A collection of one-shots originally posted on my Tumblr account

Watching the speech scene in The Funeral where Jake is so adamantly willing to get demoted and Ames is trying to convince him that it’s his dream job and he shouldn’t let it go that easily and then he tells her ‘Amy…this good’

Like. I know they were both already way too deep once they started it, but?? I really?? Need someone to write a fic centering around Jake’s PoV during those six days? What was he thinking while he and Amy did Normal Couple Things? Did he constantly get streams of thoughts that revolved around how this is a reality that he’s alive and he’s not dreaming and how amazing this whole thing is that he can openly give her the Looks and hold her hand and snuggle with her and he can openly show her affection because they’re dating now?? I NEED SOMEONE TO WRITE A FIC PLS

- Tumblr user tall-butt (aka jumpthefence)
six days

He can’t believe this is happening.

Like. Any of it.

It isn’t enough that Holt is gone or that Dozerman is dead, but the Vulture is his new captain? And he’s demanding that Jake break up with Amy? It has to be some kind of sick prank, some kind of grueling psychological evaluation that Wuntch has ordered on all of them as a ‘screw you’ to Holt.

He sinks back against his couch, sitting the way he always made fun of Holt for sitting (that is to say, bolt-upright with his hands on his knees, probably looking thoroughly, stiffly uncomfortable), and his heart aches dully in his chest. The memory of Holt’s bittersweet smile hits him again like a punch to the gut and he has to fight off yet another weird urge to bury his face in his couch cushions and moan in misery.

There’s a sound in his kitchen - a cabinet door snapping closed and a half-irritated sigh - that draws his attention to the right and the corner of his mouth up. He watches Amy search through the cabinets for two clean plates and wonders if he should tell her that they’re all still in the dishwasher, clean but yet to be put away properly. In the end, he decides against it; exasperated Amy has always been his favorite Amy.

“Do you even own plates?” She asks, letting her frustration color her voice in that trademark Santiago style, hands on her hips and foot tapping an erratic beat against his linoleum floor. He feels a little guilty - she’s had a hell of a day, too (a hell of a week, really. Every night that week was spent working late at the precinct, trying to keep up with all the paperwork that comes with going through three captains in less than a week, and this is the first night since their first date that they’ve both had off) - but it’s like some kind of weird natural instinct to tease her just a little bit no matter what’s going on around them.

He snorts. “Uh, yeah, Santiago. What d’you take me for, a caveman?”

“I found a bunch of black sticks in a bag that said ‘carrots’ on it in one of these drawers. I didn’t even know carrots could rot like that, Jake.”

For some reason, the way she says his name in the midst of such a domestic complaint makes his breath catch in his throat. He takes her appearance in; she’s wearing her yoga pants and one of her old academy shirts and her hair is up in a loose pony tail, but one of his over-sized half-zipped maroon hoodies hangs off her smaller frame. She’d borrowed his hoodies before, but this is the first time he’s been allowed to openly stare. Amy Santiago is barefoot in his kitchen wearing his clothes demanding to know where his plates are. This is real, this is happening. She arches an eyebrow, clearly ready for one of his patented witty retorts, but it just won’t come to him. “Try the dishwasher,” he says calmly.

Her brow smooths over; her surprise at his early concede to defeat is evident. She trots backwards slowly and disappears beneath the counter as she bends to open his dishwasher. Moments later she pops back up, triumphant grin on her face, two plastic plates held aloft over her head like trophies.

Minutes later they’re seated comfortably on the ground, backs against his couch, coffee table pulled up and take out feast spread across the surface. Initially it’s no different than any other night they’ve spent like this; they turn on Magnum, P.I. and he loudly mourns his inability to grow a mustache while she laughs and throws egg roll bits at his head. But then the food is gone and Amy leans back
with a contented sigh and suddenly it occurs to him that he can actually act upon the urge he always gets when she does that to sling his arm around her shoulders.

So he does. He keeps his eyes glued to the screen, but from his peripheral vision he sees her glance at him. His face heats up when she scoots a little closer; he’s positive he’s red all the way down his neck when she leans her head against his shoulder and sighs again. It’s always been a nice sound, one that reassures him that she’s on the opposite end of the gradient from her scary panic moments, and warmth bubbles in his chest at the realization that she feels completely comfortable being this close to him.

Thoughts of her face the moments before he’d kissed her for the first time as Amy rather than Dora come back to him. He’s always thought she has an expressive face, and the only other time he’d seen it so contorted with fear and uncertainty was the night her brother Luis was in a car wreck. He’d been there for her that night (he’d driven her to the hospital, worried that her trembling hands would lead to yet another accident and that was really the last thing any of the Santiagos needed that night) and he’d been there for her again in the evidence locker.

And, inevitably, he thinks about Holt again.

“This is weird,” Amy says, snapping him back to the present situation before he can get too lost down that chest-ache-inducing rabbit hole. She’s shifted down a bit, leaning more of her weight against his chest, and his heart thrums pleasantly. He runs his hand up her upper arm lightly and marvels at the warmth he can feel radiating from her even through his hoodie sleeve.

“What is?”

“This. Us. It’s weird.”

His heart clenches.

“Not bad weird! Not bad. Sorry,” she reaches up with her left hand to cover his right against her arm, and he automatically lifts his fingers to lace through with hers. “I just meant…I can’t believe this is actually happening.”

“Yeah?”

“Actually, it’s more like I can’t believe how easy this is. It’s never been this easy for me before. Should it be this easy?”

“I don’t think there’s a ‘should be’ or ‘shouldn’t be,’ Ames, I think it just…is.” He can still feel the gears in her brain spinning overtime, so he turns his head and kisses the top of her head. “We’re together, now. Romantic stylez.” He says into her hair. “I can kiss your head when you’re overthinking.” She chuckles and twists slightly; he feels the muscles in her upper arm twitch, like she was going to reach around him, but decided against it at the last possible second. “You can do this,” he reaches down and plucks her right wrist up off of her lap and pulls it across to his left side, grinning at the sound of her laughter, “and I can do this,” he turns a little awkwardly to wrap both of his arms around her shoulders and squeezes her in the weirdest side-hug he’s ever participated in.

“Definitely weird,” she says, face half-smashed against his neck, but he can hear the smile in her voice.

“I don’t even have to hide my stupid googly eyes from you anymore,” he says once his grip around her has loosened to something a bit more comfortable.

“You weren’t very good at hiding them before,” she says, playfully poking his side.
“Yeah, well, now I don’t even have to try. I can hold your hand and stare at you all day long and we can come home and hang out and do this,” he squeezes her briefly again. “It’s not even a dream.”

He says that last bit mostly to himself, because sometimes it still feels that way. Amy’s quiet for a second; he feels her eyelashes flutter against his neck as she blinks rapidly. Her arm tightens around his waist, and she lifts her head up to quickly peck the corner of his jaw.

“If you do any of that at work, Rosa might kill you.” She says after another moment of silence.

“Yeah, but think about how happy it would make Charles.”

“Ugh,” Amy groans against his chest. “He is way too involved in your love life, man.”

Jake shrugs, grinning like a fool. Amy’s shampoo smells like strawberries - or maybe grapefruit, he really can’t tell - and he inhales the scent deeply and shamelessly. Her head tilts back and he immediately leans in for a kiss, long and slow and deep because it’s something he has been wanting to do for the last five days (and the six years before that) and, finally, there is absolutely no one there to stop him.
I’d pay to see you smile

Chapter Summary

I asked for prompts on Tumblr and received the following:

I've seen AU oneshots where Amy arrests civilian!Jake, but what about one where he arrests her--maybe a bit of a Doug Judy S2 ep type situation where she's flirting with him and he's into it but then catches himself? - GRYFFINDORSWEATER

“Have you ever considered going into acting?”

Jake furrows his brow, barely resisting the urge to glance up at the woman in front of him. From his peripheral vision, he sees her lean forward, her left hand curled beneath her chin. He sees a flash of white - most likely a devastatingly stunning smile being leveled at him across the interrogation table - and he shifts a little in his seat. The words on his casefile are starting to blur together a little, and he reaches up to scratch his nose with the end of his pen.

“Seriously. You've got a great jawline. Like some kind of crazy brave lead male in an action movie.” He clenches his jaw and readjusts yet again, tapping his pen against the case file so that little dots of ink appear in the margin of the top page.

“Name?” He asks.

“Like someone from Die Hard or something.” She says.

This catches his attention. Despite his best efforts, he looks her in the eye for the first time since catching her locking up a storage unit full of priceless works of art two hours previously. She’d looked up at him, clearly startled, and he’d felt his heart drop right out of his body. Just wait until the guys from the academy hear about this - Peralta’s got a crush on an art thief. He can’t even get a crush on, like, a car thief or someone cool.

It does help that she’s pretty hot, though.

“Name, please,” he repeats, and she smiles.

“You ever see Die Hard? I bet you have, since you’re a cop and that’s the best cop movie out there.” She bats her eyelashes and he swears he almost swoons.

“It’s…actually my favorite movie,” he finally says, letting the pen fall from his fingers.

Her face lights up. “Really? Mine too!”

The smile he’s been fighting suddenly bursts forth. He leans back in his seat, the front two legs of his chair briefly leaving the floor. “Yeah?” He asks. “Which one’s your favorite?”

A look of uncertainty sparks in her eyes. “The - the first one?”

“Well, yeah, obviously. I meant which one of the villains is your favorite?”
“Oh, well, I’m a huge Alan Rickman fan, so I gotta say Gruber.”

“What? Gruber’s your favorite?”

“Alan Rickman is amaz-”

“Nah, no, I don’t care about Alan Rickman, I’m talking about Hans Gruber, the most evil bad guy, like, ever.”

“I don’t know if I’d go that far,” she says, the corners of her mouth pulling down. She moves to lean back in her seat, but her right wrist is handcuffed to the tabletop and she’s yanked back before she can get too far.

He clears his throat and grabs his pen. “I forget I’m dealing with a nerd,” he mutters. She jerks back slightly, clearly offended. “You steal art, of course Gruber’s your favorite because of some actor.”

“Some actor?” She repeats, voice trembling with conviction. “He’s a highly trained thespian who’s been in classics like Pride and Prejudice and -”

“Harry Potter and Die Hard, the only two that matter.”

“Oh my God -”

She kicks her feet out under the table, maybe to push back from the table, but her feet slip on the tiled floor and they hook around his ankle. They both freeze, eyes wide as they meet across the table, and her cheeks flush a pretty shade of pink as she quickly withdraws her feet.

He clears his throat and quickly straightens the pages up in the case file, heat prickling on the back of his neck. “Name?” He tries again.

He hears her exhale, hears the chain of her handcuffs shift, hears her fingertips drum along the surface of the tabletop once. “Santiago. Amy Santiago.”

He peers up at her through his lashes. She’s staring down at the table, but upon feeling his gaze on her, she peeks up at him. “For reals?”

She furrows her brow, but she smiles, like she can’t quite help it. “For reals.” She repeats carefully.

He writes it down carefully. “Amy Santiago,” he says as his pen scratches along the paper. “Uh, for offense, I’m just gonna put ‘huge nerd.’ Sound good?”

She snorts and kicks him under the table. “Y’know, for a cop, you’re kind of a jerk.”

“‘Jerk’ is actually my last name, don’t let the badge fool you.”

That draws a laugh out of her, and his heart jumps in response. “Is Die Hard really your favorite movie?” He asks tentatively.

She smiles coyly. “No. I prefer Training Day.”

“You so deserve your six month sentence, and when you get out, I’m definitely educating you on the real classics.”
got that good song in my feet

Chapter Notes

I asked for prompts on tumblr and received the following:

prompt! six drink amy around jake in established relationship (i.e she's no longer lonely,, she's more clingy and emotional?? idk :) ) - FOURDRINKAMY

The beach house trip is an ever-evolving test of the squad’s dynamic. The first year, back when Charles was still married to Eleanor, it was a little awkward. Amy was still six months away from starting and when Rosa trotted out of her bedroom in a bikini, well…awkward. The next year, Amy discreetly (or so she thought) worked on cases down in the basement until Charles caught her and forced her to sit in the hot tub with the rest of the crew. The year after that, Terry brought Sharon, much to Gina’s chagrin (this was the year that the no-spouses rule was established).

With each passing year came higher levels of alcohol consumption, louder all-night dance parties, more wild Never Have I Ever’s in the hot tub. And even though the house belonged to Boyle (or, more accurately, to Boyle’s ex), Gina loves the beach house. Like, almost as much as she loves her phone.

“Y’know you two can’t come,” she sang the morning the email announcement went out. Jake and Amy, who were already chattering excitedly over the trip, pause and shoot her a look. She shoots them her most winning smile and shrugs. “Sorry, I don’t make the rules. No significant others.”

“There’s another rule too, oh, what was it…Ames?”

“Detectives only.”

“That’s right, detectives only! Sorry, Goose, looks like all three of us are stuck here for the trip.”

“Unless…you wanna make a deal?”

They’re wearing nearly identical masks of smug triumph, and Gina wants to hurl her pencil sharpener at their heads. “Okay, first of all? Your acting is absolutely abysmal. I have no idea how either one of you have ever caught a criminal while undercover. Secondly, I’ll only drop this if Six-Drink Amy comes along, too. I miss that messy bitch.”

Amy’s face folds into that unflattering teacher look. “Ha-ha,” she deadpans, “not gonna happen. Six-Drink Amy almost got me fired last year.”

“No, that was Five-Drink Amy. Six-Drink Amy ended up passed out on the couch by ten o’clock.”

“Yeah, and I’d like to remember the first night this time around, thank you very much!”

Gina kicks her feet up on her desk and scrolls down her Twitter Feed. “Whatever, your loss.” She says flippantly.

“How?”
They leave a week later. Gina and Rosa take a secret shot of tequila in the evidence lock-up before they leave the precinct (because who wouldn’t need a shot of tequila when being faced with a four-hour drive in a car with Jake and Amy making eyes at each other and probably holding hands and ugh, it’s still super weird, okay). The alcohol is still burning in her throat when she struts out of the precinct, bag slung over her shoulder and sunglasses perched on the bridge of her nose. Jake and Amy are already standing by Amy’s car, squinting up at her and Rosa. “Ready?” Jake calls.

“We’ll meet y’all out there!” Terry calls, sliding into the driver’s seat as Gina and Rosa haul their luggage into Amy’s trunk. Holt waves farewell from the passenger’s seat as they pull out; they round the corner just as Gina and Rosa fully descend the steps of the precinct.

“I got shotgun.” Gina announces, shouldering her way through Jake and Amy to stake her claim.

“Uh,” Amy grunts.

“Actually, according to the rotation, it’s Amy’s year to ride shotgun and mine to drive.” Jake says, sounding only vaguely amused.

“Nuh-uh. Changin’ the rules. I’m DJ this year. Amy, you can ride in the boot.”

Surprisingly, they don’t fight much. Gina blasts Spice Girls and tries to ignore the fact that Jake keeps glancing at Amy through the rear-view mirror with this stupid dopey smile on his face.

The magic of the beach house takes over once they arrive, and it only takes minimal goading from Gina and Rosa to get Amy to drink. Something is…different, though. Different than last time. Gina finds herself frowning and taking meticulous mental notes as the night progresses, determined to identify the cause.

The Revised Santiago Drunkenness Scale:

One-Drink Amy: somehow manages to find a way to work Jake into every conversation she has. Example:

“What about you, Santiago? You looking forward to Episode Eight?”

“Uh-huh. It’s like I was telling Jake, it’s like, Jake, obviously Rey is Luke’s daughter, okay? And the…the premise of the movie will be that Finn is looking for Rey because he loves her, okay, Finn loves Rey. He’s in love with her. Hey, have you seen Jake?”

Two-Drink Amy: still loud, but suspiciously quiet and giggly whenever Jake appears. Example:

“Yo, Peralta, wouldja go grab the salad tongs? Kitchen counter.”

“You got it.”

The racket in the kitchen suddenly cuts off, Jake snorts, and Amy giggles. Gina gags.

Three-Drink Amy: only wants to dance with Jake. But not, like, dirty dancing. Just spinning and twirling and all that stupid romantic-comedy crap. He seems to have no objection to this - rather, he laughs and spins her around all red-faced from the beer he’s been drinking all night and the exhilaration. Again, Gina gags. By that point, she’d identified the source of change - Pineapples, of all people - but she was invested. Morbid curiosity, if you will.

Four-Drink Amy: this one is a bit harder to measure. There didn’t seem to be any majorly obvious outward signs of drunkenness, but…Amy’s eyes definitely lingered on Jake for longer than normal.
And maybe her cheeks flushed a little bit. (This one will need more observation, Gina decides.)

Five-Drink Amy: weirdly confident…about Jake. Example:

“Yeah, yeah, I heard The Vulture bagged some dope with fifteen pounds of marijuana, but d’you guys remember that time Jake got a guy with forty-seven pounds of cocaine? He could totally beat The Vulture up, is all I’m sayin’.”

“Oh, babe? It was…it was forty-seven ounces of…of marijuana. You okay?”

“M’fine, I’m…I wanna…hey, Diaz! Come wrestle with me!”

“No.”

“Yeah, no. I think you’ve had enough.”

Gina watches Amy twist away from Jake’s outstretched hand, the glass of vodka cranberry she’d just emerged from the kitchen with just out of his reach. “Nope, no,” she shoves him back with her left hand and tilts the glass back with her right, downing it all in one go.

“Oh, this should be fun.” Gina murmurs to herself with a smile.

It’s…not.

They all end up down in the basement, spread out in a loose circle on the furniture there, and somehow Gina ends up on the opposite side of the circle from Jake and Amy. Meaning that, to her horror, she’s offered a front-row view of Jake and Amy…cuddling.

Jake’s reclined on the couch, head resting on the back of the couch, and Amy’s curled up at his side. Her arm is draped across his stomach and her head is on his chest, up close to his chin. She watches Boyle prance around the middle of the circle shouting about charades with half-lidded eyes that flutter close each time Jake presses an absent kiss against the crown of her head. Which is, like, often.

Gina waits for the urge to gag to come, but it doesn’t. Instead, she feels a strange, budding warmth in her chest. She peers down at her half-empty glass in disgust, because surely the cause of this sensation is bad tequila.

No such thing, she hears her mother say somewhere in the back of her head.

The warmth spreads in increments as Gina inadvertently watches Jake comb his fingers through Amy’s hair, watches Amy snuggle closer to his chest, watches Amy drop a quick kiss to the base of Jake’s throat. They’re still actively engaged in the game (which has gone from charades to Boyle Acts Something Stupid Out While The Squad Drunkenly Tries To Guess), but it’s clear that they’re totally wrapped up in each other.

For a moment, Gina forgets that Amy’s the most anal person she’s ever met. For a moment, Gina’s actually happy that they found each other. They’re both nerds, after all. They’ll probably make adorable nerd-babies who will be her godchildren and she’ll get to teach them how to be fabulous since neither Jake nor Amy will have the skill sets to do so.

Ugh, God, this has to be bad tequila.

As she stands to empty her glass out for a vodka-based refill, she adds one last item to her mental list:

Six-Drink Amy: totally in love with Jake Peralta.
to make up for the times i've been cheated on

Chapter Notes

I asked for prompts on tumblr, and received the following:

u heathen okAY OKAY imma be Terrible and say Jake gets shot protecting Captain Holt and Amy and Rosa react ;;;;;))))))))))) - PHIL-THE-STONE

It happens quickly.

Their collar - Armando Thomas - has been leading them on a ridiculous chase through Central Park for the last twenty minutes. He's been robbing jewelry stores at gunpoint for the last four weeks, leading Diaz and Peralta all over New York City, and in a desperate bid the detectives enlisted the entire nine-nine for backup on the night of their ambush.

It’s only partially because Major Crimes has been circling Ray’s head over this case for three-and-a-half weeks.

The squad is spread out in a line, racing through a particularly woody area. Peralta’s to his right, whooping each time he leaps over a barrier, and Jeffords is to his left, grunting each time he tears through low-hanging branches. Ray’s eyes are fixated on the cell phone light bobbing and weaving through the trees several yards ahead of him. So fixated, in fact, that he does not notice Thomas until he’s practically on top of him.

Ray sees the flash of silver in the low light, hears the click of a gun being cocked, and hears footsteps rushing at him from his right.

The next few minutes come to him in pieces. There’s a strangled shout, a hand on his chest, shoving him backwards. He falls, hears the gunshot. Twigs and gravel dig into his palms and Peralta is on the ground in front of him, on his side, arms and legs splayed. The aftershocks of the gunshot work through his system and he stares, eyes wide and unblinking, at Peralta’s heaving back.

The squad leaps into action and they’re moving in colorful blurs shooting through the darkness around him. He sees Boyle and Jeffords charge after the suspect while Santiago and Diaz converge on Peralta. Santiago eases him to his back, braces his head, while Diaz swiftly rips the flannel button-down Peralta is wearing open. Ray blinks. Diaz’s hands are flying over Peralta’s torso.

His hearing fades back in slowly, ambushed by the sounds of Diaz grunting, of Santiago speaking, of Peralta gasping. “Jake, Jake, look at me,” Santiago urges, “you’re okay, yeah? It’s okay, it’s gonna be okay, you’re gonna be fine -”

“Captain!”

He rips his eyes away from the red stain spreading over Peralta’s torso and finds Diaz shooting him a hard, piercing glare.

He opens his mouth to respond, but nothing comes out. It feels like his last inhale is caught in his chest, bubbling around his heart, solidifying and anchoring him to where Peralta knocked him out of the way.
“He’s in shock,” he hears Diaz growl. “Call for back-up.”

“This is Detective Santiago, I’ve got an officer down, I repeat, there is an officer down in the north-eastern quadrant of Central Park!” He sees Santiago drop her radio somewhere to her right, scrambling closer to Peralta’s head. Her hands reach to cup his face, and they tremble on the way there. “Jake, you have to stay with me, okay?”

Peralta coughs and sputters, and his shoulders lift off the ground. Diaz shoves him back down firmly with one hand.

“No no no, don’t try to sit up, it’s okay, um…h-hey, did you hear they’re remaking *Die Hard*?”

Peralta makes a strangled sound, like a protest, and when Santiago laughs it’s watery and more than a little panicked.

“Yeah, yeah, and they’re casting Bill Hader as McClane.”

“H-hate…that…” Peralta chokes.

“I know, I know, talk to me about it, tell me why you hate it, Jake, no, no, Jake, Jake, open your eyes, *open your eyes, Jake!*”

Diaz is cursing in Spanish and Santiago is tapping the side of Peralta’s face while shouting his name and sirens are wailing somewhere nearby and Ray still can’t move.

Paramedics get Peralta strapped to a gurney and Santiago launches herself into the back of the ambulance without a backwards glance. Ray doesn’t remember standing or getting out to the street, but he stands stock-still, staring after the ambulance as it squeals away.

“Captain.” Diaz’s voice is low in his left ear. He glances down at her; she still has Peralta’s blood on her hands. “D’you need a ride?”

It’s a true display of how in-shock he truly is that he actually climbs onto the back of Diaz’s motorcycle.

They’re ushered into a private waiting room once they get to the emergency room with little more than a cursory, “he’s in surgery,” and twenty minutes later Jeffords and Boyle arrive. They tell them that they caught Thomas trying to jump-start a motor scooter and threw him into the back of a squad car (well, Jeffords tells them; Boyle wails loudly in the far corner).

There’s nothing for a little while. Diaz idly spins a pocket knife on a table to her left. Boyle paces the length of the waiting room, pausing occasionally to shout an impassioned speech at the ceiling. Jeffords texts his wife. And Ray…sits.

And waits.

Two hours later, Santiago appears. She’s pale and he thinks he can detect dried tear tracks on her face, but there’s a peaceful kind of relief shining in her eyes. “He’s okay,” she says, her voice quiet and hoarse, like sandpaper.

Boyle promptly collapses, wailing once again, but this time it’s in pure joy.

Once they have him propped up in a chair, Santiago looks to Ray tentatively. “They said…they said he can have visitors. One at a time.”
He nods slowly, inhales deeply. “What room?” He asks.

He hardly recognizes his own voice.

The walk between that waiting room and room 519 feels remarkably similar to the walk between the parking garage and the precinct on his very first shift as a detective; his knees feel very weak, his hands trembling when they loosen from fists, his chest quaking, the world just a little bit uneven. He steels himself at room 517, holds his breath at 518, and freezes at 519.

Peralta’s in a highly reclined position, leaned back on a rather large stack of hospital pillows. He’s pale too, though Ray assumes it’s from loss of blood rather than panic (as was the case for Santiago). His head lifts an inch from his pillows upon spotting Ray hovering in the doorway.

“Captain,” he rasps, and his voice is too quiet, too weak, too quivering. Peralta is loud and boisterous and present, not…damaged.

“I…wanted to thank you. What you did in that park…” Ray glances down at his shoes; his toe is a centimeter from the threshold. “There aren’t many cops out there who would do what you did. Not…not in my experience.”

A flash of something familiar sparks in the back of Peralta’s eyes. “You’re my captain,” he says with a small shrug. “And, besides, isn’t it our job to serve and protect?”

“The public, Peralta. Not necessarily each other.”

“Yeah, well, that’s not how I roll.” He shifts slightly and grimaces. “Look, if…you’re, like, thinking about all the stupid guys from your precinct back in the eighties, it’s…they were ignorant bigots. I didn’t have to think about it, Captain.”

Ray clears his throat, but it does nothing to rid the lump that has suddenly risen there. “Yes, well, I…thank you.”

Peralta’s mouth twists up in a half-smile. “You’re welcome. You can come in, you know.”

Ray does. He perches in the seat to Peralta’s right, noting the seat is warm, likely from Santiago. “I must say, your usage of ‘ignorant bigots’ was…impressive.”

Peralta waves his hand. “Amy got me one of those word-a-day calendars as a gag gift last Christmas. She doesn’t know I actually use it, so don’t tell her.”

Somehow, incredibly, Ray snorts. A bright smile splits across Peralta’s face. “I am thankful that you will survive, Peralta.”

“Aw, I love you too, Captain!”
why don't you sit right down and stay awhile?

Chapter Summary

I asked for prompts on tumblr, and received the following:

Prompt! Jake finds out Amy has never seen Diehard and takes her to see it immediately - TARDIISBLUE

“You’re…you’re joking.”

Amy grips the steering wheel before her a bit harder, concentrating on the seams that dig into her fingers rather than the smile that’s fighting to break loose on her otherwise indifferent face. “Nope.” She says, popping the ‘p.’

Jake gapes at her across the center console. “Seriously, Santiago? I’ve been your best friend for three years now and you’re just now telling me that you’ve never seen Die Hard?”

“First of all, you’re not my best friend. If anything, I’m your best friend.” He scoffs and mutters something about Boyle under his breath, but she presses on. “Secondly, it’s not a big deal. I just never got around to it,” she shrugs. The red light they’re stopped at flashes green, and she eases slowly onto the gas pedal. “I was busy in eighty-eight.”

“Busy being a nerd,” Jake grumbles. She gives him what she hopes is a disparaging glance before returning her attention to the road. “God. God. I can’t believe this. It’s, like, personally offensive.”

“It’s just a stupid movie,” she says. It was really meant to be a thought, but it spills out of her before she can stop it. Jake whirls around, scandalized expression on his face. And, just her luck, she hits another red light. “Just…just a stupid movie?” He repeats. His voice is low and dangerous.

“Sorry -”

“Nope, that settles it, you’re watching it. With me. I’m keeping you honest, Santiago.” He crosses his arms over his chest and nods firmly, as though he’s just decided her entire future for her. “You’ll thank me later.”

“Should I even bother trying to get out of this?”

“You live in apartment three-twelve in the Rosewood Apartment Building on Leonard Street.” She pulls a face, and he smirks. “I don’t care where we watch it. I’ll break in at four in the morning and blast it on your TV if that’s what it takes.”

She relents, and three hours later she finds herself on Jake’s couch, beer in hand, watching him fumble around with his DVD player. He snaps the DVD case closed and tosses it on the floor to the left of his television, shooting Amy a winning smile before hurrying off to his kitchen to get the popcorn out of his microwave. “McClane is the bad guy, right?” Amy calls, hoping he can’t hear the grin in her voice.
“I’ll ban you from this apartment building, Amy Santiago, don’t think I won’t do it!” He shouts back.

He emerges just as the opening credits start, shoveling popcorn into his mouth, already riveted to the screen. His distracted state causes him to fall on the couch so close to where she already sits that their arms end up sort of overlapping, and no matter how hard she tries to readjust, she just can’t get free of him.

So she stays like that.

For two hours.

And the strangest thing is…she doesn’t even mind it that much after the first ten minutes or so.

“Oh right,” Jake says once the DVD loops back to the main menu. He shifts to the side so that he’s facing her on the couch. “I need your full analysis of this movie.”

She snorts, but the look he’s giving her is dead serious. “Are you...are you serious right now?” She asks, and he nods. “But...you hate it when I analyze movies.”

