Life is now. (and now, and now)

by FlyByNightGirl

Summary

What do you mean season 3 of Skam ended?? Nei ???

In which the clips for season 3 update, because there is so much more of Isak and Even’s relationship we haven’t seen, so. Here it is, congratulations.

ps if you're looking for that fic that's by that kickass writer who also happens to be manic-depressive, it's this one.
A week ago, it'd been untied shoes skidding around a street corner, police sirens in the distance, a stopping taxi and the tear on his cheek nearly freezing before it could drop to the empty city sidewalk.

He had no fucking clue how now it was fuzzy socks on tiptoe, a boisterous cheer behind them, mistletoe overhead, a circle around his waist strong enough he couldn’t remember what it felt like to fall.

Isak didn’t hear, know, care. Even was here, here, taste on his lips, arm around him warm, everything he’d ever need and how long had he been standing here staring?

“Halla, there you are,” Even teased, some kind of serenade and Isak blinked twice, finally tearing his eyes away from where he’d been gazing hopelessly up at his boyfriend.

“How? Did I miss something?”

Well, if the laughing boys were any indication. But Even was laughing too, pressing a warm, giggly kiss to his cheek and pulling half his mouth up in a crooked smile with it.

“It's not my fault,” he insisted, shoving a half-hearted hand he didn't mean. Even caught it over his heart, fingers tangling as Isak sent him a very faux glare before turning dramatically to the boys.

“He’s just that...fan-tastic of a kisser guys, dunno what to tell you.”

A brighter laugh, Even’s hand shoving him back as his cheeks lit up pink and it was Isak’s turn to go up on tiptoes again, peck one sweet smiling cheekbone to memorize the taste before it disappeared.

Jesus fuck, they were sappy.

Mahdi shook his head and Jonas ducked his, grin fading at the corners and drawing Isak's eyebrows together with it.
Now was hardly the time though, the party was nearly over and the boys still had to wrangle up Magnus from whatever he and Vilde dare do in the public hallway of an apartment building, then there was the whole fucking cleaning thing.

He’d never seen so much glitter in his life honestly.

“You boys are planning to stay and help out, right?” Isak smiled, innocent and bright-eyed as both Mahdi’s and Jonas’s faces dropped.

“Uh, man. About that…”

“He’s kidding. We’d no more ask you to stay than Vilde,” Even interjected, the arm around his waist shaking him as that infectious smile flickered his way.

“Excuse me, we? This is my house.”

“And mine!” Eskild piped up, sweeping past with a broom and a pail already in tow. “And Linn’s, and we agree that Even has just as much of a say as you, so.”

“What?!”

Isak’s mouth popped open as Jonas’s barked laugh of surprise echoed and Even’s touch disappeared to clap Eskild’s passing shoulder, smile bright as the fucking galaxies in his eyes.

“On that note, we’re heading out.” Mahdi and Jonas both offered salutes with smiles, Jonas’s tipping up just a bit more as Isak caught his gaze and held it.

“God jul, Isak.”

“I’ll see you again before Christmas,” Isak called after him and Jonas shook his head once, already backed halfway for the door.

“Still. God jul to you too, Even.”

“God jul!” Even caroled back, words nearly cut off with the kiss he planted on Isak’s cheek, one hand cupping carefully under his jaw as lips trailed up his cheekbone to ghost over his ear. “Hey you.”

“Halla,” Isak murmured in response, side of his mouth tipping up as Even’s arm snaked around his stomach, enough pressure to press his spine secure against Even’s chest as they slid in place against each other.

“Uh uh, don’t think I’m letting you get away with this again. I learned well enough the first go round, and you’re actually gonna help clean up this time. None of that false pretense of helping out just so you can try and--”

His mini lecture was cut off by the mouth on his again, two strong arms tightening around his stomach as Even squeezed him tight and kissed him deep enough to make his toes curl.

Yeah, see, the first time Even tried to kiss him he’d stayed after at a pre-drink to “help clean” and ended up spinning some story about aluminum legs to get close enough to go in for the kiss, which had been interrupted by Noora getting home but Isak hadn’t been able to clean a single goddamn thing for the rest of the night because he couldn’t stop thinking about how fucking close Even had been, how electric the look was in those eyes, how fucking fast his heart had been pounding.
No way he was gonna leave all the cleaning to Eskild and Linn again, he was already indebted to them for taking such good care of Even this week and.

And Jesus fuck, if Even kept kissing him like that he was gonna melt right to the floor.

“Mmrm,” he attempted to protest, but apparently Even took that as a moan of sorts because the next thing he knew he was being spun around, one hand on his shoulder and the other on his chest, shoving him hard into the closest wall.

He really did wanna help clean up, he swore.

In fact, he had absolutely no idea how both his hands made their way into Even’s hair, let alone how one of his legs ended up hitched over Even’s hip but fuck fuck, he couldn’t breathe, mouthing helplessly desperate at the lips that were probably leaving bruises back and he couldn’t fucking believe Even just pulled that fucking move, who did he think he was, shoving him around like this just so he could grind their hips together until the only thing Isak could see were ten thousand fucking stars--

“Holy shit?”

It was kinda a miracle Eskild’s voice registered at all, but Isak’s head snapped to the side fucking quick how much his brain wasn’t working.

Did Even stop? Of course not, now that he couldn’t ravage Isak’s mouth he was sucking and biting his way down Isak’s neck which was really also not helpful for the current situation.

“Fuck,” he managed, and the resounding gravel-filled purr Even sent into his skin wasn’t actually what he meant by that, Jesus Christ.

“Even, Even, hey--”

Vague shoving hands on shoulders and Even finally lifted his head, scanning Isak’s face before he finally caught on and followed his gaze.

“Oh.”

“Yeah, oh!” It came out a little high pitched and breathless, which only made Even’s gaze cut to his with that sharp intensity again and Isak had to physically peel Even’s hand off his hitched up knee to stand on two goddamn feet.

"Were you boys planning to help or...” Drawn out, wiggling eyebrows and all. Isak had no defense but to roll his eyes, spinning for the kitchen. Even's fingers tangled up in his, sideways and haphazard and making his heart pound.

“‘We’re actually gonna help, okay?’ Isak shot Even a very serious glance over his shoulder and the only thing he got back was the eyebrow thing. Up down, quick but at least the little smile on his face wasn’t that mischievous.

They made it through emptying about half the beer cans before Even “accidentally” bumped Isak into the counter, making him fold from the force of it, just enough that sparks went right down to his toes and their locked gazes both shot straight to fire.

“The dishes,” Even started and yeah, no, they could clean the whole damn apartment tomorrow.

Isak shoved off the counter and had both his arms wrapped around Even’s neck less than three
They stumbled for the nearest hard surface, which was why Isak was propped on the kitchen counter with his legs around Even’s waist when all three of their roommates walked back in.

Unfortunately, neither of them heard until Noora threw a beer can into the trash, loud clatter making them both start. Violently enough on Isak’s part he almost fell off the damn counter. Even caught his hips just in time, and there really wasn’t any choice left but to bury his face in Even’s freakishly long neck and die.

The shoulder he was hiding in lifted, a shrug that would hopefully come along with an apologetic, eloquent excuse as to why they couldn’t get a single damn thing done--

“He’s really hot,” Even told them and Isak popped up, scoffing in offense as he socked the shoulder he’d been laying on a second ago.

“Don’t blame this on me!”

“It’s your fault!” Even shot back, gaze turning back to him and Isak’s mouth was open in offense, originally, but Even was looking at him like that and now he just couldn’t close it. The sparkly fucking eyes cut down to his lips and yep, okay, what roommates?

“Um, well. Before you jump each other’s bones again, could you maybe get off the kitchen counter? We still need to clean, so.” A smile mixed in which actually wasn’t helping because if they weren’t so damn happy for him then maybe he wouldn't be making out on the kitchen counter.

“We’ll help clean, really.” Isak very seriously peeled Even’s hands off his hips, attempting to wiggle free so he could hop down. “It’s not like we can’t--”

“Oh go get a room,” Eskild flicked his wrist at them and the next thing Isak knew he wasn’t on the kitchen counter anymore, he was being carried out of the kitchen with his legs wrapped around a tapered, pretty waist.

“Oy, oy, hva faen--”

At least he had the decency to shout an I'm sorry! as loud as he could before Even kicked their bedroom door shut behind him.

Three voices lifted in a chorus right back.

“God jul!”

Wait, fuck. Not their bedroom, but his, but Even had lived here for a week now and it was both the best and worst week of his life and god, fuck, he was gonna meet Even’s parents tomorrow, he was gonna meet his boyfriend’s parents tomorrow. His roommates had sent them off to have sex because they couldn’t keep their hands off each other and all his friends talked about how they’d never seen Isak so happy and looking in the mirror he wasn’t sure he had either and

The mattress collided with his spine, bouncing where he’d been tossed onto his bed and by god, was he gonna have some words with that boyfriend of his once he stopped being so fucking hot about that whole being fucking hot thing he was doing. At the expense of Isak being toted and tossed around.

Which, wow, really wasn’t so bad when Even was looking at him with gray-blue burning like that, hands wide and possessive as they popped the button on his jeans, lifting his ass all the way off the
bed to slide them off inside out. They were his darkest, tightest skinny jeans, which had been actual hell to get into but by god, he’d do it every day if Even peeled them off him like this.

“Skinny jeans, are you trying to start something?” A shaking head with a smile, all affection through the heat as he pressed a kiss to an exposed piece of thigh, jeans discarded and Isak lifted an eyebrow, fingers through the swirls of gravity-defying hair.

“I have no idea what you're talking about, aren't you supposed to dress nice for parties?”

“I showed up in a hoodie, that hardly counts as nice,” Even teased, and Isak cocked his head, running a thumb over where the material met the warm skin of his neck.

“I like you in my clothes,” he replied, a little soft and a lot honest. The first time he’d come home to see Even wrapped up in his favorite gray hoodie he’d nearly burst with the tightening in his chest. It was the same half-smile crooked on his face now, curls splaying on the pillow as Even leaned up over him, that same beautiful sparkle in those eyes.

“I like wearing them.”

The kiss to follow was so achingly domestic, short and soft and sweet and everything he’d never thought he’d find, but.

Here he was.

It turned pretty quick into a smatter of kisses though, soft and quick to quickening and heart-thudding, the kind he could feel tingling their remnants in his fingertips.

Breathless, swept away, lifted on the highest cloud and tugged through the deepest ocean, that’s what this felt like. Fuck poetry, but fuck Even Bech Næsheim, okay.

“Mmm, gotta say though, as much as I like you in my clothes,” a hand shoving between layers, sliding those strong arms free as he swallowed hard, gaze locked on the expectant scalding one,

“...I really like you out of them, too.”

Y’know, considering that a week and a half ago he was blushing dumbstruck as Even called him hot in the hallway, he’d say this was one hell of a glow up.

“Is that so?” Even purred, low and dark, teeth grazing his ear as his grip tightened involuntarily in swoops of pretty hair. “Because it just so happens…”

Isak’s breathing was picking up before quick fingers made it halfway through the gray buttons down his chest.

“...I like you out of your clothes too.”

“Merry Christmas?” Isak offered and Even laughed, peppering kisses down each piece of stomach he exposed, popping open the last button to spread his shirt open wide, teeth closing around the top band of his boxers as fingers curled to tug.

The snap against his stomach echoed as Even dropped the band from his teeth, eyebrows knit in concern as he looked up, wrists locked beneath Isak’s grip. It was kinda abrupt to just catch Even’s hands like that but he’d just realized something that was. High key important enough to stop this abruptly.
They hadn’t had sex in a week.

Which usually would be fine, but the last time they’d had sex Even was in a manic episode and he’d snapped right after, then fell into this terrifying depressive episode that had been their life of up and down since Saturday.

So they couldn’t just have sex, not when he wasn’t sure about how Even was feeling, really, and if this was what he wanted or if it was just what those kinda kisses lead to. Because he would be completely, entirely fine with just making out all night and curling together to fall asleep in the heat between them.

But the longer he held Even’s hands still, lips parted as he tried to figure out how to say that, the deeper the crease grew.

“Are you sure? I don't want...I mean, do you. I don’t want you to feel like...you have to.”

A moment’s pause as Isak held his breath, listening to the thud of the heartbeat under his fingertips. Strong, steady, beautiful.

“I don't feel like I have to,” Even swore, as incredulous and open as that day so long ago in the locker room, of course I'm not sad. “I want this. I want you.”

And it was with the same sweet certainty that he closed the space between their mouths, sliding up Isak’s body, eyes closed before their lips touched, hands cupping his neck the way that had that fuckin’ fateful day.

Today’s conversation was gonna end differently, he could promise that. When their mouths broke apart he kept Even close, hands weaving in his hair, eyes locked, ten thousand times more serious than he’d been in that locker room.

“I just want you to be sure. If you're not ready, it's completely fine.”

“Not ready? I was never incapacitated, thank you very much.” His eyes crinkled when he said it, but the corners of his mouth didn’t. Yeah, okay, apparently he was gonna fuck up this conversation too.

“Nei, nei, I know that. I swear. But it's been awhile, and a lot has changed, and…”

A shaky breath as he cursed internally, Even’s smile fading entirely as his gaze shifted, bubbling up with emotion as blue flickered between his eyes like Isak was holding the entire world on the tip of his tongue.

“Are you sure?” Mouth quiet and closed for a moment, all calculations and sinking bones as Even’s gaze cut away, hands burning where they were still cupping Isak’s neck. “Because. I mean, if you don't want to be together like this anymore--”

“Wo-ah. No way.” Blue cut back up to him, just the slightest bit hopeful as Isak made his craziest you’ve got to be kidding me face he had, mouth open a beat and a half too long before he finally just fucking said it.

“...I've never wanted you inside me so bad in my life.”

Even’s eyebrows shot straight up on his forehead, the slightest hint of a smile tugging a corner of his mouth, looking so goddamn kissable in that tight white tshirt. Isak, not want to have sex with Even anymore? Yeah, uh, no way in hell.
It definitely wasn’t him he was worried about here.

“But seriously, Even, I'll feel awful if I ever overstep and I just. Don't want to, I dunno, push you into something just because you feel like you have to, or even just should,” he was rambling, but he still wasn’t really great at this whole talk-to-cute-boys thing so, “I guess I’m just trying to say you know you better than anybody else and I don't want to assume the way you feel.”

“I feel like I also have never wanted to be inside you more,” Even interrupted, one eyebrow arched up high and Isak stopped talking, mouth hanging open as he looked up at the shiny bright that’d crept back into pretty eyes somewhere in the middle of his insecure rambling.

“Wow. Well.” He swallowed once, double checking Even’s expression, the light in his eyes, the curve of his mouth, which he couldn't really tear his eyes away from now. “Glad we're in agreement then.”

“Mmhm.” A slight pause centimeters before their lips touched and Isak couldn’t breathe, lungs completely wrapped up again, then Even’s mouth was crashing into his and he was long gone all over again.

Their lips broke mid-kiss, leaving him gasping for air as Even mouthed his way back down Isak’s chest, stomach, eager and sweet with Isak’s hand in his hair. “Agreement, it’s uh, oh fuck, Even, fuck, ah ah--”

Well. It turned out they were on the same terms after all.

~*~*~

Lørdag, 09:49
17.12.16

It was actually the...first time, he’d ever woken up with Even’s arms around him. Between drawings and breakfast and staying up all night and the past week, it just hadn’t really happened until right now.

Fuck, what a reason to live for right now, though.

Isak smiled into his pillow - the blue one, which they were apparently sharing right now, no wonder he slept so well the gray one fucking sucked - and decided he was going to lay right here, with his eyes shut, forever.

Except either Even knew him better than he thought, already, or there was some telepathic shit he hadn’t been let in on, because he only got to lay there in utter blissful peace, two arms around him, warm breath on the back of his neck, knees tucked up behind his for like three fucking minutes before puckered lips were pressing down on his shoulder.

“Good morn’,” a low rusty voice reverberated into his spine and Isak groaned, squeezing the arm under his fingers in acknowledgment and vague protest.

“Ten more minutes,” he breathed, wiggling slightly to settle in closer to Even’s chest.
“You’re gonna fall back asleep,” the echo-y voice warned and Isak at least attempted a sound to negate it, but.

The next thing he knew it was somehow 10:30 and Even was kissing the back of his neck, a lot, enough that his brainstem was sending ten thousand messages up into his dreams, pulling him back into reality wrapped in silk and sunshine.

“Mmm, welcome back,” echo-y voice teased and Isak scrunched up his nose in offense, eyelashes fluttering.

“Hva faaaen,” he complained instead, turning to peek up at the pretty face smiling over his shoulder.

“Hmm?”

“I don’t wanna wake up, I wanna lay here forever.”

“Aww.” A soft kiss to his cheekbone and Isak groaned, dropping his head back to the pillow. Why did Even have to be a morning person. It wasn’t fair.

“Fuck off. I’m not getting out of bed.”

“No? We have plans today, remember?”

“Fuck plans.” Isak rolled just enough to see Even properly, grip secure to make sure the arms around his waist weren’t planning on leaving anytime soon. “Lay here with me.”

A soft kiss to his mouth, domestic and sweet, tugging enough to make little sparks go off behind closed eyes.

“Is this how you always are in the morning?” Even whispered into his mouth and Isak leaned back a little, letting the pillow sink beneath his head. Jesus, he could lay here gazing up at those pretty eyes with these arms around him for the rest of his entire life and not want a single other thing.

If only this could be how he always was in the morning.

“What, lazy and stubborn?”

“I was going to say soft and sleepwarm, but yeah, that too.” He could feel the laugh even louder than he heard it, tumbling out of Even’s chest just as warm as everything else too.

It wasn’t like he could listen to that beautiful laugh when he was this weak and not reach up and kiss Even for it. There was only so much a man could stand

“Mmm, what were our plans again?” Blinking slow, hand carding through soft strands when it finally hit him, eyes popping open instantly. “Oh yeah, we were gonna see your parents!”

“Yes, we were. I told my mom sometime in the afternoon, since you sleep in longer than anybody else I know.”

“Hmph. Funny.” He pouted a little, and Even kissed him a little more. Unfortunately, they eventually broke apart, hands on each other’s cheeks as Isak tried to focus on anything but the overwhelming sea of emotions he was currently drowning in.

“So. We should probably go shower, then.”

“Are you sure? We don’t have to.”
“Don’t have to shower? I don’t know about you, but--”

“No, don’t have to meet my parents. If you don’t want to. If you think it’s too soon, or you’re just not up to it, which is fine, I don’t want to pressure you into anything.”

“Y’know, when I started with this line of questioning last night, I got ridiculed.”

“That was different.”

“Hardly,” Isak shot back. Even made a face, to which Isak made a more dramatic one and insisted, “...the gravity of the situations are pretty similar.”

Both eyebrows shot up.

“You think so?”

“I do, and I think last night went...really well.” Rolling up on top of Even’s lap, mouth open as he ran both hands up bare collarbones to lock behind that pretty head, pressing their foreheads together as the rest of their bodies slid into place, pressure in enough places to make him suck in a shaky, telltale breath.

“Mmm, is that so?” Even murmured back, two hands sliding over slightly bruised hips to sink into the top of his ass. The sharp inhale got swallowed up into a pecking kiss, mouths locking to drag apart, again, and again and **fuck**.

“Y-yeah,” Isak barely managed, head rolling across Even’s to lap at his mouth from another angle, fully aware of how fired up he already was, from just this alone. “And I bet this morning will be...great too, and then this afternoon when we meet your parents I'll be like mmm...completely chill.”

“Is that a request?” Teeth painted over his jawline, grip already tightening to squeeze before the reply.

Isak just kissed that beautiful, warm mouth, but he was pretty sure it was an answer in a language Even understood.

Lørdag, 14:10
17.12.16

“Don’t be nervous.”

“Nervous? Me? You think I’m nervous? I’m the master of meeting parents, I’ve met so many parents that I don’t even know what the word nervous means, what in the world would I be nervous about?”

Even paused on the staircase, tugging Isak to stop from where their hands were entwined.

“That bad, huh?’

“That bad? Nei! I’m completely--”
The hands on his jaw shut him up before Even’s mouth on his did.

Their foreheads touched as their mouths slipped apart, one hand fucking up the hair he’d worked very hard on making look nice, thank you very much.

“They will love you, promise.”

Isak was quiet a moment, tripping out a little with the fact that he was one stairstep above Even and therefore taller than him, for the moment, which was really unsettling, actually.

Enough that he tugged Even up one more step, pressing up to kiss him again. Much better.

Three steps later their hands were tighter than before and Isak apparently wasn’t as completely chill as he thought he was.

“Even?”

“Yeah?” He spun around, still halfway up this goddamn staircase.

“Are you sure they don’t hate me?”

“Hate you?? How could they possibly hate you??”

He needed both of his hands to throw them up for dramatic effect, but that apparently wasn’t happening because when he tried to pull free the one tangled with Even’s, he was suddenly in a deathgrip of Not Letting Go and just ended up with one hand awkwardly in the air and their entwined ones kinda halfway there.

“I dunno, maybe the little fact that before me, you had a girlfriend for four years, who I’m sure they love, and who was entirely fucked over, by me. Not only did I take you from Sonja, I then left you in a police station by yourself, the one time when you needed me most, and basically fucked up handling anything at all until it was almost too late and--”

“Hey,” Even interrupted, and his tone was serious enough that Isak did stop, blinking wildly and trying really fucking hard not to cry because he had no idea where that just came from but by god, maybe he should’ve tried facing his guilt and talking it out before they were a fucking door away from meeting Even’s parents.

“Hey. Isak.” A crooked finger ran over his cheek and Isak wiped at them madly, just in case, although they weren’t actually wet yet, halle-fucking-lujah.

How could Even look at him like that, after everything Isak had just reminded him of, all the fucking shitty things he’d done, all the reasons why he didn’t deserve to be pranced in front of parents like he was a good thing, when he’d literally fucked up Even’s life so goddamn much--

“It was me who kissed you, remember?”

“Yeah, but--”

“I was bipolar before I met you, so that literally could not be your fault.”

“Yeah, but--”

“Sonja and I weren’t happy, Isak.”

“Yeah, but--”
“But you came for me, you’re here, with me, right now, and you make me happy. That’s all they want, is for me to be happy, and you’ve made me happier than I’ve ever been in my life. I’d like to introduce you to my parents so they get the chance to meet the man I’m crazy about, but if it’s too much, we can do this another time. Okay?”

A moment’s pause and Isak wiped a hand over his eyes, sucking in a breath as he tried not to squeeze Even’s hand so fucking hard.

“Okay.”

“...okay as in you want to do this another time?”

“Nei,” Isak shot back. “Okay as in, let’s do this. Too late to go back now, right?”

The smile he got for that could probably fuel the next three hundred nervous moments of his existence, regardless of whether Even was there or not.

The tender kiss Even pressed to his cheek could fuel another ten thousand plus that.

“Too late to go back now.”

The last time he’d been here with Even had been before everything, a whole other world as they walked in and kicked off their shoes. Except this time, when Even called out hello, he didn’t say nice at the silence that returned, because silence didn’t shout back.

“Halla! Even!”

Blue shot him a look, barely seconds before the owner of said voice came all but swinging around the corner.

“And this must be Isak!” A beautiful - of course, she gave birth to Even, she had to be beautiful - woman swept open her arms, all wide smiles and crinkling eyes as Isak took in the messy blonde bun atop her head, pristine apron tied over a dress his mother would probably wear to church on Sunday.

“Mom, let him take off his shoes first,” Even complained, but there was a smile on his face as he stepped forward into the spread arms, stooping down into a hug.

Isak finished wrestling a boot off, hopping awkwardly on one foot for a moment before stepping forward - also awkwardly, and waited - still awkwardly - while Even’s mom rubbed his back and pulled back to hold his chin, look his face over.

“How have you been doing?”

“Fine, Mom, I promise.” She gave him a squinting once over before she seemed satisfied enough to finally let go.

Which meant it was his turn.

Isak went for his nicest not-too-bright smile, extending a hand to shake as he opened his mouth to introduce himself,

Hi, I’m Isak Valtersen. I’m the boy who’s banging your son. Or rather, being banged by, I don’t know if it makes a difference to you--
But before he got so much as a word out - how the fuck does one introduce themselves to their boyfriend’s parents - Even's mother (why in hell hadn't he asked what she went by? What the fuck was he supposed to call her? Even’s mom? Hi, Miss Even’s mom, I’m two and a half years younger than your son and have no idea what I’m doing in life let alone what I’m supposed to be doing in this relationship??)

Even’s mom bypassed his hand entirely and went straight for a hug.

It was a little surprising, but they were better matched on height and he managed to hug her back without crushing anything, although he couldn’t really feel his ribs and Even was most definitely laughing at him under that smug little smile he was shooting Isak over his mom’s shoulder.

“Oh, um. Nice to meet you too.”

“Here, here, come in, let me get a look at you.”

“Mom,” Even was protesting but Even’s Mom was already dragging him into the kitchen, one hand between his shoulderblades and a lovely smile on her face.

“I’m Isak. Valtersen,” he said, which was probably repetitive and he was pretty sure she already knew that but he really had no idea what else to say, and maybe--

“I’m Liv. Bech Næsheim,” she replied cheekily, taking a step to the side to finally let him breathe a little. “But you can call me Liv.”

Okay, at least he knew what to call her now, but Jesus, what else was he supposed to say?

Thank god, Even chose that moment to reappear behind him, one hand settling on his lower back. Normally he’d balk, this wasn’t the comfort of a kosegruppa party or the anonymity of a hotel room, this was Even’s parents - parent - and Even was touching him but honestly he’d take awkward looks over drifting away aimlessly in this kitchen by himself.

“Would you like a cup of tea, Isak?”

“Um. Yeah, sure, thanks.” He offered another smile, looking up a little hopelessly at Even, who was shooting vague warning glances at his mother.

Who apparently wasn’t catching them, or just really didn’t mind them.

“Even, when you said he looked like an angel I thought you were exaggerating, honey.”

“Mom!”

“But you were right,” she continued, reaching up on her tiptoes to pull three mugs out of a cabinet. “What kind of tea do you like?”

“Anything’s fine.” He sounded a little dazed but Liv was sweeping off for the pantry so Isak had about three seconds to either kiss Even or tease the shit out of him for whatever that was just about.

“An angel?” Isak whispered, corner of his mouth tipping up as Even glanced over and glanced right back away, cheeks heating up.

Maybe he’d get enough time for both, Even looked absolutely adorable right now, blushing with his mouth all twisted to the side - it was the same look he’d given Isak that day on the bus, which he knew now was nervousness, what with that crush he’d had since the first day of school.
“It's the blonde curls, okay,” Even defended and Isak would let him off the hook for this eventually, considering he was actually glowing right now. Even’s mom wanted to know what Isak looked like and Even had replied that he looked like an angel.

But for now, he was gonna give him so much shit for it.

“Your hair is blonde,” Isak pointed out, reaching up to ruffle it just a little, finally making Even’s gaze cut over to him again. God, he was super fucking cute all embarrassed like this. “And your eyes are even blue. Sky blue, like the heavens--”

“Shut up.” Even said and Isak giggled, nose crinkling as Even’s little smile broadened, eyes all shiny bright again as the hand on his lower back shoved him closer, their chests colliding as Isak’s mouth tipped up, side-smile melting right into the kiss Even planted so goddamn sure on his lips.

It couldn’t’ve been that long until they pulled apart again, slow and smiling with their gazes still locked, all melty mushy and entirely Even’s fault, all of it.

Still, you’d think he had enough brain power left to remember that he was supposed to be putting on Meeting the Parents face instead of staring up dumbstruck at The Parent’s Son, but here he was. Thank god, Liv cleared her throat, otherwise Isak probably would’ve stood there staring up at Even for the rest of time.

They both looked over in sync, like the way their goddamn hearts had to be beating right now.

Well, at least they were both blushing now. Or - fuck, apparently Even wasn’t anymore, it was just him. Okay, that was cool, fine, leave him out in the cold.

But Even’s mom had a smile on her face, that kinda was almost as sappy as theirs, so maybe it wasn’t so cold after all.

“Why don't you boys come sit down, your dad will be home soon.” She turned on a heel, headed for the dining room on her bare feet, that did not at all match the artfully disheveled updo or lovely swirling dress.

Thank god he’d worn something nice. Even had given him shit for it, but if he’d shown up in a tshirt he’d’ve felt terribly underdressed and better to look presentable when there were this many damn unknowns.

Like the little detail that apparently Even’s dad was gonna join them after all. Because that wasn’t going to be terrifying.

It was one thing to meet Even’s mom, who clearly meant a lot to him, and it was a whole other thing to be like hey, I’m screwing your son, to Even’s father.

“Well. I supposed I’ll start embracing for more surprises,” Isak offered, rolling his lips in and Even checked his shoulder, only to pull him stumbling back in with a hand on his waist. “I'm meeting your father? What am I supposed to say?”

“It’ll be fine! You’ll be totally fine. You’re fine so far, aren’t you?”

A kiss to his cheek and Isak cocked his head, starting for the dining room after Liv, before she came back out here to haul them in for taking so long again.

“I’m fine because you’re here,” he amended, allowing just one moment to reach up and peck a pretty
cheek back in return.

“I’ll always be here,” Even told him and Isak smiled, tugging him one step closer to the dining room, one eyebrow cocked up with his favorite crooked smile.

“You better be. Otherwise, where am I getting my 500 a week?”

The way Even kissed him after that was definitely not appropriate for his parents’ house, but his heart was thudding anyways, what was one more reason.

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Fredag, 20:53
30.12.16

It all started the weekend they were apart. Or well, it was only a Friday, but. They’d been practically living in each other's pockets for the past three weeks, so it was time they spent a night apart, make sure they both could still breathe without the other lying there beside.

Of course they spent time with other people, with school and his friends - who were actually becoming Even’s friends really quickly too - but all in all, it was still the two of them falling into bed every night. There were a few nights he spent at Even’s too. He did have bunk beds, after all.

Not like they used them, but it was the thought that counted. Isak never would’ve asked to spend the night there, but Even’s mother suggested it, after Christmas dinner because they ended up staying up so late chatting, Liv just offered for Isak to stay the night.

Even’s eyebrows had shot up and Isak had been frozen stiff for a moment, but Liv waved a hand, “he spends the night at your place all the time, no reason for you not to be able to spend the night here too,” and that had been that.

So between Christmas morning at his place with all of his crazy too-many roommates and Christmas dinner at Even’s house with his parents, then post-Christmas breakfast cooking with Even’s mom while Even slept quietly under his parents roof it was...things had just been really really good lately.

There was a little voice in his head that whispered a silent reminder, the better he let it get the worse the fall was gonna be but goddammit, when he walked into lunch to see Even and Mahdi in the middle of a heated debate about music, so heated that neither of them so much as turned to him when he sat down and Jonas just shook his head and smiled, well.

Isak was going to keep letting himself burst with happiness that Even was okay. Even was more than okay, he was working on a film project and talking to some of his old friends from Bakka and making more friends at Nissen and fit in perfectly with their family of teenage misfits living with 5 people in an apartment for 3 and well. Even was his.

Of course Isak was bursting with happiness. Even was too. Which was why, when he brought it up on the Tuesday after Christmas, the first reaction wasn’t too freak out, or even frowned.

“Spend a Friday night without each other? Getting sick of me already?” Even teased, leaning over to
kiss the soft spot on Isak’s neck. Isak scrunched up his nose, tucking his shoulder up higher so he couldn’t get tickled again.

“Actually I’m just interested in whether I even know how to fall asleep without you anymore,” Isak shot back and if it was supposed to be a burn, unfortunately it really didn’t come out as one.

“Aww,” Even cooed, leaning over all the way to litter kisses down the side of Isak’s face. Isak attempted to shove him off the couch and failed miserably. Failed so badly he somehow ended up in Even’s lap, making out with him for a solid ten minutes before Noora walked in.

“Rub it in some more, guys,” she said dryly and Isak popped up, making a cross face at her as Even instantly lifted him out of his lap and set him on the couch on his own.

“Sorry,” he started and Isak shoved him hard, still glaring at Noora.

“I’m not.”

“It won’t kill us to apologize--”

“Nei, I don’t have shit to apologize for. Noora, get over yourself, or go fetch William before you drive the rest of us batshit crazy.”

“Isak!”

“What! Someone had to say it! She doesn’t get to barge in here and be all snippy when I have a goddamn right to make out with my boyfriend on the couch--”

“Baby, calm down--”

“You two are sickeningly cute,” Noora noted, taking a sip of her tea before giving them a little finger wave and floating out of the room again.

“What in the world was that about?” The look Even was giving him was that surprise twisted with affection as he was reminded yet once more, of what a bitch Isak was down to the core.

“We are sickeningly cute, and I’m not letting anyone, especially my roommates come in the way of th--”

The rest of his rant was cut off by Even’s mouth on his again, Even’s hands pressing him hard into the couch cushions.

“You,” painted on lips between chaste kisses, “are sickeningly,” that were getting a lot less chaste, “cute.”

“Don’t you know it,” Isak said, but he was pretty sure the entire thing was muffled by Even’s mouth. Which yeah, was completely fine.

Was completely fine all week, actually.

They were spending New Years Eve together, obviously, which was on a Saturday this year, so that meant the designated Day of Separation was the Friday night before.

Which basically translated to spending every minute with each other until Friday, when they’d agreed to go their separate ways for 24 hours before they turned into the most codependent couple on
the entire goddamn planet.

It was gonna be a pretty simple night, Even planned a dinner with his parents and would just crash there, because Isak was having the boys over for Boys Night.

Mahdi, Magnus and Jonas all got along fantastically with Even, the five of them spent plenty of time together. But it wasn’t too often anymore that it was just Isak and his boys, which was exactly how he wanted to spend one of the last days of this fucking rollercoaster of a year.

Of course everyone was down - by 19:00 they had the apartment to themselves. Noora and Linn spent the night at Eva’s while Eskild went out with his drinking friends and wouldn’t be back until the New Years Eve party on Saturday. So that meant blasting really loud 90’s hip hop, and playing the most ridiculous drinking games they could think of until everyone got plastered enough to sing along to all the raps they didn’t know.

That was the plan anyways, a simple nice quiet night of drinking, but well.

Isak wasn’t so good at being simple or quiet anymore. He’d spent so long being boring, sitting there dead silent in a chair while everyone drank and they argued listlessly about past hookups. No, that wasn’t gonna be how they did boys night anymore.

“We’re doing what?”

“Oh, like you’ve never played it? Or are you just scared you’ll freeze to death?” He shot his best bitchy smile at Magnus’s flapping-fish open mouth protests, prepared as hell with his beanie, scarf, and deck of 52.

“It is a pretty fun game, since the stakes are so high,” Jonas backed him up, hand waving in the air while Isak nodded his head, shoving a pile of chips into the middle of the table.

“Takk.”

“Have you guys played before?” Mahdi was looking nearly as skeptical as Magnus, but Isak just rolled his eyes because yes, obviously, he wasn’t gonna suggest a game he’d never played.

“There was this one fucking crazy party during first year--”

“Oh fuck, I’ve never been so hungover in my life.”

Jonas groaned and Isak grinned.

“--it was fantastic, and tonight will be fantastic too. We’re not gonna end 2016 with a night sitting around and chatting.” The obvious disgust in his voice was exaggerated to fuck, but they were used to that, only gave him a few eye rolls and disbelieving glances in return. They were slowly warming up to the idea, though.

Which was kinda ironic.

“Snow poker, though? Serr?”

“Serr!”

“You just want an excuse to see us naked,” Magnus declared and Isak paused in the middle of shuffling the deck just to give Magnus the Highest Bitch Look on the Bitch Scale.

“Nei, I want an excuse to see you freeze your ass off and whine like a baby.”
Jonas snickered, but anyone who’d played strip poker in the snow knew exactly how high those stakes got. Still, he had to throw in the bit of pompous, just in case Magnus had some delusional idea about his chances.

“If I want naked boy, all I have to do is crawl in bed with my boyfriend,” Isak pointed out, nose up and lips pursed as he lifted one eyebrow in that you-don’t-have-a-chance look that always made Magnus all flustered.

A chorus of ooyy’s went up and Isak shrugged a shoulder, dealing out a round of cards as Magnus and Mahdi finally sighed and plopped down at the table.

“Boyfriend who isn't here, which means we can gossip about him, finally.” Jonas shot him a look over the cards he was picking up, one eyebrow up like he had just about the richest dirt in the world.

“What is there possibly to gossip over?”

“Well the hickie you've been attempting to hiding under your scarf is one point.” Mahdi pointed a finger and Isak looked down, trying to see what in hell he was talking about. “You know every time you move, the scarf slides over and flashes your neck, right?”

“Well fuck.” He attempted to rearrange, maybe tighten the folds around his neck, twisting the end of one and tying it off in a little knot. “There, are your delicate sensibilities satis-fied?”

Magnus snorted at Mahdi, who rolled his eyes to the sound of Isak gloating silent and smug from his chair by the window.

Jonas shook his head at them and popped up from the table, laying his hand of cards on the table face down and giving them all a very serious point.

“I’m getting the liquor, look at my cards and die.”

“Hard liquor, snow is cold.”

“Yes, Queen Isak, I know,” Jonas called over his shoulder and Isak narrowed his eyes viciously as his best friend turned the corner into the kitchen laughing.

Magnus and Mahdi were giggling too, which was absolutely the only reason why Isak reached over and picked up Jonas’s hand of cards.

Magnus’s laugh went up two octaves and Mahdi started a low oooo that had Jonas shouting in from the kitchen, where he probably knew exactly what Isak was doing.

“You better not be!!”

“I would never!” Isak shouted back, not looking up from Jonas’s cards, scanning them intensely to make sure he had each one memorized.

He had them back on the table moments before Jonas stepped back into the living room with two bottles of whiskey and a bottle of fancy-ass kick-your-ass tequila.

Isak kept the most innocent look on his face, straightening the piles of chips in the center of the table. Jonas sat down the alcohol and tumblers first, then calmly slid his cards over to Isak and snagged Isak’s pile instead.

“Hey!” That pouty mouth interjected, looking very instantly and exaggeratedly offended. Jonas
fanned them out and counted carefully as he spoke.

“If you spent all that time memorizing my cards, you know what they look like, might as well play them. Besides, odds are you were too busy messing with my hand to look at yours - oh look at that, these aren’t in order yet. Guess who was right, it’s me, I was right.”

Isak stared at Jonas with his mouth open in offense, Magnus stared with his mouth open in awe, and Mahdi burst off in a fit of giggles.

“How did you know?? How long have you two been friends again??”

“Too long,” Jonas said dryly, which is why he absolutely deserved the precious hand of cards that Isak threw right back at him.

Which may or may not have turned into an all out war of card-battling but after someone knocked over a bottle of whiskey - it had the lid still on it, thank god - it turned into a quick round of 52 card pick up then Jonas reshuffled and dealt the cards again, giving Isak the side eye the whole time.

Isak put both hands in the air and swore he wasn’t gonna cheat, but at this point all the boys knew better than to trust that.

Because as fun as snow poker was, Isak sucked. At cards in general, actually.

They didn’t have a porch to actually play outside, but there was a window right next to the table that Mahdi opened up wide, so it was cold as fuck, which was the only part they actually needed to keep the stakes high.

Strip poker was hard anyways, but when losing your clothes meant getting naked and freezing your ass off, you better hope to hell you had a good poker face.

Only problem was, Isak was a fucking shit liar.

“Jesus Isak, you’re terrible at this,” Magnus said for about the thirtieth time and Isak glared as he whipped off his last sock. Had he worn two pairs of socks in preparation? Yeah, maybe. He’d already lost his beanie, scarf, overshirt, belt, and now four socks.

On the bright side, Magnus was also a terrible liar. He’d already lost his shirts, belt, and socks to the game, and both of them were at least four fingers of whiskey in from buying back all the goddamn chips they’d lost. So yeah, they were both fucked, basically.

And then came another hand, which Isak lost, again.

“Fuck!”

“You suck,” Jonas exclaimed, loudly.

Isak scooped up the closest tumbler, sipped it as pretentiously as possible and shot them all a scandalous look over the edge of the glass, one eyebrow arched high and suggestive,

“Maybe I do.”

Everybody burst into giggles and Jonas leaned over, poking his neck on - ow - what must’ve been a dark spot, because that hurt and he made sure to pout enough and swat at Jonas’s hand so he knew it too.

At least Magnus lost the next round, a small victory in a losing war but at least Isak got to point and
“Ha! You suck too!”

Magnus paused, eyes furrowing all confused under the layers of impossibly straight blonde.

“I go down on girls now, does that count?”

Someone threw a card at him and they were all giggling again, giggling like the girls in the kosegruppa squad probably did at sleepovers.

Isak highly highly doubted their sleepovers were nearly this fun. Or had someone losing their pants before midnight. But then again, they hadn’t had a night this fun in a while either.

“Okay, okay, seriously though. I like this hand, everybody focus, I’m gonna fucking win.”

“Isak, you’re not going to win, your hand is shit, it’s written all over your face.”

“You know what, Jonas? I’m just about done with your shit. Just you wait, just you--”

Well, it turned out - surprise! - Isak lost the round. Horribly. There were a lot of pointing fingers and shouting and Jonas going oh what was that? What was that you said, something about just wait, you had it this time?? I’ll tell you what you don’t have Isak, and that’s your shirt, motherfucker!

Which was true, he was now down to losing his shirt, which just. Ugh, he was cold, goddammit.

Although he was drinking enough not to be freezing. He may be a bitch, but he wasn’t bitch enough to not play the game by the rules so.

“Fine. Fine, I lose my shirt, but I swear to god, you’re losing all of your chips in the next round, you just fucking watch, Jonas Noah Vasquez.” It was high-key hell to somehow wrestle himself out of the impossible article of clothing, but he finally popped his head free from white cotton and spun around to toss it victoriously. “Ha!”

The boys had all been laughing as he was wrestling with the goddamn cotton gods, but as he spun back around with the shirt thrown successfully across the room, Isak paused, half naked and full confused as one eyebrow lifted at the absolute, dead silence.

The room had gone entirely quiet in the four seconds it took for him to turn and throw his shirt, and based on everyone’s wide-eyed looks, he had completely missed something.

“What?”

All the boys exchanged slow, silent glances that were actually concerning, despite the fact that he was feeling tipsy and everything had been floating and nice like ten fucking seconds ago.

Eventually all the gazes settled on Jonas - you do it - and Jonas looked down at the table, sucking in a breath before he looked over at Isak, eye contact burning through him like he was a butterfly pinned to a wall.

“Are. Uh.” It took a few seconds for him to manage it, but Jonas finally swallowed and got his words enough together to carefully lay out the question. “Are you and Even okay?”

“Uh...yeah. Everything's great, why?” Isak gave his little signature shrug and Jonas rolled his lips in, looking back between the boys’ expectant faces and Isak’s very confused one.

“You're not just saying that? You know you can tell us anything, Isak. We’re here for you. No
Okay, the look on Jonas’s face was starting to freak him out.

“What. What do you mean?” The half smile was more of a coping mechanism than joy, eyebrows furrowed as he tried to figure out what the weirdass silence and exchanging looks could possibly mean. Finally he narrowed his eyes playfully, head cocked as he pursed his mouth.

“If this is some ploy to dig more about my sex life—” Isak teased and Jonas stood up, pushing his chair back as he took Isak’s arm, lifted him up out of his chair too.

As soon as they turned from the table there was a muffled sound of shock behind them. He threw a look over his shoulder, which made the room spin a little because he was tipsy, and stumbling a tad, but he was too dumbfounded to do anything but be compliant, let Jonas pull him aside with a strangely gentle hand on his arm.

What the fuck, Jonas was holding onto him so fucking...lightly, like he was afraid Isak was gonna break, which he wasn’t, he was just gonna shuffle the few feet away Jonas pulled him and stand here pouty-lipped and confused.

“Man, I need you to be honest with me.” The depth of sincerity in his best friend’s eyes was highly fucking concerning, so he held the gaze and replied back with as damn deep and sincere as he could.

“Jonas. I am. I promise.”

“Isak.”

“What is everyone freaking out about?!” He didn’t mean to shout, or throw his arms up, but Jonas was kinda scaring him, which was not a fun feeling when the room was spinning a little and everything was so goddamn quiet. “Why are you all…”

He didn’t even know how to explain everything they were all doing right now, so he ended up waving an arm around to indicate the palpable worry in the air.

“This.”

He looked back to his best friend with a bit of a wild look in his eye, the way he looked at Vilde when she ran up to him at his locked and bombarded him with a thousand reasons why he was hosting a party at his place, goddammit.

If only this was that simple, or if someone would so much as tell him something, he’d take Vilde’s overtalking over this silence any fucking day of the week.

“Huh??” Isak pressed, looking accusingly at Jonas, who was chewing his lip in clear debate of what to say. Well, Isak could help with that, he could just, y’know, tell the truth about whatever the fuck they’re all freaking out about.

And Even? What could this possibly have to do with Even?

“Jonas,” Isak tried again, desperate this time, probably so desperate even Magnus could see it.

Finally, fucking finally, Jonas sucked in a breath, leaning in a fraction as he dropped his voice that much lower, quieter, private and motherfucking dripping with worry.

“Have you seen your back?”
“My back?” The amount of confusion on his face, mouth popped open and face scrunched up as he looked at Jonas like he’d grown seven fucking heads.

Jonas was just looking back, steady stoic and waiting for an answer.

“What the fuck…” Isak kinda turned-ish, he couldn’t see much and angles were a bitch when you weren’t tipsy, but he could see enough of one shoulder to. “Oh.”

Jonas was still just watching him as he turned back. What was the big deal about--

“Oh. OH. Wait did you think--”

Isak froze with his mouth open and one finger in the air, head turning between the solemn boys sitting at the table and Jonas’s stoic silence and the state of the shoulder he’d seen, which.

Oh fuck. All of that concern, pulling him aside, asking if he was okay and how his relationship with Even was doing, all because of some bruises on his motherfucking shoulders, his friends all see him shirtless and the first thing they fucking think is that he’s in an abusive relationship Jesus fucking Christ--

“Jesus fucking Christ,” Isak repeated aloud, exhaling every fucking cell out of his body as it finally sunk in all the way, the looks on their fucking faces, fucking hell--

He took a second to gather himself, arm swinging out wide as he gestured a little wildly and gave them the most *duh* face he had.

“Most of them are hickies!”

“…what?” Magnus said quietly and Isak would laugh his ass off if they weren’t all so seriously fucking concerned.

“Oh god, what the fuck. Even has never laid a violent hand on me a day in my life, I fucking swear.”

The whole room breathed out collectively, tension visibly deflating as Jonas managed a strangled-sounding laugh of relief. Wow, he’d actually managed to scare them all pretty badly. Well they scared him too, acting all freaked out and whatnot, he’d thought something was seriously wrong.

So he had a few hickies. Or well, more than a few, and there were a couple of other sex-related bruises in there, which he really should’ve thought about before he took off his shirt, but it wasn’t like he fucking took count of the marks every morning in the mirror.

Jonas was shaking his head, trying to catch his breath with his hands on his knees and Mahdi was pouring a round of drinks, despite the fact that no one was anywhere near buying back chips.

“Are they really that bad?” He attempted to peer over his shoulder again but he really couldn’t see much as this angle.

Only tripped twice on the way to the living room mirror, neither of which ended in a faceplant, so that was a success, but the minute he got there and turned around, the last thing he was thinking about was how tipsy he was.

“Oh fuck.” His shoulders were positively mottled, littered with purple and blue, his hips were bruised, he had faded bite marks down his spine and there was that red mark from the door frame he’d hit a little too hard.
“Yeah, oh fuck,” Jonas repeated, a little high pitched still. No wonder they’d been freaked out, he’d be freaked out if he didn’t remember exactly every fucking incredible shuddering moment that lead to each and every one.

“They're all consenting, I swear,” Isak repeated, taking one more look in the mirror. They looked a lot like hickies if you asked him, he was pretty sure he wouldn’t mistake those for anything else, but. Still. “What the fuck.”

“What the fuck,” Mahdi agreed, sounding relieved as hell. Isak shook his head, a final glance to fix his hair before making his way back to the living room without tripping over any of their discarded clothes.

Well that was fucking dramatic.

“I completely forgot,” he started, which was hardly the apology they deserved but he couldn’t get another word out before Magnus’s Confusion was suddenly interrupting.

“But how do you end up with your shoulders dark purple??! Not to mention the fucking fingerprints on the back of your neck.” Magnus lifted his chin, one hand going up as he waited for an explanation.

Explanation. Right.

“Uh. Well.”

“What do you mean most of them are hickies?” Jonas asked slowly, careful not to bump Isak as he scooted past him for his chair again. Isak touched his arm briefly on his way past, a quiet thank you he knew Jonas wasn’t going to miss.

Apparently, Jonas also hadn’t missed that comment, though. Because yeah, Even’s mouth made the majority of those marks, but so had Even’s hands, and the wall, and.

God fuck. He was gonna have to explain this. They were still all looking at him in vague worry when there was literally not a single fucking thing to worry about, this was way more of a “you go man” than an “are you okay man” moment but. Better to rip it off like a band-aid, right. Might as well just.

“Well these,” Isak poked the ones he could reach, hoping they kinda got the extrapolation to the rest of the marks and their locations, “--are because I was on my hands and knees, and since kissing at that angle is basically impossible, Even’s mouth had to go somewhere and...yeah.”

He sucked in a breath and looked down, staring at the table just in case it was going to be kind enough to swallow him up and make his cheeks not as bright fucking red as the rest of him was apparently purple.

“Oh wow,” Mahdi said. Yep. Wow was right. Isak rolled his lips in, eyebrows going up as he tapped his fingers once on the table and pointedly did not look at anyone.

And then, of course, who opened his big mouth, but their very own overly-nosy, ridiculously outspoken Magnus Fossbakken.

“Well I guess that answers the question of who tops--”
“Shut up,” Isak said, pointing an accusing finger at him, instantaneous and vicious; tongue wetting his lips as he opened his mouth prepared to verbally kick Magnus’s ass, but it was too late.

Every single one of them burst into instantaneous laughter and yeah, it was official, he was bright fucking red and his friends were laughing their asses off, fucking cackling because they all just got it confirmed that he took cock up the ass on a regular basis.

Isak took his pointing finger back, rolling his lips in and swaying his head back and forth for a moment as he decided. Yeah, okay.

“I need to be significantly more wasted for this.”

The laughter doubled. Isak held out his hand and Mahdi passed over a bottle of whiskey, still laughing as Isak popped the top and took a swig straight out of the bottle.

“Ahh.Fuck. I can't believe I told you guys that,” Isak mourned pitifully, and Jonas was laughing so hard he had to lean against the wall, arm over his stomach.

He took another swig.

“What about the other ones? And the handprint,” Magnus pushed and Isak leaned back in his chair with a loud groan, shivering a little at how much closer to the window that put him.

“Ugg. Nei. I'm not gonna let myself get wasted enough to tell you one more single goddamn detail.”

“Well. It’s pretty visible, gotta say. All the marks are right there,” Mahdi pointed out very helpfully and Isak shot him a glare he didn’t mean, which was just returned by three expectant, amused-ass faces.

They were all looking at him like that.

Isak put his face in his hands.

And lifted it up one second later to grab another swig of whiskey. A round of giggles went round the table and Isak rolled his eyes, hard, rolling his head on a propped hand over to Jonas, his best puppy dog eyes on, the please save me look that Jonas was so great at ignoring, apparently.

No, Jonas sat there all curious and cocky, one eyebrow up as he leaned back in his chair, looked at Isak with that same confidence and security he had that day ages ago they’d been helping him figure out what to text Even instead of what kind of sex he was having with Even.

“So. It sounds like you guys get pretty kinky then,” Jonas prodded and Isak would flick him off if he thought it’d do any good.

Instead he scrunched up his nose, feeling strangely exposed without a snapback or a shirt or basically anything to protect him from all his friends’ scrutiny. Although not all their observations were that keen or anything, he wasn’t actually that worried.

“Not that kinky,” he squinted at the bottle, debating pouring it properly into a glass, which thank god he was not in the middle of doing when Mahdi asked his next question.

“So that's not a whip mark on your back?”

Isak’s mouth popped open, bottle clattering back to the table as his eyes bulged out of his head and he barely managed to stutter,
“Huh??? A-- a what???”

They were all laughing again as he scrambled up and stumbled his way - much quicker this time - to the mirror again, one hand on the wall as he twisted and squinted hard at his reflection. What the actual fuck could be mistaken for a *whip mark*--

“Oh! Fuck. The red stripe. Nei, nei, nei, I hit a doorframe. We don't use whips, *Je-sus.*” Isak shook his head once, making a tsk tsk sound as he sauntered his way back this time, give Magnus a very pointed look.

“...not like you and Vilde.”

“Huh!?” Magnus squawked and just like he'd hoped, all of the laughter turned on the other blonde instead of him, both Mahdi and Jonas shouting out things about dominatrix dreams while Isak slid back into his seat, waving his hand to a whip cracking sound, pulling the laughter up to bubble another round.

“Actually, how come you don't have any hickies, Magnus?” The expectant look Mahdi gave him was enough to turn Magnus into his try-hard, desperate self like the flip of a switch.

“Who said I don't??”

“We can see you! You're literally only in boxers,” Jonas pointed out and Magnus looked down. Yeah, one more plus, at least Isak wasn’t the *worst* one at this game.

“Maybe they're beneath,” he argued back and Mahdi covered his mouth with a hand, “Ooooo!”

“Nah nah, I don't believe it,” Jonas waved it off and Isak tipped his head, scanning Magnus over and debating whether or not he and Vilde had hooked up or actually had sex. He’d probably bet on just the former, actually.

“And as a matter of fact, there's one right here on my neck,” Magnus pointed out, to which all of them were squinting.

“What?”

“What?”

“Let me see.”

Isak scrambled around the table as Mahdi leaned over, both of them peering close while Jonas leaned forward in his seat, all of them scanning the spot Magnus was pointing to on his neck, which was yeah, a little discolored. Maybe.

“Huh, if you don't say. It's pretty faint,” Mahdi pointed out, inspecting a little closer and Magnus huffed, waving them both off with rolling eyes.

“Not all of us are dating a fucking vacuum cleaner.”

There were a lot of things in life dating Even had made him prepared for, but that comment was not one of them.

Isak ended up on the floor, which was probably mostly the whiskey’s fault, and the fact that his sides hurt from laughing so fucking much, but there were tears in his eyes as he rolled, both arms over his
stomach, but the more he laughed the funnier it was and he couldn’t fucking stop laughing, which meant the boys couldn’t stop laughing at him, and soon all of them were tearing up from the fact that nobody could stop laughing but jesus fuck, that was the single funniest fucking thing he’d ever heard.

By the time they wound down enough that it was mostly just random painful giggles and snorting that turned into chuckling and brief scattered bouts of laughter mixed between wiping tears, Isak had stopped noticing the cold from the window and Magnus had joined him on the floor.

Jonas caught his breath first, shaking his head at them as Isak stared up at the ceiling and mouthed the words vacuum cleaner to himself for the fourth time only to burst into a round of giggles again.

“Oy, drinking game idea.” Jonas patted a hand on the table, waving at the two of them on the floor to get up, waving Mahdi to hand the unopened bottle of tequila over.

It took a few more seconds to even look at the boys without giggling, but he somehow managed to reign it back in with a few residual shaky breaths.

God. Vacuum cleaner.

“How about, everyone takes a shot for every hickie - even faded - they have. I’m sporting a few too, somewhere between vacuum cleaner and kitten licks.”

Isak ducked his head, giggling off again as Magnus rolled his eyes and Mahdi barked another laugh, laying out the first round of shot glasses for Jonas to fill.

“Wait, wait. No way, this isn’t gonna be fair at all.” Isak sat up abruptly, noting distantly that his chair was a lot further away than he remembered, but he also had a lot more hickies on him than he remembered, enough that even he knew that was a dumbass fucking idea.

“We can each take shots for a different body part number of Isak’s hickies?” Mahdi suggested, which sent everyone of into another round of snorts and huffs before Jonas waved a sloppy hand at them, trying to get everyone to cut it out before they all ended up laughing on the ground next time.

“Or how about this, Isak takes shots for all his hickies, and we take shots for all the other marks that aren’t like. Officially hickies.”

Isak squinted, thinking back to what he could remember of the map Even had left on his back, shoulders, spine, but. Well, if they counted all his visible marks, at least they’d be decently wasted with him.

“Whatever,” he conceded, pushing up to plop back down in his seat beside Jonas, reaching for the first shot glass. “Fine. But I’m still not gonna let myself get wasted enough to tell you guys one damn. thing about my sex life.”

Which was how twenty minutes later there were four boys howling and choking on laughter in the middle of the living room floor.

“God, it was so fucking deep I swear he bruised my diaphragm. Fuck.”

Poker game entirely forgotten, tequila and whiskey bottles empty, and Isak trying to find enough air to inhale between bursts of laughter to speak, breathless, too giggly and short to be slurred as much as it should be.
“I couldn’t walk this morning, honestly. He had to bring me breakfast in bed.”

Jonas doubled over, again, knocking Isak’s shoulder as he rolled and Isak laughed, wide mouthed and open, hand waving up in the air to get them all to quiet for just a moment.

“Wait, wait, that’s not even the best part!”

Magnus was crying, laughing so hard he’d gone near silent and Isak could barely stop giggling enough to even tell it.

“Eskild—”

“Eksild, Eksild?” They all parroted like birds, the mispronunciation of his name they fucked up when they all were sober and there everyone went off again, round seven fucking thousand of endless giggling.

“Now, Eskild—”

“Eksild!” Jonas shouted and Isak shoved him, licking his lips and trying not to burst into more laughter again as Jonas’s curls got squished by Mahdi trying to shove him too.

“Hey. Listen to me. So Eskild saw him bring me breakfast right, and stops at our bedroom door—mind you, I’m still naked, with just a blanket over my lap and I’m like wincing as I’m sitting up—”

“Holy fuck.”

“Yeah, holy fuck, and Eskild’s just—”

“Eksild Eksild,” Magnus murmured, so Isak jammed his toes into Magnus’s ribs to hopefully get him to shut up long enough to finish his fucking story.

“And he’s just standing there in the doorway and he’s like,

‘You two are so sweet, it’s just so precious and endearing and shit, how your boyfriend brings you breakfast in bed?’”

Isak laughed, making his voice a tad higher, flicking a wrist up at the sky for comedic effect, which worked way too damn well when it was two in the morning and they were all wasted off their asses from giggling and hard liquor.

“‘I’ve never seen anyone so soft and sweet!’”

“And I’m sitting there staring blankly at him because ??? Last night was fucking anything but motherfucking soft.”

This couldn’t even be considered laughing anymore, this was some awful combination between chortling and the highest pitched giggling he had no idea any of them was capable of, the ricochet of sounds making it that much funnier until they were laughing so hard it physically hurt, again.

Isak wiped a tear from his eye, shoving at the various pile of body parts close enough to bother to make sure they were listening.

“Listen, have you ever been so hard you thought you were going to actually die? Yeah try that, while being fucked within an inch of your life by your…gorgeous boyfriend who’s pinning your shoulders to the bed with one hand and is bruising your hips from how high he’s holding them in the other.”
“Oh my god.”

“Holy fuck.”

Magnus was like. Choking and Mahdi was tearing up with silent laughter now, and Jonas’s face was twisted up so fucking scandalized Isak was crying with tears now too.

“Oh my god?!?”

“Oh my god isn't the beginning of it, fuck.” The laughter dragged Jonas back in as Isak reached over and prodded his ribs, smiling so wide his face hurt as Magnus mumbled something about maybe taking back his comment about being able to handle watching them bang on TV after all.

“Right? It's fucking crazy.” Isak stared up at the ceiling in awe, some distant part of his mind registering that wow, this was real, he was talking about his sex life with his friends, and for some reason that made it feel about 6000 times more real. Here was Isak Valtersen, getting fucked hard enough to bruise on Thursday night then giggling about it with his friends all night Friday.

“Fuck.” Isak lifted his head just a tad, wincing and squinting to try and make the floor somewhat horizontal again. Sitting up, he was going to sit up because fuck, his stomach hurt from all of the laughing mixed with all of the alcohol and sitting up sounded like the cheat version of curling up in a ball without cutting out for the night.

“Ughh, fuck, I swear, he’s all I can ever fuckin’ think about. The room was spinning more than it is right now which is. Oy yoy, saying a lot.”

He patted out a hand for the closest solid surface, found Jonas, then Mahdi, then finally the couch, which he managed to scoot back against without any casualties except maybe kicking Magnus. Whoops.

“So that's the handprint then?” Mahdi was also sitting up against the couch, would you look at that. Great minds think alike.

Speaking of which. He’d just said something. Isak rolled in his lips, registering the words and looking down at his chest, which wasn’t nearly so marked up as his back. It was usually the opposite, but.

Right, handprint. On the back of his neck.

“Mnhm. And most of the other bruises on my shoulders. And this hip.” He flipped the band of his pants down, revealing just an inch more of the purple peeking out from the sharp bone. These pants rode low enough to see a bit of the bruising anyways. Now those, he was pretty used to, marked up hips were pretty damn frequent nowadays and Isak was definitely not fucking complaining.

He peered over at his other hip, prodding at the bone once or twice. Yeah, definitely bruised. Like usual.

“But the thumb marks on this one are probably from blowjobs.”

“Jesus fuck.”

“Yeah man, if you think getting head from a girl is fun?” Isak lifted his head, tipping it knowingly at the faces all turned up his way again. “That's nothing on somebody who knows his way around a dick ‘cause he's got one.”
“That’s a really good point,” Magnus pondered all curious and confused again and Isak just nodded, heartily.

“Goddamn.” Jonas was staring up at the ceiling contemplating existence, from the look of it.

“What about giving head? Is it weird?”

Isak blinked once or twice, looking down at Jonas again. He wasn’t actually asking many of the questions tonight, but he’d asked that one and Isak furrowed his eyebrows, really thinking it over. No automatic answers for Jonas.

“Mmm. Nah, not anymore. At first it was…” Sucked in a breath over a weirded out eee sound. Universal for yeah, freaky, not good. “But like once you get over the whole not being able to breathe thing it’s like...empowering?”

Isak chewed on his lip a moment, debating the word choice before he decided he like it, nodding and waving a hand in the air to emphasize.

“Ja. Empowering.”

“Huh,” Jonas said and Isak lifted a shoulder. What you didn’t know, y’know.

“Do you guys switch off giving head then?” Mahdi asked and Isak rolled his head back, couch cushions all soft, too soft, his head was heavy but not that heavy, might as well lift it back up.

“Yeah, cause like. Everyone likes getting it, and we both like giving it so.” He lifted both hands, flat palms in the sky as he weighed them back and forth like scales with a little shrug, y’know y’know.

“But you don’t switch when you have sex?” That was Mahdi again, who could sometimes ask questions almost borderline Magnus nosy but somehow they didn’t feel so curious, more like he was opening doors for Isak to share which was a weird feeling but whatever, everything felt weird right now and that was a weird question, actually.

Isak paused, brushing a stray golden curl out of his eyes. His hair had to be fucked to hell if curls were in his line of sight, fuckin’ yikes.

Did they switch when they had sex? He lifted one shoulder, squinting into the distance as he thought about it. He’d actually never thought about it. Like, once.

Was that weird? He used to like. Worry, back when he wasn’t sure if he was gay, or if he’d ever be expected to have gay sex, he even kinda worried when he first got with Even, he was afraid he’d freak out or not be able to handle it or anything but like.

It just came so natural, there was something he trusted so much in Even’s core, something in the way he kissed Isak hard up against a wall that made it real damn easy to spread his legs right open--

“Woah,” Jonas interrupted and Isak froze, mouth snapping back closed. What.

“...was that out loud?”

“...yes?”

“How much of it??”

“How are we supposed to know?!” Magnus demanded and Isak put up his hands in defense, eyes widening, chill the fuck out dude.
“What I was gonna say, anyways, was that for switching, we haven’t yet. I don’t know if we will? I haven’t really thought about it actually, like. At all, until right now. Not since we’ve had sex anyways.”

“So you like how it is, then?” See, there was something about the way Mahdi asked questions that just came across as so much more polite than it did nosy. “Being, uh.”

“A bottom,” Magnus filled in.

Great. Great, yeah, sure, he’d figured they’d guessed as much from Even’s and his dynamic, or at least their heights or something, but. Magnus could also just blurt it out loud for God and the world to hear.

“I learned my gay sex terms,” he was defending, cause Jonas had kicked him or something. Go Jonas. “And just, so you know--”

Magnus struggled to sit up, clearly, obviously drunk. Join the club.

Did he like being a bottom. Jesus fuck, yeah.

Isak blinked patiently at him as Mr. Desperate took a very sincere moment to pause, looking Isak straight in the eyes as he deadpanned, pure as hell,

“I don’t think of you as a woman at all.”

“Takk,” Isak replied, overly sincere in return, with a dramatic hand over his heart as he swayed forward a tad, pausing at the front of his balance with one hand in the air, palm graciously out towards Magnus Who Tried.

“Although I suppose that’s really too bad because. I still think of you as one.”

He barely got out the drag before he was giggling like the little bitch he was, one hand over his stomach and water in his eyes.

Mahdi and Jonas were both stuck between barking out shocked cackling laughter and pointing with their loud, kickass backup drags.

“Ahhh cold, cold, fucking vicious, cold--”

“I was already freezing man, what the fuck?” Magnus pouted, looking very pitiful there in just his boxers with the window open - they should close that window, asap - but when you had a shitty poker face, life really just took you for a ride sometimes.

Isak was laughing at the stars and the folds of the couch as he snickered his way through yet another one of his burns and by fucking god, he should write these down, he’d be fucking famous for how fucking funny he was.

“It’s too bad you suck at poker and everything having to do with sex. Vegas, you, never.” The couch stopped holding him upright when he was tipped sideways, but Mahdi seemed pretty amiable to catching him before the floor did so Isak didn’t bother to stop laughing.

“You have no idea how I am in bed!” The defense was fair, but the doors it opened, he couldn’t not.

“And I’d like to keep it that way,” Isak shot back, triple burn to sink Magnus’s eyebrows back into that confused, vaguely kicked puppy look that he fucking had coming every time, which didn’t stop
it from being so fucking funny every time.

“You are like. The fucking king of hickies. You have no room to speak,” he pouted and Isak rolled off of Mahdi’s thigh, landing on his stomach in front of Magnus to reach over and shove his knee, which refused to budge with all the weight Magnus had on it. Damn damn.

“What’re you talking about? Hickies are great.” Obviously, his skin was serenading to back him up and Isak rolled one more time, ending up somewhere between all three of them as he closed his eyes, squinched up his nose and sing-songed up at the ceiling in English, “Mark me up, baby.”

At least one of them thought that was funny, spiraling into laughter again, his brain was just way too distant right now to figure out who.

“Yeah, but twelve? Fucking hell, just one takes like fucking five minutes to make properly.”

Twelve, that’s right, that’s how many shots he had taken and fuck, that had been a lot hadn’t it. Apparently his rough count in his head before he agreed had been way off.

Excuse him for not remembering perfectly, he’d been a little preoccupied with the fucking sensation as Even was making them to count.

“I’m markable,” Isak parroted back, quoting what Even had told him last night and then they were all giggling. God, this was better than being high, even if his sides were aching again from how much they couldn’t fucking stop laughing. But this was so nice, laughing until he couldn't breathe and getting to talk to all his boys about sex and Even and all of the fantastic things in his life. Which was just so sad they didn’t have too.

“Hey, hey, but you know what, gay sex is great guys, honestly. If you ever get the chance, try it, you are missing out on so fucking much. I mean, do you have any fucking clue what the prostate--”

“Ahh! Stop, okay, stop there,” Mahdi interrupted and Isak’s triumphant smile deepened into dimples as Jonas knocked his shoulder, a hand shoving through his curls as he lifted them up to plop down on the nearest soft spot.

“I mean, I knew biology was your subject,” Jonas caroled, which was so nice, it was great that his friends knew him so well. If only Jonas could’ve fuckin’ let Sana know that yes, biology was his subject before it took her the entire class to figure it out but y’know what, that was fine, they were friends now and they probably wouldn’t’ve been otherwise and. Jonas was still talking, fuck.

“...didn’t know anatomy was too.”

Isak laughed, head kicking back into Jonas’s stomach as he laughed too, reverberating through Isak’s skull and down the rest of his bones. He’d ended up on his favorite soft spot, look at that. This was where he used to lay when they were younger, because he bitched about his hair being fucked up by the grass and Jonas would always sigh but volunteer as a pillow while they watched the clouds in the park or chatted on somebody’s roof or something.

Stomachs were the absolute best pillows.

Isak blinked up at the ceiling, laughter dying down enough to gasp in a breath as his leaking eyes stained little puddles on Jonas’s shirt. At least one of them was vaguely wearing clothes. Somewhat.

“Jesus fuck, I don’t think I’ve ever been this drunk in my life,” Isak confessed to the ceiling and Jonas carded a hand through his hair while Magnus poked his ankle, like that was gonna somehow measure how fucking drunk Isak was.
The answer was: fucking drunk. But there was nobody he’d rather be Fucking Drunk with, these were the only hoes he had any desire to get trashnasty with and the fact that they’d all agreed to, were all still camped out on his living room floor giggling just.

Made his chest so warm, how the fuck did he find such fucking amazing friends?

“I love you guys,” he cooed sincerely and Jonas’s hand paused in his hair, wild head of dark curls lifting up to catch the dreamy-distant look in his eyes.

“Fuck, yeah, you’ve gotta be drunk.”

Isak was back to giggling, rolling a bit, just enough that when Jonas put a hand in his hair this time it was a lot more about keeping him still than playing with his hair.

“You hate us, man.”

“No I don’t. I love you guys,” Isak insisted, looking up at the underside of Jonas’s chin before slipping free of the hand pinning him still and rolling over onto his stomach. Ear to Jonas’s sternum, hand curled up by his face as he smiled to himself, eyes slipping shut in the warmth.

“Oh Isak,” Mahdi sighed fondly and Isak shuffled, lifting his head just enough to make himself comfy again, content little smile on his face. He totally loved them, every one of them. His fucking amazing friends, he absolutely loved them.

“But not like I love Even,” Isak interrupted, fingers and shut eyes tightening with the pulse in his fucking fingertips. “Jesus fuck I am so, so in love with Even.”

It took him a second to place the shift, because he was still kinda just basking in the warmth and the glow of how much he loved the boy that marked him up enough for his friends to question it and not enough for Isak not to miss him fucking desperately.

But there was a shift, because all the latent giggling and chatter had fallen again, all of the boys kinda quiet as Isak rolled back over onto his back, right over the softest part of Jonas’s stomach as he stared at the ceiling, hands resting still and quiet over his stomach.

Maybe they were all watching him, or maybe they were all just kinda shocked with how honest and sincere Isak’s voice had been, or maybe they just didn’t see it written all over Isak’s fucking face every time Even Bech Næsheim so much as walked into the fucking room.

Where was he right now? It was too late - or early, in the morning, depending on who you were - for him to still be hanging with his parents, nobody hung with their parents at 03:30.

So he was probably sleeping, then. Hopefully tucked in warm and cozy in a bed he hadn’t slept in alone for like. A fucking month, not that Isak had any slightest regrets about that.

If anybody else his age practically lived with their significant other, he’d probably think they were crazy but it was different, with Even, they were different.

Jesus Christ, he was so fucking in love with that boy.

“I think you need some water.” Jonas’s mom voice interrupted and Isak groaned loudly, rolling back over to bury his face in a nice and cozy warm shirt.

“Leave me alone, dad. Actually, wait.” Isak lifted his head, blinking disoriented against the spinning room. Fuck that. Fuck this, too. “I wouldn’t insult you like that, fuck my dad.”
“Okay, yeah, things are getting too real. It’s time for you to go to sleep now,” Jonas told him, two hands shoving Isak gracelessly to the floor as he sat up, arms instantly flailing out for balance. “Oh fuck.”

“Mmm, yeah, it’s better down here on the floor,” Isak informed him blurrily. He would no more get up right now than he would tapdance naked out there in the cold. Unlike some people, he made a point to wear clothes when he went outside. Although huh, actually, he was gonna like. Not think about that when he was this fucked up, that probably was not the best idea.

God knows what’d he do, if someone brought that up right now. Maybe break down crying, maybe lay there numb and dead as he’d felt when Sonja had swept his feet out underneath him like that—

“Couch,” Jonas declared. A hand wiped over his cheek and Isak swatted it away pissily. Whatever made Jonas think he could put water on Isak’s face, salty water on top of it, how fucking dare—

“Magnus, Mahdi, help me get him on the couch.”

“Get yourself on the couch,” Isak mumbled, sniffling. Wow, there were suddenly a fucking lot of hands here right now. He was hands down the most drunk, but nobody was sober enough to pick each other up, either.

Bridal style, that’s the only way Even hadn’t carried him yet. Last time he’d talked about their wedding he’d been in a different universe than Isak, and it wasn’t one that was parallel at all.

It wasn't parallel at all.

God, he'd been so scared.

“Leave me alone.” The weak protests weren’t saying much when he curled into familiar hands the second Jonas tried picking him up. There was plenty of cursing, but next thing he knew he was landing sideways on something a lot softer than the floor, elbow jabbing something that made a very uncomfortable sound when it got squished.

Isak dragged his eyes back open, blinking wide eyed at Jonas, whose face was way too close to his right now the way they’d landed on the couch.


“Mahdi, can you get a glass of water?”

“Did you know,” Isak started slowly, narrow vision filled with just the face of his best friend, the one who’d been literally the best person in the world to come out to, which Isak never really would’ve expected considering how much it used to fucking tear him up. “…I used to have this…massive crush on you.”

Jonas lifted one eyebrow, clearly unimpressed.

“And bring duct tape, while you’re at it!” He shouted for the kitchen. Uh, rude.

“I’m serious,” Isak whined, shoving at his chest. “Jonas, you’re like super great, I was so into you.”

Another voice piped up, from the ground, which Isak’s brain took a few seconds to register as Magnus.

“Knew there had to be a reason he chose having sex with you over sex with me, it’s just the only
thing that makes sense.”

There were a lot of reasons that made sense, but Isak just twitched an eye and looked back up at Jonas, who was still half pinned beneath him here on the couch. Good, Jonas was supposed to know everything, it fucking killed him that he didn’t know everything.

Literally, there was like an actual hole in him from not saying anything, although at least there wasn’t a hole in his chest from an unrequited one way crush anymore. That sucked, but thank fuck it didn’t suck anymore.

“Don’t worry, I’m so fucking into Even now, there’s no way I’d get in between you and Eva again.”

“Here’s the water,” Mahdi said but Jonas didn’t reach up to take it, too busy looking at Isak with a furrow between his dark, bushy eyebrows.

“Again?”

“Jonas,” Mahdi repeated, something underneath in his voice that Isak was not picking up, but apparently everybody else could hear it just fine, cause next thing he knew Jonas was holding a glass of water to his lips, switched right back into Worry Mode.

“Here, Isak, drink.”

“I thought you cut me off,” he argued light-heartedly, but he opened his mouth when the glass pressed to his lips anyways. No point being cheeky when he was that wasted and Jonas was being that nice.

Why was Jonas being so nice to him? It wasn’t like he fucking deserved it.

“Don’t be mad,” Isak tried, trying not to sound terrified, and Jonas put a hand in his hair.

“I’m not mad.”

“Promise,” he insisted, and this time when Jonas wiped a hand over his cheek, the salt water he was brushing away kind of registered in the same bubble as the foggy water haze in the bottom edge of his vision. Oh.

“Promise,” Jonas told him, shifting both of their bodies as he reached up to hand Mahdi the empty glass. When his arm came back down, it came down around Isak’s shoulders.

Ribs were also surprisingly comfy and Isak settled in, both of them sideways on the couch with Jonas’s hand in his hair, stroking over it the same way he did when Isak’s dad left his mom and Isak didn’t know how to deal with a single fucking thing.

“Are you really in love with Even?” Jonas asked him softly, private, just between the two of them. It was quiet and close and caring, more felt than heard with his eyes slipping closed against a sideways heartbeat. This was his best friend, who cared more about him than anyone else in the entire fucking world, and Isak could fucking hear it in every note of his voice.

That, he could be drunk, high, dead, he didn’t miss.

“Yeah,” Isak replied sleepily. “You like him, right?”

“Yeah, I like him.” Jonas told him. “I like you being happy more.”

Seeing Isak smile, the day he came out over kebabs? That was the most heartbreaking moment of
Jonas’s entire life. His best friend, laying bare the soul he’d hid for years. To Jonas, before anyone else, watching him with the most terrified look in his eyes as he held Jonas’s gaze - this was fucking important - and said it once, ”Try.”

Try to guess. A hint. It’s not a girl.

The look on Isak’s face, as he said that, physically holding his breath to see what Jonas would respond with. To see if Jonas would be disgusted, kick him to the curb, look at him different, tell him it was wrong, he was sick, anything that could’ve possibly been running through that kid’s head at the moment.

“Hmm,” Jonas had said, looking down at his kebab as he thought it over. Isak liked somebody, that wasn’t a girl. So yeah, when he’d looked up he’d replied with a curious, honest, guess.

“Is it me?”

“Nei!” Isak had defended, so quickly, a brilliant, shaky smile on his face. “Nei, nei nei! You?!”

And it wasn’t, it wasn’t anymore, but. It had been, at one point, he had that confirmed now.

But that wasn’t why that day was the most heartwrenching memory he owned. No, it was the end of that conversation that killed him.

“Like, he has got to break up with his girlfriend,” Jonas had said and Isak had looked down, thumb rubbing over the edge of the drawing Even had given him. And then he did the simplest fucking thing.

He just smiled. Small, and shy, as he looked down at this note a boy had given him and.

It was the kind of smile he’d never seen on Isak’s mouth before. Quiet, sincere. None of the bullshit or pain or underlying something. Just. a smile. An honest, little. hopeful smile.

That, that was why.

So Jonas meant it. Meant every word of it when he ran his hand through Isak’s hair and told him yes, he liked Even, he really did, but.

“I like you being happy more.”

It was too bad Isak was already asleep against him by the time he said it, but. Passed out or not, hopefully there was some part of that stubborn head that knew it, deep down. That heard it as he drifted into sleep, and let it fill his dreams with something quiet and peaceful.

Jonas smiled to himself, resituated the pillow under his side, and let himself drift off into sleep too. Let them leave this entire fucking year behind.

Let next year be nothing but the hope there’d been in that honest little smile.
Hangovers and New Years

Chapter Notes

Isak is oblivious and still wildly uneducated, hence.

Warnings: hangovers, vague not-really smut (yet, it'll happen, don't worry) but definitely nsfw? dealing with mental illness, the Beginnings of Drama (TM) and shitty parents

also I totally referenced Julie's Official Evak New Years Scene, which if you haven't read, is here. Also, the blog that link goes to is my side Skam-only blog, where i just scream a lot, feel free to follow me fam

I hope you enjoy.

xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lørdag, 09:13
31.12.16

It was probably at Vilde’s request again, but Isak was hosting a New Year’s Eve party to bring in 2017 at his place, which was - of course, because it was Vilde - going to require quite a bit of the day to set up.

There was alcohol to buy, rooms to decorate, food to make. Even had promised both Vilde and Isak he’d be there early on Saturday to help, apparently having an extra set of hands and someone over 18 who could buy was pretty appreciated when it came to kosegruppa parties.

So it wasn’t like Isak wasn’t expecting him, but still, Even felt a little out of place as he bounced on his toes at Isak’s doorstep, his phone waiting quietly with an unanswered string of texts, which was fine, he wasn’t worried or anything, he was sure Isak had a great night, but he didn’t exactly wanna wake him either.

Or well, maybe he did, maybe that’s why he was here at 9 in the morning instead of the 10 he definitely could’ve shown up for, but.

Dinner with his parents had been terribly boring without Isak there to throw suggestive glances at. Not to mention falling asleep was also extremely, terribly boring because his bed wasn’t warm enough and there wasn’t a damn thing to match his breathing to.

Basically, he just missed Isak. A lot.

And Isak wasn’t responding to his texts, and none of his roommates were going to be home, so Even rapped again, knocking a little louder in case Isak was passed out deep enough not to hear the first two.

He was wearing his leather jacket today. It wasn’t supposed to snow and he wasn’t really over the
way Isak looked at him in it. Hopefully Isak missed him as much as he missed Isak, because he could really go for some *we’ve been apart so long* sex right now. Or a we’ve been apart so long day in bed, just holding each other and occasionally kissing just because they could.

Something intimate. Anything intimate.

They hadn’t even *texted*. Like all day. The last time he’d spoken to Isak had been early Friday morning, and that’d just been a message to confirm that he was gonna be here Saturday - which he was, open the door - and a little red heart to carry him over until now.

Shouldn’t feel like it was that long, but he’d just gotten so used to being surrounded. By the apartment he basically lived at now, by Isak’s roommates and Isak’s hoodies on his bare skin and Isak’s smile as he turned the corner into their - his. Bedroom.

Which wasn’t that far away, really, he should be able to hear Even knocking.

He was just about to consider calling Eskild when finally, a lock on the other side of the door clicked, doorknob turning to swing open as Even took a step to the side, ready to rush in and sweep Isak into his arms.

Only that wasn’t Isak, that was a very groggy looking Mahdi.

“Oh. *Halla,*” Even greeted, nodding as Mahdi backed out of the entry way, rubbing his eyes painfully as Even shut the door behind him, kicked off his shoes. “You look…”

“Exhausted,” Mahdi answered for him, all gravel and a vague nod in his direction before he was wandering in the direction of the living room, “--and going back to sleep.”

“Alright.” Even rolled his lips in, holding back the amusement as he followed Mahdi into the living room where he sunk right back into an armchair that really wasn’t big enough to sprawl in like that.

Speaking of sprawls and not being big enough.

Isak - fuck, Isak, he’d missed him so fucking much - was passed the fuck out on the couch, slumped half on top of Jonas, who looked beyond uncomfortable squished up against the side of the armrest while Isak lay stretched out like a cat in the sun, one leg hanging off the cushions.

The only person who actually had enough room was Magnus, who was passed out on the floor, a pile of shirts under his head for a pillow.

That was another interesting little detail. Like, not one of them was wearing a full outfit of clothing.

Mahdi and Jonas were both in an undershirt and shorts, Isak wasn’t wearing anything on the top half of his body and Magnus was only in boxers.

The window was cracked open and there were empty alcohol bottles everywhere, coupled with discarded clothes and cards and shot glasses.

Even stood in the middle of the living room and highly debated blackmail photos for a solid ten seconds before deciding that it was probably too early in this friend group.

“Well. Wow, you guys had a hell of a night.”

Mahdi groaned in agreement, eyes closed from his strange position on the armchair. Right.

He had to be careful not to slip on half a deck of cards as he crossed the room, amusement growing
more and more with every step.

Not as much as his affection grew though. He dropped to a squat in front of the beautiful boy, sleeping with his mouth open as he drooled on Jonas’s ribs, blonde curls fucked in a thousand directions and those tiny stress lines around his eyes that made Even’s heart skip a beat.

A moment’s hesitation - he didn’t want to wake Isak up, especially not after a night like whatever the hell last night was - but he couldn’t just. Not touch him either.

Blonde shifted through his fingertips as Even carded a hand through silky disheveled hair, pretty green eyes fluttering at his touch.

“Good morn’,” Even whispered fondly. Pouty lips parted around a half-assed grumble, eyes squeezing tighter shut as he dug his head a little harder into Jonas’s side. Even couldn’t help but light up in a smile, cupping the back of Isak’s head as he tipped forward and placed a solid kiss to the crinkled forehead.

Isak softened just a little, some of the stress lines by his eyes fading as Even smoothed aside a rumpled curl that bounced back into the wrong place the moment he slid his hand free.

He might as well get some things done while the boys slept, odds were none of them were going to wake up in the mood to clean, and he had to do something while he waited anyways.

The corners of Isak’s mouth flattened a tad as Even stood up, placing one more kiss to the top of his head before he left his sleeping boy to the sleeping Jonas’s care and turned to survey the room.

Alcohol first, glass was always the most important thing to round up.

As he stooped to pick up a rolled over shot glass, Even noted the space between this one and the next, the bottle between. It was almost like a movie, the way the mess they left behind painted a picture of the night.

Clothes under cards, so clothes came off first, which meant they were probably playing a stripping card game. The scattered chips obviously pointed to poker. The windowsill was frozen over, and none of the chairs were right up against it, so snow poker.

There were both tumblers and shot glasses, the shot glasses were empty but some of the tumblers were still full - they abandoned snow poker for a drinking game of sorts, which ended with everyone on the floor, based on the fact that that’s where all the shot glasses were.

Even dumped everything glass and washable into the sink, rinsing off his hands as he smiled to himself. Regardless of the fact that everyone probably felt fucking awful today, he was really really glad they decided to do that whole night apart thing. Clearly, Isak had needed it.

Yeah, maybe he was a little jealous he missed out on all the fun, but there were worse things to miss out on. And at least one of them needed to be sober and chipper today for the party they were hosting.

In the meantime, he’d clean and debate over what their drinking games must’ve been, wonder whether the boys brought him up, what Isak had told them. He was pretty sure his parents’ questions last night were nothing like the questions Magnus and Jonas and Mahdi asked.

*Does he know what he wants to study in school? Does he have a school picked out yet?*

*What are his roommates like? They really don’t mind you being there all the time?*
When are you bringing him over for dinner next, honey? Do you think he’d like my signature pasta
dish--

Yeah, he doubted that’s what they were discussing over shots of tequila and whiskey.

He was in the middle of wiping down the table when the silence finally disappeared, replaced with a
distant whiny groan.

“Babyy…”

The cloth got abandoned instantly, traded in for a hand over the draping lax one as Even dropped to
a knee in front of the couch, other palm out to cup the tired, scrunched up bitter face.

“Hey you.”

“Mnrrm.” Isak pouted, pushing his lips out the way he did when they were laying in bed and he
wanted to be kissed, except about a dozen times more petulant. Didn’t even have his eyes open yet
and he was already grumpy and demanding.

Even stroked a thumb down his pretty cheek, just looking him over for a moment before he smiled,
soft and affectionate as he leaned forward and kissed that pouty mouth as gentle as he could.

“You taste like tequila,” he informed him and Isak scrunched up his nose.

“Ughh. Don’t say that word.” One eye cracked open, side of his face squished against Jonas’s
slowly expanding ribs. Even tipped his smile, running soothing fingers through curls.

“Can I get you a glass of water?”

“Mmm.” The cracked eye squeezed shut again, fairly miserably.

And he still looked miserable lying there sprawled when Even came back with a full glass.

“Think you can sit up to drink it?”

The exasperated huff Isak made was pretty cute, rubbing eyes roughly as he struggled upright to
squint accusingly at the world as Even handed him the glass. He sipped slowly, looking vaguely
okay past the bitchiness and dark eyes.

Isak was still squinting as he handed the empty glass back, paler than usual as Even twisted his
mouth to the side and told himself he really didn’t need to watch so closely, this was hardly the first
time Isak got wasted with friends.

“Do you want another?” He lifted the glass in indication and Isak squinched up his face, pinching the
bridge of his nose like that could stave off the headache that was sure to come with whatever massive
hangover they were all toting.

“I’ll take that as a yes.”

Hadn’t so much as turned the handle on the sink before Isak went stumbling past, hand over his
mouth as he ran for the bathroom.

He almost slipped on the kitchen tile taking off to follow, landing at the bathroom door just as Isak
hurled into the toilet.

Charming.
He really should have some sympathy, it was only fair, but there was something about seventeen year olds getting wasted off their asses without so much as a glass of water to counter the next day hangover that just...really didn’t have that much sympathy, it wasn’t like they didn’t know this was exactly what was gonna happen.

But at least he managed to rein in the amused smile as he dropped by Isak’s side again, brushing a hand over his forehead to pin back curls, other hand bracing against skin.

“Jeez, you guys had one hell of a night.” Even ran a palm down Isak’s spine, rubbing comfort absentmindedly, and that’s when he saw it.

“Holy shit.” Hand lifted, curls on the back of Isak’s neck brushed aside as he took in the marks across his skin, light purple and fading blue, red edges on a few. He’d known he was leaving marks yeah, but. Wow. “Your shoulders are *fucked*.”

Isak crossed his arms over the top of the toilet seat, spitting into the basin and groaning.

“Ja, I know,” he croaked back, pure sass beneath the doting misery.

“Does it hurt? Are you okay?”

Eyebrows knit as he leaned over, tried to catch some kind of emotion from the profile as Isak squinched up his nose again. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“The only thing that hurts is my head.” It was accompanied by another groan, forehead resting on forearms and a quiet grumble from a protesting stomach. But that wasn’t enough of an answer, as much as he loved leaving marks - and how Isak loved him leaving marks - it was nowhere near fucking worth it if they hurt. Isak couldn’t just not tell him, that wasn’t fair.

“Besides, you made them.”

“I didn’t know they were that bad!”

“They’re not bad. *You* made them.” Isak peered up at him from his post of misery and Even held the gaze, eyebrows shooting up at the sincerity in the miserable green.

“If you’re sure.”

“Mmhhm. Ughhh.” Barely a moment of a little smile before Isak was rolling his head back down, groaning miserably at his stomach, head, both, either.

Even dropped a kiss to the closest mark on the sleepwarm, marred skin before regretfully pushing up off the tile.

“I’ll go make you something for your hangover, will you be okay for a minute?”

“Nei.”

Not very convincing, but it ended up being less than a minute anyways. As much as he’d love to make something impressive and delicious, not really the morning for that. So he brought back the most old-fashioned hangover cure there was, soda pop with a fuckton of salt dumped in it.

Isak was puking again by the time Even made it back, so he grabbed the closest towel, running it under the sink to wipe off Isak’s mouth for him as he miserably lifted his head again.

“I hate everything,” he mumbled and Even patted his lips clean, being the good boyfriend for once
and not commenting on how if he hadn’t decided to sell his soul to tequila last night, he might not hate everything today.

“Nasty,” Isak complained, again, as Even swiped a clean part of the wet towel over his cheeks and forehead too.

“Not like I haven’t cleaned you up before,” he scoffed and Isak squeezed his eyes shut. Yeah, the light was probably killing him, but Even wasn’t gonna leave him here to throw up in the dark.

“But that’s after sex, that’s different.”

“It’s admittedly a little more fun, yeah.” Isak made a disgruntled sound and Even set the towel back in the sink, trading it out for the hangover remedy and offering it over.

“Ewww.”

“It'll help,” he pointed out. Isak still had his bitchiest face on as he took the glass. He drank half, shoved it back petulantly, and went right back to curled over the toilet.

Even rubbed a hand over his back, careful not to press too hard on the scattered bruises.

“I'm gonna go check on the boys, okay? Try and drink as much of this as you can. It's good for you.”

He pushed to his feet, almost missing the mumbling from his disastrous mess of a boyfriend.

“What's that?” Even dropped back down close and Isak shifted, rolling his head so he could see the profile of that pretty face.

“Are you the man who's gonna tell me what's good for me or not?”

The smile Even gave him was wide enough that Isak couldn’t help but smile too, the first real one he'd seen today.

His whole chest could burst.

“Of course. It's my job. Don't you know that's why I'm doing this?”

The dimple flashed for just a moment, misery forgotten as green eyes filled with light as they simultaneously darkened, pupils dilated to fuck the way they always were when Isak looked at him, really looked at him, and Even would kiss him madly if everything didn’t smell terribly of stomach acid and tequila.

Instead he slid a hand through disheveled blonde and reached over to press a gentle kiss to the slope of a cold ear. He should go grab a hoodie, Isak had to be freezing. But he definitely should check on his friends first.

“You okay? I’ll be back.”

A simple nod and Even made himself leave, if he didn’t now he’d stay there rubbing Isak’s back all morning, while there were three more plastered boys who needed attending to.

Thankfully there was enough soda pop to make three hangover cocktail remedies, even if they were admittedly pretty nasty, the electrolyte boost was important. Mahdi was slowly sipping water at the table as Even brought them in, but happily exchanged it for the soda sat down in front of him.
“You guys had fun though, yeah?”

“It was fun,” Mahdi agreed and then came a bitter sound from the floor.

“My sides hurt from laughing,” Magnus groaned, awake and curled up with his eyes closed. “I have stitches. Or I need stitches. I don't know.”

Even laughed and carefully stepped over the pile of bare limbs, setting the next soda on the shoved aside coffee table.

“This one’s for you. And if you’re cold, I put everyone’s clothes in individual piles. Easier than searching around for them.”

“You know what I wear?” A blue eye peeked open at him and Even lifted an eyebrow, running a hand not at all awkwardly through his hair. “I’m so honored.”

Okay that wasn’t as vicious as he’d expected. Even shook his head and set down the last glass on the end table next to Jonas. He didn’t mean to set it down loudly, or maybe it was his shadow blocking the morning sun from the window but the second he sat it down, Jonas startled awake.

A burst of scattered, tired laughter as Jonas wildly patted the empty spot on the couch beside him, groggy as fuck and hair in ten thousand directions as he whipped his head around in confusion.

“Where’s Isak, is he okay, where’d he--”

“He’s puking up all of last night in the bathroom, but he'll be fine.” Even rolled his lips in to keep from laughing as Jonas relaxed back into the cushions, eyes slipping closed in relief. He scooted the glass a little closer before stepping over Magnus again and plopping down on the other end of the couch.

Jonas pried open his eyes, squinting at the bright room painfully before pinching the bridge of his nose and groaning.

“Fuck, my head.”

“Even made us hangover remedies.” Mahdi seemed quite content, drinking his without so much as a complaint about the salty bitter.

“Man after my heart,” Magnus mumbled and Even laughed, pulling a leg up to cross an ankle over his knee.

“You’re a man of many talents, at least,” Jonas offered, shooting a glance at the other two, then all three were busting up laughing, mixed in with a few groans as strained muscles were woken back up.

Many talents?

“Hmm? What's that supposed to mean?” Even glanced between the different expressions, eyebrows knit and lifted in confusion.

“I, uh.” The scratchy voice behind made everyone perk up, heads turning towards where Isak was standing in the doorway, still squinting but looking considerably better as he held onto an empty glass and twisted his mouth up guiltily. “I'm pretty sure I spilled a few more things than drinks last night?”
“Oh?” Even’s eyebrows went up all the way and there were a few mutters of yeah, one way to put it, a lot of shaking heads and a hell of a lot of knowing looks.

Isak rolled his lips in, looking down at his glass as Even pushed off the couch, carefully stepping around Magnus again before sliding up to Isak’s side, wrapping an arm around his waist to press a quick kiss to his temple and tug his groggy adorable self into the kitchen.

Long limbs and bare skin all warm and beautiful, snaking around to curl in the back of his leather jacket as Even set the glass down on the counter and painted a chaste kiss to the tender, marked up neck.

“You don't mind?” Isak asked, swallowing nervously, head pulled back.

He straightened slowly, running a thumb up one of Isak’s beautiful cheekbones, studying the guarded worry in those fucking captivating eyes.

Even lifted both eyebrows, hold secure on the pretty, half-naked boy in his arms. Isak had told his friends things, details of some kind, enough to make them all blush and make jokes about his many talents. He’d pictured Isak to be pretty tight-lipped, considering he was still going through the little nuances of not being in the closet anymore, but the last thing Even cared about was the boys knowing some details of their sex life. Isak was okay with them, really okay enough that he rambled to his friends about things they did in bed, if anything he was kinda proud.

But it wasn’t about him, it was about Isak and whatever guilt he was feeling. Even was happy to assuage it what he could though.

“I'm...surprised, but whatever you're comfortable sharing, I really don't mind.”

Isak’s eyes lifted to the sky for a moment, crooked smile tipping up one side of his mouth in relief. “Phew.”

He followed Isak’s gaze all the way out of sight as he tipped forward to prop his chin on Even’s collarbone. Green eyes slipped closed as Even kissed his temple again. God, it was fucking nice to have Isak right here again, skin and smile and achingly bright soul all within reach.

Even ran a hand down Isak’s bare back, smiling to himself as he reveled in the closeness. He’d never grown used to it in the three weeks they’d basically lived together, but it felt so remarkably extraordinary today. Just twenty four hours.

Isak had been kinda right, in a way. It took him an hour and a half longer than usual to fall asleep alone in his bed last night. Which wasn’t really fair, because Isak had clearly passed out, and on top of Jonas in addition to that, so his theory of testing if he could still fall asleep alone was unfairly not tested.

He didn’t mind though. Didn’t mind a single fucking thing when Isak was here with his head tipped to rest against Even’s, arms wrapped loose and comfortable around him as Even traced indented circles into his spine.

The slope of Isak’s back, just that little thing alone, somehow that was even more remarkable today. Even’s gaze cut down as his hand slid lower, the arch up from Isak’s dipped lower back, fingertips stopping at the band of his sweats to dip barely inside, drag the tease of his touch over the edge of warm skin. Isak shuddered against him. Kept tracing all the way round to a hip, stopping to rub his thumb over the light purple bruising arching out from beneath an elastic band.

“Jeez, I'd forgotten about these too. No wonder you wound up on the topic.”
He could physically feel the corners of that tired mouth tip up as Isak smiled and pressed his face into Even’s neck.

“Everything comes back to you anyways.” Lips dragging lethargic over his skin with every word.

“Aww. Aren’t you sweet when you’re hungover and needy.” A few peppered kisses to the golden crown as Isak fidgeted, hands grabbing up a little higher and tighter on Even’s jacket, proving his point that much further.

“Shut up.” There was no bite in it as Isak breathed warm over his skin, nuzzling up under Even’s jaw to nibble lightly at his skin, press a warm, loose kiss that had Even’s fingers threatening new bruises onto Isak’s hips again. “To be fair, I was wasted off my fucking ass.”

A distant laugh, light and high, palming Isak’s lower back to cement their bodies that much closer.

Isak inhaled shakily, one hand running up between his shoulderblades as Even pressed a kiss to Isak’s ear, cheek, before tipping up his dimpled chin, taking in the lidded eyes and parted lips - Jesus fuck - to finally press their mouths together.

Mint toothpaste was considerably better than tequila, or puke, so the moment their lips tugged apart Even was diving beneath the surface of the waves to kiss Isak again.

He could lose himself in this, honestly.

He already had once.

A tilt to pull their mouths closer, deeper, and the jaw under his hands moved like a rag doll, hanging on every inch Even tipped him.

There probably wasn’t anything better than the mornings when Isak was pliant and needy, gravitating around Even like he was the sun, kissing him with all the same heartwrenching sweet he had that morning they’d danced in here to Gabrielle.

He could probably stay here kissing Isak all day, but eventually they broke the surface into oxygen again, lips dragging apart as their smiles grew wider, foreheads touching for a moment as Even tipped his head and pressed another kiss to a dimple, making it deepen almost more than the look in those dark dark eyes.

“How was your night?” Isak managed, gaze caught between his eyes and his smile, which only made both crinkle up brighter.

“Much less eventful,” he teased, running a hand through the back of those still-fucked golden curls, cocking his head as he watched Isak watch him. “I missed you.”

How that boy managed to look more domestic than Even’s parents while simultaneously looking more starved than a seventeen year old in a locker room, Even had no fucking idea, but he could fucking bask in the way Isak was looking at him for the rest of his life.

“Well you’re still spending the night tonight, right?”

“If you’ll have me.” A playful light shove and pull with the secure hold he had, hand covering the side of his neck, the soft spot beneath his ear, all the way up to the fingertips tucked in curls.

Isak swayed and squinched up his nose, rocking forward and leaning up close to put their lips just centimeters apart, parted enough to drag sparks of anticipation up from Even’s toes as he whispered
tantalizingly low.

“I’ll have you upside and sideways,” Isak murmured and Even leaned back in surprise, eyebrows shooting up again.

“And who’s this? You suddenly turn into a dirty talker overnight?” He was smiling as he said it, biting his lip and ducking back in to brush his nose against Isak’s while he made a half-cross face back at him.

“Maybe there’s still tequila in my brain.”

“Well I hope it doesn’t leave, then.” Even ducked forward to close that sparkling space between them, smiling into Isak’s mouth as he turned to melting putty under his touch. But there was still some fire in all the silky plush, a bite at his lips that had Even opening his mouth in surprise, then Isak was sucking his lower lip into his mouth, fingers tightening hard in the back of Even’s jacket.

The sound Isak made when Even backed him into the kitchen counter was a really fucking wonderful one, and so was the pop their mouths made as they broke apart, both gasping as he shoved two hands in Isak’s hair and held their foreheads together, eyes still closed.

“Fuck,” Even breathed, trying not to give into the tingles that kept running up and down his spine, curling his toes against the cold tile floors.

“Please,” Isak breathed back and wow, that was an even better sound, broken and achingly desperate, starved as their mouths crashed together again. That had to be new, because Even was suddenly hard as a rock, grinding his hips forward and licking the whimper right out of Isak’s begging mouth.

He gasped loud, for real, one hand clutching Even’s hair now as Even mouthed his way down Isak’s neck, hand tightening hard as he scraped his teeth over the first dark mark he came across.

“Ah, fuck.” Isak all but collapsed in his arms, knees buckling, a gorgeous moan rumbling from his wonderfully marked up throat as Even squeezed him tighter and trailed barely-brushing lips down to a bare collarbone--

Something clattered in the living room and Isak stiffened, a momentary reaction that had Even lifting his head in worry. Only by the time he straightened up Isak wasn’t frozen, he was rolling his eyes back in his head in frustration and groaning in the vague direction of where the sound had come from.

That’s right, all of the boys were still here. And could probably hear them pretty well too. Well fuck.

Even glanced over his shoulder, but the separator wall between the kitchen and living room was positioned just right that he couldn’t see anyone, which meant they couldn’t see the bitchy look on Isak’s face either.

Although when he turned back around, the petulant sigh was replaced with a single raised eyebrow, head cocked to the side and sparkle in dilated pupils.

“Bedroom?”

“Your friends are all still here!” Mouth dropped open in feigned shock, leaning back like he couldn’t believe Isak suggested it. Although really, he kinda couldn’t.

“So?” Isak shot back, shoulders lifting in an overdramatic shrug, both palms for the ceiling.
Even laughed, light and airy, somewhere on cloud nine, floating through the best version of heaven
ap he shook his head fondly.

“Wow. You might actually still have tequila in your brain.” Even kissed Isak’s forehead, dead center,
sincere and soft and sweet. He’d take Isak’s brain anyway he could get it.

Isak made a hmph sound, reaching up and pecking his lips but as much as he was protesting, that
was sweet and domestic too.

If there was anything they were good at, it was switching from hot to soft in about 2.3 seconds.
Which was a blessing and a curse, cause things went from soft to hot in the same snap of fingers.
Meaning when things were hot they were really hot, and when things were soft they were really soft.

Just like him, he supposed.

“I don’t wanna wait until tonight.” The murmur spread through him like electricity, echoed by the
slow hand running up his chest. His bottom lip caught between the edge of his teeth, dark eyes
instantly shooting to the movement, his mouth.

“What makes you think we’re having sex tonight? You have to wait until next year.” He said it
simple enough, a little axiomatic didn’t-you-know shrug at the end. Isak’s face completely dropped.

“...what?”

“Don’t you remember? You’re throwing a New Year’s Eve party tonight?” Isak rolled his eyes up to
the sky before closing them entirely, giving Even a moment to smile as fond - and mischievously - as
he wanted. “We can’t just bail on the biggest drinking party of the year.”

“Oy, nei, don’t say that word. Agh, hva faen--”

His head tipped back all the way and blonde fell all over the place, a dozen layers of gold shifting
over each other. It was mesmerizing, fingers sliding through smooth silk as his eyes softened over the
sharp curl of his mouth.

“What, drinking?” He teased again, making Isak snap his head back to glare as evil as he could.
Even smiled wide, tipping forward to eskimo kiss their noses together.

The groan Isak tipped up at him echoed behind them too.

Oh, right, yeah. He’d forgotten, again. That was pretty much confirmation the boys were totally
listening this whole time, but well. He had a feeling they heard a lot worse last night.

Not to mention that you could literally see the marks from Even’s mouth all over Isak’s shoulders.
Yeah, no way he’d lived that one down. Poor darling.

Poor all of them, if just the word drinking was causing that much commotion.

“I’m sure I can pick up some sparkling grape juice for all you kids who don’t wanna drink,” he called
over his shoulder, smiling at the various curse words shouted in return.

When he turned back, he didn’t even have the chance for one word, let alone another jab before
Isak’s mouth was back on his. Both arms wrapping around his neck as he pushed up into him,
tongue sliding right into his mouth.

Even cut off and leaned back in surprise, searching Isak’s face for a brief moment before Isak was
pulling him back down again, kissing him even more urgent this time.

Fuck, yeah, they were gonna end up in the bedroom if Isak didn’t cool his jets like, right now.

Even pulled back again and Isak pushed his nose to the side with his own, kissing up his jaw to ghost a warm breath over his ear (on his fucking tiptoes).

“Fuck you,” Isak whispered and Even gripped the back of his neck, pulling away to the side so he could see that pretty, dazed face again.

“Next year,” he teased. Isak shook his head no, tongue darting out to wet his lips, voice still down in a whisper.

“Soon as the boys leave.”

“Mmm.” A thumb and finger to cup Isak’s jaw, tip his face up again so Even could kiss him properly. Tongues sliding, heart thudding, deep enough to take his breath away properly.

Twin gasps again with one of Isak’s hands shoved up in his hair, eyes closed as he panted against Even’s cheek, every word sounding positively gone.

“C’mon, you know you want to.”

“I fucking do.” Even swallowed, trying to catch his breath as he rubbed a hand back down Isak’s bare spine. God, all of this skin. As soon as the boys left. Temples tipped together, a quick kiss to the shell of his ear as his free hand found one of Isak’s, pulling it down to tangle their fingers together.

“And I will.” Four loose, sticky pecks, eyes still open as he looked down at that beautiful angel, shining more than all the fucking stars in the sky. “Happily.”

Isak reached up to kiss him hard, again. And again. And again.

Happily.

“We’ve gotta get you in some clothes though, like now, before I lose all my resolve.” Even’s eyes were shining and Isak was barely breathing but he somehow managed to nod in agreement.

“Here, take my jacket.”

Isak lifted an eyebrow, because leather on bare skin meant all sorts of other things besides warmth, but he let Even put it around his shoulders without the slightest protest.

Especially since it was warm and worn, tingling his skin awake as leather rubbed over fading bruises. Even zipped up the front so he wasn’t walking around like a male stripper or something, but that didn't change the fact that he was in Even’s jacket, which smelled and felt a hell of a lot like Even did.

“It looks good on you.”

Isak’s gaze shot upwards, meeting the shiny blue one looking him over fondly.

“Are you sure you don't just like me in leather?” He cocked up an eyebrow suggestively and Even’s mouth popped right open.

“We can still hear you,” Magnus shouted from the living room, over a vague chorus of strangled noises.
“We know,” Isak shouted back, tipping his head at the stunned beautiful boy before him. “Well?”

“You cheeky--” Even started but he was kissing Isak again before he could get out the rest of it. Really really kissing him.

The moan Isak spilled into his mouth was admittedly a little loud, a little dirty, but the way their mouths were sliding together felt as desperate as that first night in the pool, on fire and drowning and reborn into the world with the lifting palms of Even’s hands on his jaw.

“Still here,” Magnus shouted again. Fucking bastard. Even broke away first this time, heart pounding beneath Isak’s fingertips, lips parted around rapid lungs breathing tantalizingly heavy.

Isak kissed him one more time - just one - and took his hand, wrapping Even’s arm around his waist and dragging them both for the living room.

“Yeah yeah. We're coming.”

“Actually we're not,” Even pointed out as they rounded the corner and everyone burst into a mixture of curses and groans. Isak shoved him indignantly, mouth open in offense because kissing in the kitchen was one thing but that--

“Oh no, not you too,” Jonas looked up to the sky, shaking his head in feigned horror. Hopefully.

Even’s laugh was brighter than the morning sun bursting through that window this morning (still trying to fry his coronas but at least someone had thrown the curtains closed), his hand snatching Isak’s as he shoved, tugging him stumbling right back in to place a sappy little kiss on his nose.

“We can't let this become a regular thing,” Mahdi was agreeing, all of them nodding and conspiracicizing together. “You guys are just way too…”

“Fucking adorable?” Isak filled in, wrapping Even’s arm around his upper chest as he turned to face the various faux mortified expressions.

“In love,” Magnus muttered in correction, not seeming to notice the very obvious instantaneous way Isak’s stomach dropped directly to his feet.

Even’s breathing stuttered, forgetting how to inhale for a second as the arm around Isak’s chest loosened, a step to the side as he couldn't help but check Isak’s expression, eyes flicking between the wide eyed boys on the living room furniture and Isak’s lax open mouth.

He’d forgotten entirely about that.

To be honest he wasn't sure he remembered all of last night, in fact he was pretty sure he didn't remember much of it, but with the stunned silence in the air for the second time he could remember pretty clearly the confession he'd made.

I am so so in love with--

“And on that note, this was the nastiest hangover remedy I've ever drunken.” Jonas popped up from the couch, setting his empty glass down on the table.

“It worked though,” Magnus pointed out, handing his glass to Jonas the second he came back to the couch. Jonas rolled his eyes but took it to the table for him anyways.

“It did work.” Mahdi nodded in agreement, significantly less sprawled and uncomfortable looking in
the single armchair.

They were all just lounging, fully dressed again, glasses empty and phones out, taking it easy but clearly not feeling anywhere near as rough as he had this morning. Why they didn't do that hangover remedy thing every time they went out drinking, he had no idea.

“Takk, Even.”

“No problem,” Even replied, a little less strangled than the sound he'd made a second ago. Isak still wasn't looking at him though, not when his face was bright fucking red.

Yeah, they needed to turn that conversation around like. Pronto.

“Actually, one problem,” Isak overrode, the slightest glance Even’s way - his eyebrows were up and his cheeks were pink but his eyes were shining so Isak sucked in a breath and turned back to the boys with an axiomatic shrug. “I can't have sex until you all leave, so.”

Three pairs of wide blinking eyes - four if you counted Even - so Isak took a step forward, breaking Even’s hold to shoo them with his hands, since they apparently weren't getting it.

“Ut ut ut ut!”

Everybody was laughing again, awkward tension snapped as the boys - finally - got off the couch, shaking heads as they herded for the door.

“At least we're not searching frantically for our shoes this time,” Jonas pointed out and everybody laughed some more.

“Isak, they're your friends,” Even scolded lightly and Isak glanced over his shoulder at the knit eyebrows, nodding exaggeratedly.

“Yep. They are, which is exactly why they're leaving right now.”

“We gotcha man.” Mahdi sent a finger gun his way, shrugging into the coat he'd discarded at the door.

“This is the second time we're getting kicked out so Isak can get laid. Guys, we need to up our game,” Jonas pointed out, hopping into his shoes.

“You're the worst,” Magnus told him and Isak’s eyebrows shot straight up.

“Me? I'm the worst? Excuse me, who is it here who asks all the most awkward invasive questions--”

“You answered them!” Magnus defended, clapped on the shoulder by Mahdi as Jonas slid a beanie over his hair.

“He's got a point.”

“Oh whatever.” Isak rolled his eyes, scoffing at the extremely true statement. “Takk for a great night, I hope you all feel as much like death as I do.”

“What are you talking about?? You're about to get laid!”

Well. That was also true. One corner of his mouth tipped up as he shrugged, glancing over at Even. He was practically glowing at Isak’s side, one hand light on his lower back, eyes all sparkly as they
glanced over at him, secretive little teasing smile. *You should try taking desperate to a whole new level.*

Their eyes were still locked as Even lifted his voice again, fingers drawing little infuriating circles into the slope of his spine.

“You guys are all good to get home though right? We won't actually kick you out if--”

“Everyone's fine,” Jonas interrupted, shaking his head at them again.

“It was him who had to be carried,” Mahdi input and Even’s eyebrows shot up high.

“Oh? Jeez, no wonder you feel like hell.”

“You're gonna fix that,” Isak told him, jamming a finger into his chest. Even laughed brightly and caught it, fingertips dragging across his palm to open the rest of his fingers up, weave their hands together properly, long eyelashes cast over cheeks as he looked down at Isak with the whole universe in his eyes.

“I'll certainly try.”

“You two are grossly cute.”

“Is that a thing?” Magnus glanced between Mahdi and the lovesick couple, hand on the doorknob as he tipped his head knowingly. “Because if it is they totally are.”

“Okay guys, we're leaving now.” Jonas starting shuffling them forward, herding everybody and their waving goodbyes out the door.

“Even keep your phone on, I'll text you later,” he called over his shoulder, a little loud to overarch the chatter the other two had already broken into, then the door was slamming shut into utter silence behind them.

Isak’s head whipped around, gaze instantly locked back on Even’s.

“What would Jonas text you about?”

“I have no idea,” Even said. “Maybe the party? They all seem to think I'm in charge around here apparently.”

“You are not!” Isak shot back indignantly.

“Oh yeah?” It wasn't teasing, could hardly be teasing when Even’s voice dropped low, shaking into his bones as he slowly backed Isak into the closest wall.

Isak wasn’t breathing.

He swallowed tightly, mouth open and eyes searching as he tipped his head up to still keep their gazes locked from this fucking close.

Even’s hands were hard, unmoving and strong against his chest and he would be actually melting if he could fucking move.

Or think. Or breathe.

Even’s mouth was open too, staring down at him and studying every twitch intently, searching for
the answers to every question he'd ever asked in Isak’s face, right now.

They were alone, finally alone, and god he'd never seen anyone so beautiful in his life.

And he was looking back at him. Like that.

In love, Magnus’s voice in his head supplied helpfully. Isak shoved it aside, shoved everything aside because none of that mattered, not right now. The only thing that mattered right now was the inches between their faces and their twin pounding hearts under begging palms on chests.

“Fuck, I missed you,” Even breathed. *I shouldn't have missed you so fucking much* he didn't say, but Isak heard it anyways.

He swallowed tightly, one hand sliding up to cup Even’s neck, blinking lethargically as he offered up his soul between begging parted lips.

“Then stop missing me now.”

Even pulled his face up, closing the space between their mouths into an electrifying kiss and well.

It was pretty obvious where it went from there.

Lørdag, 14:22
31.12.16

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He wasn't quite sure what to expect, but he was waiting for a typing bubble to pop up not a phone...
call, so when his phone suddenly started vibrating in his hand he startled enough to nearly drop it.

The kitchen was far enough away Isak wouldn't be able to hear much, put Even made a point to close the bedroom door before sliding his thumb to pick up.

“Halla?”

“Hi,” Jonas greeted, and it was a good thing he'd told Isak he needed ten, because the voice on the other end of the line already sounded rushed.

“I don't mean to be all weird and clandestine and what not but uh.” A pause and Even plopped down on the edge of Isak’s bed, pointedly not commenting as Jonas cleared his throat, sounding vaguely strained. “...you're really important to Isak, and I feel like I can, I guess. I dunno, actually talk to you.”

A huff, maybe nervous or just awkward, he wasn’t sure he could tell over the phone. Or if he’d know anyways, he really didn’t know him all that well yet.

“You can,” Even assured him, heart pounding. Honestly he was a tottering on the balance between nervous and awkward too, it may just be a simple phone call, but he did not want to fuck this up.

He’d hit it off great with Mahdi and Magnus - one had a great music taste and the other had pulled him aside a few weeks ago at a party to tell him very bluntly, Just so you know, my mom’s bipolar too. Not saying that means I know anything about what you’re going through, but if you ever need somebody to talk to, I gotchu, man.

Even had blinked in surprise and clapped him on the arm, thanking him sincerely for the offer, to which Magnus had leapt forward and hugged him, so.

They got along great, and not that he didn’t get along with Jonas too, they just. Hadn’t actually talked, the two of them. Truthfully Even was a little intimidated, a little unsure because Jonas had been Isak’s best friend for years, years and years and he didn’t want to ever come in the way of that, or god forbid make Jonas hate him.

Things had been chill between them so far, but this phone call was the first time he’d talked to Jonas one and one so yeah, his heart was pounding. And that was before Jonas’s voice came over the line again.

“It's just that. Last night, after everybody was trashed, Isak said some things and...do you know about his parents?”

“I know he doesn't talk to them anymore.” Or live with them, and I know his mom’s mentally ill but I don’t know with what, and I know his dad left and I’m guessing it has something to do with his mom’s head, but beyond that?

“Kinda. I mean, he went to a concert with them in early December,” Jonas said offhandedly, distracted like that wasn’t important while Even’s eyebrows shot all the way up on his forehead.

“Wait, really? When?” How in hell had he not heard about that?

“It was uh. After...after the um. Hotel thing,” he said awkwardly, line going silent as Even’s stomach twisted. The hotel thing, okay, yeah, when he had a manic episode and nearly ruined Isak’s life, right, the hotel thing.

“...but before the kosegruppa party. It was like, a Friday or Saturday night?”
The weekend between the hotel and the kosegruppa party, they’d been together all day Saturday, all night Saturday, and all day Sunday too. The two of them had left the room a collective number of four times, to eat or pee, and the rest of the time they’d laid in Isak’s bed in silence.

Even slept a lot of it, but he was pretty sure he’d’ve noticed if Isak left for a concert, which meant it had to have been Friday night.

Friday night, which was the night Even texted Isak the 21:21 letter. The night Isak had come running for him, out of breath and vaguely dressed up, his hair nice and his nose red from the cold as he stood in front of that empty bench at the school and looked at Even like he’d never resurfaced from turquoise pool water.

He’d been with his parents???

“Mm,” was the only thing he could manage, some distant part of his brain really glad he was already sitting down.

“Well, anyways. I mean I know his mom wasn't too happy or something because he took off in the middle of it--”

God fuck, he had personally, one-handedly fucked over his boyfriend’s relationship with his estranged parents and probably destroyed any potential future Isak had with his broken mom and abandoning dad, but y’know. Little things.

“--so everything is still kinda rocky but. Last night Isak mentioned something about his dad, who he's still pretty pissed at and. I was just wondering if he mentioned anything to you about it.”

Had he mentioned anything to Even.

It took him a few moments to realize that he wasn’t breathing, that he should probably do that some time soon, no point in actually dying on top of feeling like he was dying.

“No, he hasn’t,” Even finally inhaled, eyes falling shut. The darkness didn’t feel much better.

“No, he hasn’t,” Jonas didn’t sound that surprised. Still worried, but not surprised that Even didn’t know anything, which okay. This wasn’t about him, this was about Isak, he had to keep this about Isak. Couldn’t breathe, but he had to keep this about Isak.

“...cause he just seemed really upset.”

“Upset how?” Even managed, quiet and a hell of a lot more calm than he felt, throat bobbing as he swallowed tight.

“Upset he started crying, upset.”

Evens just sat there silently on Isak’s bed. This was a hell of a lot to take for one phone conversation.

“Oh.”

“He calmed down after a little bit, but I've never seen him cry over his parents before like that.” Well. Him either. He’d never seen Isak cry, actually. He’d come close the first time they’d had sex, close the first day of minute for minute, close the first time they went to meet his parents. But Even had never wiped a tear off his precious cheeks.

Apparently there was a lot that Even didn’t see, didn’t know.
Jonas just kept going.

“He’s always just been like. Numb, or pissed. When his dad first left his mom he didn’t leave his bed for like four days, then he went off on this bender and got wasted off his ass, but he’s never. Y’know. Gotten emotional like that? And I’m just worried.”

“Yeah,” he heard his voice replying, sounding a hell of a lot more stable than he felt. Keep going. Keep talking. “Yeah uh. Of course you are. He hasn’t said anything to me, but I’ll see if I can bring it up, maybe gage a reaction. I’ll let you know anything I find out.”

“Yeah, uh, thanks man. He might open up more to you, I don't really know.”

Clearly not, Even thought to himself. Not about this.

Jonas fell quiet.

So did Even.

If Isak wasn’t opening up to either of them, that meant he wasn’t opening up to anybody.

Actually. When had Isak...ever, opened up to him. They talked about parallel universes and how he ended up living with Eskild, Linn, and Noora and they talked about his mom in the locker room and Isak had mentioned a few things in the past weeks, places he used to like to go when he was a kid, a story or two about his first year at Nissen.

Even knew his music tastes, and how his lips tasted, but he had no idea what was going on in Isak’s head to make him cry about his dad when he was wasted on tequila.

Jonas made a quiet sound on the other end of the line and Even opened his eyes, looking down at his knees, the floor between them.

“Uhm. I'll do what I can.”

“Okay, cool.”

The line fell quiet again, the kind of quiet that said he should say goodbye, one of them should, but he was reeling and he had no idea how to tell Jonas that.

If fucking only he could ask Jonas what the fuck was happening, Jonas didn’t know. Jonas also didn’t know that this was Even’s fault, that Isak had gone and tried to fix things with his parents and Even had fucked it up by having the most inconveniently timed crash of all time.

“Uh...yeah,” Jonas echoed quietly, static to mix in with all the poisonous buzzing quiet. Even just wasn’t ready to face Isak like that, how was he supposed to go walk in and kiss him when he’d ruined his life and Jonas was turning to him for help? This was his fucking fault.

“Uh-h, is there...anything I can do for him? Y’know, about his parents?” He held his breath, waiting as the line went quiet again. Even wondered distantly if Jonas could hear his heart pounding out of his chest through their phones.

“I don't think so. I think he's fine with you.”

“Okay,” Even said numbly. Him.

Right. “Yeah. And uh, Jonas?”
“Yeah?”

“Thanks for calling. It means a lot that you went out of your way to let me know.” To trust me with this, he wanted to say, but Even didn’t trust himself with this so he wasn’t gonna fucking say that out loud.

“I mean...you mean a lot to him.”

That time when the line fell quiet, Even could palpably feel the thousand and one things Jonas wasn’t saying either.

He wondered how upset Isak would be if he ruined his mattress physically melting into it.

“And the rest of us don't think you're so bad either,” Jonas crackled over the distance between their phones and Even managed to huff an excuse for a laugh.

“I'm glad.” You’d take that back if you knew, he didn’t say, swallowing and squeezing his eyes shut instead. “And sorry if we kicked you guys out in a hurry, it'd just been awhile since we'd seen each other and--”

“Hey, no worries. Seriously, we’re all completely chill.” A pause and Even ran the tips of his fingers over the top of his knee, tried to focus on the sensation instead of his heartrate. The quiet. “You guys take it easy, okay?”

“We will.”

Chill. Breathe in, chill.

“I'll see you later then.”

“Yeah. Yeah, thanks again.”

Exhale, chill.

“Uh huh, yeah. Hadet.”

“Hadet.”

His thumb touched the little red circle and the phone line cut, numbers blinking once before his phone slid brightly back to his home screen.

The room echoed quietly around him, unnaturally silent.

Even sat there on Isak’s bed and stared at the wall.

What the fuck.

How fucking much was he missing? Isak ditched his parents? Was crying over his dad on a night they were supposed to be having fun?

Did Isak not tell him because his mom was. What was the word Isak used…fucking nuts?

Fucking nuts.

Even collapsed back onto the mattress, bouncing a little, the way Isak did when Even tossed him on here. Tear out his heart and sew him a new one.
He just lay there, staring up at the blank ceiling instead of the blank wall.

And he was still there when Isak edged into the room, peeking around the corner.

“Hey you--”

The one-sided affectionate grin faltered, Isak freezing in place as he took in the look on Even’s face, his mattress sprawl.

“Is everything okay?”

“Hm? Um. Yeah.” Even blinked and sat up, too quick, making his head spin. Enough he tipped a little, catching himself with a hand on the mattress.

When he looked back up the concern on Isak’s face made him physically inhale, soaking the furrowed eyebrows cocked head careful words into his bones.

“I heard you talking, were you on the phone?”

“No, I've started talking to myself when you're not around,” Even attempted to joke, if he didn't smile he might snap in half. Isaks’ eyebrow shot up, but he didn't laugh.

Fuck.

He picked at a loose string on the seam of his jeans, deflating an inch in a held back sigh. He didn’t want to lie to Isak, not after how fucking much he’d hurt him last time, but this was between him, his broken heart, and Jonas.

Him, Jonas, and the parents Isak had abandoned for him on his one shot of putting his family back together.

