"When we turn 30, and still haven't found someone to fall in love with, let's get married."

"That's such a stupid idea, but okay."

It was only a joke when Levi proposed the idea to his best friend. But will it remain that way?
We were only 13 back then. The first time we met, we were only 13.

I still remember the first time I laid my eyes on you. Ironically, there was none of that sudden shift in the air, no song playing in the background, no butterflies in my stomach, no second stretching into fantasy.

Nope. Nada.

I never really thought much about you back then. I do remember how the girls went crazy for your eyes, though. Never really understood it at 13, but now, 19 years later, I confess: They’re beautiful. Gorgeous, even.

One day, in the middle of a test, I felt something blunt poke at my side. Repeatedly. And like a switch that’s been flipped, I responded to the source of the disturbance with my best glare.

Shockingly, it didn't seem to work. I guess it never really did when it comes to you.

"Hey, do you know the answer to number five?" You whispered, constantly keeping an eye out for the teacher-in-charge.

First conversation and you're already baiting me into cheating. Fucking wonderful. So like the sensible person I never really was, I just turned back to my paper after staring at you flatly.

I thought that was it – my "fuck you" to fate.

But then Earth Science happened.

Professor what's-her-name-I-think-it-may-be-bitch singled me out with... well, a single question I haven't been paying attention to. That being said, it was no wonder why I drew a blank of an answer.

Until I glanced at the paper you were casually tapping on the desk to get my attention.
I didn't even notice you were sitting right beside me. Or if I did, I guess I deemed it hardly enough to warrant my concern.

"Marianas." I blurted out, absently reading the words you were discreetly pointing out. Your eyes remained on the front the entire time, not once sparing me a glance. "Marianas Trench." I repeated aloud, mind catching up with what you were trying to do.

I could see a small smirk playing at the corner of your lips. When I followed your gaze, I saw Professor what's-her-name-I-think-it-may-be-bitch looking somewhat appalled. I knew she never really liked my guts – as with a lot of people, really – and I could only guess she wasn't expecting I could answer her question. Whatever that is. And, well, she wasn't entirely wrong.

"I'm guessing you want a cookie?" were my words of gratitude as I sat back down.

"You're welcome, you impertinent asshole. Name's Eren, by the way. Just in case paying attention isn't a habit of yours."

I should say I was positively impressed by that smug smirk plastered on your face. That was the time I realized you weren't just a pretty face, after all. That was the moment things set in motion.


As if that wasn't enough, P.E. followed after that, which, by the way, I didn't know we were actually in the same class 'til that day. We were in opposing teams for a basketball match. I could see the glint in those eyes everytime they met mine. And I took that as a challenge.

Our teams were neck-to-neck thanks to us. And that's not to brag, just saying things like how they were.

"Nice." You would always praise everytime I shot a hoop.

It wasn't long when I started returning the compliments. In my own way, at least. But I could tell you received it well despite the delivery – as always, really – if that blinding grin that would split up your face afterwards was anything to go by.

However, when minutes turned to seconds and fate entrusted the deciding shot to you, I found myself tripping my own teammate just so you could successfully take the hoop, and the glory.

"What the fuck, Ackerman?! Now look what you did." The guy – Shitface, was it? – groused at me.

"Don't blame me, fuckface. I'm not the one who was aiming for Jaeger's balls instead of the actual one."

Or maybe that was fuckface?

"Language!" The gym instructor warned before things could escalate further.

"You didn't have to do that, you know." You approached me as we were changing back in the locker room, keeping your voice low enough to keep the conversation between the two of us.
"You're welcome, dickhead." I spoke flatly, carrying on with my business.

"Hey, I wasn't being ungrateful like you were, you ass." You shot back, grinning like insults weren't just fired.

And just like that, our friendship grew. It grew, and it grew, and it grew... until we were practically inseparable. It even got to the point where whenever someone would ask either of us where the other is, we always, always have an answer. Granted, the usual one would be that "he's in the shitter". But hey, that doesn't mean it's not true, anyway.

We spent a lot of time in each other's homes, though mostly, it was really just me who took more than half of the share. What can I say? Kenny's an ass. I get that you may somehow like that uncle of mine, but...

No, I don't really get it. Why? Who are you? What are you?

"Look, Eren. I really hate to break it to you, but you will never be able to see a tap-dancing penguin like you saw in the movie." I stated for the nth time, exasperated. "That's a fucking cartoon with talking animals. What more do I have to say?"

"The chance that it exists is one in a million. I get that. Nonetheless, that still means it has a chance to exist." You argued.

"No, your chance of seeing one is the same as your chance of seeing an elephant hiding in trees. Have you ever seen elephants hiding in trees?"

"No." You blurted out, still with that determined look on your face.

"And why do you think that is?" I arched a brow, relieved that I'm finally getting through that thick skull of yours.

"'Coz they're really good at it." You responded with a degree of seriousness that was inconceivable for such a stupid answer.

"Oh my god. I can't. I can't with you." I clutched my poor head that was suffering from your stupidity. "Carla? Carla! Your son is giving me brain aneurysm. You're gonna owe me therapy if this keeps up." I half-feigned exasperation, throwing myself on your bed and covering my head with your pillow.

"Everything alright here, boys?" came that soothing voice of your mom, popping her head by the open door of your bedroom.

"Yes." You laughed.

"No." I groaned at the same time.

"Levi's just being dramatic again." Somehow I could tell you were rolling your eyes even though I couldn't see it.

"I see." Carla responded amusedly. "Are you staying for dinner, Levi?"

"He's staying the night." You answered before I could. "Right, Lee?"

I lagged for a response as I sat up. We never talked about me staying the night here. But then
again, you never really asked for my opinion the previous times you made me.

"Kenny won't be home tonight, and it's the weekend tomorrow. So he could stay, right?" You keep putting words in my mouth.

"Of course he can. You're always welcome to stay here, Levi." Carla smiled.

"Thanks." I mumbled out, a bit sheepish. I could never get used to the kindness your parents have. It wasn't something I've grown up with, after all. Hell, I don't even really have parents.

And just like that, I soon found myself clad in your clothes and hogging the blankets in your bed. Again.

"What's this?" I asked when I found something buried under the pillows by the headboard of your bed.

It was a stuffed toy of a humanoid monster or something, with dark, shaggy hair, serrated teeth that was protruding out of its mouth, and angry green eyes that, for some weird reason, remind me of yours.

"Oh, so that's where it's been." Your own emerald orbs lit up in recognition. "That's Titan. He's like... my bedtime hero. He guards me in my sleep."

"Your bedtime hero. A stuffed toy." I stated flatly, yet incredulously. How old are you again? 15? Or 5?

"Hey, don't laugh. He's defeated countless nightmares and monsters under my bed since I was like... four." You defended.

"I see. Titan. The bedtime hero." I repeated flatly, idly shifting the toy in my hand.

"You know what? I think you should keep him. Maybe he could help you with your insomnia shit."

That successfully made me snap my eyes towards you with furrowed brows. That was something I've only ever mentioned to you in passing. I never thought you'd actually remember it. And despite how ridiculous your way of helping is... I'm fucking touched.

"You mean... this is mine now?" I asked dumbly instead.

"And you call me the stupid one." You rolled your eyes.

"You still are, though."

A beat of silence draped over us as the topic ended. I was too busy trying to figure out what was so special about Titan to notice how you seemed to be internally debating with yourself.

"Levi... I have something to tell you." You started, crystal hesitation in your voice.

I merely gave you my entire attention sensing that this was going to be one serious talk. I could always tell when you were fucking around and when you were fucking serious. This was the latter.

Even though you've already opened your mouth, it was clear that you were still conflicted whether to spit it out or not.

"I really, really hope this won't change anything between us. You'd be the first person I'd be telling this to. And... god! Please tell me we can still be friends after this?" You blubbered, nerves getting
the best of you.

"You're gay." I blurted out. A statement.

Teal eyes widened and your cheeks instantly burst into colors. You let out some pretty odd noises when you buried your face on the covers.

"So, are you?" I prompted, needing a verbal answer.

"Yes." Your voice came out muffled as you refused to lift your head up and look at me in the eye. "Well... bi, I guess." You added. "Are you gonna be mad at m—"

"Thank fuck." I cut you off, feeling like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders.

Ever so slowly, you finally lifted your head up to look at me, donning on the perfect mix of disbelief and confusion on your portrait.

"And I thought I was the only one." I continued with a little chuckle that didn't give justice to the relief flooding my system.

"You're... gay, too?" You asked slowly. As slow as your mind is catching up with the realization, probably.

"My door swings both ways." I shrugged.

"What the fuck?! Since when?!"

I swear my heart suddenly sprang up the same time you bolted up on the bed. That was a bit too dramatic of a reaction, but should I really expect nothing less from you?

"Uhh... I dunno. Grade school? Can't exactly pin a date on it, you know?"

"And you never considered telling me until now?" You were animated as you spoke, and I really won't be surprised if your parents would take it to themselves to barge in, considering you're practically yelling at almost 11 in the PM.

"Boys? Everything okay?" Your dad called out, voice a bit groggy. Poor man must have woken up from the volume of your voice. At least that was better than my expectations, though.

"We're great." We answered in unison, falling silent for the next moment to check out for any follow-ups, and receiving none.

"What was I supposed to say? 'Hey, yeah. Forgot to tell you I like dick, too', and just cross my fingers you won't hightail it to the next city?" I hissed, continuing on as if there were no interruptions.

"Well, yeah. Why not? You really think I'd stop being your friend just coz you're gay?"

"Well, gee, Eren. What's your excuse for not telling me 'til now?" I shot back.

You opened your mouth to rebut only for silence to come out. "Okay, point taken." You conceded. "But in my defense, I've only ever been sure of it, like, two weeks ago."

"And how'd you do that?" I quirked a brow.

Even in the poor lighting, the blush that coated your face was clear as day. You started patting
around for a pillow to bury your face into, only to remember I practically own your bed whenever I'm here. So doing the next best thing, you planted your face on the cocoon of "my" blankets instead.

"I kissed Thomas." You mumbled out after a while.

"Wanker? Seriously?"

"It's Wagner, Levi. And yes, seriously."

That got me pondering about it for a while. Thomas isn't the type who could make you drop your pants and bend you over with just one look, but he isn't exactly unpleasant to the eyes either. And well, I don't really know much about him beyond the physical aspects.

"You kissed him?" I clarified. You just hummed in response. "Or was it the other way around?"

"That's not important. The thing is that we kissed, alright?" You scoffed, lifting your head back up.

"And that's everything that happened?"

At that, your face was promptly slammed back down again. Such a weird coping mechanism for embarrassment when you think about it, but one that's apparently considered normal.

We spent the next couple hours dwelling about this newfound discovery of each other. I learned how you and Wanker ended up jerking each other off in the stalls, and you learned about how I sucked someone off for the first time just over a year prior. He was a football player from a neighboring school. Someone I can't even remember the name of anymore.

It was weird talking about your sexuality down to the detail to someone you're literally lying in bed with late at night. But I didn't find it uncomfortable in the slightest. It's generally hard to feel uncomfortable with you, really

And in the end, baring our secrets to each other only shattered more walls between us, and brought us even closer than we thought possible. There was nothing there but acceptance and understanding and eagerness to learn more about the other. Of course, all built in the foundation of trust.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd ever have this conversation with you." You remarked as our conversation was finally coming to a conclusion.