“Yeah, but I love this movie. I love it. Like, I want this projected on my tombstone when I die. And since this is my favorite movie and I’m your best friend -”

“You’re not -”

“- I wanna know what you think about it.”

She furrows her brow. Surely her opinion can’t be that big a deal.

“I thought it was pretty good.” She says carefully. His eyes are guarded. “I mean, okay, yeah, it was great. Definitely top five.”

“Top five? Try top two, Santiago. Training Day’s the only one that comes close.”

“If you think that, why’d you even bother asking me?”

“So that I can make fun of your terrible taste in cop movies, duh!”

“Okay, Training Day is way better than Die Hard, hands down! It’s not even a competition, are you kidding me?”

“What? You’re insane, okay? No cop movie can even compare -”

“Twenty-One Jump Street is a better cop movie than Die Hard!”

Jake’s jaw drops, and Amy struggles not to laugh. “Y’know, you’re lucky I know you well enough to know you’re joking, because if you weren’t, I’d make you watch it again.” He says after a moment of recovery.

“Of course you know me well enough to know that, I’m your best friend and you’re obsessed with me.”

“That’s it. Get comfortable, Santiago, we’re goin’ in for round two.”
Chapter Summary

I asked for prompts on tumblr, and received the following:

as payback for the dress she wore and having to dance with scully in the bet amy plans a
bad date to take jake on even though she doesnt expect to use it and later (while dating
jake?) finds her notes while going through and cleaning out some old binders/notebooks
- ANONYMOUS

“So…explain to me again what all of this is?”

Amy represses a heavy sigh and glances up at Jake from her seat at her dining room table, who’s
standing beside her, beer in hand. He’s staring down at the madness (okay, it’s not really madness,
it’s more like…carefully-controlled chaos) spread out across the table in front of her. “I told you,”
she says as she hefts another binder emblazoned with a large 2013-2014 label up from her to-do
stack, “it’s spring cleaning. I go through all my old binders and throw out to-do lists and contingency
plans and stuff like that. Stuff that I’ve already completed.”

He makes a small noise of understanding in the back of his throat and turns his head to get a better
look at the first few pages of her 2013 binder. “Is that work stuff?” He asks.

“Mhm,” she hums. “This is from right around the time Captain Holt started, look,” she lifts the binder
closer to him, opened to a page titled Ways to Impress the New Captain. “Wow, this stuff really takes
me back.”

“Yeah,” he says, though he sounds far less convinced. “So is this, like…does this take you all night,
or…”?

“You can go watch Fixer-Upper,” she says, rolling her eyes and smiling.

“Ah, you’re the best, babe,” he stoops and kisses the top of her head and quickly sidesteps her papers
and binders to hurry off to her living room. “I just can’t resist Chip!”

“I know you can’t,” she calls with a good-natured shake of her head, rifling through the stack behind
her ‘office’ tab. It’s mostly just organizational solutions to the chaos that was the file room that were
never realized, each one revised and edited and then tucked away in the binder. She pulls them all
out and shifts them into the half-full garbage bag to be taken to a bulk shredder the following day and
flips to the next tab. The ‘partner’ tab.

“Oh…my God,” she says softly. She’d forgotten all about this list; she’d written it at 3 in the
morning and promptly shoved it in her binder and never looked at it again.

“What?” Jake calls from the living room.

“Remember the bet?” She calls, still scanning the list.

“Pfft. Like I could forget.” He pauses, and when she doesn’t respond, he tries again. “What about
it?”
“Well, I sort of…made a revenge plan.”

She hears footsteps approaching quickly and when she looks up he’s skidding into the dining room, face lit with intrigue. “And it made it into the binder?” He asks in wonderment. “Lemme see.”

He grabs the binder from her outstretched hands and slowly lowers himself into the dining room chair across from her, eyes flying across the page. “Oh my God,” he scoffs, “the Natural History Museum? The Brooklyn Public Library?” He gasps and looks up at her over the top of the binder, eyes wide with horror. “You were gonna take me to an off-Broadway musical?”

“I was trying to think of your worst nightmares,” she says, a smile creeping across her face. “I think at one point I had Charles teaching us how to make something super complicated written down, but it got deleted before I printed it out.”

He shivers and continues scanning the list. “You…you really thought this through,” he says slowly.

“I had to dance with Scully, Jake.”

“Oh, please, that doesn’t mean I deserve a carriage ride through Central Park! What are we, tourists?”

“It took half an hour to get that dress zipped by myself! Half an hour!”

“Would’ve taken three seconds if you’d have let me help you like I originally planned. Actually,” he flashes a thoughtful gaze up at his ceiling. “Nah, it probably would’ve taken the same amount of time, considering the fact that you would’ve been half-naked and stuff.”

“Shut up, you would’ve been a perfect gentleman and you know it.”

“Y’know, I don’t even wish I could argue with you on that.”

He teases her a little more before her phone begins to ring in the living room. When she comes back, he’s fiddling around on his phone, the binder forgotten on top of her organized stacks spread across the table. Suddenly she’s lost all motivation to finish tonight like she originally planned; instead, she drags him up by the elbow, into the living room and onto the couch where they snuggle beneath one of her blankets and watch re-runs of Fixer-Upper.

Three days later, she’s in his apartment searching through his bathroom drawers for a bandage when she finds two tickets to the Lincoln Center Theater tucked away beside an expired bottle of nasal spray. The date of purchase is from three days previously.

He smiles when she walks out of the bathroom with them, plucking them from her fingers and dropping to one knee. “Amy Santiago,” he starts, his voice quivering with laughter, “I wanna go on the worst date ever with you.”

(Even though he whines and complains under his breath most of the time, she can tell he enjoys it.)
Jake works from the break room the next morning; he’ll never admit it out loud, but it’s because he’s scared. Scared of the woman sitting across from his (currently empty) desk. Scared of the empty office behind her.

He’s not really sure when his life fell apart so spectacularly, but it happened in the blink of an eye. In less than eight hours, he lost his best friend and his captain. Part of him, the quiet, sniffling, abandoned seven-year-old in him, wonders what he did wrong. Because surely this is somehow his fault.

He hears Amy’s voice and looks up through the break room window on reflex, spotting her standing by Rosa’s desk, pointing to something in a case file clased in her right hand. He watches her lips move as she speaks, and he’s suddenly plunged back into vivid memories from the night before - the exact smell of the kitchen surrounding him the first time their lips crashed together, the feel of the air conditioning vent musing his hair as Amy’s hands fluttered on the back of his neck and his shoulder, the muffled sounds of the restaurant around the corner over Amy’s little gasp of surprise. Despite the fact that his heart has been sitting like a dead weight in his chest for close to twelve hours now, he feels billions of butterflies burst to life in his stomach.

(Of course, that kiss was nothing compared to the one they shared twenty minutes later beneath the tree in the park. He was so caught up in the pure vigor with which she kissed him that he hadn’t even felt the loose bark digging into his back until he got home and found little shards of it stuck to his leather jacket.)

They both stayed late to finish up paperwork and she’d (gently) shot him down yet again right here in this very room, not two feet away from where he currently sits. Despite what he said when he left the room last night, he finds himself struggling just to make eye-contact with her.

She seems to be having the same issue. He isn’t sure if that makes him feel better or worse.

(Worse. Definitely worse.)

He does his best to turn his attention back to his work, but now that he’s aware of her he can’t stop tracking her in his periphery. He watches her hover near Rosa’s desk for another minute or two before taking the file and striding purposefully toward the captain’s office. She falters halfway there, and then pauses; at this point, he can’t even pretend to be working anymore. He lifts his head to look at her fully and she’s just staring at the now-empty office, a tiny crease between her brows. She turns
away slowly, toward Terry’s desk (and the break room by extension) and their eyes meet through the open doorway.

If he’s not mistaken, the ghost of a smile flashes across her face. But there’s sadness in her eyes, and he can’t breathe.

He turns his head away and glares down at his file and he hears her heels click along the tiled floor and stop at Terry’s desk. “Do I need to wait for the new CO or can you sign this for now?” He hears her ask.

“I would wait. He should be here pretty soon.” There’s a pause filled with the sounds of the precinct, and then, “you okay, Santiago?”

“Fine.” She says, but her voice is far too high and squeaky to be anywhere near convincing. “It’s just, uh…fine. I’m fine.”

Jake taps his pen against the table, waiting for Terry to address it. “Okay. Let me know if you need me to look anything over before the new captain gets here.”

“Will do.”

Jake looks up in time to catch Amy hurrying away from Terry’s desk. Terry’s attention is already fixated back on the computer screen, busily answering emails. No! Jake thinks. Go after her! Can’t you tell she’s about to lose it?

She disappears from view for a moment, and then reappears, rounding the corner next to Rosa’s desk and heading down the hall. He waits to see if Rosa will get up to follow her, but Rosa doesn’t even glance up from her paperwork. He cranes his head around toward Charles, but Charles is rifling through his bottom desk drawer, completely oblivious to what has just happened.

He wonders, briefly, if Gina would have noticed or done anything. It doesn’t matter, he supposes. Gina’s gone now, too.

He jiggles his leg anxiously. No one is getting up. No one is going after her.

Because that’s his job, he suddenly realizes.

His mind automatically replays all the awkwardness of the last twelve hours - and twelve months before that - but he pushes it away quickly. Beyond those twelve months lie almost seven years of beautiful partnership, of loyalty and friendship and understanding. Long overnight stakeouts and impromptu pizza parties in the precinct, organizational overhauls that last for hours, movie marathons and popcorn and beer. Amy Santiago is one of his all-time favorite people, and suddenly the idea of losing her over something as stupid as a kiss (an earth-shattering, mind-blowing kiss) seems stupid.

So he pushes himself up and strides out of the break room purposefully, down the long hallway next to Rosa’s desk, straight to the evidence lock-up, spurred on by determination to get his best friend back. Because he can’t get Holt and Gina back to the Nine-Nine by sheer force of will, and he can’t control who the new captain will be, but damn it he can fight to get his best friend back.

She’s been waiting for him. He doesn’t realize it until her arms are hooked around his neck and his are wrapped around her, pulling her as close as possible in that moment. The thought enters his head randomly, like a spark from a short-circuiting fuse. She’s been waiting for him, possibly for forever now.

He’s so glad he finally caught up.
The first fight comes six months after their wedding. Of course, within those six months, they had moments of annoyance and irritation toward each other. They still bickered (as usual). But none of it ever felt like anything more than their typical banter. None of it was out of the ordinary. Their first fight, though - their first fight as a married couple - is a knock-down drag-out crazy bitch fight.

And it’s over peanut butter and jelly, of all things.

But, really, it’s more than the PB and J. It’s that Jake sees no problem using the same knife between the peanut butter and the jelly jars without washing the knife in between, leaving streaks of peanut butter in the jelly that promptly ruins the jelly (especially because he also has a habit of just…leaving the jelly out. On the counter. Where it gets warm and melty and ruined). And no matter how many times she asks him to stop and he swears he’ll never do it again, she inevitably finds herself buying yet another jar of jelly every time she goes to the grocery store.

It’s a miracle they aren’t in financial crisis, considering all the money she’s spent on stupid...
strawberry jelly.

She comes home late on the night of their first fight, exhausted and worn thin, feeling more like an exposed nerve than a human being. Her whole day consisted of working a kidnapping case for a teenage girl who had been missing for three days - and by the end of the day, her case transformed into a homicide. She’d taken the time to go to the victim’s parents’ house to break the news as gently as she could to them; it was while she was sitting on their couch in grim silence listening to the mother wail while the father shouted obscenities at her about not doing her job right that Major Crimes swooped in and stole the case out from under her.

“Hey babe!” she hears Jake call brightly from the living room as soon as she comes inside. She mumbles a greeting back as she drops her purse on the ground beside their coat rack and shrugs out of her jacket. “They had an episode of *How It’s Made* about shoelaces earlier. Did you know the little plastic thing is called an aglet?”

“I didn’t,” she sighs, toeing her shoes off and sliding them to the right of the coat rack. His are discarded in the middle of the walkway, and with a heavy sigh she moves those out of the way to sit beside hers. “Is that what you’ve been doing all day?”

“Pretty much. Oh, I broke my phone again.”

She pauses. “How?”

He’s quiet for a second, and then she hears him clear his throat. “I found my old hoverboard,” he says, his voice a bit smaller than before. “My phone was in my back pocket…it never even stood a chance.”

He laughs as though it’s funny, as though she hadn’t spent ten minutes crying to his voicemail in her car about how God-awful her whole day had been. “Glad you had a good day off,” she says after composing herself for a moment.

“I really did!” He calls as she shuffles into the kitchen. “Ah, although…I sort of accidentally deleted one of your recordings. It said it was new. I’m really sorry. But, if it helps, I found a rerun of the same episode airing tomorrow night and I’ve already set the DVR to record it!”

She can hear him talking, but his words don’t reach her through the white noise suddenly buzzing in her head.

The jelly jar is sitting out on the counter. Even from the distance from which she stands, she can see streaks of peanut butter inside the jar.

“Jake?”

He must sense the sudden shift in the temperature of her voice. The sounds of the television cut off and their hardwood floors creak and groan beneath his approaching footsteps. She turns, and he’s ducking into the kitchen, already rubbing the back of his neck in shame. “Hey, I’m so sorry -”

“No, no,” she interrupts, “you’re not. You’re not sorry. Because if you were actually sorry, you would have *listened* to me the first time I asked you to stop doing this.”

“Honestly, it was an accident -”

“I don’t care if it was an accident, Jake!” She snaps. She feels blood rushing through her ears, and it makes the pause sound like thunder. “You always do this, you always say whatever it is you think I want to hear and then you go and do whatever you want to do and I’m left to clean up the mess!”
She starts blindly grabbing at the discarded butter knife on the counter, at the tossed-aside jelly jar lid and the still-opened loaf of bread. “You can’t do shit like this and expect me to be your mother and to just clean up behind you all the time! We’re married, for Christ’s sake, this is supposed to be a partnership! Stop being such a lazy slob and be considerate!”

There’s a flash of hurt in his eyes, but she’s too far lost in her own anger to truly care. “Lazy slob?”

He repeats. “Are you serious right now?”

“Considering I had to move your shoes out of the entryway again and you ruined another jar of jelly, yeah, I’m serious right now! I’m sick and tired of cleaning up all your messes!”

“Oh, I understand what you’re saying, but you’re being totally unfair -”

“I’m being unfair? Me?” She tries to scoff, but in her fury it comes out as more of a high-pitched laugh. In a flash, she’s hurled the knife and the jelly jar lid into the sink and the load of bread against the side of the counter where the bag bursts and the bread explodes all of over the floor, but the commotion doesn’t reach her through the haze. “What’s unfair is that I worked my ass off for three days to find that girl! What’s unfair is that some bastard decided she deserved to die! What’s unfair is that while I was getting yelled at for not doing my job by that little girl’s dad, the stupid fucking Vulture was stealing the case! What’s unfair is that after getting shit on all day long, I come home to your fucking shoes in the middle of the walkway and the seventh spoiled jelly jar in a goddamn week sitting on the goddamn counter! Don’t talk to me about what’s unfair, Peralta, don’t you dare!”

Jake, to his credit, looks as though he’s just been punched right in the gut. His eyes are wide and he seems to be holding his breath, like he’s waiting for her to keep yelling. Her chest, in contrast, positively heaves. She’s only just now aware of the fact that tears are streaming down her face, but she doesn’t care. She clenches her fists at her sides and hopes the trembling in her arms looks more like she’s restraining herself and less like she’s about to completely break down.

“Oh, Ames,” he says softly.

He moves toward her quickly, leaving her no time to retreat before he’s wrapped her up in a fierce hug. She remains stiff for a moment or two, every muscle in her body tensed. And then she breaks.

The violence of it all kind of surprises her, in the one small corner of her brain that hasn’t short-circuited from the onslaught. She flings her arms around his shoulders, buries her face in the crook of his neck, and sobs. Her knees give out after a minute of this but he seems prepared; he maneuvers them over to the dining room table just a few short feet away and drops into one of the chairs, situating her so that she’s sitting on his lap, forehead pressed against his neck. His arms hold her close to his chest and he rocks her side to side, and when her sobs begin to taper, she realizes that he’s murmuring quietly to her.

“I’m so sorry, honey, I’m so sorry…it’s over now, you’re home, you’re okay, it’s over…” he says as he drops kisses across her forehead and down her nose. She sniffs when he presses his cheek against her forehead. “I love you, I love you, I’m so so sorry…”

“I’m sorry,” she says hoarsely once her lower lip has stopped quivering.

“Don’t apologize, don’t, it’s really okay. I understand.”

“No, it’s…it’s not okay, I shouldn’t have taken all of that out on you. I shouldn’t have, and I’m sorry. I feel like such a dick right now.”

“You’re not.” He says sharply. “You had a really bad day and I made it worse. I understand why
you reacted that way now.”

His left hand drifts down her thigh and rests against her knee, pulling her a bit closer, and she stares at the silver band on his ring finger. “You still wanna be married to me after that crazy bitch fit?”

He scoffs. “It’s gonna take a helluva lot more than throwing stuff around in the kitchen to make me not want to be married to you, Ames.”

“You sure?”

He squeezes her briefly. “For better or worse, right?” he says, voice soft.

Her eyes flutter shut and she leans into him gratefully. “For better or worse,” she echoes.

They stay where they are for a little while longer before Jake jiggles his leg beneath her. “Let’s move to the couch,” he murmurs.

Once she’s on her feet he wraps his arm around her shoulders gently, so gently that she wants to cry all over again. He steers her into the living room and, after a bit of situating, she ends up laid across the couch with her head on a pillow in his lap. She falls asleep to the quiet sounds of How It’s Made: Guitars and the feeling of Jake’s fingers combing through her hair and gently scratching along her scalp.

She wakes up two hours later to a silent, empty apartment. There’s a note on the coffee table in front of her, though, written in Jake’s handwriting:

*Gone to get jelly and bread - I LOVE YOU!!* ❤
I asked for prompts on tumblr, and received the following:

JAKE AND AMY MEET THE EXACT SAME WAY JANE AND MICHAEL DO
AU (an unassuming beat cop shows up to her epic twenty first birthday door and gets mistaken for a stripper) - PHIL-THE-STONE

When Jake was a kid, his Nana watched soap operas. It was, unfortunately, a daily occurrence. He vividly remembers being barred from the living room every afternoon when General Hospital came on; he and Gina were quarantined in the old guest bedroom where they were allowed to play (quietly) until the show was over.

(Come to think of it, that’s actually his first cop-related memory - one of the storylines involved a police officer and Jake distinctly remembers his Nana calling him “dreamy.” He just thought the uniform looked cool. He didn’t realize it at the time, but the sight of that muscle-bound actor in a too-tight cop uniform lit a small flame in the back of his mind that would one day burn brighter than a forest fire.

Becoming a cop is his destiny, and his whole life lead him to it. At least, that’s how it feels.)

His mother watched them, too, but she wasn’t quite as fanatic as his Nana was. Still, she would always grab a copy of Soap Opera Digest while they stood in line at the grocery store and would tut at whatever drama that particular copy predicted. His Nana used to call sometimes, on days when Jake stayed home from school sick, and she would stay on the line with his mother for an hour discussing the trials and tribulations of fictional people.

Personally, he never really saw the appeal. There was way too much drama and not nearly enough action to balance it all out. Plus, the boys were always kissing the girls, which was gross at the time. He much preferred Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles or Pokemon.

Now, as a twenty-four-year-old police officer in Brooklyn, he’s pretty pleased to discover that not much has changed about his taste in television. He still craves action (which is a major part of the reason he chose to become a cop) and he sees plenty of it in his beat. Unfortunately, he also sees a lot of drama. He saw more drama on his first week as a cop than he had in his entire life before that. His field training officer laughed the first time Jake broke up a fist-fight outside of a vegan coffee shop; “These hipsters live life like a damn soap opera,” he’d said as Jake mopped sweat off of his forehead.

Of course, that was almost eighteen months ago. He’d completed that field training six months previously, and had taken to working his beat solo for most of his shifts. It’s a pretty comfortable existence, and he’s happy, really. But the flame still burns for something…more. And he just can’t figure out why. It’s maddeningly frustrating, because he’s spent his whole life working for this, and yet…something is missing. He’s pretty sure it’s a highly-coveted detective position, but he still has a ways to go as a beat cop before that’s a possibility.

Whatever it is, he doesn’t expect to find it or anything close to it one balmy evening in July.
“Got a four-fifteen on seventy-four twelve Lawrence Avenue,” a voice filters through his radio. Jake furrows his brow, before his academy course on police codes comes rushing back to him. Four-fifteen - noise complaint.

He sighs and grabs his radio from the console. “Copy that,” he says into the receiver. He’s only two blocks away, and he’s been parked by the curb doing nothing for the last twenty minutes. If nothing else, this will at least give him something to do for the next five.

He forgets the house number on the way over, but it ends up not mattering - he can clearly see signs of a party down the street when he turns the corner. Twinkle lights hang from the porch and it appears as though every light inside the house is on, and he can hear the music through his closed windows from fifty yards away.

There are three women in nice dresses decked out in the plastic jewelry Gina used to wear when they played dress-up as kids, all on the steps leading to the front door, lounging against the handrails with red party cups in hand. He parks across the street and steps out, and all three of them turn to appraise him curiously. He nods politely when he gets to the bottom of the stairs, and the one closest to him gasps and whips around to the other two and begins whispering. They all giggle, the high-pitched kind that’s fueled by alcohol, and he does his best not to grimace. This was probably not going to be the most fun call he’ll ever answer.

He side-steps the gaggle on the stairs and knocks on the door as loudly as he can, ignoring the self-conscious prickle on the back of his neck. “NYPD, open up,” he calls, his voice carrying over the bumping bass line inside.

There’s a moment before the door opens where he stares at the wood, studies the way the paint seeps into the pores of the wood surface. He doesn’t know it, but it’s the last moment in the portion of his life that he will later think of as before.

Because the next moment - the moment the door swings open and he gets his first glimpse at what is happening inside - is the moment his life changes.

Forever.

The woman who answers his call is a few inches shorter than him, but he finds his shoulders loosening and his breath catching as he takes in her appearance. Her hair is long and dark and glossy beneath her plastic crown, and her skin is perfectly smooth and tanned, not a blemish in sight. Her eyes are wide and bright and as he stares down at her he feels his mind cycle through a thousand different words for the color brown, failing to come up with one that does the breathtaking shade looking up at him justice. She’s breathing hard, like she’s been running, like she’s been sprinting toward this moment like a runner in a race sprints for the finish line. He’s so mesmerized by her face that he barely processes what lies a few inches south - all he knows is she’s in dress and it’s the most vivid shade of red he’s ever seen in real life.

All of his training on how to be aware and prepared for any situation goes out the window as he finds himself transfixed on this beautiful woman wearing a cheap plastic tiara.

The woman whips around, toward the inside of the house (and the large crowd of very drunk women dancing and mingling behind her), and begins to shout: “You guys got me a stripper?”

Moment: ruined.

The crowd behind her quite literally forms into a mob, manicured hands reaching for his chest, pulling him into the house by the collar of his shirt. He immediately begins retreating, but the three
women from the steps are behind him now, pushing him back in. “No, no, I’m an officer,” he hears himself saying, “you guys got a complaint -”

“The only complaint I have is that you’re still wearing clothes!” A disembodied voice shouts from the back of the crowd.

He feels hands at his waistband, pulling at his handcuffs and his pepper spray and his gun, and his brain begins to short-circuit. This is bad. Very, very bad. “I’m a real police officer -!”

“You’re way too hot to be a real cop!” Someone else shouts.

Suddenly, the woman in red raises her fist over her head. The crowd parts slightly, and to his horror, he realizes she’s brandishing his gun at the ceiling. His heart stops. “This looks like a real gun!” She shouts, face lit with glee.

His worst fears come to fruition when she pulls the trigger, blasting a tiny hole through the ceiling over her head.

A few of the women scream, and all of them jump, but he never takes his eyes off of the woman in red. In an instant, her whole face changes. He sees the color drain from her face, the horror in her eyes, as she finally looks at him. The music cuts off, and she says “You’re a real cop,” in a strangled whisper.

The one upside is that the sound makes the women groping him go still and deathly silent. He slips through their still-outstretched hands and gingerly takes the gun from her hands. “Yes, I am, and I’m responding to a noise complaint you guys got for this party.” He reholsters his gun and casts a stern glance at the wide-eyed women still surrounding him. “I think it’s time for you guys to head home.”

Everyone begins scrambling, desperately searching for their purses and other belongings. He can’t help but to glance at the birthday girl (he realizes now that her tiara proudly declares her to be so) and the general anguish on her face.

Once everyone has mostly cleared out, he clears his throat and takes an uncertain step toward her. “Are you okay?” He asks, keeping his voice at a low and soothing timbre like he learned at the academy.

“I - I - I can’t believe I shot the ceiling,” she says faintly. Her eyes dart up at the little hole and she blinks rapidly. “I can’t believe I shot the ceiling with a cop’s gun. A cop who I thought was a stripper. Oh my God.”

“Hey, it’s okay.” He touches her arm, trying to keep his hand firm and comforting, but the moment his fingers brush against her skin it’s like sparks shoot up his whole arm, straight to his heart. She looks him in the eye, a brief, grateful smile flashing across her face. “You want me to stay here for a little while? Until you feel better?”

“Um…” she glances at the door, where the last party-goer has finally scurried out. “I…yeah. Yes. Sure, that would…that would be nice.”

He stays where he’s standing as she moves to close and lock her door, taking in as much of the little bit of her home he can see. There are pictures of her with two older women hanging on the walls. She gets dimples when she smiles.

“I just want to apologize again,” she says once the door is locked. Her hands are clasped together in front of her, fingers twisting nervously. “I just, um, had a little…a little too much to drink. It’s my twenty-first birthday.”
“Happy birthday,” he says with the warmest smile he can muster.

“Thank you,” she nods shyly. “I did four shots, and I get a little…loopy? After four? What I’m trying to say is that I’m not normally that stupid.”

“I don’t think you’re stupid.” He says softly.

A lovely pink glow spreads across her cheeks and she ducks her head. She’s quiet for a moment, but it isn’t uncomfortable. Still, he wishes she would keep talking, because standing there with her in her messy living room watching her blush at the things he says is so much better than sitting alone in his squad car.

“Would…would you like to sit down, officer…?” She asks, interrupting his thoughts. She’s gesturing to the couch behind him, shoved back against the wall. It appears to have survived the worst of the party, not a stain or crumb in sight.

“Peralta. But, Jake. Call me Jake.” He extends his hand toward her.

“Amy.” She takes his hand and pure electricity jolts through his entire system.

“It’s nice to meet you, Amy. And sure, I’d love to sit.”

He sits on the far right side, and she sits on the left. From the corner of his eye, he sees her fiddling with her fingers, twiddling her thumbs and twisting her index fingers together. “Usually when I’m…when I’m anxious, I like to watch telenovellas. Do you mind?”

“What’s a telenovella?”

“They’re basically Spanish soap operas.”

“Oh, my God, they make them in Spanish too?” She smiles and nods. “My Nana is having a fit somewhere in the afterlife.”

She tilts her head back and laughs, and the sound makes his belly simmer pleasantly. “Did she not like soap operas?” She asks as she reaches for the remote on the side table to her left.

“She loved soap operas. She’s having a fit because I’m pretty sure she didn’t know more existed in another language.”

Amy laughs again, a little quieter this time, but it has no less effect on him. He studies her profile as she clicks around on the remote.

Even though her eyes are a little bloodshot with the lingering after-effects of the alcohol she’s consumed, she’s beautiful.

“Oh, this one’s really good.” She toes her shoes off while she stares at the television, drawing her legs up and to the left to curl beneath her. Her new position causes her to lean his direction by a few degrees, and the proximity brings a whiff of her perfume straight to him.

He has to work very hard not to visibly sniff the air in appreciation.

Most of the plot is completely lost on him due to the language barrier, and no matter how hard either of them try they just can’t figure out how to turn subtitles on, so he resorts to the one thing he knows best: making fun of the drama. He halfway expects her to roll her eyes in annoyance, but she giggles at just about everything he says. And they aren’t pity giggles, either - they’re real and genuine and
her eyes sparkle when she glances at him. Not only that, but she seems more than ready to banter with him, and she makes him laugh just as much as he makes her giggle.

He’s never felt so much light in his belly before.

“Okay, wait…now it’s snowing on the yacht?” He asks quietly.

He’s moved a few inches closer to the middle of the couch as the telenovella has progressed, and she’s done the same. Amy’s riveted to the screen, having made an adorable little noise in her throat the moment the scene started. But at the sound of his sarcasm, she shoots him a look. “Snow makes everything more romantic,” she says mock-indignantly.

“Well I’m just saying, shouldn’t they have coats on?”

She laughs and shoves a pillow at him. “I thought we agreed that you would stop picking it apart!”