But he wasn’t looking at those beautiful green eyes and that made it a hell of a lot smoother to roll off his tongue.

“It was just my mom. Wishing us a happy new year, and wondering for the billionth time when we're coming over next.”

“Okay,” Isak said simply, the mattress compressing double as he plopped down next to him. “Then what made you all…”

A waving hand at the bed to encompass the staring-at-the-ceiling-in-despair he’d caught Even in.

“...when I came in?”

“Nothing just. Thinking.”

Isak was studying him, he could tell in his peripherals. Even risked a glance upwards, snagged in the snare of concern again, of Isak’s eyes on him, the side twist of his mouth. Fuck.

“Well. That was nice, he was going to pretend that’s not what they were talking about instead.

“Hey, just cause I'm not all science-y like you? We artist types can still be smart too, y’know,” Even
leaned over with a quirked eyebrow and flirty smile, bumping their shoulders together in hopes the proximity would be enough of a distraction.

Isak’s crooked smile tipped up, fond and cute and patient and entirely void of the light it usually had. That was the smile he gave when he was worried as fuck and pretending he wasn’t.

As long as you’re smiling, and wearing clothes, then life is chill.

When he’d looked up, that day at the party, to see Isak looking at him like that, with his mouth open, studying and calculating and trying not to act like he was devastated, always one step more to catch up, always one step off balance.

“I’m serious, Even. Take as little as you need to, okay?” Isak reached across the distance between them, hand landing over the one keeping Even from falling sideways, a few fingers sliding between his, puzzle pieces. “Just. Slow it down, yeah?”

Even nodded, glancing away before glancing up at that caring face again. “Yeah, it’s not--”

Isak just looked at him. He was right in a way he supposed, because Even was worrying about the future, and the past, neither of which were actually this minute, right now, so. He was breaking the rules of their game, their promise, technically.

It wasn’t about that, he wasn’t depressed just because he was lying here overwhelmed and near tears but still, Isak was patient and steady and here, so.

“Okay,” he said quietly. “Yeah, okay.”

The little smile on Isak’s face turned up, real and sweet and just enough brightness, matched with those patient dark eyes as he leaned forward, pressing down on Even’s hand for balance to tip and kiss him.

It was long enough to swoop his organs inside out with guilt, short enough that his heart pounded as they pulled apart, irrational terror of the infinite being numbered again.

They paused inches from each other. Isak unprying and soft, here for him as Even studied, back and forth and tried not to be devastated.

“Now, are you gonna come help me cook or what? I don't know any kind of fancy recipes that have ‘secret tablespoon of sour cream’ ingredients.” Isak made one of those precious over-exaggerated faces for the quote, full of life and personality and love and hope.

Everything in their world was hanging in the balance of unsaid tragedy and toxic guilt but when Isak lit up like that, there was nothing that could keep his heart from lifting, skin from clearing, mouth from turning up in the corners as the simplest, most sweet thing in the whole world tugged a smile out of him like the sun tugged a reflection from the moon.

A real smile, a real pounding heart as Isak’s eyes sparkled that much more and Even leaned over, pressed an overwhelmingly selfish kiss to that beautiful mouth, and damned himself to whatever grave he’d dug between them.

“Don’t worry. I’ve got plenty.”

~*~*~
The kosegruppa Christmas party had been warm, glowing, intimate. Just their friends, decorating ornaments and sipping wine. If that was one end of the spectrum, this was the other.

It wasn’t a full on rave like the first one they’d thrown here, more like a triple-alcohol dance party mixed with a *fuck 2016* celebration. The whole apartment was lit with leftover Christmas lights and nothing else, some rooms twinkling white and others flashing rainbow, a vague haze over everything from the ambient lighting and the groups of laughing high schoolers smoking by the cracked windows.

The furniture had all been shoved against the walls in favor of a beer pong table and a surprisingly entertaining game of Bop It™ Party Mode. There was an old, cleaned out kegger piled with scraps of paper with the worst parts of 2016 that they were gonna light on fire at some point.

The entire kitchen was lined with shot glasses, a squad piling in at once to cheers to the New Year, speakers blaring as all the empty spaces were filled with strangers dancing, making out against walls.

It was going to be actual hell to clean up, but Isak wasn’t thinking about that in the least, laughing with Sana by the coat racks as they bobbed their heads to the blaring trumpets of *This Girl* and pointed out the absolute shitty techniques of Noora and Mahdi vs Chris and Vilde’s beer pong game.

He was groaning about Eskild’s shouted “put them in the house shape,” recommendation when a hand suddenly grabbed his, fingers entwining and arm wrapping around his elbow.

Isak glanced over and up, expecting a pretty boy with glowing eyes and a kiss, only to be looking at a blank string lights, eyes raking down to finally land on top of Eva’s head.

“Eva!” He smiled, shooting Sana an apologetic smile over his shoulder but she was already waving him off, dimples and dark-lined eyes bright.

“Come take shots with me,” she shouted up at him, looking surprisingly sober for how she usually got at these things. Hell, he was pretty sure last time he actually spent time with her at a party she’d been trying to make out with him.

“Shots? I’m hosting, I can’t get *wasted*.”

“Oh c’mon, loosen up! It’s the last day of 2016! This only happens once. Besides, what’s one shot?”

“One,” he conceded, smiling as she broke off into a cheer, dragging him through the crowd with her unshakable grip.

She finally let go of his hand to put a shot glass in it, clinking it high and loud with hers.

“To new beginnings!”

“New beginnings,” he echoed, sucking in a breath and throwing it back.

Oh *fuck*, he should’ve asked what that was first.

The taste of the tequila was bad enough, dragging back instant unpleasant memories of hurling over a toilet - this fucking morning - that Isak squinched up his face in enough disgust to let Eva fill his
Being vaguely tipsy was better than dealing with the taste of tequila, which was how four shots later Eva tried pouring another and got most of it on his socks instead.

“Hva faen, you lightweight! Give me that bottle, no more white girl wasted for you,” Isak scolded playfully, snatching the vodka - he’d made her switch over, no tequila for him ever again, thank you - out of clingy hands as Eva threw back her head and laughed.

“I really missed you,” she confessed, giggly as she leaned her shoulder into his chest and tapped an uncoordinated hand over his heart.

He threw an arm around her shoulders, leading her away from the shot glasses and alcohol to park them both at the edge of the party again. If you thought he was a hassle drunk, you had to met Eva.

“I missed you too. So now that you’re all stumbly and nostalgic, tell me everything.”

“Everything?”

“I’ve missed a whole year, what’s your life like now? Are you and Chris officially like, together-together? What’s up with you and Vilde making out at half the parties we went to last semester?”

That was all Eva needed to shoot off at the mouth, hands waving around as she shouted up at him a lot of undecipherable things about life being too short not to make out with everyone fun, about unexpected crushes and past histories and all sorts of things that probably wouldn’t’ve been easy to follow if she was telling them in the right order, let alone with music blaring and alcohol in their systems.

Isak listened with a smile anyways, shoulder on the wall as he leaned and scanned the crowd over Eva’s shoulder and exaggerated waving gestures.

There were too many people, the lighting was shit, so odds are he wouldn’t be able to just search and find. He almost gave up, figured he’d walk around later, when the music cut for just a moment, the pause before a bass drop and that’s when he heard the laugh.

The same laugh that’d caught his attention that first day in the cafeteria, the laugh that he didn’t dare interrupt with a kiss even now, not when the sound was his fucking world. His gaze snapped instantly to the scattered partiers on the couch, rainbow reflecting off the carefully styled, gorgeously swept blonde over high cheekbones.

He was pretty sure his teasing about Even not dressing up for the last party had gone to heart, because he looked like a fucking god tonight. A real one, without the wig and beard.

Instead he was dressed in a black and white shirt with a collar, buttoned all the way up with the dark purple tie Isak had knotted himself. While Even gave him shit about not being able to tie a tie, which was fucking ridiculous, actually, because he looked incredible.

Besides, Isak was a little distracted while he was doing it, with the nickname thing (he was totally gonna call Even ‘Evi’ now, just because Even couldn’t hear for shit when he called him baby and had to make a whole affair of the thing) and the little fact that despite the high collar and buttons, the shirt was just low enough to show off a mark on his neck that was actually driving Isak crazy.

The hint of a bruise over the top of his collar that Isak really wanted to sink his teeth into, which was half the reason he wasn’t sitting in Even’s lap right now. Because he wouldn’t be able to just sit there and be chill about it, not when Even had put work into styling his hair just right, had folded his
sleeves up the way the male models did for J Crew or some shit and Isak was just.

Drooling, over here, from across the room.

Even didn’t glance back his way, too busy chatting with somebody Isak didn’t recognize. Laughing again, head tipped to the side. But his eyes weren’t really shining in the multi-colored light, didn’t crinkle up the way they usually did when he laughed, smiled.

Isak frowned slightly, watching a little more intently. He was clearly holding a conversation, but barely. He seemed distracted, constantly glancing away, fingers tapping away on his knee.

Whoever he was talking to leaned forward a bit, tried to catch his attention, connect, and Even didn’t even seem to notice.

Distant. Still laughing, still smiling.

He stood up abruptly from the couch, saying something to whoever he was chatting with, then he was pushing through the crowd, attention caught by Noora, waving a hand for him to come give an opinion on a shot for their game.

Even slid over, whispered something in her ear that made her laugh then he was off again, fingers still tapping. A pause by the window, bumping Jonas’s shoulder and Jonas turned to him, gesturing with a hand. Even tipped back his head in another laugh.

Isak’s heart dropped in his chest.

It wasn’t the same as last time, but Isak still couldn’t breathe.

He didn’t take his eyes off Even, he couldn’t, touching Eva’s arm as he stepped past her, room tipping the tiniest bit.

“Sorry, I’ve gotta go.”

What he wanted more than anything in the world was to shove through the party, snake an arm around Even’s waist and drag him far far away from everyone and everything, but. He had to be sure, he couldn’t fuck everything up by being paranoid.

Isak forced himself to tear his eyes away from Even’s hollow smile, searching the crowd for another blonde instead.

He finally found Magnus at the beer pong game, cheering on Vilde and getting generally way too into it, fist pumping and shouting as much as the ones playing.

Maybe it was the expression on Isak’s face, or the way he grabbed Magnus’s arm, but whatever it was the moment Magnus registered that Isak was pulling him aside he went with, no questions asked.

The only place even vaguely quiet was the corner of the room furthest from the beer pong table, where a few couples were making out and the music was loud enough to cover his words without being too loud for Magnus to hear him.

“What’s up?” Magnus was asking and Isak was definitely not totally freaking out and kinda forgetting how to breathe.

“You plotting some epic team to cream Vilde and Chris at beer pong or…” he trailed off, the smile
dropping as it suddenly sunk in that Isak’s eyes were that wide and panicked for a reason.

“Isak, what’s wrong?”

He really didn’t know how to answer that so he just sucked in a breath and blurted it out all at once.

“Does it seem like Even is having a manic episode to you?”

“What??” Pure surprise as Magnus quickly scanned the crowd, finding Even fairly quickly with the way he was standing, taking up the whole room with his laugh and restless eyes. Magnus watched silently, eyebrows knitting as he lifted his voice just enough for Isak to hear him over the bass.

“I was just talking to him earlier, what makes you think he is?”

“Or maybe just starting one, I don’t know. He’s just. He’s being distant and like, over-happy but it’s not reaching his eyes and he keeps hopping around to different places in the party and something’s wrong and I don’t know what’s happening or what I’m supposed to do--”

Okay, first of all, breathe.” Magnus’s hand landed heaving on Isak’s shoulder and he inhaled sharply, chest filling up as he tried to calm the fuck down.

“I know everybody’s different, and every brain works differently, but I pretty highly doubt that Even’s having a manic episode right now. I think you’re freaking out, but I don’t think he is.”

Isak ran a hand over his face, sucking in a breath again and forcing himself to let it out slowly through pursed lips. “Mhm. Okay, yeah, but--”

“Is that how he was acting last time?”

“Not exactly, but. Something’s wrong, and…”

Magnus rolled his eyes so hard Isak just stopped talking, blinking up at him dumbly.

“Every time something’s wrong doesn’t mean it has anything to do with him being bipolar, Isak.”

“I know that! No, really, I know that, but this just. This feels different, I don’t know.”

A turn back to the crowd, watching Even again for a few moments before Magnus turned and studied Isak instead.

“Just go talk to him then. Nobody knows Even better than Even does.”

_She can’t feel what I feel. Or think, for that matter._

Only you can feel what you feel, Isak had told him and yes, he knew that, he did, he just. It was going to happen sometime and he felt so fucking unprepared, even if it wasn’t this time there would be a time when he’d be right, and he had no fucking clue what he was supposed to do, how he was supposed to make sure Even stayed safe, if Even would freak out if he tried to talk to him about it, if Isak would even know before it was too late--

“Isak.”

“Yeah, okay,” he finally managed, swallowing tightly. He just felt so fucking far out of his depth. Between Wikipedia and the brief conversations he’d had with Magnus about it, he really had no idea what he was doing.
Magnus was still watching him concernedly so Isak just sucked it up and asked.

“Can you tell when your mom is having an episode?”

The reply wasn’t instant, a pause as he carefully figured out how to respond and Isak’s skin crawled with every flickering white light biting into it.

“Yeah, but I’ve lived with her my entire life. You guys have been dating for a couple weeks, give yourself some credit.”

“It’s been a month now,” Isak corrected weakly and Magnus clapped a hand on a shoulder.

“Okay, a month. Cut yourself a break, and cut him a break too. And just talk to him. And maybe don’t freak out and accuse him of having a manic episode.”

“I can do that,” Isak said. He could. Jesus fuck, he had no fucking clue what he’d do without Magnus Fossbakken. “Magnus, thank you.”

“No problem,” he waved off but this wasn’t something you could just brush aside, he had no idea how much of an impact he had literally, one-handedly had in saving their relationship. Isak grabbed his arm, holding his gaze and dropping his voice dead serious.

“No, seriously, thank you.”

Magnus smiled, taking his arm back to shove Isak lightly in the direction of the crowd.

“Just go get your man. You not stealing all the hot chicks anymore is thank you enough.”

Hardly, but Isak shot him one more grateful look and made his way across the room anyways.

The pounding in his chest might make him combust before he made it halfway there, but somehow his legs didn’t give out and the next thing he knew he was finally wrapping an arm around a familiar tapered waist.

Even’s eyebrows went up as an arm went around Isak’s shoulders, looking down at him with all of this fond mixed in with a little surprise.

“Hey, babe. Can we talk a minute?” His heart was pounding enough Even could probably feel it through the layers between them, eyebrows knitting as the words sunk in under the music.

“Yeah, of course.”

Isak took his hand and forced himself to breathe in, out, the entire way to his bedroom. Usually there’d be people hooking up in there, it was a party after all, but he’d locked it beforehand. It was still kinda sacred territory. Just theirs, not for anybody to just crash in and have a useless drunken fling.

He had to let go of Even’s hand to fish the key out of his pocket, let them both in. Even followed him silently, didn’t say a word as Isak locked it again behind them.

Even was already sitting cross-legged in the middle of the bed when Isak turned back around, swallowing and trying not to look as nervous as he felt. He shouldn’t be nervous, this was Even, his Even, beautiful and patient as he lifted an eyebrow, looking unfairly soft despite the heart-thudding sex-god outfit.

“What’s up?”
He was acting positively perfectly normal now and Isak sank down on the mattress beside him, feeling like an idiot. But he had been acting strangely earlier, so he had a right to be worried. He did.

Isak sucked in a breath, eyes searching back and forth between the dark, waiting ones as he opened his mouth and tried not to damn them both with it.

“Are you….is something wrong?”

“Huh? With me?” That was genuine surprise, a touch of a smile as he tipped his head, reached over for Isak’s hand again. “I’m fine.”

Isak just looked at him a moment, wetting his lips as his eyes cut away again. “You’ve been acting, I dunno…off.”

Off was probably the wrong word to use.

“In what way?” Even asked him quietly and Isak shrugged a shoulder, staring down at his blue duvet instead of the icy blue eyes.

“It’s just. Like I don’t know, I feel like ever since that phone call earlier today all your smiles have been forced, and everything just feels. Fake. You’ve been hopping around the party and not really engaging with anyone and it’s just. Not like you.”

He risked a glance upwards, just in time to see the cold melt for gentle sympathy. Now he couldn’t look away, Even holding his eyes as he reached over, palm sliding into place on the side of Isak’s neck.

“Hey. Hey, I promise you. Everything’s fine.”

“Are you sure?” Search search and Even gave him a little shake, that pretty smile growing again. Fuck.

“Yes, I’m sure.”

The smile was so sincere and simple, thumb coasting fondly over the line of his jaw. This wasn’t the disconnect of the hotel room. This wasn’t the racing, the slip of fatalism, the urgency. This wasn’t Even manic, this wasn’t even the smooth unbreakable cheeriness that had lead there.

Then why the fuck did Isak still feel like shit?

“You shouldn’t worry so much,” Even told him, still gentle, patient with him as Isak’s lips parted and he tried to look a little deeper for all the ten thousand answers he wasn’t getting.

He couldn’t not worry when Even didn’t tell him shit.

“I’m dating you, of course I’m worried.” It was supposed to be a joke, to lighten everything back up but there was a flash behind Even’s eyes and Isak swallowed tightly. He wasn’t gonna take it back. He had a right to be worried.

So what if Even was rolling his eyes at him. He wasn’t gonna fucking apologize for caring.

He was gonna kiss him back though, Even’s eyeroll and fond tipped smile closing the space between them to slip their mouths together.

It was sweet, the way Even was kissing him but Isak hadn’t spent the past ten minutes going out of his mind to come in here with that beautiful boy, find out he was wrong and then be sweet.
They’d spent most of the night on opposite ends of the room and now Even was kissing him, here in his bedroom in that fucking gorgeous outfit with his fucking gorgeous hair and face and everything else and Isak was still off canter, unbalanced enough to be fucking needy as hell.

The desperation he pressed back into Even’s mouth caught him off guard, but not half as much as the leg he swung over Even’s to slide boldly into his lap.

“Well, halla,” Even broke off, eyebrows up in surprise as his gaze flickered over Isak’s expression. Isak pulled them back together, lips catching to dive back in again.

“Halla,” Isak mumbled back into his mouth, sliding two hands through the carefully coiffed hair, caring absolutely zero if he completely fucked it up.

Actually with as hot as Even looked, dragging him into disheveled oblivion sounded that much more enticing. And a hell of a lot better thing to think about than running around outside in the freezing cold with tears staining his cheeks.

Even pressed up against him, holding Isak’s waist secure with respectful hands. Fuck respectful. Isak twisted the kiss, pulling it filthy as he ground down against the building heat, fingers sinking hard into his spine.

He kissed and nipped his way across Even’s jaw as he broke off again, breathing heavy with his head tipped to the side, Isak’s spread hands skidding tracks down the silky back of the nice black and white shirt.

“You sure you wanna go down that road?” Even panted and Isak kissed his mouth one more time before he fit two hands in between them and pushed Even’s chest to shove him down hard on the mattress.

“What road?” He asked innocently, sliding his hands up to quickly undo the tie he’d struggled so damn much with earlier, pulling it free in victory so he could start unbuttoning, thumbs sliding over every bit of new, warm skin revealed.

He knew what Even was talking about, but Isak’s heart was still jumping from how helpless he’d felt earlier when he’d thought…

Now he just really needed Even close. Close as he could be.

“This one,” Even said, hands curving over Isak’s hips to sink into flesh, digging in the heels of his hands to knead his ass, one eyebrow cocked up high.

Well there went the rest of his brain functions. Isak’s mouth was open and he couldn’t really think, rolling into Even’s touch as his eyes closed, head falling to the side and spine arching into the next rough squeeze.

“We’ve only got an hour until midnight,” Even warned, reminded, voice scraping over gravel already and Isak exhaled shakily, raising an eyebrow back.

“That’s plenty of time.” He didn’t even finish speaking before he was shrugging off his opened button up, grabbing the neck of his tshirt to tug it straight off over his head, tossing it for the closest wall.

The moment his curls popped free Even sat back up, two arms around Isak’s waist, bare chests colliding then he was flipping them, sheets chilled as his fading-bruises spine hit the mattress, mouth warm as it crashed into Even’s again.
A hand on his jaw, turning his face sideways as Isak gasped, wanton and already shivering with the sloppy kisses Even was circling round the base of his neck.

“It’s been what, ten hours?” Teeth scraped over his throat and Isak threw his head back, making Even’s hand shove harder, lashes fluttering, fingers digging into muscle shifting across shoulderblades.

“...little too long to still be prepped,” Even’s lips danced over his skin, fingers catching skin as they dug in against his side, slid down his left hip, circling beneath a thigh to lift him closer. The sound Isak made was somewhere between heaven and dying, then Even’s tongue was shoving in his open mouth and that whole making sounds thing was out of the picture.

Unless you counted the strained, choking gasp as their mouths broke apart again, eyes fluttering back open to stare positively taken at the smug, lip-biting bastard hovering over him.

“Do you want my hands or my mouth?” Even’s eyebrows shot up and back down, that stupid cheeky thing that made Isak weak at the knees, heart entirely burst from his chest to pound on the tip of his tongue.

“You,” he gasped, spine arching as Even’s grip on his thigh tightened double.

He barely had the brainpower to kiss him back as Even dipped down for his mouth again. Bottom lip tugged, nipping once as Isak’s throat betrayed him in a stuttered moan. A smile pressed against his jaw, hands sliding into ruffled hair then he was disappearing down Isak’s body.

The rest of the clothes discarded, knees shoved into his chest as he keened and tossed his head, curls splayed on checkered blue as he completely fucked over his hair and Even ruined his life with his tongue.

And his fingers.

And his entire fucking body as he rocked in and out of Isak’s, foreheads pressed together tight as their hips. The rise, the hit, the fall the crash as he threw back his head and shouted Even’s name, some distant part of his brain wondering if the music was loud enough in the other room to cover the sound.

Then Even was kissing him, kissing and smiling until Isak was floating and didn’t think about much anything at all for as long as the world let him.

Honestly, they made it back to the party twelve minutes before the clock hit midnight.

Everyone was crowded round in the living room, windows open wide and television on as people danced absently, waiting for the firework show to go off.

The plan was to sneak back into the room as surreptitiously as possible, pretend they both hadn’t disappeared for an hour, but the moment they slid out of the kitchen, half the gazes in the room cut to the movement and a cheer went up, started by their piece of shit friends.

Isak gave everyone a bitchy, unimpressed look and Sana leaned over, all triumph and sass as she quite flatly informed them,

“You smell like sex.”
He rolled his eyes back in his head, easily matching the sass right back.

“You don’t smoke and yet, demand some of my drugs, you don’t sleep around and yet, you come over here and accuse me of smelling like sex, really now, Sana--”

“You do,” Noora confirmed, crossing her arms over her chest as Sana gave him a bitchy, cheeky dimpled smile.

“See? I may not do it, but I still know my shit.” She crossed her arms over her chest too, the two of them looking like some kind of movie duo, one head to toe in all black and the other in all white, perfectly matching expressions as they judged the fuck out of him in the most loving, friend way possible. “In fact, I also happen to know it’s extremely poor etiquette to leave your own party to fuck your boyfriend in some back room.”

“Oooo,” Noora put one hand up over her mouth, other in a jazz hand over the burn.

“And I didn’t even have to have sex to know that!” Sana tipped her head in her cutest murder burn stare while Noora cracked up behind her hand, falling half sideways to bump her shoulder into the triumphant Sana’s.

Poor etiquette his ass, it wasn’t like anything significant could’ve possibly happened in the forty five minutes they were gone, jesus.

“I’m not sorry,” Isak informed them, tipping his chin up. They both rolled their eyes at him, but everyone was smiling by the time Even slid back up behind him, two arms circling around his stomach and a warm kiss nuzzling into his neck.

“Speak of the devil,” Sana said and Even raised an eyebrow at her, tongue sticking in his cheek.

“You were talking about me? Sana, I’m honored.”

The eye roll he got was even more exaggerated than the one she’d given Isak. He giggled, leaning back against the shirt he’d buttoned back up himself, although he’d given up on tying that damn tie again. How was he supposed to focus now that there was a bruise on Even’s collarbone too? In fact, that was a beautiful fucking bruise, and Isak had therefore decided not to cover it up, leaving the top two buttons of Even’s shirt open, cold and stares be damned.

“Your boyfriend was talking about you, it’s not like he knows how to talk about anything else,” Noora sassed and Isak squinted at her from where he was leaning his temple on that lovely bruise.

“What do you mean I don’t know how to talk about anything else, I’m the single most interesting conversationalist living in this whole house--”

“Nice try,” Linn said dryly, passing by them conveniently at the exact right time to input over the top of Isak’s mild protests. “I talk about more subjects than you do and I sleep for 16 hours every day.”

“Huh?!”

Even was laughing behind him, rumbling chest shaking them both as Isak opened his mouth in offense and looked up over his shoulder.

“No fucking fair, you can’t agree with them, you’re dating me, you have to agree with me.”

The happy kiss Even placed on his mouth was full of laughter and sunshine and all the stuff that had singlehandedly saved the year of 2016.
“I suppose I could be convinced,” those shining eyes and pretty mouth teased, their mouths pressing together again. A hand stroked through the hair he’d tried to make look at least somewhat presentable again but let’s face it, they probably both looked disheveled and wrecked to hell.

But fuck, he could not think of a better way to bring in the New Year.

Leaning back against a beautiful boy who smiled like an angel and drew Isak into the light with his beautiful blue halo, he couldn’t help but wonder why the hell he got to be so lucky.

Standing here warm and sated as Even ran a hand through his hair, back and forth, sliding between curls, the both of them quiet. Happy.

Surrounded by friends, by people who loved them, by people who cared about the right things and didn’t give a fuck about the rest.

Jonas was here, and Mahdi and Magnus, all of them laughing and happy and chatting. The girls were all here, new friendships and old ones rekindled, Sana and Eva elbowing each other about something with Noora chatted with Vilde and Chris, Eskild and Linn listening in.

There was a text on his phone from his parents, one he’d reply to once the party was over, but for now, there wasn’t a single fucking thing missing.

A quiet kiss pressed to his cheek, then another and another, rapid little kisses and Isak smiled with his whole body, scrunching up from how much it tickled, how many tingles Even was sending down his spine.

“H-hey,” he managed, squeezing the hands resting over his stomach, looking up over his shoulder at the dozen rainbow twinkling lights, the whole sparkling universe reflecting in silver blue eyes.

They rocked as they kissed, mushy and warm from how close they’d been in each other’s embraces just minutes ago, how fucking beautiful everything was right now.

“I thought we were here to watch the fireworks go off, not you two go off on each other,” Eva shoved his shoulder, their lips breaking apart as Isak made a surprised sound, just loud enough to make half the room turn their way, a few amused laughs.

Eskild reached over and very dramatically flicked her arm.

“Let them be beautiful and gay, we’re bringing in 2017 in the best way.”

Isak rolled his eyes. Eskild shoved him too, to which Isak threw up a hand because what the fuck, could people stop shoving them, he was too cute he didn’t deserve this.

“Although not the very best, or else I’d have someone to kiss,” Eskild went on to pout, head flicking to the side all dramatic and faux upset, foot tapping followed by a heavy sigh.

“Sorry, I’m taken,” Even piped up over his shoulder, a smile for Eskild’s face and a shocked looked on Isak’s.

“Damn right you are.” Isak tipped his head up over his shoulder again, hand gripping the back of Even’s neck as he twisted up, arching a little to kiss him hard and proper.

“Oy, you’re supposed to kiss when it hits midnight!” Magnus protested, throwing something that clattered uselessly to the ground at their feet. It served its purpose though, both of them turning to the couch with skeptical looks on their faces.
“He's right,” Jonas pointed out, one arm slung around the back of the couch where some girl was perched. “No kissing in the last ten minutes before midnight.”

“What?” Even’s pure shock was damn precious, the same disbelief when Isak had teased he got paid 500 kroner by his mom every week for dating him.

Jonas threw up a hand, looking not even a little bit apologetic. “It's tradition.”

“Do you follow that tradition?” He turned to ask Isak, all dramatic and cute. As much as he'd love to keep kissing Even right now, he wasn’t gonna lie.

“I mean. I used to.”

“Ughhh.” A lean backwards, eyes up at the sky as he bounced on his toes and collected himself, came back down from the high weather up there with a determined look on his face. “Okay. Not kissing you til next year.”

“Good luck with that,” Isak told him, gaze flicking down to his mouth.

“Oh yeah? You think I can't make it?” Even pressed a hand in the small of his back, dragging Isak a touch closer with a cocky little smile on his face.

“Nei,” he teased back, reaching up on his tiptoes at the same time their entire half of the room interrupted with a collective, flat, “No?”

They both broke off into a round of giggling, faces close enough he had to physically restrain himself, biting his lip as he stared skywards bursting with fond.

Even rolled his head back and to the side, making a you're killing me face at him that Isak lifted his shoulder at.

“Seven more minutes,” Mahdi supplied. “That's not too hard, is it?”

Not too hard. Speaking of which,

If they had seven minutes they weren’t allowed to kiss, he might as well make it hell for them both, right? Isak pressed up on his tiptoes, a hand on Even’s chest as he dropped a quiet whisper centimeters from his ear,

“I bet I can make you hard without our lips ever touching.”

His bottom lip just barely brushed Even’s earlobe as he whispered touching, pulling back before it could possibly be considered a kiss.

“Fuck,” Even cursed and Isak let his mouth curve up in a one sided grin.

“See, halfway there.”

“You little--”

It was a low fucking move, below the belt in the best kinda way but if Isak was good at anything, it was being a bitch.

He put his finger on Even’s mouth, smushing his lips right down the center, the way you shut
somebody up if you were in a goddamn porno or something.

“Shhh. Six more minutes,” he warned, low and dark as his eyes flashed, smudging that plush pretty mouth as the tip of his finger curled.

Even sucked it into his mouth before Isak could think to pull back, lips closing around the base, bedroom eyes locked and Isak’s mouth popped open again, pants instantly irrationally tight as his genius planned backfired so hard he was harder than he’d been climbing into Even’s lap earlier.

“Boys!”

The pillow hit Isak square on the arm, drawing his hand back fast enough Even’s lips made a popping sound. Two sets of wide eyes turned to the couch, where Linn was holding up a second pillow, fully prepared to throw it.

“Hva faen, **PG**, you fuckers,” she scolded, the turned down music filling in the silence from the rest of the room.

“Are they always this bad?” Christoffer asked, turning to everyone else and there went the silence as everyone instantly responded with various versions and intensities of **yes**, mixed in with a few **I had no idea’s**.

Neither did Isak, actually.

He turned promptly to Even, eyebrow up and cheeks pink.

“We have a reputation.” Two arms around his waist again and Isak let it happen, didn’t bother fighting it, it wasn’t like everyone here hadn’t seen and done worse in literally any other party of the year. At least they weren’t actually having sex tucked away in a dark like a solid quarter of the people in here had, they were just The Couple and therefore people noticed. “But I really don’t think we’re always this bad.”

“I really want to kiss you,” Even replied.

Isak raised one eyebrow. “Tradition.”

“Fuck tradition.”

“Nei, it’s the New Year. The only thing you’ll be fucking is—”

“ISAK.”

“Okay okay! Jeez.” He shifted, making a face and settling into Even’s side, sliding a comfortable hand in the back pocket of his pants. “Touchy touchy.”

“No, that's you two,” Chris pointed out. At least she wasn’t making eyes at him while licking a spoon anymore.

Isak lifted a shoulder. Still wasn’t sorry.

Maybe it was more than that they were The Couple, maybe it was the fact that they were so fucking cute, not just fucking. Sure, girls made out at parties and people thought it was hot, but here was the two of them, the most sought after boys in Nissen and they were kissing each other instead, and smiling while they did it.

He got it. He didn’t necessarily like it, but he got it. As hot as they both were, he’d probably want to
watch them too.

He wouldn’t, because he wasn’t a dick like most of the people here, but. It wasn’t often kids their age were this dedicated and into each other, that was more of a spectacle than some couple hooking up in a corner ever could be.

“How long?” He asked Mahdi, who glanced down to check his watch.

“Three minutes.”

Isak sighed, absently running his thumb back and forth over the top of Even’s ass, tracing the seam of his pocket.

Even was watching him, quiet and unmoving, like nothing else in the world existed. Isak rolled his lips in, meeting the gaze and doing Even’s little eyebrow thing back at him.

A twitch of a smile and Even was leaning over, whispering close enough to his ear for it to be dangerous again.

“How much have you had to drink?”

Isak lifted his head, squinting an eye as he calculated backwards and tried to count.

“A bit.”

There went the eyebrows again, although they paused halfway through, just up and open as he jostled Isak a little closer to his ribs with the hand on his hip.

“You’re being pretty bold for a boy who was scared to kiss me in public,” Even teased, smiling affectionately down at him. Yeah, the alcohol might be helping that a little, but being honest, probably not that much.

Isak reached up, pulling Even down to him so he didn’t have to go up on his tiptoes again, and rubbed their noses together affectionately.

“This is hardly public. Besides, when your boyfriend is that hot…”

Foreheads pressed together, a hand up through blonde again, lips centimeters apart as Even closed his eyes, tipping forward, hovering close.

“…just can’t help it.”

“Fuck.” Even’s eyelashes fluttered, lips parting as his hand slid all the way up through Isak’s hair, gripping him tight.

“Waaait,” Isak murmured, letting his fingers play through the short hairs sloping down to meet the smooth skin of Even’s neck.

“What time is it,” he whispered, looking straight into Isak's eyes.


They were staring at each other completely breathless, fingers tightening as the tension built like early sideways glances over cardamom toast.

Isak moved his head, shifting the angle. Eyes slipping closed, tongue darting out to wet his lips,
dancing fluttering eyelashes over Even’s cheekbones as light eyes swallowed up dark and couldn’t tear away from his mouth.

“This is worse than if we’d let them makeout the entire time,” somebody complained.

Isak completely disagreed.

The countdown started behind them.

“Sixty! Fifty-nine--”

Inhaling warmth, exhaling closer as their cheekbones brushed, mouths riding parallel tracks that were only sparking darker with more heat. Isak rubbed his face on the side of Even’s, both hands cupping his jaw.

Even’s fingers sunk into the crown of his head, a tight swallow Isak could feel from the proximity, how hard he was trying to get a grip.

“Fuck, Isak.”

“Welcome to the new year,” he whispered cheekily back and Even gripped the back of his neck, pulling away to let their eyes lock again. Isak’s were half lidded, staring up at him through the unblinking, toe-curling awe he’d never grow out of and the numbers were still counting.

“Thirty eight, thirty seven--”

“This is gonna be the longest thirty seconds of my life,” Even said. Isak smiled, soft and pliant, lip caught in the edge of his teeth as he ran both hands over the sides of Even’s neck.

“You two are ridiculous.”

Isak turned enough to see who said it, catching the shake of Magnus’s head from across the room, the eyerolls and fond smiles and quickly turning heads between here and there.

But between Mahdi leaning against the wall close and Jonas’s pursed mouth he couldn’t help but roll his lips in, cocking an eyebrow at his friends.

“You’re all just jealous you don’t have new years kisses.” Lifted his voice over the music to say it, and that’s when he registered that they were literally all sitting with girls.

“...as hot as mine,” he amended and Vilde’s mouth popped open, so did both of the randos.

An eee sound as he sucked in a breath between his teeth and turned back to Even.

“I fucked up.”

Even was laughing, bright and shiny and the countdown was still going.

“Eleven, ten--”

The moment it hit single digits it doubled in intensity and Isak looked back at Even, smiling and happy now, thumb running affectionately up a cheekbone.

“Eight, seven--”

Seven seconds, that’s how long he had to either pull the tension so tight one of them snapped enough
to shove the other into a wall or something when it finally broke.

Or he could spend those seven seconds seeing if he could get a laugh out of Even Bech Næshiem and go into 2017 doing his favorite thing: listening to the best sound in the whole wide world.

““You make everything go up in smoke,” he started, head tipping to the side, nose crinkling affectionately.

“Five, four!”

“...there’s no one else I’d rather do this with,” Isak sang under his breath, smiling so wide he could feel it in his shoulders and toes as Even burst into the brightest laugh Isak had heard all day.

What a fucking hashtag.

“Three, two--”

He was still laughing when Isak grabbed the back of his neck and kissed him, hard.

“ONE!” A cheer went up, fireworks exploding on the TV, outside in the streets as the room lit up in a flash of brilliant, heart-stopping color, ridden by a wave of hopeful, celebratory screams about 2017.

2017.

And Isak just kissed the best thing that’s happened to him all year.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s to 2017, if Even is the main character of season 4 or at least season 5 of Skam I'm going to scream

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also, I chose This Girl as a party song because last time I was in Europe that song was literally on repeat

xx
It was Sunday morning, the first morning of the year and they could do absolutely anything in the world they wanted to, the apartment to themselves, the world at their feet.

So of course, they were laying in Isak’s bed; tangled up and doing absolutely nothing as the sunlight filtered in quietly through the curtains over the windows.

Everything was still, beautiful and peaceful. One leg tucked between Even’s, hand on his ribs and his head on the inside of Even’s shoulder, long fingers resting sprawled in his blonde curls.

They’d been awake for a little while, had kissed a few times, whispered a happy new year to each other, but other than that neither of them had spoken a word.

He could feel Even’s heartbeat underneath his fingertips, following every beat like he could engrave the pattern into his soul if he listened hard enough.

Isak flicked his gaze up to the peaceful one looking over at the windows, waiting for the blue to catch on and glance back down his way.
As soon as Even did, a little smile curled on Isak’s face, involuntary and warm as he was.

“What’s your thoughts?”

The hand in his hair slid down the back of his head, fingers tracing a tight curl behind his ear as Even’s eyebrows lifted.

“Do you actually have a penny?”

“Nei?” Isak smiled wider, shaking his head at the look on Even’s face. “What would I need American money for?”

“I don’t know, you were the one who offered a penny! I can’t give my thoughts away for free.” He gave Isak a very skeptical look, all exaggerated and cute enough that Isak was giggling into Even’s worn tshirt.

“I can give you a crown?”

“Only if it fits my head right, and it’s got rubies in it. I can’t take any other kind of crown.”

That time the laugh was bright enough Even burst into a smile too, reaching over to place a sweet, happy kiss on Isak’s forehead.

“Did I tell you Jonas called me ‘Queen Isak’ the other day?”

“No,” a little laugh that had his eyes crinkling all shiny. “But that’s fantastic. I’m guessing you retaliated?”

“I looked at his poker hand, but then he made me take it and stole mine, so. It didn’t really work.”

“Mmm.” Even’s fingers were skirting over the back of his neck as Isak settled back in against his shoulder, smile softening as he adjusted a little closer, making Even shift to rearrange them comfortable again.

A few quiet minutes passed by, thumb tracing the outline of a curl back and forth, over and over as Isak listened into Even’s heartbeat again.

“You’re not gonna make me get up and get the crown, are you?”

“Hm? No, no. I don’t know, I wasn’t really thinking about much. Just how nice this is, y’know?”

“Doing nothing?”

“Being with you,” Even corrected quietly, eyes on the ceiling as Isak glanced up at him again. “Which is everything.”

“You’re sappy in the mornings.”

“You’re soft.”

“So’s your mouth,” he shot back, hardly a comeback but Even was smiling as Isak lifted his head, careful of their tangled legs as he scooted up to press a lax kiss to warm lips.

Hand on the back of his head, mouths overlapping and tugging apart slow to press back together again, sticky and slow.
“Mmm,” Isak’s throat rumbled without his permission, sated and wildly domestic, lips parted as he lifted his head, mouths breaking apart to peck one more time, both their eyes open and watching each other half-lidded.

The first time they’d done this had arguably been the best day of his life, but somehow this was just as nice. In just t-shirts and boxers this time, the press of skin and Even’s bare biceps to lay on instead of all that soft hoodie material.

Y’know, he’d never really expected to have a thing for biceps, or other shit like that, but from the minute Even made that stupid fist pump in the pool after kissing him, Isak was a besotted man.

He fell back down happily, turning his head to press a kiss to the muscle he didn’t really notice until it was straining, holding all his weight to keep him pressed hard up against a wall, wrapped around his shoulders, trembling fingers clutching tight to keep from losing his balance as he rocked up and down--

Fuck.

He’d been chill like three goddamn seconds ago.

“Crown for your thoughts?” A warm, reverberating voice asked back and Isak wet his lips, prying his eyes back open to scan the sparkling stars looking down at him.

Well, he hadn’t made himself completely hard yet, so he could in theory lie, but.

“You,” he replied simply and Even rolled his eyes.

“Obviously.”

“Hey! You’re not all I think about.” Isak made a face up at him and Even’s eyebrows shot up, down in that stupid oh yeah face that, well, yeah, okay, maybe it was a little true, but still. Rude.

“Fine. I was thinking about your biceps, actually.”

“My...what? Really?”

“Yes, I know, right,” he agreed, scoffing a little as his eyes cut away. That lasted about two milliseconds before Even was shoving his shoulder.

“Not that that’s a bad thing, I just didn’t think I had any. At least, not worth thinking about.”

Isak sucked in a breath, picking up his head again, fully aware how intensely Even was watching him right now. But Even hadn’t made a big deal out of it, so he wasn’t going to either.

Instead Isak prodded the arm he’d been laying on, making Even lift his forearm and make a fist to flex.

“See?”

“I mean, I guess, yeah. I don’t work out as much as I should so I never really thought about it?”

“Then how the fuck do you have arm muscles?”

“Probably because I draw upside down.”

“You...what? Huh?” He squinted down at Even’s little smile that was widening as Isak twisted up
his face in disbelief.

“Yeah! Have you never drawn on a clipboard while laying on your back before? You have to hold it up in the air for like hours, it’s exhausting.”

“Then...why wouldn’t you draw on your stomach??”

“Because sometimes you’re drawing something in the sky, or above you, it’d be hell to crane your neck for that long.”

“You…”

Isak stuttered a bit, realized he didn’t have the words to describe how fucking ridiculous it sounded that his boyfriend thought he had arm muscles from fucking drawing, and promptly gave up trying.

He shook his head, lips pursing and fond as Even laughed, giggly bubbly, eyes crinkling below him.

“We should workout sometime together though, that’d be fun.”

“Mmm. So long as we don’t run,” Even told him and Isak furrowed his eyebrows high on his forehead.

“The fuck is wrong with running?”

“It’s not fun? It hurts your knees?”

“You’re running wrong, then!”

“I probably do every workout wrong. The most of the physical activity I get is biking—”

“You do bike weird,” Isak agreed absently and Even shoved his shoulder.

“What? No, I don’t. Anyways, so I bike, and I have sex with you, and that’s about it.”

Isak lifted an eyebrow.

“You’re definitely not doing that workout wrong.”

That time when Even laughed Isak did too, smiling so wide he couldn’t help it.

They were kissing again when Isak’s phone chimed. Loudly.

They both groaned, almost covering up the next chime on the other side of the bed. Even’s phone.

Isak lifted his head, eyebrows furrowed as he gaged the look on Even’s face and debated asking the question about how he felt about serendipity and coincidences and destiny and whatnot, but that was gonna be a longass conversation and they were having a nice time making out.

“The world is calling us,” Even told him and Isak glared at the world.

“Nei. It was a coincidence, we’re going to ignore that.”

Whether Even believed in signs and symbolism or not, when Isak kissed him he kissed back, which was all that mattered in this minute, right now, they could talk about more deep shit after his toes uncurled.

Their phones plinged again, in unison this time, full surround sound with only the volumes different
between the two sides of the bed. Isak’s was louder, which wasn’t all that surprising.

The fact that they got another text at the exact same time was though, and the look on Even’s face as they broke apart said he thought so too.

They were still staring at each other in vague wonder when their phones went off, again, at the same time, one more loud and medium loud pling.

“The fuck?”

They both rolled for opposite sides of the bed in unison, legs taking a second to untangle then Even was scooping his phone off the floor and Isak was grabbing his from the nightstand.

He also grabbed his discarded hoodie - it was fucking cold now that he wasn’t curled up under the covers - and the closest hat, the red one, tugging it down over his curls to block the sun that was now trying to blind him from this new angle.

Okay, or maybe it was because he could feel how fucking crazy his hair was right now, which was fine when they were laying there in bed all soft and cozy but not fine when they were sitting up and checking their phones.

“It’s the boys,” Even said, sounding surprised. Isak rolled back into the middle of the bed, sitting up with the sheets in a hundred knots around their legs as Even shifted up to sit too, knees bumping.

“There’s a new group chat.” Isak thumbed down the lock screen in surprise, taking a second to let it sink in. Oh.

“Group chat?”

“Yeah. We’ve always had one, but.” He slid over on one of the messages, typing in his passcode quickly. “…this one’s new. With you.”

He glanced up from his phone to see Even staring at him, hair in gorgeous disarray and a slightly alarmed look on his face.

“What does that mean?”

He made a face as Even reached over and tweaked the brim of his hat, making him pull it down a little further. Even may look like a greek god in the morning but he did not, thank you.

What did a new group chat mean? Well.

“That you’re officially in the friend group.” Isak lifted a shoulder, watching Even’s face for a reaction. He looked surprised, but definitely not put out at all as he glanced back down at his phone, up at Isak with that little, unsure expression. You don’t think it’s awkward?

“What, there’s no hazing incident or anything?”

(My mom wants to meet you. Oh? That same pretty face, you don’t think it’s--)

“Why, you worried?” Isak shot him his eyebrow thing and turned back to his phone with a smile, thinking back to post-tequila night and the shit the boys gave them for all the times they’d been kicked out and that’s when their phones went off again.
He scanned through them quickly, thumbs flying before he was done reading. A month and a half ago he would’ve debated whether or not to type it, but now he didn’t think twice. Life was too short not to.

•

-- So now that Even’s in the group chat we get to haze him right -- Isak

•

Even made an undignified sound next to him as it popped up on his screen and Isak smiled, leaning over to bump their shoulders together.

“You couldn’t just be sweet like a normal boyfriend,” Even huffed and Isak popped his mouth open, swinging his head over dramatically.

“Like you would ever want a normal boyfriend.”

A quick glance to the side, eyebrows shooting up down all suggestive before looking back down at his phone. Isak made an offended sound and Even smiled, leaning over the distance between them to duck under the brim of Isak’s hat and kiss him on the mouth.

It was one of those surprisingly sensual kisses, lips sliding and catching as his free hand came up to cup the back of Even’s head. Their mouths smushed together, pulling sideways as Even nearly lost his balance in the lean.

Then he was pressing two hands on Isak’s chest, laying him back down on the closest pillow as they kissed, brim of his hat tipping up and a thousand little fireworks going off inside his chest. Even’s hands on his shoulders, crawled over to hold him unfairly still, making everything that much more
fucking sensational--

The next group chat message plinged in, Even’s phone vibrating against his shoulder and knocking into his vibrating phone too.

“Ugh,” he complained as Even popped their mouths back apart, snagging his phone and falling over to bounce on the mattress beside Isak, already unlocking his screen and checking the message before Isak could breathe again.

Even made a strangled sound and Isak lifted an eyebrow, feeling vaguely squished as he lifted his head a tad, patting the side of his bed for his phone before he finally found it, lighting the screen up.

•
-- Why does that sound like you’re suggesting a group orgy -- Mahdi

Isak burst out in a shocked laugh, throwing his head back enough to put his hat back on the way it was supposed to sit.

Not exactly what he’d meant by hazing. He was thinking more like…

•
-- I was thinking more like Tequila Night 2.0 -- Jonas

See, that’s exactly what he was about to say. The laughter faded down into a simple smile, in the middle of typing a response as another sound went off, the incoming message for when the app was already open.

And there popped up a sideways photo of him smiling at his phone, clearly taken in snapchat and sent from the app since it had a caption on it, he’s elated and a text to accompany,

•
-- I think Isak was thinking orgy -- Even

“Hey!” Isak turned his head accusingly, shoving Even’s shoulder from his spot on the pillow beside.

Even shoved him back, not looking up, typing again and Isak turned back to his phone, typing faster and pressing send before he was tossing his phone aside and tackling Even for his.

“Hey!!”

The phones both made soft thuds as they fell a foot for the carpet, then their mouths were on each other, all the playful shoving shifted into vaguely aggressive making out.

The hat got knocked off pretty quickly, then Even was rolling them across the mattress and Isak got both legs around his waist. He let Even think he had the upperhand for a few heart-thudding kisses before he quickly engaged his thighs and flipped them again, landing on top of Even with his knees pinning bruised hips, mouths breaking apart as he sat up with a victorious grin.

“Ooh, looks like working out pays off,” Even teased, smile quirking up and a hand running up Isak’s stomach. “Why’d you put on more clothes, you knew I was gonna take them right back off.”

“I didn’t know that, and it’s fucking cold.”
Even hooked a finger in the front of the hoodie’s neck, dragging Isak down forcefully, his breath caught in his throat.

“I know some good ways to warm up, if you’re that cold.”

Isak stared down, mouth open and heart thudding as he searched Even’s face, confession hovering on the tip of his tongue. A shaky inhale, eyes locked, and his voice dropped, barely above a whisper.

“...I’m freezing.”

The phones plinged again, about five minutes later.

Neither of them picked up to check.

They were both a little busy.

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Troppen 🚴

1 dag 09:33

Magnus

we have a week until school we have to do something epic

Mahdi

like school changes anything

Magnus

it's an excuse to do something epic okay don't rain on my ideas

Jonas

you have to have an actual idea before we can rain on it

So now that Even’s in the group chat we get to haze him right
Mahdi

why does that sound like you're suggesting a group orgy

Jonas

I was thinking more like tequila night 2.0

Even

I think Isak was thinking orgy

don't listen to him

Magnus

don't worry we will

(group chat)

~*~*~*~
Did he have homework over the break? Yes.

Was it entirely completely pointless and stupid? Yes.

Was he doing it? Surprisingly...yes.

He was laying on his stomach on the living room floor, biology textbooks stacked to one side - Sana was coming over later - and his notes from German spread out around him in a fan, laptop open to wordreference as he scribbled away at the worksheet.

It was more time consuming than impossible, which made it twice as annoying, but 2017 was a new year and he was gonna be a good student, dammit.

Was he completely focused on just this assignment and this assignment alone?

Well. No, but he could multitask. Do a few problems in German, focus focus, then scoop up his buzzing phone and text back Eva.

Their conversation was about thirty times more interesting than repeating the lesson they'd learned before break twenty thousand times, and he was still getting work done, so. Sue him.
you should talk to her about it! I bet she'd listen to you

Why would she listen to me? Our sole connection has been based around her throwing parties at my house

see? You're just so connected to everyone

shut up. You talk to her, you're the one who makes out with her

connect to Vilde! Talk to her! Help your fellow gay!

I hope you know how much my eyes are rolling. And you don't know that she's actually interested in girls
okay I can give you a list of all the reasons why Noora and I think she is

you have a list???

we had a list for you too

what?? When?

last semester, we all thought you were in a secret relationship with Christoffer

Christoffer Schistad???

Yeah!!
Noora saw you get in his car all sneakily, plus you made secret //call me// gestures at him in the courtyard, and this was after we found the gay porn on your phone.

who doesn't delete their tabs before lending their phone to someone??

who looks through other people's phones when they're letting them borrow one out of the kindness of their hearts????
people's phones when they're letting them borrow one out of the kindness of their hearts????

you know what, we should hang out soon. Really hang out. Like old times.

you're avoiding the question

Oh shh, it was Noora, not me. But seriously, do you have any plans for this week?

no, but the boys wanted to do something "epic". What did we used to do that was super fun?
“Hey babe?” Isak said out loud, not looking up from his phone as he started composing the text to Jonas.

He got a distant, noncommittal sound in return. He'd thrown a few questions Even’s way in the past hour, but most of them had been rhetorical and only gotten sounds like that back.

He needed an actual answer for this one though so he finished the text, hit send, and lifted his head.

“Even.”

The table Even was drawing at was across the room, ten years away from Isak’s homework station and neither of them had budged since lunch.

Actually, the table was even more of a mess than the living room floor, crumpled up paper, pens and pencils scattered over the surface as the beautiful boy bent over it all just kept on sketching.
It was nice they could do this, chill out and get shit done in the same house as each other without being in each other’s laps about it or anything.

Still though, he had a legitimate question and Even wasn’t paying any attention to him, which was pretty regular when he was drawing, but still.

Isak waited and watched a moment longer, fond little smile crooking up the side of his mouth as he crossed his forearms and sing-songed across the space between them.

“Ev-ii.”

“Uh…” His pretty mouth pursed to the side, pen drawing out a few more rough strokes before he finally finished whatever he was working on and lifted his pen in sync with his head. There was ink smudged all over the side of his hand, his pinky basically painted black, raised eyebrows on his pretty face as he caught onto the fact that Isak had been looking at him for a little while. “Yeah?”

Isak smiled affectionately and tipped to the side, wetting his lips before he raised an eyebrow back and asked the question.

“How do you feel about cabins in the middle of nowhere?”

~*~*~

Torsdag, 11:41
05.01.16

“I can’t believe you're planning this and it's my cabin.” Jonas reached over to snag a piece of Isak’s pizza, getting his hand swatted in retaliation.

“I’m not actually doing it. You think I bitch about picking up a Christmas tree I didn’t even buy, then turn the corner and plan an entire weekend trip for two squads? Nei. This is all Even.”

“Not all--”

“Still, though!”

“Did you want to coordinate getting 10 people to a cabin two and half hours away? No? I didn’t think so. Be grateful, Thief-man.” Isak took a bite of the pizza Jonas had nearly stolen, talking muffled around it as he waved a hand. “We haven't been up there in forever! Besides, I think this counts as epic.”

“Definitely epic,” Magnus agreed, pointing a finger at Mahdi’s extra piece and raising his eyebrows.

“Yes, I’m going to eat that.”

“So if there’s three bedrooms that’s six people already, unless some people are willing to sleep triple, which some of those beds could…maybe fit.” Even had sketched the whole thing out based off Isak’s description, making him chew all proudly as Even explained the setup to the rest of the boys. “Either way, with just two to a bedroom that’s only four on the couches. Well, you probably can’t fit more than three on the couches, unless you have someone in the armchair, then look! No one’s
sleeping on the floor.”

“So long as I get the southern bedroom,” Jonas said, giving Isak a very pointed look.

“What?? Nei. If you get a bedroom you sleep in pairs, and I’m sharing with Even, so.”

“I see how it is.” Jonas balled up his napkin and arched it across the table at Even, who managed to duck to the side just in time, dropping his mouth in an overexaggerated offended face as Jonas lifted his chin. “You two can sleep on the couches.”

“That’s fine,” Isak agreed, pretty smile on his face as he leaned an elbow on the table and cocked his head. “So long as you’re fine waltzing past the living room in the middle of the night to get water and walking in on me having sex.”

Even choked on his pizza. Mahdi nearly spit his drink out across the table and Isak’s triumphant smile threatened to break into a tongue-in-his-cheek laugh.

“I vote Isak and Even get the southern bedroom,” Magnus offered and Jonas threw up his hands in disarray. Mahdi reached over Jonas’s plate to grab the pen and write down their names on the drawing, filling in the two blank lines for southern bedroom. It was a good idea to assign sleeping locations before they arrived, so it wasn’t pure chaos once everyone piled out of the cars exhausted.

Magnus leaned over to glance at the sketch, his half-eaten pizza mouth opening up as he stuttered over a protest.

“Why can’t Vilde and I share a room??”

“Because you guys aren’t official and we’re not going to pressure her into feeling like she has to have sex with you??”

“I would never pressure her!” Magnus sputtered in retaliation, then he and Mahdi were breaking into a full on argument with interjected input from Jonas layered between.

Even caught his gaze across the table, laughter in his eyes as he tipped his head up, crooked, surprised, fond smile.

“That was bold.” Even sounded impressed and Isak lifted a shoulder, crooked smile of his own.

“It’s worth it. It’s a great bedroom.”

~*~*~

Fredag, 08:28
06.01.2017

It wasn’t like Isak had planned the trip up here to have a getaway sex vacation, honestly he hadn’t. If he wanted to he would’ve set up the trip for just the two of them instead of coordinating two cars and ten people up here.

They arrived late last night, late enough everyone crashed instantly, after stumbling around claiming
spots (and entirely ignoring the helpful sleeping arrangements they’d set up) but on the bright side, he and Even still got the southern bedroom, so he didn’t actually give a fuck where anyone else slept.

Because it was just the two of them in here. And it was early enough in the morning there was no way anyone was gonna be awake, so. He hadn’t planned a getaway sex vacation but they were alone in a secluded bedroom in a cabin in the middle of nowhere, everything warm and beautiful with the early sun shining through the windows and miles of crisp, falling white sheets.

Neither of them had spoken a word yet this morning, they’d both woken from the light streaming through the windows and kissed. Now Even’s shirt was tossed aside, Isak straddling his waist as warm, sweet hands slipped up his sides to slide his clothes free too.

Material bunched over Even’s wrists as his palms skirted up Isak’s ribs, arms lifted slow over his head so the shirt could tug all the way off, blonde curls popping free as Even bit his lip, eyes on fire. Isak dropped his head to the side, gazes locked and back muscles shifting with Even’s hands running slow back down his ribs, over his waist as Isak slipped the shirt off one wrist to toss it for the closest wall--

The door slid open behind them, a sound Isak still remembered very very clearly from their last cabin trip, and the sound that followed it wasn’t all that different either.

Although Jonas squawked first, before he made the same rounded, wide-eyed exit Isak had,

“Ahh, sorry, sorry!”

Three things happened all at once, Jonas spinning out of the room with a hand up to block his vision, Isak making a scandalized sound as he dived for the covers, and his balled up shirt hitting the wall before flopping silently to the ground.

“JONAS!” He shouted in complaint after the closing door, cursing fluently under his breath as he clutched a sheet to his chest.

When he’d done the same fucking thing to Jonas and Eva, more than a year ago - Jesus fucking Christ - the moment he’d closed the door behind himself he’d started singing to ease the tension he’d clearly just caused, and not of the good kind either,

_I’m so lonely, I am so lonely, I have noboodyyyy--_

Eva had laughed, he’d heard that much, then he’d trailed into the kitchen and vowed to never open another door without knocking again in his life.

Jonas didn’t sing to break the tension though, he clearly wasn’t as amusing or cute as Isak was, but he was laughing his ass off in the next room.

Of course.

Even cocked an eyebrow at the laughter, turning his head on the pillow to give Isak a cute, confused little look.

Yes, he overreacted, he knew, and it wasn’t like Jonas had never fucking seen him with his shirt off, but _still_.

“Karma, motherfucking karma has bit me in the ass,” he groaned, letting go of the sheet to roll up and glare at the ceiling. Even laughed, reaching over to wrap a hand around his ribs again.
“Hey that's my job,” he teased and Isak groaned again, closing his eyes and cursing some more.

He had this coming. He fucking had this coming and how he hadn’t seen it, he had no fucking clue.

“He didn’t even sing,” Isak complained under his breath, sucking in a breath to sigh dramatically and open his eyes back up to Even’s still confused ones.

“Karma? And singing?”

“It's a long story,” Isak told the ceiling fan. This bedroom was so nice. Giant window over the bed, white walls, beautiful view, it was a damn shame they weren’t gonna get to use it.

“Well, tell me then, what’s karma getting you for?” The hand over his ribs prodded him once, smile in his voice as he rolled up on his side, tearing Isak’s eyes away from the ceiling and to that beautiful face. “Since we’re apparently not gonna have sex.”

“Not when that can happen! We're fucking lucky we're both still in boxers.”

“You have to get out of them to get lucky,” Even corrected. “Can't you just lock the door?”

“The doors don't lock,” he sighed mournfully, pouting his lips up at Even to get a kiss.

Even obliged, soft and tender and a hell of a lot less heated than they’d been kissing a few minutes ago. God dammit.

When he pulled back a hand stroked over his cheek, looping around his ear to slip through blonde curls, eyes sparkling and fond. Too bad he couldn’t be stroking other things, if only it weren’t for that goddamn interruption--

“Then. We've got time for you to tell me that story.”

“You don't wanna know,” Isak told him, reaching up to press their lips together again. The kiss didn’t last long, followed up by a few short sticky ones that always made him shiver, which Even fucking knew, leaning back with a little shit of a smile on his face.

“Oh?”

“Yeah,” he replied, although it took him a second to figure out what the fuck they’d been talking about. Even Bitch Næshiem over here trying to get him all worked up again.

“Is it the same thing I didn't wanna know about your secret life as a master liar?” It was teasing and cute, but Isak unfortunately was still a fucking shit liar, and the look on his face gave him away in about .3 seconds.

Fucking shifty expression he couldn’t get help, jesus christ none of this was his fault.

Even still had one hand on Isak’s face as he lifted up all the way, mouth popping open and looking down at Isak all shocked and whatnot.

“Really??”

“Ugh. I was a bitch my first year.”

“I've seen some of those clapbacks at Magnus,” Tipped head, raise eyebrows, pretty smile. “What makes you think you've changed?”
“Hey,” he interjected, then Even was kissing him and he stopped minding pretty quickly.

Seriously though, he was nowhere near as much of a bitch now as he’d been then.

It’d been their first weekend as first years at Nissen, a few months after Jonas and Eva started officially dating. They’d been planning this sex-getaway weekend up to Jonas’s cabin when Jonas somehow convinced Eva to let him come along, third wheeling on the romantic getaway to its full capacity, including walking in on them about to have sex in this very bed.

On the bright side, Eva really hadn’t minded, and the three of them had been hella close, so in theory the cabin trip would’ve been nice if Elias hadn’t shown up and Eva hadn’t seen those texts on Jonas’s phone and they hadn’t gotten stoned off their asses and…

Well. Drama.

At least now, they were all so much more mature. Drama like that just didn’t happen anymo--

“Ha!!” Isak froze in his tracks the moment he stepped into the living room, eyebrows knitting in confusion at the instant halt in conversation and the very obvious finger pointing at him from across the room.

“Fucking karma,” Eva shouted and Isak unfroz, rolling his eyes and sweeping past the crowd as they all broke into laughter at Eva’s clapping hands and pitchy little song she was singing behind him.

“Jonas walked in on you having se-ex, Isak got a taste of his own medi-cine, haha ha suck a dick, and sucking dick--”

“Oy!” He shouted from the kitchen while the living room burst into another round of laughter.

Even’s lips were rolled in, eyes wide as Isak reached over him to grab an oven mitt, turning back round the corner to throw it promptly at Eva Mohn and her ridiculous gloating face.

When he came back into the kitchen shaking his head, living room still filled with giggles, Even was leaning against the counter next to Sana, both of them sipping tea and looking judgmentally up from their mugs at him together.

“What??”

“An oven mitt?” She said dryly and Even’s judgy demeanor cracked a little, barely restraining the laugh as he took a quick sip of his tea.

“Ow, ow, hot, hot--”

“Why thank you, I think so too,” Isak replied, wild-eyed as he snatched up the other oven mitt and aimed it at Sana.

The look she gave him threatened to melt him into the floor - honestly, worse than the one Emma gave him when she tried to kill him and fry him into the lockers which was saying a lot - and he put the oven mitt back down very carefully.

“So. Who’s making breakfast?”

“Considering you’re the one who was having sex with the doors open--”

“For the last time, we were not having sex, I was taking off my shirt.”
“--it sounds like you get to make breakfast!”

“That the only thing anyone’s getting is scrambled eggs with toast, and there will be zero fucking complaints.” Isak shooed both of the sassy lingerers for the door, snatching his hand back as Even tried to grab it. “Uh uh, no distractions, no sir, you are going to go sit in the living room and talk to your friends and save our reputation and I am going to cook, go.”

Sana looped an arm around Even’s waist, shooting Isak a cheery smile as she turned them round the corner and Even shouted something like good luck over his shoulder.

Oh boy, he wasn’t the one who needed luck, Even was the one stuck explaining an already spreading story to the other eight giggling people who’d apparently all woken up the same time they did.

Whoops.

Fredag, 11:16

“She, did you bring along an actual picnic basket?”

“I made sandwiches too! We can have a picnic on the mountains after a nice brisk hike, it’ll be so nice! Energizing and nutritious.”

Isak blinked twice and Jonas leaned over, arms crossed over his chest and voice dropped low enough not to travel.

“Are you sure you actually came up with this idea? Maybe Vilde has planted kosegruppa bugs inside your room that whisper to you at night.”

“I’ll ask Even if he’s heard anything,” Isak replied seriously, both of them still staring at the blonde as she gathered everyone up from the couches, herding people for the doors.

They leaned shoulders and judged her for a moment longer before Jonas cleared his throat and said flatly,

“So when are we ditching everyone to get high?”

~*~*~

Lørdag, 13:34
07.01.2017

They spent Friday playing games, eating food, drinking casually and chilling out in the cabin when it got dark - someone offered to search for board games and Noora had sat up quickly, insisting vehemently they were not allowed to play Ouija and Jonas had given her the strangest look, throwing up his hands as he told her he didn’t even own one, calm down, then Chris and Vilde were
doubling over in laughter as Sana said something about a magical hijab and they all decided to play Rules instead, which got ridiculous and had them up until 2am, everyone basically passing out in piles around the room so that all the bedrooms went unoccupied, except for Sana, Mahdi, and Noora, who all woke up at 3 and took a bedroom each.

So all in all, it was midday Saturday before Jonas patted his pocket and tipped a head for the door, a signal Isak didn’t need long to interpret.

He nodded and Jonas took off to go find Magnus and Mahdi while Even walked him outside, both of them stopping on the back porch while they waited.

“I see how it is. Leave me in here to cook with the girls while you go have fun.” An affectionate hand through his hair and Isak tipped his head, shaking it sorrowfully as he lifted up a shoulder.

“I heard from the very official source of Magnus that at least one of us has to be a woman, somehow.”

The laugh twinkling past Even’s lips bounced off the whole canyon, the lake waters and the mountain skies, echoing around to soak in every one of his senses as he bounded forward and pressed a solid, precious kiss on Isak’s mouth, still giggling as he pulled back, foreheads together and a happy peck that had Isak’s lungs seizing in the very best way.

He’d thought he was funny before, with the faces he made and the dry sense of humor he toted around but god, he was the king of humor now that making Even laugh seemed like the only goal worth having in life.

So he pressed his fingertips to the smiling jaw, sliding soft over skin that was starting to feel like an extension of his own.

“Although I’m pretty sure the whole point of this is to not have any chicks in the mix, but.”

“But you're still leaving me in there with all of them.”

“Oh you'll be fine,” he scoffed, rolling his eyes and his head with it for dramatic effect. “They love me.”

“Exactly! And I’m your boyfriend, they're gonna eat me alive!”

Isak grinned and pressed a perky kiss to Even’s cheek. He knew first hand how those girls could get, Isak’d have a great time.

“Besides, leaving me behind to cook, what will your friends think? Especially Magnus.” A thumb stroked over his cheekbone, gazes locked and betraying all the fond as he teased.

“Oh you don't have to worry.” Isak puckered his lips, looking down his nose at Even as they kissed again, all domestic and sweet, his absolute favorite time to make Even laugh. “...they all already know I bottom.”

“You--” Even’s whole face lit up as he tipped his head back, giggling and smiley with strong arms wrapping tight around Isak’s waist, leaning forward to nuzzle their noses together. “You've expanded your terms vocabulary, I'm impressed.”

“I can think of lots of other ways to say it,” he murmured, head cocking to one side, noses still brushing. “Constantly down to have you inside me, I'd let you bend me over every available surface-”
The door slammed open behind them, a pile of boys herding out with loud voices and clapping hands on shoulders.

“Isak, we're going! C’mon, you can hook up with Even later.”

He reached up on his tiptoes, pecking Even’s mouth once and squeezing his hand before he was letting go, sliding past with a smile and a little salute.

“See you lat-er, have fun!”

“Drittsekken!” Even called after him, making him smile as he spun on a heel and jogged to catch up with the rest of the jostling boys.

“Eee kinky,” someone accused, laughter shouting across the mountain range as they took off down the side of the house, headed god knows where, probably some clearing in the woods or some shit.

“Whatever, you're all assholes too,” Isak bantered back, throwing an arm around Mahdi’s and Jonas’s shoulders, smile wide and loud enough to hear from all the way up here and Even sighed, taking in a deep breath of cold air.

Just him and the girls. It was a good thing Even liked that boy as much as he did.

Lørdag, 13:42

“You're in my corner, right?” He found Noora first, thank god, dragged her aside before he dared stepping foot in the kitchen, where there was already a steady stream of laughter pouring out.

“Huh?” She looked at him like he was crazy and Even tipped his head to indicate the kitchen, bouncing a little nervously on his tiptoes.

“When this gets wild? Please, I make you breakfast all the time, I can't go into battle without a sidekick.”

“I am nobody's sidekick!” An offended hand whacked him solidly on the arm, making him grab the spot and wince. So far this was going great. “Besides, what makes you think this is gonna be a battle?”

“Even!” Sana’s voice shouted from the next room. “We need something for dinner, get in here!”

“See?” He threw up his hands, eyebrows up as he tried to get her to see it. “They're gonna eat me alive.”

Noora rolled her eyes, a bright smile as she crossed her arms over her chest and Eva poked her head out from around the corner.

“Aren't you coming?”

Noora planted a hand between his shoulderblades - having to reach fairly high to do it - and all but shoved him into the kitchen. It wasn’t like he was scared of them, or didn’t know how to talk to girls, but he was still nervous around The Boys if Isak wasn’t around and boys were so fucking simple, he just didn’t wanna fuck it up with the girls, not when Isak cared about them all too.
There was just a lot of people he had to impress - the only people Isak had to worry about was Even’s parents, who asked how Isak was doing almost more than they asked how he was, which was saying a fucking lot.

But Even had an entire *two squads* full of already tight-knit friends that he was intruding on and while yeah, he’d been added to the boys’ group chat, he hadn’t so much as passed an approval test with a single one of the girls yet.

Besides Noora, because he made kickass scrambled eggs and she appreciated the scoop of sour cream, so.

She was being merciless as hell now though, marching him into the kitchen with a triumphant smile and a cocky raised eyebrow as she hopped back up on the only spot of free counter space left. Eva was also on the counter, Vilde was propped on a bar stool, Sana was leaning against the counter by the sink and Chris was leaning against the fridge, sucking on a candy cane leftover from Christmas and giving him a really really judgy look.

Boys were easy. Girl squads though, kicked ass, and here he was standing in the middle of one, five pairs of eyes mercilessly scanning him up and down as he bounced on his toes, opening his mouth to ask how he could help, something, anything that wasn’t standing here in quiet he really could not interpret.

Chris beat him to it, demanding and flat around her candy cane.

“We need you to cook. Isak said you can and the rest of us suck, so.”

“Speak for yourself!” Noora tipped her head, light blonde hair swinging and reflecting off the bright kitchen lights. “I make great pancakes.”

“And potatoes,” Vilde pointed out. They smiled at each other all secretive and sweet and there was so much he didn’t know or wasn’t part of but they needed him for something so Even clapped his hands together once and offered a hopeful smile.

“Where do you want me?”

“Everywhere,” Eva said sultrily and they burst into surround-sound laughter as he rolled his lips in and headed for the nearest cabinet to figure out where shit was.

This was gonna be fun.

Although actually? It really...surprisingly was.

The girls had already made the menu they wanted based on ingredients they scrounged up, it was just a matter of making it all, which really wasn’t going to be hard.

They helped out some, watching the pots to make sure they didn’t boil over and pointing out where he could find salt, a stirring spoon.

Mostly though, they chatted and laughed and made jokes and told stories while he cooked various things and held up spoons for them to taste test.

“Oh my god, then there was the whole thing with Chris,” Noora’s eyes rolled, taking a bite of the end of a spatula and waving at the spices on the counter. “It needs more something.”

Super helpful. Even unscrewed the lid of the oregano again, glancing up as Chris set down a
package of eggs on the counter and made an offended noise at hearing her name.

“Huh?”

“Not you Chris, Christoffer. Although you liked Isak too, god the spoon thing--”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.” She popped open the container and carefully picked out three eggs. Even glanced over at the list Vilde had taped to a cabinet for him. He was pretty sure he didn’t need those eggs. “That Ouija board was right though, holy hell--”

“Chris, if you’re planning to juggle those,” Sana warned and Chris made a face at her, popping the lid back closed.

“Wait, what was the thing with Christoffer?” Vilde asked, reaching over to brush flour into a little pile on the counter.

“I’m not going to drop one again, I promise.” Chris took three steps backwards and started carefully shuffling the eggs between her hands, which was going to make it difficult to get samples to Eva, but she was the harshest critic, so that was fine.

“Remember when Jonas got his nose busted in and everyone was getting in fights? Chris, move, I can’t taste-test if you’re juggling there.”

Okay, or apparently he was still getting samples to Eva anyways.

“Yeah, and William smashed a glass bottle over the head of one of the boys from the other school?” Sana gave Noora a sassy dimpled look to which Noora kicked her feet, eyes rolling.

“No fair, all of them were involved, Isak was the one who set up that fight and no one ever gives him shit for it.”

“He got decked in the face!” Eva exclaimed, shoving Noora’s shoulder.

“So did William,” Vilde pointed out.

“Anyways, Christoffer?” Sana brought up again, looking to Eva this time for the explanation.

“--also got punched. God, he had the worst black eye. Anyway, Noora and I thought he was dating Isak, like, we were legitimately camped out in the school windows investigating them in the courtyard. There were all these clues that lead right to it--”

They all jumped a little as an egg smashed to the ground, shell pieces scattering as the insides splattered dramatically and Chris looked up with wide eyes.

“Again?” Noora tsked while Sana hid a snort behind her hand.

“I’ll clean it, I will!” Chris pouted, looking back down at the egg sadly. “I thought I’d gotten better at this.”

Even reached up over the top of the fridge, snagging a roll of paper towels and holding it out to Chris before glancing around the gossip filled kitchen with his eyebrows up.

“It sounds like you ladies have way better stories about Isak than the boys do.”

“Oh boy, we have some stories.” Eva clicked her tongue, head tipping to the side with a knowing look that could only mean trouble.
He glanced around to the other expressions, Vilde’s gaze on her clasped hands, Sana looking as tight-lipped smug as ever and Noora’s eyes wide as she rolled her lips in and looked off to the side.

“Oh?” Even picked the stirring spoon back up, a little trepidatious as he scanned between them. A lot of stories, apparently.

“Mm...yeah.” Noora popped her lipstick, hands wrapped around the edge of the counter as she tipped to the side and kicked her feet. “But you can ask Isak those any day, how often do we have you to fire questions at?”

She tipped her head all cutely as the rest of the girls murmured agreement and bright smiles.

“I mean I basically live at your apartment,” Even countered and Noora rolled her eyes.

“None of the rest of us ever see you though,” Eva pointed out, to which Sana and Noora both pinned him with serious looks.

“Fair,” he agreed, tipping his head and checking the temperature on the oven.

Vilde lifted a hand up straight for the ceiling, waiting until Even was looking over at her to solemnly lower it again, looking around at the other girls as she spoke.

“Okay, me first.” She sucked in a breath, pausing on the inhale before exhaling all at once. “Are you bisexual?”

“Vilde!”

“What? It's a valid question, he had a girlfriend and now he has a boyfriend, I think that's fair to ask! I just want to know!”

“You don't have to answer that,” Noora told him and Even shook his head with a smile.

“I don't mind,” he started, only to get interrupted by Eva, who was significantly louder than Vilde.

“I have a better question,” she announced, two hands in the air to grab everybody’s attention. Even turned all the way to face her, leaning against the stove as they all awaited the sneaky smile, cocked head, drawn out pause question,

“What's Isak like in bed?” Even barked a laugh and Eva turned her wrists, palms up as the rest of the girls made shocked sounds. “It’s a fair question! I know half the girls at Nissen have made out with him--”

“Including you,” Sana pointed out and Even laughed again, eyes crinkling as he propped against the counter, looking between Sana’s pursed lips and Eva’s open mouth.

“Barely!” She sputtered. “Really, our lips barely touched, that doesn't count.” They all gave her skeptical looks and she threw her hands up again. “That wasn't making out! I swear, I’d know, I’ve made out with a lot of people.”

“Including me,” Vilde said cheerily and Eva pointed an upside down finger.

“Including Vilde,” she agreed. “But anyways. Even. Everyone’s made out with him but no one’s actually slept with him and lived to tell the story, so. Is he as fantastic as he likes to think?”

“Oh, way better than that,” Even told them and all their mouths popped open, tongues in cheeks and shocked amusement as they all exchanged glances. Even arched an eyebrow and turned back to the
stove, pouring a dash of milk into the melting chocolate and speaking right to the dark swirls. “He's the best I've ever been with.”

“Awww.”

“Oh my god,”

“Oooo--”

“And you're like so much older than us too, with all your age and experience and whatnot.” Chris shooed a hand at him as she said it, all the girls’ awes turning into giggling and snorts.

Even pursed his lips to the side. He wasn’t that much older.

“Is he really the best you've been with?” Vilde pressed, looking terribly curious from her high chair as he turned down the heat on the chocolate and lifted a shoulder.

“Yeah. I mean maybe it’s just cause I’m so gone for him but. I doubt it.”

“Awww.”

Even smiled at the mismatched chorus, Noora’s exaggerated pouty lips, the little shove Vilde gave him with her foot, looking down at his hands and thinking distantly how well they fit with Isak’s, a perfect match just like everything else between them.

“I am pretty far gone for him, though…”

“You two are so fucking cute.” Vilde shook her head, scooting the carton of eggs out of Chris’s reaching hand. Even tipped his head from the carton to the top of the cabinets, way way out of reach, one eyebrow up.

Vilde nodded, reaching carefully over Chris as Noora called her name, grabbing the carton and handing it to Even before Chris could see, then he was going up on his tiptoes to carefully set it down on the top of the cabinet, out of reach of the juggling-insistent hands.

The moment he turned back around, smiling victoriously, not a single girl was where they’d been just a moment ago, all crowding around the stove with spoons dipping in chocolate.

“Hey!”

“Holy shit, this is delicious?” Sana threw him a shocked look, mouth closing around another spoonful.

“Yeah?” Head tipping enough to make his hair bounce, a little smile curling on his face. No point in pretending he was upset when they were all making obscene noises and dipping spoons back in for another round.

“Oh, yeah. This is remarkable, actually.”

Noora curved her spoon out of her mouth, eyebrows furrowing as she tried to place something, before she was pointing a finger at the chocolate and squinting her eyes at him.

“Is there cayenne in this?”

“Yeah. The spice brings out the chocolate flavor while cutting the cloying of the sugar.”
“Holy shit,” Eva announced. The rest of the girls made varying sounds of agreement, little circle around the pot opening up to let him back in.

“This is so not fair,” Chris made a face and dipped another spoon back in, swirling it up into a heap. “Do you always cook for Isak?”

“Hey, hey, leave some for dessert. Sana, you too. And not always, but. Most breakfasts, then we do dinner at my parents’ house once a week, I usually make that.” He was gonna start having to snatch spoons soon, they were gonna make a dent in his cooking plan. Vilde reached over for another and Even shooed her away from the stove, shooed back Noora’s sneaky grin and reaching spoon too, throwing his arms out wide and shooting faux glares.

“Wait, dinner at your parent’s house? Once a week??”

“You've introduced him to your parents??!” Eva gave him the most skeptical look in the world and the rest of the girls were fanning themselves, making kissy faces as Even’s mouth dropped open, looking around at the giggling disbelievers.

“Ja! I have never seen him so nervous.”

“Aww.” Vilde hopped up on the closest counter so she could tap him with her foot as she made cooing noises.

Eva was back on a counter again too, and so was Sana, the empty chair went to Chris, which left Noora to be a bother.

“Fucking storybook fairytale or some shit,” she teased and Even nudged her with his hip, making tiny blonde bump sideways, mouth open in offense but she was getting all up in his space again to try and steal more chocolate, she could pop her bright red mouth open all she wanted, she was not going to get--

“Noora Amelie Sætre--”

“Even Bech Næsheim,” she replied sassily, leaning right over him to dip her spoon and put it dramatically in her mouth, tipping her head as she dared him to say a damn thing.

Even threw up a hand, it wasn’t like he was gonna be able to get Noora, of all people, to listen to him. If anyone complained about there not being enough dessert, he was solely going to place the blame on her though.

“Hey troublemaker, how about you help instead of stealing chocolate and shred cheese for the potatoes? Vilde, could you help too?”

“Do I get more chocolate?” She asked cutely and Even sighed up at the sky. His brilliant plans. But the next thing he knew he was handing her a spoonful of chocolate and she was squealing in delight, throwing it in her mouth as she clapped her hands and kicked her feet back and forth.

“Is this the right cheese?”

“Yeah, and there’s a shredder in the first drawer, I think. I probably only need about half of it.”

“We gotcha,” Noora sing-songed, plopping the cheese and shredder down on the counter next to Vilde. “We’re fantastic cooking buddies, aren’t we?”
Vilde smiled and rocked sideways, one hand on the top of the shredder and the other still holding onto her spoon.

“Do they like him?” Sana asked, holding out an empty spoon for him to fill back up. At this rate, there wasn’t going to be enough chocolate after dinner for just them, let alone the boys.

“My parents?” Even pointed for the salt shaker just out of reach, glancing over at Sana as Eva handed it to him.

“Ja, your parents.”

She had that waiting, expectant look that wasn’t quite a smile but still had her dimple showing, eyebrows up at him.

Even spun the shaker once, handing it back to Eva and taking a moment to notice how utterly silent it had fallen, all of them paused to look at him while he turned the heat all the way off, hand on the stove. Even smiled quietly to himself, bending down to open up the oven.

“They love him.”

“Oh my god.”

Even’s restrained smile burst at the edges, mouth opening with, overflowing into bright eyes, uncontainable the same way he’d smiled the first time he’d met the boys and Isak had been so flustered and cute, you threw us out! they were going to a party, really. Mmhm, okay, Even didn’t know much, but he knew that wasn’t true and he knew he’d never wanted to kiss Isak more.

“I’m gonna throw up in my mouth,” Noora announced.

“Awwww, I'm so happy for you guys,” hands clapping together as Eva tipped her head and smiled all bright and fond.

“You’re cuter than me and Kaspar,” Chris said sullenly.

“I can't believe somebody’s parents love him,” Sana teased and Even laughed brightly. If only she knew.

Hell, there were times it shocked him, waking up and dragging his feet into the kitchen to see Isak and his mom chatting over morning coffee (although the most surprising part of that was that Isak woke up before him, and decided to talk to his mom instead of staying in bed with Even).

Or the very memorable time they’d both gone to each other’s houses after school through a miscommunication of what the word “home” meant in a text, a thrilling saga that ended with Even walking in on Isak and his dad on the couch yelling things at a game of some sport on the television.

Isak had offered a hello right before throwing a hand up at something on the screen and he’d just walked right back out of the room to go play guitar or draw or something significantly less worldview shattering. Isak hanging out with his parents without him. Intentionally.

Yeah, if only Sana knew. Vilde nudged her for the comment, whispering something about “don’t be rude, that’s his boyfriend!”

To which Sana replied a very flat, “and my friend,” before Vilde was turning to smile sweetly at his reminiscing expression.
“If that's not the sweetest thing we've ever heard.”

“It is pretty damn cute,” Eva agreed, crooking a finger at him as he blew on the taste-testing spoon for the potatoes. Alright, apparently this spoon got to go in her mouth instead.

“My mom keeps asking when we're getting married,” he told them seriously, holding a hand under the spoon as he pulled it back out of Eva’s mouth and she nearly spit it right back out at him, one hand shooting over her mouth and the other flailing in the air. It took a second before the silence shattered, the rest of the girls simultaneously breaking into shrieks and bright squeals.

“Ahhh!!”

Vilde was practically bouncing on the counter, clapping her hands and mouth open in high-pitched shock, Chris’s jaw was on the floor, Sana was laughing at the ceiling, Noora’s hands were over her mouth, not like that was blocking any of the sounds she was making.

“Oh you have to let us be your bridesmaids!” Vilde exclaimed, hands clasped earnestly, mouth open wide and bright.

Even was still laughing at their reactions, shoulders up and eyes crinkling as Eva hopped off the counter to throw her arms around him dramatically, nearly knocking him off balance and squeezing his ribs surprisingly tight.

“Please, I would kill for my room back,” Noora groaned, hand shoving Even’s shoulder playfully and head tipping in a shining, beautiful smile.

Sun pouring through the windows, laughter echoing and eyes bright, the smell of spiced chocolate and cooking spices, sweaters pulled over hands and soft messy buns and pure, brilliant joy as they all looked between each other and carved a piece in the world for their memories.

“Oh, what color do you think we all look good in? If we’re going to have matching dresses it has to be a color that matches each of our palettes and skin tones-- Sana, what color hijabs do you have, we could start with that? I seriously doubt they want their bridesmaids in all black.”

“Vilde, I can get any color hijab I need to.”

“I don’t know if we’ll have bridesmaids…”

“So you’ve thought about it! Oh my god, you’ve totally thought about it!”

“Even Bech Næsheim, expert chef and wedding planner.”

“We actually talked about it, once, but. Kinda, not really, the circumstances were a little--” He sucked in a breath, making Eva pull back and look up at him in concern.

Noora caught on instantly. Red mouth popping open ready to intervene or divert or stomp out, whatever she had to do but Sana beat her to it, rolling her eyes and waving a hand dramatically.

“Oh so what, you guys talked about getting married.” She pinned Even with a look, dark eyes twinkling.

One corner of his mouth twitched up, sideways and not so heartbreakingly heavy.

Then a burst of sunlight by the name of Vilde was brightening the corners of the room, pure joy
dragging in diversion.

“Oh my god, that wedding is gonna be the best party ever, can you imagine?” She rocked to the side, smiling wide enough it could be her wedding they were talking about instead. “Isak, getting married first, out of all of us—”

Even made a sound, open mouth at her cheery disposition and eyebrows arched high,

“Who said it was gonna be anytime soon??”

“The way you two look at each other, that’s who,” Eva answered, patting over his heart affectionately.

“Preach,” Noora lifted a hand for the sky, followed amusedly by a raise of Sana’s hand too.

Chris dropped the roll of paper towels to the floor to lift both her hands too, followed instantly by Vilde’s, which got jazz hands at the end.

The laughter bubbling up couldn’t be helped, just surrounded and doused in warmth as the girls teased him and burst into more laughter themselves. Vilde clapped a hand over her stomach as she laughed and nearly fell off the counter, making Chris dive to catch her and almost slip on the tiles, floor wet from where she’d cleaned up the broken egg and then they were all laughing harder. Eva’s hand on his shoulder as they both doubled over, tears building up in crinkling eyes, bursting smiles, Sana’s snickers behind her hand that turned into full, head-tilting-back cackling while Noora snorted she laughed so hard then they were all laughing harder.

Hand over his stomach, other to point at Noora and her pig sound. A towel wrapped up to snap at him for laughing so hard, then he threw a pinch of stray salt in her hair and she was shoving him across the kitchen, both of them sliding on the wet floors as Eva got thrown off balance and Sana lifted her feet up on the counter to avoid the stumbling mess of teenagers while shakily attempting to film a story for the kosegruppa instagram.

By the time the laughter died down into giggles, Even was slumped against the counter, Eva and Noora were both on the floor, and Vilde caught her breath enough to raise her voice, lifting up an empty glass she’d pulled from the cabinet behind.

“Alright, this calls for a toast, who’s found where they keep the wine in this place?”

Lørdag, 13:42

The hike up the mountain was significantly shorter than he remembered it, although to be fair the last time he’d done it he’d been a year younger, a lot less fit, had a lot lower stamina, and had been high off his ass, too.

“Oy, it’s over there,” he pointed off towards the clearing they’d entirely passed, hidden by a newly grown patch of bushes at the front.

“Fuck, I didn’t even see it.”

“What would you do without me?”
Jonas rolled his eyes.

Isak took the joint from him and plopped down on the same patch of dirt he had last time, only significantly colder, leaning back against the stump to inhale sharp enough to make his throat burn.

Fuck, he hadn’t gotten high in what felt like forever. Last time he was high, he was making out with Even on his bed for the first time and talking about parallel universes.

That was a long ass time ago. Time was fuckin’ weird, man. Cause like, objectively, he’d gone way longer without smoking before, but there was just so fucking much that had happened in the time between then and now that it felt years longer than it was.

Seriously, he was a different man now, taking a hit to blow smoke at the mountain sky, a whole different human being than the last time he’d sat here, soft small and harassed for being gay.

Now, he was fucking...fucking fucking the hottest guy he’d ever seen, and more than that he was utterly besotted, he was tasting Even’s lips on his between drags, eyes closed and head tipped back to let it all just wash over him.

Hell, he was a different person now than he’d been last time he’d smoked with the boys too, propped in a bathtub at Eva’s house, as fake as he could convince himself to be. Now here he was, real, in all his blazing glory.

Isak giggled at the pun, blowing a stream of smoke into the cold air as he leaned over and passed the joint to Mahdi.

“Jonas, do you remember the first time we got high, and I coughed for so fucking long we both thought I was actually dying?”

“No, I forgot that,” he replied dryly, taking the mj from Mahdi to puff out a fancy ring of smoke, dancing on the wind before dissipating in the chill.

“Ooo, so fuckin’ cool,” Isak rolled his head on the bark to raise an unimpressed eyebrow, making Jonas raise a hand to flick him off.

“I feel bad leaving Even in there while we’re out here having fun.” Magnus took the offered joint and proceeded to cough up half a lung.

“He’ll be fine,” Isak said, fluttering his eyes back open to wave a hand at the open air. “Besides, he shouldn’t smoke, so.”

“Sucks.”

“Mm. Mhhm.”

“Isak, nei, we are not--”

“I wasn’t gonna,” he protested, putting both hands up. “Thankfully, this isn’t tequila.”

“Yeah...as much as getting Even drunk off his ass sounds fun, you two drunk and in the same room does not mean good things for the rest of us.” Mahdi tapped his arm with the side of his boot - oh, he was on top of Isak’s stump, what a good spot - while the other boys giggled.

“We wouldn’t have sex in front of you guys,” Isak argued up at the sky, eyebrows furrowed and eyes shut.
“You almost did this morning in front of Jonas,” Magnus pointed out, entirely deserving as Isak reached over to snatch the joint out of his fingers before he could take a drag, making a face at the offended sound and hitting it hard himself instead.

Hard enough he was coughing and they were all laughing. Jesus fuck, karma kept getting him, again.

“We’re not talking about that,” he informed them, turning all the way around and waving a hand to make sure they were all listening. “Like, ever again.”

“Yeah, yeah, okay, Queen Isak.”

“Aghh, you fuck.”

Jonas laughed open mouthed, raising an eyebrow at Isak as he lifted the paper to his mouth for a second hit. Fuck them, that’s what.

“Let’s just listen to the trees and get high.” Jonas leaned back against his rock, waving for Isak to hand it over.

“Are you sure you’re not high already?” Isak giggled then Jonas was shoving him and they were both laughing out smoke.

Lørdag, 16:56

Jonas had brought. A lot. Of weed.

To be fair, he’d told them he brought enough for all three days, and Thursday night, they just happened to smoke all of it at once.

You’d think if he’d managed to jump over bushes to escape parties when he was high, he’d be able to walk down a mountain and up a hill, round the corner on a porch and go inside without any fucking problems, but here they were.

“Isak! Stop falling!”

“I’m fucking trying! Maybe if you stopped fucking bumping into me every three s--”

“Fuck!”

“If Even asks why your knees are fucked you better tell him you don’t know how to fucking walk.”

“There was a vine! It grabbed my foot! Why couldn’t we walk back on the path like normal people?? No, you wanted to talk to the trees or some shit. Besides, my knees are fucking fine, leave my boyfriend out of this.”

“Boyfriend, Jesus. I can’t believe you have a boyfriend, the rest of us can’t even hold a girlfriend.”

“Boyfriends are better,” Isak informed them solidly, letting out a relieved breath as they reached the bottom of the mountain, house in sight. Now they just had the path up to the porch and he could stop falling all over the place.
“I wonder if Even’s still in there.”

“Where in hell else would he be??” Isak squinted wildly at Magnus, whose hands went up instantly, making him almost lose his balance too. Ha.

“I dunno, but if my boyfriend left me inside with five chicks while he went off to get high, I know I wouldn’t be there when he got back.”

“First of all, Jo-nas, you would never have a boyfriend, and second of all, we have an understanding, something you don’t understand, and third of all, he’s a better person than you.”

One minute he’s being yelled at for falling and the next minute Jonas was trying to shove him off the porch and he was the one yelling, stumbling and barely catching the banister in time before it was him and a very large hill that lead down to a very large lake.

“Are you trying to kill me, see, drittsekken--”

Mahdi offered him a hand to get back on his feet as Jonas threw an arm around his shoulders then they were all barging inside, screen door banging behind them like a hurricane.

The intro could’ve been in slow motion, the four of them filing through the door and fanning out in perfect Squad™ mode, stepping inside blazed, tough and cool with their snapbacks and dilated pupils and wow, he was high enough the proportions of the cabin looked fucking trippy.

But nowhere near as trippy as the sight they walked in on in the living room.

All four of them froze, eyebrows furrowing then mouths dropping open, Jonas’s arm still around his shoulder, his arms crossed over his chest with Mahdi and Magnus flanking them with matching positively dumbfounded expressions.

The living room wasn’t a murder scene, it was a scene out of a fucking high school chick flick.

All of the girls were sitting in a giant circle in the middle of the living room floor, spoon-filled pot of chocolate in the middle and wine glasses balanced in everyone’s hands as they leaned back in laughter, giggles floating with smiling tipping heads, Sana leaning over to bump her shoulder with Even, who was lifting his glass with Vilde to toast something Eva said.

Even wasn’t dead, it looked like Even was having the time of his life. With the girls. Completely immersed, one knee against Noora’s, Eva’s shiny silver baseball cap backwards over his gravity-defying blonde swoops.

Isak’s head retreated into his neck, face twisted in pure, utter confusion, as shook as the involuntary confused sound that escaped his mouth, a cross between a huh and a what the fuck?

The girls hadn’t noticed their epic slow-mo entrance, but they all noticed the sound, pretty heads whipping around, dark red bright red smiles and then Even’s, paint free and crinkling up honest and precious and sweet.

“Ooo, the boys are back! Isak, you are the luckiest boy alive,” Eva leaned over the circle to tell him very seriously and Isak tipped his head, eyebrows furrowed, somehow more confused.

“The luckiest, it’s completely unfair,” Noora agreed and even Sana was smiling while Chris nodded vigilantly and Vilde leaned over to plant a noisy, bright kiss on Even’s happy, smiling cheek.

“...what???”
Even laughed, bright and cute, making every single one of the girls turn to him with pretty smiles on their faces. To repeat himself. What???

“Don’t mind them. Did you boys have fun?” He asked, eyes twinkling like he knew something they didn’t, except before any of them had the chance to answer, Noora was throwing a hand on Even’s arm and swinging around in a veil of really shiny slidly hair to interrupt.

“We had more fun,” she assured them. Isak crinkled his face double, glancing over at the other boys to make sure he wasn’t the only one seeing this but no, okay, Jonas and Mahdi and Magnus looked just as confused as was.

“Didn’t we?” Noora cooed, turning back to all the other girls swarming his boyfriend.

“Oh loads,” Sana agreed.

“The most fun,” Vilde insisted, to which Even was leaning back his head and rolling his eyes fondly.

What???

“Weren’t you guys gonna cook?” Jonas asked slowly, all confused too.

“Oh we did, it’s staying warm in the oven until you boys got back,” Even smiled, handing Eva his wine glass and pushing to his feet, having to practically shake them off him.

“I really am gonna steal him,” Eva sing-songed from across the room and Isak’s jaw dropped.

What???

“Nei??” Just in case the disbelief in his face wasn’t enough Isak shrugged off Jonas’s shoulder, stepping one foot forward into the swirling living room to look at them all accusingly, sounding as extremely offended and upset as he was, down to his very core.

“Excuse me, ladies, in case you forgot?? He’s mine??”

They all burst into bright, loud, kinda disorienting laughter, but even more disorienting Even had made it across the room to him by now, stepping right into his space, no hesitations and jesus fuck, he was tall, did Isak remember him being that tall?

Then there was an arm wrapping around his waist, tugging him stumbling a few inches feet miles forward, finger under his chin to tip his head up and kiss him solidly on the mouth.

The laughter behind them settled into oo’s and aa’s, something about Sana looking for that new hijab? And Isak was more fucking confused than he’d been in like. Ever, that he could remember, actually.

When Even pulled back, Isak took a moment and a half too long to flutter his eyes back open, kind of physically swooning, swaying on his feet as he blinked up dazed at Even.

Even took one look at the expression on Isak’s face and snorted, looking up at Jonas and Mahdi, who were both looking wide eyed between the girls and them. Magnus was just blinking wide eyed at the girls.

“How much did you guys smoke, jeez.”

Because Isak was. High as fuck.
Like, way higher than they’d ever gotten, times about thirty.

It wasn’t a legitimate question, no one had fallen off the mountain into the lake and that was better than he’d been expecting.

The only answer he got was in Isak’s mouth trying to land on his again, hand latching tight on the back of Even’s neck, swaying again as he pressed up on his tiptoes and tried to reach Even’s mouth.

“Hey, baby,” he cooed, puckering his lips all cute so Even had to kiss him, which he did.

Except the second their lips pressed together Isak’s mouth was opening, tongue slipping right between Even’s lips to pry him open and swallow him whole. Woah, fuck, having a boner in front of all of his newfound friends was super not his idea of fun.

He had to twist their mouths to break free, Isak was holding him so fucking tight. Except twisting their mouths like that sent an unforgiving wave of sparks down his sternum to tug low in his stomach.

It also sent a low, starving moan tumbling right out of Isak’s mouth, his hand sliding fast up into Even’s hair before he could pull away far enough.

Foreheads pressed together, hearts pounding, pliant wet lips swollen as they tried lapping at his mouth again, making Even’s grip tighten on Isak’s jaw, fingers digging in enough to bruise.

“Jesus fucking Christ you’re hot,” Isak breathed, eyelids fluttering and lips parted over his, voice gone enough to be barely above a whisper, scraping through gravel. “...take me to bed.”

Noora Eva and Chris all burst into laughter behind them as Even groaned and stared up at the ceiling, which apparently was a queue for Isak to start sucking on his neck.

“Woah-oh--”

Jonas threw up his hands and backpedaled out of the room, bumping into at least four things on his way out. Sana was rolling her eyes, Mahdi had a scandalized hand over his mouth, most of the girls just laughed more. With the exception of Vilde, who tucked a strand of long blonde behind her ear, smiling shyly at Magnus, who nearly tripped over his feet when he saw the look she’d painted on.

“Baby.”

Even got a hand on Isak’s jaw, pulling him up and free of his skin, holding him still in front of him so he could look directly in those glazed eyes and maybe get him to listen that way. Except that having a thumb and fingers indenting Isak’s cheeks like this apparently reminded him of all sorts of other things, green holding his gaze for about two seconds before he was hollowing out his cheeks and tried to suck Even’s thumb into his mouth.

Even cursed and quickly hopped his hand down to Isak’s chest, keeping him bodily an inch or two away, a heart pounding under his palm as he did everything he fucking could not to laugh at the betrayed look on Isak’s pretty face.

“We just made dinner! It’s delicious.”

“So am I,” Isak said indignantly.

Sana cackled as she passed them and Even finally broke, shaking his head to a bubbling giggle while Isak’s pretty face only pouted more. Pouted so much that Even had to, both hands cupping his face
as he reached over for a quick peck, as fucking quick as he could make it before Isak dragged him down to the floor right here and now.

There was a sated, content expression on that pouty face as he pulled back, rubbing his thumbs over Isak’s cheeks and watching him blink slowly, lick his lips. Yes, as much as he’d like to be licking Isak’s lips too, they really had made food, which he was 100% sure Isak was going to love. Especially right now.

“After, babe,” he promised, taking him by the hand and leading him off-balance for the dining room.

“Babe,” Isak mocked, following behind as he floated. “Ba-by--”

He erupted into giggles, remembering the slip on New Years, mumbling to himself something about baby and Evi, a lot of it mixed in with too much nonsense to understand before he finally raised his voice, calling after Even like he wasn’t literally a foot in front of him.

“How come you don't have a nickname for me? Huh? Evi?”

On the bright side, all the boys loved the dinner even more than he’d figured they would. (He didn’t have to figure with the girls, they’d tried all of it every step of the way.)

On the brighter side, Isak fell out of his chair from giggling so hard at some joke Eva made. They were all laughing so much that at least half the food went cold, Isak physically could not stop giggling then the rest of the boys couldn’t stop giggling either, escalating until Isak fell out of his chair, and if that was the climax, no one could come back down from it and they were all laughing so much every single person got stomach cramps, three forks went flying, two water glasses were tipped over, and Sana spit basically all of hers at half the table in a shocked-spray laugh, soaking Magnus, Vilde, Noora, and Chris.

Everyone ate until they couldn’t eat anymore, then the plan was to go pass out in the living room to a movie and wake back up when it got really dark to do something fun, but there was still the matter of the table and cleaning and everything.

Isak and Jonas stood up at the same time, looking at each other and about to dart for the living room to avoid cleanup duty when two small hands landed on their shoulders and sat them right back down.

“No, we cooked,”

“Hey, I cooked,” Even said and Noora waved a hand over his face for him to shush.

“--we cooked, so you boys get to clean. Make sure it’s spotless.” She pointed a very serious finger at them before hooking her arm through Eva’s and Chris’s, dragging them up from the table and headed off in the direction of the living room.

“Okay? Okay, we can do that. We can do that, right guys?” Magnus said and Jonas snickered.

“Yeah, yeah. How hard can it be?”

The girls disappeared, and Isak made it as far as helping to clear two dishes off the table before he disappeared too, but the rest of the boys were too busy trying to find out how to wash a dish without spraying water everywhere to care.

They were still just high enough to think it was hilarious without being so high they were making
more of a mess than cleaning. Jonas and Even got into a light conversation about filming, after Mahdi mentioned something about Jonas adding the cabin trip to his project, which was when the Queen decided to grace them with his presence again.

“Even,” Isak sing-songed from the doorway, twice as far gone as the rest of them were, he could hear it without lifting his head from the plate he was rinsing.

“Isak,” he replied, turning the water to the other side of the sink with his wrist so Magnus could get started on the next one.

“Even,” Isak whined again, sliding up behind him to slip two hands down his back pockets.

“Evi, baby, c’mon. C’mon, now, I want you now.”

Even caught the towel Jonas tossed his way and turned around, throwing Isak off balance with the motion. He kept drying the plate with both hands, catching Isak’s stumble with a lifted knee against his hip, landing him back on solid ground with both eyebrows up, mouth pursed to hide the smile.

“Ev--” Isak started again but Even didn’t let him get out that much before he was interrupting, steady and serious, eyes locked on Isak’s with every word.

“Go wait for me in the bedroom.”

One moment’s pause to inhale and Isak fucking took off, nearly slipping on kitchen tile before he went skidding around the corner.

Even finished drying the plate, taking his time before he turned back around and held it out to Mahdi, who was putting all the dishes away.

The boys were all staring at him with their mouths open.

“...what?”

“Nothing,” they all retorted instantly, turning back to their individual tasks with their eyes wide.

“--anyways, so that’s why I’ve been looking into film, but I really would love to see the video you made Jonas, Isak told me it’s great.”

“It is,” Mahdi agreed, “It’s deep.”

“Speaking of which.” Magnus waved a hand around, proceeding to spray soap bubbles on both Jonas and the counter. “You really don’t have to clean too.”

“Are you sure?”

“Dude, you cooked.”

“Well yeah, but I don’t mind.”

“Even, we got this, you go...deal with Isak.”

He gave them all a cocky smile, tossing the towel back down and starting for the hall, throwing a look over his shoulder since he knew they’d all be watching anyways. “Oh, don’t worry, I will.”

“Ha! How he landed somebody like that, I have no fucking clue,” Magnus was saying, already turning to the other boys as he disappeared around the corner.
“Somebody go warn the rest of the house, we don’t want anyone else just walking in there--”

If it were any other occasion, he’d knock first - unlike some people. But Isak had been pretty damn eager to get him in here, so Even simply slid open the door, stepping inside quickly and sliding it right back shut behind him.

He’d really had no idea what would be awaiting him, and if Isak was bare naked on the bed like he was guessing, he wasn’t too keen on revealing that to all ten people in this cabin.

The moment the door closed behind him - no lock, seriously? - Even was turning for the bed, mouth open to say something dark and low, only.

Isak wasn’t stripped naked, wasn’t wearing any less than the last time he’d seen him. In fact, Isak looked. Exactly the same, with the exception that he was now laying in the direct center of the bed, smushed, staring at the ceiling, surrounded by pillows with absolutely none of them under his head.

“...halla?”

“Halla what’s your opinion on destiny fate signs and serendipity?” He said it so fast it was all one word, connected and echoing, blinking over a few more inhales before he rolled his head to look over at Even crossing the room.

Isak lifted his eyebrows and Even smiled easy, lighting up maybe a little too much for what the occasion called for but Isak was here, and being fucking precious, and Even couldn’t be fucking happier than getting to crawl into a little pillow fort next to him.

“Why’re you asking?”

“I dunno, I feel like us being together shouldn't belong to some higher power, but I don't know how it's possible everything lined up perfectly for us to land here either, y'know?”

Even reached over to stroke a soft, pretty cheek, watching Isak watch him, gears turning behind those still smoked out pupils.

“You're deep when you're high.”

“Shut up,” he complained, turning away and squinching up his face in offence, shaking it a little. “Nobody's deep on these sheets.”

“Ooo, and poetic too.”

“I was talking about sex,” he whined, complainer and high pitched disbelief and Even laughed, flopping down off his shoulder to wrap an arm around Isak’s and bundle him in close to his chest.

“How about I just hold you and we talk about destiny instead?”

“That sounds nice,” Isak mumbled, pressing a loose kiss to the closest piece of Even to his mouth.

“It will be,” Even replied. It always was with them, a hand stroking through the soft blonde hair, ducking to press a closed-eyes, lingering kiss to the top of Isak’s pretty head.

“So do you believe in signs then?”

Even looked up at the tiny painting on the wall, sketching the angle of the long shadows from the
setting sun outside their window into his memory.

“Yeah, I mean. That’s what 21:21 was.”

Isak’s breathing stopped in his chest, making Even glance down at him in worry.

“Holy fuck, I forgot about that.”

“Hmm? Yeah, the first time I kissed you I’d been thinking about it all night, just waiting for some kind of sign. Then I asked you what time it was and it was 21:21. I dunno, it just felt like a sign.”

“You know how my birthday is the 21st?” Isak asked him and Even hummed a confirmation. “Did you know I was born at 21:21 too?”

Even pulled back to stare down openly at the wide eyes blinking up at him all youthful and sweet.

“No. No, you couldn’t’ve been.”

“No, you couldn’t’ve been.”

“Yeah, I totally was! Isn’t that. Trippy as fuck? Fuck,” he giggled, rolling a little bit in Even’s arms as he snickered to himself, lip catching between his teeth, heartbeat rapid under Even’s fingertips and wrists as he watched Isak laugh and tried to cognize how many fucking things had lined up.

“Destiny,” he declared, still giggling, before he was jabbing a finger into Even’s chest, looking at him very seriously under those long batting eyelashes. “Or maybe parallel universes, we don’t know.”

“Maybe both,” Even offered and Isak curled into his chest again, fist tucked up under his cheek and making him look that much more like an angel, taken straight from the gospel books to burst from holy water with their lips locked and 21:21 tying their hearts together with red string.

If there was such thing as awe, pure wondrous awe, this was it.

“Then there’s my mom, you think that’s a coincidence?” Isak mumbled into his hoodie, words taking a second and a half to register before it hit him what he’d just said.

Even leaned back sharply, looking down at the wide staring green eyes and wishing for the first time today they weren’t glazed over, so he could actually fucking read them.

“What do you mean?”

Isak just blinked up at him.

A phone went off on the nightstand, chiming loudly with a staccato vibration. That wasn’t a text tone Even recognized. Actually, he didn’t think Isak had personalized text tones, he had to have changed it recently.

“Speak of the devil,” Isak drawled, tongue slipping out to wet his lips, looking up at Even instead of over at the phone.

“Do you think that was a coincidence? That she texts me when I’m talking about her?”

It was so lackadaisical, blinking slowly like this wasn’t his mom they were talking about, someone who Isak ‘hadn’t talked to since he moved out,’ then went to a concert with and ditched, who was apparently pissed at him, wouldn’t that hold a little higher of a priority than whether or not it was a coincidence that she texted?
Even reached over Isak to grab the phone off the side table, pointedly not looking at the screen and flipping it around for Isak to take. Isak blinked at it once and dragged his gaze lethargically back up to Even’s instead.

“Don’t you wanna answer?” Even pressed, waving the phone closer.

“I shouldn’t when I’m high.” Isak pouted his lips, rolling his head boredly to knock his temple against Even’s chest, eyes slipping closed. “You answer.”

“You want me to look at a text your mom sent?”

“I don’t give a fuck,” Isak announced loudly, eyes still closed and talking about a lot more than Even reading a text.

It wasn’t technically consenting permission to open a private message, especially when he was high, but if he really didn’t want Even to open it he’d tell him, and instead Isak cared so little he was just lying there. Even didn’t have the willpower not to turn the phone over.

He couldn’t see anything but a preview of the text, which didn’t make a single word of sense the first time he scanned it. Then he read it again, having to light the screen back up as it disappeared.

It didn’t sound like regular language, but it was still weirdly familiar, maybe a quote of some kind…?

Then he placed it. It was a quote alright.

That was a quote from the Bible.

What...in hell...did that mean.

“I think it's something from the Bible,” Even said slowly, scanning for a response of some kind. Isak didn't open his eyes. Doesn't so much as twitch. “Do you want me to open it up and reply or something?”

“I never do,” Isak told him simply, shifting to lay more comfortably on Even’s arm. Even just stared down at him. He wasn’t surprised, and he never replied. That mean this wasn't the first time he'd been sent something from the Bible.

Okay, what the actual fuck was going on with Isak’s parents?

“Stop thinking.”

He’d been staring at the text again trying to place the passage when Isak interrupted, rolling to tilt his head up and wait patiently, eyes still closed in his spot of peaceful floating reservé.

“Come down here and kiss me.”

Clearly, they weren’t going to talk about it. And he wasn’t going to pry, especially not today, so Even just sucked in a breath and leaned over Isak to place the phone on the side table again.

The curve of Isak’s jaw slipped into his palm, belonging and warm as much as the phone had felt foreign and cold.

Then their mouths were slipping together, lips interlocked and tugging, dramatic and beautiful as the setting sun casting shadows over Isak’s pretty face.

The last bit of draining light, dark curving over that precious cupid’s bow as they inhaled apart,
pulling back enough to see the smile deepen on one side, dimples carving into precious skin.

A moment just to look before Isak wet his lips, mouth falling open to whisper sweetly between them,

“What about how well our lips fit, do you think that's a coincidence too?”

Lørdag, 21:32

The movie ended, the sun went down, and everyone got over their food comas enough to be craving dessert.

“We didn’t make dessert, sorry,” Noora shrugged at the boys, mouth pursed to hide the smile as the rest of the girls giggled behind their hands.

“It’s too bad we don’t have chocolate or something,” Eva sighed and Mahdi snapped upright, waving a idea hand in the air.

“S’mores, that’s what we should do.”

A cheer went up, half the group popping up to count, realizing the two they were missing, then the cheers turned into a heated debate over who had to go get Isak and Even.

“You walked in on them once already, Jonas, you do it.”

“They weren’t actually having sex yet, just stripping each other!”

“Oh, I thought he'd been trying to save his ass.”

“No, there was no ass.”

“Still, you’re his best friend!”

“Exactly why it shouldn’t be me!”

Magnus nodded, lifting a hand from around Vilde’s shoulder to point in agreement.

“That’s a fair point, especially considering—”

“Hey,” Jonas interrupted, pinning him with a look. Magnus threw his hands up.

“I wasn’t gonna say it.”

“Say what?” Eva propped a hand on her hip and all their heads whipped over to her.

“Eva, you do it.”

“Me?? Why???”

“You’re like. His chick best friend.”

“Besides, it’s your chance to get him back for the last cabin trip.”

She tipped her head, mouth pursing as she thought it over.
“Yeah, okay. But just because the rest of you are scared to.”

“We’re not scared!” They shouted after her, making her stick her tongue out before heading round the corner to knock on the door.

“Isak? Even?”

There was no response from inside, and she couldn’t hear anything drastic happening so.

Eva cracked open the door, peeking inside. They were on the bed alright, tangled up in white sheets, pressed together, limbs woven, and her heart skipped a fucking beat in her chest.

Isak was passed the fuck out on Even’s arm, blonde hair fucking everywhere and Even was just laying there looking at him, peaceful quiet smile on his face, blinking slow, a gentle hand over Isak’s collarbone as he watched him sleep, all soft and overwhelmingly in love.

Even lifted his head as she took a single step inside, closing the door quietly behind her because the rest of them definitely shouldn’t see this. Hell, she shouldn’t be seeing this right now. She kept her voice as quiet as she could so she didn’t pop the bubble of beautiful she’d stumbled in on.

“We’re going outside for a campfire on the rock, to roast marshmallows. Isak used to love it, I think it’s worth waking him up for.”

“Okay,” Even said quietly, giving her a grateful smile before gazing back down at the pretty sleeping face. “Thanks, we’ll be out in five.”

“We’ll wait,” she smiled back, then she was slipping out of the room again, sliding the door carefully and pausing with a shoulder still inside, clearing her throat so Even glanced back up.

“We all look good in lilac or gold, if your mom wants to shop for bridesmaid dresses early.”

Even laughed, low warm and fond. She closed the door behind her with a smile.

When they came out of the room five minutes later, Isak was wrapped up in a scarf and beanie, looking warm and soft and sated, but awake. Even was glowing, brighter than the full moon outside as he herded everyone off the couches and for the door.

The rock they made a fire pit on last time was fucking giant, but with ten people they had to stick pretty close not to land in the lake. Which was Isak’s excuse for sitting nestled between Even’s legs, holding golden brown marshmallows up over his shoulder for lips to wrap around, cheekbones flickering with smiles in the firelight.

It was bitter fucking cold out here, but they were all bundled up and close enough to the fire that no one was freezing, leaning against each other and laughing as someone started up a marshmallow war.

Magnus was the first one to say it, leaning behind Vilde to whisper,

“You think the scarf is to hide a dozen hickies again?”

“Probably,” Mahdi speculated, glancing between the smile on Even’s face as he kissed Isak’s cheek and Isak’s instant whining about sticky marshmallow on his skin.
Jonas leaned down from his perch on the rock behind them, glancing to make sure Eva or Sana weren’t listening.

“I dunno. Probably not as many as 12.”

“Fair. At least some though.”

“Yeah, definitely.”

Noora clapped her hands together, looking around the fire at everyone and holding up a bottle of champagne.

“Alright, what are we singing?”

“Singing?”

“Campfire songs! Let’s go!”

“Nei, Isak’s not allowed to sing,” Eva teased, reaching out to shove Even, making them both tip.

“Huh?? Me? Not allowed to sing?? I’m the best fucking singer, I could sing circles around every single one of you—”

The indignant ranting got drowned out by the laughter, red and gold reflecting over the skyline of trees in the distance, brilliant smiles of the youth reflected in the lake below.

It tapered into giggles as Jonas waves his arms at all of them, leaning his shoulder against Eva’s to lift his voice and make her sing with him,

“Hey-ey, hey-ey-eyyy. Hey-ey-ey-eyy...your lipstick stains, on the front lobe of my left side brains-...”

“I knew I wouldn’t forget ya,” Noora, Chris, and Magnus joined in, all smiles and tipping heads. “--and so I went and let you blow my mind.”

Jonas broke into a laughing smile, pointing a triumphant finger,

“Hell yeah!”

“Your sweet moonbeam, the smell of you in every single dream I dream.” Vilde and Sana joined in, leaning towards each other with bright laughs puffing in the cold.

“I knew when we collided, you're the one I have decided, who's one of my kiiiind.” Even and Mahdi lifted their voices too, Even’s arms around Isak’s stomach, knees on either side of his ribs making him rock side to side with him.

Vilde was snapping along while Magnus played drums on his knee and Chris broke the end off her marshmallow roasting stick to drum on the rocks, fire burning bright.

“Hey soul sister, ain't that Mr. Mister on the rad-i-o, ster-e-o,”

“The way you move ain't fair you know,” Isak sang, looking up over his shoulder accusingly and Even laughed, the sound of it fitting in just as beautiful as the music floating over the water prettier than summer fog.

“Hey soul sister, I don't wanna miss a single thiiiiing you doo-oo, tonight.”
“Hee-ey heeeey heeeey!”
“A single thing you do-oo, hey-ey-ey,”
“Heeeey heeeeeey heeeey!”
“...to-night.”

Søndag, 08:57  
08.01.2017

“Where in hell are all the eggs? There was an entire other carton of them yesterday morning.”

A moments silence as Even sat up, everyone's eyes wide, then he was shouting into the kitchen before the girls’ laughter got too loud to hear over.

“They're on top of the cabinets!”
“...what??”

Yeah, there wasn't much chance of explaining that one.

Chapter End Notes

I had way too much fun writing that, absolutely no apologies.

I don't know if the texting visual thing is working for you guys, so I put it in in both picture and link form, but like hmu if the formatting is being weird or just not showing up.

anyways, as much as I love fluff, school is starting again soon for both us and them, so. prepare for vacation dreamland to...end soon...:)

there will always be fluff though. promise. any comments and kudos you guys leave feed my soul, a billion thanks to every word you've spoken

xx
Lunch tables and Lights

Chapter Notes

Warnings: people are assholes as always, also, sex. At one point pretty rough sex. And a reminder that Isak is 17, so if you’re not keen on reading sex scenes, stop when you reach ***

as promised, there is legit smut in this chapter, which I do have an apology for because it’s not the hot smut you’re expecting but don’t worry, there will be hot smut eventually, get smacked by the emotion train here tho
Disclaimer: there is also an orgasm in this chapter that is super overdramatic, like hit by a train dramatic, do I care....no.

did i accidentally wear a snapback in the snow the other day and get inspiration for an entire scene of this fic...yes

Inspiration from this gifset which refers to this song which I listened to on repeat for this….whole chapter

The first scene of this is entirely self indulgent in that it’s literally the only opening i want for season 4, regardless of who it’s about, so

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mandag, 08:55
09.01.17

School used to open to him making out with some girl - last year who was it, Sara? - right in the front of the classroom, just going at it in a wildly loud extremely false brag of his heterosexuality.

Today, first day of winter semester, he was once again right in the front of the classroom, propped on the edge of a desk instead of standing in front of the window because this time he wasn't bragging, this time it was nowhere fucking near false. This time he was making out with his boyfriend before class because he wanted to kiss him more than everything in the world and goddamn, what a glow up.

Most of the people walking in the room kinda freaked out, stared, awwed or just went dead silent but Isak didn't notice, didn't care.

Until Eva and Noora walked in. Then he noticed.

“Awww! Eva, quick, get a picture!”

Isak lifted them both the middle finger and didn't stop kissing Even for one single second.

“Y’know, last year we were complaining about how we didn't think Sara was his type.”
“I think Even’s his type,” Noora smiled and Even lifted his hand to weave his fingers between Isak’s that were still flipping them off, rearranging them so their thumbs were sticking up instead.

Both of the girls laughed and the giddy boys’ lips broke apart for Isak to glare up at Even, mouth open and offended.

“Hey!”

“What? I think the girls are sweet,” Even said and Noora blew him a kiss while Eva flipped her hair over her shoulder.

“We think you’re sweet too, Evi.”

“What’d you just call him?” Isak looked over at them accusingly, one possessive hand on Even’s hip. “They took my nickname!”

“I thought you didn’t like it?”

“It’s still mine!? And since when are you guys on a nickname basis??”

“Since when we love him.”

“Agh?!”

“Shouldn’t you be getting to class though, Even?” They gave him pretty smiles and Isak made a face at them before tipping his up to Even’s again

“Why did you have to charm everyone?” Isak asked him, melodramatic and pouting.

Even laughed, the sound of the gods, and cupped Isak’s face to kiss him again.

“I should be getting to class, babe.”

“I know I know. Enjoy your day.” They kissed one more time, domestic and sweet then Even was stepping out from between Isak’s knees, their hands trailing to fingertips before dropping as Eva made a pouty face at Noora who aww’d.

Even shot his eyebrows up at them, smiling with a little wave as he spun out of the classroom, nearly running into their teacher at the door.

The teacher looked very confused as to why a tall beautiful third year was rushing out of his classrooms with a deep blush on his cheeks and glitter in his eyes, but that was nothing compared to the confusion of 98% of the classroom staring back.

The only person who wasn’t confused anymore? Isak, sitting down with a sideways smile deep enough to have one triumphant, cocky simple as Eva and Noora made kissy faces at him from the next table over.

The seat next to him was empty for the three seconds it took Vilde to run into the classroom, offering a dozen apologies before she slid into the empty chair next to Isak and gave him a bright smile that this semester? He easily returned.
So it all started the weekend they were apart, aka tequila weekend. Keyword started.

It was the first lunch of the new semester and the boys were at their regular table, arguing about something that’d happened at the cabin he hadn’t been privy to so Isak just plopped down, snagging his sandwich and taking a bite, looking around at the staring faces as he realized they’d all gone dead silent as he sat down.

Isak paused, half chewed piece of bread in his mouth as he stopped and looked at them.

“What?”

“Four,” Jonas said and Magnus sucked in a breath between his teeth.

“I dunno. I’m thinking two.”

“Nah, man, I’m goin’ with Jonas on this one,” Mahdi nodded solemnly, looking Isak over. “Four.”

“Four what?” Isak mumbled, swallowing the chunk of sandwich and unscrewing the lid on his water. Magnus waved a hand at him, finishing chewing to lift his voice and say brightly,

“Hickies.”

Isak spit out his drink over everyone.

When Even walked up they were all still laughing and wiping themselves down with napkins.

“Completely worth it,” Jonas was saying. “It’s four isn’t it?”

“Four?” Even asked, sitting down with his eyebrows knit and Isak lifted his head from a hand to tell him flatly,

“Don’t ask.”

“It is!” Jonas crowed and Isak glared heartily at him. Mouth open as he threw back his head and everyone burst into laughter again.

“Ah hah hah ha--”

~*~*~

There were two things that registered when he blinked drearly awake.
1) he was strangely really cold, 2) what the fuck.

Isak rolled over, careful with his limbs so as to not wake up...a non-existent body, apparently.

He blinked three times at the empty blue pillow before it registered that Even wasn’t there. However, his jacket was still hanging on the edge of his bookshelf, so clearly he hadn’t left. That and the bedroom door was cracked just enough to see a glowing dim light from the kitchen.

At least he knew why he was cold, but still, what the fuck.

He stumbled out of bed and ghost-walked down the hallway, squinting at the bright of a laptop screen at the kitchen table before voicing the second, but now primary of his conclusions.

“What the fuck are you doing? It’s two in the morning.”

Even leaned to the side to glance at him as he wrapped two arms around his neck, bending over to do it, then there was a soft kiss on his cheek and life was a little better. Not that it explained why Even was out here instead of in bed with him.

“Just working on getting together some pieces of my project.”

“Now?” Isak lifted up to put a hand on Even’s forehead, dramatically check his temperature. He was a little warm, but Isak was a lot cold, so odds are it was more body heat than fever. Didn’t mean he was gonna whine any less.

“Come back to bed. You need sleep to function in school. Sleep deprivation is a very serious thing, I would know.”

“So is this project,” Even countered, ignoring the hand on his forehead and still typing away, so Isak sighed and dropped his hands to Even’s shoulders instead. “I have to have a portfolio made in a couple months. This is my last semester, I need to be ready.”

“You will be.” Isak squinted at the back of Even’s head, because how this constituted for improving readiness, he had no idea. “…what, are you applying to BI or something? C’mon. Come back to bed with me.”