"I hear you." I agreed, voice starting to get hoarse from talking endlessly as well as my body slowly shutting down.

"Don't you look just cozy?" You sneered, propping your head up on an elbow.

"From the very start, you've had your fair warning, Eren." I grinned, wiggling further into my cocoon of blankets and fortress of pillows.

"At least share the blanket. It's getting cold, you know?"

"Dunno. Can't tell." I hummed, eyes already closing.

Though it must have really been cold since you weren't having it and proceeded to pull out a portion of the blanket from under me, promptly snuggling under its warmth as well as my own. You spared a moment to pick Titan up from the spot I put him by my side, and proceeded to put him on top of the headboard to "watch over us".
In hindsight, the idea was a tad bit creepy, but I let you do what you wanted since I was fucking tired to initiate a potential argument, and the thought that that would be the last time you'll have Titan look after you was something I couldn't deny you of.

"Much better." You sighed contentedly.

"Fine. I'm sharing the blanket, but not the pillows." I grumbled turning on my back. Quite bold of me to make such complaints, really.

"That's fine. As long as you don't complain when I do this." You threw an arm and a leg around me, making me your own makeshift body pillow. "No homo, by the way."

"Idiot." I snorted, but didn't make any sort of protest.

After all, I've never had such a comfortable slumber before.

Chapter End Notes

This has been one of the many things that's been collecting dust in my files now and waiting to be noticed again. If only my brain would just stop being a little shit *sigh*. 
Chapter Notes

Heads up! Horny teenage boys in action.
(I mean, it's in the tags, so don't look so surprised).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

At 15, there was one other thing we mutually agreed on: We fucking loved to party. At 15, we were introduced to our first booze and had our orientation to the "fun life". Safe to say, our adaptation to that particular lifestyle had been no sweat.

There was just something so liberating – borderline addicting, even – about going wild, after all. Drinking yourself to a stupor, making out with people you hardly recognize; basically doing reckless things without having to worry much about the consequences once it's all over and done with. It was right up our alley.

By the time we turned 16, there wasn't a single party we weren't invited to.

"Awww, it's Eren. This is gonna be a tough one since this guy's down to do absolutely anything!" Sasha threw her hands up in the air dramatically when another round of spin the bottle put you in the spotlight.

"I'm sure I have my limits." You grinned before taking a few gulps of that piss-tasting beer.

"Yeah. And we're sure even you don't know what those limits are." Ever the buzz-cut boy, Connie, contested.

"Well, there's gotta be something." Your encouragement was contradicted by that shit-eating grin you were donning on, signifying you actually agreed to what Sasha had just said.

How couldn't you when what she stated was merely a fact?

Kiss a random stranger on the streets? Pshh. Easy.

Hump a random guest at the party? You'd have them begging to keep your clothes on as you do that.

Run around wearing your birthday suit? Please. You could even throw a twerking number while you're at it.

Basically, you're downright shameless. Or at least you were once fueled with enough alcohol that your veins are practically pumping booze instead of blood. Had you been sober, you'd be a complete stuttering mess.

"I have one." Jean, host of the current party, spoke up, donning on a cocky smirk that was challenging your own. He leaned forward, resting an arm on a knee, building momentum before finally speaking out.
"I dare you to kiss Levi on the mouth. Actually, make that a French kiss."

A beat of silence passed over our group at the challenge. One that didn't last long as everyone were hooting out their opinions on the idea.

Fooling around with strangers was something you could do without even batting an eye. But doing it with friends – your best friend, especially – was another realm you were clearly reluctant to enter. The risk was far greater, and the consequences even more, if things do blow up in your face. I could tell even in your intoxicated state, you were able to remember that. And the hesitance plastered in your profile only riled up the taunts you received from the entire group.

Finally, something the brazen Eren Jaeger couldn't bring himself to do.

But as your best friend, I couldn't let that happen. You have a reputation to uphold – a shitty one at that, but a reputation, nonetheless – and I'll be damned if it gets ruined just because of me.

At least that's what I reasoned to myself at the time. Something I blamed entirely on the alcohol.

I held eye contact with you as I downed my own beer to the last drop, silently telling you to do it. We had developed this uncanny ability of communicating telepathically, and I could tell you understood me when you started emptying your own bottle while maintaining eye contact the entire time, wordlessly seeking for reassurance.

And reassurance I gave you.

"No. Way." Sasha spoke up again when the entire group took note of the way we were looking at each other. "Are you really gonna kiss your best friend?" She asked incredulously, putting emphasis where it's due.

"Kiss? Nah." I spoke for you before staggering over to straddle your lap. Your hands automatically flew to my waist, eyes never leaving my own.

"We were really gonna do it.

"We're fucking making out." I finished before diving in for your lips.

You returned the kiss with the same level of hunger, if not more. We both threw caution to the wind, far too gone to be bothered by the prying eyes surrounding us, or the unsubtle remarks hurled our way.

We kisse— made out as if it wasn't our first time. As if we were already familiar with how the other tasted like. We were just learning by then. But the more our tongues danced with each other, the more I appreciated the crash course on the phenomenon that is your mouth.

"Ugh! Okay, we get it. Now get a room, why don't you?" I heard someone speak out, but I could no longer connect the voice to its owner, too distracted by the noises I was currently swallowing.

I didn't mean for things to get even more heated. And by that, I didn't mean to start grinding on your lap as we continued our lip-lock. Your mouth seemed to have sucked the rationality out of my brain at the time.

I blame it on the alcohol.

We were gasping for air as we pulled away, two pairs of pupils blown out to convey the hidden desire. A single glance around our vicinity and it was easy to tell that the world didn't stop spinning
as our heads did when we indulged ourselves. Hell, even the bottle was spinning again in search for its next victim.

It was Marco. But we were no longer interested in that game.

"So nice of you to join us again." Jean sneered, being the first to notice we were no longer devouring each other's mouth.

"Sorry, man." You grinned, pushing me off only to grab me by the wrist as you led me away. "We're skipping this one out."

"Are you two serious?!!" Sasha gawked at our retreating form.

I managed to snag Marco's mostly untouched beer bottle as we passed, throwing out a, "Have Jean kiss your ass," as a suggestion for his own dare. Hoots and cackles erupted as we rounded the corner, and I took to downing more of the liquid at the prospect of what we were about to do.

This was utterly irresponsible. It was irresponsible to drink at 16 in the first place. But it was okay to be irresponsible every once in a while at 16. Healthy, even.

That was the mentality I injected in my brain. The shallow excuse I dared take too far.

_I blame it on the fucking alcohol._

When we stopped in front of a door, Jean's room, you snatched the bottle from me, downing the rest of the liquor, before barging inside. We knew Jean would flip if he found out we used his room. But that was the point. What better place to take things further than the catalyst's lair?

You went back to shoving your tongue in my throat as we stumbled towards the unmade bed, confused hands grasping every inch of skin they could reach. My conscience was nagging at me at the back of my mind, silenced only by your mouth on mine.

So by the time we broke apart, its scream was deafening.

"Eren, are you sure about this?" I panted out.

Even though part of my head was being a prude, my whole body was alive with desire. I knew you could tell, as much as I could with your own. But we needed to sort it out while our rationality was still kicking and gasping for air against the haze that was threatening to drown it.

"I am if you are." You murmured seriously. Way to curve the ball on me.

"Do you or do you not want to do it, Eren?" I hissed, already getting impatient.

You then nudged your crotch against mine, making me inhale sharply at the prominent bulge I could feel through the fabric of your pants.

"What do you think?" You shot back in the same tone.

"Answer me properly, you idiot." I pushed.

"Fucking hell, Levi." You sighed in exasperation. "Yes, I wanna fuck you. I'd be lying if I said the thought never crossed my mind even once." You admitted. "Or actually, I want you to do the fucking."

"Nah. I wanna bottom." I denied. "Never did that before. I wanna know how it feels like."
And what better way to try that than with the person you trust with every inch of your being? Granted it wasn't really in the romantic sense, but trust is trust.

"Well, I wanted to know what it's like to bottom, too. Hell, I've never even topped before." You blurted out.

"What the hell?" I muttered absently. "You never did it with a guy before?" I asked disbelievingly.

Considering you, more or less, fling yourself to whatever guy you find attractive enough – half the judgment determined by the ardent spirits, of course – it was difficult to believe you never fucked even one of them.

"Remember the time I told you I fucked a guy?" You tilted your head slightly, giving me that "really?" look.

"No."

"Right. Coz it never happened. So feel very honored to show me the ropes." You grinned, going in for another open-mouthed kiss before flopping beside me.

"Fine." I muttered, assuming my place between your legs. "And I went through the trouble of preparing myself."

"I did, too." You grinned again, though your eyes were closed. Probably struggling to hold on to that single thread of sobriety.

"I even brought some lube." We both stated at the same time, before falling silent.

"And condoms?" I raised my head up in an attempt to fight back against the intoxication. Not that it helped.

"Left back pocket." You hummed.

I scoffed incredulously, seeing as I've also kept mine in the same place. "We've been spending too much time with each other."

"I know. Which is why let's spend time in each other, instead." You were starting to slur.

"With those lines, I'm no longer surprised why you haven't done it with a guy before." I shook my head, proceeding to run my hands under your shirt.

Part of me couldn't believe I was finally touching the very body I've seen naked countless times. You were like an exquisite piece of art, Eren. Something I could only admire with my eyes, and touching so would only bring me consequences.

But at that moment, I could hardly give two shits about that.

"Yeah? How many guys have you fucked before me?" You managed to ask even though you already knew the answer, arms spontaneously locking around my neck.

"One." I admitted, helping myself to the expanse of your own neck afterwards.

"Well then, gee. I'm so ashamed by your abundant experience." You bit back before letting out pleasured sighs.

Everything was a blur by then forward. As much as I tried to remember each thrust, each scratch,
each nip, each gasp, each moan we shared that night, a large fragment of my memory could no longer be salvaged. Even so, I knew what had happened. And I had no doubts they truly did happen.

So come afternoon the next day, when the alcohol had finally freed our minds from its clutches, the weight of what we've done hang heavily between us.

We haven't talked much when we made our way back to my place; a tradition we had if we managed to get brick-faced during a party. Your poor parents didn't have to know about this side of their son. As long as you knew how to separate studies from leisure, then you were good enough. We had each other to make sure of that.

I knew you were using hangover or migraine as an excuse for keeping your silence, 'coz I was doing the same. So when you came out of the shower with hair still dripping wet and clad in my clothes you keep complaining were a size too small, a window opened for our conversation to begin.

"Tch. You shit, come here." I pointed to the spot on the floor between my legs.

You wordlessly complied and I immediately snatched the towel from your shoulders to dry your hair properly. I kept muttering complaints as I rubbed furiously at your head. Words that you may have already memorized by heart at that point, what with the innumerable times you heard it.

"Levi." You called out, voice so small it ironically commanded my arms to a halt. "Are... are we still friends? I mean... I'm really sorry. I know I took things too far. I... I wasn't thinking straight."

I lagged for a response, sucking in a large amount of air to revive my seemingly unconscious valor.

