Chokehold
by TrespassMyAss

Summary

Sequel to Nirvana

Sauli, a man whose potential withered away over a decade, is thrown into the path of a man he once knew and loved, but despite Adam's new life, the shadow of his past looms and it's unforgiving. He's a time bomb. Behind the jovial exterior, deep within the darkest corners of his mind, is a monster that seeks to make Sauli suffer like he does. Despite Adam's warnings, Sauli needs answers, but it proves difficult to save the life of the one who wants to take yours.

But is he really Adam?

Notes

Oh lordy, here we go again. What a long-ass wait. I apologize.

If you haven't read Nirvana, you really need to do so or else this will make zero sense to you, hence why it's called a sequel.

And, if you've read Nirvana, you know that this first chapter is also the epilogue of Nirvana,
which means you've already read it.

Enjoy, and as always, the chapters alternate in POV. :)

See the end of the work for more notes.
Sauli:

Of course, only I was stupid enough to run an errand during rush hour. It was a bright day in Helsinki, which was rare considering the season, and I was stuck inside this pathetic car. It was ridiculous. I hadn’t budged from this spot for ten minutes! Not even a meter! I was getting seriously annoyed now. What in the hell were they doing up front? I felt like just ditching my car in the middle of the highway and walking in between the cars the rest of the way to the market. It’d be a heck of a lot faster too. I would not be surprised if people started doing that soon.

I sighed heavily, getting a headache from the obnoxious honks of fellow drivers. I drummed my fingers on the top of the steering wheel, trying to distract myself from this dilemma and tune out the cars around me. When that didn’t work, I reached over and flipped the radio on. I pursed my lip as I browsed through the stations, attempting to get some kind of traffic report. I ended up settling on some music station. I cranked up whatever song was playing, hoping to drown out the constant honks and shouts from outside.

The song was definitely American. It sort of had some catchy guitar during the verses, I guess. I didn’t pay much attention to it because I didn’t really care. I hadn’t been much of a music person for years. I closed my eyes without worry since it didn’t seem like I was getting further in this traffic any time soon.

Jesus Christ, this song was repetitive toward the end. Over and over just singing, “What do you want from me?!”

I wanted you to shut up. I heard you the first ten times. Who the hell was this guy? This was not helping out my headache.

I was about to turn down the volume a bit, but then the song finally ended. I let out a sigh of relief and sank back into my seat. The host of the station came on.

“That was ‘Whataya Want From Me,’” I never would’ve guessed, “by American pop singer, Adam Lambert.”

My brow furrowed in slight confusion and I felt a dull prang at my heart. How upsetting… this annoying guy had the same name as the Adam I’d once known. I guess it was a common name since it couldn’t have been the same person. My old love killed himself a long time ago. When was that? I thought hard for an endless minute.

Ten years…

Holy… Had it really been that long? My throat slightly twanged with tightness and I blinked away the stinging in my eyes. How could I forget? What the fuck was wrong with me? I’d stopped mourning on his birthday and the anniversary of our first meeting and his… death date years ago. I just thought moving forward was the best was to cope. So long ago… Did they ever find his body…?

Come on, Sauli, stay pissed at the traffic, and don’t depress yourself. If I started thinking about him again, I’d screw myself up and mope for days. Sauli, you’re a grown man with a settled life, so start acting like it. I shook my head quickly and snapped out of it, refocusing on the radio.

“Mr. Lambert is currently on tour and will be coming to Helsinki on November sixth. So, if you
haven’t already gotten your tickets, stay on the air for a chance to win!”

I turned off the radio. Yeah, definitely wasn’t going to attend that concert. Like I said, I just wasn’t into music anymore, so what was the point? Plus, if all of his music sounded like that last song… yeah, no…

About two hours later, after scouring the grocery store, standing impatiently in a long check-out line, and then heading back into traffic, I finally arrived back at my apartment, pissed off and tired. With a grocery bag in one hand, I cursed as I struggled to get the key in the lock. I finally heard that sweet click and flung the door open, closing it with my foot as I entered. I chucked the keys into the little bowl by the door.

“Mika?!” I called out as I took off my jacket. “You home? I got your damn milk.” I made my way into the kitchen, holding up the jug of milk as I did so.

I heard clamoring from the next room and then out walked Mika, all apron-clad and tall smiles. His jade eyes glittered when they landed on my face. I just glared at him.

“Hey, baby,” Mika crooned as he pranced up to me and took the jug out of my hands. I stared up at him with an exhausted look. “You were gone for such a long time. What happened?”

“Traffic,” I muttered, stretching out and yawning.

Mika cupped my chin in one hand, still holding the jug with the other, and leaned down, taking my lips with his. I relaxed and kissed him back, reaching up stroking his jet-black hair as his hand left my chin and wrapped around my waist.

I pulled away and smiled slightly. Mika giggled for a split second. He pulled the milk jug up level to his face and his brow furrowed as he stared at it. I pursed my lip as I observed his eyes dull down into an annoyed expression while reading the label.

Mika suddenly exhaled sharply. “Ugh, come on, Sauli. Look at this!” He shoved the jug into my chest. I took it from him and gave him a look. “What does that say?”

What the fuck was his problem? I peered down at the label. “Two percent…?” I muttered.

Mika crossed his arms and narrowed his eyes at me. “That’s right!” he hissed. “I clearly told you to buy skim milk, Sauli. You know I can’t handle two percent. Take it back!”

I gaped at him. “You can’t be serious.”

“Hell yeah, I am. I request something so simple and like always, you fuck it up!” Mika threw his hands up in the air dramatically. “Can’t you do anything right?”

I slammed the jug onto the counter. “Bullshit! You’re actually arguing with me over milk?”

“Of course not!” Mika rolled his eyes. “It’s every single time I ask you to do something, you just don’t even try.”

“I’ve never said no to you! Every time you want something, I go out of my way to get it for you! But your goddam standards are so high because you’re such a drama queen sometimes! You don’t appreciate shit.”

Mika huffed, “Okay, whatever.” He started to turn away.
Oh no. I wasn’t going to let him just blow off another argument as soon as the tables turned. This crap happened way too often.

I grabbed his wrist and jerked him back until he looked at me. “Do you even care what I had to go through just to get this thing?” I gestured expansively to the milk. “I’d been sitting in rush hour in this fucking weather, bored out of my mind in that piece of shit car, and then when I finally get home, thinking you’ll be happy to see me, what do I get? This fuckery! Just drink the damn milk and stop acting like such an asshole! You’re fucking welcome!”

Mika’s hurt expression made my heart crack a little.

I groaned and turned on my heel, heading for the couch. I plopped down and leaned over, burying my head in my hands. I took deep breaths, trying to calm down. My temper was just out of control lately.

This fighting over the stupidest shit happened often. It was tiresome. I just wished we could be perfect.

Mika was so wonderful and sweet to me, but there were times when he was controlling and melodramatic. It pissed me off to no end, but I couldn’t bear to leave him, especially since this was his apartment I lived in and I practically lived off of his money. I couldn’t find a goddamn job for the life of me. Yeah, good grades would get you far... Biggest lie ever. I needed Mika to take care of me because I was hopeless and a moocher. At least, he didn’t mind... He was too nice and caring. Great, now I felt like an asshole. He fed me, housed me, bought me gifts, treated me well... for the most part, like any good boyfriend, and yet, I wasn’t even able to get him his fucking milk. Why was I so useless? What happened to me? I used to be so much bubblier and on top of everything, sharp.

I was in my late twenties and would be homeless on my own. How sad. It wasn’t supposed to go this way. I once had such a bright future ahead of me. Fuck me for needing to be so dependent on someone else. I should be grateful that I had Mika. No girlfriend could be like him, not that I’d let any woman try anymore. That ship had sailed long ago.

“Honey?” I heard a tentative voice ask, and I sensed a weight press down beside me on the couch. “I’m sorry…” I felt a hand at my back, rubbing my tense muscles.

I sighed and took my hands off my face. I reached over and gently took Mika’s hand, smoothing circles into the back of it. His fingers curled around my hand and gripped tightly, squeezing once.

I mumbled, “No, don’t even. I’m sorry. If you want, I’ll go back to the store right now…”

Mika’s lips stretched out into that pretty smile I adored so much. His dark hair fell forward as he leaned forward and pressed his soft lips against my cheek. I turned my face to peck his lips, making a smack sound. I pulled away and gazed at his angular face. I guess I did have a type. He was everything I looked for in a partner. Mika was tall and lean, and he had black, elfish hair. His eyes were a jade green, and although I did prefer blue, his were still gorgeous. Other than that, and now that I thought about it, he did strongly resemble—

“Ooh!” Mika exclaimed and shook my shoulders. I stared at him with wide eyes. “I just remembered. Okay, earlier, while you were gone, I was listening to the radio as I was cooking dinner, hence my apron, but then the guy was like call now! And I did! And I won two tickets to go see Adam Lambert!”

Another dull prang at my heart. Had we been listening to the same station? Oh god, not that guy again. Why the hell did he have to have the same name?
“Oh my god, I’m so excited for us to go!” Mika went on like a fan girl. “I saw him on American Idol on satellite and wow, he was like, wow.”

American Idol? Seriously? I never understood the point of that show. So basically, this Adam guy was some nobody that got lucky and was enjoying his fifteen minutes of fame. Okay then.

I never told Mika about my Adam. When we’d first met and told our backstories to each other, I’d just completely left Adam out. I’d told Mika that I just didn’t like San Diego and moved back home. He didn’t need to know… No one else had to know.

“Baby, can you find someone else to take?” I asked quietly.

Mika’s face fell. “What? Why?”

“I just… I really don’t want to go. Not a concert person, you know that.”

I hated seeing Mika so disappointed, but understanding. He was too good to me. “Okay… I guess I’ll take a friend. You’ll be missing out though. Do you want to see a picture of Adam? He’s real cute.”

I bet. I rolled my eyes. “No, I think I’m just gonna go to the store and get you your milk and a little extra something special.” I started to stand up, but Mika pulled me back down.

“You don’t have to do that,” he murmured into my ear, wrapping his arms around me.

I angled my head enough to smile kindly at him. “For you, I want to,” I said before I kissed his nose.

“Thank you, but really, stay home. We can do something else…” he smirked devilishly, pushing me down on the couch and climbing on top of me.

“If you insist…” I laughed.

“You’re beautiful,” Mika gushed, “and adorable… Has anyone ever told you that?”

“Other than you? Nope,” I lied, “but, come on, there’s no one more gorgeous than you.”

Mika nuzzled into my neck for a moment, humming contently, “I love you.” His voice was muffled by my skin.

I smiled sadly at the words.

“I love you more.”
Adam:

Glam Nation.

Those two words sometimes brought a tear to my eye. It was the validation I needed to know that yes, I had finally made it. The years of working my ass off finally paid off. I could let out a sigh of relief at last. At least now I never had to worry about rent, even if this superstar fame blessed upon me faded. I finally achieved everything I could’ve ever wanted.

“Adam, quit standing around, man!”

I turned around in my over-heating costume to look at a glitter-clad Tommy.

“We’ve gotta go. Honolulu’s waiting,” Tommy said as he threw his arm around my shoulder, barely trying to avoid stabbing me with his bass.

I chuckled, draping my fringed sleeve over his face. “See you at Fever…”

Tommy gave me a playful shove and ducked away from my ridiculous costume. He stuck out his tongue at me as they noticed everyone getting into position onstage. I beamed at each of them as they passed, silently thanking them. Sasha stayed behind me, following my lead. I could hear the fans screaming their heads off as they noticed everyone getting into position onstage. I swallowed the small lump in my throat. I’d finished so many shows and yet, this was still so surreal to me.

Their energized chants and shrieks of anticipation rang throughout my ears. I welcomed it with an open heart. It was still so incredible. I didn’t think I would ever get used to this feeling… a feeling of being adored by thousands, even millions. These amazing people… Some of them, as I liked to call them my Glamberts, dedicated their lives to me. It was ridiculous and awe-inspiring. I just couldn’t wrap my head around the level of commitment they had for someone like me. I could never thank them enough, and this was just the beginning of my career.

I watched for the signal of the crew to motion me on.

The signal struck and Sasha whispered, “Showtime.” My stomach lurched.

I took a deep breath and took hold of the microphone handed to me. I noticed my fingers shaking, but not from nerves, from excitement. This is what I wanted to do ever since I was little, and now I was living it, right here, right now. A dream I never thought possible.

In the darkness, I made my way onto the stage behind the stairs and waited as the Gaga song finished up. I took a few calming breaths and then signaled to the sound guys that I was ready. The music cut off and my intro started playing as the entire stage lit up. I immediately broke out into Voodoo, nearly getting drowned out by the sounds of the crowd screaming their heads off. I could’ve sworn some of them went higher than I ever could without even trying. The energy from my audience was electric, feeding me like a wildfire. All I could do in gratitude was give that energy right back at them, giving it all I had. It soon turned into a game of challenge. Who could overpower the other
with their energy? They fed me and I fed them right back, looping an infinite connection between us. This was what a live concert should feel like for both sides. It was unreal.

I put every fiber of my being into my performances. Song after song, I made sure I was nothing short of perfection. These people were here for one night and I was going to make it unforgettable. I slowly stripped off my crazy, mystic costume as it was getting way too hot in there. Sweat was pooling all over me, but I welcomed the exhilaration. By the middle of the concert, I had everyone as putty in my hands. They were eating up everything I threw at them as I knew only my Glamberts would. I put on a show. I was a performer. It was my duty to tease every emotion my audience had. So, I danced during Strut, got flirty during Fever, had teary eyes in Soaked, got angry during Sleepwalker, and celebrated life in If I Had You. By the end of it, the crowd was exploding with pure thrill and I left them wanting more. I made sure to thank my sea of beautiful faces for making the time to come and see me, and then left the stage.

Backstage, everything was hectic. I was swarmed with congratulations and praises. I was panting and absolutely exhausted. This was a full-time job that took everything out of you. It was so worth it though. It was so much better than sitting on my ass doing nothing but pitying myself. After finally getting undressed, de-glittered, redressed, and taking a few pictures with the fans, I let out a huge exhale of a mixture of emotions as I collapsed into the limo. I was about ready to pass out.

This whole journey felt like a blur. Up until my success, it had been a struggle to get by and fight for it, but when my break finally came with Idol, everything kicked into high gear and it hadn’t stopped since then. I never once thought that I’d get anywhere near this level of success. For fuck’s sake, I was on a worldwide tour! I had people that loved me. That was something that was still very unfamiliar to me.

I mean, I once had one person who was everything to me, but after ten years, he’d probably forgotten about me and was very happy right now, which only brightened the smile on my face. The passion and drive I felt was because of him. I would thank the stars for the revelation he gave me almost every night in the beginning of all this.

But none of this success had been easy. It had been an uphill battle that I sometimes lost. But... I won the war. After crawling my way to the top, I realized there were mountains to go still, but instead of turning back, I became more determined and conquered them even if they dared knock me down. I put my blinders up and just focused on my goals, and it worked. I knew I made it. The first time I’d heard my song on the radio, I’d nearly died.

We arrived at the hotel, and I took no time in getting to my room and just throwing myself onto the luxurious bed. I rolled around in the covers, relishing in the cool silk that soothed my heated skin. I finally relaxed and stared up at the ceiling. This comfort was short-lived. I still had plenty more shows to go.

The tour had been going amazingly well. I had sold-out shows everywhere. The fans were adorable; dressing up like me and really going for it at the shows. During meet-and-greets, it brought me to tears when someone told me that they loved me, or that I inspired them, or that I fucking saved their lives. That was most rewarding part of this. If I could give what I never had when I was younger: a reason to keep going, I would be the happiest man alive. I never thought I’d say happy and I in the same sentence, but now it was a constant thing. I was incredibly content, but I was still lonely at times. I had my fans and my friends—also two things I never thought would be integrated into my life—but I still felt like something was missing. I needed one more thing…

I scolded myself for being greedy. Adam, you had the world now. What more could you want?

I sighed, kicking off my shoes. I stripped down to nothing and dove under the covers, shivering as
the cool sheets kissed my sweaty skin. I didn’t bother taking a shower. I needed to get to sleep. I had a laundry list of shows to do and little energy to spread out for all of them with the amount of sleep I was getting. I closed my eyes and forced myself to relax into the pillows.

The European branch of the tour was next. I was so damn blown away that the tour was doing well enough for us to expand the dates. Okay, now I had to catch a flight. We were off tomorrow.

Next stop: Helsinki.

Chapter End Notes

Comment/Review?
Sauli:

“Babe, are you sure you don’t want to come to the concert tonight? I can cancel with Niko,” Mika called from the bedroom, spending hours picking out his outfit for this Lambert guy.

I sighed from the living room couch, turning off the show on TV. “No, for the last time, I’m just not interested.”

There was silence for a moment, followed by a saddened, “Alright…”

I played with my hands for a few minutes, getting impatient. “Would you hurry up?” I called.

“Sorry, sorry!” Mika said as he strolled out from the bedroom, completely glitter-splattered and the epitome of glam. “How do I look?” He stopped in front of me and placed his hands on his jutted-out hips. So flamboyant at times… it was kind of irritating.

Mika was shedding glitter onto the carpet with every slight movement. I watched the sparkles rain down onto the floor and then gave him a look. “I think you overdid the glitter.”

“Yes,” he rolled his jade eyes, “this is Adam Lambert we’re talking about. Don’t you know anything about him?”

I shook my head, “No, and I really don’t care.”

“Whatever… It’s your loss.” Mika winked at me and batted his drag queen fake-lashed eyes.

Mika was actually wearing a black and red feather boa and a fishnet shirt, not to mention the tiniest leather shorts covering just a little bit of his shaved legs. He looked like an extremely gay whore. It was kind of funny. There was no other way to describe him.

“You look ridiculous,” I laughed.

“That’s the point! Adam will love it.”

“How is he going to see you?” I asked doubtingly, placing my legs onto the coffee table and crossing my arms.

“Um, hello, front row tickets..?” Mika bragged. He whipped the tickets out from nowhere and waved them in my face. “I think I’m also going to go see him in LA when I go on my business trip.”

I rolled my eyes. “And since when are you such a big fan? You never even talk about this guy.”

Mika shrugged, green eyes sparkling. “I just got into him. I would so do him. Honey, really, I’m sorry, but I’d leave your ass for him.” He twirled around dramatically, showing off every angle of his
outfit. “Now if you’ll excuse me, I’ve got a date with Niko.”

“Hey,” I stated, standing up. I glared jealously at Mika as I grabbed his wrist. “You’re mine. I’m watching you.”

Mika giggled. You know, for a guy much bigger than me, he was so much more feminine. “I know, baby, don’t worry.”

Mika grabbed the sides of my face and pulled me in for a loud, chaste, and playful kiss that ended with a smack. There may have been no jolt, but it sure left me dizzy.

“Are you sure you’ll be okay while I’m gone?” Mika asked quietly into my ear as he wrapped his arms around me. He actually sounded concerned, dropping the exaggerated diva act for a moment.

I nodded into his hard chest. My voice was muffled, “Go, you’re going to be late. Have fun, but not too much fun.”

Mika snickered, bringing back the playful attitude, and kissed my forehead.

“Whatever you say, baby,” he cooed, pinching my cheeks.

Mika threw me a kind smile and made his way over to the front door, slipping on his studded platform boots. I shook my head at him. Where he could find such things and use them properly was beyond me.

“You know you’re probably going to block everyone else’s view with those things on, right?” I reminded him.

Mika shrugged, molting more glitter. I sighed. “Honestly, I don’t care. I just need Adam to notice me,” he admitted. “See you later!”

“See you,” I mumbled as I half-heartedly waved.

Mika blew me a kiss and ducked down now that he was freakishly tall in order to get out of the door, shutting it with a slight slam.

I sighed and plopped back down onto the couch, bored out of my mind. Why was I in such a useless mood?

I ended up literally just sitting on the cushions for a few hours and moping pathetically to myself.

I guess I was still peeved and worried about my fight with Mika. They were too often and so, so stupid. I glanced over at the clock and rolled my eyes. No wonder my ass was going numb; I’d been sitting in the exact same spot, staring at a wall, for three hours now. The concert was probably over by now and Mika still wasn’t home. He was most likely just out having some post-concert drinks or something. As long as he hadn’t gone back to Lambert’s hotel room with him, I really didn’t mind. At least one of us was enjoying themselves.

I groaned and finally decided to stop being such a whiny bitch and go out, maybe try to have some fun. I wasn’t going to act like a sad puppy waiting for its owner to come home. I shoved myself off the couch and went to the bedroom to get ready. I just threw on whatever I got my hands on until I thought I looked half decent. I didn’t really know where I was going, but I just needed to get out of here for a while. Maybe I could go to a club or something. Drowning in drinks and forcing my lame ass to socialize with a bunch of crack-heads seemed like a pretty good idea at this point.
Chapter Notes

Hmm, updating again on the same day? That hasn’t happen in like ten months since the beginning of Nirvana when I would have like 6 chapters up in one day. Oh well. Enjoy. :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adam:

“Well done, guys. Another kick-ass show,” I said, turning around and walking backwards with my hands in the air. “Fuck yeah!”

Everyone laughed and agreed, high-fiving each other on the way out of the venue.

Tommy sat in the back of the limo with me as I got in last, slightly excited to finally get the window seat. My fabulous dancers, band, and a couple guys from management all crowded in around us, talking away about the night’s shenanigans and the show. Monte complained about his epic solo, Tommy insisted his hair wasn’t long enough, and Brooke apparently needed to go on a diet, blah, blah blah, the usual conversations. We dropped off a couple people at the hotel before deciding to go out to a hotspot to celebrate after an incredible Helsinki show. The language barrier was always a little tough in a foreign place, especially when trying to order a simple drink and someone brings you blended, skinless frog legs instead… That was a disgusting night. Yet, despite the obvious cultural and lingual walls, everyone always knew the lyrics to my songs. It was mind-blowing.

We entered the VIP section of the club and got ourselves a large booth with a great view of the socializers. I sat on the very edge, drumming my fingers on the table as we waited for our drinks. Out of nowhere, I felt something small and hard hit the side of my neck.

“Ouch, what the fuck?” I asked in a surprised voice, laughing a little as I looked down onto my lap to find a little lollipop nestled there. I looked up at the culprit, Cam, who was trying to look all innocent. “I saw that!”

Her act of purity immediately shut down and she playfully snapped at me, “They’re free! Now start sucking, pretty boy.”

I shook my head at her, chuckling, and obeyed. I didn’t miss the snickers from those around the table. I took off the lollipop wrapper and stuck the little red ball into my mouth. Yummy, taste the chemicals.

The table set off into conversation after the drinks arrived, everyone chattering away with one another. Occasionally, random people would swarm our table, recognizing me and always wanting something. I guess sitting on the edge in full view wasn’t the best idea. But, I played along, always polite, and gave the fans whatever they wanted… within reason. After a couple hours, I kept feeling weirder and weirder. I couldn’t focus on anything. I just felt strangely out of place and uncomfortable. I tried to look calm and okay as I managed to keep up with the jokes, but I couldn’t ignore this strange nagging in the back of my mind. On the outside, I probably looked just fine, but inside, I was a fidgeting wreck.
When it was finally time to leave and we were all getting up and ready, a little flash of white gold caught my eye from the far side. I did a double-take and found myself staring at the back of some blond’s head. I couldn’t see his face, but his body shape and something else caught my eye. He was talking to a couple people, and I could tell he was laughing from the way his toned back moved. I was intrigued. The nagging feeling in my head only intensified, begging me to make a move. I didn’t think I’d ever seen him before, but he felt familiar in the strangest way. I was drawn hypnotically to him and couldn’t peel my eyes off of him. I didn’t even notice that the group was on their way out.

“Adam, you coming?” Tommy tugged on my sleeve.

I blinked and snapped back to reality. I looked at him and without thinking about it, stuttered, “Um, n-no. You go on ahead. I’ll catch up later.”

I didn’t want to leave. I knew if I left now, I wouldn’t get any sleep. I’d toss and turn all night wondering what the hell this feeling was.

Tommy looked confused for a second, but then he looked past my shoulders at the blond. “Oh, I see,” he drawled and then winked at me, taking a swig of his unfinished beer. “Have fun.”

I rolled my eyes, and with that, everyone was gone. I swallowed hard and after finally building up the courage and deciding to not just stand there like a lost idiot, I slowly walked across the club, muttering apologies as I squeezed through the packed bodies and grossly gyrating hips. I made my way over to the blond, heart pounding as I did so.

Why was I so nervous?

He was a small little thing. I noticed as I towered over his back, much tinier than he appeared from afar. I could hear his conversation now, and he was obviously speaking the language, but in a much deeper voice than expected. Hmm, I thought he’d be a twink or something.

I briefly considered whether or not it’d be rude to butt into his conversation, but then I decided that I really didn’t care, and anything I did could be passed off as part of my slight drunkenness.

I shakily tapped the blond on the shoulder and immediately regretted it. He cut off in the middle of his sentence and turned his head around with a smile.

I panicked.

Without even stopping to consider the stupidity of my actions, I took my lollipop out of my mouth and shoved it in between his lips. The look of shock was apparent on his pretty face.

Oh shit.

Why did I do that? Who the fuck does something like that? Adam, that was not how to meet people. He probably thought that was disgusting. I totally would if some random person did that to me. My hand twitched to rip it out of his mouth and then apologize on my knees, but I decided against it. I cringed and waited for him to spit it out, yell furiously, and then slap me.

Instead, to my bewilderment, he blinked a few times in surprise and took hold of the lollipop stick, bracing it as he gave it a nice suck and kept eye-contact. I stared in wonder, noting that my face probably looked idiotic.

Pretty and open-minded?

Adam, do not fuck this up.
That was mistake number one.

Sure, he reacted much better than you thought, but you’re damn lucky that he wasn’t beating the shit out of you right now for that move.

The pretty blond smiled up at me and I nearly melted. He pulled the lollipop out of his mouth and held it, giving me a sly look.

“H-hi,” I muttered stupidly. “I’m so sorry about that.” Did he even understand a word of what I was saying? I had to remind myself that this was Finland.

It was cool watching the gears in the blond’s head shift, like he was switching between language programs. With a hint of an accent, he replied with a laugh, “Hi. No problem. It’s delicious.” His chuckle was light and hearty, and I just had to join in nervously. His English seemed to come more naturally than most. I briefly wondered if he’d been to the states before.

He didn’t seem to recognize who I was and I greatly appreciated that. I really wanted one night where I didn’t have to try to calm a person down and then take a picture with them without a conversation, only to have them run away with their new Facebook profile pictures of us, and leaving me like I was some sort of exhibit, not a person. Actually, I seemed to be more nervous and agitated than he was, and I couldn’t figure out why.

“Are you having fun?” I asked, gesturing to the dance floor. I was so lame.

The blond looked around, frowning a little, and then he rolled his eyes, dropping the outgoing and cheerful act. “Honestly? Not really. I came here alone, so…” he said, shrugging politely. He gave the lollipop another suck and I couldn’t help but stare and nearly drool at the way his lips wetly molded around the ball. I could imagine his tongue lapping at it inside his mouth. God, I was desperate and pathetic. I didn’t even realize that he’d noticed me staring until he pulled it out, held it out to me, and amusedly said, “Would you like this back?”

I snapped back to reality and mentally slapped myself for making it so obvious. “We can share,” I mumbled. It was my lame-ass excuse to taste him.

The blond grinned and offered the lollipop to me. I didn’t hesitate when I took it from him, shuddering as a jolt shot through my arm when our fingers touched. I popped the candy into my mouth and licked at the already moist surface. I could taste a hint of mint on it, and I felt a small twitch in my pants, knowing it was from him. I didn’t break eye contact with the guy as I sucked, but not because of sexual reasons… mostly, but because I just couldn’t tear my eyes away for whatever reason.

Please be single, please be gay. I just really wanted to have some fun during the stress of this tour. This guy was… I didn’t know. I gazed into his big, blue eyes, speculating. There was a really strong connection there and a strange pull. I could feel it. We’d barely exchanged any words, yet I felt close to him, like I could just grab him and touch him, and he’d be okay with it. I wondered if he felt it too. It didn’t really seem like it. Normally, I could feel the nerves radiating off of people, but he didn’t seem fazed at all by my presence.

His face looked like it was sculpted sharply out of the finest ivory, and there was just something about it that made me confused. Why did he feel so familiar? Goddammit, it was bothering me.

“Well, if you’re bored, I can try to liven it up for you. Let me get you a drink,” I insisted, nodding my head over to the bar.
The blond hesitated for a second, and I felt my stomach knot, fearing rejection.

“Sure,” he said after a moment, and I let out a breath I hadn’t realized I’d been holding. Pull it together, Adam.

I beamed at him and led the way over to the bar after handing him back the lollipop. The blond took a seat on one the stools while I attempted to order something. He noticed the look of confusion on the bartender’s face and the one of frustration on mine and stepped in, saying the drink’s name effortlessly.

I threw the blond an embarrassed smile and muttered, “Thanks,” as I sat down next to him.

He chuckled and replied, “No problem. It’s cute that you tried.”

I wasn’t one to duck my head in shame, ever, but I was seriously considering it right now. I totally lost my cool with this one. I was acting like a quirky and awkward teenage boy, not a sophisticated, international star. Why wasn’t he acting like me? If I sort of familiarized with, or recognized him, didn’t that mean that he should too?

“So…” I muttered in a low voice, looking over my drink at the blond and scrutinizing, “Do I know you from somewhere?”

The blond took a sip of his drink and furrowed his brow, looking hard at me.

“I don’t think so…” he said, sticking the lollipop back into his mouth.

“Okay,” I shrugged. “It’s just that you look… familiar.”

“Well, I was on Big Brother here, maybe you watched that?” he offered.

I shook my head, still studying his face. I sighed and tore my eyes away from his, throwing my head back and downing the rest of my pink-colored drink. It burned as it ran down my dry throat.

There was a big crash from somewhere in the back followed by a bunch of excited cheers. Oh, how I loved drunken people.

The blond finished his drink and grimaced at the club before looking at me pleadingly. “I don’t think I’m going to stay here any longer,” he said. “Clubs aren’t my thing.” I guess the needy and worried look on my face made him pity me. “…You’re welcome to join me if you’d like.”

I tried not to act excited and pretty much just failed.

“Um, would you like to come back to my hotel… with me…?” I asked, shyness lacing my voice.

I knew it was pretty risky to ask, but I didn’t want to let him go yet. This weird pulse in the back of my head just wasn’t going away and I wanted to try to find out more. I was missing something and I knew it. I wondered how creepy it was considered to ask a complete stranger to leave a bar with you… Well, actually, that sounded pretty normal for a bar situation.

Grinning, the blond nodded at me, elated that I agreed to hang out with him, and I nearly fell over. I mirrored his happy expression and gestured toward the exit. The blond got up and waited as I hurriedly paid for the drinks, throwing cash out onto the counter and yelling out, “Keep the change!” knowing fully well the bartender had no clue what I was saying.

The blond followed me willingly and chucked the lollipop stick into the trash on the way out. I
opened the door for him as a nice gesture, noting his grin as I did so, and we left the bar, entering the dark streets. I looked around, overwhelmed by how this place was so foreign to me. It wasn’t like back in LA where I could walk out of any building blindfolded and drunk and still manage find my way home.

Fuck, I forgot that the crew took the limo back. Ugh, I didn’t want to pay for a taxi since I knew the hotel was at least within walking distance. I sort of, *maybe*, knew the way back to the hotel by foot here? Oh well, I’d figure it out.

The nagging feeling returned and it was getting ridiculous. I couldn’t stop staring at the Finn. There was something about those oceanic irises that felt… *safe*…

Chapter End Notes

Comment/Review or I’ll find you and hurt you.
Dream Come True... or Nightmare?

Chapter Notes

Here's chapter five. Enjoy... maybe.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sauli:

I agreed to leave with this man, knowing I wouldn’t pull anything. I wasn’t going to cheat on my boyfriend just because I was a little upset. It was just a friendly get-to-know-each-other type of thing. I’d be fine. I didn’t really know what his intentions were, but he seemed nice enough.

When I’d turned around and saw him smiling down at me, my heart had started pounding, and I had no idea why. I’d managed to keep my composure though. Maybe it was because he looked a heck of a lot like Mika? His facial structure and body shape were strikingly similar even under all the makeup and clothes. Really, the only thing that stood out as different was his hair, which was shorter on one side and fringed over on the other. And I couldn’t help but notice… glitter? Who put glitter in their hair? He was never going to be able to get that out.

And obviously, he wasn’t from around here. He was clearly American. In my head, I was trying to brush up on my English again, letting it all flow back. I’d barely used it in the last ten or so years, but I hadn’t forgotten anything. It was like riding a bike; it stuck with you even if you were out of practice.

I guess we were walking back to his hotel since he never stopped us to get into a car. The walk was very strange. There was thick tension in the air, yet it wasn’t awkward. I couldn’t quite explain it, but I was very aware of this man’s presence next to me. I found myself getting nervous and sweaty for no apparent reason. I wasn’t afraid of him. In fact, I could sense he was like a big teddy bear. I always had good intuition about people; I could tell who was faking and who was not. So, I knew I wasn’t going to be taken to the middle of nowhere and left for dead, especially if we were walking. But still, I felt so odd. Even as we chatted very casually about random things, mostly Finnish customs, I had this urge to just stop him and stare really hard at him.

I also noticed that he couldn’t stop touching me. Nothing perverted or weird, but he would brush up against me, or throw his arm over my shoulders, or grab my elbow... They weren’t very subtle, but we were both slightly drunk, so I could understand. He wasn’t crossing any boundaries, and it’s not like I really minded anyway.

Yet, every single time he contacted me, whether it was through skin or not, jolts ran throughout my body. These electric sparks that were no coincidence since it happened every single time.

The most shocking one came when the mood sank from a bubbly conversation to something a little deeper and I suddenly found the sides of my face in between his gentle hands and his face a little too close. I smiled at him but was terrified that he was going to try to kiss me. I didn’t know what I’d do if he attempted that.

To my relief, he ended up just staring hard at me like I’d been trying to get peeks of. Neither of us actually brought it up, but I thought he probably sensed the jolts too and was as confused as I was. I
guess he couldn’t take it anymore. He’d said he thought he recognized me, and now I knew what he was talking about. There was just something there. For reasons unknown, even though this was a complete stranger to me, I had an overwhelming sense of trust and home.

We finally arrived at his hotel room and the tension relaxed slightly. I heard him sigh subtly as we entered the luxurious suite. I found myself whistling at how extravagant the place was. How’d he afford such a high-class room? He chuckled at my expression and smiled at me as he took off his jacket and set it down on the bed. He made his way over to the fridge as I settled down at the table and took in all the little details of the gorgeous room.

“Wine?” he asked as he gestured to the bottles in the fridge.

I nodded eagerly, nearly drooling at the promising brand names. He beamed and took out a bottle and a couple glasses. He set them on the table and poured the rich-looking liquid evenly into the glasses. He handed one to me and we toasted silently to Finland. I took a small sip and almost fainted. Where the hell did he get his hands on such heavenly fluids? I took a big gulp and nearly moaned. I could see him watching me over the top of his glass as he drank.

Those pale blue eyes of his were bothering me. It was like trying to remember a dream.

“So,” I said as I placed my glass onto the table. “What brings you to Helsinki?”

The man swallowed his wine and pursed his lips, seemingly pondering that question for a second.

“Actually, I’m here on business,” he said with a smile. “I’m a performer.”

“Oh,” I nodded. “And you are from America, right?”

“Yep,” he confirmed. “I grew up in sunny San Diego, moved to Los Angeles as soon as I was able to.” He scratched his chin and frowned a little.

“Why the move? San Diego sounds lovely,” I said casually, knowing fully well I’d already lived there once upon a time.

“Never really had a good… family life, if you know what I mean. I was pretty much alone. Sometimes it got to me, and I ended up doing things I regret…” He shrugged. “I had to get out of there, too many bad memories.”

He was trying hard to keep it vague, which I didn’t mind of course. He wasn’t going to go into full detail about his life to a stranger and I’d learned the hard way not to push people. I’d become a bit more reserved over the years.

“I know what you mean,” I admitted, deciding not to mention San Diego because he’d ask why I moved and I really didn’t feel like explaining that mess. “My family life was terrible. I haven’t seen my parents in years.”

He was really staring intently at me now with something strange in his eyes, like a question.

“Here, look. It’s faded now, but you can see that it got bad,” I said, pulling up my sleeve.

I put my arm-length faded scar on display, not thinking anything of it.

His questioning eyes trailed down to my arm. After a slight moment, they widened and he gasped, stiffening a little.
I furrowed my brow, slightly confused. What was so shocking about an old scar?

He looked like he was about to throw up out of nowhere. His face was suddenly sickly white.

His terrified pale eyes kept flickering between my face and my arm, as if something was clicking for him.

I pulled my sleeve back down, totally taken aback by his reaction, but he suddenly grabbed my wrist and pulled the sleeve back up, stroking his thumb over the length of the scar.

I watched him with apprehensive eyes, getting uncomfortable. Okay, this was a little too close for comfort and a nudge away from my boundaries. I never let people just start touching my scar like that. Another jolt ran throughout me, and I couldn’t bear to tear my arm away. I could feel his tension through his touch.

He finally let go and settled his trembling hands into his lap to hide them. He peered up at me with his face hung low, eyes moist.

His voice croaked hard like he was struggling to even speak as he asked, “What… did you say your name was?”

I still had no clue what his problem was. I was calm as a cucumber, whereas this guy was about to collapse.

“I didn’t,” I said, and frowned a little, realizing we never actually introduced ourselves. How weird. I continued, “But, it’s Sauli.”

I could see him shaking just a little. The man’s eyes squeezed shut as if that totally wasn’t what he wanted to hear, but was expecting. Tears escaped the corners of his eyes and ran down his cheeks.

My alarm went off. What the hell did I say to make him cry?

“Are you okay?” I asked, panicking a little. I was more than a little uncomfortable that I was in some stranger’s hotel room and he just suddenly started crying after hearing my name. “What happened?” I reached out to touch his arm in concern and he flinched.

“You need to leave,” he said, barely above a strangled whisper. “Please.”

He stood up abruptly and headed to the door. I followed him in complete shock. He reached for the doorknob and his sleeve pulled back a little. I squinted and then my eyes widened.

“Wait!” I exclaimed.

I grabbed his wrist before he could open the door. I could feel him trembling in my grasp as he tried to tug away.

“Please,” he said again, like he couldn’t manage anything else, trying to squirm free.

I ignored him, my maternal, scolding side coming out. I pulled up his sleeve and glanced at all the pale, nearly faded, but numerous scars crisscrossing his arm. Some scars were more visible than others, and some had probably faded completely. I dropped his arm and grabbed the other, doing the same thing. And again, faded scars were everywhere. I felt a horrible pit of pity form in stomach.

“What happened?” I whispered, being nosy but not really caring at this point. I took firm hold of both of his wrists, afraid he’d try to open the door and kick me out before telling me.
He didn’t reply for a long minute. I stared hard at his slightly reddened eyes and he stared back, trembling more so with every second of looking at my face. His tears just got thicker with every passing moment.

He eventually sighed in defeat, sounding miserable.

“I said I let my family issues get to me…” he mumbled quietly, voice hoarse. I nodded, trying to follow along. “I was a loner with no friends, my father was an abusive drunk, and I had no mother. My father… he’d… hurt me. A lot… And these,” he looked down at the scars with regret on his face, “are the result of my pain… but I finally stopped when an angel came into my life…”

He peered up at me and sort of smiled, more depressing than anything.

“But then… he left my life again when his job was complete,” he finished.

He wouldn’t let go of eye contact as he said this, like he was telling me a riddle only I knew the answer to, and still hoped I wouldn’t understand.

“Strange,” I said, taking only one arm again and examining the faded lines and gashes thoroughly. His hands were balled up into tight fists. “I once had a boyfriend with a very similar story, if not exact. I’m sorry that you went through that.”

I stroked over a couple scars, but then noticed that his breathing was suddenly very strained.

I looked up at his face and he was crying a silent river now through tightly closed eyes.

I was stunned for a moment before looking back down at his arm then back up at him, trying to figure out why his crying got worse whenever I said something.

Repeatedly, I glanced up at his face then down at his arms, and everything was overwhelmingly familiar. I was trying to fit puzzle pieces together. Obviously, there was a reason he was just standing here almost… waiting?

He opened his eyes and they pierced through me, so intense, and I felt my stomach flip from the déjà vu. The pale blue had melted into a deeper color because of his tears… just like Adam’s used to.

He still hadn’t told me his name. My heart stopped briefly. My eyes flickered over this guy so fast I became dizzy. His story, his scars, his face, his eyes… It all finally clicked and hit me like backhand to the face. No way. It couldn’t be. Impossible. I was delusional, but…

“…Adam…?” I tried, barely above a whisper, peering up at him tentatively.

His eyes closed and he let out a deep breath like I cracked the code. But, but, NO. It made no sense.

It couldn’t be…

“…Hi, baby,” he whispered.

His words struck me so hard that I dropped his arms and staggered back a few feet, catching myself on a wall. The sound of his words rang throughout my ears, so familiar and bringing back sweet memories that only his voice could unlock.

“What?” I hissed, barely able to hear myself over the sound of my pounding heart.

He said nothing and just watched me freak out, tears still streaming down his face. My eyes stung and my throat felt impossibly tight. I stared at his miserable figure with bewilderment and horror
plastered onto my face, trying to make sure as it all sank in painfully.

This couldn’t be happening.

It was him. He was Adam, unmistakably so.

It all made sense so fast that my head spun, and I felt myself about to gag from the shock. All the tension, the jolts, everything was because of him. He was the only one who had that power over me… Adam.

This was Adam standing in front of me.

I shook my head at him in disbelief.

How had I not seen it earlier? Oh right, maybe because…

“YOU’RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD!” I flipped out. “HOW? How the fuck?!”

“Shh!” he hissed gently. “You’ll scare the other rooms.”

His voice was unbearable.

I broke down and fell to my knees, sobbing, unable to contain anything. I was literally having a panic attack. It was all clicking and becoming so much more obvious. He was a performer, here on business. Mika went to a concert. His name was Adam fucking Lambert. Oh my god. He was the singer. This was the singer Mika saw tonight. Oh my god.

Adam was immediately at my side, trying to shush me and asking me to calm down. He touched my shoulder and I flinched hard.

“You’re not real!” I was in denial. “You died. I know you died. This is a dream,” I tried convincing myself hysterically.

“Sauli…”

My stomach flipped at the sound of his voice saying my name. Oh my god.

“Sauli,” he tried again as I was shaking and flailing about on the ground. “Please, calm down! I’m here, I’m fine. I didn’t die… thank goodness.”

“You’re alive,” I squeaked, barely able to see him through my tears. I blinked them away and focused hard on his face. I was shaking so hard that I looked like I was vibrating.

I could see it. It was really, truly him.

I couldn’t help myself. I launched at Adam, tackling him to the ground. I wrapped my arms around his waist in a crushing hug and buried my face into his chest, sobbing violently. Adam stiffened underneath me for a minute before finally melting into the hug and wrapping his arms around me. So familiar… I missed this feeling of security so much. I cried harder.

“Where have you been?!” I half-shrieked into his chest. “HOW?! I just, I can’t, how the?!!”

There were too many questions and I didn’t know where to fucking start.

Adam kept hushing me from underneath and stroked my hair gently, attempting to soothe me, but he only made it worse. The touches were so goddamn familiar. I felt like I was eighteen again.
“I never died.” His beautiful voice was muffled by my hair. “I’ve been trying to live like you wanted me to.”

Adam tried to sit up, but I remained a crying mess, crawled up into a ball on his lap, refusing to let go of him. He just let me cry it out and vibrate in his hold until I could console myself and gather my thoughts enough to listen to him. When the tears stopped but the breathing was still a mess, he gently pushed me off, placing me in front of him. My body stung without the contact.

I opened my mouth to speak, utterly confused and shocked because the love of my life was alive and here, but I was cut off by the sound of my cellphone’s muffled ringing in my pocket. I groaned and ignored it, gazing fixedly at Adam, trying to rememorize every detail of his gorgeous face. I subconsciously started pinching myself hard, attempting to wake up.

“Stop it, you’ll hurt yourself,” Adam muttered, pulling my hand away from my skin. I almost whimpered from his touch. He still got upset if I was in the slightest bit of pain. “And you should answer that. It could be important.”

I was in a trance from his voice and the shock of it all. Adam brought me out it by snapping his fingers in front of my face. I blinked several times before shakily reaching into my pocket and taking out my phone.

“Hello?” I asked, trying to keep my voice level and probably failing. “Oh…” I looked up at Adam. It was Mika. “At the bar… No worries, I’ll be home soon…” Oh god, I’d completely forgotten about him. I didn’t know how the fuck I was ever going to be able to leave this room. “Okay… love you too,” I muttered quickly and hung up.

“Who was that?” Adam asked.

“No one,” I mumbled.

“Sauli,” he said. A felt a chill go up my spine. God, I was not going to get used to him coming back from the dead. “I’m not four.”

I sighed shakily. “…Boyfriend,” I mumbled quietly.

“Hmm? Can’t understand you.”

“My boyfriend,” I stated, clearer now.

“Oh…”

Adam frowned for a moment, looking a bit heartbroken, but then a dazzling and sad smile broke out on his face. What the fuck?

“I knew this would happen,” he said quietly to himself. He looked up at me and continued with another slight smile, “I’m happy for you.”

That broke my heart.

It went quiet for a minute. Adam was staring at his lap.

“…How long…” his voice was almost inaudible.

I cringed, knowing that question was coming. “Just over a year,” I mumbled, looking away.

When Adam didn’t answer, I looked back at him to find him still staring at his lap, face hidden. I saw
a tear drop down onto his leg. I frowned.

“So much longer than us…” Adam’s voice was hoarse again. Another tear dropped. My heart hurt so badly for him. I felt my eyes sting.

“No, baby,” I insisted, crawling over to him. “You don’t even know how much I’ve missed you. You’re actually here…” I said as I wrapped my arms around his side. Adam didn’t pull me into the embrace. I tried to lean in a little, to feel those lips against mine again after who knew how long…

But then, Adam pulled off my arms and pushed me away gently, sighing loudly.

“What—” I tried, but was cut off.

“—Sauli, I’m not going to be your little affair,” he sneered. “That’s not fair to anyone.”

“I can break up with him,” I offered.

Adam gave me a disappointed look. “You wouldn’t dare… How could you break someone’s heart like that? Would you tell him you’re just dumping him for someone else? Don’t be that jerk…”

I paused for a minute, feeling everything in me sink. “You don’t want me,” I stated simply.

Adam rolled his eyes, and stood up, towering over me. I followed him immediately, not backing down. He crossed his arms and gazed intently into my eyes. I stared back defiantly and angrily.

“I’ve never stopped loving you,” Adam said surely in a hard voice. “Not. Once. But, for years, knowing you were okay was enough for me to go on.”

My throat felt raw as I realized what he was saying. “You knew I was alive, didn’t you…?” I said through clenched teeth. “All these years… And you never came after me?”

He studied me for a moment. “Yes, I knew,” Adam said sadly.

It was like a slap to the face.

“But, I didn’t come after you… only because I wanted you to have a better life. I was nothing but misery for you,” he concluded.

“Better?” I hissed. “Are you trying to tell me that you left me depressed for years thinking you were dead and rotting somewhere while you frolicked around getting attention from the media?! Are you fucking kidding me?!”

His tone was sharp and clipped, “Don’t you fucking say that. You have no idea what I went through to get to this point. I did all of this for you! Everything I am is for you. I never gave up on myself because I thought I’d be letting you down.”

“How would you disappointing me even work if I thought you were a fucking corpse?!” I half-yelled. “You have some pretty pathetic excuses! Letting me down, are you stupid?! Just tell me that you moved on, it’s simple!”

“How would you disappointing me even work if I thought you were a fucking corpse?!” I half-yelled. “You have some pretty pathetic excuses! Letting me down, are you stupid?! Just tell me that you moved on, it’s simple!”

“Please don’t tell me I don’t want you,” Adam’s voice was strangled. “You have no clue how hard it’s been. How hard it is right now. I never found another love. Never. But you did…”

“Because I thought you were dead!” I was yelling now, and I didn’t care who heard. “Do you really think I would have even looked at anyone else if I knew you were alive?! And apparently, you were planning on letting me go my entire life thinking you were just bones now.”
“I wanted you to be happy!” Adam was yelling too, but I could tell it was much harder for him. He really didn’t want to. “I’m bad for your life. That was proved when you nearly died because of me!”

“But I didn’t. I woke up and you were long gone, Adam.” I felt a thrill go through me from saying his name. “How do you think that made me feel?! Even when you somehow found out I was alive, you still steered clear. Fuck you!” I kept yelling, blood boiling. “The happiest moments of my life were with you, why don’t you fucking understand that?! You were worth it.”

Adam’s angry mask cracked for a second before returning. “Well, you’re in a happy relationship now, so just return to it,” he hissed.

I was stunned. “You actually want me to pretend that I didn’t just find out you’re alive. What the fuck, Adam? You asshole… You’re such a fucking asshole.” My voice was cracking and I was on the verge of tears again.

“Stop,” Adam said in a hard voice.

“God, I can’t fucking believe you. I gave you everything! And you just gave up on all of it! I can’t even understand how someone could be such a heartless bastard!”

“Stop.” Adam’s hands were balled into clenched fists and his eyes never left the ground as I bombarded him. I could see a switch on his face. He looked frustrated.

“But, who cares how I felt? And what were you doing this entire time that I was struggling to get by without you?! Oh you know, just enjoying the spotlight, making money, and probably fucking more willing guys than you could count!”

“ENOUGH!” Adam screamed.

Before I could react, he exploded in my face and I felt a sharp hit against my mouth and cheek, and I slammed elbow-first to the wooden floor, making a pained sound. I was left with an agonized jaw and a dizzy head. The room went completely quiet for a moment after that.

I shakily touched my bruised lip and pulled back, seeing fresh blood staining my fingertips. My breaths were heavy and hard.

“Oh my god,” Adam cried out, immediately sinking down to his knees and reaching for me. “Sauli, I’m so sorry!”

Keeping my hand against my sharply aching cheek, I scrambled away and my back hit the wall before Adam could touch me. I stared up at him in horror, mirroring his expression. He did not just hit me.

Adam froze mid-reach and his lip quivered at seeing me so terrified of him, knowing I didn’t want him touching me. He burst out into tears and sank down to the ground, back against the bed, folding his knees up into his face, and crying loudly into them.

Through his sobs, he managed out, “That hasn’t happened in so long… Why now?” He was blubbering. I couldn’t make sense of what he was referring to. “I’m so, so sorry. You can’t forgive me. What have I done? Why him?!”

After a minute of confusing and what I thought were random half-sentences, Adam finally said something I could make sense of.

“Sauli, please leave before I hurt you again. I’m so fucking sorry,” Adam cried into his knees.
I didn’t know what was worse, the fact that he wanted me gone, or that he wasn’t sure if he wouldn’t attack me again.

I was appalled and shaken. I just stared frozenly at the regretful mess in front of me. I kept wincing at the pain in the side of my face. No one had ever hit me like that. And now that it happened, it was at the hand of… Adam. I didn’t know what to do. Right now, I was petrified of him. I didn’t even want to try to console him and tell him that it was okay. I didn’t think I could forget what he just did.

“Please, leave,” he begged, cries muffled by his arms.

Trembling, I did as he asked. I got up and stumbled over to the door, fighting back tears of pain. Adam made no move to stop me. He didn’t even look up. I glanced at him one more time in worry and anger before opening the door and leaving without another word. I maybe slammed the door a little too hard. I paused outside of his door, breathing hard and shakily to myself, trying to wrap my head around what just happened.

I heard talking on the other side after a minute. Confused, I pressed my ear against the door and heard Adam’s muffled voice speaking to someone.

“Shut up!” I heard Adam cry desperately through a sob. “How the fuck are you back?!”

What the… Who the hell was he talking to?

After a moment of no reply, Adam continued, “But, I kept you buried.”

My eyes widened, and I forgot about the screaming pain in my face for a minute.

There was another moment of complete silence. Adam cried, “God, he probably hates me. I’ve lost him. Why’d you have to fucking smash his face in?! He thinks I did it!”

I backed away from the door slowly with wide eyes, having heard enough. I knew perfectly well that there was no one else in there, so what the actual fuck?

I tasted the metallic sting of my bloody lip and grimaced as the ache in my jaw and cheek came back. Scared and bewildered, I left without another word.

Chapter End Notes

Whoops. Comment?
Adam:

I couldn’t believe this fucking night. How could everything just turn from such glory to such a nightmare? I would’ve never expected to just run into Sauli like this. Sure, I’d known in the back of my head that this was the city he’d returned to years ago when we came here for the concert, but I’d ignored it, thinking that since it’d been a decade, he was long gone somewhere else.

It all made sense now though, why I was so drawn to him at the club. Kill me. Now that I thought about it, I realized how blind I must’ve been to not recognize his face and the feeling he gave me immediately. He hadn’t recognized me either, not even from being a household name, though it was a bit more excusable since he’d spent the last ten years of his life thinking I was dead.

I felt so fucking stupid for talking to him in hopes of taking him back to the hotel and getting lucky… Fuck me and my stupid flirty shit. I regretted it with every fiber of my being. When I first went up to him, how in the hell was I supposed to know it was him out of all people? If I’d known, I would’ve bulldozed people down trying to get the hell out of there. I didn’t want to see him again. No wait, that was inaccurate. I still wanted him. I wanted to hold him still and gaze at him for hours, but I couldn’t. I shouldn’t have seen him again because… Well, look what happened.

I’d hit him. The one person I’d sworn to protect with my life needed protection from me. It wasn’t just some pathetic smack either. I’d slammed my furious fist into his face with all my might. His lip bled, and his cheek had started swelling before he left. The pain on Sauli’s face… and the sheer terror after it happened… It was going to haunt me. I’d tried to apologize and help him up, but he’d actually scrambled to get away from me… It’d shocked me. I’d felt a horrible sinking feeling deep in my pit when he’d tried to escape me, looking up at me like I was some bloodthirsty monster. That one gesture of fear hurt me in a way I couldn’t explain.

My memories of the past had been shoved into the deepest corners of my mind to make sure I wasn’t reminded of the horrors, but that sometimes didn’t work. The instant I saw the scar on his arm, all of my memories of Sauli came pouring back. That was when I felt my control slip away. The control I’d kept for so long had just faded. I’d snapped and lost myself, tucking into the shadows as he took over.

It may have been my body, but it wasn’t me who had savagely lost it on him. I just couldn’t explain that to Sauli. He just knew that I’d lost control and attacked him. He didn’t know the psychotic reasoning behind it. He didn’t know that for that split second, I hadn’t been Adam anymore; this body hadn’t belonged to me. The Adam he probably hated now had gone dormant.

Goddammit, Sauli! It wasn’t me! It was him.

“So, that was the boy in your fantasies you’ve annoyed me to death with,” the voice said, snickers
echoing in my head. I clenched my fists tighter. “Though now, he looks nothing like your absurd thoughts. He’s quite something. Delicious…” He licked his lips, gold eyes glinting hungrily in my mind. “Do you have any idea how good it felt to shut him up like that? I did you a favor. You’re welcome. I wish you could have been out as well when I punched him. It was like euphoria, the kind you feel after a good fucking.”

“Shut up!” I screamed, having zero patience for his bullshit. “How in the fuck are you back?!”

The voice chuckled mischievously, not even a little bit intimidated by my yelling. “You know, I’m not really sure. It’s been a while since I’ve taken control. Guess you’re losing your focus. You lost your practiced cool for a second and gave me an opportunity. I took it and used it quite well, if I may add.” I could see him grinning crookedly. “But, I feel this… strength. You’ve weakened. I guess I’m back, bitch.”

“But, I kept you buried.” My heart started stuttering, distressed from what he was telling me.

He shrugged. “Well, you obviously didn’t do a good job of it, dumbass.”

“Why’d you have to fucking hit him? He thinks I did it!” I buried my face into my hands and pulled at my hair a little.

“All that complaining was seriously getting on my nerves. God, I couldn’t even hide to avoid hearing his ridiculous shrieking. The little fuck needs to learn some manners. I think I’m going to teach him some…”

My eyes snapped open. “Oh fuck no,” I said, voice hard as rock. “I’m not letting you anywhere near him. If you think I’m going to go after him and apologize, you’re wrong. He’ll hate me, but that doesn’t matter. He doesn’t know how much better off he is without this body. You know it’s partly why I never went after him. It’s because of you. I love him, but with you putting him in risk, I can’t bear to have him… not like he’d want to be with me now anyway…”

“Boohoo. You’re such a fucking pussy.” He shook his head like he was ashamed to even be near me. “Fine, don’t go after him. Like I care.”

I slammed my fists into my head, squeezing hard, pointlessly trying to get the voice to stop. “Why is this happening?” I desperately asked the universe. “I was doing just fine!”

“How long did you think you could try to hide me? You just let the tension build up and I exploded out at the right time. Ignoring me won’t help you get rid—”

“—Shut the fuck up! I don’t want to hear your bullshit!” I hissed, crossing my arms defiantly, staring hard at the door.

Whenever given the chance, he liked to blurt out this weird, riddle-like nonsense to me, but I always cut him off or ignored it. I was not going to listen to what a demonic parasite in my head had to say. Next thing I knew, he’d probably tell me that I should go off and merrily massacre children for fun, like a lot of prisoners and asylum patients did when they listened to the voices inside of their heads.

He gave me a frustrated glare, eyes narrowing into slits. What the hell was his problem? “Whatever. Your fucking loss. And it’s not nonsense.”

“Just. Go. Away.”

I was sitting here on the floor, talking to a voice in my head that could take control over my body at supposedly any given moment and had just attacked the once love of my life.
I needed a straitjacket… seriously.

Maybe a nicely padded cell too.

I could feel the doppelganger roll his eyes and make a noise of disgust before his image and voice disappeared from my head.

He was gone… for now.

God, what was it that had made him come out like that, and at that particular moment?

I used to not be able to talk to him. When this first started ten years ago, he could only twitch my muscles and say a couple things to me before fading out. Over the years, it kept getting worse, but I’d managed to learn to suppress him enough to just keep him at bay, maybe only harassing me mentally every once in a while. I assumed he came out whenever I got angry. That was probably wrong since there were incidences when I wasn’t remotely upset and he’d popped out, but for the most part, by controlling my temper and moods, I’d been okay. I’d thought that was the fix, but no, even after years, he was still here, tormenting me in the one place I couldn’t escape him: My mind. I’d just managed to keep him from taking complete control for a good while… until today.

A sharp knock at the door made me jump.

I stared with wide eyes for a long time, not knowing what to do.

Another set of knocks came, more impatient and urgent this time.

“Coming,” I called out in a croak after a moment of hysterically considering it, failing my attempt to not sound like I was crying.

I shakily pushed myself off the floor, wincing when I felt my fist throb in pain. I’d hit Sauli so hard that it damaged me as well. I shuddered a little at the thought.

Grabbing the door handle, I paused for a second and took several deep breaths.

Please, don’t be Sauli, please.

Using my sleeve, I tried to wipe off anything that was on my face. I hoped I didn’t look a mess. Yeah right, I probably looked like a raccoon.

I swung the door open and there stood Tommy with a confused expression on his face that only intensified when his eyes landed on my puffy and reddened eyes. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t relieved to see him and not Sauli.

“Are you okay, man?” Tommy asked, eyeing me up and down with suspicion. “We heard yelling.”

I cleared my throat. “Yeah, that’s just the TV.” God, I sounded awful.

Tommy gave me a strange look and peered over my shoulder. “Um, Adam…?”

“Hmm?” I couldn’t trust my voice.

“The TV’s not on…”

“Oh…” I muttered stupidly. “That’s because…” I couldn’t think of anything.

I sighed. God, I sucked, and Tommy Joe was no idiot.
“Man, you look like someone just died. What happened?” Tommy questioned intently, sounding a little panicked as he stuck out his arm to block the door when I attempted to slowly close it.

“Look, can you just pretend to believe me? I really need to be alone.” My voice sounded exhausted.

He nodded slowly after a moment of scrutinizing my face, still concerned. “If you need someone to talk to…”

“Not right now,” I said immediately, voice cracking. Fuck. I lowered my voice into a whisper, unable to stomach another horrible croaking sound. “Don’t tell anyone…”

“Okay…” Tommy threw me one last worried look, taking his forearm off the door. “See you later…”

“Bye,” I squeaked, closing the door before he could say anything else. Poor Tommy, he really didn’t want to try to push me. I appreciated that. I felt bad for just shoving him away like that.

I trudged over to the mirror on the wall, nearly gasping at how ridiculous I looked.

My eyes weren’t only red and puffy, but they were smeared in black eyeliner, and I really did look like a raccoon… or a panda. My eyes-lashes were clumped together from my soggy mascara. I had huge, wet bags under my eyes that had pools of sweat and black liquid in them. My nose looked swollen and pink from all of the sniffing I’d done. My lips had cracked and dried from all the frantic breathing through my mouth. There were gnarly tracks of eyeliner running down my cheeks all the way past my jawline. My stupid, glittery hair was glued to my forehead and the sides of my face from the tears and sweat.

I shook my head in disbelief at my appearance. I hadn’t looked like this much of a mess in over ten years. I may have felt a little empty at times, but in general, I’d been happy for the last decade, despite the secret I had about this freak in my head. I used to look in the mirror and see someone who had made it and was successful against the odds, but now… I looked in the mirror and saw nothing but a frightened, miserable little boy. Of course, as soon as Sauli reappeared, so did my haunting past, bringing the unwanted emotions I hadn’t felt in so long with it.

One last time, I glared at my reflection before making my way over to the edge of the bed. I stood there for a few minutes, not moving, taking in everything that had happened. Then, I just let myself fall face first onto the mattress.

I didn’t even bother to clean up my face. What was the point if I was only going to blubber some more? I started shaking with every sob, and I ended up crying on my stomach, face buried in the pillows, for hours. I cried until my eyes felt like they were shriveling up in my sockets and threatening to fall out.

After I decided I’d ruined this day enough, I told myself repeatedly that it was going to be alright. I needed to try to stay positive; it was the only push I had for many years. Everyone had their bad days, and I just happened to have the worst-case end of that stick. This was a one-time incident and I could go back to being normal… well, as normal as I could be. I was glad I was leaving tomorrow for the next show. I didn’t have to risk seeing and hurting Sauli again.

At least now, if he saw me anywhere near him out of another cruel twist of fate, he’d run the other way. Why would he ever want to look at the monster that’d attacked him? It hurt knowing that he probably and wrongfully detested me so much for something that wasn’t under my control. To be hated by the one person I’d sell my soul for… it was probably for the best.
Phew! Lemme know what you think.
**Desperate Measures**

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait, I'm currently in the week of final exams at school. Be patient with me :) Enjoy!

Sauli:

I was still shaking when I got home. My mind just couldn’t wrap around everything that’d just happened. How had everything gone so wrong? Fuck me for deciding to go out and be social. I should’ve stayed home and continued to wallow in my self-hatred. Being utterly miserable with myself was a thousand times better than what had happened tonight. I could live with the depression, but I’d rather someone broke every one of my bones a thousand times over than to relive the past few hours.

I sneaked into the apartment and shut the front door very quietly, hoping to head straight to bed without riling up Mika. But of course, as hard as I tried not to, the floorboards creaked lightly as soon as I put weight on them. I cringed like there were gunshots next to my ears. Shit. And as if on cue, Mika appeared around the corner of the hall. He had some freaky sixth sense about my presence.

When his post-concert glittered face came into view with a bright smile plastered on it. I nearly started crying. I didn’t realize I’d be so happy to see him. The smile faded immediately as he took in my appearance.

“Oh my god!” Mika panicked, eyes widening at my damaged, shameful face. He ran over to me with concern.

His hands were immediately on my face, turning my head this way and that. I winced from the pain even though his touch was beyond gentle.

“What happened?!” he demanded. His tone was distressed, and his flushed, excited cheeks had been replaced with pale fear.

I sighed, thinking that same question myself. *What exactly happened?*

“Bar fight,” I muttered lamely, blowing it off like it was nothing. I tried to swat his hands from my face, continuing, “I’m okay.” Total lie, I was *far* from okay. “It’s not that bad.” I winced when my split lip tore again from speaking.

“No, you’re not. Baby, your entire cheek is swollen and purple,” he squeaked. “I’ll kill whoever did this. Come here.”

He grabbed my wrist and dragged me into the bedroom. I caught a glimpse of my face in the hallway mirror and cringed. My lips were bleeding, and my cheek and jaw were bulging out and completely discolored already. Goddammit, Adam… It looked like I’d been beaten to a pulp by some psychopathic criminal, not the sweet man I thought I once knew.

Mika steered me toward the bed and ordered that I lie down. I did as he wanted, not in any mood to even think properly. I was still in a state of shock and dismay. Mika left the room as I settled into the
bed, swallowing the lump in my throat. I waited a few minutes and everything really started to sink in, including the full extent of pain from what Adam left me with.

I was on the verge of tears when Mika reappeared with an ice pack and a wet wipe. He threw me a worried look as he took in my appearance from the doorway before making his way over to me and kneeling beside the bed. He reached forward with the wipe and held my gaze with concern knitted in his brow. He slowly pressed the wipe against my lips, wiping off the blood over and over, applying pressure every time until it finally stopped bleeding.

Mika sighed, not even fazed by the blood, and put the wipe down, switching to the ice pack instead. He gave me a look of warning as he moved forward with the pack, holding the back of my head gently as he gradually pressed the freezing surface onto my pulsing cheek. I winced and reflexively tried to move away, making a noise of complaint.

“No, no, no,” Mika muttered, stroking my good cheek soothingly with his thumb while firmly holding my head in place. “Hold still, baby.” My eyes were locked with his for support as he pressed the ice pack onto my cheek again. I fought the urge to pull away from the stinging pain. After a minute of frozen burning, I relaxed into the cold, feeling it start to numb the pain.

Mika offered me a sad smile. “I’m so sorry this happened.”

There. Right there, he sounded like my Mika, the intelligent and calm human being. There was no hint of the flamboyant and puffed up character he liked to put on. He sounded sincere.

“Me too…” I mumbled. All of it. I wished this night had never happened. I’d rather still think Adam was dead instead of alive and a madman that didn’t have any interest in me anymore.

“Shh, don’t talk too much,” Mika hissed quietly. “You’ll split your lip again.”

At least with Mika, he never once laid a hand on me. He was like Adam in many ways, but this took the cake. He was definitely saner and much less complicated. He always took care of me. For that, I was appreciative. Maybe Adam was right. Maybe I should just force myself to forget the night’s events even happened. I should be happy with Mika. I loved him. Truly, I did. Adam was completely different now, and he definitely was not the gentle, sad soul I fell in love with.

I reached up and snaked my hand behind Mika’s head, stroking his dark hair. I smiled at him appreciatively, mirroring his expression. I pulled his face toward mine, giving him a little kiss, not even caring that my lips were highly sensitive and just kissing him was causing me pain. He groaned in complaint against my lips. I pulled away with a small chuckle.

“You taste like blood,” Mika whined, wiping his mouth. “And what was that for?”

I shrugged. “Because I love you,” I confirmed.

A small frown tugged at Mika’s lips and his eyes looked distant, almost guiltily.

“Me too…” he mumbled, stroking my hair. He changed the topic. “Baby, the concert was incredible. Adam’s like this ball of energy, and so fucking hot too. His voice was mind-blowing!” He gestured an explosion with his hand. “God, the way he moved and sang things, ugh, I wish you were—”

“—can we please not talk about him?” I blurted with a dry throat. I recovered and cleared my throat. “I’m just really tired…”

He sighed after studying my ridiculously bloated face for a moment. “Should I call the police?”
My heart flipped a little. I shook my head a little too vigorously. “No, no, no, just forget it,” I insisted. “I just want to sleep.”

Mika looked uncertain. “Okay, baby…” he said slowly. “I’ll make you a lunch for tomorrow.” He kissed my forehead and handed me the ice pack before leaving the room and closing the door behind him.

I waited, listening for his footsteps to disappear around the hall, and then I immediately threw the ice pack somewhere and scrambled off the bed. I ran into my side of the closet, kneeling down and pulling out the hidden box of forgotten memories. I dug around frantically inside until I found it.

Adam’s jacket…

I pulled it out and held it up in front of me. I hadn’t seen this thing in years. I’d stowed it away so I didn’t have to be reminded of his death… but the fucker was alive and well... technically speaking.

I leaned in and took a deep whiff of it. I sighed sadly. The familiar smell of my Adam was gone. I hugged it close and felt tears drip down my cheeks. I let out a muffled sob. Just like Adam from tonight, any sign of the old Adam had faded from the jacket… and it was never coming back.

Adam, what happened to you?

I felt something stiff in one of the pockets poking into my side. Confused, I reached in and froze when my fingers curled around the cold, metal object. It couldn’t be…

I pulled it out and gaped at it, memories flooding back.

Adam’s pocket knife…

I gripped it tight and swallowed the frog in my throat. No… Memories of the first time I’d met him were pouring into my head… God… The dreaded knife that I’d been so afraid of… afraid that Adam would’ve killed me with it, but then I’d told myself that he would never do such a thing.

Now, I wasn’t so sure.

***

December came quickly after that. It’d been over a month since the incident with Adam, and I hadn’t heard from him since. Whatever. He could enjoy his little fame and success. At least he was living his dream. I was almost proud of him for that. I had my own problems to deal with here.

Mika was worrying me. He seemed antsy and nervous every time I was around him. He was always stressed and he snapped more than usual.

When I’d gotten up late in the night from bed to get a drink, I found him sitting at the dining room table, staring at nothing in the dim light with his hands folded in front of him. He looked eerily like Adam in this light and with my grogginess. I felt my heart flutter at that.

“Baby…?” I said as I approached him sleepily. He didn’t look up. If anything, he stiffened slightly.

“Are you okay? Why are you just sitting here? Come back to bed.”

I sat down slowly across from him, keeping my eyes glued to his head. I reached out for his hand gently, but as soon as I made contact, Mika sighed deeply and pulled away.

“I don’t deserve you,” he muttered, still not looking at me.
“What do you mean?” I asked.

“It’s eating me alive,” Mika said, finally glancing up at me with pain in his eyes. “I feel horrible, but I can’t help it.”

“Seriously, what are you talking about?” I asked, getting a little nervous.

Mika looked like he was about to throw up. “Do you remember when I went to that concert with Niko?” Oh god, did he have to bring up that again? It was the worst night of my life.

“Yeah…”

Mika closed his eyes. “I don’t know… Niko and I got so into the performance that in the heat of the moment, we just… kissed? I don’t know. I just thought I should tell you…”

“Oh…” I mumbled. I was a little stunned.

It was quiet for the longest moment before Mika finally spoke up, unable to handle the deafening silence. “Say something!” he blurted.

I blinked, feeling a rush of understanding go over me. “I guess it’s okay,” I said quietly. “It was a concert and you got carried away. I get it.”

Mika looked shocked and a little… disappointed. “Y-You’re not mad?” he asked, appalled.

I shook my head. “Not really,” I said, frowning. “Is that everything…”

Mika looked like he was about to cry from frustration. He nodded after a minute. “I guess…”

I smiled reassuringly. “Then, it’s alright.” I took his hand and gave it a light squeeze.

Mika buried his face into his hands. “Goddammit, you’re just… ugh! So sweet…” he said with annoyance, voice muffled by his palms. “I can’t believe myself.”

“Shh,” I insisted. “Come to bed?” My voice was quiet, wanting to forget about this.

Mika nodded into his hands and I sighed, taking his wrist. I pulled us up and silently tugged him to the bedroom. He didn’t say anything as he got under the covers and I turned off the light. He didn’t say anything as I got in next to him. Even for the next couple of hours into the early morning, he didn’t say anything. He was just turned away from me and he stayed still. Eventually, his posture relaxed and his breathing slowed as he fell asleep. I still stared at the back of his head worriedly.

There was more he wasn’t telling me. The thought made my stomach churn and I heard my tears plop down onto the pillow.

In the morning, it was no different. Our normal breakfast conversation was non-existent. Mika wouldn’t even look at me and only gave half-ass replies when I tried to make conversation. It was awkwardly silent as we sat there at the counter, both staring at our coffee mugs. Ugh, how long was this going to last? I wanted things to go back to normal.

I jumped in my seat when Mika suddenly slammed his coffee mug onto the counter.

“I can’t do this anymore!” he exclaimed irritably, looking right at me for the first time since last night.

I set my mug down gently. “What?” I asked, confused by the outburst.
Mika sighed loudly. “Okay, look, last night, I thought you’d be angry at me for telling you about the kiss and you’d break up with me right then, without me having to tell you the rest.”

“The rest…? Break up?” My stomach sank. “What?” I was so lost.

“But, the guilt is killing me. I feel like the lowest piece of shit to ever exist,” Mika groaned. “I can’t live like this, hiding it. I have to get it off my chest.”

“You mind telling me what the heck you’re talking about?” I asked, agitated.

“Okay… I told you that we kissed and that was it. Well… it wasn’t…” Mika admitted. I just kind of stared at him, nervously waiting for him to go on. “There was a spark that became addicting and I wanted him… I’ve been… kind of… sort of… seeing him behind your back for the past month after Adam’s concert.” He said it like it was a question.

Oh great.

Fan-fucking-tastic.

Adam was the reason for my boyfriend cheating on me?

Are you fucking kidding me?

“You’re cheating on me…” I mumbled to myself, shocked. I let it sink in. I couldn’t believe those words. They sounded foreign and like something only sappy soap operas had.

Mika cringed. “I’m so, so sorry,” he said, voice hoarse. “I feel so ashamed.”

“You said you wanted me to break up with you yesterday…” I mumbled again, staring off into space, a little numb.

“Only so you wouldn’t have to hear this!” Mika explained. “I didn’t want you to hurt more, but I can’t keep it a secret!”

“I… don’t really know what to say,” I mumbled. I was quiet for several minutes as Mika stared desperately at me. I couldn’t believe I was about to say this, but I couldn’t stand losing him. “It’s… okay,” I said slowly. Mika threw me an astonished look. “If you can stop seeing him… we’ll work through this… Just don’t do it anymore.”

Mika looked away, biting his lip. “But…”

“But what?” I asked, feeling a lump in my pit.

“I can’t,” he squeaked. “I love him too.”

I suddenly felt crushed. “Well you can’t have both of us…” I said quietly. “I’ll love you no matter what. It’s up to you to pick…”

Mika looked down and went silent. It took me a second to realize what that meant.

“Oh…” I mumbled sadly, starting to feel sick.

Mika looked up at me wildly, trying to reassure me. “It’s just that I don’t fight with him like we do!” Mika tried to cushion the blow desperately. It wasn’t working.

I shook my head, feeling my world tumbling down.
“You’re leaving me for him…” I confirmed quietly, staring at my mug. Mika didn’t say anything for a while. I looked over at him and sighed. I reached out and rubbed circles into the back of his hand, hurt by the pained look on his face. I knew this couldn’t be easy for him. Who was I to make it worse by yelling? “Mika… it’s fine. I mean, I’m heartbroken because I love you…” I said and he cringed. “But, if you think he’s right for you then go for it. I just wish you’d broken up with me beforehand so I wouldn’t feel so… betrayed.”

Mika’s moist eyes overflowed. I wiped the tears away with my thumb.

“I’m sorry,” he croaked. “I do love you, so much.”

“I know, but he’s better for you, isn’t he? I don’t blame you. I saw this coming,” I said. I offered him a smile. “And I’ll always love you. Just be happy.”

Mika sighed. “I’d rather you screamed at me rather than being so understanding. It’s making this hard.”

“Sorry…” I mumbled half-heartedly.

I couldn’t imagine screaming at him like that. It reminded me too much of the horror that went down between me and Adam last month.

All was quiet as we both let the new circumstances settle in.

“Sauli…” Mika mumbled. I looked over at him. “If we’re really doing this… you know you can’t stay here anymore.”

“Yeah… I know…” I muttered, sighing a little.

“I’m so sorry,” he said again.

I wish he’d stop apologizing. I was willing to cheat on him with Adam. Fuck me, I was terrible. At least with Mika, it’d been unintentional in the first place.

“It’s fine,” I repeated.

Mika looked suddenly very worried. “Where will you go? Who can you stay with? Will you be okay?” He was still concerned about me and that gave me a small peace of mind.

“I’ll figure something out,” I half-heartedly promised, not really sure I could actually make it on my own so out of the blue. “Can I just have some time to pack and stuff?”

Mika nodded sadly. “Take all the time you need. I’m so sorry.”

I spent the entire next day online trying to find a job and a place to live, but to no avail. My options diminished quickly and I was getting frustrated. I didn’t know anyone that could help me out.

There was only one person I could think of.

But I had no contact with him.

I had no idea where he was.

Not to mention he was like a stranger now.

And of course, he’d beaten my face in.
But, there were no options left. He was my only hope and I had to find him. It wasn’t like I was going to ask him to let me live with him. Maybe he could refer me to some company he knew or something? He would surely help me out, right? There had to be some of the old him left. He wouldn’t just turn me away like that, right?

I spent the rest of the day just sifting through YouTube and catching up with his career. My heart hurt seeing him again like this. It was really weird seeing someone who meant so much to me reappear and seem to be enjoying himself after I spent years thinking he was bones in a ditch somewhere. It was a relief to see him vibrant and glowing, despite what he’d done to me. I couldn’t believe how successful he’d gotten. It blew my mind. I scoured Wikipedia and was confused by how much of his life didn’t match what had actually occurred in his childhood. What the hell happened in the past ten years? Did he have to lie about everything?

I scrolled down and read the section on “Glam Nation.” My heart started to race when I read that his last concert was in Los Angeles soon. Hurriedly and without thinking logically, I switched tabs and spent the rest of my money on a plane ticket and whatever concert ticket was left over. For now, I only had a one-way ticket there.

I realized what I’d done. I was going to see him again. Oh shit. Part of me was ecstatic, but mostly, I was truly terrified, and I was angry at myself for doing this. God, this was going to bite me in the ass, I just knew it.

But, I had to at least try, right?

I desperately needed some help.

I desperately needed answers.

I wasn’t through with him.

Not yet.
Adam:

I was incredibly pumped by the time I finished the last note of Whole Lotta Love. I stood with a fierce expression plastered on my face as I panted and relished in the applause and cheering of the crowd in front of me. My puffed-up stage persona finally cracked and a big grin spread across my face.

“Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Goodnight!” I beamed at the audience, bowed to their screaming, and blew them a couple grateful kisses.

I felt my eyes sting with the bittersweet feeling of Glam Nation ending. Half a year on tour and now it was over. I couldn’t believe it. Time had absolutely flown and I’d grown so much just from this experience.

I turned and pounded my fist to Monte’s before walking off stage with him. I wrapped my arm around him in gratitude and repeatedly slapped his chest in excitement as we left the stage for the last time.

The crowd was still screaming for more, but I was worn out to the bone. Even so, I was really going to miss their thunderous energy that gave me this strange confidence that I still wasn’t used to. There were still days when I would look in the mirror and see nothing but an ugly disgrace, but all of that was forgotten every time I set foot in front of my audiences. They helped me cope without even knowing it. They didn’t know to what degree I needed and loved them. I could never thank my fans enough.

I made it backstage and took a deep breath in and out. I grinned at the people who made this show happen. The electricity and emotion in the air were palpable. I knew they were all having the same bittersweet thoughts as me.

It was over. No more flights, no more tour busses, no more anything for a while. I could breathe easily and take a break before I started getting ready for the next era. I already had a couple ideas in mind about the direction I wanted this next, far-off project to head in. Yet, even though I was excited for things to come, I could already feel the post-tour depression sinking in. I was really going to miss all of this.

It was incredible; all the people I met during my travels, how close I’ve gotten with my band-mates and dancers, the crew, and always being surrounded by people with the same vision and mindset as me. Even so, there were odd moments when I would feel desperately lonely, no matter how many loved ones were around me. There was a hole inside me that I refused to acknowledge most of the time because I was determined to stay positive. I wanted to just be grateful for the wonderful friends I had. They all understood me even though they didn’t completely know about my past. I did have to re-write my life a little to something much less… sad.

Speaking of my past… the malicious voice hadn’t intruded or taken over my body since Finland… I wondered why he suddenly would just appear after years of finally suppressing him only to disappear again. I knew he wasn’t gone though, just quiet. I could feel him lingering in a way I couldn’t explain.

I made my way over to a snack table to grab some water when I suddenly felt two different pairs of arms around me from behind, laughing and squeezing tight.
“It’s actually over!” Tommy joyfully yelled in my ear. “Thanks for the amazing run, man.”

“It’s only for a little while, Tommy,” Terrance said over my shoulder as he hugged me from the opposite side of elflike man. “He’s gonna make us go back on the road in a minute and force us to sleep on the hood because his clothes will hog up most of the bus again.”

I laughed and pulled away, turning to face them both.

“Ha, ha, very funny,” I said, rolling my eyes. “And not if I fire you first.” I stuck my tongue out when Terrance threw me a playfully appalled look. “Gather everyone. We’ll get changed and celebrate with dinner. No more shitty bus food.”

“Halle-fucking-lujah,” Tommy exclaimed dramatically, slapping his palms together and looking up toward the ceiling.

“You’re paying though, Mr. Rich-And-Famous.” Terrance winked and gave me a slight shove.

I rolled my eyes again and pulled them both into a tight group hug, squeezing them like a lifeline. I peered up between their heads to smile at the passing technical crew.

My gut sank to my feet.

My content expression faded at the eerily familiar blond tuft of hair leaning against the wall, staring at me with a slight smile.

I blinked several times, disbelieving, and I could feel the blood rush out of my face. Did I have too many drinks again? This had to be a hallucination.

Tommy and Terrance pulled out of the hug and said something, but their words were a blur. My eyes were fixated on the blond across the room.

How…?

Oh no…

“Excuse me,” I mumbled quietly to Tommy and Terrance. My voice was noticeably hoarse. I hoped they would shrug it off and blame it on the night’s vocal bonanza. I cleared my throat and continued with a forced smile, “Go get Brooke and Cam, and I’ll meet you guys outside in a while.”

They both agreed and left, again saying something that sounded cheerful.

My heart was pounding madly.

What the fuck was he doing here?

How the hell did he get backstage?

Where was security?

I considered running the other way and denying the fact that he was really in Los Angeles right now, but I was frozen to the spot. He couldn’t seriously be here. Did he not realize the danger? Did he forget what I did to him? Did he not understand that I couldn’t bear to have him near me, but not mine? It was like seeing him for the first time all over again. I felt physically sick to my stomach. This couldn’t be happening again. Why the hell was he here?

He started walking towards me when he realized that I was petrified to where I was standing. His
hopeful, bright blue eyes were locked intently with mine. I wanted to run away, but nothing responded. My breaths came out shallowly as he got closer. No, no, no! What was he doing? He approached me cautiously, as if to not startle me. It was like he was walking willingly into a hungry lion’s den.

I didn’t know whether to scream out for security or just deal with this on my own.

When he was within arm’s length away, he quietly said in a small voice, “Hi,” and offered me a small smile. His voice rang throughout my head and made me nauseous.

My body suddenly snapped into action and unfroze. I immediately grabbed his wrist firmly, ignoring the jolt, and jerked him along down the halls. He followed willingly. I couldn’t believe this. My head was spinning. I quickly looked around to make sure no one was paying attention to my actions. We reached my dressing room and I pulled him in, twirling him around to face me, and slamming the door. I didn’t even wait for him to catch his balance.

“W-What the fuck are you doing here, Sauli?!” I said, horrified. “How the hell did you—I don’t—what?! What?!”

I wondered for a moment about how bad of an idea it was to be alone with him. I didn’t want to hurt him again. I didn’t have control over it, and if it happened again, at least outside, there would’ve been people to stop me before I went too far.

Sauli frowned at my shaken self and walked up to me without a word. He reached up and gently cupped my tense cheek. I flinched, but didn’t pull away. I was shaking.

Sauli peered up into my hurt and confused eyes from under his long lashes for an agonizingly stretched-out moment.

“God…” he finally spoke, curious eyes widely trailing over every plane of my face. He stroked my cheek as if testing if I was real. “Still so impossible… I’ve missed you so much…”

I was taken aback. Did he completely forget or…?

“Even after what I did?” I asked quietly, tearing my eyes away from his.

Sauli cringed slightly at that, remembering. Maybe I shouldn’t have brought up that night, but I was glad I did. Maybe now he would realize how big of a mistake it was for him to come here.

“Of course, even after… that,” he said. It was oddly disturbing to hear his voice. I couldn’t decide if it was dreamlike or nightmare-like. “Well, I know I was being a terrible asshole, screaming at you like that after everything you’ve been through, so I probably deserved the hit.” He shrugged. My mouth popped open at the atrocity of his words. I was about to scold him for blaming himself, but he continued, “But anyway, none of that matters now. I’m here whether you approve or not.”

“I can’t apologize enough, Sauli,” I mumbled, wanting to smash my head into the wall for what I did to him.

“I know it’s killing you,” he replied. “It’s okay. I’m fine. I forgive you.” He caressed my cheek with his thumb gently.

I gave him a disappointed glare and shook my head, firmly saying, “It will never be okay.”

He was making a mistake, and I was getting antsy. I paused for a second, checking for the voice. He wasn’t in my head right now, thank goodness, but that didn’t mean he wouldn’t awaken at any point
and realize that his target was here and practically gift-wrapped for him. That’s what I was terrified of. I was scared that I’d be conscious again after he was out, finding my old love dead in front of me and my hands stained with his blood.

I shook the thought out of my head, feeling my skin crawl.

“You shouldn’t have come here,” I mumbled, placing my hand over his on my cheek. He smoothed the worried lines on my face with his thumb. “How did you even…?”

Sauli’s lip twitched. “I flew out here to see your last concert... God, that’s surreal to say. Anyway, I was in the crowd, watching you in wonder. You have no idea how it felt to see you so animated. Well, I only had time for the first few songs before I decided to sneak backstage. Your security sucks by the way.” I grimaced. Sauli continued after a moment, “From what I heard, Adam, you were just... wow. Wow.”

I sighed, losing myself in the way his facial muscles moved. I’d barely heard what he’d said. The smallest movement of his lips threw me for a loop. It hurt to think that that incredible mouth belonged to someone else, someone that treated Sauli with respect and dignity, and who could give him everything I couldn’t.

“Where’s your boyfriend?” I asked casually, honestly curious. “Did he come? Am I allowed to meet him?”

“No, he’s not here…” Sauli looked away. He looked slightly angry as he mumbled, “He’s not even my boyfriend anymore.”

I groaned, tearing Sauli’s hand off my face. I shook my head in disgust at him and started pacing back and forth in frustration. “Sauli, please tell me you didn’t break up with him for me. Don’t put that horrible guilt on my shoulders.”

Sauli sighed roughly and then glared daggers at me. “No. He cheated on me… because of you.”

I froze and turned to him. “Me?” My voice jumped. “What the hell did I do?”

“Your concert back home.” Sauli rolled his eyes. “He was there with a friend and realized he loved him. I don’t blame him. I’m a nutcase who’s needy. He deserved better.”

I felt my gut twist with sadness. I saw the faraway, heartbroken expression on Sauli’s face. He really loved him…

“I’m so sorry,” I said sincerely, feeling my own heart crack a little.

“It’s okay, it was bound to happen…” he muttered, obviously not wanting to dwell on the topic.

It was quiet for a few long minutes after that. I couldn’t stop taking peeks at Sauli’s face as he stared off into the distance, thinking. I was fascinated by how little he changed. He still had all his angular features, but sharper, less boyish. His platinum hair was shaved short on the sides and curled up at the top. It vaguely reminded me of whipped cream. And, I wasn’t wrong, that was a tattoo peeking out from the collar of his shirt. Could it be that he was even more beautiful now?