He got a little whiny but it was late goddammit, and he was still cold.

“I’ll be back in in five, I’ve just gotta wrap this up.” Even finally looked over at him, head tipping up and hair broken into a few untamed curls at the front, the kind he got when he wore Isak’s hoodies and laid down on his bed just enough for the usually slick swirls to curl in pretty, gravity-defying waves above his shiny eyes.

“I'll be waiting,” he retorted, narrowing his eyes just in case Even didn’t get how serious he was despite being in pajamas and only vaguely on this planet. “Five, cause I can't be sleep deprived too.”

Even nodded, turning back to his screen and whatever the hell he was doing that warranted sessions at two in the morning. Isak rubbed a hand over his shoulder and drifted back to bed before his feet froze off on the tile.

Slipping back under the sheets was the most wonderful, warm thing he’d done in any of his memories ever, probably.

He grabbed his phone from the bedside table so he didn't fall asleep before Even came back in. Isak wasn’t kidding, five minutes. Even could fuck with a lot of things but their sleep was not one of
them.

He snapchatted Eva, squinting into the flash and looking vaguely disoriented, sliding the screen over to the time filter, glaring 02:16, and typing a quick caption.

_When your man keeps you up for the not fun reasons ☠_

He sent it and thumbed through Instagram until the door creaked back open.

Even crawled in next to him and it'd been seven minutes but Isak kissed him anyways, pulling the sheets up over them both and curling around Even’s spine.

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Tirsdag, 08:12
10.01.17

When he woke up in the morning he had a snapchat from Eva, looking hella bomb in her makeup and smiling all bright over the caption.

_When you don't let no man keep you up at night and get fantastic beauty sleep_

He sent her back a snapchat of him and Even brushing their teeth, eyebrows raised in his direction as Isak looked at the mirror and made a face around his toothbrush. There was a hickie visible above the collar of his tshirt and it was simply captioned, _knulle det_

Even spit in the sink, washing out his toothbrush as he shook his head. Isak glanced up from captioning the photo, making sure to save it before he did.

“What? We're cute.”

Even shot him an amused glance in the mirror. “I know we're cute.”

“Good,” Isak said around the toothpaste in his mouth, pressing send and locking his phone.

He tossed it on the counter and Even straightened up, turning round to kiss him on the mouth, minty foam be damned.

“Ew, who are you--”

“Ew? Ew? You've kissed me with cum in your mouth and you're eww-ing toothpaste??”

Isak leaned around his cocky ass to spit in the sink, glaring upwards with narrowed eyes that were more teasing than anything.

A solid hand ran up his hip where he was bent over, sliding over his waist, ribs, shirt bunching up as Even dipped to press a fond kiss to his spine.

Isak finished washing out his mouth and toothbrush, patting both dry with the towel to spin back around, eyebrow up at the audacity of his goddamn precious domestic boyfriend. Even’s hands
moved with his body in a sliding circle around his waist that wasn’t making him dizzy at all.

“Much better,” he whispered then Even was kissing him, for real, backing him into the counter and scooping him up on top of it, Isak’s back banging against the mirrored cabinet when there was suddenly a rapid knock on the door.

“You two aren’t the only ones who have to brush their teeth in the mornings!” Noora yelled through the wood and they broke apart to look at each other, half caught out and half amused and all Isak could think about was how if she knocked so promptly at them kissing, she probably heard Even’s comment a moment ago.

God fucking dammit.

“Don’t forget your phone,” Even reminded him as Isak hopped off the counter with another peck to those pretty lips and a very aggrieved sigh.

A hand on the doorknob when Isak turned around and realized it.

“Fuck!”

“What?” Even spun back around, suddenly and instantly concerned. Isak looked up at him, eyes wide and curse on his tongue.

“There was water on the counter.”

It didn’t matter how much he glared, Even’s bursting laugh was louder. He was still laughing as he opened the door and apologized breathlessly to Noora.

Still laughing, all the way down the hallway to go get his backpack from Isak's room.

Giggling and bumping his shoulder on the bus ride to school, so much so Isak rolled his eyes and pretended to mind.

He didn’t mind.

Tirsdag, 09:04
10.01.17

All day yesterday teachers had been going over the curriculum for the new semester, so it wasn’t until today they got assigned their new lab partners. Or, well, students assigned themselves new lab partners.

Last semester he’d had at least four offers before he even sat down, one of the few perks of being the new kid.

But a lot had changed since last semester and he didn’t really know what to expect from Nissen - there were whispers of rumors, about what happened at Bakka but Even had no idea if that would change things.

If Isak would change things.
So he maybe showed up to class a few minutes late, ready to sit in the last available desk, not worry about the whole picking process, but it turned out that’s what...everyone did.

Because literally no one was sitting yet and the teacher wasn’t even here, fantastic.

Even sighed, hoisting his backpack higher on his shoulder and headed straight for the back of the classroom. He had no fucking problem with popularity, people liked him, he wasn’t blind enough to think he was unattractive, but secondary school was fucking fickle and honestly, he was pretty ready to be done with it anyways.

Apparently though, Hartvig Nissen could be surprising. Because the minute he sat down three people started making their way over, his eyebrows shooting up at the advances.

Then all heads were turning as another latecomer opened up the door, sauntering in with gum in his mouth and a cocky look on his face. He looked fairly familiar, but Even couldn’t quite place him. Maybe from the Christmas party?

Oh, and he was heading this way.

Even leaned back in his chair, watching as all the other students who’d been heading towards the back of the room suddenly halted, retreating as Mr. Big Shot apparently canceled out all of the competition.

Interesting.

The guy landed in front of his desk, tongue sticking in his cheek to mirror Even’s carefully unimpressed, expectant face.

“You’re Isak’s boyfriend, right?”

“Ja,” Even lifted his eyebrows, the entire class holding their breath behind the boy. The vibe was super fucking weird, he had no idea whether to anticipate punches thrown or the guy throwing his books down on the table next to Even’s.

He didn’t do either. He shifted his backpack strap and stuck out a hand instead.

“Chris.”

“Schistad?” Even sat up, reaching over the table to take his hand, shake it once.

“Ja. You’ve heard of me then?” A blooming smile, something almost sneaky in it, a flash that made you wonder what he knew that you didn’t. “That makes two of us.”

Even nodded, taking his hand back. Chris Schistad. The one the girls had thought was secretly dating Isak last year, that he was pretty sure might actually be dating Eva right now.

It was a small world. Props to Isak though, the kid was pretty hot.

Chris bounced on his toes once, angling his head for the empty seat next to Even. He waved a hand, watching the rest of the room slowly unfreeze and go back to assigning seats as Chris slid into the chair next to him, backpack dropping loud and dramatic as he slid a binder onto the table, popping his gum loudly.

Even smiled to himself. This was gonna be one hell of a semester.

“You don’t happen to know anything about Genetics, do you?”
“Oh hell no.”

“Great. Me neither.”

~*~*~

Onsdag, 12:17
11.01.17

The second Isak sat down in his chair at lunch, the boys were opening their mouths.

“Two,” Jonas said and Isak groaned, tipping his head back in misery.

“Oh god, not this again.”

“I’m going three this time,” Magnus said, sounding very sure of himself. Mahdi debated a moment before lifting a shoulder.

“I’m still with Jonas.”

Isak rolled his eyes dramatically to pin them with a very done, very overdramatically unimpressed look.

“Well? Who’s right?” Magnus pressed, all of them eyebrows up and faces eager. He had the most ridiculous friends on the planet.

“I didn’t count,” Isak informed them haughtily and Jonas scoffed, eyes rolling right back at him.

“Bullshit.”

“Really! I didn’t. The only reason I knew last time was because I had to make sure my scarf covered!” He finally opened up his lunch bag, unwrapping a toastie and pursing his lips at the packaging. “...these are lower.”

“Hm.” Jonas sounded unconvinced, eyes narrowed in amused suspicion when he glanced back up.

“Go check then.”

“I am– excuse me?” Isak threw down his sandwich, sitting up in his chair, Fully Prepared to Take Jonas On (™) as his voice dropped ten times incredulous. “You want me to go strip in front of a school mirror and see how many hickies I have??”

“Watch out, here comes Even,” Mahdi warned. Isak glared at them all, slumping back in his chair before his boyfriend caught the fighting stance mode.

“You guys suck,” he told them sincerely.
Still, an hour later, he was leaning over to Jonas in Math, waiting for him to lean back, attention caught as he dropped his voice, one eyebrow up.

“It was three.”

“Don’t tell Magnus,” Jonas replied, genuine little smile on his face as he straightened up, elbowing Isak once for good measure.

Isak rolled his eyes, keeping his mouth shut in clear indication of what he thought of their little game.

But he was smiling to himself when Jonas next glanced over and Jonas smiled too, letting them both float in the niceness for a few minutes.

Before he leaned over and scribbled Even <3 Isak on Isak’s math homework and Isak was trying to whack him with a binder while he laughed and their math teacher threatened to separate them for the thirtieth time this year.

~*~*~

Torsdag, 21:12
12.01.17

They were chilling in his room, working on homework when Even suddenly sat up, carefully swirled hair bouncing as he looked over at Isak, who was sitting with one eyebrow raised on his bed.

“What time is it?”

He checked the corner of his computer, glancing back over at Even.

“21:12.”

“C’mon.” Notebook shoved aside and Even pushed to his feet, already started for the door.

“Where are we going?” Isak called after him and Even paused at the door, shooting him an axiomatic look over his shoulder, eyebrows up.

“Does it matter?”

Cocky, beautiful, and damn intriguing. Fuck him. Of course it didn’t matter.

Isak closed his laptop and slid off the edge of his bed to grab a hoodie.

Even was putting on winter clothes at the door by the time he reached it, skeptical but grabbing his overcoat and boots, watching Even get into his with an odd look on his face.

“What? We’ve been working for the past three hours, we deserve a break.”
“Three hours?” Isak scoffed, shoving a foot ungracefully into a boot and wiggling until it fit into place. “Where’s your stamina?”

Even glanced up from tying a boot - overachiever - and gave him the suggestive version of the eyebrows, up down and a quick burst of a smile he couldn’t fight. Isak huffed a laugh and zipped his coat closed.

“It’s cold, y’know.”

“Life’s too short to be worried about the cold.”

Isak tipped his head in vague agreement. Life was too short, yeah. Fine. Might as well just drop everything and go, why not? That bomb could always take them tomorrow.

The hallway was dark but they both knew it well enough by now, Isak following behind Even down the stairs and out into the street.

“Bikes?” He asked, jogging a step or two to catch up to Even’s side once they hit the sidewalk.

“Hand,” Even replied, holding his out, palm up, fingers spread and waiting. They weren’t hand holders, they’d probably only held hands like...once, and it’d been when they’d been making love and Isak had cried, so.

Actually, he was pretty sure he’d never actually held Even’s hand in public. Like. Ever, but here he was, standing in the middle of the sidewalk, offering his hand, waiting for Isak to make a move.

Isak took it.

Even lifted their entwined fingers, looking at them for a moment, then he was putting both their hands in his pocket.

Isak giggled, blush radiating up through his cheeks as Even’s eyebrows shot up, mouth open as he looked over all innocent.

“What?”

Isak just shook his head, squeezing his fingers a little and Even’s eyes crinkled up, curling into a smile as they started walking, hands entwined.

The chills that went down his spine had nothing to do with the cold. And it wasn’t as chilly as he’d thought it’d be, certainly not cold enough to have hands stuffed in pockets, but.

It was kinda nice. To just, let Even take the reins and say let’s go again. The last time Isak had dropped everything and followed blindly had been before things got Complicated. Also before things got Real, so. He wouldn’t trade that for what they had now, but the little twist of unexpected was giving him the same butterflies it had from the Before.

Hopefully with a little better outcomes now. But he wasn't gonna worry about that. Wasn't gonna worry about anything, cause this minute right now? Was really fucking nice.

“Do you think it’s been nine minutes since we’ve left your room?”

“I dunno, probably?”

A tug on their hands and Isak skidded to a stop, looking around in confusion and knit eyebrows, then Even was pulling him under the nearest streetlight and kissing him solid, sure, blissful on the lips.
He didn’t protest at all after that.

Even was holding his hand and the street was lit up bright until they were walking uphill and the buildings began to fade into individual houses, the kinds that were on the coast. The Fjord was only a fifteen minute walk from Nissen, although his apartment was far enough from Nissen there was no way they were walking all the way to the Fjord in this weather.

Didn’t mean the view Even found was any less breathtaking.

They ended up at the top of one of Oslo’s city outlooks, a blank stretch of hill that overlooked the lights of the city. There was a hill like this on the other side of the city with a bench at the end, where guys infamously took girls on dates, trying to show they were deep to get deep.

There wasn’t a bench on this hill, but Isak had been to both now, and he had to say, the view from this one was better.

Just the right angle to see glittering water in the distance, the bay that bled out into the North Sea miles and miles in the distance. Far away glittering dots of the museums on the coast, the tourist spots that never turned out their lights. Residentials stuck in the side of hills, surrounded by trees and lit up like a blanket of stars stretched out under feet instead of overhead.

And here they were, close enough to reach out and touch the city’s chilled glow, far enough away to fade it something beautiful, glittering out of a dream, some other piece of the world that couldn’t possibly be the one they knew by day.

The lights were blinking in the distance and it was cold but Isak embraced it, sitting down cross-legged on the freezing dirt, far enough from the edge of the outlook his heart wasn’t pounding danger, close enough to see everything.

Not like he was looking. It was fucking beautiful. Breathtaking.

But Even was standing, perfectly still, three steps closer to the edge as he looked out over the city, wind ruffling the front of his hair peeking from beneath his hood.

He was watching the city and Isak was watching him and feeling like the biggest cliché in the world but he didn’t care.

Gold and glitter you could capture in a photograph. The glow off Even’s cheekbones, the shadowed indentation of his cheeks, the wind blowing every loose piece of his clothing like nature herself was doing everything she could to drag him into her clutches, only for his bones to stand tall, immovable here at Isak’s side.

Yeah, he could watch the city another time.

“Crown?”

“Hmm?” Even hadn’t budged, hands in his pockets, heels to his boots ground into the earth enough to disrupt the soil around his weight.

“For your thoughts.”

“You really just wanna know what’s going on inside my head, don’t you.” Even threw a look over his shoulder, daring smile and shiny, bright eyes - the kind of shine from a month ago, in Isak’s room after their promise minute for minute, accusing him of being a bad liar and smiling like all the stars in the universe or any parallel one couldn’t dream of comparing.
Isak was here, soul stretched out underneath one of the most star-ridden skies in the world, over a golden star-ridden blanket of a stunning city skyline, and that was nothing on the stars in the eyes of that boy.

“I do,” Isak told him, mouth tipping up in one corner, honest and sideways as he wet his lips and looked up at the glowing blues, deeper darker purer than the pitch night surrounding them. He could probably sit here forever, feet planted and knees up for the sky, leaning back with forearms propped, wrists crossed, just gazing up at Even.

Wondering what he was seeing to make him keep his eyes on Isak for so long when the city was there behind them. It wasn’t like he shone. He was wearing a damn snapback for godssakes, his ears were fucking freezing and he should have grabbed a beanie but he wasn’t paying enough attention when they left and it’d gotten colder fast.

It was his own fault though, he could pull up his hood if he wanted, but he didn’t want his peripherals blocked when Even was that goddamn beautiful and far away.

Whatever he was seeing, it was enough to keep his eyes on Isak’s as his voice lifted.

“Oslo. Do you think you’ll stay?”

It wasn’t the question he was expecting. His eyebrows furrowed a moment as he thought it over, looking around the silhouette of Even’s shoulders to the city below. Oslo.

“I’ve never thought about it.”

“You’ve never thought about where you’re gonna be in five years?” It was all incredulous, and that definitely wasn’t what he meant either. Isak scrunched up his face, shifting a little and glancing back up at Even’s waiting expression.

“Well, like. I mean, I guess I’ve wondered and considered a couple different jobs, what I might want life to be like. But I don’t know, I don’t really have a reason to leave. It’s not like I’ve got some burning desire to be somewhere else.”

Soft, impossible lips rolled in as Even looked out over the city again. It wasn’t judgemental, not at all. Just thinking. Again. Like always.

“What about you?”

It apparently wasn’t the question Even had been expecting either, because that time when he turned around he turned around all the way.

“Stay in Oslo?”

Isak nodded and Even inhaled all that cold air, flooding his lungs with the chill of the earliest days of a new year. Then he was closing the feet between them, turning back to the skyline as he sat down next to Isak, cross-legged, hands wrapped around his ankles as he leaned forward a tad, tried to see the whole rest of the glittering lights that crept all the way up to the drop below them.

“I don’t know. I haven’t decided.”

As much as Isak’s heart was pounding, he was ignoring it. They were talking about life, this didn’t have to be about him. He wasn’t gonna be selfish enough to make this about him.

He forced himself to exhale, not realizing he’d been holding his breath waiting for an answer. For
just a moment in time, he could be purely honest, completely chill. Let Even be the same.

So when he cast a glance to the side, curious and light, the question came out that way too.

“What do you think you’d go? Denmark?”

“Denmark? No.” Even huffed a laugh, glancing over at him with a smile before he was looking out at the lights again, radiating gold and heat from the six inches of space in between their knees. “I don’t know. I guess...London, or something.”

“Noora’s been to London,” Isak offered and Even lifted an eyebrow, chest expanding as the sharp gaze cut down to the dirt, finger tracing over the ground like there was something there just as wonderful as the view.

“It doesn’t have to be London, I just feel like. There’s so many places that are so big, that have so much history and life and stories, that just. Somebody’s gotta stop and make them, y’know?” Head turned to meet Isak’s waiting gaze, holding it for a moment before he abandoned his drawing in the dirt, mouth twisting to the side, eyes to the vast shimmering water in the distance. “The people who are already there aren’t gonna do it.”

Isak looked out over the city. He didn’t really understand a lot of the way Even’s mind worked, how he thought and looked at things that way, but he was trying.

“Well, then...wouldn’t a person in London think the same about Oslo?”

That time when he glanced back over, it was Even who was already studying him. Isak raised an eyebrow, wondering distantly if he’d always been this expressive with his face or if Even brought that out in him moreso.

Then Even was looking out over the skyline again, Braque’s Houses of L’Estaque and Kinkade’s most famous parisian street wound into one. It might not be London, but this was Oslo. And up here, it was a hell of a lot easier to see that than in between the walls of Hartvig Nissen.

“I don’t know. I guess I never thought about that,” Even said quietly.

Isak lifted a shoulder.

“Maybe there’s still a story for you here, that you haven’t gotten the chance to see yet.”

The turn to each other was in sync that time, clicking like lightning buzzing out a half dozen lights below. The depth in Even’s gaze was kinda astounding, enough it was taking Isak’s breath away. There was something important, Even was looking for, right here, right now, and Isak had no idea what kind of answer he was giving, but whatever it was, he could promise it was honest.

Lips rolled in, popped back out with a quiet sound and there was something else now, in the way Even was turning back to the gold of the city.

“Yes. Maybe.”

The wind was playing with their hair, battering curls against his ear, carrying the whisps of memories on its breath as Isak closed his eyes and let his face tip up, something warm and young blossoming slow tendrils in his chest.

It’d been windy like this, the first night they’d kissed. Well the night itself hadn’t been, but it’d been nothing but rushing oxygen riding on the back of Even’s bike, gold city lights flickering in the
distance. A pure, beautiful black night sky that was theirs to own, theirs to ride and sing and feel alive.

From his heart to his fingertips.

The first cold touch to his cheek made him blink open in surprise more than alarm, misplacing the snowflake for a teardrop until open wide were looking up at the sky and he nearly got snow in his eyes.

Of fucking course it decided to start snowing right now, of all times.

What was that last deep conversation they’d had, about serendipity, signs?

Isak ducked his head to avoid blinding himself with ice crystals and reached up to swing his snapback around. The flat bill would keep out a surprising amount of blinding white, he would know.

Then he was lifting his gaze to the horizon, watching for a moment as white drifted sporadically in front of the distant gold, closing them off in another bubble, separate from the city, separate from the world or anything past the quiet, large-flaked snow tumbling down from clouds too high and dark to see.

He risked a glance in Even’s direction, expecting to see him with palms to the sky, eyelashes fluttering over the white pearls clinging to long black strokes, but.

Even wasn’t watching the snow, Even was watching him.

One of these days he was going to catch Even looking at him like that and go with the flow, let it be all chill and connecting and beautiful. Today wasn’t that day, and to say he startled was an understatement.

Full-blown, what the hell instant confusion, the same furrowed-eyebrow look he gave Even the first time he kissed him in public, in the fucking school hallway, you’re so fucking hot, Isak, and then just. Swept up the stairs like James Dean while Isak was left there half gaping half confused and a lot of. Like. Shook.

Even was looking at him like...he didn’t even know how to describe that actually, but Even was looking at him like that and Isak nearly fell over.

Like, he wished he were kidding, the shock was so instant he retreated instantly, leaning back and looking at Even with wild eyes and the what the hell half-smiling, mostly confused and somehow also glowing ??

Yeah. All in all, he handled that super the opposite of graceful and the moment shattered near instantly, because Even was now laughing his ass off at the look on Isak’s face and Isak was rolling his eyes, a lot, it wasn’t his fault, he wasn’t used to being looked at like he held the universe in his palms, fucking hell.

“You’re--” He couldn’t even get it out he was laughing so much, one hand over his stomach as he almost fell over in the dirt too. Well, dirt and snow now, it was falling slow but what was falling was definitely starting to stick.

Stick and pile and stick.

Isak rolled his eyes some more, mouth open with an exasperated huff because this wasn’t his fucking
“You’re...the most precious person I know,” Even finally managed, still laughing as he rocked like a bottle pin, almost falling on one side only to lean into Isak on the other, swinging pendulum to slide an electrifyingly cold hand through his hair, the first they’d touched since their hands dropped at arrival.

Isak’s sharp inhale was mostly snow but he somehow didn’t choke on it, cold tingling down his throat as Even’s wide, happy mouth puckered against his cheek, holding warm and sweet on his skin while Isak’s rolling eyes turned into shy, downcast ones, crooked smile tipping up again as the kiss bloomed through him, radiating through his teeth, his skull, down his vertebrae into his ribs sternum arms fingertips.

God fucking dammit.

From heart to fingertips.

Even’s nose was ice against his skin, exhale painting him foggy as a glass window in this cold. The hand in his hair slid down to his jaw, tugging tipping Isak to turn to him, face lifted and lips parted, eyelids heavy and blinking slow. Noses brushing back and forth, light as the winter snow that was starting to gather on hoodies and bare hands.

He was floating too much to realize they were kissing until their lips pulled apart. Second nature, a waterfall, rushing heavy and deafeningly numb, smooth enough to slide him under so he didn’t realize he was giving into the familiar warmth of 360 degree submersion until they were breaking the surface to gasp chilled oxygen into drowning lungs.

The hand he clutched for Even’s neck was desperate, but he let it be filled by tangling fingers to weave, life and heartbeat strumming so vibrantly as it slid out of reach, pushing to his feet.

“Coming?”

Come outside.

He fluttered opened his eyes, positively soaked in gold and white over the deep black of the night and the light of Even’s smile above him, offering a hand.

A promise, or maybe nothing, but he was offering.

Isak took it.

~*~*~

Fredag, 12:16
13.01.17
He used to plop down at their lunch table bored and complaining, but now he'd started sitting trepidatiously, bracing himself for--

“Two,” Magnus instantly blurted out and Isak blinked up - give me strength - to the sky.

Jonas scoffed, arms crossed over his chest as he gave Magnus a judgy look.

“Man, do you have eyes? See how nice his hair is? There’s no way he had time for that and time for sex this morning. I’m going none.”

“Fuck you,” Isak said, lifting the bread off his sandwich and throwing it at Jonas’s stupid smug face.

An offended sound and Jonas narrowly avoided getting smacked, batting it aside so it slid across the table into Mahdi’s lap.

“Hey!” Mahdi looked up at him accusingly, like that was his fault instead of Jonas’s somehow.

“Fuck you too,” Isak told him and Jonas leaned back in his chair nodding all triumphantly.

“See? I told you. No sex this morning, that’s why he’s so crabby. He’s become dependent on it.”

Jonas was gloating and Isak was glaring him down viciously. He wasn’t gonna confirm it. But he wasn't gonna sit there and let Jonas have the last word like that either. Fuck.

“Why are we friends,” he finally complained, taking a miserable sip of his drink as the boys bubbled up in more laughter.

Fredag, 13:59
13.01.17

His last class had just gotten out, and it was the first school Friday of the year, it had to count.

If now was all they had, he had a list of things he wanted to do and there was no goddamn time like the present.

This time around he didn't stand in nervous debating silence. There was nothing to debate. Isak got out of class, went into the courtyard, spotted a familiar beanie at the place Jonas always chained up his bike, and started walking.

“Halla,” he greeted and Jonas looked up, a little surprised.

“Hi.”

Isak shoved his hands in his pockets, tugging a bit on the hood over his beanie. “Are you doing anything?”

“Not right now. Why, are you offering kebabs?”

Isak quirked a smile, shifting his weight head tipping as he thought it over. “I don’t think I have anything that drastic to tell you.”
“It wasn’t that drastic,” Jonas argued lightly.

“It was drastic,” Isak corrected and Jonas closed his mouth because, well. For them, yeah it kinda was. Way too much leading up to it over the past few years and everything had changed after it so. Drastic.

Thankfully, he didn't have anything that earth shattering on his mind.

“But actually, uh. I was just gonna head back to my place. If you wanted to come hang out for a bit. Listen to music, play FIFA, I dunno.” He shrugged, offering a hopeful little smile.

“Really?” Jonas squinted at the horizon, giving him the side eye. “You want to hang out with me?”

“Shut up.” Isak reached over to shove his shoulder and Jonas broke into a smile, looking down as he rocked with the shove.

“Ja. Of course.” Another calculating look, dark eyebrows furrowing. “You didn't bring your bike today, did you?”

“Nei, too cold. I can ride on the back of yours?”

“Nah, I'll leave it.” He clipped the lock back around his back tire, tipping his head for the street. “We can take the bus.”

“Okay, cool.”

Isak used to swing between the seats and he didn't anymore, but Jonas didn't really think about that. No point in reminiscing over times that long past, at least not little details like that, right?

He plopped down by the window and Isak plopped down next to him.

They used to sit with their shoulders plastered together, for no reason at all. Jonas never really noticed it, Isak was always just within elbowing reach, where he was supposed to be.

Except they didn't sit quite that close anymore, and he noticed that now.

Time.

“How long’s it been since we hopped on the bus back to yours?” Jonas glanced away from the window to catch the eyebrows going up on Isak’s face.

“Awhile, jeez.” He was looking at his phone, thumbs pulled out of his mittens to type, a swooshing sound as a text came into the chat he had open.

“Actually, hey, I just texted the house and I’m pretty sure both Even and Eskild are home.” Isak glanced up at him and Jonas wondered distantly when the transition happened between his parents house to that apartment being home, when Even became part of that equation. “Do you wanna head back to yours instead?”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Cool.” Isak went back to typing and Jonas turned back to the window. A maze of city buildings and wide streets, the familiar ones they used to run as kids.

“Hey y’know what I’ve been thinking about?”
“Hmm?” He glanced over, watching as the few blonde curls beneath the rim of a dark beanie smushed back against the seat, rolling to have their eyes meet for a moment, then out the window over Jonas’s shoulder.

“I feel like you know a lot about like, my life and everything right now. Especially after that tequila night.”

“Tequila night,” Jonas laughed and Isak smiled but it didn't last long, eyebrows furrowing as he got lost in thought again.

“But I dunno, I feel like I don't know half as much about what's going on with you, y’know? Like yeah, I hear you guys talk about what happens at parties sometimes and stuff but like.” Pretty green eyes flicked to him, serious and bright, full of all the life Jonas had once mistaken for innocence and childhood. “How are you?”

Jonas studied the boy beside him for a moment, trying to cognize this sharp-angled, serious face with the hollow look he'd grown used to since last year, and the soft bright of the younger version he used to know.

Isak Valtersen.

Jonas shook his head, a distracted smile and little scoff.

“Jeez. You really have changed.”

“Not that much,” Isak cantered and Jonas laughed once, looking back out the window, their city.

“Yeah, that much. But like. I dunno change, if that makes sense? I guess.” He glanced back over and Isak was furrowing his eyebrows, looking considerably confused. Apparently not that much sense.

“What do you mean?”

“Like. That question for example.” Jonas waved a hand to indicate - he'd need charts and graphs to really explain the changes, but vague hand gestures would have to do. “In primary, or hell, even at the beginning of Nissen it's totally something you would say. Did say. But like. It just hasn't really been you for a little while, y’know?”

“Yeah,” Isak said, kinda drawn. Jonas studied the look on his face a little longer, watching him watch the streets outside before he decided there wasn't anything in Isak’s expression he hadn't been expecting.

They both sat in silence for a bit and watched Oslo pass outside the window.

“Serr, though,” Isak cleared his throat, waiting a moment for the bus to announce its next stop. “I meant it. How are you?”

“I'm good, I guess.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. I mean some stuff is changing, and there's some adjusting to get used to but.” He shrugged, feeling the weight of Isak’s eyes on him in his peripherals.

“Like what?” He asked. Jonas huffed, glazing over the passerbys and the red lights to the stop signs,
the bruises Isak was sporting for a week after trying to climb one when they were younger.

“Like, y’know. You and Even.”

“Me and Even?” The confused surprise was concentrated enough that Jonas looked over at Isak’s expression, mouth open a little and eyebrows all the way up. Dramatic hoe.

Jonas rolled his eyes.

“Yes. Not like it's bad, I couldn't be gladder that you're happy, but it's just. Different, I guess.”

“How so?” Isak asked and the automated bus voice announced their stop next. Jonas grabbed the bar, ready to pull himself up and catching a glimpse of Isak’s visible emotions again.

Twisted up a little, looking at him funny and Jonas ran back over his words, Isak’s, mentally smacking himself and quickly correcting in case he’d been misunderstood.

“Not because he’s a boy.”

“I didn't think it was,” Isak said, although there was a touch of relief behind his eyes so that wasn't entirely true. Still scared, beneath all of that and Jonas had to turn back away before he spiraled into the hellish blame circle for why Isak threw himself so zestfully and painfully into the closet between their first and second year.

“What, then?” He pressed, still confused and overly cautious but there was...a lot about that he didn't wanna talk about. At least not today, when they hadn't hung out, just the two of them for no reason at all, in longer than Jonas could actually remember.

“Just different.” The bus rolled to a stop and Jonas stood, swinging for the door first.

“Okay,” Isak said, then he was following Jonas down the steps.

The speakers in Jonas’s room were significantly better than Isak’s laptop. Although Eskild did have that nice ass sound system in the living room for parties, the surround sound speakers under Jonas’s bed and propped on his dresser were ideal to chill to.

They were listening to nineties hip-hop, rapping along and bobbing their heads, leaning back on Jonas’s pillows, shoes hats scarves and coats dropped to the floor, socks crossed at the ankles as he flipped through an old journal of song lyrics and Isak drummed on the bedsheets.

“Do you ever play guitar anymore?”

Jonas rolled his head on his pillow, both their curls smushed as Isak’s tongue darted out to wet his lips, expression all open and youthful.

“Play? I don’t even know if I know where my guitar is.”

Isak huffed, scooping up the journal the moment he discarded it, sliding off the bed as Isak started flipping through pages. Guitar...if had to be somewhere in here, it wasn’t like he just lost a giant black case with an expensive instrument inside it.

Well, wasn’t under his bed. Closet then, maybe.

“Hey, how do you feel about Eva?”
“Eva?” He slid open a closet door, arm up to catch things in case everything from the top shelves came tumbling down. Victory, didn’t today. “Isn’t she dating Chris or something?”

“That doesn’t answer my question,” Isak said and Jonas looked over his shoulder to catch the little shit of a sassy expression on that face. And roll his eyes. Isak was laying on his stomach now, stretched out across the bed with his feet kicked up, Sass Mode doubled with the super extra pose.

But curiosity mode must’ve been doubled too because Isak made an impatient sound, well??, the way he did when Jonas was taking too long to answer.

Jonas furrowed his eyebrows at him and turned back to rifle through his closet.

“I don’t know. I haven't thought about Eva in a while. At least, not since you last brought her up.”

“Huh? Me?”

“Yeah, tequila night?”

Another glance over, Isak squinting at him, kicking feet paused midair.

“I don’t remember that.”

“I do,” Jonas muttered under his breath, turning back to the disorganized pile. Not that he had any idea what it meant.

Well, he had an idea. Actually, more like a few that he really wasn't sure about and honestly? He'd rather that.

If Isak did something worth freaking out and apologizing over as intensely as he had that night, Jonas wasn't sure he wanted to know what it was.

“Ah hah, found it.” A couple of sweaters shoved aside and he managed to grab a black leather handle, tugging out the guitar case.

Propped open on the floor, grabbing the instrument by its neck and lifting it free, stumbling a bit. It was way lighter than he remembered.

“Jeez, I think I've forgotten how to play.”

Jonas plopped back down on the bed, making Isak scoot over so there was room for the guitar too.

“Ah, it can't be that hard,” Isak scoffed, making Jonas’s jaw drop in offense.

“You never tried!”

“I tried, I just sucked.”

“True. Hey, there’s a pick taped to the inside cover of that journal, can you grab it?” Isak flipped a few pages, peeling back the corner to hand him the barely familiar piece of plastic. This was gonna be a disaster. Jonas sucked in a breath, got situated, and poked Isak’s rib with his toe. “Okay song request, go.”

“Hmm.” Isak rolled over onto his back, looking up at the ceiling, mouth pursing as he thought it over.

Jeez, he’d forgotten how long the kid had gotten, all lanky limbs and strangely tall. Facial structure exaggerated with an actual jawline. It was crazy how much had changed in just the year and a half
since Jonas’d last played for him.

Not counting just the inside, he was so much older on the outside, laying here on Jonas’s bed acting like the boy who giggled next to him on the bus and looking like the boy he paused worried at his locked for.

Did he time his locker visits to match Isak’s?

He had for years.

That was how they’d met when they were kids. Alphabetically, Vasquez and Valtersen. End of the alphabet, two restless curly-haired kids who rocked their feet at their desks and got in way too much trouble together from the first day a teacher had sat them next to each other.

“I can’t remember a single one,” Isak confessed and Jonas tipped his head, fiddling the strings back into tune as he ran over some of the old classics he used to play.

“What about that song I tried writing in middle school? Do you remember that?”

And Isak was suddenly beaming, rolling his head on the bedspread to turn all that brightness in his direction.

“The one about that river?”

“Ja, ja.”

“Of course I remember that!” Isak was smiling back up at the ceiling, hair folding over itself in shifting golden pieces as he elbowed Jonas’s knee. “Question is, do your fingers?”

“Let’s see.” Might as well just go for it. Jonas started picking at a few strings, shifting chords and readjusting to see his hands better. It’d been a hell of a long time, but he used to play this all the time and it was starting to come back pretty quick.

He never wrote the words, it was just some nice chords and a melody shoved together but Isak used to sing along sometimes, or hum, rapping on the occasions he wanted Jonas to laugh.

He was a way better singer than Isak, but Jonas had never written a lyric in his life. That whole journal was Isak’s - or songs they worked on together, chords sketched out in margins over sloppy teenage boy handwriting.

The river song wasn’t actually about a river, but they’d been lying out in the sun beside one when he’d made it up. So Isak called it the river song. It was easier than calling it the Isak and Jonas song.

His fingertips remembered it alright, and if the little blissful smile on Isak’s face was any indication, a soft heart did too. The green eyes were closed, elbows spread on the comfort and hands clasped over his chest, just listening. Remembering, probably.

Jonas kept playing, looking at the guitar instead of Isak, wondering what memory he had pulled up right now to be smiling like that.

For a year of faked smiles and cutting eyes, it still kinda struck him, every time Isak smiled now.

A lot of things kinda struck him now, about Isak but maybe it was just because they’d both turned a blind eye for so long it’d left him blinking harshly into all the light shining down on them now.

The best thing about this song was that it repeated perfectly, flowed right back into itself so he could
play it for hours at a time, if his fingers didn’t try to kill him first. The record on this song was something like forty-six minutes straight, his hands had gone entirely numb and Isak was laughing so hard through most of the second half of it he wasn’t sure if he was actually playing anymore, but.

It’d been awhile. He made it about six minutes before his fingers were starting to ache without the calluses he’d let fade. It had a clean spot to cut off the ending too, which was nice, but he didn’t take the cutting dramatic strokes he usually did because for all he could tell, Isak had fallen asleep right there on his bedspread.

Or maybe that was just peace, peace deep enough to take him into one of those parallel universes he thought were so fascinating.

Jonas trailed off, picking quieter and quieter until the notes were ringing empty and quiet into his bedroom.

Isak didn’t budge and Jonas carefully sat the guitar to the side, engaging his abs to lift up over his best friend’s peaceful face, debating whether or not he was actually asleep.

He was gonna go with no.

Jonas jabbed his finger into the soft spot on Isak’s side, the one that always made him jump three feet in the air. A fuckton had changed over the past year, but thank god. That was not one of them.

One moment he was lying there all quiet and the next he was shrieking, jumping up and backwards, freaking the fuck out enough to fall right off the edge of his bed, arms flailing before he hit the floor with a thud.

Jonas laughed hard enough he almost fell off his bed too.

Fredag, 19:30
13.01.17

When he got home, Eskild and Linn were sitting at the kitchen table with Even, the three of them engaged in light conversation over a delicious-smelling dinner. They usually ate on the couches, or took food to their rooms, so Isak had an eyebrow up at the formality as he came around the corner, backpack slung over one shoulder.

“Hi, everyone.” He got various mumbled greetings back and dipped to peck Even’s lips before glancing around the mess of the kitchen. “How come you’re only a chef when I’m not here, huh?”

“There’s leftovers, we saved you some.”

“Oh, it's okay. I ate at Jonas’s.” Isak rubbed a hand over Even’s collarbone and gave everyone a quick smile, tip of his head. “I'm gonna go put my stuff down and make a homework plan. Enjoy.”

A quick kiss to Even’s cheek and he was off in a swirl of smiles and pretty blonde curls. Eskild raised an eyebrow at the look on Even’s face and Even threw a piece of broccoli at him.
By the time Isak made it back from his room, the kitchen was cleaned and his roommates were nowhere to be seen. Well, no one besides Even anyways, who was stretched out on the couch, holding his tablet in the sky, arm muscles all engaged and straining. Would you look at that, he hadn’t been wrong about the drawing upside down thing. And what a way to workout.

He could think of better ones though.

Isak swung a leg over Even’s hips, sliding into place and instantly straddling the beautiful boy beneath him. The tablet dropped to the side pretty quickly.

“Woah-oh--”

“Hey you,” he greeted, swooping down to kiss him on the mouth. Even put a hand in Isak's hair and sat up, circling them both ‘round to put his feet on the ground and his hands on Isak's ass. The kiss opened a little deeper, two hands on Even’s jaw and lips interlocked, grip tightening and rolling him forward a tad, enough to make him break off in a gasp.

Even’s mouth was on his again, hands sliding up his spine, kiss softening as quickly as it’d heated, soothing right back down into gentle, domestic ease, a quiet sound as they finally tugged apart slow enough to burn his gut.

Isak blinked slow, settling back into the dangerous warmth of belonging here in Even’s lap, strong arms around him and that deep, intense gaze locked on his.

Fuck. He was so, so. so far gone.

Even’s hair was a fucking masterpiece today, swirled up all fancy instead of just brushed back, that beautiful way he’d been wearing it the first day they’d ran into each other on the bus and gone back to his house.

So of course, Isak put his hands in it, running fingers through the swooping blonde and making Even roll his eyes.

“Did you have a good time with Eskild and Linn?” He asked conversationally, mostly focused on the way silk slid through his hands.

“Mmhm. How was your afternoon with Jonas?”

“He made fun of me for not being able to play guitar.”

“You don’t?”

“You do?”

“You've seen my room,” Even reminded him and Isak squinted, thinking back.

“Oh yeah! There's like...three fucking guitars in there.”

That got him a little huff and Isak shrugged a shoulder, offering an unapologetic smile.

“I was a little distracted by some other beautiful things in that room.” Even’s eyebrows went up with the corners of his mouth and Isak kissed his temple. “I’d love to hear you play, though.”

“I'll play for you next weekend, yeah? My mom wanted you to come over for dinner on Saturday.”
“Tomorrow-Saturday?”

“Didn’t you have a thing with the boys tomorrow?”

“Ja.”

“And I’m helping out my parents this weekend. So next Saturday, then.”

“Okay. Yeah, we can do that.”

Another smiling peck to his mouth and Isak tipped his head pressing closer, deeper. Except as soon as he was Even was pulling back again, making him suck in an exasperated breath, rolling his head to pin him with a very clear look that said really?

“Yes, really. I have something I wanted to talk to you about.” He said it all haughtily, shifting a bit so his hands were on Isak’s waist, head tipped back against the couch to put some space between them, see clearly.

“So, I’ve been thinking,” he started slowly and Isak put an eyebrow up.

“Oh?”

“Ugh,” was all he got in return for his sassy little comment, and another eyeroll. This one was fond though, all smiling and whatnot so Isak straightened up a bit, a hand on Even’s chest, tipping his head to the side.

“Seriously though, I was thinking--”

“You never cease to impress,” Isak teased all cute and Even cursed under his breath, pressing up to kiss him again. That’s right, that’s what he thought.

They kissed for a bit, getting into it this time, tongue sweeping into his open mouth and before long he was grinding down on Even’s lap, heat beneath him and tight-gripped fingers leaving bruises on his hips. Fuck fuck fuck, they were wearing way too many clothes, why weren’t they in significantly fewer clothes?

And of course, it was just as he started trying to wrestle Even’s shirt off him that the fucker decided to break off the kiss, breathlessly pull them back out of it with two hands on either side of Isak’s neck, head ducked as he tried to breathe.

Isak threw his head back and groaned at the ceiling. Why.

When he leveled a heated gaze back down on Even’s he was smiling over an open-mouthed huff, all those stars in his eyes again while Isak pouted.

“Jesus Christ, you’re distracting.” A thumb stroked his bottom lip fondly and Isak rolled his eyes. The point wasn’t to be distracting, it was to Have This Conversation Later so they could do way better things right now.

He leaned forward, skirting two hands up Even’s chest to press another kiss to his lips, following pecks up the sharp angle of his cheekbone before he got forcibly removed again. Even laughed, high-pitched and sweet, bubbling as he slid a hand over Isak’s shoulders and tried to turn his head to see him.

“I really did have something I wanted to chat with you about.”
“I’m listening,” Isak told him, sitting up and circling his hips down slow against Even’s definitely still interested state. Even’s eyebrows went up, gaze flicking between his eyes and mouth before he was cupping Isak’s cheek and pressing a kiss to the underside of his jaw. Isak let his eyes flutter closed, waiting for the kisses to work their way down his neck, only.

It was speaking again instead.

“I uh. I think I’m gonna live at my parent’s house for a bit.”

“Hmm?” He drew back, opening his eyes up again as he ran the words over in his head, then he was suddenly frozen on Even’s lap as it sunk in. “Oh.”

Even still had a hand on his cheek, studying his face as Isak sucked in a breath and looked down.

“Okay…”

Even’s head dipped, trying to catch his gaze again. Isak wet his lips and glanced up before looking away again. Shit. It had to be written all over his fucking face.

“Is there. Uh. Like do you just want to, or…”

“I think it’s probably for the best,” Even told him simply and the hand around Isak’s heart squeezed enough to make it kinda hard to breathe. “I mean. I know they miss me and we’re probably a little young to be living together.”

There was a lightness in Even’s voice, a tease in how young they were, maybe a jab at how much younger Isak was from that, but it wasn’t making him feel much better.

He rolled his lips in, looking up from under his lashes as he tried to gage the weight in those worried, waiting blues, kicking himself a dozen times over for not handling this the way he should be, but he just. Didn’t understand. His parents missed him and they were too young?

“So it’s...a society thing then?”

“Nei. Nei, not at all. I don’t care what people think.” Earnest, sincere, the way he’d been when he’d dropped that first heart-stopping question, what would your parents say if I was your boyfriend?

“I’m not any less keen on you.” He was searching Isak’s face just as much, physically shaking the sincerity into his skin from the grip he had on his jaw. “Honestly, Isak. I could spend every morning for the rest of my life waking up next to you.”

Well fuck, that was a thing to say.

Every morning for the rest of Even’s life waking up next to him.

To say he was shook was an understatement this time, lips parted around a shaky inhale, eyes cast down, hand tightening its grip in Even’s hair.

“Then…” Isak swallowed, risking a quick glance upwards, as nervous as he’d been that day, what would they think of me as he asked a question that sounded a hell of a lot more like an offer. “…why don’t you?”

Both of those eyebrows went up as Even looked him over, letting the words drift between them, the irrationally small space between them in the intimacy of embrace that’d become the new default setting for comfort.
Physically he could stay like this forever, but Even still hadn’t answered his question so mentally his brain was running in circles, freaking the fuck out as Isak searched diamond-cut blue eyes, completely on edge while he waited for that mouth to tip back open.

“...you need your sleep.”

It was smacking a balloon with a brick, instant deflation and an exhale shaped in a smile, so relieved he could hug Even right now and not let go for the next three years.

He wasn’t trying to leave because of something Isak did wrong.

“Ah-hah, this is about the other night,” he declared, rolling his eyes at the guilty look of confirmation. Here he was terrified out of his goddamn mind and Even was just being overly worried about nothing at all.

“School’s started back up again. You need sleep,” he repeated and Isak scoffed, making Even pin him with a serious look. “We both do, we’re still in secondary school and it just. How much less sleep are you getting now that I basically live here?”

“Surprisingly, probably more? Now that I’m not up until 1 in the morning going through existential crises and googling The Gay Test.” He mouthed off the end as overdramatic as he could be, tilting his head back and forth with it, chest expanding to breathe again as the world shifted back on its axis.

“You what?” Even laughed, crinkling up and disbelievingly fond, to which Isak lifted a shoulder and clicked his tongue accusingly.

“You were really hot and I was overwhelmed, okay, google always has some kind of answer.”

The hands on his hips slid around his back again as Even tipped forward and kissed him, the smiling sweet kind of kiss that had them breaking apart to rub their noses together lightly.

Bursting for two, smiles and silence as they paused, noses tipped together, breathing each other in for a moment.

Isak slid his hand to the back of Even’s neck, heartbeat beneath his fingertips as he calculated, carefully considering the word choice, the sincerity in Even’s voice, the nervousness before he said it. The worry.

Even wanted to move back to his parents’ place, or he at least thought it was the right thing to do, and Isak wouldn’t be a good boyfriend if he made him feel like they couldn’t at the very least have an honest conversation about it.

“You’re not just worried about the sleep, are you?”

“It’s a big part of it.” Which meant it wasn’t all of it, but Even didn’t owe him that either.

Fuck. Even really wanted this, he could feel it. Fuck.

“Are you sure? That this is you, and not some other voice that doesn’t...doesn’t understand us?”

“I’m sure,” Even told him quietly and Isak sucked in a breath. To reiterate, fuck. That was not what he was hoping to hear.

But it wasn’t like he lived on some fantasy island, he got it. It was kinda surprising they’d made it through completely fine for as long as they had. Okay, maybe that wasn’t that surprising, they just fit
really well together, but. That meant they could fit together apart too.

Isak tipped his head again, slow, weaving eskimo kisses again, downcast gaze catching the soft inhale to follow.

“If this is what you want, then yeah. Of course you should move back into your parents’, I’d never want to keep you from that.”

Foreheads pressed together, an awed hand sliding over his cheek as Even’s eyes crinkled up over a smile, unbelievably fond, grateful.

Isak wasn't grateful, but at least he hadn't been enough of a dick to stand in the way of Even being happy.

They could get through anything. Just watch.

“How about we have really fantastic sex before I go?” Even leaned back to tip his head suggestively with the offer and Isak’s eyebrows shot up as the implication set in.

“You're leaving tonight?”

“It's gotta be sometime.” The worry was starting to creep back in and Isak cursed in his head. There were times to be an overdramatic hoe and this was not one of them.

“Yeah, uh. Yeah. Of course.” He leaned in to press a reassuring kiss with it. No really sure which of them he was trying to reassure.

He didn't mean to slip so deep into it, shifting reassurance all drawn out to slide slowly apart full of unmaskable longing.

Isak inhaled shakily and Even held him tight, heartbeats pounding.

The moment he got his lungs back under control Isak slid a hand in the still - somehow - masterfully sculpted hair, holding the intensity of that gaze until he was sure Even’s attention thoughts world weren't focused anywhere but him.

This was gonna suck, but. Even wasn't any less keen on him and he wasn't any less keen on Even either.

Then Isak let the smile curl, one side of his mouth tipping up high and real enough to deepen a dimple with it, the kind of triumphant smile that used to fall through the moment the boys closed the bathroom door behind them.

No falling this time. Not that kind, anyways.

Just the wow, and I thought I was in love with you beforehand kind. Gold and night and lights.

“I vote a wholehearted yes on the really fantastic sex though.”

Apparently that was queue to scoop him up and carry him bouncing and complaining all the way to his room.

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Yeah, the complaining didn't last much longer than that.
It was really fantastic sex actually. New and familiar all at once, the jaw-dropping sensation of Even moving inside him heightened a dozen times over by the bursting fit of laughter they’d broken into in the middle of it.

Isak had two arms wrapped around Even’s neck, knees planted on the bed as bruising hands lifted his hips and pulled him down again, steady slow friction deep enough inside him he was too busy trying to breathe through the waves of never ending sparks to be anywhere near coordinated in the unbroken string of open mouthed kisses, another shiver going down his spine as Even’s tongue slid over his.

The hands on his hips pulled them flush again, grip skirting open palmed down his ass to squeeze and roll Isak’s body forward, making him break off in a low moan, eyelashes fluttering from how deep the new angle was pressing. Forehead falling to Even’s as hooded eyes flickered down their joined bodies, the mess of slick trapped between their abs, friction sliding over how fucking hard he was too.

The hands on his ass ground in at the heels, shoving him back only to roll his hips hard and close again, another quiet sound escaping his open mouth as Isak lifted his gaze, eyes locking on Even’s, blue near swallowed up with dilated, flashing dark.

Their mouths slipped together again and Isak smiled into the fond kiss, stuffed with bliss and warmth, comfortable and close with his arms around Even’s neck like this, trapped in at the shoulders while their bodies moved together in mind-numbing sensation that tasted as sweet as the lips tugging kisses over the curl of his mouth.

Sharp teeth nipped his bottom lip as they tugged apart, then Even was nuzzling their noses together with another rock forward and Isak’s curled smile burst wider.

It was the same way he couldn't stop smiling as he kissed the beautiful boy dancing around the kitchen singing to Gabrielle, only now instead of a yearning, chasing mouth he was torn between gasps that curled into smiles at the end, little moans that Even was kissing out of his mouth quick enough to make him dance their lips back together for more.

His eyes were closed again, temple tipped against Even’s as the rolling hips shifted back to lifting with it, only a few inches but enough to make him jolt into that next level of oxygen getting caught in his throat, fingernails digging into Even’s shoulders.

Dragging lips skirted the shell of his ear, teeth scraping to catch sensitive skin, sending a wild burst of sparks to make his limbs tremble, temple pressed harder as a whine escaped his throat. Jesus fucking Christ.

And Even just kept rocking into him slow, easy like Isak wasn’t over here about to pound out of his own chest. Fuck. A heavy hand lifted to push his head further to the side, hardly a fucking warning before nibbling teeth were suddenly biting down on the soft spot beneath his ear, hard.

Desperation sparked down his spine and okay, yep, that was enough of that. Thigh muscles engaged tight to slide him down hard, lifting faster to shove together again, mouth dropping open at the friction as he forced the pace faster since apparently Even wasn't gonna do it.

He could feel the smile against his skin, mouth tipping to ghost warm air over his ear again, voice scraping instead of teeth this time, teasing and low.

“A fucking gay test, really? Tell me you got a 100.”
Okay, Even could call him a desperate hoe all he wanted, it wasn't him being all hot and refusing to take it further, all teasingly slow and whatnot.

But news for Even, that test had been nowhere fucking near a perfect score.

Isak leaned back, bottom lip caught between his teeth as he tried to contain the laugh, looking between pretty blues all shiny bright. Fuck, the bastard looked cocky right now, calling him out on how needy he was while he was still fucking up inside him slow.

Fuck. Alright. Isak had to take a moment to gather himself enough to speak with Even still rocking inside him, okay, fuck. Perfect score, god, clearly, google wasn't right about everything.

“Well?” Even breathed, one eyebrow cocking and Isak couldn't contain it anymore.

He burst into giggles, head tipping back and rolling before he finally managed to look Even in the eyes and suck in a shaky breath, exhaling all at once.

“Twenty percent.”

Even’s eyebrows shot up as his mouth dropped open, rhythm faltering like a skipped heartbeat then Isak was laughing so hard he couldn't stay upright any longer, stomach muscles seizing as he collapsed forward against Even’s chest.

“...what???”

And he ended up having a laughing fit in Even’s arms, giggling into his neck as Even shook his head and lifted Isak up and down over his cock until he couldn't breathe, then Even was wrapping arms around him tight and flipping them, Isak’s head tipping back as he gasped and huffed into another round of giggling.

Even was pressing a thousand kisses over his laughing face while pressing a thousand jolts into his sternum from the crash of their bodies together and--

“20% my ass,” Even scoffed, a few of the rapid kisses landing on his lips, teeth mouth as Isak shook his head, laughing harder and trying desperately to breathe.

“Act-cha--” Isak gasped, breathless and trembling, another huffing laugh as he looked up at his beautiful, disheveled boyfriend escaped strands of perfect hair dangling over his forehead, bright sparkling eyes and barely managed to say it.

“--actually, mine.”

He was laughing again before the words were barely out of his mouth then Even lost it too, bursting into the kind of laughter that had his entire face crinkling up, mouth wide, stars in his eyes. Rhythm entirely fucked as his arms gave out and they crashed together, giggling and rolling to the side, trying to kiss through the all the laughter, Isak’s thighs hitched up high over Even’s hips, toes curled and curls smushed as he giggled against the tongue in his mouth and wrapped his arms tighter around the shaking ribs.

It was a little jarring, considering Even was still inside him, bodies entwined and trembling with laughter, a whole other kind of vibration as Even’s laughter funneled into heated, fond kisses, biting along Isak’s jaw as he giggled, all warm and beautiful and squirmy in his arms.

And Even was entranced, perspective shifting quiet before Isak’s could, everything bubbling up beneath the surface instead of out loud. Lighting up his fingertips and the intensity of his gaze as he
held that beautiful boy close and watched, open mouthed and breathless at all the visible joy lighting up the room like sunshine.

Isak was still laughing, the kind of surprised, stunning kind that had lit up those green eyes the first day sitting in Even’s windowsill, mixed in with the drifting giggles the day they’d made out upside down on his bed, breathing smoke against each other’s skin.

Clutching each other tight, happy and safe enough to lose himself like this in Even’s arms, laughter breaking, “ahaha ha--ah ah, hahah--” as Even slid out and into his body again, a dazzling, laughing smile up at him as Isak kissed his mouth and locked his ankles behind Even’s waist, still shaking with laughter and dizzyingly bright.

Even could do nothing but watch him, lips parted as he danced their bodies together again, an urgency in every push that hadn’t been there before. Isak’s flushed, damp chest heaved, high-pitched breathy laughter in his gasps, head tipping back and mesmerizingly beautiful.

He brought them all the way to the edge that way, a hand on Isak’s cock and the other wrapped behind his shoulder, probably leaving fingerprint marks on the top of his collarbone. Squeezing him dizzyingly tight when they were both already at the edge. Of combustion from laughter, or friction, pressure, heat, something, giggles in every faster, brighter gasp.

When Isak came, he could hear the smile in his shout.

He was still dazed out, trying to reign in from panting to heavy breathing to maybe chilling the fuck out, but honestly he was right on the edge of breaking into exhausted giggles again as Even shot a raised eyebrow his way and rolled over with the bedside cloth they rotated out in hand.

“Jesus fuck,” Isak told him and Even snorted, pressing a kiss to the Isak’s chest as he wiped him clean. Isak put a hand in his hair as he moved down, smiling to himself as he shook his head up at the ceiling.

“Don’t start giggling on me again, you’re not gonna be able to stop,” Even teased, dropping a kiss to the inside of his knee and Isak snickered, lifting his head to see the pretty smile on that face.

“I know.”

Or maybe the aftershocks were still just kicking his ass, but either way he somehow managed not to break into laughter again before Even shot a raised eyebrow his way and rolled over with the bedside cloth they rotated out in hand.

Isak slid a hand over Even’s bare shoulder and turned to kiss him properly on the mouth, melting into it enough that when they pulled apart he was breathless again, a different kind of breathless that had his lips parted and eyes blinking slow, gravity pulling his mouth for Even’s one more time.

When they finally pulled away again they rolled in tandem, catching their breath as they lay on their backs and smiled up at ceiling and kinda just basked in the laughter and pounding heartbeats still echoing in the empty spaces of their room.

Even rolled his head over first, folding his lips in and popping them back out with a quiet sound. Isak turned his head too, taking a moment to just look at that lit up face, reveling in how flushed and goddamn beautiful Even Bech Næsheim was.
And how flushed and beautiful he felt too, laying here beside him in bed.

At least his beautiful sculpted hair was finally completely fucked over. Still looked like a fucking masterpiece though. Asshole.

“I really like you,” Isak told him and Even huffed, a treacherous giggle at the end as he looked away and looked back, the way he always did when he laughed like that, glittering and precious.

“I hope so. We are dating.”

“Aren't I lucky,” he murmured, rolling over to flop an arm over Even’s damp chest, kissing him sticky and warm and fond.

Even ran a hand over the top of his head down to the back of his neck, just looking at him as their lips rolled apart, a sudden silence in the gaze that sent reality sinking back in.

Even was supposed to leave.

He’d completely forgotten.

That was okay. He was gonna be okay, it wasn’t like there wasn’t enough of an ache in his stomach muscles to forget what he felt like. It wasn’t like he wouldn’t see him again, they literally were dating, they had an excuse to see each other any time they wanted to.

Then why the fuck was his heart pounding in all the wrong ways?

He didn't want Even to feel like he couldn't leave, although he was also. Fairly sure it was gonna rip a hole in him if he did but.

This was what Even wanted. It wasn’t crazy, it was probably one of the most mature choices they’d made yet. Isak could support him through this. He could.

So he pressed one more soft kiss to that pretty, lax mouth and flipped back onto his spine, staring up at the ceiling and trying to breathe again.

They lay there for a moment that felt like three milliseconds and three years before the silence broke again, Even’s voice way too real and familiar.

“This sucks.”

“It's smart though,” Isak told the ceiling. “Probably the right thing to do. Just. Like a band-aid, right?”

“Right,” Even said, sucking in a breath and then he was sitting up and throwing back the covers.

For some reason Isak really just. Couldn't stand the thought of watching Even slowly put his clothes back on to leave him so he closed his eyes and tried to exhale steadily through circle lips.

It wasn’t a big deal it wasn’t a big deal, it wasn’t like he didn’t know this was coming, he just had to keep a lid on it--

His controlled breathing was cut off by Even’s mouth covering his, all pressure and new angles from where he was stooping over the bed from the other side of the mattress and Isak didn't think, couldn't think,

He got a hand in the back of Even’s hair and desperation pressing their lips roughly, mouths slipping
apart to crash together harder as his grip tightened, heart on the tip of his tongue as he slid it into
Even’s mouth.

His emotions were written all over every touch but he didn’t know how to not, he didn’t know how
to shove it all behind some filter when he’d burned those up in flames.

Even popped free, staring down at him in the same questioning wonder from the first night he
showed up here and dropped to his knees to worship Isak like a fucking god.

The renewed fervor he’d kissed him with that day, the sudden purpose he had backing Isak into a
wall would end them both tonight, if Even kissed him like that Isak was literally never going to let
him leave this bed. Maybe ever.

In the brief moment Even pulled back to search his eyes, he must’ve read that.

Because when he pressed their mouths back together it wasn’t the rushed, heart pounding purpose of
that night, it was the soft comfort of their kisses at the Christmas party, everything good and warm as
their lips tugged apart in little motions like waves, promises and soft and precious, pecking loose and
warm little sweet domestic ones that were holding Isak so fucking close to the edge he could feel the
fall moments before he broke.

Even was kissing him like he was the most precious thing he’d ever held between his palms and Isak
broke entirely, tear slipping out of one eye as a heartbroken whine escaped his throat.

Okay well. There went domestic goodbye kisses out the window. Enter Emotions™ instead and
Isak really hadn’t been trying to land them here, but.

He couldn’t take it.

The teardrop fell on Even’s hand, the same time the sound registered.

Even cursed and tore off the covers so fast Isak didn't have time to register the cold before Even’s
body was on top of his again and he was wrapping two arms around his neck, knees skirting Even’s
hips and dropping open.

“Fucking hell,” Even kissed him hard, panting and looking dizzy as he rolled his forehead against
Isak’s and slid a trembling hand down his chest.

“I can't do it,” he whispered and Isak sucked in a breath, blinking back the rest of his tears gathered
on lashes, because of course, how could he ask Even to stay like that?

“Ja, I--” He went to close his knees and Even's hand caught one, popping them right back open and
sending a dozen sparks up his tailbone into his spine.

“I can't leave you,” he said and Isak inhaled shakily, eyes closing. Oh.

At least he wasn’t the only one suffering here, he’d feel like an idiot if he was laying here crying and
Even was just chipper walking right out the door.

But no, there was nothing chipper about the way Even swooped down to kiss him. He tasted as
desperate on Isak's tongue as Isak's aching chest felt.

Mouths broken over gasps, hearts pounding wild again, foreheads pressed together and eyes
squeezed shut, stuck in stalemate with neither of them having any clue how Even was supposed to
leave and at least one and a half of them searching for a way to keep the promise for him to.
“Just fuck me hard enough I pass out,” he suggested and Even snorted, kissing him again like he was ridiculous but he was already snagging another condom from the bedside table, throwing it on and lining up as Isak threw his head back. Fuck.

“Then what, how am I supposed to walk out when you’re laying there all. Fucking gorgeous and ahh-ah...ruined by me?”

Isak was trying to gulp in air, breath stuttering as Even slid back inside him, hand catching the inside of his thigh and slipping from having slicked up again despite the fact that lube was still fucking everywhere.

Jesus fuck, they’d never done anything like this before, sliding back together from the desperation of not being able to be apart literally, like. Minutes after they’d just had sex.

His hips tilted up of their own accord, stomach muscles clenching, mouth dropping open as Even sank all the way inside him, smooth as the waterfall kisses that just. Fit together.

It was fucking ridiculous, fucking dangerous how incredible it felt, filling up the place he'd carved in Isak's chest the moment he'd slipped out. To have Even sliding back inside him like this was the one place they both belonged eternally.

In infinite time.

“I'm always ruined by you,” Isak confessed and Even rocked into him hard enough to make him gasp over a little yelp.

And that was the pace he set, thrusting into Isak hard enough to spill a dozen little sounds between his gasps and Even couldn't get enough of it, couldn't get enough of him, biting his collarbone and neck and jaw, swallowing up the shocked little sounds with a completely gone, uncoordinated tongue over sloppy kisses.

He couldn't really breathe if his mouth wasn't covered by Even’s right now, but his chest was gonna explode, bursting at the seams like the rest of him as Even kissed him rough into the pillow, hard as the hips rocking together but it was just too much, he was just too much.

Isak ripped his head to the side, broken gasps dropping to broken moans as Even tipped his hips higher, shoved in faster.

“Ah-- ah- ah ah--” Fingernails clawing Even’s shoulders enough to leave red marks, scrambling to keep hold over the light sheen of sweat he already had going into this.

The hands on his body were burning fire into his skin, pulses between every one of the strong, pressing fingertips. Even had a hand cupping his face, fingers and thumb digging into his cheeks, slipping over his mouth and jaw, holding it to the side roughly as he split Isak's body in half and whole world into a lot more pieces than that.

“AhhHh Even, E-Even,“ he begged, as helpless as he was wanton and Even grabbed a handful of his hair, pressing desperate little kisses all over his cheek as he rocked them higher deeper faster.

“God, Isak,” Even breathed, mouth racing down the side of his neck now, lips losing pressure as their moving bodies picked up harder.

Every jolt was penetrating holes inside him Isak wasn’t sure he was ever gonna be able to fill again.

Even was breathing heavy in his ear and Isak was trembling all over, scrambling to latch onto the
sound of oxygen spilling over his skin, Even’s heartbeat, something, anything to hold onto--

And suddenly the slamming pace doubled, Isak’s spine arching a foot off the bed.

There was absolutely nothing to hold onto, he couldn’t make sound, he couldn’t even breathe, head thrown back and eyes shut, whole body torn between curling up like his cramping toes, skirting knees, or just. Shattering.

“Yours,” Even gasped in his ear and Isak was in another sphere of existence, he was in that parallel universe where they were together forever, since the beginning of time until long past the end of it and Even was here with him, bruising a permanent hand over his heart.

A thousand miles from everything but he could still hear what Even was breathing into his skin as he fucked him hard and fast enough he can’t tell where anything on the planet began or ended,

“Yours, yours, yours--”

Isak would love to say something beautiful back like in infinite time but it wasn’t physically possible, the only thing he could do was try to inhale, a single word ripping past his lips as he fucking disappeared.

“Even--”

There was a hand on his lower spine to catch him as his body threw him into the fucking abyss, everything going white so hard so fast he couldn't register his name tumbling out of Even’s mouth as the universe snatched him up too.

The rest came in flashes.

The lips pressed damp and slow to his face - forehead, cheek, mouth.

The sound of running water.

Warm and wet sliding over his stomach, chest, down between his legs, lips on his knee, hip, heart. That stirred something inside his brain but it wasn’t enough to get him to open his eyes.

The slide of blankets being tucked around his shoulders.

Hoodie material brushing his chin, his favorite gray hoodie that he'd been wearing earlier, as an unsteady hand stroked his cheek.

Isak didn't have any bones left in his body but somehow he slid a hand out of the covers, flopping it up to grab Even’s, fingers weaving together in tight surprise as Isak settled in a little deeper to his pillow.

The blue one. So Even’s pillow.

A little involuntary smile curled, under closed eyes, fluttering lashes as warm air ghosted over the side of his face, but he was nowhere near the brain attached to it.

“Elsker deg,” the oxygen breathed into his skin, then Even’s mouth was pressing to his temple.

Fingers slipping free at the extended point of his arm, weightless limb falling back for the sheets. Cold.
The flashes didn't come anymore after that.

Just the dark.

Chapter End Notes

Wow that was dramatic
If you hate me now, i understand, i also hate me now

I’m actually already working on the next week, and I’ve got so many plotlines I’m chasing right now between parents and Jonas and oh boy, I’ve got a super fun one to introduce soon too and they all weave together in general fuckery but don’t worry, I promise there will always be fluff to counteract

If you’re wondering how the years after secondary school work in Norway, this super helpful post can describe it :) 

Thank you so much for all of the comments and kudos you guys have given me, they’re all just. So wonderful and I hope you all have days as beautiful as you are xx
Streaks and Sleep

Chapter Notes

Warnings: sleep deprivation, Drama (but not TM), consumption of alcohol to the point of puking, Parents, discussion of Hell Year 2016, nsfw content

Also, fun fact, Even Bech Næsheim is five days older than me and we are...the same person in a ridiculous number of ways so I decided to make his parents kinda model mine so if they seem wild...yes

.

See the end of the chapter for more notes
The only reason he left his room was to pee, but unfortunately he had to pass the kitchen and Noora and Eskild both saw him on his way back.

“Hey, Isak!”

He paused in the hallway, looking down at his feet and sighing to himself before he turned around, looking groggily at his roommates with an expression on his face that hopefully said without him having to how much he was not interested in chatting.

“Woah, are you okay?”

“Fine,” he replied dryly, inching a bit down the hallway towards his room.
“Were you guys planning on doing breakfast?” Noora asked, leaning on the wall and glancing around him into the hallway. “Where’s Even?”

At least she didn’t call him by that nickname again. Still. In case he’d, for some reason, forgotten how much he was aching, what a great reminder.

“He went home,” Isak said and it was sullen enough for Eskild and Noora to shoot each other concerned looks.

Which was the perfect window for him to give wide eyes to the floor as he turned and drift back to his room, closing the door solidly shut behind him.

“As in his parents’ house?” Eskild sounded just as surprised as she did, mouth open in offense as he threw a hand over his chest. “I thought home was here now.”

Noora rolled her lips in, looking down the empty hallway, the silence echoing back.

“So did I.”

Eskild huffed, turning back into the kitchen and throwing up his hands.

“Now, what, am I supposed to make breakfast?”

She was legitimately concerned for Isak. Like, enough that she made him a mug of tea and brought it into his room sometime around noon. He was on his computer when she came in, looked up, saw the tea, and told her he wasn’t sick, thank you, and turned right back to his laptop.

So she brought the tea to Linn instead, who barely lifted her head up from her pillow but at least seemed more grateful than Isak.

Still, she was more worried (and curious) than pissed, so that’s why she pulled aside Eva at the welcome back to school party Vilde had convinced them all to go too. And by pulling aside Eva also happened to pull aside Sana and Vilde too.

Chris was making out with Kaspar, so be it.

“...and I’m just worried, because it looks like Even moved out for real.”

“But I thought they were gonna get married!” Vilde sounded more devastated than Isak had looked this morning and Noora carefully removed her wine glass from her hand.

“Is Isak home?” Eva asked, tipping forward just a little bit, a hand still tangled in Christoffer’s - he was looking boredly over the rest of the party and waiting for Eva to return to make out with him - lifting the other to gesture dramatically and announce. “I should go...talk to him.”

“I’m pretty sure he’s--”
The door burst open, a gust of snow making a few girls near the door scream dramatically and most of the party turn their heads in drunken annoyance, gazes lingering for a moment on the squad pushing inside, fanned out epic triangle style, hats backwards and jacket collars popped, gazes tipsy-bright and one bored-looking Isak squinting into the party lights like they personally offended him.

“Actually, I think he’s here,” Noora trailed, but all the rest of them clearly had already noticed.

“C’mon,” Vilde declared, grabbing Eva’s free hand and tugging her for the door. “We’re gonna go dance with that boy.”

“He’s gay though?” Eva pointed out and Vilde rolled her eyes.

“I’m not a lesbian and I love dancing with girls! Just watch.” Then she was pushing through the crowd, making Eva stretch a moment before dropping Chris’s hand and following.

Sana lifted her voice, reaching for a trailing hand, “Vilde, don’t you think that--”

But they were already out of earshot and reach so Sana sighed, giving Noora a look before shoving through the crowd to start after them.

Noora pursed her lips, hair swinging as she looked back over to Chris Schistad, who was looking at her with a very clear expression of what the fuck.

“I’m not making out with you,” she told him sassily and he rolled his eyes, shoving through the party to join the ambush too.

It was forty-five minutes later when Sana finally found Isak, sitting on the back stairs by himself with a bottle of something with the label ripped off, hoodie pulled up and staring down at the sticky floor between his shoes.

He didn’t look up until she was sitting down next to him, blinking dully at her a few times before the recognition hit and he straightened with a groan, holding out the bottle of alcohol in offering.

She gave him a look and he looked back at her, squinting - what - before it hit him, again, remembering she didn’t drink and lifting a shoulder before taking a swig himself instead.

“Bad night?”

“Even moved out,” he muttered and Sana tipped her head.

“Why?”

“To be responsible,” Isak pouted and she snorted, getting a cross look that made her put a hand over her mouth. She’d assumed it’d been something bad, goodness.

“Don’t laugh at me!”

“I’m not laughing, it’s sweet.” He made another cross face at her and she sighed, rolling her eyes at the melancholy, nudging his knee with her arm. “Isak, you’ll be completely fine. If he’s trying to be responsible, it means he cares about your relationship.”

“I know that,” he waved drunkenly, alcohol sloshing out of the bottle and nearly landing on her shoe. She carefully scooted one inch further away. Isak didn’t notice, he was too busy pouting. “But if he really cared, he’d sleep with me! Not sexually, well that too, is it possible to die from how bad
you want someone insid--"

“Okay there, friend, I think you’ve had enough.” She held out a hand and he surrendered the bottle easily, tipping his head against the wall in misery.

“C’mon, you’re at a party, you’re supposed to be having fun!”

“I tried. I was chilling with the boys, I even tried dancing with Eva and Vilde and then I ended up pissing off Vilde, so.”

“How did you piss off Vilde?”

“I may have pointed out that there wasn’t any point in us dancing when I didn’t like girls and she didn’t like boys and she got...upset.”

“Hm,” Sana said, head tipping as she silently connected more dots. Isak just kept rambling, talking with his hands and all that woe is me drama.

“So now life sucks, more than it already did, and Jonas found some girl to hook up with, which shouldn’t still suck but ??”

He threw up both hands, knocking his head against the wall and closing his eyes.

So he missed Sana’s eyebrows shooting for her forehead. Oh. Well, that explained a lot, actually. Probably not something Isak wanted her to know, though.

“You should maybe stop talking before you dig more graves,” she suggested and he cracked an eye open, groaning at the dim-ass hallway and rubbing a hand over his face.

“That’s...probably a really good idea.”

The poor boy looked miserable. Sana sighed again, nudging his side and offering as nice as she knew how,

“Do you want me to walk you home?”

Isak put his head in his hands, groaning again. Sana carefully sat the alcohol down on the stairs, close enough to the wall it wouldn’t be trampled. It was times like this she was really damn glad she didn’t drink.

The quiet stretched for a few moments, long enough for her to figure out Isak didn't wanna answer, which meant he wanted to answer yes but didn't want to trample on her night too.

He was surprisingly sweet sometimes for the reputation he carried.

So she nudged him, enough to throw him off balance a little. Isak rocked, looking queasy as she insisted again.

“Really. It'd be no problem. It's not like I'm planning on hooking up with anyone. I'd be more than happy to walk you home.”

An aggrieved sigh and Isak finally deflated, sinking a bit.

“...yeah okay. We have to go find Jonas first though, he’ll flip the fuck out if I just take off.”

“I’ll go find him, you wait here.” She patted his knee consolingly and he just dropped his head
further down, fingers weaving behind his hood.

He hadn’t moved by the time she got back, wasted and wasting away like the damn drama queen he was.

But at least he wasn’t too heavy or drunk not to be able to stumble upright as she got an arm under one of his and bodily lifted him up.

“Alright, loverboy, let’s go get you home.”

She linked their arms and his balance was totally off but he managed to handle himself fine enough to walk all the way out of the party and down two streets before he keeled over to hurl in the grass.

Sana put a hand on his back and looked up to the sky. Those who gave shelter and support, right? This at least had to count for support.

When he finally straightened back up enough to walk, wiping the back of his hand over his mouth and making her squinch up her nose in disgust, he at least didn’t look like he wanted to die anymore. Puking could do wonders for a person.

“Deg bra?”

“Ugh,” he replied and she smiled brightly, clapping him on the shoulder and linking their arms again. Good enough.

They talked about science, of all things, on the rest of the walk back to his place. She’d been lightly scolding him on drinking water, since alcohol dehydrated cells then they got into an argument about cell elasticity that lead to a really interesting conversation on the technology of the diffusion system in humans and affecting neurologic voltage charges in the central nervous system.

Isak had some weird ass ideas about possible technological discoveries and what they could do to effect inhibitory neurons, but it was a pretty impressive conversation for someone who was drunk off their ass and spent most of biology trying to get her from a 4 to a 5 as opposed to learning anything himself.

Thankfully, he didn’t live on the other side of Oslo and they managed the walk in less than fifteen, although the stairs at the end got a little iffy with balance and Isak nearly sent them both tumbling to their deaths, but alas they finally arrived at his apartment door, knocking loudly as he searched his pockets for a key he probably wasn’t gonna find and God Knows Sana wasn’t gonna look for it for him.

Just as Sana was about to bang loudly on the door again - she was not going to leave him out here on the stoop, not as ghostly pale as that kid was - it finally swung open, a fairly peeved looking ginger glaring at them something deadly.

“Hi Linn! I brought Isak home,” she started, attempting a smile as Isak groaned, leaning against her arm. Linn didn’t say a word, opening the door wider to let them inside.

Sana walked Isak all the way to his bed, took absolute satisfaction in letting him drop dramatically and whiny to the comforter, then Linn was helping her pull off his boots and coat while he groaned and told them he was fine.

He wasn’t fine, but on the bright side he was also asleep within thirty seconds of them taking off his shoes, laying on his stomach with his nose half smushed by a blue pillow.
“Alright. That’s one friend checked off the list.” Sana brushed off her hands and Linn gave her a tired look.

“Did you want tea or something?”

“Actually...takk, I could go for a cup.”

“I have to stay up to make sure he doesn’t vomit over everything anyway, so.” Linn lead her into the kitchen and Sana opened up the cabinet where they kept the tea. Except now it was plates.

“Even moved everything, then Noora moved everything, then he moved it back and. I just open all the cabinets now, you’ll find it eventually.”

Sana got to opening cabinets, finding the lined up boxes - by brand instead of alphabetical now - and shaking her head as she pulled out the rooibos.

“But Even moved out, right? So in theory the kitchen doesn’t move again?”

“I just assumed it was him,” Linn replied, pressing a button on the electric kettle. “For all I know Noora just rearranges things post-London.”

“Post-London?”

“Yeah, Post-London Noora. It’s a sadder Noora, but much more realistic in her life expectations and prospects.” Linn plopped down at the table and Sana grabbed two mugs, sitting down across from her.

“Is there a post-something for everyone?”

“Eskild’s still in his Pre for life discovery. Isak is Post-Closet, Even is somewhere between Pre and Post and I’m Post-Existence.”

“Existence?” Sana lifted her eyebrows and Linn sighed.

“Yeah.”

“Alright.” She tapped her fingers on the table a few times. And she thought things were wild at her house. “But you’re glad Even is moved out then?”

“No,” Linn replied dully and the electric kettle beeped.

“Oh?” Sana got up with their mugs to grab them tea, setting Linn’s in front of her before sliding back into her seat again.

“Why not? I would think you’d like the extra room.”

Linn sighed, stirring her tea bag around and looking at the mug dejectedly.

“He made us food.”

“Ah.”

“Yeah.”
“Brown rice or spinach? I know your mom likes the spinach noodles better, but the brown rice ones taste more like traditional noodles. Which do you think Isak would prefer?”

“I don’t think he cares, Dad,” Even offered distractedly, digging in his pocket to pull out the phone that just went off.

Damn. It wasn’t from Isak, it was from Eskild.

He slid open the text, trailing behind the cart as they moved further down the aisle to examine sauce types next.

•

-- are you and Isak okay??

•

Yeah there went his stomach straight for his feet.

He thought they were.

He thought they were okay, he thought everything was fine, was Isak having second thoughts, was he upset with Even, were they not okay--

“Hey, kiddo,” a voice interrupted and Even’s head snapped up, just in time to narrowly avoid plowing into the stopped cart. Well, he still bumped into it, but he at least stopped the momentum.

“Everything alright?”

Wow. Okay, freak out time, maybe he should fucking chill. Even glanced down at his phone, back up at his dad.

“Yeah, sorry, wasn't paying attention.”

Even furrowed his eyebrows, mentally kicking himself for whatever the fuck that was before typing out a quick reply.
“Hey Ev, what about Verde salsa?”

“I’m sure it’s fine,” he replied, not looking up from his phone.

“You know, it’s really nice that you’re back home, shopping with us and things.”

“Mmmh.”

“And Isak’s still coming over for dinner next Saturday, right?”

Hearing the name out loud struck a little chord in his chest and Even inhaled, curling and uncurling the fingers of one of his hands. Here.

“Yes, Dad, he is.”

“Good.”
He was out way too fucking early but he’d been up since four, he might as well make himself fucking cereal now that it was bright enough to actually see the damn kitchen.

Besides, it was way more socially acceptable to make yourself cereal at 7 than it was at 4, so. Here he was pouring some shitty off-brand oat thing into a bowl of milk, and then nearly spilling it fucking everywhere when a loud knock on the door suddenly sounded behind him.
The fuck.

He sat down the cereal box, picked up his bowl and spoon, and took a bite on his way to the door, swinging it open kinda pissily.

And of course.

It was Even.

“Hi?” When Isak looked like shit and only slept from two-thirty to four, that’s when he showed up.

“Hi.” Looking gorgeous, leaning against the wall with sculpted hair and bedroom eyes, hands in his pockets and a James Dean smile on his face. “I came to walk you to school.”

Isak glanced behind him at the clock on the wall, in case he’d entirely fucked up. No, it was still 7:30.

“School doesn’t start for another...hour and a half.”

He looked back at the boy in the hallway and Even shot his eyebrows up, lips rolling in to pop out quietly.

“Exactly.”

Still didn’t catch the memo until Even was stepping across the threshold and kissing him, two hands on his jaw, clutching tight, spinning whirlwinds with his tongue. Then there was Isak, who was gonna spill his fucking cereal on the rug.

“Wait, wait, hold on,” he managed to mumble against Even’s mouth, lips breaking free as he stumbled backwards a step or two.

Even pulled back, etched in deep concern for the four and a half seconds it took Isak to put his bowl on the counter then he was launching right back into kissing Even, who gathered him up instantly and then they were bumping into the walls of the hallway all the way to his room.

The moment the door slammed shut, a dull thud against it, Noora peeked her head out of Linn’s room and Eskild peeked his head out of his own, a thumbs up shot down the hallway before they were closing their doors again.

Mandag, 08:26
16.01.17

“And you’re sure it wasn’t the sex?”

“Jesus, ja! I’m sure! That wasn’t even the most intense we’ve had, Even.”

“But all weekend.”

“I went out Saturday night, and I had homework. And yeah, I was a little mopey, but my boyfriend just moved out, sue me. I like having you around.”

“I like being around, but this is--”
“I know, I know, the right thing to do.”

“...you’re sure you’re okay?”

“Yes! I’m extremely sure! What the fuck? Are you forgetting the time I cried?”

“Nei, I did not forget the time you cried when we had sex.”

“Did I cry on Fredag?”

“...no. I mean, before--”

“Jesus fuck. I was emotional and couldn’t handle you leaving. Then I found out you couldn’t either so everything is fine. Ja, it was intense, but it was real, okay, so like. Chill out about it, yeah?”

“...if you’re sure.”

“Even, I’m going to kiss you, so you stop talking about this.”

“We have to leave in thirteen minutes--”

“Then start kissing me now, ja?”

Mandag, 12:20 16.01.17

“Oh fuck. I don’t even know how to guess today.”

“Seven? Magnus asked and Isak smirked, leaning back in his chair, tilting his head back to take a cocky sip of his waterbottle.

“Ooo. Or maybe eight,” Mahdi suggested. “I can already see two from here.”

When he tipped back down to the table, mouth popping off the water bottle dramatically, Jonas was just studying him, mouth pursed.

Isak lifted an eyebrow. “Well, great Jo-nas, is your crystal ball broken?”

“Six,” he declared, completely sure of himself and Isak stuck his tongue in his cheek, single eyebrow arching higher.

“Nine,” he replied.

They were all still hollering when Even showed up, sitting down in the empty chair already confused.

“I feel like I always miss everything.”

Isak leaned over and kissed him, a thumb rubbing over his cheek fondly when he finally pulled back.

“I missed you, baby.”
“Fuckin’ nine,” Jonas said and Isak smiled triumphantly down at the table.

~*~*~

Tirsdag, 15:32
17.01.17

He was propped against his pillows and Eskild was laying on his side across the bottom of his bed, head propped in his hand while he listen to Isak complain. And returning advice only if Isak rolled his eyes and called him guru when he asked.

“Seriously, though, like. I get why that’s normally the right thing to do, but. Like, our situation is different, y’know?”

“Howso? Every couple thinks their relationship is different.”

“Well yeah, but like.” Isak threw a hand in the air, twisting his mouth to the side as Eskild gave him a judgy look. “I mean, I’m already moved out of my parents’, and I’m younger! Not like I think he should--”

“Or clearly, you do.”

“No, but he’s nineteen, technically he...shouldn’t even be in secondary anymore anyways, so why not just--”

“Yeah, actually, why is that?”

“He had to repeat his second year, it’s complicated.”

“Mmm. Mmkay.”

“It’s the year he got diagnosed.”

“Ooohh. Okay, so an actual reason then.”

“Yeah, but anyways. I mean, he’s gonna be twenty in less than a month, and things were great when he lived here, there’s no reason why--”

That time Eskild didn’t cut him off, his phone suddenly vibrating loudly on his side table did. Isak leaned over, squished against the pillows as he reached, fingers stretching and barely skirting the edge. A frustrated sound and he dove to the side, catching the phone and nearly face-planting with the corner of his table, stopping himself just in time as he put it to his ear.

“Halla?”

“Hey, babe.”
“It’s Even,” Isak put his hand over the speaker to mouth at Eskild. Eskild raised an eyebrow, so?
Isak widened his eyes, tipping his head for the door.

“You’re gonna have phone sex?? Now???” A completely shocked face, Eskild’s hand clapping dramatically over his heart.

Isak rolled his eyes and waved a hand, lifting the phone back up.

“Hey babe, what’s up?”

“You don’t want me to leave, do you?” Eskild sat up, waving a hand for the door and Isak tipped the phone away from his mouth, making a face.

“No it's fine, I'm kidding.” Eskild went to get up and Isak dove back across the bed, grabbing his wrist and dragging him back down.

“Are you doing anything right now?” Even was asking and Isak glanced up at Eskild, one eyebrow up.

“Uh. Yeah, I'm talking to my guru.”

“Your what?”

“Nothing. What were you thinking?”

“It's snowing, do you wanna go sledding?”

“Sledding?” He asked, eyebrows knitting as they shot up and Eskild made an ooo face.

“That’s a gay sex term even I don’t know,” he offered and Isak shoved him, mouthing shut up as seriously as he could while Eskild made a dozen or so exaggerated suggestive faces.

“Yeah! Why not?” Even sounded way too enthusiastic and Isak sucked in a breath, debating the cold versus his warm bed and getting to complain to Eskild, but. Well. It was sledding, and it was Even, so.

“Okay, yeah. I'll put on some warm clothes and come meet you--”

“I'm at your door.”

“Oh. Okay yeah I'll come get you first.”

“You can send your guru while you get dressed?” Even suggested into the phone and Isak sat up, peering suspiciously at the door before looking back at Eskild, who was waiting to make more suggestive comments.

“What made you think it was Eskild?” Isak asked suspiciously and Even’s voice came back over the line all innocent and cute.

“I didn't, you just told me.”

“Oh fuck you,” Isak shot into the receiver, pressing the end call button and tossing the phone on his bed as he rolled to the edge to grab the closest warm article of clothing.

“Ah! Rude,” Eskild accused and Isak rolled his eyes, throwing a hoodie over his head and forgetting
he was wearing a snapback and therefore getting himself stuck, tugging them both off before he drowned in cotton.

“He's at the door, would you go let him in?”

“Mmm. Mhm. So much for living separately, right?” Eskild gave him a little shit of a smile, rolling off the bed to pop to his feet. Isak paused in the wrestling match with his hoodie, looking up incredulously at the knowing look on Eskild’s face.

“What do you mean? I slept here alone last night.”

“You mean you didn't sleep.” he pointed out, spinning on a dramatic heel to stalk for the door. “I heard you tossing and turning in here all night long.”

Isak rolled his eyes again, finally getting the hoodie on and tossing his snapback aside in search of a beanie when he froze, head snapping over to the exiting Eskild.

“Wait. If you can hear me tossing and turning… what else can you hear?”

Eskild paused in the doorway, giving him a bright little smile before swinging into the hallway and sauntering off.

“Eskild!?!?”

~*~*~

Onsdag, 12:23
18.01.17

On Wednesday, Isak and Even showed up to lunch at the same time, shoulders bumping and Even’s hands gesturing as he spoke, something Isak was nodding along to vaguely as his eyes danced around the room, hands shoved in his pockets.

It was strange, the tether between them that was palpable, despite the fact that their fingers weren't entwined, arms weren't around shoulders.

He had no idea what it meant, if it was intentional or not, if everyone else in the room could feel how fucking badly Isak was dying to reach over and take Even’s hand in his, if anyone else was wondering why in hell he wasn’t.

By the time Jonas tore his eyes away the boys were all exchanging looks, debating the new variable of having them both here at once. Isak was almost always here first.

“Do we still guess, or…?” Magnus looked to him but Jonas was busy studying Isak, the way he moved, the way his scarf was folded. The smile tipped up on one side of his mouth, crooked to match shiny bright eyes.

“Five?” Jonas asked as Isak for sat down beside him, backpack dropping for the crook of his elbow
then the floor.

Then Isak was looking over at him, squinting just a little, dimple still burrowed in one cheek.

“It’s not directly correlated to my happiness,” he defended and Jonas rolled his eyes.

“Yeah, right, okay.”

“Seriously!”

“Four,” Magnus declared and Even propped his pretty head in his hands, mouth pursed, eyebrows up, looking around as he studied their faces and tried to figure it out.

“Six?” Mahdi tried.

“Zero,” Isak corrected, one eyebrow up as he shook his head at them. “New, anyways. I’m just having a good day.”

“Yeah, okay.” It sounded just as skeptical as he was.

“Really,” Isak insisted. “Hate to break your streak now, but the facts are the facts.”

The facts were the facts and the fact was?

Isak hadn’t slept more than two hours in the past four days.

He had a gray hoodie pulled over his head, so in theory the teacher was less likely to notice when he went from paying attention to passed out.

Only problem was, while it kinda worked for teachers, it did shit for saving him from Jonas.

One moment he was struggling to keep his eyes open, just focus on the swimming numbers, blink then focus only he never opened his eyes up from blinking and next thing he knew there was something hard jabbing his side.

“Ow, hva faen--”

He squinted over at bushy dark curls bushy dark eyebrows, trying to focus while Jonas hissed something at him that definitely wasn't about numbers.

“The fuck is up with you, man? Late night without hickies to show for it, who are you?”

“Hmm?” Isak wet his lips, face squished propped on his hand, elbow on the table, staring at Jonas’s expectant face a moment before the words finally registered and he squinched up his face crossly.

“Shut up.”

“Seriously, man. You've been tired like. All week.” Jonas waved a hand around and Isak made a noncommittal sound, picking up his fallen pencil and making a face at the symbols he must’ve drawn. Were those numbers? Writing while dozing that was a new one.

“Do I need to talk to Even?”

“Hmm?” Isak asked again, setting the pencil back down and rubbing a hand over his face. Did Jonas need to talk to--
“What!? Nei. Nei, do not tell Even you think I've been tired.” The sudden urgency made Jonas look really alarmed and Isak feel really awake in a strange parallel sort of floating woah spiny sort of way.

“Dude. What the hell,” Jonas was saying, putting his pencil down and entirely destroying the front that they were talking about notes. That front was supposed to be up, right? Although he probably shouldn’t’ve freaked out about Even like that because Jonas looked hella concerned now.

“What's going on?”

“He...ahhh.” Isak sighed, propping his chin back in his hand, mumbling out the rest of it to the heads of the kids in front of them. “He moved out.”

“...what??” How had he not fucking noticed? Yeah, Isak had been pissy last weekend, but there was never anything pointing to a fight or a fall out or anything else like it. “What happened??”

“Nothing happened! It was a mature mutual decision we made because. We've been living together for like...a month, and it's been every single day and night with him, y’know? And we're still young, so.”

Isak sighed again, notes shuffling as his sleeping arm flopped back down to the table.

“--so he decided to move back in with his parents. And I just…”

Jonas was just looking at him. Waiting. Isak glanced over, sucking in a breath to stare down at his notebook and mumble out the rest with a flush in his cheeks.

“Apparently I'm not very good at sleeping without him now.”

Isak didn't look up, rolling his pencil back and forth between pinched fingers. Jonas blinked at him a few times.

“Well fuck.”

“Ja,” Isak agreed, tugging on his hood to pull it further over waves of blonde, like the deeper in his hoodie he got the faster this would go away. “But you can't mention anything, cause if you do he's gonna freak out and blame himself or some shit and. I've just gotta get used to it. I'm sure it'll be fine in like. A week.”

He sounded absolutely unconvinced and therefore really unconvincing, shooting Jonas a side eye to calculate without giving too much away but this was him. He gave everything away.

“Okay, man. If you're sure.” Jonas shook his head once, glancing at the clock and closing up his binder. “But lemme know if you want me to mention something. I can make it sound like it's not coming from you.”

He was doing everything physically possible to show he was on Isak’s side, which he was, but. He was also worried as fuck.

“Jaaa, takk. I'll let you know if it gets that bad.” Isak offered a strained smile, gaze cutting away too quickly but before Jonas could call him on it the class got released, book bags and paper shuffling as the room burst into conversation and the atmosphere shift took them with it.

Isak blinked a few times before he realized everyone was leaving and started slowly packing up his stuff. Jonas waited, watching the weighed down limbs with furrowed eyebrows.
He didn't believe a word Isak said. Not about letting him know, anyways. Yeah, he’d learned in the year and a half of Isak acting weird before finally coming out to realize that maybe, he shouldn’t just listen when his best friend said he was okay.

And like yeah, this wasn’t as big of a deal as that, but still. It wasn’t nothing either.

He’d been kidding, the other day when he’d joked about Isak being dependent on sex. But like. Dependent on sleep? That was a hell of a lot worse.

How they’d gotten this far, he had no idea. How he was standing here, watching Isak go through fucking...withdrawal, exhaustion spiked and absolutely drained, because he’d grown so used to sharing a bed every night with a guy who was two and a half years older than them…yeah, the path from A to B wasn’t really clear on that one.

Jonas was gonna keep a fucking eye on those problematic pretty blonde curls and the hands that apparently weren’t running through them at night anymore.

He followed Isak into the hallway and decided officially, if this didn't improve by Friday, he was saying something.

“Serr, stop worrying.” A shoulder bumped his and Jonas nearly stumbled a step, rolling his eyes at Isak, who was now studying him right back.

“You are. I can see it.”

“You can’t see shit,” he countered, bumping Isak's towering shoulder back and he didn't stumble near as much as he used to, all long limbs and wide smiles as they fell into step beside each other again.

Jonas couldn't keep the smile as long as Isak could.

Not when his best friend was rambling off something with covered yawns in between and Jonas felt terribly, strangely distant despite the fact that they were closer than they'd been in a while.

Why in fuck had they gotten so distant in the first place? It was Isak’s doing, he’d always known that, used to chalk it up to the fights with Yakuza second semester, maybe he was a lot more touchy about having his honor defended than Jonas expected. Now, he could kinda guess it had something to do with Isak trying to closet himself or something but.

Things were weird. Still. He couldn’t place what it was, but whatever it was, he wasn’t gonna let Isak eat himself up for the next year again. No, this time, he was gonna spare Isak all that pain, and he was gonna fucking find out on his own if he had to.

~*~*~

Torsdag, 09:28
19.01.17
“That plant is definitely not purple.”

“What do you mean it’s not purple? That’s as purple as purple gets.”

“Nei, that’s like. Dusty brown, maybe, I’d bet near anything if you wash it off it’ll be green underneath.”

“What are we betting?” Even raised an eyebrow and Chris smiled, open mouthed and surprised.

“You’re actually down to bet something, E.Bech?”

“Bring it, Christo."

“Whoever loses, next lab report, entirely on their own.”

“Done.”

Chris hopped out of his chair, grabbing the petri dish and headed straight for the sink. This was totally going to disrupt the plant culture but there was like forty five petri dishes, and it was one of the thirty plants inside just this dish, so. A little water wouldn’t hurt.

“No fucking way!” Chris was still bent over the sink so Even slid out of his chair to go join him, peering over his shoulder at the petri dish.

“Hold on, light.” They both turned around, squinting up at the dish as Chris held it up against the way too bright xenon ceiling light.

“That plant is completely purple,” Chris trailed, pure awe as he looked up at the dish, all that cocky wiped off his face like this petri dish was the most important thing he’d seen in years. Even clicked his tongue and tipped his head in a sigh curled up at the corners.

“I fucking told you.”

“Oh whatever, it was luck, that’s a totally different color than it was before.”

“It’s still purple though.”

Chris rolled his eyes and Even elbowed his side, both of them breaking into smiles, then Chris was elbowing him back and Even’s eyebrows shot up, mouth popping open as pressed five fingers to a black hoodie, shoving him a step backwards before Chris was suddenly holding up an urgent hand,

“Wait, one second, the plants.” He set the petri dish down carefully on the counter, then he was spinning to level on Even, wicked smile as he shoved for his shoulder, just managed to serve out of the way of a light punch aimed for his arm, hand smacking Even’s wrist aside--

“Christoffer! Even!” They both froze, hands in exaggerated karate poses as they glanced over shoulders at the poor teacher standing on the other side of the room and looking fairly upset. “This is not gym class! Both of you, write out your lab assignments separately for the next report, if you goof off as a team, you can turn in your work individually.”

Even barely managed to reign in the snort, lips rolling in as Chris rolled his head dramatically to groan under his breath at the teacher.

“Back to your station! Both of you!”
They both straightened up, Chris’s eyes rolling some more as Even stuck his tongue in his cheek, reaching over to turn off the sink that was still running.

“Looks like you’ll be writing two reports, Christoffer. Have fun with that.” Even clapped him on the shoulder and Chris hip checked him as he snagged their petri dish samples back from the counter.

Torsdag, 15:41
19.01.17

The worst part was that he was could not. Stop. Thinking about it.

Every class, every day, didn’t matter what he was doing, the minute the silence hit the first thing that popped in his head was the next time he was gonna get to run his fingers through blonde curls, look into beautiful green eyes and watch them swallow up dark, cupid’s bow lips parted, tipping up for his like he was starved--

Isak found his way into every one of Even’s thoughts, somehow, and he spent most of the school day anxiously bouncing his knee, worrying his bottom lip between his teeth, waiting until the next time he got to light up from the pure fucking gold in a blooming, shy smile.

The worst part though, was when Even shot him a text inviting him back to his place for homework after school, he really hadn’t been thinking about homework. At all.

However, apparently, Isak had been.

The clatter of Isak’s backpack in the front doorway, the surprised little sound he made as Even backed him into the door, two hands on his face and heart pounding in his stomach, Even could really really fucking get used to those sounds, would really like to see what other sounds he could make that pretty mouth pour for him.

“Mmm--” A hand on his chest, shoving him back an inch, enough that their lips broke off, eyes locked as Even breathed Isak in and decided he never needed oxygen again. “We are doing homework, right?"

Okay, he was down for Isak to make any sound but those.

“Did you want to?” He asked, trying to be as neutral as possible as he forcibly closed his mouth, searching the green while Isak sucked in a breath and made a little grimace up at him.

“...I kinda need to, yeah.”

“Ughokay. Okay, ja, yep, sounds good. Homework.” Even forced himself to take a step backwards, kinda dying without the contact and quickly reaching for Isak’s arm, fingers sliding down his wrist to wrap around his pinky, drag him stumbling forward with one eyebrow up and a smile on his face as he pressed their mouths together again.

Isak kissed him happily, backing him into the closest wall as he kicked his shoes off, wrapped an arm around Even’s waist.
“You’re really hot, you know that?” Isak pulled back to offer another quick peck, making Even groan as he reached over for his backpack instead of the button on his jeans. “But unfortunately, you’re dating someone who cares about their grades, so.”

“I really like that about you,” Even told him sincerely, following behind Isak as he turned the corner from the front hallway. “I just really like other things about you even more.”

Isak laughed, bright and cute, shooting him a sly look over his shoulder. Jesus fuck, Even was a goner. He groaned at the ceiling again and Isak giggled, but he was still walking, so.

Even was also gone enough to agree to doing homework if that’s what Isak wanted. School should come first. He had a hell of a relationship with school, a lot of love and a lot of hate but. He respected the hell out of Isak’s dedication and as much as he wanted to, he wasn’t gonna get in the way of that.

So that’s how an hour later, they were...still doing homework.

Isak was laying on his side on the couch in Even’s room, doing his biology on Even’s tablet while Even leaned his back against the couch and worked on his film project on his laptop.

The problem with this damn project was that it kept changing on him, without his permission, because next thing he knew he’d be cutting the audio from one clip then he’d cut the audio from the next ten because he liked the silence but then there was so much missing in the coloring, only he’d very specifically chosen this coloring last week but it just wasn’t right and it was fucking frustrating, he wanted to get this done. Like, asap, because the longer he spent making it the last time he’d have refining it before he applied to uni only now he wasn’t so sure he even wanted to be filming on this topic anymore and--

Okay. Yeah. He needed a break. Before he deleted everything in a fit of artistic rage and started from scratch. He hadn’t let this stupid thing defeat him over the past seven months, it wasn’t gonna fucking win now. Break time. After he typed up the description for the next part.

“Hey babe,” he said, not looking up as he tapped away. “Are you hungry yet? We've got the kitchen to ourselves, my parents won’t be back til…”

Even glanced over his shoulder, expecting to see green eyes on him, or at least the back of his tablet, but actually. Both were closed.

And Isak was passed the fuck out on his couch.

Even’s eyebrows shot up, spinning around to peer from a different angle, look to see if they were actually closed. Yep.

Oh. Well. He wasn’t gonna wake him. Even looked Isak over a moment longer before pushing off the ground, carefully slipping the tablet out from under Isak’s hand to make sure he didn’t ruin anything he was in the middle of submitting. Notes were open but the problems he’d finished were autosave and when Even scrolled to the top for a due date, it was sometime next week. Alright then. He locked the tablet and set it on his desk, taking another glance over at Isak. He was still entirely dead to the world, curls falling over his forehead and lips parted, all of the worry lines gone from his pretty face.

If Even had clay instead of a camera, Isak was muse enough to sculpt something more striking than Michelangelo’s David.
Besides, it’d have way more passion, detail. He was pretty damn sure Michelangelo wasn’t sleeping with David.

Even pursed his lips and spun on a heel, closing his bay-style bedroom doors all but an inch behind him.

Destination, kitchen, he’d go round something up for dinner. Isak wasn't really the type for naps but knowing him, he'd probably hungry after taking them.

His dad had studied abroad in Italy, and ended up living there for like ten years before he met Even’s mom, so he had this deep, intense respect for food and cooking that Even had grown up with, and transferred over to him since it was basically the only thing they had in common enough to go out of their way and spend time with each other for.

Because Even really really did like cooking. Complete control in the kitchen. Everything turned out exactly how he wanted it, everything was exactly where it was supposed to be, and working with his hands like this, the rest of the world kinda just went quiet.

Except today, apparently. The whole time he was cooking there was a piece of him in the other room, a hesitation as he sliced perfectly even circles, waiting for Isak's arms to wrap around his waist.

Enter stage left: sleepy warm confused boyfriend. And Isak missed his que. Again.

Every time he turned to get something from the fridge he was glancing down the hallway, waiting for the door to open up, Isak to stumble out, rubbing his eyes and calling for Even.

The only thing he heard was silence and Even sighed, going up on his tiptoes to rifle through the top of their spices cabinet, wondering if post-nap Isak was the type to be groggy or take-on-the-world refreshed. The only time he'd ever seen Isak nap was when he was high, but he was pretty sure that wasn't a nap and was more of I'm Out For The Night until Even woke him up for marshmallows.

Dinner was done before six, and Isak still hadn’t made it out here yet, so Even bought some time setting the table all cute, sprig of rosemary on the edge of their plates, centerpiece from the mantel brought in for the table.

Alright. It was time to go check on the recipient.

Even didn’t knock, just in case, slowly opening up one of the bay doors the rest of the way as he peeked inside, expecting Isak to be sitting up and finishing his homework or maybe chilling in his windowsill flipping through his sketchpad the way Even caught him once a few weeks ago.

Only he didn’t get to chase Isak around for his sketchpad again, scooping him up and tossing him on the couch to kiss him as he laughed and tried to hold it out of reach.

Cause Isak was still conked out asleep on said couch.

Even paused in the doorway, worry furrowing his eyebrows. If he fell asleep shortly after the last time they spoke, it’d been over two hours now.

Maybe he was way paranoid or crazy or something but he had to check. Even crossed the room, dropping to a crouch and putting a hand under Isak’s nose, checking for breathing. The hoodie he was wrapped in wasn’t showing his shoulders lift and Even’s heart was pounding in his throat. Then a soft exhale painted over his skin and he breathed out with it, pushing back to his feet. Okay.
He'd go make dessert too.

Even was almost done, pulling a tray out of the oven when finally, there was a door opening, footsteps he felt like he’d been waiting on for the past three years.

A cheer under his breath and Even straightened up, spinning on a heel, tray in hand as he announced,

“Hey babe, made you-- you are not Isak.”

“I'm not,” his mother confirmed, looking exceedingly amused, setting her purse down on the counter as Even blinked at her over the top of his tray. “But this looks nice. Is he coming over for dinner? I thought that was Saturday. You boys usually eat earlier, don’t you?”

“Yeah...no he's not coming over for dinner, he's actually. Sleeping in my room. Or he was last I checked.”

“Oh.” His mom made a face at the hallway and Even set down the tray on top of the oven, taking off the mitts as he spoke.

“Ja, we were just doing homework than the next thing I know I turn around and he's passed out on my couch.”

“Is he feeling okay?”

“I mean. I thought so, he didn't mention anything.”

“Huh,” she said, hand on her hip, contemplative look on her face as he glanced back over. “It's a little early to be asleep, especially for a seventeen year old.”

“That’s what I was thinking.”

She turned around, bare heel squeaking as she started down the hallway to his room, Even in tow. She peeked around the corner, pushing the door open a little more from the crack he’d left it.

“Hmm.”

Isak was still sleeping, looking fucking precious, but not moving a muscle, making a single sound.

“It doesn't look like he's waking up anytime soon.”

“No, I guess not.” Even studied him a little longer, debating grabbing a blanket or something, but. It was still like, the middle of the fucking day.

His mom made another non-committal sound before she turned back around, headed for the kitchen before he could catch up.

“Well you did make that nice dinner, what do you say we eat?”

They chatted lightly while they ate, about school, his mom’s work. She had a few questions about how he’d been doing lately, if he still had his appointment with the psychotherapist, yes, he was fine, he’d be there next week, he wasn’t gonna miss, Mom, not that so much was riding on him being okay now.
For the most part though, it was a nice dinner, and his mom made enough comments about how delicious dessert was that he didn’t really mind that Isak hadn’t gotten to try it. There’d be other times.

Because Isak was still. Sleeping by the time Even started cleaning up the kitchen, clearing the table first so his mom could spread out her work on top.

By the time everything was finished, the sun had longsince gone down and Isak had been asleep for more than six hours. Even hung up the kitchen towel, turning on the light in the dining room for his mom before turning off the one in the kitchen.

“I’ll go wake Isak,” he told her, starting for the hallway when her voice lifted behind him.

“Wait, Even.”

He paused at the end of the hallway, turning around with his eyebrows up.

“You shouldn't wake him up, sweetheart. If he's sleeping, it's because he needs it.”

“But it's getting late and we've both got school tomorrow.”

“Let him spend the night here,” she suggested, adjusting the reading glasses on her nose and looking back down at her paperwork.

Let him spend the night here. Even scoffed, leaning against the wall, arms crossing over his chest as he pinned her with a serious look she wasn’t lifting her head to see.

“Mom, I'm trying to be the responsible one here. I thought you'd approve of me making the mature decision, moving back in.”

“And I do, sweetheart. It was the right thing to do.” She flipped a paper over, scanning the back of it, not so much as glancing up. “And so is letting Isak spend the night.”

“One night turns into two, turns into three…” Even sang down at his socks, knowing exactly where his mom was going with this. It’s just one school night, what would that--

“She’s just one school night, what would that--

“Honey.”

She had that tone in her voice and Even looked up, surprised to see she’d sat down her papers, arms folded over them to give him a stern look over the top of her reading glasses.

“I know you care about him, that you're trying to do everything you can to keep this relationship. And I'm glad you're mature enough to try to take the right steps to. But if you're ever making Isak go home tired and late, or if you're coming back from his place exhausted in the early hours of the morning, that's less mature than just staying there. Riding your bike back when it's dark and you're not at your most attentive is dangerous, and I won't let you do that to either of you. No matter how much you think you need to sleep apart.”

Even just looked at her for a moment, chewing it over in his head and deciding she was...definitely right. The fact that he’d gotten so caught up in doing everything he could to keep them, together, that he hadn’t stopped to look at the individual impact was kinda scary, now that he thought about it.

“Why do you always have such good advice,” he complained, kicking his foot out to lean against the wall harder and pout.
“Because I'm a mother, Ev,” she replied dryly.

“That doesn't mean you always have good advice, some mothers are shit.”

“Mmm.” She turned back to her papers, spreading them back out again. “Lucky for you, not this one.”

He still just kinda looked at her. He was used to getting knowledge dropped on him like that, but with this, it was a little surprising. It wasn’t like Sonja literally ever spent the night here. That was a different though, they’d started dating so young they had all kinds of rules they were both just used to. Wasn't like when they turned nineteen he was gonna ask his parents if she could sleep over.

So he’d figured his mom would be really on board with him living here again, and not having Isak spend the night.

The whole reason they’d been fine with it in the first place was because it was tied to a depressive episode and he hadn’t given them a lot of choice on it. He wanted to stay at Isak’s and he didn't want much when he was depressed, so they didn't counter.

His mom was still kinda shocking sometimes though. Chewing him out for trying to send his boyfriend home, that was. Definitely a new one.

She hadn’t looked up, but apparently she could feel his eyes on her, narrowed as he tried to figure out what the hell this was all about when she scratched something down on a page and interrupted his thoughts in the most Mom Voice she had.

“If it's that I'm encouraging you to sleep over with your boyfriend, don't worry honey, your father and I have known you've been having sex with him since before you introduced us.”

Even sputtered and she waved a hand impatiently at him.

“Now go let Isak sleep somewhere more comfortable than a tiny couch. And use protection, just because neither of you can get pregnant…” she glanced up over her glasses to give him a stern look.

“We do,” he replied, kinda dazed. She gave him a smile and looked back down at her work.

Even pushed off the wall and tread down the hall, shaking his head to himself at how fucking weird that conversation had been. Parents, Jesus.

And then he found himself wondering for the six hundredth fucking time what Isak’s were like, what they’d really think of him. What was wrong with Isak’s mom. Why they were fine with him not fucking living with them since he was god knows how young. Noora had been in London since last year, when Isak was sixteen, which was way too young to live on your own, or in a flatshare or whatever.

The door got to close all the way behind him this time, mouth twisting to the side as he rounded the corner of his bed, looking down at the sleeping beauty and wondering how in hell he was gonna carry Isak into his bunk bed.

No one could ever accuse him of not caring, at least.

(Isak ended up waking groggily when Even lifted him and climbed up the ladder himself to pass right back out in his arms the minute Even climbed up into bed with him.)
“But it's such a good idea! It would make so. much. money.”

“If you could find a way to actually make it, Mags.”

“It can’t be that hard.”

“When have you ever made anything that complicated, let alone…” Jonas trailed off, furrowing as he recognized the jackets headed their direction in the hall.

That was Even, who was walking with...Christoffer Schistad? And they were...laughing.

“Hey,” Chris interrupted whatever Even was talking about to lift his head, signature smile as he nodded at Jonas, making Even glance over too, suddenly lighting up as he recognized who they were about to pass.

“Hey! Jonas, Magnus.” Even all but skidded to a stop and Chris lifted an eyebrow, circling round to stand next to him as Magnus reached out and clapped their hands together, that weird bro thing people did that didn’t make any sense but everyone did anyways.

“Since when are you two friends?” Magnus waved a hand between them, which was a good question, but Jonas had a way better one, for Chris specifically.

“Since when do you go to Hartvig Nissen?”

“We’re lab partners,” Chris replied, smiling growing wide as he tipped sideways and shot an eyebrow up at Even, waiting for his nodding agreement and glance back, just as bright.

A heavy hand clapped down on Even’s shoulder then Chris was tipping his head for the hallway, taking a few steps backwards, eyes still on them.

“Gotta get to work, see you around, E.Bech.”

“Don’t have too much fun, Chris,” Even called after him and Chris spun around, just so he could sing-song dramatically over his shoulder,

“Oh you know me!” The saunter and drama was instant flashback material, memories of awkwaaard resurfacing and making Jonas narrow his eyes a little. Yeah, he definitely got along with Chris now, especially after they’d all ganged up against Yakuza, but. Still. Weird.

How did Even know Chris again? They were lab partners? How in hell did that make sense?

Jonas had his eyebrows up as Even shook his head and turned to them, hands in his pockets, bright smile one his face, bouncing on his toes. All energy under layers of red and gray, the same colors
Isak was wearing today, actually.

They lived apart and still vibrated on the same wavelength, apparently.

“Hey, what’s up?” Even looked brightly between them, falling into step beside Jonas as they started down the hallway again. Jesus fuck, he always forgot how tall Even was until he was standing right next to him.

“We’re making plans for the weekend,” Magnus was saying and Jonas straightened his beanie, shoving aside all the overthinking to focus back on his friends. Friends, who he should maybe stop analyzing so much. “You in?”

“Isak and I were gonna have dinner with my parents tomorrow night.” Even made an apologetic face and Jonas shook his head while Magnus scoffed, eyes rolling dramatically.

“You guys are so boring.”

“I know, jeez, look at us, all happy and in a relationship and perfectly boring,” the teasing was given entirely away by the ridiculous smile he couldn’t wipe off his face, the kind that could light up whole universes. Isak wasn’t even here, they were just talking about him.

At least Isak had chosen somebody that was genuinely fucking gone for him. Jonas could give him that.

“It’s appalling, frankly,” Magnus informed him and Even’s laughter echoed in the usually dull hallways, making a few heads turn, most of them turning away with smiles they weren’t wearing before.

Yeah, Isak picked somebody special, that was for sure.

Fredag, 22:01
20.01.17

They’d actually attempted at that dual workout together after school, although it was mostly Isak adjusting Even’s ridiculous form, Even giggling, and Isak yelling at him to Focus, dammit, then Even laughing a lot more and reaching to kiss him over the barbells Isak had brought into the living room. To get ridiculed for owning, of course, but you didn’t get abs like his and not work out.

The only actually successful part of the workout was when he convinced Even to run around the block with him, in the cold, which obviously turned into a race that ended in them pounding up the stairs, bursting into the apartment, first one undressed and in the shower was the winner.

They were both really out of breath, and Even was surprisingly fast for someone who complained so much about running, so they ended up kind of stumbling into the shower at the same time, and yeah, technically, Even was on two feet with the water on .3 seconds before he was, fist pumping into the air with that victorious I won, to which Isak dropped to his knees and really quickly changed that cheering into gasping.

What was that? Was Even saying something about how he won, funny, the only thing Isak could
hear were totally gone gasps of his name, garbled between broken, moaning pleas. Hm, no victorious cheering here.

Although yeah, there were maybe a few breathy complaints on his end about how Even totally cheated, in the rare slippery occasion his mouth was unoccupied enough to speak, but with Even’s hand gripping his hair that tight Isak was pretty sure they got swallowed up anyways.

But the good news was that after they finally got out of the shower, clean from sweat and all other sorts of fun things, Even agreed to work out with him again some time, which was code for Isak now got to drag Even to all his workouts, and then hopefully blow him afterwards.

It sounded like a hell of a fantastic arrangement to him.

Between then and now, Even had entirely fucked over Isak’s head by attempting to towel-dry him like a dog, which was not a cute experience when your hair wanted to curl all over the fucking place. Isak had gotten him back by throwing his clothes into the hallway so he couldn’t get dressed, to which he only put on Isak’s clothes in retaliation. Then Isak was pushing him down on his bed and making out with his cocky teasing mouth until they were both warm and snuggled close together, shower-fresh and still coming down from the workout high, the invigorated shower-sex high, the school week forgotten quietly to the past as the weekend settled in high and they didn’t have a single fucking worry in the world.

With the exception of Eskild yelling at the clothes in the hallway when he got home at 21:30.

“Really?? Could you not wait the three feet to your fucking room??”

Isak had cursed and popped out of bed, opening the door with a sea of apologies but Eskild just flicked a hand at him, rolling his eyes and saying it was fine, shooting a happy little smile and a bright wave over his shoulder at Even, who was propped up in his bed, ruffled and soft as he smiled and waved back.

Then Isak was closing the door with his foot, shouting a goodbye as he dropped the bundle of Even’s clothes on the floor and slipped back under his comforter and into the comfort of Even’s waiting open arms.

That’s where they were now, making out slow and easy, warmth bubbling his chest and Even pounding real and precious and whole under his fingertips.

Their lips slid apart on a soft smile, nothing else to exist outside the frame between his blue checkered comforter and those blue eyes, lit up by moonlight filtering through the blinds, the crack of gold underneath his bedroom door.

Isak tipped his head back up for more, always more, the moments between were beautiful and wonderful but god, he wanted to kiss Even, he wanted to drown in the flood of soul freeing shit that their dancing mouths pumped into his veins.

Even was still just looking at him, kinda dreamily and Isak tipped up a little further, chasing that beautiful mouth as it curled up in a little smile, turning just out of reach. Isak made a disgruntled sound, pushing up against Even’s chest to chase him down, teasing was cute and all but their proximity was making his toes curl and his skin tingle, he needed Even’s mouth on his, right now.

A hand stroking his cheek, turning back to meet his gaze and Isak finally caught him, head tilting as their noses brushed, mouths slipping back together. Fitting in place, lips sliding, closing around each other to drag back slow and sweet, tugging his heart with it.
The heat flowing through his veins settled back into warmth, crackling fireplace bliss as Isak inhaled against Even’s mouth. Smile curling with the sweetness in sparkling blues, locked happily on his as Even weaved their noses in an eskimo kiss.

Isak snaked an arm around Even’s waist and pressed one more quiet kiss to his mouth before he was laying back down, hair probably flooring in Even’s way but maybe he shouldn’t’ve fluffed it all over the place when it was still wet.

It couldn’t’ve been that bad though, because Even’s fingers were running through it fondly, stroking all this softness into his soul that could send him right to sleep if he kept it up long enough.

But the chance for sleep slipped quietly out the window as the silence broke, the sound of their echoing kisses quieting as Even’s voice took their place.

“Have you heard of the word lachesism?”

Isak squinted at the writing on Even’s hoodie, tracing an S in Nissen with his finger.

“What language is it?”

“I don’t know. Maybe English? It’s one of those weird words that got made up by some academic and no one really uses.”

“Then nei, I haven’t.”

“Wow, look at you.” Even stroked a callused hand down his face and Isak blinked up softly at him. “Admitting when you don’t know something, you’ve come so far.”

“Shut up,” Isak shoved him, bouncing off a solid few inches with the force of it. Even’s arm quickly caught him, cushioning his spine as he laughed and pulled Isak back in, teasing him right through it.

“Naa-s? Nah-s?” Even mimicked and Isak rolled his eyes, a lot, which kinda lost its effect when he leaned into the hand stroking over his cheek, propped on their sides now, temples on the blue pillow as Even cupped his jaw and kissed him, sincere.

Isak kissed back, the curve of Even’s lips caving under the pressure of his. This was the fucking air he breathed, parting enough to fit a plush bottom lip between his own, tugging to slip back together again, lashes fluttering as Even’s touch slid under his ear, over sensitive skin and up into curls, mouths breaking apart to breathe against each other for a precious moment.

He draped an arm around cushioned ribs, the other fitting between the sheets and Even’s side to loop around his back, keep them latched together with no chance of falling apart.

The sound of Even’s breathing echoed in his bones and Isak settled in against him, their bodies pressed together, blinking at the bright eyes across from him on the pillow. Conquerors and Christmas trees.

“Tell me about lachesism.”

Even tipped up an eyebrow, a little smile on his face as he rubbed absently in the space between Isak’s shoulderblades, everything intimate and close in the dark like this. So intimate and close it didn’t matter that they were both stacked in layers of warm clothes, everything smelt like each other and the world was pure quiet, just here for them and the drifting peace of snowfall outside the window.
“When I was a kid...I'd look back at history, and see all these amazing movements. Things happening...monumental events that people got to be part of. And I was always so jealous, that I lived in such a boring time, y’know?”

“Mm. Kinda. I mean, I don't think we live in a boring time.” Isak ran a thumb over Even’s collarbone, glancing up to catch the open-mouthed smile.

“Uh no, not anymore. But when we were younger it felt like it. Like I was always waiting, or something. That either none of that was real or none of this was, because life was nothing like the drama in the history books.”

Isak nodded, eyebrows furrowed as he watched Even speak. He was following, kind of, but the light behind those blues said this was important, so he wet his lips and listened harder.

“So when history started happening, like Breivik...the ice melting so plagues and bombs from World War Two were unfreezing, or big monumental changes like the black and white war in the US, gay marriage being passed in America and Ireland and all these other countries, then of course Brexit, and Putin. Your uncle.”

Even tacked on the last one with a cocked-head smile and Isak giggled, giving Even as stern of a look as he could manage when everything was this soft.

“You better not say that anywhere besides right here, I will disown myself.”

Even laughed, bright and lighter than air, eyes crinkling up as he twinkled all fond at the melting softness on Isak’s face.

“Anyways, so. History starts happening, and everything's changing. I mean, 2016 felt like a year in a dystopian novel or something. The “leading up to” section of a Wikipedia page on World War Three.”

“Yeah, I get what you mean.”

“And like. The worst part was, when the drama of a half dozen elections was going down, and Brexit and all these other things that are changing the world and just...fucking monumental? When they were happening, I don’t know, there was a part of me that was--” Even looked off into the distance and licked his lips, popping them back out with a little sound, taking a moment before he came back in, a notch quieter.

“I don’t know, excited, I guess, to be able to witness history like that. That everything in my lifetime suddenly counted, was part of this bigger, meaningful picture.”

“Hmm.”

“That’s what lachesism is. Kinda. The technical definition is longing for the clarity of disaster.”

“The clarity of disaster,” Isak repeated, and Even must’ve heard the confusion because he nodded, gazes snapping together again.

“Yeah, to have a yearning for some kind of disaster to uproot everything. Give you perspective. Turn a smooth lifetime into one that's sharp, that counts, because something dramatic and terrible threatened it.”

“Jesus,” Isak exhaled, the space between them feeling weirdly far. “What a word.”
“Ja. It's also used for people who have a fascination with like, natural disasters, hurricanes and
tornados and things that can just...ruin everything, and make you appreciate life again.”

“Wow.”

“Mhmm. And I mean, it's not like I want the world to go to war because I fucking don't, but the fact
that if I were in America right now, I’d’ve gotten to vote in one of the most pivotal elections in
history? I don't know there's something...awe inspiring about that. Knowing we're alive to witness
history and disaster like this. When it counts.”

Even fell quiet, blinking slow as he looked at Isak across the pillow space between them. Isak was
quiet, thinking about disaster.

“Yeah? No?” The slight touch of insecurity he got sometimes and Isak furrowed his eyebrows a
little, mouth open as he debated.

“...I don't know. I've never thought about it. I always liked storms though.”

Even smiled, scooting the few inches closer to kiss Isak’s forehead, trickling warmth down behind
his eyes.

Clarity.

“Especially when they cancel school,” Isak murmured and Even laughed, bright, the next kiss to his
cheek, then his lips and Isak smiled against his mouth.

He could kiss that smile forever. Who needed disaster when he had something this beautiful under
his fingertips, who needed storms when he had the bursting daylight that was Isak Valtersen.

Even slid his tongue over Isak’s curled lip, soaking in the unsteady inhale, mouth pressing against his
harder, arms tightening around his spine.

His boy shivered against him as Even raked a hand down his shoulders, wrapping around to a
tapered waist, over the bone of his hip. A little gasp against his mouth with splayed fingers down soft
cotton, skirting the curve of Isak’s ass down to his thigh, muscles shifting under layers.

That was all the warning he gave before he was hitching one of Isak’s legs up over his hip and Isak
broke off in a moan, lashes fluttering as his head tipped back into the pillow. Even pressed closer,
grinding his thigh against the bulge in Isak’s sweatpants, watching him lose it a little, hands gripping
the back of his head tight to reel himself back in, bite and beg at Even’s mouth.