"It's not just you, you know. I'm to be blamed here as well." I pointed out, going back to keeping my hands busy with toweling your hair.

"So... we're still friends?"

"You're here in my house, wearing my clothes, and here I am, seriously resisting the urge to shave your head identical to Connie's. What do you think?"

"I don't want to."

I instantly froze at those words. Even though you said it in almost a whisper, it was piercing to my ears.

"I mean... I don't want to be just friends with you." You amended hastily when you took note of the tension gripping my frame. An impressive feat considering you still had your back turned towards me.

"I... I thought we were best friends?" I attempted intelligently.

"Christ, Levi. You really like to play dumb at the best of times, don't you?" You still weren't facing me as you grumbled those words out. But I can tell just what expression you were wearing at that very moment.

"I blame your influence on me." I chuckled, before guiding your head to look up as I looked down to meet your eyes. "Are you sure about this?" I asked seriously.

"Just fucking kiss me already, damnit."
And I did. Not knowing how this is gonna turn out in the end, I entrusted this next step of our relationship to fate.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so I was honestly surprised by the feedback on the first chapter (thank you so much for that). I don't know if your initial opinion would still hold true in the future chapters, but as I've said, this is a self-indulgent fic.

Still, huge thanks and kisses to your support (in this fic, as well as in the others). They are literally the saving grace of a struggling writer wannabe. My 2019 had at least been tolerable thanks to you guys ❤

Advance Happy New Year to each and every one of you!
You make me happy

Chapter Notes

It's 2020, and I have no resolutions I came up with to commit to. Yay me!

(So, instead of filing this in the drafts, I pressed "post" rather. What a start for the decade. :D)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There wasn't much change when we started dating. Aside maybe from the frequent make-out sessions and anatomical experimenting. The fun, hands-on, and very educational kind of experiment.

But despite that being the case, our friends figured that particular change right out the bat. In fact, everyone who knew us probably could tell the change in our status. Hell, even before we considered to actually go for each other, they always had their suspicions that there was something more than what we say.

No matter what color you choose to paint it, best friends can't be that close, after all.

But then, your parents were the exception. And of all the possibilities they could find out, your father just had to catch us red-handed making out on the kitchen counter.

"Dad!" You almost squeaked the moment you took note of his presence by the doorway.

Grisha had a very odd expression on his face as he looked pointedly at both of us. Well, it was odd coz it was unreadable. It was odd because as far as I've known your dad, he was the easy-going and supportive, yet still firm type of parent. It was odd to see him react in such a way at what he'd seen. Blank.

But the cherry on top of it all was when he simply turned around and left.

In the dead silence that followed his wake, it wasn't all that difficult to hear Carla's shocked gasp. Grisha probably told her.

"You haven't told them about us, yet?!!" I hissed the moment I heard a door open, which I assumed to be them entering a room.

Your parents already knew about your sexuality. I was even there when you came out to your mom. So, I was utterly confused on why you didn't tell them about what we had when you basically tell them almost everything that goes on with your life.

"I thought they'd know without me having to tell them." You whispered back.

"Why would you think that?"

"Oh, come on, Levi. People who we don't see as frequent could even tell. Of course, I assumed my own parents would know."
"You idiot." I could only shake my head. Though I admit you pretty much have a point. Just not a good one.

It wasn't long before our names were called and asked to come to the master's bedroom. We shared a look of equal apprehension, cold sweat building from our hairlines. We didn't even know what exactly we did wrong, yet we were already looking guilty as a kid whose hand was stuck in the cookie jar.

Was it the kiss? Was it unintentionally keeping our relationship a secret? Or was it our relationship itself?

We could only guess as we gingerly made our way to the room.

There, we saw your parents sat at the edge of the bed. None of them looking at us as we hesitantly entered. Your mom had her head down, looking at whatever was inside the box on her lap, while your dad simply sat there with crossed arms in silence.

The oddity of their behavior only fed our bubbling dread that we were virtually shuffling our feet on the floor, keeping our head drooped low in shame of something we weren't even sure of.

"Finally, I get to use these." Carla began, still looking down on her lap.

We chanced a glance at each other, completely confused as to what she meant.

"It's about time we hang them up."

At this, we were looking at each other with pure horror. I never knew your mom possessed such... tendencies. Seeing the look on your face, I could tell you were thinking the same.

"So, which one do you think is better: this one, or this?" She proceeded to hold up two photographs of us... sleeping with mouths open and limbs tangled all over each other.

Apparently, your mom had taken pleasure in shooting pictures of us without our knowledge. With the fact that you were a cuddler in general, it wasn't difficult to find photo after photo of us looking like a couple on their honeymoon.

"Oh my god, mom." You proceeded to hide behind your palms, cheeks as red as an overripe tomato. I'm guessing mine were the same with how warm my entire face felt.

"Oh, how about this one?" She presented one photo of us fast asleep on the couch, draped all over each other.

If I remember correctly, that would be the moment when we tried watching a tedious documentary just for the hell of it, and ended up falling asleep not even halfway through. We were too lazy to go to bed or even grab some blankets as defense to the chilly night air, so we made do with the only resources we had available: each other.

"I think that one with their mouths open would add color to the wall, love." Your dad threw in unhelpfully.

"This isn't happening." You muttered out through your fingers as you refused to watch the scene before us.

"Are you... Uhh... You're not... mad at us?" I dared to ask, with my tone perfectly conveying just how hesitant I am of speaking.
"Of course not. Why would we be? Although you, Eren Jaeger, should have told us sooner." Carla pointed a photograph at you with narrowed eyes. "I can't believe we have to sit through your nonstop theory of chickens taking over the Earth, and then shut your mouth about this." She brandished the photo as if it was the ultimate evidence to throw a felon behind bars. "Do you know how close we were to disowning you?"

"This close." Grisha was practically pinching the tips of his thumb and forefinger as a gesture of emphasis, but okay.

At the end of the day, your parents received the news more than well enough, and a frame of two boys tangled in each other with eyes closed and mouths open adorned your wall, with the others tucked neatly in the pages of a family album.

However, our reality isn't one depicted in used and abused romance tropes of teen fictions and soap operas.

We never gave it much thought when we decided to launch ourselves into a relationship. At our young age, we've never had much experience other than casual hook-ups and flings. Nothing serious.

It was then we realized we weren't ready for something serious.

Our reality is one where years of friendship and months of dating resulted in a breakup.

Apparently, we weren't comfortable with the idea of compromising our freedom. Our freedom that goes beyond merely approaching and interacting with whoever holds our interest, that is.

Our immaturity led us to wanting to shove our tongues and dicks in more than just one permanent person. Our immaturity prevented us to own up to instigating arguments or even admit to being the cause of it. Our immaturity caused us to scream words we didn't mean to the other's face, pushing him away for the sake of getting some semblance of "not being tied down". Whatever the hell that meant for us at the time.

We jeopardized our bond when we foolishly thought the support we could get from our boyfriend include him being fine with us humping someone behind his back. We were party animals. And commitment was a fucking silver cage for us.

Though I may not have fully realized all these things back then, I chose to put an end to that charade once and for all. I was annoyed and felt pressured by some decent acquaintances who were only trying to teach me what a real, healthy relationship was like. And a lot of the things I discovered didn't apply to what we had. So I broke up with you.

I thought that was it – my "fuck you" to fate.

But after weeks of ignoring each other and playing the game of pretend-strangers, I got a call from your mom one day, asking me to come over. The dread I felt all those months prior when your parents called us into their room couldn't even compare to how I felt when I made my way back to the familiar pathway to your home and charily rang the doorbell.

I never had parents, but through yours, I got a gist of what it's like. And unlike before, I had a
pretty clear idea on why Carla might have asked me to come over. It's definitely not out of your own request. Hell, you weren't even aware of the initiative your own mother took.

I braced myself to see either upset or disappointment once the door opened; maybe even in the form of a palm across my face. Not that I'd ever categorize your parents as such types to do that, but my anxiety was conjuring it up for me against my will.

I was greeted by a gentle smile and a warm embrace though. As if I've done nothing wrong. As if nothing had happened these past weeks. As if her own son wasn't barricading himself in his room.

With a cup of tea in hand, Carla talked me through our mutual knot, listening patiently to my defense – or poorly justified excuses – as if I wasn't straight out trash talking about her son. Then she translated your side of things in that fascinating way not only my brain understood, but my heart felt as well.

She made me realize I didn't really hate you. I never really hated you. But I hated the fact that I missed you, and being helpless about it, even more. I hated the fact that I could no longer talk to you about every little thing whenever I wanted to. I hated the fact that we trashed our friendship for something that couldn't even hold a candle to it.

You were my confidant, Eren. I tell you everything and anything at all, like you do with me. So with that strife happening between us, I had no one to turn to. And I hated that.

So with Carla's encouragement, I found the backbone to set things right between us, once and for all.

"I'm alive." was your response as soon as I knocked on your door.

Seeing as your door wasn't locked, I helped myself inside and had the pleasure to watch your as your face transitioned from tired apathy to borderline shock.

"Hey." I greeted lamely, sitting down on the only chair in the room.

You eyed me as you sat up in the bed, expression guarded. "What're you doing here?"

"Apologizing." I shrugged, hesitating before finally saying the words out. "I'm sorry."

Your pursed your lips and narrowed your eyes suspiciously. "That's it?" You scoffed.

"Look, Eren. You're my best friend before you are my boyfriend or whatever. And as much as possible, I don't wanna lose that. If this dating shit is just gonna ruin us in the end, then I don't want it. I don't wanna lose whatever we had. Whatever we have. So why don't we just go back to being best friends? Things are a lot better that way." I sighed, relieved to finally get the words out.

You dragged the silence that followed it, emerald orbs never straying from my form. When it got to the point I started to think we were history, a smirk crept up to your lips.

"I knew it. You'd do anything for me. You're totally gay for my ass." You grinned.

It was my turn to fall silent at that. Though I couldn't deny part of what you said was true, the latter part was something I classified as BS.

"I was gay before you were old enough to masturbate. So fuck you and your stupid ass." I scoffed.

"Yeah, right." You shook your head idly. "Fuck you, indeed."
The next moments were tinged with a bit of awkwardness at first, though didn't take long before we were springing back to how we were prior to the whole fiasco. It didn't even take another hour before we were laughing at ourselves for having tried something so puerile.

Come morning the next day, Carla had another photo to add to her documentary of us sleeping together. Literally.

Chapter End Notes

Friendship is love, guys. And sometimes it's sweeter. ❤
"What's your relationship with each other, really?" Rico asked with all the skepticism of an amateur detective as she eyed us carefully.

If I had a penny for everytime someone asked us that question, Bill Gates would be trembling on his knees. So what if you had your head on my lap and we shared the same bottle during Samuel's graduation blowout? Does that automatically mean we were in denial of being together?

The Undertaker would've been proud of how far back I rolled my eyes at the notion.

"We fuck." I blurted out, uncaring on how she might take that.

"Around with people." You followed-up without missing a beat, chuckling a little as you handed me the bottle, which I took and downed without a moment's hesitation.

"You're not just friends, aren't you?" She inquired with a knowing tone, as if she just made the breakthrough of the century.

"Nope." We answered in unison, having mastered this synchrony after all the experience we had.

