leaned over her body to hit it twice on the ashtray over the bedside table. I returned to my original spot and pulled once more.

“It is kinda your fault,” I shrugged, “But I’m an adult, don’t worry. My mum won’t kill you for taking me out of the good way of life or some shit.”

“It’s not funny!” she rebuked, taking the cigarette off my lips. She took it to her own lips, pulled and pressed it on the ashtray. She blew the smoke up before leaning over my body, palming my chest. “It was hard for you to stop with that shit. Don’t let me make you come back to that.”

“I stopped because of you, I’ll come back because of you.”

She stared me for a few seconds. I licked my lips, remembering the scene of *Come Swim*’s character throws the cigarette in the toilet. Those weren’t news.

“Promise me you’re not smoking anymore.”

I arched my eyebrows.

“And who are you to ask me that? You smoke as crazy.”

Kristen sighed and closed her eyes. Then she came closer, pressing a kiss to my lips and it took longer than planned.

“I am someone who wants the best for you. And I don’t want to fuck you up even more.”

Both of us knew that sentence wasn’t about the cigarette. It was nothing close to what we’ve done to each other - good and bad things.

[...]

“I’ll tell her.”

I looked at her alarmed. She was looking outside the window, her wet hair touching the bath’s edge.
“Tell her what?”

Kristen shrugged.

“What has happened here. Today.”

“Kristen, I don’t think—”

“No, I will,” she interrupted, looking away from the window. She dragged through the bath until she was close to me again. I opened my legs, in a silent invitation for her to get closer. She got it, and leaned against my chest. “I can’t betray her like that.”

Technically, she had betrayed her already. But I didn’t want to say that.

“But telling her won’t make things worse?”

“No,” she shook her head, “You know this wasn’t an accident. It wasn’t casual sex, it wasn’t a mistake with some guy I’ve worked with or some shit. You’re… You’re you.”

I tried to understand her thinking, but I couldn’t. I mean, it was worse that she cheated on her girlfriend with her ex-boyfriend, someone with some big representation in her life, because it would represent much more than a simple weakness or an irresistible attraction.

“I still don’t get it.”

“I can’t keep on with my relationship with her knowing that I’ve… Done what I did. What we did. Because I don’t regret. I can’t regret. Look at that, you’re here now! In the bath… with me.”

“You can tell me to leave whenever you want. I’ll understand.”

I felt her laugh against my chest and, right after, her fingers playing with that region’s hair. Kristen pressed her lips on my skin, and I got a little bit embarrassed, because I was sure she got to feel my fastening heartbeat. She put her chin on my skin, looking at me.

“That’s the problem. I don’t want you to go.”

There was a silent “but”. She didn’t want me to go, I didn’t want to go. But I couldn’t stay.

“I’ve got a party to go later.”

She bit her bottom lip.

“I’ve gotta go out too. CJ is coming anytime now to do my hair. He must be bringing my dress too.”

“Hm… He’s friends with Stella, right?”

Kristen nodded.

“But he’s more like a friend of mine. If Stella is going to know, then there’s no problem if he does too. Fuck that. You’ll stay for how long you want.”

I sighed, tempted. She felt it, and caressed back until I relaxed again.

“Rob?” she asked after a few moments.

I opened my eyes.
“Yes?”

“Are you still upset because of the movie?”

I thought for a moment. “Upset” was never the word. I was never upset. I was surprised. Confused. Touched. But never upset.

I explained it, and she caressed her cheek against my chest.

“There’s one more thing I haven’t told you”

“And what is it?” I asked, caressing her hair.

Kristen was silent for a few moments. Too long. Minutes. If I didn’t know her better, I’d think she had forgotten she said something in the first place, instead of being in a inside fight in her head. I waited until she felt comfortable enough, and until she had the right words.

“I’ve got a strong feeling… A feeling that got even stronger this last year because of the whole contact we’ve had… And because of everything we’ve been through. A feeling that we’ll still need to come to this place again, you know?”