“You’re right, I’m sorry. I’m sorry.” They both laugh, both lean closer, and he feels her breath on his face. The woman on the yacht is giving an impassioned speech that he understands exactly none of, so he turns to gauge Amy’s reaction. She’s staring at the screen again, just the barest hint of a lingering smile on her face. At some point she’d found a bag of chips on the ground; she grazes absently.

He didn’t even know a human could be this ethereal in their beauty.

But there’s something more to her, he thinks, something amazing beneath the surface, and he’s strangely desperate to find out more. “Okay, so, what do you like about telenovellas?” He asks tentatively.

She turns to look at him, eyes bright and clear for the first time since opening the front door, and smiles. It takes her a minute or two to find the words, a few false starts in her answer, and he finds himself chuckling each time she shakes her head and glances away. “The idea that two people are destined to be together,” she starts, and his hearing gets fuzzy. He knows she’s still talking, because her hands are moving and her eyes shine, but he can’t quite concentrate on the words.

Destined to be together.

Destiny.

By the time she finishes talking, the man has started his speech on the yacht. Jake can sense that the mood has shifted significantly, mostly because Amy’s still looking at him with a soft, secret smile on her face. “So what’s the guy saying now?” He asks, and his voice is lower and softer than he’s ever heard it in his life.

She turns to the screen, a little crease appearing between her brow. “From our first meeting,” she says, and then she turns to look him in the eye, “I knew it was you.” He feels his heart leap into his throat as her eyes dart over his face. “I just…knew.”

Her lips are hypnotic, her eyes magnetic, and he’s lost. He leans toward her almost subconsciously, his whole body spurring him on, but his whole body is nothing compared to the smile that flashes across her face when she realizes what he’s doing.

He doesn’t even get within six inches of her when his radio suddenly blares to life on his shoulder. She starts laughing, and the tension is suddenly gone - but none of the warmth. “Oh,” he hits the radio lightly, and Amy lifts a hand to cover her mouth. “That’s me.”
She gets up to walk him to the door, but he can’t bring himself to just leave. So he pauses, turns to face her, head tilted down to look her in the eye. She mirrors his posture and her hands drift up to grab his forearms (he isn’t sure if it’s because she’s still a little intoxicated and is having issues with balance or if she’s trying to flirt, but either way, electricity all around). “Thanks for not arresting me,” she says with an impish grin.

“Thanks for letting me stay,” he grins. “You made a really boring shift…a lot less boring.” One day she may understand just how much it means to him - of course, he hasn’t even fully realized how much it means to him - but for now, he’s satisfied with the widening of her smile and the appearance of her dimples.

Her eyes flicker down to his lips, just for a moment, and the small step he takes to his right - toward the front door - quickly redirects him closer to her, at an angle. Her lips part and she gasps through her ever-present smile; it’s a small noise, but he can’t help the gut feeling that he wants to swallow it. He moves slowly, her hands drifting up to cling first to his elbows as he reaches for her face, and then to his hips, where he feels her carefully avoid his gun and find purchase in his belt loops. Their foreheads brush together, and she cranes her head up, but for a moment he draws his mouth back. He needs one more moment to prepare himself.

Their lips brush together for an instant, and his entire body lights up like the house was when he originally pulled up. And then there’s no more delaying it. He moves slowly, languidly, their lips fusing together for an endless heart-stopping kiss. Honestly, he means for it to stop after just one, but each time he pulls away he just tilts his head and goes back in for more. Amy seems to have no problem with this, pulling him closer to her by his belt loops and responding to his kisses in kind.

Just when the thought enters his head that he really could stay here and do this all night, Amy suddenly pulls away. When his eyes flutter open, he understands why.

There are white flakes clinging to her hair and eyelashes and floating down from above him. There’s a split-second where in he truly believes that it’s snowing - inside - in July - but when he turns his head up toward the ceiling he realizes that it’s just flakes of drywall knocked loose from where the bullet pierced the ceiling. His grin his huge when he looks back down at Amy, and she has to grab onto his shoulder from how hard she’s laughing. “That’s amazing,” he shortles as he points to the ceiling.

Her hand moves to cup the back of his neck and she drags him down for one last kiss in response. “You’ve gotta go,” she reminds him in a whisper when they break apart.

She waits until he’s in his car before closing her front door, and for a moment, all he can do is just sit there, grinning like an idiot. He isn’t sure exactly what just happened, but he knows, down in the depths of his heart, that it’s good.

Really good.

It’s exactly what he’s been looking for.
you're not alone, 'cause you're here with me

Chapter Summary

I asked for prompts on tumblr, and received the following:

Pertaigo oneshot where Amy has a really really bad panic attack? It can be at the prescient can be there to - ANONYMOUS

Can you please write Amy having a sever anxiety attack? - ANONYMOUS

Chapter Notes

So, obviously, trigger warning on this chapter!!

Amy has only been at the Nine-Nine for about a year, and in that year she has learned one very important thing about Jake Peralta: when he gets invested in a case, he’s invested in mind, body and soul. On a normal morning he greets her with some sharp and witty remark about her sleeping under desk because he never sees her leave, but on days when he’s working a case, he doesn’t even bother making eye-contact with her. She tries not to take it personally; he does it to everyone. He’s present, but he’s not really there.

It bothered her a lot at first. They’re partners, after all.

Eventually, after he goes one whole week without speaking to her and ends up solving a quadruple homicide case single-handedly, she learns to live with it.

She learns to live with it not because of the solve itself, but because after that quadruple homicide case, after he’d returned to earth and slumped in his chair like he’d just run ten marathons, sleep-deprived but calm with a sense of accomplishment, he told her everything. He told her all the details in a raw and uncovered voice that is so much quieter and more clear than his usual tone, and she listened with rapt attention across their desks, leaned forward on her elbows so that he didn’t have to strain so hard to make himself heard.

Every case he works from that point on ends up playing out just like that. He works himself ragged, he solves the case, he tells her everything.

But until the end, she often doesn’t even know the victim’s name.

Of course, there are cases that go south every now and then. Cases where he isn’t quite fast enough, cases that take a sharp left turn, cases that spin wildly out of control and he has no choice but to hold on as tightly as he can until the dust settles once again.

This is one of those cases.

A beginning: she’d noticed the new case file on his first thing Monday morning, and when he arrived exactly thirteen minutes later, his gaze went first to the half-eaten bagel on the crumpled paper bag on
the corner of her desk, and then to the case file.

His eyes lit up and he sat quickly, shedding his bag and coat with none of his usual finesse, already reaching for the file without even bothering to turn on his computer or even to comment on her plain bagel like he normally does. As his eyes blurred across the page, Amy sighed internally.

It’s always a little boring around the precinct when Jake gets deep into a case.

He’s mentally checked out for the next four days, and Amy gets a lot done. Her desk gets reorganized, her files moved to sturdier manilla folders she found online, and she’d refilled the ink in the fountain pen her grandfather gave her. Four days is a long time to go without his usual irritating banter, but she’s lasted longer, she reasons.

Still, she smiles when her phone suddenly begins to ring beside her mousepad. Jake’s name scrolls across the top of the screen above a blurry picture of him dancing on a table at Shaw’s she’d managed to snap seven months previously.

“I was starting to think you forgot there are other detectives at the Nine-Nine,” she says when she answers. She’s smiling, expecting him to chuckle. But instead, all she hears is his labored breathing.

“Can you come down here?” He asks, and there’s something about his voice that sets her on edge. “Please?”

All pretenses of humor vanish from her mind immediately. “What’s going on?”

He sighs, and in her mind’s eye she pictures him rubbing the heel of his left hand against his left eye aggressively. “My missing person case just became a homicide and I need a second pair of eyes on the scene.”

Her heart drops. “Of course, yeah,” she says, already scrambling to get her purse out of her bottom filing cabinet drawer. “Can you text me the address?”

“Already done.” She hears a small ding and when she pulls the phone away from her ear there’s a new text notification at the top of her screen.

“I’ll be there in five minutes.”

She’s there in seven. Jake’s outside of the walk up, leaning against the passenger’s side of his car, and he looks up from staring at his feet when he hears her car door close. “You okay?” She asks quietly when she’s in earshot.

He shrugs.

“Is it bad?”

He looks down at his feet again. “Yeah,” he rasps.

They walk in together, slowly, and Amy immediately slips into first-responder mode. There’s nothing particularly off about the entry way that she can gather, but now that she’s inside her curiosity is piqued.

“Body’s in here,” Jake says, stepping around her and pointing into the living room, which is several feet ahead. “What I can’t figure out is how they got her back into the home without any of the neighbors seeing. I was just in here yesterday and there was no sign of entry.” Amy hums as Jake steps into the living room, effectively losing visual on her. She’s already spotted a small stack of mail
on the little table just to the left of the coat rack. Amy steals forward quietly, easing along the hardwood floors. Jake’s still talking, clearly under the impression that she’s still next to him, and when she snatches the bill on top of the stack she feels a weird moment of victory.

Until she reads the name.

Donna Wilkinson.

Amy’s entire nervous system suddenly feels as though it’s been submerged in ice. Her breath catches and her heart stops, because she knows Donna Wilkinson, she used to be in a book club with Donna Wilkinson before she made detective and lost whatever life she used to have outside of work. Last she’d heard, Donna had just moved to a nice little walk up somewhere in Brooklyn.

“Oh God,” she hears herself whisper. The bill slips from her numb fingertips and she staggers forward, reaching out to steady herself on the doorway leading to the living room.

Jake’s standing to the left, arms crossed over his chest, staring down at a body spread-eagled on the floor. She sees the woman, but she doesn’t really see; all she absorbs is the familiar shock of blonde hair and the unmistakable watercolor tattoo on the right ankle, just barely visible beneath the cuff of her pants.

She’s currently staring at Donna Wilkinson’s pale, motionless body.

Jake’s still talking, but Amy can’t breathe. She can’t, she can’t see, she can’t think, she can’t hear, she can’t even function. The only image her brain can conjure is that of a laptop dropped in a swimming pool - sparks flying, circuits shorting, hard drive frying, breaking, burning, dying.

She might actually be dying.

But she isn’t, because now she’s back in the hallway, backing as far away from the body as she can, until her lower back rams painfully into the side table. She has to get away, she has to, but her body won’t let her because her it’s falling and crumbling and breaking and there are hands on her forearms, under her armpits, on her waist. She blinks, and Jake’s face comes swimming out of the haze, pale and twisted in concern. His mouth moves but words aren’t reaching her, and he starts looking around desperately, searching for something. He’s trembling so hard she can feel her head knocking into the wall behind her and Jake is digging through her purse that is somehow on the ground, dumping it over upside down, digging through the contents that spill across the floor.

And then it hits her - he’s looking for her inhaler. He thinks she’s having an allergic reaction to something.

He finds it and shuffles forward quickly on his knees - he’s on his knees beside her, when did that happen - reaching for her face with one hand and the back of her head with the other. He’s done this before, he’s administered her inhaler to her until her hands were steady enough for her to do it on her own, so he moves quickly and purposefully now.

She grabs his wrist to stop him, hands shaking so violently that she accidentally causes him to drop the inhaler. “N-n-n-nn,” she forces through her teeth.

He blinks rapidly, panic blazing through his face. She can hear herself gasping for air now in short bursts, and she screws her eyes shut because she can’t get enough oxygen and she’s already circling the drain toward unconsciousness.

“Amy.” His voice is suddenly loud and clear in her ears, his hands on her face, thumbs smoothing over her cheekbones. “Breathe. Breathe with me. One…” she hears the exaggerated sounds of air
rushing through his nostrils and she does her best to follow his lead, but it’s getting hard to comprehend what he’s saying through the growing fuzziness behind her eyes. “Two…” he readjusts his grip on her face and she leans into his touch. “Three…” Her lungs expand a little more, and they’re filled with the scent of his deodorant. “Four…” She hooks her fingers on his wrists and clumsily strokes her thumb over his pulse, and it hits a disconnected part of her brain that his heart is hammering. “Five…” Something warm brushes against her forehead and stays there. “Six…” Her eyelids flutter open briefly, and it’s Jake, resting his forehead against hers, eyes boring into hers insistently. “Seven…” It’s still a chore, but her lungs are starting to expand to normal size again and she no longer feels as though she’s spiraling.

“Trash,” she hears herself gasp.

Jake disappears and she squeezes her eyes shut, desperately willing the nausea rolling through the pit of her stomach to hold off just a few moments longer. She hears him banging around in a room somewhere behind her, desperately searching for a trash bin.

“Here, here,” he thrusts the trash can between her knees and when she hunches over it he immediately gathers her hair up and holds it away from her face. Her stomach empties violently several times over, but she’s always acutely aware of Jake’s thumb gently caressing the nape of her neck. She focuses on his touch until the nausea has passed.

Once he’s sure she’s done, he pulls the bin out from between her knees, carefully moving it as far away as he can and shuffling closer to her in the process. His hands are still on her, roving over her shoulders, carefully avoiding the middle of her back. “I n-need…to…”

“Yeah,” he says gruffly. He stays crouched down with her, taking her still-trembling hand when she reaches up and pulling her to her feet. She sways a little and loses her breath just for a moment, and he squeezes her hand. “You still with me?” He murmurs.

She swallows and nods, eyes closed, not trusting her voice.

She doesn’t open her eyes again until she feels sunlight on her face. Jake leads her down the stairs, deathly silent, straight toward his car. She lets him open the passenger’s door for her and she slides inside heavily, cursing her shaking knees and her jello bones and her fuzzy head. He quickly jogs back inside the house and disappears for all of sixty seconds before emerging with her haphazardly repacked purse in hand.

Before putting his seatbelt on or even closing his door, Jake turns the air conditioner on. He angles every vent at the front end of the car toward Amy, casting a nervous sideways glance at her. “I have to call for backup,” he says, voice barely audible over the rush of the air.

She nods, and he quickly dials the number.

It takes all of six minutes for three squad cars to arrive, and Jake steps out of the car to quickly delegate and direct the officers into the house. Once he’s back inside the car he pulls away from the curb and Amy lets her head fall back against her headrest.

“Are you okay?” He asks quietly once they’re three blocks away.

She swallows thickly and shrugs, eyes still closed.

“Ames,” the car rolls to a slow stop, and when she opens her eyes, he’s looking at her earnestly. “Did you know her?”

Tears spring up in her eyes and she blinks them away. “Yeah,” she says softly. The already-present
crease between his brows deepens.

“I’m so sorry,” he says solemnly. “I should’ve told you her name before you came over.”

“S’fine,” she says dismissively. “You couldn’t’ve known.”

“Still,” they’re quiet until the light changes and Jake eases forward. He’s being gentler than usual, she realizes. He’s usually flooring it, racing to get ahead of the cars in the lanes beside him. But today he drives carefully, easing the car forward and checking three times before switching lanes. Affection distantly bursts through her brain. He’s still glancing over at her every few minutes, as if he’s assuring himself that she hasn’t fallen back into her panic attack. “You sure you’re okay?” He asks eventually.

She hums tiredly. “Tired,” she says. “They always take it out of me.”

“So that was a panic attack, then?”

“Yeah,” she turns her head, still leaned back against the headrest, to face him. His eyes remain on the road, but his head angles slightly toward her.

“You scared me, dude.” He says softly. “Like, at first I thought you were having an allergic reaction or something? Which makes no sense because she doesn’t have a dog and there were no mushrooms in there or whatever, but…I don’t know how to describe it,” he shakes his head. “It looked like you were having a seizure or something. I’ve never seen you get like that before. It was so scary.”

“You handled it well,” she says, and a brief smile flashes across his face. The car slows again, and Amy only then realizes that they’re outside her apartment building. “Wait, what?”

“I figured you’d want a change of clothes.”

He offers to go inside with her, but she waves him down. It takes a few extra minutes to get her hands steady enough to slide the key into the lock and to undo the buttons on her button-down, but eventually she’s trotting back down to his car in her coziest turtleneck sweater. The smile he gives her when she slides back inside is tender and concerned, and it suddenly strikes her just how well he’s handled everything.

She’s still mulling it over when they pull up outside of the precinct. “Curbside service,” he announces cheerfully.

“You don’t have to -”

“But I want to.”

Amy exhales slowly. “Okay, thanks.”

“I’ll take your keys back with me and have Charles drive your car back here.”

“Jake -”

“Hey, Ames?” He’s pulling her keys out of her hands, refusing to meet her gaze. “Just let me do this, please?”

She wants to argue, but her knees still feel a little weak. “Okay, okay. Thank you.”

“It’s really not a problem. But, uh, will you tell Charles to meet me out here when you get up there? I accidentally left my phone back at the scene.”
She nods and closes the door and walks as quickly as her jelly legs will allow her back to the bullpen.

Terry seems to notice right away that something has happened. “Santiago?” He calls from his desk, brow furrowed in concern.

“Just a second, Sarge, I’m so sorry,” Charles glances up when she pauses by his desk. “Jake’s downstairs and he wanted me to ask you to go outside.”

“Is everything alright? Oh my God, is he hurt?”

“What? No, he just needs to ask you for a favor.”

Charles hurries off, and when Amy turns, Terry’s still staring at her. “You went to back Peralta up, didn’t you?”

“Yeah,” she breathes as she drops into his visitor’s chair.

“Saw dispatch got a call from him about it being a homicide now,” he says, glancing back at his computer screen. “Were you at the scene?”

A lump rises up in her throat, so she nods.

“Santiago,” Terry says softly, leaning toward her on one elbow to look her in the eye. “Are you sure everything’s alright?”

“Yeah,” she chokes, “yeah, except I knew the victim and it was just - it was - Jake’s really good at - he helped. A lot. And I didn’t really expect for him to know what to do in a situation like that, which is stupid of me, of course.”

Terry’s staring at her, expression unreadable. “In my experience,” he starts, “Jake has always had an uncanny ability to make other people feel okay. I still get calls from his old precinct requesting him to talk jumpers off ledges. He’s good at making people feel okay, especially the people he genuinely cares about. And he cares about you, Amy. Of course he’d make sure you feel okay.”

It’s hard to breathe again, but not because of panic. “Right,” she says quietly.

“Do you need anything?” He asks, his eyes warm and gentle.

“N-no, I’m…I’m okay. Thanks, Sarge.”

“Allright.” He reaches across his desk and places one massive hand on her shoulder and squeezes gently. “I’m really sorry about your friend.”

“Thanks,”

Her desk is just the same as it was before she left, which is strange, because everything - everything - has changed. She sits heavily, staring at the still-open drawer from which she pulled her purse, and suddenly she’s repressing a smile beneath the curtain of her thick hair.

Because it’s in that moment that she realizes that Jake Peralta, despite his constant jabs, his passive-aggressive banter, and his stupid nicknames, cares about her.

She cares about him, too, of course. But he doesn’t need to know that just yet.
and as our eyes start to close

Chapter Summary

And he’s healing.

Jake has never really had a way with words.

It’s not something he ever spends a particularly long amount of time thinking about - his vocabulary is just broad enough to cover the range of topics he encounters on a daily basis, and while it might be a bit heavy in police jargon, it gets the job done well enough. He’s a moderately well-functioning adult, after all.

He’s gone thirty-some-odd years without mourning his lack of a broad English vernacular, but that all changes the first time he sets foot into his new apartment after living in Florida for six months.

First of all, the smell - there’s a familiarity to it, a sense of peace and comfort that overtakes him the moment the front door swings open and it’s like - it’s like he’s home. Which is strange, when he considers it (which he doesn’t do until later, if you’re wondering) because he’s never smelled this smell before, just as he’s never been in this apartment before. But there’s an undeniable tranquility that covers that long-sore spot in his chest with a warm blanket. It’s one part her, one part him, wholly them - and already, he’s healing.

And then there’s the actual look of the apartment: unfamiliar, but once again, home. There must be a better word in existence besides taupe that can fully capture the pure magic that occurs when that lamp flickers on, bursting with life across the walls that feel like the inside of a teddy bear. Because taupe can’t describe the way that six-month-old lump in his throat finally dissolves upon spotting how well his framed Die Hard poster compliments the color where it hangs behind the couch, or how the frames on the side tables bearing photographs of his smiling face alongside hers and all of their friends are shades of that same color, or how she’d even thought to tie his favorite massage chair in with the rest of the room by finding a blanket the exact same shade to drape over the arm. That dissolved lump finally lets all the pent-up fear and desperation he’s harbored for half a year escape that raw-edged hole in his quaking chest - and he’s healing.

The front door clicks shut behind him and his bags fall heavily to the tiled floor at his feet and finally, finally, it’s just…her. She’s almost exactly like he remembers her except that her hair’s longer and she’s too thin, dangerously thin, in a way that sets his teeth on edge and makes his ribs feel like they’re being ripped apart but there’s a familiar light in her eyes and joy in her smile and now, he’s home. Their apartment is quiet and he can’t think of a word good enough to accurately capture the intense euphoria buzzing between them, growing only brighter as she slowly edges toward him - and he’s healing.

Her hair slips through his curled fingers as he quickly closes the distance between them and suddenly he doesn’t care about the smell or the walls or even the euphoria, because he’s cracked wide open and everything he’s had to hold so close for so long is pouring out of his eyes through these punishing tears smothered against the crook of her neck and his hands through harsh, yanking grasps at her jacket and his knees knocking against hers by painful quakes. And it’s getting all over the hardwood floors, and it’s bad because Amy’s still so tired but she’s there with him, standing in the middle of it all, and her hands are like whispered promises against his heaving back that she’s going
to be here when he’s done to help him clean it all up again - and he’s healing.

They leave it all there on the living room floor with his bags and his shoes and Larry’s itchy toupee to be dealt with in the morning and when he crawls into bed it’s like he’s been taken apart, piece by piece, unscrewed and cleaned and ready to be put together again in the morning. Amy’s head is the perfect amount of heavy and present against his shoulder and her sleep-steady exhales against his throat are like the first warm spring breezes after a long and bitter winter and as her arm folds loosely across his middle he tries to think of a word to describe it - the vast and unshakable depth of his love and devotion and adoration that he’s been drowning in for the last six months (and three years before that), all for her. But his bed is so soft and Brooklyn is lulling him to sleep outside the window above his head and he’ll be able to tell her in the morning while they scrub Larry from his skin and unfold Jake from his suitcases. That it wouldn’t matter if he had to stay in Florida or if he had to move to Kansas or Antarctica or Pluto - as long as she’s there, too, he’s home.

He falls asleep quickly.

And he’s healing.
Anonymous said: Okay so I was just thinking about the fact that Jake and Amy’s one-year anniversary probably occurred while Jake has been in Florida- do you think Jake had like a fake anniversary celebration with Amy's selfie? Also thinking about Jake and Amy not getting to be together for their anniversary makes me sad.

They’ve been in Florida for a month now, and Jake still hasn’t cried.

It’s not that he wants to or anything, it's just - it’s so much. So much. He had one week back with Amy, one week of sitting on top of the world as Brooklyn’s brightest detective, and then -

The phone call.

And just like that, his life went to hell.

He’s been living in hell for precisely one month and there’s this thick, painful lump that’s been sitting in his throat and another behind his eyes and, and, God. He knows it’ll go away if he would just cry.

But he can’t. He can’t cry. He can’t laugh, he can’t glare, he can’t frown, he can’t do anything no matter how hard he tries. If he had a nickel for every time a person has told him he’s got an expressive face, he’d have enough money to fly all the way back to New York for a therapy session to hash out why he feels so damn numb all the time now.

But he’s been here for a month and all he’s been able to manage is a blank stare at his equally blank living room walls.

A month. A month. Four weeks. One whole month.

It plays like a mantra in his head, over and over and over again until it all fades into a buzz that ignites a painful fire down his left temple.

He closes his eyes. Florida is uncomfortably muggy in May. Last year around this time, New York was just starting to really warm up, but he still had to wear his leather jacket while working that case with Amy, the night they first kissed.

His eyes suddenly snap open. It was a year ago yesterday. He’d written the date a thousand times on those forms while avoiding confrontation. Jake quickly scrambles off his couch, searching through the general wreckage of his living room for the planner Holt had given him when they first arrived so that he could keep track of when their check-ins with the marshal are. He’d dutifully written all the meetings in, but then he’d gone in and doodled on other important dates -

- including the anniversary of his first date with Amy.

Which is, in fact, today.

His living room is far too quiet, that’s the only explanation he can come up with for why the gasp that escapes his throat sounds so ragged in his ears.
No, no, no, this is not how it was supposed to happen. They had a plan, damn it! He should be celebrating this with her in their apartment that they share together with each other, not on the opposite end of the coast from her with absolutely no way of letting her know just how desperately he loves her! The edges of his planner curl beneath his iron-clad grasp and for a moment it really feels like the tears are coming.

But they don’t. And somehow, it leaves him feeling even more hollow than before.

So it’s his one-year anniversary with Amy Santiago, the most beautiful and brilliant woman he’s ever been lucky enough to be with, and he can’t even do the easy stuff like flowers or a card because some asshat wants him and Holt dead. And while he’d very much like to take a page out of Amy’s book and just say screw it and fly across the country to run right into her arms, he’s not keen on being shot in the process.

(Plus he’s pretty sure she’d kill him for disobeying Witness Protection protocol.)

But he can’t do nothing. It’s his anniversary, damn it.

Holt - wait, no, Greg is at work. His car isn’t in the driveway. If Jake’s going to do this, he’s gonna have to do it now.

Larry’s wardrobe is atrocious, but Jake manages to dig up a long trenchcoat and a baseball cap and those, paired with dark-rimmed sunglasses, provide the perfect cover.

He rides the bus to a shopping center boasting an office supply store and purchases one single USB storage drive. Seven bus rides later find him sitting before a public computer in a library two counties over from Coral Springs, where he carefully scans through social media (using an incognito tab, of course) until he finds it - that stupid selfie Gina posted of Amy wearing the one single hoodie he was allowed to bring with him to Florida. He quickly transfers a copy of it onto his USB and erases it from the hard drive of the computer before unplugging the USB and tucking it into his pocket. Four bus rides later find him yet another county over, walking into the cool blast of a pretty bland and generic copy center he’d noticed on the drive in from the airport.

“I need one copy of the picture on this drive,” he said, dropping his voice down lower than usual. The bored attendant behind the counter plucks the drive from his fingers and turns away, toward a computer plugged into a printer sitting on the back counter. While he does that, Jake scans the shelves nearby and snags a 24-pack of 3-tabbed file folders and slaps them, along with a roll of tape and a tape dispenser down on the counter next to the register. He uses cash he’d pulled from an ATM using the debit card the marshal had provided him and immediately rips the files open just enough so that he can slide the paper between two files before dropping it all into a shopping bag and quickly making his way out of the store.

It doesn’t occur to him until he’s finally back on the bus that will take him back to Larry and Greg’s neighborhood that he can’t have this picture in Larry’s house - the marshal could come by at any time and he can’t even imagine the crap she’ll give him if she sees it.

So he gets off the bus three stops early and finds himself before a self-storage facility.

“Sorry, all our small units are full,” the clerk tells him. “But you could rent a larger one for thirty more bucks a month.”

“Fine. Whatever. Here.”

Jake slides the cash across the counter and signs Larry’s name to the rental agreement, and the clerk
thrusts a set of keys in his hand.

“Unit three-eighty-one.” He says, his gaze already fixated back on the magazine he was reading when Jake first came in.

The unit is way too large to store just one picture, but Jake doesn’t care. He closes the rolling door behind him and pauses, the realization suddenly hitting him: in this space, Larry Sherbert no longer exists. He is free to be 100% Jake Peralta.

And right now, Jake Peralta really wants to see his girlfriend.

He makes quick work of taping the picture up just to the right of the door. It’s a little blurry, either due to the poor lighting when the photo was taken or the poor quality of the print shop, but he can still see the dimple that forms in her right cheek with her crooked smile and he can still feel the warmth in her kind eyes and it kind of feels like finding a half-full plastic water bottle in the middle of the desert. It’s overwhelmingly hot and extremely unpleasant but God it’s better than the expanse of emptiness he’s been dealing with for the last month.

“Hey, babe,” he says softly. She smiles. “I miss you so much.” She keeps smiling. “Happy anniversary.”

He presses his lips against his fingers and tentatively brushes them over her smile, and the moment he comes into contact with the photo, he finally, finally begins to cry.
just like a movie, just like a song

Chapter Summary

Amy Santiago does not break rules.

Chapter Notes

A short, missing moment between the end of 4x02 and 4x03, written the night 4x02 premiered

Amy Santiago does not break rules.

The sky is blue. Water is wet. Jake Peralta and Raymond Holt have been in Witness Protection for six months and one week. And Amy Santiago doesn’t break rules.

She turns the phrase over in her mind late at night, her darkened apartment lit in only one corner by the eerie and unnatural glow of her laptop screen. Her internet browser is pulled up, but she stares down at the screen in blazing indecision, chewing her thumbnail so fiercely she’s in danger of ripping it right off with her teeth. She’s never been a problem child, she’s always made good grades and sucked up to her teachers and professors and Captains. She’s so compliant with the rules that it’s really almost a fault, one Jake had no problem repeatedly pointing out in their first few months together as partners. It goes against every fiber of her being; even just considering it stirs up the deepest dregs of anxiety down in the furthest pit of her stomach.