Sauli caught me staring and his gaze focused and locked onto me as well. His eyes looked tired and upset. I imagined they mirrored mine. For me, I just didn’t know what to do about this situation.

“I can’t believe it…” Sauli mumbled, shaking his head, and snapping me out my thoughts. His eyes didn’t dare tear away from my face.
“What?” I replied, confused.

“You’re alive…” he said in awe, voice soft, like if he was any louder, I’d shatter and disappear. “And not only that… You’re successful and every bit as gorgeous. I’m just… I can’t… Amazing… You did it.”

I couldn’t help but crack a smile. I was proud of myself for my accomplishments too. “Thanks,” I said, shrugging.

Sauli’s eyes widened slightly.

“Thanks? Years ago, you would’ve been angry with me for complimenting you,” Sauli said, sounding astonished. “I was expecting a death glare and an angry grunt.”

I frowned, realizing he was right. Sauli saw the disheartened expression on my face and crossed the distance left between us, suddenly pulling me in for an unexpected hug. I stiffened and I knew he noticed.

“Sorry,” he mumbled, but he didn’t let go.

It felt… beyond words to have his cheek on my shoulder again. The warmth of his body radiated into mine and I shivered, relaxing into the embrace. I wrapped my arms around him and pulled him closer. I made sure no unwanted intruder was lurking about in my head and I was still in control. It’s okay, Adam. You’re fine. Enjoy this while it lasts.

I sighed into his soft hair and rubbed his muscular back, amazed that I was even holding him right now. I felt like crying at this cherished memory. I took a deep breath, trying to savor this moment for as long as I could, worried he would disappear suddenly.

“It’s been ten years,” I mumbled into his blond locks. “You’ve changed everything about me. Even after you were gone, your effect was strong. None of this would’ve happened if it weren’t for you. You’re proud of me? It’s all for you.”

Sauli’s arms tightened around me and I heard him sniffle.

Still holding his waist in one arm, I tilted Sauli’s chin up and leaned down slightly, pressing my glittered cheek against his lower temple and closing my eyes. He rested his chin on top of my shoulder. I held the back of his head to me with my gloved hand gently as I nuzzled his warm skin. I breathed in and out slowly, feeling at peace. I let out a deep sigh down his neck and relaxed against his body. I could feel his heartbeat against my cheek. This was all I needed. We stayed like that for several minutes silently.

“Adam…” Sauli whispered into my ear, barely audible.

I shivered from the sound. With my eyes closed, his voice sent the strangest chills throughout my body.

My fingers tightened a little in his hair when I felt Sauli’s head turn and his lips press lightly against the side my neck.

Too lost in the dreamy moment to think about the consequences, I pulled away slightly and cupped both of Sauli’s cheeks, searching his moist and gorgeously clear orbs for just a moment before I closed my eyes again and leaned down, pressing a chaste and soft kiss against his lips. A familiar jolt shot through my lips and down my spine. My tightly shut eyes started stinging and watering. God, I missed this. I would dream and long for this to happen again, and now that it had, I realized what I
was doing and immediately regretted it, knowing this would cost me.

I pulled away abruptly and let go of Sauli, stepping back a little.

“I—I’m sorry,” I muttered quietly when I saw the confused expression on his flushed face. “I shouldn’t have done that.”


I reached up and touched my lips. They were burning from the loss of contact, and I struggled to blink away the tears.

“Now it’ll be so much harder… I want to be with you so badly, it hurts,” I said dimly through clenched teeth, “but you should go home and forget about me. You don’t have to think I’m dead, but just… move on, please.”

Sauli shook his head like everything coming out of my mouth was crazy. I felt like I was breaking up with him, even though we hadn’t been together for ten years.

“Why?” he asked again.

“Because attacking you was inexcusable and the worst moment of my life,” I whispered, a bit strangled. I couldn’t stand to look directly at him. “But… I can’t promise that it won’t happen again…”

I regretted peering up and seeing the pained and shocked expression ruining Sauli’s face.

“You can’t be serious… You really think you’re going to hit me again?” Sauli asked quietly, taking a step back. “Why, Adam…?” His voice cracked and it was like a slap to the face.

I sighed miserably, not knowing how to word this without breaking his heart.

“I’ve changed… ”

“I can see that. I mean, look at your life now,” Sauli said, disbelief lacing his tone.

“No, not like that.” I said sternly, really hoping he’d get the hint. “It’s more internal and it’s not a good change…”

“What?”

“Never mind,” I mumbled, looking away and biting my lip.

It was pointless. I couldn’t tell him. I didn’t know how to explain the fucking voice inside my head that could take over my body and attack him without sounding crazy.

“You’re seriously going to do this again?” Sauli asked with an irritated huff.

“What?” I asked, confused.

Sauli sighed and took a seat on the velvet couch by the wall of the dressing room. He stared hard at the ground. “When we first met, you wouldn’t tell me anything and you’d get pissed off whenever I tried to get you to open up.”

I followed him to the couch and stood in front of him. Sauli was visibly tense as I towered over him. I realized how intimidating my position was and immediately kneeled down in front of him, giving
him a sad look.

“Please,” I pleaded, touching Sauli’s knee lightly. I didn’t miss the tiny flinch. “You’re scared of me now,” and it was breaking my heart, “I can see that. I’m not asking you to trust me ever again because I don’t deserve that, I’m asking you to listen to me just this once. It’s for your own good. Go home…”

Sauli looked slightly away, eyes turning into slits at the wall. “I don’t have a home,” he muttered.

My brow furrowed in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“I mean that I lived with my boyfriend. I had nothing to my own name. I was practically just mooching off of him and it felt terrible. So when we decided to part, it was only fair that I leave his apartment.” Sauli explained. “And now, I don’t really have anywhere to go. It’s why I came here… You’re the only person I know. I was hoping you could help me out somehow, by maybe asking a friend to give me a job or a place to stay for a little while, nothing more…I promise. I spent most of whatever money I had coming here… I can’t go back…” Sauli’s face was dark with shame.

“Fuck,” I muttered, dragging my palm down my face in exasperation. “You’re homeless and jobless…” I shook my head. “How, Sauli? You had so much going for you…” I bit my lip, worrying myself to death. “You wouldn’t last a day in the streets. I can’t let you rot out there…”

“Then can you just refer me to someone so I can get a job? Sauli asked. “I don’t want you to fuss over me. I didn’t come here to be a burden and pressure you. I knew it was a longshot, but if you could help me out just this once, I promise to leave you alone. I’m sure the streets aren’t that bad.”

“Don’t be silly,” I growled, annoyed that he thought I would just pass him off to someone else and abandon him. Despite my issues, I wasn’t about to let Sauli down. “I won’t allow you to suffer.”

I sat and thought for a while, trying to figure out what I could do. I couldn’t leave Sauli to just die trying to make it here, but I also couldn’t stay around him so much. I was terrified for his safety. I didn’t know what triggered the loss of control over my body, but it happened with him once and it could happen again. In the end, I sighed, resigned, knowing I didn’t have any other choice right now.

I stood up and picked up my phone from the table. I put it up to my ear after I selected a contact. Sauli watched me curiously as I looked down worriedly at him and waited while the line rang.

“Hey,” Tommy answered. “Adam, where are you?”

“Tommy?” I said, still looking down at Sauli. “You guys can go out to dinner without me.”

“Are you sure? Why? What’s up?”

“I have something to take care of,” I insisted. “Sorry to bail.”

“It’s okay, man. I’ll let the others know. Terrance will be disappointed that you’re not paying though.”

I forced a small laugh. “He’ll live.”

My eyes were still locked onto Sauli as I said my goodbyes to Tommy and hung up.

I sighed again, tossing the phone onto the couch.
“Adam?” Sauli asked.

I was going to regret this.

“You can stay with me…” I said slowly and reluctantly, and then added, “For a few days. Just until you can find your own place and get settled down. I’ll help you with finding a job and everything.” I stared at Sauli intently. “Just… be careful, okay?”

Sauli’s eyes widened. “Really?” he asked, a bit shocked. “You’ll let me stay at your place? Adam, I can’t ask you to do that. I just wanted a referral. I don’t want to put stress on you and mooch off of you too. That’s hardly fair.” He didn’t even heed my warning.

“Sauli, there’s no other choice right now, and of course I don’t mind.” I’d just have to deal with my inner demon. “It’s really no problem. How could you think I would shrug you off like that? You think you can just come to me for help and expect me to let you live on a sidewalk? Who do you take me for?”

Sauli beamed. “Sorry, sorry! I can’t believe this. Don’t worry; I’ll be out of your hair as soon as possible.”

I forced a smile at him, relishing in the glow radiating from his face. So beautiful.

I replied unsurely, “Take as long as you need…” but make it quick…

I kept that to myself. I would’ve loved to just ask him to stay with me forever, but I knew that would be unrealistic and selfish of me. Sauli was already in much danger as it was, but the way I saw it, it was safer to be with me for a few days than to be alone in the grungy streets of Los Angeles… at least I hoped so.

“Adam, thank you so much,” Sauli said, standing up and throwing his arms around me. I held him to me again and sighed. Every time he touched me like this, I would feel oddly calm and peaceful. “I hid my suitcase outside, I’ll go get it.”

I tightened my arms around him, not ready to let him go yet. I focused on the fact that my love was in my arms.

After a short minute, Sauli grunted awkwardly, and I reluctantly let him go. He gave me a small, grateful smile before practically prancing out of the dressing room.

I watched him leave and then sank down to the couch, burying my face in my hands.

What had I gotten myself into? I wasn’t going to desert Sauli without even giving him a fair reason why, but how was I supposed to have Sauli live with me for a few days and keep two things under control?

First, the parasite inside of me… I couldn’t let him come out and harm Sauli, and that was going to be ridiculously difficult considering I would be forced to be near Sauli every day for this short time. I knew the demon wanted to attack the one person who, after a decade, was still everything to me. He was hell-bent on ruining everything that I was and destroying anything that made me happy. Sauli was back in my life and I wasn’t allowed to enjoy it because of that thing.

Second, how was I supposed to be around Sauli constantly when I was still in love with him? I didn’t think my heart could handle being around him without having him. I didn’t know how long I could last. As long as I was so screwed up, I couldn’t put Sauli at risk. I would just have to deal with his presence for a few days without pulling anything and then everything could go back to normal.
knew I was confusing and hurting him by rejecting him like this, but I didn’t have a choice.

A few days… Surely, I could do this. I could control myself and the parasite for this small period.

I’d lost Sauli for ten years, and now being reunited, even just platonically, was filling me with a warmth that I couldn’t explain. That should be enough for me.

I wanted the feeling to last even for just this short while… but at what cost?
Whew! It's been a little while. I've been a busy bird. At least this one is long. 6,100 words. :) Enjoy!

Sauli:

Adam had to sneak us out of the venue. When I’d asked him why, he’d explained that it wasn’t a good idea to be seen together right now; fans would set the web on fire, and paparazzi would surely attack this development. I had to admit, I was a little upset that he’d tried so hard to make sure no one saw us together, like he was denying that I was really here. I knew that he probably had a good reason to and it was probably for my own protection. I also understood that with fame came a price that I didn’t know, so I let him do what he needed to in order to get away, and that included dressing me up in huge sunglasses and a ridiculous hat. We’d stealthily crept out of the venue and into the black cab waiting for us outside.

Up the hills of Hollywood we arrived and I gaped with dinner plate-eyes at Adam’s house. It was absolutely gorgeous. I rubbed my eyes several times in disbelief. I was only looking at the front, but I was already blown away. Everything was sculpted to perfection, even the bushes. I hadn’t seen an amazed expression like mine since Adam had first seen my one and only house in the USA. Funny how the tables had turned…

“Ah…” Adam sighed happily, pulling his luggage and mine out of the black, refusing help from both the driver and me when we offered. When Adam was finished, the cab sped away impatiently and we were alone. “Home sweet home has never been so sweet after a long-ass tour.” Adam grinned at me.

“You… live here?” I barely managed, still staring up at the masterfully Spanish-themed exterior.

Adam laughed and snaked his arm around my waist, joining me in the staring contest with his house. I shuddered at the sound of his laughter. It still amazed me almost as much as the first time I’d heard it, but now it sounded lighter, freer, and more natural, like this was an everyday occurrence now. I glanced up at Adam in wonder and noticed him grinning ahead. He was so smiley now… It was quite shocking that he wasn’t always brooding around. Adam peered down and caught me staring, raising an eyebrow as a question.

“I can’t believe I’m even next to you right now,” I explained in awe, pulling him in for a hug. “So surreal,” I mumbled into his warm chest.

“I know…” Adam said quietly, tightening his arms around me.

I tilted my head up to look at him, but Adam wasn’t looking down at me. He was looking straight ahead with something almost upsetting in his eyes. His face was only inches away. I couldn’t help the frown that pulled down the corners of my lips, realizing something as the expression on Adam’s face brought back memories.

“You know…” I said, catching Adam’s attention, “we never once went on a date like normal
people? We were too busy fighting for each other’s lives.”

I meant it as a slight joke, but Adam looked hurt and saddened by the statement, realizing the truth in my words. I could’ve been mistaken, but being this close to his face, I thought his eyes moistened a little. The supposed wetness in his eyes was quickly replaced by a look of determination.

Adam released me from his embrace and sternly said, “Come.”

His fingers interlocked with mine and he started tugging me along the driveway, luggage in our free hands. I almost forgot to ask why, too mesmerized by the fit of his big hand in mine again. You couldn’t imagine how blissful this felt. I literally wanted to just stop him right there and stand there staring at our hands finally together again for hours.

“Where are we going?” I finally asked as Adam let go of my hand and opened his garage door, practically chucking the luggage in there.

I felt disheartened and my hand burned without his touch, although I wouldn’t tell him that. I couldn’t explain it, but his touch always sent those familiar jolts through me and they made me feel more whole than I’d been in years. I wasn’t about to beg him to have some sort of physical contact at all times, no matter how badly I needed it. We weren’t even together anymore…

“I’m taking you out on a date,” Adam said simply as he unlocked his car. “It’s just dinner. No big deal.” He went over to the passenger side and opened the door for me with a grin.

My heart warmed as the corners of my lips stretched from ear to ear, and I obliged to his proposal, plopping into the cushy passenger seat.

It was mostly a silent ride, but an amicably comfortable type of silence. It wasn’t awkward in the least, and I think we were both just satisfied with being in the other’s presence. We were both probably lost in our thoughts. I knew I was. The last couple of months had been crazy. It felt like it was all coming together though, and my troubles were coming to an end with this fresh start. Maybe now, even if I wasn’t with Adam, I could live comfortably here and forget about the past that still haunted me sometimes.

Adam suddenly turned up the radio from its background noise state and pulled me out of my thoughts.

“Oh hey, my song’s on the radio!” Adam exclaimed excitedly.

I was excited and started listening intently, wondering what type of music he made. I mean, I heard a little bit at the concert, but I’d yet to hear an actual track.

My heart sank when I realized I recognized the signature guitar and repetitive hook.

Whataya want from me…

Are you kidding me?

Oh shit.

I was suddenly fighting hard to stifle my laughter. I forced my face to turn to the window and slapped my palm over my mouth to hold it all in. I let out a small snort and bit my tongue.

I couldn’t believe it.
This song that had irritated me so much was Adam’s.

Oops.

I swallowed the building chuckles and grinned to myself out of the window. This was hilarious to me. How had I not put the pieces together? Uh duh, Adam Lambert sang this song; the same Adam who had a concert in Helsinki and who turned out to be the same one sitting next to me now.

The song immediately grew ten-fold on me when Adam started singing it live next to me. My eyes flashed wide open, and I turned my head back in shock toward his voice. I stared at him in awe as he sang along, changing up some of the phrasing and harmonizing with himself. My mouth popped open at what he was doing. It was brilliant. Adam was just happily and effortlessly singing along, not even paying attention to my gaping, like his voice was no big deal.

He finally caught me staring and said, “What?” while laughing at my baffled expression.

“Nothing, just wow,” I replied and Adam grinned. I shook my head in amazement as I turned and looked out ahead.

Not really to my surprise, we ended up at some high class-looking restaurant with a fancy name I couldn’t pronounce for the life of me. Still weird to me, Adam was all smiles as we entered the restaurant, and the mouth-watering aromas hit me like a truck. The hostess did a double-take as she took in Adam. Obviously, she recognized him. Friendlier than I thought possible, Adam asked the star-struck employee for a private booth with a charm I’d never heard before. My jaw dropped at his smoothness and I almost fawned over him like the girl. She stumbled and stuttered cutely a few times in his presence, but Adam remained surprisingly patient and kind. She finally got us to our booth and left after Adam signed an autograph for her. Adam sat across from me and gave me an apologetic look. Not long after, our waitress showed up looking flustered, having obviously heard the news about who was eating here. Adam was gracious to her as well, signing another autograph as he ordered some of their finest wine. And with that, we were finally alone again.

I was still shocked by Adam’s charisma and patience. Just how famous was he? Again he caught me staring at him and threw me a questioning look.

“When the hell did you get so good with people?” I asked, bewildered by this. “And like this success… How? How’d this all happen? I mean, those girls certainly recognized you. Start speaking, Lambert. What have I missed?”

Adam shook his head and chuckled, “I guess some catching up is in order, hey?” I nodded in agreement. “Well, okay. Where to start… I guess from where you left’s a good place. Hmm…” He pursed his lips and looked off into nowhere, backtracking. “Oh! Did you know I was at the airport looking for you when you left for Helsinki?”

What.

“Yeah,” he said, nodding to the shocked expression on my face. “Right… I guess you never found out.” He frowned, staring at my chest. “You probably still think I just completely left you when you were in the coma, but no, I was there as the plane was taking off. The assholes wouldn’t let me onboard to get you, so I had to just stand there… watching helplessly as you left me for good.” Adam sighed, clearly disheartened from the memory. “And that was when I decided that I wouldn’t come after you, not when you were in a coma.”

“You were there…” I squeaked, feeling tears fill my eyes. “You really came after me? You didn’t abandon me…”
Adam nodded solemnly, offering me a small smile.

“There was no way I’d given up on you when you were in the coma. I fought for you until the last minute,” he said.

I suddenly remembered now. The nurse there had told me that Adam never left my side and was constantly crying for me. Why did my brain block that crucial piece of information? I’d spent all of these thinking that Adam had just taken off when it’d looked like I’d never wake up again.

Adam continued, “When I thought you were surely dead, I—” he cut off and bit his lip.

“What?” I insisted. Adam looked away and I scoffed. “Adam, come on, it was ten years ago.”

Adam sighed and nodded. “I know… but, it’s… nothing.”

“But—”

“—Anyway, while you were still permanently asleep, I tried to go back to school after realizing how much you’d dedicated yourself to me and to just give up on everything because you were gone was like spitting on your hard work, and… what was his name? Right, Alex, yeah, he forced me to go to the airport after you.”

My brow raised in disbelief.

“Wait… Alex? Are we talking about the same douchebag that made your life more of a hell for years?” I asked sarcastically. “He helped you?”

Adam continued nodding with amusement like he couldn’t believe it either as I tried to make sense of this.

“He did,” Adam confirmed. “He’s the one who told me you were still alive. Really, I owe him the world because I would’ve spent my life thinking you’d died because of me. So, just knowing you were alive was enough for me to carry on.

“It wasn’t because of you…” I mumbled.

“It was and you know it,” Adam said, rolling his eyes. “None of that would have happened if you’d never met me. I still regret it all sometimes.”

“I don’t,” I said fiercely. “If I hadn’t met you, I would never have experienced what it’s like to be truly happy with yourself. My life was an illusion—a lie until I met you. It didn’t matter that some things became harder because at least it was real, and for that, I was content. I swear, I was meant to meet you. I needed you to realize reality.”

I could feel Adam’s eyes on me as I stared at the tabletop.

“I thought I was the only one that thought we were fated to meet,” I heard Adam say quietly. I looked up just as he added, “Of course, nothing worked out, but… I don’t think that was the point. I guess we both had lessons to learn from each other. And after we learned them, we were separated like we had no use for each other anymore. But, I still did. I needed you and refused to believe that the universe was cruel enough to take you away from me, but it did. Your purpose in my life was over. I accepted that.”

Then, Adam gazed hard into my eyes, speculating. “So, why are you suddenly back…?” he whispered mostly to himself.
“Adam…?” I asked. I was confused as to why he was saying that and why the serious expression on his face was so focused and analytical. “I’m sure it’s just a coincidence.”

Adam kept staring at me for a few seconds, eyes flickering over my face. Eventually, he sighed and blinked, looking down. “Yeah… you’re right.” He didn’t sound convinced in the slightest.

I was grateful when the waitress reappeared with the bottle of wine when she did. I really didn’t like the mood and direction of the conversation we were heading toward. It almost sounded like Adam was upset and afraid that we’d crossed paths again. Why though? It hurt a little.

We thanked the waitress politely and she left with a smile. It was quiet as Adam popped open the bottle and poured an equal amount of the silky, dark liquid into each glass. I kept stealing glances at his face, but his smooth expression gave away nothing. Adam peered up at me as he handed me my glass and gave me a smile. I couldn’t help but mirror him as we toasted silently and I took a big, flavorful gulp. The slight burn down my throat was nearly orgasmic. Adam sure knew his wines.

“So, continue,” I said, setting down my glass. “What happened after I was gone?”

Adam took another sip of his wine, eyes never leaving mine, before he said, “Well, I begged to go back to school, miraculously got accepted after promising that I’d be good, and then proceeded to study my ass off. I took every extra credit opportunity there was and kicked its ass. People left me alone. No more bullies. I think Alex kept them at bay, weirdly enough. We even became friends… sort of, not really. All the while, I worked several jobs, and I even managed to get a shitty apartment for a while.” A hint of pride laced his voice. “I had no time to have a social life or do anything other than study and work. And you know what? I liked being always busy. It kept my mind off of things. I didn’t have any free time to waste berating my thoughts.”

It was like hearing a stranger talk. Never in my life would I have imagined Adam trying so hard for his life. The Adam I’d known had just been… waiting to die.

“Did you graduate?” I asked, knowing Adam had never bothered with school, thinking that there was no use to him learning all that shit if he was just going to either be killed or kill himself soon enough.

Adam grinned and nodded once. “Oh yeah, to everyone’s surprise. You don’t know how good it felt to be handed that diploma in front of everyone who’d doubted me,” he said, fire glinting in his eyes. “I finished school with decent grades considering how low they’d been to begin with. I even got into college.” Adam shrugged. “Well, sort of. I dropped out after like a month because I realized I was fucking sick of the classroom. I wanted to sing.”

“Well, that worked out,” I joked.

“Not really, actually, not in the beginning,” he said, holding up a finger and smirking. “At nineteen, I sucked up my fear of performing in front of people and booked a job on a cruise ship. I got to see the world and it inspired me to no end. I’d never even left my city before then, so it was fascinating to see so much culture and life. With more confidence, I actually managed to get into a few plays, including Wicked, one of my life’s dreams. It was overjoying to be able to mark things off on my mental bucket list. I was actually accomplishing things.”

I remembered Adam’s little fascination with that worn-out book he owned. A smile stretched across my face and I gazed at him in awe.

“I even made friends for the first time,” he went on. “I was shocked that some people actually enjoyed being around me. I guess I didn’t notice that I was changing and becoming more outgoing.
Adam took a small sip of his wine and then frowned, placing it down. “But, it wasn’t as great as it seemed. The theater, I mean. I was always the chorus boy and I never felt satisfied with that. I wanted more. I deserved more. I wanted to be seen and heard. I didn’t want to cower in the shadows anymore. I wanted to make music for people; to show them my journey in a way that words never could. But…” he trailed off.

“But…” I gestured for him to continue.

Adam eyed me as he slowly said, “I did have to change my past though. I made up an entire childhood for myself, one that was pleasant because I didn’t want anyone to pity me. No one knows about what really happened, not even my closest friends. I’ve locked up the truth and embraced the sweet lie I made up. I’m not proud of it, but it was necessary.” Adam sighed and was quiet for a minute. He looked up at me with softness in his eyes. “And of course, I missed you like crazy, no matter how hard I tried to deny it, but I did convince myself that you were over me by then.”

I glared at him sarcastically.

Adam saw my expression and chuckled. “Yeah, yeah, I know. I was wrong. But, you know what? The thought of you being happy made me happy. I was hoping you moved on, but I never could. I never looked at another man the same way.” Adam waved his hand dismissively, muttering, “Sure, whatever, I dabbled and whatnot, but it was never the same.” His eyes travelled to his wine glass, staring hard at it. “I never fell in love like I was with you,” he confessed quietly, brow furrowing as he kept his eyes on the glass. “You changed everything about me and saved my life, so no one could ever come close.”

My eyes started stinging as what he said sank in and melted my heart.

“Adam…” I cooed fondly, feeling tears brim.

Adam peered up at me from under his long lashes with a small, shy smile.

“Anyway,” he continued, “I took a few trips to Burning Man with some friends that had been enthusing about it for a long time. It’s some psychedelic community, radical self-expression type of thing, and like, a celebration of art… Not really something that can be explained to ones that have never been there. My friends tried to explain it to me and I was completely lost, so I’ll spare you.” Adam smirked. “And it was there that I realized something very important and the key to why my career wasn’t going where I wanted it to: I was afraid of my own success; I was afraid to be in the spotlight; I was still afraid of people looking at me and judging me. I realized it so clearly in that moment that when I finally got back home, I made myself lose my inhibitions, and just went for it, knowing this was my last chance to make something of myself.”

“What did you do?” I asked, wondering how anyone could just take hold of the reins suddenly and force their life to work out for them after being in a never-ending slump.

“I did what anyone with no other choice did,” Adam said, smiling at an inside joke. I was instantly jealous that he even had inside jokes with other people. “I auditioned for American Idol after quitting Wicked. I was still on an adrenaline rush from Burning Man and didn’t really realize that I couldn’t go back to my job if I was rejected. It was a huge gamble, and I never thought that I would make it past the auditions.” Adam suddenly looked surprised as he continued, “But… somehow, the universe finally came through for me. I made it all the way to number two because apparently, people liked me, weirdly enough… I was offered a record deal and the rest is history.” Adam cracked his knuckles and lounged back. “And now, for some reason that I’ll never know, I have a Grammy nomination.”
I blinked and opened my mouth to say something, only to close it again. I was speechless. Adam folded his hands and rested his chin atop of them, scrutinizing my reaction. I just... I was... wow. He’d gone through so much and was so strong the entire way. I was proud and jealous of him at the same time. Jealous because despite all the horrors Adam had faced in his short life, he managed to push through just when he was about to crack. He’d reached the highest level of success despite the odds. It was unbelievable, unlike me who’d thrown my life into the dumps because I couldn’t deal with anything anymore. I was ashamed of myself. I had it easy compared to Adam and I was the one who ended up being the ultimate loser.

“I, uh, I don’t know what to say,” I mumbled, baffled. “You’re just... I’m so...” I sighed, not able to form an actual sentence. I took a deep breath. “I’m proud of you,” I managed finally. “I’m just a little upset knowing that you’ve been alive all this time and I wasn’t part of your life. I feel like I’ve wasted all these years now.”

Adam smiled slightly. “You may have not been part of it physically, but you were still there for me,” he admitted. “I make it sound like I’ve just completely breezed through these years and laughed in the face of adversity, but really, there were moments when I would stay up all night crying because I just didn’t know if what I was doing with my life was right.” He glared at his curling fist on the table. “Countless times, I thought this was all a mistake, and countless times, I would panic, knowing you weren’t around to calm me. I was afraid of every decision I made and I always over-analyzed every option until I wanted to rip my hair out.” Adam sighed heavily. “But, every time I was about to just give up, I thought of you. I thought of everything you sacrificed for my life and it was enough to relight the path for me. So yes, you were a huge part of this past decade. Knowing you were happy and successful was huge inspiration for me.”

I frowned and fiddled with my hands. “Well... um... Then you may have been falsely inspired...”

Adam gave me a questioning look and opened his mouth to speak before the waitress suddenly popped up with an excited glint in her eyes.

“Ready to order?” she asked enthusiastically, holding up her notepad.

“Actually, yes,” Adam quickly said, looking up kindly at her. “We’ll have two soy-glazed tuna steaks for now.” Adam eyed me, promising with his expression that what he was ordering was good. I gave him another slight frown and quickly glanced at the menu, jaw dropping when I saw the price for what he was ordering.

“Excellent choice! I’ll be back with your meal.” And with that, the waitress left as quickly as she came.

“Adam, what the hell are these prices!” I moped when the waitress was out of sight. “I would’ve been fine with take-out or something.”

Adam grimaced. “No way, only the best for you. Don’t even complain. The price is nothing. I can afford to eat like this every day for the rest of my life.”

I sighed, knowing it was useless to argue with him. I would’ve done the same thing.

Adam eyed me for a moment. “I’ve been blabbing about myself all night. So talk, what happened with you? Why was I falsely inspired?” He gestured quotations with his fingers in the air.

I rolled my eyes. “I went downhill fast, and you probably don’t want to hear this, but okay...” I warned. “Basically,” I started, “after I thought you were dead and went back to Helsinki, I went to my aunt’s house to live. She was surprised to say the least, but I didn’t tell her I was gay. She called
my parents, and I guess they told her because she was always somewhat rude to me after that, but at least she didn’t kick me out.” I shrugged. “My parents didn’t bother asking how I was or beg me to come back because they didn’t give half a shit about me anymore, so that was my last contact with them…” I trailed off, not wanting to tell Adam about this next part because it would upset him. Adam cleared his throat impatiently and I sighed deeply before continuing. “I went into a deep depression because of you for years,” I confessed. Adam’s face immediately fell. “My final marks dropped. I barely managed to graduate, let alone go to university. I lost everything I had going for me, and I gave up on trying to make something of myself. I know you meant well by letting me think you were gone forever, but for a long time, years even, it was the complete opposite.”

“But, but…” Adam stuttered. “You—Why?—How..?”

Well, he wasn’t accomplishing much by speaking so I cut him off as he was about to start stammering again.

“Adam, I got nowhere,” I admitted. “You think too highly of me. I’m glad that’s what helped you find your success, but in reality, I couldn’t have ended up worse. I had no job, no place to live, no friends, no family, no money… and no point… because there was no you.”

Adam shook his head. “That can’t be true…” he mumbled.

“It is,” I insisted. “Life was unbearable after you. I don’t even want to go into the details.”

Adam looked devastated. “It was my fault…” His voice cracked.

“Well, I was the one that actually threw me into the dumps,” I tried to console him. “You didn’t do anything wrong. You weren’t the one who gave up. I’m the one who’s a complete loser.”

“I’m so sorry…” Adam said, voice slightly strained, still shaking his head.

“It did get a little better though,” I insisted. “I lived with my deranged aunt until I met my boy—well, now ex-boyfriend, Mika.” Adam’s hand twitched. “Mika… he’s wonderful, to be honest,” I admitted. “He brought me in and took care of everything for me without me even asking him. He was sweet and considerate most of the time.” I sighed, face falling. I missed Mika. “But, he could be controlling and dramatic. He’d get pissed off over the smallest things, but it was usually my fault anyway.” I could feel Adam’s eyes boring into my head as I fumbled with my fingers. “I loved him… but I knew it couldn’t last forever. He distracted me from my depression and I’m so grateful for that. I guess the relationship ran its course…”

“And now…?” Adam asked quietly.

I peered up at him. “And now, well, I’m homeless, jobless, moneyless, etcetera again.” I grimaced. “But, at least now, after ten years, I find out you’re alive….And I just don’t know what to think or where to go from here.”

I hadn’t noticed that I’d taken Adam’s hand with both of mine and was playing with it, turning his palm this way and that. I marvelled at his perfect fingers and shimmery dark blue nail polish. His skin felt so familiar; soft and pulsing gently with warmth.

I could feel Adam watching me quietly as I held his hand firmly in place against the table and pulled up his sleeve slowly. He didn’t fight me; his hand remained relaxed under mine. I revealed freckles splattered across his wrist and forearm, and if I focused hard enough, I could see very faint lines of old, faded scars. I sighed quietly in relief. There were no fresher-looking marks. I smiled sadly as I traced the thin lines nearly completely hidden by hair and freckles. It was amazing to see his skin so
glowing and healthy for once, and not bruised and battered.

“Did you ever do it again?” I mumbled, peering up to find kind eyes waiting for me.

Adam shook his head solemnly, knowing what I was referring to. “I made a promise to you and myself that I wouldn’t, no matter how bad it got for me sometimes,” he said quietly and sincerely. I nodded, feeling a weight lift off my chest. We were quiet for a minute before Adam continued, “How did you cope? You didn’t… did you?”

I sighed, squeezing his hand. “No, I drank away my problems instead.” Adam’s brow knit in worry. “It’s okay. I’ve stopped now, since Mika wouldn’t let me, but let me tell you, my early twenties were a fucking mess. My sixteen-year old self that was so aspirational would’ve been so ashamed of the trash I became.”

“Because of me…” Adam muttered.

“No, I already told you. It was my fault for being so weak and bitter. But, I did end up that way because of you.” Adam cringed slightly. “But, not because you came into my life, but because you left it and I thought it was permanent,” I insisted, smoothing circles into his tense hand. “I found myself getting so angry at you for dying and leaving me like this.”

I let go of his warm hand just as our waitress reappeared with our food. She placed the meals expertly in front of us, smiled, thanked us, and then left. I held my tongue, not wanting to complain about Adam spoiling me with an extravagant meal. I just kept my mouth shut and we ate our meals in peace. And oh my god, it was an orgasm for my taste buds. I hadn’t had a meal like this since… ever. The closest I ever got was mom’s home-cooking, but I hadn’t even had that for years. We ate in silence for the next fifteen minutes, occasionally commenting on a certain portion of the meal. When we were finally finished and the waitress brought the bill, I wanted to kill Adam when I got a glance at the total price. We couldn’t even split the bill, Adam absolutely refused to, insisting that it was his pleasure.

Adam patted his belly and sank into his seat further, grinning lazily at me. I shook my head at him and took sip of my wine.

“So… how did you wake up from that coma anyway?” I heard Adam ask. I couldn’t see him since my wine glass was blocking my face. It was hard to stop drinking it. I forced myself to set it down and answer his question.

I furrowed my brow, trying to recall what happened. “I… don’t really remember,” I admitted. “The only thing I do know is that… I had a dream… about you… like right before my eyes opened.”

“What?” Adam asked, sounding surprised. He sat up a little, brow scrunched up.

I furrowed my brow, trying to recall what happened. “I… don’t really remember,” I admitted. “The only thing I do know is that… I had a dream… about you… like right before my eyes opened.”

“What?” Adam asked, sounding surprised. He sat up a little, brow scrunched up.

“It’s true.” I nodded. “I don’t totally remember how it went, and I’m surprised I recall anything at all since I normally don’t remember nearly anything about my dreams as soon as I wake up, but I know that we were in front of a mirror, and you… well, you actually looked a heck of a lot like you do now, if not exact, and you were just holding me. You told me that I needed to wake up for you and that…” I trailed off, thoughts racing. I gasped a little after a moment. “…we’d meet again someday. Oh my god, I never realized how accurate… What the fuck?” I felt a tingle run down my spine from the eeriness of this. “That’s actually fucking creepy. I never thought about it before. It completely fits. Can dreams predict the future?”

“I don’t know,” Adam said, sounding intrigued. “Anything else happen?”
I thought hard about that for a moment, trying to see what other bits and pieces I could find in my head. “Actually, yeah… In the mirror that you were holding me in front of… for the slightest moment, my reflection was the same, but yours… I don’t know… It changed? I mean, there was a man there who looked just like you, but you looked… different, sinister. I think… I don’t know how to explain it. You were like a darker, corrupt, and terrifying version of yourself… That sounds stupid. It was only for a moment, but the petrifying way you looked at me, like I was something to eat.” I shuddered slightly, remembering the figure more clearly. “Do you think that meant anything?”

Adam’s face had paled considerably before I’d even finished talking. He was frozen in his seat and stared past me, mind far away.

“Hello? Earth to Adam, are you okay?” I asked. “What’s wrong?”

His gaze remained locked in another world. I scoffed and snapped my fingers impatiently in front of his face.

Adam blinked several times and his eyes finally focused on me. “Nothing’s wrong,” he said, forcing a smile. “Do you think we should leave now? I’m stuffed and exhausted.” Oh, he was totally changing the subject.

I glared at him for a long moment and Adam just kept the smile plastered on his face as he stared back at me. Finally, I sighed, resigned, knowing he wasn’t going to back down and give in. I decided not to push it and ambush him for answers. That never worked out, as I’d learned from experiences with him.

“Fine, let’s go,” I muttered, rolling my eyes as I slipped out of the booth. Adam followed quietly behind, trailing a few feet back.

Out of the restaurant and on our way to the car, I waited for Adam to catch up before I tucked myself close to his side. I looked up at him just as he smiled warmly and wrapped his arm around my waist as we walked. I snuggled closer to him and breathed in his smell. He still fucking smelled the same, unmistakably the Adam I loved.

On the drive to Adam’s house, it was pretty much silent, both of us still lost in our thoughts. The low music playing in the background kept me from going insane.

The inside of his house was even more gorgeous, and I hadn’t even had a whole tour yet. It was too late in the night for that now. I was tired, but I knew I wouldn’t be able to fall asleep tonight. Too much had happened that I needed to think about. Once I opened up my suitcase and changed in Adam’s ridiculous bathroom, I met up with him again in the living room and noticed he was pretty much wearing identical clothes. Both of us were wearing simple sweatpants and loose black t-shirts.

Adam opened his arms wide when I got into the dimly lit room. I rammed into him and nearly knocked him over, hugging him so tightly, it hurt my muscles. I just kept squeezing harder and harder, like still testing if he was actually real. I thought that if I crushed him enough, he’d disappear into a puff of smoke. He didn’t seem to mind or be in pain as he rubbed soothing circles into my back.

“I want to show you something,” Adam murmured into my ear.
Adam:

Barefoot in our pajamas, I dragged Sauli toward the backyard casually by his hand. He gasped before we’d even reached the glass door and made it out. Smirking, I slid the door open and held it with a smug look on my face as I waited for Sauli to close his slightly agape mouth and shuffle outside. I followed him out silently, secretly marveling at his back muscles through his thin shirt. I crossed my arms and leaned against the glass, watching the back of his head with knowing amusement as he shook it slowly in disbelief.

The backyard was my favorite place in my house… besides my bedroom, of course. It was serene and relaxing enough that it was the first place that came to mind to go to whenever I needed to make a difficult decision. I could let the warm water of the infinity pool lap at my skin as I rested my arms on the edge and stared out at the skyline of Hollywood during a sunset in wonder, or I could lie down in the lush grass and fall into a calming nap as I gazed up at the hanging lights that resembled stars, or I could just lounge about in the luxury patio arrangement with a good friend to vent to. It was the most peaceful haven I could think of, but it could also be a loud mess if I wanted to party until dawn. Sometimes, instead of alone time, the shrieks of joy from a crowd of drunken people I loved was the best medicine. But tonight, the air was calm and intimate, perfect for me to really think about another life-changing decision… that was standing in front of me at this very moment in the form of living perfection.

With a small, loving smile on my lips, I continued watching Sauli as he kneeled down and ran his hands through the thick, deep green grass.

He was a decision I had to make.

He was here for a few days as just an old friend until I could help him settle down… and then he would be gone again. Could I handle that? I knew that he was willing to be mine again, and I wanted it so badly that it was making me nauseous just thinking of any other option. We both wanted to be together and could have it very easily, so why not go for it? Well… there was the one huge issue that would ruin everything in this little fantasy of mine, and could I afford to put the man I still loved at risk like that?

As if on cue, my mind didn’t feel like my own isolated world anymore. In a way that I could never properly explain, I suddenly wasn’t alone. It wasn’t just me and my safe thoughts now. The familiar feeling of intrusion slowly swirling in my own head still made me feel uneasy and constantly uncomfortable until the feeling was gone. It was another presence that was filling my mind, making room for its own self.

I froze and the smile on my face wiped off as I heard bemused chuckling that was not my own echoing in my head. My breath caught in my throat. No matter how many times this happened, it never ceased to make my skin crawl with fear.
“Aw, how considerate of you,” the mischievous voice mused inside my head with fake sympathy. “You don’t want to be with your little fuck toy because you’re afraid I’ll come out and rip him to shreds?”

I could feel him frowning sarcastically… if that even made sense. In my thoughts, I couldn’t see this… thing, but I could feel his expressions and movements.

I said nothing as I continued staring at the back of Sauli’s head with worry.

He pursed his lips in my mind. “Hmm. Well, you were probably right about that.”

I tensed in fear. I wanted to start begging him out loud to not do anything to Sauli, but I stayed still, not wanting to look like a psycho in front of the Finn. Randomly screaming at the air to get rid of the voice inside my head probably wasn’t a good idea at this very moment.

“I mean, I am fully rested now. When the right moment comes, and you still don’t know what that is because you’re an absolute imbecile,” he rolled his eyes at me, “I could easily take over long enough to kill the pathetic twerp only to have the pleasure of seeing you suffer. How would you feel if you awoke again after I was out to find that doll lying limp in front of you, and your hands were stained with his blood?” With a wicked grin, he shuddered in my head and cracked his neck. “Ooh, I just shivered from excitement. That sounds splendid to me.”

“Please,” I whispered barely audibly, feeling my eyes sting painfully and my gut twist in horror as Sauli happily pranced over to the edge of the pool where he was far away enough that he couldn’t hear me, “I love him.”

The voice scoffed. “HA! Love? That’s the most bullshit idea that people have created for themselves. There’s no such thing. There’s only lust. What it all comes down to in the end is to fuck and be fucked, right?” I knew he was giving me an accusing glare even though I couldn’t physically see it. “I thought you were going to try to keep that boy away from me. Why is he here? Hmm, let me guess. You couldn’t let him go before screwing him to your satisfaction again. Love, my ass.”

“You’re wrong,” I muttered under my breath.

He snorted and rolled his eyes again. “You can try to layer that raw truth with your silly excuses like your emotions and good intentions, but in the end, to fuck him again is your goal. You dare call that love? You just can’t forget about your own selfish needs, and that’s only natural. This isn’t love. Nothing is. You think with your dick like the rest of us and then try to make your actions seem less savage and primal by sugar-coating it with lies such as the idea of love. You are no different from me when stripped down to the core.”

My eyes narrowed and I hissed quietly enough that Sauli couldn’t hear, “What the fuck are you talking about? He’s only here for a few days. I’m not going to make a move on him. I’m just here to help him out.”

“And what do you expect your reward to be?”

“Absolutely nothing. I don’t want anything from him. I can’t stand for him to love me again, or whatever you want to call it, only to have him crushed by you.” My voice was strained as I struggled to only whisper. “I just want to see him back on his feet again. That is love, something you couldn’t possibly understand. And in the meantime, I’ll be avoiding him as much as possible to make sure that whatever it is that triggers you doesn’t happen near him.”

The voice chuckled and he shook his head. “You’ll go through all this trouble to help him out, keep
him safe, not have sex, and then kick him out, all while steering clear of him and without a single nod to your own desires... just to make sure that I won't get the trigger and chance to do anything...” He sighed in exasperation, like he was running out of patience with a small child. “You’ve really thought this out, haven’t you? Are you really that afraid of me?”

“I’m not afraid of you. I’m afraid for him,” I insisted sharply in a hushed tone.

What he said next threw me off guard.

“What if I told you I wouldn’t bother him at all...?” he echoed timidly in my head.

I blinked several times, trying to wrap my head around what he just said. “I wouldn’t believe you,” I hissed quietly after a moment of re-stabilizing my thoughts. “You said it yourself. You want to tear him apart just to ruin me.”

I forced a smile on my face as Sauli turned around from the pool and mouthed, “Wow” with a huge grin before gazing out at the amazing view again.

“I thought about it and changed my mind. I’m not the monster you think I am,” the voice said with the same sarcastic tone. “I’d never hear the end of it if I killed him and had to sit around and listen to your ridiculous, depressed thoughts. Plus, what if you were stupid enough to kill yourself because of him? You almost did once. It would be the end of me as well, and we can’t have that, now can we?”

I blinked and stayed quiet, slightly intrigued, yet wary, by his proposition.

He went on after noticing my confusion, “I’ll tell you what. I won’t kill him if I’m triggered and you can be with him or whatever you dumbasses call your petty relationships. How’s that sound?”

“What?” I said, nearly too loud.

“You heard me. I’m not repeating myself.”

My heart fluttered in hope, but my mind was still suspicious. He sounded so... I don’t know, like... mocking and arrogant, or maybe that was just the regular tone of his voice.

I whispered, “How can I trust what you’re offering after all you’ve done is threaten him?”

“So, you don’t listen to anything I’ve ever told you, except for my empty threats...” He shook his head in disgust, but caught himself. “Look, you’ve already heard my reasoning. I don’t need my life to be a living hell after he’s gone since I’m stuck with you. And what other choice do you have? Are you really going to pass him up because of your silly impression of me?”

“Adam, what are you doing? Quit standing around!” Sauli called out impatiently, gesturing me toward him. “Come here!”

Sauli’s addictive voice calling my name instantly sealed my decision for me. I didn’t even have time to think about it. I realized that I was going to take this offer without a concern. It already broke my heart just considering letting Sauli go when he was finally back, but if this parasite was promising to leave him alone and let us be together, then there was no way in hell I was going to slap away this extremely rare generosity.

Barely moving my lips, I whispered “Fine,” with hearts in my eyes as I made my way over to Sauli, ignoring the little alarm of warning going off in the back of my mind. “Deal.”

The voice chuckled devilishly and smirked, but I thought nothing of it. And immediately, I felt
peaceful solitude in my head again. He was gone… wherever “gone” was.

I felt my entire body warm up with hope as I reached Sauli and he beamed up at me, oceanic eyes twinkling from the city lights. I sighed with a feeling of contentment and I subconsciously wrapped my arm around him like it was a reflex; a natural instinct to hold him. I pulled him closer and tucked him into my side as we stood over the edge of the pool, overlooking the dazzling night view.

“It’s incredible,” Sauli mused, neither of us tearing our eyes away from the glimmering lights and skyscrapers below. “How do you ever leave this place? Such a beautiful view…” He shook his head in awe.

“I can think of a more beautiful one,” I murmured, glancing at Sauli through my peripheral.

Sauli looked up in confusion, only to snort with amusement when he saw me peering down at him intently out of the corner of my eye. He nudged me playfully with his hip before crossing his arms and muttering, “Cheese-ball” as he continued to stare straight ahead, grinning.

I refocused my eyes onto the colorful array of flashing lights in the city, enjoying this peaceful moment and the decision I’d made. I felt lips press quickly against my covered shoulder and I smiled to myself, rubbing my hand gently up and down Sauli’s opposite side in thanks. Wrapping my other arm across his abdomen, I pulled Sauli into my chest, smothering his face into my collarbone. I tightened my arms around him when he slowly hugged me back, and I closed my eyes shut as I buried my face into his hair.

“I still love you,” I admitted with a mumble into his hair and Sauli tensed, “so much.”

I felt my eyes sting from the sudden overwhelming sense of longing for and missing him. I pulled away just slightly and unwrapped one arm from around Sauli, bringing up my hand to cup his cheek and tilt his face up to look at me. Sauli’s bright blue eyes were a mixture of confusion and yearning as I gazed heavily into them, rememorizing them as best as I could. As if his irises were a whirlpool, I was pulled in without a chance of escaping. I tightened my arm around him and held his head still with my hand as I leaned in, closing my eyes, and was drawn in so close, I could feel the heat radiating off his face. I felt my lips contact his blazing cheek and paused for a moment before proceeding to trail lovingly chaste kisses down toward his mouth. The instant our lips brushed against each other, I felt that addicting jolt of electricity shoot down my spine. I continued just sweeping my open lips across his slowly, barely touching him… waiting. I finally felt relief when Sauli closed the airy distance and kissed me back, molding his lips to mine. I felt desire pool in my gut and elsewhere as I caressed his cheek gently and kissed him agonizingly slow, pouring as much heat into it as I could. As soon as my tongue brushed against his pulsing lower lip though, Sauli pulled away.

My eyes fluttered as I opened them, confused and a little hurt. At least he hadn’t moved completely away and was still in my arm. Sauli looked up at me a little breathlessly.

I stroked his cheek with my thumb and quietly mumbled, “Sauli?”

“What are you doing, Adam…?” Sauli asked sadly, brow furrowing. “I thought you didn’t want me to be at risk for whatever reason by being with me. Why are you torturing me like this? It’s not fair to me if you get to kiss me whenever you feel like it, but I can’t, and I can’t have you anymore.”

He swatted my hand from his cheek, but I just moved it to his beautiful hair, running my fingers through it as I frowned down at him.
“I know… and I’m sorry,” I mumbled, gazing down at him intently. After a minute, I continued faintly, “Do you really still want me…?”

Sauli’s expression turned sarcastic. “Is that a serious question?” I kept staring at him, stern expression unchanged. Sauli rolled his eyes before staring hard at my chest and placing his palm over my heart. “Always.”

A small smile graced my lips, and my skin tingled blissfully from his answer. “Then, I’m yours,” I said with a slightly bigger smile, still playing with his hair and skin. I couldn’t stop touching him… like I needed constant reassurance that he was really here and I wasn’t crazy.

Sauli’s eyes widened and he looked taken aback. “You changed your mind?” he asked, sounding shocked and a bit excited. “Why…?”

I sighed, wishing he would just accept what I said. He was still as curious as ever.

“I told myself after I lost you that if you ever came back and you were willing to let me be yours again, I would accept with open arms. And now here you are again… and you’re willing... for whatever reason, even though I clearly don’t deserve you…” I sighed. “I can’t stand not giving you what you want, so no matter what, if you truly still want to be with me, I will belong to you completely until you move on.”

“Adam…” Sauli warned, eyeing me. “That would mean you’d have to stay with me for a long-ass time, like forever. I’ve never moved on and never will, do you understand that?”

“I wasn’t hoping for that,” I admitted. “You already know how I feel about all this, but…”

Sauli noticed the slight worry on my face and promised, “I know you wish I moved on, but please, we’ll make it work. We did it before when the circumstances were much worse.”

“Oh yeah,” I rolled my eyes, “because that all worked out so well.”

Sauli scowled. “It’s different now,” he insisted.

“I know,” I assured him. “That’s why I’m here now, offering you everything we almost had…”

Sauli noticed my slight frown. “I still don’t know what you think is so risky this time.”

I struggled not to bring up the fact that I’d hit him… even though it wasn’t technically me. But, he couldn’t know that.

“It’s nothing.” I smiled, trying to hide my tiny amount of apprehension. Or, at least… I hoped it was nothing, as long the deal I just made was honored. “And okay… We’ll make it work.”

“So… you’re mine?” Sauli asked quietly, doodling with his finger on my covered chest before peering up at me and raising a brow.

I hesitated and then nodded slowly with a tiny twitch of my lips, locking the decision.

“Always.”

The joy in Sauli’s face warmed my heart and forced a lump in my throat.

Sauli grabbed my shoulders and pushed up onto his toes to crush his lips to mine. I melted into it and was excited at his enthusiasm for only a second before I felt a shove and I was falling backward. I couldn’t manage out a scream before I smacked into the pool with a huge splash. Water surrounded
my senses and washed over me as I sunk in. I flailed around in the pool when I realized what had happened, trying to resurface. My head broke free and I sputtered out, gasping and coughing as my feet touched the bottom. Cold air nipped at my face as I frantically looked around. My eyes landed on Sauli who was bent over, hugging his gut from laughing so hard.

“Oh, fuck you!” I coughed, irritably splashing water in his general direction. He’d ruined the moment and I was completely soaked now. “What the hell was that for?!

“Sorry, baby… muscle spasm.” Sauli gave me a fake-ass apologetic look and knelt down by the edge, reaching out for me.

His mistake...

I swam over with a devious plan in mind, gently took his dry hand, giving him a sweet and innocent smile, and trying to look grateful for his offer to help me out.

I suddenly grabbed Sauli’s forearm tightly with both hands and jerked him down toward me, pushing off the pool wall with my feet. Sauli yelled out as he fell face first into the pool. Now it was my turn to laugh, watching him splash around hysterically as he struggled to turn himself right way up the way I did to get some air. The pool was shallow enough on this end for us to be able to stand with the tops of our shoulders sticking out of the water. Sauli resurfaced and gasped for air as he stood up, realizing this. He threw me a glare when he heard me snort-laughing, and I just laughed harder when I saw the look on his face, until my face was suddenly whipped with water as Sauli splashed me.

“Hey!” I yelled out, cracking up some more.

Sauli kept splashing me mercilessly. I closed my eyes to avoid getting my eyes whipped with water and blindly moved forward, with my hands up as a shield, fast enough to almost tackle him. I pushed at his chest as he continued trying to fight me off until he was pressed against the wall of the pool, and then I immediately held down his arms at his sides. Sauli struggled to get free, and my eyes narrowed into slits with a sly smile on my lips as I forced him to submit.

“Resistance is futile,” I growled playfully. “You, a tiny elf, are no match for me.”

“Ass,” Sauli spat jokingly.

I shrugged, still holding Sauli’s arms down. “You started it. I was perfectly fine with being dry.”

Sauli’s head was close enough that when he scoffed, his breath hit my wet face. As it did, I blinked several times and forgot where I was, overwhelmed by an old desire, and I found myself being drawn in, like it was an invitation. Robotically, I let go of Sauli’s arms to hold his head in place as I stared intently and warningly into his eyes and leaned in further. I froze an inch away from his lips with my eyes closed, waiting once again, not wanting to do anything without his permission. I felt Sauli’s hands move to my hips and he jerked me forward, closing the distance between us as he mashed his lips against mine.

It wasn’t long before the kiss turned dirty and desperate. Sauli’s heated tongue shoved itself into my mouth and found mine as I kissed him harder. It was completely silent in the air except for the sounds of little splashes and small moans. He was rough and had clearly forgotten his place throughout the years as he fought me for dominance. Sauli’s hands trailed over my ass and squeezed. I growled into his mouth and nipped his lip, refusing to submit. Sauli froze for a split-second from the unexpected bite and I took the opportunity to completely overpower him and take the lead.

My hands snaked down his chest and ass until I reached his thighs, never leaving Sauli’s willing
mouth for air. I grabbed the back of his thighs and lifted them up under the water easily. Sauli’s legs wrapped around me from under the water and he threw his arms around my neck, closing all distance between us. I was getting stiffer by the second as jolts of pleasure and nostalgia shot throughout me nonstop with every sweep of Sauli’s tongue. I cupped his ass cheeks firmly in place and rubbed against his hard-on with mine through the soaked, thin pajama pants. Sauli broke away for a second to moan out loud, both of us panting breathlessly. I shivered against him from the sound of his need. God, I missed this. My drenched clothes suddenly felt way too weighted and clingy.

I licked Sauli’s swollen lips once before taking hold of his waist, hoisting him out of the water and onto the ledge. Sauli scrambled back a few feet onto the grass as I climbed up after him, dripping wet and slightly chilled from the air. Like a predator, I grabbed Sauli’s ankles to stop him before he could get too far and immediately draped myself over his soaked body, trapping him. My clothes stuck to and cooled my heated skin. I held down his biceps in the grass and attacked his mouth again. Sauli arched into me, trying to appease himself with friction. We rolled around in the grass, entangled with each other. I ended up on top of him again with another dominating kiss and I raked my fingers down his rock-hard bulge in his pants. Sauli gasped into my mouth and I smirked against his in return.

As I stood up, I took hold of Sauli’s hands and pulled him up with me, tugging him up and straight to my lips. I embraced my love tightly as I kissed him, soaked hair clinging to my face, but now with grass decorating us. I broke away with a smack and gazed into his lust-darkened eyes.

“Come,” I insisted in a low, hungry voice.

I grabbed Sauli’s pulsing hand and tugged him toward a different glass door, leading into my master bedroom. I nearly broke the fucking glass as I desperately tried to get inside. I dragged Sauli into the bedroom, not bothering to shut the door again. I didn’t even care about the wet, dirty patches we were making on the carpet.

My mouth was on Sauli’s once more as I guided him backwards to the bed. The backs of Sauli’s thighs hit the edge and I followed him down as he bent over backwards onto the sheets. Without breaking the kiss, we somehow managed to climb up a little until we were in the middle. I could hardly find myself to mind that we were completely soaking and staining the sheets. Right now, nothing else mattered except this exquisite creature beneath me.

Sauli arched up and rubbed against me, panting hard as I broke away from his lips and started leaving a trail of licks and kisses down his jaw, throat, all the way to his collarbone. I made sure to pause at the hollow of his neck and continually suck and nip at it until the mark made was to my satisfaction. All the while, Sauli was squirming and gasping underneath me. I paused from the teasing and gave him a small smile before pressing a quick kiss to his cheek and taking hold of the hem of his shirt. He repositioned for a moment to allow me to peel off drenched top and chuck it off to the side, revealing his gorgeous tattoos and toned abdomen.

I sat up, straddling him, just stopping what I was doing and staring. I heard a gasp, but it could’ve just been me.

I kept blinking, trying to make sure this wasn’t a hallucination, as I brushed my hands down Sauli’s chest in a fascinated daze. His smooth skin was gleaming slightly from the wetness, and it looked good enough to eat. I just wanted to taste every inch of his golden body, including the incredible bird tattoos across his chest and the flowers swirling elegantly down his arm. He was so beautiful… more so than ever. I was practically drooling over his toned perfection. He looked better than any memory I had of him… It hurt how much I missed this body.

I tore my eyes away from his abdomen and peered up at him from under my lashes. Sauli was still
panting lightly and gazing at me with dark, but curious eyes, probably wondering why I’d stopped and was gaping at him. I just shook my head at him, disregarding his question lingering in the air before leaning back down for another kiss. I poured years of longing into this kiss, feeling my brow furrow as I mustered up enough pain and desire from over the decade and showed it in how urgently I moved my mouth with his. I just couldn’t get close enough to him.

I didn’t stop as I stripped Sauli of his wringing-wet pajama pants with one hand. Sauli hiked up slightly in order for me to pull the hem down past his thighs before he kicked them off. When I felt something moist and stiff hit my hip, my entire body shuddered with desire at the fact that the one man that I’d dreamed about for a decade was under me right now, naked and willing to give me everything. I broke away from Sauli’s lips and sat up above him with my knees on either side of his legs, taking in the fully bared view lying in front of me once more.

“God,” I said, voice strained as I stroked his inner thigh. “Amazing.”

My eyes locked sincerely with his for a minute, just taking the time to realize how surreal this moment really was as I caressed his legs. After so long… here we were. I could stop all this and just stare at him lying here in his purest form for hours on end.

I was really ruining the heated moment for myself right now, feeling my eyes burn from the old regret and the pain of missing him so much. How was I ever supposed to let him go this time if something went wrong? I wouldn’t be able to handle it a second time.

“Come on,” Sauli said impatiently when I’d spaced out. “Take it off.”

I needed to shut my thoughts up and focus on cherishing this heavenly being with everything that I had. I needed to worship this beautiful man’s body, mind, and spirit with the one act that would bind us together as lovers. I forced myself out of my daze and looked back down at Sauli’s glorious self.

“You do it for me,” I smirked, feeling my cheeks burn.

Sauli raised his eyebrows before sitting up with his legs still trapped underneath me, meeting me almost at eye level as he started unbuttoning my shirt one at a time. He took his sweet time about it too and never wavered his intense stare from my eyes, face just inches from mine. Sauli gently pushed my shirt off my shoulders and caressed my chest with both hands as I discarded the top. He leaned forward and pressed his lips against my collarbone before wrapping his arms around me and snuggling into me. The heat of his bare chest against mine and his strong arms around my back was almost unbearable. I could feel his heart pounding in rhythm with my own.

“Pinch me,” I muttered into Sauli’s wet hair as I enveloped him into my own arms and held him to me like a lifeline. “This can’t be real.” I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my shoulder blade as Sauli did as I asked. I flinched, arms tightening around him, and my voice jumped as I squeaked, “Ouch!”

“You’re not dreaming,” Sauli mumbled, kissing along my chest. I scowled at the wall ahead, still feeling the stinging pain. I didn’t mean it literally, dammit. “So beautiful…” He trailed his fingers down my entire abdomen as he pulled away slightly. My slight pain waned and I watched him in awe, feeling the longing for him become intolerable.

I cupped both sides of Sauli’s face gently and leaned down to give him a sweet and messy kiss. I continued to attack his already bruised lips, jaw, and neck, licking and kissing my way down with the occasional nip as he panted and moaned quietly.

“You’re killing me,” Sauli groaned in between ragged breaths. “How’d you get so good?
I smirked into the hollow of his neck and muttered, “Practice,” before sucking the sweet spot.

I could practically hear Sauli roll his eyes at me.

His nails dug into my bare shoulder blades as I pushed him down onto his back again, hovering over him as I ravaged his upper body. Sauli was writhing when he finally pushed me away for a break, nearly gasping for air. I glanced down at his disheveled appearance. He was covered in sweat already, or maybe that just was pool water, and his eyes were fully blown, gazing at me up and down repeatedly. He finally caught his breath and I noticed his lustful eyes tone down quite a bit as they kept lingering on my body above his. I was getting confused and a little insecure under his scrutinizing gaze. Sauli bit his lip and peered up at my face again after analyzing everything else.

I was about to ask him what was wrong, but he answered before I could open my mouth.

“You have any idea how amazing it is to see you without a single bruise?” Sauli murmured quietly, shaking his head slightly in disbelief as he placed his palm over my heart and stroked my skin lightly.

My eyes stung and I had to fight to swallow the sudden ache in my throat.

“Oh…” was all I could manage without breaking down.

“All my memories of you were decorated in black and blue, but now…” he went on, trailing his hand down my chest, “there’s nothing. Perfection…” He leaned up for a quick second to kiss the hollow of my throat in appreciation, soothingly sending the aching lump away, and then ran his hand down the entire length of my left arm. “Scars are gone too…”

It was true. Most of my scars had faded to nearly nothing over the years of finally recuperating. And because of my promise to Sauli, I never resorted to that self-mutilation ever again. For the scars that ran too deep into my flesh, I had to get some special oil to rub over them over the past few years to make them less noticeable. If you squinted, you could still see their traces, but for the most part, I was healed… at least externally.

“Thanks to you,” was the only thing I said before leaning down and pecking his lips with a smile. Yes… the man who saved my life was back in it, and no one, not even me, would screw it up this time. No parents and no classmates around at every damn corner. We were adults with the freedom to do whatever we wanted together. Who could stop us?

My thigh brushed against Sauli’s erection and he winced, subconsciously bucking up.

“Adam,” he whined, “please. I can’t take it anymore. Please, miss you.”

I nodded seriously. I realized that we would probably have countless nights for me to release my bag of tricks on him and linger out the foreplay longer. I didn’t necessarily have to show him everything I learned and mastered right now. Man, I sounded like a whore… Anyway, tonight would be saved for the main event. I was desperate to just be inside him again, but not for the reasons the idiot in my head thought. I wanted to just connect with him once more; feel him be mine on an emotional and physical level. We’d only done it one time before, but that was the happiest memory of my entire lifetime and I yearned to relive it again while I still had the chance.

“Okay,” I mumbled quietly, pecking his cheek before straining to reach out for the bedside drawer, fumbling around in there before pulling out two small packages.

Sauli chewed on his lips and watched me curiously as I ripped the first package open with my teeth and oozed out the gel-like substance onto my fingers. I sat up and spread his legs, caressing them
gently and placing little kisses on his inner thighs. He squirmed when I drizzled some of the lube down his crack and brushed my fingers over it.

“You’re sure?” I asked, looking down at Sauli’s anxious face. He nodded rapidly, impatient.

I felt heat prickle all over my skin as I nudged him open with two fingers, feeling my breath hitch when both digits slowly disappeared, joint by joint until they were completely in the tight space. Sauli made a little sound and shifted. I could hear him breathing hard through his mouth. I looked up at him and desire burst out in flames all over my skin at the sight of him just lying there, sprawled out, eyes closed, and in complete ecstacy because of me. I waited until he stopped moving and proceeded to stretch him out with both fingers, scissoring him from the inside as I pumped my fingers in and out repeatedly, but slowly. I added a third finger and continued, holding his thigh down and spread as I opened him up for me.

A moan ripped out of Sauli’s throat, sending an uncontrollable craving down my spine and straight to my dick. His hand flew to his cock, wrapping around it, and he arched up with another broken groan as he started to pump it in time with my fingers. I grabbed his wrist with my free hand and forcefully pulled it off of his raging problem.

“No,” I insisted, gripping his wrist tightly and pushing it down onto the sheets. “Let me. Don’t touch.”

Sauli gave me a desperate look as he panted, “Fuck you. I need—”

He arched up and moaned loud enough to wake the dead when my fingers suddenly hit the sweet spot inside of him. He sank back down into the sheets, but continued twitching and gasping whenever I brushed the spot again.

“Relax,” I cooed, caressing his tense stomach with feather-light touches when I noticed that he was fisting the sheets. Sauli did as I asked with obvious difficulty, letting go of the damp sheets and opening up his darkened eyes to look at me. Immediately, my fingers slid in and out of him with more ease. I admired, “perfect,” before I took out my fingers completely.

“Adam…” Sauli panted, pleading to me with his eyes fully blown. “Come on. I can’t.”

I leaned back over him with a smile, holding myself up with my hands on either side of his head, and lined up my clothed cock with his naked one, rubbing hard against him. The friction was too sensual to bear and my arms that were holding me up started to tremble from the pleasure. I panted lightly as I continued to move back and forth against him slowly, pressing down against his groin. Sauli’s face scrunched up and he bared his neck, his Adam’s apple bobbing up and down as he struggled to breathe evenly. Desire shot down my spine and tingled in every pore at the sight.

I pulled my soaked pants down to my thighs before slowly draping myself over Sauli and kicking the dripping fabric completely off. I lowered down until we were pressed up against each other, chest to sweaty chest, before grabbing his biceps and grunting with effort as I flipped us over within the next second. Surprised, Sauli’s eyes fluttered and looked down at me in a confused daze.

“What—” he started.

“—Ride me,” I demanded huskily, grabbing his ass cheeks.

Something flashed in Sauli’s eyes and I could practically see his face redden. I picked up the condom package from somewhere on the bed and held it up in front of his face with two fingers, raising a brow suggestively. Sauli’s lips twitched before he licked them and took the package from me, tearing
He sat up on my stomach and I shivered from his touch when his hand reached back and brushed over my dick at full attention before he slipped the condom onto me slowly, fingers lingering longer than necessary. The teasing bastard...

I held onto his hip with one hand and positioned myself underneath him with the other. Sauli kept his eyes locked with mine, both of us whimpering slightly when I nudged his entrance. I paused to affirm my grip on his hips before slowly pushing in, shifting and moaning with every inch. Sauli squeezed his eyes shut as he let out a long, soft moan. He tightened around me when I was fully inside of him and I nearly lost it then. I bit my lip as I waited for him to adjust. I moved inside him just slightly, experimentally, and Sauli shook his head stiffly with a loud groan, and suddenly, he wasn’t able to hold himself up anymore. He slowly lay down while I was still inside of him, and like he was boneless, draped himself over me. I let go of his hips and wrapped my arms around his heated abdomen, hugging my love close to me as he buried his face into my neck and panted softly.

“I’m ready,” Sauli mumbled hungrily into my skin after a silent minute, making me tingle inside of him.

I cupped his cheek and brought his mouth to mine as I gradually started to pull out almost completely. I kissed him sinfully to distract him from the pain until it was replaced with pleasure, as I thrust back inside, unhurriedly at first, but getting faster with every passing second. It took a minute to catch the pace and slide in and out easily, but once we both were adjusted and all discomfort vanished, I moaned into Sauli’s lips as I grabbed his ass cheeks, pushing his lower half down to meet my thrusts as I rammed into him suddenly harder.

“Oh god,” Sauli gasped against my mouth, breaking the searing kiss. “Fuck!”

Sauli gripped my shoulders tightly, nails digging into them as I just closed my eyes and threw my head back, pushing up into the blissful tightness. Sauli’s tongue was at my bared neck not a moment later, sucking and kissing my sweaty skin, surely leaving multiple hickeys for me to cover up later. I thrust into him particularly hard at one point and he hissed in pleasure as I hit the sweet spot, abruptly biting into my neck. I found my senses to be a mess and couldn’t figure out if that should’ve pained me or not, since all it did was send another pleasurable jolt straight to my cock.

“Baby, s-so good,” I nearly whimpered, taking in ragged breaths. “So tight...”

“Don’t fucking stop,” Sauli warned with his eyes squeezed shut as he pushed himself up into a sitting position again, holding himself up with his palms pressed hard against my tense waist.

I sank in deeper now with every jerk of my hips as Sauli dropped down continuously in time to meet my thrusts, moaning brokenly and clawing at my torso the entire time as he struggled to keep himself upright. His head was thrown back, neck glistening with sweat as he gulped. His dick bounced lightly as I pounded into him repeatedly. I took one hand off his ass to wrap my hand around his cock. Sauli choked on a moan and yelped out in surprise as I started smearing the pre-come and pumping him in time with my rhythmic thrusts.

I could barely hear anything except my own goddamn panting as I felt myself getting closer and closer. I was just completely gone, unaware of anything except my own pleasure and my love’s. My eyes were lustfully focused on Sauli’s disheveled body, not wanting to miss a moment of the ecstasy glowing from him. I was in awe that he looked like such a sexual mess because of me. It slipped my mind that I was still stroking and fisting Sauli’s cock mercilessly until he suddenly cried out, freezing on top of me as he came all over my chest, and witnessing that alone was enough to send me over the edge. I gasped just as my vision flashed white, and I arched painfully, nearly screaming with my orgasm. My body jerked and then stilled as I released inside of him.
I was brought out of my high, vision returning, when I felt Sauli’s chest press against mine again, smearing and trapping his own come between us. His flaming cheek stuck to my chest and he panted lightly, not saying a word. I shuddered from the intense afterglow heat radiating off him. A few groans made their way out of my throat as I tried to gently pull out and Sauli tightened painfully around my hyper-sensitive dick. He relaxed, noticing my discomfort, and winced when I pulled out completely. After a moment of catching my breath, I reached down without jostling Sauli and pulled off the irritating condom, trying to tie it securely with both hands over Sauli’s back, craning my neck to see what the hell I was doing over his blond tuft of hair. I tried not to disturb Sauli as I tied off the condom securely and tossed it to the side, hopefully hitting the trash can.

Sauli started kissing along my chest as I wrapped my legs around him and pulled him close, neither of us willing to speak yet. He peered up at me with tired, sated eyes and angled himself so he could bring his lips to mine. His hand found my bird’s nest of hair, running his hand through the sweaty locks soothingly.

“I love you,” I moaned softly against his mouth.

Sauli hummed contently in response as we turned to our sides and kissed lazily, slower and slower until he just stopped, falling asleep. I smiled and kissed his forehead, tucking his dreamy head under my chin as I pulled him snug against me, wrapping my arms and legs around him like a protective cage.

It wasn’t long before a presence swirled around in my head, pushing my mind to the side to accommodate itself. I winced from the discomfort and the odd weight of another intelligence pressing down on mine. I couldn’t see it, but I felt him materialize, and he was smirking at me, shaking his head smugly.

"See what I mean? Pathetic," he chuckled with satisfaction in my head. My arms immediately tightened around Sauli and I glared at the wall across from me. “This is what you call love… just smoke and mirrors to cover for blind lust. Congrats, you’ve fucked the blond again. You have no use for him now, right? You got what you secretly wanted… so why not hand him over to me now? Don’t worry, I’ll make sure the last sex he has is the best one.”

“Fuck off,” I whispered with a small hiss, trying not to wake Sauli. “We have a deal.”

He shrugged innocently. “Fine…” he said seductively, giving me a wicked glint. “I won’t kill him.”
Two Minds, One Body

Chapter Notes

This is 10,633 words. Longest I've eveeeeeeer done. Hold on to your hats, it's gonna be a bumpy ride. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sauli:

I woke up with a deep yawn, feeling my skin drag as I attempted to stretch out and failed, completely glued to Adam’s chest and the sheets beneath me. My arms were numb from being squished against Adam’s body and I felt oddly gross and sweaty, although I couldn’t really find myself to care because I was actually in the same bed as Adam again and his arms were trapping me against him tightly right now. A tired grin broke out on my face, feeling adored as I noticed how protective his embrace was even in his sleep.

I glanced up, only able to see Adam’s chest area, and frowned in confusion. Was that a blade of grass on his shoulder? What exactly did we do last night? It was a little fuzzy. I slowly peeled my face off the pillow, craning my neck, and my eyes widened, noticing for the first time the aftermath of our reunion sex. I observed the sweaty, tangled mess Adam and I were in. The impeccable bed sheets from last night now looked like an angry werewolf had been launched at them; completely erratic, wrapped around random limbs, hanging off the bed, and not to mention they were completely sticky and filthy… stained with our dried… uh… fluids and grass. Oh god, that was nasty. That explained why I was sticking to the sheets and Adam. We forgot to clean up afterwards, didn’t we? So gross…

I made a small sound of disgust and immediately tried to get up and move away from the mess, but Adam’s arms just tightened around me, and while sleeping, he groaned lightly in objection. I sighed and relaxed into the bed again, frowning up at Adam’s peaceful face. His hair was chaotic and caked with grass.

The smell of sex lingered in the room and hung heavily in the air. I felt filthy and uncomfortable, but I couldn’t get up unless Adam let me go.

“Adam,” I mumbled, pushing at his chest lightly with both squished hands. I heard him hum in response and annoyingly squeeze his shut eyes tighter. “We have to get up and clean.” All he did was growl disapprovingly at me, still not bothering to open his eyes. I exhaled sharply. “Well, at least let me up.”

Adam’s reply was to tighten his arms around me and squish me even tighter to him after barely managing out, “No.”

I clicked my tongue irritably and rolled my eyes. With a bit more effort, I shoved at his chest, trying to push myself away, and Adam just whined in protest, keeping his arms locked around me. He was being so adorable, and I would’ve loved to just stay in bed with him all day, but what we were laying in and what was sticking to us was disgusting.

I decided to just be frank with him. “Adam, you’ve got dried come all over you,” I said blankly.
Adam’s eyes finally whipped open and he blinked several times, adjusting to the light, before his gorgeous blue irises focused on mine. I gave him a tired look and gestured to the rest of the bed with my eyes and a slight side nod.

Still not letting me go, Adam craned his head up over his shoulder a bit to get a good look at what we’d done to the bed. His eyes immediately glinted with amusement, and he snorted and chuckled dryly before finally unlocking his arms around me and stretching them out over his head instead.

I sighed with relief and instantly sat up, holding myself stable with one arm behind me. My head spun from getting up too quickly, and I grimaced at the sheets and my own filthy self. A cold breeze abruptly brushed against me and my head darted toward the open glass door leading to the backyard. I opened my mouth and looked down at Adam to complain, but closed it again when I saw that he had his hands folded behind his head, eyes closed, and a warm smile spread from ear to ear. The corner of my lip lifted up at how content he looked. He didn’t care about the mess we’d made to his stuff or the cold, he was just happy that I was here, and I was ruining it by being in a hurry to leave.

I stared at Adam’s sleepy face for a couple minutes before sighing deeply and laying back down, resting my head on his collarbone, hugging his side, and throwing one leg over him. Adam’s strong arms were around me once again, and he kissed my gross hair in what I thought was thanks, before we both just relaxed into the sheets. I let my breathing get slower, and focused on Adam’s steady heartbeat, letting his warmth soothe me back to sleep.

A few hours later when we finally did get up and I managed to drag Adam out of bed, we didn’t bother to dress, and instead just threw his dirtied sheets into the washing machine before heading back to his room. I could feel Adam’s eyes on me as I walked to his open backyard door, hyperaware of my nudity, while he sat on his mattress. I stopped and peered over at him, not missing the way his eyes raked hungrily over my body. I followed his gaze and looked down at myself before scowling and grunting in disgust at the grass and other things stuck all over me.

“Can I use your shower?” I asked him tiredly, yawning.

“Oh I can join you,” Adam said, finally awake enough to acknowledge how nasty this was and grimacing at his own body.

Adam got up with a sigh and took my hand in his, pulling me to his bathroom, which was much grander than the one I used to have, yet he seemed to be completely oblivious to how much more extravagant it was. It was funny because he’d once freaked out over my bathroom. He turned on his shower that stretched from wall to wall, adjusted the heat while I marveled at the décor, and then tugged me inside with him.

For a while, we just stood in the spraying water, enjoying the steam and heat, but soon Adam started scrubbing me with the utmost care, not missing a single spot as he lathered me up. I blushed as he cleaned me off, wiping every kind of filth from last night. He was extremely gentle, but thorough, and he caressed my slippery body, kissing along my shoulders from behind. We didn’t talk, not even when I could feel Adam’s erection pressing against my ass as he massaged shampoo into my hair. It was actually so relaxing that I leaned my head back against his shoulder and closed my eyes as he continued running now only one hand through my sudsy hair.

He slowly wrapped his other arm around my waist and tightened his hold in my hair, starting to rub himself against me from behind. I could hear him panting quietly against my ear. It was harder to breathe with all the steam, and the erotic mood of the situation wasn’t helping either. I lolled my head on his shoulder enough to wetly kiss his jawline, brushing my tongue slowly over it. Adam shivered against me and turned his head to mold his sweet mouth to mine. He continued to gently buck against me as our tongues swept over each other more than our lips actually touched.
The sensually humid air and the pulsing heat from Adam’s naked body made my lower half stir in excitement, and a familiar tightness spread into my dick. Adam’s tongue would dance with mine before he’d slowly lick over my lips and dive into my mouth before starting all over again. The smoothness of the moist muscle brushing over mine and the way his hot breath brushed over my skin was driving me crazy.

Adam loudly moaned into my mouth and rubbed his cock against my ass particularly hard before breaking the kiss with a smack and turning me around to face him. I glanced up to see his fully-blown eyes and dripping hair for only a moment before he grabbed the backs of my thighs and hoisted me up against the wall. I gasped in surprise. I wrapped my legs around him for support and he pressed himself hard enough against me to the wall that I wouldn’t fall when he let go of my legs. He positioned his cock next to mine and started rubbing himself slowly up against it. I moaned and threw my arms against the tiled wall, suddenly needing the extra support to keep me from toppling over to the side.

“Come here,” Adam murmured, taking one of my hands off the tiles and wrapping it around both of our dicks.

He put both of his warm hands over my one and started moving them altogether up and down both of our lengths. The friction of rubbing against each other and our hands moving against the rhythm was unbearable. Adam thrust up lightly in time as we jacked ourselves off, starting to pant heavily. My ears were ringing and I could feel my lower belly start to coil tighter with every brush on my skin. The sensations were all too much and even more heightened by the humid air around us. The moans just ripped uncontrollably out of my mouth often while Adam grunted every now and then in pleasure. It wasn’t long before my body froze up, my vision decked out with stars, and I released the uncomfortable tightness, coming all over our hands and stomachs. Adam watched and stiffened. With a long, dragged out moan, he followed me into the high.

After catching our breath, Adam slowly let me down back into a standing position, but kept his hands on my waist, and for good reason too considering my legs felt like soggy noodles. It took a long minute to get off the high, and time passed slowly when Adam’s mouth was on mine again, kissing me lazily.

I broke away after a few minutes and muttered, “And now we have to clean up all over again.”

Adam chuckled huskily, glancing down at the new mess we made on ourselves.

I cleansed him this time, washing him gently, scrubbing his body, the works. We’d stop every few seconds to ravage each other’s mouths and soaked bodies, but that was beside the point. The total shower felt like it was over an hour long with the way we were doing it. I looked like a prune by the time we finally left the soppy bathroom and got dressed after bringing up the luggage from the garage. We both put on simple sweatpants and that was it. It was too hot to dress up, plus what was the point? We’d probably take these off too soon enough.

“Want some breakfast, baby?” Adam asked over his shoulder as we made our way down the hall to the kitchen. It was the afternoon, but whatever.

“Yes, please, I’m starved,” I replied enthusiastically, staring at his ass only briefly.

We entered the ultra-modern kitchen and I was slightly taken aback by it all, especially the gorgeous granite countertops that sparkled when the light hit them right.

Adam asked me what I wanted, but I told him that it didn’t matter, so we settled for some fiber-filled
cereal. We ate in peace for a while, not talking much, and I kept taking sneak peaks at Adam’s chest, still marvelling at how much healthier he looked on the outside. When we were finished, I kissed Adam’s nose and insisted on washing the bowls as he got up to get a bottle of “breakfast wine,” as he called it.

As I gathered up the dishes, my foot suddenly caught in the curled corner of a rug by the island counter, and I tripped, dropping the bowls in order to catch myself on the counter edge before I face-planted. I cringed when the horrid sounds of china shattering filled the room and the pieces flew in every direction. My heart pounded as I turned in time to see Adam whip around with a bottle of wine in his hand from the cupboard and stare.

“What happened?” he asked, frowning at the broken bowls. Oh man, they’d looked damn expensive too.

“God, I’m so sorry, Adam,” I said quickly, scrambling down onto my knees to pick up the pieces. “I just tripped and—

Ouch!” I yelped as I attempted to pick up a big piece, only to have it cut into my palm. I dropped it again out of reflex and it shattered further, leaving a visible mark on his once-perfect hardwood flooring. “Shit,” I cursed under my breath.

I heard Adam groan as he walked over to me. “Stop, you’re just making it worse.” He kneeled down beside me after placing the wine bottle on the counter and grabbing a small broom. “It’s not that hard.” He waved the broom’s dustpan in front of my face.

“Oh, come on,” I said as I stood up to make room for Adam to clean. “I’m not a child. I know.”

“Yeah, well, you’re acting like one,” Adam mumbled calmly from the ground. “You don’t just pick it up with your bare hands. Don’t be stupid.”

His tone wasn’t all that mean, but it still pissed me off.

I scoffed. “You don’t have to lecture me like Mika,” I muttered lowly and rolled my eyes.

I saw Adam’s back tense slightly. “Excuse me?” he asked as he turned his head toward me with his eyebrows shot up accusingly, giving me an annoyed look. It just kind of pissed me off.

“You’re acting like Mika,” I said without a care, glaring a little. “My crazy ex… Remember? He was a know-it-all.”

“Oh, really?” Adam said as he stood up tensely, chucking the broom down and leaving the broken pieces all over the floor. “You’re comparing me to your ex?” he shook his head in disappointment before saying, “Tell me, did your Mika ever take you into his own home to keep you from being on the streets?”

“As a matter of fact, he did,” I challenged, crossing my arms. “You’re a lot like him… and I’m not sure that’s a good thing considering how that ended up.”

Adam’s eyes narrowed and he huffed.

“He cheated on you and broke your heart,” Adam muttered at the ground. “I didn’t.”

“I got over that fast,” I insisted. “And, you broke my heart too, but it stayed like that for years.”

Adam glared at me. “The difference is… I practically gave up everything so you could be happy. I did for your benefit, not mine.”
“No, the difference is, what he did was what was best for the both of us. He never just got up and disappeared while I was dying, with some sick idea in mind that it would be good for me. Guess that makes him better than you, huh?” I scoffed.

“Can you seriously stop?” Adam said, exasperated. “We’ve talked about this. I thought it’d be best for you. End of story. Move on.”

The fact that Adam still thought he did me a favor by letting me think he was dead was making my blood boil. How could he assume that I could just forget about the years of issues he left me with and move on? I wasted such a youthful decade of my life depressed because of him, and for no reason because apparently, he was fine and living it up.

“And what the hell did you give up?” I barked, ignoring what he just said. “I threw away a future so I could have you and then you just vanished, leaving me with shit nothing. All you ever were was selfish. I sacrificed everything, including nearly my own life for yours. If it weren’t for me getting you out of your stupid, pathetic emo self, you’d really be dead!”

Adam looked like I’d just slapped him. I heard him gasp slightly and his eyes widened with hurt. I knew I was going to hate myself later for taking it too far just now as he stared at me with fiery pain in his eyes for a minute, but I didn’t back down, and eventually, he sighed depressingly, releasing the tension in the air.

“Is that how you really feel…?” he mumbled, now gazing at the ground, voice so quiet I had to strain to hear him. I could see his eyes moisten. “I’m sorry you think so poorly of me. I’d just wanted to protect you.”

“Protect me?” I nearly yelled. “From what, exactly?!”

He winced at my loud tone, clearly getting annoyed by it, but he didn’t answer. He just groaned in exasperation and turned away, grabbing the wine bottle by the neck and swallowing a big chug of it as some sort of support.

“From what?!” I yelled again, not letting go of it. “Stop ignoring me, jackass!”

I jumped when Adam abruptly smashed the nearly full bottle of wine against the edge of the counter in frustration. “Would you just drop it already?” he begged.

I stared at the bottle shards and wine pooling all over the floor and staining his pants in shock. “Holy shit, when did you become your father?” I muttered unthinkingly.

Adam’s eyes widened. He gaped at me, appalled. “What… did you just say?”

“You’re just like your father,” I spat in defiance, knowing fully well this would cost me. I’d taken it too far before, but now, I was just asking for it.

“My father…” Adam said quietly, like the eye of the storm, “was the lowest piece of scum on the face of this planet. He abused. He raped. He murdered. Is that really what you think of me, Sauli? Is it?”

I opened my mouth to speak, but Adam interrupted me.

“I’m not just letting him do this, shut up!” Adam randomly barked out of nowhere, not even looking at me.

What the fuck?
I threw him an irritated grimace. “Who the hell are you talking to?”

“No one,” Adam spat with a groan, waving his hand dismissively, and sloshing around in the wine.

“Uh-huh. Okay, whatever.” I rolled my eyes.

Adam shook his head in disbelief at me. His tone was clipped as he said, “What’s gotten into you? You have no right to speak to me like this.”

“Oh,” I scoffed sarcastically. “Sorry. Forgot you’re this almighty celebrity that everyone worships. Pardon me not sucking up to your ass.”

Adam scowled. “Listen to you! No wonder Mika cheated on you, and you know what—” He cut off and his face suddenly went pale, looking past me like he’d just seen a ghost. He froze for a moment with fear all over his face before he blurted at the air, “No! I don’t want you to take care of this! Don’t—”

He cut off again with a small wince, squeezing his eyes shut. His face relaxed for a quick moment before it tensed up again, and his eyes flashed open, glaring daggers straight at me. I just stared at him in confusion. The energy in his expressive eyes felt odd.

“Yeah, um, can you stop acting like a psycho?” I huffed, irritated that he kept addressing someone other than me, when clearly, there was no else around.

“Say that again, you little fucking bastard,” Adam hissed, stepping forward and crunching glass under his bare foot.

My eyes widened, mouth popping open slightly. He’d never spoken to me like that before. His tone sent chills down my spine. He didn’t sound the same anymore. His entire aura changed in that second. What went from frustrated and hurt vibes was now just pure rage and hatred coming off of him. My next quick-tongued reply was stuck in my throat.

“Are you… okay?” I asked cautiously instead, not able to tear my eyes from the fire and something else I didn’t even recognize in him burning in his.

I felt like the small one now.

“Oh, what’s this?” he cackled, and stepped closer still, crunching more glass under his feet like it was nothing, eyes glinting. “Where’d your tough guy act go? You’re nothing but weak talk.”

I fought the urge to back away and instead hissed, “Shut the fuck up—”

I didn’t even get a chance to finish before he exploded and was in my face within a second. I heard the slap and went blind for a split second before I felt it. But, when I did feel it, I was cowered over the counter edge, holding on with my forearms to keep myself upright, and staring at the ground in disbelief at what’d he just done, my eyes stinging almost as painfully as my cheek.

“You really need to learn some fucking manners,” Adam growled, sounding… well, not like Adam. His voice was the same, but there were underlying tones that didn’t fit his usual. I heard him crack his knuckles.