I frowned.

“To this place?”

“Not specifically this place, this house, this bath. But… We’ll need to come back and talk about everything we’ve buried. Or we think we’ve buried. We’ll need to… Throw the shit around. Or we won’t have any peace.

I thought for a moment.

Well, I couldn’t say she was wrong, because she wasn’t. I’ve had thought about that before. Many times. For years. But the effectiveness of that fact was never possible in my mind, because, for me, I was the only one who still thought about that.

“I’ll always miss something.”

“Exactly,” her voice was a whisper, “It will always have something missing. It will never be enough. It was never enough with anybody I’ve ever been with, it’s not enough with Stella. But that’s not what I feel now.” Her arms held me tighter. “Here. It’s different.”

My chest got warmer in agreement. I squeezed her body against mine and kissed her forehead.

“I know it is.”

“But…” she continued, needing a pause to swallow saliva. The sound of her throat moving was loud in the silent bathroom. “It won’t happen now either.”

I closed my eyes. That was he hurting part of the truth.

“No, it won’t.”

“Just tell me that… It will though.”

Kristen departed when I took to long to respond. I caressed her serious face and she closed her eyes, leaning her face towards my hand.
“Promise,” she whispered, “Promise me.”

“I promise,” I whispered back, “I promise I… won’t have any other commitment… Not a lifelong one, or too serious before our moment of talking come again.”

She nodded, licking her lips.

“Neither will I.”

“Promise?”

“I promise,” she responded, serious, and kissed my hand. “I’ll tell Stella and then we’ll see what happens. But I think you need this time alone and… Single. To find yourself again.”

I nodded, knowing she was right.

“I need to know myself again.”

“Yes,” she smiled to the water beneath us, “Even when I myself don’t do this and just… have a relationship after another. Or that I’ve done that for the past few years, but I just wanted to fulfill this fucking emptiness that would never go away.”

I touched her chin to make her look at me. After a few seconds of silence, I pressed my lips to hers.

“It will, on the right time.”

“Our time?”

I swallowed dry, holding her face in my hands.

“I’m making a bet on that with my whole life.”

[…]

“And then you simply came here?”

I snorted a laugh to CJ’s figure. I shrugged and ran my hand through my hair.

“Yeah.”

He frowned, looking towards the bathroom, where Kristen were getting dressed.

It didn’t take long until Kristen’s best friends were in her place, bringing Bear, Bernie and the dress she’d wear tonight with him. CJ had not demonstrated the same affection towards me as the dogs did, especially because of the friendship he shared with Stella. As much as he didn’t actually caught us doing anything too compromising - and it was a matter of luck, because he got here right after we finished our bath, which lasted longer than predicted because we ended up having sex in there again -, for sure it wasn’t natural to find your best friend’s ex-boyfriend with her. Alone. With a wet hair.

“Robert, don’t tell me you guys-”

“He won’t tell you anything,” the feminine voice interrupted as she walked out of the bathroom,
“But I can do that, if you want.”

“Kristen!” he rebuked, a hair comb in his hand, “I can’t believe you’ve done that! Stella! She-”

“She’s going to know, soon.” She affirmed. The red dress, with holes all over her body, stretched against her skin, sitting with her back to CJ.

“This is… I can’t believe you guys have done that. What the fuck is wrong you with you to-”

“CJ, please.” she closed her eyes, “Don’t worry. I’m already late, so, please, start doing my hair already.”

I laughed lowly and got up from the bed, adjusting my clothes. I sighed and walked towards them.

“I need to get ready for a party too.”

“I’m not going to offer CJ’s help, because right now he’s mad at us.”

“I’m not,” he insisted, starting to do Kristen’s hair, “I’m not mad at anyone, because that’s none of my business. You guys are adults, much more experienced than you’ll ever admit. But it was not right with Stella, and I know both of you know that too.”