Jesus, it never stopped surprising him, how eager and starved Isak was.

Hand sliding back up the stretch of a warm thigh to curve along the lines of that beautiful form until
his fingertips settled on the small of Isak’s lower back, beneath all the layers to rest on heated skin.
Their lips caught in a litany of sticky, quick kisses that were making Isak grind forward against him,
mouth falling open with the sensation.

“I...ahh. I get the clarity of storms but fuck,” A breathy little sound, one hand clutching Even’s
shoulder tight as the other slid through his hair, tingling mumble against his lips. “Fuck, I like the
clarity of this a lot better.”

Even pulled back, eyebrows lifting to fall slowly, watching as Isak tightened his grip, pupils wildly
dilated, chest expanding visibly with each breath.
“Am I... clarifying?” He shook his head a little, eyebrows knit high on his forehead. Surprised at the word choice.

“You always have been,” Isak scoffed, axiomatic written all over his face. “You kissed me once and I spilled my soul to you, did you forget that?”

“Are parallel universes your soul?” Even teased, tipping forward to kiss him again and Isak melted into it, arching against him, strong body rolling down his, softened by the layers between their chests.

Their mouths lapping together again a moment, eyes closed as they breathed each other in, spinning kinda dizzy with the proximity, pure emotions strung together between their bodies like this.

It was almost too much sometimes, how fucking immersed he could get. So far out of his head and so deep into this, into the pale blue sea they slipped into together, breaking surface only when one of them forgot how to breathe.

“Is lachesism yours?” Barely above a whisper and Even had to take a moment, slowly tracing back through the conversation to figure out what in hell Isak was talking about. His soul.

“No,” Even said simply. “I just think it’s interesting.”

“What if I told you it freaks me out,” Isak asked, mouth open, eyes on Even’s lips, grip tight and betraying the underlying teasing, so long as you’re smiling, and wear clothes--

“I’d tell you, give it three weeks and you’ll be whispering about it in bed.”

Isak’s smile tipped up sideways, fond and precious, lifting his chin just enough to barely barely brush puckered lips together before he was falling back to the pillow, other side of his mouth curling up to turn cocky sweet into fond sweet.

Even stroked a thumb over his cheekbone, sweeping back underneath it, the beautiful shadows he could still feel in the darkness.

“Does it really freak you out?”

“Nei. I just wanted to see what you were gonna say. I wasn’t disappointed.”

“Hmm. I can think of some other ways to not disappoint…”

The kiss started with his eyebrows up, hand sliding into blonde curls, then Isak was inhaling, exhaling and nuzzling their noses together. The smile he couldn’t help turned into a deeper twist of their mouths as he kissed Isak again and again, watching them tumble right back down into hearts pounding in fingertips, parted lips hungry and chasing until their tongues slipped together.

A turned on little hum against his mouth and Isak gripped the back of his neck tight, branding stripes into his skin as he kissed Even back desperate and begging like he was on his knees instead.

Fuck. Even reached up, touch sliding over Isak’s grip, weaving their fingers together as he took the hand off his neck, lifting their hands in the air to drag his fingertips around Isak’s wrist and entwine them properly, fingers locking into place together.

Isak stopped breathing, lips parted and unmoving against his, fingers curling around Even’s hand slow, awed, and alright, that was enough of that, Even fucking meant it.

He rolled up and over that blinking, overwhelmed body, slamming their entwined hands down on
the bed, pressing into Isak’s hand and lifting up to search the emotion swimming in those dark, swallowed up eyes.

Isak was staring up at him wide-eyed, heart pounding, mouth open, soul strung along a line as he held onto Even’s hand tight enough to give away how terrified he was to let go.

Even ducked back down, slow, dipping them into a gentle kiss. Isak was shivering, trembling underneath him from how bad he wanted. His fingers squeezed tight, dark hoodie hiding how fast his chest was expanding, breathing heavy, surrounded and feeling every inch of the pressure.

A moment longer to study everything flickering over that expressive, precious face and Even curled his fingers, squeezing back.

The little emotional sound that escaped Isak’s throat tightened something in his chest, making it kinda hard to breathe as he lowered again, watching Isak every inch closer until their lips were touching. Looking at him slip into the kiss, really looking at him. Until Isak’s lips were tugging for more and Even let himself fall under too, embracing the dark as he dragged them both deeper, kisses stringing together with no room to breathe.

Isak just inhaled against his mouth, stealing his oxygen with his heart, leaving them both to pound in their entwined hands as he reached up, kissing harder. He could feel it, in every pressing gasp, Isak was living for these kisses, he was holding tight to Even’s hand and living and breathing to kiss him.

He had to pull back, breaking off for oxygen, for the surface, lifting up enough Isak couldn’t drag him right back under. They were both gasping and Even waited, waited until he got his breathing under control enough for the room to stop spinning. He shifted his weight, readjusting their bodies together. Isak’s breath caught in his throat but he didn’t tear his eyes away, watching Even, waiting, thumb rubbing up and down their entwined hands.

Comfort.

Sparks.

Funny, how he could be submerged underwater and see the sky brighter than he’d ever seen it on dry land.

“You clarify me too,” he whispered and Isak tipped his head, a moment of reality sinking in with it.

Even could place the trajectory, the second it sunk in all the way. Isak’s expression shifting through surprise, worry, awe, neutrality. He was thinking about it the way Even meant, in the deepest sense, the one that hadn’t been brought up in a while.

But the look on his face wasn’t bad. Even was pretty sure, anyways. His heart was pounding ten beats too fast, gaze flicking back and forth between green eyes, searching, waiting. An inhale for his existence to ride on, an exhale to sentence his grave.

“I hope I always can,” Isak whispered back.

Even kissed him before he choked up instead. The hand in his wiggled free, both palms coming up to circle around the back of his head, hold him close and honest and raw.

A lifeline, spilling from his throat through their lips, down an arched spine to tie in knots against ribs, tied to bones the way his soul was tied to this breath, Isak’s touch sliding through his hair.

Hazy, clouded over with the storm and the lust lingering under the surface of their skin, breathed into
each other’s lips, too busy being his to do anything about the space left between them.

They were both here, in this moment, right now, and that meant something. That meant everything.

And the way Isak kissed him? Said he thought so too.

The shift was smooth as everything else, unspoken urgency rattling in every touch now, kisses to lead somewhere, palms sliding with purpose, bodies moving together as they both decided yes, now.

Even was sliding his hands up the bare skin of Isak’s back, underneath all those layers he was really ready to peel off, when the next gasp was covered by a loud chime. Followed by a soft buzz on the bedside table.

Fuck that. Isak slid his hands over Even’s waist, shoving up his clothes, and their phones went off again.

Loudly.

The kiss broke as Isak plopped back down to the pillow, looking annoyedly in the direction of the sound.

“Really?”

Another chime went off.

“Apparently,” Even pursed his lips and Isak rubbed a thumb over his hip, the strip of bare skin revealed when he was lifted like this, loose material sliding off skin.

Another chime.

“Just silence them,” Isak suggested and Even sucked in a breath, calling on all his willpower to climb off the beautiful boy beneath him, reaching for the phones stacked on the bedside table.

“It’s the group chat.”

“I figured.”

“Definitely not important.” Even flipped Isak’s phone to vibrate before sliding up the bottom of the screen, turning on do not disturb too, for good measure. Then his was next, group chat notifications stacked on the screen, over the top of a text from his mom.

His mom. Fuck.

Even’s eyes flicked up before he could think not to, four numbers burning bright white over his lock screen.

“Fuck.”

“What?” Isak rolled his head on the pillow, looking over in concern.

“The time…” Even trailed, and he could physically feel the warmth in the room freeze. If he stayed, had sex with Isak the way they both wanted, he’d be crawling out of here past midnight, exhausted to the bone. Which he’d promised his mom he wouldn’t.

Isak was studying him, all caution wrapped up in a plea he was trying to keep off his face but Even could feel it anyways, locking his phone, eyes anywhere but Isak as he looked down, shoved it in his
hoodie pocket. “I've gotta go.”

“Now?”

“Yeah.”

He risked a glance over. Isak was pouting.

Even sighed, sliding back down the bed to prop on his side next to his upset, beautiful boyfriend, stroking a thumb over his pouty mouth, keeping his words soft as he could.

“Codependency isn’t healthy. It’s better this way, for both of us.” He dipped forward, kissing the pushed out lips, hand cupping the line of Isak’s jaw. Taking a moment to just feel the press of their lips together before he pulled back.

Isak was still pouting.

Even sighed and rolled over onto his back to look up at the ceiling. He wasn't sure how Isak didn't get it. Didn't feel it. The tide of danger beneath every one of their pressing kisses begging so damn deep.

“I have to go.” Lips rolled in, popped back out as he studied the blank white. “Otherwise one of us will end up drowning.”

“Don’t say stuff like that,” Isak whispered, hushed and hurt.

Even glanced over, studying the knit between Isak’s eyebrows, the heartbreak so fucking clear on his face. He wasn’t trying to break Isak’s heart, god that was the last fucking thing he wanted.

Rolled over on his side, facing the fragile devastation mixed into the broken confusion.

“It’s just a metaphor,” Even told him and Isak was still looking at him like that.

Even kissed him. The knit between his eyes didn’t go away, he wasn’t content with the cover, not the way he usually pretended.

Alright, subject change time.

“Dinner at my parents’ house tomorrow, right?”

“Do I plan for dessert?” Isak asked, the next question so flat it wasn’t a question at all. “How late can I stay until you kick me out.”

“That’s not fair.” Even searched the green, wondering when in hell Isak had gone from being okay with this to kicking his feet this viciously. “I didn’t kick you out yesterday.”

Isak sighed, deflating from the pissiness as he rolled over onto his back, leaving Even to study his profile instead. “I know, I just...”

“What?”

“This sucks.” Flat and resigned and Even really wanted to take his hand again.

“It’s not that bad,” he argued back lightly and Isak scoffed.

“Maybe for you.”
“Has it...has it actually been bad for you?”

Isak didn't get the chance to answer, not like he was going to, before Even’s phone was vibrating in his pocket. Not the text vibration either, that was a call.

He fished the phone out of his pocket, glancing at the caller ID on the screen.

It was Jonas.

Fuck.

“I have to take this,” Even apologized, sliding the green button before Isak could glance over and see the name.

He was already rolling off the bed as he lifted the phone to his ear, speaking quickly before Jonas could, just in case Isak could recognize his best friend’s voice from three feet away through the distant non-speaker grating of someone else's telephone call.

“Just one second.”

Even pushed to his feet and padded for the door, closing it all but an inch behind him, crack left so Isak didn’t get pissy about getting shut out or some overdramatic shit. Then Even was starting down the hallway, double checking to make sure the line was still connected before he spoke again.

“Sorry, I was with Isak.”

“Ja, um. That's actually who I'm calling about.” The last time he'd spoken to Jonas on the phone, he’d been concerned as hell, and his voice was absolutely no different this time. Awesome.

“Is something wrong?”

“Look, I told myself if things looked better by Friday, I wouldn't say anything. And everything did look better today, but Isak also knows me well enough to know I probably had a plan if things didn't, so I'm guessing he was faking it to make sure I didn't and so I decided to call anyways.”

Even blinked, trying to cognize that. So a...double blinded double bluff. Like the hand of cards, the poker game Isak had told him about - where Jonas had teased Queen Isak, taken Isak's hand when he got back because he knew Isak would've taken his.

Called because he told himself he would if things weren’t okay, only Isak would’ve known he’d’ve done that and faked being okay so he wouldn’t so Jonas called anyways.

Fuck, this was a whole other level of childhood best friend.

“You moved out, right?” Jonas was speaking again and Even shook his head once, shoving that all aside to focus back on whatever it was he was calling about in the first place.

“Uh...yeah. I was just about to go home right now, actually.”

“Listen, man, I totally respect you for that, but it's not going well at all for him.”

Even sucked in a breath. He was starting to get that.

“Eskild told me it was kinda a rough start, but all change is--”

“No, listen. Even, he hasn't slept more than two hours any day this week.”
That time he didn’t inhale, he didn’t breathe at all. Even went dead silent.

The silence echoed until his throat finally started working again, one word, low and scratched.

“What?”

“Yeah, he's always had trouble sleeping, or at least since his parents fell out. But not like this. I don't want you to feel like it's your fault, you were only trying to do the right thing, but. Isak made it pretty clear not to tell you how bad off he was and I'm just not gonna get on board with that no communication shit. You need to know.”

Yeah, he could definitely agree with that being something he needed to know. Only two hours? What the fuck?

“What am I supposed to do?”

“I have no clue,” Jonas told him and Even looked up at the sky. Fuck. If Jonas didn’t know, how in hell was he supposed to? “I think moving out was the right thing to do, but you've gotta do something about the fact that Isak is drifting off in half his classes, because I can only elbow him back awake in one of them.”

“Yeah...okay.” Even swallowed and Jonas sucked in a breath on the other line.

“I don't wanna come across as harsh, or to make you think I'm blaming you--”

“No, no it's totally fine. You're worried about him, I get it.”

“Still. It's not your fault he sucks at sleeping, but if you can do something to help, I'd be a hell of a lot less worried.”

“I'll do what I can,” Even offered, feeling hollow.

“Takk...he just. Needs his sleep, y'know?”

“I do know.” Tongue in his cheek, head shaking once, phone pressed hard to his ear. “That's why I moved out.”

Jonas barked a laugh, sounding as unamused as Even was. “Fuck irony, man.”

“Tell me about it.”

“Well uh. Thanks for letting me just bombard you with that.”

“Anytime.” Even kicked his heel against the ground, watching the sock slide. “Really.”

“And I wish you luck. Both of you.”

“Thanks, Jonas.”

“Yeah, you too, Even.”

The phone clicked into silence and Even pulled it away from his ear, checking the screen to make sure the call ended before he locked it again, shoving it in his hoodie pocket as he spun back around.

Isak was leaning one shoulder on the wall, arms crossed over his chest.
“Jonas?”

Fuck.

“Isak--” he started and Isak turned back around, pushing off the wall and stalking right back for his room. Even cursed the skies and made a face at the ceiling, wishing for a moment his boyfriend weren't a fucking drama queen before he started down the hallway after him.

And got to Isak's door just in time to see his jacket thrown out of it and the door slammed behind.

Okay, actual fucking drama queen, apparently.

“Isak!” Even called, one hand on the closed fucking door, waiting for it to open back up.

“Go home, Even,” Isak shouted back. He tried the handle. The door was locked.

“Really?” The exasperation shown through but he didn't care, making an annoyed noise as he scooped his jacket off the ground. This was a lot less cute than when Isak threw his clothes out here earlier.

“Or go to Jonas's and conspire with him there, that's fine too.” His voice was muffled through the door, but Even certainly heard that anyways.

“He called me!” He banged on the door, groaning at how fucking ridiculous Isak was being right now. “C'mon, don't be like this.”

“Like what? You want to go home, go home.”

He didn't sound that pissed, more done, exhausted than angry. Not like that was any better. Even rolled his forehead on the door and fought off another groan, sucking in a steadying breath instead.

“Isak. Baby.”

“Don't ba-by me, I'm pissed at you.”

“I can see that,” Even said dryly, trying the handle again for good measure. What the fuck.

He was still pretty sure Isak wasn't angry though, he was saying that because he didn't wanna say hurt, but Even knew him a little better than that by now. It was fucking obvious, in every word as he called back through the door between them.

“It's getting late, seriously, you should go if you're going to.”

“I have to,” he said desperately and he could just picture the disappointed nod, the look on Isak's face on the other side of the door.

Resigned, upset. He just prayed there weren't watery tears with it.

“Then go.”

“Can I make you breakfast?” Even asked, temple pressed against the wood as he held his breath.

It was a long shot, but Isak was upset about him leaving, about him ‘conspiring’ with Jonas. He’d clearly caught enough of the conversation to figure out it was about this, and yeah, he had a right to be pissed, but Even was just trying to the right thing. For them.
For Isak.

His eyes were squeezed tight, murmuring please please please to himself as he waited, praying that Isak would just say yes, let Even come back tomorrow morning, try to fix this. Find a way to make this work for both of them, because clearly, his original plan wasn’t.

Please, please, Isak, c’mon--

And finally, a quiet voice came through.

“Whatever.” A pause and Even was still holding his breath, five fingertips pressed to the door like that could let him somehow get through it. “...I won't be up until 10.”

“I’ll be over at 9:30,” he promised, exhaling in a rush of relief. Isak still sounded vaguely grumpy on the other side of the door, something shuffling as he huffed.

“Make somebody else let you in then.”

“I will.”

Steady, sure. He meant it. He would, he’d text the flat tonight, see who would be awake. Come in here in the early hours and make Isak breakfast so it’d be ready when he woke, and they could have a nice quiet morning together and talk about everything to do to fix this.

Another moment of silence ticked by and he could picture Isak leaning on the other side of the door, listening to see if he was gone.

Even smiled to himself, drumming his fingers over the wood, quiet and padded and he could hear the little intake of breath on the other side. Isak was listening for him.

Quiet, sincere, barely louder than the drumming fingers.

“I'm sorry, Isak.”

He nearly fell inside as the door opened, moment of soft sweet crashed stumbling over his own feet with all his weight leaning on wood that was now swinging open.

Even managed to catch himself on the door frame. Isak was looking at him, curls wild, door half open, just enough he couldn’t see anything past Isak’s bundled up shoulders, the impossible to read look on his face as Even held his breath.

Then the hand on the doorknob dropped, and Isak was looking down guiltily.

“I'm sorry too, storming in here like that, I just.” He sucked in a breath, swaying a little and Even’s heart melted.

“It's okay. It's okay.” Two steps forward and he got a finger under Isak’s chin, tipping his head back up, their eyes locking. Swimming over with emotion, but not tears. The relief slipped the smallest smile onto Even’s face, sincere as he could be as he held that beautiful face, those hurting eyes and promised. “We’re gonna get through this, okay?”

“Okay,” he whispered back, green searching a moment, then Even was tipping his head a little higher and kissing him one more time.

Isak felt fucking fragile in his touch, leaning up into the kiss kinda hopeless, in both the terms of surrender and afraid to ask for more.
It was physically painful to pull away from that, foreheads pressing together instead. Even sucked in a breath. Fuck, they had to find a way to get better at this. It should not be this fucking painful to leave.

“T’ll be here in the morning when you wake up,” Even whispered, the bit of comfort he could offer until they both learned how to say goodbye without ripping themselves apart.

“In the kitchen,” Isak scoffed, but there was a small smile on his face and the world was slipping back onto its axis again.

“Just like the first time,” Even reminded him, a touch of hopeful as he softly knocked their noses together and Isak melted a little at the corners.

“So long as you make those eggs again.”

“Only if you dance to Gabrielle with me.”

“Not a chance,” Isak told him and Even huffed a smile, wide and honest, tugging Isak’s mouth up at the corners too then he was leaning in to press a kiss to the lifted cupid’s bow.

Mouths crushing together as Isak popped up on his tiptoes, a heavy hand clutching his collarbone to keep his balance, keep him from falling while they kissed. Even wanted more than anything to wrap arms around him, to hold him tight and press a thousand kisses into his skin until he forgot how to ever kiss that desperate again.

Fuck, why was this so fucking difficult?

Lips tugged slow apart to dive together again, heartbeats pounding. Even fucking wishing he wasn’t the older one here, so he didn’t have to be the one to make the hard decision and pull back.

But he was so he did and Isak let him, falling back down off his tiptoes with a solid exhale and a trying, weak smile.

“Goodnight,” Even said and Isak inhaled, taking his hand back, taking one step backwards. Taking Even’s heart with him.

“Good night,” Isak whispered, then he was closing his door and trying to breathe while Even watched the door close and lost his oxygen entirely.

Two hours.

He’d gone out of his way to make sure Even wouldn’t find out.

If he honestly thought it’d be better for them, for Isak, he’d burst open that door right now, kiss him to sleep on those pillows, but.

It wasn’t. They couldn’t live like this. It wasn’t fair. Reality meant they couldn’t live together, depend on each other the way they did, and if they didn’t end it on their terms it was gonna be ripped from their hands and if they thought this sucked?

Yeah. This was better, it was. He’d keep telling himself that no matter how many times he had to until it sunk in and he actually found a way to believe it.

Even was drifting through the silent, dead kitchen en route for the door to leave, when a flash of
white by the window caught his eye.

A pad of paper.

It took a little while to find a pen, then eventually tape.

The shadows from the moonlit window made the ink look so much darker on the paper than it should, just blank void he was scratching into pure white. A hole in the wall as he pinned it there, a piece of tape to hold the dark shape of a thundercloud, lightning storm, swirling tornado arching down the side of the paper.

His roommates would see it first but he didn’t care, better left here on the kitchen wall than not left at all. Just in case anything happened. Or Isak came in for water when he couldn’t sleep.

For a moment, he’d considered quoting Nas’s *Patience*, but it was maybe a little much. He went for another one, sloped words dancing under the cloud like rain.

The clarity of disaster.

*Hope you make it through the storm*  
*You know what though, I love the rain, man*  
*Take it slow.*

Take it slow. One minute, at a time.

Chapter End Notes
If you guys don’t know anything about lachesism, there’s a cool ass youtube video on it here. I think it’s something Even would absolutely be interested in, and I’m hella interested in it, so I highly recommend watching that video.

Lyrics quoted in Even’s drawing are from Nas’s Don’t Body Yourself (guys I lowkey have loved Nas since high school and freaked out when it was in Skam I’m ridiculous)

So you guys are leaving the best comments in the world and every time I get one I like scream they make my entire day and they make this whole thing so ???? much fun to write. I'm super sorry I haven’t replied to all of said comments, I get all wrapped up in writing, but I will do everything I can to get back to all of you

Now! Good news !! I wrote a weekend chapter that takes place only on Saturday and Sunday, of this week, and I will be posting that Saturday, so you won't have to wait a whole week for an update :)

I hope you guys keep enjoying, I have basically everything through February already mapped out and...all of the Drama, it's coming, it will hit you like a train when it does but thank you all for hanging in there with me for the slowbuild in the meantime.

Much love to all, xx
Church Bells and Guitars

Chapter Notes

so this chapter is actually only for two days. Saturday and Sunday, but they’re...pivotal
days and I have a lot to say, so enjoy :) 

There’s a song played on guitar in here, which would sound something like this. There
will be a link to click to it at the right time in the chapter too, so when you see the link,
click the link and listen along as you read. it will line up, in theory, so.

I just got back from spending time with my parents for the first time in like a year, so
enjoy this chapter that is weirdly about family and fluff and also religion and shouting

Warnings: a fuckton of loving ridicule, religious debate, the awful reality of gay history
is brought up in regards to the church, internalized homophobia explosion time & kinky
entirely consensual sex between ***'s if you’d like to skip it

I really wanted to have a moment for Isak and religion - Skam did such a beautiful job
weaving religious symbolism into season 3, so I really couldn’t overlook it. I in no way
intend to offend anyone, regardless of what you believe, but I think this is a realistic
scene for Isak that needs to be shown.

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Lørdag, 15:53
21.01.2016

“Are you sure that’s how it goes?”

“Yes, I’m sure.”

“Don’t sound so damn smug, I’m not as experienced as you, goddamn.”

“Mmm. Mhm. There, like that. Now just, press.”

“Ow!”

“Oh my god, Isak.”

“Cut me some slack, this isn’t easy.”

“It’s a fucking guitar string, it’s not going to cut open your finger.” Pure fond exasperation and Isak
threw up his free hand, glancing over his shoulder. Eyebrow tipping up as he took note of the
bandana he’d forgotten Even was wearing. Bright blue like his eyes, wrapped around his forehead the way he’d worn the neon one all those weeks ago at that party.

Even gave him a look, *what*, head shaking a little before Isak made an innocent face and turned back to the guitar, trying to curl his fingers a little more, press down all the strings Even was telling him too.

“Does that look right?”

“...sure. Now just strum, once, down--”

The sound was somewhere between a screech and a dull thud from the strings he really wasn’t trying to muffle and fuck, this was so much harder than it looked.

“Why do I suck?”

“Because it’s fun? Because you really like to have my co--”

“Hey. I am trying to learn an instrument here, no dirty talking. Especially not when we’re sitting like this, it’s hard enough to concentrate as it is.” Isak licked his lips, bending back over the guitar to see if he could fix his finger placement.

“Do you want me to move?” Even asked, sounding extremely insincere and dubious, like he already knew exactly what Isak was gonna say.

“Don’t you dare,” he shot back, holding his breath as he strummed again. Okay, that sounded significantly less awful. The hand on his waist squeezed, a surprised sound from behind him.

Isak leaned to the side, trying not to bump his backwards snapback off his head as he looked up at Even over his shoulder, eyebrows raised and a smile on his face.

“I told you, if you just press down a little harder.”

“Yeah, yeah, you say a lot of shit, how am I sup-posed to know what’s good and what’s--”

Even kissed him, cutting off the words and Isak tipped his head, pressing into it, shivering as the hand on his waist lifted to stroke down his neck instead.

Fuck, it was fucking dizzying to kiss Even when he was behind him like this.

They were sitting on the floor in Even’s bedroom, one of Even’s ninety hats tugged on backwards over his curls. Isak’s legs folded criss-cross and Even’s looped under his, knees plastered together and their ankles crossed. Guitar across Isak’s lap and Isak basically in Even’s lap, one arm on his waist and the other holding the neck of the guitar, just below his.

Even was *trying* to teach him how to play, and apparently it was a lot easier if they were both on the same side of the guitar, that way he could move Isak’s fingers and hands for him, but it was also hella distracting sitting all pressed together and close like this, every breath expanding Even’s chest against his spine.

But he really was trying to learn, and he was doing...okay? Apparently he wasn’t pressing hard enough, although he didn’t have much trouble switching between the chords or remembering which was where. Strumming was also ridiculously easy after Even had showed him how with their fingers entwined.
Even didn’t play with guitar picks, he said they were restricting or some shit, so it was kinda new to attempt this with bare fingers. But the few times Jonas had attempted to teach him they’d been sitting next to each other instead of stacked like this and it’d been really fucking hard.

Besides, it was surprisingly motivating to learn while nestled in Even’s lap. Since he was catching literally every movement Isak made and Isak really didn’t wanna suck.

Not at guitar, anyways. Even was a different story.

By the time their mouths broke apart, smiling softly at each other before turning back to the guitar, Isak had completely forgotten the position for the C chord. Damn.

“What’s the fingering for C again?”

“The what?” Even asked, leaning his chin on Isak’s shoulder.

“The fingering.”

“The what?”

“The fi-- oh fuck you.”

Even giggled and Isak rolled his eyes, trying to line his hands up again on his own.

“That’s not--”

Isak strummed out of spite and the screech was terrible. They both cringed and Even made an eee sound, hand wrapping over his to position it correctly again. Well, he’d been close.

And Even’s fingers were pressing over his, making his cheeks heat up in a blush, which was frankly ridiculous, he’d had that boy inside him more times than he could count but Even held his hand and Isak was a stuttering mess.

It wasn’t technically holding hands, it--

Even’s right hand slid between the fingers of his, positioning to strum and okay, yeah, that was probably technically holding hands, and Isak was having a really hard time focusing, biting his lip as he repeated the mantra in his head, chill out chill out, it’s just Even chill out.

Dry lips pressed to his neck and Isak’s head tipped to the side, grip tightening on Even’s. Which also meant his fingers sinking into the strings, which ow ow--

Before he could pull his fingers off, their entwined hands were strumming down, up down and Isak’s fluttering eyes popped right back open.

That sounded really good.

“Hva...”

“Told you,” Even murmured against his skin, keeping up the strumming, moving Isak with him. Kissing up to his ear, breath warm as he nosed aside the snapback to whisper against Isak’s curls,

“Move to G on three, ready? One, two--”

Their hands adjusted together, strum pattern not breaking and it was beautiful, nearly seamless, chords pouring out of the guitar as Isak’s mouth dropped open, looking down in surprise.
“Now D, okay?”

“My favorite,” Isak muttered and Even snorted, shaking his head, leaning over Isak’s shoulder so he could watch.

“Ready? And...go.”

Their hands curled into the D position, careful strumming on Even’s part to give them time to get there, barely a drop in the music before the next chord was humming.

“Wow.”

“Mhhm. What did I tell you?”

“Well you didn’t tell me my fingers would hurt this much,” Isak complained, for the sake of complaining, glancing up over his shoulder to meet the pretty blue eyes sparkling under the pretty blue bandana, catching all the sunlight slowly lowering in the corners of the room.

He couldn’t keep up the haughtiness for long, not when Even was looking at him like that. Isak looked away, dipping his head to reign in the smile only he couldn’t, not when Even’s hand was still wrapped in his, slowly falling away from the strings.

The strings were still echoing quietly and Isak glanced back up under his lashes, lungs freezing as he caught the intensity in that gaze.

Fuck, he was forgetting how to breathe again.

“Scale of one to ten,” Even asked and Isak furrowed his eyebrows.

“Hmm?”

“Your fingers. How much do they hurt?”

“Oh. Um. I guess...like a four.”

“Baby,” Even muttered, making Isak’s mouth drop open in protest.

Before he could squander up some indignant defense, Even was tipping him in the other direction, lifting their entwined left hands for his mouth, holding Isak’s eyes as he slowly, carefully pressed a kiss to the end of each one of his fingers.

He looked so much younger like this, and somehow really intimidatingly cooler, little escaped blonde strands curling over the top of his bandana and making Isak’s spine tingle as much as it had been before that first almost kiss.

The intensity in Even’s eyes was the same, locked on his as he finally reached his pinky, pressing a solid kiss to the tip, where the guitar strings were leaving not-that-painful red lines. Which definitely didn’t hurt now that he had so fucking much else to focus on.

“And now?”

“...six.”

Even burst into a laugh, throwing his head back and crinkling up all precious.

“What? They do.”
Isak glared. Even laughed more.

“‘You’re so cute,’” he finally managed, still breathless as Isak rolled his eyes.

“Cute, cute. Cute my ass, I’m not cute, thankyouverymuch, cu-te, who do you think you are.”

Even was just looking at him, smiled tucked away in the corners of his mouth.

“What?” Isak demanded, making the pretty head shake, legs shifting to rock them to the side.

“Can I play something for you?”

“Only if you teach me how to play it after.”

“Mmkay. I don’t know if you’ll like it though, maybe you should decide after you hear it.”

“It’s you,” Isak scoffed, reaching up to press a quick kiss to Even’s mouth. “I’ll like it.”

“Whatsoever you say, dear,” Even sing-songed, wiggling a bit as he put his hands back on the guitar. “You’ve gotta move, though.”

“Oh, we’re getting serious now, gotta play it all on your own.”

“Or maybe I just know you’re gonna sabotage me in the middle of it.”

“And why would I do that??”

“Because you can’t stand to not kiss me,” Even replied, tipping his head all cutely. Isak was in the middle of climbing out of his lap, one leg swung over Even’s so he could tumble out to the side, but then the fucker said that, and well.

Isak couldn’t like. Not kiss him after that.

They kissed for a little while, but this position was hardly the best so eventually their mouths had to break off, making Isak sigh before they’d even split apart.

“See?” Even teased and Isak struggled a bit, trying to get back upright so he could push off over Even’s leg and tumble to the ground, hat falling right off his head.

“No idea what you’re--talking about,” he managed, nearly impaling himself on the end of the guitar, but finally landing on his ass, free of the leg tangle and surprisingly large wooden instrument.

“You know I could’ve just set the guitar aside and let you out--”

“I know, I know,” Isak waved a hand, snagging the snapback and sliding it back on, scooting backwards to sit up straight, feeling strangely cold and small as he wrapped his hands around his ankles and cocked his head. “Well?”

Even stuck his tongue in his cheek, resituating to slide the guitar into place, playing down the strings once and adjusting one of the little silver knobby things. He looked like a real guitarist, all suavé and cool with his fancy hair and his tight black tshirt and Isak swallowed, trying not to look like a thirsty hoe before Even so much as hit a note.

“I don’t usually play acoustic, I like electric a lot better,” he forewarned, glancing up, knee bouncing.

“Mhmm.”
“All of my favorite bands sound better on electric. I can set up the amp if you want, play something I know better--”

“Acoustic is fine.”

“And I haven’t actually played in like, a while, I’m still kinda rusty--”

“You’re stalling.”

“--so just don’t get your hopes up or anything--”

“Even.”

He finally paused the nervous rambling, looking up at Isak. Isak shook his head at him once, eyebrows up.

“It’s just me. Chill out.”

“Just you,” Even huffed, but there was a hint of a smile in his voice, fingers sliding into place on the guitar, eyes flickering back down.

Isak bounced his knee, rolling his lips in as he tried to be patient, but Even was taking forever--

“You ready?”

“Ja.”

“Okay, here goes.”

The song started out quietly, fingerpicking through a few chords before the pattern kicked in, quiet and beautiful as it folded over itself. Fuck, Even was good.

It made sense, with three guitars in his room, but still, it was one thing for him to show Isak a few chords and it was another thing to watch him string out a beautiful melody with just his fingers, filling up the room.

The way Jonas played, he made songs, bright chords to sing around a fire. When Jonas played you wanted to sing along. That was nothing like this. If Jonas on guitar was the favorite fountain kids played in, Even was a trickling rock waterfall you watched from afar but didn’t dare touch.

Isak knew the song but couldn’t quite place it, lyrics floating just out of reach, on the tip of his tongue.

And on Even’s, apparently, because that’s when he started singing, surreal, echoey, like he was painting instead.

“Well you only need the light when it’s burning low, only miss the sun when it starts to snow. You only know you love her when you let her go.” The guitar was singing along with him, a radio song turned serenade. “You only know you’ve been high when you’re feeling low. Only hate the road when you’re missing home, only know you love her when you let her go...and you let her go-o-o.”

The fingerpicking shifted to add solid strokes, chords echoing as his hand thudded a beat against the strings, guitar and drums all at once, a beautiful backtrack with individual notes floating between, dancing over the strings and Isak just stared.

“Staring at the bottom of your glass, hoping one day you’ll make a dream last. But dreams come slow
and they go-o so fast.” An echo of high pitches, the ones you tuned with, this whole array of sounds Isak didn’t even know a guitar could make. Bass beat, go. “You see her when you close your eyes, maybe one day you'll understand why-y...everything you touch surely di-i-ies.”

Even wasn’t looking at him, down at his hands as played, voice nearly swallowed up by bursting chords as he drifted over the notes. Isak couldn’t feel his heartbeat inside his chest.

“But you only need the light when it's burning lo-ow, only miss the sun when it starts to snow. You only know you love her when you let her go.” A deep breath, and Isak’s gaze flicked up to Even’s face just in time to watch his eyes slip shut.

“...only know you've been high when you're feeling low.” Fingers dancing from memory over the strings like they belonged to his heart instead. “Only hate the road when you're missing home, only know you love her when you let her go.”

This wasn’t guitar, couldn’t possibly be the guitar he grew up giggling to, this was some other instrument, some parallel universe where everything was an art museum and this exhibit was his to watch.

“Staring at the ceiling in the dark, same old emp-ty...feeling in your heart, cause love comes slow and it go-es so...fast.” It almost slipped into a whisper, notes cutting high again.

“Well you see her when you fa-a-all asleep, but never to touch, and never to keep...”

That time he barely made it through the line, lips rolling in and eyes slipped closed. It took him a second to find the right notes again, playing them a few times before he lifted his voice, rasping, “Cause you loved her too much and you dived...too deep.”

Isak couldn’t really place whether the ache in his chest was due to an organ physically breaking or the fact that he hadn’t been able to breathe for the past thirty seconds.

“Well you only need the light, when it’s burning low, you only miss the sun,”

When it started to snow. Lights, gold.

Even was singing the chorus again and Isak couldn’t move, he was ice and Even was falling drifts of white, dangerously beautiful, deceptively peaceful, pure, breathtaking, life-shattering.

“--only know you've been high when you're feeling low.” The words had no trouble sailing over the melody now, coiffed head tipping to the side, the English lyrics shaping over to sound more like him, vowels long, “...only hate the road when you're missing home. Only know you love her when you let her go.”

A little trill, his lips rolling in, head swaying with the music like it was coming from his chest instead of his hands.

_The only way to have something forever is by losing it._

Don’t say that.

“And you let her go, ohh-ohh.”

The first time he’d seen Even sing, it’d just been mouthing along to the words of 5 Fine Frøkner, kissing him through half of them. Now it was another world, another boy, another level of
understanding as Even sang to the guitar and let the music carry all the emotions he didn’t want to show.

They were shining through anyways.

“...and you let her go...will you let her go-o-o...”

This was what it meant to be lost in music, thumb thudding out a rhythm steadier than his heartbeat.

Isak’s fingers might be actually glued to his ankles, absolutely breathless as he held perfectly still and watched Even sway, watched another layer peel back something beautiful and heartbreaking.

“Well you only need the light when it’s burning low, only miss the sun when it starts to snow. You only know you love her when you let her go-o.”

The only way. To have something forever.

Was by losing it.

“You only know you've been high when you're feel-ing low. Only hate the road when you're missing home, only know you love her when you let her go-o...”

The song dropped down an octave, the words caught in his throat as his hands took over again, just guitar dancing and singing, the last chorus.

His hands stopped thudding the drum part, beats dropping out to the quiet simplicity of a final swooping melody, soaring with the slowing dance of long fingers.

Fading out to echo around the bedroom, voice lifted quiet and raspy for the very final line.

“...and you let her go-o-o.”

The final string popped high, striking a thousand silent chords with it, all the way down Isak’s spine.

Even’s hands didn’t leave the strings. Tongue in his cheek, eyes downcast, off to the side.

A thousand feet between them.

Isak had never really liked that song. He’d never really got it until now. So you don’t miss the water until it’s gone, sure, whatever, but watching...watching Even sing it like that?

Who needed oxygen, he didn’t need to breathe, the only thing he needed to do was move. He managed to swing his legs around, shifting the spinning room to land at Even’s feet.

Even wasn’t looking at him, lips parted around the same sullen quiet of the first time he’d cornered Isak in the kitchen, the last time he’d had swoops of curled strands broken free to curve over the top of a headband, only a hell of a lot less showing on the pretty face beneath it.

Avoiding eye contact for all the opposite reasons Isak had that day. If you see him, you’re gone.

If he sees you, he’s gone.

Isak lifted the guitar from his hands. Even surrendered it easily, eyes slipping shut, jaw clicking as mouth opened, some explanation on the tip of his tongue, but it never fell. Whatever excuse, dismissal, barrage of words he had to offer just faded, gone.
That was fine, Isak had plenty. But he had more important things to say first.

He sat the guitar aside and climbed right back into Even’s lap, facing him this time, ankles crossing behind Even’s spine as he wrapped himself around pounding ribs, head on a sloping shoulder and eyes closed as he squeezed as tight as he could.

Even lifted a hand to his spine, hesitant at first, then Isak was rocking them and Even held him back.

He really shouldn’t say it, but he didn’t anyways.

“Don’t. Don’t let me go,” Isak whispered, heart pounding against Even’s chest. Face squished against his shoulder, nose folded to the side but he didn’t care, Even was here, they were together, they were together right now, and that was all that counted.

That beautiful, long limbed, multifaceted gem of a precious human being was here, holding onto him, and that was so much more than enough.

He could feel the ripple as his words sunk in, fingers tightening against his spine, reviving inhale pushing against his chest.

Then Even’s head was lifting, pulling away to look at Isak smashed here on his shoulder. Only he was facing the other way and had to flop over, blinking up at Even from a weird-ass angle, comically close.

He couldn’t help the twitch of a little smile, then one of the hands from his shoulder was gone, lifting his cheek instead. Pulling Isak up to him, steady grip holding his chin to look into his eyes, dead serious.

“I won’t,” he swore and Isak glanced between blue eyes, the sharp set of his mouth, back up.

He meant it.

The hand holding his chin slipped up the line of his jaw, bumping his hat again to sink into his curls, rubbing over the back of his neck as Even shook him a little, holding him tight and close in how fucking much he meant it.

Good.

Sitting in his lap like this he was a little taller than Even so Isak took the initiative, swooping down, head tilting to press a solid, long overdue kiss to those sullen lips.

The moment their lips slid together, apart, Even was drawing in a shaky breath. His world hanging in the balance of whether they would kiss again and Isak pressed closer, mouthing at the worried mouth until it was never ever worried again.

What was that Even had said last night, about someone drowning?

By the time they pulled apart they were both breathing again, deep and real, hands on each other’s skin and foreheads pressed together.

Fuck.

For some reason, he really hadn’t anticipated Even playing guitar for him to go that way. He’d been picturing something a lot more movie-typical serenading, but he’d never trade that for this in a million years, a hundred universes.
Heart to fingertips.

“You know, when you put aside the fact that you were trying to make me cry, you’re really good,” Isak whispered and Even huffed, a touch of a smile.

“Now you’re gonna teach it to me, right?”

“That one?”

“Mhmm.”

“...yeah, I mean if that’s what you want.”


And kissed him.

Finally tugged apart with a little pop, a curl of a smile on Isak’s face as he dipped in for one more peck, two. Okay, more like four, but.

“Except maybe teach it to me without the fancy fingering part,” Isak said, leaning back and lifting an eyebrow.

Even smiled at him, bright. Real.

“The what part?”

“Oh fuck you.” Isak rolled his eyes and then he was spinning around in Even’s lap again, two strong arms around his waist again.

He glanced over, leaning to reach for the guitar when the arms around his waist tightened, tugging him back upright with a vague sound of protest before Even’s mouth was landing on his again, kissing him deep from behind.

Jesus fuck. Isak’s fingers curled around Even’s wrist, tipping up against him with soft lips, toes curling in his socks as Even kissed him hard, sensual and open, as electric as the way his mouth had been moving when their eyes locked across a blacklight dancefloor so many fucking weeks ago.

Were emotional earthquakes a thing? Because Isak was still recovering from one and it wasn’t fucking fair for Even to be kissing him like that, goddammit, now he really wanted to be in Even’s lap for a whole slew of other reasons. Doing other things.

Guitar. He was going to attempt to learn this fucking instrument, at least enough so that he wasn’t completely incompetent. He could control his fucking libido enough to sit this close without jumping Even’s bones, fucking hell.

Their mouths slipped apart on a little gasp and it took everything in him not to tip his head back against Even’s shoulder, mouth along his jaw, arch his spine and breathe for Even to take him, like this, let him ride backwards in his lap with one hand on his throat and the other sliding down his chest to--

Okay, yeah, he needed to maybe chill right now.

Isak fluttered his eyes back open, lips still parted, Even’s fingers running over the arch of his neck, looking over his shoulder at him as he blinked back into reality.
“Halla,” Even murmured and Isak closed his eyes for a moment, tongue darting out to wet his lips. Fuck. Okay, pry back open, so much bright pretty blue, he knew Even’s eyes were blue but goddamn, they were literally as bright as the cloth wrapped around his forehead.

Focus, Valtersen. Focus.

“Halla,” he managed back, tipping up for one more kiss that had Even smiling before their lips touched.

That time when they broke apart, Isak instantly reached over for the guitar before he could get stopped again, scooping it up and pointedly not thinking about how tight Even’s arms were around his waist as he lifted it back into his lap.

Right. Music, they were doing that, instead of each other. They were at his parents’ house, and his parents were home, clearly there was no point in getting worked up regardless. It wasn’t like he was gonna ride Even on his bedroom floor when Adults were a door away, no thank you.

“You finally ready?”

“Me? Me, finally ready? I’m sorry, who was it that decided to kiss me like that in his fucking parents’ house, whatever the fuck that was supposed to be, am I ready, did you really have the audacity to--”

Alright, hands.” Even’s arms unwrapped from his waist, palms up on either side of him as Isak’s rant cut short, mouth open a moment longer as he debated.

Even pressed a little kiss to the soft spot under his ear and Isak got his hands in Even’s so fast they smacked together with a clapping sound.

A bright laugh and he was wrapping their intertwined fingers back around the strings, warm air ghosting the side of his neck. The greatest thing about sitting like this was that Even couldn’t see the stupid, helpless smile on his face as they curled back together, comfortable and warm and close, all his focus on the guitar and the smile over his shoulder.

What a place to belong.

“Okay, so it starts out in F, which you don’t know yet but there’s a cheat fingering that’s pretty close to C…”

Lørdag, 17:29
21.01.2016

They were giggling over Isak’s continuously failed attempts to remember the goddamn order of these chords - “wait, are you sure it’s E minor?” “Isak, I’m the one who’s played guitar for years, yes, I’m sure it’s E minor.” - when a knock suddenly sounded at the door, to the beat of una copita de Ojén.

“Come in!” Even shouted, lifting a hand to fix another one of his fingers. Again.

“Is everyone decent?” Liv shouted from outside and they both rolled their eyes at her as she cracked open the door to peek around the corner.
“Hardly, he’s terrible,” Even announced and Isak’s jaw dropped open, looking offended over his shoulder at that teasing little smile.

“Hey! You’re the one teaching me.”

Even’s eyebrows shot up, amused and fond. Isak’s gaze dropped to the curl of his mouth, inhaling slowly before he realized, yeah, they had visitors, right, time to spin back around to face Liv, who was still standing in the doorway with a little smile on her face.

“I just came to tell you--”

“Oh, stay for a bit, will you?” Even asked, shooting him a sideways glance before looking back at his mom. “Isak has something to show you.”

“I...what?? I’m no good, honestly,” he said and Liv shook her head, waving a hand like he was being ridiculous. He was not being ridiculous. “But, I mean, sure, we might as well.”

Liv snagged a chair from under Even’s desk, sitting cross-legged in it and propping her chin in a hand, waiting. And surprisingly intimidating for a 167cm yoga instructor.

Okay, well. Now or never, right.

Isak sucked in a breath and got his hands in the right positions - okay, apparently the almost right positions, Even knocked his pinky out of place before he strummed a single note. He shot a little glare over his shoulder and Even put his hands up, like he was somehow innocent in this process.

They’d gone over enough chords today that Isak could kinda-ish play a few songs, but the only one that was decent enough to actually play for someone was probably the lamest guitar song on the planet, but it was easy, so here he was playing Wonderwall for Even’s mom.

The strumming pattern made it sound a lot fancier than it was, but Isak wasn’t sucking too bad. Well, some of the chords weren’t quite as clean as they should’ve been, and he skipped one entirely, making him curse under his breath and Even snicker quietly behind him.

Fuck him. His heart was pounding out of his chest with nerves and he was pretty sure Even could feel it, with their bodies still nested and pressed together tight.

Isak was way too busy trying not to fuck up to look up and see the glance Even shot his mom over his shoulder, the raised eyebrows Liv shot back, a crooked finger over her mouth to hide the amused smile.

It was decent, maybe, until he hit the bridge and then the chords went out the window. Isak cursed under his breath again and Even made an amused sound, finally just wrapping his hands over Isak’s and finishing the last few chorus with him.

And eventually, he got to the final strum, overexaggerated with a relieved loud exhale, making both Even and his mom laugh brightly.

Isak shook his head and rolled his lips in around the laughter bubbling up in his chest too, there was just so much sunshine in this room, he couldn’t not.

“That was beautiful,” Liv told them and Isak flipped the guitar down to take a dramatic bow, almost tumbling out of Even’s lap with it. A strong arm quickly wrapped around his stomach, catching him and pulling him back upright.
Isak shot a vague squint over his shoulder and Even made a *what* face that broke into a smile Isak had to try really fucking hard not to kiss.

Liv. She’d come in here to ask them something, focus. He turned back around, pulling the guitar back upright as he looked up at Even’s mom.

“And sorry, what was it you came in to ask us?”

“Just to say that dinner’s almost ready.” She hopped out of the chair, sliding it back under Even’s desk, turning back to them with her head cocking for the door. “Can you come help set the table in ten?”

“Yeah of course,” Isak told her and Even tapped the fingertips on his left hand, teasing him for being a suckup but hey, having Even’s parents like him was not a bad thing, thank you very much.

Liv paused at the door, a hand on the wood as she looked at them both and smiled softly.

“That really was lovely. I hope you stick with it.”

Isak and Even looked at each other and looked at her and everyone in the room was pretty sure she wasn’t talking about the guitar.

He couldn’t really contain the smile, and he was pretty sure Even couldn’t either, if the arm tightening around his stomach was any indication.

Then Liv was blowing them both kisses, closing the door behind her as Even tipped Isak to the side and planted a deep kiss on him for real.

Eight minutes later Even was putting his guitar back on its stand while Isak leaned a shoulder against the bedpost and fished his phone out of his pocket.

There was a text from Eskild and one from Eva. Thumb across the screen, unlocking quickly and tapping open the messages app, not opening either text and instead scrolling down to Jonas’s name.

They hadn’t texted since Thursday morning, apparently. Isak pulled up the keyboard and started typing.

*Hey, you wouldn’t guess what I learned today*

Thumb hovering over the little blue send arrow.

He hadn’t texted Jonas for no reason in a really long time.

Besides, they were just about to go to dinner, he wouldn’t be able to reply for at least a few hours.

Isak hesitated a moment longer and put his thumb on the backspace, watching the text slowly erase.

“Alright, you ready?” Even drifted a hand down his spine as he walked past and Isak straightened up, locking his phone screen with one hand, sliding his snapback off with the other.

“Yeah,” he said, pocketing the phone, tossing Even’s hat for the couch, and running fingers through his curls with a smile.
They made it about twenty minutes into dinner before the questions started, despite Even’s consistent attempts to derail his parent’s interrogations that somehow, always found a way to come up with more questions, despite the fact that they’d all had dinner together like five times now.

“Do you have any siblings, Isak?”

“We used to have a dog named Lea? But besides Jonas, no.”

Even tipped his head in agreement and Isak turned to his parents, offering a quick explanation.

“We’ve been best friends since grade school, we’re not actually related. So no, it’s just me.”

A vague chorus of nods, the table falling quiet for a moment as Even’s dad lifted his glass, angling another question his way before taking a sip.

“Did Even tell you about his sister?”

Isak nearly choked on his pasta. Even put his fork down, tongue in his cheek as he leveled a look on his father and Isak looked wide-eyed between them both.

“What???”

“Dad,” Even complained and Bjørn threw up a hand.

“What, how was I supposed to know you didn’t tell him?”

“She’s six years older than me,” Even turned to tell him and Isak shook his head a little, trying to cognize.

“What?”

“Her name’s Lisbeth, she’s getting a law degree in America, at Stanford.”

“...how did I not know?”

“I don’t know! It never came up in conversation.”

“Even, she’s your sister, what do you mean it never came up in conversation, that’s something you tell people?? Especially people that you’re dating???”

“Jeez,” Even looked down at his plate, eyes wide like Isak was somehow overreacting here.

“Wha-- jeez? That’s all you have to say for yourself? I’m missing an entire family member and all you have to say is jeez??”

“I haven’t seen her in like, three years, plane tickets are expensive, and so is her college tuition. She’s trying to save money for her two year old, anyways, so we do what we can to send her whatever extra cash we have. And I usually take two jobs in the summers, in case she needs the support.”

Isak shook his head again, mouth still open in shock as he turned his disbelief away from Even, looking at his parents with can you believe this kid written all over his face.

Only.
Even’s parents weren’t the same level of shocked disbelief he was. Like, at all.

Liv was covering her mouth with a hand, eyes sparkling as she tried not to laugh.

Bjørn was very pointedly not looking up from his plate as he slowly cut smaller and smaller pieces.

“...are you.” Isak looked between them all, Even’s downcast eyes, Liv’s barely contained smile, Bjørn’s uncharacteristic silence.

“You’re joking?”

Liv snorted, other hand clapping over her mouth too and Isak’s mouth dropped open.

“Oh my god, you--”

They all burst into laughter, Even’s the brightest, and Isak was pretty sure his mouth couldn’t open wider. Pure, unbelievable offense, making the laughs break louder.

He just got pranked by the entire Bech Næsheim family.

“I cannot believe this family,” Isak told them, standing up and sliding back his chair, ready to make as dramatic of an exit as he had to.

Only before he could Even was grabbing his hand, popping up too, tugging him back to the table to press a laughing kiss to his cheek.

“Really? A sister? Who are you people?”

“I really do have a sister,” Even giggled and Isak tipped his head back, staring up at the ceiling before shooting a look at Even’s parents, who were both nodding their laughing confirmation.

“I’m not falling for this again.”

“No, really, I do. Her name is Lisbeth, but she lives in Køben with her boyfriend. She doesn’t have a kid, she’s doing some doctors without borders thing, so that’s why I haven’t seen her in a while.”

“I’m not going to believe any of you, like ever again,” Isak informed them all, very seriously.

“I can show you family photos,” Liv offered and Isak furrowed his eyebrows at her.

“Wait...what? Really?”

Bjørn got out of his chair, disappearing for a moment and returning with a picture frame holding a photograph of Even, his parents, and a pretty smiling girl who looked like a younger, blonde version of Liv.

And that’s how Isak found out about Even’s sister.

Dinner managed to conclude without any more life-altering revelations of unknown family members or anything of the sorts, although he did find out that Even used to play piano and sing in his church choir, and that Liv and Bjørn met when they were 19, and that all of them used to put on family band performances at Christmas parties when the kids were younger.

Kids being plural. Everytime someone brought up Lisbeth Isak shot a glare at Even and Even threw
up his hands, mouthing he was sorry for the hundredth time. He’d forgotten. Apparently.

They all helped clean up the kitchen, well all except for Bjørn, who was busy making dessert to follow. It wouldn’t be ready for a few hours, which he told Isak was on purpose, they needed time to digest dinner before embarking on a dessert as fantastic as this one.

Even usually helped his dad cook, both dinner and dessert, but Bjørn insisted tonight was all his treat, for both of them.

So in the meantime, Liv plopped a deck of cards loudly on the cleared table and Isak raised an eyebrow at Even.

“We used to do a lot of card games,” he explained under his breath, hand on Isak’s lower back. Isak glanced up at him, trying not to let the proximity’s effect sparkle all over his face. “You don’t mind, do you?”

“Nei.”

“I did warn you.” Even pressed a quick kiss to his temple, sliding past him into the dining room.

“Hardly,” Isak called after him, following a step and a half behind. “There were a few things you could’ve mentioned, like maybe, I dunno, your sister.”

Even rolled his eyes, pulling out Isak’s chair.

“Hey, mine.”

“I’m pulling it out for you, calm down.”

“You...calm down,” he shot back lamely, narrowing his eyes suspiciously as Even slid the chair under him.

“Listen, I’m not gonna make you fall on your ass, I think your teasing quota has probably been reached today.”

“I completely agree,” Isak huffed and Liv shot Even a mischievous look as she sat down across from them. Great.

“I hate to break it to you Isak, but there is no quota in this house. Okay, is everyone down for Egyptian Ratscrew?”

“Hva fa-- uh.” He just barely managed to swallow the curse, making Even snort next to him. Funny, how any time he was with Even and his parents at the same time that sinking feeling that Even was definitely not on his side just kept growing. “What’s Egyptian Ratscrew?”

“It’s kinda like slapjack, but on steroids, and way better.”

“We have to wait for dessert to be finished anyways, honey, you might as well play.”

“...okay. How do you play?”

They talked over each other, trying to explain when you were supposed to slap and put down certain cards, some weird number pattern with the face cards and Isak watched the whole thing with an eyebrow up and a very confused look on his face.

Even’s dad finally came back in, sitting down and catching the look on his face and shushing both
Even and Liv, taking the deck of cards and just showing Isak how it went, simply. Thank god.

“Okay, and if two people slap at once?”

“Odds are four people will slap at once, and then the winner is whoever’s on bottom,” Liv piped up and Isak’s eyebrow shot up again, entirely unintentionally that time.

Even took one look at his face and started laughing.

Isak elbowed him, making a wide-eyed c’mon face then everyone else was laughing too and Isak put his head in his hands.

The game itself was no less ridiculous, if there was one thing the Bech Næsheims had in common, it was their brutal sense of humor and a wild competitive streak.

There were at least twenty very distracting fist pumps from Even as he won, about thirty five times Isak groaned, dragging his hand back from the pile he failed to slap in time only to blush as Even’s hand on top of his didn’t let go.

One particularly aggressive round had Liv nearly cutting open his hand with her wedding ring, scratching skin not deep enough to draw blood but enough for him to draw back his hand with a little shout.

“Ah!”

“Oh, I’m so sorry, sweetheart.” She reached over the table to pat his hand comfortingly and Isak shook his head, insisting he was fine.

Then she was scooping up the cards in the middle, putting them back into her stack as she glanced up and offered lightly,

“Don’t worry, you’ll get me back one day.”

“Mom,” Even said, a little desperately as he shot her a not now look and flipped a card loudly into the center. Isak flipped one of his in too, taking a second to catch on to what they were talking about.

Oh.

His eyes went wide then Even was laying down another three on top of the one Liv had just put down and everyone was smacking the table again, bursting into a loud argument over who was closest to the card, palms all pressed to the table and hand tangled up as the moment slipped away.

Isak actually ended up being declared the winner of that pile, too, although he still lost.

Miserably.

Even gave him a kiss on the cheek and he ended up smiling through the rest of the game anyways.

Dessert was delicious, something that gods would eat on Mount Olympus or some shit, and Isak spent most of eating it wondering where in hell this family had come from and what deep dark secret skeleton had to be hiding in the closets around here to balance out all this weird, functional, happy good times.
His family was fucking nothing this. Never had been and never would be.

It was a good thing he was planning on introducing Even to his parents Never, because there was nothing they could possibly do to compare.

“Hey sweetheart,” Liv called from the kitchen and both Isak and Even spun around, going hmm? at the same time.

“Hey,” Even accused and Isak threw up his hands. “They already like you too much, don’t encourage them.”

“She calls me that too, it’s not my fault!”

Bjørn walked past the table chuckling to himself and Isak crossed his arms over his chest.

“Boys! Bring the rest of the dishes in here, would you?”

“Maybe she was talking to both of us,” Isak offered and Even rolled his eyes, popping out of his chair and grabbing all of the closest plates, including the ones in front of Isak.

“Hey!”

“Get your own,” Even suggested, shooting a raised-eyebrow look over his shoulder. Isak paused a moment, circling around the other side of the table to grab the rest of the dishes. Yeah, when it came to parents, he was really gonna pass on that one. Not that he was looking for any.

Eskild and Noora were better parents than he’d ever had, and he liked Even’s family because they were part of Even’s life. And they liked him. And his mom made jokes about them getting married. And his dad made really good food.

He was pretty sure Even was just talking about the plates though.

By the time he made it into the kitchen, he’d stalled enough that Even was in the middle of a hushed, rather intense looking conversation with his mom and Isak froze in the doorway.

“I have the rest of the, uh…”

“Oh, just set them in the sink, thank you.”

“Yeah, um.” Isak sat the dishes down, taking a step backwards and glancing for the clock on the wall, over at Even. Even was propped on the little table in the corner, phone lighting up the angles of his face, the turndown of his mouth.

Liv gave him a smile and Isak took another step backwards, glancing for the hall.

“I really wanna thank you Liv, dinner was amazing, and so was dessert, and I had a really good time playing cards so. Thanks for having me.”

“Of course, Isak. Anytime, we love having you here.” She turned on the kitchen sink and Isak just barely caught the glance Even shot her. Serious, all sorts of layers beneath it and Isak swallowed, starting to really notice how late it was.

“I, um. I should probably be heading home soon, it’s getting to get kinda--”

“Spend the night here, honey,” Liv interrupted.
Even froze in the corner of the room.

“I really should be going--”

“What for?” Even’s dad swept into the room behind him, setting down his wineglass next to the sink and leaning back against the counter while Isak shuffled his feet awkwardly. “It’s late, dark, and cold. Besides, I was going to make my famous eggs for breakfast, you can’t miss them.”

Yeah, as great as that sounded, he was pretty sure Even was not okay with that.

He wet his lips, shooting a glance at Even for some kind of read but he was entirely neutral, not a single line on his face, looking down at his phone as he typed away. If he wanted Isak to leave, he should maybe help out in the battle against his parents?

“Believe me, it’s worth it for the eggs,” Bjørn promised and Isak twitched an eye, not entirely convinced. Even wasn’t saying anything, and in theory he would, if he wanted Isak to go home, right? “…they’ve got a secret ingredient that makes them just.”

He made that sound Italians made in movies, fingers pinching together in the air with a twinkle in his eye.

That time when Isak looked over, Even’s head was up and his eyes were wide, back and forth between his dad and Isak.

Isak squinted knowingly, tipping his head at Even as he guessed.

“The secret ingredient doesn't happen to be--”

“Shh!” Even suddenly interrupted from the corner, rather urgently. Isak raised his eyebrows at him before spinning on a heel, turning back to his dad.

“To be a tablespoon of--”

A hand clamped over his mouth out of nowhere and Isak made a very offended loud muffled sound against Even’s fingers.

“We're going to my room now,” Even informed them, and if Isak thought he sounded urgent before, “Thank you so much for dinner and cards and dessert, feel free to wake us up if you need help with breakfast Dad, really looking forward to it.”

It was way too chipper, all rushed together and overeager as Even backed them out of the room with a little smile and his hand still over. Isak’s. mouth.

The moment they got to the hallway Even was corralling him into his room, practically shoving him inside and closing the door behind them with an exaggerated exhale.

Isak’s mouth was finally free, so he took the chance to pop it open, throwing a hand up as Even turned back around.

“What in hell was that??”

“That is a secret recipe!!” Even hissed, shaking his head at Isak like he was the ridiculous one. “My dad refuses to tell anyone. Like, over his dying grave.”

“Then how in hell do you know about it?”
“I took inventory of everything in the fridge the night before he made it and then directly afterwards and saw the tablespoon of sour cream missing.”

“...are you kidding?”

“Nei! This has been a point of contention in my childhood, thank you very much.” Even crossed his arms over his chest, holding his ground with all 190+ centimeters, looking absolutely dead serious.

Isak couldn’t help it, he just started laughing. Even scoffed, offended as the arms uncrossed, mouth pursed to the side to keep himself from smiling.

Isak started laughing harder. Fucking. Secret egg recipes.

“He has no idea I know,” Even defended, crossing the space between them while Isak giggled, shoulders shaking, hand over his stomach giggled. A fond hand caught his jaw, tipping his head with it while Isak tapered off, huffing smile now as Even shook his head and looked down at him, thumb rubbing into his skin.

“I can't believe you almost just outed me.”

“What are you talking about outing you, you put a hand over my mouth and dragged me to your bedroom!” The wild eyes, disbelieving sound he gave just made Even push his lips out, shoulder lifting, whatever. Not whatever, Isak shoved a light hand on his chest, no wonder she wants to meet me, “--what on earth must your parents be thinking??”

“I highly doubt they think we're gonna try to have sex in the two feet of space between my bunk bed and the ceiling,” Even responded dryly, and Isak lifted an eyebrow.

“Is that a challenge?”

“Only you would take that as a challenge.” More exasperated fond, then Even was scooping down and pressing a firm kiss to his mouth.

Okay, Isak had not been dying to kiss Even for the past five hours for them to finally land behind closed doors and get kissed like that.

He dropped open his mouth, arm lifting to wrap around Even’s neck, hand shoving up through his hair, inhaling a wave of warmth down his spine as he pressed up, lips tugging and drawn.

Even kissed him back and Isak’s grip tightened, scraping his teeth over Even’s bottom lip before sucking it into his mouth a little desperate, in case he hadn’t gotten the message from Isak pressing up on his toes like this.

Oh he got the message alright, foreheads tipping together as he pulled off in a gasp, bottom lip tugging an extra beat.

“I wasn’t kidding,” Isak whispered against his mouth, sliding their noses together before tilting to the other side, pressing another heated kiss up against Even’s parted mouth.

That time when Even pulled away he had a hand shoved in Isak’s curls, a quiet groan as he cocked his head, looking down with fire behind his eyes, regret on his mouth as he bit his lip and cursed under his breath.

“My parents,” Even started and Isak shook his head once, reaching up to overlap their mouths again, falling back flat-footed with a tingling pop.
“Your doors lock, remember?” He ran his free hand up Even’s chest, feeling that beautiful heart pound beneath his palm. “I can be quiet.”

Of all things for him to pull back all the way for, that was the last thing Isak expected. Eyebrows all the way up, furrowed high in pure disbelief.

“Uh, no you can't,” Even told him, head shaking in a duh, no expression that Isak had every right to shove him for.

And did. Hard. Even stumbled a step and Isak caught his hand before he could land too far away, dragging him back in, chests colliding as he tipped his head all the way up, stars in his eyes as he dropped his voice and offered a single suggestion.

“Get me something to bite onto, then.”

***

Turned out biting down on Even’s leather belt was not as fantastic of a solution as it sounded. First of all, having Even’s belt between his teeth while Even was sliding into his ass made him dizzy as hell. The kind of dizzy he hadn’t decided yet whether or not was a good thing. It was...a lot.

Second of all, and much higher on the priority list, biting down didn't really work when his gut reaction to cock slamming inside him was to drop open his mouth.

Aka the belt kept trying to slip out from between his teeth and Even spent a solid five minutes shoving it back in his mouth before he gave up, tossed it aside, and covered Isak’s mouth with his hand as he thrust into him hard.

Isak's eyes rolled back in his head and he nearly came on the spot, arching up against Even as the hand clapped over his mouth tightened and the entire spectrum of his vision lit up with sparks, some distant part of his brain registering the quiet string of curses raining down on him more heated than summer rain.

“Fuck, baby, you gotta calm down,” Even whispered, rolling his hips tighter to try and compensate for the angle rocking back against him.

“Mmm,” Isak moaned back desperately, head whipping to the side and making Even nearly lose his balance trying to keep his mouth covered.

Fucking Christ.

Now, it had to be now, when there was a legitimate risk of getting caught that they found out Isak had a thing for Even’s hands over his mouth.

So much for taking it slow and easy.

Isak was moaning again, eyes rolling back in his head as Even kept sliding their bodies together, trying to keep his breathing as quiet as possible, the movement as still as possible. If he kept it deep and slow enough the mattress didn’t shift, although that wouldn’t matter if Isak couldn’t keep the strangled sounds under control.
“Shh shhh. Isak, shhh.”

He couldn’t help the whimper, not when Even was looking down at him like that, rocking inside him like that, fast deep punches to the gut, barely drawing out at all before he was shoving back inside. Keeping Isak pinned to the pillow with the hand over his mouth that might legitimately be leaving fingerprint marks on his cheeks, jaw.

His hands were slipping on the plank of Even’s bunk bed he was trying to hold onto in an effort not to slide up the mattress but that was really really hard when Even was fucking him into starry oblivion.

“That’s good, that’s good, stay quiet for me--”

The hushed murmur painted over his skin and Isak shuddered, shaking Even’s hand with it, his knees sliding up Even’s sides, curling desperately.

It was too fucking much, looking up at Even and his disheveled hair dangling in strands that swung every time he shoved deeper, plush mouth tipped open and deadly blue locked on his.

That boy, that beautiful boy, holding Isak like this, fucking Isak like this, hands locked to the bed mouth locked shut by Even’s hand, trying to breathe through his nose from how hard he was being pressed into the mattress, how hard Even was pressing into him.

Jesus fucking fuck. Swallowing him up in all the sensation pummeling into his everything, stomach swooping, fingertips tingling, friction sliding so deep and sure, all the little sounds knocked from his throat into Even’s skin, doing fucking everything he could to keep Isak quiet while he wound him up so tight he could shatter any fucking second.

The next muffled sound spilling past clamped over lips said as much, a broken string of desperation on his frozen tongue that Even knew well enough now to catch the meaning.

“C’mon baby, fuck, hold on a little longer.”

Isak was shaking his head, no, he couldn’t, blonde curls going everywhere, looking wide-eyed up at him. Entirely glazed over, barely any green visible above the hand Even had clapped over his mouth, digging into his cheeks.

“You can do it, you’re being so good,” he breathed, sliding dizzyingly in, heat, and out, friction, in, Isak’s quiet moans vibrating his palm.

Dark lashes fluttered and Isak’s head tipped backwards, spine arching in drawn out slow motion, like every inch was rippling shivers up his spine so intense he was moving underwater. Chest lifting, abs sliding up against Even’s stomach, slamming back down to the mattress with his hips tipped to sink Even deeper inside him.

“Fuck,” he cursed, speeding up the tempo of their colliding hips. Isak was trembling like a leaf, couldn’t stop moving against his body back down, down, down, this painfully dragging urgency like Even had already taken him over the edge twice.

Even could barely keep his head enough to stay quiet too, let alone maintain a steady rhythm.

He couldn’t fucking think, not when Isak’s body was taking Even inside him like a fucking dream, letting him shove in and in and in as he just rocked up against him and took it, begging for more.

“Jesus, Isak.” Even rolled their bodies together and Isak was wanton, every ounce of his wrecked
movements taut and wound up, writhing beneath him like he couldn't take it, already plateaued past the point of too much.

“You okay?” He checked in, out of breath and barely able to fucking speak. Isak nodded weakly, tears sticking to fluttering lashes, fingers scrambling against the wood of his bed as he threw his head back again, curls flopping over the sheets, pulsing like a heartbeat.

“Baby, you’re so fucking beautiful, so good for me,” Even breathed against the taut throat, pressing a loose kiss to vulnerable skin as he tipped his hips back and shoved in deep.

Isak choked on a bright cut-off sound, tossing his head to the side, curls splaying wildly, spine arching as his heels slipped on the sheets, trying to find purchase with his legs spread that wide.

“Fuck fuck fuck, don’t scream, okay, baby, don’t--”

Isak's eyes rolled back in his head as his body curled in on itself, stomach muscles contracting, sensation overflowing then Isak was making a strained, muffled sound under Even’s palm and coming all over his stomach.

Rapid in out as Isak shook and shook and caught a hell of a lot more than a drop of water in his throat as it stretched, head tipping back.

Even sunk his teeth into smooth, flushed skin, biting down as Isak jolted and shuddered again, all the muscles of that beautiful body squeezing tight around him. Even sucked on his neck, hard, tasting the shivers on his tongue, the heartbeat pummeling them both. Isak kept making pitiful little sounds against his palm as Even dragged out his orgasm, wringing Isak's body until he was squirming so much under Even’s mouth he was fucking back against the pace.

“Fuck, Isak ahahh--” Even inhaled sharp, the sound cut off in his throat as his grip tightened, hips stuttering, downright dizzy as he gasped, slamming their bodies together. Isak was shivering, straining up tight all over and collapsing back to the mattress as he rode out the aftershocks and moaned into Even’s hand.

Heels digging into his lower spine, dragging Even further, deeper inside him which wasn't really possible but the motion was enough to make Even drop his head to Isak's chest, free hand gripping his shoulder so tight he'd bruise the bone if that were fucking possible.

“Fuck, fuck--”

The peak took him out for a few seconds, because by the time he stopped shuddering enough to gasp inhales, Isak wasn’t making anymore sounds, chest raising and dropping heavy beneath him.

It took Even a dazed second before he lifted his head and realized that he still had a hand clapped over Isak's mouth, his beautiful flushed boy breathing quick through his nose as his eyes watered.

“Sorry, sorry,” Even managed as he pulled it free and Isak was gasping, drawing oxygen into his mouth like he'd never tasted air before. His palm was damp, sweat and spit and heated air. He wiped it on the sheets beside Isak's head, gaze flickering all over his face.

He was still holding onto the wooden plank of the bunk bed and Even reached up, prying off his fingers and bringing them down to kiss lightly, fold over Isak's chest, a hand curled over them, chin propped on top.

“You were so good for me,” Even whispered, awed as he ran fingers through rucked blonde curls. Isak swallowed another gulp of air, eyes falling shut at the praise. Fuck.
“Wow, that was--”

“Yeah,” Isak breathed, eyes still closed. Even inhaled a little unsteadily and glanced back down their bodies, still locked together.

Then he was looking up Isak, lifting up as he slid back down, slowly pulling out.

“Ah--ahh--” Isak’s mouth stuttered and Even’s gaze snapped up, eyes wide.

“Shh!!”

“Don’t pull out,” Isak shot back strenuously, lashes fanning open as he swallowed, exhaling sharp and open mouthed as Even slipped the rest of the way out, catching Isak’s knee and careful not to hit his head on the ceiling as he leaned over the side of his bed and aimed the condom for the trashcan. And missed. Damn.

“We can’t stay plastered together forever.”

“Why not?” Isak breathed, peering down at him. Even shook his head and straightened out each of Isak’s legs, giving him room to slide off and land on his side next to him, scooting up so they were face to face.

Isak rolled his head drearily on the pillow, looking over at Even with his mouth closed and the rumbling ashes of desire still burning like coals in the dark swallowed up of those eyes.

Even searched back, taking in the slight bruising on Isak’s jawline, where the heel of his hand had been pressing. Other than that Isak looked pretty damn content.

“Halla,” he murmured, pretty and sweet. Even broke into a smile, hand cupping that beautiful face and pressing their lips together once, sticky and pulling apart.

“Halla.”

Isak smiled softly at him, sated and precious. Even stroked a hand down the side of his face and one of Isak’s lifted off his chest, patting uncoordinatedly until it landed on Even’s wrist, slid up to tangle in his fingers and pull their hands down, entwining properly and landing on the sheets between them.

“How are you?” Even asked and Isak twitched up an eyebrow.

“You don't do that whole pillowtalk thing, do you?”

“Hm?”

“What do you think of this weather,” Isak mocked, lacking its usual fiery charge, exhausted smile burning heat instead of tease.

“What? I'm not making smalltalk, drittsekk. It's a legitimate question,” Even defended. “We've never done anything like that before, I wanna make sure you're okay.”

“Am I okay? Even, I don't think I've ever been so turned on in my whole life.”

“Shh shh.” He held a finger over Isak’s lips, voice dropping hushed. “You still have to be quiet, just cause I'm not inside you anymore--”

“Don't say shit like that,” Isak whispered back. “Do you want me to bang my head on this ceiling trying to straddle you?”
Even broke into giggles and Isak's face betrayed him in a smile.

“I was right though,” Even pointed out, bright-eyed and fond. “You suck at being quiet.”

Pretty green eyes rolled, lips popping out dramatically to tip his head and complain in English,

“Whatever.”

“Whatever? You nearly came from me telling you to shut the fuck up.”

They both started giggling before Isak was waving a hand in the air,

“Shh, shh,” dropping into a whisper again. “Who's being loud now? Besides, if I remember correctly, that was definitely not how you worded it.”

“I can shoot for shut the fuck up next time,” Even offered.

“I'll just end up laughing if you do.”

“And probably getting stuck in a laughing fit, knowing you, so.”

“Which is significantly louder than the usual sounds I make,” Isak pointed out and Even made a face, one side of his mouth tugging down.

“I dunno…”

“Shut the fuck up,” Isak told him and then they were both laughing again, hushed and happy, curling to face each other and giggling in the haze between them.

Even only made it so long before he was dragging Isak in, the laughter cut off in the shape of their mouths pressing earnestly together, kissing sweet and dotingly soft.

His lashes were drooping by the time they finally inhaled slow, nearly dragged into the dark from the gentle skid of Isak's lips over his.

“Fuck, that was exhausting.”

Isak nodded, licking his lips, mouth making a hard sound as it opened again.

“Whose stupid idea was it to have sex on a bunk bed in your parents’ house?” Isak asked and Even shoved him, making him rock with a little giggle that tipped his chin down, curling in all cute.

They both very well knew whose idea it was.

“I have a couch you know, in this room, three feet away from us.”

They paused, looking slowly back to each other, silence holding for a moment until they both burst into laughter again.

Fuck, Isak was enchanting. Laying there naked and beautiful, laughing brighter than the stars, seeping with life and joy and everything good in this fucking world.

Even tapered off, looking at the shiny smile on the giggling boy next to him and almost whispered it into the space between them.

It kinda took everything he had not to, laying here beside Isak in his bed, watching him giggle, bare,
exhausted, shoulders covered in freckles and hips faintly bruised, as they always seemed to be nowadays.

His lips parted around the three words, hovering over his tongue then Even leaned into Isak’s space instead, latching on and kissing him before he dare shock that laughter right off his beautiful face, this beautiful moment.

But it was alright, because he said it all in the way he kissed Isak anyways.

Isak matched him stroke for stroke.

And they kissed softly all the way to sleep.

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~*~*~

Søndag, 08:34
22.01.17

Sunlight pouring through Even’s open window, painting shadows across his skin, reflecting off the walls.

Even was already awake, and half-dressed, in boxers and sweats as he held his sketchpad up against the ceiling and drew something, in pencil, which Isak couldn’t say he’d seen him do before.

Isak was pretending not to be awake yet, which he was fairly sure was working. And he was zero percent dressed, sheets tugged up half-heartedly over his ass as he lay on his stomach, face mostly tucked against one of Even’s pillows, eye barely peeked open to watch the boy beside him.

His fingers were gold, tip of his pencil flashing as it moved over pages angled the wrong way for him to peek. He didn’t mind, not when he got to look at the masterpiece that was the artist.

Illuminated, the swoops of blonde streaking through his hair like bits of summer, bare chest glowing enough Isak would swear he could see straight to the bone, watching the heart between his slow-expanding lungs pound, glittering as golden as the rest of him.

The light is no mystery, the mystery is that there is something to keep the light from passing through.

“Good morning,” Isak whispered. Even sketched another line, shading something with the side of his pencil.

“Don’t move.”

“Hmm?”

“Not yet,” Even said and Isak obliged. It wasn’t like he wanted to fucking move anyways.
“...are you drawing me?”

“Nei.”

“Liar.”

“At least I’m not as bad as you,” Even shot back, lip catching between his teeth as he tipped his head, another few sweeping strokes over the paper.

Isak watched his expressions shift a moment longer before he glanced back down the rest of him, all the way down to the bare feet he had crossed at the ankles, surprisingly unmoving. Even was always kicking his foot, bouncing his knee, something, but not right now.

He lifted his gaze back up to Even’s face, blinking twice as he realized Even was already looking at him, sketchbook closed and resting on his chest, pencil weaved in the spiral.

“You can move now,” he whispered and Isak lifted his head, squinting moodily against the sunlight before he was pressing a soft kiss to Even’s mouth.

A hand came up to catch the back of his head and Isak twisted their mouths, snaking an arm over Even’s chest and sliding through the sheets to wrap a bare leg up over him too.

There was a little smile on Even’s face as he pulled back, blinking slow and still kinda groggy.

“How can I see it?”

“The drawing?”

“Mmhm.”

“Nei.”

“Ughhh,” Isak complained and Even lifted up to kiss him again. Okay, fine. Isak was easy, the drawing was forgiven.

Thankfully, by the time a knock on the door announced breakfast, Isak had just hopped into a pair of Even’s sweats and thrown on a tshirt, both which were just a tiny bit too big for him, enough so that the material bunched around his ankles a little, brushing the floor but not enough that he was gonna trip on it.

Even kissed him and tried to smooth down the disheveled curls and told him he liked Isak in his clothes and funny, Isak liked wearing them.

Then came breakfast with the parents, and it was the same eggs he had for breakfast yesterday but Isak made sure to praise them with a twinkle in his eye regardless.

They were cleaning up dishes again when Even’s mom swept back into the room, more dressed up than she usually was, which was saying a lot.

Isak looked up from handing over a plate, eyebrows going up.

“You look lovely, Liv,” he said and Bjørn shot him a look.

Even rolled his eyes and snatched the towel from his dad.
“He's not hitting on your wife, Dad, he's gay.”

“There's no way I could know that! You do you, but he could be anything from pan to ace--”

“Look at his neck honey, he's not ace,” Liv pointed out and Isak squeaked, covering his neck with a hand. Fuck. Hickies. He forgot.

Bjørn snorted and Even was staring up at the ceiling either cursing them all or waiting for a lightning strike to finish him off, it was kinda a toss up. Liv just smiled brightly again.

“Anyways. On that note, thank you honey, for saying I look nice. Bjørn, the boys can finish if you'd like to freshen up before we go.”

“Where are you headed?” Isak asked, mostly so they could stop talking about the fact that he'd been sporting bruises through breakfast and no one - aka Even - had thought to point it out until now.

“Sunday service,” she replied, scooping up the little stack of dry plates to go up on her toes and set them back in the cabinet.

“Church?” Isak asked and Liv suddenly dropped to her heels, turning to him with her hands clasped.

“Oh, would you like to come with us?”

“Oh.” He looked over at Even, addressing the question to him. “Do you usually go?”

“Sometimes.” A shoulder lifted, nonchalant and great, that was super helpful. “We can if you want.”

“We'd love for you to,” Liv said, looking terribly eager and Isak lifted a shoulder, debating a moment before deciding fuck it.

“Um…sure. Yeah, okay.”

Liv gave them both smiles, turning to sweep back out of the room, calling over her shoulder as she did.

“Just put on something with a little higher collar, dear.”

Yeah, Isak was bright fucking red.

“This is your fault,” he informed Even, shrugging into the sleeves of the dark gray crisp button-up he’d found in his closet.

“You mean that I gave you that? I'm fully aware.” Even was somehow already dressed, looking at him slyly in the mirror as he slicked his hair back on the sides, twisting a fancy curl in vaulted swoops. “I remember the look on your face when I did.”

“Shut up,” Isak told him. “Nei, I meant it's your fault you didn't tell me you could see a dark purple mark over the collar of this shirt, I dunno, literally anytime before we saw your parents this morning?”

“You weren't wearing clothes for most the time before we saw my parents this morning,” Even pointed out, spinning on a heel to stride across the space between them while Isak groaned.

“You know what I mean.”
“Do I?” Even said, a dancing finger sliding down his chest before he started to button up Isak’s shirt for him. Isak narrowed his eyes suspiciously, sliding a hand up Even’s arm.

“Unless it was on purpose. I know you like showing off your handiwork--”

“You like it too.”

“--but your parents!!”

“Chill out, it wasn’t intentional.” He’d reached the higher buttons now, glancing between his fingers and Isak’s skeptical face. “Honestly, I think I’m just so used to seeing you marked up I forgot it wasn’t...socially acceptable.”

Even lifted one eyebrow in annoyance, struggling a little with the last button. Isak lifted a hand to help and got swatted away.

“I would argue with you, but…” he trailed and Even slipped the button through, mouthing finally before glancing up to Isak’s face.

“But you saw a mirror this morning in the bathroom and didn’t think about it either.”

“Ja.” Isak confessed and Even smiled knowingly, dipping down to pull his mouth into a kiss.

“...all covered up now, though.”

“Shame,” Isak murmured and Even kissed him open-mouthed, chests pumping as he backed Isak for the closest wall.

A tongue slid into his mouth, sending a shiver down his spine that was totally not ideal for the situation right now. Isak put a hand over Even’s heart, dragging his lips free in a little gasp that had Even dipping back instantly for more.

He just barely dodged, head turning to land the warm mouth on his jaw instead.

“Hey, hey, we’re leaving for church in ten minutes, maybe cool your jets for one goddamn morning?”

Even popped right back upright, jaw dropping in offense, eyes flashing as he leaned a step backwards, pointing a finger at his own buttoned up chest.

“Excuse me?? You started it!”

“Yeah and you’re the one so damn eager to finish--”

“Boys!” A voice called from the hallway, both their heads snapping for the door. “Are you almost ready?”

Even popped right back upright, jaw dropping in offense, eyes flashing as he leaned a step backwards, pointing a finger at his own buttoned up chest.

“Excuse me?? You started it!”

“Yeah and you’re the one so damn eager to finish--”

“Boys!” A voice called from the hallway, both their heads snapping for the door. “Are you almost ready?”

“Ye-ah!” Even called back, stepping close again to slip his hand in place against Isak’s neck, pinky finger skirting under the collar. Isak lifted an eyebrow, knocking his head back against the wall.

“Told you. And I've still gotta do my hair.”

“Oh? What was that?” Even’s eyebrows shot up, head dipping down and Isak scoffed at the expression, arm around Even’s waist so he could spin them and start for the mirror.

“Does it look like I care about my hair?” Even mocked behind him and Isak threw up a finger over
his shoulder.

“Fuck you, we're not starting this right now, where is your gravity defying hair gel?”

“Gravity defying?”

“Yeah, have you seen your hair? And you thought I paid attention to mine?”

It was snowing outside, not hard enough to make the drive over difficult, but enough that their coats were dusted with it by the time they climbed up the fanning staircase to heavy wooden doors.

The moment they stepped inside they were greeted by a half dozen voices, cheery hellos and sincere inquiries. Isak tried not to look too wide eyed, following Even to go hang up their coats.

It was apparent in minutes, everyone here knew everyone else, extremely well, and Isak took off his scarf and wondered silently if the word *outsider* was written across his back.

“We usually sit pretty close to the front,” Even told him congenially, carefully pulling his hoodie off, hair still somehow perfect as he finished hanging up the rest of his clothes. Isak hadn't even risked wearing a beanie, he'd take dusted with snow if it kept his curls this nice and sculpted.

He’d only seen Even properly dressed up a few times now and it kinda made his mouth dry, to follow behind the nice dress shirt, both of them buttoned up all fancy. Even wasn't the type to really like stiff clothes, but Isak didn't mind thankfully. Hell, he'd intentionally dressed up just like this for his own Christmas party.

They turned the corner into the cathedral and all the wandering thoughts about clothes or curls or parties went out the stained glass window.

This place was massive. Beautiful vaulted ceilings, walls lined with stained glass masterpieces, giant columns with decorative sculptures beside rows of dark pews all the way down to the altar.

Set back in its own giant dome, three arched, 9m stained glass windows circled around the raised pulpit, everything lit up by long, sparkling chandeliers at every column.

Isak nearly missed a step, catching himself right before he tumbled into Even. Fuck, this place.

The aisle was wide enough for him to catch up, carefully weaving around a group of chatting older folks to line his shoulder up with Even’s, glance over at him and whisper over the echoing wood floors.

“Are you Protestant?”

“Me?” He glanced back, eyebrows up before he looked back at the church, like he was seeing the ostentatiousness for the first time or something. “I dunno. I don't think I like. Prescribe to any of them, I think all faith is important and religions are fascinating. So I try to keep myself informed on as many as possible, y’know?”

Even paused, like five pews back from the altar, tipping his head for Isak to step in first. A glance over his shoulder and Even waved him on all the way to the end. At least he got to sit on the outside.

Last time he'd sat in a church pew, he'd been on the outside. And he'd ran out of the church right in the middle of a performance as the worst fear he'd ever known gripped his heart.
Isak sucked in a shaky breath and Even leaned over, touch of a smile on his face.

“Did you know I have the Quran memorized in Arabic?”

“I did, actually.” Isak wet his lips, glancing over his shoulder and spotting Liv and Bjørn, headed their way.

“Really? I don’t remember when I told you.”

“You didn’t. Sonja did.”

Even’s parents slid into the pew next to them, offering bright smiles as Even’s brow crinkled.

“Why would Sonja--” Isak glanced back at him just in time to catch the shift over his face. “Oh.”

“Yeah,” Isak said and Even was looking away, swallowing tightly. Something in his chest broke a little and Isak lifted a hand, lungs all tied up as he reached over to grab Even’s--

Then a booming voice echoed from the altar and Isak snatched his hand back, looking up wide eyed at the speaker up front as his fingers curled.

Fuck.

Heart pounding in his ears loud enough he couldn't really register the greeting, but it must've had something amusing thrown in because Even smiled beside him, all attentive and beautiful. The pained buried.

Moment shoved aside, in the shiny blue eyes, at least.

Manic episodes and ex girlfriends and Hell. Church glances and Bible quotes and all the things he used to sit in these pews and wonder, struck with terror. Waiting for someone to shine a spotlight on his spot, be it God or whoever, point him out in condemnation, among us today sits a sinner--

But Isak couldn't stop thinking about the copper he tasted in his mouth the moment he stopped himself from reaching for Even’s hand.

“--the truth found in every page of the Bible,” the preacher was saying and Isak really should be used to this, his mom had him sit through church service every Sunday between ages five and fifteen, but apparently all the hours in the pew couldn’t keep his skin from prickling.

Like being under this roof wasn’t a lie in itself. Like he could sit here and listen to a sermon when he hadn’t known how to worship anything but the soft heart of the beautiful boy beside him--

It was fine. He was fine.

*We were born sick, you heard them say it.*

Sana’s words echoed in the back of his head, hate doesn’t come from religion it comes from fear. Doesn’t come from religion doesn’t--

“--here to profess your sins unto the Lord--”

*Mamma I know the Bible says it's a sin, but you don't have to be afraid--*

This was a surprisingly non-traditional service for the architecture of the building. Isak studied the scenes in the stained glass, putting colors and shapes together before he let himself recognize the taste
of the disgust in the back of his throat.

Why had he stopped himself from taking Even’s hand?

It took a few moments to realize that everyone was standing before he popped up, making Even shoot him a funny look as the music started up.

Isak just looked down and tried not to make it really obvious he didn’t remember the words to probably any of these songs.

I’ll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies, I’ll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife--

They were singing about my worth and my unworthiness, and Isak had caught onto the melody enough to at least kind of mumble the chorus,

“--but He takes me into His arms, takes my unworthy soul and breathes His life into my heart worthy for Him--”

Even looked at Isak out of the corner of his eye, mouth tipped open to sing and Isak froze, lips parted around some word he didn’t know.

Even was not angling this at him right now.

Jesus Christ.

Oh holy night, the stars are brightly--

The church he got baptized in.

It’s almost 21:21.

It is the night of our dear savior's birth

What happens when I’ve saved you?

I’ll save you right back.

Fall to your knees.

Isak couldn’t manage another word through the rest of the song. He floated back down to the pew when they were called to sit, staring up at the stained glass scenes of the Bible verses his mom still texted him at least twice a week.

There is no sweeter innocence than our gentle sins.

Something bumped his leg and Isak looked down, blinking at the sermon notebook Even had slid his way.

Eyebrows knitting for the moment it took him to pick it up, flip open the cover. Blank pages with verses across the top to take notes on whatever part of the two thousand year old holy book they were dissecting today, only there weren’t religious discoveries written inside this one.

Just Even’s sloping handwriting, in pencil, second time he’d seen him with a pencil today, the first he’d been laying beside him naked in bed for.

Hey are you okay?
Isak looked at the handwritten question and sucked in a breath. He debated what to say for a moment but Even was watching him debate, which negated the whole point.

Clearly, if he was okay, he'd be able to just write that down.

Isak just closed the book and slid it back to him on the pew, staring straight ahead at the preacher as Even picked it back up and started writing again.

Then he was standing, scooting past Isak and leaving the book there in his lap as he passed, walking quietly for the back of the church. Isak glanced over his shoulder at Even’s retreating back, looked back down at the book in his lap.

He opened it trepidatiously, wondering if the people behind them could see them passing notes, if Even’s parents cared that Even had just gotten up and taken off.

*Meet me in the bathroom in five.*

Isak scanned the words for some clue to what the fuck was happening, figured out absolutely nothing, and carefully tore the serrated page out of the notebook, folding it up to shove in his pocket.

The fuck was Even thinking? Sneaking out in the middle of a sermon?

His parents didn’t seem all that concerned, giving him a little smile as he excused himself for the restroom a few minutes later, slipping out the edge of the pew to walk down the length of the church, between the giant columns and the stained glass windows with his head down so he couldn’t see the look on every person’s face he passed.

*Good god, let me give you my life.*

The bathroom was down a little hallway past the coat room and his heart was practically jumping in his throat by the time he pushed open the door.

He’d barely made it across the threshold before Even had an arm around his waist, snaking comfortable and close, like he was dressed up for that Christmas party instead, expecting to swoop down and press a soft kiss to his mouth as he greeted a warm *Halla.*

Isak slipped out of Even’s arms so fast he almost spun right into a wall, stumbling a step backwards as his heart pounded pounded pounded.

Even opened his mouth to protest, ask what was wrong, eyebrows up in surprise. And then he caught the look on Isak’s face and froze in his tracks.

Here they were fire and gasoline ice and snow and Isak knew he was overreacting but he couldn’t shake the feeling, the feeling of sitting beside the paradigm of his sins in this house of God when he’d been crushed terrified by that gaze for fucking years.

“Why didn’t you tell me you weren’t comfortable coming?” Even asked him quietly, steady.

“It’s not--” Isak’s hands would be ringing if he could move, if he wasn’t the frozen one now, wetting his lips and looking down, to the side, anywhere that might give him the words to say it.

It was stupid he was being fucking stupid.

There was a cross on the wall between the bathroom mirrors and Isak eventually just blurted it out.

“You don’t feel like a...an imposter?”
“Imposter? Why? What do you mean?”

“How are you just okay with this??” Isak was kinda freaking out, yeah, but Even was so fucking fine and okay and he didn't get it. The frozen statue broke enough to swing out an arm, spill the axiomatic over the tiles. “This is a church, and we're gay.”

“Yeah,” Even said quietly. “So?”

“So??” What the fuck, so? “Churches used to kill gay people, in the name of God, or did you miss that part of queer history??”

A retreating moment, space between them widening even more. Even looked taken aback.

“Isak, has-- did you--”

Blue eyes just studied him a moment. Trying to understand, but Isak didn't get how he didn't get it.

“Has someone...did your church kick you out?”

“My church doesn't know,” he fired back. “I don't want to hear whatever sob story I'd get if they did. I don't fucking need their acceptance, I don't need anybody's acceptance, not my fucking pastor or my fucking youth group or my fucking parents and I thought I was over this, fuck.”

Isak put his head in his hands and tried to breathe.

He'd texted his mom, fucking terrified she'd disown him (which was funny because that's exactly what he'd done to her and dad) and she'd texted back that she loved him no matter what, wasn't that.

Wasn't that supposed to be enough, why did the wooden cross on the wall strike fucking fear into his heart, he wasn't even that religious it was just his parents, just his mom and his childhood and his wandering thoughts when it was way too late to be awake and he couldn't sleep and wondered distantly whether his priest would've ever lifted his head up from the water of that baptism if he'd known what Isak would become afterwards.

“Is this about your mom?” Even asked him. It was kinda surprising he hadn't reached for Isak yet, hadn't closed the space to run a comforting hand down his spine. He couldn't decide if the careful distance Even was keeping between them made him grateful or was fucking killing him.

trying to keep faith as I picture his face staring up at me

Was this about his mom. He'd forgotten, Even had seen one of those Bible texts. If only he fucking knew.

Isak wiped over his face, making sure there weren't any tears staining his skin.

Was this about his fucking mom.

“How many people in this building think I should burn?” Isak asked the floor tiles, glancing up to the alarm knitting all those pretty features, the swallow catching in his bruised throat. “Think we should burn??”

“I don't think any of them,” Even replied slowly, holding his gaze like Isak was the thinnest piece of shatterable glass he'd ever seen. “It's 2017, Isak. Gay marriage has been legal in Norway since you were...five.”

A step forward and Isak somehow didn't flinch, trying to just breathe as Even stepped closer,
softened. Sincere.

Hands carefully taking his, fingers wrapping chilled and rough and smooth and real, around his, urgent and sure as the whisper.

“You don't have to be afraid.”

And Isak was instantly struggling away, fighting Even’s grip that slipped to his wrists.

“I'm not afraid I'm not--”

He sucked in a sharp breath, weak protest slipping as Even held tight to the bones of his wrists and looked him straight in the eye.

Steady. So fucking steady and Isak didn't get it, he was nothing but unsteady, nothing but pouring cracks between brightly colored broken pieces of painted glass.

“In our lifetimes, just years ago or hell, maybe even now, someone could walk into this bathroom, see this scene, and we could be beaten within an inch of our lives in the back parking lot.” He tried not to break, chest expanding too quick as the image of those blue eyes bruised, a cut across that shining smile flashed--

“Isak. It's fine if religion scares you, really, we can leave--”

“It's not that, it's not the fucking faith, *Jesus*, it's the people, it's that they use words like this and temples like to act like what we have is wrong, like we're not just as holy as they are--”

His fists were curled and there was water in the corners of his vision and he couldn't really breathe but he kept going anyways.

“--like we haven't saved each other and turned something hopeless into something *beautiful* and *real* and full of light and life.”

Even simply watched him as he shook his head, inhaled again, staying so close, solemn.

Listening and holding him anchored as the cross on the wall burned and Isak slowly fell apart.

“I can't just sit there listening to someone preach from a book that said people like us should be stoned to death, I can't just keep my mouth shut and say everything is fine now when a couple countries away you can still be killed for being what we are, when the vice president of the free world wants to bring back conversion therapy. I'm sick of people pretending everything is fine when it's not, when there's kids committing suicide and clubs getting shot up and a whole fucking world that's so scared they'd rather watch us die than be who we are??”

Some part of his brain registered the tears, bubbling in his throat, painting his words and sticking to his eyelashes as he shook his head again, again, every word escalating escalating escalating--

“It's not fucking fair, my soul doesn't need to be saved. This is not a sin, we are *not a sin*, I don't give a fucking fuck what some thous-and year old book says, I am *not. sick*, and I am *never* going to apologize for loving you.”

The tear slipped down his cheek with the sharp gasp, raised words echoing around the empty room, bouncing back to hit him in the chest as his eyes slipped closed, shout strangling his tongue trying to just breathe. Breathe.
His wasn't the only sharp inhale as he threw his confession at the walls but he couldn't think about that, couldn't think about anything except that he had to keep breathing in and out before his body gave up on him too.

*the truth runs wild like a tear down a cheek*

The circles around his wrists were loose enough to slip his hands free, rubbing over his eyes and finally blinking watery back open.

Even was just looking at him, looking at everything inside him and Isak inhaled shakily, intake level way too high, wiping both hands over his face.

The movement was too quick to be anywhere near able to protest as Even caught his hands again before he could lower them, squeezing his palms sideways and hard enough that his fingers splayed.

The grip was tight, nowhere fucking near gentle. Really really tight.

“I'm never going to apologize for loving you, either.”

Even held his gaze and Isak huffed shakily, either a broken laugh or a sound that he was about to fall apart, even he wasn’t sure.

A moment to just look in Isak’s eyes, make sure he heard him, understood how fucking much he meant it. Isak was gonna cry again, this was fine, everything was completely fine.

Even dropped his hands, palm pressing into the back of his shoulder as he pulled Isak into a rough hug, chests colliding, arms wrapping instantly, fingers digging into nice shirts. To be six foot tall and be able to fall into someone begging for comfort, to be held as the world shook on his shoulders.

The first time he admitted aloud that he loved Even - like he didn't already know - and they were in the fucking boys bathroom.

And that was. The same place they'd first met. Spoke. The first words there the first words to break them here.

Isak collapsed and buried his face and held tight to Even and did not cry. He held as still as he could, two wrapped statues under a holy roof that could maybe be built to shelter them too and Isak didn't cry.

The worst part? Of everything and everyone in his life, of all the people who could destroy him disown him deface him for who he was, there was only ever one person who ever truly hated him for it.

And that was himself.

Søndag, 14:54
22.01.17
Even’s knee pressed to his for the rest of the sermon. They’d missed most of it, but in theory Isak had washed his face enough not to have his eyes red and puffy anymore, so let Even’s parents think what they may, Isak really didn’t care.

They didn't seem to mind though, chatting lightly about the discussion at the altar on their way out for lunch afterwards.

On the way to the church Isak and Even had sat on opposite sides of the car, glancing across the distance at each other between watching the city outside their windows.

Now, Isak sat in the middle seat, leaning on Even’s shoulder, a hand wrapped securely around his waist.

That was fucking draining, but there was a thumb rubbing over his ribs and he was gonna be alright.

Lunch was nice, conversation shifted to food tastes and preferences, Bjørn was picky as hell and Liv would eat anything under the sun.

Isak told Even’s parents the story of those first cheese sandwiches Even had ever made them and Even covered his face with his hands while his dad made a lot of horrified noises.

“It was absolutely terrible,” Isak informed them, nudging the groaning boy beside him with a beaming smile, trickling laugh. “And somehow I ended up falling for him anyways.”

Liv made an awww sound and Even lifted his head from his hands, lips parted as he looked over at Isak, the same lit up surprise from the day Isak ran a thumb over Even’s lip and told him, \textit{I like hearing you laugh}.

Isak just smiled down at his plate and scooped up another bite.

By the time lunch was over it was late afternoon, and Isak had been with the Bech Næsheims since noon yesterday, so when the parents offered to drive him back to his place on their way home, he couldn't tell them no.

He sure as hell didn't wanna go home, not like this, to wave goodbye from the curb and walk up back to his apartment alone.

Didn't have much of a choice, wasn't like he could ask Even’s parents to wait for an hour while he took their son upstairs to fall into his arms one more time, make everything stop feeling so fucking fragile.

The dread already had ahold of his stomach as they turned onto his street, car sliding up to stop right in front of his door.

Isak managed a quick barrage of thank you’s and goodbye’s, all shot back with of course thank you come over again soons. Then he was opening the car door to step out onto the sidewalk outside his apartment, Even climbing out after him.

To kiss him goodbye on his doorstep. It should be romantic but he wasn’t going to see Even until school tomorrow, a long sleepless night ahead of him and Isak sighed, trudging to a stop on the doormat outside and swiveling a little on his feet, swaying back and forth, how much he didn't wanna fucking do this.
“Thanks for having me over, I had a nice time,” Isak said, looking at the mat, up at his boyfriend. It wasn't like he was sending him off to war, he'd literally see him tomorrow but it just sucked, being alone right now sounded awful.

He had no fucking problems saying goodbye when class started, when morning came and Even had to rush off somewhere, when he left from a homework session after school.

But when they'd just slept together, or broken down in the boys bathroom crying, having Even disappear after that sucked. Fucking sucked.

Isak was an emotional hoe and he needed the support, goddammit, especially when it was dark out, which it would be soon.

Whatever. He had to get over it eventually, might as well look forward to the sleepless night he fucking knew he was gonna get.

Isak wet his lips, glancing up again and doing a double take, head retreating back as Even was suddenly pulling his hoodie off over his head.

Why the fuck was Even stripping in the middle of the street, it was fucking cold and his parents were waiting at the sidewalk and they did not have a good track record with public nudity.

“What--”

Even’s head popped free from the hoodie, back in his fancy church clothes here in the middle of the sidewalk, buttoned up and beautiful and bouncing on his toes, nervous.

Then he was holding the hoodie out to Isak. Isak took it slowly, still really fuckin’ confused.

“I don’t know. I thought maybe it might help you sleep.”

Isak’s eyebrows shot up and he looked down at the black fabric, fist tightening in the material as he brought it a little closer to his body. Might help him sleep.

“Jonas?” he asked, looking up. That’s what he’d figured that phone call had been about.

“Yeah,” Even replied, hands shoved in his pockets, shoulders up against the cold.

Isak nodded and looked back down at the hoodie. Apparently today was Isak gets to be emotional as hell day because here he was holding Even’s hoodie in the middle of the sidewalk and getting all choked up.

“Takk,” he said quietly, lifting his head as Even stepped forward into his space. Nose and cheeks already light pink from the cold.

“Of course,” he whispered back. They both stood quiet for a moment. Isak swayed and Even bounced on his toes.

“Isak...I know we didn't get the chance to actually. Talk about it, and I know I didn't see how bad it was for you at first. I mean, I guess I didn't think to connect the drowsiness and you passing out during homework on Thursday and everything to, uh, me moving out? I'm. I'm really sorry, I get now that this isn't easy for you, but I wanna help. I'm not expecting a hoodie to just fix everything and I know it's not enough, but...we’ll figure it out, okay? Just. Gimme some time.”

There was a plea in his voice, under the light light sun catching eyes. He hadn't been sure, entirely,
why it mattered so much that they didn't live together, but.

There was something underneath, Even was trying to work through something and the longer Isak looked at the apologetic expression on that beautiful face the more sure he was that this was about a hell of a lot more than their ages or school or sleep.

There was a reason. A real reason, that Even was scared to tell him, but he moved out for that. Whatever it was. Whatever it was, Isak was here for him. That's what they did, they supported each other, and whatever Even needed to work through right now, he could wrap himself up in a warm worn hoodie and get over himself enough to let them take this chill.

Just. Gimme some time.

“Ja. Ja, of course,” Isak whispered back, blinking up at him, then Even got a hand on his cheek and he sucked in a breath, exhaling and feeling like himself again.

He tipped his head up, eyes already closed and Even kissed him, sincere and soft and grateful and perfectly still.

Their lips didn’t move together the way they usually did, no tugging and overlapping, just press and hold, solid and sure. Then Even was pulling back, fingertips skirting down his arm, exhaling smoke over the space between them.

“I’ll see you tomorrow, okay?”

“Yeah,” Isak replied. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Even let go of his hand and Isak looked down at his cold palm, hadn’t realized Even had been holding it.

Then he was taking two steps backwards, spinning for the car and offering a little wave.

“How a good night!”

“You too,” Isak called back and Even blew him a kiss, cheeky little smile with it as he opened up the door and swung back into his parent’s car.

Liv was waving at him from the passenger window and Isak waved back, then he was stepping inside and clutching the hoodie tight to his chest.

He might actually have a decent night after all.

Chapter End Notes

So I could not for the motherfucking life of me figure out how to get Isak to see Troye Sivan’s new video Heaven that got released on Thursday before his breakdown on Sunday, because I don’t think a single one of his friends would see that and send that to him like….ow pain??

Without losing a piece of me
How do I get to heaven?
Without changing a part of me
How do I get to heaven?

All my time is wasted
Feeling like my heart's mistaken
So if I'm losing a piece of me
Maybe I don't want heaven

But coincidentally, it fits fucking perfectly for this chapter, so if you haven’t seen Heaven by Troye Sivan yet, go watch it! <3 and cry!! <3

and imagine Isak watching it by himself alone Sunday night right after this !! and crying again!! into Even’s hoodie!!!

<333

Aren’t you glad you read the end notes.

Quote snagged from the only Richard Siken poem I’ve got memorized, Visible World.

The church I used (if you live in Norway and have any protest seriously, lemme know) is St. Olav’s Cathedral, which is fucking gorgeous, and you can find photos here.

@ everyone who leave me kudos and comments. You’re all my fucking favorite people on the planet. You fuel me. You fuel art. I hope you all stick around.

xx
I know i always post gifsets and stuff that i got inspired but guys this post is the entire fucking aesthetic of this chapter, click on it. Welcome to the Pink Sky Vibe.

Serr. Abandoned gas station vibe here.

Warnings: another sex scene, woo, it's between stars again if you wanna skip. Illegal substance marijuana, again.

Disclaimer: things are not fixed yet with our boys whoop instead get ready for the introduction of Additional (and Different) Drama (™)

Also I wasn’t kidding if you didn’t watch that Troye video watch it now I ended up writing more about it so

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mandag, 07:35
23.01.17

The kitchen was dark, so in theory, it was fucking empty.

Eskild was innocently opening up every fucking cabinet looking for some goddamn fucking tea since apparently nothing was ever where he wanted it anymore, and that’s when he heard the quiet crunch behind him and nearly jumped through the actual ceiling.

He shrieked, he did not scream, he shrieked.

“Eskild, it’s just me--”

“Isak Valtersen! Why the fuck--” He reached for the closest light, slamming it on and making them both wince at how bright it was. “Why the fuck are you eating cereal in the dark??”

“I didn’t feel like blinding myself?” Isak had a hand up over the light, squinting under all the disheveled deceptive little angel curls.

“Other people live here, Isak.”

“I know that, Eskild, jeez.” He rolled his eyes, turning back to his cereal. Eskild huffed at him and starting opening more cabinets. “It’s the cabinet above the stove.”

“...the tea?”

“Yes, the tea.”

Eskild gave him a suspicious look over his face and Isak threw up a hand, mouth full of cereal as he spoke around it all muffled and annoyingly boyish.
“I’ve lived here how long? I know you what you drink in the morning, Jesus.”

“I think you’re stalking me,” Eskild informed him and Isak rolled his eyes again, drama queen turning right back to his cereal.

Eskild turned back to the cabinets, slowly closing them and reaching up on his tiptoes to get the ones over the stove. Would you look at that, there was all of his tea.

“Actually, speaking of which…” He dropped back flat-footed, spinning around slowly, lips tucked in as he looked over at Isak and Isak raised a suspicious eyebrow. “...did you text me this morning? At like. Two?”

“Um...ja.”

“Ja, sorry, I was sleeping...what did you need?”

“Nothing,” he replied, all scrunched up like Eskild was asking the weirdest questions on the planet.

Well ex-fucking-cuse him, he wasn’t the one who texted his flatmate at two in the morning the very ominous are you awake.

But if he wanted to be all clandestine and shit, whatever, Eskild was going to make himself some goddamn tea now.

He’d barely turned back to the cabinets before the chair behind him was screeching and he glanced over his shoulder, checking to see if Isak had changed his clandestine mind, but no he was just. Putting his bowl in the sink. And...getting down his tea for him, how sweet.

Eskild gave him a bit of a suspicious glance as he held out the box of his favorite.

Isak shook the box a little and he reached out, snagging a packet and watching even more suspiciously as he put it back in the cabinet.

“What, you’re short, I’m helping,” Isak defended and Eskild shoved his punk-ass shoulder.

“First of all, Is-ak, I am an inch taller than you, second of all, it is not my fault you have freakishly long arms, I can get my damn tea myself, thank you very much.”

“You’re not an inch taller than me!”

“I am too! At least. I’m being generous.”

“Whatever.” Isak rolled his eyes for the third dramatic time this morning, shaking his head back and forth with it and taking a dramatic step around Eskild’s shoulders in the direction of the hallway. “Enjoy your tea, you’re welcome.”

“Enjoy the rest of your mystery morning Mr. Clandestine can’t tell anybody what’s happening with me ever.”

He could feel the fourth eyeroll on his way out of the kitchen.

What he did not anticipate though, was the slow backpedaling that suddenly had Isak leaning against the wall by the fridge, mouth open as Eskild turned around from the kettle and raised an eyebrow at him.

“Eskil, actually...uh.”
“So he speaks, then?” Eskild made a sassy face and pretended not to melt at the precious little rounded, tongue-paused way Isak said his name anytime he wanted to talk about anything important.

“I can just go,” Isak offered, throwing a thumb over his shoulder, already pushing off the wall to make the dramatic point.

“Okay, okay, what was it you texted me about at 2 in the morning, I’ll stop being…y’know. Annoying.”

“Wow, would you look at that, you do own a mirror.”

“You’re pushing your luck,” Eskild warned him with a wagging finger point and Isak burst into a little smile, looking down at his feet before he crossed his arms over his chest and leaned against the wall again.

“Did you see the new Troye video?”

“...Troye Sivan? The gay singer Troye Sivan?”

“Jaa…”

“You listen to Troye Sivan??”

“Oh shut up,” Isak squinched up his nose, all offended and whatnot but what, that was surprising. “He’s a gay artist, there’s not a lot of those.”

“Actually, there’s a whole sphere of gay hiphop.”

“...really??”

“Yeah, there is, you should check it out. Definitely more your speed than Troye.”

“I like Troye,” Isak defended and Eskild made the loudest shock sound he could muster without waking the girls.

“So he not only admits to listening to, but liking Troye Sivan--”

“You’re impossible to talk to.”

“--okay, okay, I’ll stop. What was it you said, a new video or something?”

“Yeah, it came out last Thursday. I didn’t see it ‘til last night, have you?”

“I haven’t. Is it worth watching?”

Isak lifted a shoulder. “I think so.”

“I mean if it’s worth texting your flatmate to see if they’re up at two in the morning, I suppose I might maybe check it out.”

“I can’t wait until we don’t live together anymore,” Isak told him, pushing off the wall and Eskild blew him a thousand kisses from the kitchen.

Isak rolled his eyes. But stopped in the hallway to blow him back one. Eskild snatched it out of the air before he could take it back.
Fucking sweet little angel of a kid, that one.

Mandag, 10:05
23.01.17

Hey, are you awake by chance?

I'm not sending you back
rainbow hearts

you should've woken me up
we could've cried together

I'm really glad you weren't
awake damn

Seriously if you ever
wanna cry i'm here for you
Issy

you're the most
sentimental person I
know

okay okay
Apparently today was the day of wild texts.

It had been over a year since the last time he got the text inviting him for afternoon coffee.

Jeez, they were both in such different places now. That was all he could think about as he squeezed past the cramped tables, headed for the one they used to sit at, in the back. And there she was, just like last time, only this time sans that worried, fretting frown.

“Halla,” Isak greeted, pulling out the chair across from Eva’s bright smile, brightening even more as he sat down.

“Hi! I got you a coffee, again.”

“Takk,” he smiled back, wrapping his hand around the glass as Eva slid it his way. “Not so sad this time?”

“Oh no, not at all.” Eva leaned her elbows on the table, tipping her head as she took a sip of her own. “A lot has changed since then, y’know?”

“A lot,” Isak agreed, lifting his straw to his lips. It was a way sugary latte, his favorite kind. She remembered, after all this time.

“Especially after puberty hit you like a truck,” she pointed out and Isak scoffed, pulling his beanie down further over his ears. “You used to be so soft.”

“Who said I’m not now??”

“You have a jawline,” she pointed out and Isak rolled his eyes, firing right back.

“You cut off all your hair. The long is better, you look like a mom now.”

“Mmm, there’s the bitch I know,” Eva smiled, clinking their glasses in the center of the table. Isak lifted a shoulder, whatever, and she smiled a little wider, all cozy and young in her white knit
sweater. “How about you? Are you sad?”

“Not sad,” he corrected. “Confused, probably.”

“About Even?”

“Nei, things are good with him. Really good, I’ve reached hoodie-stealing status.” He cocked an eyebrow over his coffee and Eva laughed, leaning over the table to tug on the material at his wrist.

“Is this his?”

“Nei, it’s at home.”

“What’s the point in stealing it if you don’t wear it?” She gave him a sassy face and Isak furrowed, making a duh face right back at her.

“So I can sleep in it, and it still smells like him.”

“Fair point. Jeez, you’re totally gone, aren’t you?”

“I am,” Isak sighed and she took a long sip of her latte, nodding softly to herself.

“But then what are you confused about?”

“Jonas, funny enough,” Isak said and Eva’s mouth popped open, a moment of silenced shock before she managed, high and incredulous.

“You don’t--”

“Nei, I don’t,” he quickly corrected, to which she breathed out an exaggerated *phew*. Yeah, same.

“Then what’s up?”

“It’s that...I know you and I are fixing things, and I’m really glad about that, cause I really did miss you--”

“Aww,” Eva interrupted and Isak sighed.

“--not that much.”

“Hey!”

“Okay, that much. Anyways, we’re fixing things, moving past all the terrible shit I did first year, but. I haven’t gotten the chance to do that with Jonas, y’know?” He swirled his straw around in his latte, watching the foam part slowly.

“But he never found out,” Eva said, confused and Isak lifted his eyes, glancing up at her before swallowing and looking back down.

“Exactly.”

“...oh. So it’s a guilt thing, then?”

“Ja,” he murmured, pausing the stirring to lift the glass to his mouth, drink it from the side the way he used to. Back when he thought sucking things out of a straw would be too gay. What the actual fuck, at himself. “It’s a guilt thing.”
“Isak,” Eva said quietly and it’d been a long time, but he still knew exactly what that tone of voice meant.

“Look, I know you said to get over it, because you are, but I can’t.”

Isak paused, the last moment before he admitted it out loud and he had to face it. The confession he’d been dying to tell someone, anyone for fucking months and months and months finally tumbled off his tongue and the reality of the words spilled out with it.

“...I feel like I’m lying to Jonas everytime I open my mouth.”

He inhaled sharp, letting it sink in. There had been a lot of things bothering him over the past year, but nothing like that one. Jonas was his best friend, he couldn’t lose him, so he didn’t tell him. Period.

And he thought, hoped, that eventually, he’d be fine, it wouldn’t matter anymore. That time would fix everything, but he wasn’t fucking over it. He was lying actively to his best friend every fucking day, had been for over 365 of them now, and he wasn’t sure how much longer he could.

It was easier when he was doped up on boredom and weed, but life was different now, life counted, and he couldn’t keep living this one lying to Jonas.

Isak finally lifted his head again. Eva was just looking at him, full of the sorrow he could read so easily in her eyes. That she could read in his.

They used to be fucking close for a reason. They saw each other, and that hadn’t changed.

“Listen, Isak…” She had her sweater wrapped over her hands, cupped around the coffee glass like it was tea instead. He already knew what she was gonna say, but he kept his mouth shut because he probably needed to fucking hear it out loud.

“You told me yourself. Jonas can’t know. I don’t if he still has feelings for me, but if he does? I don’t know if he’d forgive you.”

She was right.

Actually, Jonas could despise Eva’s guts and still not forgive Isak for that. Because yeah, this was about him and Eva, but it was also about So Much More Than That.

Jonas couldn’t know. Isak had made that much clear, at that Christmas party first year. Jonas could never know.

But hadn’t she told him that same thing, at the skatepark, when she’d confessed to cheating on Jonas with Chris? That Jonas couldn’t find out?

Isak had told Jonas himself. Then on that bench, at the end of the year, Eva had asked him why. And he’d told her the truth: because Jonas would’ve forgiven her if she’d said it herself. If he found out from her instead of someone else.

So wouldn’t that work now? If he told Jonas himself, wasn’t there some shot at forgiveness?

“Eva--”

“Isak, I know what you’re thinking. But this is different, you didn’t fuck up a relationship because of some stupid mistake. It was...intentional.”
The hesitance before the word, as honest as it could be because. Fuck. She was still right.

“And besides, I was at the risk of him finding out from other people. Jonas still doesn’t know, a year later, so clearly he won’t find out unless you’re the one who tells him. The only people who know are in this room right now, and that can’t change.”

Isak wet his lips, looking down forlorn at his coffee. That was not what he was hoping she’d say. Yeah, she was right, but everything still felt like a fucking lie and he couldn’t...he wasn’t sure how much longer he could keep it up, no matter what Eva said.

“Why can’t you just be as bad as me,” Isak complained, lifting his glass and shooting her a look over the top of it. “Here you are over here trying to do the right thing when I fucked up your life.”

“I fucked up my life, remember? And you fucked up yours, I’m just trying to be the good friend and not let you fuck it up again.”

“It’s kinda annoying, how nice you are,” Isak told her and Eva rolled her eyes.

“You adore me. I don’t know what you’d do without me.”

“Get in a lot of fights and land a boyfriend, apparently.”

She laughed, bright and weightless again. Straw to her lips and Isak mirrored, both of them smiling at each other across a table he’d once ruined everything over.

“So. How are things really with that boy of yours?”

Isak sighed. Of course she wasn’t taking the hoodie diversion.

“Up and down. He moved out, which sucks, but the sex is great.”

Eva snorted into her drink. “Sounds like boys.”

“Ja,” he agreed. “Oh, which reminds me. Did you hear that apparently our boyfriends are friends?”

“Really?”

“Mmhm. Lab partners or something. Did Chris mention anything?”

“Nei, actually.”

“Ja, neither did Even.” He shrugged, thinking back to the temporary reactivation of the cathooker groupchat last Friday. “The boys saw them hanging out and were surprised.”

“Definitely an unlikely friendship,” Eva agreed, making a sound as she tipped her head, looking down at her half gone latte. “Although Chris is not exactly my boyfriend.”

“What are you then?” Isak squinted, head turning to look at her suspiciously.

Eva shrugged, taking another sip. “Hell if I know. Y’know, boys.”

“To boys,” Isak lifted his glass and Eva laughed brightly, raising hers in return.

“To better friendships.”

“Ooh, way better.”
“Ja, definitely.” They clinked their drinks and both took sips. Isak opened his mouth to ask her how everything else was, the girls, her mom, something, but Eva beat him to it, setting her glass back down and pinning him with an inescapable gaze.

“I can’t believe the last time we were here you told me to ask Ingrid.”

Isak sucked in a hiss through his teeth.

“Yikes.”

“You’re a fucking snake,” she told him and he rolled his eyes back dramatically in his head.

She whacked his hand over the table and he made an offended sound, darting it out of reach. Eva’s eyebrows were up, head shaking, c’mon, you know it’s true and Isak leaned back in his chair, sighing.

“Ja, ja.”

“You are!”

“Maybe,” he conceded. “But I’m not anymore.”

“Mhmm,” Eva said, sounding really convinced. Isak lifted his shoulders, mouth opening. What more could she want from him.

“Really!”

“So what all happened with Even’s ex-girlfriend Sonja?”

“Oh fuck you,” Isak told her and Eva laughed, tipping sideways as she did, a real, full-blown Eva Kviig Mohn laugh that you couldn’t listen to and not smile.

It even had a snort thrown in, crooked fingers covering her mouth a moment as Isak shook his head, then she was moving the hand aside to raise her chin and tell him cheekily,

“We’ve got more in common than you thought.”

Isak raised an unimpressed eyebrow.

“Team Jonas,” she teased, throwing in the little salute.

Isak threw his straw at her.

Unfortunately, damn, it happened to still be covered in frothy sugar latte, and now so was Eva.

The napkins that came with the coffee weren’t gonna cut it, so Isak could only protest mildly as Eva dragged him to the girls’ single-stall bathroom and made him help her clean it out of her hair.

Isak bitched the entire time and neither of them stopped smiling.

Or shoving each other.

To good friendships.
“Hey, we’re working out together again soon, right?”

“What are you talking about, we have sex all the time.” Even peered down at the blonde boy on his chest, the little huff at his comment.

Isak pulled out his sassiest voice, tracing a finger down Even’s chest. “Not what I meant.”

“There isn’t a better work out,” he insisted, running an affectionate hand through blonde curls. “Why lift weights when I can lift your scrawny ass instead?”

“I’m not scrawny!!”

Isak’s mouth popped open, a moment of shocked indignation - does it look like I care about my hair? - before he was grabbing Even’s shoulder, using the leg already hitched up over Even to roll them twice, hand shoving shoulders and landing on top of him properly, pinning him hard to the bed with a hand on his chest and the other on his throat.

Even caught his breath, a bubbling laugh as he knocked Isak’s hand aside and wrapped an arm around his waist.

“Hahaha, jeez. No kidding.”

He was still being squinted at suspiciously and Even shot his eyebrows up, running a hand up Isak’s hip, amused and fond while Isak faux glared harder at him.

“Scrawny, scrawny, who do you think I am?? I shoved you in that pool, I'll shove you again. Just cause I let you have your way with me doesn't mean I can't still kick your ass.”

His nose crinkled up he was so indignant and it was taking a lot not to just full-on laugh at the offense.

“Mmm, debatable. It’s still me doing the lifting.” Even skirted his hand up Isak’s chest, back down to rest with curled fingers tucked just inside the waistband of his sweats as he scoffed, dramatic jaw dropped.

“What are you talking about, lifting? You only carry me places, you've never actually held me up against a wall.”

Even’s eyebrows shot up again, head dipping down as he caught Isak’s gest. “To fuck you?”

Pouty mouth glued shut, cheeks dusted pink, eyebrows up like he wasn’t that interested but oh boy, Even could feel his racing heart from here. And that was before he made the little confirmation noise.

“Mhmm.”

“Isak, you're a built, 6ft tall male who towers over most of the world population.”

“And you're taller,” Isak pointed out, running a hand up Even’s arm, sweeping back down, a touch of boldness mixed in with the teasing dare. “Think you can't do it?”
He could do anything. This was Isak, the literal personification of the sun.

All Even wanted to do was pull that beautiful boy down, right here and now, kiss him and murmur against his lips how fucking much he loved him, but.

Isak’s confession in the church, that wasn’t fair, he wasn’t gonna assume they just got to say that now. Isak hadn’t mentioned the text he sent an abbreviated version in, so he wasn’t gonna turn that breakdown into a moment to advance their relationship or something.

Not like they needed to say I love you to advance their relationship. Just that the number of times he found it hovering on his lips was increasing drastically all the damn time and he just. Was having a harder and harder time keeping his mouth shut. Maybe he just...shouldn’t.

“Ooo, he thinks he can’t--” Isak cocked up an eyebrow and Even blinked out of the fond daze, shaking his head once as he looped back into the conversation.

“Of course I can. I might have to actually start working out first, though.”

“What, drawing doesn't count?” Isak asked innocently.

Even shoved his shoulder. “Very funny.”

“You trying to start somethin’?”

“Who, me?” Even teased and Isak shot up a cocky eyebrow.