“Fuck you. Ass… hole!” I yelled, lashing out blindly to shove him back, but Adam’s hand clutched my neck in the next second and his body pinned mine against the counter. I peered up only to see that Adam’s eyes had narrowed into slits, predatorily glaring down at me.
“Unless you can figure out how to properly use that mouth of yours,” he hissed into my face, constricting his fingers around my throat, “I’m going to tear you limb from limb.” His voice was menacing and low as his nails dug into my throat. His eyes left mine for a moment to rake over my bare chest before glancing back at me and licking his lips.

My eyes widened and my head rang in alarm. I coughed from his grip and started to panic. Something was definitely wrong with him.

“Let me go!” I screamed, and acting strictly from reflex, I suddenly shoved my knee up into his crotch.

Adam hissed in pain, letting go of my neck for a brief moment to cringe. I took the opportunity to shove his face away with my palm before bolting out of the kitchen and down the hallway. The sounds that registered in my head were my pounding heart, and Adam’s angry yells and furious footsteps that were slapping against the ground faster than mine as he chased after me. I didn’t dare look back to see how close he was as I sprinted down the hall, and honestly, I was fucking terrified for my life.

I ran into his bedroom and slammed the door shut, locking it just as Adam’s body rammed into it from the other side, shaking the entire frame. I gasped and backed away hurriedly, tripping and falling onto my ass near the edge of the bed. I panted hard and watched with horrified eyes as Adam kept smashing his body against the door, trying to break the damn thing down. I heard him scream in frustration with every failed attempt and had to cover my ears with my shaking hands because it chilling me to the bone.

“I’LL KILL YOU!” I heard him shriek from behind the door, rattling the knob before plowing himself into the wood again.

I pulled my knees to my chest and shook, squeezing my eyes shut, and only praying that he couldn’t get past that door. Tears were brimming over my eyes just from the sheer terror of the situation. I felt like I was reliving the horror that Adam had faced with his father all those years ago. Was this the same petrified feeling he’d dealt with on a daily basis? I couldn’t imagine going through this constantly. I’d rather be dead as well. Now I was realizing how much I’d hurt him earlier by saying those things to him.

What the fuck just happened to him? My mind kept hurriedly replaying all the amazing moments from last night and just earlier today. What went wrong? Did I upset him to the point of no return? How could he snap and threaten so seriously to kill me? What the hell was wrong with him?!

I yelped in surprise when the lock suddenly broke and the door whipped open, smashing against the wall. Adam stormed in and looked around the room angrily until his wicked eyes landed on me and narrowed. His lip twitched as he took in my vulnerable position and he made his way over me, almost snickering.

“Adam, please stop!” I whimpered, covering my head as he approached, curling up into myself as much as I could. “I’m sorry!”

I heard him drop to his knees in front of me, forcefully pulling my defensive arms away before roughly grabbing my jaw and forcing me to look at him with my wet eyes. My hands flew to his wrist, digging my nails in as hard as I could, trying to get his fingers off my face, but he didn’t even seem to notice what should’ve been causing him pain. Adam’s blue irises glinted and swirled with something, making them unrecognizable as they bore into mine.

What he said next froze the blood in my veins and made the hairs on my arms stand up.
“I’m not Adam,” he purred devilishly, his breath brushing over my face. The slow grin that spread across his face was slanted and it was an expression I’d never seen on Adam before.

My heart stopped for a split second and goosebumps prickled up all over me.

What the…?

“Adam, what the hell are you talking about?!” I barely managed without croaking. Oh my god, he was a psycho.

Adam suddenly froze and his eyebrows shot up, giving me a sarcastically accusing look before he let go of my jaw with a short, abrupt, and obnoxious laugh. All of his rage dissipated as fast as it’d appeared.

“Oh, this is gold,” Adam chuckled wickedly, dragging his nails harshly through my scalp before taking a fistful of my hair and pulling so hard, I saw white for a split-second. I made noises of severe pain and clawed viciously at his hand, but again, he didn’t even acknowledge it. “He hasn’t even told you yet?”

He jerked my head to each side with my hair, causing me to yell out in annoyance and pain before he suddenly let go. I scrambled back a little, trying to get far enough away that his hand wasn’t within range, but he clenched my ankle instead before I got out of reach as he shook his head in amusement to himself, not even paying attention to me and my frantic self.

“Adam, seriously,” I whimpered. “What the actual fuck? You’re scaring me.” I was afraid to kick off his grip on my ankle, fearing the worst if I did.

Adam refocused on me, the humor in his eyes disappeared for a second, replaced by burning hatred. He snapped, “Stop calling me by that despicable name,” furious energy randomly back again. The slightest thing kept setting him off. He dug his nails into my ankle and jerked me closer to him again.

“Huh?” I squeaked, ignoring the pain in my leg and gripping the carpet as a lifeline behind me. I was so completely lost. “What do you mean?”

“What do you mean?” Adam mocked and let go of my ankle, pursing his lower lip at me. “This is perfect,” he mused. He laughed with an irritating cockiness in his voice that made me want to yell at him for taking this like it was a joke when, in reality, I could have him arrested right now. He noticed my glare and raised a warning eyebrow at me. “I’ll deal with you properly later. It’ll make it all the more enjoyable for me if you know. He has to tell you first. Oh, this is going to be great.”

“Tell me what? Who?!”

“Your boyfriend, of course, Blondie,” he taunted before closing his eyes and smirking. “Why don’t you ask him yourself?”

I was completely and utterly lost because none of what he was saying made any fucking sense whatsoever, and I was almost sure that Adam was mentally deranged. Why the hell was he referring to himself in third person?

I watched with bewilderment as Adam’s posture relaxed suddenly and his eyes opened, looking around in confusion for a moment before landing on my petrified figure and widening, not in a teasing and wicked manner, but more like… concern. The little abnormal twinkles in his eyes and odd facial expressions were gone as well, including the weird energy that’d been coming off of him.

“Oh no…” Adam muttered in his normal voice, no chillingly purred tone.
He reached out for me and I scrambled back as far as I could before my back hit the edge of the bed and I screamed, “Don’t you fucking dare touch me!”

Adam’s hand froze mid-air and he dropped it, biting his lip, like he was unsure how to deal with me. “Sauli?” he murmured quietly, worry filling his eyes.

“I demand a fucking explanation for what you just said.” I was still shaking, totally anticipating another attack.

Adam’s brow furrowed, and I was starting to feel somewhat silly with how high-strung I was compared to his calm energy. His voice was guarded as he said, “I have no clue what you’re talking about. What did I say?”

I was puzzled. My jaw popped open slightly. “Y—you don’t remember?”

“No, but are you okay?” Adam asked sincerely, shuffling closer to me, but still far enough that I couldn’t lash out at him. “Did he—I hurt you?”

My stomach flipped. “You just said hel!” I screamed. I sighed in exasperation and tried again, trying not to blow up at him because that would get me pummeled again. My voice was shaky as I tried to evenly say, “Adam, what the fuck is going on?! Tell me now or I swear I’m leaving right this minute.”

“Go ahead,” he mumbled, scowling at the ground before my feet. “Leave.”

Stunned and annoyed that he was willing to get rid of me that fast, I yelled in disbelief, “Adam!”

Adam stared up at me hopelessly. “I’m sorry. I can’t tell you. You’ll think I’m crazy.”

“Not any more than I already do,” I muttered under my breath before continuing louder, “Please. Just don’t let me leave here terrified of you. You’re supposed to be able to trust me and tell me everything.”

Adam searched my wide eyes for a minute. “Okay,” he sighed, surrendering. “But, please hear me out first before you call the police or something.” He peered at my still nervous face sadly and mumbled, “And please stop looking at me like I’m a vile monster… it’s breaking my heart.”

I nodded stiffly once, not trusting my voice, and I tried to ignore the way his miserable tone made my heart clench and willed me to reach out for him. I exhaled a deep, shaky breath and urged my body to stop shaking.

“Do you remember when you were in a coma?” he asked quietly. I nodded jerkily, wondering where he was going with this. “I’m sure you know that they tried to kick me out for not being your real family, and that they were going to go ahead and take you off life support anyway.”

“What does that have to do with anything?” I asked, irritated, not wanting to hear such a horrible story again.

Adam shifted, sitting cross legged, playing with the carpet nervously as he continued, “They tried to force me out, setting their guards on me. I was so panicked and angry for a minute that I felt completely helpless…” He peered up at me from under his lashes.

I stared back with apprehension “And…?”

Adam sighed and stared hard at the ground.
“That was the first time it happened,” he muttered.

“What?” I asked, lost.

“I heard a voice just before I lost control of my body long enough to lash out at everyone.”

My eyebrows shot up before furrowing in confusion. “Adam, that doesn’t—”

“—Just hear me out,” he pleaded, raising his palms out toward me. “It didn’t stop there. This thing… this person… talked to me at random times, mostly when I was highly stressed, and sometimes he could control me for just a few seconds. I still don’t know why or what causes it.” I gaped at him with a skeptical expression. “At first, I thought maybe he was some sort of protector because he’d saved my ass a few times, but no… I couldn’t have been more wrong. He is ruthless and he despises me.”

“I—” I tried, but Adam shook his head at me.

“Before you say anything, just… please, let me finish,” he begged. “I ignored him over the years, but instead of going away, it got worse. I found that I was starting to be able to respond to him, his voice became clearer in my head, and he was able to take over my body longer. It’s like there’s a whole other person inside of me…”

He looked up to gauge my reaction, and I struggled to keep my face blank.

“Go on,” I forced out, trying to keep my voice level and not cynical.

“It got more severe, but it also got less frequent as the years went by for some reason when I moved on from my teenage years. I had to be very careful when I became famous. It’s hard to lock him away when I have no idea what triggers him. I couldn’t risk having him out now that I was in the public eye because I don’t know what he does when he’s out,” Adam mumbled, sounding shaken. “I’m buried in my own head when he takes over, like… sleeping. I just suddenly wake up somewhere and could only pray that he didn’t hurt anyone.”

Adam sighed and gazed at me intently, studying me before he went on, “But now, you came back and he suddenly took over again… twice now. That hasn’t happened in over a year. I don’t think you should stay here with me anymore. It’s dangerous. He wants to hurt you. He even told me so. He enjoys my pain at seeing you suffer more than he does yours.”

We were silent for a minute after that. I couldn’t stop staring carefully at him. What the hell happened to my Adam?

“You made a deal… with a voice in your head… oh…” I finally mumbled, feeling dizzy.

“Look, I know it’s ridiculous, but he’s real and he’s the one who’s scaring you, not me,” Adam insisted. “All I know is that my mind works differently than yours, I just don’t understand why…”

I was stunned and creeped out, not to mention afraid of him.
“What the fuck…” I barely managed out. “You have voices in your head… and they make you do bad things…” Everything that left my mouth just kept confirming his insanity.

“Just one voice and he does those things, not me.”

Oh, like that made it better.

“Adam…” I said slowly, eyeing him. “This is serious… You can’t keep ignoring it. You need professional help.”

Adam’s eyes whipped up at me and he snapped, “I’m not crazy. I don’t need a therapist!”

“Whoa.” I rose up my hands cautiously. “It’s okay, calm down.” I was terrified that he was going to go psycho again and attack me. “But Adam…” I said, almost sugary like I was talking to an angry toddler. “There can’t be another person living inside of you, honey… It’s not possible. Let me get you some help…”

“Oh my god,” Adam squeaked. “Even you just don’t get it.” He buried his face into his tense hands. “It is possible and it’s ruined so much for me. I never told anyone because I was afraid they’d react like you! I shouldn’t have even told you. I should’ve just let you leave thinking I’d become a monster,” he mumbled into his palms, voice breaking at several points. He suddenly got up to his knees and grabbed my biceps, staring frantically at and shaking me. “I am not crazy, Sauli. Please, please believe me.”

“Okay, okay!” I said quickly, still not sure what to make of this. I forced myself to gently brush his hands off of me instead of freaking out and punching him off. “Are you sure you’re not bi-polar or something?”

Adam gave me a look. “I’m sure. This is completely different. I even thought I was schizophrenic at one point, but none of it matched up, so I don’t know… And now, I don’t think I want to know. I’m scared.”

I sighed, trying to wrap my head around this. He seemed to be telling the truth. I’d never seen such desperation to get me to understand without judging him.

“So, if you’re saying that this… person can take over your body and use it as his own…” I said slowly. “Then… back at the hotel, that was… him?”

“Yeah…” Adam nodded, dreading this. That explained who I heard him talking to behind the door. “He’s the one who… hit you. He gets pissed off and offended when you get mad. Speaking of which, what did he do this time? He didn’t hurt you, did he?”

I could still feel the phantom whip of his palm burning in my cheek. I looked up at Adam’s painfully concerned and worried eyes and realized I couldn’t tell him. He was already tormented by this enough. If what he was saying was true, then I wasn’t going to let that… thing… person… whatever… in his head get the satisfaction of seeing Adam tortured by my pain.

“Not really…” I mumbled. “He chased me in here, but stopped when he realized that I had no idea who he was. And then… Well, he told me to ask you about him and insisted I don’t call him by your name.”

It was making my mind whirl to keep switching from “you” and “him” when referring to the same damn person. It was ridiculous that I even had to because it barely made any fucking sense.

Adam rolled his eyes. “Yeah, he hates me, and makes sure to tell me that all the time. The feeling is
mutual. Neither of us enjoy being stuck together, so why are we?” He shook his head in agitation. I just watched him, fascinated that he was able to speak about this like it was completely normal. “He can talk to me in my head while I’m present, like right now, except he’s not here. If he’s talking to me, he can see what’s going on through my eyes, sees and hears everything I do, but I can’t see what’s happening or talk to him while he’s out, and I don’t know why. I just sleep in the darkness and so does he, but unlike me, he can choose to wake up and see with me. And because of all that, I have no memory of what he does, but he shares my memories. Is this making sense?”

I blinked, trying to take that all in.

“Sort of… Let me get this straight…” I said slowly, giving him the benefit of the doubt. “If you’re in control, he can talk to you in your head, see what you see, and have your memories as well if he so chooses to?” Adam nodded, looking hopeful that I was being open-minded about this. “But… on the flipside, if he’s out, you’re just like what, unconscious?”

“Like sleeping without dreaming,” Adam explained. “Just dormant.”

“Okay… and you can’t talk to him, see anything, or remember what he did… Why is that? Why can he?”

“I have no clue…” Adam mumbled. “I wish I did.”

It was quiet for a long moment after that.

“Adam, let me help you,” I said, pleading with my eyes. Adam opened his mouth to object, but I continued quickly, “Without getting you a therapist, don’t worry. It’s just that, I’m not going to leave you here to suffer alone. Maybe I can do something to help. At least now I know what’s going on and I’m prepared.”

“But, what if he comes out and attacks you?” Adam asked with a groan, putting his head in his hands again. “I don’t know what causes it!”

“It’s okay,” I said reassuringly, reaching out and placing my hand comfortingly on his knee. “I can handle it now that I know it’s not actually you. That was the worst part of it, thinking you were actually becoming abusive.”

“It’s still my body that hit you though,” Adam mumbled depressingly. “I can’t handle knowing that.”

“Adam, stop it,” I insisted. “I’m fine. You said it yourself. He wants to see you suffer. Why are you letting him win?”

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The ride to wherever the limo driver was taking us was silent. I was still blown away by the fact that I was in a limo, even though it normally wouldn’t have been a big deal. I was nearly bouncing in my seat with excitement and touched every random button I could find while Adam, dressed in an expensive-looking suit jacket and leopard-print pants, acted like he’d gotten into a regular taxi, and just stared out the window. This was probably like a usual ride for him. How many other great perks did he get? I mean, just look at his clothes. It must be fun to be rich. Exactly how famous was he? I’d thought he was some American Idol reject, admittedly.

“Is he there…” I asked Adam quietly across from him, breaking the amicable silence. His head turned toward me from the window.

Adam’s lip twitched upward, giving me a sad smile, knowing what I was referring to. “No,” he
mumbled. “He has no reason to be. He doesn’t give a shit about my career and hates seeing people adore me, so he stays away when I’m working. That or he appears in my head just to say hateful things about every rude person I meet and me.” He rolled his eyes, and then assured me, “My mind is mine and quiet apart from my own thoughts… for the time being.”

I nodded, eyeing him curiously. “Okay, good,” I said, looking out the window again.

After a moment, I heard Adam chuckle quietly to himself. I turned in time to see him shaking his head with an irritated smile.

He caught me staring in confusion. “I sound so sane,” Adam explained. “I hear a voice inside my head that tells me horrible things. Put that in the tabloids.”

I forced a smile, but couldn’t get myself to laugh at that. If something like that got out, Adam’s reputation would be in jeopardy and his career would be ruined.

The limo rolled to a stop and I could immediately hear cheering from outside. My eyes widened when Adam just smiled at me in encouragement. After a moment, the driver opened Adam’s side of the limo. Adam climbed out enthusiastically and thanked the driver. I scrambled to get to the door, only to freeze just before making it out, watching Adam only take so many steps before getting swarmed by dozens of fans in a flash. I was honestly taken aback by the level of fame he seemed to have.

My heart started to pound, instantly worried and nervous for him. I remembered my Adam being horrified in crowds and by any attention drawn to him, literally frozen stiff at times. I felt horrible for him right now. But… Adam was grinning happily. I stared in wonder, eyebrows rising up in bewilderment. He was laughing carelessly and throwing dazzling smiles at every screaming face. He chatted up the fans, treating them generously, and even got them to calm down by just being his warm, soothing self. He hugged many of them, took pictures, thanked them sincerely, and was just so amazingly cheerful.

There was no hint of nerves, not a tense muscle in his back, nothing like the nervous, jumpy wreck I once knew that hid his face whenever someone walked by. What happened to him over the years…? He changed so much… He was almost nothing like the Adam I knew ten years ago… and I really wasn’t sure if that was a good or bad thing.

Adam turned, craning his neck over the flailing heads and jumping bodies to beam at me, motioning me playfully to get out of the limo. Automatically, I did as he asked and then stood awkwardly next to the limo, not really knowing what to do. Everyone followed Adam’s loving gaze and stared at me, some eyes widening.

Adam maneuvered through the crowd and walked up to me before throwing his arm around my waist, tucking me protectively close to his side. Everyone went wild, screaming out questions and random sounds of excitement. I couldn’t understand a single word. Adam laughed again while I was shocked by the whole ordeal. He pulled me through the crowd, ignoring the questions about his “new man candy”. I kept flinching when people would randomly touch or try to grope me, but Adam didn’t even twitch once. And of course, the press was going to get a kick out of this. I forgot that this was the first time people were seeing me with him officially.

We arrived inside the building, fans locked out, and now a bunch of people in suits and passes swarmed Adam, giving him directions and instructions. He listened intently to everyone before asking if I could join in the conference. Upon being rejected access for me, Adam sighed and pressed a kiss against my forehead before apologizing a few times and asking me to wait in the safe lobby, away from the rabid women.
I sat on a luxurious lobby sofa and waited for almost an hour, just tapping my foot to keep myself sane. I assumed the meeting was over when Adam emerged from the doorway, surrounded by cameras and people babbling unintelligibly. At this point, I would’ve lost all patience and blown up at them, so you could imagine how amazed I was by Adam’s composure. He was still all smiles and jokes, like there was nothing wrong with his life at the moment, like his entire childhood hadn’t been a complete and utter nightmare. He was hiding everything under that foolproof mask and it broke my heart. I had to resist getting up and yelling at everyone to get away from him.

I shook my head in awe. Adam thanked and kindly dismissed the photographers before making his way over to me as I stood up to greet him. He reached me and gave me a warm, genuine smile of apology. I mirrored him.

“Sorry for making you wait, baby,” Adam said tiredly with a sigh. “I didn’t know they wouldn’t let you in.”

“It’s okay, don’t worry about it.” I shrugged. “So, how’d it go?”

“Great, I guess. Naturally, they asked about you…” Adam smirked, taking my hand as we started to walk toward the door.

My eyes widened as I peered up at him. “What did you say?” I asked nervously.

“Don’t worry.” Adam chuckled. “I just said you were someone special that I met in Finland recently. I left out how we actually met… I figured you’d prefer that as well.”

“Of course,” I agreed solemnly.

***

“Oh, fuck!” I exclaimed, jerking my hand out of the drawer I’d been looking for a knife in. Guess I found one. Fuck me for being an idiot and reaching in there so carelessly. I hissed and examined the gash in the side of my wrist.

Adam was immediately at my side, leaving the bowl of salad he’d been washing for our dinner.

“Are you okay?” Adam asked, worried.

I held up my arm to him, wincing a little. Adam took my forearm gently and examined the thin gash.

“You really should stop self-harming,” Adam mused with humor, relaxing when realizing that although long, it wasn’t a particularly deep cut. Adam reached into the drawer and pulled out the huge knife by himself, giving me a fake disappointed look.

I was about to make a sarcastic comment, but stopped when Adam’s eyes immediately widened slightly as blood started oozing out of the gash. He suddenly dropped the knife and it clattered loudly on the floor. His face paled, and for a second, his eyes went distant before refocusing and color returned back to his cheeks. Adam’s grip on my forearm tightened and he dug his nails into my skin.

“Oh, geez, Adam,” I said, wincing from the pang of his nails. “It’s just blood. Relax,”

Adam’s pupils had dilated and his eyes were glazed over. His grip on me didn’t loosen in the slightest. I was confused by his overreaction. I reached up to pull his hand off, but as soon as I contacted his skin, Adam’s eyes whipped over to mine and he gave me a sickly sweet smirk.

Out of nowhere, Adam harshly stuck my bloody wrist in his mouth and sucked on the cut. My jaw
dropped at what he was doing and my eyebrows shot up. What the actual fuck? His tongue darted out slid over the gash and over and over, lapping up the blood enthusiastically like it was aged wine. He dug his teeth into my skin much too hard, sucking painfully, and ripping his teeth off only to bite back in, like he was trying to tear the entire piece of flesh out.

“Adam, stop. That fucking hurts,” I complained with a hiss as I tried to tug my wrist out of his fucking mouth.

Despite the pain, my dick was twitching at his actions as his tongue skillfully flicked the slit of the gash, getting rid of every trace of blood. He chuckled lowly around my skin, wicked eyes peering up at me from under his lashes, watching me cringe and wince. I didn’t know if I wanted him to really stop, but I was sure he was about gnaw that chunk of skin off any minute now.

“Seriously, Ad—”

“—Not Adam…” he mused devilishly after pulling away with a smack, and finished with another long lick over the cut.

I stared up at the figure in front of me with wide eyes, finally noticing that strange aura surrounding me again. My breathing turned shallow when I saw the glint in his eyes as he smiled down fiendishly at me, still holding my wrist in a death grip. I gulped, feeling a fearful lump in my throat. Those eyes were unrecognizable, definitely not my Adam. This was a vile stranger.

“…You,” I squeaked, attempting to jerk my wrist away.

I wanted desperately to escape the close proximity. I knew this was a dangerous closeness, but just this person’s grip was somehow stronger than all of Adam ever was. His hold on my arm didn’t even budge as I strained to rip my wrist out of his grasp. I had no chance of leaving as he loomed over me, stepping closer.

“Me,” he affirmed in a mocking tone. “Hello, Blondie.” The non-Adam’s eyebrow twitched seductively as he gleamed down at me. “Glad you seem to know now.”

Ignoring the way he was looking me up and down like an animal longingly staring at a fresh meal hanging on the other side of their cage, I croaked, “What do you want from Adam?”

I was trying to distract him from molesting my body with his eyes, but also, I wanted some fucking answers that Adam didn’t have. Something told me that Adam wasn’t just acting like this. He was actually completely gone, and it was so fucking weird because this person was in the same goddamn body as Adam, and yet, I could tell it wasn’t him just by the smallest changes in behavior and expression. It made no sense. How the hell was this remotely possible?

He rolled his eyes, annoyed by my question. “From him?” he sneered. “Nothing.” This guy looked like he wanted to vomit just from the mere mention of Adam. Was I missing something? Did he hate everybody or was it just Adam in particular, and why?

“From you…” he continued, licking his lips as he eyed me sinfully. He leaned forward and I struggled to get away, failing miserably. His other hand snaked to my back and jerked me against him, chest to chest, locking me in place with my wrist still in his other grasp by his head. I shuddered when his teeth grazed against my earlobe.

“I want to tear you apart from the inside out,” he whispered in a smooth, icy tone, voice full of promise. “I want to watch you beg for mercy as I destroy your pretty little face piece by piece when I fuck you until your last breath.”
“You can’t,” I grunted, jerking my ear as far away to the side as possible, away from his lips. “You made a deal with Adam to leave me the fuck alone. Don’t tell me you’re that cowardly that you’ll break your promise?”

His eyes narrowed and he pulled his head back, obviously irritated by my lack of respect for him. After a moment, his eyes relaxed and the same deceiving glint filled them.

“My dear, I promised not to kill you,” he purred. “That’s all. I made no such deal that said I can’t still have you or do away with you any way I please.” I cringed in disgust as he leaned in and slowly dragged his tongue up from along my jaw to my cheek to prove his point before murmuring, “It’s not my fault your Adam didn’t bother with specifics. I can leave you hanging on by only a thread and I’d still have honored it.”

I gasped and whimpered, thrashing around, pushing at his chest with my free hand as I tried to escape, and ignoring the ache in my dick. My body still recognized and responded to Adam’s touch and voice, but my mind was fully aware that this wasn’t the man I loved. His grip around me tightened, rendering me useless.

“God, I can definitely tell what he sees in you now. You’re so tasty when you’re terrified,” he said casually, mockery lacing his voice. His tone dropped to a lower, more seductive level, lips inches from mine. “I practically live off of it.”

I spat on his lips in a desperate attempt to get him to back off. Big mistake.

He growled threateningly, eyes slitting. His snare on my wrist was gone in an instant, wiping his lips in disgust with his hand before it was suddenly clutching my throat in a death drip. I grabbed at his wrist with my hands, trying to pull away his suffocating grip. I coughed, wheezing from his extreme grasp. Where the hell did his strength come from? I could feel myself getting dizzy as his arm shook from how hard he was squeezing my airways, and his eyes were filled with zero mercy.

“Looks like I really do have to teach you some manners,” he hissed. “It’s infuriating how you think you can get away with this shit.”

I stared into the maniac’s eyes, searching for any hint of the man I desperately needed right now. “Adam, help,” I barely managed to beg his irises.

He chuckled with sick amusement, shaking his head, mood shifting again before saying, “Blondie, there’s no point. He’s gone. Really, don’t even bother. You look like an idiot.”

A few seconds passed with my throat still trapped in his clutches. I couldn’t fucking breathe in the slightest and I was getting lightheaded. Oh my god, I was going to die.

He pursed his lips sarcastically with fake pity. “You’re turning blue. How nice. That’s a pretty color on you,” he hummed.

He suddenly kicked the back of my knee with his heel, causing me to buckle slightly, and shoved me to the ground. He followed me down as I fell onto my back with my throat still gripped in his hand. My vision flashed white as the back of my head struck the ground, and I was winded from the impact, which wasn’t helping the fact that I was starting to lose consciousness from being choked by one hand. He straddled me, pinning me helplessly to the floor. My alarms were going off. This was seriously not good.

His hand suddenly left my throat, freeing my desperate airways, but before I could start gasping for
sweet air, I heard a muffled smack in the air as his knuckles collided with my cheek, whipping my head to the side. I cried out in pain, wincing at the burn, before I started gasping and coughing frantically, trying to fill my lungs with oxygen again.

He grabbed my jaw roughly and forced me to look up at his menacing self. “And if you ever call me Adam again, I’ll kill you. You can be sure of that. Deal or no deal,” he snarled, glaring down at me, digging his nails into my jaw.

“Then what—” I coughed again, sucking in big breaths of relief “—am I supposed to call you?” I wheezed, and tried to jerk my jaw out of his hold.

His grip on my on my face loosened, but he didn’t let go. I debated taking the opportunity to throw him off while I stared up fearfully at the face of my own love as he pondered my question for a long minute. He pursed his lips, deep in thought. I decided against it. I wouldn’t be able to shove him off anyway. He has some freaky, unreal strength. And, what would I do if I did manage to get him off? It’s not like I could get away. It would just piss him off further.

His expression seemed contemplative and taken aback slightly, like he wasn’t expecting me, or anybody for that matter, to ask for his name. Did he even have one?

“Dark,” he decided after a long time with a nod, stating it simply, not looking at me, like he was confirming it to himself mostly. “It feels right.”

“Dark,” I echoed sarcastically. Was he serious? That wasn’t a fucking name.

But, Dark’s eyes closed at the sound of me saying his name and he shuddered slightly, seemingly enjoying it, or even turned on by it.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” I muttered, stunned by his reaction.

Dark’s eyes whipped open and then narrowed into slits at me. Another freakish mood change… I was rewarded for my idiotic comment with the side of a fist smashing down onto my forehead twice. I winced from the pounding agony in my head, feeling like my brain just got rattled. My vision blurred for a moment and I bit my tongue to keep from yelling out in pain because I refused to start crying in front of this monster. I sucked up the screaming pain in my head, swallowed the lump in my throat, and glared up at him defiantly.

“Watch yourself, you little bitch,” Dark warned with a growl. “Don’t test my patience.”

Still recovering from the blow, I turned my head to the side and desperately glanced around the floor, mentally jumping for joy when I saw the knife Adam had dropped. I stretched my arm across the wood, trying to reach out for it, fingers brushing against the handle, only to be laughed at again.

“Really now, Blondie? A knife?” he snickered, licking his lips. “I dare you to do it. I don’t mind. Actually, I encourage it. Go ahead, cut up and mar your precious boyfriend’s body to defend yourself. I’m sure he’d love that.”

Oh fuck…I knew he was using some reverse psychology shit on me, but he was right. I couldn’t do it. No matter what this freak did to me, I couldn’t stand hurting his body. It was still Adam. If I did attack him to save my own ass, Adam would wake up and be crushed. Not because I’d hurt him, he wouldn’t care about himself, but because I’d actually been terrified enough of him to do it after I promised I could handle this. It would ruin him, and that was exactly what Dark wanted, but I refused to let this fucker win.

I was out of luck now. I couldn’t stop him from doing anything he wanted to me.
I gazed up at him fearfully as my arm retreated. Dark smirked crookedly at me.

“Good boy,” he murmured with the same sarcastic tone. “It’s so much nicer when you behave.” His nails started raking down my chest. “Now… let’s see what’s under these clothes with my own eyes.”

Panic settled low in my belly.

“You can’t rape me,” I abruptly blurted in a frantic voice. Dark paused and raised a challenging eyebrow. I continued fearlessly, “I’d rather you just killed me right now. I hate you. I’d much prefer death than having your disgusting self all over me.”

Dark’s face twitched, looking angry, but with something… sadder mixed in for a moment, but then his face settled back to normal, with just a glare plastered on it. I was expecting another hit, but nothing happened.

“Fine,” Dark spat after a minute of intense thinking, sitting straight up on top of me. He shrugged. “Actually, you just made this so much better.”

“What do you mean?” I demanded, fearing his answer.

He grinned wickedly at me. “It’s no fun if I take you right now and have you hate it. Your boyfriend wouldn’t be too upset knowing you’d been unwilling,” Dark explained with a devilish glow on his face. “In that case, I want you to enjoy yourself. I’m going to make you want me.” His eyes gleamed with anticipation as he stared down at me hungrily. “Then, I’ll claim you, own you, make you mine, and have you begging for me. That’ll kill your precious Adam.”

My expression was one of pure disgust with a horrified grimace washed upon my face.

“Yeah, keep dreaming,” I forced a chuckle, even though my heart was pounding at the images in my head. “That’s not going to happen,” I insisted surely.

Dark’s lip twitched in fiendish amusement at me.


I felt violated and mortified. He gave the mass another quick squeeze, causing me to jump, before winking tauntingly at me. I scowled hatefully at him. He just chuckled lowly in anticipation before closing his eyes.

A second later, I felt the weird energy around him and the air dissipate.

Chapter End Notes

Comments would be rewarding! This took a lot of thinking and time. Thanks, guys!
Memories

Chapter Notes

I'm not even gonna comment on how long it took to get this chapter up. Forgive me. 6,375 words for you. I like to keep track of every chapter's word count.

Also, for some reason, if you see two words crammed together where a space should be, ignore it. I can't fix it. It just gets posted like that even though it's perfectly fine in the original document. That's also why I never have paragraph indents. The formatting just gets messed up.

Other than that, enjoy! :) Leave a comment!

Adam:

I rubbed at my eyes as they flickered open. An unexpected, pleasurable tingling sensation was dancing in my core, and my skin felt completely flushed and burning to the touch. Confusion swept over me as I took in my surroundings, noticing that I’d never seen my kitchen from this low angle before. I realized I was sitting on the floor for whatever reason and—wait no, this was too soft to be the flooring, and flooring certainly didn’t rise and fall like it was breathing heavily beneath me. I blinked and tilted my head down curiously only to gasp when terrified blue eyes met mine. I was straddling Sauli’s lean body with my knees on either side of him, trapping him underneath me. I was shocked stiff for only a brief moment until Sauli squirmed uncomfortably.

Gears clicked into place and I scrambled to get off the poor guy. I pushed at the floor and threw myself off of him, landing on my ass next to him with a huff. I’d been crushing him with all my weight pressing down like that. Sauli immediately sat up and hugged his midsection tightly as he kicked at the floor in a desperate attempt to get away, wide eyes never leaving mine, until his back hit the counter, stopping his escape, and he cursed under his breath.

“Sauli?” I tried, startled by his reaction to me.

Sauli’s eyes darted all over me apprehensively when I spoke his name. He was trembling slightly and practically trying to melt into the counter the way he was pressed up against it, despite his obvious attempts to appear calm and collected. His brow furrowed when he noticed the worried expression on my face and the tentative way I half-reached out for him. I curled my fingers in forcefully and pulled my hand back, advising myself against touching him at the moment.

His tense body relaxed by the slightest degree, staring at me suspiciously but with recognition forming in his eyes as he whispered with extreme caution, “Adam?”

I tipped my head in affirmation, still trying to not to make sudden movements because it was clear now what had happened… and dread filled me because of it.

Sauli gave me one last look over before he let out a sigh of relief and slumped against the counter, burying his forehead in his palm and breathing heavily. I took that as a release and permission to move freely, and wasted no time in shuffling over to him on my knees.
“Baby, what did he do to you?” I asked miserably as I took Sauli’s face softly in both hands and turned it about, examining the damage. Sauli flinched from the unexpected contact, but made no move to stop me.

His cheeks were swelling up and already bruising. My stomach churned and a miserable feeling settled low. He beat him up again. Oh god… I stroked Sauli’s hurt face gently with my thumbs. My eyes stung slightly when he winced in pain from my touch. I dropped my guilty hands from his face and leaned forward, pressing soft kisses to his damaged cheeks.

I did this to him.

“I’m so sorry,” I whined before pressing a hard kiss to his forehead. I felt the moisture in my eyes start to brim.

Sauli stiffened when a tear hit his face and he pushed me back by the shoulders, but I didn’t even have time to feel a sting of rejection before he cupped either side of my face in his palms and gazed hard at my crumbling face with concern. His concern wasn’t even for his current condition, no. It was for mine. He was more upset by my reaction than by what my body had done to him. I wasn’t even surprised by this, only disappointed. I stared back at him, eyes jumping over every inch of his head, making sure there was nothing too serious. It was hard to bear seeing his face get more swollen and red by the second.

Sauli ran a soothing hand through my sweaty hair, shushing, “It’s okay, Adam. Don’t be upset. I’m okay.”

I shook my head at him, closing my eyes and feeling more tears stream down from the frustration of how much his statement bothered me. It was far from okay. I attacked him twice now. He could try to hide his terror and attempt to reassure me now that he was fine, but I’d seen the way he’d tried to scramble away from me the second he’d been able to.

I deserved to have Sauli file a restraining order against me. I deserved to have him removed at once from my psychopathic reach. I deserved to rot in jail for laying a finger on him without his permission. I didn’t care in the slightest if it had been technically me or not; it’d still been by my physical hand, and I could never rest easy knowing that Sauli had to witness and withstand the body of someone who promised to only ever love him batter him mercilessly. My body should be put in a straitjacket and dumped in a place where that maniac in my head couldn’t hurt him anymore.

“No, it’s not,” I croaked. “Don’t ever say that.”

Sauli’s face fell before his lips caught just next to my mouth, giving me a quick, tense kiss to calm me down. His thumb softly wiped away the tear track on my face and the tips of his fingers gently scratched the edge of my hair at the back of my neck.

He pulled away and insisted, “I’m fine.”

The scoff that jumped from my throat couldn’t be helped. I gently took his hands from my face and pushed them down toward his lap.

“Look at yourself,” I squeaked. You’re far from fine. I did this to you.”

Sauli sighed and touched his bruising face with his fingertips, and I mirrored him when he winced from the soreness. I shook my head at him, utterly annoyed when he suddenly just shrugged like these things just happen.

“No you didn’t. I know you didn’t hurt me,” he tried to assure me, taking my hand in his and
rubbing circles into the back. “Dark did. Plus, he didn’t do anything that bad. I’ll live.”

He offered me a small smile. I didn’t return it.

I just blinked at him, suddenly appalled. His sentences didn’t even register after the one word that kept ringing throughout my head. I ripped my hand from Sauli’s and he suddenly cringed in anticipation of a hit, and although it was barely noticeable and he recovered immediately, I still noted it. It was proof enough in that split second that he was still afraid of me and wasn’t saying so.

“You named that thing?” I sputtered in shock, so lost and actually offended.

Sauli’s brow knit together, appearing confused. “You mean Dark…? I didn’t name him. He insisted, as you can see,” he gestured at his appearance which made my stomach feel queasy, “that I call him that.”

I shook my head. “Of course I didn’t know. It’s not like I’d ever spend time learning his personal information,” I stated with a sneer, disgusted that the monster actually thought he even had a right to a name. “I want him gone.” My tone was something not to be argued with. Sauli remained quiet. I couldn’t help the twisted nonsensical pang of jealousy. I continued sarcastically after a minute, “Did he say anything else during your little get-together?”

Aside from my snarky voice, I still eyed his cheeks worriedly, not looking forward to the answer for my question.

Sauli ignored my tone. “Not really…”

I let out the breath I hadn’t realized I’d been holding nervously. My relief was short-lived when I heard an echo of a low chuckle ring throughout my head.

“Silly, silly, Adam. Being your…” he trailed off, and I could feel him pursing his lip in my mind as he thought of a term to use, “…roommate,” he settled for that word which made my blood boil, “and all, you really should’ve taken the time to get to know me… That information could’ve been more vital than you think. It’s not fair how I know so many details of you and even your memories as you experience them, yet you know nothing about me… know nothing of what I do when this body is mine…” He shrugged obnoxiously. “Too late now… Oh, and by the way, your so-called baby is lying to you.”

“Adam, are you okay?” Sauli snapped his fingers in front of my face, but I didn’t even blink. His voice sounded distant. “You look like you just saw a ghost.” He placed his hand firmly on my knee, which became the only thing that kept me from panicking at this moment. The hairs on the back of my neck were standing up. “Oh crap…” he finally realized. “He’s talking to you, isn’t he? Adam, don’t believe anything he’s saying to you. He’s lying.”

“Ha!” Dark barked, echoing deep within my mind. “I’m the one lying? Hilarious. Was this bitch always such a compulsive phony? I’m impressed. Of course, you’re slowly becoming gullible enough to believe anyone, including the tiny blond, tells you.” He snickered. “But who cares about my warnings? I’m nothing but a parasite hell-bent on ruining your life, right?” He rolled his eyes.

The smug, cocky tone in his voice was really starting to get on my nerves. He always acted like he was high and mighty and knew everything there was to know, and like being in my head was a burden to him. And how dare he call himself my roommate? Seriously? More like, sadistic nuisance of an intruder.
“Don’t worry though,” Dark continued, and I was suddenly glad he couldn’t actually read my thoughts. “I won’t kill your little chew toy no matter how irritating you are. I won’t even force myself on him. I won’t have to. He’ll want me soon enough. How would you feel if you knew your love desired the one thing that tortures you so? You’ll see that there’s no such thing as love, only lust. Humans are weak. That poor, pathetic fool…” Dark smirked arrogantly to himself. “And when he does give in, I get the satisfaction of ruining you mentally and him physically... if you know what I mean.”

My blood ran cold.

“Adam!” Sauli shook my shoulders when I still wasn’t responding. I broke out of my daze long enough to look down at Sauli, and my skin prickled in fear just imagining what Dark was planning to do to him.

“Why…?” I barely croaked, staring past Sauli, and starting to feel faint.


I felt Dark’s eyes narrow and his expression went completely serious, tone ice-cold. “Because if you’re going to force me to suffer like this, then I’ll do whatever I can to make sure you feel a fraction of the pain that I do every goddamn second. How’s that for revenge?”

“What are you…? What?” I winced, feeling painful jolts in my temples just from trying to understand what the hell he was talking about.

“Adam, what’s he saying?” Sauli asked, panic lacing his words as he took hold of my tense hands and squeezed hard.

“Nothing,” I squeaked and then cleared my throat, realizing that sitting here, staring off into the distance and speaking to the air, wasn’t helping Sauli’s fear of me being a psychopath.

Dark forced a humorless laugh. “Oh wow, you too? Is this whole relationship based on lies? You know very well that it was much more than just nothing. Actually, no… you probably have no clue. It’s always nothing to you…” There was an underlying tone to that, something frustrated.

“If it’s about his stupid plan to seduce and have his way with me, or whatever his bullshit idea is, I already know, and it’s not going to happen,” Sauli insisted.

Dark scoffed with slight dry humor. He was probably offended that Sauli wasn’t taking him seriously. I wished that he’d fucking go dormant already and leave me alone with Sauli instead of sitting there all conscious and eavesdropping like this.

I blinked down at Sauli. “You know?”

He nodded.

“Then why haven’t you run out the door screaming yet?” I asked, honestly surprised that it’d never happened so far.

Sauli gave me a worn-out and annoyed look.

“Really, Adam?” he asked tiredly, like we’ve had this conversation a thousand times. “After all we’ve been through, you still expect me to get up and prance out of here? Are you stupid? We’ve lived through way worse, I think. This is nothing compared to before. And I’m not going to just leave you here with that—” Dark growled from the lack of respect directed at him “—haunting you.”
He said it as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

As much as his loyalty and dedication to me awed me, it was also the very thing that could cost him his life by my hands. There were times when you just needed to forget about the baggage and save your own skin. There were times where heroics became idiocy. If Sauli ran off, we’d both live for the most part. If I, meaning Dark, hurt or ended up killing him, I’d follow right after him for what I’d done. Then who would win? We’d both lose. What would’ve been the point of him doing all this?

“Adam, I know exactly what you’re going to say, and forget it. I’ve dealt with enough ‘you should leave me’ speeches from you. Just don’t even bother. I’m staying.” Sauli’s voice was final.

I looked at him for a long time but Sauli’s severe expression didn’t waver. The fire in his eyes remained as he stared back at me with every bit of defiance and determination. He was still as stubborn as ever… The only thing I could do was compromise on some level; put my mind under slightly less stress.

I sighed after a minute with resignation. “I know you’re not going to leave no matter how much I plead,” I admitted quietly, “but please, at least just… barricade yourself or something when he comes out. Give me this one peace of mind. Don’t let him come near you at all costs, and if he does… do whatever you can to get out of there. Kill me if you have to. Just please… I’m begging you, don’t let him hurt you.”

Sauli’s face twitched and crumpled like he was keeping himself from arguing further or maybe he was just saddened by my request, I didn’t know. His eyes flitted over my face and hopefully he finally saw how distraught I was over this. He finally sighed and looked down at his lap, giving in.

“Okay. I’ll try,” he mumbled lowly, and I let out yet another breath I didn’t even know I was holding. “I’ll do whatever it takes.”

Dark snickered lowly again to himself, clearly enjoying this. My hands curled into fists. How long was this fucker going to listen to this conversation? It was times like this where I did wish he could read my thoughts just so I could curse him out and scream at him without terrified Sauli. I wanted to shove him into dormancy again so he’d leave us alone.

Trying my best to ignore Dark, I let out a sigh of thanks and pressed a kiss to Sauli’s burning forehead before taking his hand and pulling him up off the ground with me. I led him quietly to a barstool, gesturing him to sit down before I grabbed an ice pack out of the freezer and a roll of gauze from the top cabinet. I sighed at the items in my hands, and trudged over to where Sauli was sitting and eyeing me curiously. I offered a small smile down at him before holding out the ice pack. Sauli paused before taking it with his good hand from me and pressing it against his cheek. He winced from the sharp iciness. I gently took his cut hand into my own and kissed each of his knuckles, holding eye contact as an apology before examining the cut. I tried to keep my professional face from cracking and looking miserable again. Silently, I cleaned the cut before ripping off strips of the gauze. A strong sense of déjà vu pricked at my spine and a memory I’d long blocked crept its way back into my mind.

“Just like old times, huh?” I said almost inaudibly as I wrapped up his wrist tightly in gauze just to make sure the small wound wouldn’t reopen or get infected. It was a struggle to keep my voice level.

It was the sheer horror of finding Sauli in his bathroom covered in blood, seeing his corpse-like body just sitting there limply, thinking he was gone, that he gave up because of me, and that I would never see his smile again—the only thing that had given me hope for the world—that had given me nightmares ending in a cold sweat until I’d blocked the memory. It was an image that had haunted me and chilled me to the bone. A memory I couldn’t handle reliving and watching in my own
head… and now I was.

I could feel Dark stirring and I snapped back to reality, suddenly scared. I could feel his mind pushing against mine, trying to take over, but the attempts were… weak, and therefore ineffective. He must be too drained to come back out so soon, but then why was he trying?

“Ugh, can you tell your mind to stop trying to pull me out? For fuck’s sake,” Dark hissed tiredly.

I ignored him as the memory kept replaying in my head. I could feel my fingers start to tremble lightly at the horror as I worked on Sauli.

Faster and faster the scene from ten years ago looped in my mind without me even trying, and I was about to lose it. Panic started to build up within me. I couldn’t handle seeing it once, let alone several times.

Just when I was about to break down and scream in panic, it was suddenly… gone.

Whatever had been bothering me disappeared. I felt completely normal again, weirdly enough. I couldn’t for the life of me remember what exactly had me so stressed not a moment ago.

Although, I felt Dark wince and shudder so hard it rattled my mind, like he’d just seen something horrible. What was up with him?

“Yep,” Sauli agreed to something. Hadn’t several minutes just passed? He was acting like he was immediately responding to something… or was I just confused and it’d really been only a couple seconds? I had no clue at this point. Effectively distracting me from my muddled thoughts, Sauli proceeded to say, “Just like old times.”

What? What was he talking about? Had I said something?

Before I could ask, he took my arm in both hands and pressed his lips to my wrist. The act made me let go of my confusion so I could just watch in pure awe as Sauli trailed soft kisses up along my nearly normal forearm. A sweet memory of him doing the very same thing to my gnarly scars in a tiny high school washroom entered my head, and my eyes starting stinging. The warmth of fondness of that moment so long ago heated up my skin until I felt like I was glowing.

The pushing discomfort from Dark against my mind ceased.

“Do the fans know?” Sauli asked quietly after his final soft kiss at the dip in my elbow, peering up at me. He traced the faint lines with a soft finger.

“No,” I said almost inaudibly with a slight shake of my head. “No one knows… The scars are too faded to tell now.” It was a shame to even think about.

Sauli’s face fell. He stood up wordlessly from the stool and wrapped his arms around my midsection, pulling me tightly to him. I felt the ice pack dig into my back. I shivered from the dichotomy of the freezing pack and the radiating heat from Sauli’s body pressing against me, and just melted into the feeling, holding Sauli to me by his waist and neck.

“I just can’t believe you’ve come this far and you’re still alive,” Sauli mumbled, burying his head in the crook of my neck and squeezing me tighter. He sighed into my skin and I shuddered lightly.

I kissed his hair, knitting one hand into the blond mess, and keeping my other arm wrapped around his waist. “Me neither, but it was for you. Whether you’d ever see me again or not, it didn’t matter. I just couldn’t imagine breaking the promise. Just thinking about how let down you’d be…”
“Ugh, get a room…” Dark groaned with a growl.

“Get out of my head,” I muttered coldly under my breath, glaring ahead.

“Hmm?” Sauli hummed.

“Nothing.”

Sauli tilted his head up at me. “But you haven’t let me down, trust me. I’m still trying to take in how much you’ve changed…” Sauli noticed my expression and quickly continued, “Good changes… mostly. You know, except for the obvious.” He pressed the ice pack against his cheek to back up his point as he sat down again. He shook his head slightly in disbelief, staring at my chest. “Adam, it was shocking to see you so calm with the fans. You used to hate any sort of attention. You’d try to hide in the shadows… but these people were all over you. I mean, I almost got panicked, yet you embraced it. It was the weirdest thing.”

I shrugged simply and chuckled lightly. “I know, at first it was overwhelming and sometimes I couldn’t totally deal with the attention, but once I fully understood that these amazing people actually love me and what I do, I just had to change. I owe them that much since I’d be nowhere without them. I just can’t see myself ever being anything but grateful to them.” Sauli’s face warmed and I continued, “You have no idea what it’s like for me… to have people love me. You were the only person to ever give me that, and then you were gone from my life along with any hope of that feeling. After years of struggling, these fans, who actually dedicate so much of their time and energy to me, became my spine. They… I can’t explain it. They pretty much became my reason to exist after I’d lost you. Sure, they can get a bit frantic and aggressive, but I try to see it in the best possible light. It’s so much better to be too loved than to… you know, have the life I used to have.” I paused, thinking. “They weren’t around in my early twenties, which became the loneliest time of my life. I can’t thank them enough, so taking a few pictures and signing autographs is the least I can do. I can’t deny them that or a smile. I want my next album to be completely for them. I can’t tell the world what really happened in my life, but I want to let them into my head and past in a subtle way. They deserve to know… at least a glimpse anyway.”

“What about Dark?” Sauli asked.

I frowned thoughtfully. “He’s never bothered them,” I realized. “He only comes out at certain times. At first, I thought it was random, but there has to be a reason, right? I just don’t know what it is so I can avoid it. I guess that since being around my fans and anything career-related keeps me happy and busy or something, then that’s not what causes it? My guess. I could be wrong. Maybe it is random. I don’t really know.”

“He’s never bothered anyone else… So basically, it’s mainly me he wants to torment?” Sauli sighed.

Dark sneered in my head. “You know, you two should know better than to gossip about me like you know anything. If you weren’t so full of yourself and ignorant, maybe you’d know why I was born in the first place. But… you’ve never listened, and now I’m beyond the point of wasting my time trying. Good luck figuring it out before it’s too late. Maybe Blondie here is less foolish than you. Maybe he’ll listen.” His voice was ever mocking and scornful. Dark’s cocky demeanor vanished for a second as he suddenly shivered violently again, and I felt him trying to shake something out of his head rapidly. “And what the fuck did you just implant in my mind?! I don’t want to see this!”

What on earth…?

Before I could actually say anything, Dark’s frustrated presence completely disappeared from my mind, leaving me solitary once more. He was gone for now, but instead of feeling relief, I was
confused. My throat felt tight and I knew the worry was apparent on my face.

“Adam?” Sauli’s voice rang throughout my ears, and then I remember he’d asked me a question. I needed to stop tuning out of reality to listen to Dark’s constant babbling.

“Yeah, just you,” I said calmly, surprised at how reasonable and level my voice sounded.

Sauli nodded slowly, not quite looking at me. I watched him as he sat back down on the barstool quietly as he seemed to be deep in thought, the muscles in his face shifting slightly every now and then.

“You bandaging me up reminded me of something…” Sauli said drawlingly after a minute.

“Remember when you found me bleeding in my bathroom?”

“Hmm?” I hummed casually in question. “When did I do that?”

Faint lines creased lightly on Sauli’s brow. “We were talking about it a second ago.”

I thought back, rewinding our conversation. “I said something about old times, right?” I asked, pulling my hand through my hair stiffly, trying to soothe the sudden ache in the back of my head.

“…Yeah…” Sauli said slowly, eyeing me. “Ten years ago, you bandaged me up after finding me bloody and ruined in my bathroom, remember?”

I wracked my brain, struggling to link his statement to a memory.

“What?” I squeezed my eyes shut and winced. Where did this headache come from?

Sauli looked at me funny. “Just never mind, your head’s probably too cluttered to think properly right now,” he concluded, pushing himself up off the barstool. “Anyway, I meant to say that it reminded me of something… something I have for you from that day. Wait here.”

I watched Sauli as he strode off and disappeared down the hall. I let out a puff of air and leaned back against the counter. What was wrong with me? I remembered climbing up to Sauli’s room from a trellis, and feeling accomplished when I’d landed in his room, but after that… nothing. Then I somehow ended up in Sauli’s bed with him and we’d made-out heavily. But between those two events was just a white blank in my mind.

Sauli came back with something folded in his arms. As he got closer, I recognized the material as leather. He stopped in front of me and the corners of his lips lifted slightly. I gave him a curious look, eyeing the leather cloth he was cradling. He hesitated before reaching into one of the folds and pulling out something metallic. I blinked at the object he held toward me. He pressed a familiar button on the side and when a blade flipped out with a sound I’d heard a thousand times before, I knew.

“My pocket knife…” I whispered in disbelief, reaching out for it subconsciously, immediately just drawn to the thing. Sauli’s smile grew and he handed it to me.

“So you remember that?”

“Yeah… of course…” I whispered distractedly, wide-eyed as I rememorized every detail of the knife. The cool metal felt like home in my palm. I stroked the worn out blade with my thumb, recalling how this thing was basically my only friend in high school. The corner of my lip lifted with fondness as my eyes darted over every nook and cranny of the treasure. I felt peaceful having it back in my possession, like I’d been reunited with my long-lost child. I tucked the blade back in and
wrapped my fingers securely around it. “How do you have it?” I asked, glancing up at Sauli again only briefly, noticing he was still clutching a mound of leather.

“You left that at my house the day you found me and I just kept it all these years, along with this…” He unfolded the leather and held it up by the shoulders in front of him. I gave it a once-over, quickly blowing it off as just a random jacket, but then when I gave it a second look I did a double-take, realizing… it was my jacket. My lips parted in surprise and a wave of nostalgia washed over me. “And I just kept them to remind me you were real.” Sauli peered over the shoulder of the jacket and shrugged at me.

Without saying a word, I took the jacket from his grasp and examined it, seeing a very different Adam wearing it in my head. I ran my fingers over the collar and zippers, suddenly realizing how much I never knew I missed this thing. It had been one of my most revered items because I didn’t have much else to call my own.

My fingers curled inward and away when they brushed over a stiff dark spot. I squinted at the jacket, bringing it closer to my face as I kept the pocket knife gripped in one hand. I lightly traced the hard splatters with my fingers, and my eyebrows shot up when I figured out what they were.

“What?” Sauli asked, seeing my confused expression.

“I… remember the knife and the jacket perfectly, but… why is there dried blood on the jacket?” I asked innocently, tearing my eyes away from the spots to look up at Sauli in all seriousness. “Did something bad happen?”

Sauli’s mouth popped open slightly and genuine worry creased his brow.

“I think so…” It sounded like a question.

“Then how do you not remember these awful memories?” Sauli shook his head. “I’d imagine they’d haunt you even after all these years.”

“Um, am I missing something?” None of this was making sense to me.

“Yeah, Adam. Apparently, you’ve magically forgotten some very heavy, important things,” he said, scoffing a little. “Don’t play games with me. I’m serious.”

I could feel his patience with me was quickly dissipating as he grew more and more concerned, but it wasn’t like I could help it.

“Sauli, I swear, I’m not joking around. I have no idea what you’re talking about. I don’t even remember you in a bathroom…? Why was I bandaging you up?”

“Because I cut myself,” Sauli said impatiently.

I was taken aback. “When the hell did you do that?!” I exclaimed, marching up to examine him.

Sauli held up his hands to stop me and he stepped back. “What the hell is wrong with you? You already know this stuff.”

I shook my head. “But… I don’t.”

“So you really don’t know why that thing,” he pointed at the leather in my hands, “has blood all over
it?"

I shook my head tentatively and mouthed, “No.”

“The blood is on your jacket because of your father, Adam,” he stated with frustration. “Come on.”

My eyebrows knit together in confusion as I glanced down at the darks stains on the leather. I was suddenly flooded with images. My ears started to pound and my next breath hitched in my throat. My mind spun with cycling visuals of my father; his rage; the endless torture as he’d beat me to a pulp with whatever had been nearby and with no mercy. My screams and cries of agony echoed in my head, the same screams that could’ve probably been heard by an entire neighborhood, yet nobody had ever come to help me. No one, not even as I’d lain shaking and broken on the floor, and coughing up my own blood... Blood.

So much blood.

Why was he doing this to me?

Why wouldn’t the blood stop?

Why wasn’t anyone helping me?

My mind kept swirling with a dozen awful thoughts from those tortured years.

There had been so many traumas, both physically and mentally. It was a wonder I could even function today.

I took a shaky breath, unable to stand any longer, and I stumbled my way over to the couch, knees wobbling as I did so.

“Adam?” I heard Sauli’s voice call behind me. It sounded warped and distant. I knew he was following me.

I sank into the cushions of the couch and placed the jacket and knife aside. I tucked my head between my knees, fighting off the sudden storm of nausea. Somewhere in the back of my senses, I could feel the couch shift and a hand rest gently between my shoulder blades.

The violent images wouldn’t stop. All the memories of every attack that monstrous man had inflicted upon me kept rushing like a hurricane in my mind, and vividly enough that I could almost feel the pain again. I could almost feel my bones snap and the bruises form and the blood rush out of me. Reliving these memories even just only in my mind caused my physical body to start trembling with its lack of power to withstand them. I couldn’t take this. Not again. I was at my limit.

I could feel Dark coming out of dormancy as he was urged out by some unnamed force, and I could feel him desperately resisting taking over. I could sense his exhaustion, but the visuals in my head wouldn’t stop, they only started coming faster, and it was too much for me to bear. Blood. Punch. Kick. Scream. Shatter. Crack. Over and over again, faster and faster. And suddenly, there was an audible snap in my mind.

The images stopped. All gone. Whatever they had been, it was like they never even happened.

I could feel my heart rate start to slow again. When I tried to think back to what was making me feel so horrid in the first place, nothing came to mind. The sick feeling was gone and I felt relieved. Normal.
Dark sure didn’t.

Dark winced and sucked in a sharp breath, mirroring my initial reaction to whatever had made my heart thrash so wildly in my chest.

“Stop it!” He hissed. “I don’t want this!”

I barely paid attention to him as I became fully aware of the hand rubbing my tense back. I straightened up and looked over at Sauli. Again, it felt like I’d been sitting here for hours, but it’d probably only been a minute or two.

“Adam?” Sauli’s soothing voice mumbled quietly. “Are you sick?”

I gave him a look. “Not as far as I know.”

His eyes darted over my face, confusion growing more apparent on his face with every passing second. “But… you were pale as a sheet and nauseous not a moment ago, and now you look fine…”

I shrugged and suddenly recalled what he’d mentioned earlier.

“What did you mean by my father?” I asked him. “How’d his blood get on my jacket?”

Sauli looked unnerved, astonished, and his hand tensed on my back.

Dark only just shook his head in my mind, seemingly disgusted, and still a bit shaken by whatever he’d seen.

“It’s your blood, Adam…” Sauli’s voice was shaky. “He’d beat you until you could barely breathe. You couldn’t come to school most days. How can you just not remember that? It was so… traumatic.”

I was puzzled. My father would abuse me? Since when? I could barely remember the man after mom died.

“I know he wasn’t the warmest man,” I allowed, staring at my feet, “but he had never physically hurt me.”

Sauli suddenly gripped the sides of my face and forced me to look at him. He gazed hard at me, and before I could fully register it, he’d blinked away the moisture in his eyes.

“Adam, what do you think we were running from years ago? What stopped us from being together? Who ruined everything?” he demanded firmly, squeezing my face too tightly with his shaking hands.

I shrugged out of his death grip, swatting his hands away lightly, and decided to give him the benefit of the doubt by putting good thought into his questions as I focused straight ahead. It only took a moment for my blood to run cold as I realized that those details in my memory were complete and utter blanks as well.

The fear was apparent enough on my face that I didn’t even have to say anything for Sauli to get his answer. I heard him inhale slowly, forcing himself to nod calmly once in my peripheral.

“Baby, did you hit your head or something?” he asked quietly, voice wavering though he was trying to seem relaxed. “I’m worried.”

“You tell me,” I replied. “Did Dark smash my head in somewhere while he was out?”
Sauli shook his head as he subtly noted the state of my head with his eyes just to make sure.

As if on cue, the little eavesdropper, Dark grunted with annoyance in my mind.

“It’s not a concussion, you dumbass,” he growled, sounding quite sure of himself. But how the in hell would he even know? After a moment, he continued, and to my surprise, his voice sounded severely distressed, and he seemed to be talking more so to himself than to me, “But why is it happening like this? It’s not supposed to be getting worse at this rate! It’s not supposed to be happening so fast...”
A Cry for Help

Chapter Notes

So I go from not updating for two months to updating in a couple of days. How does that even work? Guess it depends on the excitement level for the chapter from me. And I AM excited for this one. All I can say is, pay attention. Close attention.

5,478 words for your entertainment.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sauli:

A couple of days later, the brightly beaming rays of light shining on my face woke me up with a cold sweat. I was immediately overwhelmed by the heaviness and stuffiness of my head, feeling like a poor roasted turkey on Thanksgiving. The fresh sheets of the king-sized bed were sticking to my boiling back. I angled my head away from the irritating light and let out a low sound of misery. My groan cut off into spastic coughs that were caught by the dip in my elbow. I might as well have been hacking up my innards into my arm as hard with how hard the coughs were ripping out of my throat. I felt like a dense pile of old shit, to sum it up.

Adam immediately but groggily rolled over to face me, no doubt having heard my totally attractive coughing fit. He let out a low rumble and rubbed at his drowsy eyes before yawning and propping himself up on his elbow to look down at my probably awful-looking face.

“Sauli…?” Adam asked sleepily and yawned deeply again, scratching his bare chest. “Are you okay, baby?” He stroked a feather light line with the tips of his fingers down my stomach. I shivered from the touch. “You look like death.”

I lolled my head to the side to make a sarcastic comeback, but as soon as I opened my mouth, my entire face scrunched up as I was overwhelmed with another hacking cough. I tried to cover up my mouth again immediately, not wanting to literally spray the germs into Adam’s face. His large hand was suddenly completely covering my sweaty forehead. His cool touch felt amazing against my burning skin. I closed my eyes and arched my neck up slightly to press further into his heavenly palm.

“You’re blisteringly hot,” Adam pointed out like I didn’t already know. I dryly peeked over at him. He was biting his lower lip and watching me with worry creasing in his brow. When our eyes met, he started rubbing soothing circles with his thumb on my scorching forehead. I relaxed into the massage. “I could fry an egg on your forehead.” He snatched his hand back and feigned a burn reaction, shaking his hand. My eyes narrowed at him slightly, but Adam only returned a sleepy half-smile.

“Sick,” I croaked, not even surprised at how awful I sounded.

“Good job, Sherlock,” Adam cooed. His oceanic eyes held nothing but warmth. “I would’ve never figured that one out.”
“Shut up,” I squeaked, weakly throwing my arm and smacking his rib.

Adam’s small smile grew into a dopey grin. “Probably caught the flu from traveling,” he suggested loosely. I frowned. I hated getting sick. It was a waste of time to rest and be trapped when I could be out enjoying everything the world had to offer. “Wait here. I’m going to go make you some soup.”

Adam leaned over and pressed a long kiss into my searing forehead. I squeezed my eyes shut and tried to savor the feeling of his perfect, cool lips. Anything even a fraction of a degree less fiery than my skin felt great. I longed to angle my head up and give him a proper kiss, but that would only guarantee spreading my condition to him, and he couldn’t afford to be sick with the type of career he had.

Adam pulled away and I made a small noise of objection. He threw me an apologetic frown for leaving me before rolling off the bed. My eyes locked hungrily on Adam’s bare ass as he picked up a pair of sweatpants off the floor and pulled them on, and I felt a different kind of heat flash for a moment before he headed out the bedroom door. If I didn’t feel like anvils were crushing my head and chest, I would’ve jumped him right there and then.

My head was ringing and foggy and I just couldn’t seem to get comfortable no matter how much I tossed and turned. Adam was gone for a good half an hour and I found that a lot of my discomfort was due to the lonesome ache inside this large, disturbingly quiet bedroom without him. I tried to not overthink and just assumed he was gone longer than necessary because he was making phone calls and rescheduling meetings.

I was relieved when Adam finally reappeared in the doorway with a steaming bowl cupped in both hands. He flashed a kind smile from the doorway and I automatically returned it. He strategically made his way over to my side of the bed, careful not to spill a drop, and kneeled down next to me.

I coughed into my elbow again as I tried to sit up against the headboard and slowly take the bowl from him onto my lap, purposefully letting my fingers brush over his during the exchange. The bowl was filled with intoxicatingly delicious-smelling liquid and tiny cut-up vegetables. I nearly started drooling as the aroma-filled steam kissed my nose and cheeks.

Noticing how I was doing nothing but stupidly leaning over and staring aimlessly at the bowl, Adam chuckled quietly and pushed himself up for a moment to kiss my cheek before prying the bowl from my fingers and taking it back. I gave him a confused look.

“Let me,” he murmured with a smile, settling more comfortably on his knees on the floor at my bedside.

He picked up the spoon from the steaming bowl, scooping a spoonful of the soup and then holding it up carefully near my lips.

I raised an eyebrow at him. He wanted to feed me?

I mentally shrugged and blew lightly at the soup. I kept my eyes glued to his intensely as I wrapped my lips around the spoonful and swallowed extra slowly. Adam’s eyes were gleaming, both with adoration and desire. The soup was hot and it burned my tongue, but it tasted amazing. Adam pulled the spoon out of my mouth slowly, watching intently as my lips molded around the shape. I winked at him and Adam’s eyes flashed with dark lust.

“You’re tempting me,” he grumbled, licking his lips. “Stop teasing before I lose it and just take you right here and now. I’m trying to be good.”
I rolled my eyes and smirked innocently but otherwise obliged.

“That’s delicious,” I croaked as he dipped the spoon back into the bowl for another go.

“Shush,” Adam muttered, giving me his best fake scolding look before holding up another spoonful and insisted, “No talking. Just eat.”

It continued on like that until the heaping bowl was completely dry. I sniffled, sinuses clearing from the spiciness of the soup. Adam put the bowl on the bedside table and leaned over to brush his lips against my burning, slightly swollen ones. I made a protesting noise and leaned away from him, not wanting to get him sick as well. He couldn’t afford this with energy-sucking expectations of a singer, which reminded me…

“Don’t you have things to do today?” I asked him as I held him at bay with my hands as a restraint on his chest. Adam pouted sourly at my rejection but backed off. I glanced at the clock and when I was sure I wouldn’t get reprimanded for talking, I continued, “I thought you were working on the album today.” My voice sounded much clearer thanks to his magic soup.

Adam shook his head, saying, “That can wait. You need me right now.” Apparently, he was on full mother hen mode now, sex drive gone. “I’ll cancel everything. I’m staying with you.” He entwined his hand with mine, still kneeling on the ground next to me. My heart warmed at how considerate and perfect he was.

“You’re incredible, you know that?” I reminded him. Adam’s eyes softened and a small chuckle left his lips. I brought his hand to my lips and kissed a knuckle, glancing around the room, when my eyes locked on my suitcase and I suddenly remembered something. “Hey, can you bring me that?”

Adam’s eyes followed as I nodded toward the suitcase. “I want to give you something.”

“Sure, baby.” Adam pushed himself upright, grabbed my suitcase from the opposite wall, and then climbed up onto the bed after handing me it. I coughed as I sat up cross-legged and rummaged through my crap while Adam nestled close to my side, watching curiously. I found what I was looking for under everything else and a huge smile broke out on my face. I whipped out a folded piece of paper and held it up tightly with a victorious grin on my face, eyes stinging a little. Adam’s eyes just darted between my expression and the wrinkled, seemingly worthless sheet of paper. He looked confused as I held out to him.

“Go on, read it!” I insisted and flapped the sheet in his face impatiently.

Adam raised an eyebrow at me, but otherwise tentatively took the paper, unfolded it, and did as I asked. I took a second to set the suitcase down on the floor by my bedside and quickly whipped back to watch Adam’s face intently as his eyes flickered back and forth over the words. His expression changed subtly from confusion to shock to awe within seconds. I noticed his eyes become glossier as they moistened ever so slightly, and his breathing became more strained near the end. Adam soon finished, and he peered over at me sitting by his side, his composure crumbling as he blinked back tears. His hand quivered as he held up the paper.

“It’s my song,” Adam croaked. He sounded astonished. “You kept Map?”

I gave him a sarcastic look, trying to not appear completely melted by his adorable reaction, though I had to remind myself that it would be odd to make baby noises and coo at him.

“I’m offended,” I jokingly scoffed, grinning at him. “Of course I did. Your lack of faith in me is disturbing.”
Adam shook his head in awed disbelief at me like I’d just told him I created a cure for AIDS and saved millions. I knew he’d be happy about this, but his real reaction was better than anything I could’ve thought of. He was practically speechless, and all because I kept his gift.

“I fucking love you so much,” he spluttered to me, looking over the wrinkled paper again, still blown away. “Ten years, and you still amaze me. And I still can’t see myself with anyone else, ever. How am I so lucky to have you? It’s really beyond me.” He took my hand, gave it a squeeze, and gazed at me with sincerity as he said, “Thank you.”

I didn’t know what else to do except turn to liquid inside. The smile on my face was starting to hurt, but I couldn’t force myself to stop. This was all still so unreal. Here I was sitting on a bed with the love of my life that I’d thought was dead for a decade, and he, in the flesh right beside me, was holding the very thing I’d thought would be my last connection to him. It threw me for a loop to think about. Adam was really, here, and he was mine again. It was mind-blowing. I didn’t know how everything had fallen into place to let us meet again, but I wouldn’t change it for the world.

Adam placed the song on the bedside table with such care as if it was an ancient and fragile artifact, and then moved closer to me, and the air rushed out of my lungs as he suddenly pulled me hard into his bare chest, trapping my hands between our ribs. His arms formed a protective cage around me. He was squeezing so tight I could hardly breathe, but I couldn’t find it in me to care. But then I realized I was a germy mess of gross disease.

“No,” I complained against the crook of Adam’s warm neck, trying to keep my wet lips from brushing against his skin, “you’ll get sick.” I stroked his bare chest shyly with the fingertips of my trapped hands.

Adam’s arms only tightened around me as he pulled us down into the pillows. One of his arms escaped and then came back, pulling the blanket over us up to our shoulders, and then his arm dove under and was right back around me in an inescapable hold.

“I don’t care,” he said simply. “I need to hold you.”

I sighed into his neck, feeling overheated and squished but too comfortable and secure in his strong embrace to care. I pressed my lips against the crook of Adam’s neck and stayed like that, unmoving. I felt him softly kiss the top of my head.

“Sleep, baby, you need to rest,” Adam mumbled, sounding sleepier than I actually felt.

But as he insisted that, a traitorous yawn snuck its way out of my mouth, proving his point. That bastard, did he drug the soup or something? I got tired way too conveniently. I’d much rather just stay awake and enjoy the day at home with him.

“Don’t want to,” I whined, prodding the curve of his neck firmly with my nose as if that somehow showed that I meant business. “Can’t we just, I don’t know… do something else?”

I waited for him to scold me, but he never did. It was quiet for a minute and I relaxed slightly, thinking that Adam gave up, but I was foolish for hoping he’d be less stubborn than me in any way. He was probably busy conjuring up more strategies to shut me up.

Out of nowhere, I heard a soft hum close to my ear. Adam’s chest rumbled slightly as he let out a gentle tune. He angled his lips closer to my ear as he hummed the soothing melody. It took me a minute to recognize the song because I couldn’t match it up with anything in my head although it sounded oddly and vaguely familiar, but when it finally did click, I couldn’t stop smiling.
Adam was humming Map.

His arms constricted knowingly around me for a moment and he rubbed gentle circles into my back when he felt my lips stretch wider against his neck. His humming was very dreamlike, very distant, and it was forcing my body to go completely slack as it magically exhausted me. The bastard knew my weaknesses inside and out to get me to do whatever he wanted. He could play me like a violin. He hadn’t even reached the second chorus before I drifted off, snuggling closer to the haven embracing me.

I took slow steps as I crossed the room, soundlessly crunching the broken glass bottle beneath my feet. It was too silent. Nothing made a single noise, not even my shallow breathing. It was deafening. And the broken glass felt like nothing under my feet even though I could see that I was crushing the pieces. The shards didn’t even sink into my heels.

I didn’t recognize this place. It felt eerily hostile and strange. Everything was tinted dark tones and shades. And other than the abstractly gothic choice of decoration, including menacing spikes, skulls, and a dead, scraggily plant, it was nearly empty. It was nothing but a simple and creepily furnished, small room, so why did I feel so unwelcomed and uncomfortable? Maybe it was because of the fact that there wasn’t even a door to let you out…

I made my way over to the one source of light, the window, hoping to find some sort of familiarity and a sense of ease from the rays of sunshine. I eagerly opened the blinds, expecting the outside world, and gasped.

There was nothing beyond the glass.

All I was faced was infinite white emptiness. No sense of direction. No up or down. Nothing.

I staggered back a little, shaken and disturbed by the sight. There was no way anyone would be here by choice. Only the cruelest scum would force another being to stay here without even a door to escape. How could anyone bear living in such isolation? I would go insane after a few minutes, let alone days or years. I could feel my sanity already tingling away at my fingertips. This place was a prison. Even the light coming from the window was an illusion, a false sense of comfort. It didn’t help that one entire wall was just a mirror, always showing you how alone you really were. No one deserved this. I could only hope that this was just a dream and no one’s reality.

I backed up a half step, whipping around fast to get away from the mind-numbing window, and slammed face first into hard wall. I stumbled backward, confused and head-spinning from the impact. I blinked several times, regaining focus. I looked up and my breath hitched in my throat when I realized that it wasn’t a wall—it was a leather-clad human chest. I attempted to scream from surprise at the figure in front of me, but not a peep rushed out of my throat. I stared up in horror as the secretive eyes of the looming man towering over me met mine. I immediately recognized who he was.

Dark.

And by Dark, I didn’t mean just Adam’s normal body under control. This was Dark in the flesh if he could have his own body. There was no mistaking it. He was the exact image of the now-vague dream I’d had ten years ago. That was the shocking part. How was it even possible for my subconscious to get right? That one instant a figure had appeared in the dream was something that was still vivid even a decade later. And now I knew who it’d been.

The questions swirled messily in my head all at once. How did he get here? How did I get here? Why was he here? Was he seriously here by choice? Did he live in this hellhole? He certainly
matched the motif of the place.

He did look almost identical to my Adam, though not completely, and I wondered why that was if they were two completely different people as Adam had said. He had the same troubled and piercing smoky golden eyes as the menacing figure in my dream, the same angry mess of vertical hair, the same sickly-looking but not the least bit fragile pale ivory skin, and even the same long leather coat and outfit. It made no sense how I was that accurate. The only thing that was different about him and the figure in my dream was the expression on his face. Dark wasn’t staring down at me with a wickedly predator-like lust. No, his face was scrunched up slightly like he was nervously distressed and maybe even frightened.

My legs anchored me to the spot, not knowing what was going to happen next. I didn’t know what to do. I wanted to run as far away from him as possible like Adam had told me to, but my body was too petrified by him to even twitch, or maybe there was something about the look on his face that was keeping me locked in place, but I knew better than to trust an expression that could easily be faked by the likes of him. So what was he going to do to me? I feared unending pain and ridicule by his hand.

Dark slowly started to reach out for me with intent, but it didn’t seem aggressive in the slightest. Actually, he looked… gentle, despite his obvious urgency. I noticed that there was a faint blue glowing film around his figure, almost like a thick, translucent outline. Dark’s haunted eyes left mine and peered over my shoulder, widening a little with panic. This was all so out of character for him, but… I was sure it was Dark.

Before I could react to whatever Dark was looking at, I felt a firm hand grip my shoulder from behind. I yelped soundlessly in surprise and was jerked back hard against another chest before Dark had the chance to touch me. A freckled arm snaked protectively around my mid-section and locked me in place like jail bar. I didn’t have time to panic before my head instinctively whipped upward to get a look at whoever was manhandling me. My tense body immediately relaxed and I let out a sigh of relief as I recognized Adam’s face above mine. I smiled at him, grateful for his presence to calm me, but he wasn’t even looking at me. His expression was set in stone as he glared daggers at Dark in front of us.

Adam took my arm and jerked me behind him. I stumbled from the sudden harsh movement, catching myself at the last second, and watched as Adam stepped forward to face-off with Dark. I couldn’t describe just how weird it was to see the two them in different, but strikingly similar, bodies, standing across from each other. Adam was a stunning contrast standing amidst all the cold, gothic, and neutral tones in his lighter, warmer, and cozier clothing. I noticed he had a dim blue glowing film surround his body as well. What the heck was that?

Strangely enough, Dark was the one to look intimidated and apprehensive, like a lost child in a crowd of towering strangers. Adam looked like the menacing one, a mother wolf ready to defend its cub with its life. His hands were curled into threatening fists at his sides and his spine was noticeably tense. I didn’t have a clue as to what was going on. Dark’s eyes flickered over to me, his golden irises swirling with a storm of worry, but before I could even register that, Adam stepped slightly aside to block his view of me.

My jaw dropped as I peeked over Adam’s shoulder in time to see Dark looking like he was about to cry. He threw his hands together and silently fell down onto his knees. I could see him mouthing “please” repeatedly to Adam as he gazed up at him with all the distress in the world. He was actually begging him for something, but for what? Weirdly enough, Dark was causing me little jolts of concern, and I felt awful for him in small bits for whatever reason. But what the hell was going on?
Adam shook his head at Dark like he was a disgrace, barely acknowledging his existence, and completely ignoring whatever his soundless request had been for. Adam didn’t even seem to understand that something was clearly bothering Dark to no end, and it put me off slightly that Adam was acting like this. I wanted to push him aside and at least see what was going on with Dark. It was just in my nature to care, and I’d thought it was in Adam’s too.

Dark started to reach out to Adam from the ground like he’d tried to do with me, and my eyebrows shot up when the strange glowing light surrounding both of them started getting brighter the closer Dark got. The glowing film intensified in luminescence slowly and it gained life, stretching toward and trying to attach to the other. The glowing outline curving around Dark’s hand almost joined the one bordering Adam’s leg as Dark was only a few breaths away. Dark’s eyes gleamed with hope as he almost touched Adam, but then… Adam suddenly backed away towards me and the light surrounding both of them with vitality faded back to the weak and gravely dim glow as he did so.

Dark looked absolutely appalled. Anxiety and horror was written all over his expressive eyes and brow at what Adam had done. He slowly dropped his arm down, still staring after Adam like he couldn’t believe what had just happened. All that had happened was Adam walked away from him, so why was that such a big deal? Lines creased my forehead as I stared at Dark with uncertainty.

Adam grabbed my hand and ripped me out of my thoughts as he roughly towed me backwards toward the huge mirror-wall, but I couldn’t tear my eyes off of Dark as his widened and he clambered back onto his feet, coming after us. Adam abruptly shoved me into the mirror, and I braced for impact, stunned that Adam would do such a thing, but instead I went flying through it just as the glass disappeared and revealed a different room, a much warmer room. I crashed onto the floor of the opposite room and scrambled to my feet. Adam climbed in after me and pulled me close to his side before I could object, watching as Dark rushed to get to us.

The thick glass suddenly reappeared as a window just before Dark reached it and I watched with wide eyes as Dark smashed himself into the glass, but it only shook and remained solid. He slammed the side of his fist against it desperately, looking like he’d just been given a death sentence. The dim light outlining him flickered dimly and then suddenly completely disappeared. He froze and looked down at himself, horror impossibly paling his face.

Dark gave us one last pleading look, and I could swear I saw him mouth “help” to Adam before a jagged and deep crack formed down the middle of his face, splitting his nose and lips.

I gasped in terror and clung closer to Adam, but I was unable to tear my wide eyes away from the sight unfolding before me.

Dark was literally crumbling.

His glassy eyes never left mine as pieces of him started splitting and falling apart and there was no blood whatsoever, like he was made up of clay or stone… or a hollow shell.

If I were to hit his hair, it would probably snap right off. Small cracks zigzagged all over him. Chunks of his body, even including his clothing, broke off and fell to the floor; ears, nose, an entire arm, etcetera. And I nearly threw up when the lower half of his face broke off, leaving him completely jawless, followed by the entire left side of his head.

Dark’s one eye was still on me, hopelessness filling it, and when he blinked, a shiver ran up my spine. He was still alive while this was happening. Wasn’t he in unbearable pain? If he was, you wouldn’t be able to tell… unless you looked into his distraught eye. The dull agony was evident where the vital golden glint wasn’t anymore.
Dark’s entire head fell off, and I couldn’t help but feel a lump in my throat. I tried to surge forward to help him somehow, but Adam’s arm tightened around me in warning. I shot him a glare, but Adam looked victorious, like Dark’s suffering was somehow beneficial to him. It was pissing me off. I didn’t care who Dark was; he was hurting, and as a human being, I couldn’t just stand back and watch. When the arm bracing Dark against the glass snapped off and his whole body collapsed on the opposite side of it, I let out a soundless whimper and rushed forward, harshly ripping out of Adam’s grasp. I slammed my palms into the glass and strained to look down into the other room just as Dark’s body pieces, including his ever watchful eye, which was still looking up at me, just… crumbled into grey powder all at once.

I screamed soundlessly, and I could feel tears streaming down my face from his strangely morbid death. I stared down at the powder, desperately hoping he’d form into himself again, and I started trembling from the hollow feeling of loss. Why was I so shaken by this? Since when did I care about this god-awful parasite ruining Adam’s life? And why was it that when I turned away from the glass to look at Adam standing where I’d left him, one shaky hand still on the glass because I was nauseous and grief-stricken, I felt an anguished bitterness toward him, my love?

Adam smiled regardless and started making his way over to me, beaming brightly like he accomplished something great. I felt like Dark’s death was his fault, especially given everything that had just happened and how smug Adam was acting. I was about to silently yell at him, but the words got lodged in my throat when his smile suddenly perished.

Like a chain effect, the faint blue glow around Adam disappeared… just like Dark’s.

Adam looked at his hands, turning them this way and that, looking shocked that the weak light had vanished. His face paled with the realization of something and worry wrinkled his skin. His pale blue eyes snapped to me, agony filling them like letting Dark die had been a fatal mistake.

Unlike Dark’s composed self, when Adam’s hand cleanly broke off and shattered on the ground, he cringed and appeared to be yelling out in pain. I screamed his name, but of course nothing happened. Adam fell to his knees, unable to stand from the torture, but that only crushed his knees and jarred his hip joints, causing them to break apart and crumble on impact. Adam’s upper, now detached, torso fell over, slamming to the floor on his side. Again, his weak body couldn’t handle the impact, and not only did Adam’s entire side turn to fine sand, but his neck snapped off from the jolt as well.

I was petrified to the spot. I couldn’t will myself to go to him, not when he was like this. Not when it was already too late. All I could do was shake uncontrollably and watch the love of my life die before my eyes.

Adam’s head rolled, crumbling as it did so. His cheeks were glinting from distressed tears. His pained eyes locked with mine for the briefest second, and all I saw in them was apology and regret before his deformed head completely fell apart, joining the rest of his body as powder.

I fell to my own knees, relieved when I remained solid, and started sobbing so hard soundlessly I felt like my chest was being ripped open as I convulsed. I was freaking out; unable to shake the images of both Adam and Dark just fucking falling apart like they were nothing but shells. How was someone supposed to react to that? I was still mostly in shock. My heart was thrashing wildly in my chest and my mind was in overdrive with questions and anguish. I could feel the fantasy starting to fade around the edges as my high brain activity was waking me up.

Out of nowhere, I heard a voice. I looked up around the now-crumbling dream, walls were falling apart and furniture was breaking apart just like Adam and Dark, but no one was around. I was stunned to hear anything since everything had been a silent horror movie up until now.
“Help us,” Adam’s voice echoed again from every corner of the room…or was it Dark’s?

I couldn’t even tell.

_It was the last thing I heard or registered in my head before reality hit me like a truck._

I jolted upright with an audible gasp. I panted for air frantically and looked around my surroundings wildly. My heart was pounding in my ears. Once I realized I was still in the bedroom and safe, I mentally urged myself to calm the hell down. I saw a small movement in my peripheral, causing me to flinch spastically. My head snapped over to the source, and relief filled me to the brim at seeing the back of Adam’s peaceful, sleeping figure secure under the warmth of the blanket.

I took a deep breath and let out a huge sigh. Calm down, Sauli. It was just a dream. I repeated that over and over inside my head until I reluctantly and half-heartedly believed it. I glanced out the window and was stunned to see it was already pitch black outside. Had I slept for the entire day? Had Adam stayed in bed fussing over me the whole time?

Adam…

I looked back at him with worry, hardly relaxing as his body shifted slightly with every slow breath. I tried to match his breaths to calm myself. Pulling my knees to my chest as comfort, I stared at Adam’s bare back with worry, not daring to try to go back to sleep. I couldn’t help but think back to my dream.

_Help us._

One of them had said that.

My eyebrows knit in confusion. The question was, _which_ one said that, and _why_? Help them? _How_?

Chapter End Notes

Anyone confused yet? lol.

Or are you starting to get it…?

Comment! I love reading them :)
Feedback is important.
Jealousy

I know, another terribly long time since I’ve updated, but this one took a lot of time to get it right. Plus, it’s a hella long one. Here are 10,300 words to hold you over until next time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Adam:

“Adam?” I heard Sauli call hoarsely from across the table, finally speaking. The entire morning had been quiet for the most part despite my attempts to make small talk. Something was clearly on his mind, but I didn’t question him about it. I knew to let him come to me when he was ready; a lesson both of us had learned the hard way once upon a time.

I glanced up, chewing a mouthful of cereal, only to find Sauli fiddling with his hands, not having even touched his breakfast, which was a shame because now the cereal flakes looked mushy and gross from sitting in the milk for so long. I guess his flu still ruined his appetite? Or maybe whatever was on his mind was bothering him more than I thought.

“Yeah, baby?” I replied as nonchalantly as I could manage before taking a sip of my orange juice, eyeing his nervous state inconspicuously over the rim of the glass.

“Um, can you… see Dark in your mind?” he asked tentatively, not quite looking at me. My eyebrows twitched slightly at the randomness of the question. “I mean, do you know what the real him looks like?”

I pursed my lip, brow knotting in confusion. So this was what was cluttering his head and turning him away from his usual chatty self? Where was this coming from?

“Ih, yeah…” I said carefully after a moment, not really sure where he wanted to go with this. “When he’s talking to me, I can see him in the back of my mind like a background thought, including his movements, expressions, whatever. I don’t really know if I’m just imagining it or not, I assume not.”

“What does that mean though? How can you see him?” Sauli pressed, leaning slightly toward me now, the nervousness in his eyes replaced by curiosity. “Do you just see a floating head, or…?”

I chuckled at the thought.

“No, it’s…” I made random gestures with my hands, struggling to explain. “I can actually clearly see where he is and what version of his usual pissed-off face is present. It’s no different than if you just vividly imagined a person or place while busy doing something, kind of like a daydream.” I shrugged.

Sauli nodded, eyes hard on his bowl of mush. “So… where is he,” his voice was quiet as he picked up his spoon and lazily twirled it in his cereal, “when he’s talking to you?”
I stared curiously at Sauli’s forehead as he played with his breakfast, silently asking him why he was suddenly so interested in this. I decided to play it cool and just go with it. Maybe if I gave him what he wanted, he’d tell me his reasoning. After all, it’s not like any of this was secret anymore. I thought hard, trying to recall Dark’s surroundings from previous encounters.