"Now, please excuse me while I suck my husband off." You made a show of wiggling 'til you were face-to-face with my crotch and started messing with the zipper.

"You two are sick." Rico scrunched her nose up at the display.

"Do you mind? He's shy when somebody's watching." I waved dismissively, successfully shooing her away with the classic cringe on her face.

"Is she gone?" You mumbled after a while.

"Yep."

"My head is spinning." You complained, rolling back to your previous position.

"Well, gee. I wonder why that is?" I rolled my eyes, taking another sip from the bottle after deciding I'm not passing it back to you.

"And I was hoping to get laid tonight. Last thrust before college, you know?"

"I'm not waiting on you if you do sneak out with someone. You're gonna have to carry your sorry ass back." You groaned pathetically, knowing I was mostly serious with the threat. "And why the fuck are you lying down there when you know that'll only make you drunk faster?"


"Why don't we just go home already? This is getting pretty boring, after all."

"Agreed." You hummed. "We should've just went to Connie's party, instead."
"If you hadn't fooled around with Sasha, we may have done just that." I sneered.

"That was one time. And I was seriously plastered." You defended. "Besides, nothing happened between us. It was Nicolo who took her away and left me in the bathtub."

"Still left us banned from his parties." I shrugged.

"Whatever. Let's get outta here. Carry me." You whined, making grabby motions as you reached your hands up.

"As if. Now get up."

"Not until you carry me."

"Eren..."

"I didn't sneak out with anyone like you said. You have a moral obligation towards me. Are you really just gonna leave me here, vulnerable to all these people ogling my body? What if I get pregnant, Lee?"

Yep. You were starting to get drunk.

"Fine. But I don't wanna hear anything from you when I resort to dragging your sorry ass halfway through."

An empty threat. Even though you were heavy as fuck and being partly intoxicated wasn't making things any better, I carried you on my back 'til we arrived at my place. With Kenny being an ass, I stood outside for a lot longer than I would've if I could just open the fucking door. I didn't even let the soles of your shoes touch the ground the entire time. And as much as my body hated me for doing so, I fully knew you'd do the same for me had the roles been reversed.

"No funny noises tonight, brats." Kenny gibed with nonchalance.

My "piss off" was covered up by your drunken slur of, "Aye aye, Kenny!" which made me wonder if you truly comprehended his words, or your mouth was just working on autopilot since that was the usual response you'd give him. Not that either mattered.

"If you're gonna throw up, I suggest you do it now while I'm feeling generous to shove you in the toilet." I grumbled as we stepped inside my room.

"Pshh. I'm not weak. I don't wanna throw my hands up, Lee. You're warm and comfy. Let me cuddle you." You snuggled further on my back.

Why did I bother? It was pointless talking to you when you're flat-out pie-eyed. For that, I merely dumped you on the bed and slumped down beside you, changing clothes be damned. I was too fucking tired.

And like a magnet, it didn't take long before you were clinging on my back as we both surrendered to the Sandman.

"Is this all you're bringing with you?"
"Well, gee, Eren. Sorry I don't own an entire boutique of apparel like you do."

"Oh well. You could always borrow mine anyway." You shrugged, shoving a shirt haphazardly in my backpack.

"Throw this in there, too." I tossed an item your way as I rummaged more of my stuffs to see what else I should be bringing.


"I'm not putting it past Kenny to use that shit as a doorstop or something."

You turned the toy in your hands with a fond smile curling your lips. "I keep forgetting, but I've been meaning to ask you, were you able to sleep better with Titan guarding you?"

"It didn't do jack-shit." I scoffed before pursing my lips. "But for some reason, it's nice to have some sense of company in bed." I practically murmured, turning my back.

"Levi..." You gasped dramatically, gaining my attention. "I didn't know you had such fetishes." You held the stuffed toy to your chest protectively.

"Fuck you, too." I rolled my eyes. You just laughed.

"You're cute when you're embarrassed."

That came out of nowhere.

"Fuck you, too." I merely repeated.

We finished packing up my stuffs before throwing them in your car and awkwardly saying our farewells to my uncle who was more than happy to finally get rid of me. The feeling was mutual.

We went back to your home to finish packing up your own stuffs. One would think you were planning to start up a business with all the things you were bringing. I could already tell you'd fill majority of our shared drawer in the dorm. If there is one.

"I can't believe this... My babies all grown up and going off to college." Carla started musing with watery eyes as we finished loading the car.

"Not all grown up, mom. I'll always be your baby." You cooed going in to hug your mother.

"And you never fail to make me wonder how you got accepted into college in the first place."

I couldn't help snorting at that. I could only wish you inherited more of your mom's wit.

"I'm wounded, mom. Truly." You feigned hurt, placing a hand dramatically over your chest.

It was really nice seeing you banter with your parents. As a mere outsider, it almost felt like an honor to be able to see this kind of bond firsthand.

Then again, though I was merely an outsider, your family never made me feel miserable about it. If anything, you extended that sense of belongingness to someone like me.

"Levi, why're you just standing there? Come here and give me a hug." Carla opened her arms out.
Despite still feeling a bit dissident about being included in such affections, I didn't dare deny Carla her request. If I were more honest, I actually enjoyed the hugs she gave. Made me understand why you grew up to be such a koala.

"Dad, don't miss us too much, okay? You know your poor old heart could only take so much." You turned to your old man as I was having a moment with your mom.

"Are you kidding me? I've been waiting for the day I don't have to cross myself before walking in every room around the house. And it has finally come." Grisha stated almost solemnly.

Poor ol' guy just had the worst luck in walking in on us back in the days. Though he's still quite lucky considering we still had our clothing on during those multiple incidents.

"Why do you talk as if we're never coming back? The level of betrayal here is outrageous." You shot back.

And just when I thought all I'd receive from your dad is that awkward pat in the shoulder, I caught a glimpse of that "fuck it" expression before he pulled me in for a hug himself. With you and Carla fawning in the background, I should say that had been more awkward than the mere pat on the shoulder.

Even so, it was wholly appreciated.

I arrived at our dorm one day to see you talking to a brunette with thick-rimmed glasses and wild hair that seemed to want to break free from the ponytail it was incarcerated in. I gave you a look, and you immediately recognized it as something along the lines of, "Really? Barely the first week and you're already sneaking a girl in?"

"Don't give me that look. It's not what you think." You defended casually, rolling your eyes. "This is Hanji Zoe. And she's inviting us to a sort of a welcoming party for freshies. Hanji, this is Levi. And he's also coming to that party of yours." You introduced.

"Excellent! The more the merrier, I always say." The brunette beamed with an energy that could rival yours. "Now as much as I'd love to stay and chat, I have more fresh meats to hunt down. But here, have this chocolate as a token of my apology." She handed me a single bar before skipping her way out the door.

What. A. Weirdo.

By then, I was starting to get skeptical on just what kind of party she actually throws.

"Awww, that's unfair. She gave you chocolate and not me?" You whined maturely.

I smirked as an idea crossed my mind, slowly opening the packaging as I sauntered my way to your bed where you were perched on.

"You want some?" I proffered, pocketing the wrapper since I didn't want you to have excuses on not keeping our dorm spick-and-span.

You eagerly nodded your head at the offer. And with that, I licked every inch of the bar right in
"Here." I offered the thoroughly spit-covered bar.

You merely looked at me blankly for a second. And to my horror, you opened your mouth and took a generous bite out of the chocolate, smirking with utmost satisfaction at the revulsion that crossed my features.

"You're fucking disgusting." I spat out.

Sure, I could tolerate sharing the same bottle or spoon with you. But that? I'd have to be either drunk or desperate for that to happen.

"Oh please, Levi. Don't go washing your hands now. As if your spit is the worst thing I had." You waggled your eyebrows.

"Like I said, fucking disgusting." I tossed the remaining bar to you, suddenly losing my appetite, and headed to my own bed.

"And as if seeing me take a bite out of the same bar was the best image you've seen." You added cheekily.

At that, a pillow promptly smacked your face.

Apparently, our party-loving nature only worsened by the time we hit college. I guess being freshly, legally 18 gives people the delusion that they have the world under their feet. The fact that parents tend to come off their backs when they hit this milestone only seems to fuel this phantasm of the still naive youth. Or maybe it's really just a matter of celebrating a newfound freedom.

Then again, that certain hype didn't really die down by the time we were treading our way past 19, and through 20.

Still, if one of us started to ebb with regards to our studies, then we had strict rules to get our shit back together before we allow each other to another night out. Just because we were away from your parents didn't mean we start wasting our lives away.

"Jaeger! Jaeger! Jaeger!"

As always, you easily became the life of the party.

I could only shake my head as you finished chugging that huge bottle of vodka in one go. That looked nasty, honestly.

"Damn, Eren. I swear you're outmatching every person in this party." That guy with the weird hairdo – Floch, was it? – cheered on. "I don't think anyone here comes close to you, man." He threw an arm around your shoulders.

He did that often. I didn't know if he's really touchy by nature, or if it was just towards you. Either way, I didn't like him. He seemed like an ass.
"That's not true." You grinned, clutching your head casually in that telltale sign that the alcohol was getting up there. "My man, Levi, could beat me if he really wanted to."

"But I don't." I butted in, nursing my own glass of drink on one hand.

Not that it mattered. Everyone pretty much put the spotlight on you since Floch was the host and the one calling the shots. I've always had the feeling he didn't like me as well. Like I cared. Fuck him.

Further into the celebration, I took it to myself not to get wasted seeing as you would need help to get back to our dorm. I kept watch on you the entire time, my instincts telling me this Floch guy couldn't be trusted with your welfare.

And goddamn was I glad I trusted my instincts.

It wasn't long before I noticed he was shadily offering you something when he suddenly took you to the side for a moment. I discreetly followed you both, made it just in time to overhear he was offering you Ecstasy.

"No." I answered in your place. Tone firm and with finality.

"I wasn't asking you, man." Floch frowned, the initial surprise didn't take long to transition into annoyance.

"He's my responsibility. I get a say on what he's allowed to do." I grabbed you by the arm and pulled you defensively to my side and away from him. You stumbled like an idiot and seemed to be confused on what was happening. All the more reason why I should be protecting you.

"What are you? His mom?" He scoffed.

"Worse. I'm his best fucking friend."

We may go overboard with the drinking and had even succumbed to smoking at times, but doing drugs was something we were firm not to touch on. For your parents' sake more than our own.

"Look, why don't you let him decide on his own?" The guy tried again.

"He's drunk. Of course he's not rational enough to decide on his own."

"He seems alright to me."

I couldn't help quirking an eyebrow at the stupidity of that statement. Granted others may find it a bit difficult to tell when you were brick-faced and when you still had some semblance of comprehension and awareness, but the difference of the two was crystal clear to me.

"Eren, what's one plus one?" I turned to face you instead.

"Levi, haven't I told you that time is just an illusion our suboptimal mind came up with?" You shook your head disapprovingly. "Do you remember about that duckling we found on the pond last week?" You rambled, proving my point.

"Well? Need I say more?" I turned back to face the mahogany-haired guy. But whatever his response was cancelled when you spoke out again.

"Lee, you're so cute. Can I kiss you?"
My eyebrows shot up at that. There wasn't anything between us that was beyond the line of platonic, but our relationship really wasn't normal either. We could kiss each other without batting an eye and with no strings attached. Hell, we even made out in front of our exes, Petra and Historia, just to piss them off. We've used each other as an excuse when someone we don't like hits on us, for fuck's sake!