We did. Of course we did. But I honestly couldn’t find strength in myself to care about someone else’s pain when my own chest had a mix of feelings. At least not the pain coming from the woman sitting in front of me. I had and have had lots of them, and I was already used to them.

“I’ll talk to her. Don’t worry.” Kristen tapped her friend’s hand on her shoulder and them looked at me. “Going already?”

“Yeah,” I nodded, “Text me later?”

“Yeah,” she smiled and waved twice to CJ before getting uo. He sighed, and supported his body against the chair. Kristen stepped forward and surrounded my neck with her arms. “I’ll be waiting for your texts too.”

“I’ll be around.” I smiled. “Have a good party.”

She nodded, licking her bottom lip, biting it.

“You too. Enjoy it,” she looked for my ear and whispered, so only I’d hear, “But start looking for company for your bed only tomorrow. Let me think this day was part of our past… Or future.”

*Or future.* I closed my eyes and nodded, taking those words more seriously than I should. I looked for her lips and met them halfway.

Maybe I’ve heard an annoyed gasp at the beginning, but when we switched the kiss’ angle for the third time, I could swear I’ve heard a “*maybe they’re really sexy together.*”

[...]

When I hit my head on the pillow that night, I felt like my day had been endless. So much happened in the last 24 hours… So much! I closed my eyes, remembering everything I’ve lived on that November 10th and sighed.
Life was a true mess.

I turned the TV on in my room and leaned against the headboard, putting between my lips the cigarette I was burning. I pulled deeply and then let the smoke out of my lungs through my nose.

When I realized I couldn’t manage to concentrate on news, I took my phone out of my pocket and reread the texts I had exchanged with Kristen throughout the night. She was complaining about her dress in lots of them, and in another she complained about her high heels shoes. And then she’d complain about the picture of myself holding a cigarette I sent her. Oh, and then she’d say she was jealous of the beer I was drinking. And the last one made me nervous and anxious, because she said she was going to call Stella and tell her what happened.

Our destiny was depending on that conversation, I was sure. I knew I’d need to spend sometime by myself, to know me as Robert again, because the end of my relationship was still recent. Tahliiah was still important in my live, even in her absence.

And my moment with Kristen was not now, but I knew that if she and her girlfriend broke up, we couldn’t keep any distance from each other.

Well, we couldn’t keep any distance anyway, because our contact would still be the same, as we decided. We’d keep a physical distance though, and an intimate distance too. If too close, we couldn’t think straight and we’d mess up with our destinies.

I hoped that conversation would follow one pattern, but I was almost sure it would follow the other one. Stella would fight, I was sure.

And my assurance was complete when Kristen texted me almost one hour later.

From: K. 02:12

Rob, I just hang up with Stella. I told her everything she cried a lot, it was awful. I tried to do a final talk, but she wouldn’t accept to take any decisions on the phone. I’ll go to NYC for MoMA Film Benefit tomorrow, and meet her. We’ll see how it goes.

From: K. 02:15

I’ll stay in touch, tell you how it went. Enjoy it as you don’t need to tie yourself again, because I’ll be more rigorous next time. Good night. I love you. PS. I know you’re smoking now. It’s past midnight, stop that shit. You could could smoke only yesterday.

Those words should have upset me, but they didn’t. I was sure about my future, just like I was sure about the phase I needed to live now. And so did her. We were in different timings of our lives, and we’ve got to this point for consequences of the mistakes we’ve made in the past.

She needed to find herself again. And so did I. And then we’d meet again halfway.

To: K, 02:17

Alright! Tell me how it went. Night, love you too. Try to make Stella not hate me too much… PS: I just finished the last one.
I rolled throughout my contacts until I found the other important person on that all, and her name was located right under the single “K.” of Kristen’s name.

To: Katy, 02:20

If I didn’t listen to you, my life wouldn’t be as crazy.

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