“I think he’s in some sort of room, but I only ever see the same angle and spot like a camera was placed in a certain position and can’t be moved,” I explained as best as I could. “And my view is across from this… couch,” I squeezed my eyes shut, digging, thinking harder, “and a wall, and a couple weird decorations, but apart from that, I can’t see what else there is. Dark is usually lounging on the couch like a cocky bastard or pacing angrily in front of my view. I only ever visualize or see him and the room if he’s talking to me and if I focus hard enough, but usually I can’t because I’m distracted with something, so I just kind of sense him move around in there.”

Sauli stared at me blankly. I could practically see the gears in his head whirring as he tried to file and organize what I was telling him. At least he seemed to be keeping up.

When he didn’t ask any questions, I went on, “If he’s dormant— sleeping or whatever he does when he’s not in control or mocking me in my head, like now— I can’t see the room even if I try. It’s like he doesn’t even exist. The first few times that happened, I thought he was gone for good and I’d somehow cured myself, but nope.” I sighed hard.

“What do you mean there’s a room?” Sauli asked, pausing his fiddling to drop his spoon into the bowl loudly, confused and impatient. “You’re telling me he has his own little hotel room in your head?”

“I don’t know,” I replied calmly, ignoring his sarcastic tone. “It’s just what I see. I don’t know why and how it even exists, or how it even works. My best guess would be that it’s just a space somehow created for him to exist in so he’s not just a floating head, but my guess is as good as yours. I don’t really question it because what’s the point? It won’t help me. Plus, it’s depressing to think that he’s literally settling in and making himself at home in my head.”

“Adam, you should be questioning it. You should be questioning everything that’s happening. It could help. We’d be one step closer,” Sauli lectured, exasperated for whatever reason. “And Dark, you say you see him. Well, what does he look like?”

I gave him an accusatory look. “You’re just trying to piece together silly fragments that I already know don’t fit together and won’t get us anywhere,” I muttered. “Trust me, I’ve tried to connect the dots. I’ve lived with this for years.”

“But you didn’t have me,” Sauli snapped. “Just answer the question.”

I glared at him. “He…” I trailed off, not really wanting to talk about this. “He looks like me.” Sauli’s eyebrow twitched and his mouth curved slightly downward like he’d been expecting that. What wasn’t he telling me? “He’s like me…” I continued, eyeing Sauli suspiciously, “but paler and his skin is a thousand times better,” I frowned, slightly jealous, “no freckles, and his eyes aren’t blue, they’re almost yellow or something because he’s a freak.” There was no mistaking the venom in my voice for that last word.

“But didn’t you say you’re two different people?” Sauli reminded me.

“Yeah…” I said, and I finally realized where he was going with this. “We are.” My tone was firm. I gripped my spoon tighter, waiting.

“So… why does he look almost exactly like you?”
And there it was. Great.

For that, to my frustration, I had no real answer.

“Shouldn’t you still be resting?” I countered irritably, turning all mother hen on him. “Talking so much isn’t going to make you feel any better.”

Sauli gave me a look. “Adam,” he insisted seriously.

I sighed sharply and rolled my eyes.

“Fine,” I spat. “Look, I just… I just feel it. There’s no way this monster could be me, come on. He’s the devil in a disguise that resembles me to lull you into a false sense of comfort or something,” I muttered, stabbing my spoon into the now-mushy cereal, not even knowing what I was saying anymore. I turned the spotlight onto him, eager to get away from this one aspect that dumbfounded me. “Why exactly are you suddenly so interested in that?”

Sauli’s determination was suddenly overshadowed by my question and his voice dropped in volume. “It’s just that, I think I’ve seen him. I had a dream and he looked exactly like how you described him.”

“Well, I know that,” I snorted.

Sauli’s eyebrows shot up in question. I gave him a small smile.

“The restaurant, remember?” I reminded him. “You told me you had a dream like a decade ago and you saw a dude in a mirror. Well… that’s him.”

“Oh… right.” it dawned on Sauli. “Is that why you’d changed the subject so quickly?” He smirked.

I got defensive. “Hey, it was just really unsettling since I hadn’t even told you about him at the time. I still don’t understand how you were able to dream of him that one time.”

Sauli’s smile died down slowly. “It wasn’t one time,” he admitted with a mumble. “Last night…” My eyes widened in the slightest, but I fought hard to keep my face neutral. “I was in that room in your head. He was there and so were you.”

So, that’s where all this was coming from.

“…What happened?” I asked cautiously, leaning forward on table and folding my hands under my chin, staring seriously at Sauli’s unsettled expression.

Sauli’s face paled a degree as his eyes went distant, probably recalling the dream. His voice was barely above a whisper when he finally replied.

“You both died…”

***

It took Sauli another couple of days to be able to walk around without feeling nauseous. Stubborn as always, he refused to go to the doctor and get some antibiotics, insisting that he would be fine by himself, and he wasn’t wrong; he was already getting better.

I didn’t leave his side the entire first day, but after that, I had to work. Management called and yelled at me, annoyed at my unprofessionalism for bailing on plans and sessions I’d created and they’d paid
for. We still had a lot to discuss about the next album, and I was going to try to prove myself by convincing them to let me have creative control and be the executive producer. This album was my vision and I wanted to oversee the whole thing happen, but it was hard to focus when my love was still sick in bed. But then I’d come home and hear a series of complaints about how he was bored all day while I was gone.

Needless to say, I couldn’t catch a break anywhere.

And I still had to go through the pain of finding new band members. As it turned out, a few just needed to move onto other projects in a while, a professionalism thing, and although I couldn’t blame them, it still sucked to have to go through the process all over again. Tommy was the only one that was still a solid member and not uncertain. I’d asked him about it and he’d given me this entire lecture on how he wouldn’t leave unless I forced him to and even then he’d fight to stay, and it’d made me smile. He was a great friend. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t attracted to him, especially in the beginning, but of course, like with many cases in my lifetime, he was straight and not interested, and I just had to shrug it off and move on.

And speaking of Tommy, I thought I owed it to my best friend to let him meet the rock in my life. Plus, Sauli could use the company and get acquainted with one of my most trusted friends while I left to work. Maybe then he’d stop bitching about how he’s considered all the ways to kill himself from being so hopelessly bored.

“What?” A sleepy, irritated voice grumbled after the dial tone cut off on the other line.

“Tommy?” I asked unsurely, leaning on the kitchen counter.

“Oh, Adam. Hey, man!” Tommy enthused on the other line, perking up immediately. “Long time, no call. Is everything okay?”

I hesitated, not sure how to answer his question. Well, for the most part, things were fine, I guess, right? You know, except for the fact that this parasite in my head was draining me of any peace of mind, and keeping me constantly on edge about losing the love of my life.

“Yeah, everything’s perfect,” I muttered quickly and changed the subject. “I was just wondering if you wanted to come over and meet somebody.” I smiled to myself, looking down the hallway to the bathroom door where I could hear Sauli humming in the shower.

“When?”

“Now?”

“Hmm…” Tommy sounded far away for a moment, like he was checking something. “Uh…Yeah, sure. Should I be afraid?”

“Oh, totally,” I laughed.

“Are you gonna tell me anything about this person?” Tommy asked with fake suspicion.

“Nope,” I snickered as I pushed off the counter. “You’ll see when you get here. And no, it’s not some guitar legend.”

“Dammit!” Tommy exclaimed sarcastically on the other line. “This had better be good then.” I rolled my eyes. Same old Tommy… “I’ll be right over. See you in a bit.” I could hear keys jingling in the distance.

“Shut up and bye.”

I chuckled and hung up the phone, checking the time after the call disconnected.

“Who’s a pretty kitty?”

I jumped at Sauli’s sudden voice, and whirled around, slamming my hand against my heart. I hadn’t even noticed him enter the kitchen in fresh pajamas and wet hair, bringing in a humid and intoxicatingly fresh smell with him.

“You scared me!” I said breathlessly, holding onto the counter for support. Sauli rolled his eyes and waited for me to answer his question. “And that was Tommy. He’s in my band.”

“Oh.” Sauli nodded with recognition, but his smile faded after a few moments. “Wait, you mean that guy whose face you like to eat?”

I raised a brow, nervousness prickling in my cheeks. “How did you know about that?”

“I did my research before coming here, Adam.” He waved his hand dismissively. My face filled with apology and shame, but Sauli cut me off before I could attempt to explain anything. “It’s okay; I know you’re just friends…. Really friendly friends…” He arched his eyebrows playfully. “Maybe even with benefits?”

I shook my head. “It’s not like that,” I assured him.

Sauli smirked expectantly. “I know. Fan service, or whatever all those YouTube comments called it.”

I let out a sigh of relief. He didn’t seem to be upset by it. I hadn’t been planning on him finding out like that, or ever, but he just took it in stride and I was grateful I could avoid an ultimatum.

“Well, yeah… him. He’s coming over right now to meet you,” I muttered under my breath quickly, not quite looking at him.

Sauli’s eyes widened. “W-what?” he stammered, and I just gave him a sheepishly apologetic smile. “You can’t be serious.”

I said nothing.

“Adam!” Sauli groaned, running a tense hand through his damp hair. His words came out in a panicked flurry. “I don’t want to meet anyone, especially not the guy you like to swap spit with! Do you have any idea how awkward this will be? What is the matter with you?”

So, he was upset by it. He almost had me fooled. My lip pouted out as I made my way over to stand in front of him, gently massaging his shoulders and ignoring when he tried to shrug me off. The sweet smell of shampoo filled my nostrils and I leaned into his hair, taking a big whiff.

“Delicious,” I muttered, nosing his wet hair before pressing a soft kiss to his forehead.

Sauli pushed at my chest gently. “Adam, call him and cancel. I’m not as outgoing as I was. It’s just… I don’t know, it’s just weird now, I guess.”

“It’s okay. It’s only Tommy,” I assured him. “He’s like… Well… he’s Tommy.” I couldn’t think of any other way to describe him.
“Yeah, thanks for that. Totally helped,” Sauli mumbled sarcastically, looking away.

My face fell. I didn’t mean for him to be bothered by this. I tilted Sauli’s chin up gently, staring at his dejected expression with worry crinkling around my eyes. “Please, baby? Give it a chance. You’ll love him. I promise.” A white lie. I wasn’t certain in the slightest that they’d get along.

Sauli bit his lip and took my hand off his chin, intertwining it with his fingers. “You could have asked first,” he muttered.

“I know, I’m sorry, but you would’ve never said yes,” I said honestly. He didn’t deny it either. “Being with me isn’t going to be easy. People have seen us together and now they’ll want to know every detail of your life. It’s weird and it can be scary at times, but you’ll have to get used to the attention, and I’m sorry for that. I know you’ve changed and are almost as antsy around people as I used to be. I’ll try to keep this aspect as private as possible, but strangers will still be all over you. Meeting Tommy will be good for you. He’s easygoing and you’ll get some practice for interacting with strangers. Plus, you’ll make a friend here that isn’t just me. Please, just trust me with this one.”

Sauli sighed dramatically and squeezed my hand. “Fine, but he’d better not be an ass. I won’t forgive you for putting this on me if he is.”

I laughed. “He’s not. He doesn’t even have an ass. I make fun of him all the time for it.”

When Sauli’s irritated mask cracked slightly with a twitch of his lip, I knew I’d won.

I took the opportunity to cup Sauli’s face gently and kiss him before he could complain once more. Sauli froze for a moment, groaning in objection against my lips. He didn’t kiss back, but he didn’t pull away either.

I mimicked him and groaned teasingly back, vibrating against his lips. I wrapped my arms around him, pulling him hard against me and trapping his hands between our chests as I urged his lips to part with mine. My brow furrowed and I made a small sound of disappointment and apology when he still didn’t move. I tried to coax him to respond by sliding the tip of my tongue tentatively along his lower lip.

Sauli let out a deep breath of resignation through his nose, tickling my face. With an annoyed grunt, he gave in reluctantly to my kiss, and fisted my shirt against my chest. I fought back a smirk and hummed in approval when he still didn’t move. I tried to coax him to respond by sliding the tip of my tongue tentatively along his lower lip.

I kissed him more aggressively, hands raking down his toned back and grabbing his ass. Sauli yelped into my mouth. My skin burst into flames, heat prickling all over, but especially lower where knots were forming in my core. My pants felt a little too constricted for comfort. I couldn’t get enough of his sweet taste fast enough, and the moment seemed to be endless, but still never enough. I lost track of time by the time I pushed Sauli back against the fridge and rammed my hips forward to his to pin him there as I ground against him.

The doorbell rang out of nowhere.

I groaned out loud in annoyance, breathlessly pulling away from Sauli’s lips with a smack, and stepped back a couple feet. His face was flushed and bright, but he was too busy panting to complain. He licked his swollen lips and just stared up at me with wide eyes, speechless.

Remembering where we were and what the plan was, I chuckled huskily, exhaling hard to get
myself to cool down and refocus. “You’re right, I shouldn’t have invited him over,” I joked, winking as I reached down and readjusted my half hard-on. Sauli’s eyes darkened as he watched me. Noting his desire, I suggested, “Perhaps a threesome?”

Sauli’s speechlessness vanished and his eyes immediately narrowed to slits when they jumped to mine. “Perhaps not,” he insisted.

“I’m only kidding.” I reached forward and cupped either side of his heated face again before pressing a sweet kiss to his lips and whispering against them, “You’re the only one for me.”

I heard Tommy shout, “Lambert!” from the other side of the door before pounding against it.

Sauli jumped and immediately froze in my hold. I could feel the nervousness developing around him like a thick film. I gave him an encouraging smile before taking his tense hand in mine and practically towing him to the front door.

“Would you relax?” I half-whispered as we reached the door, unclenching his fingers from mine. “You’re not meeting the president.” I paused with my hand resting on the handle and looked back at him, waiting.

Sauli forcefully contorted his face into that of faux relaxation and gave me a curt nod. I rolled my eyes and just swung the door open, ready to get this over with.

And there stood Tommy with his signature bleached blond fringe and smoky chocolate eyes that brightened immediately when they met mine.

“Hey man!” I exclaimed, pulling him inside for a crushing hug. “It’s already been too long.” The smell of his familiar cologne filled my nose and relaxed me slightly.

Tommy laughed into my shoulder and patted my back before smacking my bicep harder than strictly necessary, and saying, “Where have you been?!” He pulled away and kissed my cheek as he kicked the door shut, making himself right at home like always.

I held my breath as we turned toward Sauli who was standing a couple feet further away than where I’d initially placed him, his eyes flickering nervously over us both.

I cleared my throat and said, “With this beautiful man,” I gushed, gesturing to Sauli. “Sauli, this is Tommy Joe. Tommy, this is Sauli… my new boyfriend.”

I knew Sauli caught the joke in the emphasis of new with the slightest shift of his expression. I fought back a giggle, not missing the hidden daggers he was throwing at Tommy behind the feigned innocent look in his nervous eyes. Unless you knew him like I did, you could never even tell. It was probably awful that I thought his jealousy over the whole Fever kiss thing was adorable.

“What?!” Tommy exclaimed, turning to me. “Boyfriend? Already? That was really quick. The tour just ended.”

I shrugged nonchalantly, eyeing Sauli. “Well, we just… clicked immediately.”

Sauli couldn’t help but snicker, “Oh yeah, it was totally love at first sight for him.” I rolled my eyes at his comment, vaguely remembering all the empty death threats I’d thought toward and said to Sauli upon meeting him so long ago. “Hi, it’s great to meet you.” He beamed at Tommy, offering his hand; a greeting perfectly executed, and no hint of nerves visible. I arched a brow, impressed.

“Hey, man,” Tommy said casually, shaking his hand, “nice to meet you.” He let go and gestured to
me with a nod of his head.” Be careful with this one,” he nudged my shoulder, “he’s… like a sexually frustrated animal. He’ll practically eat you alive.”

Like Sauli didn’t already know.

I tugged on Tommy’s blond fringe, squeaking defensively, “Hey!”

Tommy cracked up, swatting my hand away. “I’m not even kidding, man. You know it. I thought I’d lose my nose during a few of those Fevers. You would’ve had to pay to get that shit fixed, you ass.”

“At least I have one,” I muttered under my breath, only to be shoved sideways. I stumbled and laughed, bumping Tommy’s non-hip with the side of my mine. He had to catch himself on the door frame.

“Please,” Tommy sneered, grinning as he leaned back to stare at my pride and joy with squinty eyes. “What ass? That’s like an indent!”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, keep trying to make yourself feel better. My ass is fabulous and you know it,” I concluded, crossing my arms and jutting my hip out. “I would lend it to you, but…”

My eyes trailed over to Sauli who was watching us with amusement and something else I couldn’t quite name in his eyes. It definitely wasn’t positive. I knew he’d never seen this side of me before, so I couldn’t imagine what was going through his head right now. I cleared my throat before Tommy could retaliate again, stopping the shenanigans. I quickly glanced over at the clock, realizing I was going to be late.

“Guys, I have to go to a meeting now…” I said slowly, watching Sauli’s eyes widen and then pierce through me with horror in them. I ripped my gaze from his and tried to focus on Tommy instead. “I was wondering if you could stay here with Sauli. Keep him company?”

“Sure, no problem,” Tommy said, looking perfectly calm and comfortable; the picture of ease.

Sauli, on the other hand, looked like he was going to strangle me in my sleep for doing this to him. I was grateful that Tommy’s back was to him at the moment. It wouldn’t be the most comforting thing for him if he saw the violent death glares Sauli was stabbing into my cheek at the moment.

“Think you’ll be okay?” I asked Tommy. “I didn’t mean to force you to babysit, sorry.”

“It’s cool, we’re gonna have fun,” Tommy grinned at me, wiggling his eyebrows. I gave him a look.

“Hey, none of that, he’s mine. You’re straight, so start acting like it.”

“I make no promises.”

I rolled my eyes. “I’ll be back in a couple hours,” I said, mostly promising Sauli, still not able to look at him without cringing. “So… have fun… but not too much fun.”

I could practically hear Sauli screaming at me in Finnish as he tore me limb from limb in his mind for leaving him with a stranger.

I turned to face his silent wrath. Sauli’s expression was hard-set although he was trying to look calm and collected. I could see right through it. His jaw was locked and his eyes bored wickedly into mine; A thousand insults and attacks rolling off of him in waves. He knew he couldn’t verbally reject the invite with Tommy standing right there, which had been my intent all along, and obviously, he
"Bye, baby," I mumbled apologetically as I approached Sauli cautiously, pressing a kiss against his tense forehead when I deemed it was safe enough, without touching the rest of his body. I could feel him stiffen beneath my lips and I sighed as I pulled away. "I love you, I’m sorry," I whispered into his ear before turning to Tommy.

"Thanks, kitty," I smiled at him, messing up his hair before opening the door and heading out.

***

More than just a couple hours later like I’d originally promised, I was finally finished with a handful of redundant meetings and phone calls, and now I was expecting an ultimatum when I pulled up on my driveway. I took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, tightening my grip on the steering wheel. Who knew what was going on behind those doors now?

I was expecting to see my house completely destroyed on the inside and vases being flung across the living room. I was in no way sure Sauli and Tommy got along. It was wishful thinking, really. They were very different beings.

With every step up the porch, I found the creeping feeling along my skin getting stronger as well as the sense of regret for letting them meet. I didn’t know what to do if my boyfriend and my best friend couldn’t stand each other. They could’ve had a bloodbath and ripped each other apart for all I knew. And Sauli’s jealousy over the matter didn’t really help much either.

I froze with my hand on the door handle after hearing a yell from the other side. I gulped, terrified of what I might find. I slowly unlocked the door and just barely opened it enough for me to squeeze through. I stuck my head into the gap, peering into the room, prepared to dodge any projectiles.

But there were Sauli and Tommy… laughing and yelling at the TV, sprawled over the couch and drowning in popcorn.

"Boo!" Tommy yelled with a mouthful of popcorn, not noticing me. "Why’s she going into the basement?! The front door is right there! Run, goddammit!"

"I know!" Sauli exclaimed, throwing a handful of popcorn at the TV, also having no clue of my existence in the doorway. "And why is she asking if there’s someone there?! The killer’s not going to be like, ‘Yeah, just a second, I’m in the basement! Do you need anything?’" I heard a high-pitched shriek from the TV. Sauli rolled his eyes while Tommy snickered. “See? She deserved that. Natural selection at its best.”

My mouth popped open at the sight. More than a little confused, I entered the house slowly, blinking several times because what the fuck? Were they actually watching shit together and enjoying each other’s company? Where was the fighting? The jealous raging? The arguing? How bizarre.

The door shut behind me with a quiet click. Sauli’s eyes flickered over in my direction before doing a double take and beaming brightly at me.

I gave him a look.

Tommy glanced up at me from the couch and grinned, pausing the movie. “Adam! How’d it go?”

I opened my arms as Sauli ran to me, huffing when he slammed against my chest in a too-tight hug. I gaped at Tommy over Sauli’s shoulder as I rubbed his back, still stunned. Sauli pulled away and
gave my cheek a loud, smacking kiss. I looked at him with wide eyes and he just cracked up.

“Hey, guys,” I said, voice higher than normal from surprise. “Having fun?” I sounded so disbelieving.

“Yes!” Sauli enthused. “This movie is so terrible, it’s hilarious. I cried a few times from laughing so hard.”

We both looked over at Tommy when he said, “I just cried from the stupidity.”

Sauli agreed with a laugh. He agreed. With Tommy. And laughed. He turned back to me, and I flinched in pain with he suddenly smacked my bicep.

First Tommy, and now Sauli with the hitting. Was it Adam’s A Piñata day or something? My god, they were already becoming more like each other.

“Um, ouch?!” I exclaimed. “What was that for?”

“Why didn’t you let me meet him earlier? What’s wrong with you?!” Sauli slapped my upper arm again. I could already feel a bruise forming. This should count as domestic violence.

I gave him an exasperated look. He had to be kidding me, right? I couldn’t win with this one.


“Only kidding,” Tommy chuckled and then checked his phone. “I have to go in a few anyway. Sauli, do you have any of those Finnish candy bars to go? They were sex in chocolate form.”

“Yeah, I’ll go get them,” Sauli grinned and slipped out the room.

Tommy smiled after him and got up off the couch. He made his way over to me as I took off my boots.

“Dude, he’s amazing,” Tommy gushed. “So adorable.”

“I know,” I agreed.

“And the best part? He actually likes my terrible horror movies, unlike you.”

I rolled my eyes. “Yeah, yeah, how about you don’t fall in love with my boyfriend?”

“I might kidnap him when you’re not looking, but…” Tommy grinned.

I mirrored him, thrilled now after the shock had worn off that they’d gotten along so well. Everything had fallen into place, and I was relieved. Despite the initial what the fuck factor, I was giddy about the way things turned out. But I was the only one.

A prickle crept its way up my spine as I felt suddenly crowded and unwelcome within the vicinity of my own head. The displeasure from Dark was imminent when I heard a low irritated grunt echo in my mind. So, he’d been watching quietly up until now. I focused on him and mentally cringed at his lethal appearance as he lounged about on his couch thing. He was gripping the edge of the armrest so hard that his knuckles turned white. He definitely looked more than just a little pissed off, but with a hint of something else in there, something hurt, something like… jealousy? It couldn’t be. I was
“Just make sure you don’t move too fast. You seem like you’re in way too deep already.” Tommy said, and he sounded a bit worried as he pulled me out of my thoughts.

I forced a reassuring smile at him. “Just trust me. It’s almost not fast enough.”

Tommy shrugged. “You know better than I do, but you’d better keep this one,” he warned, holding up a finger.

“I’m trying,” I said quietly, more afraid of losing Sauli than Tommy would ever know. I didn’t want to fuck this up… again.

Tommy leaned in a little closer. “By the way… he wouldn’t happen to be the same guy we left you back at the club in Finland with, right…?”

I said nothing, but didn’t try to hide my grin.

“Oh, he totally is!” Tommy smacked me. I flinched again. My bicep was starting to throb from all the abuse it was receiving today. “Jesus fuck, you brought him back here?! Is he living with you already?! Are you crazy?!”

I shushed Tommy loudly. “Would you relax?!” I peered over his shoulder, making sure Sauli wasn’t overhearing this, before I leaned down and started muttering quickly under my breath, “He’s just staying with me until I can find a place for him to live. He didn’t come here because I made him. He came because he wanted to move to LA. He just happened to run into me and I was kind enough to let him crash here for a while. I spent some of my time between meetings today checking out some possible places for him to go to. I think he thinks I’ll allow him, but I’m not actually letting him move in. That’s crazy.” If only Tommy knew why.

“Okay, okay,” He half whispered. “I believe you. Just don’t fuck this up.”

Right on cue, Sauli reappeared cheerfully with some oddly wrapper-covered things and offered them out to Tommy. “Here you go.”

Tommy’s face lit up again. “Thanks, man,” he said, taking whatever those were. “I’ll see you both later. And Adam, you’d better fucking call me again. I’m not done with this one.”

Sauli and I laughed at that. I wrapped my arm around his waist and tucked him into my side, kissing the side of his head fondly. Sauli blushed and Tommy chuckled, opening the door.

We said our goodbyes and Tommy finally left. The house was mine and Sauli’s once again. It seemed so quiet already.

“That wasn’t so bad, was it?” I accused him teasingly, squeezing his side.

“No…” Sauli admitted stubbornly.

I peered over his shoulder at the popcorn all over the floor and snickered.

“Yeah… you’re cleaning all of that up, by the way,” I said to Sauli, gesturing to the mess.

He followed my gaze and grimaced once he saw what I was talking about.

He sighed, “Fine.”
Backstage was frenzied during the meet and greet before the concert. I signed countless objects and took enough photos with flash to blind me. I really didn’t like meet and greets, but only because of how ridiculous they were. These people wait for so long only to be herded by me like cattle. I could only say hi, take a picture, give a half-assed hug, and then it was over. It felt so fake and unnatural. I would have much rather sat down with each of them and gotten to know them as human beings, but nope, not enough time.

Sauli was watching me meeting my adoring fans silently from a doorway, not wanting to draw too much attention to him. Only a couple people recognized him and I was proud when they approached him calmly and respectfully. He would slip in and out as he pleased, finding Tommy and chatting with the other band members, which I presumed he was doing right now. The room felt strangely empty, despite all the people, without his presence.

My hand ached from all the signing and my face hurt from all the grinning. Noticing how I wasn’t the only one growing weary, I signaled a wave of dismissal to my incredibly bored-looking security guards after the last fans trickled out, giggling and squealing to themselves.

I stretched my arms over my head, feeling joints pop, and I let out a satisfied sigh. It was getting close to show time. I heard someone whisper frantically in a language I didn’t understand just before two men without VIP passes around their necks stumbled into the room, checking back over their shoulders to make sure they hadn’t been followed.

Startled, I started to call out, “Securi—!”

“—No, no, no, wait, wait, wait,” the taller man pleaded quickly in a heavily accented English, cutting me off. “Please, we mean no harm!”

I froze and stared over at the men suspiciously, taking in their innocent appearances. They were holding hands, obviously together, and the taller one that’d called out sported dark elf-like hair and glitter, while the other was more petite overall with short brownish hair.

The shorter one rolled his eyes and muttered something to his partner in a different language, and I only picked up the English word “security” before he left the room again. I assumed his job was to keep watch to make sure this little visit would remain uninterrupted.

“Oh my god, oh my god,” the darker haired one flailed in accented English as soon as his partner was gone. I looked back at him confusion as he stared at me like I was a pile of precious treasure. “You’re really here. I’m really talking to you.”

I relaxed a smidgen, dispersing the plans of defense running through my head. It was almost a relief to hear him say that. He seemed to be nothing more than an overzealous fan. I gave him the benefit of the doubt, deciding that it was kind of brave of him for sneaking past security like that and risking possible jail time just to meet me. It was a bit flattering, so I decided to go with it. I might as well make his risk worthwhile.

“Hi there,” I said, putting on a smile, still a little unsure.

“I love you!” he blurted as he approached me slowly. “I know I’m not supposed to be here, and I’m sorry, but I couldn’t help it. God, you’re gorgeous.”

“Aw, thank you,” I said bashfully. Honestly, he was kind of adorable, and of course I was enjoying
the attention. I wasn’t getting any weird vibes from him anyway. “It’s okay. How did you even get back here?”

He went over his story, stuttering nervously a couple times, before just completely cutting off in the middle of his sentence and asking for a hug. I laughed and happily gave it to him, only finding slightly odd to hug someone the same size as me because it normally never happened. I still had a bit of time left, so I signed everything the cute man had in his pockets and took a few pictures, relaxing more and more all the while. Between him constantly apologizing for sneaking in, we exchanged jokes and laughed, and he even told me exactly where he’d be seated during the concert, asking if I would sing to him.

My eyes flickered toward a movement in my peripheral, and my eyes landed on Sauli who had reappeared in the unwatched doorway. Everything in me warmed just from seeing the beautiful face of my lover again, but he wasn’t looking at me. Sauli’s face paled considerably and he looked like someone had just electrocuted him, completely fixated on the man with me. The fan followed my distracted gaze and he gasped quietly when his eyes met Sauli’s and filled with recognition. My eyes flickered between their faces in confusion.

“Sauli?!” the man said disbelievingly, voice jumping an octave.

“My business trip, remember?! I said I’d come see Adam Lambert during it!” Mika cheered, squeezing Sauli’s biceps. “What are you doing here?!”

Then they started speaking excitedly in what I could now assume was Finnish to each other; A strange tongue that I had no understanding of. I felt left out and ignored, standing nearby awkwardly. So, this was Sauli’s ex-boyfriend I’d been hugging. I blanched. Fuck. He was so nice too. My heart sank a little and I fought the pang of jealousy, telling myself to suck it up and be a grown up. I watched their reunion with forcibly indifferent eyes, seeing how happy it was making Sauli, and a slow smile spread across my face. I was okay with this. This was innocent. This was sweet.

Now that he was next to Sauli, I noticed how Mika looked… remarkably like me. Well, what I looked like in my Idol days and youth. Sauli really couldn’t forget about me all these years, could he? I smirked, realizing that he totally dated this guy because of that. As obnoxious as it sounded, he wasn’t anything more than an underdog version of me, or a cheap knock-off. With that in mind, this little get-together’s threat was diminished, practically harmless.

The low, threatening growl in my mind obviously didn’t agree. I stiffened, feeling Dark stirring inside, and he was fuming as he watched Sauli and Mika reunite with piercing eyes. I hadn’t even realized he’d awoken, but he was enraged, angrier than I’d ever seen him. My gut sank in fear. For how long had he been watching?

But before I could even plead with him and attempt to stop his inevitable tantrum in my head, my body froze as my mind was roughly shoved aside. I was shocked as I felt all feeling instantly cease from every nerve.
He was taking over by himself, no trigger.

I didn’t even have time to panic before my vision and everything else blacked out.

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Dark:

My head felt like it was bursting through the water’s crisp surface after being under for far too long as I gasped in the first breath under my control, every nerve in my body sparking to life in a fire. My senses tingled wildly in overload. It felt amazing to so clearly feel again, hear again, taste again, and smell again, but it was infuriating to see again through my own eyes because of what was now disgracefully tainting my perfect vision.

My eyes reflexively narrowed to slits at the disgusting sight in front of me, the only thing I was focused on at this point.

How dare he?

Did he seriously think he could just throw himself all over some male concubine while I was here?

Every nerve in my body burned with fury, and I didn’t know why, nor did I care. My blood was boiling. I just needed the threat in the form of a pretty boy toy gone. He needed to—Stop. Touching. Sauli. Now.

I growled gutturally when the glittery freak ran his hand down Sauli’s arm with an intention straying far from platonic, something dumbass Adam didn’t even notice. I cracked my neck and proceeded to start storming over to where the two were standing and chatting up within an alarming proximity to each other. Sauli looked up at me with a sickeningly delighted grin as I was midway in my approach, but that was wiped clean off his face when he took in the menacing expression on mine, and he tensed with fearful recognition as I continued to march forward, focusing only on ripping apart the bastard that was standing far too close to him and not close enough to me to rip him to shreds. Sauli gasped and immediately moved in between me and my prey, holding his palms out toward me, a pleading look desperate in his blue eyes.

My eyes narrowed further. He was trying to defend the fucker? I didn’t stop moving. When I reached Sauli, I merely dug my nails into his bicep and jerked him behind me roughly, sending him stumbling. The look-alike fucker watched my display of sudden aggression with an irritatingly puzzled look further disfiguring his already nauseating face as he backed up a few steps. I wanted to tear that ridiculous expression of his face.

I wanted to kill him.

But just before I could finally reach him and lash out to tear the pretty boy to pretty slices, Sauli blocked my view again in a flash and shoved at my chest, stopping my momentum. I growled and shoved him back harder.

“No!” Sauli yelled and caught his footing, matching my movements as I attempted to side-step him. “Mika, you need to leave now,” he called over his shoulder, still hovering in front of me protectively for this Mika.

“Move,” I hissed, seeping as much venom as I could into my voice, giving Sauli the most severe warning I could manage.

He didn’t seem to realize how much he was testing me just for this. First, the blond bimbo, and now
this sparkly whore. He was lucky I hadn’t pummeled him to a pulp yet for getting in the way. But, even with my generous warning, Sauli’s jaw set, just as determined as I was. My hands were trembling from the anger and I saw red.

“Is he okay?” I heard the fucker ask timidly from behind Sauli’s shoulder.

I glared at the source of the obnoxious voice over Sauli’s shoulder and refocused, eyes narrowing in on the target and locking there as I grabbed a fistful of Sauli’s hair and shoved him aside. I only got a couple steps in before I felt arms wrap around my waist from behind and lock as Sauli dug his heels into the ground to restrain me. I snarled at being stopped again, and lashed out anyway at the fucker in front of me, who was just so close now, but I couldn’t reach him in time before he yelped out in surprise and staggered back.

“Don’t!” Sauli yelled into the back of my jacket, holding on for dear life. “Leave him alone!”

I paused, head clearing for a second as I realized that Sauli was completely pressed up against me from behind, clinging onto my body and practically begging me to do what just popped into my head.

If I couldn’t teach the asshole to lay off macking all over what was mine by way of force, I would try another way. If I couldn’t hit him in the body, I’d hit him in the ego; hurt his pride, like he did mine.

My primal need to show ownership—mark my territory, so to speak— took over. I spun around in Sauli’s arms and he dropped them immediately, about to back off, but not before I could grab the back of his neck and crush his lips to mine, making sure the other fucker had a perfect view of the possessive exhibitionism. The kiss was nothing, not even qualifying as one. It was just for show. Sauli shoved at my chest and his lips were unresponsive. He made noises of protest and pain as my nails dug into the hair at the nape of his neck and my teeth dug hard into his bottom lip.

I pulled away with a growl, breathless and unsatisfied, throwing a smug glare at the look-alike. I could taste a bit of blood on my tongue. Sauli stumbled back, groaning with what sounded like disgust and wiping his mouth. I twitched with annoyance at his aversion to me.

“Are you dating him?” The glittery piece of shit asked Sauli, sounding shocked. And if I wasn’t mistaken, which I never was, he was jealous. Another reason and more proof as to why he needed to be far, far away from what belonged to me.

Sauli stepped in front of me after collecting himself, immediately snapping, “No!” like that was the most insulting thing anyone could say to him. He paused for a moment and then mumbled, “Well, sort of…” He placed a weak hand on my chest like that would hold me back. I fought the urge to take his wrist and snap it in half. “Not exactly him…”

I growled at that comment, barking, “Mine.” I grabbed Sauli’s wrist on my chest from behind him, digging my nails into it as I glared threateningly over his shoulder at the pathetic idiot watching us.

“Ouch—let go!” Sauli yelled, uselessly attempting to jerk his wrist from my bone-crushing grasp.

Michael, Mika, McDick—or whatever the fuck his ridiculous name was— looked stunned and then pissed off. “You need to calm down,” he patronized me. “And let go of him!”

That did it.

I snarled and pulled Sauli aside so hard by his wrist that he fell on his ass, and within the next split-second, I was finally, finally in the other fucker’s face before he could blink, slamming my fist with his jaw, and sending him flying toward the ground. The sound of his hard impact was music to my
ears and satisfaction filled me. I half-expected him to get up immediately and fight me like a man, but
he didn’t move a twitch. His eyes were closed shut. I smirked and cracked the knuckles in my fist in
sick delight. One hit and he was out cold? Pathetic.

Sauli gasped loudly and was in my face in a second. I heard the wall-echoing crack of skin against
skin before I felt the hard strike of his palm across my face. I didn’t have time to react before my
head whipped as far as it could to the side from the impact. Vibrations of pain started in my cheek
and spread throughout the side of my face. I slowly turned my head back toward him with wide
eyes, astonished. Sauli threw me a painful look of hatred, not a single ounce of remorse, and then ran
toward Mika, dropping down onto his knees beside him.

I was frozen to the spot, jaw agape, eyes as wide as saucer plates, as my fingertips slowly reached up
and touched the tender skin of my red-hot cheek in disbelief. Shock and brief pain hardwired into
anger within seconds, blood bubbling and pounding in my ears. My fingertips on my cheek curled
inward and my nails dug into my skin. He just signed both of their death wishes. I stood there fuming
and shaking, ready to go on a massacre, when I suddenly caught sight of two tear tracks glinting on
Sauli’s face as he fussed over an unconscious Mika. My anger cooled by a degree while my enraged
face fell at the sight.

Utterly confused, I didn’t know what to make of it or how to react.

He was… crying?

Because of me?

My head couldn’t wrap around it or connect the two in any way that made sense.

Despite my efforts to remain indifferent at the sight, something about it bothered me enough to catch
me off guard. And that moment of indecision and weakness was enough for Adam’s mind to
reawaken, surging forward and trying to overpower mine to take its rightful place. Still baffled, anger
forgotten, I gave in, not knowing what to do now even if I stayed out.

Me, speechless and startled… I hadn’t thought it was possible.