She doesn’t break rules. She doesn’t. She’s a good daughter and sister and student and detective. As she stares down at her screen, her screensaver flickers to life; it’s a nine-month-old selfie of herself and Jake, taken out in the swirling snow on one of their shared days off sometime between Christmas and New Year’s. Her face (the upper half of her face, the part not hidden beneath a thick maroon scarf) is flushed from the cold, the tip of her nose red, but her eyes are bright and laughing - Jake’s kissing her cheek, his long nose smushed against her temple. As she studies the image, the ghost of his lips brushes once again against her cheek and phantom winter winds slip through her hair and down her spine.

She toggles her wireless mouse, feeling the determination that is suddenly welling up from the center of her chest set her face into the same hard lines she’d adopted earlier when she’d chewed her team out. She’s got more than enough money saved up to cover all the necessary costs - money she’d planned to use to cover all the unexpected expenses that come with moving in with a boyfriend. She only feels a vague pang when she sees the total, but she quickly reminds herself that having him here, alive and safe, is far more important than being able to buy a new couch. The only thing stopping her now is that pesky echo of CJ’s voice reverberating through her memory, but that’s drowned out quickly enough by two voices shouting over each other somewhere in the back of her mind that sound suspiciously like her twin brothers’ saying things like oh, the shame! The scandal! Mimi’s breaking the rules! What will mama say when she learns she’s raised a criminal?

She grits her teeth, her thundering heartbeat more than enough to drown them out. Three clicks later
and the deed is done; five tickets for the 4AM flight to Miami leaving JFK International are emailed to her, each one bearing a name belonging to each member of her squad.

Her fingertips tingle as she pulls her phone from her jacket pocket but she pushes through and dials Rosa’s number anyways.

“What?” Rosa answers.

“Screw what CJ said. Pack your bags.” Amy says (and it’s only a little breathlessly). “I just booked all of us a flight. We’re going to Florida.”

She half-expects some quip along the lines of ‘what did you do with the real Santiago’ or something, but instead all she hears are the muffled sounds of Rosa moving quickly through her own apartment. “What time do we leave?”

“Four AM.”

“Pick me up at three-fifteen.”

The line goes dead with no further discussion, and as Amy begins dialing Terry’s number, her screensaver once again flashes across the screen. Her gaze falls upon it over the edge of her phone, and for a moment she stares as hard as she can at Jake’s face, willing the picture to come to life so that he can look at her and hear her.

But his face remains firmly fixated to his right, his lips cemented against the side of her face, his eyes closed and lashes delicately brushing against her cheekbone.

“I’m comin’, Pineapples,” she murmurs.
**when i'm wiser and i'm older**

Chapter Summary

Jake has six months worth of missed cuddling with one Amy Santiago, and he does not intend to waste any time in catching up - pain killers and airplanes be damned.

Chapter Notes

RIP ME KILL ME DEAD CORAL PALMS PT. 3 SAVED MY LIFE 1000 TIMES

Anyways here’s. A missing moment. Post 4x03.

THIS IS DEFINITELY 100% SELF-SERVING BECAUSE LIKE…WHERE’S THE REST OF THE SQUAD? IDK PROBABLY ROAD TRIPPING BACK!! WHERE’S HOLT?? IDK PROBABLY STILL IN THE HOSPITAL!! MY POINT IS I’M PERALTIAGO TRASH BYE

“Jake, babe, can you -”

“You called me *babe* -”

“Okay, yeah, I did, now’s really not the time -”

“We call each other that because we’re in *love* -”

“Jake, seriously - I’m so sorry, ma’am, I’m doing the best I can - Jake, can you please sit still for a second and help me -”

“I missed you, I missed you *so much* -”

“I missed you too, can you *please* help me get your leg propped up? People are waiting to board and I’m blocking the aisle.”

Jake blinks down at her lazily, his face curled in an easy, dopey, painkiller-fueled smile. Despite the fact that her insides feel like softly glowing Christmas lights at the sight, she still feels that all-too-familiar prickle of stress on the back of her neck at the sound of someone impatiently clearing their throat behind her. She shuffles forward on her knees as best she can, letting the edge of the first class plane seat dig into her lower abdomen, and bends at the waist in an attempt to find a better angle with which to grasp Jake’s injured leg. “Your hands are *so small*,” he murmurs, his voice full of wonder, as people begin filing past behind her.

She can’t help but to snort at that. He giggles and leans forward and she feels his lips press an open-mouthed kiss against the side of her head and despite her current stress level, her heart jumps at the familiarity. Finally, after a few more moments of adjusting - during which time Jake casually begins caressing the skin of her inner upper arm - she gets his leg propped up on the stool the flight attendants brought to her before they boarded the plane.
“Okay, how’s that? Are you comfortable?”

He pulls her up by her upper arm with such force that she topples into her seat, laughing as she goes. The moment she hits the seat he leans toward her, both arms winding tightly around her own and his head falling into the crook of her neck easily. He snuggles closer, turning his head until she feels the curve of his nose against the base of her neck, and then he heaves a long, heavy sigh. “Very comfy,” he breathes.

She relaxes into him and twists her wrist until their fingers interlock. She can feel his smile growing against her shoulder when she tilts her head to rest against his and for a few moments, they’re both quiet, pretending to listen to the commotion of their fellow passengers boarding while secretly listening to the other breathe.

“This is so much better than the hot tub burrito,” Jake mumbles.

Amy furrows her brow. “Hot tub burrito?”

“Yeah, I - I ate a hot tub burrito. It was, like, last month or something. I don’t know.”

She shakes her head, trying to think of a way to apply that information to his original statement in a way that would make it actually make sense, but comes up short. “Okay, you’re gonna have to help me out here - what’s a hot tub burrito?”

He grumbles and readjusts for a second, his grip around her arm tightening. “It’s that thing of when you find a burrito in your hot tub and then you eat it.” He says, his voice adapting a strange sing-song quality. It’s stripped down and completely childlike, and briefly Amy wonders if he might have taken too large a dose of painkillers before they left the hospital for the airport.

She gags. “Why would you eat a burrito you found in a hot tub?”

“On account of the depression.” She feels every molecule in her body freeze in an instant. Jake, to the credit of his powerful pain killers, does not seem to notice; he carries on in that same sing-song voice. “Holt said it was ‘cause I was half-assin’ it or something. But really it’s ‘cause I missed you.”

His head suddenly springs up from her shoulder and when she turns, he’s staring at her intensely. “Did I already say that?”

“That you missed me?” She squeaks. He nods. “Y-yeah, you…you mentioned it last night. And again when we boarded.”

His gaze softens and his head slowly descends back to her shoulder. “Good.” He grunts, before stifling a yawn behind his hand. “‘Cause it’s true. I really, really missed you. I had your selfie in the storage unit.”

She closes her eyes and the memory flashes through her mind - she’d seen it, seen a photo on the wall right beside the entrance, but she hadn’t allowed herself to look at it. Because…what if it wasn’t her?

“You…you had a picture of me in there?” She asks softly.

“Yeah. I kissed it every day. Except for it was a finger kiss. Finger kisses. I didn’t, like, kiss the paper. Okay, I kissed the paper once. Okay, it was four times. But mostly I was cool and I did cool finger kisses because I love you and I’m a badass.”

She closes her eyes and smiles, her heart swelling with affection. Jake lets out a long, tired sigh once again and nuzzles closer.
“You didn’t eat any hot tub burritos, did you?” He asks sleepily as the seatbelt lights flash on over their heads.

“No, I didn’t eat a hot tub burrito. I didn’t eat anything I found in a hot tub.”

“That’s ’cause you’re smart. And pretty. You’re really pretty, Ames, did you…did you know that?”

She turns her head and presses her lips to his hairline, closing her eyes as the plane begins to move. His fingers tighten around hers as her lips press a line of kisses across his forehead and against the corner of his brow, all along the skin she can reach from this angle. “You’ve mentioned it before,” she finally whispers.

“So beautiful,” his voice rumbles quietly in his chest and her heart squeezes. “Missed you. Love you.”

“So much.” She murmurs back, and he hums. “Go to sleep, Jake. I’ll wake you up when we get home.”

“M’already home,” he sighs. Her chest tightens and the lump that has been sitting in her throat for six months solidifies once more; by the time it clears enough for her to respond, they’re flying over North Carolina and he’s snoring peacefully against her shoulders.

“Can I get you anything?” A stewardess whispers politely somewhere over Virginia.

Amy squeezes Jake’s hand, now loosely gripping hers in sleep, and Jake barely stirs. “No, thank you,” Amy whispers back. “We’re okay. We’re finally okay.”
For the record, Amy Santiago has never found trench coats attractive. Like, ever. They’re weird and long and you just never really know what you’re going to find - or not find - beneath them (and in her line of work, she finds herself dealing with those who choose the trench coat and nothing else more often than not). They’re mid-range on the list of anxiety triggers she keeps careful log of in her mind and also on a page near the back of her planner, tucked neatly in place between porcelain mugs with no handles full of hot coffee and velcro shoes.

She hates them - which is why it’s so easy to blame them for why this undercover bust is, well, a complete and total bust. They’ve been at this for nearly a week and still - nothing.

She’s walking down the sidewalk of some shady street, and despite the fact that this is New York it’s actually late enough that there aren’t too many people out. She sidesteps a drunken disorderly sprawled out on the sidewalk (cursing the fact that she can’t arrest him on the spot without potentially compromising whatever’s left of this mission) and the sudden move sends her brushing up against Jake. He glances down at her and flashes a grin over the turned-up collar of his stupid, ugly trench coat.

“You’re gonna stop wearing that after this case, right?” She mutters through her answering scowl once they’re out of earshot.

He snorts and turns his head up toward the sky, and she recognizes the curve of his cheek as a smile he’s trying to hide. “Why?” He finally asks once he seems to have control over his facial expression once again. “Does it bother you?”

“If you’d arrested as many perverts in trench coats as I have, it would bother you, too.” She snaps. He’s grinning again, but it’s the kind that he lets her see, the big toothy grins that send a burst of lightness through her diaphragm and that make her want to shove her head through a wall. “Seriously, it’s weird and it’s messing with my concentration.”

“The trenchcoat.” He starts. She purses her lips and fixates her gaze on the stairwell to their temporary walkup, still a good fifty yards off. “Is messing with your concentration.” He finally finishes.
Amy’s known him long enough to know when he’s trying to get a rise out of her - something about it is entertaining to him, which is fine most of the time, except when it isn’t. It isn’t fine when her anxiety is at a nine and has been for an extended period of time, when she’s working herself to the bone and producing so little to show for it, when the desire to impress her incredibly intimidating Captain is at an all-time high. Suddenly the turtleneck she chose to wear to dinner at that fancy restaurant where their collar was supposed to be (but wasn’t) feels like a hangman’s noose.

“Yes, it’s messing with my concentration, every time I think I’m close to a break I look up and you’re just - loitering - in a stupid trenchcoat. It’s just - it’s, it’s weird and - you’re not a trenchcoat guy, okay? You’re not, so just - just stop it.”

“I could be a trenchcoat guy,” Jake calls as she jogs out ahead of him across the last street between her and the safety of her private bedroom. “You could call me Trenchcoat Dave -”

She stops the moment her feet plant on the curb, whirling around so suddenly he nearly rams into her. “How can you be taking this so lightly?” She demands. His eyes widen and he takes an involuntary step backwards. “We’ve been at this for a week and we still haven’t found anything linking Urgovitch to the scene. Captain Holt gave us eight days -”

“Which is plenty of time!” He interrupts. “Trust me, Captain Holt will understand and he’ll give us an extension.” Despite the fact that his hands are buried in his stupid trenchcoat pockets, his voice is soothing and it makes her drop her eyes to their feet. He ducks his head to catch her gaze, stepping forward just enough so that he’s right at the edge of her space. It’s almost natural enough for him to reach across the space between them to take her hand.

Almost.

Sophia broke up with him nearly three months earlier, and the healing process was not easy. Amy had a front row seat to it all, too - every bleary-eyed went-to-bed-two-hours-ago morning, every habitual check for new texts, every Facebook stalk he thought she couldn’t see (which is stupid considering that flashing cop light he has on his desk is kind of reflective, even if it does severely warp the image…whatever, she knows the color scheme and the general layout well enough to know what she’s seeing) and long, tired sigh and uncharacteristically quiet afternoon. She’d been there for Rosa’s three-word pep talks (“Buck up, dude.”) and Gina’s shoulder massages and Charles’…well, Charles’ overwhelming Charles-ness.

(“I hear Cats is coming back to Broadway -”

“I really, really doubt that. Thanks anyways, buddy.”

“What if I sold my left kidney and got us tickets to Hamilton -”

“That’s - that won’t be necessary -”

“I could fund a one-man show of Die Hard: The Musical!!”) Slowly, though, he came back to himself. He’s still got dark circles beneath his eyes but they’re the same shade as her own, born more from a case-caused lack of sleep than the unique shade that comes with lying awake and staring at the ceiling for hours and hours on end. His hands still shake and he still spills a little bit of coffee on his desk, but it’s more from impatience to rip into a case than it is from hazy fogginess. His laughs are louder and longer, his smiles reach his eyes again, and it’s been like watching winter slowly unfold into spring, like watching a phoenix slowly rise from the ashes.

Not that she would ever tell him that. Good lord, he’d probably insist on getting a tattoo or at least a
new nameplate at his desk - DET. PHOENIX PERALTA.

Dammit, she *hates* how catchy that is.

“You’ve got nothing to worry about, Ames,” he says gently, his voice breaking through her reverie. “We’ve got this.” She blinks, and then nods.

This response seems to satisfy him, for he shoots her another reassuring grin before starting toward the walkup once again. She trails behind, listening to him whistle a nonsensical tune as he struggles with the rusty lock.

The inside of their walkup is depressingly dark and gloomy on the first level - the level with all the boarded up windows. They’re here as Dave and Melody Simpson, a newlywed couple from Austin, Texas. They “moved in” a week ago, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed until Dave got the call from the moving company that somewhere between Texas and New York, the truck with all of their furniture got lost. He’d taken the call out on the stoop, complaining loud and long until all of their neighbors seemed to overhear - including Jesse Ugovitch, their neighbor across the street and two doors down and a potential suspect in a string of arsons. Amy watched him idly on their first night there, pretending to be absorbed in Jake’s - Dave’s - fake phone call. Ugovitch seemed to be struggling with his front door lock as well, though there was a certain slow, practiced quality to his movement that told Amy he was really just listening in.

They hadn’t seen him since.

A weight seems to lift from her chest the moment the door closes behind them - it’s almost as though the knowledge that they are alone and safe, as it were, sends the Melody Simpson facade literally melting away. Amy pauses in the foyer, turning to the side so that Jake can slip past her as she raises her arms over her head and stretches long and slow. Relief radiates all the way from the tips of her fingers down to her toes and she yawns as she tips her head back.

“Hey, Santiago?” Jake calls from halfway up the stairs. Her arms flop heavily down to her sides as she turns her head toward him; he’s leaning against the banister, his head cocked slightly to the side. Briefly, she wonders if he’d watched her stretch. “Do I have any pasta sauce on my shirt?”

He quickly pulls the trenchcoat open, a devilish grin splitting his face in half. “I hate you.” She mutters through a grin.

She chases him up the stairs, both of their laughter melding together over the sounds of their heavy footsteps. She catches him at the top of the stairs, shoving him forward with both hands on his back, and he nearly stumbles down the narrow hallway that serves as their landing. He catches himself on the chair they have set up before all of their surveillance equipment, stacked neatly beneath the window at the end of the landing; all the gear is turned slightly to the right, toward Urgovitch’s place. He turns and grins at her leaning to his left against his closed bedroom doorway. “You want first watch?” He asks.

“Yeah, lemme change first.”

She has to pass right by him to get to her bedroom door - almost directly across the narrow space from his - and she swears she can feel him practically hovering over her just before she slips inside. She has to take a moment to calm her suddenly thundering heartbeat down.

That’s the other thing about the last three months: there’s been all of this…tension. All of this unresolved…romantic…sexual…*something*. And it’s driving her absolutely completely insane. Because every time she has herself convinced that it’s just a crush, it’s nothing but a crush, it will
never be anything other than a crush, he goes and does something really brave and selfless - like selling his car to pay Terry back (something he admitted to her on a quiet overnight stakeout a few weeks ago). And then every time she really starts considering what it could mean for her, professionally and personally, if she were to fall for Jake, he goes and does something really stupid and childish, like the whole working a case until he literally almost got killed thing.

They’re mostly completely back to normal now - all the same comfortable exchanges, all the same jokes and teasing and cohesive case-solving. But there’s still that something lingering between them. It’s the something that fills the silent spaces between them, the something that casts an unfamiliar shadow over the way he looks at her when he thinks he’s not looking, the something that makes her heart leap into her throat every morning when she looks up and he’s loping across the bullpen toward her, two coffee cups in hand. She ponders it as she changes, hardly absorbing her reflection in the dingy mirror screwed into the wall at the foot of her bed. Jake’s known her coffee order by heart since her second week at the Nine-Nine. Teddy couldn’t memorize it in six months of dating.

Not that the success of a relationship is measured by one’s ability to remember the other’s coffee order but - still. It’s what the coffee order represents.

Which is…what? Her? The coffee order represents…her.

Right.

She’s really cursing the fact that she forgot her designated Extended Stakeout Blow-Up Mattress while packing for this trip - the lumpy mattress is making it very difficult to get any sleep when it’s her turn.

Finally, she emerges from her room in leggings, her brother’s XXL NYU sweatshirt, and socks. Jake’s sitting in the lookout seat but he tilts his head all the way back to look at her upside down just as she finishes tying her hair back. “You good?” He asks.

(Teddy always used to say, “how are you doing?” He’d look at her with such tender concern - it was sweet for a week, and then it started feeling like the beginning of a therapy session.)

“Yeah,” she says with a shrug.

Jake nods, once again satisfied, and hauls himself up. “See you in four hours.” He says through a yawn.

His door clicks shut and she slides into the seat, snuggling down into the remaining warmth in spite of herself. She can hear him moving around in his room, the floorboards quietly creaking beneath his feet as he walks back and forth, before she hears the groan of a mattress dipping beneath his weight. He readjusts a few times, and then it’s very, very quiet.

Two hours pass without incident. Jake’s snoring peacefully somewhere inside his room, and Amy’s mapping out constellations in the flashing airplane lights overhead. Ugovitch’s apartment is dark and quiet. A siren starts up some distance away, but quickly fades into the night. It’s quiet.

And then it’s not.

It starts so softly she almost thinks she’s imagining it. Quiet, quiet, almost like it’s just in her mind. Scratch scratch. Scratch scratch. She furrows her brow and tries to concentrate on the task at hand: in just a few seconds, there will be a perfect Big Dipper constellation of approaching airplanes and she just -

Something weighty scuttles across the floor at the end of the hall behind her, and she nearly jumps
out of her skin. Being a cop who works and lives in New York for most of her adult life has 
desensitized her to most of the horrors of the city, but there is one thing she’ll never get used to: the 
rats. Mice, she can handle. They’re small and mostly harmless (even if they have absolutely no place 
in her apartment). Yeah, they’re a little creepy with the beady eyes and the twitchy noses, but, like… 
bunnies have those things, too. Bunnies are alright.

*Rats,* though - specifically, *New York* rats - *those* are a totally different ball game.

*Those* go right beneath “small, enclosed spaces” on the Amy Santiago’s List of Anxiety Triggers.

It’s like a scene right out of a horror movie. She’s paralyzed, her eyes so wide and bulging she 
wouldn’t be surprised if they’re about to pop right out of her head. Somewhere behind her is a rat (a 
big one from the sound of it) that seems to be moving slowly and steadily closer to her. Her fingers 
are numb and her palms are tingling and she’s positive that if she could move she would be 
screaming bloody murder right now.

Somehow she finds it in herself to turn her head a fraction. Moonlight is pouring down in a long 
shaft down the hallway, disturbed only by the shadows from her silhouette and her equipment and 
the huge, kitten-sized rat currently sniffing at a crack in the wall right beside her bedroom door.

*There’s a rat three feet behind her.*

She screams.

It’s not a horror movie scream, even though this is a scene straight out of her nightmares. It’s a brief 
high-pitched burst of sound and it cuts off half-way because she’s scrambling up into the seat and 
away from the rat, which, to it’s credit, seems just as startled by the sudden noise as she is by it’s 
presence. She can feel herself shrieking, feel herself recoiling almost violently on top of her seat - and 
it’s so much noise that she doesn’t hear Jake crash to the floor or thunder through his room until he’s 
ripping his door open, baseball bat in hand.

The chair finally gives in to her body’s demands to *retreat* and tips forward, toward the window, and 
for one heart-stopping second Amy forgets about the rat because she’s about to fall ass-first out of a 
second story window, but then a strong hand clamps down on her forearm and yanks her back to her 
original upright position. The back chair legs slam down on the floor firmly enough that the rat 
skitters back a few inches, and it’s this movement that catches Jake’s eye.

“Oh my *God!*** He shouts, his voice barely hoarse from sleep. The next few seconds pass by in 
flashes: Jake’s running down the hall. He’s on the stairs. There’s a crash, and another crash. There’s 
silence.

Her hands are trembling and she grips the back of her seat tightly, still standing on the cushion, now 
practically folded in half to hold herself steady. “Did you get it?” She calls in a barely-wavering 
voice.

“Yeah,” Jake answers. “Stay up there, it’s - I gotta clean up.”

She shivers.

When he reappears on the staircase ten minutes later, there’s something different about his 
appearance. Her whole body relaxes as she finally unfolds herself from the chair, appraising him 
closely, before it hits her - he’d come running out of his room still wearing the trenchcoat, but now 
it’s gone.

“Were you wearing the stupid trenchcoat to sleep?” She asks incredulously.
“Oh, you’re welcome for killing the monster rat for you, Santiago, no, don’t apologize for giving me a heart attack at three in the morning, I didn’t think you were being murdered at all.”

She stares at him.

“Okay, yeah, I was wearing it to sleep.” He finally mutters. She grins, and he grins back. “I had to use it to clean up, though.” He says, his grin fading. “Too bad. Trenchcoat Dave was awesome.”

“It was a pervert’s coat, Jake,” she says with a tired, quiet laugh.

He laughs too, his eyes soft and warm as they rove her face. “I’ll take over,” he says, glancing at her bedroom door over her shoulder.

“But I haven’t - my shift isn’t over -”

“I think you’ve earned a couple extra hours of sleep,” he says, brows furrowing. “Aren’t rats, like, number two on the list?”

“I - yeah,” she says. He’s gazing down at her intently, still so warm and soft and familiar. “I can’t believe you remember that.”

“Icourse I do.” He shrugs. “But it’s explicitly for prank purposes. I can’t go triggering a panic attack in the middle of the precinct because then I go from the lovable idiot to the jerk real quick.”

She can’t bring herself to fully laugh; all she can muster is a smile. Because Jake knows her coffee order and the order of her list of triggers and he sacrificed his trenchcoat for her and - Teddy couldn’t even be bothered to remember no cream in her coffee.

“Go to sleep,” Jake says, reaching across the space between them to nudge her upper arm toward her door. “I’ll keep watch.”

Over Urgovitch. Over her.

“Thank you,” she says just barely louder than a whisper. Any vestiges of humor still dancing in his eyes vanishes, leaving behind an intense, smoldering warmth she’s only ever seen traces of. Her stomach flips. “Goodnight, Jake.”

She makes it one full step backwards - not even fully turned yet - before his fingers hook around her arm above the crease of her elbow and he’s pulling her back, pulling her into him, and in the brief little infinity before he kisses her she thinks, finally.

And then he’s kissing her. But he’s not just kissing her, he’s melting into her, he’s gripping and pulling and commanding in a way she did not know he was capable of. His hands rove her back and skate up under the half of her hair that had fallen out of her bun in the chaos before. His lips are soft, just a little bit chapped, but also firm and insistent against hers. She doesn’t remember parting her lips but she feels his tongue - tentative and searching - swipe against hers and her knees are weak and there are full on explosions behind her eyelids because holy crap he’s really really good at this -

He pulls away but comes back to her immediately. His second kiss is a little less fervid, a little more soothing. His third, when he comes back, is even shorter and gentler than the last. And this time, when he pulls away, he keeps his forehead tilted against hers. She opens her eyes briefly and his are closed, his brows furrowed, and she swears it almost looks like he’s deep in prayer. The image makes her stomach flip.
He finally pulls his forehead away from hers and his eyes flutter open and he looks almost as shell-shocked as she feels. “I’ve been meaning to...something like that...fr’a long time,” he finally stammers.

His chest is heaving. Distantly, she registers that he has one hand on the side of her face and the other against her lower back, pressing their lower halves together, and she’s clinging to him by his upper arms. She’s still trying to remember how to speak English when they hear the sharp blast of a car horn outside. They’re at the window instantly, shoulders pressed tightly together as they strain to get a view.

“Is that -”

“- Darien Lewis -”

“- from the CCTV tape -”

“- and that’s Urgovitch!” Amy finishes excitedly, pointing to the figure shrouded in shadows emerging from the entrance of the walk up. They exchange a brief grin before reality seems to catch up to them simultaneously.

“Um...we don’t really have time to talk right now, but -”

“After.” Amy finishes, nodding in what she hopes is an encouraging way. Jake smiles, a definite look of relief taking residence on his face.

“Good. After. But right now we gotta go arrest some dudes.”

Hours later, when both Urgovitch and Lewis are sitting in separate interrogation rooms, Jake and Amy do talk - and six months after that, when they’re out at Shaw’s and holding hands beneath the table, Jake will loudly claim to those members of the squad still listening that he owes the best relationship of his life to a trenchcoat and the biggest rat New York has ever seen.

What’s really curious to those who weren’t there that night is that Amy, queen of facts and knowledge, merely listens with a raised brow and a smile half-hidden behind the rim of her wine glass.
Chapter Summary

I received the following prompt on Tumblr:

i am ONLY asking bc i'm a self destructive mess rn but if ur in an angst writing mood could u write something where like jake has to cheat on amy while he's in florida???? i don't know... i love angst

Chapter Notes

PLEASE NOTE: i didn't write this exact prompt

so here’s the thing. jake peralta is like...he’s one of the best fictional men in existence. he’s proven time and time again that he is deeply respectful of the women he likes/dates. and honestly...i 100% believe that cheating is a HOT button issue for him. because his dad cheated on his mom repeatedly when he was a kid and it ended up ruining their marriage and i just. i don’t think he would do it, no matter what the situation is.

but never fear!! i did write something angsty!!

Jake’s numb.

It’s not shocking or new, really - he hasn’t felt much of anything for the last three weeks, not since that stupid god-forsaken phone call - but this, this is...he can’t even think of a word for this.

(They flit across his consciousness like the pages of Amy’s word-a-day desktop calendar. Destabilizing. Gut-wrenching. Horrific, ungodly, abominable, detestable...)  

Marshall Haas is gazing at him expectantly from across the table. Beside him, to his right, Captain Holt - Greg, he reminds himself - is signing page after page of a respectably thick packet. An identical packet sits before Jake, untouched, unopened. The words WITNESS PROTECTION blaze across the top of the cover page, burning into his retinas, carving into his brain.

“I—I’m not - doing that.” He finally manages to choke. He tears his eyes away from the front page just as Haas raises an eyebrow at him, clearly unimpressed. Holt - Greg - stiffens, the tip of his pen pausing mid-signature. “No.”

“You can’t say no, Larry.” Haas says, and even though he only met her three weeks ago (two weeks, four days, six hours, not that he’s counting or anything), he hates her. “You two have been living in safehouse after safehouse for weeks now. This is your chance to settle down and not be constantly on the move anymore.”

Jake musters up all the conviction he can find in his foggy, swirling brain. “I’d rather keep running,” he says. “I’ll run for the rest of my life if I have to. But I’m not - I’m not doing that.”
He pushes his packet back toward her, as if distancing himself from it will make the contents less real. Haas raises her chin a few degrees, her gaze never wavering from Jake’s.


“I don’t care.” Jake snaps haughtily. It’s a testament to the pressure they’re under that Holt doesn’t even flinch, because when Jake’s nostrils flare he’s certain smoke is pouring out of them. “I agreed to come here, I agreed to leave New York, I agreed to change my name and…and my hair,” his fingertips rise to his newly frosted tips of their own volition. “I left my family and my friends and…” He chokes. He still can’t say Amy’s name without feeling a sharp twist of the knife lodged to the hilt in his heart. “…and her behind. Willingly. But only because I can’t let any of them get hurt because of me. I’m not gonna do that to her. No.”

“Larry,” Holt’s voice is far too gentle. It makes Jake want to sprint a thousand miles, to hurl his chair against the wall, to scream and scream until his voice gives out and there’s nothing left inside him. But he doesn’t do that. He just stares at Holt, until the shape of him blurs and it’s just color and movement. Haas readjusts in her seat and clears her throat; Holt briefly clenches his jaw. “She will understand.”