And then we outrightly deny there was anything going on between us. It was hilarious.

So am I gonna use this charade just to piss this guy off? Hell yeah.

I grabbed you by the collar and pulled you down to crash our lips together, relishing the crumpled face I could see Floch made from my periphery.

"You guys are sick." He spat out before making his exit.

We paid him no heed and only deepened the kiss. As I started groping your thighs, I noticed your phone was vibrating from your back pocket and didn't even think twice on fishing it out.

An unknown number was calling. I was debating on whether or not I should answer it when it rang out. Looking at the screen, the same number had been trying to reach you for several times by then. I wondered who it was.

"Levi..." You whined, lifting my chin up and tearing my attention away.

"Someone's calling you." I tried to explain.

"I'm the one calling you." You responded with grade A intelligence.

Fuck it. It must have been one of your hook-ups again. Besides, what good would it do if the call was answered?

When no follow-up call was made in the short time I checked your phone, I merely slid it back to your pocket and picked up where we left off.

By the time we made it back to the dorm, it was the same familiar scenario of us flopping headfirst on the bed and dozing off not a minute later.

In all our experience in partying like animals, we never once regretted much the times we kissed and fucked random people.

Who knew the regret that would smack us up would be that simple act of not taking the call?

Come morning the next day, I could tell your head was still hammering when you stirred into consciousness just a couple minutes after I did. We were both woken up by the constant buzz of your phone that was still in your pocket.

You sluggishly tried to fish the gadget out with impressive uncoordinated movements. I thought the call would have rang out before you could even touch your phone, but you did it.
"Hello?" The hoarseness in your voice was limpid. "Yes?"

I merely rolled on my other side to try and catch a few more winks however possible. Still too exhausted to crawl over to my own bed.

"What?!" You sprang up all of a sudden, the alarm in your voice perfectly assisted by the sudden alertness of your body.

"No, that can't be right. No. No, it's not possible. No. That can't be. No. Please, no." You rambled on. At this point, no trace of drowsiness could be detected in my system all of a sudden, as I also sat up next to you.

"Okay." You almost whispered before letting your hand drop and spent the next minutes just staring at the floor with wide eyes.

I tried to wait patiently for you to tell me what the call was about. But my concern for your lack of response won over.

"Eren, what's wrong?" I gently started, already having a bad feeling at the pit of my stomach that I couldn't blame on the alcohol.

When you failed to respond, I kneeled down in front of you and tried to get you to look at me. "Hey, talk to me."

"Last night... They said... Mom and dad... They're... They're..." You spoke in broken sentences, tears building to the brim at rapid speed. "They need me."

After that, your breathing started to pick up and spasms took your body hostage out of nowhere.

"They need me, Levi. They... I should have... Levi, they need me!" You were almost hysterical as you spoke with urgency. But your body was betraying you from moving.

I didn't need to know more before my world was crashing down as well.

Chapter End Notes

    Oh no...
You'll never know, dear

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

You've never been the same ever since.

It has been almost a year since then, but you were still stuck in that slump of depression after the death of your parents. I didn't blame you. Even I was still depressed by what happened.

Even though I wasn't really a part of the family, I catch myself reminiscing about the moments I spent at your hearthstone. The one memory closest to my heart would have to be the time you came out to your mom. I still remember how you desperately sought for courage from me just to tell your mom about finding guys as sexually interesting as girls.

I didn't understand why you were so wound up by then. What's the big deal with telling your parents about your sexuality? When it comes to friends, there is that possibility of them cutting connections with you or just make things awkward with the idea. But family? They wouldn't disown you just for something you have no control over, right?

At least that's how I understood it. Kenny didn't even blink when he found out about my own sexuality. Still, I stood awkwardly by the corner while you talked it out with your mom, since you didn't want to be alone. And when I took it to myself to just go ahead and tell your mom about me as well – just so you really won't be alone in breaking free from the closet – I partly understood why you were feeling so nervous. And I understood the relief when your mom and dad didn't make a big deal out of it and showed nothing but acceptance and support.

Even as a third party, I loved Carla and Grisha, and was devastated by their premature departure. So I could only imagine what it was like for you.

Grisha and Carla's car was broadsided by some fucking asshole who thought he was sober enough to drive a fucking truck on the highway. They did nothing wrong, and deserved none of what happened. It wasn't fucking fair.

It didn't help that you kept blaming yourself for being blissfully unaware of the accident that took place. It didn't help that you were told of how your mom made it to the emergency room, while your dad didn't, managed to hold on for a couple hours, yet still couldn't push through. It didn't help that you kept mulling over the what-if's had you been sober enough yourself to take the call and sprinted to the hospital.

Countless nights I had to hold you to sleep. I couldn't just bear to stand by while you sobbed uncontrollably almost every next hour. We barely slept on separate beds ever since. Usually it was me crawling over to yours and wordlessly pull you to an embrace 'til you fell asleep. Other times you'd voluntarily sleep on my bed while you wait for me to come back.

It wasn't easy to juggle my time between studies, my part-time job, and looking out for you. But I didn't dare utter a single word of complaint even as you'd snap out to me on random occasions. You'd always apologize afterwards. But even if you hadn't, I've already forgiven you beforehand.

When you dropped out of the semester after that tragedy, I thought it's gonna take a while before you'd be motivated to even think about going back to school again. If ever that was even possible. But to my surprise, you enrolled yourself on the next semester without even asking for assistance.
At that point, the drastic change in your personality became evident. What once was a bursting soul became greatly subdued. You turned down every invitation of a night out, or just hanging out in general. Even if I was the one who invited you. Your destinations consisted mainly of the University, then back to the dorm. Sometimes, you'd go out on your own without telling me. But you'd always just say you simply went to grab a bite or take a breather.

You also started to sleep on your own again.

I should be happy that you were picking yourself up again. It wasn't like you completely shut yourself out to everything else in the world. You still talked to me, too. Though there were certain topics we were careful not to touch on, and a lot of times, our conversations started to turn bland for some reason. Also, most of the time, I had to be the one to initiate the topics and you'd merely respond accordingly. It almost felt like conversing with an automated response.

I tried, but I couldn't help feeling you were pushing me away. It was irrational, sure. I knew you needed time and space to recover. Other than that, you were only trying to be more independent and responsible. Something I'm sure your parents would've wanted you to turn into, instead of that foolhardy lifestyle we indulged ourselves in. I guess I just wasn't used to that.

Everything went by smoothly until the death anniversary of your parents came. I gently tried to ask you if you wanted to come with me just to pay our respects, though you've obviously withdrawn to yourself at that point and told me you'd stop by later. I didn't push it. Part of me also wanted to go on my own.

It was really depressing to see the once warm souls of your parents be represented by these cold, hard stones. It just wasn't right. Everything I saw in front of me wasn't right.

I've never told you, but I've always blamed myself more for what happened to them. Well, not exactly for magically causing the accident, but for failing to inform you when I was given the chance. I was sober enough when the call was made that night. Had I made the right choice, you would at least have gone to the hospital while Carla was still fighting instead of beating yourself up for being unable to. Maybe things had been different then.

But that's not the reality we ended up in, and the least I could do is make up for them by taking care of you to the best of my abilities.

Later that night, you weren't in the dorm by the time I made it back. I could only wonder where you wandered off to. I distracted myself with academic stuffs I needed to do, and tried not to worry too much on what you were doing. You were an adult capable of going out alone. That's the thought I kept repeating in my head.

It was past midnight when I convinced myself to go to bed ahead. I've tried calling you a couple of times prior, but all my calls rang out. I didn't want you to feel like I was breathing down your neck, yet I also couldn't help getting paranoid on what might happen to you.

Thankfully, my suffering didn't last too long when you suddenly barged in the room and made a beeline towards me. To my utter surprise and confusion, you crawled on top of me, smelling faintly of booze, whispering desperate words of, "Levi, please..." before crashing your lips against mine.
Despite my confusion, I didn't fight you and let you do what you wanted. What you felt like you needed. Your movements were desperate as you tore my clothes off, grabbed and bit every inch of skin you could.

You lined up my length to your entrance and made me breach you without proper preparation. I let you. I was dead sure it hurt like a bitch, but the noises you were making hinted more of pleasure than pain.

Together, we rocked the night away.

Goddamn, it had been quite a while since I felt that good. But as amazing as that orgasm was, I knew then what exactly compelled you to do that. To have a seemingly sudden relapse of habits.

And as if to confirm it, you started shaking above me.

I wordlessly wrapped my arms around you, kissed you tenderly like how real, genuine lovers would – if only to remind you that someone still loves and cares for you... in one way or another. Hey, what are friends for, right?

And that only made the dam break and the tears overflow. You sobbed openly in my arms, not being modest about it in the tiniest bit. You never really build your walls up when you're with me. That's how much you trust me. And I, you.

Not that I was taking pleasure in your current state, but I'm glad that part of us still existed. The trust. And for that, I thank you. Hell would have to freeze over before I could even consider breaking such treasure between us.

"Hey, uhh... I... I'm sorry about... last night." was how you greeted me the next morning, the sheepish demeanor in direct contrast to the reckless spirit who attacked me just the night before.

You look tired though, and even more dishevelled than the night prior. But you were talking. And that's good. I fucking missed you talking.

"Don't worry about it." I blurted out when I realized you were waiting for a response. "I understand." And I do.

I may not truly know how it felt like to you, but I understand your impulsiveness that night. You needed a distraction. You needed control. You needed to feel a twisted sense of pleasure in pain. You needed to feel alive.

Did I make you feel alive? I'd like to think so.

Not that I wanted to give myself a pat in the back, but the fact that I successfully made you bawl out like the kid you are... The kid you were... Then I fucking believe I did.

Later that day, you confided in me your continual feeling of hopelessness despite of all the time that had flew by since your loss. One of your main goals had always been to make your parents proud, starting by conquering college. Now that they wouldn't be able to witness that, you had nothing to look forward to.

I had to give you something to look forward to.

"How about this..." I started, words coming out before my brain could even process them. "When we turn 30, and still haven't found someone to fall in love with, let's get married."
That had been one of our mutual problems. Somehow, no matter how hard we try, we just couldn't seem to get that textbook definition of falling in love. No one seemed to fit the bill. Or maybe the problem laid on us.

It was just a stupid jest for an equally stupid attempt of chipping off some weight in spite of the nature of our conversation. But when you laughed out heartily at the proposal, I couldn't have been prouder of myself for being the one to cause it.

"That's such a stupid idea." You wheezed out as you were coming down from the high. "But okay. It's a promise."

I arched a brow at the effortless assent. I couldn't tell if you were just fucking around like I was. And I didn't know if I truly wanted it to be that way or otherwise. Unable to sort this internal conflict right away, I opted to steer the discussion back in line.

"You know, the way I see it, you could still make your parents proud by graduating. We may not be able to see it physically for ourselves, but I'm sure they'd be very proud of you nonetheless."

That bittersweet smile you wore then told me I managed to get right through you. And at that point, I knew I was already so fucking proud of you.