I let him take over and let myself fall back into the safe, familiar darkness.

~~~

Adam:

A second ago, I could have sworn I’d been watching Sauli and his ex-boyfriend hugging it out, and
now Sauli was crouched over him, tears threatening to spill over as Mika lay there unconscious. My
alarms started blaring.

“What happened?!” I yelled out, running over to Sauli who flinched as I reached him. I frowned at
his reaction.

Sauli glanced up at me tentatively and his tense face washed over with what seemed like relief at my
expression. He visibly relaxed, but he didn’t reply, focused completely on Mika.

“What happened?!” I yelled out, running over to Sauli who flinched as I reached him. I frowned at
his reaction.

Sauli glanced up at me tentatively and his tense face washed over with what seemed like relief at my
expression. He visibly relaxed, but he didn’t reply, focused completely on Mika.

I bit my lip, looking around. There was no one nearby to help, and I still had a show to do. Sauli
fanned Mika and caressed him until he started coming to. I tried to not let it bother me. I kept my
eyes averted until I heard a groan from Mika as he regained consciousness. His face lit up like a
Christmas tree when his eyes landed on Sauli’s worried face before he suddenly winced and touched
his jaw. I took a closer look—it was swelling up. Where the hell did that come from?
“What happened?” he echoed me. Now that was just creepy.

“Um, you passed out over meeting Adam,” Sauli explained quickly, not missing a beat. Was that really what happened?

Mika sat up on his elbows and followed Sauli’s eyes until they met mine and widened. He froze and gasped.

“Oh my god, Adam Lambert. I was going to sneak backstage to meet you, but you’re already here,” His words blurted out in a rush. “Oh my god. I love you, can you sign my everything?”

I gave Sauli a quizzical look. Didn’t we do this already?

“He already did, babe. It’s okay,” Sauli hushed him. “You hit the ground pretty hard.”

Babe?

“How long was I out for? I think I had a dream that he,” Mika nodded toward me, “got all protective over you for some reason and tried to attack me. Crazy, right? Like he’d ever do that, he’s a teddy bear.” He laughed and then winced when his jaw ached. “God, ouch, did I hit my jaw too?”

My face was one of silent shock during Mika’s heavily accented rambling, realizing what had actually happened. Dark. Of course. How had I let it fly over my head? It was obvious. He’d taken over and raged out here in public. Oh god, if anyone else had been in here…

“You hit the floor face first,” Sauli explained, taking his hands and helping him up. I investigated Sauli’s body as he stood up, watching for any signs of damage. Other than looking a little disheveled and shaken, he seemed fine, but I didn’t feel the least bit relieved. “You’ll be okay, but maybe visit a doctor?”

Mika didn’t let go of Sauli’s hands when he said something in sweet-sounding Finnish as he made googly eyes at him and then continued in English, “and come back with me.”

I made a nearly inaudible squeak of protest and my heart dropped, but I kept my distance this time, even looking away so Dark wouldn’t see anything through my eyes, or at least that’s the excuse I came up with for not being able to watch them get so touchy, since Dark wasn’t even lurking in my head.

Sauli sighed, and I glanced at him in my peripheral as he pulled his hands from Mika’s.

“No,” he replied gently. I let out a breath I hadn’t realized I’d been holding. “It’s good to see you, but you have someone now,” I didn’t know if he was saying this in English for my sake or what, “and so do I... and I really love him.” His eyes met mine and I couldn’t even attempt to fight the smile on my face as my heart warmed.

***

After that ridiculous incident, Sauli confirmed to Mika that he was indeed with me, and Mika took it well. Actually, he was ecstatic that his ex was dating one of his favorite singers because apparently that meant he’d get “second dibs” on me…whatever that meant. Mika wanted several hugs, and this time, it was very hard give him what he wanted. Then, security came back with Mika’s boyfriend and I reluctantly had to talk to them to let him go. Turned out, I was late to my own concert—again — by the time everything cooled over. When I finally got up on stage, the show went by smoothly, and I killed it as usual, pretending there was nothing horribly wrong in my life as I was all smiles and laughs for my audience.
On the drive home with Sauli, all was quiet in the car except for the soft hum of the engine. I stared straight out at the winding road ahead. Neither of us said anything, probably afraid to bring up Mika, although I knew we had to talk about it eventually.

“He looks like me;” I blurted after a while, cutting the silence, eyes still focused out the windshield.

I could see Sauli’s distracted gaze redirect toward me out of the corner of my eye, pulling him out of his thoughts. “What?”

“Your ex-boyfriend…” I clarified slowly, finally looking over at him, and trying to avoid saying the wrong thing. “He looks like me.”

Sauli shrugged, but I saw through the nonchalant act. He wasn’t expecting me to catch onto that. “Yeah… You sort of became my type.” He smiled shyly.

My lips twitched and Sauli raised an eyebrow at my smug expression. So I was right, his ex-beau had nothing on me.

“So, you never really moved on?” I asked.

“Never. Not even if I tried to convince myself otherwise.”

I smiled to myself out the window, pleased with his responses. I could feel the tension diminish slowly, but everything was quiet again after that. The city lights passed us in a blur, like we were disconnected from the outside world.

It wasn’t long before I tried to make conversation again, hating the unusual silence. I wracked my brain for topics until I thought of one thing that had caught my curiosity since Sauli stayed with me. “Do you want to see your parents?”

Sauli’s brow knitted together painfully, taken aback by my question.

“No,” I heard him whisper almost inaudibly. “Never again…”

I bit my lip, unsure what to say that wouldn’t upset him, but also not able to just ignore this considering he was back in the state in which they maybe still lived. “They probably miss you…”

Sauli sighed sharply. He was clearly uncomfortable with this. “Adam, it’s been ten years and they’ve never once called. I’m pretty sure they’ve forgotten about me.”

“Oh…” was all I could weakly reply, dropping it.

Awkward silence number three lasted about five minutes, and then miraculously, Sauli decided to change the subject and spur on a conversation. “What caused Dark come out back there… before the concert?”

I could tell he’d been thinking hard about this. My hands tensed on the wheel. I wished he’d just stop trying to figure all this out. It was hopeless.

“I really don’t know,” I said honestly, confused by it as well.

“I didn’t see anything that could’ve possibly triggered him,” he pressed, catching on way too fast. It was a blessing and a curse really, how bright he was.
He was right, of course. “I don’t think anything did…”

“So, what, he can just take over your body whenever he fucking feels like it now?” His tone was laced with frustration.

“I don’t know,” I groaned, suddenly missing the silence. I’d been trying to ignore this part of the incident. “He—He got angry and…” I shook my head, unable to come up with a proper conclusion. “It just happened…”

“Because of Mika.” Sauli concluded solemnly. “He got angry because of Mika, I think. When he somehow came out, he tried attacking him.”

I nodded slowly and stared hard out the window. Nothing had triggered Dark. I knew that. This time it was different. It didn’t feel like he was being pushed out by something; there was no resistance. It felt more like Dark was forcing his own way out willingly. The fact that he’d done that terrified me. Did I have even less control over him than I’d originally thought, or was it all just getting worse? Did Dark know he could do this? Would he abuse it now? What did this mean for Sauli’s safety?

Sauli continued, “I tried to stop him and it was surprising that he didn’t kill me on the spot for that. Well, actually…” He trailed off, leaving something out. “Never mind.”

“What?” I asked curiously and suspiciously.

Sauli sighed and hesitated for a moment. “…He sort of kissed me in front of Mika?”

My knuckles threatened to break skin from how tightly I gripped the steering wheel. I glared out the windshield, willing myself to keep breathing evenly. Now it hit me, and it pissed me off. Dark hadn’t come out because of Mika alone. He’d only done it because Mika was with Sauli. Was he seriously jealous? He couldn’t be. He only tormented Sauli to ruin me; he didn’t actually care about him. He told me that himself… unless he’d been lying to me… which frankly, now seemed incredibly obvious coming from his character. And if that was the case, it meant that this parasite was violently infatuated with my boyfriend, enough so that he defied all theories previously attached to him, and that meant trouble. Now, I didn’t know what I was dealing with.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed.

I’m itching to write the next chapter. Probably one of my favorites.
"Mine"

Chapter Notes

Happy New Year! It's Jan 1st here, which also means, Happy Birthday to yours truly!

I think this is my favorite chapter so far (And the longest- 14,589 words!) I've been dying to get it up since the beginning.

lil bit of a warning: graphic and explicit

And for some reason, this website still likes to remove the spaces between words occasionally. So if you see something like this ignore it. That's not my fault.

Other than that, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sauli:

I dug around in my bottomless suitcase, ending up making it look like a mini tornado had stormed exclusively through it, until I found and pulled out the only photo album I owned. I smiled with recognition at the cover before tucking it under my arm and scouring the mess of clothes again until I retrieved my camera. With both items finally found and in hand, I headed out into the kitchen, making a mental note to myself to unpack that stupid suitcase already.

Adam was lounging on the black leather couch, and from what I could see, watching some show with a bunch of vampires mingling with humans. I made my way over to the couch and stood beside it. Out of my peripheral, I could see Adam glancing up at me as I stared at the silly show with amusement in my eyes.


I hummed in response, deciding to keep my mouth shut. “Ah,” was all I replied.

“Whataya got there?” Adam asked, sitting up and flipping off the TV.

I held up the camera and album on either side of my head, raising my eyebrows accusatorily at him.

“You know, we haven’t taken a single photo together, ever?” I said, something lacing my casual tone. “That’s just sad.”

Adam’s face fell after a moment of doubt flashed on his features, realizing how right I was.

“Really?” he asked, confusion crinkling the skin around his eyes. I nodded once slowly, eyebrows still playfully accusing. He seemed to think hard for a moment, and then finally breathed, “You’re right…” Disbelief washed over his face. “I’m sorry…” Adam’s voice was filled with disappointment like that fact had hit him harder than I’d thought it would.

I remained more cheerful about it for his sake. “It’s fine, better late than never!” I grinned, plopping down next to him on the couch. “Here’s to our first picture of many.”
Adam smiled, probably forced, and threw his arm around my shoulders as I turned on the camera. I leaned into him and he grabbed the camera from me.

“My arm is longer,” he pointed out when I gave him a look.

He held the camera out in front and pointed it at us as we snuggled in closer together. I grinned just in time for the flash to go off.

Adam brought the camera back and stared at the picture in his lap, smiling privately to himself.

“Let me see,” I whined.

He turned the screen toward me and I chuckled at our overly-happy expressions in the picture.

“Let’s do one more,” he said. “Come here.”

Adam cupped my cheek with one hand, leaning in and molding his warm lips to mine. I could see the flash through my closed lids as Adam took the picture, but he didn’t pull away afterwards. I heard the camera plop down onto his lap. His other hand joined the one my face and he pulled me closer, deepening the kiss, sending little giddy tingles down my spine when his tongue slipped into my mouth and brushed against mine. He kissed me lazily, taking his sweet time for a few good minutes before he finally pulled away, leaving me breathless and flushed.

Adam laughed huskily at my dazed expression and picked up the camera again to look at the picture. He gazed at the kiss with awe in his eyes, having never seen what we appeared like together from the outside looking in. I just watched him stare at it for a long minute without saying anything, not even asking to see it myself, but I was secretly dying to know what was going through his mind.

Eventually, he turned the camera off with a small, distant smile on his lips, and his attention went to the photo album in my lap.

“What’s that?” he asked, nodding to it.

I shrugged. “The only photo album of me that I salvaged from a relative, I thought it’d be nice to keep some of my childhood.”

“You as a baby?” Adam enthused excitedly. “Let me see!”

I rolled my eyes and opened the first page. Adam cuddled closer to me and threw his arm around my shoulders again, tucking me against him. Of course, the very first picture was of me laying down on my stomach at five months old, completely butt-naked. Adam’s grin stretched from ear to ear.

“Cute butt,” Adam giggled. “Some things never change.”

“Oh, shut up.” I stuck my tongue out at him.

He pulled the album into his lap and silently started going through the photos, staring a bit longer than necessary at all of them.

“Are you okay?” I asked when Adam’s smile slowly died with every flip of the page.

Adam peered at me and quietly said, “I’m jealous.” I gave him a curious look. “I don’t have any pictures of me before my twenties… not one single childhood photo. It’s like I didn’t even exist. My entire past is lost and I can’t recover it.” He sighed deeply. “But then again… I’m not sure I want to.”

I felt a small lump in my throat start to form. “We can stop,” I offered slowly as I attempted to reach
Adam shook his head and gave me a reassuring smile. “I’m okay,” he insisted. “It was just a thought.”

“Okay…” I said unsurely.

After a few more minutes of flipping pages, pretty much watching me grow up page by page, Adam sighed loudly and sharply, startling me. “How are you so cute? Then and now. It’s not fair! From what I can remember, I sure was one ugly hell of a kid.”

I laughed, kissing his shoulder of the arm around me. “Come on, I’m sure you were just as adorable as you are now.”

“That’s what you think,” I heard him mutter under his breath.

Adam flipped to the next page and his arm tensed slightly around me. I peered down at the picture and felt my stomach sink. I’d forgotten about this one. It was a picture of me at seventeen, two weeks before I moved to L.A. Two weeks before I’d met Adam. Two weeks before everything I’d ever known had come crashing down. To make it worse, my parents were in the picture… The horrific memories of what those two had done to me and Adam all those years ago filled my head, including the embarrassment of being walked in on and the shock of having the police nearly arrest Adam. I was positive that the same awful things were running through Adam’s thoughts as well, but were they worse for him than they were for me?

“Adam…?” I asked unsurely, watching him nervously.

His breaths were quiet, but shaky, and his hand was trembling as he trailed his fingers over my image. His eyes were strained with something like pain as he stared hard at the picture, assumingly taken back to the horrid times in his past life.

Within a heartbeat, I felt the calm energy around Adam pulse once and then change in an inexplicable way. The photo album was slammed shut with one hand and chucked across the room, cracking against the wall. Before I had time to panic, Adam’s arm comforting arm around me suddenly tightened, nails digging into my shoulder painfully.

Raw instinct urged me to run.

Adam’s head turned toward me and my eyes widened at the malicious smirk slowly plastering onto his face. Instead of his gray-blue eyes being bright with curiosity and contentment, they didn’t look like they should be that color. They glinted sharply with lust and something weird, like there was a storm of trapped anger he was trying to hide swirling around in his irises. Fear pooled in my gut. Oh fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

“Blondie,” he stated with recognition in a wickedly smooth voice, attempting to jerk me closer to him.

I shivered at the tone of his voice and immediately tried to shove myself off the couch, but Dark was faster, having knotted my hair in his fingers tightly before I could move a muscle, and I hissed in pain when I tried to rip away. My hands flew to the top of my head to try to claw his hold off, but his grip was iron strong. I was already trapped.

“I should thank you for bringing me out and letting me feel, but who the hell said I even wanted to?” He smirked, ignoring my attempts at freeing my hair like they were nothing.
I stared at him in confusion for a second. What in the hell had triggered him? All we’d done was look at some old pictures. I didn’t get it, and it was absolutely frustrating because it seemed so obvious.

He continued devilishly, “But… while I’m here, I might as well have some fun.”

“Um…” I squeaked pathetically, lost. “What…?”

Dark rolled his eyes.

“Blondie, you owe me…” he purred seductively, making the hairs on my arms stand up. “You see, I didn’t appreciate you bitch-slapping me the other day… In fact, I kind of wanted to kill you for it.” He smiled innocently, strangely bright eyes boring into mine as he brought his other hand up to my cheek, raking his nails slowly down the side of my face in a painful caress. “Did you think I’d forget?”

“C-Course not—” I stuttered, wincing. I could hear my heart pounding in my ears.

”—Mm,” he hummed, cutting me off as he raised a perfectly arched brow. “I thought not. Now, as for punishment… You see, I’ve got a big problem that needs to be taken care of…”

He licked his lips. Confused, I followed his gaze down to the ever hardening bulge in his pants. My eyes widened and stomach churned in realization.

“Oh, fuck no,” I hissed, kicking at the couch to get away and trying to pull his hand out of my hair even if it meant ripping all my hair out.

Dark pulled harshly on my hair and his other hand clutched my throat, effectively stopping my tantrum when I started choking. My hands flew to the wrist attached to the hand grasping my neck. I peered at Dark, only to flinch noticing that his face was suddenly inches from mine.

“Oh yes, you will, or else,” he hissed into my face, all playful amusement replaced by an eerily deadly tone.

I cringed at his proximity and clawed at his grip on my throat, coughing, but he refused to let go.

“No,” I grunted, wincing at the pain in my scalp intensifying, but that didn’t matter. I would not give into his demands. “Or else what?” I challenged.

Dark’s smirk returned like my rebellion was amusing to him, and his tongue darted out, licking once at the tip of my nose. I grunted with disgust, turning my head away as far as I could within his grip.

“Feisty,” he growled. “Get on with it, or else I take all of you right now, fuck and tear you apart from the inside, and then leave your lifeless body here for Adam to see.”

“Is that all?” I glared defiantly. He could do whatever the fuck he wanted to me, kill me even, but I refused to let him have satisfaction in it. I wouldn’t break down and plead for myself. It’s what he wanted.

“You are a little firecracker, aren’t you, Blondie?” Dark chuckled, shaking his head. “I’ll play your game. I’ll up the stakes.” His face turned deadly again. “How about I jump out into traffic with Adam’s body and kill us both?”

I froze. “You wouldn’t dare.”
Dark shrugged. “Wouldn’t I? Do you really think I enjoy my life? Or care about Adam’s? It’d be a relief to escape this misery.” His eyes glinted, and I searched them hard, but they held no deception. “I don’t think you want to test me on this…”

I immediately stopped trying to claw his hand off. The lump in my throat grew. He would really do it, wouldn’t he? He’d kill himself and take Adam with him without a second thought.

“Better,” Dark said appreciatively when I’d stopped fighting him. “Now, let’s see what you’ve got.”

He let go of my neck and shoved my head down toward his crotch, still keeping his fingers knotted in my hair. I winced in pain and turned my face away from the bulging mass that was too close for comfort. My hands shook as I slowly attempted to undo his zipper, fumbling more than once. I was stalling, I admit.

“Hurry up,” Dark hissed and I felt pain sear through my head when he tugged my hair harshly. My scalp was starting to go numb from constant ache.

I undid his fly and took a deep breath before pulling out his familiar cock. Its entire length was harder and angrier than I’d ever seen Adam with it. It was leaking, huge, stiff, and very intimidating. This freak got aroused fast, and from what—my pain?

I hesitated, not knowing what to do. I knew what Adam liked, but technically, Dark wasn’t Adam. I took several deep breaths to mentally prepare myself, but when the reality of what he was going to make me do sunk in, I started panicking internally, and I could feel my eyes start to sting. I didn’t want to do this. I didn’t want to give him pleasure. I didn’t want him to think he could just control me like this by force. I didn’t want him to think he could just own me and use me whenever he pleased. This wasn’t right.

“Oh, before I forget.” Dark jerked my head up to eye-level. I fought back a whimper of suffering. My scalp was screaming from the abuse. He glared hard into my eyes. “Don’t even think about any funny business. I feel so much as one tooth, and I’ll break your jaw with my bare hands. You can be sure of that.”

I stared at him with wide eyes, unable to speak. Dark shoved my head back down without waiting for a reply, cock stabbing my cheek, smearing the wetness against my skin. Blinking back tears, I settled my trembling fingers around the base. I reluctantly wrapped my lips around the leaking head, making sure my teeth were securely tucked away, and gave it a small lick, tasting the salty pre-come. Dark’s guttural moan from such a simple gesture was something that sent a chill down my spine. It was pure, raw need; a primal sound of lust, like an animal, and I’d barely done anything yet.

I didn’t even get a chance to do anything else on my own accord before Dark lost all patience. His fingers readjusted and tangled tightly into my hair again, and before giving me any time to adjust and breathe, he shoved my head down further on his cock.

My arms flailed around, desperately trying to get free as he jammed his entire length down my throat without warning. I gagged from the shock and sudden intrusion, feeling tears brim. Dark held my head still as he bucked up mercilessly into my mouth.

I struggled to accommodate him. He would shove himself down my throat and pause deep in there for a few seconds until I started genuinely choking on it. I couldn’t catch my breath before he’d just jam himself back in there. My jaw started to ache and my throat felt raw from the abuse. Dark sank back into the couch, getting comfy and breathing heavily as he suffocated me without giving it a second thought. My tears overflowed with another gag. It was painful as hell for me, but Dark was getting off on it, moaning huskily and tightening his hand in my hair while forcing my head up and
down to meet his thrusts.

“Fuck,” he drawled, “God, your mouth.”

His pre-come was dripping down my throat, tickling the cough reflex that couldn’t be appeased because of the obstruction. I seriously couldn’t take any more of this torture. It was like he was purposefully making sure I wouldn’t have time to adjust to him. Although time seemed to be unmeasurable and agonizingly endless, it wasn’t too long before Dark thrust as far as he could down my throat and stiffened briefly before thrusting again and riding out his orgasm. He moaned loudly, raising disturbed goose bumps all over me as he blew his load down my throat. It took me by surprise and my eyes widened as I started choking on it, desperately shoving at his lap to get away and save myself.

Dark finally let go of my hair just as I pushed at his legs. My scalp screamed with relief as I fell to the floor with a smack, and I was immediately on my hands and knees, gagging and retching, but I couldn’t throw up for the life of me. I heaved and coughed, only ending up drooling and spitting out whatever remained of his seed in my throat that I hadn’t been forced to swallow. My breaths came out in broken gasps, scraping along my raw throat, and my body was shaking.

“I can see what he sees in you now.” Dark chuckled huskily with satisfaction at my agony, not even noting that I felt like I was going to die. “Not bad.”

I dry-heaved a few more times and my body shuddered in shock before collapsing and practically curling up into a shaky ball on the ground, humiliated and violated.

“Why are you on the ground, Blondie?” Dark asked nonchalantly, mockery in his voice, but then his tone turned into warning. “Get up.”

I let out a few more hacking gags before I finally caught my breath and the nausea was started to wear off. I wiped my mouth, grimacing at what came off on my hand, and glared up at Dark from the ground, who was tucking himself back into his pants.

“Fuck you—” I paused to cough. My voice came out rough. “You’re a sick bastard. I can’t wait until we get rid of you.”

Dark’s satisfied, hazy eyes immediately narrowed down into slits at me. I pushed myself back onto my hands and knees, taking slow and deep breaths, when suddenly all the air was knocked right out of me again as Dark’s heavily booted foot swiftly slammed into me, toppling me to the hard ground again. I clutched my side and winced in pain, having the coughing fits start all over again as I wheezed.

“Want to say that again?” Dark growled, now looming over me, hands clenched at his sides. “Thought you learned your lesson the first time around.”

Taking a second to force my composure back, I exhaled sharply and made a point of getting back up to my feet, sucking up the pain, and getting right up in Dark’s face, giving the same pissed-off expression he was sending me back up at him. His face was only inches away, but there was nothing but angry energy between us.

I didn’t know where my courage—or stupidity—was coming from, but right at Dark’s face, I somehow managed to spit, “You’re a coward. You kick a man when he’s down, and expect him to treat you like a god. Pathetic.”

He snorted. “You’re testing the waters, Blondie,” Dark said in a low voice, only glaring down at me,
and surprisingly not decorating a bowl with my guts right now. “Where’s your respect?”

I huffed, bemused. “I am showing you all the respect you deserve.” I smirked despite the fact that my hands were still trembling. “None.”

It was probably extremely idiotic to egg him on like this, but I just couldn’t let him have the satisfaction in anything he did to me. I wouldn’t let him think he could break me. He could and would do it physically as much as he wanted, but mentally? I’d die first.

Dark’s hand slowly came up to my face, but I didn’t move an inch although I braced myself for a hit. I didn’t understand why he kept doing this, but again, his nails pressed into my cheek and raked down harshly, but slowly, all the way to my collarbone instead of slapping me. His scratch tracks tingled, bordering on painful. Dark licked his lips as he wrapped his hand around my throat and squeezed. I gulped against his palm.

“Fight me,” he said simply. “Hit me if you dare.”

“No,” I immediately replied.

The thought of actually trying to beat Adam’s body up—despite who was controlling it—was highly disturbing. I couldn’t ever attack him. That should be obvious.

Dark suddenly growled and I barely had time to blink before he clobbered the side of my neck with his forearm, sending me stumbling. I caught myself on the wall and dizzily looked back in time to see Dark throw a glass vase at the wall next to my head and roar, “Fight me!”

I gasped and flinched when the glass shards flew everywhere. He smashed that thing way too close for comfort.

“Never,” I still insisted, voice somehow still level.

“Then who’s the coward, huh?!” Dark yelled, hands fisted at his sides, breathing heavily. I couldn’t force myself meet the look in his eyes; they were murderous and downright terrifying.

“Still you,” I pushed. What the hell was I doing?

“Stupid fool,” Dark hissed, predatorily approaching me, but graceful as always. I was trapped between the wall, the couch, and him. My heart was pounding in my chest, but hopefully I appeared confident enough on the outside. “Why won’t you fight back?!”

“I—” I started to say, but was cut off when Dark somehow moved lightning-fast and slammed me face-first into the wall. A blistering jolt shot up my nose. My teeth were clenched to hold in a painful yell as I managed out, “—don’t want to hurt Adam.”

Dark kept me pinned to the wall from behind, binding my wrists in his hands against my back. My cheek was pressed flush against the wall. I was successful in holding in a few panicked screams, refusing to even give him that. But on the inside, I was like a terrified little girl about to start crying and calling out for help.

“Coward,” Dark sneered into my ear from behind. “Obviously, he doesn’t care about you. Are you forgetting whose body this is?!”

I didn’t want to tell him exactly how much this whole situation was bothering Adam because that meant we were letting him win, but I wasn’t going to let his mind games get to me either.
“He’s not the one doing this,” I said, attempting to free my wrists and failing, “I know what you are now, and you’re not him.”

Dark backed off slightly only to slam me into the wall again. My head spun from the jolt of suddenly getting a face full of drywall.

“You. Know. Nothing,” he spat lowly in my ear, voice more venomous than ever, “about me.” I shivered in his grasp.

“That’s not my fault,” I threw back at him. “It’s not like you’ll talk, no, you’re more interested in scaring the shit out of people. But look, I’m not afraid of you.” I was partly lying, trying to keep my voice steady hide the fact that I wanted to rock back and forth in a corner from fear while wrapped in a secure blanket. In fact, nothing sounded better than that right now.

Dark growled deep in his chest, and I felt one of his hands leave my tightly gripped wrists. I could hear him dig around in his jacket and suddenly, there was a cool metallic feeling against the hollow of my neck. I gasped and arched my head away from the pocket knife. I immediately regretted giving that thing back to Adam. I jerked furiously to throw Dark off, but instead, he pressed himself along my back, keeping me inescapably squished against the wall with both of my wrists still gripped in his free hand and rendered useless behind my back.

Dark pressed the sharp edge of the blade harder against my throat. I gulped against it.

“You should be,” he hissed into my ear from behind, squeezing my wrists. “Don’t think I wouldn’t hesitate to kill you right here and now if you tempt me any further with your unending stupidity.”

As if to prove his point, I flinched when Dark jerked the blade slightly to the side on the hollow of my neck, and I could feel my flesh slicing open a bit. My breaths quickened and my heart started to thrash wildly, all instinct telling me to fuck everything and just get the hell out of here when a small stream of blood trickled down my throat. I squirmed from discomfort when the cut on my throat started to sting.

Thankfully, it wasn’t more than a bad paper cut, but I definitely saw and felt his point. My life was in danger here, and any second that he felt like it, Dark could kill me, and he really would do it. He had no compassion, no empathy. He was nothing but a cold monster like Adam had said. And I would be powerless to stop him from just ending my life any second from now. I was like a ragdoll to him; a plaything for a small, destructive child.

“Why don’t you just do it then?” I asked, voice sounding a lot smaller than before.

Dark dropped the knife and wrapped his bare hand around my bleeding throat, squeezing tighter than strictly necessary to stop the bleeding. He let go of my wrists with his other hand and my hands immediately went to the one at my throat, trying to pull it off. Dark pressed the entire length of his body against mine tighter, sandwiching me between the wall and him. I could feel him starting to re-harden against me. Using his free hand, he gripped my hair and jerked my head to the side, forcing me to arch my neck for him.

“Because,” Dark mused quietly. He licked a long, slow line, as if savoring the flavor, from my shoulder all the way up my neck to my earlobe. I shuddered in revulsion. Chills went up my spine when he blew cool air at the wet warmth. “You’d rather I do that than have my way with you, am I correct? What fun is that? I want you to ask me to take you first, and then I’ll get rid of you. It’s really a waste if I don’t get to taste this body of yours first. Plus, what’s better than to see your Adam agonized that his boyfriend willingly fucked the very thing that killed him in the end? We’ve been over this already…” His teeth grazed my earlobe and he blew hot air as he whispered, “And trust
me… I’m to die for. You won’t even regret it. And remember, I could have you any time I want.” He squeezed my throat tighter. “You should be grateful that I’m waiting for you.”

“You’re going to be waiting an eternity then,” I promised defiantly.

Dark chuckled lowly and his lips were at my throat again. Without any warning, he bit down hard. I yelped in pain, and shoved at the wall with my hands, trying to back into him hard enough to throw him off so that I could duck away. However, Dark didn’t budge in the slightest. How fucking strong was he? I could overpower Adam if I wanted to, but Dark seemed to be much stronger. How could that be if they were sharing the same physical body?

I clawed at Dark’s hand gripping my throat as he bit and sucked the same spot on my neck. It was much too painful to be pleasurable. He finally let go of my hair with his other hand, only to let it snake down the length of my body, suddenly fisting my crotch in his grip. I squeaked out in surprise and flinched. He rubbed his erection roughly against me and moaned a little menacingly into my neck.

I couldn’t take it. “Get off!” I yelled, shoving back against him as hard as I could.

Dark removed his teeth from my neck and licked over the mark he’d made. “Blondie, Blondie, Blondie,” he mumbled lowly, amused. He nipped at my earlobe and I cringed. “You’ll give in soon enough. An eternity can be a lot shorter than you think.”

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I groaned in frustration at the mirror. Dark had shoved me to the floor when he’d decided he was finished taunting me, muttering something about only having so much self-control, and promptly left the house without telling me where the hell he was taking Adam’s body, leaving me sitting on the floor watching him go in confusion. I was almost sure he was fine though, but I couldn’t shake the thought that he’d been so okay with simply walking out into heavy traffic and killing himself. Now here I was in the bathroom, annoyed and jumpy, glaring at my reflection.

Getting the slit on my throat to stop bleeding had been easy enough; it wasn’t anything more than a scratch, but I was well aware that it could’ve been a lot worse. But it was the massive hickey on my neck that was pissing me off. Dark had left a giant, red and purple splotch right where he’d been sucking and biting. It wasn’t the hickey itself that was annoying me, not completely; it was the fact that the asshole had done this on purpose. He’d wanted to mark me with something this huge so that Adam would see it and freak out. That bastard…

And no amount of makeup could cover it up, and believe me, I tried. I packed on the foundation, but it only ended up looking weird and discolored over the purple. I let out a harsh, exasperated sigh. I didn’t know what to do other than wash the makeup off and just face the music when Adam came back. It would be suspicious anyway to attempt to cover it up only to have him realize I’d been trying to hide it from him.

I sat on the couch, waiting. I tried to come up with several explanations and apologies in my mind, crossing them off almost as soon as they came to me. There was no way to cushion the blow of this. How mad could he get though? At least it’d been his mouth that did this to me… technically. I knew he’d understand that I hadn’t wanted this and that Dark had forced me, but that didn’t mean he still wouldn’t be hurt over it. I would be outraged if Adam came back with hickeys of his own, I wouldn’t care whom they came from, especially not if they were accompanied by a cut.

When the front door finally opened, my heart starting fluttering with nerves, and Adam swiftly walked in, still wearing that same jacket. I scanned him over quickly as he took off his boots. He
seemed to be okay. I took a deep breath and stood up. I wasn’t really sure if it was him or not until when he shut the door and noticed me standing nearby, his beautiful face lit up immensely. A knot formed in my stomach. I felt so bad for him.

“Hey, baby,” Adam said cheerfully, taking off the jacket.

“Hey,” I replied, acting casual and stretching out. “Where were you?”

Adam paused, pondering that for a moment. “Um, well, one moment I think I was with you and we were hanging out, and the next, I opened my eyes and I was in some really rundown bar in the middle of nowhere that I’ve never been to and slightly tipsy, if that tells you anything. I’m guessing Dark came out?” He said his name mockingly.

I was stunned by how normal he sounded saying all that. How was he so okay with just popping up in random places? I couldn’t imagine literally missing moments of your life because your body was controlled by someone else and you had no say in what happened. What if one day you woke up, realized a week had passed since you last remembered anything, in the middle of nowhere, and were broke as fuck without any memory of what had happened? I know that hadn’t actually happened to Adam, but it was a similar situation. How could he live like this?

I nodded cautiously, eyeing him. “Yeah, he did,” I said slowly. “He was here with me before he randomly left.”

That caught Adam’s attention. His head turned to me and he looked worried. “He didn’t hurt you, did he?” Adam asked, making his way over to me. I noted that his hand was completely clean, no blood. Had Dark washed it all off?

“Well…” I mumbled.

Adam paused halfway to me when his eyes caught the broken glass by the wall. He gasped lightly and I cringed in response. His eyes widened and I followed them until mine landed on the knife on the floor that he was staring palely at. He looked back at me with horror and I didn’t have the will to move away as he reached me quickly and put his hands on either side of my head, examining me. I might as well get this over with. He tilted my chin up and gasped. His finger gently brushed over the healing slit on my throat.

“Oh my god,” Adam barely squeaked out. His eyes flickered between the cut and the knife sitting by the far wall. “He tried to kill you?” His voice was already quavering.

I shook my head and mumbled, “No, it was just a warning…” Like that made it any better.

Adam looked like he was about to cry.

“I’m so sorry,” he said painfully.

He tilted my chin up further and leaned down, pressing a soft kiss against the cut. Gulping against his lips, I stared up at the ceiling, bracing myself. He pulled away slightly and then froze. I closed my eyes, knowing he’d noticed. Adam pulled away and stared at my neck sadly as his fingers brushed over the purple and red splotch.

“He…” I trailed off, not knowing what to say.

Adam’s eyes didn’t leave the spot as he spoke. “How far did it go…?” he asked quietly, not really wanting to hear the answer.
“Adam, he forced himself on me, you know that,” I said quickly. “I tried to shove him—”

“—How far did it go?” Adam asked again, more firmly.

I sighed. “Not far. It’s okay. He stopped after that.” I decided to leave out the part where he’d basically had me suffocating on his cock... for good reason. “No clothes came off. I would’ve never let him anyway, not over my dead body,” I assured him. I hated lying to him, but I couldn’t stand to see him more hurt by this.

Adam searched my eyes with worry and dejection in his, but he didn’t seem to find whatever he was looking for, and eventually let out a deep breath of relief, sounding like he’d been holding it.

“You’re alright?” Adam asked, cupping my face.

“Yeah, baby, I’m fine. I was more worried about where he’d taken your body,” I said, forcing a chuckle to lighten the mood.

Adam also forced a smile. “I’m fine, don’t worry about me. He just likes to drink.”

“You mean he didn’t try to kill you both?” I stared at him in question.

Adam’s eyebrows shot up. “No? Was that supposed to happen?”

“Well, he said he could… so I just assumed. Why didn’t he though?”

Adam shrugged. “I don’t know? I just got here. If he’s ever tried, I wouldn’t ever know anyway.”

“Aren’t you worried about that?” I asked. I’d be terrified if I were him.

“Always.”

I didn’t know what to say to that. My brow knit together in worry, and Adam’s face softened. He leaned down and gave me a quick peck where my skin was tense and then to my lips, smiling more genuinely when he pulled away. I decided to just forget about it for Adam’s sake. I didn’t want him to be more anxious about it than he already apparently was.

I looked at him suspiciously, changing the subject. “How am I supposed to know that he’s not there and watching when you’re kissing me?”

“Because I wouldn’t if he was.” Adam laughed. “He’s dormant right now, resting or whatever. I’m alone in my head. It’s just me, I promise.” He rolled his eyes, waving his hand dismissively.

“You know it’s really freaky how casually you can say that, right?”

“Yes, well I can’t panic every time.” He shrugged, and then continued in a devilish voice, “Now, come here. I have to even out that hickey of his…”

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Once my fever was completely gone, Adam expectantly decided to take me out clubbing, as if that was some sort of celebration for my easy recovery and not a total nightmare. Adam pulled up in front of some shady-looking, underground place. I immediately felt like I was shrinking and I wanted to hide away in a shadow somewhere, but Adam’s comforting arm was around me as soon as we left the car, probably guessing that I was debating on whether I should run away screaming or not.

A small bark caught my attention, and I glanced over to the edge of an alley to see a dog watching us
with curiosity in its eyes. I grinned and tugged at Adam’s jacket. He glanced down at me and then at the dog. His eyes returned to mine with a look in them.

“Really?” Adam asked, disbelieving.

“Yes,” I insisted. “I’ll only be a second.”

Adam sighed and released me. I grinned and jogged over to the dog whose tail started wagging in anticipation. I dropped down to my knees a few feet away and made obnoxious baby noises.

“Come here, baby,” I cooed, beckoning the dog over. At a closer glance, I still couldn’t tell the breed, mostly likely some sort of Labrador mix.

The dog approached me curiously and slowly. I patted my lap until it was within my reach. I stroked its neck for a wonderful minute, mumbling nonsensical praises the entire time. I heard footsteps behind me as I scratched the dog’s ears. Poor thing was probably a stray. Adam kneeled down next to me and I grinned widely at him as he tentatively reached out to the dog.

The dog immediately started climbing up onto Adam’s lap, jumping up at him.

“Whoa, there!” He laughed, trying to avoid being licked to death. “S-Sauli,” he managed out, gently pushing the overly excited dog off him, but continued rubbing its head with both hands. “We’ve gotta go.”

I frowned and sullenly nodded. I’d much rather be out here with this adorable thing than to be inside with those wild psychos. I sighed as Adam took my hand and pulled me up to my feet.

“Bye, boy!” I cooed. “Be good.”

Adam slung his arm around my waist and kissed my temple as I waved to the dog that stayed near the edge of the alley. Adam escorted me back to the entrance of the club. Nerves settled in my gut and Adam probably sensed that, squeezing my side once in encouragement as we passed the bouncer and entered through the black double doors.

The club was loud and so bass-filled that I could feel the floor shaking beneath my feet. Heavy beats drowned out everything I could hear. There was a sea of bodies tightly packed on the dance floor, cheering and mingling aggressively. Blinding lasers and lights splattered the room randomly, probably causing seizures for some people. I winced, not really enjoying this type of social gathering. Adam pulled me over to a small, sleek couch, placing me down onto it and claiming it as ours for the night.

“I’m gonna go get us some drinks!” Adam yelled down at me, gesturing to the bar on the far wall opposite the dance floor. Great, he was leaving me alone at this godforsaken place already?

I nodded in response, knowing my voice would be completely drowned out. Adam left with a fond expression and I watched him stroll away into the wall of bodies with a lost puppy look on my face. A couple people stopped him and demanded pictures before he could completely disappear among the masses, which Adam graciously took. It made me smile a little. He became so gentle and sweet after all these years.

I flinched when a huge body suddenly plopped down next to me on the couch. I looked the intruder up and down with a frown.

“Excuse me,” I tried to get his attention over the bass. “That seat is saved.”
The guy’s head lolled over at me. “I’m sorry,” he said sweetly, slurring. “Can I get you a drink?” His glazed-over eyes weren’t able to fully focus on my face.

Oh wonderful, he was hopelessly drunk.

“No thanks,” I muttered, “and I kind of need that seat back now.”

“You’re cute,” he drawled, completely ignoring me.

Oh god, where the hell was Adam? I didn’t want to deal with this creep. He seemed like just an average-looking guy with a difficult life who probably just had too much to drink in order to drown his problems. Even so, I didn’t need him to take it all out on me.

“My boyfriend sure thinks so,” I hinted obviously, rolling my eyes.

“Boyfriend..?” he slurred, like that word was foreign to him. “Honey, that’s not an excuse. Labels…”

He waved his hand dismissively and turned to face me head-on. His alcohol-reeking breath hit me like a truck. “You can still have fun with other people.”

He couldn’t be serious.

“I’m not interested, but thank you,” I said, trying to scoot away. “But he’ll be right back, and that was his seat.”

“Too bad for him,” he said, shifting closer to me. He put his shaky hand on my thigh. “Finders keepers, losers weepers. There’s a back room that we can go to. Come,” he purred.

With a disgusted look, I scoffed and took his hand off my leg. “Okay, no. You need to go.”

The arrogant asshole threw his arm over my shoulders, and I immediately stood up, throwing up my hands. Okay, fuck this. I needed to go find Adam and tell him I wanted to leave. I scanned the pack of dancing bodies, trying to pick out where the hell the bar was again. I only took a step away from the couch before I felt a hand grab my wrist. I whipped my head back as the drunken guy stood up and tightened his grip on me.

“Let go,” I said firmly, trying to tug my wrist out of his hold.

“Please?” he drawled, starting to pull me somewhere.

“Seriously.” I was on the verge of yelling, digging my heels into the ground. “Fuck off!”

He stopped and turned around, jerking me close to him. I yelped out loud, catching the attention of a couple people who went back to their socializing a second later. Well, fuck you people too.

“Just dance with me then. And then we can go to the back,” he offered like that was any better.

He let go of my wrist only to snake his arms around my waist and forcefully start to grind against me. His hands travelled lower and squeezed my ass. Disgusted and about to start panicking, I shoved him off as hard as I could, actually managing to break free and take a step back, breathing hard. I was prepared to fully fight this guy if he couldn’t take a fucking hint.

“Baby, don’t be like that…”

He reached out for me again, but suddenly, I heard a loud smash followed by glass pieces flying everywhere from the back of the guy’s head. He yelled out and clutched at his scalp, bending over in pain, revealing Adam standing behind him, who was casually sipping a second drink in his hand and
looking completely innocent. But there was a foreign glint in his eyes that was becoming familiar.

This wasn’t Adam.

“What the fuck!” the drunken guy whipped around to face Dark, still holding onto his head. “Who in the fuck do you think you are?! Piece of shit!”

Dark dropped the innocent act, and his eyes narrowed as he fucking crushed the drink glass in his hand and chucked the shard remains to the side. I stared at him in disbelief.

“Back off,” Dark warned.

“Oh, so you’re the boyfriend,” the guy slurred angrily. Dark’s eyes narrowed further into slits. “I’mma borrow your boy toy for a bit, mkay?”

The drunk grabbed my bicep and I yelped out again. Dark was there in the blink of an eye, ripping off the man’s hold on me. The guy groaned loudly in pain as Dark crushed his wrist and held it above the guy’s head, away from me, and stared down at him menacingly.

The drunk clumsily threw his fist at Dark, but Dark moved lightning fast, having his arm already locked around the guy’s neck from behind and twisting his arm painfully against his back. Dark ignored the guy’s struggling and instead leaned close to his ear from behind as he kept his locked hold on him.

“Don’t lay a hand on him...” Dark said in a low and terrifyingly seductive voice. My mouth popped open as I rubbed my own wrist soothingly and watched them. “Leave.”

The drunken guy cringed from the pain of having his arm twisted near its limits, but he still managed to ignore what Dark was telling him and attempt to punch Dark in the face over his shoulder. Of course, Dark ducked gracefully and let go of him, still managing to hover protectively in front of me.

“Man, you fuck off!” the drunken guy yelled, whirling around. Then the idiot decided to repeat, “Finders keepers, losers—”

The drunk didn’t even get to finish before Dark’s eyes widened in rage and he smashed his knuckles right into the guy’s mouth, sending him crashing onto a table. I had to admit I was kind of glad he did that. The guy groaned in pain loudly, half bent over the tabletop, but Dark wasn’t finished.

I noticed Dark’s fingers flex around something in his grasp. I gasped in horror when the object glinted and I realized he was still holding onto a long, jagged piece shard from the drink glass he’d crushed in his hand. My heart started leaping. A few people were starting to look over curiously as well, and I knew fully well that if someone recognized Adam’s face, his career would be over.

Dark smirked evilly as the drunken man struggled to get up from the table. His knuckles gripped tighter around the shard and he started approaching the guy like a panther about to pounce on its prey. I let out a small sound of alarm, realizing what he was intending to do with the glass. I flew into panic mode.

“Dark, stop!” I screamed at him, running forward to grab his wrist with the shard in his fist.

Dark’s head whipped around and threw me an enraged look, but I only tightened my grip on him. I looked up into his bright eyes with silent pleading. His brow knit together as he took in my expression, and then he seemed to refocus on the present. He glanced around the room and I followed his gaze, noticing several curious but drunken-glazed eyes on us.
“We’re leaving,” he muttered lowly to me, eyes narrowing into slits at the crowd.

Before I could respond, Dark had his nails digging into my wrist and was tugging me away.

“Hey! Where do you think you’re taking him?!” I heard the drunken guy call from behind us as he got up off the table.

I only felt Dark’s grip tighten on me and a low growl emitted from him. I wanted to run back there and punch the guy in the face, because seriously? He was lucky that Dark was letting him live.

Dark pulled me through the dancing bodies, completely ignoring them as he was focused on the back door fast approaching. He kicked the door open and threw me out into an alleyway. The night air kissed my sweaty skin, but I didn’t have time to enjoy it before Dark shoved and pinned me against the brick wall next to the door. He fisted the collar of my shirt in one hand and was in my face in the next second.

“What the fuck was that?” Dark hissed, pushing me harder into the wall. I cowered and cringed against it, terrified of this wild and animalistic face barking at me. “You had your hands all over that piece of shit!”

“Oh, is that what you call it?” Dark spat sarcastically. “It sure looked like you were all over that filth.”

“Are you blind?” I scoffed. “Why do I even have to explain myself to you? I tried to get him to fuck off politely so many times, but then he started grabbing me and it was disgusting. I couldn’t get him off and I was about to panic,” my voice suddenly quieted noticeably, “but then… you came. And I needed you. So… thanks.” I barely mumbled out the last part.

If I’d blinked, I would have missed Dark’s eyes widening in shock and then softening ever so slightly. But as fast as the expression came, it was gone again, replaced by a cold scowl and the usual narrowed eyes.

“You tried to stop me,” he countered.

“Because you can’t just kill people,” I squeaked, wincing against the wall because his infuriated face was only inches away.

“I will if they touch what’s mine,” he growled with a menacing glare, shoving me harder against the wall. The back of my head smacked particularly hard into the brick, and I yelped out in pain and fear. Dark’s eyes clouded over with something else at that and he bit his lip. “Goddamnit,” he moaned.

Without warning, his mouth was violently on mine, taking what he wanted. His kiss against my frozen lips was hungry and needy, all teeth gnashing and rough. I whimpered against him, tasting my own blood as he bit my lips. I was too busy shaking in fear to shove him off for eating my face. Eventually, my hands did start pushing at his chest, desperate to breathe.

Dark suddenly grabbed my hand on his chest and shoved it down against his leather-covered crotch. My mouth went dry and my eyes widened at how hard he was already.

Dark pulled away slightly and growled in my ear, teeth grazing against my earlobe, “This is what you do to me.”
I shuddered and my breathing strained, not knowing what to do with my hand.

Dark pressed his forearm firmly against my neck to hold me still as he gripped and positioned my palm, starting to rub himself against and buck lightly into it. I could feel my own dick gaining interest as Dark panted and moaned into my neck, sending a chill down my spine.

“Please, stop,” I squeaked, barely above a whisper.

Dark growled but stopped—to my surprise—and pulled away, still keeping his forearm pressed against my neck hard.

I didn’t even notice that he still was holding the glass shard in his hand until he raised it to the hollow of my neck.

“I don’t care what happened,” He hissed. “If I see some lowlife with you again, I will end the both of you.”

I heard a growl that didn’t come from Dark. I glanced over to the edge of the alley just as the adorable dog from before started barking and snapping at him. Dark’s head whipped over to the dog and he rolled his eyes. The dog bared its teeth and stared directly at Dark, hackles raised, growling in warning to the same body he’d been jumping all over a while ago. Even a dog could sense the aura and tell that this wasn’t Adam.

Dark pushed away from me and turned to face the dog that was about ready to launch itself at him. Dark visibly twitched with annoyance as the dog wouldn’t shut up, and he stepped forward and suddenly ripped out a loudly feral snarl that overpowered every other sound. The dog immediately stopped all noise, tail between its legs, and my mouth snapped shut with my eyes wide, shocked that Dark could even make such a terrifying sound that was straight from a nightmare.

Dark took another predatory step forward and the dog lowered its head, starting to whimper in fear. Dark growled in response and chucked the piece of glass at the dog. I gasped and reached out, but thankfully it missed and shattered next to it. The dog yelped out in surprise and jumped before turning and running away out of sight.

“Useless mongrel,” Dark grumbled, voice still rumbling low in his chest like an animal. I was still frozen against the wall where he’d left me, completely having forgotten to use the opportunity to book it out of here. He turned to me. “And as for you…”

I kept telling my legs to run, but they were completely frozen, at least until Dark took a fistful of my hair and jerked me out of my frozen state.

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“Ouch—Ouch!” I yelled as he led me out of the alley by my fucking hair. “What the hell!”

“Shut up,” Dark muttered dryly.

“Where are you taking me?” I asked frantically, stumbling and struggling to keep up and not cry out loud at the sting of protest from my scalp. “I can walk just fine, you know!”

Dark didn’t respond. His pace only picked up when he spotted Adam’s car in the distance. He dragged me over to the passenger side and whipped open the door.

“Get in,” he hissed.

I was hesitant and froze, throwing him a wildly terrified look. Dark rolled his eyes and shoved me in by my hair, slamming the door before I was even completely inside. Within a few seconds, he was
jerkily settling down into the driver’s seat like he was in a rush. He didn’t even bother putting on his seatbelt or anything. All he did was lock the doors to keep me inside and suddenly, we were speeding off, being honked at by several cars. Dark ignored them all, gripping the steering wheel tightly and fixedly glaring at the road ahead.

I hurried to put my seatbelt on, clutching at the seat in terror at this maniac’s freakish driving. I stared with wide eyes as the speedometer kept climbing higher and higher. The thought that we were going to crash and die passed through my head more than a couple of times. I looked out the window at the streaky blur that was the outside world. I couldn’t even tell where the heck we were going. I couldn’t help the prickle of worry that he was going to pull over in the middle of nowhere and slowly cut me into pieces. Look, the horror movies with Tommy weren’t helping my logic.

When Dark hastily pulled into a less busy and dangerous road, I relaxed a little into my seat and tried to even my breathing. I peered over at him cautiously, noticing how he was still visibly tense.

Trying to calm and distract myself from my imminent doom, I asked, “How come you haven’t switched back to Adam yet? You don’t really have a reason to be out.”

To my surprise, Dark shrugged and actually replied, “I don’t want to.”

My eyes widened. “What does that mean? I thought you switch back after whatever triggered you is gone.”

“Normally,” Dark said dryly. “But nothing forced me out back there. I wanted out. I saw what was happening and…” He didn’t finish.

“So it’s true…” I sucked in a breath. “You can come out whenever you want to.”

Dark huffed. “Maybe now. I wasn’t always able to do that. I only just found out that it’s possible now. It was just triggers, but it’s become both, I think.” He stated everything very matter-of-fact, like he purposefully trying to keep any emotion out.

“What about Adam?” I asked. “Is it the same? I mean, can he talk to you in your head? Is he there now?” God, everything leaving my mouth sounded weird.

“Blondie, it’s not sharing time,” Dark chuckled coldly, but strangely, he continued anyway. “And no, he’s too weak to penetrate my mind. Only I can do that to him. And if you haven’t already noticed, not only am I mentally stronger, but also physically.” Yeah, I learned that the hard way. Dark went on, “I can see what he sees and talk to him when I’m well-rested and want to. I can even see his past fond memories on a particularly good day for my mental strength, which means,” Dark threw me a perverted smirk, “I know who you are down to every little detail.”

I blushed and tried to ignore that comment.

“So, Adam can’t see what’s happening right now at all?” I asked, scared.

“Nope,” he smiled devilishly at me, like was planning something. “He has no memory of what happens.”

“If you can come out on your own now, why don’t you just stay out permanently?” I hoped to any god out there that I hadn’t just given him any ideas.

Dark’s eyes flickered over to me before refocusing on the road. “Eventually, his mind pushes forward again, taking over because I get drained of energy the longer I’m out, like working out for too long. When I’m resting, I can’t see or hear anything.”
“So…”

“My time is limited,” he answered blankly, “yet I can go back whenever or stay for as long as I want until time is up, but…” Dark looked almost worried when his brow knit together. “My time keeps getting stretched out. Every time I come out, I can control this body for longer. I can stay out for several hours now if I want to. In the very beginning, I was able to only take over long enough to make his muscles twitch for a few seconds, and if I talked to him in his head, it was weak, one-sided, and only lasted a couple of seconds. Then it slowly changed over time, Adam could hear me clearly and reply and hold a conversation with me in his head, which is rare since we’re not exactly friendly. And apparently… now I can take over by myself and keep control until his mind finds a way. So, even if I wanted to, I couldn’t exactly stay out forever. Not yet…” He frowned.

“What do you mean not yet? Is that even possible? What would happen if you could? Why’s it getting worse?” My words were rushed; I was getting worried. This was sounding a lot more serious than I’d thought.

Dark looked tense and his hands whitened on the steering wheel. “I don’t know,” he said through clenched teeth, and I wondered if he’d once thought about all that as well. “You ask too many questions.”

“Well, it’s not like you’re not answering them.” I shrugged.

Dark sounded slightly strained. “Somebody has to hear these things and understand since your precious Adam is a fucking asshole and refuses to cooperate.”

“What?” I asked, stunned. “You’re calling Adam the asshole here?”

“Just, never mind,” Dark quickly hissed.

“If you hate being stuck with Adam so much, why don’t you just kill the both of you when you’re out?” I muttered. “You’ve already threatened to, so I know you can.”

Dark laughed coldly. “You’re too gullible.” He shook his head and I stared at him questioningly. “That’s just it. I can’t actually kill us.”

“What?” I hissed, annoyed that the fucker had lied to me. I suffered choking on his fucking dick for nothing?!

“The way that I am, I could never, although I have tried,” Dark said. “Pride has a lot to do with it, but the mental strength as well. I literally can’t… no matter how much I think I want to… But,” Dark said with hope, “Adam still can if he became too depressed. He has that ability. He’s weak. And I’d be fine with it if he did. Actually, I want him to, which is partly why I need you.”

I raised my eyebrows at him. “What?” I repeated with the same amount of venom, sounding like a broken record.

“You’re a perfect tool for me. I’ll use you, fuck and kill you, as you already know,” Dark said in a nonchalantly honest tone, whereas I’d started leaning more toward the door in horror. “It’ll completely ruin him. He could never live with you gone. He’d put us out of our misery. Maybe if you’re lucky, he’ll kill us just after I have my way with you, and you’ll get to live… that is, if you’d still want to.”

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me,” I muttered. “Get it out of your head that I’m ever sleeping with you. Instead of killing me, yourself, and Adam, have you ever tried, oh I don’t know—actually fixing this?!” I threw my hands up exasperatingly.
“I’ve tried!” Dark suddenly barked, slamming a fist against the steering wheel. I sank into my seat in terror. After a tense moment, he took a few breaths, forcing himself to calm down, and then continued stiffly, “There’s nothing I can do alone. This is my only option.”

“Adam won’t help?” I squeaked.

“Like I said, he won’t cooperate. He’d rather die… which is exactly what he’ll get. He’s not as great as you think he is,” Dark muttered. “So think again about who you call a coward.”

“Oh…” I mumbled lamely.

I didn’t push it. He was telling me things and I didn’t want to start abusing that. It was quiet for a long time before either of us said anything.

“Say something,” Dark growled. “Anything.”

I looked over at him in confusion, raising a brow.

“…Why?” I asked cautiously.

Dark’s eyes closed tightly momentarily. “Just do as I say. Distract me. Anything.”

“Um… okay?” I gave him a weird look. I thought for a moment. “You said you came out because you wanted to back at the club—”

“—Anything but that,” Dark groaned in annoyance, knowing exactly where I was going with this.

“No. You said anything,” I insisted. “So, why did you want to come out and actually help me?”

Dark sighed sharply. “I don’t know.” His voice was stern and controlled, clearly hiding the frustration that he couldn’t come up with a reason or an excuse. He thought hard for a moment. “Because you’re mine,” was his final answer.


Dark scowled at the road. “I don’t know,” he growled again.

“Sure you don’t,” I muttered sarcastically. I rolled my eyes and stared out the window. After a minute, I kept my eyes focused on the streaky blurs and coldly said, “I thought you hated me.”

Dark didn’t say anything for what felt like an eternity, but I could feel his eyes hard on me. I refused to look back at him. After a minute, he finally replied in almost a whisper, and his voice held an ever so slightly sadder tone than normal.

“I’ve never said that.”

My head whipped over to him, giving him a quizzical look, but Dark was already staring fixedly straight out at the road, jaw hard-set and eyes revealing nothing.

I stayed quiet again after that.

To my immense relief, Dark pulled into a familiar neighborhood and then into Adam’s driveway. He quickly turned off the car and hopped out. I stayed put, clutching my seat, heart pounding. Dark appeared on my side and whipped open the door. He grabbed me by my bicep and I yelled out when he jerked me out of the car. I repeatedly whimpered quietly in pain as he roughly dragged me up the
porch with one hand clutching my arm and the other knotted in my hair. Dark opened the door with one hand and threw me into house.

I clattered onto the hallway floor on my hands and knees, and I flinched when the door shut so hard behind me that the floor shook.

“You need to know who you belong to now so you don’t go whoring off with a bunch of subhuman scum,” Dark hissed. “I’ll make you beg for me.”

I only had to time to turn my body over before Dark pounced on me, pinning me to the floor, smashing my head against the wood.

“What are you doing?!” I panicked, flailing my arms around in an attempt to shake him off, but Dark growled and grabbed my wrists, shoving them down tightly on either side of my head.

“Don’t,” he sneered. “You get one warning.”

My stomach flipped. I looked up at him with wide, fearful eyes, but obliged to his warning. I didn’t need to see Adam again with bruises all over me. I couldn’t do that to him. So, while squeezing my eyes shut tightly and curling my hands into fists, I stayed still as Dark undid my pants and ripped them off to my ankles.

I peeked at him just as he let out a soft moan and bit his lip, his eyes completely clouded over with lust and glued hungrily on my ridiculously attentive dick beneath the thin layer of cloth left. I didn’t like the look on his face; it looked feral, uncontrolled, like there was nothing that could stop him from getting what he wanted… but, he couldn’t seriously rape me… he just couldn’t. He promised he wouldn’t, goddammit. I was freaking the fuck out internally. My heart was pounding all the way up in my throat.

Dark tore off my briefs, completely exposing me to him, making me under his mercy. He smirked as he marvelled at me. I blushed like a wildfire and I flinched when he shoved my legs apart and licked his lips, staring at everything like he was starving. I panicked and just couldn’t keep quiet anymore.

“You can’t,” I squeaked. “You said—”

“—I know what I said,” Dark insisted impatiently, raking his nails down my inner thighs painfully, causing me to shudder. “Where’s the satisfaction in that? I just want to hear you ask me. I think you’d be so pretty writhing underneath me and begging shamelessly for me to give you everything and more like the little slut you are, not even caring about Adam in that moment.” He said his name with mockery.

“Not happening,” I spat firmly.

Dark rolled his eyes and smirked at me, suddenly grabbing the base of my cock tightly. I flinched hard and felt a huge knot in my stomach. Oh god. I tried to pull away and sit up, but Dark immediately put his ridiculously strong hand on my core, pressing me to the floor and rendering me helpless as he started pumping me slowly and roughly.

I bit my lip, trying to not moan out loud. I could feel myself stiffening in his harsh grasp.

“You want it,” Dark purred devilishly. “Give in to me…”

It wasn’t fair. My body was more than happy to respond to the touches by Adam’s hands, but my mind was in panic mode because of Dark’s intentions.
Dark leaned down and licked a stripe up the underside of my fully hard dick from base to tip. My eyes squeezed shut and my hands gripped at the floor beneath me. His tongue and teeth were all over my inner thighs, almost everywhere except my dick. It was making me writhe from the torture. He didn’t nibble at me teasingly. He was *biting* as he practically soaked my balls with his skilled tongue. The pain shot up my spine several times and I was shaking from need. My cock was aching and leaking, but Dark ignored it. I knew he was leaving marks and I was probably going to start bleeding from his aggressiveness. I wouldn’t be able to face Adam naked.

“Stop!” I yelped out in pain and flinched when he took the soft skin of my balls between his teeth particularly hard and pulled at it.

Dark just dug his nails harder into my inner thighs as he pressed me down and licked over his burning bite marks, sealing them, and I whimpered and bit my lips to the point where I tasted blood, getting a bit desperate from his mouth being everywhere except where I needed it. I refused to moan out loud. I stifled every cry of pain and pleasure. I could feel my eyes watering from the effort, or was that just from how much I didn’t want this but also did?

Dark pulled away slightly, panting wetly against my balls. “Beg me. Let me inside of you,” he whispered huskily.

I cringed and shook my head, not trusting my mouth to open. Dark chuckled and scoffed at the same time.

I gasped and my eyes flew open when his mouth was suddenly and finally on the head of my dick. I couldn’t help but prop myself up on my elbows and watch as Dark gave me the most violent blowjob. His tongue licked slowly over my slit, again and again. My toes curled and I started trembling. The torture of that slick tongue was unbearable.

Using my elbows, I shoved hard at the floor to pull away, but Dark only pushed me down harder. I heard him growl and he bit the tip of my dick in warning. I whimpered and jerked, but stopped fighting him, feeling tears starting to well up.

I tried to think of everything that could turn me off, but when Dark opened his wicked eyes and locked them with mine as he slowly swallowed my entire length whole, I completely forgot everything. His teeth grazed a little too hard on me as he pulled back up, curling his lip as he did so. I sank back to the floor weakly, unable to keep myself up. He continued sucking me off, biting and licking me to death. It was much too painful, but so, so good.

I coiled up, about to reach climax, about to come, when suddenly, Dark pulled off completely. My eyes whipped open again in annoyance and a needy mewl escaped my mouth. His eyebrows shot up accusatorily at that and I slammed my mouth shut. I was shaking from being so close, but Dark sat up, smirking at me as he wiped his mouth. He eyed the pathetic, shaky mess that I was and his one-sided smirk grew smugger.

“Soon,” he muttered. “You’re too easy…”

I threw him a death glare. “Fuck you,” I spat, still trembling from need.

“Oh, is that a request I hear?” Dark mused.

“No!”

Dark shrugged and continued casually, “In that case, you have about three seconds to fix yourself before I bring Adam back out so he can see how pathetically his love betrayed him already.”
My eyes widened and I sat up. “You monster, you wouldn’t dare.”

If Adam saw me lying on the floor, a needy mess of pleasure and pain at the hands of one person that was making his life miserable and torturing his mind, he’d be just… ruined. I could never make it up to him. I could never explain.

Dark raised a perfect eyebrow in challenge, looking innocent as he gazed appreciatively at his painted nails. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a piece of gum, and popped it into his mouth to hide the taste of me.

“Three…”

My stomach flipped. “Fuck you!” I yelled as I scrambled to get up onto my feet, tripping over my pants bunched up at my ankles. I groaned from embarrassment and struggled to pull them up before running again.

Dark laughed as I stumbled down the hallway, frantically bolting to the bathroom.

I could hear Dark’s low chuckle follow me down the hall. “Zero…”

I slammed the bathroom door and panted heavily once I was inside, leaning against the door frame. I rushed to the toilet and pulled my dying dick out.

“Sauli?” I heard a very confused and completely friendly voice call from the living room.

Oh fuck, fuck!

I jacked off, quickly and messily, just trying to push myself over the edge without gaining any pleasure from it. It wasn’t working though. I wasn’t getting there fast enough and I could hear Adam’s footsteps approaching. I shoved down my pride and took in desperate measures. I thought about Dark’s skillful tongue all over me and that sent me over the edge. I stifled my moan and my shame as I came into the toilet.

“Where are you?” Adam called, coming down the hall.

I flushed the evidence and pulled up my pants, scrambling to button and zip it. I rushed over to the mirror and scowled at my blushing complexion. I looked sated and pleasured. Fuck you, Dark. You and your stupid name…

I quickly straightened out my disheveled appearance, and then burst out of the bathroom just as Adam reached it. He jumped and looked surprised at my wild expression. I tried to mold my face into one of calm again. Adam gave me a confused look.

“There you are…” he said, pulling me into a hug. “I was getting worried.”

His strong arms tightened around me and he pressed a kiss into my hair. I half-heartedly patted his back. I felt horrible just holding him. Even though it was the same body, I still felt like I’d gone and unintentionally cheated on Adam with Dark. I kept trying to convince myself that it didn’t count as cheating if it was molestation and I didn’t want it, except that I kind of did, but at least I hadn’t acted on it.

Adam continued when I didn’t say anything, “What were you doing in there?”

I tensed slightly. “It’s a bathroom, what do you think?”
Adam chuckled and then glanced around in confusion. “When did we get home? Did, as you like to call him, Dark bring you here?”

I pulled away from Adam and nodded, muttering, “Yeah… H—He brought me home just a little while ago.”

Adam’s brow knit together in worry and he was immediately examining me, turning my face this way and that. “What happened?” he demanded. “Did he hurt you?”

“No, he didn’t… hurt me,” I mumbled, swatting Adam’s motherly hands away. I cringed a little, noticing Adam chewing the gum that Dark put into his mouth. His minty breath hit my face and my stomach coiled. “He just brought me home.” Adam gave me a look. “We did talk in the car…”

“You… talked,” Adam said disbelievingly. “That’s it?”

I nodded in response, not trusting my voice.

We ended up on the couch as I explained to him some of what had happened in the club and some of what was said in the car, ending with, “He thinks you’re the evil one.”

I left out any part in which Dark had tried to seduce me unconventionally, anything that had to do with Dark’s use for me, and his plans for Adam.

Adam rolled his eyes, reaching down to hold my hand reassuringly. “He’s a master of deception. He’s playing with you and trying to twist your mind. Don’t believe anything he says, he’s just a psycho.”

I nodded, but definitely wasn’t sure about the crazy part. Whether Dark had lied about everything he’d said in the car or not, he seemed genuine to me. He did after all admit that he’d lied to me earlier. And the way Adam was acting right now… it was exactly like what Dark had said. I’d just explained some alarming things to Adam that even Dark had been worried about, but he just blew them off like they were nothing. It was like he was hearing me, but he wasn’t listening. He didn’t want to cooperate if Dark had anything to do with it. He automatically assumed everything Dark said was a lie and part of his “evil” schemes. Whether or not he was smart for doing that, I wasn’t sure.

Honestly, I didn’t know whom to believe.

“Shit. I forgot to ask him about what triggers him,” I muttered, annoyed with myself.

Dark had been just weirdly open and I hadn’t taken advantage of that. Maybe he would have told me. Maybe we could have been one step closer to getting rid of him. The opportunity had been right there and I hadn’t grabbed it.

“Oh well.” Adam shrugged. “I doubt he’s in any rush for us to kill him off. He probably wouldn’t have told you anyway.”

“Probably,” I agreed only half-heartedly… because apparently, Dark wanted to die. I hadn’t told Adam about that entire part during my explanation. I didn’t know why, but I just couldn’t let him know that Dark was as willing to be gone.

“I have to admit…” Adam said, “I’m glad he got that loser off of you at the club.”

“Yeah…” I mumbled, unable to look Adam in the eye because of what happened right after we left the club. And then I suddenly remembered something. “Hey, speaking of clubs…” I glanced up at Adam only to be met with a curious look. I continued, “Back in Finland at the club, how come you
didn’t recognize me? I mean, I of course didn’t because I thought you were dead, but you knew I was alive and living there, so what gives? Did you really not notice who I was?”

Adam frowned a little. “I really didn’t… I’m sorry.” He looked sheepish. “It’s just that, for years, I tried to suppress all my memories of the past because they were too painful. I didn’t forget them, but I just kind of locked them up and threw away the key. And when I did that, Dark didn’t come out for years.” I gave him a quizzical look. “Every once in a while, something would happen and he’d just say something in my head, but for the most part, I’d thought that maybe somehow I’d locked him up too or actually cured myself. So, when I saw you, I didn’t recognize you. But… then you showed me scars on your arms and that… well, it was too much to bear. You unlocked some of it. Memories of you and everything that had happened between us slipped out.”

My brow knit together. “Wait, so was the first night Dark came out completely again…?”

Adam nodded slowly, not following along. My eyes widened slightly, trying to piece together the lost connections. I felt like it was all just on the tip of my tongue, but I just wasn’t making a conclusion. It seemed to me that Adam’s memory suppression had something to do with Dark’s return. It had to. It couldn’t be a coincidence that Dark had stayed dormant for all those years until I brought a few of those memories out. Given what Dark had said in the car and what Adam was saying now, there was definitely something very, very wrong with Adam’s mind. Dark went from being quiet for years to suddenly coming back in full force and getting stronger at a rate that scared even him. I had a horrible feeling about this.

“Sauli?” Adam snapped his fingers in front of my dazed face. I blinked several times and looked into his curious eyes. “What are you thinking so hard about?”

“…Nothing,” I replied after a moment, forcing a smile, knowing that telling him what was coursing through my head was pointless. As weird as it was to think, only Dark would listen.

“Well then, let’s stop talking about that parasite,” he offered, grinning brightly at me. I sighed. “I want to talk about the reason why I was really taking you to the club.”

I arched a brow at him. “The real reason? So we weren’t celebrating the strength of my immune system?”

“Nope!” He beamed. “Okay, the real reason is…” He held up his hands in suspense and then blurted, “I found you an amazing place to live!”


“I did some sneaking around and pulled some strings,” Adam enthused. “It’s great! It’s even got one of those circular tubs you adore. Trust me, you’ll love it!”

I couldn’t believe what he was telling me. “You want me to leave?” I asked, slightly appalled. I jerked my hand from his.

Adam’s excitement stepped down a notch, seeing the horror on my face. “Well… babe, I thought I told you I couldn’t let you live here with me permanently. It’s too dangerous. Don’t take it the wrong way.”

“You’re… but… I don’t…” I couldn’t form a sentence. I just stared at him in dismay.

“Don’t look at me like that,” Adam pleaded in a more serious tone. “You know I’d give anything to keep you here at my place with me, but Dark…” He sighed sharply. “I can’t let you be around that. I can’t risk it for any longer than I already have. I can’t stomach waking up and seeing you bruised
again or worse because of me, Sauli. I can’t!"

I felt my heart break at how pained he looked. I couldn’t imagine what it must be like for him. Even so, I couldn’t just leave yet. I was onto something, I knew it. I had to monitor this despite whatever it cost me. This pain on his face… I could make it go away forever if I could just stay and help him. He only had to endure it for a little bit longer. But if I couldn’t be here with him, if I couldn’t get what I needed from Dark, it was only going to get worse and worse and then what? Adam wasn’t going to fix this on his own. If Dark couldn’t do it alone, I doubted Adam could either, especially since he refused to acknowledge Dark most of the time. He needed me here whether he realized it or not. He didn’t seem to understand that he was in more danger than I was.

“Adam,” I said sternly, placing my hand on his knee. “I’m not moving out.”

He glared slightly at me. “It’s my house. I could make you.”

I sighed. “Please?”

“But why?” He looked miserable.

“Because you can’t get through this alone and you know it whether you admit it to yourself or not,” I said simply. “Adam, I’m worried. You don’t understand the weird feeling I have about this. You know it’s getting worse. It’s never going to go away on its own. You keep ignoring it, fine, go ahead, but I won’t, and I won’t let you try to make me either. I’m so close to figuring it all out, I know it.”

“But…” Adam’s voice was quiet. “I don’t think I can handle seeing you hurt again. Why should I let you suffer with me when I could make you stay safe? I’m not asking you to disappear or leave my life; I just want you to not be here every minute of the day, especially now that Dark can come out whenever he feels like it. I think I’m being perfectly reasonable.”

“But don’t you see?” I said, exasperated. “I need to be here when he is. Look at how much I’ve learned from him already. He talked to me. He’s not necessarily going to attack me every single time. I need to be around him. I’ll be fine. We can use this to our advantage. Just imagine. A little while longer, and we’ll have all the pieces together. A little while longer and he’ll be gone. Out of our lives for good and you’ll be free.”

Adam studied me for the longest moment and I didn’t dare break eye contact with him. I kept the determined look as solid as possible.

“Sauli, I don’t know…” Adam said slowly. “I don’t know if you know this, but I think Dark’s infatuated with you, or obsessed, or something, and that’s bothering much more than it should. Why else would he beat up Mika and that drunken guy? He was jealous. I don’t want you around him. I don’t think his threats to seduce you are just to bother me. I think he also just wants it for himself. He’s kissed you and left that, that thing on your neck. I’m afraid he’ll really try to… have you.”

My stomach clenched and I suddenly felt extremely guilty for not letting Adam know that Dark had already tried a few times. Other than that one kiss and the neck hickey, Adam didn’t really know that Dark had been all over me a handful of times, especially tonight. I couldn’t find it in me to tell him now. He would never let me step foot in this house again if he knew.

“You know I would never let him,” I said firmly, “no matter what it would take.”

“Yeah…” Adam mumbled unsurely, looking away. I raised a questioning brow at his response.

“You know I would never let him,” I said firmly, “no matter what it would take.”

“Yeah…” Adam mumbled unsurely, looking away. I raised a questioning brow at his response.

“Adam, it’ll be fine,” I tried to reassure him. “Do you doubt me?
“Well, it’s not like you stopped him from giving you that hickey that keeps taunting me from over there,” Adam muttered.

“He threatened me with a knife!” My voice jumped an octave.

“Exactly!” Adam yelled, throwing up his hands. “That was just a threat! And you still expect me to let you stay here?!”

“Yes!” I yelled back.

Adam was taken aback, raising both perfectly arched eyebrows at me. He sighed sharply and shook his head. He was quiet for the longest minute and the angry tension slowly died down.

“Fine,” he muttered quietly, breaking the silence. I was shocked. “Do what you want. I’ll call off the arrangements.” He looked up at me with sadness. “I just hope you’re right about all this.”

I sighed in relief and threw myself at him, hugging him tightly.

“Thank you, thank you, you’re the best,” I repeated into his neck, peppering kisses along it. “Trust me. I’ve got this. He’ll be gone before you know it. We can use him.”

“Just… be careful, okay?” Adam pleaded into my hair, wrapping his arms protectively around me. “Don’t tempt him in any way, and don’t let him hurt you.”

Chapter End Notes

*heavenly sigh* I love Dark.

If ya found any mistakes, forgive me. It's a long-ass chapter and a pain to constantly edit.

Won’t be updating for a lil bit; gotta get some chapters up on my other fic.

Comment/Review!
Miserable Love

Chapter Notes

Hope you enjoy! At 5,079 words, it's not as long as the typical chapters, I think. Next chapter's the big doozy, and it's almost finished, so expect an update that's actually soon. Was gonna upload both at once, but that means a longer wait, so here's the first one anyway!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adam:

Sauli wasn’t acting like himself lately. Distant, was the best way to describe it.

A week had passed since our spat and the incident with Dark at the club. Ever since then, Sauli was... different. Every time I came back after that parasite had been out, he would avoid me by very subtle means. Even on a normal day, he wouldn’t make eye contact or hold a conversation with me. Whenever I tried to talk to him, he’d fidget and stutter. I didn’t understand what was going on, but it had to be Dark related.

Moreover, Dark himself was becoming a bigger issue as well. He never talked to me, which would have typically been fantastic, but instead it was merely suspicious given how Sauli was acting. He came out more frequently, and he was able to stay out for hours now, meaning it was getting worse. I’d black out in the afternoon, and when I’d resurface, the sun would be setting. It was horrifying and I felt like my life was being wasted and stolen from me. Precious moments that could never return were gone, taken forcefully.

I didn’t know what Dark did when he was out. To my relief and suspicion, he didn’t really seem to be beating Sauli to a pulp. There was the occasional bruising, but whenever I fussed, Sauli would push me away and insist he was fine. The only reason I would let this go on was that Sauli told me he would get information from Dark to use to our advantage so that we could finally end this. Yet, Sauli never came to me and told me what he’d gotten out of Dark. What else could they be doing? I doubted they sat down and drank cocktails together while reminiscing about the past.

I decided to ask him about it.

“Babe?” I called as I walked into the bedroom, finding Sauli sitting on the middle of the bed with his laptop. He glanced up from the screen and smiled. I could tell it was forced. “Can I talk to you?”

Sauli’s fake expression dropped, replaced by a nonchalant attempt at masking his sudden nervousness, and he mumbled, “Sure,” before pushing the laptop away.

He scooted over to the edge of the bed and I knelt down in front of him, taking his hand and staring up seriously at him. “It’s about Dark,” I warned.

Fear flashed in Sauli’s eyes. “Is he there...?” he asked tentatively, pulling his hand from mine a little too abruptly.

I frowned. “No, he’s not,” I assured him. “You can relax. I have complete control.”
“Okay,” Sauli muttered, slightly relieved. “What’s up?”

“Have you learned anything new about Dark?” I asked.

Sauli looked apologetic. “No, I’m sorry. He hasn’t given me the chance…”

My brow knit together. “What do you mean? He’s been out so often, and he hasn’t really been hurting you, so what have you been doing all this time?”

Sauli’s eyes widened for a slight moment before he struggled to compose himself. “I um… He…” he trailed off and refused to look directly at me, biting his lip.

“What, baby?” I pushed, insistently taking his hand again and staring up at him in worry. “I’m going to assume the worst if you don’t tell me.”

Sauli’s hand started trembling in mine. “Nothing,” he barely managed, staring fixedly at the floor next to me. “He does nothing.”

“Come here,” I said, pulling Sauli with me as I stood up. I cupped both sides of his face, forcing him to look right at me, before leaning in and brushing my lips against his tense ones. “Please don’t lie to me,” I begged in a whisper. Sauli winced away from my kiss, fear written all over his face and locking his muscles, which was really starting to worry me. “Why are you so afraid…?”

Why was he acting like this? Why was he scared of me? What in the hell was Dark doing to him? I needed him to respond normally to my touch, my affections, to assure me that this was all in my head and he was fine. Closing my eyes and wrapping one arm around Sauli’s waist, still cupping his face with the other, I left a trail of soft kisses from the corner of his mouth, along his tense jaw, all the way up to the space below his ear.

“I love you,” I whispered seriously, making sure he knew, lips brushing against his earlobe, “so much.”

I could feel Sauli shiver in my hold. I waited a few seconds, but a small twinge of panic settled in my gut when he didn’t respond. He didn’t say anything back.

My head started to feel cramped as another consciousness slowly solidified, but I didn’t focus on that.

I sighed and pulled away, looking at Sauli, who was practically pretending that I wasn’t even here trying desperately to get something reciprocal out of him, with hurt in my eyes. I felt a little heartbroken. Why wouldn’t he tell me what was wrong? He was just standing in my grasp stiffly as if I was the one about to attack him.

Dark suddenly chuckled in my head, watching this. “Pathetic,” he taunted me.

My face immediately turned into one of disdain in reflex to his appearance. Oh fantastic, the asshole had woken up and I hadn’t really noticed because I was too concerned with why my love was acting as if I was his enemy. I didn’t want to deal with Dark right now. I had a bigger issue, and now I needed to get out of here and get Dark away from Sauli before he decided to take advantage of this moment.

I let go of Sauli and started to turn away without a word, completely mindset on getting Dark as far away as possible, probably having to leave the house, but apparently, Sauli thought my sour expression and actions directed toward him.
“W—Wait,” he stuttered, grabbing my wrist, whirling me back around.

Before I could tell him to stop and why, Sauli’s mouth was on mine, apologetic and urgent, both his hands tangled tightly into my hair.

I kissed him back for only a second, before I realized the danger, pulling away slightly and breathlessly panting, “Sauli, no, he’s—”

I froze, feeling myself already fading as my mind was shoved back and overtaken. I could hear Dark’s echoing laugh in the distance as I fell backward down into the blackness.

Dark:

I took in a deep breath, always overwhelmed with the sudden gain of primary senses that came with being a physical being.

Sauli’s mouth was suddenly eagerly on mine again, and my eyebrows shot up in surprise. So… this was how he kissed Adam. His fingers tightened in my hair and the sting of it turned me on. I fought hard to keep back a guttural moan from how much this felt and tasted like pure bliss.

The irritating part of it was that he hadn’t realized yet that I wasn’t Adam. If only he was like this with me. Now having tasted it, I would kill for this.

The shock of Sauli’s eagerness wore off, and I entangled my fingers roughly in his hair to keep him still as I attacked his mouth, not wanting him to let go. His mouth like this, attentive and passionate, was addictive. Sauli moaned and I started to tremble with a need I hadn’t even known I desired. That moan was for me, in reaction to me, and I longed to hear it all the time instead of the profanities.

No matter how much I was enjoying this, my natural impulses had to go and ruin it. Without even controlling it, I suddenly bit down hard on his plump lips. Sauli yelped and shoved hard at my chest to release my grip in his hair and pull away slightly. I faintly tasted blood on my tongue that made me lightheaded, and Sauli gave me a confused look before he brought his fingertips to his lips and pulled them away slightly red.

When his eyes refocused on my hungry-looking face, they widened, probably realizing who I was. He tried to jump back, but I was faster, locking my arms around him in an inescapable cage, grabbing fistfuls of the shirt on his back and probably some of his skin.

“Fuck,” Sauli spat in fear and irritation, back to how he typically was around me. I held back a sigh.

It’d be so much easier if he just gave me what I wanted, but if he still wanted to play this tiring game…

I turned and shoved him to the wall, pinning him there.

“How long are you going to avoid and lie to your Adam, Blondie?” I purred, deeply inhaling the scent of Sauli’s neck. “You should really tell him that you’re just letting me touch you whenever I please, like my own little toy.”

“I’m not fucking letting you!” Sauli barked, shoving at my chest, trying to push me away to reinforce his statement. “This,” he grunted when his efforts to escape me were proven pointless, “is molestation.”
“Now, now, let’s not be so hasty,” I said calmly, sarcasm filling my voice. “You want this as much as I do. You want to be dominated and manipulated. You don’t realize it yet. You want to see just how different one body can feel on top of you.”

“Are you kidding me?” Sauli huffed. “I can’t even look at him anymore without seeing you. Now you two are just blurring together and my mind associates this body with danger no matter who’s out.”

“You’re afraid of him,” I snorted. “How cute. It’s too bad he can’t hurt you even if he tried, but go ahead, keep it up for no reason and crumble your relationship.” I rolled my eyes at that word. “It’ll make it that much easier for me to get what I want.”

“I know he wouldn’t ever attack me,” Sauli started, “but—”

I cut him off, “—Poor choice of words there. Not wouldn’t, but rather, couldn’t… even if he wanted to. He physically cannot.”

Sauli just glared and continued where he left off, downright ignoring what I’d just told him like the moron he was, “but, it’s entirely your fault.” He shook his head with a look of hatred. “I look at him, and I don’t see the love of my life, I just see you, a cold-blooded monster,” he admitted. My eyes narrowed at his description of me. He knew so, so little about me. “You’re ruining Adam’s body for me.”

“This body is as much mine as it is his,” I hissed, pressing against him harder. “I have the right to do whatever I want with it.”

“Yeah, right, that makes no sense,” he insisted, craning his head away from my lethal expression. “Adam was born into it. You just showed up and started sucking the life out of him like a parasite.”

I reared my fist back and slammed it into the drywall right next to Sauli’s head, creating a crack running jaggedly to his ear. He gasped and cringed away. I kept my fist where it was as I chuckled coldly at his reaction and shook my head.

“Next time, I won’t miss.” I warned. “You keep talking, but all that comes out of your pretty mouth is shit. You have idea what you’re talking about. It drives me crazy.”

“What do you mean?” Sauli’s voice was small.

“Isn’t it painfully obvious to you yet?” I rolled my eyes, growing ever so impatient with his obliviousness. “We were both born into this body.”

Sauli’s face contorted into one of confusion and fear. “What the fuck are you talking about?” he practically yelled. “Let me go!”

I completely ignored his shoving and smashed my lips onto his to shut his ignorant ass up, forcing him to respond and open up to me as I shoved my tongue in between the seam of his lips. I was already craving that intoxicating kiss he’d given me earlier, but even though I wouldn’t get it ever again, it was still immensely disappointing when he didn’t respond. One hand gripped his throat to keep him in place while my other trailed down to Sauli’s waistband and started undoing the zipper, much to his muffled cries of objection against my mouth. I pulled everything he was wearing around his waist down to his knees and ran my hand along his hardening cock. I stroked it roughly a few times, coaxing it to reveal Sauli’s desire for me even if his mouth would not. I smeared the pre-come that had gathered at the head and wiped two fingers in it. My lips broke apart from Sauli’s, leaving him panting and flustered. Tightening my hold on his neck
against on the wall, I brought my fingers up, gave him a look and shoved them into his mouth. Sauli grimaced, tasting himself.

“Make them wet,” I demanded.

Sauli bit down on my fingers in response. I growled and dug my nails into his neck, pressing my palm hard against his throat and slowly squeezing tighter and tighter. I kept my eyes locked emotionlessly with his as Sauli’s face started discoloring due to the lack of oxygen. He clawed at my hand and attempted to knee me, but his struggles were weak and poorly aimed from disorientation. He finally did what I’d asked, knowing I wasn’t going to let up until he did so. His tongue swirled frantically around my fingers, slicking them up. I bit my lip to keep from moaning.

I pulled my fingers out of Sauli’s mouth, leaving a string of saliva connecting them, and released my death grip on his neck. Sauli coughed and gasped for air, his chest rising and falling rapidly. I pressed my forehead hard against his as I snaked my hand lower while he was distracted with catching his breath. I circled his entrance with one wet finger, making Sauli freeze when he realized what I was doing.

He objected naturally, shifting, trying to move away, the works. “Please stop,” he croaked, still panting for air and clutching at my hand around his neck.

I hushed him and pushed my finger in easily to the first joint. Sauli whimpered, looking uncomfortable. I held his gaze and watched every beautiful shift of his face as I pushed my finger in deeper. He was breathing harder but steadier by the time I had the second finger ready. Sauli cried out when I shoved the second one in without warning, joining the first. I leaned into his neck and licked a spot before biting him hard, clasping on as I pulled my fingers out, only to shove them in again. I heard him struggle to stifle a few noises as I finger-fucked him slowly and marked his neck.

I moaned against his throat, licking the bite mark I left repeatedly. “God, I want you. Say yes soon…” I practically begged. “Let me fuck you. I want to be inside of you, to claim you, to make you mine. I’m getting tired of waiting. Want me…”

Sauli choked on a moan as he tried to hold it back and I smirked against his neck, knowing I was making him crumble slowly.

Then he had to ruin it with his stupidity.

“The only thing I want from you is to leave Adam and me alone,” he bit out through clenched teeth, “and just fuck off.”

That little comment made me pull Sauli away from the wall by his neck only to smash him back into it, fingers still buried deep within him. “I wish it were that simple!” I hissed into his wincing face. “You think I like this? This is a nightmare from which I can’t escape.”

“Then don’t you worry,” he glared, “I’m working hard to figure out how to get rid of you. I can’t wait for that moment when you just die.”

Taken aback by what he said, I froze, finding his words so hard to swallow down without a reaction in this moment and impossible to blow off as another silly comment. It made something in me clench in hurt, something I’d never felt before.

I robotically pulled away completely from Sauli, feeling him wince when I jerked out my fingers too. Without any warning or a second thought, I dug my nails into his neck and held him in place before I drew my fist back and rammed it straight into his fucking mouth out of fury. Sauli cried out in pain.
and his hands flew to his face. I gave him no time after that before I let go of his neck only to muster up all the power I had in my arm to elbow him in the side of the face, effectively knocking him down sharply to the hardwood.

I stood still, breathing hard, fuming in place as Sauli curled up on the ground into a slight fetal position, clutching at his face.

Then something happened.

I heard a sob.

I stopped shaking from the anger and looked down at Sauli in shock.

He was crying.

The heart-wrenching and foreign sound dissipated my fury, and replaced it with an uneasy feeling that I had no name for. Sauli looked like a terrified little bundle, and for the first time, I didn’t feel euphoric from seeing him cower. I felt weird. I couldn’t help the lump in my throat or the strange urge to check on him.

My hand shook as it slowly reached out to touch him, but the moment I stepped forward, something re-clicked without my control, and my foot shot out to collide with his stomach. I gasped when Sauli cried out in agony, gripping his midsection and kicking at the floor to get away from me. My eyes widened in shock at myself. I didn’t mean that. That wasn’t supposed to happen.

“I hate you,” Sauli seethed in between sobs and short gasps, winded from the blow as he tried to crawl away a few feet and pull his pants up.

A horrible, gutted feeling settled in my stomach, and the swirling pain and anger came back, but it wasn’t directed at Sauli this time; it was toward my own self, but apparently, that small differentiation didn’t matter to my body and instincts. It only wanted to hurt him. My fist curled up, ready to attack Sauli again. It reared back almost completely on its own, but this time, I caught myself in time and yelled out in frustration before I redirected the target and slammed my fist into the wall. I heard a crack and my eyes widened as my hand sank through the drywall with ease. A noise was stuck in my throat when I realized I’d hit Sauli with the same amount of force, and he was somehow still conscious.

I jerked my fist out of the wall as if it’d burned me, and then sank to my knees, unable to hold myself up any longer. My eyes started to sting, and that terrified me. That had never happened before. What in the hell was this awful feeling? I couldn’t take it anymore. I had plenty of time left out here, but I didn’t want it. I couldn’t even stand to look at the broken man near me without feeling nauseous.

All at once, I retreated within myself, forcing my consciousness inward, as I only could, until everything was numb and safe again.

Adam:

Jerked back to reality so abruptly and violently, I felt disoriented for a few seconds. I blinked several
times, realizing that I was awake again… on my knees… and in pain…?

“Ouch,” I muttered, hissing gently in pain as I shook off the weird, stinging ache in my hand.

A small piece of something landed in front of me. I squinted to focus on it because it couldn’t be what I thought it was.

Was that drywall?

A larger chip dropped down next to the small piece.

Confused, I glanced up, and my eyes widened when I noticed the hole in my wall.

What the hell…?

Had Dark done that?

Wait… More importantly…

Where was Sauli?

A small movement and sound in my peripheral caught my attention. I did a double take and then gasped in terror when I processed Sauli curled up limply on the ground, trembling lightly, pants loose on his hips, and lying completely silently with his eyes shut.

My stomach sank when the worst was what came to mind first.

“Oh my god!” I yelled and crawled over quickly to him on my hands and knees.

As soon as I grabbed Sauli’s arm, he flinched violently and cried out in protest.

“Get away!” he yelled in a panic.

“Baby, baby, it’s me,” I said frantically, dodging his lashing out, feeling my heart shatter at Sauli’s appearance while also immensely relieved that he was still breathing.

I managed to catch his wrists in mid-air, and Sauli kicked at me. I huffed from the hits, but ignored them otherwise. Sauli’s wrists twisted in my grasp, trying to break free, and I wanted to cry from what I was seeing. He was terrified.

Tearfully, I leaned down toward his hands in my grip and kissed his knuckles softly, something Dark would never do.

Sauli froze and he finally looked up at me from ground. I could see from the angle that his eye and cheek were swelling up at a fast rate. He took in my miserable expression and my lips at his clenched fists.

“Adam,” he croaked in relief, recognizing me at last.

He threw himself at me, wrapping every limb around me as tightly as he could in a crushing and needy manner. I cupped the back of his head protectively and wrapped my other arm around his waist, holding him to me as securely as I could. I shifted and sat up cross-legged and stroked his hair soothingly while Sauli secured himself completely around my torso. He was shaking and fistig the back of my shirt as he breathed heavily into my neck. At least he wasn’t terrified of me anymore.

“I’m sorry, I’m so fucking sorry, oh my god,” I kept repeating desperately, unable to stop
apologizing for this heinous body of mine. “Please, Sauli, don’t do this anymore. You’re going to get yourself killed. You don’t have to do this! Please,” I begged.

Sauli didn’t reply, but his arms and legs wrapped tighter around me, and I knew that no was my answer yet again. I sighed sharply. If I had to physically throw him out and change the lock on my door, I would. This got out of hand a long time ago.

I stood up with Sauli still wrapped around me and gently peeled him off onto the bed. He sat on the blanket and looked up at me with a swelling, red face. I shook my head in disbelief and turned away.

“What the fuck is wrong with you!” I screamed aloud, knowing Dark was listening in the shadows of my mind.

I heard Sauli quietly plead with a shaky voice from behind me, “Adam, please don’t. Don’t make him angry.”

I was furious. I would say whatever I wanted to say to that motherfucker.


I whirled around to face Sauli. “You don’t know? Well, look at him!” I yelled, and Sauli winced. “Look at what you’ve done to him! He could have died!”

It was hard to look at Sauli so beat up, but I needed Dark to see the damage. He had to feel something. No one, I didn’t care what he was, could take be so indifferent to something like this.

I marched up to Sauli who sat cross-legged on the edge of the bed watching me fearfully. My expression softened as I took a closer look at his face. I felt my eyes sting as I cupped his bruising face as gently as I could, but he still he cringed in pain. Purple and red bruising decorated up from Sauli’s cheek to his forehead, curling around his eye that was slowly swelling. His lower lip had split and had blood drying on it. I hoped Dark was seeing this.

Dark was quiet for a minute, surprisingly enough.

When he did speak, his response was typical. “There’s nothing wrong here. The mongrel deserved everything he got. Not to mention purple is a good color on him.”

His voice was cynical as always, but there was something underlining his tone in that ridiculous statement. His words weren’t so cocky, as if he was forcing himself to brush it off as nothing. It almost sounded like regret. Almost.

***

Dark:

It was later that night when I came out again, hours after getting sick of Adam and Sauli arguing completely pointlessly over me. Both went to bed pissed off, but Adam hadn’t been able to fall asleep, and it was beyond irritating to watch him stare at his lover’s bruised face for hours like he’d been completely mangled. It wasn’t even that bad. It was just a bit of swelling and discoloration. What else did he expect? It could have, should have been a lot worse, maybe fatal. If only they knew how lucky they were that I’d been able to stop myself, but… why did I? That feeling I’d felt was horrid, and I never wanted to experience it again. Had Adam felt it as well when he was out here? Whatever his reason for gazing so heavily at the blond, it’d been fucking annoying. Therefore, I’d
decided to take over and force the idiot to sleep.

Now… I found myself doing the exact same thing.

I lay on my side, watching Sauli’s sleeping figure facing me quietly. The air was silent, not a sound to be heard other than his slightly laboured breathing. There was no screaming, no fighting, and no insults from either of us. It was almost magical. He looked so peaceful.

However, being this close to him… I could feel the urge to strike itching at every muscle without it being under my control, and it took every bit of willpower I had to shove it back and resist. I didn’t want to do anything to him now… not when he looked like this. I forced myself to breathe evenly, trying to control and tame the only thing I knew.

God, I couldn’t stop staring either. What in the hell was happening to me? Here in the dark, where he wasn’t trying to fight me or get away, when the world was so calm and quiet, when I could just stay still enough not to hurt him, I could really see Sauli without lust or anger filling my vision. It was odd to feel my stomach twist a little from taking in his damaged face. I did that to him, and I didn’t feel that normal sick pleasure at the sight. I just felt sick. Beyond that, I could really see the details of his face in this moment, pure and unaltered by fear, and I had to admit it…

He really was beautiful.

Even mangled by my own hands, Sauli was stunning. It was starting to make sense why I’d stopped attacking him. He was a pure work of art that I was ruining slowly both physically and mentally. Adam called him his treasure and I could see why now.

Hah. Adam.

Just having that despicable name intrude into my thoughts made me want to claw something apart.

This was entirely his fucking fault.

Because of that demon that I was forced to share this body with, I existed. Because of him, I was the way I was, and I could never change that. I couldn’t even try to comfort Sauli after I’d attacked him. I’d only ended up hurting him more. It was because of Adam that I now wanted his boyfriend all to myself. I wanted Sauli… badly. If I could, I would gladly kill off Adam if it meant that I could have Sauli.

I thought I realized it earlier today when that awful feeling had crippled me, but I couldn’t convince myself. I needed to admit something to myself even if I’d only ever tell people that I didn’t believe in such a stupid thing, but… I needed to come to terms with the fact that I wanted to keep Sauli and, well… love him.

But… I couldn’t.

Could I ever even attempt to understand what love was? No. It would be pointless to try. Because of Adam, I couldn’t. I was jealous and infuriated that Adam could so undeservingly have the luxury to love and be loved. All I did was terrify Sauli, and now apparently, make him hate me. The choice wasn’t mine. It was only thing I could do. I knew that the only reason Sauli hadn’t tried to kill me for molesting him was Adam’s body. Other than that, he genuinely hated me, and it was hurting me in a much worse than it could Adam.

To hear the one thing I wanted to love, the only thing I wanted in this prisoner life of mine, tell me that he despised me… it was killing me.
I was the only one who knew the answer to why exactly it was all Adam’s fault. Maybe one day I’d reveal all to Sauli.

Maybe then, he’d understand.

I reached out quietly with the intention of stroking Sauli’s bruised cheek as an apology he’d never hear, but as I got closer, my hand curled itself into a fist. I winced and struggled to pull back my hand by force, willing myself not to lash out. It was ridiculous. I could never touch him. I could never have him.

I couldn’t do this anymore.

Chapter End Notes

Comment/Kudo/Whatever much appreciated.
Revelation

Chapter Notes

Alright, well this is a lot of information to take in, so make sure you're wide awake before reading! Here are 11,514 words for y'all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sauli:

Two weeks passed and Dark didn’t even come near me. He just stopped touching me altogether. He didn’t hit me, he didn’t sexually harass me, and he didn’t even look at me. I didn’t know how to feel about that. I was supposed to be thrilled, but I was more concerned. He rarely came out, which relieved both Adam and me, and gave us time to ease the tension between us and let our guard down slightly.

Adam had told me that Dark hadn’t even been talking to him in his head either. It was almost as if he was gone… except he wasn’t. The couple of times that he did come out for whatever reason, he would barricade himself inside the bedroom as if to hide from me. This sudden extreme shift in his actions both worried me and made me suspicious. What was going on with him? I knew I shouldn’t care, but I couldn’t help but be curious. Adam certainly never let me talk about it. He was fine with just pretending that everything was back to normal for the most part.

The whole oddity even gave me time to research what in the hell was wrong with Adam, without him knowing. He’d be pissed and he would accuse me of trying to find whatever mental disorder to slap on him like a label. Really, I was trying to piece together what Dark was the result of and how to get rid of him. I’d usually whip out his laptop when he left for album sessions and Tommy couldn’t come over. Google became my best friend as I searched up key symptoms. I came across several articles and informational sites, but nothing really seemed to click.

Over these past couple of weeks, I was also getting antsy. Adam refused to do much with me because he was afraid to bring out Dark, but the lack of sexual activity was starting to take its toll. It was hard to be around your lover day and night but have to keep your distance. It didn’t make sense. It was frustrating because I was constantly needy now, and I wanted to be all over Adam’s body again, to show him how much I loved him, but I had to resort to just getting myself off, which really wasn’t doing it for me. I wanted release. The most Adam would do was a kiss here and there when he wasn’t completely occupied with his career, which was rare. He was always so gentle and careful, but it was never enough anymore. I didn’t how he was able to deal with this. I missed him so much.

It resorted into me almost, almost missing Dark’s roughness and aggression because at least he’d give me some sort of attention, which I knew was crazy of me. I was practically having withdrawal symptoms, and it occasionally made me crave hard beyond rational thought.

Like today, I couldn’t take it anymore. The opportunity had arisen and I was just going to give it a shot. I knew this was one of the rare times that Dark was out, and he was currently hiding in the bedroom. On any other day, I would have left the house until Adam came back out because I never wanted to risk being beaten to a pulp again despite his avoidance of me, but today, I couldn’t help it. I had to try. It felt so, so wrong and I was horrified with myself for my intentions, but I desperately needed Adam’s hands on me one way or another. I was most likely going to be strangled, but…
I walked quietly down the hall to Adam’s room. I could feel Dark’s uneasy aura seeping out from the space underneath the closed door, so I knew it was definitely him in there. I took several deep breaths, suddenly feeling like this was a very bad idea. I knocked tentatively a few times and paused, but there was no response. I gulped my fear down and tried again, louder this time, but still not a peep came from the other side. I sighed in disappointment and wondered if I should just stop this idiotic plan. Instead, I tried the doorknob, and I was surprised when it turned completely. I took in a deep breath, and slowly pushed the door open enough to peer inside.