Apparently the cocky eyebrow was the last straw, cause the next thing Isak knew he was being dragged down to the mattress and Even was strong, but he was mostly limbs and smiles and crinkled eyes and floofy hair, Isak had washboard abs and experience, thank you very much.

It didn’t take much to flip them again, spinning with it this time, getting one knee in Even’s lower back and his arm crooked up behind him.

“Ow ow.” Even tapped out and Isak rolled off, collapsing next to him with told you so written all over his pretty face.

“Stronger than most the population too.”

“Fuck, apparently.” Even groaned, rolling onto his side, grabbing Isak’s waist and dragging him bodily closer. Pressing a possessive kiss to his cheek and curling them back together, a hand in his curls again.

Isak slid a fond thumb over Even’s mouth, up his cheek, down his jaw. A crinkling smile at him and Isak cocked his head on the bedspread, gaze twinkling, lips pursed and waiting.

Even huffed and pressed a soft kiss to his mouth. When he pulled back Isak tightened a hand on the back of his neck, keeping him close to kiss again.

And again, and again, broad hands on his spine Isak kept chasing that pretty mouth down until they were both smiling soft and wrapped up in each other, sweet rapid little kisses that made Isak melt to putty in Even’s arms.

A hand cupping his jaw, locked gazes and quiet inhales, near cross-eyed from how close they were entwined. The silence was warm when it finally broke, lingering question two inches from his mouth.
“Have you ever been in an actual fight?”

It was a fair question, especially considering the lock he’d just gotten Even in.

Isak wet his lips, popping his lips out as he decided how to answer.

“Uh…yeah. Not like. Wrestling though, fist fights.”

“Really? So much I don’t know about you,” Even teased and Isak scoffed, brushing the comment aside.

“There was a string of them last year. It started with Jonas and got. Way worse from there.”

Even’s eyebrows shot up.

“Jonas doesn’t strike me as the type to start rivalries between schools.”

“You’ve heard about it, then.”

Isak’s gaze flickered between shining blue, wondering how much exactly Even had heard.

“The girls mentioned something,” he admitted.

Oh, so he knew the rumors, then. That was fucking nothing.

“Yeah…” Isak trailed off, looking down. It was a hell of a lot more complicated than any of the girls knew.

“…the first punch was thrown by Jonas. Some guy said something and. Well. The whole thing ended up getting pinned on William, because the guy Jonas punched told his friends and they thought it’d been William who’d caused the trouble, then all of William’s friends got beaten up since he wasn’t there and it was. Fuck, it was a mess. I legit thought Jonas broke his nose.”

“Why was he throwing punches in the first place?”

“We were at a party, and. There were these guys, who decided to say some-- Anyways. It was dumb stuff, and I wasn’t gonna do anything about it because I was pretending I didn’t care, but then. Shit got out of hand and Jonas ended up coming to my rescue, I guess.”

“He punched somebody and started a literal war defending you from some guys?” The incredulous note was impossible to miss and Isak huffed, head tipping back and forth. When you put it that way.

“They were pretty rude guys, but. Basically, yeah.”

“Wow.”

“Yeah. It wasn’t us that took it so far into left field though. I mean, one of the fights William cracked a bottle over this guy’s head. That fight got fucking…wild. But like. I dunno, we’re both kinda past fighting. We made a pact never to get in fights without each other, and then we kinda swore off fights all together, so.”

“Good.” Even smiled, featherlight touch running down his cheekbone. “…cause I like your nose the way it is.”

They eskimo-kissed, noses rubbing as Isak broke into a smile too, tipping up to peck that pretty mouth one more time.
“Soo,” Even trailed, mouth pursing to the side all cute as Isak’s eyebrows shot up.

“...how about that workout?”

He didn’t mean lifting weights. Just Isak’s hips, which was perfectly fine with him.

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Tirsdag, 09:05
24.01.17

“Mr. Schistad!”

In case the opening door wasn’t loud enough to disrupt the class, the teacher’s sudden spin and shout certainly was.

“You may not simply saunter in class five minutes late! In case you’ve forgotten, you’ve already failed this class once, and I would highly recommend you show up on time for it.”

“It’s my only class,” Chris defended, throwing up a hand as he rounded the corner, shaking his head and muttering loud enough for all of them to hear. “Cut me some slack, jeez.”

The teacher waved him off, going back to writing on the board as Chris dropped his backpack loudly to the ground next to their lab table and plopped down with a pissy, heavy sigh.

Even glanced over, waiting a moment for the teacher to start talking again before he asking.

“This is your only class?”

“Yeah. I’m from ‘97,” Chris sighed, flopping his notebook and folder down dramatically before he draped a forearm over the table and turned to Even, chewing the inside of his cheek. “Most people know that, why did you think everyone went silent when I walked in?”

“Huh.” Even just thought it was because he was hot and popular. That’s why people went silent when he went places. “And you failed Genetics Laboratory?”

“Ja, ‘cause it’s the only class that’s entirely attendance, you can’t do the homework online or learn the lectures off youtube cause you have to grow your own fly culture or some shit, and they wouldn’t let me test out of it, so here I am.” A dramatic hand thrown up and Chris shook his head, flipping open his notebook. “I miss a lot of school for just one semester and I’ve gotta come back to secondary for an hour and a half every day.”

“Sucks,” Even offered and Chris jumped his eyebrows, tongue in his cheek as he reached back down in his backpack for a pen. Even slid him over his extra one, clicking the end once so Chris looked up and saw it. “On the bright side, at least you didn’t fail a whole year.”

“Psh, yeah, at least that.” He scoffed, scooping up Even’s pen and dating the top of his paper, huffing to himself before he glanced up, all amused. “I don’t know anybody who...”
Chris trailed off, registering the look on Even’s face and clicking his tongue in surprise.

“Really? Are you from ‘97 too?”

“February 12, 1997,” Even confirmed, shrugging casually. “Had to repeat my second year.”

Well that was the first time anyone had been happy to hear that. Chris’s mouth morphed all the way up into his predatory wolf smile. “Maybe that’s why we get along so well.”

“So maybe it’s because we both choose the back of the class.”

“Which is probably because we both think secondary is stupid,” Chris pointed out and Even tipped his head in concession. Yeah, that.

“Hey, speaking of which, did you need help on those lab reports? It wasn’t really fair the way I won-”

Chris opened up his folder and slid a finished lab report over to him, typed. Then he was pulling out one of his own, handwritten, their names across the top.

“I heard she gives brownie points for typing it, you’re welcome.”

Even rolled his lips in, running his tongue over them before popping out with a quiet sound. Sometimes people could be fucking surprising.

“You know, for a loser who had to repeat school, you’re pretty cool, Christoffer.”

Lifted eyebrows and a smile shot over. Chris stuck his tongue in his cheek, eyes comically wide as he nodded.

“I know. That’s the whole problem.”

They both snorted, glancing up just in time to see the teacher turn and dropping their faces right back down to serious.

Apparently this was not the class to goof off in.

“If only I was also good at genetics,” Chris muttered under his breath, pulling his notebook back out and shooting Even a look. “Fuck Mendel.”

“Eh. He’s not my type.”

Chris snorted and Even glanced over, raising an eyebrow at the look on Chris’s face.

“You’ve got a type? I thought you dated both.”

“I still have standards,” Even said indignantly, shaking his head down at the hereditary charts they were supposed to be filling out. “—and weird old guy obsessed with pea plants doesn’t make the cut.”

Chris laughed, bursting and surprised, getting a glare from the teacher and instantly attempting to reign it back in, then he was leaning over into Even’s space, voice dropped an octave so it didn’t carry.

“What do you mean? Have you ever tried growing a pea plant? Maybe it’s. Sensual or some shit.”
“You know what Chris,” Even said, picking up his pen to start writing down the contents of the board, easy sass shining through every word. “…you try it. Let me know.”

Chris shook his head, smiling to himself, then he was bending over his notebook to start writing too.

Tirsdag, 12:19
24.01.17

On Tuesday, Even got to the lunch table first. He booked it the fuck out of his classroom, didn’t so much as stop at his locker, taking all his stuff with him so he could get to the boys before Isak could.

They were still doing that stupid number thing every day, and it was fucking like. Three weeks into school and Even still hadn’t figured out what the fuck it was and it was driving him crazy.

He showed up right after Jonas, so by the time Isak walked into sight, sauntered over and sat down he was ready, watching all of their faces intently as Isak gave him a funny look and each of the boys threw out a number.

“One,” Mahdi said.

“Two, again.” That was Magnus, who never won. Even had thought it’d been grades at first, one through six like the grading scale at school, but the other day nine had been the right answer, so. Wasn’t grades.

“Four,” Jonas declared and Isak clicked his tongue and pointed over at Jonas.

“Agh, every time,” Mahdi leaned back in his chair in frustration and Magnus cursed fluently under his breath. Jonas cackled. Even was really fucking confused.

“Are you asking Even ahead of time?” Magnus demanded and Jonas’s eyebrows shot up, mouth dropping open.

Wait, ask him?? What??

“What!” Jonas was saying too, more shocked than Even was. “Never. I’m just that good.”

He leaned back all smug and cocky and Isak rolled his eyes, taking a sip of water and generally not at all bothered. Four? Four fucking what?

“Ask me what?” Even pressed, looking around the table for some sort of clue. “How do I still have no idea what’s going on?”

“Don’t worry about it.” That was easy for Isak to say, he knew what was happening. The cupid’s bow pursed, head cocking at the look on his face. “Really. It’s just a stupid game they play.”

“That I win,” Jonas pointed out. “Every time.”

“Not every,” Isak squinted.
“Hey! You said you weren’t gonna mention that.”

“I didn’t say anything,” Isak defended, giggly and precious. Even reached over the distance between them and hooked a finger under his chin to press a solid kiss to his cheek.

Isak caught his hand and turned, looking him in the eyes, all soft and sweet with his curls trapped beneath a gray snapback.

The look on both of their faces was so wrapped up all the boys looked away as they both leaned in to kiss for real.

“I’m surprised it’s just four,” Jonas remarked under his breath, eyes down on the napkin he was folding into a floppy bird.

“Just four??” Magnus sputtered. “Do you have any idea how much time and effort it takes for one?”

“Yes,” Isak resurfaced to reply and Mahdi was laughing, reaching over to give him a high five. Isak squeezed Even’s hand as he leaned over to clap their palms together, pulling himself back to center gravity, where Even was waiting.

He was watching the subtle flickers across Isak’s face, trying to figure it out from him now since he was reading nothing off the boys.

It had something to do with making things, and with them.

Isak was smiling wide and dimpled and closed mouth like he could barely contain it when he turned back to him.

“What is it,” Even murmured, bright-eyed and curious as he leaned in to kiss Isak again. Isak kissed him back, again and again between these brilliant bursts of smiles.

“You,” he replied and it was so sappy and cliché the whole table all groaned.

Isak flipped them off with one hand as the other cupped the back of Even’s head to kiss him again.

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Onsdag, 13:42
25.01.17

Isak hadn’t fallen asleep in class all week. They were only three days in, and yeah sometimes he looked hella bored, or maybe blinked a little long, but he wasn’t drifting off entirely. Which was better than last week.

Still, Jonas had a right to check in.
“So.” He copied down the formula on the board, Isak's eyes on him before he glanced over, offered as casually as possible. “Have you adjusted to the whole sleeping on your own thing yet?”

There was a strange fleeting look on Isak’s face, a flash of something he didn't recognize before the Queen let out a dramatic sigh, lifting a shoulder.

“I mean. It's better than last week. I've started working out before bed, getting myself like. Super exhausted and that helps sometimes. Tried the oatmeal tryptophan thing. Or I'll leave my phone playing music or something. I dunno, I figured if I find enough solutions…”

“Then at least one might work when you can't sleep,” Jonas filled in and Isak nodded, lips pushed out in a mini pout.

“But things are improving a little, so.”

“If they don't…”

“I know, I know.” Isak rolled his eyes and Jonas nudged his elbow. He meant it, dammit. “Ja, Great Jonas, I'll come to you in my hour of need.”

“You better,” he threatened and Isak glanced over, one eyebrow lifting unimpressed.

“Who else you think I'm gonna talk to? Vilde?”

“Hey, you never know. I'm sure you two have plenty in common.”

“Oh we do,” Isak muttered under his breath and Jonas knit his eyebrows. A glance up and the look sculpted away, a sideways smile shot his way. “Why, you worried I'm trading out all my brunettes for blondes?”

“It doesn't matter how many blondes you gather up in your gang,” Jonas informed him, picking his pencil back up as the teacher shot a look their way. “I've got better hair than all of them.”

Isak snorted and Jonas shook his head a little, curls bouncing. The snort turned into a little laugh then he was burying his face in his elbow before he burst up in the middle of class.

Jonas smiled down at his math notes and saved every muffled giggling sound away for a rainy day.

Onsdag, 15:25
25.01.17

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They both finished their homework in less than an hour. It probably helped that they hadn't kissed since they'd met up in the schoolyard to catch the bus back to Isak’s place.

Every time Even glanced over at him Isak didn't look up from his books, snapping a finger and pointing and refusing to return the gaze as he told him,

“Focus.”
Even laughed cutely the first time he did it but Isak raised his eyebrows and didn't look over, so he actually did go back to focusing.

About nine of those later, when he pointed and told Even to stop getting distracted, *focus* dammit, Even closed his laptop and propped his cheek in his hand.

“I just finished, I don't have anything to focus on but you.”

“Fuck.” Isak scrolled down the page. “I still have seven problems left.”

“I won't bother you,” Even insisted. “I'll stay right here.”

Yeah, that was easy for Even to say, and he did stay right there, but how was Isak supposed to focus when Even was openly watching him, content to lay on his stomach on Isak’s floor next to his bed and just. Look at him.

Isak had never been more conscious of his facial expressions while reading in his life. He could feel every time Even’s mouth quirked up in a little smile only he didn't know what his face was doing and goddammit, no one was snapping at him to focus.

Fuck.

It took him a grand total of five minutes longer than it should've to finish those seven problems, then he was pressing submit and closing his laptop triumphantly.

“Finishe--”

He didn't get the chance to finish the word before Even was scooping his laptop off his lap, setting it on the bedside table and crawling over Isak to kiss his mouth hard enough he knocked his head on the wall he'd just been propped up against.

“Mm!”

“Unnskyld,” Even murmured into his mouth, not sounding very sorry at all as he wrapped his arms around Isak’s ribs and pulled them tumbling in the other direction, plopping down on the mattress and bouncing with the force.

Isak huffed and got a hand in Even’s hair, a leg around his waist, heel digging into the top of his ass.

They rolled until Isak was on his back, head a few inches from falling off the side of his mattress they were currently upside down on but he didn't fucking mind. Not when Even was kissing him into the bedspread, pinning him hard with two hands on his chest, fingers wrapped around his pecs and thumbs skidding over nipples hardening through his tshirt, his body memorized perfectly apparently.

It was both a little infuriating and a lot hot that Even could press every bruise or soft spot through his clothes now. If he paid literally half this attention to memorizing his schoolwork, he'd be acing every one of his classes.

And Isak broke off, head rolling to the side and hand cupping Even’s jaw, thumb sliding over his lips to tell him that.

“Just *half*. Sixes, all the way around.”

Even laughed, high and bright, dipping down to nuzzle their noses together as Isak smiled and
smiled and smiled.

“You're so much more beautiful than anything else I've learned,” Even told him, foreheads pressed together, all honest sincerity.

Wow, would you look at him, apparently Isak was a fucking sucker for sweet talk like that because the next thing he knew he was surging up against Even’s body and kissing him so desperately they got their clothes off, door shut, and Even’s slicked up fingers inside him in less time than it took him to finish the last problem of his homework.

He tossed his head aside on a whimper and Even pressed a soothing kiss to the inside of his knee, twisting his hand to slide his fingers in deeper.

“Ahh-ah, baby,” Isak murmured and Even smiled, kissing his knee again as he crooked his fingers and offered a cheeky,

“Yes?”

“Fuck,” Isak’s gasp responded and Even laughed brightly, fingers still sliding in and out as he leaned up over Isak’s body to kiss him on the mouth, sweet and short enough to make Isak groan as he pulled away.

“Oh hush, don't worry, we’ll get there soon enough.”

“How soon is. Mm, soon enough, cause I'm pretty sure I can take anoth--fuck!”

“Jesus, you're tight.” Even twisted the three fingers inside him now, other hand holding the inside of his thigh to keep his legs spread wide. “Didn't we literally have sex less than twenty hours ago?”

“I'm young,” Isak managed, grabbing the pillow above his head so he had something to hold onto, looking down his body at his smug ass boyfriend and shuddering. “Fuck. Cell plasticity a-and. Muscle elasticity, the myosin levels are still h-high enough to. To. Fucking hell, Even--”

Fisting the material tight as his spine arched, hips rolling down against Even’s hands and feeling wildly, kinda wonderfully exposed here in daylight with his legs spread for Even on his bed.

“It's kinda sexy, the smart talk,” Even told him and Isak gasped, toes curling and stars shooting up his spine as Even rubbed his thumb against his perenium.

“Suh-sucks for you, that's. Ahh. That's all I got, can't think, sah-ah. sorry, faen faen faen--”

Even was laughing at him and Isak wet his lips, one fist tightening in the pillow the other prying free to flick Even off, middle finger sticking up was easier than trying to curse him out when at least half the sounds were gonna be please, more.

“Is that a request?” Even teetered, sliding his free hand down the inside of Isak’s thigh, fingers skirting up the side of his strained erection.

“Yes, it's a fucking request!” Isak sputtered back, as indignant as he'd been in the pool, uh, that's cheating, you think there are rules here, ja?? you can't just kiss me underwater and expect me not to catch a lot more than a drop of water in my throat?!!

Even laughed at him again, pressing smiling giggles into his mouth as his hands drew out, painting a stripe of lube up the inside of Isak’s thigh and making him groan.
“Why are you like this,” he complained, giving Even a very very serious look, pure sass returned as he lifted his eyebrows, smile crinkling up his eyes.

“You adore me,” he declared, snagging a condom from the box on the shelf, ripping open the package with his teeth as Isak rolled his eyes.

“Yeah, maybe, but that doesn't mean you don't drive me...wild.”

“Good,” Even told him, tossing the wrapper aside and rolling the condom on, patting around the bed for wherever in hell the lube had disappeared to.

“You're a mess,” Isak pointed out, right as Even finally found the damn lube. “I'll just lay here and wait until you get your life together enough to--”

Two fingers pressed over his entrance, just barely dipping inside as his other hand slicked up the condom, glancing over at Isak casually as he choked and scrambled for something to hold onto again.

“What was that? Sorry, weren't you just mouthing off or something? I could've sworn I heard something.”

“Aaughhh,” Isak managed back and Even climbed back over him, hand cupping his jaw as he pressed a fond kiss to his mouth.

“You ready, sweetheart?”

“Mmm.”

Their mouths overlapped again, one hand squeezing his thigh as the other slid through his curls, burning a tingling wave of sparks between the two.

“Ahh, Even,” he breathed, tipping up for another kiss, another heart pounding slide of their mouths together, apart. Lips tugging, beautiful swoops still sculpted perfectly as Even broke free to look down at him, lips parted and huffing in an awed smile.

Fuck, a boy that fucking pretty was looking at him like that, Isak was way too fucking weak for this shit.

There were a thousand waves crashing inside his chest, a hundred things making his muscles tremble, but the only thing washing over his head was the warmth of their bare bodies, of Even’s sweet smile, pretty cocked head and bubbling happiness through all of the comfortable, safe, belonging heat.

Was he ready.

“Take me,” Isak whispered.

Even kissed him into the pillow, sank inside his body, and obliged.

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Isak was exhausted enough afterwards to be completely content to go to sleep, for the night, fuck the
fact that is was like. Four in the afternoon, whatever.

But Even kept kissing him, slow and sticky and warm, fingers stroking through his curls, mouths sliding together again. And as much as he wanted to sleep, he wanted to kiss Even more.

They'd kissed through the whole thing, there wasn't a thrust inside that didn't have the sides of their noses pressed together, or Even’s mouth overlapping with his open one. With the exception of the thumb Even slipped between his lips while he kissed his way down Isak's jaw and sucked a dark purple mark just below his jawline.

And over his stretched throat. And another on his collarbone.

Isak gasped and moaned enough at that one Even rolled his head back up, popping his thumb out to soothe the sounds with more soft kisses, heated kisses, breathing into each other's mouths as they rocked and rocked until the white capped waves took them under.

And now, twenty minutes after, they were all cleaned up and sated and vaguely clothed, a pair of sweats for them both with nothing on underneath, which Isak had raised an eyebrow at, cause that meant they were going at it again before Even left.

Which was a lot of the reason why Isak finally decided it was worth not passing out asleep now. That and Even kept kissing him, so.

“Hey you,” Even murmured against his mouth and Isak pulled back, looking up with a dazed smile as Even’s fingers wrapped in a curl.

“Hmm?”

“Can I beat you at FIFA?”

“Right now?”

“Mnhm.”

Isak squinted at him.

“First of all, you're not gonna win. Second of all, not really keen on sitting on my ass for the next hour and a half.”

“You can lay on your stomach,” Even offered and Isak pursed his mouth, thinking it over.

“Mm, yeah. Okay. But only to prove you're not gonna beat me.”

Even won the first round.

Isak rolled over on his back and bitched up at the ceiling as Even laughed and teetered to the side and nearly fell off the bed.

Then Isak was the one laughing, the bursting loud surprised kind, arm over his stomach head hanging backwards off the end of his mattress.

Even crawled over between Isak and the TV, upside down as Isak giggled, then Even was pressing a kiss to his mouth, upside down too.

Isak kissed and kissed and kissed him until he got light-headed enough to not be able to tell where his mouth was, let alone Even’s then he was complaining against plush lips, muddled and whiny.
Even popped free and furrowed his eyebrows down at Isak as he hung there, eyes closed and still bitching because it was only gonna be worse once he lifted his head, then Even finally caught on and carefully lifted his head for him, making Isak groan from how dizzy he was.

Rolled back onto his stomach and Even pressed a dozen apology kisses down his spine until Isak’s head stopped pounding, then quite a bit past that cause he was kneading Isak’s shoulders now and he wasn't gonna give that up for anything, no thank you.

Even eventually caught on, because it was Even, hands pausing their massage down his bare spine.

“You're not dizzy anymore, are you?”

“How? Don't know what you're talking about.”

“You conniving--”

“Hey,” Isak interrupted. “Rude. But I am ready to beat you at FIFA again.”

“What are you talking about?? You lost the first time!”

“Is that what happened? Sorry, kissing you until I got dizzy most have damaged my memory. Cause I remember winning.”

“You little--”

Even’s fingers found their way to his sides and Isak rolled over as quick as he could, already laughing and squirming as Even tickled him.

“Stop, stop--”

And, unsurprisingly. Even won the next round of FIFA too.

Onsdag, 23:37
25.01.17

Even had left an hour and a half ago, kissing Isak goodbye at the door and whispering for him to have a beautiful night.

Isak stared up in the dark at the blank ceiling and wondered what part of this counted for beautiful.

He just didn't get it.

Here he was, happily sore and unhappily alone, clutching tight to Even’s hoodie instead of him.

Ev threw it on every time he came over so the smell of it wasn't fading, it was still soft and warm and smelled like Even but it was Not Even.

So here was Isak feeling like Not Isak.
Wishing he understood why the fuck they had to live apart. Was it some kind of commitment thing? He was pretty damn sure Even didn't have any problems with commitment.

At first he'd thought it was pressure from his parents. But after how Liv and Bjørn acted last weekend? It seemed like the opposite, they both pushed hard for him to spend the night. It was Even who kicked his feet.

This was Even, not them.

*Counting to fifteen, counting to fifteen.*

Then there was the chance that Even really had left so Isak could get more sleep. This whole thing had been set off by Isak waking up confused and walking in on him working on schoolwork at fucking two in the morning like a weirdo. So it could be about sleep.

But if it was about sleep, after Jonas had called and confessed that Isak Wasn't Getting Any, Even should've moved right back in.

But he didn't. He said they'd work through it. Figure something out. Just give him time.

So clearly, it didn't have a. Fucking thing to do with sleep.

Then what in hell was it?

1 2 3 all the way to 15

He didn’t have sheep, so he kept counting to fifteen and wondering when in hell he was gonna get to Even.

1 2 3 to 15.

In case he didn't have enough trouble falling asleep at night. Now he got to lay awake and wonder all the distant far off reasons why.

~*~*~

Torsdag, 09:29
26.01.17

He really was trying to be a better student. To not make off-handed jokes under his breath about F2 populations and heterozygous genes but there was too many open doors, he couldn’t help it.

And unfortunately, he wasn’t the one paying for it, because he wasn’t the one snorting into laughter every five minutes.

“Mr. Schistad. I would recommend closing your mouth and paying attention. You don’t have to be disrespectful, just because you’re older than everyone here--”
“I’m also nineteen,” Even interrupted, raising his hand with it in case the teacher and the entire class hadn’t stopped and looked at him. They had, but dramatic effect. A lot of dramatic effect as he lowered it again, eyebrows shooting up instead.

“...and I'm doing great in this class. If you check your grade book, I'm pretty sure Mr. Schistad is too.”

Even stared down the teacher, fucking daring them to say one more thing to Chris, who actually was doing really well in this class, especially considering he didn’t understand shit about genetics and was struggling through trying to figure it out on his own with a teacher who had a predisposition against him.

One of those asshole teachers who fussed but never had anything to back it up, didn’t fucking care anyways, and Even had heard that sexist-ass comment he made on the first day of school, he had zero fucking mercy for that teacher.

Apparently the look on his face said as much, because the man just sighed and turned back around to keep writing on the board.

Even deflated a little, leaning back in his chair and kicking a leg out. Goddamn, fucking teachers who treated people like shit, it was 2017, how had all those assholes not been weeded out of the system yet.

The weight of all eyes on him dissipated into only one pair, beside him, completely unmoving.

Even glanced over and Chris was just looking over at him. Confused, almost. Even got it.

He didn’t get stood up for like that. Probably never had. Just a pretty boy with an attitude, never got to be anything more, right?

Even shot him a triumphant little grin and Chris kinda nodded at him, looking back down at his punnet squares and smiling to himself.

The teacher went on to drone on and Even finished the last of his sketch, drawing one more little leaf before he slid the piece of paper Chris’s way.

It was a half-sheet explanation of how to do the Mendelian trihybrids using fractions instead of punnett squares, something he’d learned at Bakka but they apparently didn’t teach here. Or at least this asshole of a teacher didn’t want to share it with them, so fuck him, Even was gonna help out a friend, and draw up the math of how to do those shit of a problems.

With a drawing at the bottom of the note, a little plant with an arrow pointing to a leaf, labeled purple. And a speech bubble as it waved, saying “I promise this way is easier!”

Chris smiled. So did Even.
Magnus

Hey guys so...important question

Isak

No Magnus

Mahdi

Yeah, also not buying

Magnus

What are you talking about???

Isak

Whatever new invention you have

group chat 1
Whatever new invention you have

Magnum

????? I have a legit question

Mahdi

Oh

Go for it

Magnum

How do I ask out Vilde?

Isak

The fuck did you do at the Christmas party?

Magnum

I asked her to hook up that's different

group chat 2
Mahdi

You want a gf? U sure man

Even

Hey dating is great

Isak

Yeah but this is Magnus

Magnus

You guys are the worst, forget it

No Mags we can definitely talk about it. Squad meeting after school?

Mahdi

I'm down

Magnus

+1
Magnus

Even, are you coming?

Even

-1 I've got an appointment

Mahdi

with who, the girl squad

Icak

since they like you so much

Even

Something like that

Magnus

Really? Say hi to vide for me
“Where in hell are we?”

“You’ve never been back here?” Jonas asked, throwing a glance over his shoulder at Magnus.

“Nei?”

“Neither have I,” Mahdi pointed out and Isak repositioned the bag on his shoulder, nearly bumping Jonas with it from how close they were walking on the path.

“We used to come back here all the time when we were kids.”

Magnus made an *ohh*ing sound behind them and Isak glanced up from his shoes, checking the sky. Sun was gonna be headed down soon. Perfect timing, they were almost at the end of the woods.

“Is that a road up there?”
“Ja.”

“How did you guys find out about this?”

“...no idea. Jonas?”

“Hell if I know. We just always knew, I think.”

Isak pursed his lips and nodded, head rocking back and forth as he thought about it. They did just always know.

They hit the edge of the trees, up a steep little hill to take them out of the ditch, then they were on the pale, empty road on the edge of that eerily quiet neighborhood. Houses run-down, all of them low to the ground, lined up in rows, white or gray or disappearing beige.

And on the corner, just a little ways down, tucked in a V between the intersecting vacant roads, that abandoned one-pump gas station, single-story one-room shell of what used to be a convenience store, with the giant empty parking lot behind.

“The hell is this place?”

“No idea.” Isak hopped up on the pavement, nearly slipping back down as the edge crumbled, catching Jonas’s hand in time. Jonas hauled him up and the four of them started down the remnants of faded white lines.

“You guys came here for years and you don’t know where we are?”

“The middle of nowhere?” Mahdi offered, glancing behind them. “Is this like a ghost town or something?”

“Seriously, is this a town at all?”

“I know how to get to a bus from here, which is all that counts, now do you have anymore stupid questions?”

The sky was fading, blue trading gold at the edges as the sun sank for the treeline. There was never anybody else out here, with the exception of a few people riding their bikes by, one memorable occasion of a yard party thrown by one of the houses at the edge of the neighborhood that Isak and Jonas had propped on the bench at the gas station to watch.

“How long has it been since you guys came out here?”

“Magnus, what did I just--”

“It’s not a stupid question,” Jonas interrupted and Isak closed his mouth. He supposed it wasn’t. Jonas glanced over at him, the kind of look that peeled back layers of Isak’s skin to look inside. “How long has it been?”

“I don’t know. Not since the summer before Nissen.”

“Oh, I thought you meant you guys came here when you were like, 12 or something.”

“We did,” Jonas told them, taking the bag from Isak’s outstretched hand. “And when we were fifteen, and when we were ten.”

They’d reached the edge of the gas station’s lot, their bench still waiting quietly, facing the road.
Jonas was closer, plopping the bag down on it and kept walking, round the corner of the old store to check the back parking lot.

There was graffiti on the side of the building that hadn’t been here before, a few scattered alcohol bottles around the trash can, skid marks littering the back lot from all sorts of different wheels.

“Wow, this place is a dump.”

“Isn’t it?” Isak tapped one of the empty beer bottles with his toe, knocking it over and watching it roll. “I had my first beer here, actually.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, I was like. Thirteen, fourteen or some shit. We got it from...whose parents was it again?”

“Some kid in school,” Jonas filled in, coming back round from his once over. “Looks like we’ve got the place to ourselves.”

“Who else would be here?” Mahdi lifted his eyebrows, looking at them wildly and Isak snorted, pulling open the drawstring bag.

“There was a badger, once,” Jonas leaned against the wall, shooting an eyebrow up at Isak.

“Ugh,” Isak replied, shifting through the travel bag to find where in hell Jonas put the weed.

“You should’ve heard Isak’s scream.”

“Whatever. You were the one that jumped up on top of the bench and tried to throw your shoe at it.”

“At least I wasn’t screaming.”

“You weren’t the one who ran into it!”

“Okay, anyways, are we gonna smoke or not?” Mahdi interrupted and Isak finally pulled the weed out of the bag, holding it up triumphantly and spinning round to face the rest of the boys, declaring a pact into the slowly chilling air.

“No more stories. We’re here for new memories, not old ones.”

“Mm, another power of now speech--”

“Nei, shut up, and live a little, yeah?”

They all ended up sitting on the concrete, underneath the overhang where the singular pump was sitting in shelled pieces, their backs against the peeling wall. Shoulders all but brushing and legs in various arrangements of propped up or down or folded or crossed in front of them.

Jonas handed Isak the joint, puffing out rings against the quiet, the world spinning to a halt around them.

Isak put it to his lips, inhaling and thinking about the phone call, a week ago. Jonas agreeing not to say a word, then calling his boyfriend to tell him all those things Isak had said in confidentiality.

He exhaled, pushing the smoke upwards, watching it drift for the gray overhang ceiling as he held out the weed for Mahdi to take.
It wasn’t like he was going to say anything. Not about the phone call, anyways.

_The thing is that Jonas is your boyfriend, so you have to tell him everything. Jonas tells me everything. So I’ll know anyways._

_It’s true._

He was trying to fix drama, not cause it. Besides, he got it. He absolutely would’ve called too, if it were Jonas and a girl.

Hell, he’d probably call if it were any of the boys.

“Isak,” Mahdi interrupted the silence, handing him back the joint as Isak crooked up one eyebrow. “Go dance on one of the poles. Live a little.”

He nudged Isak’s shoulder and Isak squinted, twisting up his face as he followed the gesture to the ten cm thick columns holding up the far end of the gas station overhang.

“What?” A quick inhale, puffing out smoke as he gave Mahdi a wild look. “I can't dance regularly, let alone on a pole.”

“That's not something they teach you at Gay 101?” Magnus asked and Jonas face-palmed beside him.

“They don't teach shit in gay 101.” Isak tipped his head back against the wall, passing to Jonas as he blew another stream of smoke at the sky, one leg stretched out, other knee up. “I had to learn everything I knew from Google. But I mean. Mags, I'm sure that's where you got your sex ed too.”

“Huh? Is that supposed to be a burn? Where else do you learn?”

“Experience,” Mahdi replied.

Magnus made a face, leaning off the wall to look at all of them. “But don't know you wanna know ahead of time?”

“Dude you didn't even know you're supposed to go down on girls,” Jonas said flatly.

“Oo, called out.”

“You hooked up with a cat,” he continued, waving the burning joint around to emphasize the point. The rest of them snorted as Magnus fell back against the wall, making a face as he took the pass his way.

“She had a cat tongue, Jesus.”

“Mhmm.”

Magnus blew smoke over the distant sunset, foggy white swirling away on a gust of wind. The sky had dropped from blue to purple with golden white streaks for clouds, rays of the sun barely tucked behind the edge of the trees.

“So what are you gonna do about Vilde?”

Jonas rolled his head against the wall and Isak propped a forearm on the top of his knee, looking over at Magnus too.
“I think I'm just gonna. Go for it, y'know, like Even said.” Jonas made a noncommittal sound and Magnus lifted a shoulder. “I mean, it worked for him.”

“It did,” Isak agreed, gaze flicking back out to the sunset.

“You sure you wanna be in a relationship though, man?” Mahdi leaned over, skeptical and practical, Isak glanced his way, keeping his face neutral. He wasn't gonna stand up for the idea of relationships in general or anything just cause he was in one. Magnus and Vilde were nothing like him and Even.

“It can end up changing a lot more than you think,” Jonas followed up, dead serious.

Isak shot him a look the light eyes refused to return.

Whatever the fuck that was about.

“Isak, what do you think?”

Fuck. Magnus always ended up turning the question to him somehow - do you go down on chicks, Isak? Do you think she's hot, Isak? Do you think I should enter a potentially precarious relationship where one of us has a lot more going on than the other realizes? Huh, Isak?

He held his hand out for the joint, damn whoever had it last, next hit was for him, thank you.

“Y'know, Mags. It's whatever your gut says.”

“But are you glad? You're in a relationship?”

Jesus fuck.

Isak inhaled the burn down his throat, exhaling in a stream a hell of a lot more steady than his heart rate.

“Ja. Most of the time it's fucking incredible.”

“And the rest of the time?” Mahdi pressed, quiet.

Isak shook his head once, drawing his other knee up and knocking his head back against the wall.

“It's intense, I guess. When it's good it's so good that when it goes bad it just--” one hand curling into a fist, vision fogged over with smoke, “…crushes your heart til you can't breathe.”

Magnus made an alarmed sound, the other boys dead quiet.

He let the smoke simmer a moment or two more before he took another hit, glancing around at the faces and finally cracking.

The bubbling foggy laughter had them turning from concerned to confused and Isak tipped forward, smoke tumbling from his mouth and nose.

“I'm kidding guys, jeez.”

“Phew,” Magnus breathed and Mahdi whacked his leg. Jonas was quiet.

“Nah, it's just super time-consuming man. If you think you can handle commitment that takes up half your day and night and doubles how much you text, you'll be fine.”
Isak reached over Jonas’s knit eyebrows to hand Magnus the joint back.

“I say go for it. Whatever. Life's too short.”

“Gotta live a little,” Mahdi parroted and Isak pinned him with a hell yes it is don't you know it look. He said it all the time yeah, but he meant it, dammit.

“Thanks, man.”

The wall chipped off another peel of paint as he leaned back against it, offering back the obligatory no problem.

The rest of them settled into smoky silence again, colors of the sky shifting a little more, a streak of pink behind vibrant purple gold.

A bottle by the far trash can jingled, rolling lopsided over the concrete with a gust of wind. Piece of stranded paper jumping to dance across the parking lot, all that marked up open space to finally land and flutter up against the leg of a bench.

“This would be a cool place to skate.” Mahdi glanced over at them, back out at the empty parking lot.

Isak followed his gaze, watching the ghost of a tiny blonde kid trying to balance on a board while the one with the dark curls laughed, holding onto his ribs so he didn’t fall off.

Distant laughter echoing and he turned back to the road, watching the skyline, the boys in his peripherals.

Jonas lifted an eyebrow.

“You skate?”

Mahdi glanced over, pushing off the wall a bit to see Jonas properly.

“Ja? Of course.”

Jonas wrapped his mouth around the tip of the joint, inhaling long enough it had to burn. “Are you any good?”

“Ja, I think so. Are you?”

“Ja, actually,” Isak answered for him, in tandem with the same tone and words as Jonas beside him.

They looked at each other, Isak’s eye twitching before he turned, looking back at Mahdi as Jonas leaned forward, around his shoulder as he said it the same time Isak did.

“--really good.”

Then they looked at each other again, squinting under bushy eyebrows or cocked ones, studying each other while the two boys on the outside of the line made o o o noises.

“Why are you like this,” Isak accused and Jonas’s mouth dropped open, a curl of smoke and eyebrows knitting as he got all offended.

“Me? You’re the one who said what I was gonna say.”
“What do you mean? I was the one answering.”

“He addressed the question to me!”

“And how would you know if you’re any good or not?”

“I don’t have to watch myself to know I’m good, Is--”

Magnus spun away from the wall, speaking over them with an arm waving so everyone’s heads turned.

“Mahdi we should start collecting some sort of money jar every time they say shit in sync or guess each other's movements before they happen or other creepy shit like that they do all the time.”

“I’d be broke,” Mahdi said.

“Nei, not us pay, them pay, like a swear jar.” Magnus gave his proudest smile and Jonas lifted the joint back to his mouth, glaring a little with it.

“I'm not paying shit.” He blew out smoke, puffing it in Magnus’s general direction, making him lean to the side and wave a hand so it didn’t burn his eyes. “Just cause I know Isak better than the back of my hand--”

“Shut up,” Isak said. “But yeah, it's not our fault we're telepathically linked or some shit.”

Jonas rolled his lips in, smoke exhaling from his nose on a little snort as he looked over at Isak, who was trying to contain a laugh.

It’d gone dead silent, quiet enough to hear the burning wires of the streetlights down by the neighborhood.

“Wait, are you guys really?” Magnus asked, completely serious.

“Holy fuck.” Mahdi’s eyebrows were practically on his hairline, looking between each of their faces, all disbelief. “Like. Some sort of weird twin connection thing? Is that possible?”

“Dude like.” Magnus’s turn, glancing between the two of them as they looked at each other, girlsquad Chris in the hallway with a spoon, eyes wide, barely barely under wraps. “Can you guys read each other's minds and like feel each other's pain across distance--”

They lost it at the same time, Jonas bubbling over with snorting laughter while Isak nearly folded in half, laughing through a

“What the fuuuckkk--”

“Oh fuck you guys,” Magnus told them, giving a very unimpressed look and Jonas’s shoulder knocked into his, tipping them both sideways an inch.

“A telepathic link? Really?” Isak bit back, throwing a hand up in case Magnus didn’t see how ridiculous that was.


Jonas huffed, grinding his shoe into the dusty concrete.

“I just happen to be the expert on all things Jonas,” Isak announced, leaning back against the wall,
hand out to take the joint.

“And Isak tells me everything, so.” Jonas lifted a shoulder, unapologetic shrug as he pinned his eyes on Isak. “Right?”

Their fingers brushed as Jonas handed over the weed and Isak looked away. “Right.”

“May have a ton’a things going for him, but Isak’s one hell of a terrible liar,” Jonas told their friends, cocky confidence ringing through. “So I always end up finding out anyways.”

Isak’s eyes were on the pavement, on the scuff of his shoes, but he could feel the gaze on him in his peripherals.

The way Jonas was looking at him. It meant something.

Isak kicked his heel against the ground, lifting his head as he held out the joint in front of him for anyone to take, burning green nearly going out dead.

“Let's do hoodlum shit. Who's got the spray paint?”

The paint was still in the bag, turned out. There were four cans of it, one for each of them. They’d never smoked weed here, never tagged here before either. The first time they went tagging was this most recent summer, and they’d almost gotten caught, so they hadn’t attempted it since.

But in a place like this, a little paint was only gonna add to the appeal.

The sun had sunk low enough now there wasn’t anymore pure gold in the sky, only purple above them and brilliant, glowing pink at the skyline. A string of clouds above the horizon, stretched out and a little puffy, lavender gray against the fushia that faded near orange at the edges closest to the disappeared sun.

Jonas painted *fuck capitalism* up the side of the wall, finishing quickly and shaking his can as he debated where to draw out an overdramatic, purple broken heart and watched the rest of the boys.

Mahdi was scrawling his name on the ground by the bench. Magnus was painting a giant orange dick over the parking lot, one of the balls wildly lopsided. Enough so that when Isak looked up from his tag he ended up bursting out in sudden laughter, instinctively squeezing and splurting spray paint on his shoe.

The string of curses was as colorful as his shoe was now, lime green and still wet enough to splash up the side of his pants as he stomped his foot, like that would fucking get it off.

Isak cursed some more, hopping on one foot around the parking lot, nearly falling over trying to kick his damn shoe off. Jonas caught him just in time, one bony shoulder ramming into his side and nearly tumbling them both over with how damn heavy he was.

“Fuck, fuck,” Isak was saying and the boys were laughing, Jonas propping Isak back upright as he finally managed to kick off his shoe, green paint flying with it.

Why kicking it off was a priority, Jonas couldn’t tell you, but the next thing he knew Magnus was snatching it up by the laces, arm hauled all the way around, tossing it for the low roof of the abandoned little store.

“Fuck youuuu,” Isak whined, hopping over to the wall and nearly tripping on his dropped can of spray paint, sending it skidding in a long line of dripping green dots.
Jonas covered his stomach with an arm as he laughed, bent over and Mahdi had to set his can down before he accidentally painted everything he owned blue, from how hard the laughter took him too.

Isak got one socked foot on the bench, slipping at first then he climbed up for the roof, all long-limbed and strong. Snapback falling for the ground, arm muscles dragging him over the edge. Jonas offered to boost him but Isak could do it on his own, now.

Shoe retrieved, ass propped on the edge of the roof to kick his mismatched feet over the wall, sitting ten feet high he spread out his long long arms and hollered at the sky.

Jonas watched from down here, scooped up fallen hat in hand, glued to the concrete with his head tipped up to the boy on the roof, the pink clouds reflecting all over his golden curls, fading sunset painting him beautiful, young. Pastel.

The boy on top of the building, a laugh track of friends behind them, under Isak’s holy sock and unpainted shoe, green-streaked one dangling like a trophy, hooked by its laces around a raised nail, slowly splattering the peeling faded white wall green as it rocked in the wind and left more traces of color against gray.

“Get wrecked,” Isak shouted, leaning back and hollering up at the sky again as Magnus threw an empty beer can at him and missed, wide happy mouth breaking into cackles.

White shirt under a jean jacket, golden fringing halo around his loose curls, pink and purple soft light over the smooth skin, defined cheekbones, bright eyes, cupid’s bow mouth, laughing like the stars of the childhood that’d slipped from them so long ago.

Pastel. That fight had been in pastel, the fight Jonas had shouldered Isak behind him, yelling and accusing and trying to set the record straight, it was one of those assholes who’d called Isak that, it was one of them who’d gotten the rest of them in this tangled mess.

The infamous fight, that’d almost landed them all in prison.

The sky had been pink then too, Jonas could remember the way the sunset painted Isak’s unbroken skin, in the last few moments that it still had been.

Taking Isak home to his mom after that fight had to be one of the worst of Jonas’s memories.

“Jonas jumped in front of me, throwing his hands up and being all defensive and shit like I couldn’t defend myself, so I tried shoving past him and. We both ended up getting hit, but it wasn’t our fault, he was just trying to protect--”

Isak had spent the night at Jonas’s house that night.

His mom hadn’t taken very well to them showing up at her house with bloody noses and swollen eyes and split lips. She also really hadn’t appreciated the slip of the curse word in Isak’s rushed explanation, because she raised her son better than that.

And apparently it was Jonas’s fault, for getting him into the fighting scene in the first place, which had then turned into Jonas cursing out Marianne Valtersen the entire bloody bus ride to his parents’.

That was one of the last times he saw her, actually.

Isak wasn’t the only one who lost a set of parents last year.

The Yakuza fight.
Jonas had been yelling under that pink sky, throwing accusing fingers at the fucker who’d called Isak *that*, fucker number 2 beside him who’d followed up the nasty slur with a hard, intentional, fucking vicious shove.

At that party a couple months before, the two of them ganging up then push, Isak stumbling drunk and nearly falling off the second story banister. Caught the rail barely in time and Jonas’s entire existence flashed before his eyes in the one heart-stopping moment he almost watched his best friend fall. Then his fist was colliding with someone’s face, at that blasted party where Jonas had thrown the first punch of the school war.

That pastel day though, William drew first blood, shattering a bottle over the head of one of the Yakuza guys and that’s when it erupted, the shoving and the shouting and the tumbling to the ground, fists slamming cheekbones and grabbing jackets.

Jonas soccer-mommed the fuck out of Isak the second one of those bastards took a step their way, both arms spreading wide as he shouted, backing Isak behind him.

Isak, the fucker, slipped underneath an arm, reeling back to throw a punch that got fucking *batted* aside, the resulting shove from the crowd sending him tumbling backwards into Jonas, the first time he’d nearly knocked Jonas over with his weight.

Uncoordinated weight, height, entirely new, growth spurt putting him off balance and unsure of himself, not strong enough to fill out his form yet.

Isak, an inch taller than him. That’s when it started.

Realistically, in theory, something so simple as their fucking heights shouldn’t’ve mattered. But that’s when everything changed.

That’s when it all went to shit.

Isak passed him. Grew taller and taller and then it wasn't. Them anymore, not really.

They walked beside each other in the hallway and Jonas’s skin crawled, betrayed, his best friend moved onto some sphere without him, a step behind his shoulder instead of in front.

Whole fucking dynamic changed.

Their entire lives, Jonas had been the bigger one. Isak was the little brother, the best friend he protected and dragged places and taught things to.

Isak was always the one he threw under his arm to ruffle blonde curls if they weren't tucked under a beanie.

Or on one memorable occasion, threw Isak over his shoulder while he kicked and hollered and Jonas carried his drunk ass home, including sneaking up the picnic table and chair he’d sat outside Isak’s window for the purpose of climbing up there. Isak’s bedroom was on the second story, at the back of his house, but there was an outcropping from the living room that had a roof on it, just outside his window. They used to sit out there when they were younger, until they got in trouble with Isak’s dad and waited to sit out there until they were older.

Isak moved out before they ever could.

Now they were older and Isak was shouting at the sky up on top of the abandoned gas station they used to play around in when they were kids making up stories and singing at the quiet vacant roads.
Now they were older and Jonas and Eva split up. Older and Isak’s parents split up, older still their lips both split over a semester of endless fights. Shit just kept splitting deeper.

Jonas didn’t want him to move out of his parents’ house. He wanted what was best for Isak, he did but. Living in an apartment with some guy he’d met in a bar, where Noora used to live? It just wasn’t Isak. A lot of things weren’t.

Isak cut off all his curls for reasons only he and Jonas knew, and Jonas side-shaved his to match, so Isak didn’t have to do it alone.

That was the whole point. So Isak didn’t have to do it alone.

But now they were older and Isak was taller, Isak passed him and kept on running.

Looking back on it, Jonas wasn’t sure he could place when Isak went from begging him to sing Jason Mraz and cheering excitedly when he did -- of course he fucking did, did you see the kid’s reaction?

-- to throwing himself so far in the closet he was making out with girls every weekend and didn’t smile for anything that wasn’t a bitter comeback.

Somehow, though.

Through all that, through hell and loss and pain and fights and broken cheekbones broken heart and growing older--

Isak was back. His Isak, the one he grew up with.

Isak was here, smiling and soft, little blonde halo of curls he was letting be long and pretty again. Wearing smiles and scarves and singing on top of rooftops under beautiful pink skies, feet dangling as he shouted down at Jonas,

catch me.

Isak was back, inside that tall lanky body, filled out face, deeper voice.

And Jonas wasn’t the one who found him.

He didn’t dislike Even, he really didn’t. But Even had what he didn’t.

He had Isak.

~*~*~

Fredag, 12:25
27.01.17
The next lunch they all had together was Friday, arguably the best day, because they were starting to serve waffles in the cantina on a regular basis now.

The three of them were debating over whether waffles were better with maple syrup or cheese and jam when Isak walked around the corner, all of them looking up and pausing mid-sentence/mid-chew.

It was instantly, clearly obvious that something was very different today, enough so that it wasn’t just Jonas who noticed. Hell, the lady making waffles in the cantina probably noticed.

Isak pulled out his chair, sitting down very carefully, lips rolled in on a smile that he was doing a shit job of containing.

They were all looking at him with wide eyes, trying to figure it out as Isak stayed quiet, still, and just looked back.

“What’s the catch?” Jonas finally asked. It was a significant catch. “Jeez.”

“We’re definitely missing something,” Magnus declared and Jonas looked Isak over, narrowing his eyes as he studied him.

Isak was looking down at his sandwich, scarf bundled high, sleeves pulled over his hands, rolling his lips in over a smile and that’s when it hit him.

Jonas let out a low whistle and Isak looked up, “You beat twelve, didn’t you? Holy fuck! What are you at, fourteen? Fifteen? Jesus.”

“Hah!” Magnus shot, bright and loud and shocked.

Mahdi was shaking his head, clicking his tongue at them.

“What the fuck. Unbelievable. Fifteen?”

“Um. No,” Isak replied slowly, and Jonas’s eyebrows creeped up on his forehead.

“No? Then what is it? What’s the catch?”

“Uh…”

He sat back in his chair and winced slightly, the smile on his face twitching up that much more as he opened his mouth, pausing a moment, before rushing it out all at once.

“Even found out.”

“Found out…”

“About the number thing,” Isak clarified.

Jonas’s mouth popped open, the same shocked noise he made when Even showed up at Isak’s apartment months ago and everyone else’s eyes went fucking huge.

“No way,” Magnus teetered, leaning forward over the table. “How many did he fucking give you?”
“A lot,” Isak replied, smile breaking into a little laugh and Jonas smacked the table with his palm, shaking his head over huffing surprise while the rest of the boys cackles.

“Holy shit! Holy shit, what’s the number? You have to give us the number.”

“Mm…” A moment of debate and Isak tipped his head, corner of his mouth tugging to the side, his yikes face before it broke into another smile and fessed it up. “Twenty-one.”

“Oh my GOD--”

“Above my waist, and 21 below,” Isak finished and the squeak Magnus made was unreal.

“FORTY TWO??”

This time it was Even who was laughing as he turned the corner, practically sauntering the whole way to their table. Which was still bursting in laughter and shocked, uncomprehending sounds.

Everyone was gaping through the disbelief as he sat down all smug like the cat who got the canary, smile brilliant and eyes sparkling. All gaping except Isak, who bit his lip and lifted a single shoulder, sparkling right back.

Even reached over and pecked him on the cheek.

“Forty-two,” he guessed all sugary, nosing against Isak’s curls and they all burst into another round of cracking up while Isak turned and kissed Even on the mouth.

“How’d you know,” he murmured under the waves of laughter and Even crinkled up in a smile, thumb stroking Isak’s cheek fondly.

“How the actual ??” Jonas finally managed, shaking his head at Isak as he turned his way, shoulders shaking with the laughter, just as shocked as the rest of them.

“I missed my first class,” Isak deadpanned and if they hadn’t been loud before.

At least half the people at the table were tearing up from laughing so hard. Even included.

The entire cafeteria was shooting them dirty looks but literally not one of them noticed, all trying to breathe and gasp enough to try and wrap their heads around it.

“How is that possible?” Magnus finally managed, wiping away a tear, “Like does your body have enough room?”

“Well there’s 9 down my spine, 7 on my neck, like 3 on both hips, a whole line on the inside of my thighs--”

“Ah, ah, okay okay--”

They were all waving their hands no and laughing and Isak tipped his head back, laughing up at the ceiling, the whole world bright and twinkling around them although fuck, his stomach was gonna cramp.

Hickies. Like he said. It all started that goddamn weekend they decided to spend apart. One innocent game of snow poker turned into an Event that snowballed into this wild game and well, here they were.
Looking at Even as he laughed, all happy and included and precious, Isak couldn’t help but squeeze his hand. A game with one hell of an ending.

Seriously though, he was gonna be sore for like, Days.

But it was completely worth it.

Even reached over the table and kissed him one more time through the laughter, their friends all gasping and giggling around them.

Isak may not get the turn on from his friends Magnus thought he did, but they sure escalated things between him and Even to get turned on sometimes, and for that, he supposed keeping them at least...a little informed on his sex life, well. It couldn't hurt.

Fredag, 15:30
27.01.17

Hey Even!! How are you?

I'm great, Vilde, thanks! (Cute name in my phone by the way, I hadn't noticed :) How are you?

Yeah, haha, you should look at the emojis next to Eva's 😏 And I'm doing great...are you doing anything right now?

Oh boy haha.

Just got out of class, I'm headed to Isak's soon. Do you need something?
No, no. I was just thinking about some things, and was wondering if you wouldn't mind chatting a bit?

Not at all, Vilde, I'm always down to chat with you :)

:))))))

so...you used to be straight, right? Or like you dated girls

Yeah I dated girls, altho I don't know if I was ever straight

How did you...know that you liked boys too? Or at all? I mean, did you stop liking girls?

It's a little more complicated than that. It works differently for everyone.

Do you wanna meet up sometime soon and chat?

Oh, no I'm just asking for a friend. I think they're worried or something. But I can just tell them it works differently for everyone. Thanks!! Have a great time with Isak!!!
To be fair, they texted the groupchat first.

It wasn’t their fault neither Isak or Even replied, both of them had phones, and the rest of them had already been drinking for half an hour. Besides, he’d brought up the idea in math, so in theory, Isak shouldn’t’ve been that surprised when the three of them showed up at his door with alcohol and a lot of loud knocking.

It’d been empty with the three of them, they all fucking missed Isak, he was coming out with them, goddammit.

Even opened the door, looking more than a little rumpled, hair askew, a single pair of Isak’s gray sweats thrown on, wearing nothing else but two dark bruises, on his neck and low on his hip, low enough it was peeking out of the waistband of those sweats.

“Uh...hi,” he’d managed, stepping to the side just in time as Magnus and Mahdi shoved past him, six packs in tow.

“Where’s Isak?” Magnus was asking, kicking off his shoes at the door before bounding inside, plopping the drinks down on the kitchen table.

“Uhm. Babe?” Even lifted his voice, shouting over his shoulder in the direction of Isak’s bedroom.

“We’ve got company, get on clothes!”

“Nice,” Mahdi commented, putting his feet up on the chair next to him as he tipped a beer in Even’s direction, toasting him.

Even lifted a bare shoulder, unapologetic and a little cocky, which was kinda fair, at least two of them were getting some on the regular. They should be happy for their friends. Shouldn’t they.

Jonas stuck his tongue in his cheek and finally started taking off his shoes.

Isak finally stumbled in three minutes later, looking a little ruffled, but at least fully clothed, backwards snapback and all. And wow, yeah, there were the seven hickies in an arch around his neck, he hadn’t been kidding about that. Dark bruises patterned clear enough to see exactly how the mouth that made them mapped out over his skin, all artfully swooping and designed and shit.
“What…”

“We told you, we’re going out tonight, so get in here and drink before tonight becomes tomorrow.”

Isak furrowed his eyebrows, looking between Even and the rest of them.

“...I was busy???”

“You can be busy later,” Magnus insisted. “You guys can bang each other all night any night, how often do we get to go to parties and be young?”

“...at least twice a week?” Isak sassed, still looking incredulous and Jonas rolled his eyes at him.

“C’mon, join us. Both of you.”

“I dunno,” Even started and Mahdi scoffed.

“Dude, it’s not like you don’t go to parties, are you too cool to go to parties with us?”

“Nei, not at all, I just don’t want--”

“Look, Even,” Jonas interrupted and everyone shut up, all heads swiveling straight to him. Actually, thinking back on it, this might’ve been the first time Jonas directly addressed Even like that in front of the entire group. What a weird fucking thought.

He shook it off, ignoring the way Isak was looking at him, and pinned Isak’s pretty boyfriend with a serious look.

“You stole Isak away all of last weekend, we’re all going out tonight, you’re joining us, and you guys can do whatever after that. Ja?”

“Ja,” Even replied kinda weakly. “I’ll go put on clothes.”

Jonas tipped his head and took a swig of the closest beer. Fucking hell.

Even pressed a soft, lingering kiss to Isak’s cheek on his way past and Isak tipped sideways with it, one side of his mouth tugging up sideways too, eyes cutting down with a little blush.

There wasn’t a mirror in Isak’s room, so he wasn’t sure if he’d somehow overlooked the fact that a grand total of eleven of his forty-fucking-two hickies were visible - three over collarbones and one on the top of his spine flashing with the tug of his shirt when he moved.

Or if Isak just didn’t care. ‘Cause if Jonas was marked up like that, he’d be blushing a hell of a lot deeper red.

They needed to be significantly more wasted, asap.

“Allright kid, get over here,” Jonas waved a hand and Isak finally dragged over a chair, plopping down with a sigh he couldn’t keep the smile out of. Yeah, that’s what he thought. The kid may be head over fucking heels in love, but he still needed a chance to go out, act like a seventeen year old. Live a little.

And of course, as Jonas could’ve fucking told you, the walk to the party Isak was the fucking loudest one of all of them, bumping shoulders with literally everyone and giggling to the high heavens as Jonas spun around in a circle, arms out to keep his balance.
“Jesus, Isak, can’t you walk straight for three fucking minutes?”

“Me? Straight??” Isak put an indignant hand on his chest, looking at Mahdi like he’d grown three heads. The rest of them bust up loud enough the party had to hear them coming, bass beat be damned.

They’d barely stepped inside before someone recognized Even, some third year shouting and sticking out a hand for Even to clap, their shoulders bumping, hands patting in that weird handshake hug thing Jonas had never understood, but hey, at least Even was easy to spot in a crowd, Jesus Fuck he was tall.

And already smiling wide, both he and Isak were, enough that Jonas bumped Mahdi, leaning over to gloat.

“I told you it’d be a good idea.”

“You were right, my man, you were right. Or...maybe spoken too soon, looks like Queen Isabelle is having his first drama moment of the night.”

Jonas snorted, turning to look over at his best friend, who was currently waving a dramatic arm around, head shaking.

“What do couples even do at parties? Are we gonna...what, dirty dance? Or make out against a fucking wall?”

He was fussing, as always, but Even just shot up his eyebrows, a hand on Isak’s lower back, music too loud to hear but he spoke clear enough Jonas could read the suggestive comment anyways.

“I’m down.”

Isak rolled his eyes and Mahdi’s arm looped through his for a moment, dragging Magnus along already and plowing them all for Isak and Even, who spun around with matching expressions.

“Hey man,” Mahdi shouted over the music, tipping his head from where Magnus had just come from. “There are some third years dealing the purple stuff in the bathroom.”

Isak’s eyebrow shot for his hairline. “Hm??”

Jonas unlooped his arm from Mahdi’s to clock Isak’s shoulder, making him rock with the movement, voice lifted over the wild bass.

“C’mon man, it’ll be fun.”

“But what about Even? He can’t smoke.”

“I’ll be fine.” Even leaned down, head dipped as he spoke into their little circle of shouting, shrugging with it. “I’ll go round up the girls and dance with them.”

“Nei! I’m not letting them woo over you all night. Again.” Isak made a cross face and wrapped both his arms around Even’s bicep, clinging to him in a vaguely intoxicated pout.

Even laughed, prying Isak’s fingers from his skin.

“Seriously. I’ll be fine. Go spend some time with the boys. Just don’t do anything...too stupid.”

“It’s purple weed, I’ll be fine,” Isak assured him and the boys broke into a cheer at the yes. Only to
settle right back down with the finger Isak was waving in the air.

“But—” the finger landed in the middle of Even’s chest, tapping him hard. “--only if we get to dance first.”

“I thought you didn’t know what we were supposed to do at parties,” Even teased and the finger on his chest switched out for the middle one, sticking it up at him and keeping it there as he turned to the rest of them, ignoring Even’s laughter and hand unwrapping the crude gesture to entwine theirs instead.

“Give us one dance, guys.”

“It’s chill,” Mahdi waved them on. “We’ll go drink some booze and wait.”

Isak clicked his tongue and shouted over the music,

“You guys are the best!”

as Even was pulling him into collide against his chest, already dragging him out for the dancefloor. The Waiting Squad ended up on the wall on the farside of the dancefloor, leaning against it and passing back and forth the bottle Jonas had brought along for this very reason.

Well, he hadn’t anticipated they’d be laying wait for Isak to dance with his boyfriend while they were drinking it, but. Life.

For some reason, he’d pictured come dance with me to be some kind of dirty dance grinding thing, Isak leaning back to grip Even’s hair and kiss him over his shoulder while their hips swayed.

And yeah, it started out that way, but by the time Jonas got the bottle passed back to him, they were already facing each other again, Isak’s arms wrapped around Even’s neck, smiling soft - so fucking soft - their noses nuzzling in happy, bright eskimo kisses as they danced.

Even’s hands were on his waist, the way you held a girl when you meant it, swaying Isak with him, back and forth as they kissed. The way their bodies moved together betrayed how many times they had. How familiar the rhythm of their own skin, pounding hearts.

How many times they had.

It was worse, the affectionate sweetness dancing between them, the lovesick eyes trained only on each other. He’d take watching them grind and bruise and make out dirty with each other over...that. A thousand times over. Watching them look at each other like that.

Had Isak ever...

...ever looked at him like that?

Had he somehow missed Isak looking at him like that?

He honestly couldn’t imagine it, couldn’t imagine glancing over and not seeing, if this is what had been there. Because Isak was sick with it, positively wasted on Even, noses rubbing together and his fingers curled around the back of Even’s neck, the hands on his waist lifting up enough to flash another splattering of bruises over the back of his hip, lower spine, arching down under the waistband of his jeans.

Even’s hands to follow, touch sliding over the pattern as Isak tipped his head and laughed, shining
fucking bright and beautiful. That pattern had to be memorized cause Even’s eyes weren’t leaving Isak’s, couldn’t tear away, like the stars looking at twinkling fairy lights and seeing only more stars in return.

They tipped back to each other’s mouths like gravity, kissing as Even gathered him close and Isak only pressed closer, kissing and smiling and giggling through more kisses and.

Magnus leaned against him, shoulder knocking into his and slamming reality back into his chest, making Jonas blink and look down, over, away, something.

“Goddamn. They are perfect for each other,” he shouted and Jonas wished the music had been a little bit louder.

“Yeah,” he replied. “Sure.”

The lights were flashing blue and red and green and the bass should’ve been deafening enough that he couldn’t think, let alone sink, but here he was. Standing across the room, hand frozen around a glass bottle he was drinking for all the wrong reasons, because that’s what people did, that’s what he’d always done.

And his best friend was happy without him.

It was stupid. He was stupid. He’d been so stupid.

How was it that he never saw, until it was too late.

There was his world, the one he’d let slip away long before he laid down beside someone else. Those weren’t the curls he got to stroke anymore. That wasn’t the face that lit up when he walked into the room.

It wasn’t for that beautiful boy that he got to get in fights, hit and get hit so hard his nose bled rivers, enough for Isak to freak out, one hand on the back of his neck and the other holding tissue under his nose, yelling and yelling with that damning mouth.

*How could you, how dare you, if you fucking bleed out and die I’m gonna haunt your fucking ghost-*

“That’s not how it works,” Jonas had said woozily and Isak would’ve clocked him upside the head if he wasn’t already hurt. This dizzy, and he could still read perfectly the look on Isak’s face.

“I’m not sorry,” Jonas had told him and Isak had teared up.

“You fucking better be.”

“I’m not,” he’d repeated, high on adrenaline and pain and the way Isak was looking at him, disbelief and awe and worry and gratitude and bitchiness and so much fucking care. Love. That he’d never fucking seen until now, when Isak was looking at someone else that way.

He hadn’t been sorry, would never fucking apologize for starting that Yakuza war. Nobody got to call his best friend things like that. It didn’t matter that at the time Jonas had no idea Isak would eventually happily, proudly suck cock, the guy that shoved him and accused him of that at a party got his face smashed in by Jonas, that’s how the world worked.

Used to work, anyways.
Jonas was damn sorry now. Sorry he’d never done more. Sorry he’d never fucking stopped, thought about it. Sorry the day Isak held their foreheads together, noses bloody, tear slipped down his face, that Jonas hadn’t wiped it away for him.

Hadn’t held him back. Not that way.

Sorry he’d done all of that and never realized, that maybe, him too.

Cause it was Isak. His Isak. Who was entire goddamn world, didn't that mean something? Did that mean anything?

A beautiful laugh across the room, blonde curls tipping back, happy and pure, then he was going up on his tiptoes and kissing Even again, tight strong foreign arms wrapping around the spine that used to rest against his--

Heads on each other’s shoulders, curls smushed together, looking up at the sky.

Jonas looked away.

Not his Isak anymore.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, before you disappear, I have a youtube video for you to watch. It does a really beautiful job outlining Jonas and Isak’s relationship in the first season til now, and it’s like...pivotal so. Watch This Please.

and cry with me

There were so many people and things in this chapter holy shit but like now that we have all these plots watch them weave :))

also we had an entire chapter of just the boys enjoying their weekend so there was a lot of Friend drama to catch up on

But well. We’ve got plenty of friend drama now haven’t we

:)

ALSO: if you are confused about Jonas right now and basically thinking what the fuck, I wrote a mini meta about everything (that I will be explaining later but in the meantime, unconfuse yourself a little) and it's in the first comment down below vvv

Actually there's like a multiple comment multiple thread discussion on Jonas and his character in the comments, it kinda turned into a Discussion Board, so like. Feel free to read and chime in where you like

all of these comments and kudos, all of them are fuel, they keep the words rolling, i love you all

xx
Somehow, he wasn’t the first to notice. In all fairness he was having a heated debate with Jonas about whether Geometry or Algebra was shittier, it didn’t cross his mind to count heads around the table.

But that’s why they had Magnus, so Isak could be in the middle of explaining how angles and shapes had application in society that x equations never would when he suddenly leaned over the table and interrupted.

“How come Even isn’t here?”

“How?” Isak glanced up, looking over at the chair next to him. Oh.

“Yeah, where is the Big Man?”

“We have not fucking call him that.” He leveled Jonas with a look, getting an innocent, eyebrows-up face back.

“Serr, though, he’s always here by now.” Mahdi looked concerned.

Everyone looked concerned, the fuck.

“Maybe he’s talking to a teacher or something.” Isak lifted a shoulder and three heads turned.

“You don’t know??”
“We don’t keep tabs on each other, goddamn.” He gave them a weird look and threw down his sandwich, leaning back in his chair as he fished in his pocket for his phone. He meant it, they really didn’t.

But it wasn’t like Even to not show up, so he could have a moment of being a concerned boyfriend.

•

Alt bra? 💖

•

He’d barely pressed send before the little texting-back dots popped up.

“…bubbles,” he offered under his breath. The rest of them sat waiting, watching for the reply. Which was taking forever, was he writing a novel, goddamn.

•

My english teacher let us out early, but I ran into a friend in the hallway. How come you never told me there’s video proof of you rapping?

•

Isak’s eyes went wide.

“What is it?”

“Is something wrong?”

Eva.

He didn’t have time to glance up and see the concern before his phone was ringing out the number he’d punched in.

She was already laughing when she picked up.

Isak didn’t bother with formalities, cutting straight to the part where he chewed her the fuck out.

“You hijack my boyfriend, first--”

The lunchtable erupted into a chorus of principal’s office ooooh’s, a couple drama-drama’s thrown in and Isak ignored them, sputtering indignant incredulous.

“--and then you show him that??”

“We were just going through my instagram!” Eva defended innocently but he could hear Even’s laughter on the other end of the line. Isak was well fucking aware of how many baby photos she had of him on her damn Instagram.

“Where are you, right now, I’m gonna come kick both of your asses.”

The oo’s around the table tapered off, trading looks of vague concern. Eva did not sound concerned, that was pure bubbly smug.

“You’re so cuuuute, I had to show him your precious soft baby face.”

“He was so fucking cute,” he could hear Even agree in the background and Isak scowled.

“I still am, and I can hear you, you fuck.”
He finally glanced up, doing a double take as he realized they were all staring, shocked concerned, Magnus’s mouth open, Jonas’s eyebrows knitted, the works.

Oh. Isak put his hand over the receiver as double laughter echoed in his ear.

“Eva is showing Even videos of me rapping from her instagram.”

The whole table deflated and Jonas snorted, eyebrows shooting up.

“Ja? God, I’ve got so many better videos than that~”

“Who was that?” Even’s voice cascaded over the line, deep words rumbling close to his ear and lowkey sending shivers down Isak’s spine. “Was that Jonas? He’s got videos too?”

He was supposed to have avoided the whole embarrassing baby photos thing with his parents out of the equation but apparently not.

“You didn’t hear that,” Isak told them, then he was very quickly and very decisively hanging up.
And shooting Eva an endearing pissy text.

•
You hoe you are unbelievable
•
:*:*
•

Mandag, 16:31
30.01.17

Isak was chilling on the counter at Even’s house when the phone call came. Even was making them food while Isak leaned back against the cabinets and made comments at his shitty ideas and technique - Even was a really good cook, despite that fucking terrible first meal, but Isak was just as good of a roaster, so.

He’d tossed his phone on the counter in between them because it was playing shitty pop music on Spotify, which was probably the only reason they both turned to it when it vibrated.

The music cut and his phone jumped a centimeter, buzzing sporadically as twin eyebrows furrowed.

If his reflexes had been that much faster, he could’ve grabbed it before Even saw the name on the screen. But they weren’t, and he didn’t, so Even did see the name, and froze in the middle of stirring their homemade sauce.

Pappa.

Fuck. He reached over and scooped the phone up, because he wasn’t gonna leave it there on the counter to ring out. Although.

He really didn’t wanna answer it either.
Isak stared at the phone in his hand and highly considered not taking it, highly considered letting it go to voicemail, but. Well, he.

He sucked in a breath and hovered over the green circle, okay just press-- and the call suddenly cut.

Fuck. Missed it.

Stared one second too long and it went to voicemail. Fucking story of his life.

Isak blinked a few times, the lock screen of his phone, the little notification, Missed Call, Pappa.

Whatever.

He tossed the phone back onto the counter, the music starting back up on its own, accompanied by the quiet sound of Even stirring again.

Isak glanced up but Even wasn’t looking his way, intent on the sauce like it was going to boil over any minute. It wasn’t going to, and it wasn’t like it’d been hard to make, just pasta sauce mixed with peanut, sriracha, and lime, so it wouldn’t even matter if it burned, but.

They hadn’t talked about Isak’s parents. For a reason.

It was just a phone call, he wasn’t gonna worry about it, wasn’t gonna think about it at all--

His phone plinged, the signature sound for you’ve got a voicemail.

Fuck. Okay.

Even looked over as he hopped off the counter, face carefully neutral while he watched Isak pick the phone back up, unlock it, and take three steps in the opposite direction.

“I’ll be right back.”

Even didn’t reply and Isak turned on a heel, rolling his lips in as he made his way down the hallway, turned the corner automatically into Even’s room and closed the door behind him.

He could do this. It was just a voicemail, right? So maybe he hadn’t talked with his parents since both of the we don’t understand hurt messages they’d sent him post-concert. That escalated into nasty hurt messages and accusations and shit to be topped off with more fucking Bible verses from his mom and guilt trips from them both but.

All he had to do was listen.

Isak leaned back against the closest wall, fixing his backwards snapback as it bumped. All he had to do was press play and not freak out, that couldn’t be that hard.

Fucking hell. Why was this so fucking hard?

Maybe because the last time he’d talked to his dad on the phone he’d thrown himself under the bus and the burn in his throat, he could still feel that.

“How nice, that you’ve got a boyfriend.”

“Yeah, it was…” Tires screeching, slam to ground and crushed, as the words fell out of his own damn mouth. “...it was just a joke.”
“Oh.”

A joke.

He’d felt love for the first time in his life and it was just a joke Dad, no big deal, don’t worry about it, he would never date a boy, let alone fall so fucking in love with one he could feel it from his heart to his fingertips, encompassing his soul and changing his entire fucking life with it.

“Yeah. Okay.”

The voice over the line had gone on, talked about how he was excited to see Isak, and his mom, and. And Isak couldn’t think, couldn’t hear. He’d just thrown himself back in the closet and his chest was compressed so fucking tight he couldn’t breathe.

It probably only lasted about fifteen seconds, fifteen seconds slammed back behind locked doors while he wailed on the inside and stood frozen on the out, before he’d finally jumped again, heart pounding in his chest, everything riding on that moment.

“Pappa?”

“Yeah?”

“It wasn’t a joke.” It’d ripped something open inside him, everything raw and terrible as the phone echoed silently and Isak managed the bottom dip of the rollercoaster to take his stomach with it. “It’s just over.”

“Oh.”

“So...yeah.”

Silence.

Isak trying to inhale and realizing he didn’t have lungs. Out of the closet and into the hellfire, yeah he dated a boy but it was. over.

Over.

His dad’s voice over the line again.

“But, is that. Was that...are you upset about that? Or is it--”

“Nei,” Isak had replied, eyelashes fluttering and cold tears splattering onto his cheeks with it.

But is that. What? Good?

Was that...what you wanted?

Are you upset?

Or is it-- hurting?

No, no, ja, so fucking badly I don’t know what the fuck to do--

“It’s okay,” he’d said, instead of my heart is broken and it feels like the world is ending.

It’s just over. Him and Even had been over and Isak had fucking cried on the phone with his dad,
hung up as fast as he could and cut it all off, tried to end the emotions with the red button, slipping back numb gasping, surprised at himself, at the emotions flooding because here he was crying over a boy, his entire being shattered into pieces and.

Fuck! Wow.

Not sure why that memory decided to resurface right now, what a great thing to be thinking about before he listened to this voicemail from his dad. It was cool. Everything was super cool, life was great, he was fine, fuck his fucking parents, he was gonna listen to this voicemail and then delete and Move The Fuck On With His Life.

Okay, time to rip it off like a band-aid and go.

Isak sucked in an unsteady breath and pressed the voicemail notification, phone lifted to his ear, eyes falling closed as that familiar damn voice came over the line.

“Hey, Isak. Hey...this is your Dad, I was just calling to see if maybe we could chat sometime soon. If you want it to be over the phone, that’s fine, I just. Your mom and I are both wondering how you’re doing, and we’re sorry if what we said after the concert seemed harsh.”

Isak took the phone away from his ear for a second, sucking in a breath, tightening his fingers around it before he threw it across the room. Harsh. Yeah, cool. Harsh.

Just gonna keep on listening.

“...think we both still just don’t understand. I want...I want to be there for you, Isak, we both do. If you have time on your schedule, we’d love to see you this week. Maybe we could meet up for lunch on a weekend? Just give one of us a call. Or shoot a text, whatever’s easier. Uhm...I hope you have a good day, son. And I hope to talk to you soon. Okay...we both love you. Bye.”

He was supposed to have glowed up from this.

His explanation text to his parents had been simple. Got an urgent message from a friend, it was important, he had to go. But they didn’t get it, they didn’t understand what could be more important than a Christmas Concert Family Reunion.

They went so far as to ask Jonas’s parents if Jonas was fine, to which Jonas’s parents had replied that he’d had a movie night at their house with absolutely no drama and conveniently, all of Isak’s friends present.

So his parents not only checked up on his story, which was fucking infuriating - we just care, we were trying to make sure he was alright, he could hear them arguing it now. Like they fucking knew enough about his life to know Jonas was still his best friend?

Although, well, arguably, that was never gonna change. But it could’ve, and the nerve had made his reply a little snappy, to which they’d exploded with how he was the one who was ditching them when they were trying to make an effort and rebuild this family and he was just being a rebellious teenager who couldn’t be mature enough to tell the truth about why he left.

Was it about this boy, was he doing drugs, his nefarious life choices must be -- wait for it. Confusing him.

Isak just.

Didn’t reply to those messages. They literally didn’t know a single fucking thing about his life, or
how fucking immature he was or wasn’t.

Hell, they probably wouldn’t recognize him now, if they saw how fucking different he was, how much he’d grown and become without them.

Funny, for as much as he was supposed to feel older, more mature now, listening to that voicemail, his Dad groveling like that again, it just.

Fuck, it just wasn’t fair.

Because even if he did want to meet them for lunch - which he didn’t - how the fuck was he supposed to sit there and look his dad in the face when he’d left Isak’s mom for her mental illness, something Isak had never come close to understanding the first thing about until now.

But now, he understood a hell of a lot more than when his dad left the first - and second - times and by god, if he’d been pissed then?

It wasn’t like he didn’t miss them. They were his parents, he missed them, he missed his dad’s singing and his mom’s constant questions about Jonas and consistent refusal to let him cut his pretty curls.

In a perfect world, he could’ve started dating this beautiful boy and brought him home, had Even just as nervous as he was at first, introduced him to his mom and dad, blushing while they told lame stories about him and asked Even all about his films while Even held his hand under the table and smiled and charmed his parents the way he charmed every other person he met, so much so Isak’s mom pulled him aside with tears in her eyes over how fucking happy she was for them, his dad clapping Even on the shoulder and asking when he was coming by next, it’d be great to have another artsy type around the house.

And Even would smile, crinkles around his eyes as he shook their hands and Isak walked him out onto the front porch, blushing like hell and figuring his parents were probably watching from the kitchen window but going up on his tiptoes to press a kiss to Even’s mouth anyways.

The sudden sniffle caught him off guard, wrist rubbing over his eyes automatically and coming up damp as he knocked his head back against the wall, opening watering eyes up to the ceiling.

Fuck.

He was never gonna get to have that.

He was never gonna get to be that.

Instead he got to keep hiding shit, packing his parents away behind a straining wall before they burst into his life and ruined the one thing he couldn't fucking lose.

_I’d forgotten it's not possible to lose anyone, we’re all--_

His mom and dad would ruin his relationship with Even, it was that simple. It didn't matter whether or not he wanted to fix things with them, in fixing that he’d ruin every other good thing in his life right now.

It just wasn’t fucking _fair._

Here he was, right back to square one, leaning broken against a wall in some back room, eyes closed painfully as he tried to gather the courage to go back out and face a world through another
motherfucking filter.

It could be worse.

It could be half a year ago, hiding out in a bathroom at a trashy party having turned down a blowjob from a girl he knew couldn’t turn him on no matter what he fucking tried.

Veins pounding from the smoke in his lungs, the spin in his head, everything numbed to the lowest setting and still, he was thrashing on the inside, high off his ass and so low he could break down crying in a party bathroom.

Pretending to be anything but what he was.

Hating himself that much--

That one came with an inhale, sharp and fast and shaking right into his core.

God. He wasn’t gonna go back to that. *It’s just a joke.* He was never gonna let himself hurt so much again.

He could still feel the remnants of who that person was, shoving himself so far down he didn't know how to breathe or look in the mirror or let his heart pound and

Isak pushed off the wall, momentum making the room spin, heavy hand throwing open the door with two palms wiping over his eyes.

He was all but running down the hall, round the corner into the kitchen, tile slick enough he slid in his socks, skidding to a stop at the edge of the counter, breathing a little heavy, eyes maybe still red.

Even looked up from the counter.

He wasn’t alone.

The spoon clattered as it dropped and Isak didn't notice, didn't register anything, not even Even’s voice as it floated,

“Hey, are you okay, Isak, what’s--”

Somehow his socks caught enough traction to run across the space between them, world echoing distant until he was crashing into Even’s chest, nearly sending them both toppling off balance with the force of it.

It took a second and a half after he was squeezing Even’s ribs for it to kick in, then two strong arms were wrapping tight around his shoulders, hands branding stars into his skin through all the layers between them.

“Isak,” Even breathed and he squeezed a little tighter, shifting to bury his face in that smooth long neck. “What’s wrong? What happened?”

“I really needed to hold you,” he mumbled into chilled skin, except it probably didn't sound anything like that as muffled as his face had to be.

So it was only fair that when a worried hand slid back to cup his jaw, enough pressure to lift his head up Isak let him, sucking in a shaky gasp of air and trying to compose himself as Even searched his expression brimming over with worry.
“What happened, baby? Are your parents okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, nothing like that.” Isak shook his head, looking down and sucking in a breath. Fuck.

He wasn’t hiding from himself, he was fucking done being afraid. “It wasn’t a joke.” His fucking parents weren’t gonna take Even away from him, he’d gotten him back, “it’s just over,” he was here, real, his heartbeat underneath Isak’s hands, his hands cupping Isak’s face.

Everyone knew now who counted and loved him anyways, and even if they didn’t? He did. He did. And he had Even to show for it. Fuck his parents.

“I just. Fuck, I hate this,” he said weakly, wiping a hand over his face just in case. Fucking hell.

“What, baby, what happened?”

“Just...them. I.” A shaky inhale, steady exhale. “I don’t want you to worry about it, I don’t need them, not when--”

Isak’s gaze flicked back up, looking steady at the worried blues searching his.

“Not when I have you.”

He had no idea what to do about his parents, he was so barely out of the closet he could still smell the lingering moth balls on his clothes but he was real, living, he was himself, and he was so. Insanely fucking happy he’d met Even Bech Næshiem.

(You saved me, he didn’t say. He’d been so. so alone. Dark and terrified, locked by himself behind doors that wouldn't open, spine distorted under the weight of expectations and fear and he was never gonna live like that again, was never gonna be scared again, because of this boy).

“I have you,” he repeated again, kind of an awed whisper this time. It sunk in, Even slowly realizing that no, Isak wasn’t gonna talk about his parents. The parents didn’t fucking matter, maybe that would take longer to sink in, but hopefully it would eventually.

So Even didn’t ask again, he just pulled Isak into his chest, arms wrapping comfortably around him. They rocked back and forth and Isak hung on and promised himself, everything was going to be completely fine.

Fuck his parents. Fuck his dad for leaving his mom because she wasn’t okay.

What the fuck. He was never gonna stoop so low. Just fucking watch him.

When they pulled away Isak kissed Even’s cheek, lingering a moment. Then he was leaning back against the counter, Even’s hand possessive and unmoving around his waist as Isak pulled his phone back out and sent a single text.

•

Tell mamma happy birthday for me.

•
The windows overlooking the courtyard at the back staircase landing had just wide enough windowsills to prop on, which was apparently squad tradition for both the girls and the boys. Not at once though, somehow things always wound up being one or the other.

Even was propped against the cold glass because he didn't have class til 13:30, and neither did Mahdi. So they were chilling in the window overlooking the courtyard, listening to music and debating artists.

They were listing off names to each other when Mahdi held out his hand, indicating Even’s phone.

“Let me look through your library, I'll see what you've got.”

Even handed it over and Mahdi scrolled through artist names, making approving sounds. And a few disapproving ones, but at least he didn't have any Gabrielle on there.

“Not too bad, not too bad.” Mahdi pressed the lock button on the phone, about to hand it back over when it lit up again, numbers and lock screen flashing.

“Holy fuck.”

“Hm?”

Mahdi pulled the phone back, pressing the button again so the lock screen showed back up.

“This picture is fucking cute.”

Screen flipped around and Even leaned closer.

“Oh! Thanks. Yeah, I kinda like it.” Even smiled to himself, taking the phone back in hand and lighting it up again.

His lock screen was a photo of him and Isak, laying on the carpet in the living room and laughing, looking up at the camera. It was a hella cute photo. He was glad Mahdi thought so too.

“Okay, what about Hooligan Chase?”

Even glanced back up, pursing his lips as he thought over the name.

“Don’t know him.”

“Really? Okay man, you gotta listen.”

~*~*~
Even used to love school. When he was younger, he was That Kid who looked forward to exams, who looked forward to learning, every minute of it.

His teachers all used to adore him. His studies all used to adore him and them back.

Then there was the first project he couldn't complete, didn't turn in, the week of exams he missed because he couldn't bring himself to leave bed.

It only went downhill from there. He wanted to love school, he wanted to enjoy every minute of class but there was always that nagging voice in his head, every time a deadline was assigned.

It was either stop caring about school or stress himself out literally every. Fucking day of the week, so.

He did everything he could not to care. To doodle in class when his mind was wandering. Better doodle than focus too hard, better fiddle than focus on Other Things.

So here he was in class missing Isak, sketching out the sparkling shape of his eyes, wishing he had all the greens and golds to shade in the vibrancy of color.

This whole notebook was filled in the margins, sometimes little hearts or lovesick doodles. Detailed, shaded hands entwined.

The mesmerizing curve of that puckered cupid’s bow, on days he couldn't stop thinking about kissing him.

A golden, shimmery ringlet, the tight curls behind his ears, at the nape of his neck.

The pattern of the freckles on his shoulders, pencil barely touching the paper, drawing soft as his fingertips traced.

Even was pretty sure Isak thought he only drew cartoons, which was fine, that's what he liked to draw the most. But sometimes he craved the realism, beautiful shaded masterpieces that could probably get him into art school if he tried.

Would hopefully get him into art school.
Of all his drawings though, his favorite right now was probably the one he made of Isak a few weekends ago. Sunday morning, gold across his skin as he slept and Even used the ceiling as an easel to capture his goddamn glowing beautiful, bruises and all.

And he was pretty sure he did. Capture it.

Even smiled to himself, sketching another line, fingers tight around his pencil, itching for the next moment they got to wrap between Isak’s again.

Onsdag, 19:24
01.02.17

They were stretched out making out on the couch in Isak’s living room and Even was warm all over, kissing that pretty mouth, one hand in the blonde curls of the beautiful boy lying propped on his chest.

It was so nice and domestic, to lay here with nothing to do but kiss and drink each other in, not a single fucking care in the world. He could do this for the rest of his entire goddamn life.

The thought suddenly crossed his mind and Even pulled back, their lips tugging and popping apart damp.

He leaned back, corners of his smile tipping up as Isak chased after his mouth, eyelids hooded in that drunk look he got, positively wasted on these kisses.

Fuck, it was kinda impossible not to lean in for another kiss when Isak looked that intoxicated off him, a quick press together of their mouths before he pulled back again, running a hand back and forth over the warm skin of Isak’s neck. There were so many things they could say without words now.

Isak hummed contentedly and closed his eyes, forcibly closing his mouth too, one more quick peck before he laid back down on Even’s chest, snuggling in with an ear pressed over his heart.

A little *mmm* sound to the tracing fingertips over Isak’s shoulderblade, distant and comfortable as they settled into sweet quiet. His heart was pounding a little fast, probably fast enough Isak could tell the difference, so. He might as well just say it.

“...do you remember, when we went on that date to the hill that overlooks Oslo’s nightscape?”

Isak lifted his head, dazed blinking away for knit eyebrows and dark green eyes squinting at him. “That wasn’t a date.”

“What do you mean? I held your hand and we kissed under a streetlight, that was totally a date.”

“Uh...nei? If you want to take me on a date you take me on a damn date, Even Bech Næsheim.”

“Yes sir,” he laughed and Isak flopped back down to his chest with another content sound, curls going everywhere. Even stroked them aside, sliding silk back and forth between his fingers.
“So do you remember our...not-date then?”

“Ja.” Isak tapped an absent finger over his sternum, tipping his head up to look at Even all soft and cozy. “It started snowing and I was wearing a snapback, my ears got cold.”

That was. Well, that was true, although not what he’d say was the most remarkable part of the night. Isak remembered the weirdest fucking details.

“Yeah...” Even looked down his chest, a dozen shades of blonde over dark beneath his fingertips. “And you mentioned how you’d thought about what you wanted from life five years from now.”

“Mmm.”

“...what do you want?” He held his breath, expanding chest that was slowly making Isak rise and fall stilling them both. Isak lifted his head, shifting a little to prop his chin on the hands folded over Even’s chest, cocking to the side as he lifted an eyebrow.

“I dunno, it's kinda lame.”

“Everything about you is kinda lame,” Even teased, touch brushing through curls in a quick circle from temple to neck. “I'm used to it.”

Isak rolled his eyes, lashes fluttering. Even tipped his head forward and Isak pushed off his chest an inch, dragging himself forward to slip their mouths together again.

Dancing fingers, tugging little curls around the slope of his ear, base of his neck. The kiss twisted as Isak tipped his head, popping off with a little smile.

One more loose peck because they were both too weak to not to.

“Really though.” Even lifted his eyebrows and Isak slid down to settle back in against his chest, glancing up to show he was listening. “Do you wanna still be living the apartment life, party hopping?”

“Well in five years I'll still be 22, so.”

“Ten years then.”

“Ten years?” Isak pursed his mouth, shifting a little, legs weaving between his to tangle a little more. “Nei...I think I'd like a house.”

It wasn’t that surprising, most people did, but still, Even’s heart was pounding inside his chest again. He managed to keep it on the downlow, at least what he could with Isak’s head resting on him, listening.

“What kind of house?”

A little sound as his mouth popped open, debating it for a moment before he answered.

“One that's close enough to town you could ride a bike for groceries. But not too far from school either.”

“So you want kids then?”

“Hmm? What? Ugh. Hell if I know. I'm seventeen, the only time I think about children are when I'm being lectured on safe sex and not getting girls pregnant.”
“Mm. Least you don't have to worry about that anymore.” Even shook his shoulder and Isak rocked with it, tipping his head up to smile, dimples carving into his cheeks.

“One of the lov-ely perks of being gay.”

They had come so fucking far since when they’d first met. He might not’ve been there for much of Isak being closeted, but he was there to watch him bloom right out of it, and what a fucking beautiful thing to watch.

He smiled fondly and crooked a finger at the pretty boy on his chest. Isak crawled up again, nosing in close for Even to kiss him, quiet, all closed-eye focus, thumb rubbing back and forth over the edge of his jaw.

Their mouths danced around each other a moment longer, lips brushing and breaking off as Isak rubbed their noses together, making Even’s smile burst into a little laugh.

Isak’s elbow dug into his collarbone as he ran a rough hand through Even’s hair. Still a little dazed, tipsy gaze locking with his, mouth falling back open. Flickering between his eyes and mouth and the gravity was too much, both of them tipped forward to press their mouths together again.

Trading heat and damp between open shiny lips, closing together with a tug before they parted with an inhale, heads tipping and mouths interlocked as they closed together again, pulling apart slow slow slow.

Their foreheads pressed together, close and quiet and Even really wasn’t expecting for Isak to follow-up, let alone with a question like that when they were pressed together intimate like this.

“Do you want kids?” Isak asked him quietly.

Even paused, eyes flicking up from little part beneath the Cupid's bow to study the waiting hooded green. He asked it so fucking simply. If only he could give a simple answer to any question like that.

“It depends,” he replied slowly, not sure how to go about this honestly without dampening the dreaming moment.

“On what?” Isak furrowed a little, pulling back an inch to look at him confused. Even returned the gaze steadily, quiet. On a lot.

“The kind of relationship I'm in.” One eyebrow twitched up a bit and Even cut down, looking away as the rest of it slid quietly between them. “How stable my life is.”

Isak tipped his head, not seeming very surprised as he deliberated.

“Mmm. That's fair.”

How he was so fucking chill about shit like this, he had no idea. Even wasn’t sure he’d ever get used to it.

He shrugged a heavy shoulder, rocking Isak on his chest with it. The elbow digging into his collarbone finally slid off and Even could physically see the gears turning under golden curls.

“But if everything was good, would you want kids then?”

Isak’s head propped on his hands on his chest again, looking up comfortably at him, so fucking young and simple. If everything was good. Whatever parallel universe that was.
Even pursed his mouth, tipping his head back against the couch cushions to look up at the ceiling.

“I think so.”

“Hm.” Isak’s head tipped to the side, cocking cutely in his peripherals. “...and a house?”

“Yeah, definitely a house,” he told the ceiling wistfully.

“With a swimming pool,” Isak declared.

Even’s eyebrows shot up as he glanced back down.

“A swimming pool?”

“Ja, of course.” Isak scoffed, already smiling through it and ruining the teasing effect, taking Even’s heart right with him. Leaning in close, tantalizing hover over parted lips, barely more than a whisper over the centimeters between them. “...in case I ever feel like swimming.”

And they were kissing again. It sounded like Isak was writing Even into his future plans and Even’s heart was gonna actually pound out of his chest now, loud and fast enough it had to be reverberating through Isak’s sternum, their pressed bodies.

They weren’t supposed to do this. They agreed not to talk about the future. Or, well. They agreed not to worry about the future, so. Technically.

Still, fuck. His tummy was swooping and Isak was kissing him like they were honeymooning in a lofty, white-curtain whispering hotel room in Paris with a terrace and all Even wanted was to be kissing this same mouth on a couch of their own ten years from now but he couldn’t let himself think about that, it wasn’t fair to his own hopes and it was definitely not fucking fair to Isak so.

He made himself pull away and it was not the fun kind, eyes slipping closed as he inhaled and tried to land his feet back in reality.

Only the moment his eyes opened up again there was Isak, tipsy and soft and close, little breaths puffing over his wet lips. They breathed apart and Even soaked him in, helplessly inhaling the way Isak was looking at him and tucking it away to treasure for-fucking-ever.

Can’t I just...stay in here with you forever? Can I?

You can.

Jesus, he was so beautiful. Dazed and happy and kissing Even like that was all he ever wanted to do. He knew, Isak knew everything and he was still kissing Even like that.

In case I ever feel like swimming. Fuck.

Well.

Fuck it.

“I have to be the one to teach the kids to swim though.” Even lifted his eyebrows, pinning Isak with a very serious look. “—since someone can’t.”

“Huh?!” All incredulous and offended and precious, lashes fluttering as he slipped from faded back to reality, mouth dropping open again.
He made a face right back *uh, hello, obviously.*

“We can't have them all getting water droplets in their throats.”

Isak bubbled up in a bright, surprised laugh, rolling a little on his chest and Even tugged him in closer, on top of the highest mountain, pressing a kiss to the top of his head as Isak’s arms wrapped around his ribs. A smile on his face while he lay back on Even’s chest and listened to his pounding heart.

~*_*_~

Torsdag, 07:36
02.02.17

So the part that sucked was that Even didn’t spend the night. The part that didn’t suck as much was that he woke up to a good morning text.

Actually, a *good morning beautiful* text that made him blush and flop back down into his pillows, pulling Even’s hoodie up over his nose from how much he was smiling and goddammit, why couldn’t Even let him live, how was he supposed to wake up and be groggy and annoyed at the world when he woke up to a text like that.

Not as good as hearing it from that voice, though. If Even had *spent the night*, maybe,..

Anyways. He eventually stopped blushing enough to pull his head out of his pillow, rolling up on his side. Ugh, still tired, but at least he slept. Some. He didn’t actually go to bed until 1 and he woke up twice between then and now but still. Six hours was the best he’d gotten so far. And it was improving, slowly.

He’d taken everything completely chill last week, and this week too, one minute at a time and it was all gonna turn out okay. Yeah, a lot of nights it sucked and he was still laying up awake in the dark staring at the ceiling trying to figure this all out.

But Even asked for time. Isak could give him that. He just had to hold on a little longer and appreciate the little things he did have, like waking up to good morning beautiful texts when he couldn’t wake up to a beautiful good morning instead.

Ugh. Why couldn’t Even be here, why couldn’t he be curled up around him instead of curled up in his hoodie. Goddamn. Why was he so damn weak.

Why did Even need *time*. The fuck did he have to figure out?

Okay. That was it.

Isak sat up, head spinning a little bit from how fast it was, groaning at himself as he lunged for the laptop beside his bed. He needed advice.

Skype took fucking nine years to load, and by the time he’d dialed out the number - still the most
called, so clearly, he hadn’t used Skype in the past like six goddamn months - he’d shoved his laptop all the way to the foot of his bed, stretching out on his stomach and shoving a pillow under his chin as he waited for the other line to pick up.

Ah, there she was. And fuck, his hair looked ridiculous.

“Hi hoe, how are you?” Eva greeted brightly, snorting a little as he flattened a hand over his bedhead hair only for it to pop straight back up. Cool.

“Tired. You?”

“Mmm. Up earlier than usual, so. Might as well put on makeup with all my extra time.” She leaned in closer to the laptop, eyes on her own little photo instead of him, eyeliner pencil in hand while Isak rolled his eyes at her.

“So what's up?” She asked congenially, blinking rapidly before tracing a little triangle next to her eye.

“What, I can't just call a friend for fun?”

“Not at seven thirty in the morning.” Eva pinned him with a look and Isak pouted a little, squinting as he debated. Yeah, alright.

“...fair.”

“So?”

“So I'm trying to figure out why Even moved out,” he confessed and Eva lifted the pencil back to her eye, darkening in the little triangle.

“Oh?”

“He told me it's to be… responsible and not codependent and everything but.” He rocked his head dramatically on the terms, because yeah he got them, but still. Eva glanced over at his half of the screen and he threw up a hand. “It's dumb.”

“I mean. It is the right thing to do.”

“How?? Things were great when we lived together. He also said it was so I could get more sleep and now I get fucking half the sleep I did and he Knows That.” Isak lifted a hand, using his flipping palm to point it out. “So if that was really why, he'd move back in.”

“Hmm. Fair point.”

“Then I was thinking maybe it's a commitment thing…”

“It’s definitely not a commitment thing,” Eva countered, swiping mascara over her lashes, blinking rapidly and making a face at the black dot on her waterline. “I mean if he can talk about marriage with no issues, I seriously doubt living together would be all that intimidating.”

A sweep of the mascara wand, darkening the tops a little more, mouth open like that would help.

Isak’s mouth was open too.

Didn't help.
“...marriage??” he finally squeaked and Eva’s gazed instantly flicked over.

“Oh my god.” The mascara wand nearly went flying as she clapped a hand over her mouth, dark gray-blues going wide. “I totally forgot--”

“Did he talk to you about...???”

Isak couldn’t actually manage the word again. He couldn’t decide which of their expressions were more shocked. No, his, actually, as shocked as Eva’s was his was like. Ten times that right now, yep, fuck--

“It was at the cabin, we were all just chatting and giggling and we talked about a lot of things, don't-”

Isak buried his face in his pillow and Eva paused as she heard the muffled scream.

“Is that a good scream or a bad scream?” She ventured after a moment of heavy breathing through muddled screams and laptop screens.

His hands were clutching so tight to the pillow on either side of his face he might leave permanent fingermarks in cotton.

“Isak?”

Eva made a concerned sound and Isak lifted his head, feeling fairly dazed and probably looking even moreso. Good or bad scream.

“Overwhelmed,” he replied and she gave him a little smile, leaning back in to start in on the other eye.

“Maybe that's why he moved out. Because he didn't want to overwhelm you. He's just so...vibrant, you know?”

Smooth exit off the Marriage Train only he was still hanging on the rails and Isak blinked. And blinked again.

Eva tapped her screen like he was frozen, a little shit of a smile on her face. Isak shook his head once, curls so fucking disheveled they were trying to bounce in his eyes. He shoved them aside with a hand, opening his mouth before he figured out what to say.

“Ugh. Yeah, I guess, but like what about him could possibly overwhelm--”

Unless this had something to do with Even being bipolar.

Overwhelm.

Doing fucking homework at 2am like a weirdo.

That’s what set off Even moving out. It was a one-off event, Even really had just felt like working on his project at 2 in the morning, couldn’t sleep and artist type and inspiration and all, but.

But maybe Isak's reaction to it. To Even acting like that.

Unexpected and strange and somehow inconvenienced or something because of it--

Maybe he didn't want Isak to have the responsibility of caring for him when an episode finally hit.
He didn't wanna be a burden when it came to critical hour so he moved out before it could happen.

Oh fuck, that was probably it.

Oh fuck. Fuck that.

“Isak?”

Eva was hovering her mascara wand again, waiting to sweep it on as she looked at him concernedly. Isak had trailed off with his mouth open, realizations all kinda sinking in at once. It was fair she was looking at him all concerned.

“I think I might've...hm. I think I might know why, but I have...no idea how to bring it up.” He stuck his tongue in his cheek and Eva lifted a shoulder, painting her lashes darker as she offered a classic Eva Suggestion.

“Ask him to spend the night, then talk about it in the early hours of the morning when everything’s all soft and sweet.”

“Hey, that's a great idea.”

“I know it is,” Eva smiled, puckering her lips to blow a hand-free kiss at the screen.

Isak blew an air kiss back and glanced in the corner of his laptop for the time. Yeah, good note to end on, he actually should do something about his hair now. Or food. That was a decidedly better idea.

“Okay, I'm gonna go get breakfast. Takk for the advice...I'll see you at school, good luck with the rest of your morning.”

“You too,” she smiled sweetly, hand coming into sight to shut out of the call. Isak lifted a finger before she could, waving it over the screen.

“Oh and the wing on your left eye is angled higher than your right.”

She flicked him off and Isak tipped his head in a smile then he was closing his laptop. It wouldn’t care that Skype was still running, in theory, hopefully it wouldn’t blast something terrible at him when he opened it back up.

God, like that one time he’d closed his laptop in the middle of binging Netflix and opened it back up to some demonic sound blasted all the way on high and nearly gave himself a heart attack.

Anyways. Even. Moved out because he thought Isak couldn’t handle his shit, what a fucker.

It was fair though, he hadn’t actually proved himself in that department yet. He'd only actually attempted to deal during a depressive episode, that was only half the picture. And Even was just trying to do what was best. Too bad he was...wrong.

Fuck. Okay. He just had to find a way to bring that up.

That was gonna be so wonderful and easy.

Hey babe, so I've been deliberating for the past two weeks and I'm pretty sure you moved out because you're afraid to be around me when you have another manic episode because you don't know how I'm gonna react but! Tough shit I want to be there for you and you're gonna move back in now so I can sleep, thanks.
Yeah. He was gonna have to work on that one.

Magnus caught up to the two of them just before they hit the courtyard, backpacks swung over bumping shoulders that opened up to solid arms wrapping around both of their necks.

“Heya, boys.”

Even crinkled up in a smile and Isak shoved the arm off from around him, the three of them falling into step with Magnus in the middle.

At least he didn’t go for the ass slaps this time.

“Hey, Mags, what’s up?”

Isak’s eye twitched at the nickname and Even hesitated a moment. That wasn’t like...exclusive to certain people, was it?

The shoulder knocking into his knocked a little harder, shaking him out of the moment with that signature bright carefree.

“We're all going to the skate park after school, you two coming?”

“Skate park?” Isak sounded damn surprised, both eyebrows high as he did a little doubletake. “Jeez.”

Even leaned over Magnus to shoot him a curious look.

“You don't like skateboarding?”

Isak furrowed a little, head shaking as he fell back into step beside them.

“Nei, of course I do. We used to go every day, I just haven't been in a while.”

“You and Jonas?” Magnus asked.

“Ja,” Isak’s mouth landed in a little pout as he looked down at their shoes.

Even studied him a moment, hip-checking the door open and waving both of them through first.

There was definitely something up, but it didn’t sound like he didn’t wanna go either.

“Yeah, Magnus. We'll be there.” The door echoed shut behind them, a pause outside, tearing his eyes off Isak to give Magnus a smile. “Thanks for the invite. “

“Sure. Course. We’ll probably land there by 16:00. See ya there!” A congenial hand clapped down on his shoulder, then Isak’s, making him stumble a step as he snapped back into reality, offered Magnus a quick salute goodbye.

Even caught his hand on the way down, sliding it behind his back to wrap Isak’s arm around his
waist, settling an arm around his shoulders in turn.

One eyebrow shot up and Isak gave him an amused look, to which Even just shrugged and started walking again.

“You still wanna grab kebabs first?”

“Sure, we’ve got time.”

The fingers on his waist curled in a little and Even smiled, ducking his head to watch Isak’s expression shift through the happy-embarrassed-awed as they made their way across the courtyard, arms around each other for the world to see.

The little smile on Isak’s face only lasted as long as the black fence wrapped around campus though, cause the minute they hit the city sidewalk it was fading right back into that distant, contemplative when the skatepark was mentioned.

It took him a solid additional thirty seconds to figure out what to say, but eventually he just decided fuck it and jostled Isak’s shoulder a little.

“Is everything okay with you and Jonas?”

“Hmm? Ja. Ja, everything’s great. I mean, it’s been really nice lately, I feel like we got pretty distant there for awhile and. It’s good to not be so distant.”

“Mmhm. And you’re sure everything’s fine? With the skatepark?”

Isak glanced over at him and Even gave him a look, eyebrows up, one that said he knew something was up, no point in glossing over it. Isak sighed.

“It’s just been awhile, a lot of old memories, y’know?”

“Ahh, that mysterious first year at Nissen,” Even said knowingly, little smile with it as he shook the sloping shoulder again and Isak sucked in a breath.

“Drama drama. But it’ll be fun. Do you skate?”

“I know how. So I’ll give it a shot. Do you?”

“Kinda. I can hold my own but I always used to just watch Jonas.”

“Is he good?” Even asked.

Isak just looked at him, tongue slipping over his lips, eyebrow cocking up.

And an hour later, standing at the edge of the bowl as Jonas leaped into the air, board flipping smoothly beneath him, landing back down perfectly to fly off into another trick Even could safely say the answer was yes, he was good. Really good.

A cheer broke up from the crowd and Even’s eyebrows shot up as he looked over at Isak. Isak wasn’t looking back, fidgeting as he scanned the walls like he had to reread every word of the painted graffiti.

“Let’s go sit down,” Even suggested. They headed for a bench and Isak’s gaze was still darting back and forth between the rink and the ground.
He'd looked down to avoid Even's gaze, in the beginning. To avoid catching feelings.

Avoiding eye contact meant avoiding emotions for Isak, so clearly there was a lot he was working through right now.

It was a hell of a cool skatepark, bowls and half pipes and the works, walls and ground decorated with a dozen layers of vibrant spraypaint, everything from profane words to giant face murals, and the place was packed.

Every inch of standing room was either being boarded on, or trampled by feet of onlookers cheering, toes threatened as the flat of a board skid along the rim of the bowl, laughing boys tumbling back against each other to avoid getting hit.

The bench was long and propped right in the middle, covered in just as much graffiti as the rest of the park, only about ten times quieter right now.

“Isak,” Even tipped a little, knocking his shoulder and startling the snapback covered curls to turn his way. Isak was leaning forward with his forearms on his knees, hands clasped loosely between, one eyebrow cocking up at Even’s gaze. “What’re you thinking about?”

“Nothing,” he said, shaking his head once with an exaggerated frown but he was looking down at his hands while he did it.

Jonas cleared the top again and another round of cheers burst. Isak wet his lips and glanced up, watching for a moment. There was so much under the surface there, a whole lake under ice that Even didn't know existed.

“You don't have to tell me,” he offered quietly. “But if you want to, I'm here to listen.”

Even leaned back on the bench, studying the pretty profile in his peripherals. Isak sighed. He wasn’t looking away from the skaters now, though.

“Y’know how I told you you were the first guy I'd ever been with?”

“Mmhmm.”

“That's true. But you weren't the first guy I tried to get with.”

Even’s eyebrows shot straight up. That was...genuinely surprising. When he'd met Isak he'd never seen somebody so damn intent to throw themselves deeper into the closet. That hardly screamed I've chased down boys before.

“No?”

“Nei.”

It kinda made sense, though if he thought about it. Because once they did kiss Isak never stopped kissing him. Never really had the holy shit I'm kissing a boy there is another dick in this equation crisis that Even had been expecting.

So Isak already knew he liked boys, he just. Pretended that he didn't. Even always kinda assumed it was because he didn't want the reputation, hadn't met somebody worth it, but.

Looking at Isak's profile now, Even was pretty sure he was wrong.

Maybe Isak wasn't out because Isak had liked a boy who hadn't - probably couldn't - liked him back
and it’d left him empty, empty enough to crawl deep into the dark where heartache wouldn’t hurt him anymore.

Better to be in the closet than deal with heartbreak.

Even swallowed and looked down, leaning forward to match Isak’s pose, hands clasped loosely between his knees as he asked the question to his overlapped fingers instead.

“Were you in love?”

The sharp gaze snapped to him quickly, open with surprise. He hadn’t been expecting that question. Probably had never been asked it.

“I don't know,” he replied carefully, their gazes locked, emotions simmering under the surface as they tried to read each other. “Too much confusion and drama to ever really figure that out.”

“Are you still confused about it?”

“No,” Isak said and it was simple and sure. “I'm over it.”

“You don't have to say that just because it's me,” Even told him quietly and it was the same out he gave Isak before he met his parents, you don't think it's awkward? We don’t have to do this.

No. I don’t think anything’s awkward anymore.


“Oh.” He didn’t really understand that, it kinda sounded like still confused to him, however. “But it's been bothering you lately?”

“Not bothering me, but.” The dart of his tongue over his lips and Isak sucked in a breath, looking away.

“Isak, I can help if you want. Talk it through with me.”

A quiet sigh and Even held his breath. He really meant it, he was here for Isak, whatever he was feeling. He knew there was a lot he was missing, about the past and if he could help Isak conquer that in any way, he wanted to be the person Isak turned to.

Finally a shoulder lifted, hand kinda waving as Isak sat up, trying not to rush it.

“I don't know, I guess it's just that a lot of things were left unsaid and I don't know whether or not to say them. To apologize, to address everything I fucked up and. Eva thinks I should just get over it but. I don't know.”

“Eva?” Not who he’d go to for love advice. What was her last connection to Isak again? Even ran it over in his head, trying to remember which friends had the history with which. “Wait didn't she used to date—”

Jonas chose that moment to soar over the edge again, board flipping in slow motion, the world slowed down for the single moment before Even’s words sunk in and Isak was caught in innocent limbo, gaze on his best friend and all the swirled emotions of the conversation - nostalgia - in those green eyes and the tiny sincere dash of a smile.

Oh.
Oh.

Jonas. Isak found out he was gay because of Jonas.

All the pieces just clicked into place and then the skateboard was crashing down onto the pavement, cheers bursting and a swooping sound as the wheels soared back down the slope and took Even’s stomach with them.

“Jonas, yeah,” Isak finished absently, glancing his way and suddenly freezing as he caught the look on Even’s face.

They both knew what they knew.

Even was paralyzed and he was sure Isak could see it. Sure Isak could hear his heart pounding as he stared, pouty mouth turned down and closed and eyes slightly wide, caught out and unsure and frozen stiff.

“But you don't still…?” Even asked, drifting through vibrant graffiti’d space and he felt absolutely terrible for the jealousy coursing through his veins but if Isak was in love with Jonas, he didn't stand a fucking chance and that all too real possibility was staring him directly in the face right now.

“Nei, I don't still,” Isak confirmed and the rush of air out of his lungs felt more like a punch to his chest than a breath of relief.

“Fuck, you thought-- Unnskyld, Even, I didn't mean to scare you--”

“It's fine.” Even was trying to catch his breath back, feeling strangely light headed from how relieved he was. “I'm sorry I freaked, I just thought...”

“That was hardly freaked,” Isak argued lightly, a warm arm snaking around his shoulders and pulling Even back towards him.

“I don't want you to think I don't trust you or anything or that I don't want you to be happy and to have close friends or--”

“Even. Even, I don't think any of those things, calm down.”

“...are you sure?” He was searching Isak's expression, flickering back and forth between sparkling green eyes, distantly registering the hand cupping his face, the opposite side of the rink.

“Ja. I was pretty sure beforehand, and now I'm positive.” A little huff and Even closed his eyes a moment, lips parted as he finally inhaled steadily.

He hadn’t just fucked everything up, Jesus Christ his stomach had dropped right to his feet, that’d been so fucking terrifying--

The hand on his cheek skirted up his jaw, tipping him forward as Isak pressed a soft kiss to his mouth, their lips slipping to lock in place together, the chill of Isak’s nose against his cheek from the tilt.

Their foreheads pressed together as they pulled apart, eyes still closed as Isak's head tipped, the weight of that calculating gaze on his skin.

“I didn't mean to scare you.”

“It's completely fine.” Even’s heart was still pounding and Isak must’ve been able to feel that
because he kissed him again.

“Really.” Isak shook him a little, thumb stroking over his cheek as he pulled back enough to talk, see him and be seen.

“I’ve just been hashing through some old mistakes and conversations and things I want to fix, and there’s still a lot about that semester that I want to make up for, but it’s not from some crush or whatever, it’s cause Jonas is my best friend and I owe him that.”

Even nodded. That was fair. That was really fair.

His gaze flicked away for a moment, tapping into the warmth of Isak’s hands on his skin. Their world connected through their touch.

“Of course.” He shook his head once, dislodging a few strands from the style he’d so carefully sculpted. Eyes flicking back up to Isak’s patient waiting ones. “…and I really do wanna help, if I can.”

“Yeah?” Isak asked softly, running a thumb over the angle of Even’s jaw. Even nodded, sealing it with a kiss and when Isak pulled back the next words weren’t whatever he’d been expecting.

“So I keep hiding the secret that I intentionally fucked over my best friend’s relationship with the girl of his dreams because the ache of watching them together used to keep me up at night?”

Even’s eyebrows rose slowly as it sunk in. Isak was looking at him seriously, waiting, so he wasn’t joking, he actually did intentionally sabotage Eva and Jonas.

“Well,” Even started and that’s when Magnus plopped down beside them again, Mahdi in tow. The hand slipped from his cheek as he spun, sliding heavy down his arm the moment their gazes broke, turning in tandem to the boys.

“You guys are gonna skate, right? Even, you know how?”

“I’m nothing like Jonas,” he admitted and Isak’s fingers tightened in his thigh. Fuck, phrasing, wording.

He wasn’t though, and the glance he shot over didn’t have worry written over the pretty features looking back at him. Confirmation. Surety. Gratitude.

Even sucked in a breath and there was a little smile on his face as he turned back to the boys again.

“But you know how?”

“Yeah?”

“Fantastic. Mahdi found a board you can borrow.”

“This way.”

They both popped up and Even stood too, stooping for just a moment to press a quick peck on Isak’s tipped up mouth.

“We’ll finish talking later, promise.”

A hand squeezed in his, sending a spiral of warmth into his spine, then they were dropping as he quickly circled round the bench to catch up with Magnus and Mahdi, who were waiting.
They all started for the edge of the rink, where there was a whole crowd watching, waiting. It took him a few seconds to catch onto the fact that Isak wasn’t following, glancing over his shoulder for the bench, where he was still sitting pensively.

“Hey why aren’t you making Isak skate too?”

“Isak’s the trophy wife, he just sits and cheers,” an out of breath Jonas joined, looking over his shoulder too, both of them turning back to Magnus and Mahdi at the same time.

Even huffed a laugh, their eyes meeting for a brief moment.

“Don’t worry, he loves it. Falls off the board near instantly, but he always enjoyed watching.”

Even smiled, but he didn’t say what he was thinking, taking the board Jonas was holding out instead.

Always enjoyed watching.

Yeah. Always enjoyed watching you.

Torsdag, 17:24
02.02.17

They didn’t talk about it on the way back to Isak’s place. Even didn’t bring it up and neither did Isak, so maybe they were just talking another time. Maybe Isak was giving him time to process.

It was cold enough, dusk dark enough for the puff of warm oxygen to be visible, billowing white.

Even breathed out hard, breath fogged from the cold, narrowing his mouth into an O as the smoke blew.

Isak gave him a funny look and Even lifted an eyebrow and did it again, fogging the air with his breath into a fancy, thin smoke cloud.

“I can’t smoke anymore, leave me be,” he countered, smiling, tipping up his chin to blow out another cloud of white.

Isak sighed and exhaled, shaping it into a steady stream too. Even smiled to himself and tucked his hands a little deeper in his pockets.

“Spend the night?” Isak asked. Even hesitated.

“Just tonight,” Isak asked again and Even nodded, breathing out into the cold and wrapping an arm around Isak’s waist.

“Yeah.” He dropped a kiss to the curls and Isak’s cold hands slipped under his hoodie to rest against his skin.
Three hours later his hands were sliding up that same spine, everything warm to the touch now as
they rocked together beneath the late night whisper of his sheets.

Even was moving inside him slow and deep and possessive, biting high enough on his neck there
was no way a scarf was gonna cover the marks. Hands branding his cheeks, shoulders, ribs. Thighs.

His body had been trembling for ten minutes, an hour, infinity, he didn’t know anymore, it didn’t
matter, not when Even had him like this.

Isak lost himself to the purpose, in every touch. To the words Even was spelling out with his hands,
with his tight grip, the shove of his body deeper and deeper in Isak’s. Again and again and again a
hundred pressing nerves of heat as Even carved out a place for himself in Isak’s chest.

A place and a hole, Isak tipped his head back on a broken gasp. A permanent hole he was never
gonna be able to fill with anything else.

And laying here, taking Even inside his body like that, Isak never wanted to try.

The world was burning and Isak’s eyes slipped closed against it, flooded with sensation, shoved full
and full and full with a hand circled loose around his neck, keeping him safe from the fire.

“Is-ak,” Even murmured, painting his skin with damp lips. His eyelashes fluttered as he moaned back
quietly, the only response he could offer with his heart and soul and tongue like this. “Look at me.”

He managed to pry his eyes back open, dazed as he looked up, registered the desperation coloring
that tone as he met the dark eyes watching his. Isak held the gaze, one of them drunk and the other
crystal sharp, both tumbling for the edge.

“Tell me it’s me,” Even whispered and Isak was gone but not so far gone he didn’t get it, dropping
his mouth open wider, shaking as Even pushed further inside him.

“E-even, Even, you, only you, ba-by--”

Two hands sliding up through his curls, tight handfuls making him dizzy.

“Ahh ah ah ah ah--”

Heaven rocking them together until pieces weren’t pieces anymore.

“Faen faen Even--”

His lashes fluttered and his head rolled to the side as sparks tumbled, muscles tightening all over,
lifting past the clouds and Even thrust that much more sure, one hand grabbing Isak’s chin, turning
his head back up, foreheads pressed hard together.

“Look at me, look at me,” Even begged, mumbling over his mouth and Isak somehow fluttered his
lashes open again, locked on blues too dark to see anything but shine, Even’s lips parted, hair
disheveled, gaze desperate as it held onto his.

It took a fuckton of focus he didn’t know he had to keep his eyes open and his head still, channeling
all the too much into his fingers, sinking into Even’s shoulders, everything he usually tossed his head
wantonly to, usually squeezed his eyes against.
Burning that much brighter when he forced himself still, no outlet for the buildup. Everything foggy and deep and deep, he’d be sliding an inch up on the mattress with every thrust inside of Even’s hands weren’t wrapped around his shoulders, tips of his fingers bruising Isak’s collarbones as he tugged him down smooth and fucking hard with every roll of his hips inside.

Shoving into his body and shivering under his skin, both their mouths dropped open and their gazes locked so tight nothing else existed but the dark shades of Even’s drowning eyes, the night sky behind the stars he was hammering into sparklers in Isak’s sternum.

“Even, Even, Even--”

It was more than consuming, Even was consuming him and the sex was tying them together in messy unbreakable knots, coil wound so fucking tight in his stomach.

Spine trembling, on the edge of snapping, begging to arch, twist with, against, it was just so fucking deep and he was dying to throw his head back, toss to the side, close his eyes, anything to counter the deep slams into his entire existence but there was nothing he had nothing but winding up tighter still, unmoving and gripping tight as his vision threatened to fog over, body threatened to burst.

“Ahahahhh, please please p-please, Even E-ve-ah ahh--”

The murmured pleas didn’t do a single thing but he couldn't stop spilling them, couldn't stop rambling as he begged for something, anything because it was way too much and he couldn't take it anymore he couldn’t--

The colors and contrast spiked higher and overwhelmingly higher and every cell in his body buzzing, every ounce of skin slipping damp with the sheen of sweat and he was looking up so desperately at those beautiful eyes that were eating him alive. Taking his soul right out from between his ribs.

*Look at me,* Even begged and it was too much but Isak did, he did and did and did and the parallel universes all followed in overwhelming step after step, right to the edge of the stumbling shouting foggy cliff because his eyes were locked on Even’s when he came and he wasn’t sure he'd ever felt more exposed in his life.

“E-even!” he broke, a cry out and he was shaking all over, choking over a dozen little sounds as his world fell apart and his vision kinda swam but he was still locked on Even, letting him watch him crumble beneath the dazed dark.

A rough hand shoved up through his curls and Even’s eyes slipped closed, their mouths catching in a kiss that was swallowing his insides tipping him up taking his oxygen breath of life shot at surviving as the rapid thrusts inside faltered and Even was coming inside him.

They gasped against each other’s mouths, starved for air taken and stolen and gifted again.

Crash and crash and the tide dragged them by the thighs tumbling through white waves too strong to fight.

Isak was wondering distantly what it would feel like, to have Even come inside him without rubber between them, whether it’d feel dirtier or more intimate, if that was something Even would ever want to do.

Because fuck, he’d never felt so physically consumed before in his life.
It was another ten minutes, thirty seconds, infinity before he fluttered open his eyes again. They'd fallen shut when Even’s did. Even was breathing hard and looking down at him, kind of, eyelids hooded and their noses pressed together.

Isak managed to lift a hand, circling around a trembling bicep to grab the back of Even’s neck roughly, hold them here together, tight.

“I'm here,” Isak breathed and Even inhaled salty ocean air, dipping down to kiss him again.

And again. Until they were too out of breath to kiss anymore and that's when Even lifted up, pulled out while Isak winced and wished he'd stop doing that, dammit, that was the worst part of every time they had sex could he just. Cut that leaving shit out.

Although he wasn't really leaving. Not for real. He'd promised he'd stay the night, that's the whole reason they got to lay in Isak's bed and make love to each other on a school night.

Fuck. That really was the best way to describe it though.

Even rolled, reaching for a cloth on the bedside table only Isak hadn't thought to put one out after the last time he did laundry. (When Noora left someone had to do laundry, otherwise it wouldn't get done, and he was always the last person to pay rent so it was the least he could do.)

Even was never here anymore.

He patted around for a cloth before lifting high enough to look for one, not see one, and the realization slowly dawned.

“I'll be right back.”

The closest pair of boxers thrown on and the door creaked open, light from the hallway as he disappeared in the direction of the bathroom.

Isak wanted to curl up in a ball on his side, have Even wrapped around him but arguably he really should get cleaned up first so he sighed and laid there with his eyes closed trying not to think about the desperation, look at me until Even came back.

And tonight, thank god, he did.

The moment Isak was wiped down, a pair of sweats pulled up over his ass - because it’s January and you're always slipping out of the covers I can't have you freezing to death - he was rolling over to curl up on his side, exhausted then Even was crawling into bed beside him, pulling the sheets up over them both. Turning and sliding a hand down Isak's bare shoulder, a kiss to the back of his neck.

Isak was already drifting off to sleep but Even was here with him and he was exhausted and they were touching, there was an arm around his waist, heartbeat pounding in the wrist over his abs.

He fell right to sleep. Deep, deep sleep.
It started with the text.

Well actually it started in a church pew, empty but for a book slid over to him by a hand that had already left.

Isak picked up the book; touching the cover for a moment before he flipped open the sermon notes. It didn't say meet me in the bathroom in five. Instead, it read.

Dear Isak.

I'm now sitting at the place where we met each other for the first time and I’m thinking of you. Soon it’ll be 21:21--

The pew dropped out from under his feet as he spun, blue lit crosses and golden candles and he was running, slipping over flat pieces of stained glass, a thousand shades of blue slowly darkening, spilling purple at the corners until they were seeping deep with red--

No no no nonono.