“I don’t - God, this is insane! I’m not gonna put her in a position where she has to understand that, there’s no - there’s no conceivable situation where I would have to cheat on my girlfriend! I don’t care who’s trying to kill me, I don’t care if the devil himself came busting through the door right now to rip my soul out of my body, I’d rather die than cheat on her! So, no, I won’t sign your stupid contract.”

This time, Haas raises both of her eyebrows.

“Okay, admittedly,” he says quietly, “I probably wouldn’t take it that far.” Jake ducks his head and shakes it, trying to clear his thoughts. “I just - I don’t think the whole relationship thing -” he frames the words with air quotes “- is totally necessary. Why does Larry have to be in a relationship? Can’t he just be that one weird dude no one knows anything about? Like, he’s the drunk uncle that shows up three hours late to the block party, eats seventeen hot dogs, and mysteriously disappears again?”

“Jake.” Haas says. The warning is clear in her tone; it’s the first time he’s heard his name in three weeks. “This contract isn’t saying that you have to get involved in a romantic relationship. It just says…”

“No wait - hear me out. You’re changing all the fundamental details of who we are for these personas. You made H- … Greg straight. You killed off his wife. Those are two very significant details you’ve changed from Captain Ray Holt. Holt is gay and his husband is very much alive. So, by your own logic -” he leans forward, planting his hands on the table, sending his pen skittering across the distance between himself and Haas “- shouldn’t Larry be single and show no interest in dating if Jake is in a loving, long-term, and committed relationship?”

A ringing silence follows his question. He holds his breath, carefully cataloging each flickering emotion on Haas’ face. Her gaze darts from him to the packet he’d slid across the table to her, then back to him. He can feel his heart beating in his fingertips pressed tightly against the cool metal table top.

“You’ve gotta promise me that you’re gonna sell the no interest thing.” Haas finally says. She leans forward, elbows planted on the table. Jake nods quickly. She eyes him a minute longer before leaning back a hair and opening his packet.

A small amount of tension drains from his neck and shoulders as she quickly runs a line through the
clause stating that Larry Sherbert is open to romantic relationships. It’s a small victory - a lone firework exploding in the pitch-black cave where his heart once sat.

(It’s back in New York right now, safely tucked away in the top drawer of Amy’s desk, right between her stapler and the Rubik’s Cube he secretly hid there just before he left.)

Holt resumes signing his own packet, though at a slightly slower pace than before; it isn’t until Jake gets his back that he suddenly understands why.

This very well could be the last time he will ever get to sign his real name to a legal document.

He signs slowly, spelling out his entire first name and his middle name (it’s Roger - he hates it, and he’s really been meaning to go get it legally changed but, still, it’s his and he’s going to savor whatever he can get right now) over and over and over again. By the time he reaches the last page and finishes the last ‘a’ in Peralta, his hands are shaking - and not from excessive writing.

Holt is uncharacteristically subdued as Haas takes both of their packets and files them away in her briefcase. “Well, congratulations Greg and Larry.” She says as she straightens. “You’re moving to sunny and beautiful Coral Palms, Florida. Your flight leaves tomorrow morning at seven.”

She stands, her briefcase clutched tightly in her left hand.

“There goes our lives as we knew them,” Holt says quietly once she’s out of earshot.

Jake hums, gaze now fixated on the far corner of the table. So he’s not Jake Peralta anymore - that’s okay. Really, it is. He can be not-Jake for a while.

So long as Amy Santiago is waiting for him on the other side.
i'll be there for you

Chapter Summary

Hey, do you know an episode of friends where Monica and Chandler are secretly dating and he accidentally kisses her in front of Phoebe and Rachel? Can you write that Peraltiago-stylez? Please please pleeeaase?

Chapter Notes

philthestone originally received that ask but because she doesn't watch friends she asked me to do it instead

It’s 12:28 PM on a Monday afternoon and Jake’s face is engulfed in flames (figuratively, of course, although the more he thinks about it the less he would mind actually bursting into flames right about now). His hand is still firmly planted on Gina’s shoulder, his fingers only just starting to tingle with panic, and he’s staring at the knife Rosa’s pointing at him.

“If you come anywhere near me,” Rosa warns, “I will not hesitate.”

He swallows thickly, lips tingling from the two (two!) sets of lips he’d brushed them against in less than thirty seconds.

Yeah, he kissed Amy.

In front of Rosa and Gina.

And it wasn’t until he’d pulled away from Amy that he realized what he’d just done - what his instincts had him do - and in a knee-jerk panic move, he’d whirled around to kiss Gina, too.

Because, of course, the only thing that can cover up an accidental kiss is kissing everyone in the general vicinity on purpose.

Ah, logic.

Let’s not tell anyone until we figure this out for ourselves.

Famous last words, Santiago.

Now, Jake’s not one to hurl the blame on any one person in the room in situations like this, but if he were to narrow this disaster rapidly unfolding before him down to one person, he’d probably go with Amy. Because it’s certainly not his fault that he spent the vast majority of his weekend in her apartment, kissing her at his leisure. It’s not his fault that her ankle was hooked around his beneath the table for their entire lunch break today. And it’s definitely not his fault that she’s been shooting tiny, secretive smiles at him every time Rosa and Gina look away.

So, yeah, he blames it mostly on Amy and a little bit on instinct that he’d automatically bent to kiss
her when he stood to clear his lunch scraps. Because that’s the habit he’d formed over the weekend. Eat, kiss Amy, clear food, do…other things with Amy.

“Um.” Gina blinks up at him dazedly.

“What the hell, Peralta?” Rosa breathes. She’s still brandishing the knife, though now he can see the gears spinning in her head, the anger trickling into her expression. “What the hell?”

“That’s - that’s how I leave rooms now.” He says quickly. Gina shifts, her shoulder shrinking away from his hand, and he retracts it quickly and swings it rapidly by his side. Amy’s still completely speechless. It might look like paralyzing outrage to the other two, but Jake knows better - Amy’s panicking. “I saw it…in a movie.”

“McClane doesn’t -”

“A different movie.” He quickly interrupts, “a - a British one.”

“ Weird, that felt pretty French to me…” Gina mutters.

Yep, bursting into flames would not be the worst thing in the world right about now.

“Whatever, it’s weird and gross and super inappropriate.” Rosa says, lowering the knife to rest against the table. Gina nods vigorously, and Amy bites her lip. “Right, Santiago?”

“Right,” Amy laughs loudly, forced, a mechanical rapid-fire laugh that makes Jake wince. Rosa furrows her brow, tearing her gaze away from Jake’s face for the first time since he sprang up from kissing Gina. “Super - super inappropriate, Peralta, totally gross and uncalled for.”

She visibly swallows and turns her gaze up toward the ceiling and a blush - delicate and pink and the exact same shade as the one she’d worn on Saturday morning when he woke up and whispered how beautiful she was - slowly creeps up her neck.

Rosa’s gaze flickers back to his, calculating and inquisitive, and they’re doomed.

“Oh my God.” Rosa mutters two seconds later. She grins, cheeky and knowing, gaze bouncing between Amy and Jake. “Seriously?”

“Wait, wait, are you - are you guys -”

Rosa laughs, long and loud and nasal, and stands up quickly from the table. “How long?” She demands as she resheaths her knife.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Jake says as evenly as he can.

“Don’t you dare lie to your older sisters!” Gina cries indignantly, springing up so fast her chair flips over backwards.

“I’m older than both of you -”

“How long have you and Santiago been sucking face?” Gina shouts.

The precinct beyond the open break room door falls silent, and Jake slowly turns toward it, hardly daring to peek through his half-squinted eyes. Every single eye is turned toward them; Terry’s mouth is hanging open in shock. Aside from a loud snort from Rosa and a quiet, strangled moan from Amy, it’s dead silent.
“Thanks for that,” Jake mutters as he snaps back toward Gina. She shrugs, utterly unapologetic as the precinct slowly comes back to life behind him. “Not that it’s either one of your business -”

“It became our business when you stuck your tongue down my throat in a sorry excuse of a cover -”

“It was not - I did not stick my tongue down your throat, there was no tongue! There was no tongue, I swear,” he directs the second one a little more quietly toward Amy; the faint gleam of panic in her eyes fades as she smiles, small and grateful, up at him. “As I was saying, not that it’s either one of you guys’ business, but - Amy and I have been...seeing each other...for about three weeks now.”

“We haven’t told anyone,” Amy interjects, “because we’re...we’re trying to figure things out before we go around broadcasting it -”

“We don’t care about any of that. Have you guys boned yet or what?” Rosa deadpans. Amy appears to choke on her tongue. “It ain’t official ‘til you bone.”

“Please, Rosa, you forget Amy’s half of this relationship - what’s the Santiago equivalent to boning? Holding hands? Oh, no, wait - Jake, have you asked her to go steady yet?”

“That’s quite enough.” Holt’s voice rings from the doorway. Jake’s honestly never been more thankful for his Captain than he is in this exact moment. “Somehow you’ve managed to receive three civilian complaints and you are all on your breaks. Not to mention, you’ve all gone over by three minutes.” He taps his watch as Rosa, Gina, and Amy quickly gather their lunch scraps and scurry toward the trashcans. “Back to work, all of you.”

Rosa and Gina pass by him quickly, but he raises his hand before Jake can get by. Jake stops short so suddenly that Amy nearly rams into him; her hands land against his shoulders briefly, leaving warm, tingling traces behind.

“Detectives - when can I expect the completed Douglass report?”

“I have one last page to type up before it’s done.” Amy answers quickly. “I’ll have it on your desk before one o’clock.”

Holt nods. And glances between them. And takes a weird, stuttering step to his right, arms folded before him, and - oh God, he’s going to say something.

“I - um.” He clears his throat and turns his head down toward their feet. “I think it might be - prudent - if you, perhaps, kept the news of your…relationship?” Jake nods, desperate to escape this room and this building and this city and this planet. “Right, yes, your relationship, um...maybe, maybe don’t share this news with Detective Boyle until after he’s completed the Martin homicides. So as not to interfere with his focus.”

Jake wants to die. “Yes, sir.” Amy says quickly. Jake wants to sink beneath the grungy break room tiles and never see or speak to anyone again. “Of course, we’ll - we’ll be a little more discrete.”

“Thank you, detective.” Holt says. He clears his throat again. “And perhaps - might I suggest - if you do slip up like that again,” oh, God, he’s looking at Jake, “consider a...different escape route.”

“Yes, sir,” Jake rasps.

Holt nods, like they just finished briefing him on a case. “Excellent. Good. And - congratulations.”

Jake watches Holt sweep back through the bullpen as Amy’s fingers quickly curl around his arm, just above the bend of his elbow. “Did you hear that?” She asks quietly.
“Our Captain knows we’re dating and is being a total weirdo about it?” Jake mutters back.

“No, he totally approves of us!”
heaven and earth have finally aligned

Chapter Summary

ANONYMOUS: so do you have any headcanons regarding the Jake and Amy stills from the wedding? (I.e. write a short fic based on the pictures of them)

Chapter Notes

Contains possible?? Spoilers for 4x06, Monster In The Closet (AKA Rosa and Pimento’s wedding episode)

(Written 11/8, episode airs 11/15)

let it be known that i wrote this while i was at work and blew off answering about…10 emails, because this was more fun than any of that.

so, without further ado, here we go,

Blue is Jake’s favorite color.

And he’s seen Amy in so many shades of blue: from pale and bright as the furthest reaches of the midday sky, to deep and vast as the oceans, and (his personal favorite) the bright, classic blue that makes up his blue-and-black checkered flannel shirt that he caught her wearing while padding around in his kitchen the morning after their first official date.

Each time she wears the color to work - which isn’t often, surprisingly - his breath catches. He supposes he should be thankful that it doesn’t happen a lot, considering that when it actually does happen, he often finds himself too distracted by the things the color does to the subtle, natural highlights in her hair to get anything of substance done. She’s just as striking in red - actually, scratch that. Let the record state that Jacob Peralta firmly believes that Amy Santiago can make anything look incredible, including that god-awful Bar Mitzvah dress he forced her into all those years ago.

But there’s just something about blue.

She looks good anywhere, anytime, and sometimes Jake still finds himself wondering how on Earth he got so lucky. Not only is she ethereally gorgeous, but she’s whip-smart and kind and generous and hilarious and so, so in love with him. Sometimes he still finds himself completely and utterly floored just by her presence.

(It’s happening a lot more now than it did seven months ago, but give him a break. It’s been like rediscovering her all over again, all the tiny details - like the way she sneezes, the look on her face in the middle of intense episodes of The Walking Dead, the way she burrows down beneath what he fondly calls Mount Blankets on her couch in the dead of winter - all of it sends his heart fluttering in giddy excitement the way it used to right at the very beginning of their relationship.)
Which is why it came as no shock to anyone in the vicinity when his jaw dropped upon seeing her emerge from Rosa’s dressing room in a form-fitting cerulean dress. She didn’t see him immediately, allowing him a brief moment in which he openly ogled her, all curves and soft smiles and shining eyes. It was enough to make him forget about the ruby earring debacle, enough to make his fingertips go numb, enough to stop him in his tracks right there in the middle of Shaw’s entryway.

And when she did feel his gaze just moments later, she looked him right in the eye and smiled, as if to suggest that she knew exactly what effect she was having on him and was thoroughly enjoying seeing him so slack-jawed.

And dammit if he just couldn’t bring himself to care.

Before he had a chance to talk to her, though, he felt Gina tugging at his wrist and heard a caterer shouting Amy’s name from the kitchen. He didn’t see Amy again until the actual ceremony, standing at the back and looking vaguely panicked over his terrible stalling abilities (man, when it comes to busting criminals he’s the king of smooth-talking, but when he knows Rosa’s having a panic attack somewhere in the bar while Gina and Pimento try to calm her down, he gets distracted. So sue him).

Finally, blessedly, Gina emerges and flashes him a thumbs-up and it’s like a hush falls over the place (not that it was loud before, per se) and he hurries down the aisle to safety at Amy’s side.

Despite the fact that the air back here is a little bit heavy with whatever stench Hitchcock and Scully are producing this week (tuna salad, he thinks), Amy’s standing close enough that her body heat is radiating off of her, which is really nice. It’s a constant presence throughout the ceremony, only shifting a little bit every now and then, as if she wants to stay as close to him as he wants to stay to her. He remains mostly focused on what’s happening before them, but there’s part of him - a small part, like, 8% of him - that keeps constant tabs on the soft pillar of cerulean to his left.

The bar erupts in cheers as Rosa seals the deal, and Jake finds himself making a mental not to never call it ‘sealing the deal’ when it’s his and Amy’s turn.

Which brings him up short. Because he’s suddenly become aware of the fact that someday, he’ll be the one beaming over a carefully-knotted bow tie. And the more he thinks about it, the more the vision clears - and in it, he’s beaming at Amy.

He manages to not completely stick his foot in his mouth when he congratulates Rosa (who allows him a brief, seven-second hug - their longest on record) and Pimento, but from that moment on, he’s only smiling absently at those who greet him. Amy’s on the far side of the bar, rattling off instructions to the caterers and the bar tender, and as he watches her she moves quickly to the DJ’s booth and shouts something over the thumping music. The DJ nods in response to what she’s said, and she smiles in satisfaction.

She’s still smiling when she meets his gaze, and he straightens up in his seat and smiles broadly back.

It takes a few minutes for her to work her way politely across what has transformed into the dance floor (the majority of the time it took was spent trying to get around Gina, who loudly announced that she needed a wide berth and then unleashed the choreography to prove it), but eventually she breaks free of the group and trots toward him. He stands to greet her, and is suddenly struck with the memory of the last time they were at a wedding together, choking on hardly-concealed feelings for each other, clothed in an overwhelming fear of the unknown. He holds his hand out to her now, and she takes it the moment she can reach it, her palm sliding against his as her fingers interlock in the spaces between his. Perfect.

“Looks beautiful in here,” he says, glancing around the romantic twinkling lights and gauzy white
fabric. “Are the plants real?”

“Three dollar plastic vines I found at a convenience store,” she says, a hint of pride coloring her smile. “I got lucky that the lighting in here is garbage. Otherwise this would look like the set of a middle school play.”

They both laugh appreciatively just as the song changes. He doesn’t recognize the tune but it makes his heart stutter - or is it the way her eyes shine up at him with such adoration? Either way, he squeezes her hand gently, and she squeezes back.

He leads her out to the dance floor with minimal coaxing and she folds against him, her cheek landing lightly against his shoulder as he pulls her closer still with his arm around her waist. She is an infinitely better dance partner than Gina’s great-aunt, even with all the accidental toe-smashing, and once again he finds himself grinning giddily into her hair. He almost wishes he could go back in time to 2015, to grab his past-self by the shoulders and tell him everything that’s coming, but instead he contents himself with stroking her lower back lightly with his thumb and enjoying the fullness in his heart in response to her proximity.

“It actually does look nice,” she murmurs thoughtfully. He’s no longer moving his feet - they’re just swaying from side to side now. He hums in agreement. “I mean, it could have looked much better if they’d given me longer than eight hours to get everything together.”

“They got engaged in an alley, babe,” he reminds her.

She snorts and readjusts her head on his shoulder. “Still. Everyone deserves to have a nice wedding.”

“And this is a nice wedding.”

She lifts her head away from his shoulder so that he gets the full effect of her skeptically raised eyebrow. “We’re at the same bar we go to almost every weekend, Jake.”

“I know. I can see the corner Terry passed out in that one Friday from here.” An anguished look briefly flashes across her face, but he tightens his grip around her before she has a chance to whirl around. “I’m not saying it’s a great place to get married, but…it’s kind of the perfect place for Rosa and Pimento.”

The corners of her mouth are still tugged down in a pout, but she’s nodding slowly. “You’re right,” she sighs, “I know. Still, I would never get married in a bar. Ever.”

“I mean I probably wouldn’t mind it, but only if it looked this nice.” She’s gaping at him, which makes him laugh. “C’mon, think about it! Unlimited booze! The debt’s not crushing anymore, but you know I can’t afford an open bar.”

She rolls her eyes. “Good thing I know how to save.” She mutters, before her eyes widen and a delicate pink hue creeps up her neck.

Oh. Oh.

He swallows thickly. She’s carefully avoiding his gaze now, pretending to be absorbed in whatever is happening at the DJ’s booth over his shoulder. He impulsively tightens his fingers around her waist and hand, respectively.

So he’s not the only one thinking about it.

“Y’know,” he says softly once he’s sure his voice won’t warble beneath the sheer force of his
joy, “not to be, like, barbaric or anything…but isn’t it actually custom for the bride to pay for the wedding?”

He sees the involuntary flash of anger in her eyes - the one she gets in response to horribly obtuse sexist comments, most often leveled at the Vulture - before a slow, knowing grin creeps across her face. “Bride’s family,” she corrects. “But you can bet your ass that ours won’t be traditional.”

Now, it’s one thing for her to accidentally imply it, but to actually hear her say the words - to hear that verbal confirmation coupled with that yes I want to marry you, you doofus smile that she’s currently giving him - well, he’s lucky his knees don’t immediately give out beneath him.

Amy Santiago, actual angel walking the earth, wants to marry him.

“Just - just promise me All Out of Love won’t be on the playlist,” he says, and it comes out just as breathless as he feels.

Her playful smile softens as she brings his face down to hers for a slow, chaste kiss; distantly, he hears Charles gasp, almost as though he can tell just by the way they’re motionless on the dance floor, completely and utterly wrapped up in each other, that they’ve just decided that they’re going to be married.

But that’s insane. Besides, Charles always gasps when he catches a glimpse of them kissing. Or holding hands. Or smiling at each other. Or standing next to each other. Basically, if they’re in the same room.

He lets his forehead linger against hers when she pulls her lips away, and he knows by her quiet hum that she doesn’t mind. “I promise it won’t be,” she murmurs.

He grunts out a response, his mind is already spinning a thousand miles a minute, four half-formulated proposal plots forming somewhere toward the back. But as he pulls her close and resumes swaying, he does know one thing for sure:

Amy in blue won’t even begin to compare to Amy in white.
She goes straight to her apartment after that first time, where Teddy’s already waiting for her with her favorite Chinese takeout ready to be eaten. She confesses while locked in the safety of her bathroom and even though the words are muffled through the bathroom door, they pierce his chest with as much precision as the blades he’d seen Rosa sharpening at her desk the last time he dropped by her precinct would. She emerges some time later with apprehension shining in her blood-shot eyes and they talk for so long that the food is ice-cold, and even though she nestles closer to him when they settle down on the couch together he can’t help but wonder exactly why she was so anguished about it all. Why the confusion seemed to be more rooted in the cloudiness of unrequited feelings rather than the gnawing worry that accompanies a detective whose partner has just been sent undercover for an indefinite amount of time.

They have their first fight after the second time, and even though his entire body feels consumed by the brash anger fueled by what alcohol he had time to consume, it’s not enough to launch the words he’s clutched so tightly to his heart for six months now. Because voicing it allows her the opportunity to confirm it. Voicing it makes it real. Which, if he’s being honest, he doesn’t really need; he’s seen the way she looks at him. If Teddy’s the sun, Jake’s the entire Milky Way. It sends a dizzying wave of possessiveness coursing through his veins, all for nothing, because every claim he has to her is overruled by Jake. The only thing keeping her from leaving him is her, choosing to stay. It’s not enough, okay? He needs all the reassuring support he can get, he has mesh lining in his underwear for crying out loud, her word alone is not good enough. And based on that far-off, wistful look in her eye that always appears the moment after Jake texts her, well -

“Why did you even bother telling me about his feelings for you?” He hisses as he snatches his packed suitcase off the bed.

She runs her hands through her hair, looking from the walls on either side of him to the floor in front of him, anywhere but at him. “I-I don’t - I don’t know -”

He scoffs and brushes past her, storming down the staircase and straight out of the front door of the Maple Drip Inn.

“So…did you ever figure out why you told me about Peralta?” He asks her some four years later. She smiles a little sheepishly as he drains the last of his beer, twisting her wine glass by the neck between her fingers. The movement causes the engagement ring on her finger to catch and sparkle beneath the lights above her; he brushes his thumb over his own wedding ring briefly.

“Y’know, I thought about it for a really long time, and…I still don’t have a solid answer for you.”

“Amy, please. It’s not like I’m still holding a grudge or anything. You can tell me.”

She gazes at him thoughtfully, chewing the inside of her cheek, and he waits. “I guess I just - I knew,
on some level, that I...had feelings for him, too. Not that, y’know, I didn’t have feelings for you, too. Because I did, Teddy, you’ve gotta believe -”

“I believe you, Amy. Relax.”

Her cheeks redden a bit, but she nods, her anxiety receding to the backs of her eyes. “Like I said, I think I knew on some level that I had feelings for him, too. Even back then.”

“So it was...kind of a warning?”

“Sounds cruel when you put it that way, but...yeah, I guess.”

He nods slowly. Forget warning, it was a flashing neon light: SHE LOVES HIM, MORON!

“I think I knew, too.” Her brows raise incredulously. “Hindsight and all that. Look, either way, I’m - I’m happy for you guys. Both of you.”

A genuine smile lights her face. “Thank you. Really. And I’m happy for you, too, for what it’s worth.”

He feels the corner of his mouth tug up in a half-grin that stays in place as he pulls his wallet out and lays the cash out on the bar. “Means more than you think it does,” he tells her as he shrugs his coat on. “Good luck with the wedding.”

“Good luck with the baby,” she says, raising her glass to him as he passes behind her.

He pauses before he reaches the door, tipping on the edge of indecision, before turning back to find her already watching him. “Hey, Amy?”

She arches an eyebrow.

“Thanks for the warning.”
stuck in second gear

Chapter Summary

HAS ANYONE WRITTEN A JAKE AND AMY PROPOSAL THAT HAPPENS JUST LIKE MONICA AND CHANDLER’S PROPOSAL - Tumblr user youngsamberg

Chapter Notes

it’s worth noting that holt’s choice of attire is due to a fake b-line i have precisely 3% worked out in my head that would be happening simultaneously with this plot - basically jake enlists the whole squad to help him perpetuate the idea that he never wants to get married and holt, who hates lying, decides that approaching it like he’s an actor approaching a part is the best way to pull it off and it gets progressively more and more ridiculous and the encounter i wrote happens toward the more ridiculous end of the plot line

Heartbeats are a funny thing, Jake decides one evening in May. It’s one of the few things his body does well and automatically, a steady pulse that keeps tempo with his otherwise erratic life. Well, a relatively steady pulse.

There was that time outside of the precinct when Amy was bathed in a soft orange glow and his heartbeat stuttered even more than his words did has he haltingly confessed feelings he swore he’d always keep hidden. There was the time it sank slowly down to the pit of his stomach as she firmly told him that nothing was gonna happen between them, so low in his gut that all he could think to do was make a joke and drain three more beers as soon as she turned away. There are all the times it tap dances rapidly against his chest as he chases down perps, remarkably similar to the beat it produced in the semi-darkened evidence lockup, when Amy let him pull her close and he got to experience what her lips felt like warm, when she was actually prepared and met him in the middle for a mind-numbing earth-shattering kiss.

It’s also similar to the verified drumroll it produces as their waiter pours champagne while she arches a curious brow at the way he clutches at his chest, at the ring box resting right over his heart. But then it lurches upon the realization that Teddy, Teddy freaking Wells is walking toward them with a pretty blonde woman on his arm and a smirk on his face, leveled directly at Jake. And it thuds uncomfortably as he slowly begins to realize that his plan to propose to Amy at her favorite restaurant is slipping away the longer they sit here and listen to Teddy talk about his wildly successful pilsner business and being the youngest captain the eight-two has seen in twenty years. Teddy quotes a line of poetry that makes Amy sigh, that Jake doesn’t understand, and his heart sinks.

Not quite to the pit of his gut. But close.

“You should just pretend like you’re completely against marriage,” Gina suggests the next day in the
break room. Charles is nodding rapidly beside her, too busy chewing to voice his agreement. “That’ll totally throw her off.”

“Well I…I think she already knows that I want to get married,” Jake says slowly. “I mean, it’s not like we’ve, y’know, talked about it, but…it’s not exactly a secret, either.”

“She’s got marriage in her ten-year plan, though, doesn’t she?”

“I mean, yeah -”

“Then make her think you don’t want to be married for years. I mean, years. Like, when you’re Holt’s age. So, a dinosaur, basically.”

Charles shoots her a scandalized expression, but Jake nods slowly. “That might just work.”

Amy runs into Teddy again in the grocery store three days later.

“It was good seeing you the other night.” He says, affection and wistfulness melding together dangerously in his voice.

“Yeah, you too,” she shoots a pointed glance at the end of her cart, where his is turned at an angle to block her progress. He doesn’t move, just keeps staring. “Is there…something else?”

“Yeah. Yeah, actually, I…this is hard to say,” he reaches up to scratch the back of his neck, the faintest pink tint warming his face. “I…I think I still love you.”

She feels her jaw drop, fingers tightening over the object in her hand - a loaf of bread, dammit, now she has to go back and get a new one - but it doesn’t matter because Teddy’s still in love with her and he’s got her trapped at the end of the cereal aisle. “You…you think?” She hears herself ask, and honestly if Jake was here he’d probably be so exasperated that that’s what she’s caught up on.

Jake. Who doesn’t want to get married until he’s at least fifty, according to the brief conversation they had in the break room yesterday. Crap.

A faint smile crosses his face, warm with yet another wave of affection. “No, you’re right. I do. I still love you.”

“You’re telling me this now?”

“I know, I know, I’m probably too late, but…honestly, Amy, I was on the verge of going to your apartment to tell you all of this tonight,” he shifts forward an inch, pushing his cart more firmly against hers. “I still love you and I want to marry you and have kids with you. I want it all, everything that you want. I just…I needed to tell you.”

“Yes you’re too late, I’m with Jake and - and we’re really happy -”

Her voice cracks over the last word and they both wince. There’s a woman trying to push her cart behind Teddy, but she reverses and practically runs upon absorbing the sudden tension hanging in the air.

“Right,” he says, and it’s soft and gentle and tinged with the faintest edge of disappointment. “I’ll go.” She keeps her eyes down, on the corner where their carts are still interlocked. “But only if you can look me in the eye and tell me that Jake is willing to offer you everything I am.”

She grits her teeth and forces herself to meet his gaze. “Of course he is. In fact, I’m the one making
“Really? Why?”

“Because…because of the plan!” She says, edging on hysteria, wishing she was anywhere but under Teddy’s curious gaze. “Marriage isn’t for another four years, buddy, and if you think I’m gonna deviate from the plan for a man…”

“Hey, buddy, either grab some Corn Flakes or move.” An unfamiliar man with a bald spot shoves his cart forward, coming dangerously close to clipping the backs of Teddy’s ankles. Teddy shoots her one last look before moving forward hastily, leaving her standing alone and dumbfounded, a strangled loaf of bread in her hands.