I graduated at 21. You followed at 22. Prior to that, you asked me to move in with you in your family domicile, reasoning you didn't want to live there alone. As much as it bothered me like it did to you, I couldn't say no. I didn't want you to be alone.

Cleaning up the place had been an arduous task. And it wasn't because of the clutter. It was because of the memories that lived in every corner and every trinket all around. Twice, you broke down. But like always, we managed to get through it together.

It wasn't long before we merged with the general populace who had jobs to go to. You still tended to refuse invitations to parties and hanging out. I wasn't even sure if you made new friends. But even if you do concede going out, you tended to shy away from liquors, and the most I saw you gulp down would have to be a single bottle of beer. A small one, at that.

Honestly, our former habit had also long lost its appeal to me. I no longer had any inclinations on having a night out over a peaceful time in my room. I started to prioritize work over leisure. Budgeting over spending. Planning over spontaneity.

If that was what they call maturity, Kenny would've probably shit his pants if he found out his local runt had fucking grown up. I'm pretty sure he's still making progress with that.

Things were going as well as they could. We were functioning on autopilot on most of the time, and the difference in our schedules caused dissonance in our regular interactions. But we managed. It was the least we could do. We took each day in stride without another road map to follow.

Our future was still a blur in the distance. A mystery to even the deities themselves.

That was until we reached 24, when you dropped the bomb on me about wanting to migrate somewhere far away. Alone.
"It's been years Levi, but I still feel like my clock hadn't ticked since what happened to mom and dad. I hardly feel anything than this numbness. Yet deep down, I know I wanted to be happy. I know mom and dad would want me to be. I need to find myself again. This place holds too many memories for me to do that. Everywhere I look is just another flash of the past that keeps me rooted in the spot. The places... The faces... They're all too familiar. I need to start over again. I really hope you understand."

"I do." I responded numbly, despite my genuine yet still inadequate comprehension of how you felt. "I don't have any right to stop you from selling the house since I'm only leeching my stay here. I... I just wanna know for how long will you be gone?"

"I don't know." You responded lowly. "Forever?" The underlying follow-up unspoken.

A huge part of me didn't want you to go. But it'd be utterly conceited of me to assume your happiness existed there with me. It'd be utterly conceited of me to assume I had to be a constant in your life for you to achieve that happiness. Because then again, for years I was just that. But were you truly happy?

I knew it was rather unfair for me to spin things to fit my own pathetic perspective. I knew you didn't mean to put things that way. But I just never anticipated the time we'd have to separate with no promises of meeting again.

I had a choice: convince you to stay, which I knew I was fully capable of, and do my damnedest to prove you didn't have to migrate somewhere else... Or let you go, knowing you may build your own life out there with no hope of coming back.

I chose the latter.

"Here." I handed you a little something just when we made it to the airport.

Your eyes widened when you pulled the stuffed toy from the bag. "Why're you giving Titan back?" You asked with both surprise and confusion.

"You need him more than I do." I shrugged, gaze lingering on the toy that would, hopefully, once again do its magic in aiding you.

A smile graced your lips. Was it sadness? Was it gratefulness? I didn't know. And I didn't have the luxury to find out as your flight was promptly informing its passengers to board.

With a bone-crushing hug and lingering looks that almost seemed like a plea for something, I watched my best friend leave. Not the slightest clue when I'll be seeing you again. I didn't even know if I was allowed to contact you. And if I was, how often would be reasonable that wouldn't interfere with your progress? You sold the house because it was the most familiar place you kept seeing. Wasn't I the most familiar face you kept seeing?

All I was left with were uncertainties.

I thought that was it – my "fuck you" to fate.

But several hours later, I got an email from you.

"Made it safely. Just thought I'd let you know. Hope you're not missing me too much already. ;)

"You damned idiot." I couldn't help the chuckle that escaped my lips.
I already was.

Chapter End Notes

Now the summary makes sense. :D

So much feels for this chapter tho.
How much I love you

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Things were a lot different without you around. I wasn't used not seeing your dumb face every single day. Then again, I had no other choice but to get used to it.

At first, it took you another month to contact me again. You sent me an email detailing how different things were in Germany compared to our hometown. You said you were eager to pick up the language, and that you've already found your favorite spot to just sit and... well, sit.

You seemed like you were doing a great job at starting over again. And I would've been a lot happier if it wasn't for the fact that I was missing you terribly. But I didn't mention any of the sort. I didn't want you to doubt your decision of leaving just because of me. I didn't have that right.

Another 4 months rolled by before I finally got to see your stupid mug again. The fact that it was only through a screen was irrelevant. We lost sense of time as we talked for hours. The sun was starting to set in your place when we finally noticed. Yet in mine, it had yet to peek through the distant horizon.

You were slowly getting back that life in your eyes again. And I could only tell your decision to move had done every bit of good to you. I was happy for you.

At 25, I felt suffocated for no apparent reason. I felt stranded in a routine that started to feel like a curse instead of a sense of stability. At 25, I made the impulse decision to migrate like you did. Only, in the opposite direction you did.

You were shocked when I told you and immediately demanded for me to go on Skype. You kept asking me if something terrible had happened, under the assumption that my decision had been in line with yours. It wasn't. Well, not really, I guess.

Starting over hadn't been as difficult as I thought. Sure, you had to orientate and adapt to the new environment, but with no one and nothing holding you back, it was manageable. There's also that sense of excitement in discovering new things and exploring new places. With everything being new, it proved for a great distraction.

Unfortunately, I kept finding myself wishing you were by my side everytime I took another step.

Everything was new. But if I were to choose, I still prefer the old times.

At 26, a realization dawned on me. I tried my luck finding romance with multiple different people... and still failing. Something always felt off to me. I just couldn't convince myself what I felt for that person was genuine.

It took a while, but I eventually realized I had been looking for you in every person I dated. Perhaps that was why I couldn't fall in love with someone else; because I long since have found love with you.

Believe me, Eren, I mildly freaked out and had been in denial about it for weeks. There just couldn't be no way I was only finding out that my affections for you went beyond the line of
platonic. I should've known about it myself a lot earlier, right?

We met at 13, and it took me another 13 years to find out I had such feelings for you? It was preposterous! For years that we've been together, surely I would've noticed something, right?

Then again, maybe it wasn't a matter of not noticing. Maybe it was a matter of not realizing.

Because I've always felt things different with you than with other people. I just haven't considered it was more than friendly devotion. Our friendship hadn't been what people would consider "normal", after all. And with that debacle back when we were 16, I really thought romantic love just wasn't possible between us.

Perhaps our friends had been right all along. Perhaps I really was in denial for years. Perhaps I had been blind all along with regards to my own feelings for you. Or perhaps I had only developed such feelings due to my longing for you.

But that wouldn't be right, would it? Why would my longing for you be that intense in the first place? Wouldn't that mean my feelings for you were just as strong?

That was it. It was a long time coming, but I finally realized that... I love you.

The kind of love that makes me yearn for nights tangled in each other, and mornings waking up next to you. The kind of love that makes me believe even stormy days could be beautiful as long you were with me. The kind of love that makes me want to spend every breath of my life with you. The kind of love that makes me sappy as fuck in spite of myself.

Then again, the question remained: Did you feel the same way for me?

I tried, Eren. I tried to be peachy about it. But there was one thought I couldn't quite stave off: If you did feel the same towards me, then why did you leave?

More importantly, even if I had finally sorted myself out, what then? Do I hop on the next plane towards you and inconsiderately destroy your progress of healing? Do I even dare?

Of course not. That would be selfish. Had I realized these stuffs sooner, maybe things would have been different.

Again, I was left with nothing but uncertainties.

Despite everything, I never pushed my luck when it came to you. I was afraid if I did, things would just backfire in my face.

I merely reciprocated what you did. If you emailed me twice a week, I'd be the first to email back a week later. If you called me thrice a month, I'd desperately wait for another month to roll by. If you sent me postcards, I'd send you the same quantity in return.

I was hopelessly playing it safe. But even then, my affections for you didn't waver.

Seeing your name on my phone, on my laptop, or in the mail had always been the highlight of my day, week, or even month. It was almost hilarious how pathetic I was being.

But waiting was the only option I could count on. I had to wait for you to heal. 'Coz only then would you be able to love again. To love truly.
And if in the end you'd fall for someone else... damn. I'll crumble for sure.

But then again, you'd always be my best friend.

"Happy birthday, Lee!" You greeted as soon as the video chat connected. "Did you get my present?"

"What present?" I asked in confusion, propping an elbow on the desk.

"Oh, so it hasn't arrived yet?"

As if on cue, the doorbell rang and I promptly excused myself to tend to it. I didn't know if you conspired with the delivery company for your package to arrive on time, or if you've already familiarized the duration of when a package from your place to mine could be delivered. Neither would've surprise me.

"Is this it?" I showed you the box, the query unnecessary considering your name was clearly printed on it.

"Yeah, that's it." You beamed nonetheless. "I really hope it arrived safely. That shit's fragile."

Instead of asking what was inside, I proceeded to tear open the tapes and took a peek.

"Ta-da!" You chimed when I fished out the bottle of a "Jägermeister Cold Brew Coffee". "A perfect way to start the day, don't you think? I'm pretty sure you'd have a difficult time getting your hands on that one where you are." You puffed proudly.

"Right." I droned skeptically. "Well, at least I'd no longer be surprised if this had been spiked." I shrugged, setting the bottle aside and fetching the other item in the box.

"How rude. All my hardwork unappreciated." You sighed dejectedly.

And you used to call me the dramatic one.

Your other present was a black hoodie with the words "Ich Liebe Jäger" in white block letters.

Oh Eren, if you only knew.

"Do you like it? I'm pretty sure that's your size. I mean, you still haven't grown any since high school, right?" You grinned.

"Fuck you, you fucking tree." I glared at your smug face on the screen. "And aren't these rather narcissistic of you?" I added, shedding off a sweater to put the hoodie on. With the wonderful – not – winter season, stuffing up generously is simply a basic necessity for someone like me.

It was a perfect fit. And it was already my favorite.

"Not my fault some sort of liqueur was named after me. Besides, you're 28 and still celebrating your birthday alone. At least that will help you forget such details for several hours. Depending on how long you want to take it."
"I'll make sure to tell you the exact same thing in a couple of months." I shot back. Then took the opportunity to bring up a little memory. "At this rate, we're gonna have to end up marrying each other."

I tried my damnedest to aim for nonchalance, but my heart was racing a thousand miles per second. 

'It's just a joke.' I kept repeating in my head. Though I was fully aware a huge part of me didn't want it to be.

"Wow, way to pressure me, Lee." You laughed.

I was quite lost on how I should take that.

I had to backpedal while I still could.

"How're you doing, by the way?" I diverted. When I ask that, I was referring to your recovery. I just couldn't resist checking up on your progress.

Your expression softened as you considered the question. "I think I'm getting there, Lee." You gave an easy smile.

Another year rolled by and I had this strange sensation that could be akin to a child getting hyped up for Christmas. We were turning 29. Yet another step closer.

I knew I shouldn't get my hopes up. Even though you had hinted that you were finally getting better, you never mentioned anything in the romantic realm. Even so, I was willing to take my chances. I didn't endure these past years for nothing.

But by the time we had our regular video calls, all my hopes came crashing down.

"Ow! Armin, stop it!" You laughed jovially, yet to notice the call had already connected.