It was cold, it was so fucking cold and he could barely keep his fluttering eyes open long enough to see, everything kept threatening to blink back but he had to run, he had to make it in time--

The churches flashed, lightning behind him and there was the bench, dead wood, dead plants behind. Completely empty.

Except not, completely empty, Isak spun for the doors only they weren’t opening, they weren't opening, spun back around and there propped against the wood the empty, slumped on the ground against the side of the bench where they’d sat, the empty bench and blue hands were red gray green jackets were soaked black and Isak couldn’t breathe definitely couldn't hear the scream over the church choir singing as he fell to his knees.

Fall to your knees--

Folk, fall nu neder, och hälsta glatt din frihet

O helga natt, du frälsning åt oss gav, our salvation you gave, our salvation you gave

You gave and he was holding a cold face between his palms and there was blood on pounding fingertips he was smearing over cold porcelain skin and he couldn't feel anything but the cold, fingers pressing, hands lifting, begging him to come back, this couldn’t happen to them, no, this couldn’t be happening, no, this wasn’t real, this didn’t get to happen to them, Even, Even! I don’t sleep cus sleep is the cousin to death.

I’d forgotten, it’s impossible to lose someone. We’re all alone anyways.

In infinite time.

That time the scream was loud enough, the rip deep enough that he snapped upright, surrounded in dark as he woke, scrambling up, starlight barely filtering in through the windows, hair all over the place and breathing so fast he could feel the mattress shake.

Nightmare nightmare nightmare bedroom nightmare not church bedroom bedroom bedroom nightmare--
The strangled sound woke him first, then the sudden shift in the covers.

Even blinked groggily and reached for Isak’s shoulder on the pillow, where it wasn’t. He lifted his head and saw Isak’s bare back, expanding again and again as he breathed heavy, curled over, head in his hands and Even was suddenly really awake.

He reached out, carefully touching the shaking spine.

The moment his fingertips pressed to skin Isak jumped, Even’s hand retreated like a child’s off a stove then Isak was spinning around and the small amount of light in the room shining on his face reflected off tear tracks.

Even sat up instantly. “Isak.”

It was pure concern, dead shot worry. Isak was still trying to breathe, eyes closed and head down and not looking at him and Even reached over and placed a hand on his knee through the covers.

“What happened? What’s wrong?”

Isak gasped in shakily, parted bow lips wavering to try to respond only the moment he opened his mouth to speak, the sound that came out wasn’t human, wasn’t anything but broken crash of a storm and the crumple came instantly with the rain.

Isak just started crying.

Even’s heart tried to leave his chest, physically seizing so hard he couldn’t breathe but he didn’t need oxygen, nothing mattered but pulling Isak in, gathering close wrapping around the beautiful shaking boy shining cascades down his cheeks.

Another broken sound and Isak clutched his arm fucking tight, curling into his heartbeat desperately. Even cradled the blonde head to his chest, eyes wide as he stared blankly over the top of his head and tried not to drown how deep he was swimming in fucking concern.

“Baby? Talk to me. What happened? Are you okay?”

“Ev-ven,” he gasped, choking on the tears.

Fingers leaving bruises in Even’s bare skin.

“I’m here. I’m here,” he promised.

That started a fresh wave of crying. Running tears of rain to stuttering waterfalls, raw and ragged and open and positively shattered.

Cold and soaking, seeping into his skin through his shirt, cautious hands thrown out the window for begging desperation, fingers curling so hard into his skin it fucking hurt.

What the fuck, what the actual fuck.

He’d never seen Isak break down like this.

Clutching him like the last piece of driftwood on the broken Titanic, ricocheting in the deep of the waves, dam completely destroyed as Isak wept into his chest.
He had no fucking clue what was happening.

No fucking clue what he was supposed to do to fix it.

Even ran a hand through the blonde curls, trying to comfort, down the side of the face that his fingertips had memorized a dozen times over by now.

A sudden shift and Isak grabbed his hand, hard. It was a little startling, then he was pressing a kiss to the inside of his wrist, mouth pressed too long as he kinda sobbed against Even’s heartbeat.

What the fuck was going on.

Even kissed the top of his head and started rocking them, fucking lost as he lifted open his mouth, started singing softly.

Just something quiet and soothing, a lullaby or something his mom used to sing to him, he didn’t really know where it came from, but Isak was crying snotty tears all over his heart and Even had no fucking clue what else he was supposed to do.

Jesus Christ, Isak wouldn't stop fucking shaking.

He was just shaking and shaking and shaking. His shoulders wouldn't stop shaking, face completely hidden as he bawled and shook and shook and shook more pieces.

Skin slipping wet, stiff with salt, Even just swallowed back the teary eyes and kept singing. Soft.

“Sove nå, sove nå, i jesu navn, Jesus bevare barnet…”

Shaking sobs to shuddering hiccuped cries to trembling streaming tears to twitching raindrops to muffled little whimpers heart pounding over his chest.

It took a few more grueling minutes of Even’s entire body hanging by a frayed, soaked thread, but Isak eventually kinda melted against him. Sniffling, quieting down.

His hand was wrapped around Even’s wrist now, squeezing it tightly but Even didn’t mind, keeping the other arm secure around Isak’s shoulders as he rocked and rocked and rocked them.

Even was staring at the orange curtains when Isak lifted his head, sniffling again as he tipped up and Even’s gaze instantly cut down to red-rimmed green.

He looked like hell. Even scooped him closer, lifting the shaky body sideways into his lap, legs over one thigh, spine curved against the other and Isak just curled easily against him, one hand over his heart and his temple on Even’s collarbone.

Chest still trembling with little bursts of shaking, internalized sobs, slower and fewer and further between as Even stroked his curls and sang under his breath, holding on tight.

He had no idea how long it was, how much time passed before Isak was breathing again, eyes closed and ear pressed to Even’s chest, listening to his heartbeat in the steady silence.

“Isak?” Even asked quietly into the dark.

Isak didn’t respond for a little bit. When he finally did, his voice was scratchy and hoarse.

“I had a nightmare. A nightmare where you.” He sucked in a breath and his thumb slid over Even’s wrist.
Even didn’t know if it was subconscious or his answer, but either way, it suddenly hit him.

“Oh, baby,” he broke, no no no no no, he was so fucking sorry.

He bundled Isak into his chest, cradling his head as Isak broke down and cried a little more.

Even squeezed his eyes shut and did fucking everything he could not to cry too. No no no no no no. They rocked for a little bit, until a tear escaped, rolling past his lashes to fall on Isak’s bare shoulder.

Watery green eyes lifted up then, seeing Even’s face and all the heartbreak pasted over his skin.

Isak’s heart broke a little more, he could feel it, see it and Even couldn’t take that, couldn’t take this.

He curled in close, needing the proximity, needing the promise they were both okay, tipping Isak’s precious tear streaked face up to kiss him and Isak clung desperately, both hands lifting to his face like he’d fall apart the moment their mouths faded away.

It was salty and wet and mushed together and terribly broken, both of them stuttering little hurt inhales as their mouths pulled apart.

He still couldn't really breathe, heavy fingers biting into the sides of his neck.

“I’d never leave you like that,” Even swore into the dark, foreheads together and he could feel Isak swallow, could hear the silence filled with the unspoken response in Isak’s mind.

You don’t know that.

Fuck.

“I’m so sorry,” he whispered, choked up and Isak shook his head, moving Even’s with him.

“It’s not your fault.”

“It is,” he said and Isak shook him, once.

“It’s not. It’s not. Don’t say that.”


Isak reached up and kissed him. Desperate touch sliding over his face, through his hair. Raking over his neck, pushing up against his jaw, cupping his cheekbones.

He was the one shaking now, they were both caught in the fucking whirlwind storm but Isak was here and kissing him and Even was here and kissing him and their pounding hearts were speeding so fucking fast but at least they were in sync.

Their mouths eventually slid apart to gasp in oxygen again.

There wasn’t anything left Even knew how to say.

Inhale.

All of that crushing darkness around them.

Exhale.
“Will you hold me,” Isak asked, shaky. Even blinked away another tear as the sorrow stuffed sorry sad smile tipped up at one corner.

“Forever,” he promised, sealing his heart away with the dotted line.

And he kissed Isak, slowly laying him back down as he did.

Wrapped both arms around him, lining their bodies up before their mouths popped free, staring breathlessly into the shiny, red eyes.

It was hovering on both of their tongues and neither of them said it. He leaned down and kissed the tear-stained mouth one more time, pulling the sheets back up with it.

They fell asleep clutching each other tight, legs tangled and Even’s arms around Isak the way he promised.

The way he promised.

There was only one thing he could think about on the slide into the dark.

Isak was here, with him, safe, shivering body pressed against his until the cold disappeared from those bones forever.

What if he hadn’t been here?

It was pure dumb fucking luck he was. It was the first night he’d spent over this week.

What if Isak had that nightmare literally. Any other night? Of their lives?

Woken up alone, crying into the dark, reaching for a distant cold phone, afraid to call--

Even couldn’t actually stomach that thought, so he closed his eyes and didn’t let himself think anymore.

***

Fredag, 08:23
03.02.17

Even was brushing his teeth and Isak was standing beside him in the bathroom mirror thinking about what Eva said. About how he should talk to Even in the morning when things were soft and serene.

Too bad he'd woken up to sheets stiff with salt, Even’s thumbs rubbing over the tear tracks on his cheeks.

Not exactly the time to bring it up.
He spat in the sink and washed his mouth and toothbrush out. He leaned over to put it back in its holder and Even ran an affectionate hand through the waves of unruly blonde on top of his head. Isak shuddered a little at the touch and Even took the toothbrush out of his mouth, water blasting as Isak let his eyes slip closed, rubbing his thumb over the hand tangled in his, fingers skewed and sideways and in the wrong slots and the most right he’d felt in weeks.

Then Even was putting an arm around his waist, leading him out of the bathroom. Noora raised an eyebrow and slid in behind them, door closing.

Even didn't wait further than the hallway before he was tugging Isak close and kissing him on the mouth.

He was fine, really. He was fine.

Fredag, 18:37
03.02.17

Even was in the gym underneath a long bar with weights on the end - bench press maybe? He didn't know what it was called but he knew enough to know how to be safe about it and not bench too much at once. Slow build.

There were earbuds in his ears and the loudest playlist he had blasting, some mindless russ music with a bass that made it really hard to echo Isak’s quiet sobs in his head.

Today got to go on the list of top five most difficult days of his school career.

Sitting there all day in useless classes at stupid desks while somewhere in the building there was a teary-eyed boy who had a nightmare last night his boyfriend tried to kill himself and woke up crying.

Yeah, why wasn’t he paying attention in German again? Jeez.

No. No, he told himself he wasn’t gonna fucking think about it. Isak was going out with the boys tonight, there hadn’t been a single tear on his pretty face as he kissed Even goodbye at the bus stop and told him he could use the night out, he promised not to do anything stupid.

Even had stood on the bus stop watching it disappear on the horizon until it was long past gone, until the next bus had cycled through and the driver was asking him if he was getting on.

No, he wasn’t, and he was in here instead because he was trying to be constructive. Trying not to just sit at home and waste away drawing angstily or something until he drove himself crazy and ended up on Isak’s doorstep when he wasn’t even there.

It wasn’t either of their fault, he got that.

Hell, for all he knew, Isak had had that nightmare half a dozen times before.

Fuck, okay, yeah, actually that did not make him feel any better, time to get off that traintrack before he dropped a giant steel bar with attached weights to his chest and actually crushed a metaphorically broken heart.
Shitty dance music. The bass was probably already loud enough he was gonna be deaf by age thirty but he didn't care, he turned it up a notch louder.


Focus on the strain. The burn. The bead of sweat dripping down the edge of the workout band he had wrapped around his head. His hair was all nasty sweaty now, curling over the top of it but he didn't give a fuck, he wasn't seeing Isak until tomorrow, at the earliest.

And it wasn't like he was gonna fucking know anybody working out in the gym by Nissen at 18:30 on a Friday night--

A towel snapped his thigh and Even lifted his arms backwards, notching the bar back on its hooks, popping out an earbud as he lifted his head to a wolf smile, the pop of chewing gum.

“Christi-boy, hey!” The other earbud tugged out and that smile widened, all glowy from the sweat beading his slicked back hairline too.

“Hey yourself, E.Bech. Since when are you a gym regular?”

“I'm not,” he corrected, sitting up and holding back the groan as he stretched out his shoulders. “Spot me while I go up a level?”

Chris shrugged congenially, wrapping the towel around his shoulders and helping him trade out the weights and get settled back underneath the bar.

Figured, of all people to run into at the gym, literally the only person he actually knew well enough to talk to.

On the bright side, Christoffer Schistad did not make it easy to think distant sad angsty thoughts.

“Fuck that's heavy,” Even groaned, pressing upwards with the two guiding hands as Chris grinned again and popped his gum.

“Ja, it is. What in hell are you training for? You look fine, there's gotta be a reason to try and lift this many kilos.”

Even huffed, letting the bar sink down to his chest. The workout band was doing its job a little too well keeping the sweat out of his eyes, no excuse for tears.

But this many kilos? Well. Pushing the bar back up was considerably harder while he was talking, so he pushed it up and answered the question anyways.

“I've got a boyfriend who's 182cm, weighs 75 kilos,” he huffed at the top, straining as he held it steady, looking up at Chris with a dead serious look on his face. “…and wants me to fuck him against the wall.”

Chris barked into shocked laughter, and it was a good thing Even had this because Chris would've dropped the weight on his chest just now, hand over his chest as he bent backwards, cackling.

“Oh my god, unreal.”

“Very real,” Even replied, grimacing as he lowered the weights back down again. Jesus fuck.

Chris was still laughing as he took the bar again, lifting a bit of the weight off with a shaking head, looking down at Even all incredulous and amused, wolf-smile wide.
“I’ve heard it's better, with guys.” He tapered down, mouth pursing as he tipped his head curiously, gave Even a Look. “You've done both.”

“I have. I'm kinda partial though, sex with Isak is.” Even shook his head once, exhaling dramatically phhew, arms engaging to lift for another rep. “Wow.”

Chris shook his head, chewing over the sex with Isak thing. “I can't even picture it.”

“Good, don't,” Even suggested and Chris laughed again, a real, pretty boy smile sans the shark bite to follow.

“No, I just mean. Isak’s pretty cool, but he's always been that baby-faced kid with the curls, you know? Well, not anymore, the kid grew up fast.”


“He’s chill now, but he was trouble,” Chris tutted, kinda leaning on the bar - great, extra weight, just what he needed - as he slid into storymode. “Split up me and my girlfriend, actually.”

“You too? Jesus. How many couples at Nissen…?”

“Hell if I know.”

Even shook his head, wondering if there'd ever been at least some unrequited truth to Eva and Noora’s suspicious of Chris and Isak having a thing last year.

If there was, and he'd broken Chris and his girl up too?

“He wasn't kidding, when he said he used to be a bitch.”

“Eh.” Chris shrugged. “He mostly just outed the rest of us bitches. It was me who cheated, he just told my girlfriend.”

Even lifted his eyebrows and Chris caught the look, eyes rolling wayyy overdramatically.

“I didn’t even find out it was him until like, three months after. I tried to get back with my ex and she went off on this rant how, no way, not when it wasn't me who confessed, she had to find out from some kid named Isak.

“But like we were all wrapped up in Yakuza shit at the time, so I didn't really give a fuck.”

Even cocked his head, trying to place the name. Oh yeah, wasn't that the other school they'd fought? He inhaled and exhaled huffing into another rep, considering prying about the Yakuza shit but. It was Chris, it wasn't like he was gonna get anything he hadn't from Isak.

So he gave him a judgy look from the bench instead.

“You cheated? Dick.”

“Is it less bad if you end up with the girl after?” Chris cocked an eyebrow and Even licked his lips, popping them back out with a sound.

“I mean. I hope so.”

“Oh?” Chris sounded surprised and Even rolled his eyes at him. Chris laughed, rolling his head. “Draaamaa--”
“It was just a kiss. Or, well, a few. More than a few. But I broke it off with my ex as soon as I got home.”

“Just a kiss for me too, but. I didn’t break it off, so.”

“You better off now though?”

“Oh, hell yeah.”

“So am I.” Even paused a moment, bar hovering near its hooks as he tried to catch his breath and Chris cocked his head side to side, debating it over with one of those wide smiles.

“Yeah, Blondie’s not too bad.”

“Oh, I know. Otherwise I wouldn't be in here working my ass off for his ass.”

It was a good thing Chris had just helped him hook the bar back into its stand because now they were both laughing too hard to stand up straight, let alone lift weights.

But with an arm over his stomach, shoulders shaking he was too busy to think about the shaking shoulders of the boy crying in his arms in the early hours and that's more than all he could ask for.
I miss you

I'm sorry for scaring you

Hey I'm fine. Maybe a lil tipsy but I'm fine

Are you sure?

I feel like that's half your texts now

What is?

Are you sure are you sure yes I'm sure

Okay okay. I'm not trying to be pushy

I know. I know it's just late and I'm exhausted can we talk tomorrow?

Yeah of course. I hope you sleep well. Have a great night.

❤️

❤️

text

Lørdag, 11:42
04.02.17
He wasn't freaking out.

Isak spending time with people who cared about him and didn't stress him the hell out was a good thing right now.

He most definitely wasn't laying in his bed over analyzing every look he'd ever seen Isak give Jonas.
He was fucking *trying* not to anyways.

They were close, they had history, that was fair, Even got that.

They'd never actually been more than best friends, so he had literally no reason to be jealous but here he fucking was, slowly torturing himself as he stared up uselessly at the ceiling.

How much did he not know?

How many conversations was he gonna have where he saw this whole new piece, new side of Isak and if that's how *he* was feeling, how in hell must Isak had felt when he found out Even was sick?

Fuck. This was not a good spiral. Not this spiral.

Okay. So he'd broken up Jonas and Eva. He and Eva were friends, close friends, but he was pretty sure he couldn't remember seeing them talk...ever, before the Christmas party.

And clearly Eva knew, she and Noora had both mentioned something at the cabin.

But Jonas didn't know. And Isak wanted to tell him, against Eva’s advice. So it had to some pretty serious guilt then.

How nasty of a breakup did it have to be? How in hell had he broken them up?

Although if he'd broken up Chris and an ex too, cause Chris cheated and ended up with --

Eva. *Ohhh.*

Oh Eva must've confided in Isak. Oh shit. And he'd used that to…

What a fucking drama queen. Yeah, he got why Isak wasn't too keen on admitting all that to Jonas.

He'd thought it was odd, at first, with Sonja? Isak had only cared that she was out of the picture, he'd never once stopped kissing Even to whisper no, you have a girlfriend, we shouldn't.

Although, in that locker room, he *had* been worried about upsetting...Even, the first time Even broke up with her. Still though, there was no, what, guilt?

Did he just not care? Or shove it some place really deep, that had to be healthy.

Or hell, maybe his parents’ relationship was so fucked he didn't have any of the usual Don't Do This morals.

But. Did that mean Isak would cheat on him?

No, no, he was way overthinking this, he had to Chill the fuck out before he ended up down destructive lane number seven fucking thousand.

Isak said he didn't still have feelings for Jonas.

Even would trust that. He'd chose to trust *him*.

And conveniently, that's exactly when his phone decided to go off.

He nearly hit his head on his ceiling he sat up so fast, catching his hand on the surface just in time. Then he was patting the folds of bedsheets for wherever the fuck his phone went--
There.

It was barely past lunch, he wasn’t expecting Isak to call until at least around dinner.

The vibrations were still going off wildly when he scooped it up, flipping it over to see the screen. Not Isak.

No, actually,

It was Jonas.

Even’s stomach dropped. Again. There was just...dread now, every time Jonas had called him it’d been to ruin Even’s life a little.

First Isak crying over his parents and then that he hadn’t slept all week, both of which were Even's fault and--

Fuck, he had to pick up or it was gonna go to voicemail the way Isak’s call from his dad had. Wouldn’t that be fucking ironic.

He managed to pick it up just in time, lifting the phone to his ear.

“Halla?”

“Hey, it’s Jonas.”

“Hey, uh. Yeah.”

“So...I have a really weird question.”

“Shoot.” Me through the heart, actually, what life-altering knowledge was he gonna drop toda-

“Have you seen my red hat anywhere? Isak wears it all the fucking time and I can’t find it but I need it, I’ve got to prove something to Magnus and I can’t lose this bet.”

Even was already climbing off his ladder, headed straight for the windowsill where Isak’s - Jonas’s, red hat was sitting. Jesus fucking Christ. He was gonna be the first person in history to die of a heart attack over a phone call about a fucking hat.

He kinda glared at the red thing as he flipped it over, checking the inside in case he remembered correctly from the first time Isak had left it at his house, that very first day, so many damn months ago.

“Uh, does it have a tag torn out on the inside?”

“Yes! That’s it. Thank god. Can you bring it to school Monday?”

“Sure. No problem.”

“Thanks, man.”

“Mmhmm.” Even paused, almost considering asking Jonas when they were planning on disbanding, when Isak was finally gonna go home, but. He wasn’t gonna be that boyfriend.

He at least kinda hoped to hear Isak’s laugh in the background or something.
“Kay, I’ll talk to you later, then?”

“Uh, yeah. Yeah.”

“Oh, and if you see Isak, can you tell him to call me? It’s important.”

“Uhm...sure,” Even said slowly, looking at his phone weirdly for a second before he put it back to his ear. He thought Isak was at Jonas’s? What the hell. “Anything I can help with?”

“No, I just got a text from Marianne, and Isak’s not picking up his phone.”

Isak’s not...what?

“Marianne?”

“Yeah. Uh, his-- he’ll know who that is. I’ve gotta go, but thanks Even.”

“Okay. Sure. Uh, hadet.”

“Yeah, hadet, hadet.”

The phone clicked off and Even stared at the screen for a few seconds. What the fuck. Who the fuck was Marianne. Why wasn’t Isak at Jonas’s? Jonas couldn’t get ahold of him? Isak didn’t turn off his phone, like. Ever. For any reason. How many fucking times had they been interrupted in bed by the goddamn groupchat going off?

He didn’t wanna do it, but Jonas sounded...awful about that and Even didn’t know anything that was happening and fuck.

He pulled up Eva’s contact, typing out the question, hey, do you know who Mariann--

Before he cursed out loud and erased every letter.

Cursed a little more and pulled up Isak’s contact instead.

•

Hey, babe. Jonas is trying to get ahold of you, he got a text from someone named Marianne?

•

Even stared at the screen a moment longer, not sure why, it wasn’t like Isak had read receipts turned on.

Then his mom’s voice was cutting through, calling him from the kitchen. Even turned his phone from vibrate to loud and shoved it in his pocket.

That was there was no way he could miss Isak’s call.

It also meant he was on edge literally. All day waiting for it.

His phone chimed once, during dinner, a text message he excused himself to read. It was from Isak.

•

I got ahold of him. Thx ❤

•

Even sent back a red heart and trudged back to the table with a sigh.
A text but not a phone call, and not the time for a phone call, so he’d attempt some kind of conversation for the rest of dinner and maybe attempt playing guitar after it was cleaned up until Isak finally had time to call him.

Lørdag, 21:35
04.02.17

“We’re going out,” Magnus declared from the couch and Jonas lifted his head from the carpet.

“Who’s we.”

“You me and Mahdi.”

“Isak and Even?”

“According to the group chat, no shows. Probably banging each other all night or some shit.”

“Or some shit,” Jonas muttered under his breath, plopping his head back down to the carpet.

If only Marianne knew when she texted Jonas - asking if Isak was alright, he didn’t show up to her birthday - apparently if you wanted to get ahold of Isak nowadays, Jonas wasn’t the one to contact.

How much Marianne knew about Even, he had no idea. Well he certainly wasn’t gonna be the one to tell her.

He hadn’t texted back, what was he supposed to say, oh, it's fine he ducked out early here too?

Left before they even finished cleaning up lunch. Said he had to get homework done or some shit.

More like get Even done.

Was he being petty, probably, but there was a joint in his hand and barely a fraction of his friend group even available, he was allowed to be petty for a moment.

Jonas was upset because he was possessive, he was high enough he could stare up at the ceiling and admit that to himself.

Isak was his, always had been and now he had a boyfriend which meant. Jonas didn't mean the same thing he used to. It wasn’t fair to feel this way, it wasn’t fair to Isak because even if Even wasn't in the picture, Jonas wouldn't be able to fill that capacity, he never had been.

Didn't mean he didn't miss how much they used to mean to each other.

Didn’t mean he didn’t miss his best friend like crazy, sitting right beside him. On the rare occasion he got to sit next to him.

It wasn’t fucking fair, he shouldn’t be jealous of Isak’s boyfriend when he couldn’t even be Isak’s boyfriend, that wasn’t who they were, but he missed his best friend, dammit, and it wasn’t Even’s fault that Isak loved him more but that didn’t mean Jonas didn’t hate all three of them a little for it.
Even for taking Isak, Isak for happily leaving him in the dust, and himself for being so fucking petty and selfish.

But hey, if he got high enough. Maybe it wouldn’t matter anymore.

“Yeah, fuck those two.”

“I think they’ve got that covered,” Mahdi joked and if Jonas could ban them from talking about Isak and Even banging in his house, he fucking would, but here they were.

Instead he sat up, threw the closest soft-ish object at the closest boy and pushed to his feet.

“C’mon, c’mon, let’s go.”

Lørdag, 22:31
04.02.17

Even was low-key dozing definitely not napping just stretched out with his eyes closed on his bed when his phone finally rang.

It took him a half second to wake up, then he was reaching straight out, snagging the little vibrating devil device and answering it without looking.

“Halla?”

“Halla,” Isak greeted over the line and his voice was so close to Even’s ear it sent shivers down his spine that cut in deep with the sinking realization that that precious soft skin was so far away.

It took him a moment to get his shit together, blinking his eyes open in the dark, pounding heart hopefully not loud enough for Isak to hear.

“How are you?”

“I’m good. I went and saw Eva this afternoon.”

“Yeah?” They were communicating without pestering each other to, just offering up a single sentence that answered at least a third of the hellish merry-go-round circle questions he’d been asking himself all afternoon. He went and saw Eva, spent time with a friend who understood some of the shit he was going through right now. With Jonas, anyways.

Doing healthy, good, things for himself and Even had been what, worried he was fucking sneaking around? Jesus fuck, he needed to get himself together.

“Yeah, it was nice.”

He sucked in a breath, mentally kicking himself and really glad that Isak couldn’t see his face right now.

“That’s great. I saw Chris yesterday at the gym.”
“You went to workout without me?”

“Just arms, you didn’t miss much.”

“Oh.” It took a second, silence over the line before it clicked. “Ohhhh.”

No one could ever accuse the kid of not being bright.

“Hm, yeah,” Even laughed a little and he could hear Isak smile on the other end but.

It didn’t last long, and everything fell quiet quick.

They called to talk, for real, and suddenly Even really didn’t wanna be in the dark by himself when they did.

“Can I come over tomorrow,” Even asked, eyes falling shut and he knew he sounded desperate but here he was.

“Ja,” Isak said. “Ja, Even, you can always come over.”

He said it so fucking axiomatically but it wasn’t obvious, it wasn’t something he could take for fucking granted.

There wasn’t a single sure thing in his life and here was Isak, acting like he was one, like Even was being ridiculous for thinking otherwise and the only thing he could do was inhale, unsteady enough Isak had to catch it over the static between them.

Yeah, he caught it alright, if the sound he made was any indication. A disbelieving huff, impatience mixed in with hurt.

*It's not. It's not easy for me to not give a fuck about her, Even.*

That disbelieving, impatient hurt huff.

Probably had the same hurt look on his face too, Even could hear it, in every fucking word

“You're the one who's always trying to leave, remember?”

He’d like to say the bitter on the edges of Isak’s voice wasn’t clawing into his heart, but it was. It was and it was and it was and he could not do this right now.

“Isak, I don't wanna fight. I really don't wanna fight with you.”

“I don't either, but this isn't working. It's causing all this unnecessary space between us and it *sucks.* We’re miscommunicating, and blaming each other for things. It's gotta stop, Even.”

Rational, to the point, but it wasn’t that fucking *simple,* Isak didn’t understand. He didn’t get it.

It’s gotta stop? Really? Was that how he was gonna play this?

“What, are you forcing me to move back in with you?”

“Nei! I wouldn't do that.” The voice over the line sounded offended that he’d suggest as much but Isak was the one over here being confrontational, bite in every word, a touch of incredulous. “But I need you to *talk* to me. For real.”
It echoed and Even had to take the phone away from his ear for a moment, setting it on his chest as he swallowed tight, heart pounding, staring up at the blank ceiling. Fuck. fuck.

He lifted it slow back to his ear, a moment or two of silence between them he could spend years trying to read, there wasn’t any way to know what expression was on those pretty cheekbones now, whether Isak was fuming quietly or exasperated staring up at the ceiling or wandering lost or--

Then his voice came back over the line and Even thought he was prepared but he wasn’t.

Not an ounce of the fight. None of the upset. Nothing but soft, silk around his chest and squeeze.

“Why are you doing this, sweetheart?”

His eyes fell shut of their own accord.

Why was he doing this.

If he opened his mouth he was gonna say something he did not wanna fucking say over the phone. If they were gonna talk about this, real, the way that Isak sounded, Even wasn’t gonna make the confession to these walls in the dark and fall asleep alone after.

“Don't you wanna talk about this in person--”

“If you really want to, but I wanna know what's wrong.” Isak sounded so damn upset and the last time Even had properly held him he’d been a whole different kind of upset, crying in Even’s arms because of him. What was wrong.

All indignant and young and so damn sure with every biting word.

“I wanna know why you're so dead set on this you're letting it...hurt us both.”

The knife slid in between ribs.

“I'm not trying to--” Even started tearily and that’s as far as he got before he was gasping shaky, giving everything away and Even was not a crier but his emotions were all over the fucking place right now, he didn’t--

“No, no. I know you're not, baby. Even, hey, listen to me. Fuck. Fuck, I'm not trying to upset you. I'm sorry. I know you're not. And we can figure this out, okay? It's us.” Isak’s voice tipped all sincere and sorry and Even forced himself to breathe.

He was fine. They were fine, they could figure this out. He had to get the fuck out of his head, Jesus, he was gonna eat himself alive.

“So how about you come over tomorrow morning after you get a good night’s sleep and we’ll talk and hold each other, okay?”

Even didn't sniffle, he wasn’t crying dammit, he just thumbed the edge of his lashes and let himself sound stuffed up.

“Yeah, okay.”

“And we’ll get this all figured out and there won't be anything to worry about.”

“Mmkay.”
“Okay.” The phone line fell into quiet silence again and Even tugged the hood up on his hoodie, pulling it over the top of his head and letting it close out his peripherals like sideblinders.

When the quiet words came back over the phone, they were as sure as Isak had been that day in December, I can’t stand you lying here all sad. I’m not sad.

“I’m not mad at you, Even.”

“I’m not mad at you either,” he whispered back. Reverberated awe.

“I just really really miss you.”

“I miss you too.”

“Tomorrow, okay?”

“Mnhm.”

“Okay.” Isak sounded considerably more okay than the last time he said that and Even drew in a breath, steady this time. Fuck. They were gonna talk tomorrow and everything was gonna be okay. “...I hope you have a good night.”

“Yeah,” he exhaled. “You too. You'll call me, if you need anything, ja?”

“Ja, I will. Promise.” He sounded sincere enough Even believed him. He didn't have anything else to do. “Sweet dreams of me, yeah?”

“Always,” Even confessed and Isak laughed lightly on the other end of the line, twinkling like the stars. Even closed his eyes and soaked in it as long as he could.

Not long enough.

“Okay. I'm gonna go to sleep now, but I'll see you in just a few hours. Try and get some rest, baby.”

Baby.

“I will.”

“Love you,” Isak whispered over the phone and Even’s breath caught in his throat, the edge of tears, a drop of water. Breaking the surface too soon, the boy who couldn’t hold his breath underwater.

His heart was pounding as he whispered it back.

“Love you too.”

And by god, did he.

Chapter End Notes

wow!

You guys are troopers. I'm here with apologies for the nightmare but listen I had a nightmare like that and I was in Pain I had to make you guys in pain too :(
If you haven't seen s1 and therefore don't know about The Skatepark go watch s1 it's like one of the coolest locations in this whole show.

Someone talk to me about the parallels of them both saying Love you over the phone before they say I Love You irl amiright amiright

Other than that, come yell at me friends. I love the discourse we have in comments, you guys fuel me. xx
Isak was sitting on the couch, hands in his lap, staring dejectedly into space. Waiting.

He couldn’t remember the last time he’d just sat somewhere and thought for a bit. It was always headphones in, or phone out, or something. But today he just sat, waiting, kinda thinking, mostly just quiet.

There was a knock on the door.

It took a second to recognize, then Isak was lifting his head, looking for the door. Pushing off the couch and walking right to it, turning the handle and opening it wide.

Even.

“Hi,” he offered and the corner of Isak’s mouth tipped up in a smile.

“Hi.”

He stepped to the side, waving Even inside. A quick glance down the hallway and Even followed him in, kicking off his shoes while Isak closed and locked the door behind them.

The first time Even had shown up to talk, they hadn’t said a word past hello before they were kissing, all the way to Isak’s room and up against the wall, then went their clothes, and Even’s mouth down his body and he'd looked up from his knees and breathed Can I? and Isak had a hand in his
hand and gasped *you can* back and yeah, well.

They hadn’t actually ended up talking.

Today though, they were going to.

“Do you want tea or anything?”

“Um. I’m good, thanks. Have you eaten lunch yet?”

“Nei.”

“I can make lunch in a little while, if you want.”

“That sounds great,” Isak offered and Even gave him a tight smile, hands in his pockets as he looked down at his socks.

Oh. Wait.

Hold on.

How was it that Even was as nervous now as he’d been that first time waiting in Isak’s doorway? They were so far past that, weren’t they? This couldn’t possibly be...that bad, could it?

Isak opened his mouth, a couple different words hovering over his tongue, most of them starting with hva faen, but he settled on something a little less dramatic.

“Bedroom?”

Even glanced up, catching the tilt of Isak’s head and unfreezing.

“Uh, yeah.” The smile was a little less tight as he took a step, waiting for Isak to lead the way. Like he didn’t fucking know where Isak’s bedroom was.

Used to call it *their* bedroom in his head.

It was quiet down the hallway, Even following silently behind him like a funeral death march or kids on their way back to class or strangers, how many times had they laughed down this hallway and Isak was suddenly really aware of the fact that they hadn’t kissed yet.

He paused at the door, hand on the knob before he let go, turning around to face Even instead, mouth open. Blonde hair in dramatic parted swoops over his forehead, feeling strangely disconnected from time. This could be today last week last month the first time Even called him into the locker room to kiss him, make him inhale shakily, foreheads pressed together.

Even stood there, eyebrows up, silent and waiting.

“I love you,” Isak told him.

Even blinked.

“I do,” Isak repeated, confirmed, dipping his head, one eyebrow cocked up with how serious he was being. Even rolled his lips in, tongue darting before pink popped back out with a little sound.

Looking at Isak like he was trying to figure something out. Isak dipped his head a little more, eyebrow arching a little higher. What.
“I love you too.” Even said it like Isak already knew it, like this was the six hundredth time they’d had this conversation, it wasn’t, it was the first, but Isak was completely fine with hearing it the next six hundred times just like that.

“Then kiss me.”

Even’s eyebrows went up, a tiny hint of a smile on his face.

Okay, that was enough of that.

Isak rolled his eyes and stepped across the foot between them, wrapping an arm around Even’s waist and pulling him in, pressing up to kiss that nervous, beautiful mouth.

Even kissed him back, fuck did he kiss him back, all urgency and sweet mixed up in the passion as he tilted his head, knocking their noses and slotting their mouths back together, backing Isak into his bedroom door.

There we go, that was the boy he knew.

Isak fumbled with the doorknob, stumbling them both inside. Even kicked the door back shut automatically, one hand coming up to cup Isak’s jaw as they barraged heatedly into his room.

Thank god he’d cleaned up this morning, so there were no clothes to trip over when Even backed him all the way to the edge of his mattress, pushing him down to bounce on the fall and crawling up over him to kiss him right into the sheets, making Isak’s heart soar in his chest.

“Mmm,” he managed to protest vaguely, although he didn’t wanna protest at all, he wanted to keep kissing Even until tomorrow came, but they did have things to discuss and they were going to discuss, dammit.

Their lips drew apart over a wet sound and Even lifted up, lips still parted as he looked down at Isak.

“We do still have to talk, though.”

“Ja. Ja, I know,” Even breathed, rolling off of him, landing on his back with a huff. Isak rolled too, landing on his stomach with an arm wrapped around Even’s ribs and a kiss pressed to his shoulder.

“Why did you move out?”

“Jeez, right to it--”

“I’m not kidding. This is important, and we’re talking about it, so.”

“I know, I know,” Even trailed, sticking his tongue in his cheek.

Isak leaned up and pressed a kiss to his cheek, over the protruding soft skin, making Even give him a funny little amused look. Then he was pushing his lips up against Even’s and they were kissing for real again. Fingers tightening in his curls, his fingers curling tighter in Even’s hoodie. The best kind of toe curling real.

This, this was good. This was so good, why couldn’t it just. Always be this, the two of them on his bed, making out soft until they both were smiling softer, his curls flopping sideways as he fell back to the arm he was resting his head on.

“You’re so beautiful,” Even whispered, reverent and Isak cocked his head, eyebrows shooting up in a touch of surprise.
“Takk.”

“Mhm.”

They lay there quiet for another moment, heartbeats settling back down. God, this was exactly his favorite place to be. Tangled up and warm, laying here with Even and nothing else in the whole goddamn world.

This was worth fighting for. Dammit, this was something he wanted. He hadn’t let himself want for way too long but this, this he wanted.

They were worth fighting for.

He wasn’t gonna wait, be patient, keep quiet, hold on any longer. Not when it was this at stake.

“Why did you move out?” Isak asked again, significantly more serene this time. Absolutely no less serious.

Even was quiet.

“You told me it was so I could get more sleep. Clearly, that wasn't true, I spent a week getting no sleep and you didn't move back in when you found that out.”

Still quiet. Isak rubbed the thumb over his ribs, a little reminder to the light blue gazing off over the top of his head.

“Even. Conversations are two-way.”

“I know. I just.” Even sucked in a breath, eyes fluttering closed for a moment. Head rolling on the mattress to look up at the ceiling instead of him. “I really was trying to be responsible.”

“I get that. But if that was the only reason why, when it didn’t work, you would’ve moved back in.” Isak studies him a moment, watching the slopes and stories in his profile. “You didn’t.”

Even sighed. Long fingers pushing through the waves of blonde on top of his head. Not exactly giving him much to work with here.

“So it’s about more than that. Not sleep, not being responsible.” Isak wet his lips, biting back the edge of nervousness as he lifted his expression up at that pretty face and asked. “There was nothing wrong when we lived together, was there?”

“No.” A shake of his head, still up at the ceiling. “No, just that we did.”

What the...fuck.

Isak furrowed his eyebrows, adjusting his weight on Even’s side to see his face clearer.

“What’s wrong with that?”

Even caught the touch of sharp in the question, gaze flicking his way. Caught the look on Isak’s face too, rolling head and shifting shoulders to look him straight in the eye.

“It was every night, Isak. Every night together, that can't possibly be healthy.”

Isak furrowed a little deeper. “Said who.”
“Common sense! You're seventeen.”

“So?”

“So you need independence, and to not live with your boyfriend.”

“Why?”

“Isak, c’mon. Every night?”

“Lots of couples do it,” he argued.

“Married couples do it,” Even corrected. “They’re older than us.”

“Not all of them,” Isak whispered.

Even looked away, transparent blue falling shut.

Why in hell did he look pained. What the fuck was so wrong with the idea of them being together?

Maybe not married, yeah, but the fact that Even thought they couldn’t sleep in the same room every night and not still be happy healthy functional members of society and have a wonderful relationship to boot, he just.

Isak sucked in a breath, looking down at the rise and fall of Even’s chest, playing with one of the strings of his hoodie, smudging the knot back and forth between his fingertips.

“I just don’t get it.”

“Isak, we’re young enough that we think we know the answers, and if we spend every day every night, in and out with each other, if we’re that dependent on someone else this young, when in hell are you supposed to learn how to be okay on your own?”

All of the we’s until the last sentence, then it was you, your own, when in hell are you supposed to learn, and that was red bell number one.

“I don’t need to be--”

“Yes. You do. You need to be okay on your own.”

It was stern and serious and Isak’s bottom lip was trembling a little. He wanted to say but why, I’ll always have you, but if Even was that adamant on Isak being okay on his own, that meant.

He wasn’t sure Isak would always have him.

Way to fucking break his heart. He just wished--

Fuck. He could tell Even he didn’t need time to be on his own, that they could be together forever, but Even didn’t believe that. Even still didn’t believe that and.

Red bells, you need to be okay without me.

And that’s what this was about. The only reason Isak would need to learn how to be okay on his own was if he didn’t have Even anymore. Which was how Even was talking. Because that’s how he was thinking.
This still wasn’t about Isak, not really, there was still that underlying reason. Why Even thought he needed to know how to be okay on his own.

This was about Even being bipolar.

Isak licked his lips, debating a moment. How in hell he was supposed to approach this.

Carefully, was the answer. If he started throwing accusations, Even wasn’t gonna take that well. Or, well. Actually, he didn’t know. Like, he had no idea.

So. He was just gonna...go for it.

“Okay. Okay, so maybe it was a little much. Maybe…every night isn’t what we need.” Isak’s voice was quiet, but honest, and Even’s eyebrows shot up.

What we need, Isak had said. A team.

But more importantly, maybe it was a little much. Maybe not every night.

Was that something rational, out of Isak’s mouth just now? Remarkable.

Truly, he had no idea what parallel universe he’d just landed in.

Even almost opened his mouth to say so and that’s when Isak turned it right around, lifting his head up and pinning him with an accusing look, one hand waving up in the air as blonde curls bounced over his forehead.

“But that didn't mean you had to go three sixty in the other direction and just drop off the face of the planet, either.”

“I didn't drop off the face of the planet!”

“You did. Drop of a hat.” The hand was still waving around, giant gestures spanning across both their shoulders. “Went from all, to nothing. One end of the spectrum to the other.”

Even was in the middle of opening his mouth to call Isak a drama queen when the very poignant word choice hit and his mouth snapped back shut.

That couldn’t’ve been intentional--

Isak’s eyes were locked on his and Even just looked at him a moment.

Isak knew exactly what he just said.

Now Even couldn’t look away and Isak’s head cocked, peering green sinking into him more and more deeply.

Fucking hell.

“Is that why you're doing this?” Isak asked him quietly. Even searched back and forth between the serious, shining gaze. He couldn’t possible be talking about--

“...’cause you don't think I can handle it when you have another episode?”

Okay, fuck, or he could be.
Even closed his eyes, lashes fluttering. Jesus fuck.

Didn’t matter how fast he ran from this one, Isak had just said that and now they were gonna Talk About It. And yeah, okay, they hadn’t actually had any kind of conversation really about that which clearly wasn’t a good idea because Isak already thought Even was blaming him, that he couldn’t handle it when that wasn’t it at all.

“It's not about you,” Even started, and the high-pitched huff that interrupted sounded so fucking offended his eyes flicked right back open to indignant green.

“Bullshit it's not about me. I'm the other half of this relationship Even, this is about me too.”

Pure incredulous and Even sucked in a breath, pushing off the mattress to prop up on his side, consequently dumping Isak onto the mattress to scramble up on his side too.

“Look that's not what I--”

“Ja, that is what you meant.” It bit, the escalation, the shaking head, curls tumbling as Isak looked at him like he could see through every ounce of cellophane. “You don't trust me with this. With you.”

“That's not true, and that's not why.”

“Then what is??” Dropped open shock and hurt you don’t trust me with you and the axial tilt of the world was all wrong but Even’s mouth was spewing without his permission and he didn't get the chance to stop himself in time before it all just rushed out, broken dam to waterfall.

“Cause maybe we got so comfortable I got scared, okay? Maybe everything was so great I forgot there was a world outside our room, a reality where I don't get to have that, not really, and I could only see the damn expiration date stamped to the next time I run naked into the street and shatter that beautiful little bubble we were living in that couldn't be real. It's never gonna be like that with me Isak, it's never gonna be easy--”


Even was already shaking his head, pushing to sit up all the way, away. “You don't know, you haven't seen it, not really, not how--”

“I don't care.” Isak followed right after, knees bumping as he propped next to him, hand sliding around his thigh to grip tight. “I don't care how bad it gets. Even, I love you. Get it through your pretty head, cause I mean it, and I'm not giving up.”

The whole world kinda stopped turning for a few seconds, Even’s heart skipped at least three beats and he was pretty sure only half of his inhale actually made it into his lungs.

He closed his eyes, one sense cut as the rest of them kicked up, the universe revolving around the hand sliding up his chest, the spread fingers pausing over his heart. A single finger lifting to tap once, twice.

“I mean it.”

Even, I love you.

Palm over the pounding in his chest, moving with every sharp inhale, exhale as he tried and tried to calm himself down but Isak was holding a hand over his heart and telling him he loved him, wasn’t
exactly the easiest situation to just keep his chill.

“I mean it.”

Isak was being fucking adamant. Even didn’t have walls high enough for this.

The hand on his chest caught him as he crumbled.

“I love you too,” he whispered, deflating, one hand catching steady over his heart.

He didn't get to have this, but it was so easy to forget that when the hovering clouds were so far off, when Isak shined so bright it made it hard to see the darkness in the sky.

It was on the edge of pained, that whisper between them. I love you too.

“Then come over here and kiss me,” Isak whispered back.

Even fluttered his lashes open, lifted his head long enough for the moment it took to search that beautiful face. Isak meant it and he didn't know he didn't get it but he wanted this he wanted to try and Even could do that, he could let them try.

He looked at that precious, sincere boy with the angel curls and the prettiest pout in the whole wide world then he was leaning forward, pressing their mouths together and maybe, everything might somehow turn out okay.

~*~*~

Mandag, 08:44
06.02.17

There were certain axiomatic rules in life that you just...followed. Regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, star sign, all of it, you just. Followed.

The primary of those rules was that you knocked on closed doors before you opened them.

Apparently karma still wasn’t over the time when Isak used to not follow said rule, because come Monday morning, guess who was barging into his room knocking the door down without so much as a polite hello first.

“Queen Isabelle!!” Eskild called loudly and Isak lifted his head, blinking groggily.

“What.”

Then Even chose that moment to roll over and lift his head out of the covers too.

“What’s happening?” Bleary and precious, rubbing a hand over his eyes as they both squinted at the intruder in the doorway who had a dramatic hand over his chest and was fucking lucky the bedsheets hadn’t been kicked off in the night.

“Even!! I didn’t know you were here!!”
“If you knocked, maybe,” Even suggested and Isak did not have the temperament to be that nice in the mornings, sorry.

“We’re both here, what do you want.”

Eskild made a sassy little face at him before turning to Even, softening right back all sweet with a touch of sorry thrown in.

“School starts in fifteen minutes.”

“Fuck,” Isak said.

“Fuck,” Even followed, slightly less dead and a little more passionate.

Eskild tutted from the doorway, waving a hand at them.

“What would you loverbirds do without me--”

“Eskild,” Even interrupted, one hand on the bedsheets as he looked up at the doorway.

“Yes?” Eskild gave him the brightest happiest I love you the mostest smile he had and Isak put his face in the pillow.

“If you wouldn't mind leaving, neither of these birds are wearing clothes under these sheets and we've gotta get to school, so.”

“Oh! Oh my. Ja, yeah. I'll just. Be going. Good to see you though Even! I hope you stick around!”

He gave one more little wave then the door clicked closed and Isak lept out of bed so fast the mattress nearly catapulted Even off too.

Then they were both cursing a lot and scrambling for clothes, attempting to not trip over each other as they reached for the same pair of boxers, same tshirt,

“Get your fucking own, Jesus, it’s my clothes. I get first dibs.”

“I’m your guest, I get first dibs!”

“You’re not a fucking guest you hoe-- no, I’m wearing that button-up, don’t you dare.”

“Did you just call me a hoe?”

“Sorry, it’s what Eva and I call each other, she’s the one I bitch at the most, so.”

“What the hell happened to your morning alarm?”

“I haven't used a morning alarm in a week and a half,” Isak scoffed, finally wrestling in the button on his jeans and reaching over to tug the hem of Even’s shirt straight. “Sometimes cause I’m already up anyways, but mostly I wake up enough times in the night I don’t need it.”

“Fuck.”

“Ja. Speaking of which. Are you sticking around?” Isak looked up, unrolling a pair of socks as blonde curls floofed into his face. Great.

Even paused in shouldering into one of Isak’s plaid shirts, looking at him for a moment before
reaching around him to grab a pair of socks too.

“How about we don't play by extremes, yeah? I won't be gone all the time, but I won't be here all the time either.”

“Okay. That's fair.”

“And we’ll just play it by ear. Unless you wanted to make a schedule or something.”

Isak snorted, dropping to a crouch to shove his laptop into his backpack, checking to make sure his binders were still in there.

“So what, you spend more than three nights either place I come hunt you down and kick your ass?”

“As hot as you are when you wrestle, I prefer it when you kiss my ass.”

Isak rolled his eyes at the suggestive quirking eyebrows. “You done getting dressed yet? Your hair looks ridiculous.”

“Yours is worse,” Even told him, grabbing his backpack and throwing it over his shoulder. Thank fuck they'd picked it up when they went out to lunch yesterday.

“No fucking way.”

“Yes fucking way.”

Isak tugged his backpack on too, reaching for the closest snapback on his shelf.

“Not fair,” Even accused, already opening up the bedroom door again. “And sure, three nights is fine with me.”

They finally caught up at the threshold and Isak reached up on his tiptoes to plant a solid kiss on Even’s mouth.

It was probably a little too long and little too deep for what the time constraints allowed, but, well.

“We were already late, so.

“Why didn't we do this in the first place,” Isak murmured, falling back flat footed with a thumb stroking fond over Even’s jaw.

“Because I'm insecure sometimes and don't know how to bring up shit like this with you?”

Isak rolled his lips in and popped them back out, looking up at that beautiful boy.

“Yeah, we need to work on that.”

“We will,” Even promised, then he was pushing Isak out the door.

Isak span around in the hallway and reached up to tug his snapback backwards over the disarray of Even’s pretty swoops before snagging a folded up beanie from the side pocket of his backpack, shaking it out and tugging it over his wild curls.

Eskild handed them both a bag with a sandwich in it as they slid through the kitchen and Even kissed Eskild’s cheek while Isak protested a loud hey from the door, hopping into a boot then Even skid over on his socks to press a warm kiss to Isak’s mouth before he was hopping into boots too and well.
They were both late to class.

He wasn't sure what Isak got from all the friends he had in first hour, but Chris gave him a raised eyebrow at the snapback, which okay, was maybe a little obvious.

“Sleep in late with the boyfriend?”

“Yeah, actually,” he breathed, sliding into his seat and unzipping his backpack. “How was growing pea plants with yours?”

“You know, not as fun as it sounds, but they're naming an element on the periodic table after me now, so.”

“Really?” Even glanced over and shot his eyebrows up, folder tossed down on the desk.

“Mnhm.” Chris gave him a knowing look, pen twirling dramatically between quick fingers. “It's called Coolerthanyouium.”

“You're the worst ever,” Even told him and Chris laughed brightly, passing him a sheet of paper that had the first ten minutes of class jotted down secretary style.

“That's me. Gym after school?”

Even picked up the sheet, scanning over it and smiling to himself.

“You bet.”

---

Mandag, 12:12
06.02.17

“What in hell do I get Even for his birthday?”

Jonas reached down to close a zipper on his backpack and Isak reached over for Jonas’s Fanta.

The smack of his hand was loud enough to reverberate in the lunchroom and Jonas hadn’t even looked up, wrestling his zipper one handed as he scooted his Fanta out of the reach with the other.

Isak’s face was all twisted up, silently cursing, mouth dramatically sounding out the words at the rest of the boys as he shook out his hand. Mahdi snorted at him and Magnus raised his eyebrows, leaning across the table too.

“Don’t,” Jonas said before he was halfway across the table. Magnus fell back down in his seat and Jonas finally looked up, backpack zipper and friends tamed. “Now what were you saying, Isak?”

“Birthday, no idea what to get.”

“When is it?” Mahdi asked, chewing congenially and yeah, at least his hand wasn’t smarting.
“Sunday.”

“Wrap yourself naked in a giant red bow,” Magnus suggested around his sandwich.

Isak turned to him with the widest, wildest eyes he had.

“Nei ???”

“Why not?”

“Because that's…weird?”

“Oh and being bruised 24/7 isn't?” Mahdi pointed out. Isak rolled his eyes, unscrewing the cap on his waterbottle.

“That's different. They're almost always hickies.”

“It's the almost part that's kinky,” Jonas pointed out, snapping the cap off his Fanta and smiling at Isak as he lifted it to his mouth. Fucker.

“Hmm. True. There was this one weekend my jaw was mottled purple—”

Jonas choked a little.

“Okay yeah yep—” Mahdi held up a hand and Isak snickered to himself, shooting Jonas a triumphant look.

Jonas flicked him off and lifted the orange drink again.

“But seriously. What am I supposed to get him?”

“What does he like?” Magnus asked, like it was that fucking easy. Isak threw up a hand.

“Me. And film stuff. And art and music.”

“That sounds like a lot of things to chose from.”

“I guess, but also. No.”

“Just get him...I dunno, pencils or some shit.”

“You guys are so fucking helpful,” Isak told them and that time he got three middle fingers in return. Oh to have great friends.

Tirsdag, 11:45
07.02.17

Isak was bored in class, so naturally, he was thumbing through Snapchat. None of the world stories looked interesting and Cosmo didn’t have anything on star signs today so honestly, what was the point, only thing he had left to scroll through was the stories of actual people.
He had way too many friends on here and 98% of them posted fucking longass stories he didn’t care about, so he scrolled down checking for the only four names that actually mattered--

Oh, there was Vilde, he supposed he could see what she was up to.

A hella cute photo of Eva and Sana with a billion stickers around it, and one of Chris and Noora with flower crowns. Hooray.

Scroll scroll scroll and--

Even? Since when the fuck did Even post anything on his Snapchat story?

It was rare enough that Isak put an earphone in to watch it properly, with sound.

The camera was shaky for a second, a wall or something, then it panned over to the kitchen.

It was fucking *him*. This morning, in sweats and a tshirt, pouring two bowls of cereal. Filmed from around the corner, because he clearly wasn’t paying attention or looking at the camera, and fuck, fuck no.

He’d thought Even was still showering. No no no no. This couldn’t be--

And there it was in the background, 5 Fine Frokner playing quietly on the radio and he was. Dancing, actually, singing to himself as he bobbed his head and this was on Even’s Snapchat story, Isak was gonna kill him.

He was gonna go find him and kick his fucking ass what the fUCK.

Except they were in school and he couldn’t realistically do that, however he could realistically cancel the fuck out of snapchat and pull open his messages app to type a very heartfelt text message to his lovely boyfriend.

•
HVA FAEN
•
*You were cute!*
•
How many friends do you have on snapchat ??????????? dDELETE IT
•

Well. his question was answered a few moments later when the group chat lit up.

Fuck his friends.
Magnus

Aw, Isak, I didn’t know you could dance

Jonas

Did you see the video? He can’t

I’m gonna murder him who’s helping me bury the body

Mahdi

You could ask Gabrielle to help

Listen He Danced To It
First this is not my fault

Magnus

He's elated

Even

❤️
There was a string on Even’s hoodie, he kept brushing it with his hand every time he reached around
Even’s waist and it was annoying the fuck out of him.

Enough that he broke off mid kiss after brushing it for the nine thousandth time and lifted his head,
wrapping a finger around it to tug hard.

It snapped and he breathed out a sigh of relief, lifting the black string up in the air and glaring at it.

“Hey, you’re supposed to tie them off and cut them, now it’s less secure,” Even protested, plucking it
out of Isak’s hands.

“Whoops.”

He snagged it back, taking Even’s hand too, propping up on an elbow and quickly glancing upwards
to make sure he had enough clearance without hitting the ceiling, Even’s fucking bunk bed.

They were supposed to be on the floor practicing guitar but alas, Isak had stolen Even’s sketchpad
and ran screaming around his house while Even chased him, then somehow got just enough of a
head start to haul ass up his ladder then when Even followed him up here Isak had tossed the
sketchpad off the side of the bed and pulled his boyfriend down onto the sheets.

They’d made out for a little while, the nice sweet domestic kind, legs tangled together and Even’s
hand on his neck, thumb rubbing into his skin.

It was the same thumb Isak was holding now, propped up on his elbow as he tied the torn hoodie
string in a careful knot around Even’s finger, finishing it off with a little bow.

Then he was plopping back down to the bedspread, tilting his head up and waiting for a kiss. Even
smiled, shaking his head fondly, and kissed him.

Not for long though, cause Isak suddenly remembered something, planting a hand on Even’s chest
and lifting him bodily upwards, already rambling before their mouths were all the way apart.

“Oooo, did I tell you what the boys suggested for birthday gifts?”

“Hm? Wait, who told you about my birthday?”

“Your mom.”

“Ughhh.” Even dipped his head, eyes falling shut dramatically and Isak tipped his chin up, pressing a
kiss to the end of his nose. The smile that followed crinkled up his whole beautiful face sparkling
shiny starry eyes and Isak was so full of warmth he could burst.

“Aquarius. I should’ve known, you’re super hard to pin down.”

“Hey,” Even protested and Isak smiled cutely, tipping his head to the side.

Expressive eyebrows lifted, that cocky oh really face as Even smiled and leaned in slow, tilting his
head, hovering centimeters from Isak’s mouth.
“Speaking of pinning down…”

Then he was kissing Isak into his pillow and Isak was shoving a hand up through his hair, other arm wrapping tight around Even’s shoulders, pulling him closer and making a lot of happy little *mmm* sounds into his mouth.

All that wonderful, safe pressure, Even kissing him so damn earnestly like this was the first day he got the chance to and Isak could barely kiss him back he was smiling so damn much. Two hands pressing his chest into the bed, thumbs rubbing over his ribs, just close enough to his sides to be kinda ticklish and Isak giggled into Even’s mouth, the kiss breaking into happy smiling little pecks.

Then Even was pressing their foreheads together and Isak’s bottom lip caught between his teeth, biting down as he looked up at the crinkling fond, the happy smiling shiny way Even was looking at him.

“You’re easy to pin down,” Even whispered, a little laugh on his pretty mouth as Isak’s cheeks heated up pink.

“Only cause it’s you.” He was blushing too much to say anything but the truth and Even laughed again, lifting up with it, head turning away and back to him crinkled more. Blues flicking down to watch Isak’s mouth, thumb pressing against his bottom lip, popping it back out. Pressing a little harder.

“Mhmm. I’m sure it is.”

“Really!” He took Even’s hand off his lips, weaving their fingers together instead so he could talk without the urge to suck Even’s thumb into his mouth. “I’m a fucking mess around you. You should’ve seen me before. I was super smooth.”

“Oh I’m sure you were,” Even told him very seriously and Isak scoffed, waving his head on the pillow and rolling his eyes a little.

“Shut up. Anyways. Birthday gifts.”

“Dammit.” A cute little shake of his head and Even’s gaze was on his mouth again, words going kinda soft. “All that kissing and you still didn’t forget.”

“You could kiss me some more and see,” Isak whispered, tipping up his chin, mouth closed as he waited, looking at Even from under his lashes.

That time they kissed until they were breathless, until Isak was all wrapped up in Even’s arms and legs, both of them tangled sideways on the bed with pillows strewed and sheets tangled and blankets kicked off, his heart pounding so hard in his chest he could barely remember how his lungs were supposed to work.

It was Even who was finally the responsible one, pulling back enough to let Isak pant against the skin of his cheek, eyes closed, mouth open, fingers curling in Even’s shoulders.

“You alright there?”

“Most alright I’ve ever been,” Isak managed and Even laughed, tucking his nose down in the crook of Isak’s neck and squeezing him tight.

“I’m seriously gonna forget what I was gonna say about birthday gifts though,” he mumbled into Even’s ear, following it up with a little kiss to his skin.
“Good. I don’t want anything.”

“It wasn’t even about that! I wanted to tell you what the boys said to get you.”

“Oh?” Even was pressing warm little kisses up his neck and Isak let his head fall to the bed, neck stretched out and lashes fluttering as Even sprinkled affection all over his skin.

“Mmhm. It was Magnus, actually. Ah-- unsurprisingly. I was whining about how I didn’t know what to get you and. Mmm. And he was like...you should just strip down entirely naked and wear a big red bow.”

Even burst into a bright laugh and Isak giggled, rolling up to watch. Nose squinching up, gaze unable to tear away from that beautiful crinkling face. Why was Even so fucking cute god fucking dammit.

“What did you say?”

“I told them no! I don’t think that’s our kind of kinky.”

“Mmm.” Even rolled his lips in over his tongue, popping them back out as he thought it over. Isak’s eyebrow lifted slowly, higher and higher until Even glanced down and caught the look on his face, smiling all pretty before he offered an explanation.

“I think if I wanted you to dress up for me, it wouldn’t be in that.”

“Ooyyy,” Isak sounded and Even laughed brightly, head cocking with it, thumb rubbing back and forth over Isak’s cheek. Isak was still making surprised noises up at him.

“Oi-oi-oi. What would it be?”

“I don’t know. Let me think on that one.”

“Mmm. Mkay. Well. Then it looks like I do still have to find a legit birthday gift.”

“You don’t have to get me anything,” Even insisted and Isak shoved his chest a little.

“You’re turning 20, I have to get you something.”

“You really don’t. You’re enough.”

“Oh shh,” Isak hushed him and Even dipped back in, rubbing their noses together, up and down and Isak was smiling so much he was gonna actually burst in half, he could feel it all the way down in his toes, stuffed bubbling full with sunshine in the shape and color of light blue crystal eyes and that beautiful bright bright smile.

His grip tightened on Even’s bicep, waist, all that happiness making him too warm all over to not to and Even just smiled at him, tipping to the side to press a sweet little kiss to his cheek.

“Speaking of gifts though, are we doing anything for Valentine’s Day?”

“Oh fuck, yeah I forgot that’s like. Right by your birthday.”

“Mnhm. I’ve done like...joint gifts between Valentine’s and my birthday like. A lot of times.”

“Did you wanna do that?”
“Nei. I don’t really like Valentine’s Day, honestly, St. Valentine is creepy as fuck and it’s just. Too close to my day, y’know?”

“Mmhm. That makes sense. Although like. Snowdrops are cute.”

“We’re not in Denmark. And aren’t they a little middle-school-y?”

“Mm I suppose.”

“So no gifts for Valentine’s then?” Even confirmed hopefully, fingers sliding into Isak’s hair. Isak wet his lips, tipping his head to the side again as he squinched up his nose and pretended to think it over.

“I was hoping for some really romantic sex.”

“I can definitely do that.”

A soft kiss landed on his mouth and Isak pulled back, hand on the back of Even’s neck as he looked at him very seriously and reiterated.

“...with candles.” Another kiss. “--and rose petals.” Kiss. “Live music.”

The next kiss morphed into a laugh against his lips and Isak leaned back, dipping his head, mouth open, eyebrows up.

“What? Do you think I’m kidding?”

“I think the live music gave you away,” Even teased. “You don’t really strike me as the exhibitionist type, even if it’s just a violinist.”

“Nei nei, the live music is coming from you,” Isak insisted.

“Oh?”

“Absolutely. I will be serenaded on Valentine’s day, thank you.” He pinned his boyfriend with a terribly serious look and Even was all bright and lit up, lips pursing together tight to keep the laugh inside. Isak’s mouth popped open a little further. “You really think I’m kidding?”

“I can’t tell!” Even was all happy and smiling which made it really hard to keep up the axiomatic faux serious looks. “Either you’re kidding or you’re actually that much of a princess.”

“Me? A princess? Excuse me, who do you think you’re talking to? A fucking princess? It’s...*Queen* fucking Is-ak, thank you very much--”

The laugh was so bright and loud that Even rolled backwards onto the bed, shiny eyes disappearing all the way in crinkles and Isak had his mouth open in offense but he couldn’t keep it up any longer, breaking into bright giggly laughter with him.

Then he was feather-touching his fingers up under Even’s shirt to tickle his sides and Even was kicking and laughing more and Isak couldn’t help but kiss the literal fucking sun and then Even was sinking his hands into Isak’s hair and kissing him back, kissing and kissing as the huffing laughter faded into smiling kisses into earnest kisses and squeezing each other tight.

Then Isak’s hand was skirting down Even’s chest and dipping into the front of his pants, sliding beneath the band of his boxers and well. It was a good thing Even’s parents weren’t due home for another three hours.
Cause they made use of a good two of them.

~*~*~

Onsdag, 10:28
08.02.17

There were these tables by the cheese sandwich station that had benches with really tall black cushioned backs which were hella comfortable and also gave you view of like. Every person who came by for food, so that was where Isak and Eva were currently stationed, a coffee for both of them as they judged the outfits of all the people who walked by.

Or well, Eva was actually just trashing most of the boys for having no sense of style then commenting her favorite thing each girl was wearing while Isak hmm and mmmh'ed, but still, it was fun, spending quality time, all that.

Eva had just pointed out the hella cute color combo between that girls bow and her shoes and Isak was arguing that the distance was too far to match your damn hair accessories to your shoes - to which she pointed out his gray snapback and gray sneakers so fuck her - when Vilde walked in.

“There's a cute one!”

“Yeah, sure,” Isak agreed and Eva shoved him heartily.

“What, there’s only room for one soft whiny blonde per relationship, I already fill that quota.”

Eva rolled her eyes at him and Vilde plopped down cheerily next to her.

“Hi Isak! Hi Eva.”

A fond smile turned on the bright blue eyes and Vilde looked back wide-eyed at Eva for a moment, blush creeping up on her cheeks. Isak’s eye twitched.

“What’s up, Vilde?”

“Nothing.” She adjusted a little in her seat, setting her drink down on the table, two hands wrapped around the cup. “What are you guys doing?”

“Judging people. And talking about how great girls are,” Eva added on while Isak rolled his eyes. “Wanna join?”

“...sure? But um, Isak. I thought you were...gay?” Vilde leaned forward and dropped her voice a little, like she didn’t wanna shout it across the cantina and Isak leaned forward and pretended like that wasn’t annoying as fuck.

“I am?”

Confusion wrinkling up her eyebrows as she looked between them both.

“And Eva, aren’t you...straight?”
Huh, didn’t drop her voice for that one, *wonder why*.

“Why would that matter?” Eva tipped her head, a hell of a lot more patient than Isak was.

“Well if you're sitting here admiring girls wouldn't that uh.” Vilde scratched her head, looking like. Palpably confused. “Wouldn't that mean...certain things?”

She was being shifty af, jeez. Isak knew what Eva told him her suspicions were, but that didn't look like *suspicions* that looked. Yeah, if anybody could recognize the confused furrow, the way her heart was pounding right now, it was him.

“We're talking aesthetically,” he explained, trying to slowly retract the claws of sassy bitchiness.

“...what do you mean?” Vilde asked slowly. Looks, that’s all he meant, but he knew that wasn’t gonna be the way she took looks.

“Like outfit choices.”

“Oh. Oh, so nobody here actually like, likes girls,” she clarified, at least three degrees too bright and half an octave too high.

Yeah, the only thing he knew of Vilde’s experience was that she made out with Eva, and if Eva were to answer that question right now, regardless of what she said, it was gonna be so overanalyzed and picked apart and Isak just wasn’t gonna let her do that.

“I think girls are great,” he blurted out before Eva could so much as get her mouth open. He was lowkey cringing at himself but there were waters to test and he could for one single moment fake and pretend he thought anyone on this fucking planet (besides Even and maybe Jonas) was *great* for the chance at watching for the flash of That Expression.

Although they were both looking at him like he was off his rocker, so he should maybe explain that before somebody asked if he was pansexual or something again.

“They...do their hair cute, and wear great clothes and stuff.” Still looking at him odd. Isak threw up his hands. “I dunno, they put more effort into shit than boys, I guess. And they stick up for each other and stuff and. They don’t pretend they don’t care about shit so like. Yeah.”

“Fair point,” Eva was nodding.


Isak narrowed his eyes just a little. Hmm.

“Yep. Girls,” Eva repeated, that one *definitely* dreamy.

“Ugh. They’re not *that* nice,” Isak complained, lifting his coffee to his mouth.

And exposing his ribs to be elbowed.

“Hey!”

Onsdag, 13:05
Have you heard of Boot Theory?

nei

I was gonna come up with something cute and punny to say but I couldn’t think of any so

What’s the theory?

It’s not a theory actually, I was just curious

...mysterious

Onsdag, 20:27
08.02.17
It wasn’t the most mysterious text he got of the day, though.

Only the next one, he wasn’t actually the person who saw it.

Isak had gotten home from the gym right as Linn was helping Even clean up the dinner he’d made. Isak had been pleasantly surprised to see him, giving him a kiss hello before heading off to shower.

Even wasn’t gonna be that annoying boyfriend who made everything about him, so he left Isak to shower in peace while he hung out in his room and waited.

He was working on his project on his laptop when his phone went off. Even picked it up without thinking, glancing at the text preview on the screen.

Only this wasn’t his phone, because he had his dad’s name written as Bjørn, not Pappa.

To be fair their phones were both on the bedside table, he’d just assumed--

But he didn’t get a text, Isak did, and now Even was accidentally staring at it and he couldn’t stop staring.

It was just the preview, so he couldn’t see much, but what he could see.

Pappa: Hey Isak. Your mom and I are sorry about what we said about you being gay--

Fuck, fuck.

Now he was leaning on his shoulder in the hallway, just outside the bathroom door, tapping his foot, Isak’s phone in hand, cursing quietly to himself.

“Isak?”

And perfect timing, the bathroom door swung open and there was Isak, stepping out of the bathroom with fog rolling and a towel around his waist, wet curls plastered to his forehead.

“Ja?”

“I swear, I didn't mean to look. I thought it was my phone, and I only saw the text preview but.”

Even shoved the phone over and Isak double-dried his hands on the towel, eyebrows furrowing as he took it and lit up the screen. And read the preview.

“Fuck.”

The only thing Even could think about was that phone conversation with Jonas a month ago, about Isak crying because of his dad and he just couldn’t, he couldn’t keep his mouth shut and let Isak cry to himself alone about this.

Besides, hadn’t they just promised they weren’t gonna fall back into the no communication rut? That had been fucking terrible.

They had to talk about shit. That meant everything, and like. Now.

So Even waited until Isak locked the phone and looked back up at him, and then he fucking asked.

“Isak, what did they say?”

“Uh.” He glanced back down at his phone. Avoiding Even’s eyes. Sorry what we said about you
“I thought you said your dad would be fine with it,” Even asked quietly. God, the last time they’d talked about that had been so fucking long ago, so much had changed since then, yeah, but. Isak had told him it’d be fine.

“I mean. The first time I texted him about it he was. Well. Kinda.” Isak lifted a shoulder, head tipping back and forth, still not meeting Even’s eyes. “He thought I was joking then, uh, told me you’d stress my mom out, so.”

Isak shook his head once, glancing up, catching Even’s patient gaze and looking back down to worry his thumbs over the phone screen.

“But like. That was a long time ago, before the conc--” He stopped himself, mouth open, words frozen.

“The concert?” Even finished for him. Green flicked up instantly, their gazes locked, Isak’s mouth still open a little. A dozen gears turning behind his eyes before he finally swallowed, tongue wetting his lips, looked up at Even and asked.

“How do you know about that?”

Even was quiet for a moment. Communication, he’d promised. Glance down, away, hands in his pockets. “Jonas.”

“Fucking hell,” Isak cursed, then he was turning and stalking down the hallway for his room, one hand on the towel around his waist and the other tight around his phone.

“Isak! Wait--” Even took off skidding after him, nearly colliding with bare shoulders as Isak turned to him at the bedroom door, eyebrows knit, wild look on his face.

“I’m getting dressed, chill the fuck out. I’m not gonna lock you out again.”

Even followed him into his room just in case and plopped down at the edge of his bed.

Isak sat his phone down on the shelf and looked over at him sitting here still and cross-legged and knit his confused eyebrows a touch more.

“Are you just gonna...okay.” A shake of his head and Isak dropped the towel, getting dressed while Even sat there on his bed quietly, staring down at his hands.

He wasn’t gonna freak out. He wasn’t, Isak was dealing with all of this homophobic shit from society, yeah, on top of all the internalized shit he was still getting over and okay, all of this guilt with Jonas and then that break down in the church about how many people in this building think I should burn which had broken his fucking heart because Isak was the brightest thing in the world and he should never know any kind of burn but the heat of a thousand fucking loving kisses but he thought he was damned to Hell or that at least some people thought that about him like he could somehow ever on the entire fucking planet deserve that and on top of everything, apparently his parents weren’t okay with it and Even hadn’t known, how hadn’t he known, why didn’t Isak tell him, was he ashamed, if not for himself than of his parents, because they weren’t accepting like Even’s were, how bad was it, how many times had Isak cried, this was all his fault because Isak’s parents hadn’t been mad at him before about it but now they were and it was his fault because they’d had been trying to fix things with him and Even had been the one to ruin it, he’d been the one to ruin it because he’d pulled Isak away from them during his one shot--
Isak plopped down beside him on the bed and Even tipped sideways with the force of it, wide eyes and open, motionless mouth suddenly snapping shut. Blinking back into reality as the spiral snapped into the back of his mind and he turned his gaze on the beautiful boy settling into the mattress beside him.

He was wearing clothes now, wet curls significantly drier, fluffy around around his ears and in pretty waves everywhere else and Even blinked twice, looking back down at his hands, up at Isak again.

A single eyebrow arched at him, shoulder bumping his, too quick to feel the subsequent shudder down Even’s spine.

“What do you know?”

“That you were at a Christmas concert with your parents who you haven’t seen in months when I texted you 21:21 and you ditched them and ruined your chance of fixing things because I couldn't handle my own shit.”

Even stared at his hands and the room was entirely entirely quiet. The water was hardening in every cell in his body and the room was silent and--

“Okay, so you don't know shit.”

The words bit and Even’s head snapped to the side, gaze watery, drop from Isak’s throat to Even’s lashes, trying to blink it away as he looked at the green.

Isak was just staring at him. Leaning a fraction away, staring at him, mouth dropping open only long enough to slide another question his way.

“How long have you been thinking that?”

“Since December,” he whispered.

“Fuck. Even.” Isak reached over and took his hands, pulling them out of his lap and Even’s torso spun with the movement, facing Isak now as he breathed in through his mouth and looked between their entwined fingers and Isak’s earnest gaze.

“Even. It was a shabby attempt by my dad at fixing things that have been complicated and fucked up way too long. Threw in the nostalgia of the church I got baptized in and great fucking music. I got your text before it started, I read it and I didn't think much of it, figured I could text you back later and we'd sort everything out.”

Even looked down and Isak squeezed his hand, hard, making him lift his head back up. A moment just to hold his gaze, then Isak was speaking again, gaze wandering, head shaking as he did, but Even didn’t tear his eyes away this time.

“My parents were...I dunno, I went in expecting to have this big emotional downpour and they just...didn't mean anything to me anymore, you know? Like I almost couldn't see their faces, it was like. Strangers from the past, an aunt and uncle you feel obliged to please for no real reason. So we chatted a bit and sat down and then.”

He sucked in a breath, beautiful chest expanding, taking all the air right out of the room because Even certainly wasn’t breathing, he was watching Isak, watching the thumb rubbing absentmindedly back and forth over his hand as he talked about his parents, the one thing he’d refused to talk about for months, the people who raised him and shaped him and made him all of these things and.
And his thumb was sliding back and forth over Even’s hand, instinctively comforting him.

When Isak’s voice lifted again, Even’s translucent eyes lifted with it, watching the story spill out across beautiful features.

“That Nils Bech was singing O Holy Night and I was looking at the cross - it was a Baz Luhrmann-looking cross you would’ve loved it - and. And I was thinking about you, and it just hit me, that text wasn’t a love letter, it was a sui--”

Isak stopped himself in time.

Even couldn’t look at him now. Wouldn’t look at him. Wouldn’t even look at their hands.

Even closed his eyes and told himself not to cry and Isak held the pause, held his hand, held the closed eyes that were fucking trying not to cry.

It wasn’t a love letter,

“It was a suicide note,” Isak whispered, every syllable sinking into his skin. “So fuck my parents, of course I fucking left, what was one useless concert that didn't mean anything, against the very possible threat of losing the life of the man I’m in love with?”

His lips parted around an inhale that turned into a shaky hiccuped broken soft cry instead.

Isak squeezed his hands, shaking them once, earnest, and kept going, kept painting with blue neon lights over the candelight.

“So no, you don’t know shit. I didn’t ruin my chance of fixing things with my shitty parents because you couldn’t handle your own shit?? I walked out of a situation that wasn't gonna fix a fucking thing to fix the only thing that mattered--”

One of the hands let go, palm shoving up his tilted jaw instead, rocking him sideways, fingers curling bruises into the back of his neck, words sinking in heavier than the touch with his eyes closed.

“...you thinking you were alone.”

“Fucking Christ,” Even managed to gasp, wiggling his other hand free to put both his palms over his face, smushed fingers wiping his eyes, trying to breathe. Isak was trying to catch his gaze and Even’s eyes had to be all puffy, he had to look like a fucking wreck, he’d guessed all of that completely wrong and he’d been torturing himself for how fucking long about that and he’d been dead fucking wrong and Isak’s touch was so fucking warm and secure and.

“Clearly, I don’t what the fuck I’m doing,” Even huffed and Isak made a sweet little pitied sound, melting a little, other hand sliding up his thigh.

“Shh. It’s okay.” Thumb rubbing over a high, tender spot on his thigh for a moment before the hand on his neck was pulling him forward, all the soft morphing into sincere, pushy. “C’mere.”

He let Isak pull him into a hug, let strong arms wrap around him, block back all those impending tears. Arms to hold back waterfalls. How on heaven or earth he’d found them, he had no idea.

They hugged and held each other there in the eye of the hurricane and Even went quiet, eyes slipping closed as he squeezed Isak painfully tight.

Isak just squeezed back harder.
“You saved me. I had to save you back.”

God. Even broke a little, some combination between a laugh and crying, shaking into Isak’s arms, eyes squeezed tight as he propped his chin on that strong shoulder and tried not to sound teary.

“Fucking stop with the one liners, I'm gonna soak you enough you have to shower again.” He failed on the not sounding teary part but Isak was smiling, leaning back and forcibly tipping Even upright, wiping his hands over Even’s wet cheeks before his own palms could.

Then soft pretty lips were pressing kisses to the tearstains, hand sliding up over the back of his head to hold him steady.

Even tipped his head away and Isak pressed another kiss to his jaw, leaning back to replace his mouth with his rubbing thumb.

“Fuck my parents. I don't give a fuck that taking off hurt their feelings. It's not my fault they couldn't handle it like fucking adults and had to lash out at me instead.”

He said it so derisively and fuck, Even had forgotten about the text that started this whole thing.

Sucked in a shaky breath, blinking open wet eyes and Even reached up to take Isak’s hand from his face, wrap it in his own, praying his voice didn’t crack too much.

“What did they say? After you left?”

Isak let him keep the one hand, using the other to still rub away at tearstains, thumbs over his cheekbones.

Shrugging lightly as he ran fingers through Even’s hair, not the usual fuck it up way, smoothing the top out into the little twist, fixing it for him.

“I got a nasty text about how my life choices were gonna catch up to me. Basically they blamed my immature childish reactions on drugs and ‘losing myself through nefarious life choices that must be confusing me,’ aka being gay, so.”

“What the fuck.”

Isak scoffed, tongue in his cheek as he ran his thumb down the side of Even’s face.

“Yeah. I know.” Wiping the pad of his hand over both of Even’s cheekbones one more time, destroying the few escaped tears that were longsince past just because they’d been there.

“...right after my mom said she'd love me no matter what, too.” Isak laughed, but it was cynical and hurt, breaking a few more bones in Even’s heart.

“So, fuck them, okay?” Their entwined hands squeezed once before Isak was dropping his grip, their gazes finally meeting again as he lifted both palms to Even’s cheeks, holding him still, immovable.

“Fuck the sob stories about how it's my fault my mom’s the way she is, fuck my dad for leaving, fuck the accusations and the constant fucking apologies I just. Don't need them.”

Holding them close, shaking Even a little with how fucking much he meant it, those precious green eyes way too old for their age.

“We don't need them.”

Even nodded, inhaling shakily. Isak dipped forward precariously, pressing a solid kiss to his
forehead, lingering long enough to send the ocean down Even’s spinal cord, into every nerve he owned.

Then he was pulling them into another hug, rocking with it this time and Even clung to his shoulders and tried not to feel so fucking small. Curls ticking his neck, warmth ghosting over his skin.

“If we go down, we go down together,” Isak whispered against his ear.

“Did you just quote the fucking Chainsmokers at me?”

“Yes.”

“I hate you,” Even informed him and Isak laughed brightly, squeezing him super tight.

“I love you too.”

It still made him inhale sharp, hearing it. A dozen little kisses to his neck and Even had already gone lamely weak at the confession, now he was nothing but boneless putty in those beautiful arms.

Jesus fuck, what he’d ever done in his life to deserve this, he had no fucking clue.

Isak tipped them sideways, further than just a gentle rock and they flopped down onto the bed together, mattress cushioning shoulders. Isak used the little bounce to climb closer, their expanding chests pressed together, one thigh slipping between Even’s, ankle hooking around the back of his shin to tug him in, a solid kiss to Even’s bobbing throat.

Even closed his eyes, stroking a hand down the back of Isak’s still damp head. Isak kissed his neck again.

“I love you,” Even whispered, and the taste on his tongue somehow wasn’t sorrow.

Isak scooted up an inch, tilting his chin up, looking down his nose under long dark lashes at Even, waiting.

One more inhale through parted lips and Even was leaning down to kiss him.

Their lips slotted together and Isak held it for a moment before he tugged, pulling away in a little wave.

Then he was tucking his head under Even’s chin, settling in against him, probably getting his bedsheets and Even’s shirt all damp from the freshly washed curls but there wasn’t a cell in his body that minded.

They both just lay there, in the quiet. Past the sounds of Eskild getting home from work, past the sounds of everyone going to bed.

They both lay there in the quiet until Isak fell all the way asleep.

Isak never realized how preciously fleeting life could be until he’d thought Even might lose his. It was that suicide note, that terror of Even dying, that made him realize that right now was the only thing they had. That wasn’t romantic, it wasn’t, it made Even want to be sick, but Isak thought it was beautiful. Even’s life, and the threat on it made him realize how important his life was too. All lives.

It’d been fucking terrifying, but they had this now. They had this.
He was attempting to finish the assignment - most days they got homework done, yesterday was not one of them - when Sana plopped down next to him, bright cheeky smile on her face.

“Hi, biology partner!”

“Hi friend, how are you.” He didn’t word it like a question because he wasn’t looking up from his laptop, he had to finish these last two molecules before he could email this in and there were some things a little more important.

“I’m great. So. What are you planning for Even’s birthday Sunday?”

Isak blinked and looked over at Sana’s expectant, raised eyebrows.

“What? How do you know Sunday is his birthday?”

“Magnus told Vilde, who told us.” A waving finger flipping from Vilde to us, us being the girls that doted on him so goddamn much. Then Sana was pinning him with a very serious look, dimple pursed. “And frankly, I’m offended I didn’t hear it from you.”

“Okay, whatever,” he shot back, turning back to his laptop. Even was his boyfriend, not theirs, he owed nobody anything, actually.

“Serr though, do you have plans?”

“Uh. We’re having lunch with his parents, but other than that...nei.”

Sana reached over to point at his computer screen, nail tapping on the molecule.

“The answer to that one is C.”

“It’s B,” he corrected. “I just figured it out. Is this all the homework we had?”

“Yes. Are you sure it’s--”

“Yes, I’m sure. Okay. Good, done.” Isak hit send and closed his laptop, arms folding over the table as he looked over properly. Sana was still giving him that expectant waiting look.

“So, Even’s birthday. Do you guys wanna do something for it?”

“We girls would love to. We all like him, remember?”

“Mmrgh. Yes, I remember.” He rolled his eyes and Sana smiled prettily.
“Surprise party at your place on Sunday? We could decorate and everything while you keep him at his parents’ house and...distract him.”

Isak twitched an eyebrow up at her and she lifted a shoulder.

“It’s not like we don’t all know you sleep together, you sport hickies the way celebrities sport wedding rings.”

“It’s not that bad,” he argued.

Sana made an “eeehhh” sound and Isak made a yikes face in return. Or apparently it was that bad.

“But anyways. Party, my place...sounds fun. Do you think the girls will be up for it?”

The teacher walked into the room and they both glanced over, before Sana clicked her tongue and looked down at her desk, hijab swinging as her head tipped.

“Vilde already bought decorations.”

Isak’s eyebrows shot up.

“...oh. Okay.” He nodded to himself, mouth closed on a little pucker. Sana shot him a Look and Isak sighed, throwing up a hand. “Why am I surprised, I should not be surprised.”

“It’s not surprising,” she agreed, typing something away on her phone.

If he thought his friends were extra, the boy squad had nothing on the girl squad.

“Yeah, so. Sunday then,” he confirmed and Sana lifted up her phone to show him the screen.

It was a group chat, titled something about lilac and gold? and there was Eva and Chris and Noora and Vilde, already all responded with various exclamation points and excited profanity.

“Alright then.”

“Oh, and what does he want for his birthday?”

“I wish I fucking knew.”

“What’s he like?” Sana asked, rolling her eyes like he was a dumbass but it wasn’t like it was that fucking simple. So he made a sassy face back, eyes narrowing and head cocking.

“Me.”

“Things he doesn’t have,” she corrected and Isak smiled a little to himself. “You’re a fucking sap.”

“I know. And I don’t know...art things?”

“Hm. You suck at this.”

“I know!”

Sana typed away in their little group chat, offering him a tip of her head.

“We’ll think of something.”

“Let me know when you do, because I have zero ideas.”
She gave him a bright smile, then the teacher was starting class and they were both sliding their phones away, but not before Isak caught the notification that he had already had a lengthy text message from Vilde, probably filled with a list of all the other things they were gonna need.

Sunday it was.

Torsdag, 20:43
09.02.17

They were kissing goodbye on the doorstep outside Isak’s apartment, although it wasn’t the most successful goodbye because Isak was up against the wall and their mouths weren’t doing a very good job at that whole breaking apart thing.

Eventually though, someone pulled off for oxygen and Even dipped his head, putting an inch of space between them before Isak could capture his mouth again and keep him for another five minutes.

“I love you,” Isak whispered against his nose and Even lifted his head, inhaling it.

Fuck. Isak just kept doing that and it was. It didn’t make it any easier to breathe, was the simple way to put it.

Even traced the lines of that beautiful face, the dimples around his pretty lips that were pursed even when he closed them, the dip in his chin, the sharp angles of his cheek bones, the arch of his eyebrows as he just looked at Even, let him soak in it for as fucking long as he wanted.

And god, he wanted.

Instead he finally slowed his hands, tipping up Isak’s chin to lean in and kiss him again.

He had no idea why his heart was racing, why the axiomatic reply hesitated on the tip of his tongue.

Not because it wasn’t true, but maybe because he was fucking terrified of how true it was.

Their mouths broke apart and Even inhaled against parted lips, breathing it right back into his skin.

“I love you,” Even promised, eyes slipping closed, foreheads pressed together. Fuck, they’d said it what...four or five times now, and still, it like. Shook his entire being every time they did.

Isak reached up and pecked him cutely, all light and sweet. He couldn’t help the curl into a smile, then Isak was pecking him again, tip up of his chin, puckered lips landing on his mouth for barely a second, a little kiss sound with it.

Again. And again.

Even’s smile broke from fond to wide, stars swooping through his chest as he dipped down and pecked him back, swaying a little with it.

“I hope you have a good night.”
“Oh I plan on it,” Isak told him, hand wrapping around his hip bone. “Gonna go take a long hot shower and think of you.”

The cupid’s bow tipped up in a sideways, cocky smile and Even leaned back, lifting his eyebrows up high.

“You trying to get me to stay?”

“Nei, just letting you know my plans.” Up on his tiptoes to press another little kiss to his mouth, chin still tipped up as he fell back flat footed, mouth still smiling all crooked. “Call me later, maybe I’ll skip the shower and we can...chat instead.”

“Oi,” he said back and Isak’s mouth tipped up on the other side, full dimpled beaming as Even leaned down and kissed him again. The smile morphed into pursing lips against his mouth and Even pushed back against them, wishing for the smile back.

Then a hand was on his chest, pressing back over his heart.

“Now go home so I can miss you and call you for phone sex.”

“Okay,” Even laughed lightly, then they were kissing just one more time, already taking steps backwards on the pull apart. Isak leaned off the wall to keep their mouths together as long as possible, then they were breaking with a little sound and Isak was waving goodbye, a pretty smile on his face as he spun into his apartment, closed the door behind him and Even pounded down the stairs.

One stair two stair three so many fucking stairs.

The door to the street took a second to finagle open then he was stepping out onto the sidewalk in the cold, air blasting his skin.

Shocking burst back into the outside world. Reality.

Popped little bubble of pretty.

Step one, untangle the headphones from his pocket, two shove in earbuds, and three go.

He figured he’d walk back today. He usually took the bus or rode his bike but it wasn't too far of a walk and it was still early enough he had no reason not to.

And the sky looked like That, dappled and dark and stark surprisingly movie dramatic hyper real so he had to play That song.

Even strolled down the sidewalks, cold hands in his pockets, mummified words filtering between his ears.

Was this his silver screen?

The wind picked up, scattering a stray piece of paper, dead leaves that hadn't quite decomposed to dance across the sidewalk, get trapped under the indifferent speed of traffic.

A sucker’s dream. He wasn't nineteen that much longer.

It was cold enough his eyes watered up but he was fine with that. Even walked to the brain pounding beat, every step reverberating up the rest of him to shake the water on his bottom lashes. Maybe he was a beautiful crier in some parallel universe. Maybe it made his eyes shine.
Then a tear slipped down his face and he wiped it away and inhaled shakily and if this was breaking on the inside so far deep down he wouldn’t let himself look at it let him let it he’d suck the rest of the tears down so they could settle in between his bones and wait until the day they got to freeze.

~*~*~

Fredag, 10:56
10.02.17

He hadn’t seen Isak yet this morning.

Spent last night at his parent’s house, a hand clapped over his own mouth this time, Isak’s voice through his headphones, whining and moaning and carrying on over his own twisting hand and a lot of surprisingly filthy talk about what he wanted Even to do to him.

Except the part that sucked was that after they were both panting and sticky, Isak made kissy sounds over the phone and they eventually had to hang up to the darkness of their own rooms.

He didn’t even like coffee but he was waiting in line to get one and he had absolutely no idea why.

It was taking forever and he was gonna be fucking late to class. He had his earphones all the way out, clutched in his hand in case they called his name but they didn’t. The clock was ticking and he was gonna be late, he’d already paid or else he wouldn’t even wait but--

Okay, or his coffee could already be sitting waiting on the counter, his name on the cup. He’d been standing here bouncing on his toes waiting the entire time, how in hell had he missed that?

But it was ready and he grabbed it, taking off down the steps, across the courtyard because it was faster. He passed some kids from his one class and somebody said hey and he couldn’t place their names and he was trying to drown in music anyways.

Made it through the door just in time, swinging into a desk that was weirdly wedged behind the outcropping of the wall where the door was so he could only see like half the board, the rest of the vision was just wall but he sat his coffee down on the edge of his desk and tried to slow his heart down and told himself it didn’t matter.

Someone was talking to him and he was nodding along but he had absolutely no idea what they were saying, it was all drifting over him the way it did in movies, that hollowing echoey effect.

It was then he realized why, his mouth on his coffee, that he got it so he had an excuse for his hands to shake.

The door opened. The teacher walked in. Everything went dead silent and it was so fucking quiet it made him dizzy.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Had he eaten today?
...he hadn’t.

Oh, thank god. He just needed food. He just needed food, everything was fine.

Even took a deep breath, one hand on his chest, didn’t care who saw, what they thought. He was fine.

No one fucking noticed anyways.

Sat the coffee back down on the edge of his desk, equidistant from the corners. Picked up his pen and wrote down his name at the top of the paper.

Not like he was gonna turn it in, the paper was just for notes, but this paper was his.

He’s got this. He’s still in complete control.

When was the last one? Early December? It was too soon anyways.

Not like it was impossible and he hadn’t had them this close together before--

No. Stop, calm the fuck down.

Another deep breath, glancing up at the board, writing down the name of the chapter.

His hand was trembling, just a little.

Even put down his pencil and put his palm flat on the table. Waited, looking at it. The teacher was talking and he wasn’t listening.

Slowly, carefully, peeled his hand off the desk. It wasn’t shaking anymore. Fuck, okay.

It really was nerves. Stress. Coffee. It was almost lunch time and he hadn’t eaten anything. He needed to not do that, especially considering that he went for a run this morning. All of that energy expended and he didn’t fucking eat a granola bar or something, of course he was fucking dizzy.

It didn’t help that he was psyching himself the fuck out.

There was just. So much to ride on this time but he was Fine, honestly.

If he sat still and breathed for a moment his hearing was okay, everything sliding back to normal. Pieces clicking in.

It was completely okay. He just needed to Chill.

Couldn’t trust himself but he was Fine.

God. Calm down. Let’s go. He was fine. Relief.

The girl next to him leaned over to ask what page they’re on.

He said no idea and the girl kinda snorted at him and Even smiled back, thumbing open his book.

It didn’t matter what page they were on. He heard the question. That’s what counted.
Usually, making Friday night plans required at least a solid five minute debate, then going to someone’s house and debating more, making some phone calls around, searching for the best party, finding weed or alcohol or both.

By the time they were actually partying there was this whole list of hassle that went into it. Usually.

This Friday, they beat every record they’d ever set for making plans.

It took three texts in the group chat, and that was absolutely it.

- Mahdi:
  my parents are gone for the weekend and left the nice car who wants to go for a drive

Isak:
What time can we come over

Mahdi:
How’s 19:00

Read, by everyone

Fitting five overgrown boys into a little silver BMW 430i Coupe was not as easy as it sounded. Actually, it didn’t sound easy, any car with only 2 doors was always a struggle, but they were Determined and therefore they fucking figured it out.

Mahdi was driving, obviously, it was his parents’ car. Even was in the front with him because he was the tallest and had the longest legs by a long ways, then Isak was squished between Magnus and Jonas in the red-leather interior backseats.

“I’m second tallest, why am I in the middle,” he whined, trying to wiggle himself a bit more room as Mahdi pulled out of his parents’ driveway. “This isn’t even a real seat.”

“Bitch sits bitch,” Jonas said cheerily.

“Fuck you,” Isak told him, throwing an elbow then Jonas was jabbing a finger in that stupid fucking sensitive spot on his side and he yelped, jumping a foot, which was great when he had an inch of clearance between his head and the roof of this car.

Couldn’t really decide whether the thud his head made hitting the ceiling or the high-pitched yelp was louder, but everyone was laughing at him regardless, making him rub his head and pout.

Even turned around in shotgun, looking over the edge of his fancy seat with his eyebrows lifted high, head dipped down while Isak’s yelp echoed around the tiny space.

“What the fuck was that??”
“Oh, he doesn’t know about that?” Jonas asked, bushy dark eyebrows shooting up in turn and no.

“No, he doesn’t know about that, don’t you fucking dare tell him,” Isak shot back, swiveling to point very accusingly and very seriously at the amused-ass face of his best friend.

“Well now I’m fucking curious,” Even said from up front and Isak glared daggers in between those dark eyebrows, fucking daring him to--

“Isak has a soft spot,” Jonas said and Isak attempted to lean backwards in the seat, try and clamp a hand over Jonas’s mouth only there wasn’t enough room for his shoulders and now both Magnus and Jonas were shoving him. Isak batted a hand at his knee instead, way too many elbows in the back of this car as he glared ten thousand threats.

“It’s right--”

“Stop it, stop it, I will spill all of your secrets.”

“What secrets,” Jonas scoffed and Isak’s jaw dropped open, head dropping with it.

“The rope thing, for one.”

Jonas’s eyes went wide and his mouth snapped shut so fucking fast. Isak kept him pinned with a look until Jonas was leaning around Isak’s shoulder to talk to the front again.

“Sorry Even, I have no idea what I’m talking about, soft spot, what.”

“How the fuck don’t I know about it?” Even knitted his eyebrows, still high on his forehead as he shook his pretty head, curl falling loose from the high twist in his hair. “Pretty sure I’ve touched you everywhere.”

“Agghhh,” the boys all complained in tandem.

Conveniently it was right then that the front tires reached the major road and Mahdi wrapped the wheel around, tires spinning as they peeled out into the turn, picking up speed in about .3 seconds, getting a little cheer out of Magnus and Isak nearly dumped in Jonas’s lap.

Jonas shoved Isak back upright, then a little more so he was tipping into Magnus instead.

“But have you jabbed him everywhere.”

“Yes,” Even said, “But probably not in the way you mean.”

“STOP IT!” Isak yelled and the entire car was laughing their asses off, enough that the wheel shook a little from Mahdi and Magnus and Jonas’s breath was fogging up the windows and Even was crinkled up all cute.

Isak just groaned through his laughter, head tipped back against the seat in misery.

Then Mahdi was spinning the wheel again, turning a complete 90 degrees sharp enough to send them all sliding sideways yelling and squishing Magnus into the window.

Literally no one in the car had any idea where they were going besides Mahdi, and no one cared because it was Mahdi, he was the one like. Sensible not overdramatic hoe in this car.

Despite the way he was driving.
It was a sports car you couldn't not drive it this way.

Isak lowkey climbed over Jonas’s lap to try and read the sign for the road Mahdi just turned off on and Jonas highkey shoved him back on his ass with a lot of verbal unnecessary fussing Isak rolled his eyes at.

Then the car was pulling into a parking lot and all but skidding to a stop, passenger side door popping open before the engine rumbled off.

Even climbed out and Magnus shoved down the seat to climb out too then Isak was tumbling gracefully for the pavement and Even caught him just in time, muttering something about clumsy hoe boyfriends while Jonas hopped down to the pavement all easy and shit, shaking his head at Isak with a judgy look.

But at least they were all upright now. Fuck, his legs were cramped and he had like six elbow bruises probably, but they were no longer squished and somewhere cooler than they’d been when they’d left which was…

A park. It was already decently dark but there were streetlamps lighting a path back through some trees, a playground in the distance complete with jungle gym and swingsets. A giant pavilion set further back in the trees, a fuckton of picnic tables, a couple grills, and possibly a little gazebo by a creek way off to the left.

Nice.

The trunk of the car slammed shut with a loud sound, making them all turn as Jonas shouldered the backpack with the alcohol.

“Okay boys. We’re racing,” he declared, coming to a stop at the edge of the parking lot and the grass.

“Fett,” Isak agreed, letting go of Even’s arm to step up next to him. Mahdi and Magnus both joined, then Even last, the car’s locking alarm sound beeping behind them.

“Who has to carry the backpack?” Magnus asked, glancing over.

“I can.” Jonas pulled on the other strap, buckling the front over his chest. “To the light on the far end of the playground, last one there is DD.”

They all looked between in each other, eyes meeting as they agreed to the terms and held each opponent in calculation preparation.

“Ready.” All eyes on Jonas. “Get set.” Isak’s foot prepped, a flick of his head to keep the curls out of his eyes.

“GO!”

Five pairs of feet took off, sneakers and boots pounding over grass mushy with longsince melted snow, (Fuck warm Januaries), arms swinging, perfect line breaking almost instantly.

Isak was going to win, obviously, he’d ran from enough fucking busted parties in his lifetime and he was the only one of them who regularly worked out, he had the core strength and stamina to count when it came to shit like this.

He pulled ahead, and Even did too, only because his legs were longer than like, Mahdi’s entire body.
And yeah, he technically had stamina too, although Isak would go to his grave swearing that yes sex was the best workout but it was also not technically a workout.

But he would happily win this and let his boyfriend take second, how cute would that be--

Even’s foot curved right around his ankle and pulled.

Of all. fucking. people.

Of all fucking people to trip him and cheat in this fucking race and it was the one he was fucking, are you fucking kidding me this was un-fucking believable, he could not fucking--

He barely managed to catch himself on the ground, a twig stabbing into his palm and he was shoving himself back up almost as quick as he’d fallen but it didn’t matter, there wasn’t enough of a gap between their speeds.

The boys all collided into the pole, hands and fingertips and laughing shoulders and Isak jogged to a stop, the last one, three feet behind.

“What the fuck,” he gasped, entirely out of breath and somehow the rest of them weren’t winded enough they couldn’t laugh at him.

“Sore loser?” Even asked, smiling wide and knowing through the heavy breathing.

“Fuck you,” Isak offered, sticking up his middle finger with it in case the message wasn’t clear enough, other hand on the pole as he tried to breathe. “Fuck. Okay. I can be DD.”

“You can’t drive,” Mahdi and Magnus said in tandem and Isak squinched up his face, looking offended at them both.

“Said who?”

“Jonas,” Mahdi replied. Isak threw up a hand at the laughing face under the fake fuckin’ halo of wild dark curls. Bastards, all of them. He turned to his one and only backup and Even put a hand on his hip, shoulder lifting with it.

“Well. Sounds like Isak’s not DD.”

“Good, even your boyfriend knows I’ve got authority,” Jonas cackled, all smug and puffed up.

Isak regrettably ended his relationship with the only kind thing that still loved him, this lightpole, pushing off the kind cold metal to shove Jonas as heartily as he could. He stumbled backwards and laughed brighter, twinkling and out of breath.

“DD’s gotta be someone strong enough to lift Isak, too,” Magnus pointed out and Isak spun around, making Magnus take a step backwards before he got shoved, except Isak was throwing up his hands, not shoving, confusion upping the next three notches.

“What are you talking about.”

“The only messier drunk than you is Eva.” Jonas made a sassy face and Isak crinkled up his nose in offense, jaw dropping, voice going up a damn half octave.

“I’m nowhere near that level!”

“Do you have any idea how many times I have carried you,” he deadpanned back and Isak threw his
head back to the sky, hair falling as he groaned at the stars. When the fuck conversations on
designated driver turn into let’s drag Isak through the dirt, he had no idea.

Whatever. Whatever, if they were gonna fucking be this way.

“Okay! DD has to be strong enough to carry me, that rules out Mahdi, sorry bro.”

“I can be DD,” Even offered. “I’ve carried you plenty too.”

“Very different reasons,” Magnus pointed out and Even tipped his head knowingly.

“Yeah, definitely.”

“I’m not gonna need to be carried! Jesus.”

“But Even, you’ve never gotten to be trashnasty with us, you can’t be DD. I’ll be DD.” Magnus
stuck out his chest proudly and the rest of everyone’s faces scrunched up with his, angling towards
the other blonde this time, thank god.

“Can you even drive??”

“Yes!”

“Okay but Mags, I want you to be able to drink too. I can be DD.” Mahdi clapped Magnus on the
shoulder, tipping his head for the bench at the edge of the playground. “—and I’ll let your drunk asses
carry Isak if someone has to, yeah?”

“Do you not trust me to drive your dad’s car?” Magnus sounded all offended and Mahdi pursed his
mouth, eyebrows shooting up.

“No.”

“Then why are we arguing anyways! You’re DD.”

“It’s official,” Jonas declared, swinging the backpack for the dirt and tugging out a bottle of spiced
rum. “Now who’s ready?”

They got positively, absolutely wasted in the middle of a park on the outskirts of the city, music
blasting on someone’s phone as they threw Spotify back and forth and sang all the stupidest songs
they could think of.

It was cold but not as cold as it had been, and the more they drank the more clothes that got shed,
until everyone was in tshirts and jeans and clinking Captain Morgan with the bottle of Jack Daniels
while Mahdi laughed at them, completely bundled up in coats and Isak’s beanie.

Then someone (Isak) came up with the stupid idea of playing truth or dare while they were drunk off
their asses, which was how Magnus got stuck in a tree - that was the photo that got posted to
Instagram, too - and then karma bit his ass and Isak nearly broke his ankle falling off the top of a
bench he was trying to tightrope walk on.

He bitched on the ground for awhile but turned out he just sprained it, Mahdi was gonna be a doctor
one day he had authority and he Knew, but Isak still made Even carry him back to the playing circle.

And then spent the next ten minutes of the game sideways in Even’s lap, reaching up to tip puckered
lips up for a kiss every fucking. Thirty seconds or some shit.

Okay, actually it was more like *three* seconds.

They were on the truth part of truth or dare but Even wasn't managing to answer his question very well because Isak kept fucking kissing him.

“Our first kiss? Well it was supposed to be at—*hmmph!*” Isak’s mouth covered his and Even kissed him once before he was popping off and speaking again.

“Isak threw this pregame at his apartment in Novem—”

Another kiss interrupted and Even pulled his mouth away and rubbed his thumb over Isak's cheek before he turned to the boys again.

“And we were in the kitchen and I tried to kiss him but—*fy faen*—” Isak slid his tongue into Even’s mouth first that time and Even shoved two hands in Isak’s curls in retaliation, kissing him hard.

Hard enough it left Isak blinking dazed when their lips broke apart wet and Even got to attempt to finish his story.

“Anyways, sorry, I tried to kiss him and Noora showed up and interrupted. So then we ended up pregaming at his place before Halloween and the girls were there so we ditched them and broke into somebody’s pool and—”

Isak recovered through the dramatic retelling of their story and suddenly there was a very beautiful very drunk angel attacking his mouth with ten dozen rapid hungry little kisses.

Even made a vaguely frustrated mostly fond and hella turned on sound against Isak’s mouth then he was cupping his jaw with both hands and giving in, twisting their mouths together deep and dirty.

That was all it took before Isak was swinging one of his legs around in attempt to straddle Even and grind down against his lap, only they were in the middle of a park with all of their friends like ten inches away and Even caught Isak’s leg just in time, shoving his knee back to keep Isak sideways between his thighs.

“No, no,” he was scolding and Isak pressed pouty lips back up against his, lifting to straddle him again. Even pulled away, mouths breaking apart with a loud pop as he shoved Isak’s knee harder.

“Stay,” Even commanded down at him and Isak whimpered weakly and kissed him again.

“Fucking hell,” Even finally managed, ducking to the side and splaying his fingers over Isak’s mouth, heel of his palm pressed up against Isak’s Adam apple. “I am never gonna finish this story.”

“You guys are really cute,” Magnus told them, kinda dreamily as he tilted his head all cute. Even forced himself to tear his eyes away from Isak’s heated one, glancing up at the boys.

Magnus was smiling at them the way people smiled at their favorite movies and Mahdi had a hand over his forehead pretending like he had a headache or maybe facepalming at Isak’s neediness or maybe Even’s story telling.

Then there was Jonas, who had his mouth permanently wrapped around the alcohol bottle and kept tipping it backwards periodically with times that lined up strangely close to all the kisses Isak kept planting on Even.
“Anyways. So long story short, we broke into a swimming pool and had a competition who could hold their breath underwater longest and I won.”

“You cheated! You kissed me underwater!”

“I won,” Even repeated, ignoring him and Isak made the most offended sound on the planet and all of the boys were laughing now, Jonas included.

They went around in a circle of more truths until Jonas declared they were wasting their youth away chatting and that was how Even got dared to do the monkey bars with his feet, which was some kinda fucked up dare but Magnus thought it was a great idea and Even apparently didn’t know how to say no to a challenge so.

Mahdi spotted him while he put two hands on the ground, carefully kicking his feet up into the sky, pushing into a handstand that was surprisingly steady considering how much he drank.

Isak had a hand over his mouth the entire time and Jonas’s jaw was on the floor as he kept elbowing Isak and Magnus both,

“Did you have any idea he could do that?”

“Nei???”

“Surprise, babe,” Even called from the monkey bars, finally getting one foot hooked around the first bar, tipping a little to get his other foot hooked around the next one.

His white tshirt was all bunched up under his arms, smooth stomach and most of his chest entirely bare to the winter air - it was a miracle no one had commented on the dark mark riding low on the inside of his hip - but to be fair they were all pretty distracted. Even was fucking stunning, gravity defying hair all fluffy and somehow taller than usual as he pushed up on his hands and bit his bottom lip, one palm walking forward on the ground as he unhooked one foot and balanced it over to the next bar.

“What the fuck, he’s doing it!” Magnus shrieked and clapped his hands together, absolutely elated while Even giggled and Isak finally took the hand off his mouth.


“It’s freaky, is what it is.”

“That’s me,” Even shot back, hooking his foot around the next one. “How’s that song go? Lady in the streets but a freak in the be--”

There must’ve been a patch of ice on the bar or something, because he’d barely let go of the ground before his foot was sliding, skidding sideways on the bar as Isak and Magnus both screamed and Jonas clapped a hand over his mouth.

Mahdi dove to catch him but Even didn’t fall, somehow, laughing hysterically as he hung there upside down, foot lodged between the rung and sides of the horizontal ladder.

And by lodged, he meant stuck.

“Oh my god,” Even giggled, trying to wiggle his toes, both hands landing back on the ground as he tried to pull his shoe free to absolutely no luck. “Baby! Help!”
Isak attempted to push off the ground and fell back on his ass near instantly.

“You’re useless,” Even told him. Isak made an offended sound, hand clapping over his heart, jaw dropping open. Even blew him a little kiss, letting go of the ground and swinging a little before he was crunching up his abs and attempting to reach upwards for his shoe himself. “Fuck.”

“This is the best dare we’ve ever, ever done,” Magnus said, completely awed and Isak could only nod in return.

“Hey Isak,” Mahdi piped up, stepping to the side so they could see him around Even’s dangling body. “Is Even ticklish?”

“YES.”

Magnus leapt off the ground, diving over and Even wiggled helplessly, waving his arms.

“No no no--”

It took all of them to get Even down from the monkey bars, Isak was the only one tall enough - okay, Magnus was taller but he wanted to do the important part dammit - to unhook his foot, and the rest of them all caught the falling boy while Isak shouted at them to be careful, dammit, he liked that one.

Then Even was whining about his dizzy head and Isak crowed something about karma before wrapping his arms around Even and tumbling them both for the dirt.

They ended up rolling until Isak was on his back, legs wrapping around Even’s waist automatically as Even kissed him into the cold grass, mouth fucking warm and tasting like alcohol. Now his head was spinning too, for a hell of a lot of other reasons, hands shoving up under the bunched white tshirt to warm warm skin and--

And that’s when the rest of them brushed themselves off enough and tapered down from laughing at Magnus enough to look over and instantly throw up protests.

“Hey, hey, hey, no hooking up on the fucking playground, the rest of us are standing right here.”

“Assholes! That’s you!”

They rolled again, Even’s back slamming into the grass as Isak settled comfortably perched on top of his hips, breathing hard and grass sticking pieces in his curls.

“Isak!”

“Hm?”

He glanced over his shoulder, one hand on Even’s chest and both of Even’s hands on his hips. Magnus gave him a hello?? look, waving an obvious dramatic hand at the three of them standing there. Isak rolled his lips in, looking between the disheveled, flushed, fucking gorgeous boy he was straddling and his indignant friends.

“Oh fuck, were you talking to us?”

“Ja!”

Isak stuck out his bottom lip, turning back to Even, telling him very matter-of-factly. “Apparently we’re not allowed to kiss.”
“You’re not allowed to have sex in front of us, no.”

Isak sighed heavily, slinging his leg back off Even’s lap and landing disgruntledly on his side in the dirt again. Magnus said something under his breath about young wild ones in love and Isak squinted at the starry night sky and tried to will away the sparks ricocheting up and down his spine.

“Fuck.”

“I’m still dizzy,” Even whined up at the sky, all precious and pouty and drunk and Isak put a hand on his own chest, other one waving around in the air.

“Kissing me isn’t gonna help with that, sorry.”

“Cocky bastard,” Even shot back, eyes twinkling at him prettier than all those stars they were under. Isak was just about to crawl the fuck back over there and kiss him until the sun rose with half the burning beauty of that enchanting boy only Even’s head rolled on the grass again, registering someone above him. Paying attention to someone besides Isak.

He stuck out his bottom lip, watching the beautiful jawline tip up, strong heavy hand lifting to one that wasn’t his. It was Magnus, sticking out a hand to help him back up and Even clapped it, groaning all the way up to his feet.

Jonas put both his hands under Isak’s arms and hauled him upright, making him bitch loudly and turn sloppily around, two hands waving Jonas off as he tutted. Way to make him not look cool.

“I’m fine, I’m fine.”

“I’m fine too,” Even insisted, pushing Magnus gently off him and taking a stumbling step forward, holding out his hand in Isak’s general direction.

Actually it was closer to Jonas than Isak but that was fine, Isak knew what he was talking about.

“Me? You wanna hold my hand?” Isak lifted his eyebrows, head dipping and shaking a little as the playground tipped.

“Jaaa,” Even insisted, making a grabby hand at him.

“You’re so sweet,” he cooed back, weaving his fingers in between Even’s and letting himself be tugged up to his side. “Okay, back to the game. Let’s go back to the circle spot...where did Jonas go?”

“I’m right here, fucknut.”

“Oh! Rude. It’s your turn, Jo-Jo, let’s go.”

They were all really mature and really wasted at this point, which was the only excuse they had for the next one. Well that and Magnus had found a really cool looking stick.

Which was how Jonas got dared to light said stick dipped in whiskey on fire and climb up to the highest point of the jungle gym with this flaming dangerous fireball on wood and somehow lodge it securely to the top, shoving it in a crevice and managing, remarkably, not to light either himself or the jungle gym on fire.

The boys all cheered wildly loudly, doubling as Jonas pulled a pocket-knife out of his pocket and carved all of their initials into the wooden post he was perched on, at the top of the dome above the
highest slide.

“Fuck society!” He shouted, face all lit up with the flames slowly eating away at the burning stick and Isak laughed, tipping to the side.

“That’s my boy, hasn’t changed one...fuckin’ bit.”

Jonas carved a little heart at the final V, his and Isak’s last, before the knife was being flipped back closed and tossed down to the ground, according to Mahdi’s sincere insistence.

Then their triumpher was hopping down to the top platform, finally safe on two feet as he swept out an arm and bent down dramatically into a low bow.

“Jo-nas! Jo-nas!”

It was basically a whole night filled with hoodlum wonderfulness, topped off with fire to boot and then Jonas was popping upright from his bow and stumbling sideways, catching himself just in time before he tumbled off the side.

There was a significant amount of laughter and Jonas bowed again, using another wooden plank to launch himself down the straight metal slide. Isak’s heart kinda stopped in his chest for the moment it took between him being in the air and landing hard on the slide, swooping down and taking his stomach with it.

Then Jonas was stumbling into the dirt, spinning around, shaking his head and sending dark curls tumbling everywhere and everything was beautiful again.

“Jesus fuck, sliding while intoxicated--”

“I wanna try the tunnel slide,” Isak gasped, scrambling upright and dropping his jaw at the idea. One hand reaching out and making vague motions at the pile of waiting boys. “Mahdi, come with me.”

Mahdi sighed and stood, giving the rest of them a look that was probably some mix between save me and why me but they were going to have a super duper fantastic time. Isak grabbed his hand and dragged him for the steps. He was drunk enough to know that climbing up the little rock wall was going to mean certain death for them both.

Actually, they almost both died climbing up stairs to the platform with the swirling tunnel slide, but that was alright, they eventually made it.

“You first, I’ll hold onto you.”

“Why me?”

“Because you’re sober and I am Not.”

Mahdi laughed, stooping down and waiting at the entrance of the slide while Isak got situated behind him, squeezing his cushioned jacketed waist tight.

“Ready?”

“Yes.”

A hard push off and they were dropping into swirling, pitch black space with ridges that were trying to destroy his beautiful ass.
Isak screamed like a four year old the entire way down, only they were going so fast that when the slide finally dumped back out into the dirt they got dumped, literally. Mahdi stumbled and caught himself before he face-planted, but Isak wasn’t so lucky.

He landed hard on the chilled ground, barely missing his tailbone, tipping sideways and groaning. Loudly.

“I’m gonna have bruise-seees.”

“You always have bruises,” Magnus shouted at him and Isak pushed himself in some vague direction of upright, pointing a tipsy finger in the direction of the laughing boys.

“I do.”

“Hey Jonas,” Even called, blinking numbly as Jonas tipped over overwhelmed, looking wide-eyed at the very loud Even who was sitting right beside him. “Oh. Hi.”

“Hi.”

“I bet I can swing higher than you.”

“You’re...fuckin’ on.”

They almost broke the fucking swing set. Even had really really long legs and Jonas had enough muscle mass that the entire A-frame was jumping around, jolting with every high point of one of their swings, basically threatening to launch them into outer space.

At one point in their mad swinging - seriously, someone was going to wrap themselves all the way around, was that possible? - the swings somehow aligned, both of them pushing back at the same time, soaring up with their feet kicking in tandem, and right back up high again.

“Ha!” Jonas shouted, two hands on the chains as he tipped back to keep up with Long Legs. “Isak, I married your boyfriend first, get wrecked.”

“Magnus, can you believe this? What a fuckin’ poser.”

“Oh fuck, look at that, we’re divorced,” Even made an exaggerated pouty face, pushing off extra hard so their swings didn’t line up anymore.

“Bastard,” Jonas shot back. “Okay, whoever can jump further.”

“You guys are gonna break your fucking ankles!” Mahdi shouted at them.

“On three.”

“No, on one.”

“Three, two--”

They both jumped and Jonas tried to duck and roll all fancy and just ended up catching the ground with his shoulders and tumbling over himself with a bumpy groan and Even ended up stumbling and almost face planting with the dirt, catching himself just in time but they were both laughing and Isak was giggling against Magnus’s shoulder.

“You’re really drunk,” Magnus told him and Isak patted his thigh.
“Mhm. Isn’t it so nice to be back home?”

“Home?”

“Like the Marshmallow song,” Isak told him and Magnus furrowed his eyebrows.

“Was there something in the Daniels or…”

“You know what I’m talking about! The Marshmello song, right guys?”

Nobody was paying attention to him, Jonas was too busy settling himself back on two feet, taking another sweeping, dramatic bow.

“I went higher, I won.”

Even’s mouth popped open.

“I went further, I won!”

“You both won,” Mahdi told them, then Jonas was shoving Even’s shoulder on their way back to the Sacred Circle.

Even stumbled a step or two and shoved him back, hard. It was Very Dominant, their weird little show of aggression or superiority or whatever and Isak just blinked softly at them, thinking about how nice Magnus’s shoulder was.

“Thanks?” Magnus was looking down at him weirdly and Isak cocked his head.

“Did I say that out loud?”

“Ja. You are fucking wasted.”

“Mmm. Hey Magnus, guess what.”

“What.”

“I think there’s a chance that Even and I are soulmates.”

“Oii, the forelsket’s got you hard.”

“Oh ho ho. I thought it’d be like, a temporary thing? But it’s not. It’s like...everytime I look at him, it’s just...forelsket all. over. again.”

“Jeez.”

He closed his eyes, nodding to himself as he leaned a little harder on Magnus’s shoulder.

“S’great though.”

Then Magnus jostled his arm, shaking Isak back upright.

“Isak, I wanna go down the slide with you.”

“I’m still bruised, but...okay, let’s go.”

Magnus offered a hand and Isak took it, nearly dragging him back down to the dirt then they were attempting to race to the playground, streetlit world fading beautiful and bright at the edges, creaking
empty swingset singing of their eternal legacy of youth.

“I’m going first this time, cause I’m not landing on my ass again.”

Only of course he did, and of course he bitched, and of course the boys all laughed and a dozen or so more stars were born in the sky.

On the bright side, Magnus also landed on his ass, narrowly avoiding smacking his head on the slide as they both fell backwards.

“Owww--”

“Jesus fuck, someone get me the alcohol, make the pain go awaaay.”

“That’s not how it works,” Magnus groaned and Isak flicked him off, dragging himself back up with a hand on the slide and the other pointing for the backpack.

“Race you.”

They all ended up kinda carrying each other back to the car sometime around one in the morning.

Everybody had stitches in their sides from laughing but most of their heads were spinning too much to care. Mahdi made them all stop in the parking lot and brush themselves off, because there was literally not one of them that wasn’t smudged with dirt, covered in grass, or both.

Even ruffled the grass out of Isak’s curls with his big hands and Isak squinched up his face and bitched about it, then he was reaching over to brush dirt off Magnus’s shoulder, pointing out the grass pieces sticking out of Jonas’s shoes.

“No one puke on the seats, that’s all I ask.” Mahdi helped everyone’s ducking head back into the car, Jonas and Magnus first, a whiny Isak next.

“Do I have to sit in the middle again? Can I lie down?”

They passed him off from Mahdi’s hands to Magnus’s to Jonas’s, who licked his thumb and smudged at a streak of dirt on Isak’s cheekbone.

“Yeah you can lie down, if Mahdi drives careful.”

“I’ll drive careful,” he promised, swinging into the driver’s seat. Even closed the passenger door, shooting a wayyy affectionate look over his shoulder.

“Good, that’s precious cargo.”

“You’re...precious,” Isak slurred back, eyes slipping closed as he tucked Jonas’s arm over his chest.

“Guys this was so fun, why don’t we do more shit like this like all the time.”

“Because you have bruises and you’re gonna wake up tomorrow ready to kill everyone?” Magnus offered.

“Nuh uh,” Isak countered, bumping Magnus’s stomach with his knee to prove his point. Because that obviously would prove his point.

“Speaking of which, is there water up front?” Jonas’s voice sounded all deep from down here with his ear against his stomach.
Isak squinted open his eyes in time to see Even lean over from the front, passing back a bottle.

Jonas had a hand in Isak’s hair and Even had a funny look on his face, then the hand in his hair was sliding to the back of his neck, lifting him up while Isak let his head flop back dramatically against Jonas’s strong fingers.

“Ughhh.”

“C’mon Iska, sit up.” Jonas propped him upright, cushioning hand between the back of his head and the cold window as he held the water up to Isak’s lips.

“Iska...fuck you.” Head tipping to the side, open water bottle chasing after his mouth. Jonas tried to make him drink and Isak moved his head again, dodging and nearly making it spill. Whoops.

“Cut it out.”

He squinched up his nose, groaning because he didn’t wanna sit here and be fed like a baby then Jonas took his chin and gave him The Look™ so Isak sighed and opened his mouth.

“You’re a fucking hassle,” Magnus told him, fondly he was pretty sure, tapping his ankle with it. This car was so much better when he wasn’t sitting in the middle. Why couldn’t he sit on everyone’s laps all the time.

Jonas didn’t let the bottle leave his mouth until the water was all gone and Isak felt approximately like a two year old but whatever, didn’t have much of a choice. So he drank it all, then finally Jonas released him from hell and tossed the empty bottle back up front.

“Why am I always the drunkest,” Isak whined, rolling his head on the window as Even passed Magnus another water bottle for him and Jonas to split.

“Cause you have zero meat on your bones?” Mahdi offered from the front, flicking on his blinker before taking them very carefully and smoothly around a turn.


“I’m not tiny, you’re drunk,” Jonas informed him. Even snickered up front and Isak licked his lips, watching the little laugh curving up Even’s profile. He was so fucking pretty. Even couldn’t see him from up there. Shame.

Then he was rolling his head on the window to look back at Jonas, who had his eyebrows raised at Isak. It was a very different eyebrow raise than the kind Even did. Even’s were all signature and cute and Jonas was just looking at him judgy and Knowing.

“You were always taller than me, what happened,” Isak complained, pouting and sinking down the window a little.

“I don’t fucking know kid, you kept growing without me.”

“Gotta cut that shit out,” Isak said, sliding all the way down and hopping a little to land back on Magnus’s thigh, making him groan then he was laying back down comfortably in Jonas’s lap, smiling softly as the hand returned to petting his hair.


The rest of the car was quiet.
Even looked out the window at the dancing lights of golden Oslo below them and watched the world go by.