She forgets the Lucky Charms.

“So that marriage stuff you were saying yesterday in the break room,” she starts that evening. Jake’s perched on the kitchen counter, and open bag of marshmallows balanced on his lap. A brief, delighted smile flashes across his face, lips curling back from his teeth to reveal half-chewed marshmallows, but he soberes before she sees and nods encouragingly when she glances up at him. “You didn’t really mean that, right?”

“Of course I did,” he says, tossing a marshmallow up and catching it on his tongue. “I mean, you gotta think about it, like, in terms of the government. Everyone knows that the government stops caring about you after you turn fifty. And marriage is the number one method for government tracking ever. So, yeah.”

She’s halfway through the motions of pulling a plate out of the dishwasher, having completely frozen, staring at him incredulously. “That’s insane.” She says. “You know that’s insane, don’t you?”

He shrugs. “I don’t think it is.”

“Wait, so…so you’re telling me that this,” she gestures between them, “is just…like, we’re just staying like this until we’re fifty? What about when you’re ready to start a family?”

“Whoa, there, mantrap, who said anything about us having a family?”

Outrage flashes dangerously in her eyes. “First of all, don’t you dare call me that. Ever. Understand?” He nods, trying to decide if he wants to throw up or burst out laughing. “Secondly, if you think that I’m gonna have kids at fifty years old, you’ve got another thing coming. Honestly, if that’s your plan, then what are we doing? What is this? If - if you don’t want to marry me, just say it.”

This time, his heart feels like it’s tripping, because before he can answer her phone begins to ring. She sweeps out of the room and he can tell by the tone of her muffled voice in the far room that it’s case-related and that she’s going to have to leave before he can get things back on track. Crap. Crap.

“There’s been a development in the Ferguson case,” she mutters as she rushes back into the room. She’s scanning the counters for her keys, conveniently avoiding his gaze.

Not good. “Amy, wait,” he says as he quickly jumps down from the counter. The marshmallow bag tumbles from his lap, spilling all over the floor, and Amy releases a strangled, frustrated sigh in response.
“We’ll talk about it when I get home, I have to go,” she says. “Clean that up.”

The development turned out to be nothing more than another witness who had a crappy angle on the perp, so after about fifteen minutes Amy finds herself back at the precinct, moodily slamming her binders closed and shoving them into her drawers. She really doesn’t want to go home where Jake will be waiting for her, having finished all his floor marshmallows and probably listing out all the reasons why he doesn’t want to marry her.

“Detective Santiago, will you please come see me in my office?” Captain Holt calls behind her.

It’s a monumental effort to keep herself from rolling her eyes but she manages to keep a relatively calm facade until she actually gets into his office. He’s wearing this ridiculous wrap that sits on his shoulders like a velvety black cape, sweeping out behind him dramatically as he moves from the door to behind his desk. “Update me on the Ferguson case,” he says.

“Rosa’s running point, you should ask her. Have you seen her? Or a mirror?” She regrets it as soon as she says it, and regrets her whole life when his brows rise incredulously. “I-I’m so sorry, sir, I’m just - I’m having a really bad night -”

He silences her with a raised hand, and then perches on the corner of his desk. “Normally I try not to get involved with my detectives’ personal lives, but considering I am your mentor, I find it perfectly acceptable to ask you the following question: what is the matter?” She blinks at him a few times.

“Talk to your captain, Santiago.”

“Is Jake really against marrying me?” She blurts. Holt tilts his chin up, eyes flashing with an emotion she could probably read if she took the time to dissect it, but doesn’t immediately recognize. “I-I mean - is it me or is it marriage in general?”

“Jacob is…a complex fellow. One who is unlikely to take a wife. Detective Santiago, as much as it pains me to say this, perhaps…it would be prudent to adjust to the idea that Jacob may never want to get married.”

“Yeah?” Holt nods, a frown tugging the corner of his mouth down, and when she blinks she sees kind brown eyes and a grocery cart blocking her path. “Well, I know someone who does.”

She stands and Holt remains frozen. “You do?” He asks, voice suddenly an octave higher. “Who?”

“Teddy.”

“Teddy - Teddy Wells? The captain of the eight-two you once dated?”

“That’s right. I ran into him at the grocery store today and he told me that he still loves me and that he wants to marry me.”

Holt stares at her for a beat, blinking rapidly. “Jake loves marriage!” He suddenly shouts, springing up from the desk and shedding the cape as he goes.

“But you just said that he doesn’t wanna get married! That he’s a complex fellow, one who is unlikely to take a wife!”

“Well that was - I mean, I -”

There’s a sharp knock at his closed office door. “Captain, Madeline Wuntch is here to see you!” A muffled voice shouts.
The look he gives her is utterly anguished as she moves quickly out of the room.

Ten minutes later, she’s sitting in her car, idling on the right side of a familiar, darkened street. The street is relatively quiet but there’s a couple sitting out on the stoop three doors down, passing a bottle back and forth every now and then. The back of her neck pricks at the thought of them seeing her, of them recognizing her as that woman that used to sometimes come here with a bottle of wine and a label maker.

The streetlight has gone out in front of Teddy’s walk up, though, and it’s dark enough that if she keeps her head turned down, her hair will cover her face. So with one last steeling breath, Amy kicks the door open and hurries to the front door.

Teddy opens the door a moment or two after she knocks and a wave of a familiar scent washes over her, and it takes every ounce of self-control she has not to close her eyes and groan in response. It smells like nice candles and fabric softener and the faintest, faintest hint of freshly-baked bread. Most notably absent: three-day-old socks. Which unfortunately can not be said of the apartment she and Jake live in.

Teddy’s expression is unreadable as his eyes rove over her face.

“I don’t know why I came here,” she tells him, voice soft.

“I didn’t ask.” He seems fairly neutral, even as he takes a step back and to the side, offering her a glimpse into the apartment she hasn’t seen in over three years. “Do you wanna come in?”

“I don’t know.”

His left hand, partially lifted to usher her inside, falls to his side. “Okay, well, I’m just gonna leave the door open and go sit down on the couch, and if you want to come in, you can.”

He turns on his heel and starts toward the couch in question, and she waits until he’s seated before stepping inside and shutting the door behind her. “Jake is such an idiot,” she half-mutters, half-shouts.

“Drink?” Teddy asks, quickly springing off of his couch and toward the small bar in the corner.

“Yeah. I’ll take a scotch -”

“- on the rocks with a twist.” He finishes, back turned to her. “I remember.”

She sits on the very edge of his couch, gaze slowly moving over every new piece of art in the room. He’s clearly been busy over the last three years; a medal of valor hangs in the center of a small cluster of framed newspaper clippings on the far wall, next to the bookshelves that are more books and less knick-knacks than they were before.

“Is that a collection of Yeats poetry?” She asks, pushing up off the couch to get closer to the shelves.

“Oh, yeah,” he sounds a bit sheepish. “I, uh - I spent six months in Ireland after we broke up to perfect the art of the brew, and... I kind of, unintentionally, ended up on a kind of marathon tour of Yeats’ life. I can see why he’s your favorite poet now.”

A soft noise escapes her throat unbidden, and she blushes. “What are you doing to me?” She asks quietly.

He hands her a glass, and she takes a long drink.
Amy has been gone for just over three hours when Jake’s phone begins to ring. The precinct’s number scrolls across the top of his screen, and for a split-second, the absolute worst flashes through his mind. But then it’s gone and he’s accepting the call and pressing the phone up to his face.

“This is Peral-”

“Jacob,” Holt’s voice is strained. “I’m - I apologize, I’ve been held captive by Madeline Wunctch - has Amy made it home yet?”

“No, I think she’s still out with Diaz. Why?”

“She - they came back three hours ago, the lead was a dead-end. She hasn’t come home yet?”

Something very unpleasant is churning deep in the pit of Jake’s stomach. “N-no?” He stammers uncertainly.

“Call her. Call her immediately and tell her that your foolish refusal to marry was a joke.”

“What’s going on -?”

“Teddy Wells has told her that he still loves her and wants to marry her.” Holt interrupts, voice so loud the speaker crackles in Jake’s ear. “And you’ve been telling her that -”

“Are you - are you serious? Oh God, oh crap!” He can’t even feel his heart beating over the rush of adrenaline surging deep in his chest. “Crap, crap! O-okay, I - I think I remember where he lives, I dropped her off there once while they were still together - do you think she went there?”

Holt doesn’t respond, and it’s like a thousand tiny knives are spearing through his heart. “I think - perhaps - that would be the best place to start your search for her.”

Jake mashes the end-call button and prays he’s not too late.

“God, I love this apartment!” She says, gesturing all around and nearly sloshing the contents of her glass all over the floor in the process. It’s only her second glass, but she’s already feeling the buzzing side-effects and she’s feeling them more than usual as she paces to and fro through the apartment. “See, this is a grown-up’s apartment! I want to live in a grown-up’s apartment! I wanna talk about Yeats and - and Ireland. I don’t wanna talk about marshmallows and stupid government conspiracy theories.”

Confusion flashes across Teddy’s face. “I think that’s fair,” he says, twisting a little in his spot on the couch to track her movement. “You wanna date an adult. Maybe one with a successful pilsner business and his own police precinct in Brooklyn.”

She laughs, but the scotch twists it into a scoff. “Please, don’t even talk to me about fair. Fair would have been you wanting this - you being this you - three years ago. Fair would be Jake wanting to marry me now. Believe me, nothing about this is fair! Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing -”

Oxygen is getting harder to process and her vision is going black around the edges, and the next thing she knows, Teddy is in her space, taking the glass from her trembling hand, pulling her into a warm, steady hug. She braces her fists against his chest as he wraps his arms around her back, rocking his weight from foot to foot, cheek pressed against the crown of her head. And it’s soothing against the panic still attempting to well up inside of her.
Up until she inhales, slow and deep, and her lungs are filled with the scent of an unfamiliar cologne. She pulls away, and Teddy’s eyes are too dark, too small, too…not Jake’s.

“I-I have to go…think things over,” she says hoarsely. His arms fall away from her back and she moves away from him, toward the door, where her purse lays on the floor.

“Of course. Take all the time you need. I’ll be here.”

Almost no time passes between Jake pounding on the front door and Teddy flinging it open which - well, he’s not really sure if that’s a good thing or a bad thing. Still, it doesn’t stop him from growling.

“Where is she?”

“She’s not here,” Teddy says calmly, even as Jake shoves past him and stalks into the apartment. He’s not really sure what he was expecting (bland, beige carpet on top of bland, beige walls, maybe) but the intricate artwork, impressive collection of books, and shining medal of valor on the wall certainly isn’t it. Still, he doesn’t even have time to fully process it, because his gaze falls upon the table where two glasses are sitting, condensation still gathered on the sides.


“Alright, she was here, but she’s not anymore. She said she needed some time to think things over.”

He knows it’s true, her car wasn’t even outside, but the confirmation that she’d come here - that he’d driven her here with his own stupidity - is enough to make him want to positively scream in frustration. “Y’know, you had no right to interfere like this. I had a plan, dammit, and then you came in and ruined it. My girlfriend is out there somewhere, thinking you have something to offer her that I don’t. You made my girlfriend think, you big tree!” Teddy furrows his brow as Jake collapses backwards against the couch. “I mean, what does she have to think about, huh? I love her.”

“See, I don’t - I don’t think that really matters,” Teddy says, sinking down on the opposite end of the couch. “Because I love her, too, but I actually want to marry her.”

“I wanna marry her, too,” Jake snaps, fishing the ring box out of his pocket and thrusting it toward Teddy. “This whole thing has been one huge misunderstanding.” He says as Teddy slowly reaches out and takes the ring. “The only reason I told her all of that about marriage was just to throw her off so that when I actually did propose, it would, y’know…be a surprise.”

Teddy’s gaze remains fixated on the ring for another moment longer, before he turns sharply toward Jake. “Well, it worked,” he says, snapping the box closed.

Jake’s heart is a roaring lion.

“You should go get her,” Teddy says quietly.

“Wait - what?”

“You should go get her. Seriously. I had my chance, and…if we’re being honest…I’ve known right from the very beginning that for her, it’s either you or it’s no one. And…she doesn’t deserve to end up alone.”

Jake stares, incredulous, watching a muscle in Teddy’s clenched jaw twitch. “Wow, I…thank you. You…you really are a good guy, Teddy.”
“Yeah, I know. I hate that sometimes.”

He nearly forgets the ring, but ten minutes later he’s in one piece and is racing up the stairs toward their apartment. His phone died the moment he dashed out of Teddy’s place, but he’s got a spare charging cable somewhere in the apartment that will let him charge his phone in the car. He’s so intently focused on trying to remember where the last place he saw the cable was that he nearly rams right into Charles where he stands outside of their apartment.

“Jake,” Charles starts.

“I really don’t have time to talk right now, Charles, I gotta go find Amy -”

“She’s gone, Jake,” Charles says softly.

Jake freezes, keys in hand. “What?”

“She left about half an hour ago. She had a bag and she was crying and everything. She says you shouldn’t call her, but if I were you, I definitely, definitely would.”

“Why did you try to stop her? Why didn’t you tell her that this was just a stupid plan?”

“I did! I told her everything, Jake! She wouldn’t believe me!”

He runs a hand through his hair. He’s never felt his heart plunking so painfully against his chest before. “Well where is she?” He demands, voice harsh and ragged.

“I think she was going to her parent’s house. Seriously, Jake, I really think you should call her -”

“My phone’s dead, Charles, I came here to get my charger, otherwise I’d be out looking for her - God, I can’t believe how bad I messed this up -” A lump is rising dangerously high in his throat and his eyes are stinging and, if he’s not mistaken, there are tears in Charles’ eyes, too. His chest is empty, caved in, but still his brain is whirring. Without another word, he turns back to the door, sliding the key inside, bracing himself.

The apartment is darker than usual when he gets inside, and it takes a moment to realize that there are hundreds of candles clustered together on almost every available surface starting from the front door all the way through the kitchen and the living room. It throws the whole apartment into a sweet, romantic glow, and his breath catches when he realizes Amy is standing in the middle of the living room, looking at him expectantly. “You wanted it to be a surprise,” she says softly.

He has enough presence of mind to turn back toward Charles, whose tears are gone, replaced by a grin just barely visible as the door closes behind him. And then Jake’s feet are carrying him forward in instinct, closer to her, where she stands as steady as the sun. And when he stops short a foot away, she slowly sinks down to one knee. “Oh, my God,” he hears himself say.

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“Jake,” she says, and he’s never loved the sound of his own name more. “In all my life, I never thought that I’d be so lucky. I mean I’ve...I’ve fallen in love with my...my best friend,” tears have gathered in her eyes, streaking down her face quickly, and he drops to his knees to better wipe them away with his thumbs. She leans into his touch, curling her fingers around his wrists, and it takes every ounce of willpower he possesses to keep from kissing her. “And I am, I’m so in love with you, Jake. So in love. And I’m sorry,” she finishes in a whisper.

He drops his forehead to hers, laughing a little, and she smiles in response. “It’s okay,” he murmurs. “I sort of...accidentally pushed you that way, so, really, I’m...I’m sorry.” she shrugs, and when they laugh it’s watery and choked.
“So you were...gonna ask me something tonight,” she prompts. And even though she’s looking at him so adoringly, so openly and expectantly, his heart shoots right up to his throat.

“Yeah. Yeah, I - yeah. Um, Amy,” he brings his thumbs up over her cheekbones, stroking lightly, memorizing the warmth pressing against his palms. “You...you make me happier than I ever thought I could be,” she readjusts her grip around his wrists, and he inches forward, slotting his knees on either side of hers. “I love you so much it honestly kind of scares me sometimes. But it’s - it’s like you said. You’re my best friend and the love of my life and...God, you just make me so ridiculously happy. And above all else, I want you to know - I promise that I will spend the rest of my life trying to make you happy, too, if you’ll let me. So...Ames?” He pulls away from her, and when her hands fall away from his wrists, they rise to cover her mouth. The ring box slides out easily from his pocket and she releases another watery, breathless laugh when he pops the thing open. “Will you marry me?”

Her hands fall away and she lifts her gaze from the ring up to his face. “Yes,” she breathes, and then they’re hugging, hugging so tightly he’s afraid she can’t breathe but he just can’t loosen his stranglehold around her because holy shit, she just said yes!

She offers him her hand when they finally break apart and the ring slides over her knuckle perfectly, nestling right into place at the base of her finger. She only admires it for half a second before launching toward him and kissing him with everything she has, stroking his face and combing through his hair and massaging the base of his neck. And he can’t even form a coherent thought because he’s on the floor with his fiancee surrounded by candles and they’re so in love it’s stupid and he doesn’t care about any of the crap that happened to him when he was a kid, he’d do it all a million times over again, so long as he always gets to end it right here, on this floor with this woman.

“Can we come in yet? We’re dying out here!” A muffled voice shouts through the front door.

“Come in, come in!” Amy shouts back, her voice high with emotion. Jake hears the front door open somewhere behind his back as he helps Amy to her feet, and when he turns, the entire squad is pouring through their front door, gazes varying degrees of hopeful. “We’re engaged!” Amy cries.

A collective cheer works through the squad, and then he’s hugging Amy again, but Charles’ arms are wound around them both, and Gina’s arms are flung around his neck and he can feel Rosa’s arms somewhere near Amy’s waist and Terry is basically bear hugging all of them and he even thinks he can feel Ray somewhere between Rosa and Gina. And all he can think is family.

The squad lingers for a long time, managing to burn through three bottles of wine, but eventually Jake finds himself alone with his fiancee for the first time in several hours. Her eyes are half-mast from the wine and the quiet music filtering through the speakers in their living room, and without a word, she lets him pull her close and they begin to sway.

And it’s funny, really, because he’s close enough that he can feel her heart beating through her chest, ticking steadily against his own chest, and it’s perfectly in sync with his own heart.

Which is, for the first time in his life, completely and totally full.
my life before was tragic

Chapter Summary

Prompt! After Jake and Amy start dating, Jake finds the ring from The Bet in Amy's desk and asks her why she went back to get it. - ANONYMOUS

Jake really hates Wednesdays.

He’s not even really sure why. His father left on a Monday, his turtle moved out on a Thursday, he started preschool on a Tuesday. There isn’t anything particularly awful about Wednesdays, and yet…

It’s all the little things that go wrong on Wednesdays that really get him.

For instance, on this particular Wednesday, Jake woke up approximately twenty minutes before he was set to testify in court. The courthouse is a fifteen minute subway ride away so after the fastest shower known to man he haphazardly dressed in slacks and what he hoped was a matching jacket (it wasn’t matching) before bolting out of his apartment and flagging down the first taxi he saw. They must have upped the fare without telling him, so by the time he got to the courthouse he had to split the bill between two credit cards, which - well, he won’t even get into that, but there’s a pretty good reason that they’re both almost maxed out. He managed to race inside the courtroom just in time for the proceedings to start, but was so flustered that he didn’t even realize who the perp’s lawyer was until he was already on the witness stand. After forty-five minutes of being ruthlessly grilled by his ex-girlfriend, he got to watch the stupid sunovabitch perp walk free while Sophia looked on with a smug, self-satisfied grin.

The hearing took so long that by the time he finally made it into the precinct to have lunch with Amy like he told her he would, it was two o’clock and she’d left with Rosa to interview a witness. Guilt gnawed at the lining of his stomach at the sight of two neatly packed tupperware containers stacked on the corner of her desk, increasing tenfold when he read the sticky note stuck to the top - Sorry, had to run! Be back later <3

She hadn’t eaten before leaving. Amy hates not eating. She gets cranky and irritable and…God, he’s the worst, he should have texted her and told her to eat without him.

Boyle and Gina are both gone and Terry’s in Holt’s office, the two of them appearing to be deep in a conversation that won’t end any time soon, so Jake sinks down in Amy’s seat and moodily swivels back and forth a few times. She’s got a direct shot to Hitchcock and Scully’s desk, where they’re currently clipping their toenails - ew - but otherwise her view of the precinct is perfect. She’s added a few little things to her desk since they’ve been dating, he notes; one of which is a small framed photo of the two of them from last year’s holiday party.

He smiles in spite of his bad mood as he picks it up. She was wearing that little red dress that night, the one that always makes him momentarily forget how to speak when he first sees her in it. It was the first time she’d worn it since they started dating, and that night was the first night he actually got to act on all the thoughts he usually gets when he sees her in it. They got to dance together that night, too, and they got to hang out with all of their friends and drink a lot of free champagne. All in all, not a bad Friday night.
He leans forward to replace the frame, but hesitates upon spotting the lines on the desk from where it was sitting before. A thin layer of dust has settled along the furthest edges of Amy’s desk, right where it meets with his own. She’s been so busy with an overwhelmingly large caseload lately she just hasn’t had time for her weekly desk sanitations.

Jake carefully folds the back arm of the photo frame down before placing it on her desk calendar. She keeps all of her cleaning supplies in her bottom drawer behind her files - “I don’t want the cleaning crew to get it, Jake, this solution is a homemade secret family recipe!” - and her good scrubbing sponges are in the middle drawer. He made her miss lunch, so the least he can do is clean her desk for her.

He stands to take a picture of the desk’s surface with his phone before carefully moving each item to his own desk until all that remains are her desk lamp, her computer monitors, her keyboard, and her mouse. She’s got three different unmarked bottles of cleaning solution in her desk but he only pulls the blue one out (it’s the one he’s seen her use most often, one he thinks might be some kind of combination duster and polisher) and sets it on her desk before opening the middle drawer to root around for her sponges.

His gaze catches on something small and red, something heart-shaped and velvet.

It’s a ring box.

A mental image of Amy sinking down on one knee in front of him with this box in her hand briefly flashes through his mind but he shakes it off as he carefully pulls the box from the space in her drawer. He glances up, quickly scanning the bullpen - no one is looking at him - before slowly sinking back down to her seat. There’s something oddly familiar about this box, some little niggling deja-vu sending up red flags in the back of his mind. Do not open that, a voice that sounds suspiciously like Rosa’s hisses in his head. Open it now! Charles’ voice says excitedly.

He slides his thumbnail between the top and the bottom of the box and flicks it upwards, holding his breath in anticipation. And when the lid flips open, all the air comes hissing out of his lungs at once. A familiar plastic ring winks up at him beneath the fluorescent light above his head. It takes him a moment to place it in his memory, but it comes flooding back to him in sharp technicolor in an instant; he remembers clutching this ring box while standing in line at the dollar general around the corner, whistling to himself, checking his phone and pulling up the picture Charles texted him of the colored backside of the whiteboard where he and Amy had been keeping score from their bet. He pulls it out of the box carefully, examining the ring with as much care as he might handle the original tapes Die Hard was recorded on. The plastic faux-diamond is cloudy and one side of the band is scuffed up pretty badly, and it takes him a minute to remember why.

He threw this ring with all his might on the night of their first date.

“How the hell…?” He whispers to himself. He’d all but forgotten about that night in all the months that had since passed. How long has this been in her drawer? Did she keep it there as a daily reminder to seek revenge? Oh, God, is that why she’s been dating him for all this time? As some kind of cruel, drawn-out revenge for making her wear that stupid dress?

“Jake?” A voice snaps him out of his spiral. Amy and Rosa are standing before him, Amy’s hands on her hips, brows raised, eyes wide as they sweep over her belongings scattered across his desk. Rosa’s brows are furrowed curiously as she peeks around Amy’s shoulder.
“Are you breaking up with me?” He asks, thrusting the ring toward her.

Her head snaps fully toward him, the slight panic from before now fully blazing. “What?”

“Have you been pretending to date me to get revenge from the bet date? Because -”

“Wait, no, I don’t - what? What is going on right now?”

He scrambles out of her seat, still holding the ring out toward her between his index finger and his thumb. “I found this in your drawer just now,” he says, and apparently that’s still not a good enough answer, because she looks even more confused than before. “Have you been holding onto this as a reminder to get revenge?”

“Oh my God - no, you dummy! God, what - I can’t - ugh,” she turns sharply toward Rosa, who up until that point had been watching the exchange with a wide, amused grin. “Can I follow up with you in a minute?”

She clicks her tongue, glances at Jake, and then shrugs. “Sure.”

Amy sinks down in her guest chair as Rosa walks away, gesturing for Jake to reclaim her desk chair. “First of all, that was an insane assumption to make. You realize that, don’t you?”

He blinks. Maybe…maybe he went a little overboard. Wednesdays, he thinks savagely.

“Secondly, why were you digging through my drawers?”

There’s no accusation in her voice, just a little annoyance. “I was gonna clean your desk for you,” he says, suddenly feeling sheepish. “You’ve been working so hard lately that you haven’t had time for your weekly sanitations and I felt really bad for making you skip lunch, so I thought I’d - y’know…”

Her facial expression softens. “Oh. That’s really sweet of you.” She reaches out and gently squeezes his wrist. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” he can feel the blush starting to pool in his cheeks, so he pushes the ring toward her again. “Why do you have this? Or, actually, how do you have this? I thought I hurled this all the way to Narnia.”

She snorts and rolls her eyes. “I went back the next morning and found it.” She says, carefully avoiding his gaze by studying the shapes her belongings left in the dust on her desk. He can tell instantly that she’s trying to be nonchalant but is failing miserably - he can see red quickly blossoming across her face.

“Why?” He asks softly.

Her eyes are big and liquid when they flick to his face. He’s leaned forward subconsciously, he realizes, and she’s mirrored his pose so that their foreheads are almost touching over the corner of her desk. He can see Rosa shifting files around on her desk from the corner of his eye but he can feel her furtively staring at the two of them. It doesn’t matter, though, because the tip of Amy’s tongue darts out to the corner of her mouth in a nervous tick she picked up four years ago.

From him.

“Because I…wanted it.” She finally murmurs. Her fingers are still wrapped around his wrist so he grabs her wrist with his free hand to pin her as he leans forward and kisses her, soft and slow but brimming with emotion. He can feel her reach around to blindly grab the plastic ring from where it
sits between his forearms but he couldn’t care less. He pulls away from her slowly and reluctantly only after Rosa loudly drops a stack of files to his right.

Amy has that wonderstruck look on her face that she sometimes gets when he’s done something really, really well, and he almost smiles - really, he should be the gobsmacked one here.

“I’m keeping this,” she tells him once she’s recovered a little. She shows him the ring before tucking it back into it’s little velvet box and putting the box back in her drawer.

“Oh, no,” he says. That’s fine, he wants to say. I’ve got a much more expensive one in my sock drawer at home that you can have, too, if you want it.

“Lunch?” She asks, rising to her feet.

“But your desk -”

“I’ll clean it later, I just wanna eat with you right now.”

He stands as well and pecks her lips, grinning at the dreamy smile on her face when he pulls away. “I’ll clean it later,” he says, squeezing her hands.

She pulls him around her desk, toward the break room, pausing long enough for him to grab the tupperware containers from the edge of his desk, before a frown crosses her face. “Oh, no,” she says softly.

“What?”

“I fell in love with you,” she says, sounding genuinely anguished, and it takes him a moment to remember the condition he’d laid out all those years ago. “You said it wasn’t allowed and I - I broke a rule -”

“Alright, shuddup,” he grumbles, rolling his eyes when she laughs. “You’re lucky I fell in love with you, too, you dork.”

She’s still grinning, but her gaze has softened once again. “Yeah, I am,” she says with a shrug.

Maybe Wednesdays aren’t that bad afterall.
“Wait, wait!” Charles shouts for the third time in five minutes. Rosa’s huff comes out as a growl as she basically throws herself backwards in her seat, rolling her eyes as far back as they’ll go in her head as Charles stands and hurries toward the surveillance room door. He flicks the lights off, throwing the room into an almost-eery glow that throws sharp shadows across his grinning face as he hurries back to his seat beside her. He’s already made her stop so that he could pee (“I don’t wanna miss a single second!”) and again so he could find a jacket (“I don’t wanna be distracted by how cold it is in here, Rosa!”), and now -

“Mood lighting?” Rosa asks, unable and unwilling to keep the disdain out of her voice.

“This is going to be the most romantic thing I will ever witness, Rosa. It has to be perfect. One day my kids are gonna see this tape.”

It would be touching if it wasn’t so totally weird.

“Whatever,” she grumbles, turning back toward the film pulled up on the screen. It took Savant all of twelve seconds to get everything pulled up for them, which apparently isn’t all that impressive in and of itself, except their last IT Department Head would sometimes take twenty minutes just to log in to his stupid computer.

It’s really a wonder they weren’t hacked sooner.

The picture quality is pretty bad, but Rosa can already tell that it’s Amy’s arm only just starting to push the door to the evidence locker open. Her fingers are strangely tingling as she reaches for the play button. "Ready?“ She asks Charles one last time.

“I was born ready,” he mutters, eyes glued to the screen.

She rolls her eyes and presses play.