I could only catch a glimpse of a blond hair that blurred from the corner of the screen before a pillow was smacked at the side of your face, throwing you off the chair, then an unfamiliar voice laughed his heart out.

"Oh, now you asked for it." was all the warning you said before you pounced on the blond, throwing both of you towards the bed.

I couldn't tell who shrieked and who laughed as you wrestled on the bed before falling off to the other side of it, obscured from the vantage point of your webcam. Then another blonde woman came into the room, took a moment to look at the floor where you fell off, before bending down.

When she straightened back up, she got the both of you by the ears. I couldn't make out what you were talking about, but it didn't seem like she was nagging judging by the tone of her voice. Then you chanced a glance at my direction and realization flashed on your features.

You gestured vaguely at the direction of the camera, and I could only catch the words "me" and "have" and "guest" before the sounds resembled more like static again. You ushered the two out of the room, yet as the woman walked ahead, you chanced a slap on the ass on the other blond, slamming the door shut before complaints could be heard.
It almost felt like I just watched my own nightmare on the screen.

"Sorry about that. Armin still has a little grudge on me." You chuckled, shaking your head fondly. "Good thing Annie came to save the day again."

Armin. Annie. Names that were familiar only because of all the stories you told me. Must be siblings judging from that, and from what I've seen. You haven't bothered with much details.

Were there any other details you were purposely not telling me?

"You could've told me you had people over. I could've waited." I responded numbly. My usual excitement nowhere to be found.

"Nah, Annie was just borrowing some stuffs. I'm pretty sure they've already left." You shrugged.

I let you lead the direction of our conversation, only chipping in whenever necessary. Several times you stopped and asked if I was okay. Only then would I be compelled to put in more effort into acting fine, and would then slump back when you went back to chattering again.

I felt like shit.

I felt like shit that's been stomped down aggressively, left to decay, buried underground, dug back up, molded back into its original form, then trampled down again. Yeah, don't bother imagining it, 'coz it's shit.

As more time ticked by, I was conflicted on how to feel. I still looked forward to chatting with you, yet I also dreaded to see your name on the screen. A couple of times the same mop of blond hair would suddenly pop out of the corner for a moment, then would disappear just as fast.

After the first handful of moments, you finally introduced us briefly to each other. Me, as your best friend since forever, and Armin as... just Armin. No labels other than "annoying".

How the hell am I supposed to interpret that?

He seemed like a nice guy. Bubbly, yet undoubtedly possessing an impressive range of intellect.

You looked good together.

With those huge blue eyes that looked deceivingly innocent, soft mop of golden locks you seemed to like ruffling up, and vertical standing closer to yours than I could hope for... I never thought I'd be so insecure of myself.

29 and I was still pathetic. Even the ring I had kept for years was practically laughing at my misery.

Before I knew it, I had hit 30. Only a couple months later, and you'd be the same, too.

But then... what?

I was a grown-ass man still hung up over that little "joke" we made 9 years prior.

As always, you didn't fail to greet me on the exact day of the occasion, time differences be damned. You never brought up our pseudo-promise though. I, myself, lost the heart to remind you.

Then weeks before your day, I threw caution to the wind.

"It's almost your birthday." I started, a simple fact.

"Don't make me feel too old for hitting another decade." You laughed.

"How're things with you and Armin?" I blurted out, bracing myself for what I would hear.

"Uhh... We're fine. Why do you ask?" You asked back in unconcealed confusion.

I could have made up excuses, but my tongue couldn't seem to figure out which one to use, and I ended up with silence. A silence that could only flirt out suspicions.

"Hold on... Did you think Armin and I were dating?" You asked incredulously. "More importantly, is it just me or... are you jealous?"

Again, I lagged for a response. Denial would be the easy way out. But where would that lead me?

I had to come clean.

With a deep breath and a resigned stance... I never knew saying the truth could be so terrifying.

"Is it too late to say I love you?"

Chapter End Notes

Is it, Eren? Is it?!
Big. Fat. Silence.

I never knew a second could stretch so long while merely waiting for a response in bated breath. You were so still I could've been convinced there were problems with the connection. I couldn't blame you though. Had the roles been reversed, it would, most likely, take me days to function again.

What I would give for that to happen; for the tables to turn. But I had to take things on my own hands. I've spent enough time relying on such fantasies. It was time to snap in reality.

I could tell the exact moment you rebooted back in your senses. I didn't know how, I just did. It must have been the simple blink, the non-existent twitch, the subtle shift in the eyes... I just knew. "On my birthday..." You started, expression turning morose. "Meet me back home. We need to talk."

I've never been so antsy in my life. The sleepless nights I spent pondering over your reaction seemed endless. I was so ill at ease I ended up coming back to our hometown two days before the agreement.

You never contacted me since then. And after what I did, it felt like me initiating to reach out first would add damage to what had already been made. I was lost on what to expect.


Jesus, Eren. You could've said more than just that. You knew I had a bad habit of coming up with the most splendid ideas.

A simple, "Oh, really?" would've been nice. Or maybe a, "Wow, Levi., I've been madly in love with you since birth, too!" would've been fucking swell.

But, "We need to talk"? Christ. It felt like I just committed five counts of murder while being high as a feline who overdosed in catnip, and not remembering a second of it. Even the memory of 10-year-old me shaving Kenny's eyebrows in his sleep flashed through my head. Not that I totally regretted it, it was hilarious. But that was besides the point.

For all I know, you only wanted to see me again, after all these years, to knock some sense in my head.

Two days flashed by like a blink of an eye. I then found myself waiting restlessly at the airport for your arrival. I might as well have been idling there for the entire day since I didn't know which flight you actually took. I just figured maybe you'd only contact me again once you've landed.
A quick inquiry informed me there will be three flights from Germany for the day. The earliest one around 9AM, followed by one on 4PM, then last at 8PM. It was 10 minutes before 9 o'clock when I dragged my feet to the airport. So safe to say, my nerves were shot when I found out.

You weren't in that flight though. And that only meant my agony was extended.

Minutes past 4PM and I finally spotted you. All 183cm of perfection with that chocolate hair that had grown so much you had to tame it under a manbun, dragging your luggage behind with another fat backpack slung over one shoulder, while you fiddled and kept your attention on the phone in your hand.

Jesus Christ. Had I known that was what happened to lost souls who wandered in Germany, I might have salvaged some hope for myself.

You were probably trying to contact me then. I thought I should just save you the bother.

"Hey." I squeaked.

Fucking genius. It's not like "hey" refers to just anyone, right? And it's not like you weren't a good 30 feet away from me, right?

"Eren." I tried again, louder and more prominent.

Your head snapped up from the phone in your hand and started turning every which way. With all the other people also ecstatic about reuniting with loved ones, I should know it wasn't that easy to find the source of the voice, or even determine if you heard right. So I hesitantly raised a hand up for attention.

It took a few more seconds, but those gorgeous green orbs I've missed so fucking much finally met mine.

Seeing you again after a long time had been strikingly different from when I first saw you 17 years ago. There was that sudden shift in the air, a soft song playing in the background, a thousand butterflies in my stomach, and the second stretched into fantasy.

Before I could even twitch, you abandoned your luggage and backpack, and went barreling straight towards me. I braced myself for the impact and the high possibility you'd send us both rolling on the floor.

But it wasn't the collision of our bodies that took my breath away. It was your lips on mine.

Hundreds of emotions passed through that kiss; each one as intense as the other. Longing. Relief. Thrill. Euphoria. Love.

When we breathlessly pulled apart, the fire in your eyes burned me from the inside.

"Marry me, Levi."

And that's when my heart lagged a couple beats behind yours.

"With pleasure."
We couldn't keep our hands off each other. It could even be argued that we were already having our honeymoon months prior to the wedding. But hey, that was just us making up for the lost time.

The days were a lot brighter with you around again. And even if the nights felt longer, they were never cold. I knew then that you, Eren, are the sun in my life. My heart had never been so warm.

"Say it." You demanded.

"No."

"Come on, Levi."

"No." I stubbornly refused.

"I'm starting to miss Germany." You sighed despondently.

"Stop playing dirty, you fucking—"

"Say it, Levi." You demanded a lot more firmly.

I let out a half-annoyed, half-defeated sigh before humoring you just so you'd stop bothering me.

"I'm an amazing man who need not to be insecure of myself. And that my gorgeous fiancé is head-over-heels for me." I rolled my eyes with the highest possible sass a 30-year-old man could make.

"And?"

I hesitated for a second.

"I'm fucking cute." I grumbled out.

"Yes, you are!" You beamed, throwing your arms around me and planting a sloppy kiss on my temple.

Apparently, my curiosity about yours and Armin's relationship had won me over that I just had to ask you about it. You told me that you were just good friends and that Armin is actually married to Annie. They were the ones who helped you find a good job in Germany and were also generous enough to show you the ropes in an unfamiliar place. Teach you a little of the language, even.

You found Annie really cool, and Armin... not so. Which is why you kept teasing him to be the woman in their relationship, which then resulted to how your little fights progressed over time.

Of course, you didn't fail to address the little stupid invidiousness I had. Which then resulted to the stupid self-motivation jig.

"Jesus Christ, I feel like 12 again." I muttered out.

"Love makes you feel forever young, sweetheart."

It was the nickname. Ever since our engagement you come up with random nicknames at random instances. I didn't know if every time you called me one, I was itching to kiss your stupid face, or punch it. Probably both. In that order.

"You know, I bet mom would've been ecstatic to finally get to call you her son. Like, officially speaking." You spoke again. And I was glad for the change of topic.
You were looking at the engagement ring you slipped on my right ring finger with pure fondness. At the gesture, I also chanced a lingering look at the ring I slipped on yours. Funny how we both have prepared something real for what was supposedly just a "joke".

Before you left, you had difficulty mentioning anything about your parents, or even anything that reminds you of them. But when you came back, you were casually bringing them up in conversations.

There may still be a tinge of sadness in there. However, above that was acceptance. That was the end result of your convalescence.

"Yeah? If she was so inclined, she would've just adopted me for real back then." I pointed out.

"But if that was the case, then it'd be more awkward for us to marry, don't you think?" You countered.

True. With that said, I got the feeling Carla may have wanted us to end up marrying each other since then. 'Coz why would she be putting my pictures in your family albums?

If that was the case, wouldn't we be making one of her dreams come true?

"Okay, you got a point. Damn, you've gotten smart." I admitted.

"You mean 'smarter'" You grinned smugly.

"No, just smart. Don't flatter yourself. You know the truth." I denied.

"Wow, real supportive, Lee. Husband of the year." You rolled your eyes.

"Oh? So I'm 'husband' already, huh?"

"You and I both know that's the endgame. So might as well start practicing the title." You shrugged, planting another kiss on my forehead.

"Damn right."

A couple months before the big day, you started stressing out. We haven't planned for a grandiose celebration, and have only invited a reasonable number of friends and some relatives. The setting was fixed, the reception area was reserved, invitations were handed out, roles were assigned, wedding rings were polished, cakes were tasted, table napkins were picked, honeymoon was booked, lube was fully stacked, toys were on the ready, and a partridge in a pear tree.

So what were you stressing out for? Were you starting to doubt your decision? Started to get cold feet?