Dark was lying on the bed on his back completely still. His eyes were open and he was staring straight up at the ceiling. I would’ve thought he were dead if it weren’t for his chest rising and falling and the split second where his eyes flickered over to my direction and back up at the ceiling. His eyes… even from here they looked dead. Just dull and depressed. I couldn’t help the twinge of concern.

I had completely lied when I’d told him I hated him. I should hate him for everything he’d done, but I just couldn’t bring myself to. Of course, I disliked him immensely and could never forget all the misery he brought upon me. However, I just had a weird feeling, a nagging twinge in the back of my mind that he and Adam related in some way. They had to be. In the weirdest ways, Dark reminded me of Adam at times, and maybe that was just me being foolish and thinking stupidly because they shared the same body therefore looked exactly alike on the outside, but still, even his real form, the one I’d seen in my dreams, was almost a mirror image of Adam himself. If he was a part of Adam in some way, I could never hate Adam.

“Dark…?” I asked tentatively as I mustered up enough courage to enter the room.

I cautiously made my way over to the side of the bed when Dark didn’t reply or make a move on me. My heart was thrashing in my ears, and my head was screaming at me to stop walking toward the threat and start running away from it. Instead of listening to the rational voice in my head, I ignored it.

Dark was wearing nothing but Adam’s pajama pants from the night before. Adam usually slept naked, but in order not to tempt me, he would put on those stupid pants. Without moving his head, Dark’s eyes glanced at me before refocusing on the ceiling, and I didn’t miss the way his dead expression subtly cringed when his gaze had landed on my fading bruises. What in the hell was that reaction? I was expecting him to smirk with pride at what he’d done to me. His stare remained locked upward after that and he completely ignored me.

I scoffed and climbed onto the bed, feeling braver now that he was like a corpse. I took off my shirt in one swift motion and dramatically threw it over into a corner. Dark’s eyebrows furrowed for a second in confusion to what I was doing as he continued to stare at the ceiling. Really, I had no idea either.

I shuffled over to his body on my knees, and I felt my heart pound as I riskily reached out toward him. I hesitated, gauging his reaction, but his face gave nothing away. I took a deep breath and ran my fingertips along Dark’s smooth stomach with feather-light touches. I could feel him tense up beneath my fingertips, but other than that, he did nothing. Absolutely nothing. I was getting annoyed. Normally, he would pounce on me if I were within ten feet of him. He was deciding to be civil now?

I let my hand travel down over his waistband and over his thinly clothed crotch. I knew he wasn’t wearing underwear. I paused and looked at Dark’s face. He was watching my hand now, looking… disappointed. I squeezed him lightly through his pants and his eyes closed lightly, nothing more.

Dark finally sighed, “Blondie, what are you doing…?”
His voice sounded tired and hopeless, not sarcastic and smug. It’s as if he didn’t even have enough energy to keep up his cocky little persona, let alone attack me in whatever way. I frowned. What was up with him?

“Why do you come out only to hide from me?” I asked, not easing the tension in my hand.

Dark’s closed eyes squeezed tighter in annoyance. He muttered, “Sick of Adam worrying aloud. Need to escape his ridiculous voice.”

“Oh…” I mumbled lamely, staring at my knees. Adam was still worrying when he was alone. The bastard always acted completely nonchalant around me.

When I glanced back up, Dark’s eyes had opened and were studying me carefully.

“You didn’t answer my question,” he stated, eyes flickering over to my hand on his crotch.

I gulped. I couldn’t believe I was really going to tell him. After this, there was no going back. He was probably going to hold me down and screw the life out of me.

I drummed my fingers over the clothed bulged. “Well… you were… right,” I had to pause to swallow, finding it much harder to admit that than I’d thought. “I want you… all of you, and I want you to… fuck me.” That last part came out almost squeaky.

I took a deep breath, waiting.

Dark stared at me with that same dull look in his eyes for another moment before he looked away.

“You should leave,” he said simply.

Wait, what?

“Excuse me?” I was shocked.

“Leave, Blondie,” he said, sounding bored, “before you get yourself hurt.”

I gaped at him, offended. “I’m saying ‘yes, do me,’ like you’ve wanted and now you’re backing out? Hell no. Dark, fuck me. I want you inside of me now.”

Dark’s hand twitched slightly toward me, but he stiffened and shoved it under his back to keep it there. It looked like he was trying his hardest to keep from touching me.

“Dark, please,” I pleaded. I was practically begging him for it. How ridiculous.

“I can’t,” Dark croaked, looking miserable all of sudden. “I’ll kill you if I do.”

“Why!” I raised my voice, getting exasperated. “Why would you have to do that? It doesn’t make any sense!”

Dark suddenly sat up and I flinched slightly. I noticed him scoot away from me until he felt the backboard. My hand that had been resting on his dick just dropped limply next to me.

“I want you…” Dark said, eyeing me with something intense, but then he tore his gaze away and stared hard at the wall. “More than you’ll ever know.”

“But…?” My voice was quiet, taken aback from what he’d just said to me.
“But I can’t show you just how much without hurting you,” Dark muttered, “…and I don’t want to do that anymore.”

As wonderful as it was to hear that, I was also confused. “Since when don’t you? That’s all you’ve ever done.” I gestured to my face and he cringed lightly. “And if you suddenly don’t want to hurt me, why do you?”

Dark was quiet for a minute, as if he was debating whether to tell me whatever was on his mind.

He sighed, resigned, “All because of your boyfriend.”

“Huh?” I wondered aloud. “What does Adam have to do with this?”

“Everything.” Dark rolled his eyes, showing his personality a bit more. “After we started to split, I was stuck with everything Adam didn’t want.”

Taken aback, I stammered, “S—Split? Dark… what?”

The corner of Dark’s lip lifted ever so slightly in a knowing way and he shook his head. “Do you even want to hear this? I don’t want to waste my breath if you’re going to just ignore everything I say like Adam.”

“You know I wouldn’t do that,” I mumbled quietly.

Dark’s gaze bored into my eyes, examining. “I know,” he said at last. I felt my cheeks heat up. “But I wonder… Should I tell you anyway? You’re just going to use what I say to get rid of me, am I right?”

I said nothing and looked down in shame.

“Thought so,” he sighed. “But maybe… you’ll change your mind after you hear this.”

I highly doubted that. “We’ll see.”

Dark exhaled sharply. “Where to begin…” he pondered. “Well, Adam thinks we’re two different people, or at least, he tries to convince himself of that even though he sees that we look almost exactly alike.” I nodded quickly in confirmation, surprised that I’d been on the right track. “He doesn’t want to accept that someone like me… is actually a part of him.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” I breathed.

Dark smirked. “Surprise.”

“I was right…” I trailed off, stunned.

Dark raised a perfectly arched eyebrow. “You suspected?” I nodded quickly. Dark huffed and shook his head. “Maybe you’re not as big of an idiot as I thought.” That was probably the nicest thing he’d ever said to me.

“But… but…” I stuttered. “That… but… what? That makes no sense. I mean, I didn’t think I was right. How can you… but… You’re different… You’re… I mean….” I sighed sharply, annoyed with myself. “Just explain. I’m all ears.”

“You’re asking for it,” Dark warned. He paused for a moment, before taking a deep breath and continuing. “I’m an entire human being melded by the traits that Adam blocked and banished from himself. The violence… the crazed lust… everything he doesn’t want. He left all the trash personality
traits to me, and nothing but them.” Dark shook his head in anger. “He doesn’t realize this. His mind did it subconsciously over the years. He thinks I’m just some demon with everything he hates in a person sent to torment him.”

I blinked. “Okay…” I said slowly, a little disbelieving. “So, I wish I wasn’t so dangerously curious all the time. Can I banish my curiosity and make my own little roommate as well?”

Dark glared. “If you won’t take this seriously…”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” I said quickly. “I am serious though. How can someone just do that?”

“Easy. By not having any idea that you’re doing it,” Dark explained. I gave him a confused look. “It’s simple,” he insisted. “It’s rare, but it can happen if the conditions are right. Adam went through an incredible amount of trauma in his childhood, and his brain, as a way of protecting him, created me with these characteristics to come out and deal with certain terrible events that he wouldn’t be able to psychologically handle but I could because I’m stronger in that sense. That was the original trigger; events so traumatic or dangerous that they would completely crush Adam’s mentality or body if I didn’t take over and handle them in a stride.”

“You were created to protect his mind and body?” I asked sceptically. He wasn’t doing a very good job.

Dark nodded. “And in order to do that, Adam’s subconscious pushed away every trait and bits of him that were anything remotely similar to whatever tormentor he faced, and he melded them into me. It’s fighting fire with fire. Those traits I was given are strong ones that can easily handle pain and trauma, and respond usually by way of violence.”

I cocked an eyebrow. “Give me an example.”

Dark gave me an annoyed look, but went on, “Say he was about to be raped and murdered at gunpoint. Adam would break down like the wimp he is and wouldn’t be able to defend himself. If the rapist did get his way with him, Adam’s already fragile mind would crack and he’d be irreversibly traumatized afterward. He’d probably curl up into a ball for the rest of his life and become an unresponsive, shaking vegetable. There’s only a certain amount of pain and trauma a person can take before they snap. Adam was already on the edge of that, so as a survival method, I’d be pushed out by his subconscious to take the motherfucker that was attacking out.”

“I can’t decide if that’s really cool or really sad,” I admitted.

“Sad,” Dark said immediately. “Definitely sad. The amount of horrors you’d have to face before your mind would do this for you could never be worth it. Then there’s the other side of the problem. What about me? I was created and used as a guard dog against my will.”

“Yeah…”

“Plus, those traits and characteristics were the only ones I was given, only the ones that would be useful in a violent or otherwise traumatic event. He kept everything pleasant about a person, everything useful for a normal life to himself. Where he can love, caress, and be joyous, I can only abuse, destroy, and be hateful.” Dark shook his head angrily.

I was confused. “But, why does it still have to be that way? Adam’s awful childhood is way in his past. If you were created to come out and handle the traumatic parts, why are you still here? His life is fine now.”

“True,” Dark allowed, “but I have another trigger now. If anything even reminds Adam of those
memories, his mind usually cannot handle the pain, it chickens out of having to face the thoughts, and he forces me out to deal with it instead.”

Dark waited for me to respond, but I just blinked at him and gestured for him to continue, waiting for an explanation. When he noticed, I could practically see him fighting not to roll his eyes.

“One time, we were in our early twenties, and Adam was shopping for a TV. The display was playing this old movie remastered, and he happened to stop by right when one man started smacking the other with a baseball bat as a comedic relief. There was hardly anything to it, but it brought back a memory of being beaten with a bat by his father. Right as that happened, I was rudely shoved out so Adam wouldn’t have to think about it, then I was forced to experience the memory in his stead. When that happens, that memory that triggered me transfers to me permanently, and Adam completely forgets it. You might recall that occurring a few times while you’ve been around. It could never be a trigger again because it’s gone from his memory. It gets complicated though. It’s not always so formulaic. I’m just telling you what I understand, but there are inconsistencies. Sometimes, shit just happens, like a random memory might just pop over to me for no apparent reason. I can handle them, but my mind is now a terrible, bloody place. You wouldn’t last a minute in there.”

“That’s why he forgot finding me in the bathroom,” I breathed, almost relieved that there was a reason.

“Quite a gruesome memory, that one,” Dark said dryly. “Surprised he didn’t vomit all over your corpse-like self.”

I ignored him and shoved the memory out of my head. I did not need to relive Adam’s tortured-looking face.

“One thing though,” I said slowly. “Adam said there were a few years in which you were practically gone, but recently you came back in full… why? What changed?”

“You did.” Dark shrugged. My eyebrows shot up. “I was supposed to take over when Adam was confronted with a memory of the past, but you’re right. I was dormant for years. Adam had learned how to suppress those memories, not forgetting them, but rather, blocking them, thus giving the early version of me no reason to come out. After that, most things he faced weren’t significant enough to unblock the memories and cause a trigger… until you came back.”

“What? What did I have to do with it?” I squeaked. “It’s my fault you’re back?”

“Are you surprised?” Dark rolled his eyes. “You were one of the biggest aspects of Adam’s early life and the source of a few traumas, like that whole bathroom thing you mentioned. Your presence unlocked the traumatic memories that had included you one by one from his head. You could do the smallest thing and it will still unblock a memory and remind him of it, and you’ve done this multiple times.”

“What if I stop bringing back the trauma?” I asked in a small voice. “What if I leave? Will you go dormant again if nothing brings back the memories?”

“No,” he replied simply. “It wouldn’t matter now. You caused me to come out so often that I’ve gained complete control over it. Trigger or not, I can take over, and each time I do, I get stronger, more in control.”

“Oh god,” I groaned, burying my head in my hands. “I should have left when he first told me to! I’m such an idiot! I stayed to help him, but I only made things worse.” I felt like crying.
“You did. I suppose I should thank you, but I can’t. Despite what you believe, this isn’t what I wanted,” Dark said. “I may be becoming stronger, and more of a developed human, so much so in the short time you’ve been back, but it’s strange watching myself develop feelings like an actual person with each time I’m in the real world. This wasn’t supposed to happen. I’m not just a defense mechanism anymore. I’m real. I’m even gaining traits that Adam never even had to begin with.”

“Fuck. What am I going to do?” I groaned before looking up at him suddenly. “Wait, if you have traits that aren’t Adam’s, that means you’re not him,” I insisted.

“Don’t bother trying to convince yourself that, Blondie,” Dark muttered in annoyance. “I’m still part of him, and I can feel that, though we won’t always be. With each time that I come out, I separate from him further, and I’m worried. I’m not sure what will happen when we do split fully… I doubt it’ll be good.”

“Why would you think that?”

“Because, I like to think of me and Adam as connected by a hypothetical elastic band, and when you pull on an elastic band, it can always snap back to normal if you let go in time, right? Well, the more you pull on a band, the weaker the elastic gets, and at some point, it won’t snap back to its original shape. It’ll be loose and overstretched. If you pull it too far apart… it breaks in two. It’s ruined.”

“What’s the connection like now?” I asked timidly.

“Getting overstretched,” he replied. “Our connection is weakening as I grow stronger and become my own person. We’re close to no longer being enough of the same person to be able to return to normal. I fear that as the elastic keeps weakening, we’re not far from going past the point of no return, until eventually… snap.” He made an exploding gesture with his hand.

“God…” I took in a deep breath, an uneasy feeling washing over me. “Does Adam know…?”

“Of course not,” Dark snorted. “He’s too concerned with avoiding you so I don’t hurt you. Too bad he doesn’t understand that he’s hurting himself more.”

“Well, you have been spending all this time tormenting me,” I muttered. “You can’t blame him for being so distraught over it and ignoring everything else. That’s your fault. Moreover, you’re just deciding now to stop. So much for being part of Adam who would never attack me... What gives?” I challenged.

Dark sighed. “Because I am, or was, technically Adam at one point for the most part, we still share the same deep-rooted wants and needs, you being one of them.” He looked away. “I’m just realizing that now. However, unlike Adam, I can only hurt you. I can’t love or whatever it is that you want to call it.” He waved his hand dismissively. “I physically cannot do it. That’s not how my wiring works. I wasn’t given anything like that. I have to attack.”

“What could you possibly gain from hurting me?” I asked in a small voice.

Dark stared at me with conflicted eyes. “Seeing the pain on your face… it makes me feel euphoric, but so wrong at the same time. You’re a drug. I need my fix to be functional and sane, but it hurts too much now to be worth it. It goes against how I’m supposed to feel about you, how Adam feels about you. I never feel fully satisfied tormenting you, but at least it gives me momentary fulfillment and purpose. Nothing can permanently fill the void in me.”

“Nothing at all?”

Dark shrugged. “I’m… incomplete. There’s no balance. One side is missing. I can’t be happy no
matter what I do, and that’s Adam’s fault. I live in constant anger and depression with no way out. I’ve accepted that… until now, that is. This is the only life I’ve ever known. You try living like this. You’d kill yourself the first chance you’d get… but I don’t even get that luxury either.”

I felt guilt settle low in my core like a nagging weight I couldn’t get rid of.

“I’m sorry,” I barely managed to say. “I didn’t know… I wouldn’t have stayed.”

“Too late now,” Dark sighed. “It’s all downhill from here. Doesn’t matter if you go or stay, although if you stayed, maybe you could get it through Adam’s thick skull, and maybe you could help… but if you do stay, I can’t guarantee I won’t lose control and attack you. In all likeliness, I’ll kill you eventually. If you leave, nothing would change, but it wouldn’t get worse. Although, both Adam and I won’t have a reason to go on… and that would be the end of this body, which is almost a nice thought to me. So… it’s up to you.”

I felt horrible and I couldn’t believe that no matter what I did, these two would hit rock bottom. This wasn’t fair. Why did this have to become my fault? I didn’t ask for this… Yet, I also couldn’t believe I had any right to complain after Dark just explained what he was going through. He had no escape from it either. Everything that had ever happened in his entire life had been against his will, and here I was, complaining that I had to deal with it. It was paining me to see him live like this, especially since he was part of Adam, a banished part, but still him nonetheless. I realized what this meant. I loved every bit of Adam, and if Dark was part of him… Well, that was going to be hard to come to terms with. Could I love him as well, despite all he’s done to me and all he’ll continue doing? Maybe… especially now that I knew he had no choice.

I could see it right now as I stared at him. I could see his body trembling lightly from my close proximity as he sat on his hands to restrain them. He was struggling so hard to stay still and not hurt me. He was fighting everything he was wired to do to me. It was aweing.

I scooted over to him on my knees. Dark threw me a warning look. I gave him back a frown.

“Stay still,” I whispered.

Confused, Dark’s brow knit together as I slowly cupped either side of his face. I could feel him stiffen beneath my touch. He wouldn’t comply when I tried to pull him closer, so I leaned in instead, closing my eyes, and gently pressing my lips against his. I stayed still until he relaxed by the tiniest degree. Then, I started to move my mouth against his softly, still holding his tense head in place. I could practically feel him struggling not to attack as his lips shook. When my tongue shyly licked Dark’s lower lip, he lost his control and responded excessively roughly, biting down my tongue and lip. I winced in pain and started to pull back, but his hand flew out from underneath him and grabbed the back of my neck. That was when I froze completely and pushed him away hard. Surprisingly, he backed off.

“Don’t move,” I warned, fearfully eyeing Dark’s wrist attached to the hand gripping my neck.

Dark let out a shaky breath and struggled to peel his hand away before sitting solidly on both of them. He licked his lips and took in a deep breath, trying to stay still and relaxed without lashing out. My bottom lip tasted slightly metallic. This was going to be harder than I thought.

I leaned in and kissed him harder this time, surprised when he responded without causing me agony. He was rough, but I welcomed it; it was controlled. My tongue met his and it was my turn to kiss him as if I was trying to eat his face off, messily and urgently with nothing held back. He nipped at my lips with just the right amount of pressure for it to be pleasurable. Dark moaned softly into my mouth, sounding more like a pleased growl than anything else as he started to lose himself without
losing control. Without breaking the kiss, I straddled Dark’s lap and threw my arms around his neck, pulling myself as close as possible. That was when he broke apart and turned his head away, avoiding my lips.

“Stop,” he suttered, slightly breathless. “I can’t… I’ll kill…”

I looked down at his arms and they were visibly trembling from his struggle. He was about to lose it any second now. I guessed sitting on top of him willingly wasn’t really helping his desire to control and dominate me by whatever means necessary. I apologized and scrambled off him, scooting to the other corner of the bed. I flinched and watched with worry as Dark groaned with frustration and suddenly punched a pillow.

“Fuck!” he yelled before entangling his fingers hard into his hair and squeezing his eyes shut. “Just get out of here!”

“No,” I squeaked, heart pounding. “Not until you take me. You can do whatever you want. Don’t fight it.”

Dark looked at me as if I were deranged. “Don’t fight it? Moron, do you not get it? I would end up strangling you and you’d be dead by the end! Then what would I do with myself? Don’t be so stupid for something like this because I’m not going to be able to resist forever if you keep asking. So, stop.”

I sighed sharply, “Fine,” before pouting dramatically at him.

“You’re making this so easy for me,” Dark shook his head, taking in my whiny expression. “Look at you. You’re all willing and right on the bed where I want you. I could take you right now and you wouldn’t even fight me. I could break you and pound into you without mercy and you’d beg for more… God… Ask me one more time I won’t be able to stop myself.”

I hesitated, deliberating. I opened my mouth to beg him and then snapped it shut. He was right, I was being stupid, but still, I couldn’t just leave him like this. I felt like I owed him one moment of happiness in his life without hurting either of us. I thought hard for a minute while Dark glared at his lap. There had to be a way.

An idea popped into my head.

“What if I tie you down?” I blurted.

Dark looked surprised. “What?”

“You’re afraid of lashing out and hitting me, right? What if I tie your hands and feet down to the bedposts? Then you wouldn’t be able to move.”

“You kinky little bastard…” Dark chuckled humourlessly. “And how exactly would I be able to fuck you like that?”

“Well, you wouldn’t,” I said it as if it were obvious. “I would.”

Dark’s eyebrows shot up and he barked a laugh. “Absolutely not,” he spurted. “You’re asking the most dominantly wired creature to submit to you? And in bondage?” He cackled again at my words. “Good luck with that. I think you’re missing the whole point of me owning you.”

I gave him a look and moved closer to his legs. “It’s not about ownership, Dark…” I stroked his thigh lightly. “It’s about showing someone how much you love and desire them, in a way words
“You don’t love me,” Dark scoffed immediately, no trace of doubt in his tone. “You just came here because you’re horny and desperate. I’m not an idiot like Adam.”

I gave him a sad look, albeit that’s precisely why I’d come here in the first place. Damn, he was good. However, after everything he’d said to me, my entire outlook and my intentions changed.

“How would you know what love is like and how people express it? I realize it’s not your fault for not knowing… so just let me show you…”

Dark looked indecisive, staring at my hand stroking the cloth near his knee.

“Plus, it’s the only way you’re going to do this without anyone getting hurt. I promise I’ll make it good,” I purred, trying to win him over.

Dark’s eyes started to darken with longing as his gaze travelled from my hand to my bare chest.

I continued, knowing I was winning, “If you really want to feel what that physical connection is like, you’ll do whatever it takes, otherwise I don’t believe you.”

His eyes flickered up to my face and narrowed. “You’re such a little guilt-tripper, you know that, Blondie?” Dark muttered. I took it as a compliment. “I’m impressed. I didn’t know you had that in you.”

“You don’t know a lot about me,” I mumbled, flicking his knee.

“Perhaps not…” he trailed off, getting lost in thought.

I cleared my throat, redirecting his attention. “So maybe it’s time you find out. What do you say?”

Dark pondered for a minute, glaring at me stubbornly the entire time.

“Fine,” he finally agreed reluctantly.

I flashed him a brilliant smile.

Dark rolled his eyes.

Ten minutes, a whole lot of struggling, arguing, and retying knots with sheets later, I had Dark naked and tied to the bed. I’d escaped with only a scratch on my arm, sweat on my forehead, and little breath left in my lungs. With the end of each limb tied to its respective bedpost, Dark was lying in the middle of the bed with his back slightly propped up by all the pillows, spread out like an X, and glaring sharply at me.

I stood at the end of the bed and smirked back at him, admiring my handiwork. I could feel my excitement tingling lower as I took in how vulnerable and appealing Dark looked like this. My skin burst into flames from the anticipation. I could do anything I wanted to him and he’d be helpless to stop me. It was payback time, but I was really going to enjoy this. I wasn’t even going to mention the irony of it to him. He’d spent the entire time he’s known me boasting about how he was going to make me submit to him and own me, yet here he was, tied up and looking all pretty exposed like this for me.

I couldn’t help but snicker.

Dark’s eyes narrowed further into slits. “This is ridiculous,” he spat, pulling at his wrist restraints. My
mouth started watering at the way his muscles flexed.

“Oh, but it’ll feel so good,” I assured him, climbing up onto the bed and in between his legs.

I paused when Dark tensed up and started trying to kick out of his ankle restraints. When proved useless, he let out a huff of annoyance and stopped. I let out a breath I didn’t know I’d been holding. If he managed to get loose during this after what I had planned for him, I’d be dead. He wouldn’t be able to regain control fast enough, and I wouldn’t see the light of day again.

“It’s alright,” I hummed, crawling up his chest and settling on top of his bare body. I ran my hands up along his tightly muscled arms, wondering how I’d managed to stay conscious with even one hit considering I could feel the brute strength in them just like this. I lowered myself until I was inches from his face and mumbled, “Just let go.”

I cupped each side of his head and smoothed out the angry knots in his forehead with my thumbs before leaning in and kissing him. He responded willingly but held back until I deepened the kiss, forcing his mouth open and licking my way inside. I could hear a low, pleased growl from deep within him, like an animal.

I broke away from the kiss with a smack, only to lick over Dark’s plump lips and continue trailing wet kisses along his jawline and down his neck until I reached a particularly sensitive spot and Dark arched up into me with a groan, angling his head to give me better access. I nipped and sucked on the spot repeatedly until I had Dark starting to breathe heavily against me.

“Fuck,” he panted, chest rising and pushing at mine.

I licked over the perfect little mark I made on him before musing, “You know, I like you so much better like this.”

He shook his head with his eyes squeezed shut. “Shut up,” Dark growled. “Just shut up and get on with—”

He broke off with a hiss when I rolled my hips against his, grinding his hard-on with the friction from my pants.

He spat, “You evil son of a—”

I cut him off again with a messy kiss that was mostly tongue, but so sweet tasting. His mouth was hot and angry against mine as if this was a form of punishment. I kept grinding against his cock as I kissed him, trapping it tightly between our bodies, and earning little grunts from deep within Dark’s throat. I pulled away and he shot me a death glare to which I only smiled and leaned down to press a chaste kiss against his cheek. I could see the blush spread across his cheeks.

I pulled away with another snicker. “Oh, I’m enjoying this way too much.”

Dark’s arms jerked as he glared daggers at me. “If I could move my arms, I swear…”

“I know, baby, I know,” I humoured him, “but you can’t.”

“Don’t call me that,” he muttered. “I’m not an infant.”

I rolled my eyes and pecked his lips before peppering kisses over his chin, down his gulping throat, to his bare chest. Licking over his hardening nipples, I caressed and kissed every inch of his torso slowly, taking my sweet time.
In between short, shallow breaths, Dark spat, “Quit fucking teasing and get on with it!”

I stopped my affections and gave him a look, drawing circles around his belly button lightly with my finger. “I’m not doing anything more until you ask nicely.”

Dark gave me a delirious look and pulled hard against his restraints. “Fuck that! Untie me!”

I let my hand wander lower, lightly brushing against the base of his hard cock.

“Are you sure…?” I drawled, drumming my fingers on his skin. “All you’d have to do is say please. That’s it. Then I’d give you everything you want.”

Dark glared. “Fine. Please suck me off, you little blond shit,” he replied with as much sarcasm as one could inject.

I feigned a hurt frown. “That won’t do. I guess I have to convince you to have a better attitude about it.”

“How about you fuck off?” Dark growled.

“Okay, bye!” I quipped, pretending to start getting off him.

“No!” he blurted, jerking hard.

I paused and smirked down at him. Payback was so, so sweet. I dramatically cupped my hand behind my ear and stared at him innocently. “Well, I’m waiting.”

If looks could kill, I’d be a pile of ash right now because of Dark’s expression. “…Please,” he spat through clenched teeth.

I shrugged, “Well, that’s a start.”

I moved lower and spread Dark’s thighs before diving in, licking and sucking every inch of skin around his cock, purposefully making sure I didn’t touch the actual thing. Dark squirmed and made noises of annoyance, jerking his legs every now and then as if he was trying to kick me off… either that or he was trying to steer his cock into my mouth. I was so glad I thought of tying him up like this. He couldn’t do shit to me. Just to persuade him further to be nicer, I let my nails ghost up and down his cock from balls to tip repeatedly as I wetly kissed the sensitive part of his inner thigh.

I could hear Dark panting and struggling not to say anything. It was almost sad how his pride kept him from enjoying himself.

“I’ll do this all night you know.” I blew hot air against his balls. “Teasing you like this and never letting you come.”

Dark’s eyes were squeezed shut and his arms were shaking. The tip of my tongue brushed against the underside of his balls ever so slightly. When I suddenly grabbed the base of his cock between my thumb and forefinger and squeezed, that was when he cracked.

“Please!” Dark demanded without sounding venomous. “I want your goddamn mouth.”

I hummed in approval and slowly and hotly licked and sucked on Dark’s balls, lapping at the heated skin affectionately before sucking one into my mouth and pulling lightly. I steadied myself by holding onto Dark’s thighs before I decided to be nice but take my time as I ran my tongue slowly and dryly from the base of his cock to the head, as it rested on his stomach, applying as much
pressure as possible to the rock-hard limb. Dark hissed and his hands curled tighter. I wetly kissed the side of the leaking head before swirling my tongue around the slit teasingly, tasting him. I finally took him into my mouth deeply all at once and hummed lowly around him, causing Dark to buck up sharply and gasp from the vibrations of my throat. I pumped him into my mouth a few times and realized just how hard he was. In fact, he seemed to be much too close already and I wasn’t done with him yet. I pulled off and kissed the head before getting off the bed. Dark made a noise of objection.

“Where are you going?” Dark complained.

I shushed him, receiving yet another glare, and I briefly wondered how his eyes hadn’t frozen like that yet. I pursed my lips in thought as I glanced around the room for something I could use. Spotting a tennis shoe poking out from under the bed, I had an ‘aha!’ moment before I knelt down and tugged the shoelace out, smirking mischievously as I stood back up and twirled it in the air.

“What the fuck is that for?” Dark watched me with confusion, irritation, want, and just a bit of fear.

“You ask too many questions.” I chuckled, mimicking him. “You’re about to find out.”

I climbed back onto the bed in my previous position. I reached for Dark’s ready-to-burst cock with the shoelace in my other hand, and that was when it clicked for Dark.

“No,” he gasped, horrified. “You wouldn’t.”

I gave him a feigned sad look, “Oh, but I would. We can’t have you finishing early.”

“Fuck you!” Dark growled before jerking around and pulling hard at every one of his restraints. “No!” he barked when I ignored him and wrapped the lace around the base of his cock.

I tied a knot with the shoelace, pulling it tight enough to gather the blood and maintain his erection for a while. I needed him to last longer. Dark made a frustrated noise before jerking his leg hard toward me, aiming to shove me off the bed. I just smiled at him and tied the shoelace into a bow.

“I even made it into a pretty bow for you,” I cooed, admiring his practically gift-wrapped cock.

A makeshift cock ring was necessary, I thought. I needed to delay Dark’s orgasm for as long as possible while I had my way with him.

“I could kill you right now and be fine with it,” Dark hissed, twisting his fists in his restraints.

“We’ve established this,” I muttered. “Now…”

I reached over to the side table, scrambling my hand in the drawer until I grabbed the lube. I pulled it out and raised an eyebrow at Dark, who seemed to have a permanent scowl on his face. I gave him an apologetic smile, knowing I’d promised to make this good for him and so far I’d only pissed off the poor guy.

Who was I kidding, I wasn’t sorry.

Still, it was time to get rid of that glare. I stood up next to the bed and pulled down my pants and underwear, feeling Dark’s eyes heavy on me, but I didn’t mind in the slightest. I glanced at him and found it hard to hide my smile at the full-blown, hungry look in Dark’s eyes. I paused for a second, taking in how he looked right now, tied up and needy, and so vulnerable. His muscles were pulled taut from his straining, and it was damn sexy how such a power was rendered useless like this.
I licked my lips, hypnotized by him, and climbed up on the bed until I was chest to chest on top of him again. Dark didn’t say anything as I stared at him intently, but he didn’t look away either. I smiled and kissed his chest before resting my cheek there for a moment and clinging to his sides, listening to his strong, excited heartbeat and the relaxing way his bare chest rose and fell against me as he breathed slowly. He still didn’t complain or tell me to hurry up.

I thought it was a beautiful moment, one in which Dark felt human to me for once, and not a parasite possessing Adam’s body. He was real. He was alive. We could only share this one moment together like this, so why not just savour it? Dark had said nothing could make him happy, but I would do my damnedest to try. At least, that’s how I felt about this. Even after a couple minutes passed as I just held him like this, he was oddly silent. I leaned up and melded my lips with his, kissing him slowly and sweetly, and instead of responding roughly and ruining it, Dark surprisingly stayed still, letting me do what I wanted. He couldn’t reciprocate with the same passion, so I understood that not responding was the closest he could give me. Perhaps he was realizing what this moment meant as well.

I pulled away slowly and asked, “Ready?” as I held up the lube.

Dark looked at the lube, his eyes giving away nothing, but he gave me a slight nod, and there was no annoyance crinkled in his face. I didn’t know why he decided to shut up and stay calm, but I wasn’t about to complain or ask. Maybe he’d just tired himself out from all his pointless struggling, or maybe the reality of what was going to happen had hit him. Whatever his reason, the shift to a more serious mood made my heart thrash against my chest from how intimate this had suddenly become.

I swallowed, suddenly nervous, and backed away before positioning myself between Dark’s legs with the lube. I squeezed a sufficient amount onto my shaky fingers and watched Dark as I let my fingers brush lightly between his cheeks. He tensed immediately.

“When was the last time you did this,” I asked quietly, “you know… on the bottom?”

“Never,” he replied, staring at my fingers. “Never planned on it.”

I nodded, not sure whether to be surprised. I’d assume Dark fucked many things over the years, but then again, I doubted he’d ever bottomed if he had. When was the last time Adam was on the bottom? Never with me, certainly. I realized that this would be the first time I’d take Adam’s body, and that made me hesitate with guilt. I was going to take him without his permission. Was it wrong to do so? Then again, Dark did say that this body was just as much his as it was Adam’s, and in that moment that I’d heard his heartbeat, I believed it. If he was giving me the green light, then that should be good enough, right?

I took a deep breath and circled Dark’s entrance with my finger before pushing to the first knuckle. I paused to check on Dark, who had a slight look of discomfort but nothing more. I took that as permission to go on and proceeded to push my finger in all the way slowly, reminding myself that I shouldn’t be so surprised at how ridiculously tight he was. I didn’t know how he’d be able to take even two fingers. Dark gulped and bit his lip when I started pumping my finger in and out, curling it inside of him, loosening him as much as a single finger could.

“Are you alright?” I asked when my finger slid in and out with ease.

Dark gave me a look. “Seriously?” His voice was gruff. “I was made to take pain. This is nothing. Give it to me.” I wondered if pain turned him on. I mean, watching me in pain certainly did, so did it work backwards as well?

“Just making sure,” I muttered. “Sorry I annoyed you with my concern.”
“…Why would you show me concern when I’ve done everything but?” Dark asked.

I pondered that. Why did I care? “It’s just another part of love, I guess.”

“Again,” Dark rolled his eyes, “you don’t love me. You never will.”

I just smiled faintly, knowing it would be pointless to argue with him, but the dejected look on his face had to go. He needed to stop being so depressing and just feel. Not bothering to ask him, I pushed a second finger in slowly alongside the first. Dark tightened around me and he shifted.

“You need to relax…” I said gently, pausing.

“Like that’s possible,” he muttered under his breath.

I waited for him to ease up anyway before I pushed both fingers in all the way, slowly scissoring him from the inside, coaxing him to stretch out. Once I added a third finger that was when Dark made a quiet grunt and his chest started rising and falling heavier. At one particular motion inward and a certain spot hit, Dark’s breath caught and he rammed back to meet my fingers.

I smirked. There it was.

I purposefully pumped my fingers in and out faster, teasing that spot inside of him every time. Dark started panting lightly and fidgeting, rocking back to meet my fingers. Other than that, either he was a very quiet, passionate fuck, or he was purposefully trying not to give me that satisfaction of seeing him crumble. I took one look at Dark’s tied hard cock resting on his stomach, oozing pre-come onto his skin, knowing that he was actually thoroughly enjoying this despite never telling me, so much so that he wasn’t deliberately trying to insult me, and my dick suddenly couldn’t take it anymore.

“Are you ready?” I asked in a low voice, biting my lip as I fucked into him with three fingers, tickling that spot repeatedly.

Dark’s eyes fluttered open. When had they shut? He gave me a hungry look.

“Yes, yes,” he said impatiently.

“Want to ask nicely?” I teased.

To my surprise, Dark didn’t even pause for a beat to groan or complain before he breathlessly and sincerely said, “Please. Fuck me. Fill me. Want you… Need. Please.”

I fought back a moan. I never expected him to say that so openly. If this was all he could get with me, he must want every part of it badly. I pulled my fingers out completely and Dark shuddered quietly. Squeezing more lube into my palm, I took hold of my own hardening cock and worked it slowly, slicking it up as much as possible. I noticed Dark watching me with thirsty eyes and wet lips, and I blushed when I realized that I was just sitting here jacking off in front of him. It gave me a sense of power, knowing I could actually turn him into a puddle of needy goo. Therefore, I displayed myself, throwing my head back and moaning softly as I worked my own cock, thrusting into my tight, slick fist.

“Fuck,” I heard Dark groan quietly, his fingers curling in his restraints. I wondered if he wanted to be the one doing this to me.

I stopped before I got too close, and positioned myself on top of Dark, sliding my slickened hand up over his balls and cock once, pressing hard and making the skin glisten from the lube, and earning a hitched breath from him. I nudged and rubbed against his entrance before starting to push in, sinking
slowly inside of him. I groaned at the same time that Dark held his breath.

“So goddamn tight,” I breathed brokenly once I bottomed out against his cheeks. I took a minute to catch my breath and allow Dark to accommodate me inside him before I asked, “Too fast?”

Dark shook his head as he exhaled his breath sharply, eyes fluttering open before he angrily said, “Don’t you dare fucking stop.”

I nodded quickly before starting to move my hips slowly, pulling almost all the way out and rutting back in as deep as I could go. The sensation of being completely enveloped in warmth by something that melded tightly around me no matter how I moved was insanely pleasurable, especially since I hadn’t done something like this in a long while. I started to move faster, choosing a comfortable pace as I drove into Dark, who had thrown his head back against the sea of pillows, with his eyes squeezed shut, and was otherwise still quiet except for his slow panting and soft, almost inaudible groans. Was he really this quiet and considerate or was he holding back to seem more or less indifferent to keep me from getting total satisfaction out of this whole mess like I’d thought? I didn’t even care. It was obvious how much he was into this, probably more than he thought he could be with bottoming.

“God, you’re so pretty like this,” I purred, stroking his inner thighs. Dark only growled briefly with annoyance. He really didn’t like it when I complimented him.

Every now and then, I would purposefully angle in just the right way to hit him in that spot, just to tease him, just to get him to react, and he would. He would freeze and his breath would catch, and I would watch, bemused, as his forehead would wrinkle slightly with frustration when I wouldn’t drive into him like that again for a while. His tied cock was still drooling pre-come on his stomach and it looked like it could explode at any second. I knew he couldn’t keep up that apathetic mask for much longer, not with his cock revealing everything he was really feeling.

Eventually, Dark did crack. The frustration of how slow and controlled I was moving within him was getting to him. He held his fists so tightly that his knuckles had turned white. With his limited mobility, he moved his hips slightly to meet my thrusts halfway, so I slowed down even more, smirking at his irritation showing clearly even though his eyes were closed. I had him.

“Faster,” he bit out, squeezing his eyes further.

I paused midway and lifted an eyebrow. Dark groaned with annoyance at the lack of movement.

“What’s the magic word?” I asked in a singsong voice, glad he wasn’t seeing my highly amused expression.

“Do it or I’ll rip your fucking throat out,” Dark spat, jerking his bound arms around as if that were menacing right now.

I held back a cackle.

“It starts with a ‘P’” I said slowly, like I was talking to a child.

“Please,” Dark hissed through clenched teeth, eyes opening only to narrow into slits and glare daggers at me.

“Ah, there are your pretty eyes,” I mused. “I won’t hold back anymore if you do me one favour.”

“I fucking said it already!” Dark snapped.
“No.” I shook my head. “I mean I want you to keep your eyes open. I want you to watch; to experience.”

Dark huffed sharply, “Fine, whatever, now move.”

“Touchy, touchy,” I quipped, but complied.

Dark went through with his promise and stared right at me as I started to fuck into him again, picking up the pace this time. I pushed down on his thighs to steady myself as I pounded into him with sharp, deep thrusts. Dark’s eyebrows twitched and he grunted in surprise when I slammed into him. Man, was I ever glad to stop holding back. I panted hard as I rutted forward with a greater need, taking in every single one of Dark’s addictive twists of expression as his desire and approval started to brighten his eyes instead of looking dead and irritated.

I thrust into him in that perfect way again, hitting that spot with just the right amount of force, greater and more intensely than before, and Dark lost it. His breath hitched in his throat, his locked gaze broke off, and a loud moan escaped his lips, a deeply pleasurable moan that sent a sharp chill down my spine. That was what I wanted. That beautiful, core-shaking sound. For the first time, Dark looked completely lost in it, licking his lips repeatedly as his head lolled to the side in ecstasy and sweat glistened on his brow.

“Oh my god,” I panted in between thrusts, needing desperately for him to react like that again. “You’re so fucking hot.”

Dark just hummed lowly in response, not growled, and bit his plump lower lip. Those lips… I needed them. I lowered myself over Dark, not losing rhythm as I drove deeply into him. His solid, leaking cock was suddenly trapped tightly between our bodies and he hissed. I shakily grabbed a fistful of his hair and lifted his head up enough to crush his lips against mine as I pounded into him. I kissed him sloppily at a weird angle, shoving his mouth open and demanding my way in. Dark wasn’t one to object of course. He responded enthusiastically and violently with open-mouthed kisses.

Dark suddenly gasped loudly against my lips when I nailed that spot from this new angle, and I was taken aback by his reaction. The sound of his sharp breath of pleasure made my skin burst into flames all over again, and I stole away his gasp, kissing him so hard I was sure we’d both have bruises. Dark moaned into my mouth, sending vibrations deep into my gut I shuddered with need, so sure I could never stop fucking him even if I had my release. I broke away from his lips, still not losing rhythm as I snapped against his ass so hard that Dark would lurch beneath me to the headboard, rubbing his hard cock against my stomach. Dark couldn’t stop moaning because of that, deliberately arching up into me to get more of that friction. I didn’t mind this time, not when he was so desperate that he was actually letting go.

“Un—Untie me!” Dark choked out in between thrusts with his head thrown back as I hovered over him. I took the opportunity to bite down on and lick his exposed throat, right over his Adam’s apple, feeling the blood pulse beneath his hot skin. “I need… Touch. I—I need to touch you. P—Please.” His voice sounded broken and beyond reason, and it vibrated in his throat against my lips.

I pulled back and watched with a twinge of sadness as the muscles in his arms flexed when he struggled against his bed sheet restraints. I cupped his face tenderly and forced him to look up at me as I slowed my thrusts to deeper, more intimate ones.

I stroked his heated cheeks with my thumbs and quietly said, “You know I can’t. I’m sorry.”

Dark stared up at me with despair, but I knew he understood. I would love to have him hold me
close and envelop me in his strong embrace, but we both knew that just wasn’t possible. It wouldn’t end well no matter what, and it was frustrating for me, so I couldn’t imagine how difficult this was for him. With a sigh, I took his lips with my own with the intention of kissing him sweetly and slowly, and it started out that way, but Dark’s unresponsiveness to tenderness drove me crazy. I found my hips rutting faster and the kiss growing dirty and violent. I moaned into his mouth. I couldn’t get enough of it when he did this properly.

I could feel myself nearing the edge surely and steadily with every plunge into this sweet tightness. Dark’s cock remained trapped and rubbed roughly between us. I could feel him throbbing hotly and his leaking head wiped off on my skin. I thought it was time to drive him past the point of insanity. So… I nailed him right in the spot every time, angling myself and shoving in with as much force as I could manage. Again and again, I snapped my hips hard against his ass, hitting him right where he needed it the most. Dark let out a string of moans and profanities as he arched up, throwing his head from side to side with his eyes squeezed shut and his hands fisted to the point of breakage.

“P—Please,” Dark begged between gasps. “Let me… I need…”

I leaned down to kiss him once in approval before reaching down and untying the shoelace cock ring around his dick. Dark let out a long, destroyed sound of relief. Immediately after, I took his lips again and kissed him hard before I slammed against that spot inside him with as much force as possible. Dark seized up and broke away from my lips with a groan, throwing his head back as he came hard with his cock trapped between us. I kissed and licked down his chin and his arched throat as he just kept coming, shooting endlessly all over his stomach and mine, more than I’d ever seen Adam. I could feel his cock throbbing and pulsing under me as he released all his tension. He moaned brokenly, trembling and looking to be in pure ecstasy while his skin glistened from sweat and pleasure. *Goddamn.* The sight was so beautiful and *erotic.*

It only took moments for me to go over the edge as well. Watching Dark’s face contort from rapture and feeling his cock pulse beneath me as he came was all it took. I came fast inside him with a moan, riding out the orgasm for as long as I possibly could. My arms holding me up started to shake as I kept fucking into him, making sure I got every drop inside of him. Dark had closed his eyes and his breathing had slowed as he just relaxed there, blissed-out and spent, letting me finish. Panting, I slowed my thrusts until I eventually stopped when the stimulation became too much.

“Oh my god…” I said breathlessly. “Dark…”

The corner of Dark’s lips lifted up slightly into a lazy smirk. I took his bruised lips with my own and kissed him very slow, but this one was different, still rough, but filled with a fondness I wasn’t supposed to have for him. I ran a hand through his sweaty hair and sighed contently as I pulled away, sitting up while still inside of him and holding onto his inner thighs for support.

The image of Dark right now was almost enough to make me hard again. His stomach was covered with his own come, and his cock was red and exhausted. If I didn’t know any better, I’d think he was asleep from the way he was just completely spineless, loose and quiet. His hands were slack in his restraints and his fingers curled inward only slightly, naturally. He was even more beautiful like this, content and relaxed, not so damn tense for a palette of reasons. I briefly wondered if he even had enough energy right now to attack if I untied him. I didn’t know for sure.

Catching my breath, I pulled out of Dark, earning a small grunt and look of discomfort from him. I already missed being surrounded by his warmth. I didn’t know if this would ever happen again. I watched with wonder as my come slowly oozed out of him when his muscles contracted. God… Could he be any hotter? I did this to him. He was this sweaty and flushed because of me. I tamed the beast… for the time being. I swiped a finger in my come that was dripping out of him and teased his
asshole. Dark shuddered.

“You’re leaking,” I said fondly, sliding my slick finger easily into him.

Dark contracted tightly around me and he moaned ever so softly.

I teased him for a moment before I pulled my finger out. I cleaned us quickly before I started to undo the restraints on his feet. When I got to his wrists, Dark looked up at me with confusion as I struggled with the knots. “Are you sure about that?” he asked tiredly.

“No,” I huffed, freeing one his hands and then quickly backing away from it. “But I’m hoping you’re tired and will stay still.”

Dark hummed lazily in response and twisted his wrist around as I worked on the other one. My mouth went dry when Dark brushed his hand over his cock and gave it a squeeze. I cleared my throat and focused on freeing his other wrist, and when I did so, I moved off the bed.

Dark let out a groan of relief, sighing, “Freedom at last,” before cracking his knuckles and stretching out his legs.

I stood and watched him with sadness, debating if I should move any closer to him or not. I wished I could just climb into bed with him and cling to each other all night, but with Dark, that would never happen. Even if he wanted to, he physically couldn’t. I’d end up being broken probably.

Dark tucked his hands behind his head and closed his eyes, sighing deeply. I sighed internally. He looked so inviting. I couldn’t resist. I moved gingerly beside the bed, hesitating before I climbed on next to Dark. I lay down next him, snuggling up close his side and resting my head on his chest. Dark stiffened immediately under me. I braced for a hit, but it never came. I peered up at him nervously. He was staring back at me with shock in his eyes.

“What—” he started.

I cut him off, “—Just go with it, okay?” I circled his chest with my finger. “You don’t have to do anything but lay here.”

“You’re not afraid I’ll hurt you?”

I shrugged. “I don’t know. You’re not right now, so…”

“Oh trust me, the strong urge is there, it always is,” Dark warned, “…but I’m about to pass out.”

“Good!” I enthused, throwing my arm over his bare chest and my leg over his thigh, pulling myself closer to him. “As long as I’m not causing you too much discomfort…”

Dark snorted, but didn’t embrace me in any way. His hands remained behind his head and his body stayed extremely still and cautious. I understood that he couldn’t, but his silence felt as if he wanted to as much as I did, though of course he would never tell me that himself. I was surprised he was even allowing me to do this. I’d been expecting him to tell me to fuck off now that he’d had his fun. The fact that he hadn’t gone back to stone cold was very out of character. I kissed his side and buried my face in his skin, smiling to myself. I sighed deeply and allowed myself to relax.

“Hey,” I heard him say quietly after a silent minute. I hummed in response, letting him know I was still awake. “I—” He hesitated, but then sighed after and just muttered, “…Thanks.”

I didn’t ask him what he’d been about to say. Instead, a smile spread over my face in appreciation to
his sentiment, and I felt myself grow comfortable enough to fade away.

Chapter End Notes

Comment/Kudos!
Well. I haven't updated in months. Trust me, I hadn't forgotten. Not for a day. I wrote each day, but I could never get the next few chapters right. I experienced a fat writer's block on top of moving, changing schools, moving back, summer, Queen + Adam...

I finally saw Adam Lambert for the first time, and it was the best day of my life. My first ever concert was Queen and Adam. What the hell can top that? Nothing. A couple months prior, I talked to Adam and the band on the phone. My year has been great so far.

It's time to get back to work.

And now I've started school again, which means I'll actually be updating regularly once again! I SO apologize for taking so long. I'll finish Chokehold and By The Rules, don't worry about it.

And with that, here's the newest chapter, and I promise the next one won't take months. It's not long as long as all the others.

***My block/hiatus is over. So I'll release this chapter and the next one, but then I'll get some By The Rules chapters up as well. Alternating regularly between the two seems fair.

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Adam:

A dull and vaguely familiar throb of discomfort in my lower body slowly returned my consciousness. I opened my tired eyes and immediately cringed at the single ray of piercing sunlight somehow finding its way directly to my face and attempting to blind me. With a slight groan, I shifted away from its sharp light, and in doing so, suddenly noticed that my body was sticking to the bed sheets from drying sweat. I turned my head and felt a small sense of comfort and warmth when I saw Sauli peacefully sleeping next to me, also gloriously naked, but with a hint of a smile on his pretty face.

We’d had sex, which was apparent now that I was becoming aware of my surroundings. The smells, the sights, and the aches were unmistakable, but the trouble was… I didn’t remember any of it. Hadn’t I been making sure to avoid being intimate with Sauli for a while just in case something awful happened? Had we gotten hopelessly drunk? Well, no, we couldn’t have because I wasn’t suffering from a hangover now. Nevertheless, the more I thought, the more I realized I didn’t even remember most of yesterday… yet we’d had sex, which could only mean…

My jaw set hard, grinding my teeth together. I sprang upright too fast, causing a brief wave of dizziness. I crossed my arms and shook my head in disbelief. Sauli couldn’t have—he wouldn’t have… would he? All that time he’d spent reassuring me, it couldn’t have been a big lie. I had to remind myself that he wasn’t like that. I needed to keep calm and not jump to any conclusions. I had to believe that Sauli wouldn’t betray me like that. Anything but that… Yet, the evidence was right here in this bed and everything was connecting faster than I could keep up with it. Even considering
the possibility was causing my eyes to burn and my throat to feel slightly constricted.

Maybe I was reading everything wrong. Maybe it had all been by force. Sauli wouldn’t willingly want to destroy me by doing something like this, but then again, if he’d been forced into it, he would not be sleeping soundly next to me, still alive. That disgusting creature that had made its nest in my mind would never allow it. For an unreasonable amount of time, I stared at nothing, overthinking and fighting the urge to panic, until Sauli finally started to stir beside me and wake up. He shifted a few times before yawning and I could feel his eyes on me as soon as they were open. I felt him tense immediately, which meant he knew there was something wrong, which meant that I was right.

I took in a deep, uneasy breath. “Tell me I’m wrong,” I said almost inaudibly, still staring straight ahead, silently wishing, and practically begging for the universe to let me be embarrassingly wrong for once.

Sauli was quiet for a moment. I couldn’t bear to look at him. “Um…” he mumbled nervously.

His hesitation was all the confirmation I needed. It all snapped into place and the realization of what he had done hit full force and any hopeful denial I had shattered. The sudden intense weight of betrayal was already suffocating. My eyes stung with distress.

“You had sex with him,” I answered for him, voice monotone. The words were hard to force out without screaming. I could hardly believe them myself.

I heard him shift and sit up, but Sauli didn’t verbally respond. His silence was far worse than any horrid thing he could say to me. He wasn’t even attempting to deny my accusation. Every second of unbearably tense silence that ticked by without him saying any word of comfort or apology or anything sculpted delicate fractures in my already unstable heart.

“Why?” I squeaked, baffled. I finally looked over at him with slightly blurred vision as the furious tears continually welled up in my eyes. Sauli shrank back at the blatant hurt in my expression. He looked away.

“He…” Sauli finally muttered. “He was broken. You should have seen him.”

That angered me further. Since when did Sauli start to care about the wellbeing of that life-sucking leech?

“So you took pity on him and let him fuck you?” I asked with disgusted disbelief.

“Not exactly…”

My eyebrows knit together as I tried to decode what he meant with that unnerving tone. The confusion only lasted a moment until I shifted slightly and the dull, yet oddly familiar ache in my lower half returned. It suddenly clicked and I remembered what this uncomfortable feeling really was.

My eyes shot wide open. “You didn’t,” I gasped in horror. Sauli visibly cringed, hardly glancing at me. “Y—You…” I didn’t know how to finish that. I was at a loss for words.

“I’m… I… Sorry,” was his pathetic, defeated reply.

The words suddenly found their way and jumped out my throat. “You fucked him!” I vaguely worried that my jaw would freeze from gaping open like this. I couldn’t close it. I was too appalled. Then I remembered something that overpowered the shock. “You took my body… without my permission. That’s practically rape.” My voice jumped an octave at that last word. “That was
supposed to be a special moment when we finally did that together and you just… You just took it?”

The fact that I had no memory of the event and what it was exactly that he’d done to me was frightening. Prior to this, Sauli had never topped me.

“No, Adam!” Sauli gasped like that wasn’t exactly the case. “Dark gave me permission. He gave me his word that it was okay.”

“What the fuck is his word good for?” I spat back at him furiously. “It’s my body. He can’t give permission for shit and you know that, but you still went with it because you were desperate.” I shook my head, unable to wrap it around what was going on. I never thought I’d be having this conversation with Sauli. I never even thought about thinking about it. “I can’t believe you,” I muttered more softly, gazing at my hands in my lap, and finding it difficult to speak with the agonizing tightness in my throat. Every word was straining. “How could you? I thought you were better than this, but…” I trailed off, swallowing the lump as another realization set in. “You gave in easily because he offered you something I couldn’t anymore because I wanted to protect you. You cheated on me for something as shallow as that… on top of molesting my body.”

My hands sitting on top of my lap blurred completely out of focus before the tears finally overflowed and a couple splattered on my wrists. Every word that had left my mouth would have seemed impossible even a day ago. Who the fuck was this person in my bed that I was saying all this to? This wasn’t my beautiful, incredible Sauli. There was no way this was real. This had to be some sick nightmare. This couldn’t possibly happen, not to us, not after everything over the last decade. It was completely unthinkable.

“Come on!” Sauli sighed exasperatedly, throwing the covers off. “Don’t be so melodramatic. It’s just as much his body as it is yours, so yes, he can give me permission, and how could I be cheating if you’re the same person? Adam, I would never. You know that. You’re everything to me.”

Outrage temporarily replaced my dread. My head whipped over to glare at Sauli and I hissed, “Don’t ever fucking say that. Just because he’s forced his place in my body doesn’t mean this thing is a part of me. And if I’m everything to you, you have a pretty revolting way of showing it.” I was hardly trying to keep the mocking tone out of my voice.

Sauli groaned. “You don’t get it, and that’s the fucking problem. He is you!”

I shook my head in disgust. “Glad you think so highly of me. I would never hit you. I would never threaten you. I would never try to molest you.”

“But he hasn’t lately,” he muttered lamely.

“Oh, that totally makes it okay now.” I rolled my eyes. “So what have you two been doing?” I remembered, “You never actually answered that. Have you just been sneaking around with him like this? Is that why you’ve been avoiding me?”

“It isn’t like that, Adam. Try to listen,” Sauli pleaded. “Last night was the first time we did that and probably the last. He told me everything, which you really need to hear, and I was grateful. I did what you wanted me to do.”

“I wanted you to get information out of him!” I sputtered wide-eyed, appalled by his ridiculousness. “Not have pity sex with him! What the fuck is wrong with you!”

That shut him up for a minute, his face filling with shame as he lowered his gaze. A hard, determined look quickly replaced the previous and he snapped his eyes back up to my bewildered ones. “I didn’t
do it out of pity, Adam.” He insisted. “I did it because after what he told me, I think I love him…”

The ground could have split open and I wouldn’t have even noticed. The sky could have fallen and it wouldn’t have fazed me. The only thing that registered in my brain was the audible sound of my heart shattering like a cracked crystal thrown at a wall and then stepped on as if it was nothing of value. I felt the color drain out of my face as my muscles contorted into a look of cold devastation. Despair stung in my throat and eyes, like slamming white-hot branding irons on both, but using the last bit of self-worth I had, I bit back the tears, swallowed the unbearable ache in my throat, and quickly climbed out of bed, hastily pulling on the first pair of pants I could find. I couldn’t be near him anymore. I needed to leave. I had to get out. Now. Right now. Before I lost it completely.

“Adam, please listen to me,” Sauli pleaded, his voice starting to sound desperate. “I love him because he’s you! Why can’t you just hold on for one minute and let me explain this?”

Not that shit again. I looked over at Sauli, unable to contain how betrayed I felt while barely managing to coherently say, “He’s not me. He’s ruining my life. I’ve dealt with this monster for years and I can’t tell anyone because a nuthouse would be my permanent home. I even had to convince myself I’m not crazy. Then you, you came along again, and for once, there was hope that maybe, maybe I wouldn’t be alone in this and could get through it. My love had returned and he was accepting, willing, and wanting to get rid of this thing to save my sanity. I had felt like I’d won the lottery. Then you go and have sex with him and tell me you love him. How do you think I feel now? I feel like it’s all over for me. I have no one on my side and I’m terrifyingly alone. You tell me what the fuck I’m supposed to do now. He’s taken my body and he’s taken you. I despise him like I didn’t think possible. He’s everything I could possibly hate in a person. He’s everything I’m not, so don’t you dare try to tell me that we’re the same person!”

“That’s just it!” Sauli blurted, waving his hand around sporadically. “That’s just what he told me! He is everything you aren’t, but you did it to him—"

“—I did it to him!” I repeated, almost wanting to laugh from the absurdity. “I thought you were smarter than this, Sauli. How could I possibly do that without knowing it? I’ve been trying to get rid of him for years! Of course, he told you such crap to get you right in the bed where he wanted you and now you think you love him. God, what other sick shit has he been implanting in your head? Don’t you get it? He lied. He’s a manipulative psycho. He’s toying with you and he doesn’t actually care about you. He’s going to kill you to ruin me! That’s what he told me himself and I’m sure he’s said the same thing to you. Do you not remember this very important detail? Do you think he suddenly forgot? You’re falling for his trap of false security! You’re playing right into his game and damming me down with you!”

“No,” Sauli insisted, looking offended as he actually defended that fucker. “He’s depressed. He’s worried. I know he’s not lying to me. Not this time. You had to be there to understand.”

“I was there!” I practically yelled, throwing my hands up in exasperation. “That body you were uninvitingly fucking? Yeah, that was mine, you bastard.” I turned away with disgust and started heading to the door. “And keep defending that lowlife; keep showing me whom you really love.”

I could hear Sauli shuffling to the edge of the bed. “Wait!” he begged. I paused mid-step. “I’m not defending him because I love him more; I’m doing it because he’s right. Look, I love you, and I love him, but—"

I whirled around, loudly snapping, “—I don’t want you to love me!” Sauli’s mouth slammed shut and he looked stunned. “Not if it means him too! I want you to get the fuck out of here if you’re not going to help!”
Sauli quickly recovered from his shocked expression and said, “I’m trying to! Would you just stop yelling and listen to me? Let me explain. You need to hear what I found out! It could help!”

“The only way you could help is by getting rid of him, there’s no other way, but you don’t want to do that because you love the bastard.” My voice was dripping with venom.

“You’re right, I don’t,” he admitted immediately, and the feelings of dread and betrayal were starting to make my knees shake and my head pound. “But, I think we can help the both of you. No one has to be rid of.” He patted the mattress. “Just come here and sit down. We can discuss it like adults.”

He wanted to save the bloodsucking leech that was the vain of my existence. I was losing the love of my life to the one thing that’s made it a living hell, and Sauli wanted to discuss it? I’d rather take a bullet to the head than have this worst nightmare become the reality that it was. At this point, I didn’t even know how to feel anymore. All I knew was that my blood was boiling, and my knees were wobbling until I could barely stand, and my head was screaming profanities of hatred and anguish. Even so, they were all numb and distant sensations.

“Fuck you,” I croaked, my voice cracking, as I turned on my heel to leave.

“Adam, please.”

“I don’t fucking want to hear it!” I yelled and stormed out of the room, slamming the door.

“Adam!” I heard a muffled Sauli call after me.

“Fuck off!” I screamed at the door.

I ran out into the backyard, enraged.

“Asshole, I know you’re there!” I yelled out in the air, not caring in the slightest if anyone heard me. I waited a moment and felt my irritation crossing the line when there was no response. “DARK!”

“What?” I finally heard his poisonous voice in my head. If I closed my eyes, I could visualize him materializing as he gained some consciousness and stood in front of me inside my mind in his little room; the real him, with the same haunting, golden eyes.

“Why in the fuck are you so hell-bent on ruining my fucking life?” I yelled.

His voice remained mockingly calm as he replied, “I have no idea what you’re screaming about. Do tone it down. It’s almost as bad as that banshee shrieking you call singing is. Almost.”

“You fucked my boyfriend!” I spat at him, ignoring the insult. “Or don’t tell me you’ve forgotten about that already, you piece of shit.”

“Oh, that.” I saw him shrug nonchalantly as he casually lowered himself onto his couch and lounged there as if everything was just dandy. “I didn’t do anything to that pretty blond. That was all him.”

“Uh, huh, yeah, you snivelled your way into his head by telling him a tub of crap and tricking him into it,” I insisted. “He might have not been able to resist because you outwardly look like me and then played some sick sympathy game, but you listen to me. He’s not some disposable toy! I know fucking him meant nothing to you, but you’ve affected him and now he’s this complete idiot!”

I panted hard, and Dark’s eyebrow arched. I waited impatiently for a response that took too many seconds too long. He suddenly let out a snort.
“Let’s get one thing straight. You’re the real idiot,” Dark shook his head like a chastising parent. “Furthermore, I didn’t say anything like that to him. I didn’t do anything to him. And I quite literally didn’t fuck him. The blond even tied me up to make sure I couldn’t.”

“He what?”

“He came into the bedroom, started feeling me up like a needy little slut, and believe it or not, I told him to leave. He wouldn’t take no for an answer. He just had to have me.” He smirked wretchedly, looking pleased with himself. “He even tied my arms and legs to the bed to make sure I couldn’t move.”

“You’re lying,” I seethed. “He would never do that.”

“He’s done everything else you were sure he wouldn’t, right? Believe what you want.” He rolled his eyes before his smirk widened devilishly, knowing exactly what to say to get under my skin. “I still had a great time. To tell you the truth, he felt incredible inside of me. You’ve been missing out.”

I was at a loss for words. I felt completely alone in this whole mess, cornered by the devil and someone I’d trusted. Sauli had told me he’d only wanted to have sex with Dark after Dark explained whatever to him, and Dark was saying that Sauli had gone in there wanting his body right off the bat, not even expecting answers. Both versions were just two sides of the same nightmarish coin, but somehow, I reluctantly knew which one was the truth, and it was painful to tolerate, let alone accept.

I guessed I should have seen this coming, but not like this. I knew Dark had been lusting after Sauli and promising that he’d use him to get to me, and it’d worked because now I wanted to crawl into a hole and die, but two things didn’t add up. One, Sauli had fucked Dark, not the other way around, which was all on its own a thousand times worse. Two, Dark had let him live.

“Why…?” I asked the air.

Dark immediately replied, “Why what?” while checking out his nails, ever so relaxed on his couch.

“Why didn’t you take him like you’ve wanted all along? You said he came to you willingly. That was your chance to do him and then get rid of him... but you didn’t.” I muttered, deep in thought. “I know that you want to kill him eventually, or rather, wanted. It’s almost as if you did it because you really wanted to, not because you want to ruin me, which I’m sure you still want to do, and you would do anything, even let him take you to have it. What changed? Don’t tell me you’ve suddenly gained compassion.” I snorted.

Dark didn’t reply for a moment. “Ask him.”

Right on cue, a timid voice called out behind me and it made my stomach churn.

“Adam?”

My fists clenched and I reluctantly turned, already having to fight the stinging in my eyes at the sight of my beautiful lover and traitor. As soon as our eyes met, he closed the distance, reaching out for me. I took a half step back and held up my trembling hand, shaking my head at him.

“Don’t,” I warned, staring at him cautiously. “Don’t touch me.” Sauli slowly dropped his arms, looking regretful, but he nodded. We stood in awkward silence for a moment before I broke it. “Dark told me you went to him looking directly for sex, but he wouldn’t have you, and so you took him instead.”

I sighed when Sauli nodded shamefully. “I guess that’s sort of true.” When he saw the look in my
eyes, he immediately went on, “At first, I mean, that’s what I wanted, just mindless… you know, but then after talking to him, hearing his side, my intentions changed. I just really wanted him to have one moment to himself to feel a twinge of happiness, whatever it took.”

It took every bit of willpower to keep myself from getting angrier. “So… why didn’t he take you like you both wanted to?”

Dark was listening quietly as Sauli gathered his thoughts while shifting his weight around nervously.

Sauli didn’t look at me as he quietly mumbled, “He didn’t want to hurt me.”

I was confused. “He didn’t… What? No, that’s all he wants to do.”

Sauli shook his head insistently. “No, Adam. I’m dead serious. Do you really think I would have done this if I had doubt? I went to him, but… he kept rejecting me. He confused me by it as well. And then throughout the whole… thing, he was so careful, considerate, so much so that he let me have him instead to ensure he couldn’t be a danger to me.”

I gave him a disbelieving look. Dark cocked a knowing eyebrow at me in my mind. I didn’t like where this was going.

“And why on Earth would he act like that? Why would he let you live when he was so close to his goal?”

“I think he loves me?” Sauli winced back as if expectantly waiting for me to go ballistic.

My face paled. It was a mutual thing. Although it was almost a relief to hear that Dark apparently wasn’t willingly going to kill Sauli, this cost for it… having Sauli love Dark and have the feeling returned… it was almost worse. Because this meant that Dark wouldn’t want to die and Sauli wasn’t going to let it happen. I was going to be stuck like this, watching the only man I love defend the only thing slowly driving me insane. Stranded and abandoned, that’s what I was. I tried to wrap my head around it all, but nothing was making sense. It seemed more likely that Sauli was just being foolish, lulled into a false sense of love by Dark, because Dark surely couldn’t have just abandoned his plan.

“No…” I denied, looking at Sauli’s nervous face while staring hard at Dark in my mind for any hint of deception, anything to let me know that it was a lie, that this was a trick to lower Sauli’s guard and then take him out when he was most vulnerable.

However, there was nothing. Dark still lounged on his couch with one foot now kicked up on the armrest and the other planted on the floor, listening to our conversation quietly with a hint of an almost shy smile playing at his lips. It was barely there, but it was enough. Moreover, his strikingly gold eyes seemed softer somehow for an instant. I watched him in horror. His expression was so out of character, it was scaring me. It wasn’t something you could fake. He wasn’t lying.

“That’s not possible,” I breathed. “You can’t love.”

Dark’s eyes hardened back to normal and narrowed into slits as he glared at me and sighed sharply. “You’re right, I shouldn’t be able to. I can’t for anyone else. It’s not something I have the ability to create. However, this feeling specifically for him hardwired into me since the birth of my existence, but I’m only realizing it now because the more I’m near him, the more I can give a name to these foreign twinges of emotion that regular humans have no trouble identifying. It’s something I gained from you. Something you and I share. However, unlike you, it’s something I can’t actually show him physically or emotionally. I don’t have a choice but to love him, just like you, but you know what? I wouldn’t change the feeling even if I could.”
I fought back an irritated growl. “I don’t give a rat’s ass if you can’t control your pathetic, primitive feelings! You can’t do this to us! You can’t have him!” I seethed loudly. “He’s mine. Rather, he was. I’ve lost him because of you!”

“No, you haven’t, Adam,” Sauli said tentatively, placing his hand lightly on my arm for a moment before I irritatingly shook it off.

“He’s ours.” Dark’s eyes glinted with possessive fury. At this point, I was glad Sauli couldn’t hear anything that he was saying in my mind.

“You can only hurt him! You beat the living shit out of him and expect him to love you back? How long do you suppose that’ll last before you slaughter him?” I hacked out a humourless laugh. Dark’s glare could’ve melted buildings. “You’re sick.”

“He won’t do it anymore…” I heard a quiet voice babble. “He tried so hard…”

“And you!” I turned to Sauli in my rage. He cringed back, looking at me with wide eyes as if I was the insane one here. “What the living hell is wrong with you? He’s hurt the both of us and I can’t just sit around and accept that! He needs to be gone. If we’re to be together, he can’t be part of the equation or else one of us will end up dead. I know you’re better than this. Don’t be fooled by whatever sob story he told you. I need to get rid of him.”

“Adam, there is no getting rid of him!” Sauli finally snapped back, throwing his arms around exasperatedly. I just stared. “You can’t get rid of something that’s a part of you!”

“How many times do I have to tell you he’s not—?”

“—Okay, I have had enough of this!” Dark suddenly snarled in my head. “I fucking can’t stand you. If you would shut your fucking mouth for one entire minute and listen to what he has to say, you’d get it. I’m done trying to wait for your ignorant ass to figure it out,” he hissed. “You can’t interrupt me like you do with him because I’m in your head, and I’m only going to say this once: I’m not ruining your life. I am the result of everything that did ruin your life. You took every shitty thing about you and pushed them all way, rejected them, and so your mind slowly split, creating me to deal with every horrific thing that you were too laughably pathetic to handle. Unfortunately, for the both of us, I am you. You are me. That’s it. That’s what the blond has been trying to tell you.”

“What…” I hardly squeaked, stopping dead in my outraged tracks, shocked. The anger fizzled away for a moment of clarity.

“I’m nearly an entire half of you that you don’t even realize you’re missing. Get this through your head. We were one, and now we’re not. Simple. Yin and Yang. Black and White.” He paused, arching an eyebrow. “Dark and Light…”

Chapter End Notes

And as always, comment/review!

***Also, if you’re ever confused as to where I’ve disappeared, don’t leave a question here, because I can’t reply to comments even though I read and love them all.

Contact me on Twitter if you haven’t already. @TrespassMyAss :P Happy to answer
questions or discuss the fic/characters
Touch

Chapter Notes

NOTE: ***Probably important for you to reread Sauli’s dream in chapter 13

10,254 words for you guys to enjoy, so enjoy!

About 10,000 more words left to go before we surpass Nirvana’s word count :P

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sauli:

Half an hour later, I was still attempting console a distraught Adam on the couch, skillfully avoiding flicks of his hand as he swatted me and demanded I leave him alone between sobs and verbal assaults. Regardless, I couldn’t comply with him and leave, not when he was this unstable. Whatever Dark had said to him took its toll. In one morning, Adam had to process and understand so much, all because of my carelessness, and now the guilt was eating away at me.

Of course it was my fault, and I hated myself for what I’d done even if technically, I didn’t do anything wrong. But morally? Psychologically? I’d hurt Adam deeply. In my mind, I was the sorriest excuse of a person there was. The more I thought about what I’d done from Adam’s point of view, the more I realized that it was inexcusable and unforgivable, and I was just lucky that he was still speaking to me. If I were him in this situation, I would have beaten my ass and then left forever, but I knew he couldn’t physically harm me even if he wanted to. I’d let my shallow needs overcome my sensibility and now I had to deal with it. I hadn’t even thought about the fact that Adam would wake up eventually and immediately know what had happened.

Even so, did I really regret what I’d done? No. At least now, Adam finally knew what Dark was, or at least I assumed that’s what he’d told him. Unfortunately, it had to come to this mess in order for him to realize. “Realize” wasn’t even the correct term, more like “be in blatant denial.” He was just sitting here crying and insisting that it wasn’t true—whatever “it” was exactly.

Dark was another issue. I was fully aware of his effect on Adam, presently and long term. I could see it now as Adam bawled into his hands as if there was nothing left in the world for him. It was painful to see him like this. Every sob would claw and gnaw at my chest, and my first instinct was to try to calm him down, caress and embrace him, comforting him as only I could, but Adam wasn’t giving me the chance. He’d flinch and snap every time I touched him, but I deserved it. I couldn’t hold any of it against him.

So what was I doing, trying to help Dark? Besides being dangerous and manipulative, his motives were usually unclear. I knew firsthand that he could be a heartless monster, and that the rational decision would be to figure out a way to remove him from torturing Adam further, but still it felt wrong to even think about it. There was just something about all of this, recalling the elastic band between them Dark had told me about. What would happen if one were to force the band to break and throw out a half? Did that even matter? Dark wasn’t born with his own flesh and blood; he was born as a part of Adam, a large piece to be fair, so did that disqualify him as a person?
“Just kill me,” Adam cried for the umpteenth time. “I deserve it. I’m a freak. I can’t function!” He paused to sob. “What if the media finds out? Oh god…”

I attempted to pat his bare back in comfort, only to have him shrug my hand off. I sighed sadly, now coming to a decision as to what I needed to do. I gently pried Adam’s warm but tense hands away from his moist face and held either side of his head, turning him to face me. His beautiful face had been marred with redness and tearstains, and his gleaming blue eyes were hard to look at when they were staring at me with a storm of betrayal, anger, confusion, and anguish, but there was still a tiny light of softness, like love, which I didn’t deserve.

“Dark?” I called into Adam’s ruined eyes. “Please come out, I need to talk to you.”

Adam’s face fell and he gave me a sad, questioning look. I tried to ignore the blatant hurt I’d caused in him. I knew it was terrible of me to ignore Adam and plead for Dark instead, but he’d thank me for what I was about to do. I had to say this. It probably wouldn’t end well, but I didn’t care about what Dark would do to me after I told him. I just needed him to know; I needed things to be clear, even if it meant being a puddle of bruises later.

Before Adam could verbally respond, his face scrunched up slightly into one of mild discomfort before his eyes reopened and blinked several times. I knew they had switched when his hands were suddenly gripping my biceps like iron cages, digging his nails into my thin shirt without being able to help it. My face twisted in pain before I dropped my hands off his face and somehow successfully shoved him off by the shoulders, scooting to the other end of the couch as soon as he let go.

Surprisingly, Dark didn’t leap after me. I stared at him with my heart pounding up in my throat. I was suddenly very afraid he’d kill me after this.

“And what do you want, Blondie?” Dark hissed, sounding overly irritated with Adam’s display of emotion and making a disgusted noise as he roughly wiped off the tears from his face.

“Well…” I mumbled, fumbling with my fingers. “I have something to say to you.” Dark’s eyebrow twitched in mocking curiosity. I stuttered and backtracked, “B—But first I have a couple questions.”

“Oh, this is going to be gold.” Dark scoffed a sharp laugh, throwing his arm over the back of the couch and crossing his legs at the ankles between us. “You’re not going to go on a wimpy cry fest too, are you?”

“No,” I said sharply, half speaking to Dark and half demanding the stinging in my eyes to go away. “I want to know exactly what the hell you told Adam.”

Dark rolled his eyes. “Just the truth, what exactly I am, and all that fun stuff. That’s all.” He waved his hand dismissively.

I glared at him. “Then why didn’t you just tell him that years ago, before any of us got into this mess?”

Dark growled. “I tried,” he stated flatly, not quite looking at me. “Does it look like he listened? It took you betraying him,” I frowned, “to shock him enough to shut the hell up long enough to pay attention and absorb. It’s as if whatever I’d explained went in through one ear and out the other. I’d given up. I’d let him try to figure it out on his own. I didn’t want to waste my breath, not when the consequences didn’t really matter to me. If we end up dead because of this, I couldn’t care less back then. But now, I can’t keep quiet.” He glanced at me, “I don’t want to die.”

“Why wouldn’t he just listen?” I sighed. “He’s desperate to fix this.”
“Because he’s a jackass,” Dark said immediately. I gave him a long tired look. “Alright, fine. It’s probably because of the slow split. My side tends to be more aware and critical of everything. His has a tendency to be ignorant and airheaded. Happy?”

“Not really,” I said sarcastically, “and you can’t really blame him then, just like you say I can’t blame you for the things you do. He has no control over it.”

Dark was unnervingly silent as he stayed still as a statue, the only movement being slight flickers of his eyes as he glared at me through slits. I could feel the tension in the air around him. I forgot how irritated he’d become when I back talked. He was so easy to piss off. I needed to tread lightly in order to not set him off, but what I really needed to say was just going to make him go ballistic.

“Next question,” Dark warned, his tone closing all discussion on the previous.

“It’s not really a question. Just something I want you to hear,” I murmured, taking a deep breath before continuing quickly, wanting to get it over with. “Look, when I think of my dreams for the future, I only see Adam in them, not you and—”

Before I could even register it, Dark had me pinned down on the couch, locking my wrists by my sides. He glued his hips to mine as he hovered over me and stared down at me menacingly. My heart started to race for a multitude of reasons and fear paled my face. Goddamn he could move fast, showing me exactly how helpless I was with him. I still didn’t trust him, and for good reason. I shrunk back into the couch, crushed by his overwhelming intimidation. Dark’s aura was still slightly terrifying and undeniably seductive.

“No promises,” Dark rolled his eyes, tone still even, whereas I felt like I’d just squeak if I opened my mouth. He made no move to separate the pressure against my hips with his, and I could feel the dull burn increasing steadily. He stared intently at me, eyes gleaming lustfully. “Know something, Blondie, before you continue. I can manipulate your mind and your body with just my very presence,” he purred lowly. Yeah, I realized that on my own. “However, there are no tricks or magical abilities to do so; just my knowledge of the psycho and physical inner desires.”

“What are you talking about?” I gulped up at him, barely able to hear myself over my heart pounding in my chest. Every inch of my skin was ablaze inexplicably. I’d been more or less fine a moment ago. Wasn’t I supposed to be in control right now saying what I needed to? Wait, what exactly did I want to say? My mind had already turned hazy and heavy, yet Dark had hardly done anything.

“See, Blondie,” he pressed his bare chest closer, his face only hovering a couple inches above mine, and my breathing quickened as I struggled to shrug him away, “I even know when you’re turned on. It’s in your eyes. It’s in your breaths. It’s in your scent. And it’s in the way you—”

He growled that last part predatorily, tightening his grip on my wrists as he ground his hips into mine. I whimpered from the heated friction.

“Um...” I squeaked, but wasn’t allowed a chance to continue.

“The lesson here is... the mind is my haven, my specialty. I was born in and shaped by it, so I have
learned every corner, every secret, and every facet of it. That’s all just a simple street to body language, and I can manipulate all of it just by pulling the right strings.” He smirked devilishly although his cocky tone became more serious as he went on, “This includes the subconscious. So, trust that I know what I’m talking about when I say that sure, your dreams may actually become reality… but remember that nightmares are dreams as well,” he finally finished. “Now… what were you saying?”

I gave him a wide-eyed look before blinking in a daze, confused for a moment by the sudden change of topic until the fog cleared slightly and I realized my original purpose. Son of a bitch almost made me forget. He turned my serious, platonic mood into… this—a fidgety, heated, drunken mess within seconds. Was he trying to prove his point or tease me? How could I think straight with the way he was driving me crazy almost effortlessly? There was no way in hell I was going to be able to say what I needed to with him suggestively pinning me down like this. It would defeat the entire purpose of my statement and keep me in a position that made it excessively easy for him to kill me.

“Um, do you mind?” I asked timidly, clearing my throat when my voice sounded thick before gesturing at his hips that were subtly grinding into mine, so lightly, teasingly, but it was driving me insane. We were both wearing sweatpants, but he wasn’t wearing a shirt or underwear, and wasn’t exactly hiding just how hard he was. I glanced down toward the minimal space between us. “How can you even think of that at a time like this?”

Dark didn’t move an inch. He felt no shame. “It’s force of habit, Blondie. You’ll take it and talk, or I’ll take you…”

His tone was seductively low and final as he lowered himself completely for a moment. I huffed as he released his entire body weight on top of me. I shivered when he buried his warm face in my neck and inhaled deeply, just as Adam still did after all these years. I almost smiled to myself at the memory and the similar feeling. Dark shuddered as his lips brushed over the dip in my neck. Then suddenly, a sharp pain jolted through my sensitive skin and I yelped, feeling his teeth latch firmly on. Okay, not like Adam.

I fidgeted beneath him uselessly, struggling to break his hold on my neck as the pain intensified slowly but managed to send knots of pleasure down into my core. “Okay, okay, I’ll talk, you listen!” I gave in. Well, it looked like I wasn’t going to make it through the next few minutes.

To my surprise, Dark’s teeth vanished immediately, replaced by his tongue as he slowly licked over the spot he’d bit. Relief burned through my neck and I trembled from the warmth and wetness of his tongue. He groaned and returned to hovering at arm’s length over me.

“Took bad, I was hoping to use you as a… stress reliever,” he pouted, eyes glinting down at me. “That Adam of yours is ever so mind-blowingly irritating.”

“Are you done?” I asked impatiently, forcing myself to challenge his intense stare above me, ignoring how badly I was aching for him.

Dark’s eyes narrowed, eventually replying, “For now.”

“Okay,” I mumbled, lowering my gaze as I rapidly tried to pull my thoughts together. “I know you’re going to hate just the mention of this, but…” my voice was almost too quiet, “you know, Adam and I, years ago, made a promise to each other about the future we wanted for ourselves. We wanted to face the world together, and be together for the rest of our lives.”

Dark’s grip on my wrists tightened. Great, I was going to die before I could even finish because he
seemed to know where I was going with this. I wasn’t going to dare look at his expression as he growled out, “Shut up.”

“No, I need to say this,” I stammered, continuing despite the angry heat rolling off him, “We-We couldn’t have that life because of… many reasons, ending up with us separated with no hope for a decade. Yet now, through some strange twist of fate and timing, we’ve reunited, and I thought that maybe we could finally make this work and have that life.” I sighed, knowing I was about to cross the line. “And right now… I just don’t see that happening… because of you—”

“—Stop,” he warned with a rumble in his chest, squeezing my arms. His voice was dangerously low. I could feel his stare piercing into my face, but I had to ignore him.

“Nothing from our past followed us to get in the way this time. You’re the only thing standing between us. You’re single-handedly sabotaging everything we are on purpose. I find that disgusting considering how hard Adam and I had worked to be together, and I can’t deal with you anymore. I regret sleeping with you and it won’t happen again. It cost me, and I might not be able to mend my relationship with Adam. I’ll deal with that, but I won’t let you cause any more problems. We have dreams that I’m determined to make come true, and I’m not letting you get in the way. I can’t let you do this to us. I belong with him.”

“Enough!” he hissed, crushing my arms with his grip as he shoved me further into the couch. I winced immediately from fear, heart pounding. All instinct begged me to shut the hell up.

“You may be a part of him, but you’re not the man I’ve loved for ten years. I’m sorry,” I forced myself to finish.

My eyes squeezed shut and I turned my head away, bracing for the hit to my face that was surely to come. I could feel his fury through his grip on my wrists, tight enough to cut off the circulation, and nearly tight enough to snap them in half. I waited for Dark to lash out, rape me, or kill me, or all of the above. I waited for it, thinking every stressed breath that passed my lips was my last… but nothing happened.

Confused, I opened my eyes and willed myself to look up at Dark. He didn’t look enraged or bloodthirsty, like I had imagined, growing fangs and turning red, or anything like that. His brow had furrowed as if he was in pain, and his eyes, that weren’t meeting mine, were slightly shinier than normal, but not maliciously, almost as if he was on the verge of tears. I’d seen that look on Adam’s face before, even today, whenever he was heartbroken, but that would not be possible with Dark. He was quiet for a long moment, not looking at me. His chest rose and fell heavily and I could feel him trembling. I would feel guilty if it weren’t for the shock of his reaction that was already preoccupying me.

Then, he spoke, voice eerily low and quiet as if each word took effort. “He’s not the man you love either…”

“What do you mean?”

Dark blinked hard, seemingly forcing himself to regain control, or at least make it look like he was, since his grip hadn’t let up on my arms. “I’m practically one half of him, and the one you’re obsessed with is the other half. He’s not the full thing,” he hissed though clenched teeth. “He will never be, not as long as we’re separate. The Adam you love, the Adam you know from a decade ago, practically doesn’t exist right now.”

I held back a frustrated whine. “I don’t care,” I lied. “I’d rather have that side if you two can’t join.” A small smile graced my lips as I thought of memories. “I love him more than anything.”
Dark made a gagging sound and muttered, “Gross,” as he pushed himself off me roughly and sat on the opposite side of the couch, leaning forward with his forearms resting on his thighs. I noted that his usual sarcastic tone was off even with that small comment. It sounded too forced and it was shaky.

My wrists burned as the blood flow returned. I sat up to glare at Dark even though I was just surprised I was still alive, but I paused when I saw the look on his face as he stared hard at the floor. His eyes were narrowed and straining, glistening slightly again. His lips pressed together in a tight line. Maybe I’d been too harsh… but this was Dark, for fuck’s sake. He was strong, mentally as well as physically. I never dreamed that mere words would upset him. Yet, as I watched him carefully, his body shook ever so slightly. Had I actually hurt him? I’d figured he’d be furious, sure, but not…this. This was far worse. This should be impossible. Maybe it used to be.

After a few moments, feeling guilty and confused, I tentatively reached out, murmuring, “Dark…” but before I could touch him, Dark had my wrist locked tight in his grasp, glaring murderously through slightly wet eyes. I gasped as he sunk his nails in, staring back into the eyes of death.

“Don’t,” he snapped harshly, throwing my arm to the side so hard that a twang of pain ran up it. His voice had sounded odd again. There was no cocky undertone. It just sounded so strained and unusual, as if he was trying his damndest to keep up his persona.

He stood stiffly and turned away to leave, but stupidly, instead of taking him up on his generosity of not beating me shitless, I followed him up and pleaded, “Wait,” as I grabbed his arm.

As soon as I made contact, Dark almost snarled as he ripped his arm out of my grasp and whirled around faster than the eye could see, slamming his sharp knuckles into my temple. As the master of the mind and body he’d claimed he was, he knew exactly where to attack to render someone useless, for when he hit my head with that amount of force, all I felt was a jolt, my body collapsing, and then blackness entering my vision.

Okay, I guessed I deserved that.

Actually, I was surprised he hadn’t done more than that. I had fully expected him to murder me.

My eyes fluttered open into a squint, hoping to catch a glimpse of Dark still towering over me, but my eyes flew wide open when I realized I wasn’t even in the living room anymore. I pushed myself up onto my hands and looked around in a panic. This place was immediately familiar to me, but not in a good way. There were shards of broken glass scattered all over the floor of the room, it was eerie how everything was colored in dark tones and shades, and the choice of gothic décor didn’t exactly scream welcome either, not with its warning spikes, skulls, and dead plants. I was trapped in a small, oddly decorated room with no door.

Could it be?

I glanced over at the small source of light in the form of a window.

Yes, it could.

I would never forget that window. I knew exactly what lay beyond it.

Nothing lay beyond it. I already knew that. I couldn’t bring myself to go over to the window again. I couldn’t bear looking out into the vast white emptiness beyond with no sense of direction. This prison would rob you of your sanity. There was no way out, I remembered that now, and even the white light coming in from the window was an illusion. This kind of isolation, I wouldn’t wish it on
Yet, this was where Dark lived when he wasn’t out in control.

This was the room from my dream a while ago. I was sure of it now. This time, my view on the situation differed. Just seeing how isolated Dark was, forced to live here in this madhouse, was making my eyes sting with pity. Even with what he was, he didn’t deserve this. I briefly wondered if he had in fact killed me and now somehow I had to live my afterlife here in this room with him.

Wait, no, the jerk had just knocked me out.

Well, if it were still just a dream, if I just played it out, it would be over sooner.

I looked down at my hands and gasped a little when I saw nothing but flooring and broken glass where my hands should have been. Shocked, I glanced down at the rest of my body, but again, there was nothing there. I reached down to where my leg should be, still feeling the sensations of my arm but having no solidity, and when I touched my knee, my sense of touch went straight past it to the floor. I wasn’t just invisible, but I wasn’t even physically here. What the hell?

I looked up back to the window when I saw movement in my peripheral. Someone was walking over to the window. My figurative jaw dropped when I saw… well, myself, heading to the light source. I had no doubt that he was also Sauli, but god… did I really look like that from behind? I called out to him, finding it odd to say my own name, but there was no response. Okay, so he couldn’t see, touch, or hear me. Fantastic. Other Sauli gasped when he looked out the window and then staggered back. Yeah, I remembered that feeling. Someone suddenly materialized behind him, a tall dark looming figure, dressed to match his room.

Other Sauli turned around fast but slammed face-first into Dark’s chest. He gazed up at him with fear and alarm, but that’s not how I was feeling now. As I said, things were different this time. When I walked around to get a better view, my throat felt thick and dry at seeing Dark in his true form again. Only one other time had I seen him like this, in his long coat, pale, tired-looking complexion, and with those striking golden eyes. He was beautiful, but he looked dangerous. Those eyes of his were wild, inhuman. His stance was tense, unpredictable. He was like a fantasy version of Adam, or supernatural. Even so, when Dark started to reach out gently to the other me, I longed to run to him and take his hand.

Before I or the other Sauli could do anything, a similar figure to Dark suddenly materialized and immediately grabbed Sauli around the waist. Other Sauli looked up at Adam with relief, but I was staring unsurely at Adam’s tense face glaring at Dark. My eyes flickered between the two ethereally beautiful halves nervously. I didn’t know for whom I should be more worried. I wanted to step between them and yell at them to knock it off and act like grownups.

If this was really the same dream and I was only meant to view it, I knew exactly what was going to happen next and I wasn’t looking forward to any of it. I knew it involved the thin blue films glowing dimly around each of their figures that were suddenly obvious and hard to ignore.

Adam, who stood out in his cheery clothes within the eerie room, pushed the other Sauli behind him protectively and blocked Dark’s view of him. Dark looked apprehensive and fearful as Adam glared and stood off against him defensively. Other Sauli’s jaw had dropped open when he peeked over Adam’s shoulder just in time to see Dark drop to his knees and plead silently to Adam who then shook his head at Dark as if he was a disgrace. While it was still strange, my reaction wasn’t quite like other Sauli’s. Now this made sense to me; their switched roles, Dark pleading for me and scared, Adam’s anger and resentment toward Dark. This time, everything held context in my mind like rereading a book after knowing the plot and outcome.
Dark started to reach out to Adam, and not surprisingly this time around, the glowing films around them glowed brighter as Dark got closer. The film from his hand seemed to be stretching out eagerly toward Adam’s leg, and vice versa with the film bordering Adam’s leg. They were reaching to each other almost as if they wanted to join. I watched anxiously, itching to see what would happen if they would just touch. Just a little bit closer…

Adam backed away, and the films surrounding both of them snapped back into place and the dull, depressing glow replaced the vitality once more. Dark looked appalled like someone had just shot him as he slowly lowered his arm.

“Hey!” I tried to yell at Adam, “What the fuck are you doing? Just let him touch you!”

No sound escaped my lips. No one even looked at me. I was frustrated tremendously. The curiosity was nagging at me. What would happen if they touched? Unless my subconscious was cruel and twisted, there had to be a reason why I was here watching this. What was I supposed to see?

Adam grabbed other Sauli’s arm and pulled him toward the mirror-wall and Dark rushed to his feet, chasing after them. Anxiety filled me as Adam pushed other Sauli through the glass, revealing the warmer, lighter colored room that I remembered. Adam followed him through and pulled the other Sauli to his side just as Dark reached the wall, but the glass had already reappeared and Dark collided with it, slamming his fist against it desperately. The thin blue film around him flickered once and then suddenly completely disappeared and Dark looked horrified when he noticed. I held my breath, knowing what was coming next, but how could I just stand here and watch it again? Dark, looking like he was about to cry, mouthed “help” to the two of them before a crack split down the middle of his face again. I couldn’t watch this. Not again. Not when my feelings toward him changed so much since the first time I had this dream.

All Adam and other Sauli were doing was staring back at Dark. I glared at my dream self, despising the shocked look on his face.

“Help him, you asshole!” I yelled at my other self. “Don’t just stand there!” No one acknowledged me.

My eyes stung and I could feel the tears overflow from frustration and sorrow as Dark started to crumble before my eyes once more, but now it was truly heartbreaking. Dark fell apart as if he was dried, damaged clay. Cracks formed all over his body, and chunks of his clothes and flesh broke apart and fell to the floor. My tears were running freely when the lower half of his face broke off again, followed by the entire left side of his head, and soon, his entire head.

Other Sauli moved tentatively forward toward him, but Adam’s grip only tightened. I wanted to go over there and punch us both in the face. How could we just let this happen? I couldn’t fight the anger I felt toward Adam as he watched the scene before him almost happily. Dark’s arm that braced him against the glass fell apart and his whole body collapsed to the floor. Other Sauli broke free from Adam and watched Dark die with a small look of misery on his face.

“Good, you should feel horrible, you sick bastard!” I yelled soundlessly.

I couldn’t do anything to save Dark now, could I? I was merely a spectator right now in this dream, forced to watch this horrendous scene play out again but from a third perspective for whatever reason. The remainder of Dark’s body crumbled into powder and a small sob escaped my throat. Even though I was fully aware that this was a dream, watching any version of Adam die like this was unbearable.

Adam smiled and walked over to Sauli. He was happy about Dark’s death. Of course he was.
Sauli looked confused and angry, but I understood now. I knew better. Adam always wanted Dark to die. He wanted to get rid of him, hoping he could do that without any consequences to himself, but…

Adam’s blue glow vanished, just like Dark’s, just like a chain effect…

Everything that I remembered would take place next made sense to me.

Adam’s hand broke off and shattered on the ground. He fell to his knees, silently yelling out in pain unlike Dark, but as soon as his knees touched the floor, the impact crushed his knees and forced Adam’s upper torso to break off and slam to the floor as well. Both I and the other Sauli yelled out for Adam, but no words left our lips. Adam’s broken body parts had crumbled into sand. His head broke off and rolled, and then turned into powder as well. Just like that, it was over. They were both dead.

Sauli fell to his knees, sobbing. I just stood there, defeated and exhausted, waiting for this dream to end as it should be right around now. The walls broke and fell apart just as Adam and Dark had, and I stared at my old confused self with pity. How could he not see what was so obvious to me now?

“Help us,” a voice echoed off the walls.

I remembered being confused as to who this voice was; Adam or Dark, but now I knew that was Adam. It wasn’t Dark, nor the other, lighter side of him, but Adam himself, full and complete. He was asking me to help him, all of him. This was the Adam that I loved.

It was obvious to me now, dream Adam’s mistake. A chain effect. Trying to kill off Dark wasn’t possible, not without destroying all of himself. You could not have light without the dark. They were one and there was no compromising. The fact that my past self couldn’t figure this out when it was right there was beyond frustrating. I could have ended this long before. But then how? How could I help them both?

I looked around, but the dream wasn’t ending. The rooms were both gone, with only broken parts floating around me with the other Sauli curled up in himself pathetically. Why wasn’t the dream ending? Why wasn’t I waking up? What more was there? Did I miss something? Was I supposed to help them here and now? How was that possible when they were both dead and I couldn’t even be seen, touched, or heard? I was reaching desperation. I squeezed my eyes shut and let out a frustrated growl.

What was I supposed to do!

When I reopened my eyes, I was immediately taken aback and disorientated. Everything was suddenly reset. I wasn’t floating around with the remains of the rooms anymore. I was standing behind a tall figure only known as Adam. I blinked several times, confused, and looked around. What happened? I was back in Dark’s room and everything was intact. I peeked over Adam’s shoulder and noticed Dark’s worried face as he was on his knees in front of us. I breathed a small sigh of relief. He was fine. The other Sauli was nowhere in sight… which meant that I’d replaced him? I looked at my hands and actually saw them. My flesh was contactable again and I was solid once more, but why? Did I seriously have to go through this again? Why hadn’t I woken up?

Dark reached out hesitantly toward Adam’s leg again, causing the thin blue films around them both to glow. I realized which moment of the dream I was replaying; in a few seconds, Adam would back away and cease the stretching and glowing, causing everything after that to spiral down to shit.

Wait a minute; this was what somehow had to change, wasn’t it?
The glowing blue borders around them both reached out for the other as Dark’s hand neared Adam’s leg, begging to make contact and intertwine. Again, I found myself willing them forward, watching hypnotically as they glowed brighter and became stronger and stronger until... Adam backed away, leaving Dark shocked, looking like his world had been destroyed, and me angered and disappointed. The glowing outlines dimmed significantly and returned to their normal shape.

Fury built up in me. Why did nothing change? I couldn’t bear watching Adam and Dark die again. Why was Adam just letting this happen? Could he not see the desperation? I couldn’t let this all take place again, but how could I do anything to stop it? I mean, I had to try; I couldn’t go through with this loop again. Not again. Not...

“No!” I yelled, immediately shocking myself when my voice rang clear and loud through my ears. Both Adam and Dark’s gazes snapped to me, also looking stunned. I tried to ignore the eeriness of how synchronized that movement was.

My brain kicked into gear after one moment of surprise. I only had one shot at this. I started to move forward, only to have Adam’s arm shoot out in front of me. I looked up at him with irritation. His eyes held warning. I wasn’t taking any of his bullshit right now. Maybe with the real Adam, it would have been different, but with this dream version of him, I couldn’t care less if he got angry with me.

I rolled my eyes and harshly shoved his arm out of the way, moving to stand in front of a confused, kneeling Dark. I looked back at Adam who was staring at me with wide eyes and clutching his arm to his chest as if I’d burned him. I gazed back down at Dark, my face serious as I held out my hand to him. His golden eyes flickered between my face and outstretched hand several times, as if he didn’t recognize the gesture. I sighed and reached down, taking his hand off the floor. The touch did nothing, as the glow remained dim. Now I was sure of what I had to do.

I pulled Dark up to his feet, not letting go of his hand once he was upright. I kept my grip on him tight as I turned to Adam who was glaring at our interlocked hands. I forced a reassuring smile at him and offered out my free hand to him, gesturing for him to take it. Adam’s eyes only narrowed further and he crossed his arms, keeping his feet planted firmly in their place. Stubborn mule, he was, even in dream form. He probably didn’t want to take my hand just because I was holding Dark’s. For him, he either had to have all of me or none of me. Well, let’s see if he could handle it if he “lost” all of me.

I gave Adam a fake hateful glare and whipped around to Dark, tightening my hold on his hand as I reached up with my free hand and grabbed the back of his neck, pulling his head down toward mine and barely registering the shocked look on his face before our lips met. Dark tensed for only a moment as I kissed him hard before he melted into me and his free hand wound around my waist. My hand around his neck settled on his shoulder. It was strange for sure, having Dark be gentle. I really liked this dream version of him.

Before I could get too into it, Adam grabbed my hand on Dark’s shoulder and roughly jerked me back, ripping my other hand out of Dark’s, and breaking the sealed kiss with a smack. I slammed into Adam’s chest, immediately locking my hand around his in a death grip. I whipped my head up to shoot a hugely victorious grin at his furious expression. Still pressed against his chest, I pushed myself up to my toes and angled my head to leave a quick apologetic kiss on his jaw. Still keeping an iron grip on his hand, I stepped away from Adam, grinning smugly as he tried to tug his hand from mine, but not forceful enough to hurt me.