Amy comes in alone, surprisingly. They watch the grainy image of her quickly pace toward the front row of shelves, where she feigns interest in what Rosa is pretty sure is a duffel bag literally stuffed full of cocaine, before the door suddenly opens and Jake appears. He’s turned back toward the exterior of the room, apparently in the middle of shouting something (Rosa vaguely remembers him yelling something about evidence earlier, but she learned a long time ago to not pay much attention once Jake starts shouting) before closing the door and quickly meeting Amy in the middle of the room. She half-expects them to just immediately go to town on each other, but they don’t - instead, they start talking. She can tell by Amy’s exaggerated movements that she’s excited about something - binders, probably - and Jake responds to her just as enthusiastically.
“C’mon,” Rosa grumbles. “We came for the action, not the foreplay.”

Jake asks something, Amy shrugs, Jake says something disparaging (she knows it’s disparaging because she sees his head drop down lower toward his shoulders the way it always does when he’s being annoying), and then -

“Oh, oh, we have hand-holding!” Charles shouts excitedly.

“Look at Santiago, initiating the rule-breaking,” Rosa says. Amy pulls Jake to the back row and spins so that her back is pressed against the shelves. His hand is still in hers, though, and she uses it to pull him to her; Jake appears to go more than willingly, bracing himself with hands on the shelf on either side of her shoulders, diving in for what appears to be a pretty raunchy kiss.

Charles squeals.

It’s pretty annoying, really, but Rosa finds that she can’t quite draw her gaze away from the two making out on-screen long enough to level a proper glare at him. “Oh I’m - I’ve waited so long -” Charles says, and she glances up to find his eyes glassy with tears as he watches.

“S’creepy, man,” Rosa tells him, but she’s fighting a grin that is dangerously close to bursting across her face. Amy’s no longer pressed against the shelves when Rosa looks again - in fact, she looks to be half-way through the process of pushing Jake back against the shelves - when suddenly the evidence locker door swings open and Dozerman comes lumbering in. Charles gasps when Amy shoves Jake away so forcefully he falls, and Rosa snorts when Jake leaps back to his feet brandishing a candy wrapper he apparently found on the ground. They both wince when Dozerman collapses into the boxes stacked to the right of the aisle, and Rosa finally stops the tape just before Amy reaches the door to the lockup. “They actually killed a guy,” Rosa marvels.

“Correction: their love killed a guy.” Charles says. He’s poorly suppressing a grin. “They’re the Jack and Rose of the Nine-Nine. It’s official.”

“Are you saying that Jack and Rose caused the Titanic to sink?”

Charles blinks a few times, his grin slowly fading. “N-No, I - oh,” he frowns. “Just that, like, the odds are stacked against them, but…their love will prevail.”

“You do remember how it ends, right?”

“Yeah, but Amy actually won’t let go. They’ll die holding each other as the Titanic takes on water -”

“I think you may be getting a little ahead of yourself, there, buddy,” Rosa mutters, but he’s already grinning dreamily again.

And somehow, Rosa can’t find it in herself to mind.
**don't let our hearts freeze**

Chapter Summary

I see a lot of Jake helping Amy with panic attacks but not much of the opposite and you write intimate moments between them so well, so would you write the first time Jake feels safe enough with Amy to call her when he gets a panic attack (establish relationship)? - FUCKINGDAMNITDEAN

Amy wakes up around two in the morning to the sounds of a familiar ringtone slicing through the darkness. She reaches blindly across her bedside table, slapping around for her phone, and when she squints through the blurriness clouding her vision, she registers that the shape of the picture filling the screen is the same shape as Jake’s face.

“‘lo?” She croaks into the receiver. Immediately, she can tell something is wrong. He’s panting into the phone, breaths sounding louder than usual, as if his throat is constricting. She sits up immediately, reaching for her glasses as she pins the phone between her face and her shoulder. “Jake?”

“I’m - hnf,” she hears him whine. “I’m sorry, I’m - I shouldn’t - ah -”

“What’s wrong, what’s going on?” She’s on her feet now, flicking her lamp on, searching desperately for the slippers she so haphazardly discarded earlier. Her memory is starting to flood back now - he’s been out sick for the last three days, she hasn’t seen him longer than five minutes total in that time. “Talk to me, Jake, what’s wrong?”

“I’m so sorry, I’m so - uhnm,” he groans, long and loud, and Amy’s heart is in her throat. “Please, I just - I need you, I’m sorry, I - I need to see you right now.”

She’s never heard this tone in his voice before, not once in the eleven years they’ve known each other. “Are you at home?”

“Yeah,” he chokes. He’s still panting.

“Okay, I’m - shit -” she rammed her toe right into the leg of the bed “- I’m on my way, Jake, okay? Do you want me to stay on the phone with you until I get there?”

“Please,” he gasps.

She does. She keeps up a steady narration of what she’s doing and what she’s seeing as she quickly dons her bathrobe and seizes her purse from the table beside her front door. He doesn’t speak again, not one single time in the entire drive between her apartment and his, but she can hear him panting the entire time. It’s a relief on some level, but wholly anxiety-inducing on another.

“Okay, Jake, I’m at your front door - I have your key - I’m unlocking it -” the door swings open to reveal a dark apartment. She steps inside and closes the door behind her, suddenly feeling absurdly stupid for forgetting her gun. “Where are you?”

“Bedroom,” he says, and his strained voice echoes from the room up and to her right. She hurries toward it, dropping her phone down into her purse as she pushes the door open and rushes inside. He’s on the floor beside the bed, legs tangled in his sheets, looking frighteningly pale even in the

She drops to her knees beside him and lets him pull her into a truly bone-crushing hug. It takes her a moment to realize that he’s straight-up sobbing against her, face pressed into the curve of her neck, fingers gripping her terry cloth robe so tightly it’s a wonder it doesn’t rip. It’s far more alarming than the disjointed phone call, she decides. She comforts him the best she can at the awkward angle, running her fingers through his soft curls and tracing the shells of his ears with the pads of her thumbs. Her hands come away damp - he’s practically drenched in sweat. His forehead is burning where it rests against her shoulder. Clearly, he downplayed how sick he actually was when she called him before going to bed. “It’s okay, babe,” she whispers, lips pressed against his temple. His grip becomes impossibly tighter around her. “Everything’s okay. Sh-h-h, you’re okay. You’re okay.”

It takes a long time, but eventually his sobs begin to taper and his grip loosens to merely vice-like. He’s somehow situated them so that he’s flat on his butt, leaned back against the side of the bed, with Amy sitting in his lap. His legs are still tangled in the sheets, which she realizes now are damp with sweat as well. He sniffs and lets her pull back far enough to kiss his forehead before pulling her back to rest snugly against him.

“Sorry,” he croaks after a long stretch of silence.

She lifts the hand she’s been rubbing his upper arm with to cup the side of his face not resting against her shoulder. “You don’t have to apologize,” she says softly. She feels his lips purse just enough to briefly press against the base of her throat. “Are you okay?” He shrugs beneath her. “D’you wanna talk about it?”

He’s quiet for a long time, so long that she’s almost forgotten that she even asked a question. “It was…just a nightmare,” he says. He’s started tracing patterns along her back through her robe. “A bad one. They get really bad when - when I’m sick. And the sheets, I thought - it’s stupid -”

“It’s not stupid,” Amy interrupts in a whisper.

He sniffles, hugging her to him for a moment, before relaxing back to his pattern-drawing. “In the dream, my legs were tied. I guess the sheets got tangled while I was sleeping, I dunno. It was really surreal because I was kind of awake but still dreaming and - I couldn’t get to you in the nightmare and - and -”

His breathing has picked up again, so Amy quickly shushes him and strokes his face. “It’s okay, it’s okay, it was just a nightmare,” she reminds him, trying to keep her voice as low and soothing as she can. It seems to be working - his breathing is slowing down. “You’re okay and… and I’m okay. Nothing bad happened. It was just a nightmare.”

Jake’s jaw muscles twitch against her shoulder as he clenches his teeth and hums into her neck. “Thank you for coming over here in the middle of the night.” He says after another stretch of silence.

“You would’ve done the same for me in a heartbeat,” she says, and he chuckles because he knows it’s true. “But, you’re welcome. You already took medicine, right?”

“Yeah, ’fore I went to bed. Will you… will you stay here ’til morning? Please?”

Amy pulls back and he’s looking up at her through blood-shot eyes swimming in apprehension. She frames his face between her hands and kisses him, long and slow and firm, before pulling back just far enough to rest her forehead against his. “Of course I will,” she whispers. “Now, c’mon, lets get you back in bed.”
He’s unsteady on his feet when he stands but he stays upright thanks in large part to her firm grip on his arms. She digs out a new shirt for him from his drawers, one that isn’t soaked in sweat, and he changes perched on the edge of the bed while she sheds her robe and drapes it over the back of his desk chair. He slides in facing her but rolls over when she prods his shoulder, releasing a shuddering sigh of relief as she throws her arm over his side and pulls herself up as close as she can get to his back. She presses three kisses between his shoulder blades through his shirt, and he finds her hand curled loosely against his rib cage and squeezes. “I love you,” he sighs, settling back a little further in her embrace.

“I love you, too,” she whispers, pressing her lips against his spine between his shoulder blades until his breathing evens out.

She wakes up to a running nose, a pounding head, and a raging fever, but finds that she doesn’t mind at all.
Chapter Summary

Could you write something where Rosa encourages Gina to think about becoming a cop/something post coral palms pt3??? Xoxoxo - ANONYMOUS

“Aw, man,” Gina whines. Rosa glances up from the postcard spinner she’s spent the last five minutes idly spinning to where Gina stands. Her Snuggie is now on backwards so that it billows out behind her like a cape, her sunglasses pushed up to sit in her hair, and her disappointed gaze is fixated on the vending machine just inches from the end of her nose. “They ran out.”

“Of what?” Rosa asks, giving the spinner one last twirl before approaching Gina slowly.

“Those cute ‘lil guns,” Gina says, and Rosa has to close her eyes to contain her snort. “If I’d known you guys were gonna keep takin’ ’em from me, I would’a bought more.”

Gina doesn’t know it, but the gun in question is actually securely hidden in a holster inside Rosa’s jacket. She crosses her arms over her middle, elbow pressing the gun in question more snugly against her side, and tilts her head to the left. “I don’t really think you need it.” She says calmly.

“That’s easy for you to say, you get to carry one around for your stupid lame job!” Gina stamps her foot like a petulant child, and Rosa finds herself fighting off a grin. “The only thing I got for my job is a stupid security pass.”

“You could always…get a different job.”

Gina shoots her a scandalized expression.

“Not that I want you to leave,” Rosa quickly backtracks. “But, y’know. Surely you don’t wanna stay the civilian administrative assistant forever, do you?”

Gina’s eyes narrow infinitesimally. “No,” she finally admits. “But I just, I don’t…mmm,” she turns her head away and Rosa watches her shoulders rise and fall twice. “I don’t know what I wanna do.” She says quietly.

It’s the most serious Rosa’s ever heard her be before. “I didn’t, either. Not for a long time. There’s nothing wrong with not knowing.” She moves around to the other side of the vending machine, into Gina’s line of sight. “But I gotta tell you, Linetti, I think you show a lot of promise in become a police officer.”

Gina’s nose wrinkles. “Ew,” she mutters, but Rosa recognizes the spark of interest in her eyes.

“Not sayin’ you have to go to the academy tomorrow or anything,” Rosa says. “I’m just sayin’…I think you’d do really well there. And they’d teach you how to shoot guns for real.”

It’s at that precise moment that the men’s room door swings open and Jake comes hobbling out. Amy has one hand firmly wrapped around his upper arm, just above his elbow, to keep him from face-planting right there on the rest stop floor (those pain meds are strong) and with the other she holds the door open for him. Gina and Rosa both spring into action immediately, each of them taking one
side to help him outside while Amy goes back into the restroom to help Holt.

They don’t talk about it again - but after an hour or so, after Jake’s deep, even snores have filled the back seat where he lays across Amy’s and Charles’ laps, Rosa glances across the space between her seat and Gina’s. Gina’s staring out the window, headphones firmly in place in her ears. but Rosa knows contemplative Gina when she sees one.

She turns forward again, and this time she can’t fight the small grin that blossoms on her face.
baby, you were my picket fence

It’s not often Rosa Diaz finds herself without company on a Friday night in Shaw’s. In fact, the phenomenon is so rare that she can’t even really remember how long it’s been; she’s got a vague memory of storming out of McGinley’s office, furious (though now she has no idea what for), blowing Jake’s offer to take her midnight laser tagging completely off as she stomped out of the precinct. She’d come here blindly, planted herself at a booth alone in the back, her only companions her glass and her bottle of whiskey. If anyone in the bar knew her, they knew her well enough to stay away.

The situation on this particular Friday night doesn’t look exceptionally different - same glass, same brand of whiskey, just one booth over from the one before - but Rosa’s not particularly angry at the present moment. She turns her half-empty glass slowly atop the table, trying to sharpen her focus down to the smeared rings of water left behind by the glass’s condensation in an attempt to drown out her racing thoughts.

She’s been at this for three hours now, and so far, it’s not working.

Because no matter how hard she focuses (she can feel the tension headache forming above her left temple) or how much she drinks (she’s halfway through the bottle, thank you very much), she just can’t seem to banish Jake Peralta from her mind.

And it’s so strange, really, because it’s not like he took up a huge space in her daily thoughts before. But now that he’s gone - gone undercover, for god only knows how long - she’s starting to realize just how much he’s permeated the nooks and crannies of her life. Who’s gonna remind Gina to ease up on Charles during lunch every day? Who’s gonna remind Santiago to chill every time she gets all weird and panicky? And who the hell is gonna throw balled up post-it notes into Hitchcock and Scully’s gaping mouths when they fall asleep at their desks?

It’s the little things, she decides, that she’s going to miss the most. Not that deep-seated, aching kind of miss, but rather the quieter kind, the kind that make her pause in the middle of whatever she’s doing, a faintly melancholic nostalgia washing over her for only the briefest of moments. He’s been a damn constant in her life since the academy; she can always count on at least one text a day from him, even though she never, ever responds.

She should have responded.

Rosa has to keep reminding herself that he’s not gone - that eventually, he’ll be back, probably just as annoying and energetic as before, and she can go back to rolling her eyes at him and refusing to acknowledge that little lump of affection that has taken root deep in her chest.

Their whole relationship is contingent on her barely tolerating his presence, after all.

It’s nearly midnight and the bar has just hit its’ Friday night stride. People are swarming the bar, working the three bartenders to the bone, and the din of noise has risen to a loud buzz in Rosa’s ears. It’s a welcome assault, even if it sits something like nails against her brain - it drowns out the scarier thoughts, the what-ifs she’s been repeatedly shoving down ever since she walked in here. She’s so busy people-watching that she doesn’t notice the presence approaching her until they’ve dropped down in the chair across the table from where she sits; she blinks, and a pair of familiar brown eyes blown wide in equally familiar panic come into focus.

“Santiago,” Rosa mutters. Amy swallows and nods, a small movement, so small Rosa wonders if
“I - I needed a drink,” she says distractedly, uncertainly. Rosa furrows her brow as more details about her appearance come into focus through the quiet buzz of whiskey in her veins; Amy’s shoulders are slumped and she’s hunched over the table, arms crossed tightly against her middle. Her purse continuously twitches where it rests against her thigh, and after a moment Rosa realizes it’s because her leg is jiggling violently beneath the table. She’s twitchy, nervous, completely on-edge; all manner of vulgar protests die on Rosa’s tongue. Instead, she pushes the whiskey bottle toward her wordlessly.

Amy snatches it and takes a long pull, screwing her eyes shut against the bitter taste, but even as she coughs and splutters as she lowers the bottle again Rosa finds that she just can’t make fun of her. “Good? Or do I need to order another bottle?”

“And other,” says Amy, and then, “he’s gone.”

Rosa stiffens, gaze lifting to scan over the crowd around them. “Who?” She asks quietly when she can’t spot the threat.

“Jake.”

She deflates. “Yeah, he left, like, three hours ago -”

“Not three hours ago, ten minutes ago. And he - he stopped me in the parking lot, as I was on my way out.” She swallows again, thickly this time, and Rosa clenches her jaw. “He confessed - he told me that he likes me.”

For a split-second, Rosa has to fight the craziest urge to laugh. It’s all so juvenile - a boy confessed he liked her and she’s immediately distraught, how utterly cliche - before the implications of it all belatedly hit her. “Oh.”

Amy nods, eyes still unsettlingly wide and unblinking on Rosa’s face. “Yeah. Yeah. He said he liked me, romantic-stylez.”

“Don’t say it like that,” Rosa interrupts with a grimace.

“I know, believe me, but that’s how he said it - he said he had feelings for me and then he just - he left! He just left me standing there in the middle of the parking lot, never even gave me a chance to respond, and that’s not even the worst part - d’you wanna know what the worst part is?”

She doesn’t, not really, but something about the manic quality of Amy’s next swig from the bottle tells her that she’s going to find out either way. “What?” asks Rosa cautiously.

The bottle hits the table loudly, hard enough that Rosa can feel the vibrations up her fingers and into her wrists, and when Amy leans forward she brings the scent of whiskey and a faint, flowery perfume with her. “I didn’t even say goodbye.” Amy whispers.

“You didn’t say goodbye, or he didn’t give you a chance to say goodbye?”

Amy’s brow furrows. “He didn’t give me a chance. He said his spiel and then - then he just walked away.”

Rosa leans back, trying to digest it all. “So he told you he has feelings for you, ran away before you could respond, and didn’t give you a chance to say goodbye? Santiago, you know what he was doing, don’t you?”
Amy shakes her head slowly, a look of impending dread shining in her eyes.

“He was suicide bombing it.”

Anguish twists the delicate features of Amy’s face.

“That was bad wording - what I mean is, the stakes are so high, his adrenaline is so high, that he’s feeling brave enough to make these big sweeping confessions, but not brave enough to stick around for the aftermath.”

“He said he knows I’m still with Teddy - that he didn’t mean to be a jerk -”

“Yeah. And I think he means that. But just because he knows that doesn’t mean he wanted to stick around for the confirmation. Rejection from you is the absolute last thing he wanted right before he left.”

“Well that’s - that’s bullshit!” Amy cries. Outrage rolls off of her in waves that clash unpleasantly with the pulsing throb in Rosa’s brain. “I can’t believe how selfish - how dare he do that! He can’t just say things like that and then leave, it’s not fair - how am I supposed to live with myself if something happens to him while he’s gone and I have to live the rest of my life with the knowledge that I never even said goodbye because he wouldn’t let me?”

She’s shaking, fingers clenched tightly around the neck of the bottle, and her eyes are shining and glassy with tears. Rosa’s breath catches in her throat as the first tear rolls down Amy’s cheek; it’s only the second time she’s ever seen Amy cry, the first being three years earlier when her grandfather died in the middle of the work day. She opens her mouth, desperately searching for the right words to say, but all that comes out is an airy hiss of breath accompanying Amy roughly swiping the tears away from her cheeks.

“S’not fair.” Amy repeats, more of a growl than before, and this time when she tilts the bottle back she doesn’t come up for air for a long time.

Neither one of them speak again, not even when Amy slowly crumbles and dissolves into a quietly crying mess sprawled out on her half of the table. Rosa watches quietly, shooting withering glares at anyone who dares approach over Amy’s bowed head. There’s something to be said about the raw quality to the emotions pouring out of Amy right now; something, Rosa suspects, that might lead to a hell of a revelation somewhere down the line in Amy’s future. It’s not like anyone else kept finding paper-thin excuses to hang out at the precinct while Jake packed his desk up, after all. It’s not like anyone else is sobbing over a bottle of whiskey right now because of Jake’s departure (actually, scratch that, Charles probably is).

“I didn’t even get to say goodbye,” Amy moans into the bend of her elbow.

Rosa’s never really been gifted in the talking arena of life, or the emotional arena of life, but damn if she can’t drink in brooding silence like a pro. So all of her half-formulated responses shuffle away to some shadowy corner of her mind as she catches a waitress’s attention and holds up two fingers. And for the rest of the night, Rosa does what she does best: she sits in complete silence and drinks. And listens intently.
Amy can tell something’s off the moment she steps off the elevator.

To the naked eye, everything about the bullpen appears to be perfectly normal. There are three perps sitting in holding, and Charles is bickering with Scully over the coffee pot in the break room. Gina’s engrossed in whatever is illuminating her face on her computer screen, Rosa’s scribbling something in the margin of what appears to be official paperwork, and Holt’s office door is closed. She can see Terry’s back through the open blinds - the two appear to be deep in conversation.

The only one missing is Jake - which is why she’s immediately suspicious.

She hasn’t seen him in four days, having left Thursday night for what ended up being a rather disappointing notary public summit up in Aspen. She’d been expecting updated information about renewing her status, but she ended up enduring hours upon hours of what amounted to be nothing more than basic introductory training information. The only bright side of the trip was the gorgeous scenery and the little boutique near the bed and breakfast she’d booked a room at. She’d found the pretty, sky-blue gauzy blouse she’s currently wearing there, and a nice leather wallet (currently gift-wrapped back at her apartment, ready to be given later that night after work) to replace the one made of duct tape Jake totes around in his back pocket.

He’s not in the break room, or the briefing room, that much she can tell as she slowly pushes through the bullpen gate. Rosa glances up when the hinges squeak, pushing up an inch or two on her elbows and tapping the end of her pen against her report, clearly waiting for Amy to get closer.

“Have you seen Jake?” Amy asks.

“Not for ten minutes.” Rosa says. Amy frowns and glances to her right - he’s not out on the terrace, either. “I think he said something about needing evidence for a case or something. Maybe check the lock up.”

She returns her attention to her report, missing Amy’s nod. “Thanks, Rosa. How was your weekend?” Amy asks as she begins backing toward her desk.

“Fine. Yours?”

“Oh, it was okay. The summit was pretty useless, but Aspen was -” she stops short, having just reached behind her chair, casting her first glance over her desk in four days.

It’s just as tidy as it used to be, except for the fact that someone has taped dozens of selfies, all featuring Jake’s face twisted into a wide array of the most grotesque expressions she’s ever seen to nearly every item on her desk.

“Everything okay?” Rosa asks.

Amy’s head snaps toward her, eyes narrowed at the overly-innocent ring in her voice. “Where is he.”

Amy says, doing her best to convey her threat.

Rosa’s grinning broadly. “That’s quite the shrine you got there, Amy,” Gina chimes in from her desk.

“Very funny,” Amy says as Rosa snorts, dropping her purse unceremoniously into her chair. “Where is he?”
“I already told you,” Rosa snaps, suddenly sounding bored with their game. “Evidence lockup.”

“Thank you.” Amy sniffs. She hears Gina snickering as she starts down the hallway, and does her best to will the blush igniting the tops of her ears away.

Jake is, as promised, in the evidence lockup. His back is turned to the door, though, and when he doesn’t look around at the sound of the door opening, Amy pauses two steps inside. His head is bobbing and there’s a general relaxed look about him - he steps to the left and a white wire swings out on his right, connecting his phone in his pocket to the earbuds buried in his ears.

Amy grins.

It’s surprisingly easy to sneak up on him. She approaches slowly, pausing once to slap her hand over her mouth when he tilts his head back and tries to hit the high note in whatever song he’s listening to (the operative word being *tries*; also, she’s pretty sure it’s a Taylor Swift song, and even though she’s fully prepared to exact her revenge on him, she can’t help the little swell of affection that warms her heart at the realization).

She edges as close as she can behind him, lips clamped together to hold in the urge to laugh, and for a few moments he’s so focused on what he’s doing that he doesn’t even notice her. He does, eventually, freeze - shoulders and neck tensed, the fingers of his right hand twitching in a subconscious desire to draw his gun - and she very nearly grabs his shoulders right then and there.

She’s glad she doesn’t half a moment later, when he whips around and *screams*, scurrying backwards so quickly and instinctively that he nearly takes the shelving unit down with him.

“*God!*” He yells over her uproarious laughter. “How long were you *standing there*?”

She wipes the tears of laughter from her face as she straightens up (she’d doubled over with the force of her laughter), very nearly falling apart again over the indignant look on his red face. “Like, five minutes.”

He rolls his eyes while he absently massages his chest. “You almost gave me a heart attack. You *know* this is the heart attack curse room! What’s *wrong* with you?”

“Oh, hush. I missed you this weekend, so I wanted to see you. Rosa told me you were in here and when I came in, you didn’t hear me, so…”

Jake *humphs*, before his entire face splits into a mischievous grin. “So, all the pics at your desk weren’t enough, huh? You needed the real thing?”

He strikes a ridiculous pose, recreating one of the facial expressions from the selfies (the one taped to the bottom left corner of her computer monitor - the face he makes when he’s pretending to be a French nobleman attempting to seduce her, the one that never fails to make her laugh). It’s all Amy can do to keep herself together - there are cameras in here, after all, much better-quality cameras ever after the whole Dozerman incident - but she can’t help the grin that steals across her face as she slowly shakes her head at him.

“You’re ridiculous,” she tells him, and in an instant he’s dropped the pose, the seductive French look replaced with a cheerful grin.

“You love me for it,” he reminds her, stepping closer and winding his arms around her. He bends his knees slightly, silently encouraging her to drape her arms over his shoulders to hang loosely around his neck, and when he kisses her it’s soft and sweet and exactly what she needs after such a long weekend. “For the record,” he murmurs a moment later when they’ve broken apart and are just
standing together, foreheads touching, “I missed you, too.”

She tilts her chin up to peck the cleft of his chin and then steps away to straighten her blouse. “Alright, enough of that. Come help me clean my desk up.”

“You’re not gonna throw them all away, are you?” He asks as they walk back toward the bullpen. “I worked really hard on those selfies. I almost asked Charles to help, but that would’ve been weird.”

“I haven’t decided yet,” she says, before shooting him a sly grin. “I do have an empty file in my desk labeled ‘dork’ where I used to store print-outs of your most embarrassing social media posts.”

He stops in his tracks, eyes wide in mock-offense. “Excuse me? I’ve never made a social media post once, in my life, so that’s just factually incorrect.”

“I also had a printed copy of that picture you sent me when you were black out drunk eating chicken salad while shirtless on the subway.”

“Hey. You said you deleted that.”

“I did! Right after I printed a copy of it.”

“You’re the worst. I can’t believe I’m in love with you. I could do so much better, y’know.”

She arches an eyebrow. “Jake. C’mon.” She gestures downward quickly as a wide grin cracks across his pseudo-disgusted face.

“Good point.”

There are 34 selfies total - though Jake swears he took 36 - and even though she’s probably going to tear her entire desk apart looking for the other two selfies that may or may not exist, she does take the time to draw two hearts on either side of the word ‘dork’ written across the file tab.

Because even though he drives her a little nuts, she wouldn’t have it any other way.
Chapter 27

ANONYMOUS: do you have any headcanons for jake and amy on valentine's day? an idea of mine is that they're both working late and so they can't go out for dinner or anything and thus jake feels bad and buys amy all the tacky valentine's gifts he can find within a mile radius of the precinct

It starts out with one little innocent comment, as these things usually do. Amy honestly hadn’t meant anything by it - hadn’t even graced the words with a second thought as they left her mouth - because in her mind, it was all categorized as ‘insignificant.’ Stupid, really, would be the better word, but that’s neither here nor there at this point.

This point being 3 AM on Valentine’s day. This point also being her desk, the surface of which is currently buried beneath what appears to be a veritable hoarder’s nest - assuming that hoarder has a fixation on Hallmark’s most successful business venture.

There are five singing teddy bears and at least a dozen boxes of chocolates, six dozen plastic roses (and one dozen real roses in a vase balancing in the inch-wide gap between her desk and Jake’s), all manner of pink and red confetti and plastic hearts and three paper silhouettes of the patron saint himself. Even her chair fell victim: the fuzzy pink blanket is soft as it slips between her fingers.

“Jake,” she says, and his name comes out a bit choked. He’s standing a foot behind her, practically radiating with pride at his work (and it is his work, she knows this beyond a doubt - where the hell else would he have been for the last ninety minutes?). “What - what the hell.

She hears him shuffle behind her, and then another teddy bear with white fur slides into her vision on her right. She leans away from it, eyeing the red heart sewn between the bear’s paws, before lifting her gaze to stare at his wide, delighted grin. “Did it all while you were interviewing Peters.”

“I - God.” Amy snatches the teddy bear out of his hands. “What happened to not doing anything for Valentine’s Day?” She snaps.

He looks only slightly put-out at her reaction. “I decided not to do nothing,” he says with a shrug. He’s maddeningly, furiously unrepentant. “Oh, c’mon, Amy! I couldn’t not do something after that Teddy comment.”

It’s suddenly very difficult to resist stamping her foot and growling in frustration. “For the last time,” she says, fists clenched around the teddy bear, “it doesn’t matter. The steakhouse wasn’t even that good, and he spent more time arguing with the waiters than actually talking to me. Literally nothing at all would be better than that night.”

“I know!” He gestures to her desk. “That’s why this should completely and totally blow your expectations out of the water! I wiped every bodega within a five-mile radius out, babe. I’m basically the king of Valentine’s Day.”