Chapter End Notes

quote from Paris by Chainsmokers

This is one of my favorite chapters. This is gonna be that chapter you come back and read for nostalgia and good times after the upcoming weeks okay.

Does the title mean bow like big red bow or bow like taking a bow after you light a stick on fire the answer is both.

Forelsket: an untranslatable Norwegian word meaning the euphoria of falling in love.

The song that Even listens to in the short little walk home scene is Special Needs by Placebo, I’m 98% sure he’d know it and obsess over it

Come obsess with me, let's talk theories and comments I love you guys. Seriously.

See you all on Saturday! xx
Birthday Parties and Apartments

Chapter Notes

Happy Birthday Even Bech Næsheim the sunlight of our universe

First of all, I have to warn you that this is the longest chapter I’ve ever written for this fic, but I’ve also cut everything I could without cutting content, so.

Second of all, there is a giant chunk of this chapter that a lot of you should be skipping. It’s bracketed between ***’s, and it’s wild sex. Like, if you have at any point ever been uncomfortable reading a previous sex scene in this fic, don’t read it. It’s kinky, ft Edging and dom/sub undertones, and it’s rough, to the point of someone being in temporary pain (don’t worry, it’s fixed after) so if that’s not your cup of tea, please do not read it. Please.

This sex is not the fluffy kind, it’s realistic, and I won’t apologize for writing realistically. However, if you have nothing against sex or edging or rough kinkiness, fucking go for it, and enjoy. It’s like. 8k.

**Warnings:** kinky sex, intoxication, and crying - all three unrelated. And manipulative parents thrown in to boot.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lørdag, 02:12
11.02.17

Mahdi dropped them off on the curb Friday night, shouting at them to be safe dammit and not fall down the stairs or some shit.

Even wrapped an arm around Isak’s waist, shot the fancy silver car a thumbs up, and pulled his boyfriend for the door. He had to dig through Isak’s pockets to find the keys, during which Isak slumped against his collarbone and mumbled some shit about Even getting in his pants but they were both wayyy too drunk for that.

But he eventually found keys, letting them both inside and taking a woozy second to lock the door behind him, then he was dragging a bitchy stumbling boyfriend up the stairs with him and somehow wrestled the other door open too.

The lights were all off and the place looked empty, but Isak was still bitching so Even shushed him, trying to kick off both their shoes.

“Hey, cut it out, I can take off my own da--”

“Shh! You’re gonna wake up your roommates.”

“Don’t fuckin’ care, s’not like they don’t wake up me--”
Even clapped a hand over Isak’s mouth before he could think to not to.

Isak’s knees lowkey gave out then Even was cursing, barely covering the moan against his hand as he herded Isak through the kitchen and down the hall. Kicking himself mentally because now he not only had a noisy fussy boyfriend, he had a noisy fussy really turned on boyfriend.

Who apparently couldn’t stop whimpering, practically boneless as Even all but dragged him down the hallway.

Then they were finally, eventually, safe in Isak’s room. He let go of Isak’s mouth and Isak whined, reaching grabby hands for him again. Even put up an unsteady hand, no, room spinning at the corners.

“Another time, baby.”

“But I want you nooww.”

“You want sleep,” Even corrected, unbuttoning Isak’s jeans and wiggling them down over his ass.

“With you.” Isak tipped into him and Even kissed the side of his face, holding the back of his head for a moment. Fuck.

Then he was pushing a stumbling, half undressed Isak onto his bed, because wrestling him out of his grass-stained jeans was way easier when he wasn’t leaning all over him.

Even nearly fell trying to wrestle Isak’s jeans off but he somehow managed it, hopping out of his own too and almost crashing into the bookshelf. Then he got his shirt tossed off and plopped down to the mattress, bouncing way too many times, and lifted Isak’s arms up to tug his shirt over his curls too.

There were still some dirt smudges along his hands and neck but this was as damn good as it was gonna get.

So he pressed a hard kiss to Isak’s cheek - or at least aimed for his cheek, it ended up kinda between his jaw and ear, but Isak fell sideways with it either way.

Then they were tangling up in each other, half covered in the sheets, clothes strewn and mouths overlapping for the brief moment they had enough brain power left to. Then brain power cut entirely and Even squeezed warm bare skin and they both slipped into the dark.

Ten minutes after they’d been dropped off at the curb and they were passing out wasted and half naked on top of each other.

Which was kinda a hell of a successful night if you asked him.

Lørdag, 08:44
11.02.17

Saturday morning Isak woke up with a headache and Even woke up painfree. He’d had a lot of water and Isak apparently hated himself cause he’d only had the one bottle, so.

Still though, Even kissed his neck and held his hand the whole way into the kitchen, so he wasn't
feeling that terrible.

The kitchen that currently had really bright lights on, and a stove on, and three people packed in already.

“When am I supposed to flip it?”

“When it’s golden brown, this is not that hard, Linn.”

“Can't see the other side, how’m I spos’d to know when it's golden brown…”

“Good morn’,” Even greeted everyone way too brightly and Isak trailed grumpily behind him, still latched onto his hand.

“Boys! You're awake. We're making pancakes.” Noora gave them a bright smile and Eskild huffed.

“Attemp廷g to make pancakes.”

“I can see that…” Even glanced at the finished stack, which was thankfully only like three, then the batter that Noora was stirring and decided it was his duty to step in and rescue them all or something.

“The fuck is your consistency?” Even passed a sleepy Isak off into Noora’s surprised arms, squinting at the lights and grabbing milk from the fridge.

Isak squinted up at Noora from the shoulder he’d landed on. She peered down right back.

“You’re not Even. You’re very small.”

“Good to see you too,” she offered, patting a hand on top of his curls.

He groaned vaguely and rolled his head off her shoulder, shuffling free and bumping right into Eskild, who was pressing a full glass of water into his hand.

Why did everyone always act like this when he was drunk and/or hungover.

“Act like what, babe,” Even asked, not looking up from the batter he was fixing and Isak blinked against the stupid fucking bright lights until he figured out Even wasn't telepathic, he'd just mumbled it under his breath.

A hand patted his shoulder and Isak rubbed the backs of his hands over his eyes.

“Take care of me,” he bitched, pouting as he narrowed his eyes at Eskild.

“We loooveee you,” Noora teased all smiley and cute and Isak was way too grumpy for this.

“I love him,” Isak grumbled back, then he was wrapping his arms around Even’s stomach, curling over his warm spine and slipping right into place. Melting soft, nose pressing to the side, clinging affectionate with how damn sleepy he was.

It was just really fucking early okay, he didn't deserve this shit.

“Awww.”

They were all looking between each other - God knows what look Even was giving over his shoulder - and Noora clasped her hands, cooing at them.
Isak ignored them, soaking in the steady slow of Even’s back expanding against his chest, the calm breathing and warm proximity that was gonna send him right back to sleep.

Unfortunately, he eventually woke up, after Eskild shoved three more glasses of water at him until he had to go pee, and actually washed his face and fixed his hair and brushed his teeth - and okay, hopped in a quick shower but there was dirt on his ankles, no thank you - while he was in there.

The headache was basically gone, and the sleepiness was too, so now he was just hungry and vaguely bitchy.

He wandered back into the kitchen unfortunately refreshed, but everyone was already in the living room.

They were eating breakfast in front of the TV, turned quietly to some news channel everyone was chatting over.

Even was squished between Eskild and Noora, Linn was on the other couch, all stretched out and Isak joined her, plopping down on the other end with his plate of pancakes, stretching out his legs alongside Linn’s and taking up as much room as possible.

“...so you know how it's my birthday tomorrow?”

“Yes,” Isak said, stuffing a piece of pancake in his mouth as everyone else freaked out, including Linn, who chewed at him all surprised.

“No way.”

“Mnhm.”

“So you'll be turning...20, right?” Eskild was way enthusiastic and Isak sighed at his maple syrup.

“Yes, twenty.”

“Wow, you're gonna be so old.” Linn said dully and Isak raised an eyebrow. “Time is a construct of society.”

Noora and her clapping hands and cheery red-lipped smile interrupted all bright again.

“Oh Isak, he's gonna be a real adult, no teen left. What a catch.” She batted her lashes all dreamily.

“He's mine.” Isak narrowed his eyes and took a threatening bite of pancake.

“Anyways. It's my birthday tomorrow, and there was kinda a gift I had in mind, from all of you?”

“Oh?”

Yeah, Isak could echo the surprised oh. Even had been pretty adamant on not wanting gifts, so this was kinda hella surprising.

“Mnhm. Although actually I'd like to have it today, because we've already got plans for tomorrow.”

“And what's that?” Noora asked, leaning on the armrest of the couch with a pretty smile. Even turned to the side, giving her an even prettier one in return, eyebrows shooting up with it.

“An afternoon in the apartment with just the two of us, no interruptions.”
“Ooooo,” Eskild said.

Oh shit, Linn’s face said.

Oh my, said Noora’s.

And Isak was on his end of the couch trying to swallow his pancake without dying.

“Jesus fuck.”

An afternoon in the apartment with just the two of them. Linn nudged his leg with hers.

“If I were you I’d get seconds. You're gonna need the energy.”

Everyone snickered but that was a good fucking point. Isak climbed off the couch and headed straight for the kitchen.

All the snickers turned to laughs. He wasn't fucking around though, he knew what a workout fucking for an hour was, let alone a goddamn afternoon.

“...really would,” Even was saying as Isak got back with three more pancakes.

“We can definitely do that,” Noora assured him.

“The whole apartment, kinky,” Eskild gave a suggestive little shimmy and a super suggestive smile with it.

Isak flicked him off and settled back into the couch.

“If they have sex on the tables or kitchen counters, can we make them wipe it down?” Linn made a vaguely disturbed face. “People eat there.”

“Oh we’ll deep clean the whole place tomorrow, don't worry.”

Noora nodded reassuringly and Even was trying not to giggle and Isak was beet red, entirely focused on carving up his pancake.

“I've heard couch sex is harder than it looks,” Noora offered and Isak lifted a bite, chewing as he spoke around it.

“It's really not.”

Even threw his head back in a bright crinkling laugh, lighting up the whole room as Isak fought the triumphant little grin and Eskild jumped up dramatically, pointing at the couches.

“Which one? This one? That one?”

Isak lifted an eyebrow, stabbing another bite and popping it in his mouth.

“Both.”

The laughter that erupted was probably just as much at Eskild’s shocked scandalized reaction as it was to Isak’s answer, everyone all happy and amused.

It was still too early for this shit, honestly, but it was nice to just chill with his roommates like this. Making everybody laugh and lean into each other in the early morning light over warm good
homemade food.

Isak smiled to himself and Linn kneed his knee.

“Was I home?”

“I don't think so?” Isak offered. “Maybe, honestly.”

“Good thing I never leave my room.” She leaned forward and waved a fork at his plate. He held it out for her to stab an uneaten half of pancake.

“Well. Either way, none of us will be home today, so. Be as loud and kinky as you want.” Eskild clapped his hands and gave them both a happy bright ridiculous smile.

“We will be,” Even replied all simple and sweet. Fuck.

“No like Isak's not already rather...vocal.”

Eskild and the girls all gave him knowing looks and Isak glared at the entire room, furniture and pancakes included.

“I’m not that loud, dammit.”

“Oh we’ll see about that.” Even tugged his fork out from between his teeth, eyes on Isak the entire time, eyebrows shooting up suggestive as the fork popped clean.

Isak's eyes went wide and he looked down at his plate very pointedly.

“Oh my,” Eskild suggested and yeah, oh my, what the fuck.

Noora tapped a finger over her mouth, looking between them both and Isak was not gonna lift his eyes up from his plate, thank you very much.

“Hm, guys we should go soon, ja?”

“We've got breakfast cleanup,” Even offered and Isak was still eating his, dammit, he was feeling wildly unprepared right now and these pancakes were the only things that weren’t teasing him for being loud or making suggestive-ass faces at him from across the room.

Then his only other ally pushed up regretfully from the couch, leaving his legs cold and his heart pounding.

“I’ll go get a coat.” Fuck, Linn, come back--

“What time will it be safe to come home by?” Eskild spun around to ask over his shoulder and Isak was watching the scene from under his lashes, pretending not to pay attention so he could maybe chill the fuck out for a second.

Even chewed his cheek for a moment, glancing over at Isak, eyes sweeping all the way down his body before he looked back up at Eskild.

“Like...18:00.”

Isak choked on his pancake.

That was literally….eight fucking hours from now.
He didn't stop choking and Linn had to grab him a glass of orange juice because the rest of them were too busy laughing too hard. Not that Linn wasn’t laughing too, she just also happened to look sorry for him.

He was motherfucking far from sorry for himself.

No, he was just pretty sure he might pass out before everyone got out the door.

Eight hours. With Even. Alone. In the apartment. When he’d been looking at Isak like that.

Hahahah, yeah, no, he was probably gonna die before he managed to get his clothes off.

But then all his roommates were waving and bundling up and heading out the door.

Okay. He could be chill.

***

The lock clicked shut and Even turned around. Isak got off the couch. Even was watching him and Isak swallowed, gathering the plates in the living room. Taking them as calmly as he could for the kitchen.

It was deadly quiet and Isak was physically fucking tripping over the tension right now.

His heart was pounding out of his chest, then Even actually appeared, coming into the kitchen behind him. One hand on the counter by Isak's hip as he reached around him and set a glass in the sink.

They weren't touching yet and Isak was already breathing hard.

Jesus fuck he'd never been more attuned to Even’s body in his life, the heartbeat moving behind him, the heat of his skin just inches away. The silence as he swallowed, throat bobbing he could feel it, he was facing the other direction and he could feel it.

Also lowkey happened to be so hard he was pressed against the cabinets, eyes shut, trying to breathe.

He nearly jumped out of his skin when Even’s voice lifted, rumbling behind him.

“No pressure, babe, we can go watch a movie, or nap or something.” Soft, low. Sweet. “I just wanted to be alone with you.”

Isak hummed and that was very romantic and all but he couldn't really think from how much his body was like, throbbing. Even’s warmth, this empty apartment, no obligations for hours, the look he'd given Isak when the door shut.

Jesus fuck. Jesus fucking Christ he was completely frozen and he could not breathe.

“We don't have to if you don't want to--”

“God I want to,” Isak breathed and Even paused, shifting on his feet behind him. Isak's mouth was open now and he ducked his head, swallowing tight trying to make his lungs work but his fingers were curling in the counter.

“Yeah?”

Deep and interested.
A hand swept slow over the back of his neck, nails skirting the line of his curls and sending waves of sparks down his spine.

“Nå,” Isak gasped and Even span him around so fucking fast, pressing hard against his hips, slamming him into the counter.

Stupid pretty eyebrows up at how hard Isak was already but he didn't fucking care, head falling back as his eyes fluttered closed and Even grinded forward slow, making a filthy desperate moan tumble past Isak's lips.

That's as far as they got in the teasing before Even was latching two hands on Isak's jaw and shoving his tongue into his mouth.

Which would’ve been enough to destroy him if he weren’t so fucking wound up, but surprise, he was so fucking wound up from the past twenty minutes that when Even fucking grabbed him like that he just...crumbled. Knees giving out as he whimpered into Even’s mouth, clinging weakly to his biceps, begging.

One of Even’s hands tipped his head up harder and the other hoisted his thigh up over Even’s hipbone, grinding closer and keeping him from falling all in one.

Okay apparently Even was attempting to make him come in his pants like a fucking teenager that was fine everything was so fine he was so dizzy he couldn't really tell which way was upright as his head tilted against Even’s mouth, pressing deeper, tongue slipping wet over his while it rained fire through his entire torso.

Even tasted like maple syrup and fireworks and Isak was melting.

Their mouths broke apart for gasping oxygen and the broken sound Isak made was entirely involuntary, only now Even was squeezing his thigh tight enough to bruise, looking at him in mouth-parted awe.

“Fuck,” he whispered and Isak was gonna fucking burst.

“Please,” he begged.

It happened so fast he barely had time to get his arms around Even’s neck before his other thigh was scooped up then he was being swung around and dumped onto the kitchen table.

He wasn't sure it would hold his weight but considering that he just collided with it hard and it hadn't broken yet, clearly, it could handle the weight.

That made one of them cause Isak couldn't handle a single bit of the weight, the heat dragging his sweats off right now, he was already losing it to the hands stripping him with this fucking urgency.

Sweats tossed aside, grabbing the bottom of Isak's shirt and tugging it off over his head, then Even was yanking off his boxers and Isak was surging up against him, kissing his mouth and skidding his knees up Even’s hips and the table was cold and fucking hard and strange beneath his bare ass but he was also fucking hard so.

“Fuck, you're starving for it, aren't you?” Even kissed loose sloppy kisses down his neck, still completely clothed while Isak was here on the table stark naked and it was making his head spin, fingernails digging into Even’s shoulders, mouth filled with little moans and opened too wide to reply.
Besides yes. Because yes yes yes yes.

“You want it, baby?” A heated mouth taunted, hand wrapping around to slide up his inner thigh, fingers curling against sensitive soft skin as he danced in closer between Isak’s spread legs.

“Fuck, Even,” Isak managed and Even pressed his mouth over Isak’s ear, hard and possessive, damp lips catching over his skin.

“Tell me how bad you want it.”

Isak keened but Even’s touch was getting lighter and lighter and god he didn’t want it, he fucking needed it or he was gonna actually combust and Noora’s deep clean tomorrow was gonna be for Isak-pieces instead.

“Ba-by--”

“Tell me.”

Low, warning, a step away from stepping away, fingerprints leaving indentations in his inner thighs and yeah, he fucking broke.

“I want it I want it I want you so bad please Even please baby please--”

A hand shoved his chest, other catching his head just in time before it slammed onto the table, then it was slipping free to spread his legs, tug them hard for the edge of the table as Even dropped to his knees and shoved his tongue in Isak's ass.

Isak lifted his head, jaw dropped and sound caught entirely in his throat as his stomach muscles curled his hips up, angling Even’s tongue deeper. Eyes rolling back in his head then his head was knocking back against the table and puckered lips sucked hard, all the pressure knocking the block right out of his throat.

“Even!! Fuck fuck fuck, baby fuck-- ah ahhhh--”

Hands scrambling for purchase, one of them gripping the edge of the table and the other darting down for a handful of Even’s fluffy bedhead hair, fisting tight.

“Fuck fuck fuck fuck--”

It was so fucking much, way too fucking much. Even kneeling there on the tiles, eating him out at the kitchen table, this was.

Actually not how he'd pictured spending his Saturday.

Then there were fingers pushing inside him with the tongue and Isak was kinda losing his mind.

This was Even, who wanted for his birthday to be alone with Isak and now here he was stripped out naked for him and Even was licking and curling his fingers inside him like this was a gift for him instead of Isak.

Like Isak was the only thing he ever fucking wanted. Like pressing into his body was it, like Isak spread out for him on the table like this was the only gift he ever needed and fuck, _fuck_, he’d never been so fucking emotional with a tongue in his ass before.

It was just that. He didn’t get treated like this, like something...precious, something to long for, besides with Even, Even treated him like this and held him like this and pried open his body with his
fingers like this and fucking did that stupid fucking thing with his tongue that was literally eating Isak up like this and he just.

It was a lot, all of it was a lot and Even was so far down, way on the other side of the world while Isak gasped up at the blank white ceiling and this was incredible but the only anchor he had was his hand in Even’s hair and he was kinda falling apart, he needed Even to be right here up here right now he was way way too far away.

“Please. Please, please, I need you inside me Even, please.”

A pretty mouth popped off, pressing a kiss to the smooth curve of a cheek and looking up at Isak as he ran his fingertips softly around the most fucking sensitive place in his body.

“What’s that, baby?

“Even please,” he gasped and he was so worked up there were tears on his lashes. “Please I need you inside me I need you I need you--”

“Shh, shh baby it’s okay, I’m right here, I’m right here.” A solid hand sliding up Isak’s chest, holding over his pounding heart as Isak breathed and breathed and tried to stop his legs from trembling so much.

Even was fishing a condom and lube out of his jean pockets but Isak didn’t have time for that, sex had never been like this, he had no idea what to fucking do and he needed some damn comfort, dammit.

“Kiss me,” Isak breathed and Even did, bending in half over the table to kiss him on the mouth. And he kissed him the same way he’d twisted his mouth down there.

Isak, up on a pedestal.

Their mouths were fucking warm, Christ, and Even tasted like him, all over the slip of his tongue.

Strong arms flexing as his shirt tugged off over his head, their lips breaking apart for the briefest moment then his mouth was landing back down hard, kissing Isak again as he unbuttoned his jeans.

It was uncoordinated and sloppy as he tried to get undressed and still kiss him, still give him something to hold onto while he tried to wiggle out of his clothes and hopped around on one foot with his lips on Isak’s. It was just so sweet, Even was so fucking sweet Isak couldn't help the curling smile against his mouth.

He got a crinkled one in return, lips pecking together as he finally toed his boxers aside.

Light light blue glancing down to roll the condom on and Isak grabbed the back of his head, locked on that beautiful gaze.

“Hey, keep kissing me.”

He wasn’t done yet, meant it in every drop of heat in the gaze, parted lips wavering gravity between their mouths. Even huffed amused, cute and leaned down to kiss him again.

Isak slid his tongue into Even’s mouth and arched up against all this blank air above him, hard surface below. Fingers curling hard enough in the back of Even’s neck their mouths broke apart on a gasp.
“Fuck. You ready?”

“Always,” he collapsed. Even circled around the table, a hand running down Isak’s bare chest, catching one of his thighs and dragging him back for the edge.

“I hope so, cause I’ve got more plans than this table.”

“Fuck,” Isak said to the ceiling. Lubed up fingers pressing back inside him for a moment, to check, the way he fucking knew Isak’s body like this Jesus fucking Christ, “Fuck.”

“Mnhm,” Even said back, then he was sliding inside and Isak didn’t really have words anymore.

His beautiful, strong, doting boyfriend fucked him into the table until all he could see was stars, until his whole spine was probably bruised from the damn surface, until he was keening and tightening up so much he couldn’t grip the sides of the table tight enough,

And that’s when Even stuttered a shaky breath and pulled out.

Isak made the most pained noise he’d literally ever made during sex and scrambled for him, to which Even put a hand on his chest, holding him down against the surface, own chest heaving as he tried to breathe.

“What the--”

“18:00, remember?” Even gasped and Isak’s jaw had never dropped further.

“Oh fuck that, I wanna--”

“My birthday,” Even tapped the inside of his thigh and Isak lowkey wailed, whipping his head on the table. That was not fucking fair.

“Baby please.”

“Oh we will, just not right here. We’ve got an entire apartment.”

He swooped low to press a kiss to the inside of Isak’s trembling knee and Isak fought the urge to scream.

He’d just fucking stopped.

“Where do you want me to carry you?”


Even caught the reference, a pretty smile blooming on his face and yeah, Isak was trying to be cute but he was mostly trying to breathe, he couldn’t believe Even just fucking did that to him, actually.

“Wherever it is, kiss me on the way.”

Even slid two fingers inside him and Isak’s mouth popped open.

“This isn't carrying, this isn't--”

Isak was so close to coming and Even just lifted his hips up, high enough Isak’s knees were about to land down next to his ears, table digging into the top of his spine as Even’s hand twisted inside him, taking about point three seconds to find his prostate, pads of his fingers rubbing fast.
“Fu u uck Evi Evi please--”

The angle was completely different with Isak up on a platform like this and he honestly could not fucking cognize any of this, just that he was about to hit his orgasm like a fucking train, feet kicking, eyes rolling back, and that’s when Even’s fingers slipped right out of him again.

Isak shouted fuck up at the ceiling.

“You’ll be fine,” Even told him, all fond, slowly lowering his hips back down, fingers still pressed over his entrance on the outside.

“Have you ever had a heartbeat in between your legs? A fucking heartbeat, Even.”

“I know, I can feel it.” He wiggled his fingers like Isak wasn’t fucking throbbing.

“Ughhhhhh.” Isak threw his head back against the table, only the dull thud didn’t do a damn thing to change the fact that he was shaking and Even wasn’t letting him have any.

“I can bend you over the counter,” Even suggested and Isak had never said ja faster in his life. Then Even was sliding him off the table and they were kissing and kissing again.

His legs weren’t being the most fucking cooperative, making him stumble a little then Even was wrapping around him and kissing him from behind, walking them both as raining sparks trickled through his bones.

Then there was a hand between his shoulderblades and the side of his face was on the counter,

Fucking Christ.

The heels of his hands skid across the smooth surface only he couldn’t find purchase and Even was still positively ruining him, so.

“Fuck, you’re beautiful,” Even murmured behind him and the flush that went up his chest was ridiculous, he was bent over the kitchen counter and making all these pitiful little sounds while Even shoved inside his body, this was really not what he would picture for the word beautiful.

Maybe, like, so hot he was gonna die, but.

The hand between his shoulderblades wasn’t holding him down very well, fingertips had gotten distracted, drawing little lines and sketches over his shoulderblades, hips slowed to roll instead of shove and this was ridiculous, he was being split like, in half, and there were tingles going down his legs from how goddamn soft Even was touching him.

“It’s n-not. Fair,” Isak managed, words shaky and squished against the counter. “You can’t. Can’t aauggghh, fuck, fuck me like this and still. Mmmrm draw on my fucking shoulders, Christ.”

The palm between his shoulderblades planted down hard, entire body rolling down his spine as Even bent over him to bite where he’d been drawing pretty pictures, smile behind his teeth as Isak gasped.

“No. Fair.” Bites and drawings and soft kisses and.

“You think there are rules here?” Even teased and the scoff would’ve been high pitched and breathy if Even hadn’t slammed into him with it.

“Ja???”
The body draped over his disappeared again, hand sliding soothingly down his spine, hips rolling up against him in a tight little circle.

“Fuck, fuck, faaaeen--”

A sharp sting to the side of his ass and Isak rolled his forehead on the counter, choked sound morphing into a moan as he pushed back against the hips trying to ruin his life.

Oh god.

“Between all the curses, you make the most beautiful noises.” Even’s fingertips traced over the side of his neck and Isak groaned into the counter.

“Mmmm. Mm baby you c-can’t…”

“Can’t what?”

“I’m gonna fucking come if--”

“Don’t, not on the cabinets.”

“You can’t just tell me not to c--”

Mouthing off, not the most clever thing to do right now apparently, cause the second he protested that it was not that simple, Even was pulling right back out again.

“Why, why, why--”

The hands on his hips spun him around and Isak was pretty sure he wasn’t much more than a ragdoll right now, limbs deadweight, everything deadweight as Even tipped up his face and kissed him deep. Deep enough his head was spinning and his toes were curling, vision a little blurred at the edges when Even pulled back, thumb stroking fondly over his cheekbone.

“Ughh,” he offered, but everything was too dazed and pretty to do much but blink slow and drunk, make a vague sound as Even picked him up and set him down on the counter, cold and hard and real kinda waking his skin back up.

“Think you can hold onto the counter behind you?”

“Hmm?”

“I don’t know if I can prop you all the way yet.”

“I can...try,” he offered, then Even was rolling his hips forward and tugging him off the edge, sliding Isak right back into place on his cock.

Fuck.

To give him credit, he actually did try. Wasn’t his fault his arms gave out.

They kinda stumbled back against the counter, slipping apart again as their mouths crashed together and Even giggled and kissed him until he was way past dizzy, way too turned on to care that the arm thing didn’t work. Fuck it.

Literally the only thing he cared about was getting Even back inside him, fucking him, this was
absolutely ridiculous, actually.

“You wanna try the hallway?”

There was a hand on his face, a beautiful boy in front of him with his eyebrows up, head dipped, smile on his face, waiting for Isak to respond. Right.

“Mmmhm,” he managed, way high pitched. The hallway. As in the hallway to his bedroom? That hallway? Ohh. Ohh. Isak swallowed, making himself blink a few times, trying to slip back into reality and out of drunk on Even. Foreheads pressed together, a moment to manage the words.

“Up against the wall?”

“Yeah,” Even whispered, noses weaving. Then Isak was kissing him and kissing him and shivering like all over, couldn’t stop kissing him, definitely couldn’t stop shivering, especially now that Even’s hands were raking down his spine, around to his hips, bubbly and amused, kisses drawing off into loose, sticky pecks that were trying to drag his eyes shut with the shivers.

“We’re not even in the hallway yet.” Even smiled over his mouth and Isak wrapped two arms around his neck, squeezing bare hips between his knees, kissing the smile under the heat.

“Fight me, I’m excited.”

“How ’bout I fuck you instead?”

“Please.”

“Always so polite,” Even teased, hand shoving up through his curls and Isak rolled his head, mouth popping open, a moment’s pause before he managed to squint at Even and tell him very seriously,

“Fuck off.”

“Alright, go time.” Two arms hauled him off the counter, holding him pressed tight to Even’s chest as they swung into the hallway, then Even was slamming him into a wall and Isak was shoving his hands through Even’s hair, legs squeezing tight, mouths crashing together.

They’d made out up against this wall so many times but they always had to keep going and tumble into his bed, except today, today they crashed into the wall and Even was gonna fuck him against it and Isak was super chill if you didn’t count every cell in his body trembling or the litany of sounds he couldn’t stop muffling against Even’s mouth.

Until Even’s mouth disappeared and now he was whining and moaning against the open air as Even kissed down his neck, leaving bruises or little fires or cool wet spots that were making his entire being like shift through all of the elements, who fucking knew that was possible.

“You remember my promise to make you loud?”

“Ahhh. God. Fuck.”

Even’s head lifted, normally perfect swooping hair broken into bobbing strands, damp around his face as he held Isak’s gaze and Isak tried to keep his head above water. “Isak?”

“Ja, I do.”

“Don’t hold back for me, baby. I’ll know if you do.”
“Mmm. Okay.”

“I mean it.” Even kissed his mouth, guiding his hips, tip sliding just barely inside him, breaching the rim and making Isak’s mouth drop open. Choking over it. Light blue held his gaze, waiting, forcing Isak’s eyes back on him, held them as tight as he was holding Isak’s hips. “I’m gonna make you scream, and you're gonna blush like crazy after, but for now you're gonna beg for it.”

Isak was already kinda shaking, had already worked up enough of a sweat that he was damp to the touch, Even’s grip was gonna slip if he kept trembling but Even was looking at him like _that_ and Isak was being held up against a wall like a precious painting instead of a backalley screw.

“Mmhm.”

“Isak.”

“Yes, yeah.” He tipped his head back against the wall, closing his senses off before everything just. Dropped him. “Okay.”

“Look at me,” Even murmured, thumb rubbing his hip fondly. “Let me see those pretty eyes.”

Fuck.

“Ahhhm.” Isak rolled his head on the wall, prying open his eyes to peer down at Even, mouth puckered in a little pout. Even still wasn’t moving inside him. Fucking fuck.

He’d never been more turned on or frustrated in his life, Even was just barely inside him, waiting, holding him hard up against the wall, same intensity in his eyes as the first time he backed Isak into a wall to kiss him.

Fucking fuckity fuck fuck--

“You okay? Scale of one to ten.”

“What?” Isak lifted his head off the wall, shaking it a little, repeating the question in his head. Scale of one to ten. “Turned on? Eleven, I don't know how to handle this.”

“Emotional wellbeing,” Even corrected.

“Need you back inside me feel like I'm kinda losing it.” Rushed together way too honest - it being the world, his sanity, connection to reality - and Isak opened his mouth to take it back the moment he said it.

Only his open mouth was suddenly being covered by Even’s, kissing him into the wall and shoving inside to the hilt.

“Mmm _mm_--”

It felt precarious as hell, held up with his spine pressed hard and Even’s hands digging into his skin as he fucked up into him, hard and sure, kissing Isak through every inch of it until his chest was gonna burst.

Lips breaking free, gasping frantically as he shuddered, another round of shivers going down his spine from the lock Even had on his gaze.

“Now?”
“MmmMmgh.”

Weight shifted harder against the wall and a hand lifted for his jaw, popping Isak’s mouth back open for him, cheeky little smile before he was catching his thigh again, keeping him propped before they slid.

“What was that?”

“Ahh h I uh ah--”

“W-words, baby.”

“Uunnnhhh fuck fuuuuuck.”

Even rolled up into him and kissed his cheek, fond and sweet.

“Close enough. Emotional wellbeing?”

What the fuck made Even think he had enough brain power for that right now, he had no idea, but apparently Even knew him better than he knew himself because somehow, some part of his brain let him part his mouth over an intelligible number.

“Nine,” Isak gasped and the eyes on his flashed, Even’s pretty head cocking, hips shoving him up against the wall, arms straining to keep him up.

“What's missing?” Of course Isak gave him an almost perfect score and Even was focused on the damn one point.

“Too many emotions,” he managed tightly, sinking his fingers a little deeper into Even’s shoulders. The force fucking him into the wall slowed slightly, making him tip his head and let out a little cry. C’mon, c’mon.

“Overwhelmed?”

“Mmhm,” Isak nodded, a little rapidly, eyes closed.

“You wanna stop?”

He said it so fucking gentle and sincere and Isak had never been more upset to hear the soft kindness in that deep voice.

“Nei nei nei, please, don't stop, nei--”

“Okay, okay I won't. Can you look at me, sweetheart?”

Even wasn’t sure what he expected when Isak pried his eyes back open, but based on the way he was shaking, it wasn’t all that surprising the beautiful green eyes were just entirely glazed over.

Yeah, the kid was only seventeen, he was putting a lot on him emotionally and physically right now, pushing all those limits Isak didn’t even know he had, and god, to watch him crumble and beg for Even, but he was super not okay with stepping over a limit, no thank you.

“What's your name?” Even murmured and the hands on his shoulders tightened, the ankles locked behind his spine slipping across the sheen of sweat, digging into the top of his ass.

“I-Isak Val...Valtersen.”
“And what's mine?”

“Even. Even Even Even Even--” Blonde curls smushed and rearranged as Isak rolled his head against the wall, gasping with every push deeper.

“Tell me what you need.”

“Harder, harder, baby please.”

He obliged, arm muscles screaming, and his leg muscles were probably gonna like. Not work tomorrow, but that was fine, because Isak was scrambling for purchase on his skin, letting out a little shout that echoed down the hallway before the tumbling mantra.

“Oh god oh god god god god Even! Ah ahh ahH--”

Isak’s curls were bouncing with every thrust into his body, one of his hands slipping off its grip of Isak’s thigh, turning that pretty head to the side so Even could press in closer, sink his teeth into the pounding pulse.

“Fuck!!”

Splayed fingers digging in, keeping Isak’s head turned for him while Isak lost his grip entirely and Even fucked him into the wall hard enough the plaster could probably shake.

“Fuck ooooh ooh oooh god, fucking hell.”

They were pressed close enough the movement of every thrust was keeping Isak against the wall, so the hand shoving Isak’s face to the side slid down his neck, fingers digging in just a little, closing around his throat and the faded bruises from a few days ago, the oxygen Isak was barely grasping at anyways.

Glazed green rolled right back into his head, rasping through the shout.

“FUCK fuck fuck ah ahh ah ahh--”

The bob of Isak’s throat under his palm, then his grip was sliding around to the back of his neck and Even was pulling Isak into his chest, forward an inch off the wall to grip thighs tight, inhale all the oxygen left in this hallway, and bounce him.

Isak screamed, cry shoved against his neck, hauling up and down in open air, thighs so tight Even’s hips were gonna bruise, only the arms around him trembled too hard too fast, too much. Even slammed him back into the wall, one hand on his chest as he shoved inside rapid fire fast.

“Faen, yes yes yes fuck--”

Okay, it was him this time that was a shuddering second away from tensing up and losing it, how could he not when Isak was completely gone, completely wasted and begging for him.

“What's that, baby?” Barely managed the words, fingers sinking in hard to beautiful skin and Isak was way beyond the point of being embarrassed anymore.

“Oh oh ohhh please please harder please--”

Choking on it, squeezing Even with straining thighs and bruising fingertips as Isak tried to pull him in closer and yeah, okay, they had to slow it down right now or this was about to be over way faster than he’d planned.
It took a few breaths and stuttering thrusts to draw to a halt.

The moment he stopped Isak broke a little, letting out a sound some mix between a wail and a sob, heels scrambling over his skin to keep Even inside.

“Hey, hey, sweetheart I’m right here.” A desperate gasp for air. “I’m right here, just calm down baby, I’ve got you.”

Slowly rolled his hips inside, back and forth, drawing slow and steady as Isak panted, eyes closed, chest heaving, fingers still digging into Even’s biceps.

“I’ve got you. I’ve got you.”

Isak was rocking down against him, desperate enough he was sliding against the wall, mouth unable to close, clinging and needy and Even wanted to give him the fucking world, but his arms were probably gonna die if he had to hold him up three seconds longer, and it was gonna be hella unromantic the moment they both just collapsed to the floor, so.

“Can you walk?” He asked, breathy, barely together enough himself.

Isak popped his mouth open with a little smacking sound, eyebrows knit as lashes fluttered open.

“I can try,” he managed. And barely managed, at that. Honestly, he was pretty sure he couldn’t, he was pretty sure Even was going to have to carry him everywhere for the rest of their lives, which was completely fine with him.

But if Even wanted him to attempt to walk, he could try.

“That’s a good boy,” Even murmured, and he probably meant it in jest or some shit, but Isak melted against the wall, so.

“Well I can’t now.”

A bubbling, surprised laugh, eyes crinkling up for a moment as Even crowded him up against the wall, their open mouths overlapping again. Fuck, he was soft. Soft and warm and humming against Isak’s mouth.

Then Even was pulling back, foreheads still together as he whispered over Isak’s lips.

“Yes you can, you can be good for me, can’t you?”

Well actually, fucking yes, when Even put it that way. Isak could probably move a mountain or like actually lasso a fucking star or some shit.

He’d always thought that was the dumbest thing but here he was, here he fucking was.

So when Even slowly lowered his legs, placing his feet back on the ground, Isak sucked in as steady of a breath as he could manage, wobbling a little. Blowing the breath out through an “o.” He was chill, he could be chill.

Even’s arms were wrapping around his waist and tugging him in the direction of the kitchen again but if Isak pressed close enough, kissed him deep enough then maybe he could just...float wherever Even was taking him.

Even kissed him all the way into the living room, their bodies bumping, everything bright and on edge, on fire and terribly empty.
What a thing to get addicted to.

Then their mouths broke and Even cupped his jaw, searching his expression while Isak tried to flutter his eyes open, swallow against the pitiful sound in his throat.

God. He needed, he'd never felt so desperate in his entire goddamn life, needed Even inside him, surrounding him in every way possible and like now, please, now--

“Turn around and touch your toes.”

“Fuckkkk.”

Jesus fucking Christ. Okay, okay.

This was the same giggling boy who kissed him soft in his bed but he'd swear, right now, there was nothing but the heated suavity of James Dean floating across the courtyard, lips parted, positively gorgeous, entirely untouchable.

Only except now, he was more than touchable, hyper touchable, every cell of his body begging their connection and the heated look was the boy dancing across a blacklit room, cheekbones sharp enough to cut his skin, fucking him hard as he had up against the wall just now, except that the only thing locked was their gazes.

“Isak.”

“Ja,” he swallowed, then he was spinning.

Even’s hands held his hips tight as he turned, sucking in a breath before he bent over, blush shooting up his chest.

Even bumped up against him, lining up. He'd just slicked back up with more lube as they made their way through the kitchen so it was cold, hard cold against all the most exposed parts of him, trembling with it.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Isak hung his head, curls going fucking everywhere, then Even was sinking slow inside him and he scrambled to hold onto something besides his shaking calves, fingers curling round the edge of the coffee table.

He was never gonna be able to look at this coffee table the same again.

Was he already getting a little lightheaded as Even pushed slow back inside him? Why yes, he was, this was disorienting as fuck, and frankly most of the light headedness was probably from how fucking hard he was, so.

“You gonna be good for me?”

“Hva faen,” was all he managed, then Even’s hips were pressing against his ass and he didn't have the ability to make anymore words. Or sounds at all, actually.

Because yeah, they'd had sex at a lot of angles in their time together, but this was wildly deep. Like, it felt like Even was pushed between his ribs and into his throat kinda deep.

Even kicked his legs further apart and Isak was trying to fucking inhale but surprise, apparently he didn't know how to do that anymore.
One hand on his spine and the other on his hip, drawing back slow and Jesus fuck fuck fuck.

Then Even was shoving back in, little smoother, so fucking deep he yelped when they pressed flush again.

“Hold on, baby.”

Hold onto what, the coil so tight in his stomach he was trembling on the edge from one thrust inside? Hold onto the mental stability and emotional regulation he'd thrown out the window the moment he spread his legs? Hold onto the coffee table as his head hung and his boyfriend fucked into him hard enough his vision spotted black?

Then the gentle pushes inside went out the window, maybe the same one Isak lost his mind out of.

His entire body rocked, hard heat colliding deep enough his thrust closed, caught over any possible sound, tears jumping into his eyes fucking Christ.

For everything the first thrust jarred, the second knocked loose. Frozen, broken, then the next collision in his fucking sternum and his body remembered how to work again. Isak jolted with the force and cried out, loud.

“AahhhAHH!!”

Even froze instantly, pulling right back out and peering down at Isak, hand still on his hip.

“Are you okay?”

Isak couldn't breathe enough to reply to that, trembling. Even knocked his arms free of their death grip on the table, hauling him back upright; hand over his sternum unfolding him up against Even’s long body.

Isak tipped his head back, curls flattened against Even’s neck, eyes closed and mouth breathing open heavy.

“Isak? Are you hurt?”

Every muscle in his body was still taut, all wound up and kinda throbbing, all he wanted to do was press back against Even and fall apart but there was so much concern in the voice over his ear, in the body he was draped over.

“Isak?”

“Nei. It was just...really deep. Like painfully deep.”

“I'm so sorry,” Even whispered, hushed and hurt over his skin and Isak shook his head once, fingers sinking in against the thigh behind his.

“Nei, nei. I'm just trying not to like...come on the coffee table, hold on.” He blew a steady stream of air through another o, fluttering his eyes back open to the gaze on his face.

Even’s eyebrows were up at him and Isak settled back against his collarbone a little, letting his head roll as Even nosed down his jaw to place a soft lingering kiss to his neck.

The hand on his chest pressed him closer as Isak melted, legs trembling too much to hold all his weight.
“God. Never thought I’d find something that was too much.”

“It’s completely okay.”

“Yeah, yeah, I know it is I’m just. Ahh always used to asking for more but. Mm. Wow. Maybe one day, when I get a little better at this.”

“You’re incredible at this,” Even whispered, warm, sending about ten thousand tingles down his spine with it. “But you’ve gotta talk to me, okay? I don’t wanna hurt you.”

“I think the whole scream thing worked pretty well.”

“Isak, I’m serious.”

“Jaa, ja okay.” He rolled his head the other way on Even’s shoulder, looking up at him beneath hooded lids and tipping his chin up, waiting pouty for a kiss.

Even obliged, mouth slotting together, lips overlapping as they slid together wet and tugged apart. Affectionate hand slipping up to his neck, angle pressing deeper to slip back together again, breathing over each other’s tongues.

A wet pop on the break and Isak’s mouth hovered open over Even’s, nose squished against the side of his, blinking too slow to breath properly.

“Promise?”

“Mmhm. How’s baby, you’re bruising my fucking diaphragm, knock it off.”

Even laughed, bright and light and beautiful, thumb stroking over the skin of his neck, every sweep deciding the heartbeat beneath as Isak tipped up against him, drunk on the proximity, affection.

“I think that works,” Even told him, other hand skirting up Isak’s ribs. This was nice, really nice, but he was still trembling, still had all the rest of him that was kinda dying right now so.

Isak nuzzled back against that beautiful smile, arching up a little as he chased the sensation of Even’s touch skidding over his skin. Fuck. Starved.

“Hey, can you get back inside me?”

Even made a fond sound, fingers skirting every sensitive place on his chest as he pressed another soft kiss to Isak’s open mouth.

“How about the couch?”

“My legs are probably gonna give out if I try to ride you, honestly.”

The fingertips that’d reached his throat, tracing mesmerized slipped back down his chest, quicker now as he tipped Isak a little, mouth capturing his again, kissing him hard. Isak keened up into it and kissed back.

Then two strong arms were wrapping around his stomach, one hand sliding up his straining erection.

“Ahh, fucking--”

“C’mon. I’ve got an idea.”
Even laid them down sideways on the couch, Isak’s hitched up knee pressed to the edge of the cushions, Even behind him as he held Isak’s thigh, cradling his body to slide back inside.

“Unnnhh,” Isak melted into the cushions, grip tightening on Even’s forearm. “Fuck.”

A warm kiss to his shoulder and Even rolled them together, moving slow and easy inside him.

Fucking...leisurely, like he was petting and stroking Isak from the inside out. Okay, fuck.

Plastered against his back, close enough he could feel every clench of soft abs as his hips rolled slow, waves of deep and sweet.

“Mmm. Fuck, can we just stay like this forever?”

Even laughed into his skin, hips drawing out to sink back warm and steady and beautiful.

“I’m not kidding,” Isak told him, mouth parting over a quiet inhale as the hand on his thigh pushed it a little higher, sinking a little deeper. So fucking smooth.

Isak twisted his torso, leaning up over his shoulder to kiss Even’s mouth, making dancing hips roll up inside him a little harder.

“Agghhh ah ahh.”

“You want me to make you come like this?” Even pressed a kiss to the side of his face and Isak let his head tip with it, eyes slipping closed to drown in the heat gifted slow into his muscles, bones.

“Mmm. Nei, save it. Let's just mmm. Enjoy this for a bit.”

A teasing nip of his ear to send chills down his rolling spine.

“Who knew you'd be so into edging.”

“The fuck is edging?”

“Nothing, don't worry about it,” Even giggled, kissing his cheek and Isak peered at him suspiciously over his shoulder, only he couldn't keep the squint up long when his mouth was dropping back open. Heavy gaze holding his while Even locked their bodies as tight and close as they could be again.

God god.

“Is edging where you don't let me orgasm?” Isak finally managed, taking a moment to close his eyes and compose himself. As composed as he could be with Even sliding in and out of him like this.

“Because yeah, it's hot as hell, but I also wanna strangle you.”

A smiling kiss pressed to his mouth and Isak tipped into it, letting the warmth flood.

“You should be thanking me,” a little peck against his lips. “I'm teaching you stamina.”

“...stamina ??? Excuse me, you're depriving me of my **natural right**.”

“But think of how much better it's gonna be when you do.”

“Mmm. Mmmugh okay.”

“Besides. We always take things so fast. We've got all day, we're young, might as well make it last.”
Forever and ever, more like it. Isak squeezed Even’s arm, tipping his head up for another kiss, mouth already open.

“Nothing we can’t make last,” he murmured against the smile. He was so far past caring how cheesy he sounded right now.

Another kiss and Isak moaned into it, eyes rolling back in his head as their mouths broke, shuddering at the roll of Even inside his body.

Fuck. The rest of all of his Saturday’s had a hell of a lot to live up to.

Isak laid his head back down on Even’s bicep and let his eyes flutter closed. Shifting muscle beneath his temple as Even bent his arm at the elbow to sink long fingers into his curls.

Cradled here in the quiet, safe cage of Even’s arms, still doting on every inch of their combined bodies.

“Fucking hell, Isak.”

Hushed, awed.

“Mm-mmm.”

“How long would you let me do this to you?” Even whispered, open-mouthed kiss to a bare shoulder curled up all comfortable. Isak adjusted his head a little, eyes still closed as he released some of the tension lingering in his muscles, relaxing into the cushions and Even’s cradle, the cock inside him.


Even was fucking him so soft and easy Isak was completely settled and comfy into it, he fucking meant it.

“Let’s see how close we can get to forever.”

It felt a lot closer than it was, Even managed to keep it up a damn while. Isak lowkey slipped into some parallel universe or some shit, the one where they actually did get to do this forever, lying there completely dazed and warm and gasping soft little breaths.

It probably could've lasted forever, if the friction wasn't building in his gut slow and steady enough to take him by surprise. They rocked steady and sweet until one of them - Isak - got a little too heated, grinding back against it with a moan.

Even teased him about his stamina but he was fucking seventeen, cut him a break. They had time to learn, lots of time to take it slow and easy but right now he really could go for some actual satisfaction thrown in with all the buildup.

“Fuck, fuck. Mmkay, let's go.” He tapped the side of Even’s ass, arching back against him, pressing a quick kiss to the bicep he'd been using for a pillow. “C’mon, give it to me.”

An amused huff and Even pulled up his hips, rocking back on his knees and pressing the side of Isak’s face into the couch cushions. Give it to me, he'd said, and oh did Even ever.

“Fuck fuck fuck!”
Yeah, okay, they'd reached the point where he wasn't playing games anymore, he'd been highkey dying for release for the past god knows how many fucking hours.

Isak got a hand wrapped around himself and Even knocked his grip right back off.

“Ahh, Even, please—”

Even pulled out.

“Fucking quit it! Oh my god!” Isak flopped onto his back, mouth open in offense as he looked up accusingly at his ridiculously pretty smug ass boyfriend.

“If you don’t get back inside me in the next five seconds so help me god—”

Even grabbed his foot and hopped off the couch, dragging him up to the far end of the cushions, ass up over the armrest, curving his body then he was holding onto Isak’s thighs and sinking back in.

“You’re fucking insatiable,” Even laughed brightly and Isak’s jaw dropped, making the most high pitched indignant sound he had.

“Excuse me??? You haven’t let me come yet!!”

Even giggled at him and Isak was still staring open mouthed up at him in offense. Insatiable?? Okay yes, but really????

“Okay okay,” Even conceded, shaking his head a little as he sunk in deep and leaned down over the side of the couch to kiss him.

Isak kissed him back hungry, craning up, ab muscles shaking from how much he was engaging them, begging.

And Even was crawling right back over him onto the couch, arm slipping under his waist, flipping them upright in one fluid motion then Isak was sinking into his lap and his lashes were fluttering.

Ohhh yes. This one was fucking intimate, he knew this one, he fucking loved this one.

His jaw dropped again as his hips did, seated with Even all the way inside him, possessive grip sliding over his hips to knead his ass, roll him out, back in.

Mouths tipping together, filled up to the brim, and yeah, his legs were too shaky to lift him up and ride Even properly but this was. Great with him.

Kinda wild to think about, that he was somebody who regularly had sex now, somebody who regularly stripped down and tangled with somebody like this, enough so to have favorites, to have a familiar chill go up his spine because with his eyes locked on Even’s like this, both of them so wrapped up and focused on each other, it burned something warm and stable in his chest. Sinking in deep, letting Even lift him up, all the power still in the grip on his heated skin.

Any way Even wanted him he'd take, but the desire felt fucking palpable when Even smiled against his mouth and thrust up inside him like this.

“Fuck, that’s good,” Isak tipped his head to the side and Even rolled in his lips over the smile, pushing Isak up to fall back down on his lap.

Isak moaned and moaned. Yes. Head rolling, forearms resting lazy on Even’s shoulders, rocking deep and warm while Even’s gaze flickered all over his face kinda moaned.
“I thought we were celebrating your birthday, not mine,” he murmured, eyes still closed, mouth tipped open.

“We are,” Even said and Isak shuddered as Even’s hands danced over his waist.

“Feels like mine.”

Heavy touch gathered him close, kissing his open mouth.

Isak kissed back, letting Even lift him up and down over his cock, riding tall and proud and pretty, wrists crossed loosely behind Even’s head.

Even pushed a curl off his forehead, hand draping down along the side of his face to cup his jaw, pure affection.

“Fuck, I love you.”

A little shudder went down Isak’s spine. He wet his lips, heart-pounding at the revelation. Too much to open his eyes yet.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, Isak. Yeah.”

His thighs were engaging, fuck how sore he was gonna be, and he rocked a little faster, desperate in Even’s lap.

“Ahh ah ah ah ah-- jeg elsker deg, faen--”

“You ready?”

“Am I ready? Am I-- You’re unbelievable, honestly, you spend fucking...hours pushing me to the edge and holding me there and not letting me fucking orgasm while I’m begging you and then you fucking ask if I’m ready of fucking course I’m fucking ready you assho--AHH!”

It was a damn good thing this apartment was empty.

“Even Even--”

Even had one hand on his cock, twisting, other holding Isak half a foot off the couch so he could fuck into him hard and rapid, legs shaking, mouth open and he was suspended for a moment then he was curling and shouting, everything twisting to burn bright.

And right before the drop Even was slamming them together, pulling him down hard, wrapped all the way around Isak, both hands on Isak’s face, foreheads pressed together as close and intimate as they could be, two final deep circles into his body.

“C’mon, Isak, come for me.”

The most anticipated moment of the goddamn day and he was barely conscious enough to register the look on Even’s face before it all just went like. White.

So he was gone, entire body tightening all at once and Even followed right after, mouth crashing into Isak’s only Isak wasn’t like, breathing, let alone in the capacity to kiss. The visible world fogged over at the edges, slowly dragging him further down through clouds and he just mouthed desperately at Even’s warmth before his mouth was popped permanently open, eyes rolling back in his head.
Collapsed down against the heavy chest and Even shuddered and squeezed exhausted arms around his dead limbs, heaving torso.

Isak was whimpering and moaning into the long stretch of Even’s bare neck and Even was just trying to fucking breathe, holding onto him tight, eyes closed to the world and nose tucked in damp, beautiful blonde curls.

***

So. Apparently not getting to orgasm for that fucking long meant that when he did he basically passed out. You learn new things every day.

It was past 13:00 by the time Isak blinked awake enough through the daze to recognize that they were sticky and exhausted and hadn’t actually left the couch yet.

Nice.

“How are you?” Even whispered and Isak smiled, soft, beautiful, a slow deep purple sunrise.

Then the pretty mouth just tipped up, lashes low as he held his chin up and waited for a kiss. He got one.

He got a lot more than one, actually.

Even kissed him slow all over, every drop of bare skin laid out on the couch, a few places which got him a raised eyebrow from Isak, nose crinkling up. Even just kissed again and Isak dropped his head back to the cushions and let his eyes slip closed.

Even would be perfectly content to run back through and kiss him all over all over again, but Isak was making faces, pout turning down a little at the sticky, the sweet sheen and all the other things and well, yeah.

They could definitely both use showers right now.

The great thing though, was that they had until 18:00 for everyone to get back, which meant over four hours for him to just dote on and love all over Isak.

And oh, did he.

First were the basic necessities, a glass of water, and the obvious bridal carry to the shower. Because Isak was being needy and whiny and neither of them were keen on having him fall in attempt to walk to the shower by himself, so.

Even got to wash him down, dropping kisses over every soaped down and washed clean stretch of skin. Isak’s shoulders drooped in the warm water, head tipped against the wall. A quiet sound as Even washed between his legs but green eyes didn’t open once, perfectly quiet and peaceful to every sliding inch.

Soft and sweet and compliant enough to let Even carefully towel dry his hair, which was saying something, because Isak was damn possessive of his curls.

“Alright,” the pouty mouth finally piped up, muffled, peering up at Even as he lifted the towel off of
Isak’s head, raising an eyebrow at the look. “We've reached my sex quota for February.”

Even laughed.

“I'm not kidding. That was enough for like...a month.”

“Good.”

“Forget birthday sex. Forget Valentine's sex.” Even rolled his lips in over his tongue, popping them back out with a soft sound and wrapping the towel around speckled, marked up shoulders. Isak curled the towel a little tighter and looked up at Even very seriously. “I will give you blowjobs, then I will pass out from the effort.”

Even smiled and kissed him, thumb rubbing over the remaining dampness to the curls around his ears.

“So dramatic.”

“Seriously though. I hope you're not expecting anything tomorrow cause…”

“I'm not, I promise I'm not.” He rubbed his thumb over Isak’s jaw, holding the sparkly green gaze and making sure he was completely paying attention as he said it. “I never am.”

“Mmmm.”

“Honestly. Just let me take care you right now though, yeah?”

“Ja, okay.”

Isak let him kiss him again, and again.

Soft and sated and snuggly and Even told him he loved him and held him and wrapped him in Even’s warm hoodie and the softest pair of sweats and kissed his beautiful beautiful face. Isak tipped right into all of it, tiny sweet curl of a crooked smile, blinking slow and turning into every guiding stroke of Even’s hands.

Energy levels were way down, which was completely wonderful, but blood sugar levels weren’t allowed to drop with it and they’d just had the workout of their lives, so.

Even made them warm food, one arm wrapped around Isak’s stomach the whole time, breathing slow against his skin.

Then Isak let him hand feed him, perched sideways in his lap, back against the wall and head tipping for Even’s shoulder between bites.

Eyes slipping closed enough times that Even decided sleep probably trumped food right now, and he’d gotten enough substance in Isak that he wasn’t too worried.

So he made him down one more glass of water before Isak trudged to the bathroom to go pee and Even opened up the curtains in the living room.

The city was outside, flashing and beautiful, the sun setting right over the tops of the trees in the distance, the roofs of the houses gone red and orange with the reflections.

The nice thing about the sun going down at four in the afternoon was that they could watch it on the bus home from school sometimes.
This was way nicer though, everything bathed in warm, glowing light as Even plopped down on a white couch and tugged Isak down with him.

The moment he was stretched out Isak was curling up on his chest, cold nose tucked against his neck, bare feet hitching along Even’s sweats.

“Make me something out of chocolate instead of sex for Valentine's Day,” Isak mumbled into his skin and Even smiled.

“Mmkay.” He pressed a soft kiss to Isak’s cheek.

“I think the next time I'm gonna be ready for sex is my birthday.”

“That's in June.”

“Exactly.”

It was cute and soft but Even couldn’t help the knit between his eyebrows, hand pausing in Isak’s curls.

“You don't hurt, do you?”

“Nei. I just don't have bones, I can't actually stay--” A yawn, getting his wet mouth all over Even’s freshly washed skin. “…upright.”

“Or awake.”

“Mmmmm. I love you.”

Heartbeat dropped. Still a revelation instead of a reminder.

“I love you,” Even whispered back, hand tightening in curls.

“I really really love you.” Isak pressed a little kiss into his neck before he lifted up, eyes drunk and giddy, giving him that precious smile. “Do you really really love me too?”

Even stroked a hand through curls, around his ear, settling down against the warm skin of his neck.

“What's your body tell you?”

“You dooo,” Isak cooed happily, head cocking, chin propped on his hands on Even’s chest.

“I do,” Even confirmed, quiet, smiling gently. Isak blinked slow at him, tongue darting out and in, gaze flicking between Even’s eyes and his smile.

“Kiss me.”

“What happened to nothing sexual ‘til your birthday?”

“Then don't make it sexual. Kiss me.”

Even licked his lips, eyes falling shut as he tipped up and slipped their mouths together, kissing Isak tender as he cupped that pretty face. Lips overlapping, crumpled against each other for a terribly devoted moment before they parted, slow languid warm.

“Mmkay, maybe early June.”
Longing and warmth and tugging lips.

“May,” Isak whispered. Even kissed him again.

“A-April.”

Two hands cupping his jaw, head falling against the couch to lift Isak up all the way over him, holding him still as he kissed him and Isak gasped against his open mouth.

“March.”

“Mm, maybe we should stop there,” Even pulled back and Isak chased him down into the cushions, pressing their mouths together sincere, heart-pounding. Pulling free with the curl of a smile under drooping, intoxicated eyes.

“Next week. But no sooner.” Another warm kiss to his mouth. “No sooner.”

“Mmm. Whatever you want, honey,” Even smiled cheekily and Isak tipped his head, smile growing, soft and pretty and full.

“You,” he murmured. “Always, always you.”

Isak curled up on his chest, ear over his pounding heart and mumbled about how much he loved Even until he fell asleep.

Shoulders and back expanding with every breath, slow in and out for him to spread his fingers over, feel pounding against his palm.

Isak, here, beautiful, curled up on him, trusting, safe, asleep.

Even watched the sunset over blonde curls and the angles of Isak’s cheekbones and wondered if this was what it meant to taste infinity.

They were still there on the couch when Eskild and Noora and Linn got home.

Even was playing with golden curls, gazing down at the beautiful boy curled in a little ball on top of him when they all swept through the door.

“Oh my,” Eskild said, pausing with a shoe half off. “You boys didn’t mess around.”

“No, we had fun.” Even smiled briefly and turned back to gazing fondly at Isak. Who was positively passed out, cheek smushed and nose sideways on Even’s chest, fist curled up under his chin, shoulders by his ears.

“He’s so much sweeter like this,” Noora pouted affectionately.

“If only there were less time consuming ways to knock him out.”

It was surprisingly suggestive for Linn and Even shot his eyebrows up at them both, then he was looking back down at the smushed golden curls, smiling at his soft sleeping boy.

“Is everything like. Relatively sanitary?”
“Relatively,” he conceded. “Maybe not the table. Or the counter perpendicular to the sink. And then like, this couch but everything else...should be fine? In theory. Noora, you clean the walls anyways, right?”

“Ja…”

“Okay cool.”

“Alright, well.” Eskild clapped his hands together quietly, looking between them all with a proud smile. “On that note we’ll leave you two to, uh.”

“Oh I can take him to bed now. He’s had a long day.”

Even kinda sat up and Isak whined, burrowing his face in Even’s chest, trying to curl up smaller.

“Awww,” they were all whispering. Even didn’t really notice, he was too focused on the peaceful face that was all twisted up in sleepy protest.

“Well, alright, c’mon now. I’m just taking you to bed.” One arm beneath his curled legs, other behind his shoulders and Isak was curled up small enough he could almost cross his arms over each other entirely as he stood.

“I love you,” Isak told him drearily, eyes still shut. “I love you I love you I love you.”

“I know,” Even promised, kissing the top of his head and smiling at the flatmates as he turned past them, cold kitchen tiles before they hit hallway, murmuring against silk. “I love you too, baby.”

Then he was laying Isak down in his bed, door closed and hoodie slipped off and covers pulled up over his shoulders. “Sleep now, yeah?”

“Mmmm.” A hand flopping out of the covers, grabbing onto his wrist, a single sleepy word. “Stay.”

He hadn’t been planning on it. He'd stayed last night.

But there was no way in hell he was gonna leave Isak like this either.

So he crawled in too, pulling the covers over both their shoulders. Isak curled right back into him, warm and happy and comfy and it was like 18:30 but they both fell asleep anyways.

And slept the night through.

~*~*~

Søndag, 09:00
12.02.17

Well, mostly. Isak woke up at 2 to grab water and pee again then he was crawling back under the covers. Even did the same at 23 and 4, but then an alarm was going off at 9 and they both woke up groggily, reaching for phones to turn off whoever’s device had decided to ruin their slumber.
Both of theirs, actually. Because they had shit to do today.

Isak groaned loudly and flopped his face into the pillow and Even groaned internally and laid back down, because he wasn’t a drama queen.

Reality. Goddammit.

He turned his head on the pillow, watching for a moment before he was reaching for bare skin, tracing careful fingertips over the slight purple and blue marks over Isak’s spine, lit up pale with the filtered morning light.

“How are you feeling?”

“Not as sore as I thought I'd be,” Isak mumbled into his pillow and it was a good thing Even knew him well enough to make out all the words, because that one was close to being impossible to decipher.

“That makes one of us. You're hard work.”

“Oh no! I made you sore for your birthday!” Isak lifted his head, blinking once before the words registered and he gasped a little. “Huh, oh! Happy birthday!”

“Thank you,” Even laughed, flopping down and tipping his chin up at Isak, twinkle in his eyes.

Isak huffed at him and leaned down to kiss him anyways. There was no better way to start out being twenty than teasing his beautiful, drama queen boyfriend.

“I'm sorry I made you sore.” Isak slid a hand into Even’s hair and Even danced his fingertips down that beautiful spine.

“I'm not sorry. I'm just glad you aren't too sore.”

“I mean, I'm still sore. I just thought I wouldn't be able to move for a few days, honestly.”

“Jeez.”

“You're telling me,” he murmured, gaze flicking back down to Even’s mouth. “I like feeling wrecked, though.”

Their lips mushed together on a warm kiss then Isak was mumbling the rest against his mouth, hand sliding through his hair. “I like feeling you.”

Even’s eyebrows were up when they pulled apart, wide palm sliding over Isak’s shoulder, tracing a circle from back to front, catching the little shiver under his touch.

“How often do you press those bruises you're always wearing?” he teased and Isak’s head tipped to the side.

“Hm? Oh. I never thought of that.”

“I thought that's why you liked them!”

“Nei? I like having marks from you. It's about you, not me.”

“Oh.”
“Press them?” Isak squinted at him, sounding dubious as he’d been of dancing to shitty pop music.

“Yeah, like this.” Even put two fingers in one above Isak’s collarbone.

“Ahh ah—”

“Yeah, see, exactly like that.”

“Fuck me.”

“Not ‘til next week,” Even teased back and Isak stopped biting his lip to break into a surprised little smile.

“Oh yeah. That’s fine. Kiss me, then.”

“My pleasure.”

Søndag, 09:23
12.02.17

“He’s alive!”

“Barely.”

“Isak, what walls do I need to clean?”

“South side hallway,” he mumbled around the leftover pancake he shoved in his mouth, then he was grabbing the plate and retreating back for his room, Eskild calling after him.

“Make sure you let us say happy birthday before you boys take off!”

Fuckin’ adoptive parents.

Søndag, 13:38
12.02.17

The best part about birthday lunch with Even’s parents was that his mom made all of Even’s favorite foods, so Isak now had that list and Plans to do with said list. At a much later date in which there weren’t adults around, but.

Well, besides Even, who was like. A real, full adult now. Twenty years old. Jeez.

He was dating a twenty year old.

He’d just spent a full day of his life having wild, crazy sex with a twenty year old. That beautiful twenty year old actually, that one right there, sitting at the desk in his room finishing up his homework for the weekend before they did cake and presents.

Jeez. It was fucking wild, actually, to think about.
Isak tipped his head against the window, shifting a little on the edge he was propped, and studied the lit up features of a beautiful face from across the room.

Wow. That boy, in this room, that was his boyfriend. That was the boy he let kiss him into walls and crawl between his ribs. All this space between them now, but it was those lowered eyes that’d been locked on his, those typing hands that’d held him still, gripped him tight.

It was that boy who'd been inside his body.

Holy shit. Of all people in the world, it was somehow that James Dean looking motherfucker, softer than anything he’d ever known who spent god knows how many hours yesterday literally inside his body. Like.

Even glanced up from his screen, catching Isak’s gaze on him.

Isak didn't look away. Those light light blues, that little curl of a smile. For him.

Fuck.

“Crown?” Even asked casually, glancing back at his laptop, typing again.

Crown for your thoughts.

Isak studied him a moment longer. Waited until Even looked back up, taking a sip of his tea as he did, eyes meeting his over the porcelain rim.

“That you've been inside me.”

Even choked, eyebrows up, snorting tea right up his nose from the look of it and Isak smiled to himself. Got him.

Took a second to catch his breath, then Even was setting the mug down, glancing back over, gazes locked again.

“Jeez.” Eyebrows up down, tongue sticking in his cheek as he realized how serious Isak was being.

“Ohkay.”

“Don't you ever think about that? About like. How you've been inside my body.”

“All the time.”

“Yeah?”

“Uh. Yeah.”

Isak rolled his head on the window, dipping to pin Even with a look, eyebrow up as he asked the question.

“And what do you think about it?”

Even had just been about to turn back to laptop but when Isak lifted an eyebrow and asked him that, the laptop lid closed.

He stopped, hands curled around the edge of his desk, really looking at Isak from all the way over there. Studying him silently, everything from the look on his face to the foot propped on the windowsill with him.
“That I’m probably the luckiest person in the entire universe,” Even said quietly. “Or any parallel one.”

The side of Isak’s mouth tipped up, smiling crooked, all lit up and warm. Even just kept looking at him, perfectly serious.

“Fett.” Then he was looking back out the window, still smiling crooked to himself.

It was about ten minutes later when the shout came from the hallway.

“You boys ready for gifts and cake?”

“Fuck,” Isak said, quietly, then he was saying a lot louder, “We’ll be right there!”

Even was already rolling his eyes before Isak popped to his feet.

“You didn’t get me anything, right? I swear, I’ll--”

“Don’t say it, cause I lowkey did.”

“Isak!”

“Even! Leave me alone, I’m allowed to get you something.” He rolled his eyes and an arm looped around his waist, tugging him stumbling in, chests colliding as Isak tipped his chin up, mouth pursed a little in defiance at the pretty eyes shining down at him.

“What, three hours of sex yesterday wasn’t enough?”

“That was...more than enough. But still, it’s not like it’s a lot or anything, just. C’mon, it’s already wrapped and with the stuff your parents got you, so let’s go.”

“You’re impossible,” Even told him, then he was leaning down and kissing him, fingers curling against his lower back to press them that much closer. Isak tilted his head and overlapped their mouths again. Lips dancing, brushing wet and dipping back in, noses pressed together.

How just kissing Even still felt this nice, he had no fucking clue, but here he was. Neither of them really wanted to be the one to break it off. Fuck, that was a problem, but.

Eventually someone leaned back and their lips dragged apart slow, leaving Isak blinking a few times to gain back control on that whole little reality thing.

“Were we supposed to be doing something?”

“Birthday, remember?”

“Oh yeah! Twenty. Fuck, you’re old.”

“You’re the best boyfriend,” Even said dryly and Isak went up on his tiptoes to press a quick kiss to his jaw.

“Yep. I know.”

“The age gap doesn't bother you though?”
Isak’s eyebrows went up in surprise.

“Nei? You’re still you just cause you’re twenty.”

“But you’re just seventeen, that doesn’t feel, I dunno, weird to you?”

“...neei, does it feel weird to you?”

“No, but. I’m not the younger one, and there is a big gap there and technically I’m like zero percent teenager now and--”

“Even, nothing’s changed. I’ll be eighteen soon, and it’ll be right back to the way it was. So you’re an adult, whatever.” Isak cocked his head back and forth sassily on the whatever and Even twisted his mouth to the side. Isak froze, leaning back a touch, eyes narrowing. “Wait, is this...actually bothering you?”

“I mean. I’ve thought about it.”

“Well then quit thinking about it. Cause I still love you the same.”

Even squinted down at him and Isak shook his head a little, both hands up. What?

He did. It didn't change a damn thing and he’d stand here with that written all over his face until Even got that.

And he did, eventually, sighing heavy and rolling his head, a little smile as he raised his eyebrows down at Isak and his stubbornness.

“You really are the best boyfriend.”

“Yes, I am. Now you can go open the gift from said boyfriend and not bitch at me about how you didn't want one.”

“I’m gonna bitch,” Even sing-songed and Isak sighed heavily.

“Well. Considering how much I make you put up with my bitching--”

“You bitch so much.”

“--I was going to say something sweet, but now I’m not going to, so fuck you.”

“See?”

“Fuck you,” Isak told him again and Even was kissing him again.

The arms wrapping around Even’s neck probably gave him away, but he didn’t care, he could kiss Even for the rest of his life, forget playful bickering and whatnot, as much as he loved the mouth on Even he loved the mouth on him that much more, so.

“Boys!!”

“Mmmugh. Dammit.”

For all the bitching, Even actually got kinda teary-eyed when he unwrapped Isak’s gift. Isak was a
perfectly kind boyfriend who most definitely didn’t do a little fist pump at the teary eyes, or the little heartbroken,

“Isak.”

Okay, he fist pumped, a little one at a diagonal, clicking his tongue with it because good. Got him.

Even huffed a laugh through watery lashes and his parents both smiled, although their smiles had that Worried Parent look, they hadn’t seen what Even was holding yet and Even was like. The opposite of a crier, so.

It wasn’t much, just a framed copy of the photo Eskild had taken of them fucking months ago. It was in black and white, Even’s arms around him as Isak smiled shy at the camera. Propped on Isak’s bed, those pretty eyes trained just on him and.

He was pretty sure Even had never seen the photo. Or, well, based on the way he was looking at Isak, yeah, he’d never seen it.

“Who…”

“Eskild,” he explained. All the explanation he ever needed for anything, to be honest.

“I didn’t know he took this.” A moment of silence as Even just looked at it and yeah, they were sweet, they were happy, you couldn’t look at the photo and not feel it.

“We’re really cute,” Even managed and everyone laughed, then Liv was waving an impatient hand for Even to pass it over. She gasped softly and Bjørn gave a gruff that’s a nice photo, and Even pulled Isak into a hug.

A really tight one.

“Happy Birthday, Evi,” Isak whispered. A soft smile against his curls and Isak squeezed a little tighter.

“I thought you hated that nickname.”

“I don’t hate anything about you,” he mumbled back, then Even was pulling away, hands sliding from his shoulders to his ribs, eyes sparkling as their gazes met.

Even leaned over and kissed him once, simply, on the lips while he held onto Isak’s ribs and it was hella sweet and PG and it still made Isak’s cheeks flush. A thumb rubbed over the heated blush and Even smiled, small and genuine, then they were both turning back to his parents and Liv was all teary-eyed.

“Not you too,” Isak groaned, throwing up a hand and everyone laughed again, smiles to go around that time.

They had time to kill before the party, so Liv asked if they wanted to stay for an early dinner - she knew about the surprise party, Isak had told her so she could help him coordinate keeping Even here. So Isak suggested they hang in Even’s room until they needed to start cooking. Cause Even wanted to help today, which was great with him.

For now though, Even was laid out on his stomach across his bedroom floor, sketching with the new
fancy charcoals he’d gotten from Bjørn while Isak played on his phone.

It was nice, just chilling on the couch in Even’s room. Everything white and pretty, laying on his back with his feet dangling off the end of the couch where Guitar Stand #2 was not, so he didn’t accidentally destroy one of Even’s children.

He was debating on what filter to use for his Instagram post on Even’s birthday. Liv had gotten a really sweet ironic photo of them hugging over the photo of them hugging - which she posted to her snapchat story - not that Isak minded but still, the fact that Liv had snapchat and added him on it meant he didn’t get to snapchat wild drunken parties anymore.

He actually temporarily deleted snapchat off his phone for wild drunken parties just because he didn’t trust himself or his friends and he really didn’t want Liv to know he was a fuck of a seventeen year old, so.

Anyways, he was debating between different filter lighting - their hair was really gold and pretty in this one, but the other one shaded their arms around each other better - when Even’s voice suddenly interrupted the very important filter decision.

“What happened with Jonas and Eva?”

Isak glanced over, taking a second to register as he looked at Even. Pretty head lifted, hand smudged charcoal dark while he waited for a reply.

Oh fuck. With all the drama lately he’d totally forgotten about that.

Apparently Even wasn’t waiting that long for a reply. “Did Eva kiss Chris and confess to you, only for you to tell Chris’s girlfriend?”

Isak put his phone down, lifting up to prop his head on the armrest.

“. . . that was part of it, yes,” slow and calculated as it sunk in. “Where did you hear that?”

“Chris.”

“Wait. What? Chris knows?” Isak sat up all the way, head spinning a little from how fast.

“Uh, yeah.”

“Faaenn. I didn’t think anyone knew beside Eva and Chris’s ex.”

“Chris’s ex told him it was you.”

“Fuck. Fuck, fuck.”

“And Jonas doesn’t know?”

“No, but he and Chris are friends-ish, it’s fucking luck it hasn’t come up until now. Fuck.” Isak stared wide eyed at the floor. “I really do have to tell Jonas. He will never forgive me if he finds out from somebody else. Especially since that’s not the worst—”

He stopped himself before he blurted out everything, only it was a little late cause now Even was looking at him with a dozen little question marks dancing around his head.

Fuck. They were going to communicate, they weren’t gonna lie to each other, and yeah, it was... not good, he really would be content to go the rest of his life never relieving his fuckups in first year ever
again, but. If Even found out that much from Chris, god knows how much else he knew or could know and.

It was better if he heard it from Isak, as fucking shitty as it was.

So he sucked in a breath, tipped his head to the side and tried not to squinch up his face too painfully.

“Okay, I kinda-ish-maybe had been sabotaging their relationship long before Eva kissed Chris. She kissed Chris because she thought Jonas was cheating on her, which...I may or may not have kinda orchestrated a situation to look like?”

“Fuck! Why?” Even rolled to sit up and Isak threw a couple more dozen internal curses at his stupid 16 year old self.

“Because ?! I was a fuck and I didn’t know how to handle my feelings. All I knew is I could not watch them together, I felt like a fucking idiot just sitting there, being Eva’s advisor about her boyfriend that should’ve been mine.”

“...wow.”

“Yeah, I. Fuck.” Isak ran a hand through his hair, staring out the window a moment. On the bright side, Even wasn’t breaking up with him right now, not like he’d expected anything like that to happen. But he had to look at the bright sides when he’d literally fucked over everyone’s lives and it was coming back to bite him in the ass now, a year later. “...I’ve gotta tell him.”

“Do you think that’s a good idea?”

“No. I know it’s not. But it’s a better idea that him finding out from Chris Schistad. I just. Ugh.” He groaned some more, putting his face in his hands. Fuck. Yeah, he’d been contemplating with the idea of telling Jonas but honestly he hadn’t managed to get over the fear of all the atrocity it was gonna cause and he just. He wasn’t ready for that, not now, not when they were finally trying to fix things and.

Agghh.

He lifted his head from his hands, eyes closed as he sucked in a deep breath, tried not to freak the fuck out but he was maybe freaking the fuck out at least a little.

“Even, I. Fuck, I don’t wanna lose him.”

A side glance over and Even was nodding quietly, hands wrapped around his ankles as he looked at the ground. There was so much space between them, all this distance. He was just used to having conversations when they were tangled up in each other and Even’s voice was rumbling and low from the deep echo of Isak’s ear against his chest.

Maybe that was why he felt so fucking small.

Or maybe it was the very real possibility that he might actually lose his best friend.

“He means a lot to you, doesn’t he?”

“The fucking world,” Isak told the ceiling.

Even chewed on his bottom lip.

“I mean, he’s been there for me since the beginning, he was the only person I had for such a long
time, through the worst time, I don’t know what I would’ve done, he was always everythi…” Isak trailed off, slowly taking in the pained expression on Even’s face.

That was not a good expression.

“Even?”

Isak was looking at him like he was cellophane, like he could see right into the turning gears in his head. He ran his fingertips over the edge of a wooden floorboard. They were going to communicate. He’d promised Isak they’d get better at that and Isak just told him all this shit about his past so Even at least owed him this, owed him the truth and it just rushed all out at once, already wincing before he was finished.

“Would you rather be with him than me?”

Isak kinda just stared at him for a moment.

Even would sink into the floor if he could, but he hadn't figured out that particular trick yet.

“...what??”

It was the same what he got when he told Isak that Sonja had a peg leg. A pause and incredulous, leaning back against the counter the couch with his eyebrows on the ceiling, head shaking once like he'd heard wrong.

Yeah, no, he didn't hear wrong.

It was just that they were so close and they had been and it was such a trope, falling in love with your best friend and blah blah blah this was a movie he really needed to know the ending plot twist to like. Now.

Isak was still kinda just staring at him and Even pursed his mouth to the side, trying not to freak out.

“...do you actually need me to repeat that or--”

“Listen. It's gonna sound cliché as hell but.” Isak sucked in a breath, waving a hand around. “Jonas is my best friend. I’d go to the ends of the earth for him.”

Okay by cliché did Isak just mean heartbreaking or…?

He was staring down at his crossed ankles cause he wasn't sure he wanted to see the look on Isak’s face when he told him there was no chance with Jonas, which was code for yes, if I could I would but I'll take what I can get and honestly he didn't wanna be in the room when Isak said it, or in this universe actually, could one of the parallel ones sweep him away now?

He didn't flinch when Isak spoke again, though it was fucking close.

“But Even…”

His lungs were kinda starting to protest the fact that he wasn't breathing.

Then Isak exhaled, breathy, all at once and oxygen didn't exist anymore anyways.

“...the way I feel about you.” It was awed, hushed and blown away, like that one word, that one sentence was enough.
Even looked up.

Then Isak was hopping off the couch and plopping back down in front of him, scooting his sketchpad aside, charcoals too. And crawled right over him, swinging a leg over his lap and taking his face in both hands, looking between both his eyes, searching.

Isak held those beautiful light eyes and tried to read everything underneath, all of the things Even wasn't saying, the whole list of insecurities and misconceptions he was just starting to understand.

It took some getting used to, Even being unsure like this. He'd just thought his boyfriend was the most confident person on the planet, didn't give a fuck about anything anyone said, what anyone thought. But turned out that was super wrong. And it wasn't like the insecurities made sense either, Even had been nervous that Isak wouldn't want to meet his parents, and his parents were wonderful.

But he'd learned a lot since that first are you sure, you don't think it's awkward? at the Christmas party, and Even was looking at him with those same terrified-to-disappoint eyes. The expression on his face when Isak asked if he wanted to come to the kosegruppa party and Even paused, wanting so badly not to say the wrong thing.

There was no wrong thing. This was them, Isak was here, any insecurity or unsure moment or doubt, whatever Even was feeling was fucking valid and Isak was gonna fucking prove it.

Even’s eyes slipped closed as Isak pressed their foreheads together, thumbs spinning circles over Even’s cheeks, soft and patient.

They were too close, Even was breathing too shallow for him not to dip forward, place a comforting kiss on the lips of the beautiful boy who was too afraid of overstepping to circle his arms around Isak’s waist.

The moment their mouths pressed together, lips locking in place Even was inhaling again, pushing back against him, and there we go, there were the arms wrapping around him.

Their foreheads pressed back together on the parting, a moment just to breathe before Isak was tipping his head and breaking the fizzing silence.

“Childhood memories and nostalgic bus rides are great and all but.” Isak inhaled, letting the sincerity shine through in every word. “...it's you.”

He leaned back, watching blue watch him as he traced fingertips over Even’s skin, the thrumming beneath. He was so alive and complex and stunning and complicated and passionate and beautiful and everything.

“You're not just saying that cause we had crazy wild sex yesterday and you like being doted on?” There was an edge of teasing but it mostly came out painfully obvious and Isak had never scoffed so truthfully, propping tall and leaning back with his wildest eyes.

“Excuse me, nei? I mean.” He tipped his head back and forth, allowing for the single drop of truth in that. “I like being doted on yeah, but.”

Even huffed, a tiny hint of a smile and Isak paused, squinting dramatically at him to prove the point that much further.

“But I don't want that from anyone else. It's you.” Twinkling eyes, incredulous turn of his mouth and he dipped in to press another quick kiss to the little smile.
“Nothing can compete with that, with...the way you make me feel.” Isak slid a hand down from Even’s neck to lay his palm over the pounding heart, cotton under his curling fingertips, tracing every beat as he closed his eyes and leaned forward to tilt their foreheads together again.

Even was just watching him and Isak took a moment, letting their everything connect and tie together before he lifted his head. Free hand stroking through Even’s hair, smile tipping up on one side as he let his eyes drift over the waiting expression.

Isak rubbed a thumb over Even’s cheek. Nothing can compete with the way you make me feel.

“With your smile,” he added softly, thumb skirting down to trace the parted bottom lip. “...and your laugh.”

Even’s eyebrows shot up a little, knit on his forehead, shiny eyes reflecting back to the first time Isak had confessed that, I like seeing you laugh. It was one of the first confessions he’d washed over Even’s skin, as sincere as he was now.

“...and your sparkly crystal eyes.” They lit up a little more at the mention, maybe a little exaggerated and cheesy as Isak’s crooked smile tipped up on the other side too.

“And your mouth.” Dipped forward to kiss him, short and sweet.

Leaning back to run fingertips down his jaw, sweeping up through his hair as Isak found his gaze again. Their eyes locked. Isak’s mouth opened without him. “Your ideas, and your drawings, and your sunshine, and your sparkling soul.”

Even’s eyes slipped closed, taking it in. Isak tipped up his chin and pressed their noses together, smiling sweetly with it as he tapped the fingers on Even’s chest, palm pushing a little harder against the pound beneath.

“Your heart and your...dancing,” he begrudgingly added and Even huffed a tiny laugh, pulse speeding up a little under Isak’s fingertips.

Isak smiled, then he was catching those eyes again, two hands stroking up through Even’s hair this time. Pausing, framing him in close.

Holding the gaze as his voice dropped to a whisper.

“...and your beautiful mind.”

Even’s bottom lip was kinda trembling and Isak kept holding onto him tight.

He touched Even and he stopped being afraid. He didn’t understand how Even didn’t see that.

Isak kissed him lightly, breathing him in. Letting him tremble a moment longer, letting the silence prove how fucking real this was.

Then he was stroking through Even’s hair, down to his neck, around to his collarbones, up over his shoulders. Fingers curling around the seams of his tshirt, waiting until Even’s eyes lifted again.

Looked him right in crystal blue and told him the truth.

“I fell in love with you sitting in that windowsill.”

Even was stunned, tears in his eyes. Isak danced his hands up to hard cheekbones, stroking two lines up under the falling eyes and held him close.
“I’ve only fallen deeper since.”

Even’s eyes shut. Their foreheads bumped together and Isak closed his eyes too, patient and honest.

To think Even didn’t fucking know that. That he somehow wasn’t sure enough in what Isak felt for him not to feel this.

Isak shook his head and Even moved with it, he was in a current and Isak was the ocean pulling him into serenity with every crash.

“Jonas is great. He’s my best friend. But he’s not the love of my life.”

The break came with the fingers curling tight against his spine, dragging around to squeeze his waist, tight, sides of their noses pressed together as Even tipped a little, weaving, skin tingling.

“Me?” Even asked weakly. “Is it me you were talking about? Or...?”

Isak smiled, every cell in his body shimmering as he nuzzled their noses together.

“Mm. That’s how the hashtag goes. Of course, you.” Dimples and crinkling eyes, warm, bursting, of course you resonating in his bones. Then Isak was piping up again, chipper and teasing as he glowed.

“Even Bech Næsheim, support person and boyfriend.”

Even laughed and Isak kissed him then they kissed and kissed and kissed with their hands on each other’s faces and fingers running through each other’s hair, they kissed.

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Isak honestly had no idea what to expect as they started up the steps to his apartment. They’d hugged his parents goodbye, they were gonna go to Isak’s for a little while, have fun, bye boys happy birthday Ev and it was so nice to see you Isak.

Even’s parents were lovely and predictable. Vilde was not predictable.

Although when Isak held his breath and opened the door, he decided within about three seconds that she most definitely was lovely.

The apartment was beautiful, gold fairy lights strung up everywhere, designed on one wall in two giant numbers, 20, pastel happy birthday banners draping from the ceiling, a few dozen pink blue and purple balloons tied to furniture, and a door of shimmery streamers between the kitchen and the living room, which was currently pouring out laughter over live guitar music.

Isak took a sliding step the side and Even stepped in behind him, eyes wide and lips parted, then ten heads were turning from the couches and Vilde gasped, waving at everyone before they were all jumping up and shouting.

“Surprise!!! Happy Birthday!!!!”
Even’s jaw dropped open and Isak couldn’t stop smiling, then everyone was piling off the couches, Jonas setting his acoustic aside, people untangling from the various ways they’d been draped over each other on the couch and there was already such a good happy atmosphere, then Eskild was barreling into Even’s ribs, Magnus catching him from the otherside, then Vilde and Sana and Chris and Eva shoved in close next to Eskild and Mahdi and Jonas and Linn and Noora.

Isak slipped out from under the dogpile, digging his phone out of his pocket and opening up snapchat as fast as possible to snap a quick photo.

It was fucking sweet, that’s what, and Isak literally could not have better friends.

Everyone was laughing and talking over each other and Even was crinkled up and smiling and thanking everyone and clapping hands and offering individual hugs as half the girls bubbled,

“You really didn’t know?”

“No, Vilde, I had no idea!”

Isak smiled to himself, glancing down at his phone to decide on what the hell he could caption a photo like that with.

Eva slid up to his shoulder, bumping into him as an arm snaked around his waist.

“Well hi,” Isak offered, thumbing through the filters in case any of them were great. Unsurprisingly, the best one was the original.

“That is a super fucking cute photo.” Eva reached for his phone and Isak twisted, lifting it up and holding it out of reach. “I’m just gonna send it to myself!”

Isak locked his phone and shoved it back in his pocket, wrapping an arm back around her shoulders with a smile.

“Already did.” She gave him a pretty smile and Isak rolled his eyes, glancing back around the apartment. “You ladies put on one hell of a party, wow.”

“We like your man,” she informed him and Isak sighed up at the ceiling.

“I know, I know. Me too.”

Then they were all piling back for the couches, hands on shoulders and bumping arms and draping legs, cheery smiles and bright laughs as golden as the lights on the walls.

Even caught his eye from across the room, brighter than everything else in this apartment combined and Isak smiled softly at him, biting his lip as Even shook his head, pure awe and disbelief. Joy.

A little kiss blown his way and Isak puckered his lips back, then he was being plopped down on the couch by Chris and Magnus, who apparently had heard rumors about his day yesterday and did they really have to clean the walls--

“Noora!”

“It was Eskild!”

“Exxxillll,” Mahdi interrupted before Isak could yell again, then Jonas was snickering,

“Ekssild--”
“Xill-xill--”

“What in the world…?” Eskild looked between the boys, throwing up his hands. Isak had entirely forgotten he was here too, and if the look on the squad’s faces were any indication, so had they.

They all glanced between each other’s wide eyes and burst into laughter.

Sana and Even rolled their eyes, giving each other a really look of pure sass and the girls mostly just looked confused, then the boys were laughing harder.

They would’ve missed the knock on the door, except that it was a surprisingly loud knock, more surprisingly so that there was someone at the door at all. Isak sat up, counting heads with his pointer finger and mouthing the number to himself, who in the world else could be here?

Then Even was opening up the door and made this high-pitched sound of surprise, everyone craning their necks to try and see who was at the door.

“Chris!!”

“I’m right here,” Chris Berg offered quietly beside him and Isak shot her a look before it registered. Oh, Schistad?

“E.Bech, my man.”

Apparently, because that was Even’s elated face and that was Christoffer Schistad stepping into his apartment to clap Even in a hug.

Fuck, that was a hell of a lot of attractive embracing right now.

“Chris?!” Eva popped upright from where she’d been laying in Vilde’s lap, lighting up as she untangled herself from the couch cushions and hopped to her feet.

Vilde leaned over, eyebrows knit and pink mouth open in offense, voice hushed enough the light chatter around the living room covered it.

“Who the hell invited him?”

Sana gave her a weird look. “I did. He’s like, practically Even’s best friend.”

“So?”

“So it’s Even’s birthday party??”

Vilde huffed, crossing her arms over her chest and pouting a little.

Isak squinted suspiciously as he circled around the back of the couch.

“Hey man,” Christoffer offered over the noise, tipping his chin up at the boys in the living room, offering his signature Schistad smile as Isak approached.

He slid a Not Possessive arm around Even’s waist, gripping him a little tight as he tipped his head up, looking between his man’s pretty blues and Christoffer’s smile, the bottle of wine with a bow on it.

“I didn’t realize you guys were that good of friends.” Isak raised an eyebrow at Chris and he lifted a shoulder, shrugging and nonchalant as he’d ever been.
“We’re lab partners,” Even teased, rubbing his thumb over the wrist Isak had wrapped on his side. “And friends.”

“Really?”

“For genetics, yeah,” Chris supplied and Isak squinted up a little at his pretty boyfriend before glancing back to Chris’s unfading smile.

“And how is Even doing in genetics?”

“Man, he saved my entire fucking grade.”

Right in time for Sana to materialize, groaning as she held out her hands to take the wine bottle from Christoffer, scolding him as she did.

“You gotta pretend he didn’t. Amateur. Next time shoot for ‘he’s useful.’ Maybe.”

Isak rolled his eyes at her and she smiled, taking the wine for the coffee table, where the rest of the gifts were. (Yes, Magnus had gotten him a single pencil, wrapped in a big red bow. Isak said Even liked art shit.)

“Useful? Listen, this guy almost got kicked outta class the other day for me.”

“You what?” Isak’s eyebrows shot for the ceiling.

Chris’s tongue was in his cheek, amused at the rat out while Even made a face at him, the my boyfriend’s here, don’t say that shit face.

Then Even was turning to him and smiling way too pretty.

“He’s exaggerating.”

“Mmhm.”

“The teacher was being a dick to Christo, I wasn’t gonna let that stand. So I maybe...had a few words with him.”

“In front of the entire class,” Chris tacked on, head tipping up triumphant smile. Isak’s mouth popped open, turning the offense on the tall dark handsome pretty boy that still wasn’t as pretty as his.

“Chris, you’ve been corrupting my boyfriend?!”

Chris winked at him. “Don’t you know it.”

Then Even was clapping a hand on his shoulder, thanks for coming man, and Isak smiled, watched Christoffer slide past and make himself at home, starting with a kiss hello for Eva.

And a sad little pout for the blonde on the couch, watching a moment or two before turning away, looking down at her pink-painted fingers.

Oh, oh. He knew that face.

Isak pursed his lips, looking between the kissing couple and the look in Vilde’s eyes.

Fuck, he hurt for her.
“Hey Isak, do you remember that first party this year?”

“The one at mine that the cops busted?” Eva piped up, Chris’s arm around her shoulders.

“Ja, that one,” Mahdi pointed confirmation.

Isak squinted. “I remember it, why?”

“Remember how all of us said you didn’t have a chance with Emma because the last guy she dated was a 20 year old model?”

Even scoffed, tugging Isak a little closer into his side. “She was so not your type.”

“Clearly,” Isak told him, patting his knee consolingly. “But ja, I remember that, why?”

“Well now you’re the one with the high standards.” Mahdi leaned back, double fingers pointing between him and Even, smiling wide. “’Cause you’re the one dating the 20 year old model instead.”

The party bubbled up in bright laughter, Even’s still the brightest and Isak turned to him, smiling into the kiss he placed on Even’s mouth.

A hand shoved up through the back of his curls, possessive and bright as Isak crinkled his nose and tipped into dimples.

“You hear that babe? Our straight guy friends think you’re hot enough to be a model.”

Jonas was playing guitar as the local entertainment, strumming through some songs everybody could sing, fading into chorded instrumentals while people thought up more songs to play.

Until Even tipped his shoulder into Isak’s, eyebrows up.

“You should play something, babe.”

Jonas glanced up from the acoustic, guitar pick flipping between his fingers. “He doesn’t know how.”

Even dropped open his jaw, leaning away in shock as he called Isak the fuck out.

“Oooo, you’ve been holding out on your friends?”

“I know like three songs!”

“That’s three more than I thought you knew,” Jonas said, eyebrows on the ceiling. Isak didn't let himself think about the look on Jonas’s face, holding out his hand instead.

“Ugh, let me see.”

Jonas lifted the guitar up and handed it over. Isak grumbled the entire time he got it into his lap, having to scoot a bit so he didn’t impale Sana with the end. Everyone was watching and waiting and Jonas held out the pick between his fingers.
“Don’t use one,” Isak told him and the crowd broke out in burning *ooo’s*.

“Aren’t you fancy,” Magnus scoffed and Isak threw up a hand.

“I didn’t learn with one, jeez! It’s not my fault, blame Even’s pretentious ass.” Isak got himself settled in, painstakingly placing every finger on its fret. Then he paused, hands in the chord as he looked up, met sparkling crystal eyes.

“Okay but this counts as one of your birthday gifts, ‘cause I’m literally never doing this again.”

“Okay,” Even laughed, smiles around as everyone shifted, leaning forward and thrumming with anticipation.

Isak sighed. He didn’t deserve this. Honestly.

“Anyway...here's Wonderwall.”

Everyone burst into laughter and giggles, which was great because it covered the first few chords, only.

Isak was actually playing...Wonderwall.

The laughter doubled as people realized it, then Jonas was clapping his hands, tipping wide-mouthed into Mahdi as they both lifted their voices to sing along.

“To-day is gonna be the day that they're gonna throw it back to you. By now you should've somehow, realized what you got into--”

Yeah, if only he’d fucking realized what he got himself into, but. Well. Everyone was smiling and laughing and singing brightly and Isak rolled his lips in over his smile and let himself burn warm.

“I don't believe that anybody, feels the way I do, about you no-ow…”

About you now.

They were in the kitchen grabbing glassware, the boy squad and the girls squad both collectively brought a bottle of fancy, hardcore alcohol as their gifts, so it was hella time for drinking games.

That plus Chris’s bottle of wine constituted the gift-giving - with the exception of Eskild and Linn who’d chipped in for a gag gift. (Like apparently yesterday wasn’t enough.)

Only it was literally a gag gift, a piece of black fabric with a little note about not keeping them all up until 1am anymore.

Isak turned bright red and buried his face in his hands for the next literal ten minutes while the rest of them laughed and laughed around him.

He eventually stopped blushing enough to clap his hands and suggest they get wasted - okay, he was still blushing - then jumped off the couch and practically ran for the kitchen.

Even giggled and followed him in here. He thought the whole fucking thing was hilarious apparently, which was fine but also Isak was Dying from how red his cheeks were. Didn’t help
much when Even wrapped his arms around his stomach and pressed a warm kiss to his cheekbone from behind.

Isak ignored him and opened another cabinet looking for where in hell the rest of the shot glasses were. The arms around his waist squeezed a little tighter, lips ghosting his neck and Isak finally found them.

He went up on his tiptoes to reach and Even locked his arms tight enough to keep him there, inches higher while the neck kisses danced up to his jaw, tipping Isak’s head to the side with it. Mmm, well, okay.

“Hey, are you spending the night tonight?” Not that he was thinking of anything in particular, except that Even’s mouth on him made him warm all over and waking up tomorrow that way would also be fucking great.

“I'd like to,” Even offered, letting Isak down off his tiptoes, two hands running up his chest now.

Isak smiled to himself, leaning over to gather the rest of the glasses, count to make sure they had enough. Even wanted to spend his first night of his adult life with Isak.

It was also the only thing he wanted to do for the rest of his adult life but.

“Good,” Isak said back quietly, one hand over the two clasped on his stomach. Even nosed against his curls, pressing a hard kiss to the back of his neck and sending a ricochet down his spine with it.

Then Even’s lips were skirting his ear, brushing sensitive skin while Isak’s eyes slipped shut, fingers curling tight around his wrist, heated words dropped to a whisper.

“Why, you wanting to try out my present?”

Isak’s eyes shot open wide, then he was shoving Even off as fast as he could, spinning free of the laughing smile and scooping up as many glasses as he could carry.

“I don’t know you, sorry,” Isak informed him then he was ducking between the shiny streamers and escaping into the living room, lifting his voice over the laugh echoing behind him before he went so red he actually combusted.

“Okay, so who's ready for Yearbook?”

“Yearbook? The fuck is Yearbook?”

“The fuck do you mean the fuck is Yearbook? It’s the best drinking game there is.”

Apparently half the party hadn’t played, so Isak had to sit down and explain, glancing up as Even plopped down on the other couch and stuttering a moment because fuck, Even was pretty, but anyways.

“It goes around in a circle, every person says a Most Likely To statement like...most likely to choke when drinking water. Then the group counts to three and on 3 everyone points to the person they think is the most likely to do that. So for that one, I could point to Eva, and Magnus could point to me, etc.”

“Can you point to yourself?”

“Yes, but you don’t want to. ‘Cause next, you count who has the most fingers pointing to them and
whoever it is has to take a shot. Considering how many of us there are, that’s 13 shots by the time we’ve done one round.”

“What if everyone points to a different person?”

“Everyone drinks.”

They only had one round where everyone drank, and that was for the question most likely to skip school, because literally every single person pointed to themselves, except for Sana and Vilde who pointed to each other in an ironic joke.

The rest of the rounds had a lot of indignant accusations, offended faces, and proud high fives.

Jonas ended up drinking for most likely to end up in jail and he flipped off everyone as he took his shot.

Chris got most likely to end up in Hollywood and Even shoved him in offense, he was the one who did film, dammit.

"It's literally only cause you're pretty," Even pouted, and Chris almost choked swallowing his shot.

"You think I'm pretty, man?"

"Uh...yeah?"

"He thinks I'm prettier," Isak leaned over to point out and Even made an amused sound, kissing the side of his face in rapid little pecks. "But yeah, Chris, you are really attractive."

A dramatic mouth popped open and Chris put a hand on his chest.

"Are you kidding?" He looked between Eva and the rest of the party and back to them again. "I'm attractive to boys too??"

"Chris, I'm gay, I think boys are attractive," Isak told him very clearly and Chris shook his head, throwing up a hand.

"Still!"

"I'm so proud of you," Eskild said kinda tearily, at the same time Even tipped back into him,

"I love you so much baby."

Isak rolled his eyes a lot and turned to Magnus.

"Your turn."

"I mean, I'm proud of you too--"

"No, it's your turn for the fucking game."

"Oh, oh. Uh...most likely to die first in a horror film?"

Vilde and Chris Berg tied for that one and tipped back their shots in sync.

Noora won most likely to get away with murder and took her shot very proudly.
“Most likely to cry to Youtube videos at 2am,” Eskild declared and Isak pointed a wavering finger.

“That is a leading question, no leading questions, dammit.”

That was the other rule, you couldn’t single people out with a question meant to make them drink, they had to be neutral and that was not neutral.

“How the hell is that a leading question?” Mahdi asked and Isak squinted at him.

“It just is. Eskild knows that, so new question, asshole.”

“Do you cry to Youtube videos at 2am?” Even asked him and Isak put a hand over Even’s face.

“New question.”

“Most likely to wrap their naked body in twinkle lights for a photoshoot.”

“What the fuck.”

Eva won that one.

Isak and Even got an equal number for most likely to do anal and Isak was wasted enough at that point to clink Even’s glass before they tipped them back together.

They also got an equal number for most likely to get married young, which somehow made Isak blush more, especially since Even insisted they take their double shots with their elbows linked the way married couples did, so.

Mahdi won most likely to become actually successful, Sana won most likely to make it out of a fight without a scratch and since she didn’t drink had to chug an entire bottle of water instead, which of course got interrupted by Eva making a dick joke and everyone getting sprayed with a giant stream of water.

“Most likely to run into the snow naked--”

“Leading question,” Even interrupted and Christoffer’s eyebrows shot up.

“What??”

“Most likely to be into figging,” Eskild said quickly before it could become a Thing.

“The fuck is figging??”

Someone Urban-dictionaried it and the girls all squealed, passing around the phone and making everyone either laugh their ass of or their eyes bulge out of their head, then Isak was waving it aside and shouting the countdown,

“Three, two, one--”

Everyone pointed to Eskild. Eskild took his shot with a hand in the air.

“Most likely to be into edging,” Eva said and Even started laughing, uncontrollably, drunk enough he was tipping over sideways with it.

Isak hid in Sana’s lap and screamed while she pet his curls and Magnus patted his shoulder consolingly.
Shots went around for a lot of things, enough that Sana went and got everyone bottles of water so people weren’t bitching in the morning.

Someone was complaining about lipstick stains on water bottles, which led to lipstick stains other places and Isak groaned, shaking his head as he uncapped his.

“I’m so glad I’m gay.”

Eva snorted and Eskild made a cooing sound and Vilde’s eyes went wide, looking down pointedly at her water while Magnus finished downing his, popping off in a loud sound before he was waving a hand around, head tipped.

“Ok but like. Since you brought it up again. What are the best perks of being gay?” It was such a fucking signature Magnus question and Isak rolled his eyes back in his head, ready to Lay Down The Sass.

Only his boyfriend answered before he could.

“Better sex,” Even said instantly, making Jonas choke on his water. Isak stuck his tongue in his cheek and Even lifted a shoulder unapologetically.

“No accidental kids,” Noora pointed out, to which Eskild reached over for a high five.

“Date somebody your size and double your wardrobe.”

Isak glared a little at Even for that one and Even cocked his head in a pretty smile. He did not mind Even wearing his clothes, like at all, but they were always getting changed at his place so the proportions were all off cause most of his clothes were at Even’s house now and he wasn’t there often enough to bring them all back over here, so.

“Being able to listen to really good music together because of automatic good taste,” Eva added and yeah, that was a really great point, only like. How would she know? But both Vilde and Noora were nodding and Magnus tipped his head in concession.

Then Isak was shaking his head, uncapping Linn’s bottle for her and leaning forward to declare the obvious, simple best perk of being gay.

“Not being straight.”

The game faded out after the water bottles. Someone turned on Eskild’s speakers and started up a mini dance party, apparently all the girls wanted to dance with the birthday boy, and it wasn’t like Isak was gonna protest Even having fun on his twentieth.

Although they were gonna pass on all the birthday spanking jokes Magnus kept making.

Isak found Vilde in the kitchen, putting glasses in the sink.

“Hey,” he offered, leaning against the counter.

“Hi!” she said back cheerily. “Do you think Even’s having fun?”

“This party is great, Vilde. Really.”

“I’m glad. He deserves it.” She gave him a little smile and screwed a cap back straight on an empty
water bottle.

“Speaking of which…Vilde, I don’t wanna overstep or anything.”

“Mhmm…?”

“You…you deserve to be happy too, you know.”

“Why takk, Isak. You’re so much sweeter than everyone says.” Vilde tipped her head all cute and Isak would usually joke back at the comment, but he wasn’t really messing around.

He wet his lips, glancing to the side a moment before crossing his arms over his chest, kicking out a foot, looking down at the tiles.

“Vilde. I just want you to know, if you ever wanna talk, I’m here.”

“Talk about what?”

“You being happy. With whoever might make you that.” Isak glanced back up, reading over the expression in reflective blue eyes.

Vilde was just looking blankly back at him.

“It’s nice to see you care so much about your friends,” she finally said brightly. “I’m sure I will be.”

Then she was turning back for the party and Isak sighed, looking up at the ceiling. Not like he’d thought it’d be that easy, but.

Fuck.

There was a debate going on between the two couches, something about media representation and Even was waving his hands around, pointing out something before Linn was speaking over him and he bubbled up in a laugh, eyes crinkling, mouth wide.

Isak circled around the couch to sit down at his side, the one that Sana wasn’t currently occupying.

Even glanced over as he sat down and Isak held his gaze a moment, smile tipping up on one side.

Twenty.

How many more birthdays he got to have, he didn’t know, but he would happily take them all if he could.

“You’re…really beautiful,” Isak told him and Even’s eyebrows shot up. Reached over to give him a complacent kiss.

“Thank you.” A quick smile and he turned back to Magnus Mahdi and Linn, right back into the debate.

Isak wrapped their hands together, putting his chin on Even’s shoulder and smiling softly to himself. Tuning out of the conversation as he let the happy sounds just wash over him, the dancing girls laughing, the argument between Chris Schistad and Chris Berg about what the best nicknames were or whatever, Eskild and Jonas naming out songs to add to the DJ playlist for the next party.

Everything was perfect.
And that’s when his pocket vibrated with a text from his dad.

The rest of the night kinda went by in a blur, party dispersing for school Monday morning, friends filtering out with kisses on cheeks and hands clapped on shoulders.

The flatmates disappeared with promises to clean tomorrow, the girls took a few decorations with them as the door opened and opened and opened.

Isak was leaning a shoulder against the wall and looking down at his phone again when Jonas slid into view.

“Hey man, you alright?”

Isak looked up.

Jonas was the last one here. Lingered, waiting for everyone to leave.

“Um. Well.”

He’d stayed behind to see if Isak was okay.

Okay.

Isak tipped his head for the couches and Jonas followed.

“Ja, Sana, I would absolutely love to sit and chat sometime, really--”

“I can’t believe you have it memorized in Arabic--”

“Sana, we shouldn’t keep the birthday boy waiting! I’m so glad enjoyed the party, congrats on being twenty!!”

“Takk, Vilde.”

“Of course! You’re part of the family now. Happy Birthday, Even!”

“Thank you! Have a great night!”

Then the door was finally closed, it was finally just the two of them again, and Even spun right around.

“Hey babe we’re...not alone, actually.”

Jonas glanced up, eyebrows knit. He shot Even a sorry man look and turned back to Isak.

“What are you gonna do?”

“I have no idea. I mean I really don't want to, but. Kinda can't manage on my own.”

Even’s eyebrows lifted and he made his way slowly to the couches, very aware of the vibe shift. This was not a drunk post-party conversation.

“Ja...would it be both of them?”
“That's what it sounds like.”

“Jesus.”

“Ja.”

Even stepped up behind the couch, rubbing his hands comfortingly and not at all possessively over Isak’s shoulders.

“Anything I can help with?”

“Nei, we’re just chatting.” Isak smiled lightly and tipped his head up for a soft kiss. “If you don't mind starting on clean up, I can finish this up and fill you in later.”

“Okay.” Even squeezed a warm shoulder, then he was off for the kitchen.

The pause was one of those hesitant awkward ones, waiting until Even was out of earshot before Jonas asked him quietly.

“He knows?”

“Not everything. Enough, to know how much it would suck he just. Doesn't have all the details of the why y’know?”

“Are you gonna tell him?”

“I don't know.”

“If you want me to go with you.” Jonas lifted a shoulder. “I've faced them both before, I’d be happy to.”

“Thanks, but.” Isak wet his lips, pausing as he glanced for the kitchen, wall of streamers between them. “I think I'll take Even.”

“Are you sure that's a good idea?”

“It's probably not, but I feel like I owe it to him, y’know?”

“...okay. But if you change your mind, I really will go. And I won't punch anyone either.”

“Mnhm I'm sure.”

“Really,” Jonas repeated and Isak smiled at his feet.

“Thanks though, for offering. For being here. For always being here, I don't know what I would’ve-”

He inhaled sharp and Jonas bumped his knee.

“Hey. You don't need to know, because I'm always here, ja?”

“Ja.”

“We've always been there for each other.” Dark curls tipping, shaking his head once. “That's never gonna change.”

Isak nodded.
He was thinking about all the times he was the opposite of there for Jonas, but he nodded and looked down at his feet anyways.

“Okay. Keep me in the loop, yeah?”

“Of course.” The smile was too tight. Jonas noticed Isak noticed everybody noticed and no one said it.

Jonas got up, clapping him on the shoulder. Isak walked him to the door.

“Happy birthday Even,” Jonas called, toeing into his shoes, grabbing his jacket from the hook.

Even stepped around the corner, shimmery streamers rustling around his shoulders, closing to sway between him.

“Takk, Jonas. Thanks for coming.”

“Ja,’course. Have a good night, both of you.”

Even gave him a little wave and Jonas returned it, then Isak was opening up the door, a step in the hallway.

Jonas turned around at the top of the stairs and Isak gave him a little salute.

Then he watched Jonas go, treading down, out of sight.

He couldn’t fucking do it.

He couldn’t do it anymore, he couldn’t keep lying to Jonas.

Chris knew. Chris and Jonas had been chatting tonight it was motherfucking miracle Jonas hadn’t found out.

And honestly? The guilt was too much. It really was. His parents texted him, demanding to see him--

His dad specifically, blackmailing him into having lunch by threatening to cut off his rent money. How could he ship off money for Isak’s life when he barely knew what his son looked like anymore.

Fuck them.

Jonas fucking offered to go with him.

To be his armor, sit at some lunch table across from the shitty parents Jonas probably hated more than him, so Isak could have a support team. Because he cared. Because he’d always been there for him no matter what.

Couldn't do it anymore. Couldn’t ruin their friendship in this fucking terrible silence.

He had to tell him.

Isak sighed, stepping inside and shouldering the door shut behind him, locking it.

Didn’t look up as he typed out a quick response to his fucking parents.

And pressed send.

Isak breathed out slow and turned around.
Even’s eyebrows were up, just looking at him, waiting.

“Hey babe?” Isak pocketed his phone, leaving his hands shoved out of sight. Met the unreadable gaze and held his breath.

“Yeah?” Even stood patient and still, chin dipping, eyebrows higher.

Isak’s mouth opened, paused as he cocked one eyebrow, tipped his head and just fucking asked.

“How do you feel about lunch with my parents?”

Δ Meldinger Pappa Kontakt

son looks like anymore. I know you’ve said you don’t have the time, but this isn't too much to ask. Your mom and I really want to see you. How's some time this week?

Klem, Pappa

only if I can bring Even.

Chapter End Notes

So you’re welcome everyone for teaching you all my favorite drinking game, it’s the best drinking game, play it sometime friends

On a different note this week we have an update Wed, Fri, and Sat because...reasons

You’re all great and I love all of you come yell at me darlings xx
Chapter Notes

1) I’m sorry

2) I told you this was coming since the beginning, so. Welcome to aforementioned and alluded…. Drama™

it's here it's happening

Really!! Rough sex in between ***'s like really. Skip it if it's not your cup of tea

Warnings: verbal and physical fights, external homophobia, cyberbullying through social media, isolation, outing of an LGBT member, a fuckton of crying, hooray

Also @ everyone who says Jonas is “too chill” and has no emotions like…watch s1 pls thx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mandag, 16:32
13.02.17

School ended an hour ago, but Even was working on his project in the film lab and Isak didn’t mind getting homework done in the meantime, propped on the edge of an empty desk with his textbook in his lap.

“Hey babe?”

“Mhmm.”

“You know that video of you rapping that Eva showed me?”

“Please stop talking.”

“I’m not teasing, I was just thinking…”

“Please stop thinking.”

“Isak, I’m being serious! You’re like. Really good in front of a camera.”

Isak finally looked up from his book, raising a single eyebrow at Even, who was doing something on the laptop hooked up to a very expensive fancy looking camera.

“What?”

“You did all that hamming for the camera just for Eva. And it’s not like I didn’t know you were an adorable showoff--”
“Huh!”

“But you happen to be dating an aspiring filmmaker, so.”

Isak narrowed his eyes.

“What do you want.”

“I was just wondering, if at some point, you would ever want to do a project with me?”

“Um...sure?”

“Cool.” Even looked back down at his laptop and Isak squinted at him a little longer.

Now that he thought about it, Even had his phone out way too often for somebody who didn’t have any social media accounts.

Hmm. Suspicious.

But he didn’t get any more strange requests over the next hour and by the time Even finished, the school was practically empty.

Which was apparently code for pressing up against him between his spread legs on the top of a school desk and kissing him deep and hard, tongue sweeping until he was shivering and trying to hold Even at arm’s length, whispering gravelly about the janitorial staff.

Even kissed him some more and yeah, okay, that was enough of that. Isak broke off, turning to the side to breathe and Even’s mouth started down his neck.

“Oi, nei, I’m not gonna let you bang me in school.”

Light blue popped up, flashing as they locked with his, grip digging in around Isak’s waist, eyebrows shooting up all suggestive.

“It’d be super hot.”

“The doors don’t lock?!”

Even’s head tipped, lips rolling in over his tongue and popping back out, grip sinking harder in his jacket. “Scandalous.”

“Nei?! Stress.”

“Mm. You sure you don’t wanna--”

“Ja, I’m sure.”

“...okay, then what are we waiting for, let’s get you home.”

The hands on his waist slid him right off the desk, barely waiting for Isak to catch his balance before Even was shoving one of his backpack straps over his shoulder, holding it out and waiting for Isak’s other arm.

“Jeez, somebody’s eager.”

“Have you seen you?” It was completely incredulous, but digging in right beneath his skin too, eyes
twinkling at him as Isak raised an eyebrow over his shoulder.

“Huh.” Adjusting his backpack straps, leaning against the table with his arms crossed over his chest while he waited for Even to grab his stuff. “Snapbacks and scarves do it for you?”

“Like you don’t know exactly how hot you are.” Even pinned him with a look and Isak threw up his hands, couldn’t held the smile that went up with it.

“I dunno, I figured I’ve gotta be somewhat good-looking to catch a guy like you.”

Eyebrows up again, bag thrown over a shoulder then Even’s hand was on his face, long body backing him into the desk again as their mouths mashed together. Fucking hell.

He brought a hand up to Even’s waist, dragging him in to bump their hips together and wow, okay, somebody was definitely interested, fuck. Isak pressed back against the heat and Even shoved both hands in his hair, hat knocking off onto the table behind them with a quiet sound. The fingers buried deep in curls tightened, tugging hard enough to yank his head backwards on a gasp, flood shooting up his chest to pop his mouth open, eyes flashing dark.

“Fuck. You sure I can’t just fuck you against the door, no one could walk in--”

“They have keys to this classroom, and the janitorial staff is gonna be here soon, I am not keen on being found half stripped by the fucking janitorial--”

“Okay, okay, let’s go let’s go.”

Even’s fingers wound in his, another kiss to his mouth before he was pulling him bodily for the hallway. Isak barely grabbed his snapback in time then Even was squeezing his hand tight enough Isak shook his head at the ridiculous amount of eager.

For somebody in such a hurry to get home, you’d think they’d go straight there, but he kissed Isak into at least a quarter of the lockers they passed on the way out so.

It took a lot longer than it should have to finally get out of the school and by the time they did the sun was already gone, everything dark and gray and stormy.

And snowy. Really snowy and really really windy.

It was one of those shitty can’t-see-ten-feet weather days but Isak didn’t mind, not when the bus pulled up to the stop the moment they ran outside with their hoods up, backpacks bouncing.

Even’s laughter echoing as they pounded up the stairs, shot a thanks to the driver and headed straight for the back. It was practically empty, probably because the weather was shit and no one left their house in the first place, no need to go home.

Even swung around the very last pole, swooping into a seat and practically tugging Isak into his lap.

He managed to land in his own seat, tipping into Even’s hands with a kiss instead, a really heart thudding kiss that turned all sweet as Isak melted a little and Even smiled against his lips. It softened in warm affectionate loose pecks and the look on Even’s face had Isak’s stomach fluttering.

“Wanna ride the loop for a bit, wait the worst of the storm out?”

A thumb rubbing his cheek, eyebrows up all hopeful and cute. He wasn’t sure what was so exciting about riding the bus for longer but. If he got to stay dry and warm against Even, well.
“Sure.” Isak shrugged amiably and Even pecked him one more time before he settled in against him, wrapping an arm around his shoulders and tugging him in close.

Warm and cozy to contrast the cold and wet outside.

It was kinda sweet and domestic, just the two of them sitting here, tucked warm against Even’s ribs. Nothing to do but breathe together and look out the windows at the hard swirling snow splattering the city.

It was nice. Isak was just about to say so when Even tugged him in closer and lifted his voice over the rumbling silence.

“Why did your parents split up?”

Isak blinked, shock taking a second to settle in. They didn’t usually ask each other direct questions like that, it was more of them offering up pieces of information for each other, that way no one felt bad when they didn’t want to say something or they thought the other one wasn’t ready or something.

Especially about that topic. They didn’t ever talk about that topic.

“It’s…a lot,” he said slowly, studying Even’s profile. A quick glance his way before Even was looking back out the windows again.

“If I’m gonna be meeting them this week.”

“Yeah, I get that,” Isak said quietly. The bus announced the next stop, filtered voice over speakers. “If you really don’t wanna talk about it, I won’t make you.”

“No, it’s just. It’s really intense, and I don’t want. I mean, I don’t want you to think--” Isak stuttered to a stop and Even glanced over at him from his peripherals, trying to gauge the situation. Fuck. Isak shot a glance over his shoulder. They were the only ones on this half of the bus. Not like it mattered, the person he actually didn’t want hearing this was Even, but.

He was gonna meet them and it was Even, Isak was uselessly open.

“There’s a reason I don’t live with them,” he said flatly. “That I moved out, and. Don’t really wanna fix things. More than because they say shitty things sometimes, everyone’s parents say shitty things sometimes. But. You know how I told you my mom is…”

He trailed off and Even was perfectly quiet, no yeah or input so he didn’t have to say it. Fett.

“Not okay,” Isak finished slowly. Even was just watching him.

“Ja?”

“Yeah, that’s. It’s not actually. That’s not why I left. But that is why my dad did.”

Even stopped breathing.

Isak could feel it because they were pressed so damn close, because they’d been breathing in sync, because the expansion of Even’s ribs against his were the nicest part of this whole trip so far and he noticed when that stopped.
The rest of it came out all rushed because he really needed Even to breath again.

*In what way,* Even had asked him in that locker room forever ago and Isak couldn’t do that again.

“He left her because he ‘couldn’t help her.’” Isak lifted the hand off Even’s thigh to squinch his fingers around the air quotes, made sure Even knew they were quotes. “And so he just. Decided he didn’t want to deal with it anymore and fucking...left us both, and so I. I mean, I wasn’t handling it well. My mom kinda lost it, and my dad left for that exact reason, and I just. I didn’t understand, why she couldn’t get it together and get him back, and I didn’t get why he would just leave, and.

“It was way too much, but Jonas helped, a lot. I don’t know what I would’ve. Anyways, this was like...December 2015, I guess.

“Then my dad came back, for a little while, towards the end of the school year. Tried to make things work, all apologies and shit, but. He said it was too much and then boom, he takes off again, my mom loses it.

“So I go get wasted and refuse to go home. I met Eskild, I moved out, and. I hated my dad for leaving my mom and I hated her for making him leave and I thought my mom would hate me, she used to...send me Bible quotes all the time, she’s like. Really really religious, and so on top of everything else that sucked, I thought she’d hate me for who I was and this was when I still kinda hated me for who I was so...

“Ja, I moved out. It was a lot of hate. And I’m still...not over my dad leaving my mom like that. For that. Especially now that I...anyways, I mean, he’s kinda back with her now I think, I know he’s been trying to fix things again and. Yeah. That’s...why.”

The bus rumbled over a curve in the road, snow pelting down outside.

“Oh,” Even said.

“Yeah,” Isak replied. He could feel Even’s heartbeat in the arm he still had curved around his ribs. It wasn’t the good kind of heartbeat. “Yeah.”

Because he couldn’t help her.

His dad left because his mom was sick and Isak left because he was heartbroken and that’s why he’d said it, that there was no contact, that he was better off without her because every word she ever texted him ripped into his chest. She wasn’t okay and his dad had left them because of it and he hadn’t known how to not blame her for that, hadn’t fucking understood a thing.

And then he met Even, and now he understood too much and he didn’t know what to do because all he fucking felt was guilt, all the time, guilt for walking out too but it’d been so fucking stressful, he physically hadn’t been able to handle it and he just.

Now he was taking his boyfriend to meet his sick mom and his deadbeat dad and if he thought he hated them, he couldn’t even imagine what Even was thinking.

“I’m guessing you don’t wanna meet them now,” Isak huffed, trying not to deflate too much.

The last thing he expected was Even’s arm suddenly rolling him closer, pressing Isak into the folds of his coat, holding onto him tight.

“Of course I want to go with you. We’re in this together, okay?” It was warm and Even was breathing again and Isak let his eyes close, soaked in the ocean of Even’s barricade.
“Fuck my dad,” Isak mumbled, gripping the side of Even’s neck tight.

“Yeah,” Even said quietly, swallowing. *Fuck your dad.*

It didn’t matter how tight he was holding onto Isak’s shoulders, he’d swear the slick material between them left him slipping between his fingers.

Because he couldn't help her.

Losing his grip.

They watched the storm outside and it was too foggy and muddy and harsh to feel anything like the sharp clarity of lightning.

Isak leaned against him and Even stared out the windows and couldn’t think about anything else.

Isak’s dad left his mom because his mom was sick and he couldn’t fix her.

That meant only one thing for them. Only one question left to bounce around in Even’s head, ricocheting off corners to dig deeper and deeper bullets.

What if that was why Isak was with him? For revenge, for a jab at his past.

To prove his dad wrong?

Even spent the night on Monday. It was the fourth day in a row but Isak didn’t correct him or send him home. Knowing Even, it was because it was Valentine’s Day tomorrow and he had plans for the morning or something.

What was one more night.

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*Tirsdag, 07:35
14.02.17*

He woke up early to make heart shaped pancakes for Isak, mostly so he could see his pretty eyes roll, fond and exasperated as he let Even kiss him until the smile was too genuine to pretend.

For as much as he didn’t like Valentine’s Day, he liked pressing Isak into the kitchen counter, morning sun bathing his skin as the pretty smile teetered on about hopeless romantics between the kisses Even kept placing to his mouth.

The sun was so fucking bright when they broke apart that Even couldn’t look away from it, gleaming gold in the beautiful smile inches from his. Even took a good long look at that impossibly stunning boy, messy curls arranged in a little halo. An angel, in the realest sense of the word and Isak was looking at him with dark dark eyes and a little curl on his mouth.
It was so much, everything he felt for Isak was so much, he could feel it painted on his skin thick, sparking a dozen poprocks through his veins, twisting hard in his gut. There might never be a day he could touch enough, hard enough, deep enough to sink into the eternity waiting inches from his mouth but Even leaned in to try anyways.