I reached out to Dark once more, gesturing with a jerk of my head for him to take my other hand. A tiny smile twitched at his lips, knowing what I was doing. He eagerly grasped my hand and now I stood between the two sides, holding each of their hands. One was pliant and willing, and the other
was tense and resistant. I slowly started to bring the two together, and when Adam noticed what I was doing, he grabbed my wrist with his free hand and furiously tried to pull my death grip on his hand off. However, this was my dream and hey, if I wanted to be stronger than him, I sure as hell could.

I shot Adam a warning glare, who in turn was glaring at Dark, who was the picture of feigned innocence. I jerked on Adam’s hand to draw his attention back to me. His piercing eyes met mine and I gazed up at them with a pleading. Adam’s blue eyes were intense as he searched mine for a few moments and I stared hard right into his, not backing down. Finally, his eyes suddenly softened and he sighed, his hand relaxing in mine. A small sad smile graced his lips in his soft expression as a way of saying, I trust you. I couldn’t help but beam up at him in thanks.

Okay, now it was go time. My gears clicked into focus, and I let go of each of their hands only to take hold of their wrists instead. Very slowly, I started to bring their hands closer together, feeling a bit of tension in Adam’s. As their hands neared, the thin blue films outlining both of them glowed brighter and brighter, starting to pull a bit and stretch toward each other. I glanced at Adam and Dark with excitement. Adam wasn’t watching. He looked annoyed as he gazed off into the distance. On the other hand, Dark watched with intelligent curiosity, not even acknowledging me anymore.

Inches apart, I felt their hands start to pulsate in my grasp. Adam looked over, raising an eyebrow. Dark’s hand outstretched toward Adam’s, whose had curled up into a fist. As the inches dwindled and centimeters remained, the now vibrant, lively blue films touched and then absorbed into each other, becoming one solid film surrounding the two of them. Adam’s full attention was on the scene before him now. I felt his hand relax and his fingers uncurl as well. Now, I couldn’t even see their hands anymore. Fingertips nearly touching, a blinding white orb of light that pulsated violently, eagerly, engulfed their hands. I nearly squealed with delight.

Simultaneously, as I watched, Dark and Adam, or Light, to be technical, if I could even call him that, looked up at each other with raised brows, again eerily synchronized. The stare remained, but it wasn’t malicious or anything. It was merely curious… or was that enlightenment? Were they seeing something in their heads from the close proximity?

Then, the distance closed, their unevenly pulsating fingertips connected and the white light engulfed them both completely, but not before they could each shoot me an apprehensive look at the exact same time. I squeezed my eyes shut and turned my head away from the piercing light that had now swallowed up the entire room. I felt both Dark and Adam’s wrists dissolve and disappear in my grasp, and I ended up clutching at nothing but air, and a hint of panic shot through me. I only hoped I hadn’t killed them both.

I backed away and opened my eyes to a squint in the room of now blinding light to get some idea of what was happening to them both, but it was to no avail. I couldn’t see anything except light that was making my eyes sting and I couldn’t see either figure of Dark or Adam, but there was something else now. The pulsating sensation from the center had intensified so much that I could feel it even standing away from them. The pulses were turning rhythmic, steady, and strong, almost like… a heartbeat.

The light starting to draw back slowly in and I looked around wildly. We weren’t in Dark’s odd room anymore. Instead, I was seeing glimpses of green and blue, and it was all strangely familiar. A sky started to materialize, along with trees and grass. I looked around as various trees and clouds formed.

There was only one place I knew that had a clearing like this.

But that meant…
I was drawn out of my thoughts when the heavy pulsating suddenly stopped. Through the ball of light I could only see one figure forming, not two. My heart pounded as I watched anxiously. Suddenly, orb of light exploded and shone incredibly brightly, enough to make me flinch and turn away and cover my eyes. The explosion lasted only for a moment and then it was completely gone.

Now it was too calm. My chest rose and fell heavily and my head remained craned away with my eyes squeezed shut. Did I even want to open them? What would I see? Maybe I’d woken up. How was I in such a deep sleep anyway?

My long string of thoughts was suddenly cut off when I felt warm palms gently cup either side of my face and turn my head toward the source. Oh my god, who was touching me? I couldn’t bring myself to open my eyes, too terrified of what I might see. I felt soft thumbs stroke my cheeks and angle my head upward gently.

I couldn’t resist anymore. I slowly forced my eyes open and it took a moment to adjust to the new outdoor light and focus on the shadowy face above mine. Once I did, I sucked in a breath that stifled a scream.


And not even present day Adam, but Adam from many years ago, his beautifully young face only inches above mine, and his ebony locks of hair brushing over his... strange eyes. His eyes were two different colors. One gold, and one blue. Then, he blinked a few times and his eyes reverted to the pale blue that I remembered. Even so, I could feel them, both of them. My Adam and Dark... It was strange; I could sense both of their presences, but the odd part was it wasn’t as if I could feel them separately. Their auras were weirdly interconnected into one strong presence that held unique flavors of both of them, yet complimented each other. This new aura felt full of vitality and strength.

I stared up at Adam with wide eyes, terrified and shocked at the sight of him. He was wearing simple jeans and a grey t-shirt, and to my surprise, he wasn’t covered in scars and ghastly bruises. He looked so at peace, so angelic, but I was almost overwhelmed with the grief of losing him the first time. Tears overflowed and ran down my cheeks, only to be brushed away by Adam’s gentle thumbs. It was too much to handle to see him this way again.

Adam smiled gently, looking more relaxed than I could ever remember, and in his velvety voice he quietly said, “Thank you,” as the one who had asked for help.

My breathing became labored at the sound of his younger voice and panic settled in as Adam slowly leaned toward me, but I couldn’t move an inch from the shock. I felt panic bubble up my throat while I took frantic breaths as his head drew nearer, but all breathing ceased and time seemed to stop when his lips were a hairsbreadth away from mine. I was frozen, stiff to the bone, unable to move away or closer, but as soon as his lips brushed lightly against mine, I felt a sharp jolt.

My eyes snapped open and I flinched, gasping for air as I looked around wildly, unable to tell up from down for a few moments. I sighed with relief when I realized I was finally awake and lying on the floor of Adam’s living room. I reached up to my face and patted my cheeks and lips, still feeling Adam’s ghostly touch. I felt a twang of pain and realized that I wasn’t feeling Adam’s phantom fingertips on my face, but rather the aftermath of the blow from Dark that had knocked me out.

Everywhere I looked, I saw those eyes. I couldn’t get them out of my head. For a moment there, Adam’s eyes were gold and blue before he blinked the unnatural colors away and returned to normal. Two had become one who shared both of their eye colors. Obviously, that’s what needed to happen, but how? It wasn’t as if Dark and Adam could physically touch and join in reality.
I sprang upright into a sitting position and my heart leapt when I noticed Adam’s body sitting on the couch with his knees pulled up to his chest, looking miserable.

“Oh, you’re up,” he said in a dejected voice, hardly looking at me. “That only took a couple minutes.” It had only been a couple of minutes? What the hell? “Guess you’re just happy he was so generous and didn’t completely beat you lifeless.”

I didn’t even hear him. I had no time to spare now. I got up onto my feet, ignored the dizziness, and cautiously headed over to him.

“Adam, Dark, whoever you are, I really need to talk to you…” I muttered urgently as I neared the couch.

He looked up at me and glared through distant eyes. “Unfortunately, it’s just Adam right now. Your precious Dark is hiding.”

I sighed and plopped down next to him. “Adam, don’t be like that, please. I’m sorry. Look, I only wanted him out so I could tell him I was done with him. I kind of actually deserved that hit.”

“You could never deserve it…” Adam was quiet for a moment. “…Is that why Dark’s moping in his room?”

I felt a twang of pain, but tried to hide it and nodded.

“Is he listening right now?” I asked timidly.

Adam gazed off into the distance for a moment. “Yes, he’s conscious, but I’m in control.”

“Okay, good. Adam, listen to me,” I said urgently, shaking his shoulder. “You seriously need to get professional help.”

Adam groaned and shoved my hands away. “I already told you, I can’t do that. I’ll get rid of him on my own somehow. There has to be a way.”

“No, Adam, look…” Knowing Dark was listening as well, I might as well let them both know. “A while ago, I had this strange dream, and when Dark knocked me out earlier,” Adam gave me a look, “I saw it again. See, when it happens, I’m in Dark’s room, the one in your mind I think, but you’re both there with me. Dark keeps trying to reach out to you but you refuse him every time—”

“—oh, of course I’m suddenly the bad guy,” Adam interrupted. “Would you mind telling your subconscious to get a grip?”

“Listen,” I said exasperatedly. “You’re also both kind of like outlined by this glowing blue film thing. Every time Dark reached out and got closer to you, they would glow brighter and stretch toward each other, but before we could see what would happen next, you would pull away and they’d dim, and…” I trailed off, noting the annoyed look on Adam’s face. Talking about Adam’s antagonized role in my dream to his face was not a good idea. I might as well just get to the point while he was still listening. I sighed sharply. “Basically, some stuff happened, and you ended up separated from Dark by a glass wall in the other room in your mind—”

“—other room?” Adam questioned. “What other room? There’s no other room.”

I pondered that. “Well, where do you go when you’re unconscious?”

Adam’s brow crinkled. “I don’t know. It’s just darkness, like a dreamless sleep. I don’t think I have a
“Well, that’s what I saw.” I shrugged. “It was the decorative opposite of Dark’s room, all bright and warm. Maybe it’s there and you haven’t been able to open your eyes, or maybe it hasn’t even formed yet. Anyway, we were in the other room that formed a barrier between you two, and there was no way Dark could touch you then. The blue outline thing disappeared and Dark… He started to crumble… literally. He died.”

“Really?” Adam half chuckled. “This other room sounds pretty great.”

I rolled my eyes. “Yeah, dream you thought so too. You were happy that Dark crumbled… until you started to as well. You died right after him, and you know why? It’s all because he died. It was a chain reaction, Adam.”

“You’re an imaginative one, aren’t you?” he muttered under his breath.

I ignored him and went on. “The dream normally ended after you were both gone, but this time it didn’t. It sent me back to the part where Dark was reaching out to you. I was so confused, but I realized I was supposed to change something. Then, I took both of your hands and forced them to touch. You should have seen what happened. It was incredible. There was this blinding light and suddenly we weren’t in Dark’s room, we were in the clearing we used to go to.”

“How could you still remember that?” Adam smiled a little.

“How could you think I’d forget?” I countered, appalled by his lack of faith in me. Adam’s smile twitched a little wider. I went on, “Then… you were both gone, but you hadn’t died this time. There was just one version of you… from high school.” Adam tensed slightly at the mention of high school. “You thanked me. I looked into your eyes and for a brief moment, you had one gold eye and one blue eye as if you and Dark had combined. I could feel both of your presences at once. Then, you kissed me and I woke up.”

“Sleeping Beauty indeed,” Adam murmured distractedly, staring off into the distance.

I snapped my fingers in front of his face to grab his attention and tried not to roll my eyes. “What I’m trying to say, Adam, is you need Dark, and he needs you. You can’t get rid of him because he’s a part of you. You kill him, you kill yourself. I know it’s hard for you to accept that you’re part of the same person, but you need to join. I don’t know what’ll happen if you drag out this separation for much longer, but I know it’s not going to be good.”

“That all sounds pretty fairy tale, sleeping beauty,” Adam said tiredly. “You can’t be sure it wasn’t just a dream.”

“No, it wasn’t,” I insisted. “Dark said,” Adam rolled his eyes at the name, “that dreams come true, and I’m pretty sure he didn’t mean that goals and ambitions crap, but this nightmare of mine was a dream too. What if it really happens? I’m pretty sure you won’t crumble and crack like clay, but I think something will happen.”

“And I think you’re overreacting.” Adam gave me a once over. “He must have hit you harder than I’d thought.”

I groaned. “Dark said your side was more ignorant, and I know you can’t help it, but this is ridiculous.”

“Dark said this, Dark said that…” Adam grumbled to himself. “How come nothing I say is valid to you anymore?”
“To be fair, you never took anything Dark said as valid…” I muttered back.

“Maybe because listening to the voices in your head isn’t what sane people do,” he retorted.

I huffed. “Whatever. Look, your idea of fixing it on your own is probably going to get you both killed sooner or later. You’ve already tried for ten years, but it hasn’t worked, and you know why? It’s because that’s not how to fix this. You have to become one. It’s the only way.”

Adam sighed. “But…”

I didn’t let him continue. “If you’re going to say that he’s not you, don’t even bother, Adam. You’re not even you. You’re technically not Adam either. You’re just one half. If Dark is the dark side, then you would be Light.”

Adam made an appalled face. “Don’t ever call me that…”

“Fine, but listen carefully, because we only want to help,” I said slowly. “You know now that you’re unstable. You and Dark are separating.”

“But—”

“—No buts,” I insisted. “You keep denying that you are part of each other, which is why this is getting worse. You were one once, we’ve established this, correct?” Adam rolled his eyes, but didn’t deny it. “Whether you like it or not, it is the truth. I don’t care if you don’t understand it. Just listen for one more moment, okay?”

Adam glared, but it wasn’t as stubborn as before. “Fine,” he grumbled. “Enlighten me.”

I thanked him with a small smile and then gathered my thoughts. “Okay, here’s my theory. You can’t function without half of your sane mind. You need him, Adam, but now Dark is becoming an actual separate being. Your brain is trying to make room for two splitting minds that keep battling for control. It has no other choice because you constantly reject half of you. Dark said that there’s still a thread of connection between you two for now, but it’s fraying. If you keep ignoring the issue or trying to get rid of Dark, you’re only going to break the bond permanently, and then what happens? There’s no hope of you guys joining if you become two separate and equal in strength but incomplete beings in one head. There’s no room for the both of you. Your brain can’t possibly take so much pressure.”

Instead of giving me an impatient and condescending glance, Adam was staring at me with a hopeless and fearful look in his eyes that filled to the brim with moisture. Was he finally understanding and surrendering?

“What do you think will happen if it does come to that?” he asked, barely audible.

I looked down, hiding my relief that he was actually absorbing this for once. “I don’t think any of us know. Maybe you’ll go comatose or maybe you’ll die,” I said, not even bothering to beat around the bush, not when he was finally listening. “Whatever happens, it won’t be good, and we can’t let it come to that. I can’t let anything happen to you because I love you. Understand?”

Adam’s body started trembling lightly before he buried his face in his hands and rested his elbows on his knees. “I hate my life,” he groaned into his palms. “I’m a complete psycho. Just look at me!”

“Please, just get help, Adam,” I begged, wrapping my arm around him and tucking him into my side.

“The world will find out if I do that…” Adam mumbled into his hands.
“That hardly matters now. You matter. I love you to death and I don’t want to wait to see what’ll happen if you ignore him any longer.”

“I don’t want him to be a part of me,” Adam whined.

“If you haven’t noticed, Dark’s not entirely in love with you either,” I muttered obviously, rolling my eyes, “but he still wants to unite with you… badly, because it’s the right thing to do, and plus, he’s suffering. Have you seen that room? It’s a prison. You’ve left him nothing that gives a hint of joy, and nothing good and pure about a person. No one wants to just be a storm of terror all the time.”

“Okay, fine!” Adam sighed sharply, jerking up straight and smacking both his knees. “I accept him. He’s a part of me. We’re supposed to be one. Happy now? So, why are we not normal again?”

I gave him a look. “I don’t think it’s that simple…”

Adam groaned. “So what do I do?”

“I don’t know… but we have to figure it out fast…” After a moment, I quietly asked, “Is Dark still there…?”

Adam blanked out for a second, checking. “He’s moping, but he can still see and hear sort of.”

I shrugged. “Well I made sure he understood that you’re the one and only, if you don’t integrate.”

Adam smiled a little. I reached up to his face with both hands, pleased when he didn’t flinch away this time, and wiped away his tears before leaning in slightly and waiting hesitantly. He had every right to be angry still, so I understood if he didn’t want to do this now. To my relief, he met me halfway and pressed his soft lips to mine. I couldn’t help but smile against him. Adam’s fingers tangled into my hair and he pushed his tongue between the seam of my lips, immediately delving deeper and kissing me possessively. I didn’t mind in the slightest.

“I love you,” I managed to say when he allowed me to break away long enough to breathe. “Always.”

Adam hummed approvingly before leaning in to steal another intense kiss, but then suddenly, he pulled away and winced.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, dazed and breathless.

Adam winced again and stared off to the side distantly, eyebrows knit together in confusion.

“I think,” he said slowly, eyes widening with alarm, “Dark’s crying…”

Chapter End Notes

Comments are appreciated!
Officially succeeded Nirvana in word count with this chapter adding to the total. Without further ado, since we've already established that I'm terrible at updating, here are 11,642 words for you all to enjoy. That means it's very long, very feely.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adam:

Twenty-four hours later, after Sauli had insisted to do some research at the library where he wouldn’t be disturbed, I leaned over my kitchen counter, scowling because he’d forced me to stay here and talk to Dark since I “might learn something” and “maybe even become friends.” Sometimes, I wondered exactly how Sauli’s pouting eyes could turn me into such a pathetic sucker. His idea sounded much more stupid now that I actually was trying to do it, and even more so by the minute.

Dark was sitting still on his floor in my mind, leaning against his couch, jaw hard-set and his eyes straining with anger. His chest was heaving heavily as he took erratic breaths, but other than that, he could have been mistaken for a very irritated-looking statue.

“Dark,” I said through my teeth, annoyed that I had to say that like it was a real name. “Talk to me. You’re the one that wanted me to listen and cooperate, and now I’m here, but you’re shutting me out.”

I’d been trying to coax him to talk to me, give me any useful piece of information, and I was becoming increasingly frustrated with his stubbornness. It was ironic since apparently, I’d been the stubborn one thus far, forced to come around reluctantly, but now he had completely blocked me out. He hadn’t said a word all day and refused to respond to me with anything other than a sharp glare. I’d watched him fight tears yesterday, and at some point, he had made himself go dormant and that was the end of that. Today, when he was fully rested and conscious again, this happened. It was bad enough that Sauli had demanded I get all buddy-buddy with “myself,” but I wouldn’t beg Dark. There was no way I’d reduce myself to that for someone like him who was now refusing to make this work for whatever reason.

“Dark, come on,” I pressed. I knew I was ticking him off by being so persistent. It was rather amusing to watch him twitch with irritation just at the sound of my voice. I mean, he really hated me. “What’s your problem anyway?”

I jumped from surprise when Dark suddenly hacked out an abrupt, humorless laugh.

“My problem…” Dark shook his head as he finally spoke, “is you, you selfish, obnoxious piece of moronic shit.” His voice held so much venom that he was practically hissing.

I frowned and my eyes widened, eyebrow arching. Okay, well that was offensive and uncalled for.

I took a deep breath, trying to maintain my temper. “You’re being silly,” I said patronizingly, tone sickly sweet. My eye twitched from the sheer effort it took not to scream at him. I hated this.
“Go fuck yourself.” Dark rolled his eyes heavily. “Oh wait. I would rather drink bleach and spit it into my eyes, or swim in a pool of gasoline that’s then lit on fire, or far worse, listen to your music,” he shuddered, “than have you fuck me.”

My eyes narrowed to slits and my hands curled into fists on the counter. Yeah, I couldn’t do it. Sorry, Sauli. Screw being nice to this god-awful abomination. It was impossible for me, especially after everything that had happened.

“Listen here, you son of a bitch,” I snapped. “You’re going to help me fix this and that’s that. You can’t just ignore everything now.”

“You mean like you have for the past decade?” he seethed, staring ahead coldly. “You’ve let me rot in here without a second thought.”

“Okay, I was very wrong and I’m sorry,” I said impatiently, “but now we need to focus on the present. It’s not too late to fix this.”

I didn’t even believe what I was saying. I knew we needed to put the past aside if we were to solve this problem, but I couldn’t. How could we ever join if our relationship was so toxic? I hardly wanted to be associated with him, let alone be him.

“Fuck that,” he spat. “I’m not helping with anything. I’m finished.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” I asked with a little bit of panic.

“It means just fuck off!” His outburst echoed in my mind. “Go enjoy your life with YOUR little love while it lasts. Leave me to my misery. It’s fine. I won’t bother you two anymore.”

“Dark…” My brow creased with confusion, anger dissipating. I’d never heard him sound so hopeless.

“Let the split happen completely. It’s bound to anyway.” He suddenly looked so exhausted. “Who are we kidding? It’s over.”

“Don’t be so irrational,” I said gently. “There has to be a way. We can talk about this civilly.” We had to.

“Now you want to talk?” Dark growled, and the dark circles under his eyes started to look more and more as if he hadn’t slept in a week. “Now it becomes important, but when I was practically begging you to help release me from this constant torture for a decade, you didn’t listen. You have no idea what it’s like in here and you don’t give a shit. You have some damn nerve.”

“I wasn’t about to listen to the voice in my head! I didn’t want to believe there was anything wrong with me,” I explained. “That was the past. I know better now and I’m here, aren’t I? Dark, look, I’m sorry.” I truly was.

“Not yet you’re not,” he insisted, “but you will be. I don’t want to fix it; I have no reason to anymore.” His eyes flashed with pain for a brief moment before he recovered and hid it under a scowl. Knowing whom he was talking about, I couldn’t help the short twinge of guilt I felt despite everything. “I wish I could tear this body to pieces because I’m finished with this life,” Both of us paused, listening to the garage door opening as Sauli arrived home. Dark stared sinisterly at me. “But… since I can’t and you can, I guess I’ll just have to give you in an incentive to take us both out of this hell…”

My heart skipped a beat from alarm. “Wait, Dark, you don’t mean—don’t hurt—”
Before I could finish, I felt his furious mind shoving mine backward. I didn’t have a second to myself before I blacked out.

**Dark:**

I took over like a raging wildfire, only wrath and no mercy. I felt my senses come alive as if switches flicked to *on* one by one as I regained control. My eyes snapped open and light flooded my perfect vision just as I heard the front door unlock. I had no time to formulate a flawless plan knowing that Sauli was about to walk in through the door in a matter of mere seconds. I had to go with the flow of constrained time, and plan every step as I was executing it.

The front door swung open and in swept Sauli, perfect as usual in dark jeans and a light tee, and almost glowing too brightly for my eyes. Already, he fogged up my rationality. His lithe, toned legs tightly wrapped in denim called to me, demanding to be spread, his tanned and muscular arms were begging to be bound, and his immaculate face was pleading for me to devour it. He’d been home for about six seconds and already I was drooling over him despite everything. I just had no control over this insatiable thirst for him. It was pathetic.

“Hey,” Sauli said cheerfully when he spotted me in the kitchen, apparently not recognizing me. I snapped out of my inhuman lust, refocusing on the task at hand. I drummed my fingers on the edge of the counter as I eyed a glinting chef’s knife that was beckoning to me, my mind racing with ideas.

“I couldn’t find anything particularly useful,” he said as he started unlacing his boots, “I mean, I found info on multiple personality disorder and stuff that mostly fit, but there’s no immediate cure for that and our situation is kind of different. That takes years of therapy to maybe fix it, but we definitely don’t have years.”

I frowned to myself, pulled out of my gruesome thoughts for a brief moment, thinking I didn’t hear him right. Was he seriously still trying to help? He was completely wasting his time then. It was too late, and even if it wasn’t, there was still no point left. There was only one true way out of this permanently and quickly; eliminate this body and the scrambled minds that accompanied it by whatever means necessary.

Sauli’s back was still turned to me as he took off his boots and spoke. “How’d your bonding chat go?”

My eyes narrowed to slits, remembering. “Fantastic,” I muttered sarcastically under my breath, low enough that he couldn’t hear me.

With his back to me, the opportunity was glorious, and on a whim, I decided it was time to strike. I pushed myself off the counter and swiftly snatched the knife along before stalking my way over soundlessly behind him. My primal predatory instincts were delighted at the situation, but my developing conscience cursed at me. I ignored only one of the nagging voices. I paused and hid the knife inconspicuously behind my thigh just as Sauli turned around, jumping a little when he saw me suddenly behind him. He then beamed brightly at me, his smile stretching from ear to ear. He was so beautiful that I actually hesitated, second-guessed my decision, and then immediately became disgusted with him and myself. For how long was I going to allow him to make me so weak? I felt my heart crack and my fingers curl tighter around the knife. Those perfect day-brightening smiles of his weren’t meant for me. They never were and never would be. I’d tear his face apart just so it couldn’t taunt me anymore.

I stiffened as his hand swept up out of nowhere and gently cupped my cheek, alarmed at the soft touch. I resisted the strange and very strong urge to lean into his unusual touch, the warmth being
oddly… pleasant. Sauli pushed up onto his toes and started to lean in closer to my lips, but I wouldn’t be able to stand a kiss from him when it wasn’t even intended for this monster. He would never be doing this if he knew it were me.

I hated him for making me want him so desperately all to myself. The pain was becoming too much, too real. As much as it would kill me to do this to him, that was entirely the point. It was becoming very necessary because I couldn’t take this anymore. I was done with this life, and after he was gone, I wouldn’t have to suffer from guilt for very long. When Adam saw, he would finally end this for the both of us. And if Sauli kissed me now out of his own free will, I knew I would no longer have the strength to go through with this.

I grabbed his throat to stop his advance and dug my nails into his skin. Sauli’s eyes flashed open and he stared up at me with confusion and alarm. Now that was the expression I was used to.

“Dark?” he grunted, looking worried. “What’s wrong?”

I froze, eyes widening ever so slightly, nearly breaking my mask.

He knew it was me the whole time?

Then why in the hell was he smiling at me and trying to kiss me like I was his favorite thing in the world? A longing ache formed in my throat. He’d actually smiled at me? He’d actually tried to kiss me knowing how otherworldly stupid that was on his part? Could there be the possibility of a slim chance for me?

Wait, no.

I had to remind myself of what he’d said to me.

You're the only thing standing between us.

I can’t let you do this to us. I belong with him.

You may be a part of him, but you’re not the man I’ve loved for ten years.

My eyes narrowed and stung with anger. He was only toying with me as if thinking I would be weak enough to let him live through it. I almost was, but he wasn’t lucky enough. He was nothing more than a cheap hat trick—a fake.

“You…” I hissed quietly, squeezing his throat tighter. “What do you think you’re doing? Are you forgetting your little speech?”

“No,” he wheezed, his hands flying up to grip at my wrist, attempting to loosen my iron grip on him. I relaxed my clutch on his windpipe, allowing him to answer me with whatever sad excuse he could muster. Sauli gasped for a breath before continuing, “But you looked sad and tormented. I just wanted to make you feel better. It’s just a friendly kiss. Don’t think I hate you.” He offered another small smile though I could tell this one was curtaining his fear.

A friendly kiss? What in the fuck was a friendly kiss?

I gave him an irritated look. What, did he think we could be friends, or friends with benefits? We couldn’t be anything. Nothing would work. I realized that now. My sole duty was to attack, and attack I would. I wasn’t going to be ignored in the depths of Adam’s mind and watch this insufferable fool fornicate with his lover. They wanted to be together and I wasn’t allowed in the picture. Then so be it. They could go ahead and be together in hell.
Fueled by frustration and the need to make the ache in my chest dissipate, I shoved Sauli against the door by his neck, his head bouncing off the wood. He let out a short grunt of pain and his hands pulled tighter at mine on his throat. It was then that he noticed the chef’s knife by my side and his eyes widened as he gasped.

“Dark, what are you doing?” Sauli asked frantically, clawing at my grip on him. “Why are you acting like this? You’re not going to use that thing to—?”

“—Give me one good reason why I shouldn’t,” I said through clenched teeth, silently begging him to have a damn great one as I lifted the knife.

“Because no one has to die,” he said desperately. “I can still help you!”

I snorted and pulled him off the door only to shove him back into it harder, bringing the sharp edge of the knife to his throat as I held him firmly in place.

“Not good enough,” I whispered, looming over him. “I don’t want your help.”

“If this is about yesterday, I’m sorry!”

The mention of yesterday only made my skin burn more with rage. I pressed the blade hard against his windpipe as a warning, his skin nearly breaking from the pressure.

“There’s nothing left for me here, so I’m finished. We’re all finished,” I insisted.

I pressed closer to him, leaning my head closer to his temple and breathing in the last bit of his soft scent before it would be overpowered by the smell of blood. His light scent drew me in and I closed my eyes, intoxicated by the delicious smell. Absently, I pushed the knife even harder, a moment away from roughly pulling the blade to the side and slicing so deeply into his neck that it’d kill him.

“I’m not!”

Out of nowhere and almost impressively, taking my stupidly close proximity and distraction to his advantage, Sauli swiftly slammed his knee upward into my crotch.

My eyes snapped wide open and my breath caught on the sharp pain, loosening my grip and focus on him. Before I was able to register it, Sauli tore away my grip on his throat and knocked away the hand holding the knife to him with his forearm before ducking away.

Sauli ran, yelling, “And you’re not either!” and I fell forward, catching myself by my forearm on the door for a moment, frozen from the crushing pain.

I couldn’t believe I’d let my guard down again. What was it about him that drugged me like this? I grunted, turned to ice by the constricted feeling, but I held my ground, and after a few seconds, I willed the pain to be dull enough to ignore. I whipped my head around and scanned the room quickly with narrowed eyes for Sauli. He had nowhere to run. I was already leaning on his only escape door. I didn’t have time to play cat and mouse. Gripping the knife tighter and shoving aside the throbbing pain, I growled and ran after him.

Moving faster than he could, yet still within human limits, I took a different route through the house and easily caught up. I slid to a stop in front of the backyard doors as Sauli was running to them. He gasped and skidded to a halt before he could slam into me.

“Going somewhere?” I asked calmly, challengingly, raising an eyebrow and twirling the knife.
Even if he got out into the backyard, unless he wanted to tumble down a steep hill and make my job easier by killing himself, there was no way out. Sauli glared and turned on his heel, running back toward the kitchen area. I sighed. Why couldn’t he just let this be over quicker for the both of us? Annoyed, I merely walked after him and found him just reaching the side of the huge kitchen island that was opposite to me. I growled low, slowly making my around the island, only to have Sauli do the same in the opposite direction, keeping a barrier between me and him, leading us into just circling each other. I stopped. I knew this stupid strategy and I wasn’t going to bother with it. I’d find another way.

“Dark, come on,” Sauli pleaded. He still wanted to talk me out of this. Fine, I’d humor him. “How could you just kill me and Adam just so you can have an escape? How could you be so selfish? We’re only trying to help!”

“Selfish?” I spat, appalled by his absurdity. “I’m selfish?” I placed my hands on the giant island counter and leaned toward Sauli who still thought he was safe on the other side. “Listen, you tiny blond bastard, for all my life—no, my existence, I’ve suffered. I’ve been imprisoned and used whenever I was of convenience to that piece of shit, like a bodyguard, except I wasn’t even being paid, I was given worse than nothing. I was a slave. After a decade, I am sick of this. I’ve never had anything to call my own and never could even if I wanted. For a while there, I wanted you, more than air at some points,” I admitted bitterly, “but obviously, that’s not remotely possible, and you’ve become just as much a tormentor as him. Now, all I ask, all I’ll ever want again, and all I will have, is an end to this. How is that selfish?”

“Okay, okay, I understand,” Sauli said quickly, raising a hand as an effort to calm me. “It will end, after you join with Adam. No one has to die!”

I let out a short, sarcastic laugh. “Yes, yes we do. All of us,” I insisted. “The thread between me and Adam has almost completely frayed. There’s no way we could find a way to join us in time. I don’t know what’ll happen when we split, and I don’t intend on risking it. I can’t physically destroy this body, but Adam can. You’re the only reason he would.”

“He would never let you win like that.”

“He’s weak, he would. He can’t help it. That’s just how his side is. Despite how happy-go-lucky he can be, he’s also insanely suicidal because he’s fragile. You’re my only ticket out now. End of story.” Yet, apparently, he still thought this was all up for negotiation.

“But—”

Practically snarling, I slammed my fist out of angered impatience on the counter and expertly threw the knife at Sauli’s head. It rushed by his head, so close it sliced a few hairs before stabbing into the wooden cabinet behind him. Sauli froze and stared at me wide-eyed. I could practically hear his heart restart.


“Oh my god,” he squeaked, whirling around to see the knife stuck in the wood still vibrating from the impact. “You’re serious.”

I took his momentary distraction to my advantage and vaulted over the counter, sliding over the smooth surface, and grabbing Sauli by the throat as soon as I was on my feet and before he could fully turn back around. I slammed him into the wall by the stabbed cabinet and he yelped. I jerked the knife out of the wood and repositioned it on Sauli’s neck. He gasped and squirmed uselessly, pulling fiercely at my hold on his neck and attempting to twist away. This time, I made sure he
couldn’t knee me by stepping on his feet. I increased the pressure on the knife, watching it break skin and feeling my heart start to pound when the first small trickle of blood seeped out.

Sauli’s face paled in fear and he thrashed just once out of desperation, yelling, “Dark, no!” but it cost him when he sliced his own neck deeper on the knife. He cried out in pain and stilled immediately. I finally tore my gaze off his eyes and looked at the crimson blade before bringing it up to my lips and licking it once, relishing in the feeling of the metallic liquid trickling down my throat.

“You don’t want to do this, Dark,” he begged, his eyes as big as saucers as he pleaded, “please, I love you.”

I hesitated for a moment, heart flipping, not expecting those words. In that same moment, my head raced through hundreds of hopeful situations, but my short-lived high died down fast as I assured myself that he didn’t really mean it. Unless his speech yesterday was a fallacy, this bastard still thought he could toy with me.

“You’re worse than I am.” I shook my head with disgust and glared sharply at him. “Lying to get what you want. You manipulative little piece of shit.” I felt my rage boil. There was a dreaded feeling nagging heavily in my chest that I didn’t understand. “Do you think this is a joke!” I snarled. “I could kill you right now and laugh while doing it!”

I squeezed his throat tighter in a death grip, his warm blood from the shallow cut running down between my fingers.

“Not… lying,” Sauli choked.

I wanted to believe him. I really did, but it didn’t even matter now. He would still pick the other fucker over me any day. I couldn’t blame him for it. Look at what I was doing to him even now. It wasn’t as if I could live a domestic life. I wasn’t created for that. This— I watched lustfully as a small stream of blood ran down my wrist— was all I was good for.

I pulled the knife away from his skin, only to then whip Sauli onto the ground by the throat. He collided hard but no sound escaped his lips, only clutching at the small wound on his neck. I followed him down immediately and straddled him, trapping him beneath me. Before he could attempt to throw me off, I extended my arm, grazing the skin under his jaw with the point of the knife as a warning. He ignored it and was about to attempt to smack the knife away from his throat with his free hand, but before he did, I immediately turned the blade as he swing his hand, letting him slice deeply into his own knuckles. Sauli gasped out in pain and clutched his bloody, trembling knuckles, letting go of his slowly bleeding neck and staring up at me with nothing but pure fear and betrayal.

“I could just go along with my original plan,” I mused, ignoring how much the pained look on his face really bothered me, and gently drew patterns into his skin using the knife tip with the slowly oozing blood from his neck. “Might as well go out with a bang—literally. I should just rip off all of your clothes, and have you my way, begging for mercy and crying for me to stop as I pound into you until your bones break and you’re nothing but a broken, destroyed whore, and then I’ll kill you.”

Sauli’s eyes moistened and tears overflowed. I almost felt nothing, numbed by the overbearing pressure of how much I felt, and drunk on his blood like my entire creation’s purpose. “You’ve changed though,” he whispered. “You won’t do that.”

I raised an eyebrow at him for a moment, considering, and then I gave him a sad smile as I pet his cheek with the side of the bloody blade. “You’re right,” I admitted sadly. “I won’t.”
Without another moment’s notice, I swung the blade behind me and swiftly dug it into Sauli’s thigh. His back arched to the extreme and he howled in pain, but my face remained stoic as I twisted the knife in his flesh like a screwdriver.

“Stop!” he cried, thrashing under me. “Please!”

Though he couldn’t see it, his yells of agony clawed at my chest, regardless of how hard I tried to convince myself that I didn’t care and was enjoying this. I jerked out the knife from his flesh and turned the bloody blade toward my own chest just to test if I could end this for myself now. I took a few deep breaths, tuning out Sauli’s cries, and then with all of my might, I pulled the blade toward my chest with both hands. I squeezed my eyes shut and waited for the impalement, but an inch before the knife could puncture me, my arms suddenly froze on their own accord. I snapped open my eyes and stared down at my arms straining as they tried to shove the knife into myself, but no matter how much they shook with effort, my arms wouldn’t budge any closer. I let out a sound of frustration, releasing the angry breath I’d been holding in, although I wasn’t even surprised. I was right. I still couldn’t kill this body. It hardly belonged to me. I couldn’t even control these arms as much as I deserved.

“See this?” I said in a rough voice, gesturing with a jerk of my head to my quivering yet frozen arms still straining to shove the knife into myself but not moving a centimeter closer. Sauli shook as he struggled to look at my shaking hands through teary eyes. “I can’t do it myself, but I could spare you,” I offered, hoping to every god that he would take me up on this and save me the horror of watching him die, “if you take this knife, and end me yourself.”

Sauli’s body continued to shake from the pain and he coughed before spitting out, “Never.”

Fucking fool. Nevertheless, obviously, he’d rather die than kill his precious mentally deranged Adam.

I shook my head in disgust and then sighed when I dropped my arms. I breathed heavily, tired from struggling so hard. It was next to impossible to injure myself, but this, cutting up Sauli, the very thing that had been my only attachment to this world, was so damn easy. How cruel. I was allowed to kill the one I desired but not myself to end the pain.

My eyes flashed with dismay and irritation, mind clouding over again. I tightened my grip on the knife before suddenly jamming the knife back into Sauli’s same oozing wound on his thigh. He arched and cried out in agony, unable to stop me with his hands at the risk of me chopping them off, settling for cupping his bleeding throat. He wasn’t a complete idiot after all.

I jerked it back out and then repeated the same thing to his other thigh, shoving it into his flesh, feeling the slight resistance against the blade at the moment of contact before it sliced through and sank in deep. I twisted the knife to drive it in deeper. Sauli kept yelling out, crying, and desperately trying to throw me off, but my mind was in a haze, tuning reality out. I could feel Adam’s mind starting to stir, called by Sauli’s voice in extremely high levels of distress. I was running out of time. Even unconscious, he could react to Sauli. He really was connected to him. Mentally, I sighed with dread and even envy.

I pulled the knife out and chucked it to the side, climbing off a flailing Sauli who immediately curled into a ball and clutched at his wounded legs, smearing the blood pooling on the kitchen floor. I stared at the depressingly pathetic mess he was for a moment. He was shaking violently and alternating between letting out little gasps and whimpers of pain as he gripped onto his thighs in a fetal position, hands completely drenched in his own blood up to his wrists.

Forcing myself to feel nothing, or at the very least act like I felt nothing, I grabbed the back of his
shirt collar roughly and started to drag Sauli through the kitchen, leaving blood smears, and ignoring his whimpers and short breaths of pain. At least now, he wasn’t trying to fight me or get away. Maybe he was too concerned with the presumably agonizing pain in his thighs, or maybe he finally wanted this to be over more quickly. It didn’t really matter. I kept my eyes locked on the backyard doors, hardly able to look at him and look at what I had done to him.

I decided just now that I wasn’t going to kill him by slitting his throat; it was far too quick. I was just making this up as I went, although I knew I wanted him to feel at least some of the misery and torment I’d lived with for the past decade summed up in this short moment. I wanted his death to be fast and effective, like a balancing act. With his legs rendered useless now, I wondered how well he could swim? That would definitely drag this out a little more.

I slid the backyard door open and pulled Sauli roughly through it, his bloodied legs smacking the doorframe in the process. He yelped aloud into his knees, still curled up. I dragged him through the grass, leaving a trail of blood as we reached the edge of the pool. I stared at it, tuning out Sauli’s noises. I watched the water sway gently, rippling softly, for a moment of peace before this became too real.

I let go of Sauli’s collar and kneeled down beside him, fighting the lump in my throat at the sight of his shaking, bloody body. He flinched when I ran a red hand through his sweaty hair, brushing it out of his straining face, before reaching under his shoulders and the backs of his legs and hoisting him up. Sauli hissed out in pain. I stood swiftly and held him cradled to my chest, and all I could do was stare at him for a long moment. Now I wasn’t sure whose body was trembling more.

Any anger and excitement in my mind cleared, making me completely aware of just what exactly I was doing right now. Unable to fight it any longer or keep up a mask, my eyes betrayed overflowing tears, running shamefully down my cheeks as I stared at Sauli. The cool air stung at my damp cheeks. Sauli looked up at me and noticed my expression with wide eyes.

“Dark?” His broken voice was filled with alarm.

“I’m sorry,” I whispered, giving him the sincerest apologetic look I could manage. “You’re perfect,” I said it like it was a bad thing, “and we’ve wasted you.”

“Dark?” he repeated louder, more panicked now.

I took a deep, shuddering breath and did what I had to do. Gathering up my strength, I swayed and stepped up to the very edge of the pool. Sauli looked down and started flailing around desperately, protesting loudly, and then crying out when he moved his wounded legs. Then, without another warning, I tossed him into the middle of the pool and watched as he crashed into the water below, blurring as the water engulfed him. I felt sick as the water immediately started turning crude shades of pink and red, all peacefulness about it gone.

Sauli’s arms splashed around desperately, resurfacing him and keeping him afloat as he coughed violently and gasped for air, but it wouldn’t be long before he tired out and his wounded legs acted as anchors. I stayed unmoving by the edge, ensuring he wouldn’t be able to grab onto the ledge. Soon enough, his desperate splashing turned minimal, his muscles already tired out from struggling so much earlier. I stared blankly and slowly sank to my knees, unable to keep myself standing any longer as the guilt and aching became too much to bear.

I had already known that if I were to do this, I’d feel miserable, but I wasn’t expecting it to be this bad. Just the sheer level of anguish that felt as if it were crushing me from the inside out was too much, making me suffer to the point where it was unbearable, yet I still felt like it wasn’t enough. I wanted to beat myself within an inch of my life repeatedly until my soul was skinned alive for this.
I’d never felt so much at such an intensity. I’d never thought I would hate myself more than I did Adam. Why was I reacting like this? Why did I have to fight the overwhelming urge to jump in there and save the life that I was so determined to take? He was nothing but poison to me, so why?

Sauli’s struggling stopped altogether, his loss of blood and his wounded legs taking their toll. I stared as his unconscious body sank down into the red tinted water, almost disappearing from sight. I started to inch forward, but caught myself.

Suddenly, a sharp pain shot through my head as Adam’s mind started to wake up and force its way out. My eyebrows rose. He’d never been able take over on his own before, normally hilariously weak. I guessed Sauli’s mortal danger brought out some strength in his subconscious instincts, and apparently, they were furious. I winced as another sharp jolt attacked my head like a migraine from hell. I couldn’t hold on any longer. I didn’t want to. I didn’t even try to fight it when Adam’s mind shoved itself forward. I welcomed it.

Adam:

I was woken up to the sharp, pungent smell of something metallic invading my nose and slowly bringing me out of a daze. When my eyes flashed open from alarm, the very first thing that entered my vision was my own ordinary backyard pool, but my brow crinkled when I noticed the pink water. My thoughts and concerns were foggy. Did Sauli put food coloring in there? Another wave vomit-inducing smell of thick, metallic heaviness caught my attention. Where in the hell was that coming from? I was still a bit lightheaded, unable to think clearly. My hands curled into fists and I frowned at their surprising wetness. Casually, I glanced down at them, expecting pool water, but I gasped aloud and immediately gagged when I saw that they were almost completely painted in deep red, the source of the heavy smell.

Confusion and panic clawed at my chest. I frantically looked down at the rest of me. There were dark stains on various parts of my clothes, but I wasn’t in any pain and I didn’t have any gaping wounds. This couldn’t be my blood. My eyes snapped to the pool directly in front of me and widened as blaring alarms went off in my clearing head. That wasn’t food coloring either. It was diluted blood. The last trace of fogginess escaped my mind, allowing me to make more sense of what was going on. The very moment I did was the same moment I noticed the darker figure within the middle of the calm water that rippled around it. I squinted, trying to make out the shape. When I realized that this figure had limbs and when I caught sight of a few bubbles rising from it, everything clicked into place in my mind and I suddenly screamed so loudly I thought I woke up the dead.

I immediately scrambled to my feet, catching myself before I fell over from the dizziness, and then without the slightest hesitation, I leapt right into the bloody water. Not wasting any time to shiver at the cold bite of the water or pay attention to the urge to vomit from how disgusting this was, I splashed wildly as I made my way over to the body, careful not to swallow any of the water. Taking a deep breath, I dunked myself under the surface and dove down toward the mass. Once I reached the body and realized who it was, I had to suppress my rage and worry, needing to focus on just getting him out for now. I couldn’t risk panicking and scream gasping therefore inhaling a lungful of bloody water. I wrapped my arm around his waist gingerly and pulled him to my chest, immediately kicking at the water and forcing our way back to sweet air once he was securely locked within my grasp.

We broke the water’s surface and I gasped for air, then maneuvering him to be at arm’s length as I held him by the biceps and looked at him. Instead of returning my gaze, his head lolled limply to the side. I shook him lightly, my breaths becoming shallower. I brushed his soaked hair out of his face.
and tried again, calling out his name desperately as his unresponsiveness made me more nauseous. Unable to hold back the panicked tears stinging in my eyes, I rewrapped my arm around his waist snugly and pulled us over to the edge of the pool before hoisting him up to safety on the lush grass, his legs still dangling in the water. I pulled myself out completely, shivering as cool air welcomed me back, and then gently dragged him far away from the water. I caught sight of the trail of blood leading from the backyard doors to the edge of the pool. My stomach churned. I didn’t even want to know what kind of mess was waiting for me back inside the house.

I kneeled down by his head, staring down at his peaceful and beautiful face, waiting for his eyes to open. There was a shallow-looking cut on Sauli’s neck, bleeding lightly enough not to raise mass panic. I took his cold hand in both of mine, squeezing it gently, both comforting and warming him. A strange trickle of liquid heat ran from his fingers into my palms. Confused, I opened up my clasp on his hand and cursed aloud when I realized his knuckles were sliced open and bleeding as well. I briefly wondered if it was worth it to run inside and grab something to wrap up his hand and throat with, but decided against it. My priority now was to get him to wake up. A little bit of bleeding wasn’t going to kill him.

“Sauli, baby, come on,” I murmured as I gently patted his cheek. “Wake up.”

When he didn’t show any hint of moving, I found myself shaking with worry before letting out a whimper. I grabbed his wrist and checked his pulse. Please, please, where was it? Where—there. It was weak but it was there. He was alive for now, and I had to work quickly. Okay, okay, so CPR or something. I could do that. I learned how to do it… seven years ago. Fuck. Whatever. I had to try.

Okay, first part. I had to get the water out of his lungs. No doubt, he’d swallowed a bucketful. I tipped Sauli’s head back and lowered my face over his before pinching his nose and sealing my mouth over his. His lips felt cold and cracked. Taking a deep breath through my nose, I blew air hard into his lungs. I pulled back up and stared at him for a moment, muttering, “Come on, come on,” repeatedly, before leaning back down and trying again twice.

I panted, pulling back, and suddenly, Sauli coughed roughly and started choking when a fountain of water rushed out of his lungs. Almost excitedly, I turned his head to the side so it could all drain out. I let out a small sigh of intense relief. He cringed, groaning out in pain, and still didn’t open his eyes.

“Sauli?” I tried, hoping my voice would coax him awake and calm him.

He winced in agony and his small frame started trembling. I stared at him worriedly. What else was there? I’d cleared out his lungs. Why wasn’t he opening his eyes?

Another strong wave of the scent of blood filled my nostrils, making me lightheaded. I almost forgot about that. I glanced at his hand, but it couldn’t be coming from his cut knuckles. My eyes flickered over his body, checking for anything wrong, and I did a double take when I saw his thighs. Two holes in either pant leg were oozing fresh, gleaming blood. I quickly took a closer look, gasping when I realized they were stab wounds. My hands started shaking violently. How did this happen?

What a stupid question. I knew exactly how.

But how could he? I mean, I knew his I’m good now and I have wimpy feelings for Sauli act was bullshit, but still, to do something like this… How could he ever? He had to have some compassion, didn’t he? I never thought he’d seriously have the nerve to go through with this, not after everything Sauli had done for his sorry ass. What in the hell made him do this?

I thought back hard to what had happened before I’d blacked out. Something… something Dark and I were talking about. Joining together… he had refused and said something after I had told him I was
“Not yet you’re not,” he had insisted, “but you will be.” The color drained from my face as the conversation came back to me. “I guess I’ll just have to give you in an incentive to put us both out of our misery.”

My hands curled into fists and I let out a frustrated shout. This was his idea of an incentive? How dare he? I was about to force him conscious so I could scream at him, but I hesitated when I realized he already was conscious, but just barely, only watching everything I was seeing with an unreadable expression. My fury peaked at his arrogant nonchalance. He almost killed Sauli for fuck’s sake and he looked bored.

Speaking of whom, Sauli whimpered out in pain below me. My heart ached for him. I couldn’t imagine the horror he’d just faced and I couldn’t be there to protect him because I was the one hurting him. How did it feel to stare at my face while I tried to murder him?

“You asshole!” I suddenly screamed at Dark. “I can’t fucking believe you!” He didn’t react in the slightest. If anything, his pale face went a shade whiter and the dark circles under his eyes darker. Wait, he didn’t look bored; he looked sick. Good.

Sauli flinched under me, probably thinking I was yelling at him. At least I knew he could hear me.

“Sauli, sorry, baby, I’ll be right back,” I urged him quickly. “You’re going to be alright.”

I stood up and ran inside the house, gasping loudly and backtracking into the doorframe as soon as I saw the interior. Blood stained the kitchen floor and the murder weapon glinted wickedly nearby. Overwhelmed by horror for a few moments, I forced myself to breathe and focus. Gauze, gauze, I thought quickly. I didn’t think I had any gauze to wrap him up. I needed to improvise. Thinking quick on my feet and avoiding stepping in the blood in the kitchen, I ran to my bedroom and tore the sheets off the bed. I tore them into long strips as quickly as my strength would allow. I rushed back to Sauli, still ripping apart sections on my way. I didn’t glance at the blood again as I sprinted out into the backyard, but there was no way to avoid the fresh blood as I sank down onto my knees by Sauli, feeling the liquid seep into my pants. I held back several gags.

Ignoring my discomfort, I examined Sauli’s wounds, not sure where to begin, and felt my blood boil. I’d done this to him, maybe not mentally, but still by my hand. I couldn’t stand the thought. I would never let anything like this happen again.

Sauli hissed in pain when I tentatively reached out to lift his bloody thigh slightly in order to wrap his leg. I lowered it immediately.

“Sauli, Sauli, look at me,” I begged, trying to figure out where I could touch him that wouldn’t cause him agony. “It’s me.”

Sauli struggled to look up at me as his consciousness returned slowly, his eyes opening slightly to peer up at me. I smiled down reassuringly at him, though it was forced. The color was fading from his face. He was losing too much blood, and I didn’t even know how long he’d been in the pool or how long ago Dark had stabbed him. He would not survive this if I did not act now, and trying to stay calm was a challenge.


Hearing his weak voice hurt, but it was still his voice, and it meant he was alive. My jaw set hard and I turned toward his wounds, focused on the task, determined to keep him alive. I prepared a strip of
cloth and lifted his thigh slightly. Sauli grunted, but I had to ignore the pain in his voice. I needed to keep going.

“This is the last straw,” I declared fiercely as I tried my hardest to get the sheets wrapped around Sauli’s oozing wound without moving him too much.

He hummed weakly in question.

“I can’t stand another day of this.” My voice was shaky. I pulled a knot tight and Sauli winced. “I won’t let him do anything like this to you anymore.”

The important thing was to get this bleeding controlled or I was going to lose him. I’d be the one held responsible for his murder. Once I had one thigh wrapped in thick, tight layers of white sheets to the point where the last layer wasn’t seeping through with blood, I moved onto his other leg.

“It-t-t’s okay,” Sauli sputtered, struggling to breathe. He ended up hacking coughs into his arm.

“Be quiet,” I commanded, glaring at him for wasting his breath and forcing himself to speak. I continued firmly, “And no. I’m done. I don’t want to hear it. I’m completely finished. I was being lenient when I let you stay here to help, and continued letting you try to help even after everything he’s done to you, but now, this happened. No more. I can’t do this. I can’t watch you get hurt anymore.” My voice cracked on the last part.

He didn’t say anything, and his eyes had squeezed shut, cringing while I worked. While wrapping him up, Sauli cried out a few times, and I would apologize repeatedly, but sometimes, I’d accidentally make a rough movement I was sure would cause a reaction, and Sauli would just lay still as if he was dead. I would almost have a heart attack every time that happened, but I tried to keep my panicking under control whenever he slipped in and out of consciousness.

I pulled the final knot tight. Both legs were wrapped thickly and securely, blood still not showing through the outermost layers. Once his legs were finished, I used the final and thinnest strips of bed sheet to wrap up Sauli’s bleeding knuckles, kissing his covered fingers once completed, and then moving on to gently wrap his neck. I slumped back to check over my handiwork and allowed myself a sigh of relief. Now that his bleeding was under control, I had to get him to the hospital.

I glanced at Sauli’s face. He was unconscious again. I swallowed the lump in my throat and placed a fierce kiss on his sweaty forehead before hooking my arms under his knees and his shoulders and gently swooping him up to my chest bridal-style. He felt strangely light. He winced in pain, slightly aware once more, and I kissed his head again, muttering apologies helplessly. He reeked of blood and his pants were nearly completely soaked with it. Sauli’s head lolled back, losing consciousness yet again.

I ran, hurrying to the garage without jostling Sauli too much. I placed him carefully in the backseat of my car, not thinking twice about the very permanent stains. Cars were replaceable, Sauli wasn’t. I rushed to the driver’s side and jumped into the seat, starting the engine up before I was even settled in. I stomped on it, driving like a total maniac and completely ignoring any speed limits and signs. The hospital wasn’t too far away, but I needed to get there now. I sped over unavoidable potholes and winced when I heard Sauli whimper in pain from where he lay being jostled in the backseat. I peered up at him through the rear-view mirror. My heart sank at the sight of his bloodied face and legs.

I could’ve sworn I thought I saw Dark wince lightly too.

My hands tightened on the steering wheel, smearing blood. I wanted to murder the son of a bitch.
When we finally arrived, I wasted no time in picking up Sauli, albeit gently, and running through the front doors of emergency.

“Somebody, help me!” I yelled into the waiting room, getting the attention of everyone there.

Several people gasped, including a few nurses that rushed to my aid. One ran over to a phone and called for a stretcher, and less than a minute later, one arrived. I gently placed a soft kiss on Sauli’s cheek before laying him on top of it, minding his legs. One nurse immediately started recording his vital signs while another asked me about current medical complaints, past medical problems, medications, and allergies. I hardly paid attention to her, answering hurriedly and impatiently, my eyes glued to Sauli the entire time as he was wheeled off.

Once he was out of sight, worry clenched at my chest. I didn’t really know for sure what condition he’d be in the next time I saw him. My head was in a dismayed haze, but two nurses kept asking me if I was okay, and I would unintentionally snap at them or insist I was fine.

“What exactly happened?” One suddenly asked me calmly and I froze for a moment.

I couldn’t tell them what really happened, could I? I stared at her curious face for a moment, before blinking and robotically telling her, “Someone broke in, attacked him, and tried to drown him while I wasn’t home.” At least it wasn’t a complete lie.

She nodded and scurried off in the same direction as Sauli, leaving me with the other horrible nurse who kept talking about the paperwork I needed to do. I tuned her out, staring down the empty hallway. My throat became thick and my chest felt heavy. Breathing suddenly became very difficult as the nausea swayed my vision, and the smell of blood once again became overwhelming.

“—Where’s the washroom?” I cut the nurse off in strained voice, still not looking away from the hall.

She frowned in annoyance, but gave me the directions anyway. I bitterly thanked her and half ran, half stumbled down a different hall, bursting through the washroom door and making my way over to the toilet, unable to stomach the blood all over me anymore. I vomited violently into the bowl, sobbing once there was nothing left in my stomach to empty out. I breathed heavily over the toilet, my breaths dense and strained. My eyes and throat burned. Shaking, I stood up and paid a visit to the sink, clawing at my hands and arms with soap until they were raw, gagging hard when I watched the crimson swirls run down the sink. I still couldn’t get rid of the smell. It was a constant reminder of what I’d done.

I looked up at the mirror and was quite disturbed by what I saw. Besides the streaked blood on my cheek, my eyes had dulled to a flat color with dark circles beneath them, and my skin had paled to an ivory tone. I looked sickly and exhausted.

I looked like Dark.

Horrified, I immediately scrubbed at my face with my hands, wiping off the blood, and hoping I could remove any trace of him. I looked back up and was disappointed to find that nothing had changed. If it weren’t for my blue eyes, I’d practically be him. Despair filled me and I sank to my knees on the washroom floor, realizing that I could never escape from Dark, not mentally, not physically, and not ever. I couldn’t escape from myself.

Minutes later, I didn’t wait in the lobby like everyone else. I locked myself in a stall and just cried, letting go of all the anger, guilt, and worry wreaking havoc inside me. I wasn’t even completely sure how much they could help Sauli, with all the blood he’d lost and water that filled his lungs and all. Something told me I’d made it in time and he’d be fine, at least eventually, but that was this time.
One thing was for sure, there was no way in hell I was ever letting something like this happen again. I was going to do whatever it took to keep Dark from attacking anyone ever again. I’d rather die than let him get near Sauli. I’d rather die than become one with him. Joining now mean that I would seriously be the one that attempted murder on my own boyfriend.

I was woken up gently in the nearly empty lobby a few hours later after I’d finished crying in the washroom. A nurse told me I could see Sauli now and that he was okay for the most part. According to her, he’d suffered great blood loss and of course, the damage to his thighs from the knife. He wouldn’t be able to walk properly until they healed, but at least he was alive. It was almost hard to feel relief when the exhaustion was so overpowering. She said that he’d have to stay here for a couple of days, just in case complications arise because the first forty-eight hours after drowning were the most dangerous, and he was also running the risk of infections. After the horrid piece of information, she gave me the directions to his room and I was immediately on my way.

I heard two voices from inside the room, one unfamiliar and one that meant a world of happiness to me. I hesitated just out of sight by the open door and listened.

“You need to tell us the truth,” the unfamiliar voice insisted quietly. “If he did this to you, you don’t have to be afraid to tell us. We’d protect you from him.”

I cocked an eyebrow. They weren’t talking about me, were they?

When I heard Sauli’s musical voice, even when it was croaking and raw sounding, it warmed my heart, lifted my spirits, and evaporated my exhaustion. I didn’t know what I’d do if I never heard it again.

“He didn’t!” Sauli exclaimed weakly. “I already told you. Some random lowlife broke into our house and tried to kill me.”

Oh good, so far we had the same story. That would make it easier to get out of here without too many questions asked.

“Then why is he covered in your blood?”

I looked down at my clothes. Shit. I’d probably been scaring people, walking around the hospital looking like a freshly turned zombie. I’d completely forgotten that I was caked with Sauli’s dried blood, but come on. That was mostly because I’d carried him here.

“Because he carried me all the way here!”

An amused, small smile pulled at my lips.

“Look, I saw him in the waiting room, and honestly, he seems a bit psychotic,” the other person stated and I frowned, “and something tells me he’s threatened you so you won’t tell us what really happened.”

My eyes narrowed. I would never threaten Sauli. Okay, so maybe I was psychotic, but I would never hurt Sauli… Well, at least this part of me wouldn’t. I sighed sadly. It really didn’t matter that it wasn’t me doing it. Technically, it was still me… I sounded clinically insane no matter how I worded this.

“Maybe he seems psychotic to you because, oh I don’t know—I was stabbed? He’s freaking out!” Sauli said exasperatedly. “If he did it, why on Earth would he bring me here?”

“Out of panic?” the other person stated lamely.
Sauli said nothing for a moment. I could just imagine the scowl he was shooting right now.

“Look, I appreciate everything you’ve done for me and your concern, but please, just let me rest,” Sauli told him. “Adam would never harm me. I just want to see him.”

Guilt filled me to the point where it was painful. He was lying for me, protecting me when I didn’t deserve it. If he’d just told them the truth, or technical truth, and told them I had attacked him, this would be all over. I wouldn’t hold it against him. I’d be locked away somewhere where Dark couldn’t get to him.

“But—”

I knocked on the doorframe, peering in, purposefully cutting the person off from annoying Sauli further. The first thing I saw was Sauli lying on the hospital bed, legs elevated and rewrapped expertly in gauze. He peered up at me through tired, irritated eyes that immediately brightened at the sight of me. I bit back tears. How could he be so happy to see me? Next to him, was the source of the other voice, who wasn’t the investigator I assumed, but his doctor apparently? I fought a glare, and he didn’t bother to hold one back.

“Sorry to interrupt,” I said stiffly, “but I’d like to talk with my boyfriend alone, if you don’t mind of course. It almost sounds like you’re stressing the patient, doctor.”

My tone was naïve. I was the picture of perfect innocence. You know, if you closed one eye, squinted with the other, turned your head to the side, and looked past all the crusty blood on my clothes.

The doctor’s eyes narrowed, but he was wordless as he gave a stiff nod, moved away from the bed, and breezed out the door. My spine shivered when his arm brushed coldly against mine. I sighed and promptly closed the door behind him before turning to look at a very weak Sauli.

There was an enormous sense of dreaded Déjà vu and it took everything I had not to fall to my knees and break apart.

“At least you’re not in a coma this time,” I whispered to myself as horrid memories darkened my vision.

I could feel the tug and pull of my mind trying to bring Dark’s forward to deal with the familiar and traumatic situation, but for some reason, Dark seemed to be resisting, almost fighting back. I struggled to keep conscious, forcing myself not to allow the memories to flood my mind, otherwise I’d lose myself to Dark, and who knows what’d he to Sauli in this state. I’d rot in hell before I’d let him out again.

“You okay?” Sauli’s warm voice drew me out of it and the internal struggling stopped. I glanced at his face and he gave me a small smile. “You look pale.”

I answered quietly after a moment of attempting to find my voice. “…Why do you think?”

Sauli frowned with worry at my tone, noticing my slightly horrified and defeated expression, and then realization dawned on his face, followed immediately by guilt.

“I’m sorry,” he said. He was apologizing. What in the hell did he do wrong? Everything was my fault. “Please come here,” he begged. I couldn’t deny him.

I sighed yet again and sluggishly moved closer to him, taking a seat next to the bed, and taking his good hand in both of mine. I squeezed tightly. He was so cold.
“Why are you apologizing?” I asked tiredly.

“For putting you through this… again,” he mumbled, pain flashing in his eyes.

I sighed exasperatedly. It was so like him to feel bad for me. Yes, it was torture for me to see him like this again, but the reason why was much worse to bear.

“You were stabbed and then drowned by me,” I reminded him under my breath, wrongly expecting him to flinch, “and you’re apologizing? I’m completely at fault here.”

Sauli looked away. “It wasn’t you,” he muttered lamely. “It was Dark.” At this point, I thought we both knew how stupid that sounded.

It was quiet for a long minute after that. I stared at Sauli’s hand clasped in mine and listened to the steady beating of his heart on the monitor. I glanced up curiously when I heard him sigh sharply.

“You can say it you know,” he told me quietly.

“What?” I cocked an eyebrow at him.

“It’s safe for you to say you told me so. I deserve it.” He sighed again. “Although I really wish you hadn’t been right about him.”

Any other day, I would be gloating with pride,” I said almost amusedly, and then turned serious, “but I have never wanted myself to be more wrong.”

He nodded and then gazed past me. “How could he?” Sauli whispered, sadness ruining whatever was left of the glow on his face.

“I can’t try to understand his reasoning, but he tried to kill you. He actually tried it.” I shook my head angrily. “I knew the day would come, I knew he’d been lying about his crap feelings, but—ugh. If he’s really supposed to be me, I can’t believe he had the nerve to go through with it. How could any part of me ever live with hurting you?”

“Well, I’m alive,” Sauli said meekly, “so technically he didn’t go through with—”

“—Sauli, for fuck’s sake, he tried to kill you. That’s it. It wasn’t one of his sick and twisted games. You really would have died if I hadn’t come out in time. He left you to die. That’s all there is to say. Nothing else matters. You can’t make excuses for him anymore.”

Sauli bit his lip knowingly. He knew there was nothing to argue about. He was finally agreeing with me and realizing what Dark was. He was manipulative and he was heartless. He had no compassion and only had one selfish goal for himself. There was just no changing that parasite. I held Sauli’s gaze for a long time as I thought, coming up with a plan to end this finally, even if it meant letting Dark win. If I could keep Sauli safe, then that was all that mattered to me.

“You need to move out,” I said firmly after a brief silence. Sauli threw me a shocked and confused look at the sudden statement. “I’ll get you a hotel room for now until I can get you a ticket back to Finland. Go home; go see your friends… even Mika. Be safe from me.”

Sauli gave me another look. “Adam, no—”

“—Listen to me.” I squeezed his hand gently, staring into his worried eyes with resigned, exhausted ones. “I’m hurting you. Despite what part of me did it, I almost killed you. How am I any better than my own father if I let myself be okay with that?”
His eyes flashed with fear at the mention of my father, but he quickly recovered. “But it’s not you!” he insisted. “It’s not your fault!”

“Dark, Light, whatever. It’s me. It’s all me. I’ve accepted that. You should be happy,” I said lightly, remembering my haggard appearance in the mirror. That had been the moment where it had all clicked one hundred percent, no matter how much I wished I could still deny it.

Sauli gave me a frustrated look. “But—”

I cut him off and continued more seriously. “—You walked into my life a decade ago and were hospitalized. I thought I lost you, and it very nearly killed me. You come into my life once more by some miracle, and still you end up here. I’ve had to learn my lesson twice. At least let me do the right thing now. Let me keep you safe.” Sauli opened his mouth, but knowing what he was about to protest, I immediately continued, “Just please. I can’t see you like this again. I just can’t.”

“…I know you can’t,” he admitted sadly with a sigh.

His eyes moistened and he looked away. With a frown, I reached out and cupped his cheek, turning his head toward me again, and wiping a single tear that threatened to run down his cheek with my thumb.

I went on gently, gazing into his glistening blue eyes. “I can’t stand the thought knowing that one of these days, he’ll try to kill you again, even if unintentionally, because it’s just in his nature, and this time, I won’t make it back out in time. Please don’t put me through that. I can’t live if you die, but if I’m the one responsible for your death? I don’t even know what I’ll do. No punishment would be enough.”

Sauli stared back into my eyes, searching for whatever. I kept my expression serious and sincere. Eventually, he sighed with dismay.

“I know, but…” he mumbled weakly, “I can’t leave you like this.”

“It’s just until you’re not at risk anymore, alright? I’ll come back for you when I’m better and Dark’s completely gone,” I added quickly, sweetening the deal, trying to get him onboard somewhat. “You only tempt him. I need to do this alone.”


“I’ll admit myself to an institution. They can help,” I assured him and then frowned. “My career will pretty much be over when people find out I went to a nuthouse… but I don’t care. It’s what’s best for me. We’ll keep in touch. I’ll call you every single day.”

Sauli stared at me for a long moment before finally giving in and sighing for the hundredth time, “Okay, fine… but it’s only for a little while, right? You’ll make sure you get help and then you come straight to me.”

I nodded, not trusting my words.

Sauli relaxed into his pillow, satisfied. “Good.” Then he glanced at the door. “You know they’re suspicious of you, right?” he whispered.

“I heard.” I followed his eye, grateful for the change of topic. “God, I hope none of them recognized me.”

“I seriously doubt that,” he muttered.
“Here come the rumors then,” I rolled my eyes. “Fuck.”

“It’ll be fine.” He grinned. “They’re professionals. This should all be confidential.”

“You’re probably right.” I forced a smile. “Though I did kind of cause a scene in the lobby bringing you in…”

Sauli shrugged. “Well it’s not like you can be incognito every time you leave the house. This was an emergency. Just relax. Not everyone is out to get you.”

“Yeah,” I said unsurely, looking away and glancing at his wrapped legs before hesitantly asked, “Are you in pain?”

Sauli shook his head. “Nah,” he replied. “They’ve got me so loaded with painkillers, I can’t feel anything.”

I smiled slightly, grateful he wasn’t hurting.

“It looks like you’re in good hands then.” I glanced at the clock. “So, just rest for now. I’ll be back when they release you in a couple of days.”

“Promise?” Sauli said, sounding worried.

I just leaned in a pressed a chaste but urgent kiss against his chapped lips. My eyes stung and my reply lodged in my throat. I pulled away and leaned in by his ear.

“I love you more than anything, even my own life,” I told him quietly, sincerely. “Goodbye.” I got up and turned away before Sauli could see my glistening eyes.

“Adam?” Sauli called out for me. I paused but didn’t turn. “You didn’t promise.”

My hands curled into fists and I continued out the door, ignoring Sauli’s worried calls.

I wasn’t going to ruin Sauli’s life. Not again. No way in hell was I going to let him die because of me. I’d take that spot any day. Whatever the cost, I’d keep him safe. I would do the right thing this time.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are fawned over.
Happy post-Valentine's day! I think this chapter is fitting. Kind of. Here are 11,259 words for your entertainment.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sauli:

It was irritating to flip through everything sitting in my suitcase, making sure all of my possessions were present. Of course, my plan had been to pack everything by myself, complete with a checklist and a ceiling to floor scan of every room in Adam’s house, but no, that never actually happened.

On the day of my hospital release, the last thing I’d been expecting was for a nurse to tell me that a chauffeur was waiting for me at the entrance, not Adam. I’d been disappointed to say the least; the slow-building excitement of seeing him again after a few days too long fizzled out pathetically the moment the nurse had told me.

The disappointment had been accompanied by a nagging confusion about a half hour later when I’d glanced out of the sleek limo Adam had prepared for me to find that I was being dropped off at some hotel. I’d muttered some sort of thanks when my chauffeur handed me my suitcase that had apparently already been packed by Adam, and when I’d tried to tip the driver, he’d assured me that Adam already had that covered as well. Adam hadn’t followed through with any of what he’d said to me at the hospital, which was worrying since he really wasn’t one to lie to my face. All I wanted was to see him again before I left him here alone to fight this on his own.

Adam had gotten everything sorted out in my suitcase. Even my flight ticket was in there, tied to my passport. He’d thought of everything, hadn’t he? Why exactly I was in a hotel room now and not at Adam’s house without any contact from him was unnerving. I tried to convince myself that something urgent had come up and he couldn’t come get me himself or have me dropped off at his home. He must’ve had a damn good reason. Therefore, instead of hopping on a taxi and bursting through his front door accusatorily, I obliged with this turn of events and decided just to trust him.

From kneeling over the suitcase on the floor, I attempted to stand up in one quick motion, and failed miserably when I hissed in pain and slammed back down to the hardwood onto my knees and cursed loudly at the resulting jolt of agony.


My doctor had been wary about letting me leave the hospital so soon with such fresh wounds, but knowing fully well that they couldn’t legally keep me there against my will, I’d insisted that I could take care of myself. So far, I was completely failing at that. The painkillers had worn off and I’d forgotten the rest of them in the hospital’s restroom. They were perpetually aching dully in a way that I could ignore, but the pain was most excruciating when I’d simply forget what condition they were in and just acted without thinking, straining them. Constantly, I was moving my legs too fast or putting too much weight on them.

Taking a few deep breaths, I slowly urged myself up, supporting my weight with my hand on the
edge of a nearby table. My knees wobbled as I straightened up. My thighs were still wrapped in
gauze underneath my pants, but at least they were stitched up and healing, slowly but surely.
Unfortunately, for now, it was impossible to do anything painlessly.

I limped around the room, chucking everything back into my suitcase, all the while cursing myself
out for having thrown everything out over my shoulder while checking them off in my head in the
first place. I’d been trying to make sure everything was here, and they were, Adam was very
thorough apparently, but I hadn’t realized I’d actually have to walk around the room and pick
everything back up again. At least there wasn’t much to pack. I didn’t bother with folding or neatly
placing anything to save time. I ended up just balling everything up and throwing them into the
suitcase, feeling slightly guilty for messing up Adam’s pristine folding and care.

I scowled when my legs threatened to give out on me already, exhausted. I knew I wasn’t helping
the healing process in the slightest by standing around so much, but I didn’t have much of a choice.
They could shut the hell up and rest when I was sitting on a plane to Helsinki for god knows how
many hours. I threw the last of my crap into the suitcase and closed it before eagerly moving to the
bed to lie down for a minute, but before I dove into the inviting bedding, there was a tense knock at
the door. I mentally groaned and glared sharply at the door.

“Not today!” I called out, assuming there was a maid at the door. I checked the clock on the wall and
frowned. This wasn’t the usual time.

Another series of knocks met my ears in response, more sharply and urgent this time. One hell of an
impatient maid.

I rolled my eyes and limped across the room, calling out loudly, “Coming!” Irritated to the point of
twitching, I flung the door open, impatiently muttering, “I said I don’t need—”

The remainder of the words died down in my throat, my eyes widening to saucer plates when they
trailed up a sturdy body to land on the face of a very familiar figure towering over me, and the hairs
on the back of my neck stood up in terror as his looming aura engulfed me immediately. My blood
ran ice cold. I gasped and staggered back a step, realizing fully well that I was within arm’s reach of
Dark himself and that only meant more pain. I reflexively threw the door as hard I could, attempting
to slam it shut and then planning to barricade the damn thing as if my life depended on it.

Dark’s foot shot out and caught between the door and its frame before it could slam shut. Shit! I
whirled around and shoved at the door with my back and palms pressed flat against it, pushing as
hard as my legs would allow me against his foot, refusing to let that monster get in here. My legs
screamed out in pain at the sudden stress bearing down on them as I pushed against them, but I knew
this pain would be nothing against what would happen if Dark managed to come inside.

“Get out!” I yelled in frustration when he wouldn’t move his foot. It was like a damn brick in the
way. I wanted desperately to kick at his shoe until it dislodged, but I couldn’t risk taking my weight
off the door by swinging either foot.

“Please, Sauli,” I heard Dark say urgently from the other side of the door.

That got me to hesitate, freezing against the door. My name rolling off his lips rang loudly
throughout my head in an unfamiliar echo, almost louder than the sound of my heart hammering
against my ribs.

He’d never said my name before.

Not out loud at least. Not once. He normally just referred to me in some completely degrading way
or just called me Blondie.

Using my hesitation, he continued. “Please,” he repeated, speaking hurriedly and almost nervously. “I won’t do anything. I—I won’t even come in. Believe me—well, I know you can’t, but I just—I’m in control and—” He sighed sharply, sounding frustrated at his own incompetence.

My brow crinkled. I’d never heard him tripping over his own words and sounding so unsure before either. He was always eloquent and confident, almost robotic. This was… well, more human in a way.

“I just need to talk to you,” he said when I didn’t respond.

My focus snapped back and my eyes narrowed to mistrusting slits. I glanced at his foot in the door as I continued firmly pressing against it with my back. “Then talk through the door,” I responded stiffly, trying to keep my voice from wavering out of fear.

“Please.” He sounded almost desperate.

“Why?” I asked suspiciously, my loud voice trembling slightly. “If you just want to talk, this should be fine.”

“Because I’m standing in the hall with my foot in the door and sooner or later someone’s going to walk by and think I’m trying to kill you because you won’t stop yelling through the door.”

“Good,” I hissed before squeezing my eyes shut, taking a few quick breaths before exclaiming even more loudly, “Help me! Anyone, please! This psycho is going to kill me!”

Dark shushed me loudly from the other side. “Sauli, please don’t,” he then half-whispered hurriedly, “I am not going to do anything to you. I won’t even move from the doorway. Just let me see you.”

“See me?” My tone was disbelieving. “You mean laugh at what you’ve done to me?”

Dark was quiet for a moment.

“I’m… sorry,” I could barely hear him, but he sounded pained. He was apologizing? Him. Dark? Seriously?

“Well you weren’t very thorough,” I spat with hatred, clenching my flat palms into fists against the door. “I’m still alive. Come to finish the job?” It sounded like a challenge, but oh god, even my bones were quivering now.

Dark sighed exasperatedly. “Sauli, if I wanted to come in and tear you apart, don’t you think I would have done it by now?”

I frowned to myself, relaxing slightly against the door and realizing there wasn’t even a slight opposing force. Dark was right. He hadn’t actually pushed once against the door this entire time. If he had, with his strength against my current handicap, he could have easily barged in. His foot was just keeping me from slamming the door in his face. I suddenly felt completely pathetic for thinking I was holding my own against him. He could have barged in and silenced me at any time, but he hadn’t, not even when I’d called out for help. Given this, maybe I could hear him out.

I sighed mutely, weighing my options. Well so far, Dark hadn’t tried anything and had actually said my name and apologized. It was all already so unlike him that it drew my curiosity. Moreover, I was in a hotel surrounded by other guests. Dark couldn’t do much to me without others hearing my screams and then being arrested. I reluctantly decided to risk it, even with every instinct telling me
not to move a muscle off this door.

I gulped tightly, and with fear tickling the back of my neck, I willed myself to step away from the door with whatever scraps of courage I could find, but then I immediately bolted across the room to stand in front of the bed, ignoring the shooting agony in my legs. I instantly regretted my decision, panic eating at my nerves as I frantically looked around the room for an escape route already.

The door swung wide open a moment later, and I stared timidly and fearfully at the entire stature of Dark, who looked more like a mess than usual, like his body hadn’t rested in days. I bit my lip, wincing slightly, bracing for him to call out his own bluff and then charge at me, but Dark didn’t budge from the doorway, just as he’d promised.

“That’s so much better,” he said with a hint of relief.

I felt violated at once when his eyes took me in, running up and down my entire being. Although his mask remained emotionless, to me it seemed like the weird twinkle in his eyes was a result of him mentally gloating to himself for what he’d done to me, as if every bruise was another sick trophy.

“Stop staring at me,” I demanded a little weakly, crossing my arms over my chest insecurely. “It’s not even remotely funny.”

Dark’s eyes snapped up to my face with confusion. “Who’s laughing?” he asked seriously, apparently annoyed that I even accused him of it. “You think I’m enjoying this?” he gestured to all of my bruised and cut up self.

“No. Not now. I’m just glad—” his voice went quiet, his gleaming eyes, which apparently weren’t amused and led me to wonder what exactly he was feeling now, were distant as they scanned me again, “that you’re well.”

Did he actually have the nerve to act concerned? I raised an eyebrow disbelievingly. “Yeah, I’m the picture of perfect health, thanks to you,” I muttered sarcastically.

“You’re well enough to run your mouth at me,” he said tiredly, pinching at his eyes with a thumb and a finger, “even when you know how idiotic that is. I’m letting it go because it means that you’re still alive and kicking.”

“For now,” I said under my breath, ducking my head, barely able to hear myself.

Dark’s surreal hearing picked it up, and his eyes hardened into a look of determination. “I won’t hurt you,” he promised fiercely, seemingly talking mostly to himself, “no matter how annoying you are. Trust me.”

My eyebrows shot up at that absurdity and my anger bubbled. “Trust you? You tried to kill me!”

Dark’s expression contorted painfully for a split second before smoothing out again. “I can’t take back what happened,” he said, every word carefully treaded, “but I can make sure it won’t happen again.”

I almost barked a sarcastic laugh. Of course, the person responsible for the horrid aching in my thighs and the reason why I now had to leave the country was suddenly concerned about my wellbeing and offended if I tried to say otherwise. That made complete sense. Sorry for not buying the crap he was trying to sell me right now. He had to have another agenda.
“Like I’ll even give you the chance to try,” I huffed, glaring at him. “What do you want anyway?” My tone remained clipped and cold. “Say it and then leave.”

“Right,” Dark agreed. His eyes burned into mine as he went right into his point. “Sauli,” my name rolling off his lips sent a small thrill though me again, “you have to stay.”

I blinked at him, pausing for him to crack up or add something sarcastic because there was no way that stern tone of his was for real. Did he not sense how pointless that statement was? Did he think I would take him seriously? I waited, but he didn’t waver in the slightest, his eyes still scorching into mine, no hint of amusement anywhere on his face. He wasn’t kidding.

I gave him a look as if he’d just asked me to hit myself in the head with the back of a hammer for fun. “Why on Earth would I do that?” I scoffed when the waiting started to become uncomfortable, deciding to play along with his weird game. “If you haven’t noticed, I’m through with being your chew toy.”

“Not for me,” Dark muttered impatiently, waving his hand dismissively, “for Adam.”

“And what exactly is the point in that?” I challenged, trying to catch a fault in his rather convincing façade. “Adam’s going to come after me after he gets rid of you.”

Dark laughed once without humor, shaking his head. “Always so naïve.”

I glared at him, my hands clenching into fists at his patronizing tone. “What are you talking about?”

“Adam was never going to come after you.”

That caught me off guard, my stomach sinking to my feet. “Wait, what do you mean? You’re not making sense!”

“Why do you think he’s carefully avoided you until now? It makes it easier,” Dark said as if it were obvious.

“Makes what easier?” I asked with impatient worry, shifting from one aching leg to the other, wishing he’d quit being so cryptic. “Just give me a straight answer.”

“Blond—Sauli, are you really that blind?” Dark rolled his eyes. “He’s going to kill himself the moment you’re gone. I would know.”

“You’re lying,” I hissed, but the color was already draining from my face, and I didn’t feel nearly as confident in my assumption as I pretended to be, but he had to be toying with me. “What game are you playing?”

Dark’s eyes narrowed into menacing slits, making me wince in fear almost imperceptibly. “Do you really think I would waste my time coming all the way over to crack a joke? To play games?”

“But you can’t be serious,” I still insisted.

Dark relaxed and shrugged, not looking bothered by my doubt as he leaned against the doorframe, studying his nails. “Believe me, don’t believe me, I don’t really care. He’s your loss, not mine.”

“Why are you telling me this then?” I pressed, slowly sitting on the edge of the bed that I was backed up against. My legs sighed in relief. “All you want is for Adam to kill himself.”

Dark tilted his head and pursed his lips in wonder. “True.”
I gave him a bewildered look. “Then why? Why would you come all the way over here to tell me all this? You were about to get what you’ve wanted all along.”

Dark shrugged again noncommittally. “I have my reason, an epiphany of sorts.”

“A what?”

“A sudden realization,” Dark clarified slowly, rolling his eyes dramatically, before focusing back on his hand that was apparently suddenly more interesting than this conversation.

I waited for a moment, sighing when Dark didn’t continue automatically. “Well?” I asked, annoyed. Dark glanced at me again. “Are you going to tell me what it was?”

Why was he suddenly all relaxed, nonchalant, and avoiding eye contact? It was annoying since I was getting more tense every second dealing with his obnoxiousness. Maybe this was the act. Maybe I was actually making him uncomfortable, charting into territory he didn’t want to talk about. Good.

“Are you going to let me in?” Dark retorted. Now he was just stalling.

“Are you going to try something stupid?” I threw right back.

“No.”

“Am I going to regret it?”

“No.”

“Are you going to stay right by the door?”

“Yes.”

“Then fine.”

“Fine.”

“Great.”

“Whatever.”

The door of the room behind Dark opened. Dark and I both glanced over his shoulder.

“You! Go inside or shut the hell up!” a tired-looking man inside yelled as he pointed angrily at Dark. “You two bicker like an old married couple!” He slammed the door shut and I jumped from the sound of the impact. Dark didn’t even flinch.

After a weirdly silent minute to process what had just happened, Dark’s head slowly turned back around with an expression that was a mixture between downright stunned and annoyed. My lip twitched with amusement at the sight. It felt fulfilling to have someone else yell at him, and for him to be so taken aback by it. Dark blinked several times, still confused, as if he couldn’t even believe some random dude had the nerve to say that to him, before his eyes narrowed and he looked back at the door.

“Imbecile,” he muttered harshly under his breath before starting to ramble, “Married, my ass. That insignificant bacteria, I should go in there and—”

“—Dark,” I interrupted, trying to hold back a snicker. I was supposed to be angry with him, but now
I was almost enjoying myself.

Dark’s head whirled back around to me and he scoffed hard at my expression.

“Fine,” he spat before gesturing to the room, actually asking for permission to enter. I was surprised he could still think clearly despite being pissed off.

I nodded once, refocusing on the risk at hand. Dark’s face held no wickedness as he stepped through into the room, but I kept my gaze locked on him, scanning for any suspicious movements. Keeping his word, he shut the door gently after glaring across the hall one last time, and then leaned back against it, crossing his arms.

“So…” I drawled, bringing back the one topic he didn’t want to talk about. “Since when do you care about Adam?”

Dark snorted. “I don’t. You have too much faith in me. My epiphany was quite selfish.”

“How so?” I wasn’t going to let this go no matter how many non-answers he gave me.

Dark looked down and scratched the back of his head, his annoyance forgotten. “I’d rather not tell you.”

I huffed, glaring sharply at him. “And I’d rather you hadn’t stabbed me,” I threw back. He wasn’t allowed to have the luxury of withholding anything from me.

Dark looked like I’d just slapped him. “Touché,” he muttered, eyebrows rising briefly. “Fine. If you have to know why, and I guess, I owe it to you…” he looked away, contemplating for a long moment before sighing with resignation and locking his eyes firmly with mine. “I don’t want to leave you.” His expression gave away nothing, but his hands had balled into fists as if that was the most difficult thing for him to say.

“How?” I blinked, confused. “What are you talking about?”

Was he not the very same person who’d tried to kill me a few days ago? Now he was talking about not wanting to leave me, right after having tried to wipe me from this earth himself? This was some otherworldly bullshit right here.

Dark made a face as if he was already uncomfortable and didn’t want to explain, and he probably wished I would just drop this. Too bad for him he needed to clarify what in the hell he was talking about before I’d have him forced to leave for insanity.

“If Adam suicides, I’ll never see you again. I know, I know,” he added when he saw the, are you fucking kidding me, look on my face, “I clearly remember what I tried to do earlier, but that’s just the thing. You don’t know… how it felt to see you dying. Words can’t describe. I never thought I could react that way to anything. Believe me when I say that nothing is worth that agony again. I should have enjoyed it, but the grief was unimaginable, and I don’t know why. I’ve learned my lesson, and it won’t happen again if I can help it. I just know I was so damn grateful when Adam got to you in time. If anything, I owe him that.”

“Dark…” I didn’t even know how to finish that sentence.

“That’s why you need to stay. He won’t kill us if you’re here. Stay for Adam, because I can’t lose you, not after that, even if it means only watching you two from the sidelines, which I can’t do if I’m dead. I’ll take what I can get.”
“You get nothing,” I said harshly, my chest heavy for doing so.

Dark blinked slowly, still looking exhausted. “Then so be it. Just don’t leave.”

“Adam’s not going to kill himself,” I promised, shifting on the edge of the bed. “That’s ridiculous. He’s not that damaged teenager anymore. I’m not dead, and he has a career, friends, fans, and a great life. Putting you aside, he’s quite happy.”

Dark shook his head as I talked, impatient. “You’re priority number one. None of it matters to him because as long as he’s near you, you’re at risk, and he knows you’d never leave him permanently, so in his mind, the solution is to get me away from you by killing our body. It’s not because he’s depressed, it’s because he truly believes this is the most logical solution, taking one for the team so to speak. I told you. His side is weak, suicidal, though it doesn’t show. He can’t think very clearly. Although he is right. That’s the only way out of this now. On a normal day, I’d be all for it. Now, I can’t let him go through with it. If I don’t bother you anymore, maybe he’ll let you stay.”

“I can’t stay. I can’t risk—”

“—I know,” he sighed. “You can’t risk being anywhere near me and even being in this room with me is a nightmare-scenario for you.”

“Right.”

“I know you can’t ever forgive me for any of what I’ve done,” he went on, “and that’s probably the smartest thing you’ve ever done.” He half-assed a smirk and I narrowed my eyes. “I hardly trust myself right now, so it’s completely logical why you don’t, but believe me just this once when I say that I won’t come out if you stay. In the meantime, maybe try to help us get better. We can’t do it alone with such a toxic relationship, and Adam’s not going to let us breathe long enough to try. Stay and help us find a solution.”

“I offered that when you were coming at me with a knife,” I bit out. “I told you that no one had to die.”

“I know.” He looked slightly apologetic. “I still don’t think Adam and I can get through this alive, but I’ll try if he’s willing, and if it doesn’t work out, well, then I’ll let him do whatever he wants to this body—if we even survive long enough to get to that point.”

“I don’t know, Dark,” I admitted, at a loss, “I’m shaking just sitting here near you.”

“I can see that. At any point you ask, I’ll let Adam out, and as long as you don’t let him out of your sight, hopefully you’ll never see me again. As long as I can help it, I won’t take control, and you can avoid the triggers.”

I didn’t know how to react. I just stared into Dark’s pale eyes for a long moment, waiting for some hint of deception.

“It just doesn’t make sense to me why you, you of all people, would suddenly want to help anyone, me, Adam, and yourself included. I gave you chances to prove yourself and you ended up nearly killing me,” I sighed, dragging my hand down my face, wiping off the frustration. “I can’t believe you.”


I gulped and continued staring warily at him, indecisive. His eyes were wide with pleading, worry
etching his brow. There was still no hint of any malice anywhere in his expression, but still, I couldn’t bring myself to trust his words, not after everything he’d done.

Dark suddenly took a couple slow steps inward and I immediately stood up in a panic just out of instinct, but I realized I had nowhere to go.

“Don’t come any closer,” I warned shakily. Dark didn’t hesitate in his steps, ignoring me completely as he continued slowly to cross the room. Alarm broke into high gear and my hand automatically grabbed the nearest object on the bed, which felt like a shoe, and swiftly flung it at his head as I yelled, “Stop!”

Dark stopped and his hand flew out expertly, whipping the shoe away to the side. It smacked against the wall before landing harmlessly on the floor. Dark stared at it bewildered for a moment before relocking his eyes on me and glaring. I froze and automatically sank back onto the edge of the bed under his unnerving stare. That was a bad fucking move on my part.

“Seriously?” Dark muttered lowly after a moment of tense silence. “This is already hard enough, you have no idea. Don’t test me. I am still me. I can still snap and regret it afterward.” I watched with strained breath as he forced his hands to uncurl and relax at his sides.

“That’s why I can’t trust you,” I said timidly, feeling weak internally, as if my insides were quivering. “You’re a time-bomb.”

Dark threw me a look like I was the world’s biggest idiot, which at this moment, I was. “You just threw a shoe at me.” It was plain that he was trying his damndest to stay calm, and I was surprised he’d lasted this long. “Any sane human would be at the very least annoyed.”

“You’re not sane or human,” I blurted without thinking, and then snapped my mouth shut. Fuck, what the in hell was wrong with me, provoking him like this? I wished my mouth would stop moving.

Instead of snapping and charging at me, Dark’s eyes softened sadly, like that actually hurt him. “Are you sure about that?” he asked quietly. His hands faced palm-forward in surrender, keeping his eyes locked onto mine as he started to approach me again.

“Did that shoe not send a clear message?” My heart rate climbed at a ridiculous rate, as if I was staring an angry lion in the eyes as it came toward its first meal in weeks. “Stop walking.”

“Let me show you…” he said cautiously, “how human I can be.”

“Please, stop.” I quickly looked around the room for some sort of an escape, but I was already sitting on the edge of the bed, Dark was between the only door and me, and I wasn’t about to scramble onto the middle of the bed and practically invite him in to have his way with me.

“I won’t hurt you…” Dark said quietly as he reached a very shaky me and sank down to his knees in front of me so we were almost at eyelevel. “I promise…”

My breath caught in my throat as he slowly peeled my tense fist off the bed and held it with his very gingerly. I could feel myself trembling within his grasp and his eyes on me. When he brought up my hand to his lips and pressed a soft kiss against my stiff knuckles, my eyebrows shot up in shock and my wide eyes snapped to his, which were still staring up at me with an intimately intense focus.

There was no way in hell this should even be possible. Dark was being… gentle. The gears in my mind sputtered and failed trying to add those two things up.
“Do it for Adam…” Dark mumbled against my hand, brushing his lips sweetly against my knuckles as his eyes fluttered shut. “I’m begging you. Help him. Don’t let him die.”

A shaky breath of air filled my lungs, but nothing came back out. I didn’t know how to respond. I couldn’t believe any of what was happening right now. I knew he was able to push all the right buttons to get a certain reaction, but even he shouldn’t be able to do this. “I—” I barely managed to say, voice trembling.

Dark glanced up at me curiously and the corner of his lips lifted up ever so slightly when he saw the indecisiveness and shock on my face. This smile held no malice or anything I’d normally see in him. He looked genuinely like Adam. If I didn’t know any better, I’d think they’d switched back. For this moment, I could truly believe that they were once the same person. Suddenly, I didn’t like that he was asking me to forget him and help Adam while he suffered deep in his mind, as if he wasn’t an equal part of the whole.

“I–If I do this,” I began slowly, treading carefully on my words, “If I stay, I’d do it for the both of you.”

Even though I hadn’t actually agreed to anything, the relief on Dark’s face was subtle, but noticeable, despite how he tried to hide it. Distracted by his slight facial movements, I flinched when he cupped the side of my head. I froze again, not knowing what he was going to do next and if I would have any power to stop him, so when Dark started to lean in as he gently pulled my head forward and slightly down, I was so overloaded with alarm, I didn’t even think to pull away. I only managed a light gasp before Dark stole it away when his lips melded to mine. My eyes fluttered shut instinctively and a small jolt shot down my spine. His lips were firm and cautious, yet so sweet and tame.

My mind became so muddled that it took me a minute to realize Dark had shuffled closer to me on his knees, sitting between my legs, which had at some point opened as I sat on the edge of the low bed. I didn’t even realize he had wound his arm around my waist, pulling us torso to torso, until it was too late. I was half-aware that I was trapped now in his hold, even panicking a little somewhere in the back of my mind, waiting for him to bite me or throw me, or something, but no, Dark’s kiss remained chaste yet so intimate that my cheeks heated until they were scorching. Soon, almost too soon, he pulled his head away and gazed up at me through heavy-lidded eyes. My heart was pounding, but for an entirely different reason now.

“I wish that had been our first kiss,” he mused, his eyes glinting with a sadness he hid behind a poor mask of amusement as he raked his fingers through my hair and tightened his arm around me. “I wish I knew then what I know now, and maybe it wouldn’t have been too late.”

Dark let go of me completely and stood up, leaving me craving his close presence and feeling overwhelmingly heartbroken for him.

Bravely, I stood up and pushed myself onto my toes, grabbed either side of Dark’s head, and only met his puzzled eyes for a second before I pulled his face down toward mine and crashed against his lips. I kissed him hard and fiercely, brow knitting together as I smushed his lips almost angrily. Dark hesitated for a moment, before both of his arms wound around my waist, clenching possessively and pulling me flush against him. Even like this, he remained pliant but willing while I took control of this kiss, soon escalating it to something open-mouthed, less clumsy, and much more heated. Dark half growled, half moaned into my mouth, sending vibrations down my throat.

He was good. He was damn good. I hadn’t realized this was the first time I was kissing him back. He was so good that my knees started wobbling and the resulting pain in my thighs was a like a wakeup call, reminding me of what the situation was. I licked into his mouth one last time before
pulling away, and dropping my hands off his face, panting heavily, before meeting Dark’s shocked expression staring down at me. His hands clasped against the small of my back, but his arms hung loosely, allowing me some wiggle room.

“Hmm…” He licked his lips curiously, still wide-eyed. “You’ve never kissed me before. You taste so much better when responsive. I quite enjoyed that.”

I could hardly hear him over the pounding in my ears, but I still managed to blush and duck my head. I hadn’t meant to do that. I didn’t really know what got into me. Pity, perhaps? “I guess it makes us even,” I said a little breathlessly. “You’ve never bothered to say my name until today.”

“Is that so?” His eyebrow arched and his lower lip pursed, going into thought, as if he’d never realized that before now. “I rather like my reward then, Sauli.” He smirked.

I fought the urge to roll my eyes and instead hid it by unthinkingly falling forward into Dark’s chest, wrapping my arms around him in an embrace, dismissing who he was for a minute.

“Nice try,” I said into his chest, muffled.

Dark stiffened for a long second before forcibly relaxing. I almost forgot that every instinct of his was probably urging him to do something horrid to me. Instead, Dark tucked me closer into him. It escaped my mind that I was standing here literally hugging the person that had tried to kill me only a few days ago. For a few seconds, I couldn’t bring myself to care, but then the thought got more disturbing and I tensed in his hold. Before I could pull away, I felt him kiss the top of my head in gratitude, and I sighed in resignation, relaxing into him again. No matter what, he was still Adam. I couldn’t help myself.

With the way he was acting now, so impossibly out of character, I was convinced he wasn’t going to try anything. This wasn’t something that could be faked, not even by him. This was going against basic wiring, his core programming. I believed him, I really did. Despite everything, he just proved himself. I was almost proud of him for doing this. He didn’t have to come here, let alone treat me like this when it went against everything he knew. In addition, he was trying to save Adam, in a weird way, despite his claim that it was only for himself. So far, I’d yelled at him, insulted him, accused him, and thrown a shoe at him, and Dark still hadn’t hurt me. It was practically a miracle.

“It was, wasn’t it?” I heard him muse quietly, bringing me out of my reasoning with myself. After another moment of nothing but listening to the sound of Dark’s heartbeat and feeling his chest pushing against my face with every breath, he sighed and mumbled into my hair, “I wish you could be mine.”

I pulled away slightly to arch my neck up and give him a curious look. “There you go again, saying that,” I told him. Dark cocked his head questioningly. “Always with the mine, mine, mine. Have you even figured out what you mean by that yet?”

Dark snorted before smirking slightly and nodding once. One hand came up to graze my cheek lightly with his tense knuckles, while his other arm stayed wrapped around me securely.

“My friend…” he mumbled quietly. “My lover…” His eyes softened, looking almost sleepy. Then his arm tightened possessively around me. “My everything.”

I blinked up at him, throat feeling tight, and heart doing somersaults. I didn’t even have a response to that. I just nodded and looked down, unable to meet his intense eyes any longer.

“Um, Dark?” I mumbled lamely, changing the subject. “How exactly are you doing any of this?”
“Not without great difficulty,” he admitted, shifting a little.

I glanced up at his face again, and that’s when I realized I could feel Dark trembling and twitching just slightly, struggling to stay as gentle and calm as he was. Now I could see how difficult this was for him. He was fighting it so hard, and despite how calm his face looked, his body gave away the illusion. He could snap at any moment. Fear prickled up my neck, realizing that if he did suddenly lose it, I was standing right in his embrace. I decided not to push it and pulled away, stepping back a couple feet. Dark let me go immediately, letting out a deep breath of air and the shaking stopped.

“Is that better?” I asked cautiously.

Dark cleared his throat and shook out his arms. “Better, yes, because I’m not holding you, and worse, because I’m not holding you.”

I frowned. “You can’t ever win like this, can you?”

“No.”

The guilt was almost painful. I was the one that brought him out so many times, the one who got Adam and Dark into this state, and the reason why Dark, as long as he remained like this, could never feel the smallest fleck of joy without having to torture himself. I was the reason why Adam now felt the need to kill himself to end this. Yet, here I was, planning to run away, and Dark, the mind that hardly had morals or a sense of justice, had to be the one to beg me to stay and help? How pathetic was I? Despite what Dark did to me, I was the one that brought both of them into this mess, let it escalate this much. I owed it to the both of them to fix this. I was a terrible person, more so than Dark. He didn’t have a choice. I did.

I looked back at my suitcase, feeling a wave of dread, soon replaced with determination when my hands curled into fists.

“I’ll stay,” I said clearly, looking back at Dark.

“Thank you,” he sighed, unable to hide his relief, dragging his hand down his tired face.

“Can you stay here while we figure this out?” I asked. “I don’t want Adam’s body to be wandering around without me if he’s suicidal.”

“Of course.”

I moved to sit up on the bed cross-legged on one side, leaning back against the headboard. My legs ached with gratitude. I gestured Dark to join. He looked hesitant but he followed me anyway. He sat as far away from me as possible on the other side of the bed, legs spread out and ankles crossed, also leaning against the headboard. After an amicably long silence to scour through my thoughts, one in particular nagged at me.