“Buying a bunch of cheap crap at midnight on Valentine’s Day does not make you the king.” She informs him loftily, which she thinks would normally make him feel bad, except she can’t stop
running her fingers through the teddy bear’s fur and he’s definitely noticed the movement. “Ugh. Thank you, or whatever.”

“Sheesh, what is it with you and this holiday?”

“It’s stupid! It’s not even a real holiday! It’s all a conspiracy created by Hallmark to -”

“Hey, Ames? You - you’re allowed to be happy, y’know.”

Jake’s studiously avoiding her gaze now, too busy focusing on rearranging the confetti on her desk. She deflates all at once, suddenly feeling like a complete and total jackass. A complete and total jackass going for nearly twenty-four hours on only three hours of sleep, but a jackass nonetheless. “Jake,” she exhales, and his expression is guarded when he peers up at her through his lashes. “I am happy. I really am. This isn’t - it’s not about us. I just hate this holiday.”

“Not as much as Halloween.”

He’s smiling again, which is a good sign, so she releases a long sigh and nods, before dropping heavily down into her desk chair. “You’re right. Nothing will ever top Halloween. I’m sorry I - it’s just that, I’ve… I’ve never had a good Valentine’s Day.” He furrows his brow as he sits in her guest chair, leaned toward her with his elbows on his knees. “I’ve either been alone, or with the wrong guy, and - I don’t know. I just don’t like it.”

“That’s okay. I’ll like it enough for the both of us.” He reaches for her hand and she gives it to him willingly, smiling in spite of herself at the familiar contact. “We both have tomorrow off, and we don’t have to do anything - we can just hang out and watch TV in our PJ’s. Maybe we can go visit Gina in the hospital or something. It doesn’t matter - I just wanna hang out with you.”

His smile is genuine, but there’s a certain calculating edge to his gaze, so she narrows her eyes suspiciously. “What do you have planned right now?”

“I don’t have anything planned. Have you met me? I don’t plan.”

“I call BS, Peralta. Tell me.”

“Ugh, fine, I have dinner reservations. But I can call and cancel, it’s so not a big deal -”

“Jake,” she interrupts, and then she leans forward and gently squeezes his fingers until he meets her in the middle for a slow, chaste kiss. “Dinner sounds… nice.” She murmurs when he breaks away.

His grin is blinding has he jumps up, pulling her up to her feet, only broadening when she laughs. “It’s gonna be great, I promise. I promise I won’t even talk to the waiter.”

Jake starts toward the elevator, but Amy pulls him back sharply with the hand still clasped in his. “Uh, if you think I’m letting you leave my desk like this -” she gestures to the mess “- you clearly don’t know me at all.”

“But it’s Valentine’s Day!”

“And it’s my desk!”

“You’re lucky I love you, Santiago.”

Amy grins. “Believe me, I know.”
Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

ANONYMOUS: Prompt idea: get this... jake amy in highschool .. prom is coming up.. amy cant go something comes up.. jake is super excited but .. instead stays with amy at her house playing board games in pjs

There’s probably a lot to be said about the fact that, on the night of Senior Prom, Jake Peralta finds himself standing on his date’s front porch in what might possibly be the rattiest Spiderman pajama pants in existence. He swallows down a wave of self-consciousness that rises in response to the muffled voices on the other side of the door upon which he’s just knocked, focusing more on standing as straight as he can and clutching the little plastic bag from the supermarket by his mom’s house where he’d stopped before heading over here.

The lock clicks, and then the door opens, and then Jake finds himself face-to-face with one of Amy’s understandably confused-looking older brothers. Luis, he thinks, but he can’t be sure - he’s suddenly forgotten how to speak at all.

“Jake,” Luis says, gaze drifting down over Jake’s entire body before flicking back up, amused. “What, uh - what’re you doing here? Amy’s sick -”

“I know,” Jake says, wincing a little at belatedly realizing he’d cut Luis off. “She texted me yesterday. Flu, right?” Luis nods, looking faintly grim. “Well, I…I, um…I didn’t think she should be alone tonight.”

Luis’ chin lifts a few degrees, eyeing the bag in Jake’s hand. “Isn’t prom tonight?”

“Yes. And I know she’s bummed that she can’t go, so…” he trails off, hoping that half-phrase is enough of an explanation to buy him a ticket inside.

Luis smirks. “So you came to hang out with her,” he says, nodding slowly, and Jake’s whole face is about to burst into flames. “Well that’s…that’s pretty awesome, dude, not gonna lie. Wanna come inside?”

“Please. Your neighbors laughed at my pants.”

Luis snorts as he steps to the side. “Yeah, they’re not the only ones,” he tells Jake as Jake trots inside. “Here, wait here - she’s been quarantined in her room all week. Mama!” He turns away as he shouts into the house.

“Si?”

“Jake’s here!”

“Jake? Jake who?” Jake hears footsteps approaching from the kitchen and then Camila Santiago appears in the doorway, drying her hands on a dish towel. Her curious gaze immediately lights up upon spotting Jake in the entry way, the dish towel falling from her hands as she hurries to hug him in greeting. “Jake! What on earth are you doing here?”
“Hi, Mrs. Santiago,” he mumbles over her shoulder, squeezing his eyes shut as her arms nearly squeeze the life out of his lungs. “I figured Amy might want a little company tonight.”

“Oh, mijo,” she pulls back, cupping either side of his face, before pulling the bag apart and peering at the contents. “You are a very, very good friend. You know she’s sick, don’t you?”

“I do.” He says, nodding very seriously. “I brought surgical masks.”

She laughs, big and long and loud, and Jake can’t help but to laugh along a little.

“Jake?” A hoarse voice calls from the top of the staircase to his left.

Amy’s pale, almost frighteningly so, practically buried beneath what he recognizes as the comforter from her bed draped over her shoulders. She appears to be trembling a little, brow faintly glistening with sweat, hair tied back in a messy, frizzy bun near the top of her head. Luis appears at her elbow, leaning away from her, looking ready to steady her down the stairs but also to jump away from her at a moment’s notice.

Jake feels his breath catch in his chest. Maybe it’s because he hasn’t actually seen her in over a week, but she’s absolutely breathtaking.

“What’re you doing here?” She rasps, snapping him out of his daydream.

“It’s prom night.” He grins up at her.

“I - yeah, I know. I called you three days ago and told you I couldn’t - are you wearing pajamas?”

He casts a glance down at his pants and does his best to ignore Luis’ snort. “Yeah,” he confirms, “I am.”

Her brow his furrowed as she takes one step down, left hand emerging from the comforter to grip the railing. “Why?”

“’Cause you’re wearing pajamas and I’m pretty sure we’re supposed to match. That’s what Gina kept saying, I dunno.”

She pauses on the fourth step, shaking her head, clearly trying to comprehend what he’s telling her. “Wait, wait - what?”

“Mimi,” Luis says sharply, impatience soaking his tone. “He came to hang out with you so you wouldn’t be alone on prom night.”

Amy inhales sharply. “You - you did?”

Jake shrugs. “No one should be alone on prom night.” He mumbles.

She totters slowly down the rest of the stairs and then slowly draws toward him, oblivious to her brother and mother quietly retreating to the kitchen. “But - but you’ve been talking about prom for months now. You asked me to go with you in November.”

“I know.”

“Jake, don’t waste this night - you should be up there having fun, don’t miss your senior prom because of me -”

“Hey,” he steps closer to her, gripping the edges of her comforter and gently rearranging the garment
to cover her more. “It wasn’t about prom. Not really. That would’ve been fun, but…I was more excited about going with you.”

Her eyes are big and wide and bloodshot, and her lower lip is quivering just a little bit. “If I didn’t feel like I’ve been dead for three months I’d kiss you right now.” She whispers.

“Me too.” He smiles, and then pulls her forward by the comforter to lay a kiss to her feverish forehead.

They end up in the Santiago’s living room, Who’s Line Is It Anyways providing the only source of light where it plays on the television, Monopoly board unfolded and laden with plastic houses and hotels and gamepieces alike. They’ve been at this for four hours, seemingly no closer to the end of the game than they were when they started (although Jake has stolen at least five of her property cards and her get out of jail free card and she hasn’t noticed yet - he blames the flu) but Jake can feel the deep-seated ache in his abdomen from too much laughter and Amy’s been wiping her laughing tears away for twenty minutes. The contents of his supermarket plundering lay strewn across the floor beneath the television - junk food, mostly, though the bag of cough drops has been ripped open and the little things have spilled across the floor in a traitorous trail leading straight to Amy - and Jake buries his arm elbow-deep in a bag of Cheetos as Amy rolls the dice.

“I don’t even like this game,” she mutters as the dice spill from her palm and dance across the board. She takes two of her own hotels out, and they both promptly dissolve in hysterical laughter again.

“I mean, we could play something else,” Jake suggests after setting one of her hotels back in its’ place (and stealthily tucking the other into the folds of the blanket Camila had draped over his back earlier). “I’m pretty killer at Chutes and Ladders.”

She snorts, and then groans - apparently snorting is not good for her raw throat. “I don’t have a preference, you pick.”

She sighs, reaching up absently to try to tame some of the fly-away hairs sticking up off of her forehead, and a tingling warmth he’s become all too familiar with begins expanding somewhere down below his lungs. “Hey, Ames?”

“Hm?”

“I’m glad we skipped prom.”

A slow, genuine smile blooms across her face. “Me, too.” She murmurs.

(He’ll mean it tenfold in the morning, when Gina and Rosa and Charles all show up, disgruntled and oblivious to Amy’s indignant sounds of protest muffled beneath her comforter, to inform the two of them that prom was shut down just one hour in when someone got caught trying to spike the punch bowl.)

They’re on the couch after that, Amy leaning heavily into him, her head fitting warmly just below his chin, and as Jake drops off into sleep he’s enveloped in pure, unadulterated contentment.
Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

ANONYMOUS: um hi love your writing BUCKETS - prompt for after tonight's ep, jake goes home and accidentally lets it slip that he wants to have kids at some point (a la mentioning he kissed holt - totally unintentional, slips out by mentioning charles in convo with amy, potentially??)

ANONYMOUS: Prompt! The night of Captain Latvia, Jake talks to Amy about his thoughts on what Boyle said about Jake never becoming a dad.

It’s still snowing by the time they make it back to Amy’s apartment, and Jake’s head is full of the pleasant buzz of Amy’s non-stop chatter. He smiles softly as she talks all the way up the front steps to her front door, never once pausing as she digs her keys out of her purse and struggles to get the proper key inserted into the lock with her mitten-clad fingers. He’d missed her tonight - although, to be fair, he missed her pretty much all the time he spent away from her. Not to the point of being unable to function, but it’s always there in his mind: the hole, the empty space she should be filling.

The empty space felt bigger tonight, somehow, and when he’d seen her out on the sidewalk in front of Charles’ apartment building he had to work very hard to stay where he was (the other option being, of course, to slip down the icy steps and likely take out half the squad in the resulting slide out into the street).

They’re inside now, familiar warmth enveloping them both, and Jake watches Amy methodically strip out of her mittens and coat and hang them all in their designated places as he slowly unzips his jacket. She’s still talking, an absent smile rounding the apples of her cheeks in a way that makes Jake want to gently hold her face and kiss her cheeks until he feels the heat rise up beneath his lips.

He doesn’t, though. Instead he hums when she pauses and hangs his jacket up neatly beside hers. There are three empty hooks to the right of his coat - hooks that are never used, to his knowledge. Amy’s already bustling off to the kitchen, her voice still carrying easily to where he stands, but he finds himself unable to tear his gaze away from the empty hooks.

Because suddenly, he’s picturing three tiny children’s coats, each one with its’ own designated hook.

“I mean, it’s not that big a deal, is it?” She asks as he appears in the doorway, leaning to one side. She pauses, hands poised over two mugs full of what he’s hoping is either coffee or hot chocolate, and he raises his brows to signal he’d lost track of the conversation. “That I can’t sing. Very well. According to Holt. Like, it’s not huge, right? Plenty of people get through life without being able to sing very well.”

“Oh, no, yeah, that’s - that’s so not a big deal. Besides, you play French Horn like an angel.” She shoots him an exasperated grin and an eye-roll before turning her back and resuming her doctoring of the mugs.

“Right. Well, we’ll see how many people appreciate Christmas carols on a French Horn,” she grumbles.
“Oh, c’mon, Ames,” he crosses the distance between them quickly, crowding up against her back, arms wrapped around her middle and chin propped on her shoulder. His senses are immediately overwhelmed with the warm scent of fresh coffee. “I don’t care if you can’t sing. I can’t sing either.”

Her head tilts slightly, enough to brush against his, and she sighs in what he hopes is contentment. “I kind of wish I could sing, though. Just a little.”

He lifts his chin and presses a soft, feathery kiss to the corner of her jaw. “Me too.” He says. His chin falls back into place and he squeezes her middle. “I guess we’ll just find CD’s with lullabies on them for our kids.”

Amy stiffens immediately in his arms, and in an instant Jake feels his entire soul depart from his body. The kitchen has gone deathly silent - he can’t even hear his heart beating anymore - and he blinks rapidly, trying to find a way to U-turn out of the conversation. “Our - our k-kids?” Amy stammers.

He jumps away from her, hands up over his head defensively, and when she whips around to face him her expression is a mixture of shock and something else - something he just doesn’t have enough wits to define. “Okay, okay, I can explain - when I said our kids, I didn’t actually mean - I just meant, like - cases! I was talking about cases, like, the cases we work together - you know how attached we both can get, it’s like they’re our actual children, I don’t wanna have your babies. What?”

“Jake.” She’s got a hand raised, like she’s trying to physically stop the barrage of word-vomit spewing out of his mouth, and he snaps his jaw shut and grinds his teeth together. “It’s okay. You don’t…have to…do that. You can be honest, I won’t run away. It’s okay.”

He bounces forward on the balls of his feet uncertainly, wishing more than anything that he was still wearing his leather jacket so that he could bury his hands in the pockets. “Not lyin’,” he mumbles, and he practically quails under her sternly raised eyebrow.

“We should talk about this.” She says decisively after another prolonged silence. She twists to grab the coffee mugs off the counter, and then gestures for him to lead the way out of her kitchen and toward her living room. He goes - but he slumps his shoulders all the way.

So this is how it ends. Not with a badass explosion or a Casa Blanca makeout in the rain - but with his own stupid, giant mouth.

He all but throws himself down on her couch, taking his coffee from her outstretched hand without looking up at her. She tuts as she sits down next to him, apparently having no sympathy for his obviously miserable state, so he gulps down his coffee and focuses on the searing burn of the liquid against his tongue.

“Jake.” She says after it becomes obvious to her that he’s not going to speak first. He ignores her, staring at the far wall, hoping if he sits still and silent long enough she’ll just give up and go to bed without him. “Oh my God, Jake, it’s not that big a deal. We’ve been dating for a year and a half, now, this conversation was gonna happen eventually.”

“That’s exactly what I was afraid you were gonna say,” he mumbles. From the corner of his eye, he can see her brow furrowed adorably, but all it does is accentuate the misery hanging heavy in the pit of his stomach. “I knew I was gonna say something or do something stupid enough to screw this up eventually - I’m sorry, for what it’s worth, I didn’t mean -”

“Wait, what? You think you screwed this up?” He turns his head a fraction, staring at her sideways,
and after a beat she releases an incredulous laugh. “Oh my God, you poor thing. You didn’t screw this up, Peralta. Not by a long-shot.”

He narrows his eyes suspiciously, but finds no misgivings in her earnest gaze. “Really?” He asks, hardly daring to let himself hope.

“Yes, really, you big doofus.” Her smile is fond, perhaps because of the way she shakes her head at him, or the way the dim lighting is playing tricks with her hair. “If anything, you just inadvertently took us to the next level.”

He perks up at that, setting his coffee on the coffee table and shifting on the couch so that he’s facing her rather than the wall. “I mean, that wasn’t my intention, but I’m - I’m glad.”

“Me too.” She says softly, before readjusting a bit and raising her mug to sit closer to her face. She’d kicked her shoes off at some point - her socked feet end up on the couch, toes tucked beneath his thigh. “I still think we should actually talk about it, but please relax. We’re not breaking up.”

Jake bites the inside of his cheek as he nods, giving himself a minute to relish in the relief surging through his veins. “Okay, okay, good. Sorry I freaked out for a second.”

“Sorry I freaked out for a minute in the kitchen,” she responds, and they share a grin. “So, okay - you want kids?”

“Yeah. I definitely want kids. I mean, I think you already knew that - I’m not really good at hiding it - but, yeah. Yes. I want kids.”

Her smile has adopted that warm fondness again, and Jake feels affection bubbling in his chest in response. “Good. Me, too.”

“Really?”

She nods in confirmation. “I mean, I want to get married first, obviously. Do you - I mean, is that…is that something you see yourself doing?”

He closes his eyes briefly, and behind his eyelids he sees a flash of Amy in white, glowing in her ethereal beauty. “Yeah,” he says, eyelids fluttering open in surprise at the choked, raspy quality of his answer. “Definitely.”

Amy smiles, a restrained laugh breaking through her chest. “Well okay then,” she says, and it rings through the air like a declaration. “That was easy.”

Jake laughs at that, hooking his arm beneath her ankles to lift her feet up into his lap. “The easiest.”

He agrees, letting his hand rest loosely against her ankle, thumb gently caressing the little boney bump just above her heel.

“I guess hanging out with Nikolaj has you thinking about having kids,” she murmurs over the rim of her coffee mug. It lands something like a suggestion - an out - and for a moment, he’s sorely tempted to take it. Charles had apologized, after all - he’d only said what he said in the heat of passion, blinded by his own determination to provide for his child. He’d apologized, and Jake had forgiven him, but still - the words sit like shattered glass against his heart, jagged edges digging in uncomfortably, just shy of sharp enough to draw blood.

Jake had forgiven him. But he still hurts.

“Yeah, sort of. It was actually something Charles said.” He toys with the elastic band of her sock,
flicking it over with his thumbnail, avoiding her gaze. “He - he said I’d never be a dad.”

He feels her calf muscles tense beneath his palm. “Wait, what? Charles said that to you?” She asks sharply. “How dare he! What the hell, Jake, what did you do after he said it?”

“He didn’t mean it,” Jake says quickly, gripping her ankle hard enough that she sinks back into the cushions. Her irritation is still very much present in her face, and he represses a sigh. “We were in an intense situation and he was focused on getting to Captain Latvia, and I was trying to stop him from getting hurt - he just said it to try to get me to leave him alone. He apologized later. He didn’t mean it.”

Amy narrows her eyes. “It’s still bothering you, though,” she says after a moment. He shrugs, a sharp lump rising up suddenly in his throat. “Oh, Jake - I’m so sorry. It’s not true, it’s not true at all. You’re gonna be a father. You’re gonna be a great father, okay?” She leans forward, one hand curling around his elbow as the other carefully sets her mug down on the coffee table. She scoots further down the couch, using her grip on his arm as leverage, until she’s almost in his lap, head resting snugly against his shoulder. “You’re gonna be an incredible father, and husband, and - and I’m - I’m so lucky to have you.”

He could honestly cry at how earnest she sounds. He kind of hates the awkward angle - he’s forced to hug her knees closer to his chest rather than her - but the proximity is nice and wonderfully comforting, so he closes his eyes and lets his head tilt down to rest against Amy’s. “I’m so in love with you,” he murmurs softly.

Her head lifts, and when he turns toward her, she catches his jaw in her hands and holds his head steady. Her kiss is warm, fervent, and exactly what he needed after such a long night. He feels the jagged shards of glass against his heart dissolve, Amy’s presence enough to soothe the ache. She kisses him twice more once they break apart - soft, lingering things - and then she holds him in place with a hand against the back of his neck so that their foreheads rest against the other’s. “I love you so much, you big doofus.” She whispers.

He feels tons lighter after that, practically bouncing in place on the couch. She laughs as she leans away, and it’s all he can do to keep from lunging at her and tackling her against the cushions. “We’re having three kids, by the way,” he informs her through a broad grin.

Her eyes bulge. “Three?” She repeats incredulously, and he nods. “Uh, two. Maybe. You’ll have to sweet-talk me into the second one, if we’re being honest, here.”

“Wait, no, why only two?”

“Are you gonna be pregnant for nine months with the third one?”

“Aw, c’mon, you already know I’m gonna be, like, the best pregnancy partner on the planet, Ames. I’m talkin’ foot massages every night, midnight takeout orders, I’ll even cart you around in a wheelchair when you don’t feel like walking.”

“That sounds like the opposite of a solution.” She grumbles, already glaring down at her coffee mug in distaste at the thought.

He leans forward, ready to retort, but when her expectant gaze flicks back up to his face, the words die in his throat. “I don’t care how many we have,” he hears himself say, and he’s a little shocked at how bone-deep the honesty behind his words is. “As long as I get to have them with you - I don’t care.”
Amy’s gaze is full of open wonder, a small, wistful smile on her face, before she closes her eyes and heaves a sigh. “God, see? You just sweet-talked me into the second one. Unbelievable.”
Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

ANONYMOUS: omg idk if this has been done yet, but imagine an au with jake and amy where amy is an artist and jake is a photographer or something and they're each others muses like omg

It’s three in the afternoon on a Thursday in April and Amy has lilac paint smudged along the side of her nose.

It wouldn’t normally be dried there, the way it is now, especially considering she’s out in public in a rather busy park near her apartment, but the fact of the matter is that her inspiration is flowing for the first time in months and she’s not about to let one stupid smudge on her face interrupt this process. She’s already got a good thing going with this landscape - the dynamics are just right, the textures accentuating the brightly contrasting colors on display before her. She spares one glance over the edge of her canvas at the sunset in progress in front of her.

The image itself is pretty basic, as far as paintings go, but the colors are dynamic and beautiful and all she really wants is to get back into the groove of things - it’s not like this one’s going in a museum, or anything. It all feels like coming home again, like slipping back into a forgotten old pair of shoes - comfortable, familiar, solid. Something she hasn’t felt in a long while.

Amy’s not in love with Teddy, for the record. She could have been in love with him - she felt herself drifting that direction, certainly - but right now, in this moment, she’s content to realize that it was never love. It makes dealing with his abrupt departure from her life a bit easier to categorize in her mind, makes the initially messy emotions simpler to internalize. She’d only painted three times in the eight months she spent with him, and all three of those times were done while he was out of town. It’s not that big a deal, except that he found the whole affair to be messy and hard to clean, which - okay, yes, she does admittedly understand. But it’s the only messy thing about her, so it’s hardly fair that he always seemed to look down on her for it.

It’s not like brewing shitty pilsners out on the balcony on the weekends is a more viable use of free time.

She’d only allotted one day to feel the full scope of emotions the day after Teddy walked out of her life for good. And then she’d woken the next day and started cleaning, scrubbing, cleansing the whole apartment of everything that once belonged to him (neatly bagged up and placed in the trashcan for garbage pick up on Tuesday). It took her nearly a week before the uncomfortable lingering itch of his presence to be fully banished from her home, but she’d woken up that morning feeling lighter than she had in months.

So she’d dug all her paint supplies out from her closet, neatly tucked it into her old paint-stained rucksack, snatched her keys, wallet, and phone off the counter, and left.

It’s taken longer than she anticipated to find that familiar spark of inspiration, but she found it slowly sinking toward the horizon in a remote little park three blocks away from her apartment complex. She’d struck out toward a small ledge lined with an outcropping of rocks - one of which jutted out right at knee-level, perfect for sitting on - and she’d set up camp there with her easel and her paints.
She’s losing sunlight pretty quickly but it doesn’t matter; the image is pretty permanently seared into her brain. Still, she releases a low sigh of frustration, wiping the back of her hand over her forehead to alleviate an itch and sitting back to study her half-finished sunset. Distantly, she can hear children’s voices echoing from somewhere behind her, delighted laughter floating over the low thump of a foot connecting with a ball. The whole scene feels rather charming in a wistful kind of way, like she’s been dropped directly into a scene from a romance novel without realizing the change had even occurred. She pauses for a moment, letting the rucksack she’d picked up off the ground at her feet dangle from her fingers, taking a moment to just close her eyes and enjoy the warmth on her face. It’s peaceful, calm, still in a way that makes her want to lay down and take a nap right there on her rock.

The quiet click of a camera lens’ shutter snaps her right out of her daydream. All that calm peacefulness goes flying out the window in a moment; she’s sitting bolt upright instantly, eyes hard and calculating as they sweep over her surroundings, zeroing in on a rustling movement in the bushes off in the same direction she’d heard the camera snap. “I heard you.” She says sharply, and the rustling stops. “I know you’ve been taking pictures of me. Come out here, you pervert.”

It’s still only a moment longer before the bushes begin rustling again. A man with light brown hair just barely curling at the edges and a long nose emerges, a camera in one hand and a sheepishly apologetic look on his face. “I’m sorry,” he says, and she narrows her eyes despite the fact that he sounds honest. “This looks really bad, but I swear I’m a legit photographer -”

“Owning a nice camera doesn’t make you a photographer.” She interrupts haughtily.

A brief, faint smile flashes across his face. “You’re right, it absolutely doesn’t. Here, here’s my business card, to prove to you I’m legit.” He produces a little card from his pocket and she snatches it from his outstretched hand, maintaining her withering glare for a moment longer before dropping her gaze to study the card. “I’m Jake,” he says just as she reads his name printed in bold block letters across the center of the card. “And I’m really sorry. I usually don’t photograph people without getting their permission first.”

He’s primarily an event photographer, according to his card. Weddings, parties, bar/bat mitzvahs, and quinceañeras are all listed as his specialties. She arches a skeptical brow at him over his business card, and is rather pleased to see his face is red with embarrassment. “I don’t see any special events going on around here.” She says, careful to keep her tone a bit more measured than before.

He laughs awkwardly, reaching up to rub the back of his neck with his free hand. “Actually, I just got done with a party on the other end of the park. I was coming back this way, ‘cause I forgot where I parked - although, now that I think about it, I’m pretty sure my car got towed - anyways, I was down there,” he points down below, several yards away, where Amy can just barely make out a walking trail through the dense cropping of trees littering that area in the park, “and I just happened to look up, and…”

Jake’s voice trails, and Amy holds her breath. He lifts his camera hesitantly, and Amy shifts down a few inches, offering him a small perch on her rock.

The first photograph is a bit blurry, but she can clearly see her own face illuminated in the sun’s setting rays, brow furrowed and lips pursed in concentration. The paint smudge is clearly visible, too - she lifts her hand to rub at it self-consciously. Jake clicks to the next image, and this one is as clear as day. It’s pretty similar to the last one, except in this one she can see each individual strand of hair on her head, each one blown behind her in the breeze, which she hadn’t actually noticed happening while painting. He clicks to the next one and it’s pretty much the same, but in the fourth one he’d caught her mid-blink. He scrolls through three more - looking appropriately ashamed at having taken
so many - until he gets to the one he’d just took, crouched down in the bushes. Her eyes are closed and her head is tilted back just slightly, just enough to welcome the soft sunlight casting an ethereal glow over the scene. “I’m sorry,” Jake repeats for what has to be the tenth time, “it’s just that…you’re so…I mean, the sunlight was perfect, and…you’re incredibly beautiful.”

Amy rips her gaze away from the camera screen to stare up at him, finding nothing but earnestness in his gaze. Well, earnestness and embarrassment, but still - no lust, no ulterior motive, just…just him. “I bet you say that to all your clients.” She mutters, but she’s grinning, and he grins too.

“I can delete them.” He tells her, and she couldn’t possibly imagine him sounding any more reluctant than he does right then. “If you’re uncomfortable, I can - I don’t mind. I would edit a few of them, maybe adjust the lighting, and then they would go in my portfolio. Nothing weird or perverted, I swear.”

She snorts, fingering the edge of his business card. “Don’t delete them.” She says after a pause. He beams. “But do me a favor - email those to me. When you’re done editing. If - if you don’t mind.”

He lets the camera hang by the strap around his neck as he quickly digs through his pockets, searching for paper and pen. “Absolutely.” He says, quickly thrusting the materials toward her.

She takes them with a smile, using her thigh as a writing surface. She writes her name first, and then her email address, and then - rather recklessly, she thinks - she adds her phone number as the third line. She folds the paper in half before handing it to him, answering his luminous smile with a shy one of her own.

“What’s your name?” He asks as he takes the paper and pen from her.

“Amy.”

“Amy,” he repeats, and her name has never sounded quite so breathlessly beautiful before. He smiles again, nervously, and then steps backwards and nearly trips over the uneven rocks. “I’ll email you.”

He leaves quickly, and she gives herself a moment to grin broadly before stooping to pack her easel and canvas in her bag. She’s just gotten it all together when her phone buzzes with a text in her back pocket.

_The painting was incredible, btw. Got too nervous and forgot to say something. I got a pic of the sunset, too - I’ll send that over unedited with the others tomorrow!!_

She smiles down at her phone, and then quickly adds Jake Peralta as a new contact. And that night, when she gets home, she pulls out a fresh canvas and begins a loose outline in pencil of Jake’s expressive face.

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