Of course not. You were stressing out on what to wear 'coz nothing seemed to suit your preferences.

"I thought we agreed on white suits?" I asked, already having picked and customized mine weeks ago. You were adamant we shouldn't be seeing each other's suits until the wedding.
"Of course we did. That's not the point." You fussed, pulling on some sneakers as you got ready to hit the boutiques again with Armin, who had been generous enough to fly all the way here upon knowing he'd be your best man. "It has to be extra special, Levi. We waited years for this. You have to be drooling once you see me wearing it."

Ah, right. Apparently, we both had been dancing around each other the entire time. Even before the tragedy, you were already aware of your feelings for me. It was why you easily agreed to that absurd proposal I made. The thought of me being the one who broke up with you prior to that had been a constant in your mind though. You thought I would never look at you the same way.

It was also why you chose to leave and pick yourself up again. You didn't want to be a burden for me with all the weight you were carrying – despite me being adamant you weren't. You wanted to free up the heaviness in your heart to make room for me. Give it entirely to me, in fact. You wanted to be better, not just for yourself and your late parents, but for me as well. The promise we made was the single thread of hope you kept in your heart to achieve that.

And here we are.

"If that's what you're aiming for, then I hope the guests are into voyeurism, Eren." I smirked.

"Right, of course. How could I forget I chose to be tied to a pervert?" You rolled your eyes with a smile.

"You're one to talk. Need I remind you of all the shit you pulled in high school?"

"Yeah, yeah." You laughed and stood up once you deemed yourself ready to go. "Even if you're a pervert, you know I love you." You grinned, placing a kiss on my forehead.

"Say that again, sunshine." I practically purred, partly enjoying the funny flips my heart would give everytime I hear you say those words to me.

"I love you, Levi." You repeated with reverence and devotion, kissing me properly on the lips.

It had been a while since you went out with Armin. I could only wonder how the blond was coping up with your finickiness. He had been equally stressed hopping from boutique to boutique, and searching for designers who could appease you with your demands.

I still remember that one time you came back to the apartment with no luck and a stressed out Armin on your tail; shrieking out, "And you call me a girl?!" while you tried to coax him down with a bottle of vodka.

That's when I decided I genuinely liked the guy, after all.

I've also met his wife, Annie, through Skype. She had volunteered to help out with some preparations in whatever way she could, in spite of the fact that she was still in Germany. Great woman, I could tell. And I could see why you find her very cool compared to her husband.

I started to wonder how our married life would be. A lot of our friends had been way ahead of us in that department, and some even went through it more than once. Not that I was judging them. It is quite difficult to find the right one you'd be spending the rest of your life with. I was just glad I got
lucky with you.

What would our life be? How would our house look? Will we come around the idea of adopting kids? Will we have dogs? Cats? Some turtles, if you fancy? What holiday traditions will we be starting? What sort of pictures will we accumulate? How many places could we travel to? What new things will we be discovering together?

So many questions running around my head at that time. Yet still, I was fucking excited to gradually answer them with you.

I was snapped out of my thoughts when my phone buzzed with a text message.

From: Sunshine ❤
7:03 PM

I. Found. It.

I fucking finally found it, Levi! The perfect suit for the perfect occasion! It just needs a few adjustments, but fuck that. I hope you're ready to drool, love ;)

I love you <3

Nothing could wipe the stupid smile on my face as I read your message. Fucking finally, indeed. I wouldn't have minded if you wore nothing but rags, though. You were already gorgeous even with nothing on. Especially with nothing on.

With that settled, all we had to do now was wait. Goddamn, why does time have to go by agonizingly slow when you were flooded with anticipation? I was so prepared to marry you and have you officially rank up from best friend to best husband.

I could only hope it would be the big day by the time I woke up the next day. If years went by with me barely noticing, surely time could do its magic again.

God-fucking-damn was I ready.

Chapter End Notes

1 more chapter left.

I know, I know. Wedding endings are too damn cliche. Sue me.
Chapter Notes

Away

So to keep it short and sweet, I'm just gonna go ahead and thank you guys for your support, and even for sparing the time reading this. I know it may not seem like it, but I really do appreciate it. I just don't wanna sound overdramatic (you're more than welcome to do that to me, though). You, babes (yes, that's what I'll be calling the readers now), simply are the best ❤️

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It's been two years since that fateful day. And here I am, carrying a bouquet of flowers – which I can only hope would give justice to your beauty – as I made my way to you.

Today's weather is sunny. Sky stark of clouds, and birds filling the air with their symphony. Sure the city noise proves to be a sharp dissonance, but that's besides the point. It's peaceful where you are.

Funny how in every beauty I bother to acknowledge around me, regardless of how small and mundane it may be, I find myself comparing it to you. Of course, bottomline would always be that they could never hold a candle to you. You're way above everyone's and everything's league.

Funny how I would never have thought I'd be admitting these things when we first met all those years ago.

"Hello, sunshine." I greeted as I reached you, the all-too familiar emotions holding my heart hostage all over again.

Sitting on the ground across from you, offering the flowers gently, I still couldn't muster up a smile no matter how badly I wanted to.

"Eren... come back. Please." I whispered pathetically to the cold, hard stone in front of me.

It's been two years since that fateful day.

The day when fate took you away from me.

When Armin called me the night you were just coming back after picking out your suit, desperately trying to tone down his sobs to manage telling me of how a fucking drunk driver rammed his car to the sidewalk straight to you... I didn't want to believe it.

When I arrived at the hospital as soon as I could, breathless and dishevelled, only to be told you didn't make it... I didn't want to believe it.

Hell, two years have passed and I still don't want to believe you're gone, Eren. I'm still stuck in that first stage of grief and I don't have the slightest idea how in the world am I ever going to claw my way out of here.

How ironic is it that both your parents and you fell victim to a fucking drunk driver? It should have
been a cardinal sin for such coincidences to exist. If I could, I would dig my way through hell and
tear those bastards to pieces. It wasn't fucking fair for them to just croak out after what they did. It
isn't fucking fair that I don't get to let them feel this crushing pain they caused me.

Was this how it felt like to you? How did you do it, Eren? Do I need another 8 years for me to
heal? How would that even be possible when there's no you to welcome me at the end of this
throe?

It hurts, Eren. It hurts so much. There's not a minute that passes by I don't get haunted by thoughts
of you. For the past 2 years, I've been in my worst state. Our poor friends had to shoulder my
constant irritability, and stop their own fists from flying when I snap out to them with little to no
reason at all. I've also been forced to go to therapy, but it didn't do jack-shit. Poor woman had to
fight tooth and nail for me to even get a single word out.

I admit I'm to be blamed for that. But ever since you left me, I've withdrawn tightly, hopelessly
into myself no amount of prying would get me to budge. You, my sunshine, were my only
confidant, after all.

Those rings we were supposed to wear on our wedding day? They've found residence on my left
ring finger now. Granted the only purpose they serve now is feeding my agony of the what-should-
have-been's, but they're the only things that constantly remind me of the authenticity of your
existence, and of our devotion for each other. Call me a masochist, but I fully believe no pain will
ever come close than having lost you forever.

It was also a punch in the face, a stab in the chest, a kick to the balls – whichever was worst – that
you ended up wearing that suit you stressed over so much in your casket. Even with your eyes
closed, you looked absolutely beautiful, Eren. Like a piece of art preserved in the finest museums.
But it's the kind of beauty that twists my heart in all the wrong ways.

It's hilarious, really. For all those times I flipped the bird on fate – back when you first attempted to
talk to me, to our breakup, to letting you flee to some faraway place with no reassurance of
reconciliation – all those times I let you slip through my fingers, we kept coming back to each
other in one way or another.

And just when I decided to hold on tightly and never let go, you became water in my grasp and
ended in the ground; so far, so deep below.

I knew that was it – fate's "fuck you" to me.

Our reality isn't one depicted in used and abused romance tropes of teen fictions and soap operas.
Our reality is one where years of friendship and months of anticipation resulted in nothing.

Hell, "nothing" is actually better than this harrowing pain of tragedy I continue to drag myself
through. Will this ever end, Eren?

Honestly, there have been one too many times when the temptation of running after you had been
far too enticing to resist, but I knew that would only be an insult to you. You, who had struggled so
valiantly despite the hopelessness consuming every inch of your being. Even if we were to meet on
the other side again, I just knew you would resent me for the method I succumbed to.

But fucking goddamn, Eren. How do I do this? How do I take one step forward when all I see in
front of me are visions of the past? Visions of you? Visions of what should have been had the
circumstances been different?
They aren't. What's happened has happened. I know that.

But that doesn't mean, I accept it.

Hundreds of days had passed, and the seasons had come and go, but my sun had never returned. I've been living in constant darkness. My heart and soul died along with you, Eren. I really don't understand why I continue to be here.

It hurts. It hurts so fucking much. It's so fucking unfair. What the fuck did I ever do to deserve this? All I wanted was to love you, Eren. To be with you. Why the fuck can't life grant me that little happiness? Why the fuck can't I do anything but just keel over and take it?

Please, Eren. It really hurts.

After a good 30 minutes or so of bawling my eyes out at your grave, I finally felt tired enough to gradually calm down. I really shouldn't keep doing this everytime I come to pay you a visit. I could imagine just how disappointed you'd be with my actions. These wild sunflowers that had grown around your grave seem to tell me just that. A perfect symbol for you, really.

I'm sorry, love. I couldn't help it. I just really miss you so much.

Getting my gears back again, I tried to think of something to tell you. Or at least this lifeless stone that represents you somehow. God, I hated how your name had to be engraved there, when it's already inscribed in my heart and in my memories. Nothing could take that away, sunshine. Not even time and death themselves.

Between the two of us, you were always the chatterbox, Eren. I was usually the listener. I was content with that, but the roles just had to be flipped.

People say we hold our future in our hands. But how could that truly be when a lot of things are out of our control?

What I would give to hold your hand again, love.

"You know, I dreamt about you again..."

The other night, dear
As I lay sleeping
I dreamed I held you
In my arms
When I awoke, dear
I was mistaken
So I hung my head
... And I cried ~
(I lied. But aren't you glad this didn't end in the happy wedding trope? :D)

Surprise! It's a song fic in disguise!
Everything that happened here is intentional. Each chapter is created in accordance to the (now renamed) title, which then corresponds to the song lyrics, and also for the overall development of the plot, of course.
Leading you on from the very beginning is intentional. Making you believe they'll have their happy ending is intentional. Writing this in first person perspective is intentional.
Now you're more than one step closer to feeling the same shock and agony our poor Levi is feeling. Yay! :D
(If you figured out this would happen tho, then – as much as a bummer that would be for me – props to you, babes. :D)
Yes, yes. I'm evil. But allow me to quote what Levi said on chapter one: "From the very start, you've had your fair warning, Eren." (This is a self-indulgent fic). Eren being "you", as in you, the readers. So if this fic managed to break your heart, it's been a pleasure. 😅
You're free to diss me all you want, no offense will be taken. XD

P.S.
I'd just like to recommend Moira Dela Torre's version of the song, You Are My Sunshine. It's what I've been listening to as I wrote the story. :)
the lines, "And if in the end you'd fall for someone else... damn. I'll crumble for sure. But then again, you'd always be my best friend."

So yeah. Just thought I'd point that out. 😊

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!