“Dark?” I drew his attention to me. “I thought you didn’t really, totally, believe in love or whatever. I thought you thought that humans were just lust-driven animals that claimed love as an answer to justify their libido.”

Dark snorted. “I still think that, mostly because I can’t, so it doesn’t seem logical.”

“Yet here you are with me,” I pointed out.

“You’re different,” he snapped. “Yes, every moment of the day I want to hold you down and fuck the living brains out of you until you’re boneless.” I gave him a wide-eyed look, scooting away

His brow crinkled, gazing at me with confusion. “I once thought maybe that’s what it is… but you know I’m not capable of that.”

“Well, you’ve done a pretty good job at doing everything else you’re not supposed to do,” I reminded him.

Dark huffed in agreement. “I guess you’re right.” He turned silent. “Hmm. Love,” he tested under his breath, as if it was suddenly such a foreign word to him. “It actually happened… I don’t like it.”

I snickered. “Well, it can be pretty horrible.”

“And you people strive for this?” he asked, appalled. “Like a lifelong goal? This is awful.”

“It does have its benefits,” I hinted.


A small smile spread on my face to myself. It was strange, coming to terms with the fact that Dark was in love with me, in his own weird way, especially when I knew that we couldn’t happen. I felt bad for him, to have your life be a living hell, and now to feel this way but never have anything come out of it. I glanced up Dark and noticed that he was very, very tense.

“Are you alright?” I asked quietly. Dark shook his head stiffly. “Is it that hard to sit so close to me?”

Dark was fiddling with his fingers as a distraction. “It’s extremely hard,” he admitted. “You’re the biggest thing that triggers those memories for Adam. Every fiber in me wants me to attack you. It’s what I’m hardwired to do. I’m fighting against every instinct because my primitive conscience disagrees. I don’t even know how I’m lasting this long. Sheer will, probably. It gets harder every minute.”

“Well maybe if you practice—”

He cut me off by sighing sharply and looking at me sternly. “Let’s get one thing straight, Blond—Sauli,” he started. “I’m not going to throw that ‘I’m not good for your life, but our love can surpass any obstacle’ crap, okay? What I’m doing right now is a onetime deal. The reality is, if you stay anywhere near me, you’ll eventually be killed. The end. I can’t let that happen. I can’t have you. I won’t let myself have you. I’ll join with Adam if it means the risk will be diminished. It’s the only way.”

That shut me up. At the very least, Dark understood that we wouldn’t ever be together. I should have known since Dark was the one to see the blatant reality of things and accept it, whereas Adam, bless his heart, would try to find a way around the problem.

“Then Dark, if you’re struggling, maybe you should leave…?” I offered tentatively.

Dark gave me a look. “And let Adam come out long enough to kill himself? It’s not going to
“I can do this,” he insisted, eyes narrowing in determination. “I’m in control. I won’t lay a hand on you. I can do this just this one time.”

“Okay…” I drawled out, staring at him nervously. “But aren’t you pretty much killing whatever thread of connection is left between you two?”

“Yes,” Dark bit out, “but it’s either this or certain death. At least if we end up splitting, I don’t know what will happen.”

“Then switch back with Adam!” I exclaimed. “You’re here now, and I won’t let him go off on his own.”

“I will,” Dark promised, “but first I need you to understand some things before I leave you with him.”

“Okay, sure, anything.” I ushered him impatiently to continue.

“I can feel the thread between me and Adam, the connection. It’s almost completely frayed and it’s barely holding on,” Dark said slowly. Before he could continue, I interrupted.

“I think we’ve established this,” I muttered impatiently.

Dark glared. “You going to let me even begin, or…?”

“Sorry.”

He huffed. “Once this connection breaks, I don’t know exactly what will happen, but I do know this now. We become two separate beings in one body, both incomplete and dysfunctional. No person can live with that kind of imbalance in which you are literally missing half of your working mind. That’s just common knowledge. You need balance in order to be stable. I can assume there will be a mental breakdown. After that, I have no idea.”

“Two separate people in one brain, but both broken and incomplete.” I nodded, clarifying to myself. “So then, who takes over the body?”

Dark sighed impatiently. “You’re not getting this…” he complained. “Right now, we’re constantly fighting for control over this body, hence our switches, but up to now, Adam’s had the upper hand because he’s had default control. This small connection between us, this elastic that keeps us the same person, is what allows us to switch control. However, since this elastic thread is about to split, stretched and frayed so much, the fight is becoming more equal because Adam and I are about to separate into two equal people. We won’t switch anymore. I won’t be his leftovers anymore, or his defense mechanism. We become two entirely different but mangled minds with no hope of rejoining. Given that, the brain cannot have two real people conscious simultaneously. We can’t both take over the body at the same time.”

“So then if neither one of you can take over, what the hell happens?”

“I presume the body will shut down. I don’t exactly know what that can mean, maybe a coma, maybe death, maybe who knows. Heck, maybe we’ll just reset and be fine. I just know it’s too much pressure when it does happen. It’s already getting crowded in here.”
“What do you mean?” I frowned at that last sentence. Dark pursed his lip, probably trying to figure out a way to explain.

“Okay,” he said, clapping his hands together. “Say the brain has a capacity of one hundred percent, right?” I nodded. “When Adam and I split, the space won’t be occupied fifty-fifty. As I said, we become two different people. It’ll be one hundred-one hundred within the same brain. Overload.” He made an exploding gesture with his hands.

My eyes widened. “Fuck,” I muttered. “And you can already feel it getting crowded. Jesus. We don’t have much time, do we?”

“Nope,” Dark grimaced and shook his head. “And if one of us were able to take over, we’re two sides of a coin. This little remaining thread is what still allows me to tap into Adam’s compassion sometimes, and him into my anger. When we split, and I was able somehow to shove his mind somewhere to make room for mine, I’d be a raging monster with no conscience, no self-control, no mercy, and no dignity. In Adam’s case, he’d be like this… airhead in a mental hospital somewhere. There would be nothing to keep him grounded. He’d be completely pliant and useless, probably staring out into space, hallucinating about clouds or some shit.”

“You’re certain that can’t happen in reality though, right?” I asked, and Dark nodded. “I’d rather anything than to have either of you take over like that.” I shuddered at the thought, which reminded me of something. “Dark, how long can you stay out now? You said the fight’s becoming more equal.”

Dark shrugged. “Probably a day or two now, or more, and I’m not interested in finding out. I shouldn’t. The longer and more frequently I’m out, the faster we’re damaged. Even this is pushing it. I don’t think we even have a couple days at this rate before this brain malfunctions. I can feel it. The little thread left is fraying to the last fiber. Our minds are going erratic, destroying themselves trying to split.

I buried my head in my hands, shaking my head. “You don’t have any hope, do you?” I muttered into my palms. When Dark didn’t respond, I peered up at him through stinging eyes to find him looking away, jaw hard-set. That would be a blatant no. I was on the verge of tears. “There has to be something,” I insisted, voicing cracking. “I can’t lose Adam again, not like this. I feel like it’s my fault.”

“It is your fault.”

I glared at him, tears brimming. “Well thanks. Gee, I feel better.”

Dark huffed. “I’m not going to sugar-coat it for you. Though you’re probably the greatest thing that’s ever happened to Adam, you’re also the biggest thing that triggers his trauma. He’s pretty much had it under control for these past few years until you showed up and kept forcing me out. Congrats, you’re probably killing him without lifting a finger.” Dark smiled cruelly. Try as he might, his downright mean nature was still apparent, especially now that he was more comfortable.

“You suck,” I muttered, wiping my eyes, refusing to cry in front of him. “How do you even know all this?”

“Well, like I said, being this darker being, I’m more in tune with reality and sad truths. I knew from the second I was able to think for myself that this was a serious problem. Adam was apathetic and in denial, living in ignorant bliss. I’ve had plenty of time to think.”

I clasped my hands together and sighed loudly, sniffling once. “Okay, so far, we have Adam, who’s
suicidal at the moment and useless, we have you, who has no hope and can barely sit there without attacking me,” Dark rolled his eyes, “and we have me, who’s made this problem a thousand times worse by just being in the same room as Adam. In addition, you two are either going to die from the overload of splitting apart or worse. So… how can we fix this?”

Dark squeezed his eyes shut and raked his hand down his face. “I don’t know. I have a half-assed theory, but really, it’s more like a temporary bandage. I doubt we even can fully fix this.”

“What is it?” I asked eagerly, ignoring his pessimism.

“There’s no cure, as far as I’m aware.” He scratched his head, pondering. “But maybe, you can help us rebalance and meet in the middle again; to become as close to one mind as we can. If we’re lucky, maybe this pulled-too-far fraying elastic between us can still snap back to as close as normal as possible.”

“Okay,” I nodded quickly, getting excited. “How would I do that?”

“Only one of us has to be conscious from now on, so you probably want your Adam since he’s had default control.” Dark’s eyes flashed with a mixture of anger and disappointment, but it was gone just as fast. “Then you need to keep him present. Do not let his mind shove me out to deal with something. I can’t come out anymore because we split further each time. I don’t think we have another time. If something does happen, if something triggers him, you need to force him to face it without me.”

“And what would this accomplish…?” I asked slowly.

“If it works, it might go two ways,” Dark guessed, shrugging noncommittally. “One, nothing happens, but nothing gets worse. If I don’t come out, there’s no more damage, but we stay here at the stage we’re at now.” I didn’t like the sound of that at all. “The second thing, which I seriously doubt can even happen, is that the process will reverse. As Adam forces himself to deal with his traumas alone, he’ll have to regain the necessary traits that I currently possess, with practice and time. He’ll start owning every emotion of mine, take them back, and embrace the parts of him I rejected and he’ll have to accept his memories, no more blocking anything. As he does this, I’d slowly disappear because he’d be taking everything back and becoming whole. It’ll be just like plugging back in missing puzzle pieces.”

I blinked at him, something clawing at my chest. “So, you’d have to die…” I said quietly, trying to hide the pain lacing my voice.

“Relax,” he snorted. “It’s just a theory.”

“I know, but if it actually happened, would you die?” I asked meekly.

Dark forced a small smile. “No, I’d finally get to live.” I frowned and gave him a look. “Okay, fine, maybe in a way I’ll die, but remember, I am still technically Adam. We’d become one, share the same mind, and I’d get to keep you, so it’s worth it for me.” I opened my mouth, about to complain, but Dark cut me off. “Listen. I can’t handle being permanently stuck in this mind of mine anymore, not with these horrid thoughts, emotions, and traits just storming around up here, dragging me down into the pits of hell. It’s driving me crazy, well… crazier, that nothing can make me happy because I’m not allowed to be. I don’t have that capability. I need it. I need to be whole, to be at peace, balanced. Let me have it.”

“Dark…” I squeaked, surprised at myself for feeling so upset that I’d never see him again.
I reached out to him, but Dark shook his head in warning, and I dropped my hand, remembering that his calm was just an illusion of sorts. He could blow up at any second, and it was only proving his point. I’d be cruel to make him keep going on like this.

“Just know that I’m there,” Dark murmured. “Adam and I are two halves of a whole. I’ve always been there. I’m a part of him, an entire half of him, well except that now I’ve evolved into more of my own person. If I disappear, the only difference is that I won’t have a voice anymore. I won’t be able to talk to Adam because we become the same thoughts. There won’t be another mind up here. Everything he says to you is also me just as much. You’ll have a complete Adam, the very one you first met. Don’t think of it as if anyone’s dying.”

My eyes stung, and I stared at hard at my knees. “Dark,” I squeaked, “thank you.”

“For what?” he seemed baffled.

“You didn’t have to come here and tell me all this,” I explained, trying to show my appreciation. “Despite everything, you did just technically save Adam’s life, and I kind of love you for that.”

I heard him sigh sharply. “Don’t lie to yourself like that, Sauli,” he said resignedly. “I can feel what it’s really like, and I know you don’t feel the same. You only think you think that because I’m Adam. If I didn’t look and sound like this, If I was in a different body, you’d have me arrested or killed long ago.”

“But—”

“—And would you quit being so emotional?” Dark looked annoyed and uncomfortable. “That was just my theory, geez. I don’t do sap. I don’t actually know how to fix this. In reality, everything I just said was probably just complete bullshit and Adam and I are going to die no matter what, but if there’s even the slightest chance that something might at least improve this, we need to take it. You shouldn’t care if die. You never did.”

I was quiet, not knowing what to say; worried I might burst out into tears like an overdramatic teenage girl if I opened my mouth. Instead, I stared hard at the patches of bandages I could feel beneath my pants on my wounds. I sensed Dark’s eyes on me again, watching as I stroked over the clothed wounds.

“…I’m so sorry about that,” I heard Dark say quietly. “I couldn’t help it, and I hate myself for it. I know what I do is wrong, but…” He sighed, probably not quite knowing how to explain. “I wish that for a moment, you could feel what it’s like to be in my head,” he quietly mumbled and I looked at him curiously. He stared at me with longing. “And I wish that I could have you to myself for one night, one time before we try out the theory and I stay cooped up in here,” he tapped his forehead, “but I can’t.” He sighed.

“Why not?” I demanded, sounding way too eager to get in bed with him. I snapped my mouth shut. Dark snorted softly and gestured with a nod of his head to his hand. He scooted it closer to me, and I observed as it tensed and shook before his fingers curled in and he forcefully pulled his hand away, holding it close to his face and glaring at it. “I don’t want to hurt you anymore.”

I watched him with concern crinkling my forehead. He looked like he was in genuine pain.

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“What if I tie you up again?” I suddenly blurted. Dark’s head whipped over to me and he threw me an impressed yet slightly shocked look. “You devious little…” he chuckled half-heartedly, shaking his head. “No, we can’t do that.”
“It worked last time,” I reminded him.

His eyes glazed over with lust, definitely remembering. He snapped out of it and shook his head, crossing his arms. “It’s not worth Adam throwing another annoying tantrum.”

Translation: He’d feel guilty.

I turned away slightly and smiled to myself, awed.

“And do you think I can’t handle some pathetic ties?” he asked.

I glanced back at him. “Well you didn’t that one time…”

“That’s only because I didn’t want to,” he said. “I could have easily ripped them apart. Not even a mere bedpost is a match for me.”

“You broke a bedpost?” I asked, shocked. “When the hell…?”

Dark gave me a look. “Adam never told you?”

I returned it with a confused and suspicious one. “Tell me what?”

Dark shrugged. “He was kidnapped and molested while you were in that coma.”

“What?” I squeaked loudly, turning my body fully toward him.

Dark chuckled, leaning his head back onto the headboard and staring at the ceiling. “I saved his life. This was when I was developing and could only twitch his muscles for a few seconds. Adam’s mind pushed me out and I broke the bedpost, knocking the perverted fucker out before he could get too far.”

I blinked, stunned. “But why would you help him…? You hate Adam.”

“I was his defense mechanism. Adam’s mind shoved me forward to deal with the situation. I followed through with it because, remember, this is my body too. I didn’t want that nasty psycho’s filth all over me.”

I nodded, still surprised, and slightly annoyed that Adam never told me. I pressed my hand over my chest and willed my heart rate to calm down again.

“This was one of the traumas that caused Adam to create me. Another suppressed memory he doesn’t want that adds to my miserable fire… I think this is the key though. Nowadays, Adam’s mind shoves me out without realizing it when he’s faced with something that triggers a memory. He runs away from it and throws me as bait. He can’t do that anymore, otherwise we’re screwed. He has to deal with it instead of trying to block the memory.” Dark looked over at me with a warning look in his eyes. “You need to help him. You wanted to try out my theory, you can go knock yourself out with it. I can’t do much except stay out of the way.”

I nodded quickly. “I’ll give it a shot,” I promised. “I have a good feeling about this.”

“I don’t.”

I rolled my eyes. “You don’t have good feelings in general. This could work. Try to have a little hope.”

“Easier said than done,” Dark muttered, glaring at a wall.
I bit my lip, feeling like an asshole.

“Come here,” I said apologetically, opening my arms for him. I didn’t how a hug could fix anything, but oh well. He just looked like he needed something comforting and I didn’t have much else to offer.

“What? No.” Dark threw me a weirded-out look with a bit of near panic before he shook his head nervously. “I can’t.”

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to tempt you,” I promised.

“I’m not worried about you, I’m worried about me,” he spluttered, leaning away.

“I’m trying to trust you, Dark.” I stared hard into his eyes, scooting closer to him when he wouldn’t budge. “I think you can do it. You won’t hurt me.” I gave him a reassuring smile, but the aching in my legs was nagging me against this.

Dark stiffened and squeezed his eyes shut, fisting the blanket to keep him anchored down. I sat next to him, hip to hip and slowly wrapped my arms around his tense shoulders, resting my head on his shoulder. I just held him for several long minutes and I could feel Dark breathing slowly, very tense.

Eventually, Dark’s breathing became calmer and his body relaxed into my hold. His hand slowly reached up across his chest and he placed it over my hands clasped together on his opposite shoulder. Dark let out a relaxing sigh. I closed my eyes and took his hand between both of mine on his shoulder, smoothing soft circles into the back of his palm.

“Hmm…” Dark mumbled quietly, his chest rumbling. “I didn’t know I needed this.”

I felt like crying again. “I’ll save both of you, I promise.” My voice nearly cracked.

Dark huffed disbelievingly. “If only you could. Yet, you’ll still try,” he sighed. “You’ll always try. It’s somewhat irritating actually. You’re just this persistent ray of sunshine.” I could imagine his grimace when he paused. “This is why I don’t deserve you and neither does Adam, not separately.” What was I even supposed to say to that? I couldn’t get anything past my lips. When I didn’t respond, Dark shifted and said, “Anyway… I should go now.”

My voice found its way back to me. “Wait, no.” My arms squeezed tighter around him.

Dark glanced down at my head peering up at him, chin on his shoulder.

“I have to go,” he insisted. “I’ve already been out for too long, and this,” he gestured his head to my clinging, “is too hard.”

“You do realize this might be the last time I’ll see you?” I reminded him, keeping myself wrapped around him. “Let me enjoy it for a moment, dammit.” I couldn’t even believe I said that. A few days ago, I’d be ecstatic at the thought of never hearing from Dark again.

Dark groaned and huffed. After another minute, he shifted and muttered, “Alright, alright. That’s enough. Moment’s over. I really need to go.”

“Fine,” I sighed, before pulling away from his shoulder.

I cupped the side of his face and pulled him toward me, ignoring the confused look on his face. I stroked Dark’s cheek as I studied him for a long moment, gazing into those eyes and absorbing every little emotion flitting across them. I leaned in and barely brushed my lips against his carefully,
gauging his reaction. Dark didn’t push forward for more. He stayed completely still, letting me do whatever I wanted. I pressed in closer, kissing him softly. Dark responded gently, but tensely, consciously controlled. I savoured every movement of his lips against mine, committing it to memory. They were the same lips as Adam’s, but he still responded differently, and I was going to miss it.

I pulled away with a sigh. Dark’s eyes glinted and his lips twitched upward into something that was almost a small smile. Almost, but not quite.

“I’m going to miss that,” he said with disappointment. “It’s really not fair how you decide to spoil me now.”

“It’s not fair how you’re making me like you now,” I threw back. “You’re not a complete asshole, and I’m actually sad to see you go.”

“I’m not really going anywhere. I’m just staying in my horrid room from now on.”

“But if your theory works, you’ll eventually disappear.”

“Technically, so will Adam, or… Light.” He snorted at the name. “He’ll suck me back up and won’t be himself anymore. In our place will be the both of us, as one.”

“God, I hope so.”

“We’ll see what happens.” He shrugged. “We don’t know if any of this will work. In all likelihood, this will all go to shit right off the bat and I see you tomorrow.”

“As much as I’m going to miss you, I really do hope I never see you again… Does that make sense?” I asked, hoping he got it and wasn’t offended.

“Completely.”

I nodded, swallowing against the heavy feeling in my throat. “Goodbye, I guess…”

Dark raised his hand to my face, and for once, I didn’t even flinch. He stroked my cheek lightly with his knuckles as he held my gaze. “See you later,” Dark said and then added, “but… hopefully not.”

Chapter End Notes

Any comment/Review? I read every one :)
Okay I suck. I know. This fic WILL be finished this year, but my original plan of just finishing all the chapters and uploading them at once isn't working... CLEARLY. Like, I've had this chapter pretty much finished for a long while now. I was going to finish this during my four-month summer last year, but then I got a puppy, Lukas the Doberman, and he took up all of my time. This summer, for sure. May-August.

So here you go, guys. We're going back to a single chapter at a time. Don't expect regular intervals, because I'm a fucking failure.

This is pretty much the last chapter before shit hits the fan. The calm before the whatever.

Bear with me, we will get through this fic.

THEN Nirvana will be rewritten into something I don't cringe at. The chapters will be longer and better written. More dialogue, more interactions, more everything.

THEN Chokehold will be reworked as well, just to improve and fix a few inconsistencies that tend to happen when you update months apart and forget about what you already said and did in the fic.

THEN, I'll rework and finish By The Rules.

THEN, I have another fic to upload after btr. That one will be uploaded in its entirety. No waiting for updates. It's got androids and shit and existential stuff. You'll like it.

THEN, I have other fic ideas in mind. The first one to go up will be a Dark/Light mpreg fic. lmao. I can't help myself. I ship it.

Also, I do read all of the comments, every single one. I've seen the complaints, the anger, the questions. I just can't reply to them because I didn't do it in the beginning and now it's unfair if I reply to someone, but not another. Let the comments be for comments. If you have a question that you actually want me to respond to, tweet me @trespassmyass and I will.

Also, also, all these chapters will not have a beta checking over for mistakes, so please excuse any that you come across. It's definitely not perfect or my favorite chapter, but I don't give a shit; I wanted this one out of the way. It's a segue. My favorite chapters are coming up, and I hope you'll like em as much as I do.

I hope I've cleared up everything!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adam:

Instead of waking up in a peaceful manner, I felt like I was thrown back into my body with the force
of a high-speed collision, hard enough that I felt mentally winded. I jolted upright in an unfamiliar bed, panting. I looked around rapidly, dizzied, and confused by my surroundings. I did a double take and flinched wildly when I noticed a body next to me, my hand flying to my chest over my thrashing heart.

“God, what the hell!” I gasped, taken by surprise. “Sauli?”

I stared wide-eyed at him, my heart still thundering loudly and actively in my chest. Sauli was sitting tensely next to me, watching me with a concerned look on his face, and holding out a cautious hand as a gesture to calm me. It was slightly relieving to have someone familiar in this random room instead of a complete stranger, but then again, hadn’t I just been at home? Why wasn’t Sauli at the airport right now? What in the hell happened? I gave him a bewildered look.

“W—What…?” I sputtered, wiping my eyes to make sure I wasn’t hallucinating. I was completely lost. “Where am I?”

Sauli straightened up slowly, keeping his eyes trained on me guardedly as if I was going to be spooked like a wild animal and burst out of here. “You’re in my hotel room.”

My brow crinkled as my nerves calmed down. “How? Why?”

“Dark brought you here,” Sauli explained and I threw my hands up in exasperation. Of course that fucker did. “He knew what you were going to do and brought you here to keep you safe,” he mumbled more quietly, sounding a little heartbroken.

“Shit,” I spat, caught red-handed.

Sauli shook his head at me as I’d just confirmed something for him. “What in the hell were you thinking, Adam? I can’t believe you were going to kill yourself. Haven’t we gone through this enough? How could you even consider something that stupid just to get rid of Dark?”

“Look, I don’t even care anymore. I just need him gone, Sauli,” I insisted quickly, not wanting to have this conversation.

“It’s not worth losing you too.” He gave me a melancholy look. “What about me? You were going to dump my ass back home and then do away with yourself? Did you ever think about how I might feel following your death?”

“Look, I don’t even care anymore. I just need him gone, Sauli,” I insisted quickly, not wanting to have this conversation.

“It’s not worth losing you too.” He gave me a melancholy look. “What about me? You were just going to dump my ass back home and then do away with yourself? Did you ever think about how I might feel following your death?”

“Honestly, I didn’t,” I admitted, and I had a feeling I knew why I hadn’t, though I wouldn’t say aloud that I really was misplacing my logic at times, like a slow downward spiral into loopy-land. I still had a decent chunk of my awareness and I was going to treasure it for as long as I could. “It never even crossed my mind, but I don’t think I’d care anyway. You could hate me or be depressed. At least you’d be safe.”

Sauli’s eyebrows rose and he looked down, muttering almost inaudibly. “He was right, dammit.”

“Who was right?” I inquired, feeling a twinge of anger. “Dark?” I said his name bitterly. At least now, I didn’t have to say anything about why I didn’t think of Sauli’s situation after my death, he already knew.

Sauli rolled his eyes. “Lose the attitude, alright?” I glared at him. “He just saved your life by bringing you here.”

“No, he saved himself,” I scoffed.
“Adam, he came here and begged me to stay and help you. He’s wanted you both to die for how long now? He didn’t have to do—”

“—Wait, wait, wait, wait,” I interrupted, realization dawning. “Backtrack a second.” I quickly checked over Sauli’s healing face, and there really didn’t seem to be any new marks, but… “You actually let him in here?” I asked, bewildered. “After he did this to you?” I gestured wildly to his body.

“He didn’t lay a hand on me,” Sauli promised, sounding proud. “It was amazing to see him try so hard.” He beamed, then mumbled quietly, shrugging, “It was also extremely weird, but…”

I just stared at him as if he was drunk or high and telling me about all the pretty dragons he’d found in his bathroom sink this morning.

“You let in… the guy… that tried to kill you…” I said slowly, trying to make the words connect in a way that made sense in my mind and failing, “into a private, lockable room… while you’re still injured and weak…”

I ran the sentence repeatedly in my head, trying to detect something logical to give Sauli the benefit of the doubt, but all that grew was my concern for his idiocy. I mean, I knew I was the one that was supposed to be losing it, but holy shit. Even this was obvious.

Sauli just nodded quickly as I talked, impatient. “I already know how stupid I was being, okay? It’s not like he knocked on the door and I happily let him in for a tea party, alright? A lot happened, so just go with me on this. I took the chance and it paid off. The important thing is that he wants to become one with you and I think he might have told me how.”

I felt like banging my head against a wall. “I can’t believe this,” I sighed. “Every time I go dormant, I come back to you having heart-eyes for this thing. Except you seem to be forgetting that the last time this happened, I had to drag your bloody near-corpse out of the fucking pool.”

Sauli kept his tired gaze on me. “I know how you feel about this, and I felt the same. I even agreed to leave, but not like this, Adam, not if you have zero self-preservation.”

“Yeah, that’s why you weren’t supposed to find out,” I muttered.

I was met with an incredulous look that lasted an uncomfortably long time.

“Alright, whatever, can we just focus on the present?” Sauli asked. I crossed my arms and glared at the wall, but I didn’t object. “Now listen, Dark explained that your mind created a separate personality to deal with the past traumas you’ve had in your life, but this personality has really become his own person and the situation is spiraling out of control. You two are about to split apart and none of us want to know what the outcome will be. You have to rejoin.”

“I already know all this,” I snapped. “You don’t need to explain it a thousand times. I get it.”

“I’m just getting to the theory.” Sauli held up his palms. “Dark said that he shouldn’t be brought out anymore because you’re already teetering dangerously, and one more switch could tip it. The idea is, you’re going to have to face everything that reminds you of your past and accept them as a part of your life instead of throwing Dark out under the bus to deal with them. You can’t let him come out anymore, or I’ll lose you both. This way, at the very least, nothing will get worse, and at best, you slowly regain all of him. Understand?”

I sighed. “Wouldn’t it be easier to just let me die? Sauli, I’ve tried for years to forget my past, and every time I’m reminded of it, I’m too weak to face it and Dark has to do it. I just can’t. It was hard
“Adam, you’re the strongest person I know.” Sauli took my hand and gave it a reassuring squeeze. I attempted to smile at him, but all I managed was a weak grimace. “You lived through hell and came out on top, so I know you can do this. Save yourself, all of yourself. Suicide is the most selfish thing you could do. Think about it. I’m not the only one that needs you. What about your fans?”

My hand went limp in his and I nodded lamely, fractionally agreeing. I did live through hell, and I did claw my way to where I wanted to be, but that didn’t mean I got here unscathed. Living my life for the first twenty years of hell was nearly unbearable the first time. A few more years of it surely would have killed me.

Thankfully, it ended and I escaped, but eventually, even the slightest nod toward what had happened would cause me to curl up on the floor shaking and nearly drooling for hours. Just a memory could paralyze me. It would tickle the surface of my soul that had been scratched raw by my past. My soul had been barely keeping itself together, and the teasing only tempted it to collapse entirely.

I guessed my mind’s way of cushioning the blows and protecting my fragile self was to make Dark stronger, feed him everything necessary to keep me from collapsing, even down to personality traits that might’ve caused me to remember. It was a temporary bandage of sorts, I assumed. It’s too bad he had to keep getting stronger as my reactions got worse. He was given more than the basics, which gave him the chance to flourish.

No one could have warned me that Dark, my own defense mechanism, over the years would develop to the point he has, almost a human being in his own right, as much as I hated to consider it. One sick, twisted human consciousness created by none other than myself. Blocked from my mind were my nightmarish memories and locked into him, along with the worst of my traits and everything else toxic within me. This was all obvious to me now. Being forced to sit down and accept Dark made it all click, even with my fading awareness.

The eerie thing was, when Sauli said that my condition was teetering and one more switch could split us apart. I believed it immediately. It didn’t even matter that I was supposed be getting more ignorant by the week, because I could feel it. If I had any doubt left that Dark was the other half of my entire self, it was gone. I could feel the split impending in a way I wouldn’t even be able to explain.

Even stranger, when I went dormant this last time, I wasn’t just asleep as per usual. I felt almost half-awake, with blurred vision in darkness, and I could have sworn that at times, I could have made out the image of a fuzzy, mustard-colored wall, followed by the sense of warmth and an eerie calm.

I didn’t know exactly that meant, but I knew time was running out. I couldn’t bring myself to mention any of it to Sauli. He was already worried enough.

If there were a chance that I could get through this, and come out whole, I would take it now. That last dormancy scared me shitless, and I never wanted Dark to take over again, afraid of what I might see next.

“I’ll do this on one condition,” I said with brows raised, holding a finger up. “If this doesn’t work, you let me end this the way I planned.”

Sauli was quiet for a moment. “Adam, if this doesn’t work… you won’t get the chance to.” My heart skipped a beat.

“Okay…” I muttered. “So, what do we do first?”
Sauli gave my hand a tight squeeze and grinned at my cooperation before letting go and nearly vaulting off my side of the bed, going over my lap. He hissed in pain the moment he was upright on his feet, legs buckling, and I was off the bed in a flash and catching him by the waist before he crumpled to the floor. I held him securely from behind with both arms around his waist, hoisting him back up to his feet gently. Sauli gripped tightly at my forearms and panted lightly.

“Careful,” I mumbled, unavoidably nuzzling his hair, and relaxing my grip enough to slide my hands under his shirt and keep my arms wrapped around his toned bare skin instead. He shuddered lightly against me. “Your thighs.”

“Thank you,” Sauli sighed, leaning his head back against my shoulder. “I keep forgetting.” I hardly heard him. I was too happy holding him like this. It felt like it’d been so long. His skin was so warm against my arms and his hair still smelled the way I adored. For this moment, I didn’t care about what he did or didn’t do with Dark. I just missed him. I closed my eyes and gently swayed us back and forth. “Um, Adam…?”

I slowly opened my eyes, smiling a little, finding that Sauli had tilted his head up and was staring at me questioningly. My smile grew and I kissed his forehead sweetly. “Sorry,” I said between a second kiss to his nose. “I was just remembering how much I love you.”

Sauli slowly mirrored my warm smile and he reached up one hand to place gently on the side of my face. I leaned into the touch, closing my eyes again.

“I love you too,” I heard him say sincerely, relaxing me further. “That’s why I’m going to do this.”

My eyes fluttered open. “Do what?” I asked lazily, feeling my skin sting when Sauli removed his hand from my cheek.

He pushed up onto his toes shortly to kiss my jaw before pulling away completely. Reluctantly, I dropped my arms, my whole body now burning at the loss of his pressed up against mine. I felt heavier, yet emptier, but I tried not to show just how much I needed him for his sake.

“Trigger a memory,” he said. I watched, confused, as he started to look around. He sighed and looked back over at me after a minute. “You wouldn’t happen to have a knife on you, would you?”

My eyes widened, and all sense of calm and relaxation vanished just like that. “What? No!” I exclaimed, now understanding what he was going to try to do.

“Relax, I’ll be fine,” he said as he reopened his suitcase and moved stuff around. “It’ll be just like a paper cut.” He scoured around before finding and pulling out what appeared to be a pocketknife. My stomach flipped and then sank to the floor.

“Sauli,” I croaked. “Please don’t.” I half-heartedly reached out to him although my legs were frozen to the spot and wobbling lightly.

He frowned at my reaction. “Adam, I have to, and you have to see this.”

I shook my head weakly, already feeling uncomfortably nauseous.

Sauli walked back over to me and sat me down on the edge of the bed when I couldn’t find the will to move, before kneeling down in front of me and holding out his arm. I cringed when I noticed an old, barely noticeable, faded scar running down his wrist. Breathing immediately became a challenge when Sauli poked the tip of the knife into his skin, right at the start of the scar. He pressed harder and my head started spinning when a small drop of blood pooled in the tiny dent he made when the tip broke skin.
I looked away, the urge to run quickly becoming unbearable.

“No, Adam,” Sauli said sternly. “Look, and remember, whatever you see, embrace the memory. Whatever you do, don’t let Dark out.”

I glanced back just as Sauli started to drag the knife a tiny amount. He was fucking reopening his scar.

There was a flash of an image in my mind, but it was gone just as quickly when I felt an incredibly strong pull in my mind, urging a block to come forward and deal with this so I didn’t have to. I fought the reflex, trying somehow to convince my subconscious that everything was okay, that I could handle this, even though I already knew I would break. Apparently, my resistance wasn’t strong enough and I could feel Dark stirring, becoming conscious in my mind. I could also feel him struggling to resist the pull against him, but still, he was brought forward enough for me to hear him.


I pushed as hard as I could, my face scrunching up, eyes squeezing shut, which made it slightly easier when I couldn’t see. I took a few shallow breaths before groaning from frustration and making a last ditch effort to stop Dark overtaking me. It helped when he was fighting with me, not against me, not jumping at the chance to take over. With both of us resisting the switch, the strong pulling sensation suddenly died and I exhaled hard, immensely relieved at the loss of mental pressure. Dark was gone again.

I was about to tell Sauli of my small success, but when my eyes snapped open just in time to see Sauli dragging the knife through his skin and blood oozing out, I felt my heart skip a beat and everything seemed to freeze. There was no one to protect my mind, nothing to stop what happened next.

Images flashed rapidly across my vision, blinding me from reality. I stopped breathing, completely engulfed by a memory. My entire body froze and no matter how many times I blinked, I couldn’t get the scene out of my sight:

Blood. Lots of blood. All over the floor. That was the first thing I saw.

Sauli, lying immobile in the blood. Second thing I saw.

I stood in the doorway of the bathroom, choking on my breaths and sobs as I stared down at the giant gash in Sauli’s arm and the blood running down it, as he remained motionless on his bloody bathroom floor. My heart pounded in my ears and everything became too hot, too stuffy. The panic became overwhelming and the anguish was stifling. I couldn’t lose him like this. How could I let this happen?

I heard a scream in the distance. Or was that just me? It sounded like me. My eyes wouldn’t leave the gash in Sauli’s arm, even when the bathroom tiles jarred my knees as I fell to them. Tears flowed freely down my face. I kept hearing him call out my name, but his lips weren’t moving. There was slight confusion amidst my terror. Who did that voice belong to? There couldn’t be another Sauli, but I couldn’t remember. I couldn’t even remember how I got here to this room.

I felt a sharp pain in my side as if I’d just hit the floor, but here I was still kneeling in front of an unconscious Sauli. This headache was pounding to the point of me wanting to claw my brain out. I couldn’t take it. Another scream, again sounding like me, and then there was blackness and calm, and all the pain ceased.
When my consciousness slowly returned, I could faintly feel fingers running through my hair so soothingly. My sense of orientation returned and I realized I was lying on my side in a fetal position on something cozy, a bed. It was all so quiet. I wasn’t sure where I was exactly. My eyes fluttered open only to be met with blurs. I felt someone shift beside me as I blinked several times, regaining focus in my vision. Sauli was watching me, laying parallel beside me, his hand in my hair. He looked worried.

“Hey,” I mumbled, giving him a weak smile. Sauli sighed with relief, his fingers tightening in my hair. I gave him a questioning look. “What happened?” I asked as I slowly started to recall what we’d been attempting.

“You—” he cut off, biting his lip, looking like he was going to cry for a brief moment. “You just froze up, staring at me—no, through me with this horrible… look. It was terrifying. It was as if you had completely left your body and left a shocked shell. Then…” he trailed off, his skin paling.

“What?” I pressed.

Sauli sighed. “The screaming started. I’ve never heard you sound like that.” He shook his head. “God, it was like you were being tortured, like ripped apart limb from limb. I had to cover your mouth to quiet you down before someone called the police.

“Oh.” I just blinked at him, not quite knowing how to respond to that. “Did I do anything else?”

“Well, after screaming, you fell off the bed and curled up into the tightest ball. When I tried to help you relax, you were vibrating, downright vibrating, and you felt like solid rock. All the while, your eyes were still open.” Sauli shuddered. “Fuck, it was something out of a horror movie. I thought you were having a seizure or dying.”

“How long was I like that for?” I asked warily.

“I managed to get you up onto the bed and you lay curled up and shaking for,” he checked the clock on the wall, “over an hour. I didn’t know what to do. You were still staring at nothing and you wouldn’t respond to anything I did. I was about to panic and call 911, but your eyes suddenly closed and you… fell asleep. It’s been about another five hours now.”

“I’m… sorry,” I said slowly, a chill going up my spine imagining what I must’ve looked like, “for scaring you. I did warn you.”

“Adam, you didn’t tell me it was like that.” Sauli shivered and squeezed his eyes shut. “Why didn’t you tell me that could happen?”

“It hasn’t happened in years…” I sighed. “I wasn’t sure what would happen. I almost never get to that point. Dark always takes over specifically so I don’t break down like that.

“What happened exactly?”

“I just… I probably saw a memory.”

“You don’t remember what?”

“If I remembered, I’d be back in that same position. My mind sort of resets after that.”

“So what now?”

“We try again,” I said in a hard voice.
“What— no.” Sauli looked at me worriedly. “That was bad enough the first time.”

“Well, do you have any better ideas?” I pressed. “You said this was our best shot and now you want
to give it up?”

“I don’t know,” Sauli exhaled sharply. “I don’t want to do it if it’s painful for you.”

“This whole thing has been painful, in more ways than one.” I stared hard at the wall. “Now I just
want it to be over, whatever it takes.”

“Oh.” He nodded. “We’ll try one more time for today. If it doesn’t work, take a couple days off
and let your mind rest. We don’t know if you breaking down like that has permanent effects.”

I shrugged. Sauli watched me carefully as he got off the bed and took the knife off the floor. I
shuffled on the bed, throwing my legs over the edge and sitting solidly. My head swayed briefly, the
room shifting, but other than that, I was fine.

Sauli kneeled down before me again, eyeing me cautiously the entire time. He positioned the knife
beneath the small wound he’d already inflicted upon himself. My throat went dry immediately, mind
hazing over.

“Ready?” I heard his voice say, sounding muted and far away.

I must have nodded or something because Sauli started to dig the tip of the knife into his flesh,
breaking skin. A flash of something, a memory, zipped across my vision briefly before I felt it be
forcefully removed and a strong force pull Dark forward. I heard him grunt with frustration as he
pulled back against the urge. He was strong, but even this force would overpower him without help.

Sauli tugged the knife further down his arm, wincing slightly as he did so. A small stream of blood
ran down the side. I gasped, another image shooting by, but this time it last long enough for me to
pick out the strong color of blood within it. The urge became more desperate, shoving the image
away and pulling Dark more forcefully. Dark actually hissed when he almost lost his ground, almost
gave into the pull. I needed to help. I pushed back with all my mental might, cringing hard at the
strain. My head was pounding, like there was a three-way raging war happening right in the confined
space of my mind. Dark’s grunts of effort started to fade as I forced him dormant once more,
rejecting the pull entirely.

For a moment, my mind was calm, and I could see clearly again. Sauli was still in the middle of
running the knife down his arm, that’s how short amount of time had passed. The moment passed,
and I was hit with an overwhelming and blinding memory, nothing to restrain it.

All I saw was Sauli, bleeding out on his bathroom floor, his arm slashed too deep. I gasped and my
eyes burned at the sight. Was he dead? He couldn’t just be dead. Why the hell would he do
something like this to himself? He couldn’t leave me, not like this. I dropped down onto my knees in
front of him, finding it impossible to breathe, not knowing where to even touch him. He was so
looked so pale, so dead.

“Sauli?” I croaked, hoping my voice could somehow get him to respond with anything to let me
know he wasn’t dead.

“I’m right here, Adam,” I heard him say distantly, slightly deeper than normal, deeper than a teenage
boy’s voice.

I frowned, confused. Sauli’s lips hadn’t even moved. Then, I suddenly felt something squeeze my
hand, soft like skin, but firm and reassuring. I glanced down at my hand, but there was no one
holding it. There was only Sauli’s blood, but I could have sworn someone was holding my hand. A
moment later, someone started to hum, again sounding like Sauli, but as if I were half asleep and
dreaming, and hearing someone else in the room. I listened carefully, the bloody Sauli in front of me
shortly forgotten.

He was humming a song I recognized, a song I wrote… for him. I think. What was it called? God, it
was hard to think with my heart racing and head pounding from the stress of Sauli laying here like
this. I needed to calm down and clear my head. My brow furrowed as I listened carefully.

Where was his voice coming from? The bathroom suddenly felt hazy like a dream or a memory.
Was… that what this was? Was this not real? Sauli sure sounded alive and well, but where was he
and then who was this? I looked back at the Sauli who was still bleeding out in front of me, but
something seemed very off about the scene now that I could focus. He almost seemed to be
repeating, his arm was continuously bleeding out, but weirdly, like a looped video. I frowned. What
the hell? I glanced over my shoulder and gasped. There was nothing behind me. The rest of Sauli’s
room was gone. There was nothing but white emptiness behind me.

I looked back at Sauli and squinted hard, an eerie feeling of familiarity washing over me, as if I could
predict the future. Like, this… had all already happened. In a few moments, I was supposed to help
Sauli and we’d end up on his bed having the time of my life. This was a memory.

My eyes widened in realization.

However, glancing back at Sauli’s arm sent a wave of nausea through me. I took deep breaths,
forcing myself to withstand this. Come on, Adam. This really happened, but he’s all right. Sauli—the
real Sauli was still alive and well. He was right here, but I couldn’t see him. He’s fine, and you’re
fine. This was years ago. It shouldn’t hurt anymore. Stop letting it hurt. This was a part of my past,
and it was horrid, but it’s over. I could let it go. I could move on… I would.

I blinked and the hazy memory was gone, my vision filling with the real Sauli’s beautifully worried
face. The knife was still poking at his arm. He didn’t need to be doing that anymore. I snapped
forward and grabbed the knife out of Sauli’s hand. He looked up at me with wide eyes, probably
worried that I was Dark.

“It’s okay,” I hissed, forcing myself to stare at his blood and remain calm. “It’s me. I think I have it.
Stop hurting yourself. Go wash up.” I dropped the bloody knife onto the floor.

Sauli nodded quickly and ran to the bathroom. As soon as he was gone, I felt my entire body and
mind relax. I let out a deep sigh and fell back onto the bed, panting hard. I felt mentally exhausted.

Sauli eventually came back, the cuts covered by bandages. Again, I forced myself to look at the
bloody knife. Nothing. There was no pull. The memory of that one horrid night entered my head, but
it didn’t consume me. It was just a passing thought. I did it. I didn’t block it. It felt like a normal
recollection of a tragic day years ago. Somehow, I’d accepted it.

I felt almost giddy when Sauli hopped up onto the bed next to me and stared at my face
apprehensively.

“Are you okay?” he asked quietly.

I grinned at him, whispering, “I did it.”

“How?”

“I’m not sure, but your humming helped,” I replied fondly. “It distracted me long enough to take
notice of what was going on because it didn’t make sense for me to recognize a song you were
humming that I hadn’t even given to you yet.”

Sauli smiled. “Map. I thought it might soothe you. I guess it worked.”

“God, that was way too difficult though,” I sighed, burying my face in my hands.

“Are you sure you don’t want a professional to help us?” Sauli asked quietly, rubbing my back.

“No,” I insisted, voice muffled by my hands.

Sauli was quiet, waiting for my tension to ease under his touch.

“I kind of miss him already,” Sauli admitted.

I sighed, knowing exactly to whom he was referring. “He’s still there,” I muttered, dropping my
hands.

“I know, but I don’t get to see him anymore.”

“Good,” I said stiffly. Sauli nodded solemnly.

“I’m proud of you though. I can’t imagine the difficulty.”

I reached out and pulled Sauli into my chest, stroking his hair. “I can’t believe you just slashed your
wrist for me. I don’t know whether to thank you or smack you.”

Sauli mumbled into my neck, “I’m involved in this; it’s partially my fault, so I’m not going to let you
fall apart. We started this together and we’re ending it together.”

A smile played at my lips. “You know that boggles my mind? You could’ve have stayed away,
found someone you deserve, and not gotten involved with someone who isn’t mentally unstable and
dangerous.”

Sauli groaned. “I spent ten years thinking you’re dead. You think I’m just going to give you up now?
You are a moron. I don’t care about someone I deserve or whatever. I want you, unstable or not.”

I said nothing, but released him before checking over his arm. I noticed blood was seeping through
the bandage a bit too much. He hadn’t tended to the cut properly. I took his arm in my hands and
pulled him wordlessly into the bathroom before re-cleaning and wiping the wound. A nagging urge
came back, but it was much weaker this time around, and I shoved it back with all my might. I tried
to breathe evenly as I felt Sauli’s eyes on my face.

“Somehow we end up in a bathroom again with you trying to save me,” Sauli said lightly, chuckling
a little.

“You’re stupid if you keep trying to push him away,” Dark said with a faded voice. I still wasn’t
fighting hard enough. I wasn’t going to mention how it was his fault I kept trying anything.

I know.

I gave Dark the biggest exertion of mental stress I could and suddenly, I relaxed completely, but felt
a bit strange. I could feel Dark smirking in approval, but it was far away and distorted.

“He’s still annoying me,” I grumbled as I applied bandages to the cut. It wasn’t nearly as deep as the
first time around. It was more like a surface scrape and definitely nothing near lethal.
“Well, duh,” Sauli rolled his eyes, “did you think this was a onetime thing? You’ve only conquered this one trauma. There are still plenty of others… unfortunately. Even after you stop pulling him out, you still need time to reconnect and become one. It’ll take weeks, months, maybe even years to heal you.”

I sighed sharply, annoyed.

Months? Years? Fuck me. This was nearly unbearable the first two times.

Chapter End Notes

Here we go...
Chapter Notes

Normally each chapter alternates POV between Adam/Dark and Sauli, but because we are getting down to the nitty gritty here and need to switch POVs a lot, they’ll be happening within the same chapter. Otherwise, we’d have a bunch of really short chapters coming up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adam:

Three months later

I woke up with Sauli tucked tightly against my chest, his soft breath brushing over my bare collarbone. Both of us were bare as the day we were born, with his leg hooked over my hip, leaving no space between us. I could already tell my skin was glued to his from drying sweat and the blanket was on the floor somewhere. The sheets were a chaotic mess all around and stained with whatever. We never bothered cleaning up directly after; we’d just throw the sheets into the washer in the morning. Nothing ruined the post-coital bliss like chores.

I angled my head down to get a better look at Sauli’s peaceful, sated face, and smiled. He’d ended up moving back in with me since he insisted on monitoring me at all times, especially in the first couple weeks because he didn’t trust me to be alone, and I gave into his demands because I was weak and practically worshipped him.

After his legs healed completely, I ended up forcing him to go on a shopping spree with me, gripping him tightly by the wrist and dragging him into store after store to buy him clothes, electronics, and everything else he would need since, apparently, he was here permanently. I had been a bit wary about him staying, but mostly I was just tired of fighting him on the matter. I clearly needed his help.

The treating process was a struggle, without a doubt. We didn’t know how many appearances by Dark we had until one caused the split; it could be dozens or it could be just one, so it was terrifying every single time we triggered a memory and attempted to block him from taking over. Considering life, friends, my next album, and everything else that came into play, it wasn’t as if we were practicing daily. We really didn’t need much to trigger a memory though; sometimes just talking about it started the urge to switch. Other times, we had to create a trigger like self-harm. There were ones I did conquer, a few more minor memories that I could now think about freely. They were sad, but they were long in the past.

At first, Sauli and I tried to talk about previous traumas—to figure out the triggers—but that didn’t go so well considering I had blocked them and didn’t know what would set me off. It’d been up to him to recall the past and assume what would work. One problem was that Sauli had only been in my life for a short time back then. He didn’t know everything that had happened to me.
I didn’t know if I was improving. I didn’t really feel any different, although at times I would tell myself that I wasn’t quite as forgetful or absentminded, that the gears in my head ran a little more smoothly, but I could just as easily be imagining it. Sauli would insist that he could see some of Dark in me, in my expressions and movements, but I’d roll my eyes and tell him it was because we were in the exact same body, and then he’d say that it was in some of my comments as well. Maybe the split did heal slightly, our only evidence being the one time we’d slipped up. Dark had suddenly popped out after a failed triggering attempt, which could have been fatal, but it hadn’t been. Of course, as soon as it had happened, Dark jumped right back into me so quickly that Sauli hadn’t even noticed the change until I’d pointed out that I’d failed. In any case, that incident sent us back a step in the wrong direction. All of our other attempts had been successful.

In short, it wasn’t getting worse. That was all we knew.

Somehow, we’d managed to keep all this from the public eye. No one knew about my secret as far as I could tell. A few people said I looked happier, but I credited that to Sauli being with me. So far, we’d kept the whole thing on the down low, something I never believed possible.

For the past couple of months now, no one had gotten hurt, no one felt like an unstable mess, and my relationship with Sauli had gotten stronger than ever. I didn’t know how Dark felt about any of it, but I didn’t really care either. He was staying out of the way as promised, even if we weren’t rebalancing. I felt as if things had calmed down, become domestic even. Being with Sauli was as easy as breathing now. Before, other than Dark, we didn’t have any problems, and now, with him out of the way for the most part, we were perfect.

I sighed softly into Sauli’s hair and he shifted gently in my arms. I pressed a kiss to his forehead, causing him to mumble and stir a little more. I grinned and held him tighter. I was overheating, but I’d rather stay like this than be without it. If it weren’t for Sauli, I’d be a patient of a mental asylum right now inside a padded cell... or dead. If my condition didn’t get better or worse, if things stayed like this, just like this, I could be happy with him for the rest of our lives. I wanted to prove that I meant that.

I gently untangled myself from Sauli and quietly slipped out of bed, dressing myself up in my usual incognito gear, which consisted of a baseball cap and overpriced sunglasses, and drove my way to Beverly Hills for a specific shop I’d had my eye on for a couple weeks.

I felt a little bit dizzy walking into the jewelry store.

If I had entered a store like this years ago, I’d have spun on my heel and walked straight back out. It screamed high-end glamor and leave if you’re not currently wearing at least 10,000 bucks because you’re not going to be able to afford shit here. Of course, by now, I was more or less used to the high-class life I’d been catapulted into. Money was an afterthought.

I removed my sunglasses, but kept my head down as I scanned the necklaces and bracelets, not really knowing what the fuck I was doing. I casually trailed over to the rings, pretending as if they weren’t the exact reason I was here. I was stalling. The reality of my mission was creeping up on me. Feeling a bit out of balance, I scanned over the rings as they all sparkled at me, begging to be bought. If I did this, I didn’t know when exactly I’d give it to him. I just wanted to have it, just in case.

I remembered once accidentally telling Sauli that I’d marry him if I could, but I never got the chance to act on it. The world was changing and suddenly, the option was mine. The thought terrified and excited me all at the same time. I wanted to take the last step with Sauli. I’d given him the opportunity to leave me many times for his own good, but being his stubborn self, he resisted. Fact was, Sauli wasn’t going to leave, and I was never going to ask him to again. My condition wasn’t getting any worse and our life together was gelling beyond expectation. From now on, whatever
happened would happen with us together.

I let my fingertips trail on the glass as I went down the rows of rings on display. None of them seemed to pop out at me. I repeated to myself like a mantra, *buy something simple*, as I gazed at the twinkling beauties. *Buy something simple.*

*Buy something sim—fuck.*

Something finally caught my eye. I kneeled down to eye-level with the glass, feeling my throat get a little tight as I saw a ring I knew I couldn’t leave here without, and I hated myself for it. It was excessively dramatic and flashy, so of course I was drooling over it. I couldn’t help myself.

It was enchanting, otherworldly, and fluid. In the center was a round diamond wrapped in pavé diamonds that crossed over on either side of the main diamond and then trailed all the way down the band. The reality of this, the fact that I was really going to buy a ring like this, was scaring the shit out of me, and yet I was mesmerized all the same.

“May I help you sir?” I heard a voice ask.

I looked up and saw a girl dressed in a sharply ironed white suit with a kind smile on her face.

“Um, yes.” I cleared my throat, straightening up. “How much for that?” I pointed at the gorgeous and ridiculous ring.

She smiled wider at my choice and pulled out the ring with the tag. “It’s $24,847 for this exact ring. Alterations will vary the price.”

My eye twitched. Of course, I picked an expensive one, and one that normal people wouldn’t think was worth the price. I wasn’t normal. I was a drama queen through and through. My eyes flickered over to the ring next to it, a much simpler, yet still beautiful ring, but it just didn’t resonate with me. I was already sold.

“May I see it?” I asked, holding out my hand.

She handed it over to me and I gently took it from her. I twirled the ring around and took in every perfect detail, completely able to see Sauli wearing it only after complaining to me about how extravagant it was. That was the point though. I wanted all eyes on the ring. I wanted the world really to *see* that this perfect human being completely belonged to me and I belonged to him, and no one else could ever even hope to touch him.

I paused and replayed that last thought in my mind again.

Uh… maybe I *was* acting like Dark.

“Hey… sorry if I’m overstepping, but you wouldn’t happen to be Adam Lambert, would you…?” the girl tentatively asked as I internally berated myself for being so weak for a ring.

I looked up from the ring and smiled, acting cooler than I actually felt inside where I was alarmed at my childish excitement. She gasped a little.

“Is that for…?” she whispered. I nodded once, smirking. Her eyes went wide. “Oh my god, congrats.”

I mouthed, “Thanks,” followed by a grateful smile. “I’ll take it,” I said, “this exact version, no alterations.” Sauli had delicate hands, smaller than mine by a quite a bit. If the ring was too small for
me, I could see it fitting him fine. It wasn’t as if I could’ve casually asked him what his ring size was after all.

After purchasing the ring and signing an autograph, I was on my way out onto the streets accompanied by a box in my pocket with an unnecessarily extravagant ring inside it that would change my life. Sauli was going to throw a fit. I knew I could give him a twist tie as a ring and he’d be overjoyed, but I wouldn’t be satisfied. My tastes were much flashier. I would never tell Sauli how much it cost; he’d kill me.

I didn’t know how to do this properly. It wasn’t as if I had practice proposing to people. There was no real guide to this. I didn’t know how my friends would react, or how the media would react, or how the fans would react, or even how Sauli would react… All I knew was that this was the first thing I’d done in a long time that felt right. I was nervous and wanted this to be special. I could only think of one place I could take him to do this, just to be even more dramatic, but that required me to face a ghastly memory. I just hoped it would pay off.

But what if he said no?

Wait, why would he say no?

He loved me. I knew that.

He wanted to marry me, right?

Or was I being too old-fashioned?

Maybe he just didn’t think it was necessary.

Maybe he just didn’t want to marry me.

No, that was ridiculous.

But what if he said yes?

I’d have to plan a wedding.

Me!

A wedding!

My wedding!

I’d be a husband.

Sauli would be my husband.

What the hell. I felt giddy.

I was pulled out of my thoughts by a familiar face caught in my peripheral. I looked over into the electronic store at a display TV showing a picture of Sauli and me. I paused mid-step and fully turned toward the image in confusion. Why were they showing a perfectly innocent picture of us on some tabloid show? We hadn’t done anything scandalous. Curious and slightly anxious, I put my oversized sunglasses back on and stepped into the store before asking the sales associate if they could turn up the volume. The feeling I had low in my gut did not bode well.

As the volume increased, I picked up, “–Koskinen, Lambert’s current partner. Several witnesses
confirm that Lambert had acted abusively and possessively toward Koskinen in a local club months ago, even assaulting a partygoer that had gotten too close.”

A cold weight settled in my chest, the feeling of just watching this be broadcast, of being powerless to do anything about it.

“Others claim Lambert’s behavior has been sporadic and strange ever since he first made his rise to fame. Some claim drug addiction, or even mental illness. Over the years, he’s been spotted to be violent and prone to fits of rage, especially toward—”

“—Change the channel,” I said weakly to the sales associate.

He complied with a shrug and then shook his head. “Never liked that Lambert guy. I’m not surprised if he really is a total POS underneath that makeup. You know, I had an abusive girlfriend once—”

My hands curled into fists and my teeth gnashed together. I turned on my heel and strode out of the store without another word. The ride home was a blur. I vaguely recalled my phone ringing angrily a number of times. I threw open the front door and found Sauli digging around in the fridge in the kitchen. He peeked out and threw me a smile that faded as he took in my appearance. He closed the fridge door, making his way over to me.

“Adam?” he called out warily. “Are you alright?”

I stared at him. “It happened.”

“What happened? Adam, you look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“T-The media, they—”

The home phone started to ring. My eyes locked onto it just as Sauli reached for it.

“No, Sauli, don’t answer—”

“—Hello?” Sauli spoke into the receiver. I tensed and held my breath. “He’s right here,” Sauli eyed me carefully. “You have? Well, he seems a bit jaded right now so that’s probably not for the best.” He frowned. “Do I know what?” He was quiet for a minute as he listened, his face flitting between expressions. “Oh my god.” He threw me a cautious look. “No, of course it’s not true! He would never. I’m fine. Great even. Just—just call him later. Bye.”

He hung up the phone and stared at me. I had no idea what my expression was.

“So?” I squeaked.

“That was your manager,” he spoke slowly. “He said he called you a bunch, but you never answered…” I gave him a look to get to the point. “Apparently, we were on the news because of Dark. Is that what you were going to tell me?”

“Fuck!” I yelled, throwing my hands up, anger bubbling up and spewing over. “Of course there were witnesses! Of course they recognized me! Fuck, we were practically the highlight of that club! And it’s not just that, they’ve been noticing for a while. Who knows how many people had seen you limping around? How could I be so stupid to think no one would notice that something is very, very wrong with me?”

“Just calm down for a second, they can’t know about Dark—”
“—Of course they don’t know about him!” I exclaimed, volume rising higher momentarily. Sauli winced slightly. “They think it’s me. They think I’m a psychopath who beats the shit out of you and anyone that gets close to you! Of course they ran straight to the media. What, they’re not going to jump to, maybe he has some other dude in his mind that takes control and makes him do shit he’d never do! Yeah, that makes total fucking sense. They’re completely right to think it’s me because technically, it is! Fuck!”

I whirled around and stomped over to the couch, plopping down and burying my face in my hands. A few seconds later, I felt fingers that normally would’ve been soothing running through my hair from behind the couch.

Sauli sighed. “Why is the media reporting about it now if they’ve been getting reports for a while? It’s been a long while since that night or any incidents with Dark. It’s old news anyway.”

“If I know tabloid media, and I do, I think it’s probably because we announced the new album yesterday. Worst-case scenario, they were waiting until I was relevant again to ruin my life and blacklist me again. Best case, they wanted to wait until I was relevant to give me a spotlight boost.” I chuckled without humor.

“All publicity is good publicity?” Sauli offered weakly.

“I’m ruined,” I said surely, ignoring him, dread washing over me.

“No you’re not,” he said gently. “All you have to do is make a statement and so do I. I’ll say none of it is true.”

I pushed his hand away from my head with a groan and stood up to face him. “Like anyone will believe you, the poor, pathetic boyfriend who has to listen to me and my threats or get the living hell beat out of him!” Sauli rolled his eyes. “It doesn’t matter what we say, because it was all true. People saw what happened. It’s not a rumor. That news broadcast was probably the first. It’s just going to snowball. People will research and find more evidence. People will go through their phones and be like, hey, the video I took of that crazy person sure looks like that Adam Lambert dude on the news. Either we tell the press about Dark and I go to an institution for basket cases, or I say nothing, look more suspicious, and end up going to court. I am royally fucked.”

Sauli ran his hand through his hair roughly, his eyes squeezing shut with stress for a moment. “I’m sorry,” he murmured. “I don’t know what to say.”

“I’ll probably have to run away, start a new life, new identity… again.” I groaned dramatically.

“I think you’re exaggerating,” Sauli mumbled.

“No really,” I scoffed. “Every time you come into my life, it’s all gum drops and sprinkles until it’s not, and everything goes to shit to the point where I’d rather be dead,” I spewed, and immediately regretted the words.

Sauli’s eyebrows shot up shortly before they knit together in irritation.

“Wait, that came out wrong,” I backtracked, but Sauli was already off toward the front door, brushing past me stiffly. I stared with wide eyes at the spot he’d been standing on, unable to turn around, appalled at myself.

“Just stay here,” I heard him respond, and thankfully, he didn’t sound too angry. “I’ll be back later.”
My feet were frozen to the spot until the slam of the door made me jump. I whipped around to stare at the closed door.

I was silent for a few seconds. “I didn’t mean it…” I finally said quietly to no one.

How could I be such an asshole? Maybe I really was acting more like Dark.

The ring in my pocket suddenly weighed a ton.

Sauli:

It only took a quick Google search and a cab call, and I was on my way to the KWLA broadcast station Adam’s manager had mentioned on the phone. If Adam wasn’t going to deal with it himself, then I would go give them an ultimatum. The plan was just to explain that I was fine, the whole bit. Hell, I’d give an entire interview if I needed to. I was the only one that could set this right. It wasn’t as if Dark could do it, and Adam was a goddamn irrational mess.

I tried not to dwell on the guilty twinge in the back of my mind as I sat in the back of the cab, watching the LA streets fly by. Adam’s words hurt, and even though I knew he didn’t really mean them in the heat of his panic, I couldn’t help but think they did hold some truth. In any case, I was going to fix this. I wasn’t about to let Adam go through another disaster because of me. I’d already caused enough damage, and we were just starting to get accustomed to our newfound sync.

I paid the cabbie when we arrived and stepped out to take in the tall building that was the KWLA station. My phone rang in my pocket and I sighed when I pulled it out to see Adam’s caller ID and a sweet picture of him staring me in the face. I declined the call and sent him a text instead.

Paying a visit to the KWLA station. It’s only a few minutes away. I’m fine. Stay home. Love you.

I slid the phone back into my pocket and crossed the large courtyard before heading inside. The first floor was vast and sleek, not a mote of dust anywhere to be seen. There were TV monitors everywhere, showing broadcasts being recorded from probably somewhere in the building. There was a long, curved reception desk in the middle with a huge candlelit chandelier above it, which stood out among all the modern décor. I made my way over to the thin-lipped receptionist staring sharply at her monitor.

“Hello,” I said when she glanced up at me. “I need to speak with whoever is in charge.”

She just looked at me as if I was requesting something ridiculous. “Do you have an appointment?” she asked disinterestedly.

“No, but—”

“Sir, if you want to share a potential news story, we have a submission form on our website. I suggest you use it.”

“Look, I don’t have a story, I want you to stop a story,” I said impatiently.

Her bored gaze didn’t change. “And what would that be?”
“Your station has been reporting falsehoods against someone very close to me, and I will speak to someone right now to sort this out civilly and correct it or else we will sue for slander if this damages his career.” I crossed my arms and stared at her challengingly. I was trying to sound professional, but I had no idea what I was doing.

“Sir, that’s not how any of this works. You can’t sue unless the station knowingly reported a falsehood. I assure you the professionals here would not make something up. There were probably multiple reports coming in from various sources.”

Shit, I needed to say something. “Well I am the so-called victim of the report and I am the only source you people need to be listening to.” Yeah, good, that sounded legit. “I demand to speak to someone who can right this.”

She studied me for a good moment, but didn’t look impressed. “Hold please,” she said simply before picking up a phone and pressing a single number. “Mr. Wingate? I have a Mr…."

“Koskinen,” I clarified.

“…Koskinen here to see you. He claims it’s urgent.” She paused, twiddling her pen. “No. An issue with a report. Yes, I told him… Alright, sir.” Hanging up the phone, she looked up at me again. “Floor six, office thirteen.”

“Thank you,” I said with relief, turning and heading toward the stairs.

“Sir, you can’t go up the stairs,” I heard the receptionist call out behind me. “There are technicians in there repairing a gas pipe.”

“Sorry,” I muttered, spinning around and making my way over into the elevator the receptionist was gesturing to with boredom.

I scanned the panel of buttons inside the elevator. The building had ten floors in total. I pressed on the sixth button and was on my way up. With each passing floor, my nervousness grew. With every passing second, I knew less and less about what in the hell I was going to say to convince anyone to report something different. For all they knew, Adam had threatened my family to get me to come here and make a convincing case. Whatever, I at least had to give it a shot.

When the elevator reached the floor, I’d walked out about four steps onto a huge floor with various frosted glass offices lining the walls and people in cubicles in the middle, and more monitors every few feet before it happened. The ground beneath my feet jolted and then started to shake. The lights began to flicker. I had to steady myself on the wall with my palm before I looked out and saw people rising to their feet in confusion, and someone yelling “earthquake!” before ducking under his desk.

Los Angeles was not uncommon to earthquakes, but normally they were reasonably minor, hardly noticeable. This, on the other hand, was not mild. Everywhere around me, I heard clattering and rumbling, and people yelling. Lights kept flickering and the TV screens had turned off. Decorations and lamps were falling off desks and people were stumbling as they rushed to find shelter under desks and doorframes.

Suddenly, the fire alarm went off and it happened to be right above my head. I yelled out when the unexpected blaring took full force above my ears. I held onto the sides of my head, protecting my ears that were now ringing of their own accord from the sudden shrill blast of sound. Hands preoccupied, I stumbled to the side and landed on my hip. People now looked more confused. Fire alarms meant leave the building. Earthquakes meant hide under something. I for one, needed to leave. I got up quickly, and as soon as I pressed the elevator button, I could faintly smell smoke
coming from a vent. Fire. There really was a fire. How? Where? I’d take an earthquake over being trapped in a burning building any day. I waited for a moment, but the elevator had shut down.

Stairs, I had to find the stairs. I looked over behind me to where everyone was yelling and panicking and evacuating toward a sign marked for a stairwell on the other side of the room to me. Floor still shaking, I started to stumble my way across, hand on the walls to steady myself. I heard a crack, and when I looked up, I got a face full of the edge of a small flat-screen TV. I hit the floor on my back with a searing pain in my nose and forehead, vision going fuzzy. I groaned and grabbed onto my face, hissing at the stinging. I blinked several times, but everything was still blurry and my ears were still ringing loudly, muffling the sounds of people scrambling. I closed my eyes.

When I reopened them, the fire alarm was still blaring, but the ground had stopped shaking, and there was no one around. I scrunched my nose and winced in pain as I sat up and looked around. The room was empty. Media bastards just left me here. I slowly got to my feet, regained my balance, and set off headlong toward the stairwell.

I sprinted down the stairs and made it to the fourth floor before I heard a loud, wall-shaking explosion from somewhere beneath me in the stairwell. I froze in my tracks. What in the hell was that?

I continued down the stairs more slowly, breathing becoming more difficult as the smoke started to get thicker. I let out a few hacking coughs into my elbow and checked down the edge of the spiraling stairwell to the third floor where I saw another wave of heavy smoke absolutely blackening everything. The fire was down there somewhere, not above me. Fuck.

I didn’t know what to do. The smoke was thicker with every level down, and I didn’t know exactly where the fire was or how many there were or what that explosion was. I had no way out unless I decided to jump out a window and break a few bones or die. I was so close to the exit. Maybe I could barrel the rest of the way down the stairwell through the smoke and just hold on until the first floor. I could handle holding my breath while sprinting down four flights of stairs, right? Whatever, whatever, I had to try something. I was a sitting duck like this.

Taking in a huge gulp of air that was already polluted, I bolted head first into the black smoke. I couldn’t even see my feet as I took the steps down rapid-fire. My eyes started watering from ash flying into them. My entire body was starting to become soaked with sweat. It was fucking hot, worse than any sauna. Once I reached the second floor, I couldn’t take it anymore and had to breathe.

I knew I didn’t have long before I lost consciousness. I tried to inhale as little as possible, but after a few more steps, heart pounding, body straining, lungs aching, I started coughing my blackening lungs up and tripped, tumbling down a few pairs of concrete stairs before sprawling out and catching myself, all the while still coughing. I opened my eyes and saw nothing but thick black smoke, so thick I could taste it. Was there even oxygen in this? I doubted it.

I attempted to feel around for anything in the darkness and wave of nausea fell over me as my fingers brushed over what felt like a nose. It was someone’s charred face.

My gut lurched.

Had I tripped over another body coming down the stairs as well? I didn’t know how many were around me. I didn’t fucking want to know. Was this where the explosion had been?

Oh god, I had just caressed a dead person’s face.
The revulsion was overwhelming, and I leaned over to empty my stomach beside me. A disgusted shudder ran through me and I suddenly felt so tired and hopeless. I threw up again.

My chest burned and my body was already forming bruises from taking a fall down the stairs. I didn’t know how close I was to the first floor now. I couldn’t see anything, but I knew the fire must be on the first floor. In that case, either it had engulfed the entire floor with no hope for escape, or it was sporadic and possible to navigate through to the exit.

At this rate, whatever the situation was on the first floor didn’t even matter. I couldn’t even get up. I was too achy, too hot, too tired, and too sick. I coughed weakly and gave up on breathing the toxic air, consciousness giving out slowly. I just really needed to close my eyes for a minute, the ash stung so much. Just for one moment.

***

“Wake up,” a voice demanded.

I peeled open my crusty eyes and winced at the light. The blurry figure staring down at me was familiar, and beyond him was a grey sky. I was outside, or something. What happened? I reached up to wipe my eyes and they focused on the person kneeling over me.

“Adam?” I murmured, voice absolutely wrecked from the smoke. I couldn’t even recognize the sound.

“Guess again.” He smirked down at me. “Hi, Blondie. Long time, no see. You look like shit.”

“Dark?” Gears clicked and my gogginess dissipated immediately. I noticed I was breathing into an oxygen mask. I could hear sirens, random street noises, and a several panicked voices. I tried to sit up, but his firm hand on my chest held me down. I was made aware that I was lying on stretcher on the ground of the courtyard outside the building. “You’re not supposed to be out,” I croaked, sounding raw.

Dark rolled his eyes. “You almost legitimately died and you care about me being conscious? Who else was going to save your stupid, suicidal ass?”

“You came after me?” I took a closer look at Dark. He looked like a mess. His hair was tattered, his face ashy, and he was trembling slightly. There were clean tear tracks running down his dirty face. He and Adam went into a burning building after me. “Why?”

“Dumb question,” he muttered. His voice was a little hoarse, but not nearly as disgusting as mine. “We fucked us over real bad by doing this, but we had to.”

“But how—” I paused to cough violently into the oxygen mask.

Dark stared down at me disapprovingly. He paused for a moment, looking past me. “Adam, he’ll be fine. Calm down.”

“He can talk to you now—?” I squawked and cringed at my voice, before being shut up with a sharp glare from Dark.

“Do not. Adam, stop it!” Dark hissed. “You can’t take over. You’ll kill—”
Dark froze, wincing. When he reopened his eyes, he was gone. His expression was now Adam’s
distinguishable worried face.

“Adam,” I drawled, reaching up to stroke his ashy cheek.

A faint smile graced his lips, but his eyes creased with pain. “Sauli, I’m so—”

He cut off with a gasp, eyes going wide. I froze, staring up at him. He suddenly fell forward, causing
me to cough out with the impact of his weight, his head landing by my ear. Panic welled up in me.

“Adam?” I yelped, trying to shake him. I could feel his chest rising and falling rapidly against mine.

He started having spasms and twitching soundlessly over me. With each twitch, he’d draw in a sharp
breath. I could feel it; he was alternating between Adam and Dark, repeatedly, faster and faster, until
suddenly, he stopped moving altogether. I just shook him again because I was too weak now to push
him off and get a better look.

“Adam? Dark?” I tried. No response. No movement. “Adam?” I called out with more anxiety, my
chest constricting. My eyes started stinging and blurring, and my throat felt thick with a sob I
couldn’t let out.

“Adam!”

Chapter End Notes

Here’s the ridiculous ring

http://media.tiffany.com/is/image/Tiffany/EngagementItemL/tiffany-co-schlumberger-
engagement-ring-22597361_stnd_tf_ml_x1b_rh_R1.jpg?
defaultImage=NoImageAvailable&&
http://media.tiffany.com/is/image/Tiffany/EngagementItemL/tiffany-co-schlumberger-
engagement-ring-22597361_side_tf_ml_x1b_rh_R1.jpg?
defaultImage=NoImageAvailable&&
http://media.tiffany.com/is/image/Tiffany/EngagementItemL/tiffany-co-schlumberger-
engagement-ring-23712202e062608_1.54ct_tf_ml_x1e_rh_R1.jpg?
defaultImage=NoImageAvailable&&
Did I actually update twice in two days? Who am I and what have I done with Eileen?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Adam:

I decided to hide the engagement ring in my sock drawer, which Sauli never touched because it was chaotic mess of unpaired socks. I slid the box inside a sock and then buried it under more socks, before closing the drawer and giving it a sigh. I glanced down at my phone with a frown. I should apologize to Sauli for my diarrhea mouth. On my way out of the bedroom, I forced myself to press his name on the screen and call him.

The call went to voicemail after only a couple rings. I expected that.

A moment later, surprisingly, the screen flashed with a new text from Sauli.

Paying a visit to the KWLA station. It’s only a few minutes away. i’m fine. Stay home. Love you.

I read the text over and over on my way to the living room couch. Each time I read it, I felt more ashamed. After the complete crap I’d said to him, Sauli was going to try to fix this on his own. I sat on the couch, staring straight ahead at the wall in front of me, hating myself for being the shittiest human being alive. It’s not as if any of this was his fault, and blaming Dark didn’t exactly make me feel any better since he was me.

After a long while of moping while anxiously bouncing my leg waiting for Sauli’s return, the walls and floor abruptly started to shake. I groaned. An earthquake? Now? I was not in the mood for this. With a sharp sigh, I sank off the couch pathetically and slumped to the floor before rolling under the coffee table. It was the same basic drill every time there was one of these annoying moments. I wasn’t exactly worried since my house was built to withstand, even if this one felt stronger than most. Even so, the rattling of everything in the house was unnerving.

My thoughts remained a mess and mostly directed at Sauli as I stared up at the stony underside of my coffee table, patiently waiting for the shaking to stop. I realized Sauli could probably feel the earthquake as well and I just hoped he found a good place to take cover. I was more worried for him than anything else.

When it was finally over, aftershocks too, I got up to inspect the damage. The house appeared fine, except for a few fallen picture frames. I sighed at all the broken glass, glaring as if it was their fault they were broken. After quickly sweeping the shards of glass into the garbage along with the now useless picture frames, I turned on the TV to a random news station. Surely enough, they were already reporting on the damages caused by the earthquake. I stared blankly at the TV, mind too muddled to pay much attention as they showed various damaged buildings and streets. I frowned, realizing the earthquake was a bit more severe than what I’d felt in the house.
I checked the time. It hadn’t even been an hour since Sauli left, but it still felt like he was gone longer than he should be. The station couldn’t have been more than ten minutes away, including traffic, and whatever discussion he was having couldn’t have taken this long… but then there was the earthquake that just ended, so that was probably slowing him down. Then there was travel time back home with the damages…

I glanced back at the TV during my train of thought just as they were showing live footage of one building in particular where a section of the lower half was ablaze, with a familiar name written on the bottom of the screen. My eyes widened into saucer plates and my thought bubble burst. I whipped out my phone and checked Sauli’s text.

*Paying a visit to the KWLA station.*

My eyes flickered between the name in the text and the one printed on the TV, disbelieving, but despite my hope that the text would magically have a different name every time I looked at it, it was still the same news station building Sauli had gone to.

No, no, no, no, no.

“Fuck!” I hissed, not bothering to turn off the TV as I burst out the front door and was in my car in the next ten seconds, already backing out onto the road.

I didn’t know what in the hell I was going to do or what to expect when I got there, but I just had to get there. Five horns honking, three swerves narrowly avoiding collisions, and several speed limit violations later, I parked a block away, arriving in record time, and sprinted down to the building, just following the thick smoke in the sky.

On the scene were paramedics from the hospital down a few blocks and many people breathing into oxygen masks and staring up at the burning building in worry at a safe distance away on its expansive grassy courtyard. I didn’t see any firefighters, which only angered me since they were supposed to have a respond time of like five minutes. I scanned the crowd for the blond tuft of hair that I loved so much. Nothing. I tried to keep calm, keep from panicking. Maybe he’d gotten in and out before all of this even started. Maybe he never even arrived here. I whipped out my phone and hurriedly sent a text.

*Where are you???

I waited, staring at the screen expectantly. Sauli always answered immediately, within thirty seconds at most. After five minutes, my head was spinning and my legs were wobbly. I looked around at all the officials. Had no one checked inside for people that need help? Why was no one even trying? What if Sauli was still in there and no one knew?

Oh god, oh god. He could be dead, burnt alive, or buried, and all because he came here to solve my problem. Oh my god.

Two more minutes, and no response from Sauli. I couldn’t wait any longer. I found the nearest police officer and impatiently barked, “Why is no one looking for survivors?”

The balding officer put on his most professional face and stated, “Sir, the firefighters will do that immediately once they arrive.”

“And where are they?” I snapped.

He didn’t look happy with my tone. “On their way. A collision blocked their path on the freeway, but they’ve gotten around it now. They’ll be here shortly,” he explained.
I nodded stiffly and turned away, staring up at the building with fierce worry. Two more minutes passed, and still no response from Sauli, and no firefighters anywhere in sight. People would die by the time they got here. That was it. If no one was going to go in there, I’d do it myself. I broke out into a run, ducking under the safety tape, eyes glued on the entrance.

“Hey, you can’t go in there!” The same officer yelled, and I heard his footsteps gaining on me. I just did not have the time for his safety shit right now, not when Sauli could be dying or dead already. I couldn’t just wait around and see what happened. Every minute counted and I had already wasted so many. I headed for the broken double doors of the entrance, glass crunching beneath my shoes. The officer grabbed my arm and jerked me to a halt. “Sir, I won’t tell you again. It’s not safe. Step away from the door!”

With an irritated huff, I whirled around and grabbed him by his collar, getting up into his face. “Listen to me, you stupid son of a bitch,” I warned, trying to put as much Dark into my tone as possible, though I could never actually hit this guy. “The reason for my life is in there, so if you really want to stop me, kill me.”

He stared up at me with bewildered eyes and I let him go roughly when he didn’t say anything. With a warning glare, I turned away and opened the door, stepping inside. He didn’t try to stop me again. As soon as I was inside, my mind went into sharp focus as the intense heat hit me. The flames inside were worse than what they appeared like outside. The lobby was abandoned except for orange and red plumes eating up everything, and rubble spread all around. A candle chandelier lay destroyed in the middle where the fire was the most intense.

Oh, this was a horrible idea.

The fear almost made me run back out to safety, but I willed my feet forward. I coughed into my sleeve from the sudden onslaught of ash before calling out, “Sauli!”

No answer, of course. I moved quickly but carefully, staying low to the ground and avoiding anything ablaze. There were paths to follow that weren’t burning, but the bonfires were still excessively close for comfort. The heat was unbearable, so much so that I strongly considered abandoning my mission several times just to escape the sweltering air. I wasn’t going to get out of here without burns. I breathed solely and rarely into my sleeve as some method of filter, and checked behind the reception desk. What were even the chances of him being on the very first floor? He would have gotten out. He must’ve been higher up, but how high? I didn’t even know how many floors this godforsaken building had. And if I found him, then what?

Or you know, maybe he’d gotten out and had dropped his phone here, and I was just sinking deeper into a burning building for nothing. Oh well. It was either assume the best and be wrong, or assume the worst and be wrong. The latter sounded better and I was trying to be optimistic here, albeit stupid.

Squinting through the smoke, I caught sight of an open stairwell door and made my way over to it carefully, flames crackling and debris crunching under me. I coughed hard when I reached it, the smoke particularly thick in the stairwell beyond the door. There was no actual fire here, which meant it was a bit cooler than the lobby, thankfully. I dropped to my stomach to breathe the cleaner air, only when I was desperate for a breath, and started crawling up the stairwell.

The stairwell itself was destroyed as if a bomb had exploded. The walls were torn apart, gas pipes sticking out and mangled. The stairs could barely even be called stairs anymore on the first floor. The actual emergency exit door in the stairwell may have been blown open, but it was blocked by rubble. At least that and the broken glass of the front doors provided escape for the heat and smoke. If Sauli was nearby ventilation, he had a chance. Maybe.
It was a challenge to manoeuver the stairs while lying down and barely able to see anything. I suddenly felt something wet on my palms. Squinting through the smoke, I blanched and my entire body froze at the sight of bright red on my palms. Pain flashed through my mind as my consciousness urged a switch, but I fought it. I pushed it back and forced myself to calm down without taking deep breaths. When I felt grounded again, I looked up. Beyond the blood was when I realized I wasn’t alone in the stairwell. It was as if I could clearly see my surroundings for a moment.

There were human body parts decorating the stairs.

I half gasped, half screamed, and nearly fell over backwards down the stairs. I managed to catch myself at the last second, but I was full on panicking now, inhaling more smoke than necessary. This was beyond the worst idea I had ever had. Stupid, stupid, stupid!

It had been hard to notice that any of what was on the stairs belonged to people. They were burnt to a crisp, blackened completely by the smoke and whatever fucking explosion happened in this hell stairwell. I wasn’t sure what was an arm or a leg, and I definitely wasn’t going to scope out a head. I didn’t want to see. I didn’t want to know if this was one person or however many. I needed to find Sauli, and it took everything in me not to look for a body part that I would maybe somehow recognize as his.

What the fuck was I doing?

Okay, okay, I needed to calm down. I needed to focus on my goal here. Find Sauli. I needed to forget about the fact that I was crawling on people bits.

Oh god.

Stop it.

I struggled hard against the nearly overwhelming sense of nausea. I had to move. Every minute counted, remember? I’d been in here for less than two minutes and was already traumatized and probably had second-degree burns, but hey I’d gotten this far. If I didn’t find him within the next few minutes, I was going to be cooked alive or killed by the super-heated gases, whichever came first. At this point, I was probably not going to make it anyway, so I might as well keep going.

I didn’t dwell on my morbid optimism.

Trembling, I forced myself to keep climbing, mind going blank and not registering or contemplating what every soft or hard, dry or wet thing my palms and knees came into contact with was, or that my lungs and skin were slowly burning. Thankfully, I didn’t have to climb for very long and the stairwell became more solid as I got higher, and the smoke got thinner. Only about a flight up, I saw him.

For a moment, I didn’t even recognize him. I was just startled by a sudden intact body in my way. He was lying unconscious, sprawled out on the stairs with a large piece of concrete pinning down one of his legs. His hair was almost completely black and burnt, and his face was covered in soot and bruises. What I could see of his skin was starting to blister. His nose was purple and swollen.

I wasn’t relieved to see him. He looked dead.

“Saul—!” I broke off immediately to cough.

I scrambled up to him on my knees and stared down at his battered face, too afraid to even touch him. As gingerly as I could, I positioned over the rubble on him to press two fingers under his jaw. I waited, holding my breath, and exhaled loudly in relief when I felt his pulse. It was weak, but it was
Now to get him out of here, I needed to get this triangular concrete piece off him. I gripped its edges, careful not to push its weight down on Sauli more, and with a mighty heave, pulled as hard as I could away from him. It only shifted slightly. I let go and crumpled over beside Sauli, panting and coughing, and then immediately holding my breath, cursing at myself for stupidly taking in more of this air. I tried again, face turning red from effort, but to no avail. I stared down at him wildly. I’d gotten this far and now I couldn’t lift some stupid rubble off him?

“Adam,” I heard Dark intrude into my head. “You’re too weak.”

I sighed sharply. “You come out for the first time in how long just to tell me that?” I hissed, trying to use as little air as possible and coughed again. “Gee thanks, you’re a big help! Get back into dormancy before you screw us over too!”

Dark growled, a deep and angry sound resonating in my mind. “I meant, let me take over. I can move it, and the smoke and fire won’t affect me as much.”

“You selfish piece of shit, he will die if you don’t let me help him!”

“You can’t even touch him without hurting him!” I exclaimed, accidentally gulping more air. “Look at him! If you so much as flick him, he’ll die!”

“I’m the only shot you’ve got!” Dark barked back. “You’re stupid enough to run into a fucking burning building, but I’m not letting you get all three of us killed!”

With an incredible rage, I felt my control ripped from me and Dark shoving me back into an abyss without a chance for protest.

I wasted no time as soon as I was in the lead. It was too hot and my lungs felt as if they were on fire, but I could manage. It wasn’t as bad for me as it had been for Adam. I reached forward and heaved at the huge piece of concrete lying haphazardly over Sauli’s leg. The entirety of its weight wasn’t on him, so at least there was that positive. My muscles flexed and strained as I pulled with a low, angry growl in my throat, and the concrete started to shift. It was actually fucking heavy.

“It’s working!” a voice said in my mind. “I can’t believe it.”

I froze, still holding onto the piece. “Adam?” I asked the smoke, wildly confused. “How in the fuck are you talking to me?”

There was a pause and then, “I… I don’t know. I’m just not dormant. This is fucking weird. I can see everything you’re doing.”
My brow knitted together tightly. “But… how? You can’t be in my room in there… Just never mind, what do you see?” I asked with difficulty as I continued to tug on the concrete.

“Um, like mustard?”

“Mustard?” I echoed dully, shaking my head with irritation. Fucking moron. With a final heave, I pulled the triangular concrete piece off Sauli and it tumbled down the stairs loudly, splitting open at the base.

“You did it!” Adam exclaimed.

“Of course I did,” I grumbled at his disbelief. “What do you mean mustard?”

“I mean like, the color. Yellow. I can’t really see anything else. Everything’s so blurry.”

“Huh,” I said between shallow breaths, staring at the broken concrete. “Something new. That’s how you know we’ve probably fucked up.”

Adam didn’t answer.

I looked back at Sauli’s limp body through the smoke and felt a wave of dread. The urge to attack him was nonexistent. I kneeled beside him and stopped breathing, partly because I had inhaled too much smoke already, and partly because it was painful to see him in this state.

“Why did this happen?” I muttered, carefully reaching down, hooking an arm under Sauli’s knees and the other under his shoulders, after making sure his neck wasn’t broken, and hauling him up with me as I stood.

“The media knew about you and what you’ve done to him. They thought it had been me. Sauli came here to tell them off.”

So, even though I hadn’t directly done this to him by my own hand this time, it was still my fault he was near death… again. I sat down on the stairs, finding it suddenly difficult to stand, and cradled Sauli on my lap as I held him close to my chest. I stared down at his sooty face. My chest ached and my breaths came out ragged—due to the smoke. With great difficulty, I held back the tears that were forming in my eyes—from the smoke, knowing Adam was still watching. I leaned down for a moment, pressing my forehead to Sauli’s and tucking him closer to my chest. When I closed my eyes, the tears overflowed.

The most irritating voice ruined the moment. “Are you crying?”

My eyes snapped open. “It’s the smoke!” I barked.

Adam was quiet for a moment.

Then, “Dark, we need to go,” he said urgently and impatiently. “He’s already inhaled way too much smoke and we’re next if you don’t get a move on. You’re strong, but you’re still human.”

I stood swiftly, cradling Sauli bridal style. I bounded down the stairs, through the smoke, over the limbs and whatnot, back through the door, and into the lobby. I grunted and twisted Sauli away when a blaze suddenly grew two feet away from my head and engulfed the plant next to me.

“Shit, the path I took is on fire now,” Adam said.

It was extremely hot in the lobby. A person couldn’t survive in here for more than a minute without
suffering significant burns and dying. I couldn’t even fathom how Adam had withstood it if I could barely take it. I didn’t think he quite understood how incredibly fucking stupid he was for doing this.

I glanced around and found a different route to the exit. Glass and rubble crunching, I sprinted, not daring to take in even a single breath, hardly noticing the two other limp bodies near the flames, and kicked open the broken door, stepping out into the cleaner air with a relieved gasp.

There were many pairs of eyes wide on me, jaws agape, and I glared back at each one of their useless faces as I carried Sauli a safe distance away from the building and placed him gently on the ground, staring down at him expressionlessly. God, I hoped we’d made it in time. A paramedic sprinted over to me, and I fought the urge to tear out his throat. Completely useless moron.

“Is he alive?” he asked me.

I just nodded stiffly, not taking my eyes off Sauli’s unmoving form.

“Alive one over here!” the man yelled back to the ambulance. “Bring a stretcher and a mask! Sir, do you need anything?”

“I’m fine,” I spat before hacking coughs grated my throat raw.

He gave me an unconvinced look, but the one I threw him kept him shut up. I moved aside slightly to let the paramedic start giving Sauli CPR. I let him, only because I couldn’t trust myself with it. I’d probably break all of Sauli’s ribs and regret it later. I didn’t know how much point there was in doing this though. How long had Sauli breathed in smoke? If he’d been actively breathing in that much for anything longer than ten minutes, he was a goner. Adam and I had been in there for barely even a few minutes, but my lungs were straining. Even if he lived, there was no way he was going to be the same. How much black shit had burned his throat and covered his lungs?

“Dark,” I heard Adam say.

With an annoyed sigh, I stood up and walked out of hearing distance of anyone. “What?” I said dryly.

“There were two other people in there,” he reminded me.

“I’m aware.” I crossed my arms. “So?”

“They could be alive.”

I knew this was coming. “And I care why, exactly?”

“Because you can help,” he said calmly.

I stifled a groan. “Can, but I won’t.”

Adam paused for a second before adding, “Because they could be Sauli to someone.”

My eyes narrowed, pissed off that he hit a nerve. “Listen to me. I’m not some ridiculous hero. I don’t give the slightest rat’s ass if everyone here gets slaughtered, minced, chopped, ground, or ripped apart at an atomic level, okay? I only care about him.” I glanced back at Sauli. “And even that’s a pain in the ass.”

“I know that, you think I don’t? I know you suck.” Adam said more impatiently before sighing. “But please, the medics are taking care of him. Give those other people the same chance. No one even
knows they’re in there. I can’t stand by and let them die.”

“No,” I hissed firmly, wishing I could punch Adam right in his prissy little face.

“It’s the right thing to do,” he added pointlessly.

“What are you, my conscience?” I rolled my eyes. “Shut the hell up.”

“Then let me out and I’ll do it.” I didn’t reply, just started pacing angrily back and forth, wanting to scratch at my brain until the little insect of a voice was crushed. Like hell I was going to let the idiot take us back in there himself. “…Please, Dark. Save them for Sauli. He’d want you to.”

With a frustrated growl, I spat, “Fine!” in the most venomous voice I could manage before turning on my heel and heading straight back toward hell if only to make him stop pleading with me in that obnoxiously gentle voice. “I hope you realize we can’t take much more smoke either or we’ll end up the same as him. You’re willing to doom us for a couple of nobodies.”

“Of course. It’s not about us.”

Whatever.

I ran inside the intense heat and wasted no time in locating the first body. It was a woman in a pencil skirt lying on her stomach, hair a bird’s nest, and glasses broken, still hanging off her face. I kneeled and unceremoniously checked her pulse. Alive. Dammit. I picked her up with a huff and roughly threw her over my shoulder, before manoeuvering through debris and finding the second body. I wasn’t wasting a single second. It was just, get the bodies and get out. No thoughts spared for anything else. It was a man in fetal position whose pant leg was on fire. With a blank expression, I stomped out the fire before it engulfed his leg and then checked for a pulse. Again, alive. They were lucky they were near ventilation.

“Thank goodness,” Adam sighed with relief in my head.

Would he stop talking already? I picked up the second person with more difficulty since I already had a woman draped over me. With two bodies over either shoulder, I grunted trying to regain balance against their combined weight as I stood.

Encumbered, I moved slowly toward the door, again kicking it open. I managed all this with only a small handful of breaths wasted. This time, all eyes were staring at me in shock and people gasped aloud, like it was such a fucking surprise that there could be people in there. I risked my ass to pull them out. Me, the most apathetic piece of shit that there was. These so-called decent people couldn’t be bothered, and yet I was the monster? I couldn’t hold back my fury.

“Three people!” I snarled at the crowd. “There were three people alive in there, maybe still more. Two of them were on the first fucking floor, and I bet you all just ran right by them because it’s not your goddamn problem, right? What a bunch of sorry-ass excuses of human beings!” I shouted before taking a second to spit at the ground, saliva coming out entirely black from soot.

“Whoa,” Adam breathed. “Easy there.”

With an angry yell, I laid down the two bodies not so gently and stormed away. Whether they lived or not now was not my issue. I ignored the bustling of paramedics rushing to the two behind me and the numerous voices thanking me. The goddamn firefighters finally arrived and immediately moved in on the building as I headed toward Sauli, my eyes fixated on his still form.

A man in formalwear and a camera operator next to him abruptly blocked my view. I halted
immediately, about to tell them to fuck off or be murdered when suddenly there were several microphones pointed at me and I was surrounded by reporters. Bombarded by questions and requests, I stood unmoving in shock, overwhelmed by the onslaught of attention. It was a chorus of grating voices from every direction shifting on my nearly nonexistent patience.

“What caused you to run inside and save three people?”

“Mr. Lambert! Can we have your exclusive?”

“Tell us about your heroic trek through the burning building!”

“Have you had firefighter training?”

“Why was your partner inside in the first place?”

“Did you force your partner into the building and organize the fire so you could look like a hero amidst all the recent claims against you?”

That one made me whip around to face the poor sorry son of a bitch who said it. It was a man, a young-looking one, and I narrowed my eyes at him severely. His terrified expression didn’t match his bold question.

“What,” I snarled, teeth gnashing together, “did you just ask me?”

If he hadn’t already shit himself, he was about to. “Uh—it’s just that,” I could see him signaling his cameraman to zoom in on me, “you’re known to have bouts of rage—”

“Oh god, Dark, don’t,” Adam pleaded in the background.

Too late.

Without letting him finish that sentence, I shot out my hand and tore the camera off the cameraman’s shoulder before throwing it like a fucking football. It was quiet for about two seconds as we all just watched it soar through the sky only to smash into pieces on the concrete.

Everyone gasped their outrage at the same time the asshole reporter yelled, “You can’t just do that. That was Fox News property—!”

I saw red. I snatched him by his gelled hair, holding him in place as I reared my fist back and rammed it straight into his mouth once, twice, and a third time, hearing a satisfying crack, and letting go of his hair, sending him sprawling to the ground. He cried out in agony and grabbed his bloody face. I could hear him gurgling blood. It felt fucking amazing and I had missed this.

“How’s that for rage, you fucking bloodsucker?” I barked. I hoped he was choking on his teeth.

The rest of the reporters were a mix of shock and horror, all of their jaws on the floor. They each winced back when my eyes landed on them in turn. My nails were digging into my palms at my sides. I could rip them all apart, and oh, how I longed to, but I needed to check on Sauli.

“Fuck off,” I said simply, barely managing to keep my voice level, and they all went running, suddenly busy with interviewing other people. The jerk with the ruined face crawled comically fast toward a paramedic, leaving a trail of blood. I loved it.

“Okay, I imagined a lot worse.” Adam sighed in relief.

“I kind of hoped they would stand their ground. I really want to kill someone.” Anger was still
boiling the blood thrumming through me and it was invigorating. “Tell me again why you thought running into a burning building after someone that might not even be in there was a good idea?”

“He was in there and you got him out,” Adam said defensively.

“If I hadn’t taken over, you wouldn’t have been able to get him out, and you wouldn’t have left him. We would’ve died.” I continued smugly, “But you’re real glad I exist now.”

Adam scoffed. “If you didn’t exist, I wouldn’t have had a reason to go in there in the first place, asshole.”

I scowled, muttering under my breath, “How would you like me to ruin your career right here and now? You’ll have to pay for all the funerals.”

Adam forced a nervous chuckle. “Oh, do you think Sauli’s starting to wake up?”

His attempt at a distraction worked. My eyes focused on Sauli in the near distance, and he appeared to be stirring. I broke out into a fast walk and plopped down next to him.

I heard a paramedic behind me timidly say, “Um, we’re about to take him to the hospital. He needs to be intubated and given proper medical attention, so I can only give you a minute…?”

I ignored the paramedic and looked down at Sauli. Indeed, he was moving. His face scrunched up slightly behind closed lids. I held back a relieved sound just as Adam gasped.

“Wake up,” I said without really realizing it.

Sauli’s eyes struggled open and he immediately winced. He looked so awful it was almost funny. He wiped his eyes as if he wasn’t quite sure if he was really seeing me.

“Adam?” he murmured, a grossly rough sound. Of course he called for him.

“I’m right here, baby,” Adam called out within my head. I smirked, so very glad he couldn’t be heard.

“Guess again,” I said smugly, to the annoyed tsk sound of Adam. “Hi, Blondie. Long time, no see. You look like shit.”

“Why do you have to be such an ass to him?” Adam muttered disapprovingly. “Let me out, I want to talk to him.” I ignored him.

“Dark?” he exclaimed in disbelief, his eyes widening as he scrambled to sit up, but I immediately held him down, palm splayed across his heaving chest. He then looked around at his surroundings in confusion before gazing back up at me suspiciously. “You’re not supposed to be out,” he croaked, and barely any sound was able to escape his throat.

Oh god, he sounded like a chainsaw throat-fucked him.

“What he said,” Adam grumbled.

I rolled my eyes at the both of them. “You almost legitimately died and you care about me being conscious? Who else was going to save your stupid, suicidal ass?”

“You saved me?” he asked cautiously, studying me. “Why?”

“You know, I think our body’s fine, besides the smoke damage. You think maybe this wasn’t as big
“of a deal as we assumed?” Adam asked.

“Dumb question,” I answered both of them. “We fucked us over real bad by doing this, but we had to.”

“But how——” Sauli broke off into a violent cough. I actually winced from the godawful sound. There was no way he was going to return to normal after this.

Adam made a distressed sound.

I shot Sauli a look for trying to speak again. “Stop talking.”

“Dark, I need to see him, in person I mean. Look at him; he keeps trying to cough up his lungs!”

“Adam, he’ll be fine. Calm down,” I said aloud, irritated.

“He can talk to you now——?” Sauli croaked quietly, his forced attempts to push enough air out to make sounds causing him to squeak in places, and I immediately returned my attention to him with a sharp glower. His voice was unbearable. He was not helping.

Adam made an appalled squawk. “Yeah, no, I don’t like this. I’m taking over. I have to talk to him. Now how does this work…?”

“Do not. Adam, stop it!” I hissed as he prodded around in my head. “You can’t take over. You’ll kill —”

It was already too late. Adam’s consciousness surged forward and pushed me back despite my resistance.

Adam:

The sensations that came with being in control of my own body were exhilarating. People didn’t realize how much they appreciate sensation until it’s gone. Having felt that feeling before, I recognized that this wasn’t the same. Something felt… off, as if I wasn’t fully here. Still, the moment I was front and center, I opened my eyes and took in the sight of Sauli lying on the floor staring up at me, his expression mirroring mine.

“Adam.” Sauli’s voice filled with recognition and warmth, despite its absolutely wrecked hoarseness. His fingertips brushed my cheek and I smiled sadly down at him.

“Sauli, I’m so——”

I only heard a sharp snapping sound like a giant elastic band breaking apart and an excruciating pain shooting through the center of my head as if a thousand daggers had been shoved clean in from every angle, and then there was nothingness.
Now for the fun part! lol

End Notes

You know what I'm going to ask for...

Comment/Review? Much appreciated! ;)

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