They had lunch with just the two of them, propped in the white windowsill overlooking the courtyard.

He was reading Isak Shakespeare sonnets and Isak had a rose on top of his textbook, the one Even brought him with the cheese sandwiches he got them for lunch. Isak had so far stabbed himself on the thorns twice and was attempting to fill in the rest of his biology notes without bleeding on his pencil while Even chatted away at him.

“Did you know Shakespeare was hella gay?”

“Huh??”

“Mmhm. You know that really famous sonnet, the shall I compare thee to a summers day one? It's about a dude.”

“Nuh uh.”

“Yep. His first 20 sonnets were basically just convincing his boyfriend to get a girlfriend so he could pass on his beauty to children.”

Isak furrowed his eyebrows, looking up all exaggerated confused and Even smiled wide, keeping their eyes locked, heartbeat pounding in the ankle he had pressed to Isak’s thigh.

“It was believed back then that the only way to be immortal was if you passed on your likeness through children. And this dude was so beautiful Shakespeare was like, it'd be a sin if you didn't have kids and pass you on forever.”

“Wow.”

“And sonnet 20 - that one's my favorite. Two after shall I compare thee to a summer's day and this is what it says. It's so fucking obvious.” Even cleared his throat, lifting the little book up to read.

“A man in hue - hue was shape not color - all hues in his controlling, which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth...til nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting and by addition me of thee defeated, by adding one thi-ing--”

He shot his eyebrows up suggestively and Isak laughed, boyish and amused. Even smiled and glanced back down at the poem.

“--to my purpose nothing.”

“Oh I totally disagree with that part,” Isak said, shaking his head and glancing back down at his
“Mmhm,” Even sounded, watching the nuances of the little flickers across Isak’s face. “Yeah, I like your thing just fine.”

“Shut up,” Isak told him.

“But since she pricked thee out for women’s pleasure, mine be thy love and thy love’s use their treasure.”

“He wrote pricked in a sonnet?”

“Ja! Isn’t it great?”

“Mmm. Who fucking knew.”

“Shakespeare’s lover,” Even pointed out. “And now you.”

Isak leaned over the textbook and the rose and the streaming window sunshine between them and kissed Even on the mouth.

He pressed back, sonnets dropping to his lap as a flat palm held the side of Isak’s face, kissing him a little deeper.

Only before they could transition into really making out Isak was popping off and leaning back, giving him a smile before writing something down in his notes.

Even didn’t take his eyes off the long lashes, the spider leg shadows they cast over sharp cheekbones.

“Hey, speaking of poets.” Isak scratched away, head down, eyes on the paper as he asked. “Is that why you did it?”

The alarm flashed across every feature he owned but Isak didn’t see and therefore it didn’t matter.

Even sucked in a breath, drumming his fingers against his thigh as he carefully sculpted his voice.

“Did what?”

“Boot theory.” Isak looked up. “Is that why you took me home for cheese sandwiches?”

“…you read Siken.”

“I wanted to know what it was,” Isak defended, setting his pencil down. Even lifted his chin, tongue in his smiling cheek.

“Did you cry?”

“What makes you think I cried?” Isak scoffed, getting all defensive and Even shot his eyebrows up, amused.

“It’s Siken.”

“Did you cry?”

“I always cry. It’s Siken.”

“Oh,” Isak said softly. He looked back down at his lap, fingers rubbing absently over the loosest
petal on the rose. A deep breath and he glanced up shyly. “Ja, I cried.”

Even smiled and leaned over and kissed him.

“Knew it. But no, that’s not why. I forgot my ID, remember?”

“Bullshit.”

“What do you mean, bullshit?” Even straightened back up, lips parted, shaking his head in offense.

“Mr. I Saw You On The First Day Of School,” Isak tipped his head back and forth with it before he was pinning Even with a look, eyebrow cocked up. “You wanted an excuse to hang out with me!”

“Is it that obvious?”

“..ja??”

“You were really cute,” Even defended. “You still are.”

Isak’s mouth tipped up in the same deeply crooked, shy, precious smile he had that day he introduced Even to the boys. Elated inside and too shy to show it and that boy was the cutest fucking thing he’d ever seen. Wrestling his textbook into his bag and trying not to burst with the happy. Turning his head for the stairs so he didn’t glance up at Even and give himself away.

Even knocked his chin back forward and leaned in to plant a hard kiss on his mouth, swallowing the surprised little sound Isak made against his lips. Fuck, he could live off the sounds Isak made for him.

The next thing he knew he had a hand on the window, crawled over the windowseat to press Isak hard into the glass and twist their open mouths deeper.

One of Isak’s hands gripped tight in the back of his hair, tight enough to indicate how fast his heart was pounding, mouthing back a little desperate against him.

Even broke their lips apart with a quiet smack, diving right back in for more. Isak’s head knocked back against the glass with the force of it and the whimper that escaped his throat--

Twin gasps as they pulled apart, barely finishing the inhale before Even was pressing their noses together, eyes still on Isak’s mouth as he exhaled fast.

“You think we can get away with having sex in the boys bathroom?”

“Nei ??” It was breathy and incredulous and absolutely precious. Even kissed him again, tugging at his bottom lip and drowning in the resulting shudder.

“Wanna try?”

“That sounds so fucking risky!” Isak hissed and Even leaned back a tad, mouth dropped open, hello.

“It’s Valentine's Day!”

Isak squinted at him, flush still high on his cheekbones and for a moment Even’s heartbeat tick tocked, waiting to be called out on hating this holiday, to be seen through like cellophane.

But then the pursed, red mouth opened and it was all just sass and sweet.
“The boys bathroom does *not* count as romantic.”

“Of course it does, it’s where we met!”

Isak rolled his eyes hyperdramatically, head rolling with it then he was buckling his backpack closed, carefully adjusting the head of the rose to stick out the side.

“At least let me blow you,” Even piped up.

“Fuck. Fine, fine, let's go have sex in the boys bathroom.” Isak threw up his hands and a group of first year girls turned around the corner, right in time to hear them.

Even burst into laughter as they all clapped their hands over their mouths and the look on Isak’s face said he was actually gonna die. Then Even was sweeping him off the windowsill bridal carry style and Isak batted at his hands, landing on his feet and grabbing his backpack and running up the stairs.

“C'mon, *c'mon*, before I change my mind.”

Tirsdag, 15:19
14.02.17

This was the third time he was waiting after school to meet up with his best friend with his stomach in fucking knots.

The first time it’d been like, one of the most important conversations they’d ever had and he’d been so fucking terrified and it’d ended so much better than he ever could’ve imagined.

The second time had just been to hang out and he’d been like, zero percent nervous for that one and it also had ended fucking great but.

He had the sinking feeling this conversation wasn’t going to go anywhere near as okay as those two.

Jonas was grabbing his backpack out of his locker to go home and Isak was most definitely not convincing himself to breathe at the end of the hallway but Jonas was gonna take off soon and if he was gonna do this he had to do this now, better just to run and. Go for it.

“Hey, Jonas!” He called and dark curls bounced as he turned around, locker slamming closed.

“Isak, hey,” he greeted, a hint of a smile as Isak caught up and tried not to die inside at the unknowing joy on his best friend’s face.

“Hey, are you doing anything right now?”

“You asking me on a date on Valentine's Day?” Jonas skirted to the side, eyebrows up and that old teasing smile on his face now. “What would your boyfriend think?”

Yeah, as much as Isak would love to joke back right now, his heart was pounding too much, so. He swallowed and looked down at his feet.

“...you're not doing anything though, are you?”

It was nervous as hell and Jonas’s eyebrows furrowed, all the teasing dropped instantly.
“Nei, I’m not.”

“Kebabs?” Isak tried.

Jonas almost stopped in the middle of the hallway, glancing over at him bewildered and Isak dared to risk a peek over.

“That drastic?”

Isak sucked in a breath. He was trying to be chill, hands tight on his backpack straps as Jonas opened the door for them, looking at Isak the entire time he passed him into the courtyard and eventually he just couldn’t do it, breaking a little as he spun and just said it.

“Yeah.”

“Shit. Ja. Let’s head.”

They didn’t speak the entire time they ordered. Jonas paid this time, glancing at Isak every ten fucking seconds. Isak had his hands shoved in his pockets and a docile look plastered on his face but he couldn’t believe he was fucking doing this.

He had to now, he’d already told Jonas he had to tell him something and he couldn’t just...back out.

Then they were finally sitting down on a bench, silence settling for as long as it took them to unwrap paper then Jonas was glancing over at him and setting straight into it.

“Is this about Even?”

Oh jeez, Isak hadn’t thought to think whatever Jonas might’ve been wondering over the past twenty minutes but thank fucking god it wasn’t about Even.

“Nei, it's, uh...it's actually not.”

“Your mom?” Jonas glanced over at him, chewing concernedly. “Did you change your mind about meeting your parents?”

“Nei, Jonas it's.” Isak stared down at his kebab for a moment before he glanced back over, Jonas’s eyes still on him. Fuck. “It's about you.”

“Me?” Eyebrows knit, hand on his chest and Isak nodded, swallowing tight and looking away.

“I. I have something I really need to tell you.” I’ve really needed to tell you for a really long time now and it’s been eating away and causing all this space between us and I’m so fucking sorry for being the shittiest friend on the fucking planet when you’ve been nothing but there for me and--

“...okay?”

“And you’re probably gonna be really mad at me,” Isak managed, kinda tearing up and Jonas sat down his kebab on the bench, looking really concerned now as he leaned forward, trying to catch his eye.

“Hey. Isak, calm down. It's me. What's wrong?”

Jonas was acting so kind and worried and he'd been such a good friend and he had absolutely no idea Isak had ruined his life.
“You have every right to be mad. I’d hate me too, if--” he sucked in a breath, burrowing down a little in his scarf before he just fucking. Said it. “You know how. I told you I had a crush on you last year?"

“Uh...yeah. Tequila night?”

“Yeah. It. It wasn't just. Last year Jonas it was. It was for a really long time.”

He stared down at wax paper, trying not to think how fucking terrible it'd been to sit across from Jonas for all those gas station sunsets and slowly realize deeper and deeper with each one that what he felt for his best friend wasn’t what you were Supposed to feel.

The rest of it came out in a whisper. “...a really long time.”

“Okay,” Jonas said quietly.

Isak tipped his head to the side, trying to lighten his voice again, drag himself out of the hole he was already digging while he kept digging deeper.

“And you know how. How all that drama happened between you and Eva last year, when you guys broke up?”

“Ja,” Jonas scoffed, shaking his head once, kebab scooped back up for a bite. Happy for the topic change. “Ja, that sucked.”

“Yeah,” Isak kinda broke. Only it wasn’t a fucking topic change. His fist tightened into a ball, uncurling slowly, a quarter the speed of his racing heart. Moment of truth, he wasn’t fucking ready, and here he went anyways.

“...yeah, and it's my fault.”

Jonas furrowed dark eyebrows. Looking him over for a moment, he could feel it in his peripherals.

“...what do you mean?” Swallow, kebab back down as he looked over at Isak all furrowed and confused. “Eva cheated, Isak, that couldn't be your fau--”

“It could, and it was. I made her think you were cheating on her. Since the first cabin trip, she saw a text from Ingrid and asked me if I knew anything about it and I made her think that you would, that you were...when I knew all along what was really happening and.”

He tried to inhale and found his lungs didn’t work.

“She asked me if she should trust you and I told her...I told her to talk to Ingrid instead, cause I. I knew Ingrid would be a bitch about it and Eva would--”

Found he couldn’t look at Jonas either.

“Then she kissed Chris because she thought you-- because I made her think that you would, that you were...when I knew all along what was really happening and.”

His throat was trying to choke him and his eyes were closed but it wasn’t stopping his mouth from spilling his grave.

“And then she told me, she confessed to me that she hooked up with Chris I was the only person on the planet who knew and I promised her I wouldn't tell anyone and I told Chris’s girlfriend and I told the whole school and I told you because I knew if you found out from her you'd forgive her and you'd be able to work through it and you two would be okay and--”
The first tear slipped down his cheek and Isak had no idea where it came from but he shoved it away, kept going as his voice cracked.

“And I just couldn't do it, I couldn't watch you two be happy, it killed me, it killed me and I was in so much pain I couldn't do it anymore I couldn't I didn’t know what else to do I couldn't keep living like that it hurt so fucking bad and I had to make somebody else feel it too--”

“What the fuck.”

Jonas stood up from the bench, words completely flat and Isak’s head snapped up.

He had to blink past the bubbling water on his lashes to see Jonas’s face, the deep deep furrow between his eyes, head down as he stared at the wax paper in his hand.

“Jonas, I'm so sorry I--”

“For a year? You did this a year ago and you're telling me now?”

“Jonas--”

His head shook sharply, cutting the protest off as he pursed his mouth, looked down. Took a moment to calibrate because it was Jonas, he was rational. Yeah, he was pissed, but--

“Just tell me one thing.” Jonas looked back up at him, silver blue burning and Isak was already torn in half, offered up both his shoulders and his heart on a tray with it.

“Anything.”

Gray blue was burning, looking into him deep enough, peeling back enough layers they were going back in time, Jonas was staring at the same boy from a year and a half ago who did all of this shit to ruin his life.

Isak's heart thudded and his head thudded and Jonas curled his hand tight around paper, making it crinkle in his grip.

“Did Even have anything to do with you finally telling me?”

Isak’s eyebrows furrowed. What?

Anything to do with...Even said Chris Schistad knew, which meant there was a chance Jonas would find out from somebody else, plus he’d been so guilty for so long and now that he wasn’t like. Miserable anymore he felt even more guilty because Jonas had had that, being happy, and he’d taken it away and Even was the reason he didn’t live fake anymore and yeah, Even was a lot of the reasons why he was trying to be a better person but it wasn’t like Even told him he had to confess or anything, like Even was the reason why Isak was trying to come clean. Because that wasn’t true, this was about Jonas, he wanted to fix things with Jonas.

His best friend.

Isak opened his mouth to say so, but the moment of deliberation, knit eyebrows, confusion was too late, because Jonas was already nodding to himself, confirmed, tongue in his cheek.

“Nice. Nice, okay, so you only care about anything because your boyfriend tells you to. Nice, man.”

“Jonas, no, it’s not like that--”
“What you finally land a boyfriend and now you’re a good person? That’s not how it fucking works. You don’t get to—” The emotions crashing through every flicker were enough to knock him off his feet and it hit a point where it was too much for Jonas too. Words cutting off in his throat as a hand threw up, pitch half an octave too high. “You know what? It’s not even worth it. *Fuck* this.”

It stung sharp enough Isak was left blinking and Jonas shook his head once, curls tumbling then he was spinning on a heel as Isak sat there with his eyes wide, shock settling in but apparently that wasn’t enough, Jonas wasn’t done because he turned right back around, pointing finger up in accusation.

“Did you really-- you were never gonna tell me otherwise, were you?” It was so fucking bitter and Jonas huffed, scuffing his boot on the pavement once before the head and hand went up, “You get a fucking *conscience* fucked into you? Or maybe because you’ve *moved on* from me you don’t care if you hurt me anymore.”

He’d never seen Jonas that upset at him, that emotional and broken and accusatory and Isak could only stare up with his lips parted and his soul in his hands. Then Jonas nodded his head again, looking off over his shoulder, voice twisted a thousand times more bitter.

“Oh wait. It sounds like you never did.”

“Jonas, please.”

He’d never done this before, he’d never fought with Jonas about anything real before, he didn’t know what he was doing, he didn’t know what the fuck he was supposed to do, he didn’t think--

“You selfish bastard. I actually cared about you.” Jonas scooped up his backpack, throwing it hard over his shoulder. Isak flinched at the movement and Jonas looked down at him with his eyebrows furrowed in disgust, face twisted up.

“I thought our friendship would *always* be more sacred than-- than...I fucking cared about you, and you just reduced me to some crush to fight over? At what point did I stop being your best friend, Isak? At what point--” Finger on his own chest, bending in half with it and breaking into more than halves as the arm flew out to gesture wide. “--did you throw away what I thought was the best relationship I had? But it wasn't the relationship you wanted, right, because I wasn't enough. How *fucking old were we* when you stopped giving a fuck about me? Huh? As your best friend, when did that stop?”

Isak couldn't even blink, couldn't inhale, chest tight lungs tight stomach queasy he could only stare. Jonas was yelling at him and hurt and pissed and somehow fucking worse, resigned as he looked off over Isak’s shoulder, adjusting his backpack strap, nodding once.

“Actually, I don't wanna fucking know.” A disbelieving step backwards, the movement shattering something between them that'd been hanging on by a thread and the sound of glass shattering over the ground was almost as loud as all of that heartbreak all over his face, the kind Isak had never come close to ever ever seeing.

Jonas had tears in his eyes when he pointed at him, tears in his eyes when his best friend took their friendship of years and laid it in the dirt.

“I would've done anything in the world for you, Isak.” Everything twisted up, nose wrinkled like that could keep the tears at bay, the bursting floodgates at bay. “...for you to be happy. Great to know the feelings are mutual.”
Then he was turning around and walking away and Isak shoved off the bench so fast he tripped over his own feet.

“Jonas, wait!” Isak hauled after him, nearly fucking colliding as he grabbed ahold of the sleeve of a slick jacket, he had to stop him, he couldn’t let Jonas walk away from him like that, not him, not him.

Jonas whipped around, snapping out of the hold and shoving Isak off, the force of it sending them both stumbling. Dark sinking bitter deep and fast as he bit.

“Don’t fucking pretend you care about me.”

“Jo-nas.”

There were tears rolling over his lashes, too much and too fast to try breathing when dark curls just tipped and Jonas shouldered his backpack over his other arm.

“Go cry on your boyfriend. Maybe he’s fine with you lying for years and never really caring about him. Never--” Jonas sucked in a breath, looking away from him for a moment. The tears were so fucking close to falling from his eyes too.

He thought, Jonas thought--

All of that loss and sadness and anger, his image of Isak destroyed, his image of the world destroyed, the past and their dreams and their lives crumbling to dust beneath their feet beneath the weight of everything Isak made him believe and.

He honestly thought that Isak didn’t--

His best fucking friend in the whole wide fucking world, since he was too young to remember a time without him, Jonas looked him dead in the eye and shattered his heart with a fist.

“I don’t even know who you are anymore.”

“Jonas.” Barely a whisper, slip through the crack.

A shaky gasp and Jonas shook his head once. Took three steps backwards, and sliced right through the only tether Isak had always known.

“Fuck you, Isak Valtersen. Go fuck over someone else who cares.”

Then he was walking away and Isak didn’t have the strength to follow, not when Jonas wanted nothing to fucking do with him, not when the world was just ripped out from beneath his feet. Not when he didn’t have a spine anymore.

Isak couldn’t follow. Isak had spent his life chasing and laughing and getting tugged along and leaping on the back of bikes and running headfirst into danger and life and.

Isak couldn't follow him anymore.

Because Jonas didn't want him.

The axis of the world shifted and Isak sank to his knees at the tilt. The ground hit hard, frozen and solid as the heartbreak on gray blue eyes as they turned away.

Isak sunk to his knees, put his head in his hands, and broke.
He sure hoped Even hadn't made any candle rose petal plans because when Isak shouldered the door open to the apartment there were tears in his eyes and streaks down his cheeks.

Even was pacing in the living room, spinning around on a heel the moment Isak stepped inside.

Then strong arms were wrapping around him and Isak held back tight and did everything he could not to fucking cry.

He'd cried and cried and cried and his sides hurt and his knees hurt and his chest hurt and he just didn't wanna hurt anymore.

Even held him and they rocked and rocked and Isak buried his face and tried to get warm.

It was gonna be okay. Even’s arms were around him and it was gonna be okay. They were gonna be
okay.

He’d find a way to fix it, he’d find a way back, it couldn’t be over, it *could not* be over and--

Isak inhaled sharp, trying to shut up his stupid head as he squeezed tight and Even made a pitied little sound, running a hand over the back of his head.

Rocking him a little more.

“So much for romantic sex, huh?” He finally muffled bitter and Even squeezed him tight.

“This is completely fine.” He pressed a kiss to Isak’s curls, voice light through the deep rumble of Isak tucked so close to his chest. “Unless you want me to strip you down and get your mind off everything?”

Isak huffed, pulling back to wipe a hand over his face, try and breathe. Just inhale and exhale and everything else they could figure out.

Even was looking at him all soft and trying and Isak had ruined everything, he didn’t fucking deserve this.

“I doubt that’d work,” he scoffed, heart thudding and Even took his hand, lacing them together so fucking sure and pulling him for the bedroom.

“I can try,” he offered, all sweet and suggestive, eyebrows up, little smile. Isak let himself be pushed down on the mattress, catching his breath as Even pressed a sweet kiss to his mouth. Wiping flat palms over the stains on Isak’s cheeks. “Ja?”

“What the hell, go for it.”

Then Even was kissing down his chest eagerly and Isak closed his eyes and tried not to think about anything at all.

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Onsdag, 12:13
15.02.17

Jonas wasn’t in school. None of the boys had seen him this morning, Isak texted every one of them individually and no one had so much as heard a word from him.

Maybe he’s sick, Mahdi had suggested. Yeah, sick of seeing Isak’s face. That was fine, he could barely look in the mirror himself this morning.

At least Even wasn’t sick of him.

Isak was on his way for the lunch room, lowkey psyching himself out in case Jonas showed up, what the fuck he was gonna say, what in the world he was supposed to do, and that’s when Even slipped up next to him and slid his hand in Isak’s back pocket.

“Oyy,” Isak said, eyebrows shooting up. It was the far pocket too, which was somehow a lot more possessive but Even was smiling down at him really fucking pretty and sparkly so Isak couldn’t help
but tip his head up for a kiss.

Even kissed him hard and squeezed his hand with it.

“Oi oi, we are in school, mister.”

“Mmm. Hmm. You’re just as fucking hot in this building as you are in our bed.” Even gave him a Look™ and Isak kinda narrowed his eyes.

“Mmm. Just be careful how much you’re grabbing there.”

He kissed Isak’s cheekbone in response.

Then they were coming up on the lunch table and Even’s hand had to slip free for him to sit the fuck down; it just slid up to squeeze his waist instead.

And then he was kissing up Isak’s jaw. Isak furrowed his eyebrows and leaned to the side, giving Even as weird of a look as he could manage when he was so close his nose was bumping Isak’s snapback.

“Hey, hey, cut it out. I’m trying to have a conversation.”

Even hummed and slipped his mouth down to Isak’s neck. Okay, definitely not what he meant.

“As in I can’t think when your mouth is on me, babe.” Isak pushed him upright and off. Even pouted at him so Isak took his hand, setting both haphazardly on Even’s lap and turned back to the boys, straightening his snapback with his free hand and finally able to have this damn conversation.

“So anyways, as I was saying, none of you have heard from him?”

None of them had.

Until after lunch apparently.

Isak was on his way from Biology to German when he spotted Magnus in the hallway. He lifted a hand, about to open his mouth and greet him in some pun or nickname or some shit when Magnus beat him to it.

“Did you break up Jonas and Eva?”

Isak stopped in the middle of the hallway. So did Magnus, right in front of him, head dipped, waiting for an answer. Perfectly serious.

Isak swallowed.

“Where did you hear that?”

“You did.” A moment as it sunk in and Magnus shook his head, furrowed in disbelief, voice pitching too high. “What the fuck??”

“Magnus,” he started, desperate, and Magnus’s expression opened up, shock and hurt and.

“You were supposed to be his best friend, Isak.” The way he spat Isak’s name cut like a blade, slipping between his ribs, absolutely nothing he could do as he watched it sink in over the face of
another best friend, as he sunk in, true colors and deceit and months of nasty that was already making Magnus shake his head.

“I can't fucking believe-- after everything Jonas has done for you??”

“Magnus I swear, I never wanted to hurt him--”

“Ja?? Ja, cause Isak it sounds like that's exactly what you wanted. Do you have any idea how much you've destr--”

Destroyed? Or destroyed him?

Isak swallowed, trying to keep back the tears as Magnus purses his mouth and nodded disgustedly.

“...is he okay, have you. Is there anything…”

“Anything you can do?? Fy faen Isak, haven't you done enough?? We all looked up to you two! No one’s closer than Isak and Jonas, right? No one’s got a more pure, perfect friendship than Isak and Jonas! To think we were fucking jealous of a bond like that? What bond? You've done nothing but stab him in the back and he's taken every fucking hit, and in case you were too blind to notice, Jonas is a great fucking person and he deserves so. Much better than you.”

Isak wiped quick hands over his face but it didn't matter, the splatter of tears escaped anyways.

Magnus scoffed.

“Go take your sob show somewhere else. No one fucking believes it anymore, Isak. You're fucking cellophane.”

Their shoulders collided as Magnus brushed past him, hard enough to make him spin and stumble a step, then Magnus was walking off down the hallway, not so much as a glance behind him and Isak turned back around, shuddery inhale shaking his chest.

It was.

He had.

He didn't--

Isak sucked in a harsh breath, wiping his face down one more time, trying to stretch into whatever ounce of numbness he had left. Shaken and rotting on the inside as he lifted his head and stared blankly ahead of him.

Fuck.

There was a crowd of onlookers, six or seven first years and Isak blinked back into reality, shooting them a glare.

“Fuck off,” he suggested, then they were all back to gossiping and he walked as fast as he could to his next class.

He had 65 new Instagram comments in the next hour.

So you're gay and a traitor too?

Magnus’s words still burning like brands in his skin.
Painful enough his head read that one in Magnus’s bright inquiring voice. The fucking brutal scoff of indifference to follow.

Fuck you, Isak.

_Fuck_ this.

Isak had his head down as stepped out into the courtyard. He just wanted to be home. This was one of the days they usually all walked together, at least until they went separate ways to the bus stop and today Isak would be walking alone.

Jonas hated him.

Magnus hated him.

Mahdi probably hated him.

Isak kept his head down and shouldered past the whispering crowds, didn’t wanna see how many fucking people were looking at him right now, how fast the rumors were starting to spread.

He only glanced up to make sure he didn’t hit the fence, and that’s when his heart dropped for his feet.

The unmistakable sight he used to look for, since that first day on playground, the distant halo of dark curls.

Jonas.

Across the courtyard, walking out of the building with a stack of papers in hand, the homework for the day he must’ve just picked up from his classes.

Isak didn’t think twice, he ran as fast as he fucking could down the stairs, right for the doors of Hartvig Nissen Jonas had just left.

“Jonas!”

He spun around at his name, expression instantly shutting down as he recognized Isak. He turned around and started for the street and Isak jogged to catch up, already calling from a foot away.

“Jonas, fucking talk to me. Look, I’m sorry, you know I am, it was a year ago, it’s not what you thought, it doesn’t mean I don’t still--”

Jonas turned around and shoved him, hard.

Isak went stumbling and a gasp went up behind them, god knows how many cliques were watching now, school had just let out and everyone was piling around the courtyard, and literally _everyone_ knew they were best friends, and everyone knew who Isak was if they didn’t before because he was The Only Gay Kid in school besides his mysterious older boyfriend and to say he and Jonas had gathered a crowd by now was a fucking understatement.

So Jonas shoved him and knocked the wind out of his chest with the look on his face the violent hurt hands the pure twisted hate and heartbreak and Isak barely fucking caught his footing.

Jonas shoved him, the world stopped spinning in its axis and the crowd gasped.
“Oh fuck,” some girl said next to them.

“Is he gonna hit him?”

“I would.”

The fucking chatter didn't register, not as anything but internal voices to burn in the back of his mind is he gonna hit him, I would.

The shove had knocked him so far off the train tracks of his life he couldn't imagine derailing further without crashing off the cliff and into the ocean but if Jonas hit him it would fucking end him because they'd promised--

They'd promised to never fucking get in a fight without each other again and this didn't break that promise did it, Isak went stumbling and instead of exasperated hands hauling him up by his hood it was those protective hands that knocked him down.

And down and down and down as Isak teetered dangerously in his feet and Jonas glared at him worse, burning deeper and more pissed and more hurt than the way he fucking glared at Penetrator Chris their first year.

“Fuck off, Isak.”

“Jonas--” It was almost a hiccup, it was so weak and begging and that was his best friend, please please, he just needed him to understand--

“Don’t fucking talk to me.”

It hit him in the same place every reversal ever had.

How many times in their lives had Jonas sat him down, looked over at him from his locker.

Talk to me, Isak.

I'm here if you wanna talk about it.

Isak fucking talk to me, what else am I here for--

Don't.

Don't fucking talk to me, a hard enough smack across the face that honestly?

Isak would've taken the punch.

Jonas spat the condemnation that would put him in his fucking grave and Isak didn't get the chance to blink before he was spinning right back around, stalking off with his backpack the final retreating middle finger.

Isak’s feet were cemented to the ground and everyone was mulling and the world was turning again but Isak couldn't move.

What the fuck.

What the fuck.

He couldn't feel his fingertips or his face or the heart pounding between his ribs, it was tied to the
retreating curls that left him here in the courtyard in worse shape than Jonas had ever found him.

Isak didn't get to be found and saved anymore.

He'd thrown it all away.

The sob caught in his throats and he was screaming beneath the paper film that couldn't cling to the burn of his skin much longer so he ran, he all but ran to the bus stop because the moment he slowed down was the moment the mask melted from his skin and he collapsed for the earth.

Only the earth couldn't save him now either.

Nothing could.

Onsdag, 17:43
15.02.17

“Let’s go on a walk,” Even said, hopping off the edge of the couch.

Isak glanced up at the windows, looked back at Even with his eyebrows knit.

“It’s frozen rain-sleet-snowing right now, why the fuck would we go outside?”

Even was bouncing on his toes, eyebrows up, head tipping for the door.

“Cause, you’re mopey, let’s get you out of the house.”

“What do you mean I’m mopey, my best friend hates me, Magnus hates me, my entire school hates me.”

“C’mon! Isak, you can’t sit here and wallow forever.”

“Maybe I wanna fucking wallow.” Isak looked back down at his book. Didn’t matter that he hadn’t been able to read a word since he opened it. He got it, Even was trying to compensate for how shitty everything was by staying chipper but it wasn’t helping.

“Baby, I’m not gonna let you do this to yourself.” Even dropped to a crouch in front of him, taking his hand, all sparkly eyes as his other hand slid over Isak’s neck, sincere touch against his skin.

“Don’t you trust me?”

“Of course I do.” It was kinda bitchy but Even was undeterred, squeezing their fingers.

“Then come with me.”

There was just so much...bright in his hopeful look and as much as this fucking sucked everything fucking sucked Even was fucking beautiful and Isak crumbled.

“Okay. Does it have to be outside?”

“Det finnes ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlig klær,” Even said cheerily, popping back to his feet. Isak
sighed, pushing off the couch considerably slower.

“Fine.” But only because it was practically a challenge now. There’s no such thing as bad weather just bad clothing, Even had said and it was like the number one Norwegian excuse to go on a hike in torrential downpours or icy blizzards.

Which this basically was.

Oh fucking well, they invented beanies for a reason.

Even dragged him for the door, hands locked before Isak could change his mind.

They were about to head down the stairs when it kicked in and Isak skidded to a stop.

“Wait, Even, it’s fucking storming. We need coats.”

“Oh shit.” A tight hand herded him back inside and they bundled up at the door then Even kissed his nose and they were off.

“--but like artistically, cinematography is so fucking important, it's like that extra boost that makes or breaks a film, y’know? Cause yeah, if the acting and plot and everything is good that's important but if you can capture an angle that throws symbolism and the aesthetic factor in then the watcher is physically thrown into--”

“Even.”

“...the film which is arguably the whole reason for watching, Aristotle said the only point in art was catharsis and that catharsis isn't achievable if you can't identify yourself within the art and--”

“Even, you don't have to keep talking, I’m not going to actually combust if it's quiet for three minutes.”

Even blinked, mouth open around whatever nerdy artistic fact he had to throw out next, distant and cherry while Isak was over here dying.

But now he was called out on the distraction and he finally caught the look on Isak’s face over the top of his phone.

“You're still scrolling through Instagram comments.”

“People are asking a lot of questions, okay.”

“Are you replying to any of them?”

“No, but that's not the point.”

“The hell is the point then??”

“I want to know what people are saying!”

“It's just rumors, it happened a year ago, people will get over it, okay?”
Isak glared back down at the phone. He was on Instagram yeah and he'd looked through the comments, had most of them etched in various bones now but he wasn't on his page anymore, he was torturing himself scrolling through Magnus’s, Jonas’s, the old posts about them and everything they used to have that he'd just fucking thrown away and he was tearing up now but how was he supposed to do it, he couldn't fucking picture a life without Jonas in it but Jonas was so pissed and hurt maybe more hurt than Isak was and--

and Even reached over and plucked the phone out of his hands.

“Hey!”

His gaze shot up to glare accusingly but the shine was still on his lashes and Even saw him in a fucking instant. Blue eyes searched his for the three milliseconds it took to lock Isak’s phone and toss it aside, then Even was crawling over the distance between them, still searching as a soft hand landed on Isak’s jaw.

Isak clenched his teeth and Even’s fingers sunk in against his skin. Fuck.

He popped his mouth back open over a shoddy inhale and the warm kiss to his forehead seeped into him like the flicker of summer sun, hot and golden enough Isak managed to inhale again, tears blinked and shoved back and away.

Then Even was leaning back and this time when Isak lifted his gaze they met dry, warm, everything he didn't fucking deserve as Even stroked a warm thumb over his cheek.

“You know what baby, we’re gonna call it an early night.” Even tipped his head, tipping up in a bit of a smile that Isak couldn't help but mirror weakly.

“You wanna go to sleep now?”

“No, I'll tell you what, Mr. Martyr. I'm gonna take all your clothes off and fuck you hard enough it makes your head spin, and you’re gonna forget all about Instagram rumors, okay? Then we’re gonna wake up tomorrow morning and have a wonderful day at school.”

Isak squinted. Even raised his eyebrows. He was being completely serious.

They’d just stepped out of a very steamy shower together after their ridiculous fucking hike - during which they got a lot dirtier before they got clean - literally recent enough their hair was still wet but Even was proposing again and he had that look on his face and.

It was either let Even shape his world into something beautiful again or drown in nostalgia until he teary-eyed himself to sleep and with Even’s eyes raking down his body like that. Well.

It was a pretty compelling argument. Even stuck his tongue in his cheek, fingernails skirting over the sensitive skin under his ear, clock ticking and touch pulsing and.

Isak threw up a hand.

“Fine.”

“Fine??”

“Ja! Yes.” Eyebrows shooting up and Isak melted a little into Even’s touch. Let this take him instead. “Please.”
He didn't need to ask twice.

Yeah, it was gonna be the sixth night in a row and they were supposed to have reached their sex quota for February and they'd had more sex this week than literally any other week ever, but Isak really did not mind the constant distractions.

And he was kinda fucking grateful Even kept spending the night because everything sucked and he could not stomach the idea of Even going home, spending a cold night alone with nothing to think about but how he'd fucked up.

So Isak let Even kiss him into the mattress and spread his legs and take him to pieces and forget some more for a little while.

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Torsdag, 08:25
16.02.17

Morning sunlight and soft fingertips running up the backs of his bare thighs, back down again with a sticky kiss to his shoulder. Isak made a sleepy bitchy sound and the kiss morphed into a smile.

Touch drifting a little higher on the next skid up his skin, curving up with his body to more...sensitive places.

Isak’s eyebrows went up before he bothered to blink open, gaze settling on the bright one on the pillow beside.

Fucking beautiful and sparkly and way too alive for how early it was.

“How are you always awake first?” Isak complained grumpily and the fingertips dancing up his skin flattened into a full palm, rubbing up bare beneath the covers and waking all of his skin up. Unfortunately. Fucking eight in the morning and Even was bright eyed and bushy tailed and they'd been up god knows how late.

Cause Isak had, like usual, passed out before Even so much as closed his eyes.

“...and asleep last?”

“I like watching you sleep,” Even defended and Isak fluttered his lashes, squinting a little before he closed his eyes again and settled back into the un-fucking-beatable comfort of their bed.

Cozy and soft and just the right temperature.

Even’s warm touch already dancing over his skin. Over his ass and up his spine, taking a dozen tingles with it.

Fuck. Why couldn’t he just stay here forever instead?
“I can’t go to school today,” Isak grumbled, face smushed to the side, two arms wrapped around his pillow tight.

A drifting hand ran over his bare shoulders.

“Why not?” Even asked, tracing down to drag lines over his waist.

Isak lifted his head from the pillow to plop back down on the side of his face, squinched up as he pouted at his beautiful, naked boyfriend.

“Stress is bad for the baby.”

Even’s eyebrows shot up on his head, knitting over wild eyes, mouth open and hella confused.

“What baby??”

“Me,” Isak pouted.

It took a second before Even was rolling his eyes, a lot, then rolling over to drape himself half on top of Isak’s back to press a warm splattering of kisses to his shoulders, the back of his neck.

“Well now I really don’t wanna go to school.”

“You are the most precious, whiny baby I know,” Even smiled into his bare skin, and Isak sighed.

“Don’t tease, I’m still upset.”

“I’m sure today will be better, sweetheart.”

Surprise.

It wasn’t.

Chris and Iben?? Apparently broke them up too??

You mean the cutest fucking couple in Nissen?

Wow, and apparently the Boy he’s dating now used to have a girlfriend too

What’s that count, three couples? How many more are there gonna be by the end of the day?

Isak closed out of Instagram and put his head on his desk.

“You've been doing really well in the class, Isak, I think if you were to do that extra project you could absolutely bump up to a 6…” Mrs. Hansen was walking down the hallway with him, she was on her way to go get an early lunch and Isak had just gotten out of her history class, asked if he could walk with her for a bit because he was really close to getting 6’s in all of his classes and he really could use any tips for the boost.
Besides, it wouldn’t hurt to have a buffer of an Adult in the hallway before he got to English.

Mrs. Hansen was droning on about how she always noticed his participation in class, how dedicated he seemed to his studies, and that’s when Isak spotted a familiar face on the other side of the hallway.

His mouth tipped up in a smile all on its own, how could he not, it was Even. The most beautiful human being in like, the world.

He was walking with his third year friends, sauntering like the king of the whole school, laughing brightly at something someone said and Isak couldn’t contain the crooked smile anymore, dimples digging in deep, and that’s when Even spotted him.

His eyebrows shot up, a few feet away from passing him and Isak expected maybe a head nod or a smile back or if Even was being particularly flirty a little kiss blown his way, but he did not expect two warm hands taking his face, tipping it up, and crashing their mouths together.

The kiss was hard and wet and spun him completely 180 with it, all the way around from the hands on his jaw, Even’s shoulders up, towering over him with all of that height and power then Even was popping off and smiling triumphantly at him, kept right on walking backwards a few steps, had actually never stopped walking, all that momentum leaving Isak to stagger a moment before the eyebrows went up again and Even turned back around to his classmates, hand lifting smile lifting as he said something.

Then he was turning the corner out of sight, another echoing laugh.

Isak blinked like 600 times and turned back around on one heel, eyes wide as he stared at the hallway.

Mrs. Hansen was standing there looking very shocked.

Funny, that’s exactly how Isak was feeling.

“Sorry, my boyfriend can be a little--”

A little what, out of his fucking mind, jesus fuck they were in school, what in the world made him think that was a good fucking idea, Isak’s teacher was looking at him like he was on drugs and yeah, maybe he smoked pot sometimes but never enough to get that look.

“You know, Mr. Valtersen, it takes a lot of work to get a 6 in this class. Only students who are really focused on their studies can.”

Isak’s eyebrows shot straight up. That was a fucking tone change if he ever saw one.

“Believe me, I'm focused,” he said slowly.

“Only the very best of students can get 6’s, and those with...other issues they're dealing with just don't have the ability to dedicate what they need to,” she continued and Isak lifted an eyebrow.

Issues??

His teacher had virtually no fucking concerns about him doing well in this course before she found out he was gay, funny.

“Well I will work as hard as I can to prove to you I have the dedication for your class,” Isak told her and he did everything he fucking could not to sound bitter.
Magnus and Mahdi weren’t texting him back.

He walked into the cafeteria and they were sitting at the usual table though.

Isak’s eyes went wide and they both looked up and saw him. Their conversation paused, he could tell from here, and he kept walking down the side of the room, he had to go get food first anyways.

Okay so he saw them, it wasn’t the end of the world, he had just as much of a right to be here as they did.

Still didn’t see Jonas, but he was a little early today, there was always the chance that Jonas just hadn’t gotten here from German yet.

He was going to get a cheese sandwich and go back in there and…

He could either sit down and try to explain himself or he could just head to the bench on the back wall where he was supposed to be meeting Even, his boyfriend, who supported him and understood that this shit happened a year ago and yeah, it was shitty, he was shitty, he fucking got it--

“I think you’re short a few crowns?” The girl at the counter told him and Isak took a couple seconds to register.

“Oh.” Then he was digging in his pocket, pulling out the rest of the change and trying to breathe.

He wasn’t gonna bolt, he wasn’t. He was going to walk back in there perfectly calmly.

Isak turned the corner into the lunch hall and they were gone.

The table was completely empty.

He stood there staring for a moment, then an arm was wrapping around his waist and he nearly jumped out of his skin.

“Halla,” Even greeted, pressing a warm kiss to his temple.

Isak snapped out of it, turning on a heel and looking up accusingly.

“Hey, what the fuck was that earlier?”

“What?” Even shook his head, looking entirely innocent. Isak started for the bench, Even still attached to his hip and following with him.

“In the hallway, I was walking with a teacher.”

“So?”

“So maybe it was a little inappropriate?”

Even’s eyebrows knit, plopping down next to him and crossing a leg over his knee. Studying Isak for a moment, mouth pursed. Isak raised his eyebrows impatiently. “Are you embarrassed of me or something?”

“Nei. God no.”
Even stuck his tongue in his cheek. “Did she say something?”

“Well.” That wasn’t actually the point, the point was that Even kissed him like *that*, in public, and yeah, it made his tummy swoop and yeah, he got that Even was trying to brighten his day considering that everything else was shit, but what the fuck.

“Wait, did she really?” Even unfolded his legs and sat up, suddenly paying a lot of attention. Isak tore off a chunk of cheese bread and popped it in his mouth.

“Not explicitly, she just got all weird. But...you did kiss me in the middle of the fucking hallway.”

“What teacher was it?”

“Even, calm the fuck down, you’re not gonna go chew out my teacher, okay. It’s the only class I don’t have a six in yet.”

Even’s jaw clicked, eyes scanning the cafeteria like he was gonna find Mrs. Hansen somewhere between the fucking first years.

“Seriously, babe, it’s fine. Let’s just have lunch and forget about it, okay?”

Even reached over and tore a chunk off his sandwich too. Isak didn’t bother batting his hand for it, it wasn’t like Even didn’t make him enough food as it was, he could have half of Isak’s shitty school lunch.

“Hey, speaking of gay, do you know who texted me the weirdest thing the other day?”

“Hm,” Isak responded, turning to the sharp cheekbones and swooping hair. It was like, remarkably high today. Even hadn’t cut it in forever and he kinda looked like a Hollywood star or some shit. Last week he’d let it curl more, so it didn’t look so fucking tall, but he was hot both ways, so.

“Vilde,” Even shot back, popping another bite of cheese toastie in his mouth.

“Really.”

“Yeah, look.”

A hand digging in his pocket and Even pulled out his phone, unlocking it and making a face at something on the screen. Isak glanced over and Even tilted it surreptitiously away from him, thumbing through something.

Then he was holding it out for Isak to see, fingers still wrapped around the sides like he didn’t want to surrender it. Isak brushed aside the thought and read down the thread.

“Wait, why is your phone in black and white?”

“Hm? Oh, I dunno. The colors were really bright.”

Isak glanced up and gave him a weird look. Even shrugged a shoulder, shaking his phone once.

“Did you see what she said?”

“Okay, okay, reading.”

Apparently Vilde had a friend who liked both, or played for the other team.
Right. A friend.

“Okay, that’s it,” Isak declared, leaning back again. Even quickly pocketed the phone, giving him a look.

“What?”

“I’ve gotta fucking talk to her.”

Expressive eyebrows shot up, an amused look on Even’s face as he reached over and stole the rest of Isak’s sandwich.

“Have fun.”

Torsdag, 17:01
16.02.17

It’d been a solid year and a half since he ducked down next to this bush and rapped on this window, but he’d been on his way home and just landed here, he had no idea why except that he was torn in about three hundred pieces and she was probably the only person on the planet who understood.

Eva looked up from her bed in surprise, eyes going wide as she recognized who was outside. Isak blew on his freezing hands while she quickly crossed the room, unhooking the latch and throwing her window open.

“Isak?”

He sniffled - against the cold, that was the only reason why - and she waved him inside instantly, “C’mon, c’mon.”

He crawled through the foot of space, turning at the corner of the ledge to get his feet out first, hop down properly to the ground. Her bedroom was in the basement and the window used to be how they all came in - well, her friends probably still did. He’d fucking struggled with how long his legs were but he’d figured it out sometime last year and thankfully his body still remembered, cause he landed on his feet instead of his face.

Didn’t stay upright and stable for long though, cause the next thing he knew Eva was throwing her arms around him in a rough hug.

“Eva, I’m--”

“I know,” she muffled into his hoodie and Isak blinked back the tears, one head coming up to cup the back of her head.

The last time he’d come in here had been to hug her, after he’d broken up her and Jonas. He’d sat on her bed and lied to her about how Jonas found out, he’d held her while she broke down and cried into his arms, he’d held her tight and promised her it was gonna be okay and he’d been the one to do all of that but she’d turned to him.
And now, when the stupid decision he’d lied to her about in this exact room came back to destroy him, Eva Kviig Mohn, who should’ve been turning him out on his ear, was holding him tight.

He just stood there fucking numb.

“You can cry on me, y’know,” she told him and Isak huffed.

Eva lifted her head, smoothing back the curls from his forehead, looking up at him with so much fucking concern.

“C’mon, let’s sit down.”

Quiet and comforting and it was the same thing he’d said to her.

Isak let her lead him to the bed, sit him down, landing right beside him with both of her hands between his.

“How are you doing?”

Isak blinked down at their hands.

“I shouldn’t’ve done it,” he whispered. Eva waited and he cleared his throat, head tipping to the side. Throat torn up. “I never should’ve told him.”

“I think it was really brave,” she whispered back.

“It took me a year, how is that brave?” Isak turned to her, water hovering on his lashes and Eva took one look at him and melted, bringing a soft palm up to his cheek.

“You told me yourself, Isak. If he heard it from you, he’ll forgive you.”

It was so fucking kind, in what fucking universe did he get a fucking ounce of this, not after he’d just--

“B-but. I’ve been nothing but awful, I don’t deserve--”

“Oh, Isak. Oh, Isak, c’mere.” She bundled him into her arms, tipping him sideways with it and Isak landed against her collarbone, emotions bubbling over and shoulders already shaking as she wrapped her arms around his head.

Fuck. So much for not crying.

“Shh, shh, it’s gonna be okay.”

Rocking him back and forth, planting a kiss on the top of his hoodie, rocking them some more.

“It’s gonna be okay.”

Isak cried shakily into her shirt for a few solid regretful minutes but he hadn't gotten to cry about it not really Even was all distract distract smile distract and spent every moment trying to make sure he wasn't feeling all of this hurt but it didn't matter how much he tucked it down and away it was there and there and.

And Jonas hated him, his best friend hated him and didn't want anything to do with him and thought Isak never cared about him.
That it’d all been a crush to move on from, that Jonas never really mattered beyond that, Isak had been shitty enough Jonas believed that and that part was almost fucking worse than how upset he was about everything Isak did to hurt him and.

And it sucked it sucked so fucking much, Even didn't get it but Eva did. Eva rubbed his back and let him cry and told him it was gonna be okay.

Until he finally got a fucking hold on himself, reeled it all back in and shoved it all back down and managed to snifflle into silence, pull back and wipe at his face.

Fuck.

Eva stayed there with him through every moment, so fucking empathetic, watching every flicker across his face as he put a hand on his forehead and tried to breathe.

She was rubbing his back when her phone chimed.

And chimed again.

Isak closed his eyes.

Please please please please please don’t--
It was after school, she was propped on one of the picnic tables outside on her phone, waiting for someone and it was literally the perfect opportunity, destiny landing him right at Vilde’s feet at the one time a fucking year that she was alone.

On the day he declared he was talking to her too.

So he plopped down on the bench beside her knees and she looked up from her phone in surprise.
“Isak! Hi.”

“Hi, Vilde. I was wondering if you had a moment to chat?”

“Uh...ja! Is it about all the drama that’s been happening lately? Cause in case you’re wondering, Eva had already told us it was you--”

“Nei, nei, uh. Not about me.”

“Oh? Jonas, then?”

“Nei, um. Vilde, I wanted to talk about you.”

“Meg??” Blonde eyebrows lifted and Isak nodded, propping an elbow on the table and leaning his head on his hand.

“I know you’ve been kinda going through a rough time and I know we’re not that close, but I really do wanna be here for you.”

“...for me? What makes you think I’ve been having a rough time?” She cocked her head all cute, blonde hair swinging and Isak sighed.

“Vilde, I used to be in your position, I know what it looks like.”

“What what looks like?” She shot back and Isak fought the urge to groan. Fucking hell. “What position am I in, Isak?”

He debated a moment, studying the blue eyes, the curl of her fingers tight around her phone. Better him than somebody else, and she clearly didn’t have a Jonas to go talk to about it or an Even to go make out with about it, so.

“The closet,” he finally said and Vilde’s eyes went wide.

Isak just propped his head on his hand and looked at her.

“What are you implying??” She all but squeaked, voice too high and hands waving around before she ducked down, voice dropping to a hella concerned whisper. “Do you think I’m a-- a...lesbian??”

“Vilde, it’s okay,” Isak insisted, sitting up to look at her properly, get her to understand that really, it wasn’t as fucking terrifying as she thought it was, the world wasn’t gonna end, everything was only gonna get brighter from here.

“What’s okay,” a voice over his shoulder asked and Isak’s brain registered the voice as Familiar, Friend, Trust, absolutely zero warning bells going off as he turned around and said it without thinking.

“That Vilde likes girls,” Isak told Magnus, looking up. And registering that it was Magnus.

And that he’d just said that out loud.

His mouth snapped shut as fucking fast as Vilde’s dropped open.

Magnus’s eyes were wide, but both Isak’s and Vilde’s were wider. They were both frozen silent though, which left Magnus - who hated him now - to be the one to speak first.

“You...what? Really? Are you like...panphil or something? Wait. Does that mean you don’t-- is that
why you won't…” He trailed off, eyebrows furrowing as all these bells went off.

Isak was fucking frozen on the bench, right up until Vilde shoved him as hard as fucking possible.

“I hate you,” she bit, half a sob, then she was grabbing her bag and running across the courtyard, heels clicking, hands over her face and blonde hair flying.

If Jonas’s shove hit him deep in the stomach, hard enough to take his knees out from under him, Vilde’s shove hit him in the face, sharp and bright enough his cheeks were stinging in the aftershock.

Twisting the center of his chest as the horror sunk in. Sunk in like a nail shoving all the way through bone from a single swing of a hammer.

He'd just outed someone. Uprooted their entire lives, flayed them open for the world to see, ripped inside out to expose the most tender sensitive terrified parts to a world that mocked and judged and burned.

And not just anyone. He'd outed Vilde. The softest. Sweetest. Most fragile girl he'd ever known, who baked bread to spread love and smiled delighted and wide and open like somehow through all the shit of the world she still hasn't lost her innocence and.

That girl. That's the girl whose life he just ruined.

His face stung and his twisted chest burned but she was long since gone, disappeared in a flurry of shock and tears and a violent shove that knocked him so much further sideways than the picnic bench allowed.

Isak stared after her wide-eyed and Magnus stared after her wide-eyed, until he was turning to Isak instead. Mortification permeating with every accusatory word.

“What the fuck did you just do?”

Yeah. Isak came crying to Eva’s room for more reasons than just Jonas.

And now he was sitting on her bed with tear stains down his face as he repeated please please please please please in his head and Eva stared down at her phone.

She’d typed back a few things, brows knitting deeper and deeper as she did, thumbs flying faster and harder. Getting visibly more upset until her phone made a message received in this chat sound and her eyes just went wide.

Then she locked her phone, slowly setting it back down on her bed. Hair swishing around her shoulders, looking down for a moment, letting whatever it was soak in.

Isak held his breath. Fuck fuck fuck.

Then Eva was turning to him, head cocked to the side, all of the softness gone. Looking at him with the accusatory burn she’d had under that wants hat when she pinned him in the corner of Iben’s kitchen and ripped him into pieces.

“Isak did you...did you out Vilde?”

Fucking hell.
The desperation slid right back into place like an old glove, shoes too small and curls long and wild and terrified hiding heart seizing in his chest.

“I wasn't fucking trying to, Jesus it's not fucking right for her to lie to Magnus and herself and I was just trying to fucking help her--”

“And you came in here crying for my support? She’s my fucking friend, Isak! All we ever did was support you! And you've ruined this for her!! How could you??”

“I swear I wasn't trying to hurt her;” he started, desperate, reaching for her hand, trying to make her understand, anything, and Eva shot to her feet so fast the bed tried to tip him sideways.

“It just turned out that way, right?” She sneered, shoving his words right back in his face hard enough to sting, looking positively disgusted as she waved a hand for the window. “Get out.”

It just turned out that way. That’s what he’d told her when he apologized for hurting her so much their first year.

“Eva--”

“I don't wanna fucking see you right now, Isak, get out.”

The snap was sharp enough he recoiled with the words then Eva was pointing a hand for the exit and he shoved shakily to his feet.

“Eva--”

“Out!!!”

She stared him down all the way to the window, waiting impatiently as he climbed back through it, then she was hopping up and slamming it closed in his face.

Fuck.

FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK.

It took him a second to push to his feet and by the time he did his jeans were already wet, it was snowing hard and the ground was already littered with it, damp soaking through and it was fucking cold, everything was fucking cold and his eyelashes were going to freeze in clumps, his cheeks were already freezing tight in streaks.

Fuck. Fuck.

What the fuck was he supposed to do?

Isak wrapped his arms around himself and started for the road, snow whipping into his face.

He glared at the stupid fucking bushes he’d jumped at that last party at Eva’s house, so fucking long ago. He’d only known about the hole in her stupid fucking bushes because he used to take it to get to her bedroom window when they would hang out or chat or listen to music together and he.

He’d fucking ruined everything. Twice.

He couldn’t really breathe by the time he reached the road, the snow had hit the point of swirling upwards it was so fucking windy and all the snow earlier today had been so light, had barely stuck, he hadn’t thought it was gonna turn hellish like this for awhile and.
It was already dark, the sun was down and he couldn't breathe, the wind and the cold were biting and scratching and burning.

Isak pulled his scarf up over his mouth and he was breathing into it, making it stiff with the moisture in the carbon dioxide that was freezing and he was freezing and trying not to shake as he walked blind in all that fucking white.

Jesus fuck he couldn’t do this.

It nearly froze his hands off pulling his phone out of his pocket but he didn’t care.

Two rings, then the warmest voice in the world on the other end of the line.

“Hey, baby.”

“Ev-en--”

“Oh no, Isak, sweetheart. What’s wrong?”

“I keep fucking up more, I don’t know what to do, everything’s ruined--”

“Hey, hey, just breathe, okay? I’m here.”

“I-I tried to go see Eva and she kicked me out and it’s snowing and it’s fucking c-cold and--”

“Isak, can you see a bus stop?”

“I know how to g-get to one.”

“Okay, baby, I just need you to breathe and get on the bus, okay? I’ve got a cup of your favorite hot tea and I’m waiting for you in your room. Just get here, and everything will be okay, I promise.”

“Ok-ay,” he whispered. “Okay.”

The bus loop felt like it took three hundred years and he couldn’t stop shivering and he shouldn’t’ve tried texting Mahdi and Magnus and Vilde and Eva and Jonas but he did, and absolutely not one of them texted him back.

The Instagram comments were starting to get pretty vicious. It was four couples now. Apparently he was going to hell for all kinds of reasons.

Yeah, vicious enough he deleted the app from his phone.

It wasn’t like he’d just did some shitty things to his friends. He’d intentionally fucked over everyone’s lives, because he was so fucking selfish, and he’d ruined apparently every relationship at Nissen that counted in the past two years.

Sonja and Even, Jonas and Eva, Chris and Iben, Magnus and Vilde, who was next, all the comments said. Who was next.

Isak spent the rest of the bus ride trying not to cry.
“How about we just get out of here? You and me.” Even’s voice sounded like a fucking song, melody floating beautiful up to the ceiling. Isak didn’t loosen his grip on hoodie-padded ribs the fucking slightest.

A light gaze landed on top of his head, warm, he could feel it but Isak just kept holding onto Even’s torso like it was the only life raft in this entire fucking ocean. Even was warm and dry and he’d smoothed all the snow out of Isak’s curls and kissed him deep until his frozen toes curled up again and Isak did not have the strength to let go.

“My aunt has a cabin in Geiranger,” he offered, a little slice of escapable heaven and Isak smiled to himself, rubbing his cheek on Even’s chest to look up at the pretty face that somehow still hadn’t sunk.

“Is it the same aunt who supposedly owned that house with the pool?”

Even laughed like the stars, tugging him in closer with the hand on his shoulder.

“No, an actual aunt. She’s my dad’s sister. It’s a really beautiful cabin, it’s in a mountain range and overlooks this stunning, crystal clear lake.”

“That sounds really nice,” Isak murmured, letting his eyes slip closed. Picturing how fucking nice it’d be to just be him and Even right now, in the middle of nowhere, nothing to do but each other. And look out over the mountains and the lake, but.

“It’s fucking beautiful, you’d fit in perfectly.”

“Mmm.” He made a happy sound against Even’s heartbeat and the hand on his shoulder curled hard fingers against bone.

“It’s like an hour flight. We could buy plane tickets tonight. Just drop everything and go.”

Isak huffed. Yeah, if fucking only. But he could play along with the fantasy a little, let them both dream of a better day where he didn’t have to deal with this shit place. So he pressed a kiss to Even’s sternum and placed his chin on the spot, tipping a crooked, teasing smile back up at him.

“Hm, let’s see how dinner tomorrow goes.”

“Mmm. Meeting the parents.” His eyebrows lifted dully and Isak stuck his tongue in his cheek, dancing a hand up Even’s pec, sliding around the back of his neck and sliding himself up higher with the anchor.

“Speaking of which.” Fingers skidding up into the back of Even’s hair now, tongue pushing out to wet his lips slow, watching the burn behind reflecting blue. “…shouldn’t you be headed back to your parents’?”

This was like, what, the sixth or seventh night in a row Even had been over here? They’d agreed on
three. And yeah, the past few days had fucking...sucked. He got why Even was making the exception, but he didn’t want to just not say anything about it either.

“Mmm. Fuck that,” Even brushed the comment aside, pulling Isak closer with his thumb and fingers digging in his cheeks to kiss him square on the mouth.

Isak raised an eyebrow and kissed back, sinking into it as the hand on his jaw slipped around his neck, thumbing over the front of his throat.

When they pulled away Isak tipped forward, foreheads together, knee slung properly over Even’s stomach now. *Fuck going back to his parents’ place.* It was a different boy than last week, that was for sure. Last week he could barely convince Even to spend a night.

“What, you turn twenty and you stop being responsible?” Isak teased, dipping back down for another kiss and Even weaved to the side, dodging it with a smile and an unfair twist to Isak’s gut.

“Unless you wanted me to go, for real.” Ah, there he was. Honestly, he probably should, but they were already tangled up and Even was literally the only one besides his roommates who didn’t hate him right now so.

“Oh hell no.”

“Then I think I’ll stay,” he whispered back, rough hand in the back of Isak’s curls dragging him further up Even’s body, tilting his head to the side so the fire mouth could kiss warm and wet down his throat.

Fucking Christ, what a fucking distraction. His eyes slipped closed, twist shifting his knee further across Even’s stomach, hips opening a little wider.

The front door slammed loud enough that through the muffle of his closed bedroom door they both jumped.

The indignant demand that followed was loud enough to hear perfectly fine through the door too.

“Is he here??”


“Isak Valtersen happened, that’s what.”

Isak rolled off Even’s side and sunk his head as deep into the pillow as it’d go, groaning to himself as he let his eyes fall shut. If he squeezed them tight enough he maybe wouldn’t cry.

“What in the world did he do?”

“What the fuck didn’t he do ??? There isn’t a fucking person in our friend group right now who hasn’t been fucked over by him. Vilde’s been crying through more wine than her mom’s liquor cabinet has—”

“Noora?” Linn’s voice. “Can you maybe not shout?”

“What happened to Vilde?” Eskild was demanding, then the voices were dropping hushed and pissed, probably at Linn’s insistence but it didn’t matter, the tone was fucking unmistakable.

Isak cringed at another harsh mention of his name. Muffled, upset voices and his closed eyes weren’t gonna make him any less fucking miserable.
It was late, pretty late but not late enough Noora wasn’t gonna drag him into the middle of a confrontation and he wasn’t sure he could fucking take that right now, he couldn’t take anything, he’d never felt so fucking fragile in his life.

“They’re gonna come barging in here,” Isak whispered, wretched and the hand on his waist squeezed hard.

“Not if they know I’m in here,” Even overrode and it was kinda fierce, possessive. He fluttered his eyes back open, half expecting Even to be shooting daggers at the door.

He wasn’t, he was looking down at Isak but it was still fucking defensive, he was looking at Isak like he’d go to fucking war for him and Isak humphed, trying not to let his chest seize up.

A hand skirted up his chest to stroke down the side of his face and he turned into it, pressing his nose against Even’s palm, begging to drown in the touch.

Even’s thumb slid down the side of his cheek, raking over his mouth and parting his lips with it, smushing them to the side.

“How about we have sex loud enough to drown them out?”

“Woah-oh.” Isak lifted an eyebrow, turning back to look up at Even, a bit of a smile curling into the thumb pushing into his bottom lip.

The light eyes above him were twinkling, bright and beautiful and shining when everything else in the world was fucking crushing and Isak honestly had no idea how he was this lucky. How his life could be absolute shit and then there was Even, who fucking loved him like this, who looked at him like that.

Still.

Who wanted him and tried to make him forget how much everything sucked and loved and supported him and Isak’s life fucking sucked but look at what he had, look at this beautiful boy in his bed who wanted to protect him from the world, who offered to take Isak into his arms and let everything be okay for just a little while.

Who let his past be his past and understood, that yeah, he’d done some fucking shitty things, but he wasn’t a _shitty person_, Even never doubted him for a fucking moment and Isak had no idea how he got here but he wouldn’t trade it for the world.

So he let his mouth curl up a little deeper, one hand stroking fond over a soft cheek, the shining sparkling sweet.

Let it all fade lighter for the moment Even looked at him like that.

“You’ve been the insatiable one this week.”

“You’ve been the really fucking hot one this week,” Even shot back, voice dropping low, thumb dragging off his mouth to pop his lip back and Isak parted around the smile, eyebrows shooting up.

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Even’s bottom lip caught between his teeth and Isak’s gaze snapped down, catching on Even’s mouth too, swooping all the way down through his chest, stomach, legs.
And he swung a leg up over Even’s lap, rolling up on top of him with his eyes dark and his heart already pounding.

“Oh yeah?”

Even’s eyes were throwing off sparks. “Hell yeah.”

Then he was surging up and taking Isak’s mouth, knocking him backwards onto the bed. Mouths breaking apart with a gasp, already shoving his shirt off his shoulders.

The force was hard enough he barely had to wiggle to get the rest of the material free then Even was shoving it aside, lips crashing together again as his hands bunched up tshirt material and slid it up Isak’s chest.

Arms lifted over his head and the kiss only ended long enough to get his shirt over his mouth then Even was kissing him into the mattress again before it’d so much as cleared his eyes.

Isak’s mouth was wide open, pressing up desperately with his hands overlapping on the back of Even’s neck. *Fuck.*

Even kept kissing him, the toe-curling kind of kissing him, only breaking off for them to strip entirely, throwing clothes aside like they were a personal offense, tossing lube and a condom onto the bed while he was up. Then he was running his hands down Isak’s naked body like he couldn’t possibly ever get enough.

Craving hands turned to short nails on his flanks, scratching deep red lines around the curve of Isak’s ass, circling around to his inner thighs where it was sensitive enough Isak jumped at the touch.

His throat was already making quiet raspy sounds before heavy palms skid up his thighs, then Even’s hands reached the insides of his knees and he shoved down hard, slamming Isak’s legs open and fuck, it sent a hell of a rush up his spine but also fuck, he wasn’t sure he was that fucking flexible, Jesus.

But then Even’s tongue was licking flat over his entrance and Isak wasn’t thinking about anything he was shouting, a lot, legs trembling at a burst of suction. Even pressed harder, pushing him into the mattress with the hands on his inner knees and the strain burned, Even’s tongue shoving inside and curling against him burned and Isak had two hands fucking up Even’s hair, gripping tight but it was nowhere near enough.

He was just about to gasp something about not fucking around when the hands pushing down his knees slid back down his legs to stroke up his cock, then up to grab the wrists tight in Even’s hair, ducking his head free and shoving Isak’s hands on his inner thighs in replacement.

“But don’t let go,” Even told him and that was all the warning he got before Even grabbed the lube and slicked up three fingers. Isak held open his thighs and tipped his head back and groaned.

Then Even was working three fingers into him fast enough that stretch was burning too and he was making all these little pitiful noises.

“Ah-ah-ah—”

Twisting fast and hard and it didn’t take long before he adjusted to try and reign in some of the throaty sounds, only the moment it got comfortable Even was reaching for the lube again, and the condom.
Okay, fuck, that was fine with him, he was prepped enough for it not to hurt, he was pretty sure, but
it was gonna be a fucking tight fit.

Mmkay. Wow.

Beautiful fucking sculpted sex god got settled behind him again and Isak was just trying to breathe,
in and out, still holding his thighs open with hands that were gripping tight from how fucking turned
on he was only the tighter his fingers curled the more he felt it and then there was Even, slowly
pushing his hands over the top of Isak’s, pressing harder against them, looking down at him
predatorily enough it was making his head spin.

“You ready?” Low, the hands over his squeezing, eyebrows shooting up as he took in the look on
Isak’s face.

“Mmhm.” Too high-pitched, but Even looked fucking perfect right now, he was so fucking beautiful
and put together and sparkly and the way he was looking at Isak.

“Words.”
Tongue running over his lips, waiting as Isak closed his eyes and groaned again, trying to get a
handle on himself.

“Yes, baby, please--”
Even wrapped one hand around his hip, lining up and pushing in and Isak was already choking on it.

“Fuck fuck fuck!”
He was barely all the way inside before he was out and shoving back in again and Isak’s spine
arched off the bed, letting out a little shout cause it lowkey felt like Even was making new holes
inside him.

Then Even grabbed his other hip, hauling him up, squeezing hard enough his thumbs were digging
into the bone. Isak whimpered at the grip and that was before Even lifted him a clear two feet up off
the bed, holding onto his hips as he shouldered Isak’s shins onto his collarbones and slid inside him
deep.

“Unnnhhaa-aaa--”
It was fucking obscene, mouth dropped all the way open and Isak scrambled to hold onto something,
anything, because Even was gonna actually screw him into oblivion like this. The closest thing was
the bottom edge of the mattress above his head; spreading him that much more exposed with his arms
bent over his head, legs bent over Even’s shoulders, nothing to support his spine. Fuck. Fuck.

Just held up by unforgiving fingers latched around bone, by the slam of their bodies together, a
whole array of sounds to throw his spinning head back as Even held him tight and fucked him hard.

It was seizing his entire chest, like one firework setting off four hundred only there were three places
his skin was so hot it was burning. Even was gripping his hips so fucking hard it hurt, but he was
fucking Isak so hard it was fucking gripping, it overruled every bit of the bruises, the building throb
making his heart pound that much faster stomach twist that much more.

It was good, it was so fucking good. Some part of him registered the moans were too wanton, too
loud but he couldn’t help it. Even was singlehandedly destroying him, raised up and fucked deep and
he couldn’t fucking help it.
Then Even shoved his hips for the far end of the bed, dropping them to the mattress with Isak’s pelvis tilted up. And sunk straight down into him, making his mouth stretch open wide as his eyes fluttered shut and he stuttered over a euphoric whine.

_God._ His hips burned where Even let go, that instantaneous throb of something embedded in deep peeling free, ripping a twisting suffocated vine from the bark of a tree and he didn’t get to think or breathe before Even was redoing the surface of his world and folding them in half.

Heavy hands wrapping around the back of his shoulders, drawing in close, Isak’s legs still over his shoulders and therefore now brushing wisps of his fucking curls.

He definitely didn’t think he was this bendy either but here was Even dipping between the legs on his shoulders to kiss Isak on the mouth.

Tongue fucking between his lips in perfect time with the thrusts knocking him staggeringly full. It was motherfucking intoxicating, craning up into Even’s mouth and his fucking tongue, shuddering over the angled draw out, rolling hips shoving in dirty and deep and deep and deep--

Only it was also a fucking lot, it was so fucking much and the angle was shoving so fucking far inside him he couldn’t breathe, he couldn’t inhale and Even’s mouth was in the way of any begging rehabilitation. Isak gasped open mouthed into the kisses, only every time his lips parted Even was tugging at his bottom lip with his teeth, sliding his tongue back over Isak’s and it was kinda impossible to take in oxygen like that.

His lungs were starting to scream in protest and Isak finally ripped his head to the side, broken heaving air as Even’s teeth sank into his neck.

“Baby, baby,” he tried, letting go of the mattress to slide sweaty palms through Even’s hair, pull back the sensation a little only Even ducked free of the grip to sink his teeth into Isak’s neck and slam inside him.

“Ah--ahh--”

Everything was just really fucking intense and Even was making the mattress complain with how hard he was pounding Isak into it and it was so so fucking much his vision was strangely sharp, blurred a little at the edges, sounds starting to get kinda _foggy_ as another choked sound broke past his lips.

“Fuck fuck fuck Even. Ev-en.”

One of the hands lifted from his shoulder to his jaw, turning his face up forcefully, thumb pressing over his open mouth and the dark gaze locked on his, fucking overflowing with a thousand fucking things and the way he looking at Isak was somehow even more than the way he was fucking him right now.

Fuck, _fuck_, he was being painted by the slow sweep of Even’s eyelashes dipping as his gaze roamed over Isak’s face, chapped lips permanently parted as he inhaled the sounds Isak couldn’t stop making, the smack of their bodies together.

He almost begged _slow down_, it was verging on the edge of too much but it was so fucking good and he couldn’t really breathe so he had two hands in the back of Even’s hair now, holding on tight while he let Even fuck him hard and close instead.

“Ah ah ah ah ah ah--”
Then the hands were releasing his shoulders to slide up to his ankles, his hips still rolled up as Even lifted and pulled him with it to spread his legs again and Isak scrambled for the edge of the mattress.

An earth shattering succession of hard thrusts into his body and Isak’s entire chest was seizing with how fucking scandalous it felt, his legs open wide, Even driving into him and holding him still by his ankles and he’d be sliding off the bed if Even wasn’t fucking him straight down.

“Ahhhh ahh fy fa-a-aenn,“

Mouth open as wide as his thighs, shut eyes squeezed painfully tight as Isak threw his head back, digging into the mattress, five-finger bruises on his ankles spread eagle upside down, pounding so hard and fast and fucking dirty--

“Even Even Even Even g-god, god--“

Isak squirmed, legs kicking as his torso knocked to the side, head whipping and he just couldn’t take it, it was too much his body couldn’t do it it wasn’t up to him anymore, nothing was.

His body tried to twist up again, too much, away, and Even wrapped his arms under Isak’s thighs, scooping around under his ass to roll him up smoothly into Even’s lap, not missing a fucking beat only now he was straddling Even with his legs spread and Even’s arms underneath him, lifting him up and down and he couldn’t actually breathe.

Hands scrambling up muscled shoulders, gripping the back of his neck, trying not to fall off or backwards, too fucking fired up from the arms under his thighs and the drop filling him up only to be lifted again and shoved full and burned from the motherfucking inside out.

The temperature in here was off the fucking rocks, Even’s touch was a furnace, fire swooping into his stomach to light all the coils bright fucking red. Isak’s jaw dropped, head cocked to the side, completely strung up tight as his cock rubbed up against Even’s stomach and Even lifted him so high off his lap he was almost deseating him every time.

“--ahh-aaAHH-ah-ah--“

Just as he nearly toppled from the force of it, Even’s arms were slipping out from under his legs, pushing hard on his shoulders to slam him down over Even’s cock with a sharp cry, shining eyes falling shut.

Rolling up against him in tight filthy dizzying circles and Even’s lips skirted from his cheekbone down to his mouth, dancing tantalizing over Isak’s lips.

Teasing and pulsing and fucking circles into him fast, lips barely touching again and again until he fluttered his lashes back open, already fogged over. The moment he blinked dazed green Even held his gaze and brushed their mouths together, harsh whisper dropping a command,

“Ride.“

Isak let out a little cry and Even’s hand clapped over his mouth, other hand gripping hard against the back of his curls, dragging him in close and holding him perfectly still and silent with Isak’s knees planted on the bed, shoving himself up and down over Even’s lap, curls bouncing and trying to get caught in his watering lashes, barely able to breathe over the top of Even’s hand, his pinky smushed up against Isak’s nose.

“Mmm mmm mm mm mm--”
Even was watching him, eyes on fire, burning bright and fucking flashing the way they did when he sang Gabrielle in the kitchen, mouth open then too, looking at Isak like he could eat him alive.

Their faces were so close and Even’s eyes were following his up and down as he bounced on Even’s cock and impaled himself hard enough his eyes were rolling back in his head and his thighs were fucking burning.

“C’mon, baby, show me how much you want it,” Even murmured and it was rough and gravelly, teeth dragging over his bottom lip and little broken exhales washing over the negative space between them.

“Mm-hmm-hmm--” a broken, muffled little cry and Even couldn’t stop watching him, mesmerized. Isak could physically feel the want crawling in his chest, the desire so fucking heated and intense his skin was dusted pink with it.

His cheeks were flushed beneath the imprint of Even’s hand, he was blushing for a hell of a lot more reasons than what he was doing and the heat it was pooling in his stomach.

The heat it was physically fucking into his stomach, and his ribs and his sternum and his chest with every fucking locked-eye bounce.

Even wanted him Even wanted him so fucking badly, Even was drowning in him and Isak could feel it, he was drowning in the feeling of Even drowning in him and wow, that whole too fucking much thing was on a whole other level right now.

They were both intoxicated and the sparks spiraling out from the center of his chest just keep coming.

Down and down and full and down.

But Jesus, he’d never seen those light blue eyes so dark, had never felt Even touch him so possessive and wanting and begging before, had never felt that gaze on him so intense he could burst, and that was if he wasn’t being told to ride Even’s cock like that fucking Pony song.

The hand over his mouth squeezed, ring finger carving into his cheekbone, thumb biting his jaw, digging into his skin. Holding twice as rough as the one of the back of his head disappeared, sliding down his ribs to press his thumb hard into the bruises on Isak’s hip.

Isak jolted and nearly lost his balance and a burning palm smacked against the side of his ass stinging enough he could feel the reverberation through his skin and his eyes were rolling back in his head again, thighs straining and pushing desperately fast now.

“That’s right, that’s right, e’mon baby. C’mon,” Even was telling him and Isak was fucking coming on, Jesus fucking Christ, like literally, if Even looked at him like that for like three fucking seconds longer then he was gonna fucking lose it.

The tingles were in his arms now too, creeping up the back of his neck, spiraled all the way down with the clenched abdomen muscles, all the solid full shoving beneath every tight desperate thrust.

They were slamming together hard and fast enough he was making Even’s beautiful swirled hair flounce with every beat, watching Isak careen and lose everything but the hammer between his ribs, heat between his thighs.

Everything was spiraling so fucking high the whole world was sharp and nothing at the same time, colors saturated too bright and Even’s eyes on him and the fingers clamped over his mouth were
The hand on his ass squeezed hard and his lashes were fluttering, spine arching up which was causing fucking problems with the whole keeping his balance thing and he couldn’t, he fucking couldn’t he--

“Mmmmmmmm--” he begged and Even apparently understood enough muffled cry to get what he meant and the next thing he knew he was gasping in oxygen, hand on his face gone, mouth wet eyes wet and the rough fingers that’d just been digging into his cheeks were in the back of his curls, shoving his head forward to surge up and crash their mouths together. He whimpered cracked against Even’s lips and Even dragged his bottom lip into his mouth and sucked, hard, squeezing grip on his ass rolling his hips forward and shoving up roughly inside him at the same time and--

It was deep and overwhelming and everything and it pushed him right over the edge. Isak cried out into Even’s mouth, fingernails clawing down his shoulders, rocking in tight little jolts in his lap as he tightened up and his body tried to curl without him.

Even wrapped a solid, strong arm around his waist and dragged Isak in hard against his chest, pushing rapid up into his body, hips stuttering and shoving deeper inside him to still, jerk, spill.

Isak was kissing him desperately, head tipped up and moaning broken into every one, he couldn’t stop kissing Even and Even had a tongue in his mouth, a hand in his hair, an arm barred perpendicular with his spine keeping Isak as close as he could be, his cock rubbing so deep Isak couldn’t breathe but he couldn’t stop kissing Even.

He was falling into pieces and Even was holding him so fucking tight, rolling up in circles against him as they rode out their orgasms and oohh, fuck, he could not believe Even had whispered for him to ride, what the fuck kinda movie quote shit was that, fucking fuckity fuck--

Isak’s lashes were lowkey fluttering just thinking about it and yep, okay, couldn’t breathe, time to stop kissing Even now before his lungs burst in his chest.

He pulled back on a gasp and the pressure on the back of his head was enough to shove him forward again but he somehow managed to dip to the side, land on Even’s collarbone instead, fingers tight in the back of his curls as the force of it rocked them both off balance enough to go crashing backwards onto the bed.

Even’s chin knocked his temple as they hit the mattress and bounced and Isak groaned but honestly the only thing he could feel right now was the throbbing pulse in both hips and the damp sheen over his skin and Even’s arm on his back and the cock sliding out of his--

No-no--

Dammit.

Even rolled them over, palm pushing back the curls on his forehead and Isak didn’t open his eyes, moaning at the wave of chills ricocheting up his spine.

Even kissed all over his face, all up his jaw, over his ears, down his neck, over his collarbones, back up to his cheekbones and his forehead and his nose and Isak was gasping then panting, chest was rising and falling and rising and falling and Even’s mouth rained down over him like a hailstorm, leaving purified healing bruises in their wake.

Isak finally got ahold of his lungs enough to make shuddery inhales and exhales against dark eyelids, the cloying richness of the kisses pressed to his skin, every sensation dulled but touch as Even kept
kissing and kissing him.
Then he was eventually managing that whole words thing, eyes fluttering open, still a little unsteady.
“F-fucking hell.”
“You okay?”
“Mm.” He closed his eyes.
“Isak?”
And squinted one back open.
“Yeah, yeah, like. Physically. Maybe.” Another shuddering inhale, shifting on the bed while he tried to feel anything besides the overwhelming crash of the waves pounding hard and fast as his heartbeat.
“Baby? What’s wrong?”
“That was so much.” He rolled his head to the side with it and Even caught his chin, turning his head back upright and just that little move, that one little manipulation of his body and Isak was shuddering, he was through every fucking roof right now and Even just touched him like that again.
“Too much?” All worried. Searching his eyes.
Isak inhaled, breathing out through his nose, trying to chill himself out as he ran a hand up through Even’s soft hair and felt his heart pound.
“Nei,” he finally decided, fluttering his lashes before he peeled his eyes open for real, gaze instantly locking. Looking deep at the dark dark blues. “Nei, it wasn’t, but it was fucking close.”
Even breathed out hard, sigh of relief landing his forehead on Isak’s chest for a moment. Isak kept the hand in Even’s hair, running back through the angle of slick blonde. Angel of slick blonde, mumbling worried against his skin again.
“But you’re okay? You’re sure?”
“Mnhm. Yeah, I’m okay. Are you okay? Fuck.”
“Yeah, I’m so okay. I love you.” An unsteady hand wiped Isak’s curls away from his face, dark gaze lifting to look all over him.
Stripping back his bare skin with the burn that was still so fucking hot behind those eyes.
“God, I love you too.”
Even’s eyebrows went up with the smile and Isak gripped the back of his neck with literally all of the strength he had left. “You sure know how to ruin a boy though, goddamn.”
“You sure it’s not bad?”
“No, no, not bad. Just a lot.” He raked his hand up through Even’s hair again. God, the chills wouldn’t leave him alone, running down from his chest shoulders fingertips. God. God.
It took him a second to get a grip again, closing his eyes against the intensity before he was peeking
to glare a little at the beautiful beautiful boy on fire.

“I’m never gonna be able to have sex with anyone else ever, so you know.”

“Good,” Even said, wrapping his arms around Isak’s limp torso and dragging him in close. “You’re mine.”

“Mmm.” The smile was that much sweeter curled against Even’s chest. Skin, sweat, a heartbeat. He was so fucking warm and Even was holding him tight and Isak was pressed up against him in the most wonderful naked ways. “Say it again.”

“You’re mine,” he whispered into Isak’s curls and Isak pressed a kiss to his pec, nose squashing to the side as he hummed again.

“Mmm. I can like. Physically feel how much you mean that right now.”

“Does it hurt?”

“Nei. My hips, maybe. But that’s it.”

“These hips?” Then Even was slipping low beneath him, hand dragging slower than his mouth was, thumb skirting over a nipple as he mouthed down Isak’s body with a dozen feather light kisses, a nip at the top of a bruised bone and Isak jolted, fingernails dragging through Even’s hair as he pressed more kisses to the skin that was already mottling purple.

“Fuck...yeah, those,” he whispered and Even rolled him onto his back, pulling another groan out of him. Soft fingers danced up his thighs, stroking warmth into him fucking delicately as he kissed all over the finger shaped bruises.

Isak glanced down his body at the top of Even’s floofy hair bobbing and groaned again.

Most of them were high enough they were gonna sit right on the waistband of his pants, or maybe above, actually. Fuck.

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“Tell me it wasn’t too much,” A gravelly voice whispered against one of his hips and Isak flattened a hand over the top of that beautiful head.

“You’re never too much,” he whispered back and Even’s breath hitched, then he was crawling up Isak’s body and sliding his mouth against Isak’s open one.

Eyes slipping closed, lips tugging apart to reimmerse, heads tipped and ache dragging something deep in Isak’s gut.

Deep and unsettling and dangerous warm.

Fuck.

He cupped Even’s face and kissed him back fucking desperately, gasping lips stuttering, mushing sideways, pressing harder, breaking over it. Good god, he was so fucking in love with that boy.

Honestly, honestly, not a single fucking thing mattered because Even was holding his face like this, their foreheads pressed together, mouths staggering apart to hold his eyes like this.

And tipping back together to kiss each other again. Isak kissed him as fucking aching as the chills
winding around his bones and Even kissed him back like the gods, matching every stroke to raise him a dozen more with the tongue Isak was shuddering against, shadows pressing into his skin.

They kissed and they kissed and when they broke apart Isak couldn’t really breathe.

Even kissed him one more time and reached for the bedside cloth. The temporary distance didn’t help his lungs one fucking bit.

Warm hands wiped him down with a dozen splattered pecks and kitten licks and Isak closed his eyes until he got his breathing somewhere near a level of rational.

It took awhile.

A long while.

Cloth long since tossed aside, Even’s mouth on his neck, up and down and sucking light while Isak held a quiet hand in his hair and exhaled.

Soft warm nosed up his jaw, over to his mouth and Isak parted easy, pulling Even back against him and holding his pounding heart. Careful exhale against his lips, pursed ones tugging out slow in a wave and pressing back in again.

Breaking free on a little pop, Isak’s eyes were hooded and the moment Even finally finally laid down Isak curled around him.

An arm looped around his shoulders, ribs expanding and falling as he lay there looking up at the ceiling, Isak cradled against his side.

“Fuck.”

“Mhm. I need water.”

“I can go get it.”

“No, it’s okay. I’m fine, and I need to piss anyways.”

“You’re fine?”

“It’s been like. An hour, I have to walk sometime.”

“...okay,” Even said dubiously. Isak rolled his eyes. Now he definitely had to get up, if only to prove the fucking point.

He rolled over regretfully, gritting his teeth so he didn’t wince as he sat up, then he tried actually standing and almost fell backwards.

Even sat up instantly, reaching for him and Isak got a hand on the wall, waving the other one at him, I’m fine. He was gonna have to teach himself how to fucking walk again plus his legs were so sore he was legit about to collapse, but he was not gonna let Even carry him around the apartment so.

He lowkey kept a hand on the wall the entire way to the dresser. Even was raising his eyebrows at him and Isak flicked him off over his shoulder, grabbing a pair of sweats and breathing out through his mouth. His legs were shaky, yeah and Even was watching him but Isak made it all the way to the door, paused to blow the beautiful naked boy on his bed a kiss, then stepped out into the hallway, and tried to breathe. Wow.
Wowowow.

He was fucking amazed he was walking right now.

Well, kinda, he had a hand on the wall all the way down to the bathroom, then it was a hand on the counter or the cabinets and yeah, okay, maybe this wasn’t quite walking.

Isak left the room and his phone went off for the millionth fucking time. It’d been buzzing like half the fucking night, over there rattling on the side table like some kind of demonic alarm clock but Even was pretty sure Isak didn’t notice a single vibration.

He’d had a lot of other vibrations to worry about.

But he’d swear he could hear fucking everything in this room, he heard the pissy slam of Eskild and Linn’s doors when he was holding Isak’s hips the heavy slide of the mattress across the living room floor when Isak’s knees were framing his face.

All layered beneath the wanton heavy breathing, the fucking tangible ecstasy ricocheting through Isak like the stars themselves had darted down to burn stamps into their sliding skin.

And his phone kept fucking buzzing. And it just buzzed again, and Isak wasn’t in here so.

So Even leaned over and checked the screen.

Liv.

Fuck. That’s what he’d fucking thought.

Fucking bitch.

She’d texted him earlier, wouldn’t stop texting him and yeah so he’d gone off on her but she was trying to get him to fucking come home so she could fucking lock him in his room or some shit and of fucking course she texted Isak instead.

And called him. Four times.

He didn’t know if Isak needed a moment to himself because he was lying about it being too intense or if he’d missed the phone vibrating cause he was drifting on the edge of subspace or something like it or if he was just that good or if maybe they’d been in a parallel universe that didn’t have cellphones and bitchy mothers, but whatever it was he hadn’t heard the texts or calls and Isak was temporarily gone and his screen was lit up with the exact fucking thing Even needed him not to see.

Four missed calls. And a string of text messages.

The previews made it pretty fucking clear.

*If you could please call, we can get th--*

*You can't blame yourself for not seein--*

*I know you're new to this honey, both--*

*He's been staying at your place to avoi--*
Hello Isak, it's Liv. Is Even with yo--

He lifted it up to the dim light, angling to check for fingerprints. Just like he thought, four distinct marks. Why Isak hadn’t gotten around to getting a six digit passcode, he had no fucking clue, but he hadn’t and if those were the four numbers….okay, yeah, he knew what order those had to be in.

Sequence recognized and Even unlocked the phone, thumbing through quickly. Blocking both his parent’s numbers, deleting the text thread, the missed calls and voicemails and locking it again, tossing it back on the bedside table.

He wasn’t gonna let her fucking ruin his life.

The most beautiful thing he'd ever known was about to come stumbling back in here and Even needed to wrap him up close and hold him so tight their lungs expanded as one, there wasn’t any part of that script that called for bitchy mothers.

He was not gonna let her control him.

Chapter End Notes

So here is this beautiful cabin in Geiranger that I saw a photo of and freaked the fuck out about it’s beautiful. Geiranger is in like...north western Norway.

As you might have noticed this chapter only covers Monday-Thursday. Good news, I'm posting a Friday chapter all on its own. Also posting a Saturday chapter all on its own.

- Okay so I'm done replying to all the nasty comments, at this point they are stressing me the fuck out and I can't handle it anymore, so. There's that.

You can't literally rip my words apart and then say "oh it's cause your fic is so good it has such an impact" like no, if you appreciate an author, maybe don't destroy them, this fic affects me even deeper than it does you

one last quick announcement for those who missed it:
1. literally not one of Isak's friends started rumors about him, rumors did not begin until things were shouted in public places, which is where and how rumors begin
2. If one more person says Jonas is Chill or a pacifist I am going to sit down this entire fandom and put them through the hell of watching season 2 because Jonas Punches People And Gets In Fights And Shouts About Capitalism Sorry
3. Just because a character has a side that doesn't fit into your trope doesn't mean!! You get to erase that!! Jonas is a fighter, not just a weed smoking skater. Isak is conniving, not just a soft gay boy. People are saying "oh he didn't mean everything first year" okay well he literally confessed to Eva that he did, not to mention THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WHEN HE TELLS EVA TO ASK INGRID LIKE. guys. Stop trying to make these characters perfect, or at least don't yell at me for exposing the truth

This has been a Public Service Announcement thanks all

If none of this applies to you, please ignore the ranting, I apologize sincerely and I hope you enjoyed.
much love to you all xx
Chapter Notes

Happy Twentieth Birthday to me! What a hell of a birthday gift to give myself!

Hello everyone it’s Personal Reveal Time
So in case you haven’t caught on, Even’s been spiraling into a manic episode over the past week.

Usually I love to do Reveals in my plot and keep you guys as in the dark as the characters, but this is too important of a topic, so, spoiler alert, hypomanic episode in this chapter. But before we proceed, I’m gonna go way out of my comfort zone and tell you strangers on the internet something I haven’t told most people, ever!

I am diagnosed bipolar. It’s actually the whole reason I started writing this fic, because every one that I read dealing with Even’s disorder made me cringe. I was like hey, I have this disorder, relate to this character a fuckton, and I’m a great writer, so. I couldn’t like, not write about it.

I get that every brain works different, and that you also may be manic-depressive, and that you may read this and be like what the fuck that’s not at all what it’s like for me, which is totally okay. I only write from experience and what I know, and this is what I know, so.

But for a lot of you, you’ve never had personal experience with this disorder. Manic episodes can look really different, and the episode Even has in this chapter is nothing like his last one in Skam.

Be prepared to be unprepared.

Warnings: (more) mania, physical violence, verbal destruction, crying, (more) school bullying, fucking shitty parents, flashback emotional turmoil to shitty childhoods, shitty situations in general

xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Fredag, 08:08
17.02.17

The alarms went off for the hundredth fucking time and there was a point they had to stop ignoring them. Apparently now was that point, because Even didn’t just roll over and pull him sleepily close again.
Isak didn’t get to curl into warm and soft and sweet again, his lashes were fluttering open because he was being smothered. Positively buried in playful kisses, a bright teasing mouth dancing from his cheek to the base of his throat to his nose and forehead and his dimples and his jaw down his chest over his shoulders, his curled up arms.

Anywhere he could reach, waking up every centimeter of skin with the rapid fire smiling touches and Isak couldn’t help it, giggling as he tried to roll over and escape, then Even was tugging him closer and kissing him more and Isak was laughing out loud, trying to shove him off, wiggle free only Even just held him down and kissed him more and Isak could only complain so much before he surrendered and grabbed that precious face to finally get a kiss on his smiling mouth too.

They got dressed together and Even wouldn’t stop kissing him and trying to peel off the clothes he just put on, Isak’s arms going through a shirt only for Even to tug it right back off over his head.

Isak huffed an offended laugh and reached up to grab it back, only Even was holding it up high and kissing his mouth while he was up on his tiptoes and Isak didn’t have the balance for that, not when Even was kissing him like that.

He finally got the shirt back by biting Even’s lip hard enough to make him gasp then he was jumping up and grabbing it from him, tumbling right back into his arms only then they were kissing again and it took him another five fucking minutes to get the shirt on.

“You are the most beautiful distraction,” he managed breathlessly and Even raised his eyebrows, fingertips slipping inside the waistband of his jeans to drag Isak a wobbling step closer.

“Mmm. You’re the kind of boy who needs distracting.”

“Ugh, don’t remind me,” Isak groaned, pressing a kiss to the side of Even’s jaw and reaching around him to grab a belt.

Even took it from him, weaving it slow enough through his belt buckles it was fucking...sensual.

“I’ll hold your hand between all your classes and beat up anyone who looks your way,” he confirmed and Isak rolled his eyes, head tipping dramatically to the side.

Even’s arms snaked around his waist then he was pulling Isak back into another round of insatiable kisses and Isak was laughing against his mouth. Stumbling with it as the kiss deepened fast, pressing against him hard enough he was gonna get hard if Even didn’t cut it out, then speak of the devil Even was swinging them around and tumbling them to the bed.

Rolling their tangled clothed bodies over the disheveled sheets and Isak was laughing more, head tipped back as Even pressed kisses all along his jawline, squeezing him tight and close. A happy bubbling giggle and Isak forced himself to pout a little, trying to sit back up only to get dragged down to the sheets again.

“Even! Even, we have to go get breakfast, c’mon, c’mon.” A kiss to that sweet smile and Isak tried shoving him upright. Even flopped back down. Isak faux pouted. “I’m still sore from last night anyways.”

“Where? Where are you sore?”

“Why?” He squinted suspiciously and Even’s head shook, hair dislodging, duh, eyebrows on the ceiling.

“Cause I’m going to kiss you there until you’re not sore anymore?”
“Oi, oii.” Their mouths crushed back together, dipping into it, denim rubbing as he wrapped his legs up around Even’s hips. Even kissed him hard, compressing his curls into the mattress. “Mmm, faen, as nice as that sounds, we’ll end up late for school, so.”

“So what,” Even whispered against his lips, lapping at his mouth again and Isak had to fight the moan, craning up into it, holding Even’s jaw tight. He was really really close to agreeing with the so what, but.

They both groaned that time as he broke away, falling back down to the mattress with a bounce.

“Ughhh. So I care about my grades, baby, you know that.”

“I know I know.” Their mouths overlapped again, his nose smushed to the side as Even kissed him long and hard and longing.

Thumb over his cheekbone, fond enough to make his stomach flutter, smiling too wide to press back.

“After school, okay?”

“I’m gonna hold you to that,” Even’s voice dropped and took Isak’s stomach with it. He looked up and wet his lips, pulse pounding in his throat.

“Hold me all you like,” he managed to shoot back and Even’s smile was giving him fucking butterflies, then he was sliding his tongue back into Isak’s mouth and yeah, this was that shit he could get on top of for the rest of his goddamn life.

School. School, grades, learning, life success, fucking focus, he could kiss Even like literally any time but how often did he get to attend the first class of the day--

Too often. Okay. But he was gonna go anyways.

Twin groans at the hand he put between their chests but they had to go.

They finally made it into the kitchen but barely, Even wouldn’t let him walk without a hand in one of his pockets, down the hallway it was the back pocket but as soon as they were stepping into the kitchen he was plastered to Isak’s spine with his arms around Isak’s waist and both his hands stuffed into the hoodie pocket over his stomach.

Even kissed his neck all mushy, nosing into it as Isak giggled again and tipped to the side, nuzzling back against him with his brightest smile and that’s when he saw the group of people standing at the other end of the kitchen.

The laugh cut off and the smile fell right off his face.

Even lifted his head, chin hooking over Isak’s collarbone and the smile fell right off his face too.

His grip tightened over Isak’s stomach, possessive and pissed, holding him in close like he was ready to fucking attack dog his damn roommates.

Okay, chill, maybe. It couldn’t be that bad.

(It was that bad.)

Eskild had his arms crossed over his chest and so did Noora, and Linn had a hood up and her arms crossed over his chest and her eyes on the ground.
They looked like a very ragtag gang of very upset people.

“Did you fucking out Vilde?” Eskild twisted into his gut without so much as a good morning or hello.

“Yes,” Noora replied before Isak could open his mouth.

“Noora,” Eskild said impatiently and she turned her pursed red lips on them both.

Even was gripping him tight enough Isak could feel it in the bruises on his hips.

“I...first of all, it was not my fucking intention--”

“Not your intention? How the fuck do you unintentionally out someone, Isak?”

“She unintentionally outed me!!”

“So it was revenge then???” The shocked indignation made him physically cringe and Isak shot it down as quick as he could before it could sink into his bones and make him think too hard.

“Nei,” he countered, moving to step forward, explain, only Even’s arms wrapped fucking tight around him and tugged him right back in. Protective.

“Nei?” Noora mocked. “All you’ve ever done to fuck up everyone’s life has been because of revenge, Isak.”

“I wasn’t—I wasn’t trying to fuck up anyone’s life!! I didn’t know Magnus was standing there, I wasn’t trying—uggh!”

He threw up his hands and Even straightened up behind him. Isak had no idea what he was about to do right now so he quickly grabbed the hands around his waist, keeping them there.

“Look, I really wasn’t trying to hurt anyone--”

“Yeah, well, you did.”

“Badly,” Noora bit, tongue in her cheek as she turned to Eskild, tutting completely red serious. “I can’t live here with him.”

Isak’s mouth popped open.

“Don’t you think that’s a little fucking dramatic--”

“Dramatic? You intentionally fuck over relationships because you can’t handle your emotions, Isak, who’s dramatic now.”

Noora was positively storming, throwing off sparks and the unsympathetic look on Eskild’s face shot him right back to his room being scolded about raising himself above the gay pride movement only this somehow felt worse.

Then Eskild tipped his chin up to the side and delivered the final blow.

“You know what Even, can he stay at your place? I’m not sure any of us want to see him right now. Not until he apologizes to Vilde.”

If his jaw wasn’t open before.
“...Fuck you guys. Are you fucking kicking me out?!”

“None of us want to live with somebody as fucking selfish as you are, Isak,” Noora snapped back. Eskild shot her a peed bitchy look but she didn’t stop, fury storming red hot. “Get your life together before you come crawling back here.”

“Noora,” Eskild started but no, Isak didn’t need anyone to defend him now, he fucking got it.

You’d think after the number of times in his life he’d had shitty conversations like this, he wouldn’t be tearing up, but here he was.

One shaken step backwards and he stumbled off Even’s foot, then he was shouldering Even back into the hallway. Trying not to break all the way for his room and Even was dead fucking silent.

Isak grabbed his bookbag and scooped up Even’s too. Even took his hand and Isak didn’t cry all the way through the kitchen to the door, everything completely vacant in the time it took him to grab their stuff but he didn’t stop, fingers still locked while he toed into his shoes and grabbed a jacket and didn’t say a fucking word.

Then the door was closing behind them and Even squeezed his hand and Isak let go, starting down the stairs before he broke down here either.

Even tucked him under his shoulder on the bus and Isak leaned against him numbly and stared out the window and tried to get a fucking grip.

“I’ve gotta go see a teacher, turn in a project for next week, are you okay to go to your first class yourself?"

“Ja. Ja...a project for next week?"

“Yeah, I’m trying to be a good student, turn things in ahead of time.” A little smile down at him. “Maybe catch up to you.”

A sweet kiss to his lips and Isak’s mouth turned up in a corner.

The smile died the minute he hit the courtyard by himself.

Because he wasn’t by himself, there was a wall of girls standing between him and the door.

The girl gang, minus Vilde, plus Noora, who somehow got here before he did, and was still glaring at him as much as she had been like twenty fucking minutes ago.

Every single girl was glaring. Chris, who used to flirt at him, now looking positively disgusted.

Eva, his ex best fucking friend, with that unmaskable hurt under everything else in eyes that knew him so fucking well. At least he’d thought. He’d always been able to see through her, he’d assumed she’d at least see him now.

But the worst glare of everyone?

The worst glare out of everyone was the girl standing at the peak, and that was Sana Bakkoush.

If there's one thing I can't stand, it’s when someone fucks over their friends.
Of all people to tear him apart in the middle of the schoolyard, she was literally first on the list of Never Please.

He’d fight with Even in public before he’d fight with Sana.

But there they all were, arms crossed over their chests, hips popped, staring him down and Isak swallowed, glancing over his shoulder and fantastic, there was already a crowd gathering.

Okay, he was just going to... spin on a heel and walk around--

“Oh no, don’t you dare,” Eva warned and Isak paused, sucking in a breath and turning back to them slowly. He really wasn’t sure he could handle getting chewed the fuck out right now, but it didn’t look like he had much of a choice and fucking honestly, he had it coming, might as well get it over with.

“Before you rip into me, I promise I wasn’t trying to--”

“You weren’t trying to ruin Vilde’s life??” Sana snapped, leaning forward and Isak’s mouth snapped shut.

Okay yeah well--

“None of us ever outed you. How could you?”

Yeah maybe he'd been careless and stupid and too emotional and maybe it hadn't been his fucking place but--

“You're the only person who has any fucking clue what she's going through and you ruin her life because what, you're fucking upset? You're not in control of anything else so you do the one thing someone like you should never stoop so fucking low to do??”

Isak cringed, someone like you, head hanging; he knew she didn't mean it viciously, it'd've been more vicious to shout gay at him across the courtyard so she was being surprisingly delicate all things considered.

Sana threw up a hand, taking a step with it to just drag him through every ounce of fucking dirt on this schoolyard.

“You have all of these problems in your so called fucked-up life but guess fucking what, Isak Valtersen, there are some people who have it worse than you. If your inflated little head can imagine that. Or wait, maybe you can, because it looks like you’ve been trying to make everyone more miserable than your sorry ass for years.”

He knew Sana could chew people out. He'd helped her a few times. He’d been on the other side of some of the milder stuff.

But this?

“You didn’t just fuck over your friends--” He lifted his eyes just long enough to see the flash in her eyes as she pointed a condemning finger to send him right to the grave.

“--you fucked over mine. You ruined her fucking life, she hasn’t gotten to come to terms with anything yet and now she has to on your terms, you selfish, miserable bastard.”

There were at least two phones recording he could count in his peripherals, and that was when he
was staring at Sana’s shoes instead of anywhere else because he literally could not look anywhere else.

“Do you have any fucking idea what you've done? How unfair this is?? You had a boyfriend and supportive friends who eased you in all soft and gentle and a flat of people to explain things to you and your entire life fucking perfect and do you know what she has? Not a boyfriend anymore because you broke her up with her first real one, certainly not a girlfriend because she didn't get to face this on her own, her parents heard rumors already and they’re fucking upset, but at least she has supportive friends, aka me, and the rest of us girls, who are no longer friends with you.”

The entire courtyard was dead silent.

“I hope you enjoy your time out of the closest, Isak. Because you fucking ruined Vilde’s.”

Isak nodded to himself, mouth twisting to the side.

He’d seen her eviscerate people before, but holy fuck.

So much for biology partner and friend.

“Nothing to say for yourself?” Sana bit, leaning back with her arms crossed over her chest and Isak glanced up, squinting against the water that hopefully wasn’t being picked up on the cameras.

What in hell was he supposed to say to that.

Yeah. No nothing to say for himself.

He wet his lips and turned for the closest door. Backpack hoisted a little higher over his shoulder.

Every single step threatened to seize his ankles but he just walked, head down, shouldering past Noora and the flock of first years, squeezing the strap of his backpack hard enough he might be leaving indentations.

Door shoved open and he was ducking into the first hallway, there was a boys bathroom a little ways down and he turned round the corner, shoving through another door then he was shoving into a stall, rattling shut behind him as he stumbled back against the partition wall, put his pounding head in his hands and tried not to cry.

Yeah, he cried. Not much and not for long but the watering bubbled over enough to have him rubbing over his cheeks, wobbling mouth sealed shut so he didn’t gasp or make any broken sounds cause he was only gonna cry more if he did but he got ahold of himself as quick as he could.

Wiped a hand over his eyes and sniffled once then he was shoving open the stall to go grab a paper towel and wash his face, get himself somewhat fucking presentable.

Only someone was already washing their hands, and that someone just fucking happened to be Jonas.


Their eyes met in the mirror, Isak’s red and puffy and Jonas’s wide, and Isak turned and darted out of the bathroom faster than humanly possible.

Fuck fuck fuck.

Fuck fuck.
Eva and Noora were in his first class.

No no no, no, he had no idea why he was here today, why he’d bothered, why everyone kept bringing up the fact that he was gay with literally every single accusation they threw his way like it was only Fine He Was Gay until he did something terrible and suddenly now it wasn’t only not fine, but he was also doubly terrible and--

Fuck that, fuck them, fuck the fucking high school dramatic bullshit that happened in this fucking school, he didn’t deserve this, he fucking didn’t.

Isak shuddered in a breath and wiped over his eyes in the hallway. Everything was gonna be fine, he still had Even, there was still one damn person on this planet who loved him when everyone else he knew couldn’t stand the fucking sight of him--

He turned the corner, staring at his feet the entire hallway to his locker, lifting his head and looking up just as he reached to punch in the combination.

Only his hand froze before he could press a single number.

Because his locker was not the locker he’d had a fucking rollercoaster relationship this year, it was now a Decorated version of the same homophobic bitch locker who wouldn’t open up for him but would for his boyfriend.

Not the kind of decorated like it was at Halloween, not a flyer he could rip off and toss over the top in annoyance.

No, that was spray paint.

Bright pink spraypaint, and the word couldn’t be clearer. Big enough the letters hung off either end to taint the lockers beside.

*Homewrecker.*

He had no idea how long he was standing there staring at it, could’ve been three seconds or three years, but the next thing he knew there was an arm wrapping around his waist, dragging him for the closest exit.

“Fuck ten percent, we’re getting out of here.”

Low and burning and familiar and Isak pulled up his hood, fingers curling over Even’s.

Head down the entire rest of the way out of Nissen, through the emptying courtyard, to the bus stop.

Even was squeezing him tight and pressing comforting little kisses to his cheekbones and Isak closed his eyes and didn’t feel an ounce better.

He stood up automatically at their bus stop and Even pulled him kindly back down to the seat.

“My place, okay?”

Right. He’d forgotten. He’d gotten kicked out.

This was just the *best fucking day.*

His fucking locker, what an earth had he done to deserve that, and pink too, so it wasn't just about last year or all the fucking couples he’d broken up it was a homophobic slur too and he couldn’t
“Baby. Out of your head. Right here, look at me.” Isak turned his face into Even’s shoulder instead and Even sighed, putting a hand on top of his head. “Fuck them. They don’t know shit about what happened.”

He knew that, yeah, but that didn’t mean this fucking sucked any less.

“You’re okay.” Stroking through curls, heavy hands with how fucking much he meant it. “You’re okay. I’m here, you’re okay.”

They were headed up the stairs to Even’s place when Even reached out a hand, gently stopping Isak’s chest and making him dully raise an eyebrow.

“Hold on, just one second, I have to make sure my parents aren’t home.”

“Why?” He furrowed his eyebrows and Even made an eee face, one side of his mouth tugging down as he very quietly, very carefully opened up the door, peeking inside for shoes and offering a whisper over his shoulder.

“We’re kinda. In the middle of an argument.” A peer around the other side of the door and he suddenly straightened up, swinging the door open wide. “Nope, we’re clear. Here, c’mon, set your stuff inside, we’ll get cleaned up and head downtown.”

Even ushered him in and Isak kicked off his shoes, following numbly into the empty apartment.

“...okay? What are you fighting with your parents about?”

“Don’t worry about it. Let’s just focus on yours, alright?” Even gave him a bright smile over his shoulder and Isak sighed, setting his backpack down by the couch in Even’s room.

Even was busy straightening up, although he hadn’t actually been here in like...a fucking week.

Let’s just focus on Isak’s parents instead. Fuck that.

Although honestly, like today could get any fucking worse. What was dinner with his parents when the entire school hated him, he didn’t have a place to live, or a single friend who wasn’t fucking him.

“What are their names?” Even asked and Isak blinked, taking a second to recalibrate. Right.

“Terje and Marianne.” He leaned against the bedpost and Even looked up so fast he almost hit his crown on the wood above him.

“So that’s who Marianne is! Why was she texting Jonas?”

Jeez, he still remembered that? Although he supposed it was kinda suspiciously weird. Isak just lifted a shoulder.

“I didn’t show to her birthday, I guess she wanted to make sure I was alive or guilt me or something.”

“And she has Jonas’s number?”

“He’s my--” Paused, mouth open. Flash over his face as he realized it. Nearly crumbled on the correction. “Was my....”
Is no longer my--

“Fuck Jonas,” Even interrupted, quick, serious. Fuck Sonja, we’re not together anymore. Fuck Jonas, who didn’t do a damn thing wrong.

Then he was holding up two shirts from his closet, nice button-ups on hangers.

“Do I go blue to accent the eyes or gray to be more subtle?”

“Whichever you want.” Isak really didn’t give a fuck what Even wore, it wasn’t like either of his parents’ opinions actually mattered, they were only going cause he couldn’t pay rent on his own--

Not like he had a place to pay rent to--

“Bright fucking blue, then.” He gave Isak a sparkly-eyed smile and Isak lifted up one side of his mouth as dutifully as he could. Then Even was looking between the blue shirt and him, mouth pursing to the side, eyebrows shooting up. “I think my mom might have a cross necklace I can dig up?”

“Haha,” he said dryly.

Then Even was crossing the room, taking his hand, pulling his heavy limbs for the closet.

“C’mon, are you wearing that to meet your parents?”

“Are we getting dressed now?”

“Yeah, then we can hang out in the city until dinner, how’s that sound? Do things. It’ll be fun.”

Even was just so fucking eager and he got it, he fucking got what Even was trying to do but it wasn’t like he could just go chat over ice cream and forget about all his problems, they were still gonna be there tomorrow and he couldn’t actually fix them when he wasn’t in school but he couldn’t fix them then either because he didn’t know what to say or do and.

“Isak. Baby. Just pick a shirt, and we’ll go get your mind off everything, okay?”

“Okay,” he agreed, reaching for the gray one Even decided not to wear.

Even gave him a pretty smile, reaching over to peck his cheek twice. It tugged up the corner of his mouth a bit so Even pecked his cheek again, and again, then Isak was waving him off.

“Okay, okay, I’m getting dressed, I get it.”

Jacket and overshirt off his shoulders, grabbing his tee at the collar to tug it over his head, toss it for the laundry basket in Even’s closet, turning back around to take the gray one and looking up at the low whistle.

“Ooh boy, have you got bruises.”

“Huh?” Isak glanced down, blinking at the marks on his hips, disappearing dark purple red into his jeans. “Jeez, yeah.”

When he looked back up Even was stepping into his space, close enough their chests nearly bumped, close enough Isak’s head had to tip back to meet the chilled blue eyes, lips parted and gaze sickeningly sweet, searching between his.
Isak just looked at him. Even took his face, took his heart with it and held him close, peering deep enough into his eyes that Isak couldn’t do anything but swallow, deep enough to let the waves crash his stomach into something gooey, heart fluttering uncomfortably.

He couldn’t get a fucking grip, Even was looking at him like he’d peel back his skin to take the broken pieces out of his chest and mend them himself and it was just a lot, everything was happening so much and it needed to stop happening because he was fucking fragile dammit, couldn’t the world just cut it out, cut him a fucking break for like three seconds.

But it didn’t, Even tipped his chin up higher into a kiss and the broken pieces in his chest rattled like floating bones.

He inhaled softly as Even let him go, stepping across the room to get dressed himself. Isak squinted after him long enough to have arched eyebrows shot his way, then he was slowly pinning up buttons and stitching up his chest quiet enough with every slipped one.

Fredag, 11:15
17.02.17

“Pick one.”

“...one what.”

“A bench.”

“What’s wrong with...the closest one?”

“Is that the one that resonates with you?”

“...resonates with me? What?”

“Oh c’mon, like you’ve never resonated with a park bench.”

“Can’t say that I have, Even.”

“Isak. Do you really want the closest one.”

“Fine! The one under the streetlamp over there.”

“Why?”

“Because it resonates with me, are you happy?”

“No but like, what about it makes it resonate with you.”

“I don’t fucking know?”

“Like, is it the aesthetic of how far away it is, or cause the trashcan is close, or--”

“It probably looks pretty when it’s dark out cause it’s lit up directly under that streetlamp and it looks over that whole area of Catcher in the Rye snow, okay, how’s that.”
“...fett. To the far bench it is.”

Isak rolled his eyes as much as possible and Even took his hand and took him there.

“Catcher in the Rye snow?”

“Don’t tell me you haven’t read it.”

“I’ve read it, I’m surprised you have.” Even reached over and took a sip of Isak’s drink.

“Oi, you have your own!”

“But I like yours.”

“I don’t care, drink yours.”

“Mm, someone’s grouchy.”

“You’re...grouchy,” Isak defended lamely and Even shot his eyebrows up.

“Okay babe.”

“Okay babe,” Isak mocked, head tipping back and forth with it. Even’s arm swung around his shoulders, pulling him in close.

It was nice, Even here and warm against him, this whole place was fucking empty since everybody was at school and it was exactly how nice it was that made him think of how not true that was in literally every other part of his life right now.

“Everything fucking sucks,” he complained, taking an annoyed bite of his kebab and Even rubbed his shoulder, up and down with a heavy palm.

“It’s been one hell of a week,” Even agreed lightly, smiling a little at the resounding snort he got in return. That was the understatement of the year.

“On the brightside, we get to go meet my parents today,” Isak said dully and Even laughed, arm folding in to hold him close.

Catcher in the Rye snow.

It was untouched and peaceful and pure white, sparkling like the boy beside him. Isak tipped into Even and Even’s hand kept rubbing over his arm, over and over and fuck, for at least this moment right now, everything was fucking beautiful.

He had no clue what he’d do if he didn't have Even.

No clue what he'd do. Where he'd be.

What was happening to him right now in the parallel universe they'd passed each other by, how destroyed, ripped apart--

If the conversation he’d had with Eva first year would be turned around on him, devastated and in pieces, no one left to call and threaten to switch schools. He’d probably just...be in a different school by now.

Hell, actually. In the parallel universe where he didn't meet Even, where he had no one left and had
to switch schools? Maybe in that parallel universe he switched to Elvebakken. And maybe he met Even there.

Isak smiled to himself and lifted his chin, looking up at the pretty boy he was tucked against.

He liked that idea. Finding Even no matter what parallel universe it was. Infinite ones. In infinite time.

“You're fucking beautiful,” Even told him and Isak smiled, nose crinkling up.

“Not like you.”

“What in the world are you talking about??”

“You're beautiful too.” Temple pressed to Even’s collarbone again. Drink sat down beside him so he could wrap his hand around the top of Even’s thigh, skirt his palm up and down along denim. “I have no fucking clue what I'd do without you.”

“You don't ever have to know,” Even told him quietly, fingers curling tight in his coat. “I'm here as long as you'll have me.”

“Always,” Isak whispered into the cold, articulated into a white puff of smoke past his lips.

Even’s free hand danced in front of them, spread fingers raking through the dissipating fog from his breath and Isak’s smile tipped up in the corner.

Then capturing fingers were hooking beneath his chin, raking him up now, all the way to Even’s mouth.

They kissed, here on a park bench with kebabs snow and Even’s tugging lips dipping tongue, open tilting mouth, consuming touch. Here, real, burning with emotions and sincerity. Their noses bumped as Isak tipped, angle sliding their mouths deeper until Even was sucking gently at his bottom lip and Isak shuddered, pressing up hungry with a squeezing grip on Even’s thigh.

God. They were different boys than the first time they'd done this, laying together tangled and warm and easy on his bedspread, mouths mushing together as Isak’s lashes and heart fluttered.

Now they were sitting together cold and suffering, still tangled as their mouths mashed together and Isak’s heart fluttered just as much as the first time.

Free hand reaching up to cup Even’s neck, lean up into the kisses with his body heart and soul. Even smiled into his mouth, a little nip, soothing tongue then he was pulling at Isak’s lips again, pressing chilled foreheads on the pop apart. Ducking right back in with a rough hand gripping the back of his neck through the layers of scarf and coat.

“Mmm--”

Mouths dropping open over the same broken inhale, noses pressed together. Pulse pounding under fingertips and Even’s thumb stroking roughly up and down the side of his neck.

“I fucking love you,” Even told him breathlessly and Isak dragged their mouths back together.

A deep pressing kiss to curl his toes in his boots, have him stuttering up against that beautiful mouth, nuzzling in for more.

Even weaved to the side, breaking into a little smile and Isak groaned, digging fingernails into his
denim thigh to push up and chase that pretty mouth. Even laughed, high, full of oxygen, light heart. Tipped back to brush their mouths teasingly only to swerve away again before Isak could press over his tongue.

“Ugh?!"

Another laugh and Isak shrugged Even’s arm off from around his shoulder, neck, sitting up to the edge of the bench so he could turn around and take that beautiful face between both of his hands, kiss him square on his taunting mouth.

Even melted into him, giggling against his lips, cupping the back of his head. Tip of his nose smushed up against Even’s as he tilted, thumbs rubbing his jaw. Kisses dancing, tugging apart faster and faster until they were little smiling sticky loose pecks and Isak’s dimples flashed.

Thumbs landed in those next, holding up his smile and making it crinkle more as Even pressed their mouths together again, and again, and Isak’s warm insides were radiating enough to warm his outsides too.

Okay. Maybe things really weren’t so bad.

He was warm and smiling into Even’s mouth and Even loved him, really loved him, he could take on...anything.

They were doing this together. So no matter what happened, it was gonna be okay.

After all, the only thing they had left to face was dinner, what could possibly go wrong?

Fredag, 13:51
17.02.17

There were two things she was sure of.

She couldn’t get ahold of Isak with either of their phones, and Even was spiraling.

“Do you have any of Isak’s friends’ numbers?”

“No, that’s not something that ever came up, Bjørn!”

“Olivia, getting upset with me isn’t going to help our son.”

“Why wouldn’t he be responding? It’s Isak, it’s not like he doesn’t care! He’s young enough to know he doesn’t know what he’s doing.”

“Even probably blocked our numbers, we’ve just gotta find another way to get ahold of him.”

“And how in hell are we supposed to do that?”
They kept walking everywhere instead of taking the bus. Even said they might as well, they could use it to work off some of the nervous energy. They had a couple more hours to burn before they had to meet his parents.

Jesus fuck.

Even, meeting his parents.

His stomach should've been twisted in ten hundred knots - what if they don't like him, what if Even doesn't like them, what if he fucks up and says the wrong thing and the two halves of his past and his future collide and everything fucks over, what if his dad and his mom got in a fight in front of Even, what if his mom wasn't okay enough to make it through dinner without fucking over everything, what if his dad asked Even something uncomfortable and terrible enough that Even wanted to leave, what if Even saw how fucking clear it was, that his dad couldn't handle anything with his mom and what if he thought that about Isak what could his parents do to destroy the most important relationship he had with their fucking shitty paralleled one and what if--

But honestly, those were yesterday's knots. Last week’s knots, last month’s knots and he'd not remembered to remember them in the past few hours.

Even was untying his twisted nerves with the precision of a brain surgeon and Isak just tipped into him, laughing bright with their hands entwined, and let all the dopaminergic neurons fire instead.

They were giggling and people watching and making faces in crystal windows that had Even swooping him into another kiss, hands sliding into his pockets to keep him warm, and that's when his phone went off.

“Woa-ah--” Isak broke off and fell back flat footed, huffing another laugh as he wiggled Even’s hand out of his pocket.

“Since when do you have vibrating fingers and why haven't you used them inside me yet?”

Even barked a laugh, surprised and bright, head tipping to the side, eyes crinkling then he was kissing down the side of Isak’s face as he curled up a side smile and dug out his still vibrating phone.

He’d expected it to be his dad, calling to confirm their reservation or something, but.

It was an unknown number. Hm.

Isak furrowed his eyebrows down at it, lifting his thumb only before he could slide to pick up Even snatched the phone right out of his hands, denying the call.

“Hey!”

“No drama, just you and me today, remember? If it were somebody important, you’d already have their number, right?”

Isak tipped his head, face pinched up. “I guess.”

“Don’t I guess me.” He put his hand and the phone back in Isak’s pocket, thumb rubbing through
layers. “I know.”

A hard kiss to his cheek and the doubt morphed into a fond smile, then their lips pressed once and
Even spun back to his side, possessive hand low on his waist as they started back down the
sidewalk.

Isak had one hand in Even’s jacket pocket and the other in his own, just the right heights to stroll
comfortably like this.

Well as comfortable as one could be when it was this cold but.

“Okay, so like…” Even popped his lips in the pause and Isak glanced over. Even sparkled back
down at him, waiting for Isak’s gaze. “…do you ever do that thing where you have a soundtrack
when you walk places?”

“Well... Me? Me?? I’m the fucking...king of pretending I’m in a music video. Music video walking,
soundtracks, that’s my shit.”

“Yeah? What would you be listening to right now.”

“Here here, headphones.” Even handed them over and Isak dug out his phone again to thumb
through Spotify. “Hmm. Hm. Oh, oh, okay.”

Isak put in both earphones, tongue between his lips, looking up at Even as he hovered his finger over
the song. “You ready for this?”

“Yeah?” Already sparkly fond, amused and enchanted as he'd been the first time Isak had said *ebox
gimme the beat.*

Isak put his tongue between his lips, one eyebrow cocked up at Even, might as well milk it some
more.

“You sure?”

A bright bubbly laugh and Even reached over to press a hard little kiss to Isak’s cheekbone, making
him tip with it.

“Oi, oi, no distracting the performer.”

“I’m not, I’m not.”

“Mhmm. Okay, go time.” Isak rolled his lips in and he was already bobbing his head, Even watching
bright, wide smiling as he started to rap along. “Alright, alright...hm hm mastermind, fuck a bitch to
pass the time, mass appeal, orange rind, smoke your green, I’m spendin’ mine--”

High key getting into it, finger pointing every word. Even bit his lip to hold back laughter and Isak
rapped louder.

“The beat is witches brew, but beware this shit is potent-- E.E. cummin’ on her face, now that's
poetry in motion!” Isak’s whipped his hand around on the bass drop, shoulders shifting dramatically
to the beat.

“Oh wow.”

“Yeah, Gambino make it work, I’m the boss move somethin’. Yeah, this cool fuckin' suits me, swag
two button yeah--”
“Gambino? Childish Gambino? Really?”

“Yeah, I ain't fuckin' at the club, put your clothes back on--”

“Do you have any idea how problematic he is?”

Isak pulled out one earphone. “Gambino?”

“Yeah, he’s like super not cool. Like as a person, he has done so much shit that is seriously problematic. Bad enough to stop listening to his music kinda shit. How do you not know about that?”

“I am runnin’ this bitch, you are just a dog walker!! Okay, yeah, sorry, what?” Isak pulled out both earphones, that was like the second best line he wasn’t gonna miss it. Even had his eyebrows up at him, still amused and cute but also kinda judgy.

“He’s a fucking asshole?”

“He’s an actor.”

“Doesn’t mean he can’t be an asshole? He’s like hella racist and about as anti-feminist as you can be.”

“No way.”

“Yes way. Have you listened to half his songs?”

“....yeah I guess...yeah that’s actually really assholish.”

“Uh, yeah.”

“But he’s got the best lines.”

“So??”

“Okay. Okay, fair. But like. EE cummings on your face now that’s poetry in motion, I mean?”

“It is a really good line,” Even conceded, bumping his shoulder. Hand lifting to gesture casually at him, eyebrows up again, “Hey, speaking of which--”

Isak turned directly to him in the middle of the sidewalk, pinning Even with a very serious look and very serious pointing finger.

“We are not talking about facials in public.”

“Why not? We are fucking, and we haven’t done that--”

“I don’t wanna clean fucking giz out of my hair, thank you.”

“....I can hold your curls back?”

“Oh my god we’re not talking about this right now, nei, I’m having milk-locker-room flashbacks, we are dressed nice and on the way to meet my parents, we are not--”

“You brought it up!!”

“Okay! I did! Anyways. Your turn, go, what would you be listening to?”
Isak shoved the phone and headphones at him before his bright red cheeks somehow got redder. Even took it, giving Isak a knowing look that he shook his head at - what, don’t look at me like that, I brought it up, get over it - and Even just rolled his lips in and did the suggestive up-down eyebrows down at the phone.

Yeah, that was not the last he was gonna hear of that.

“Hmm.” Even finally picked something, holding out an earphone to Isak. “Okay, you probably don’t know him cause it’s like modern and a lot of his stuff is...darker than what you listen to but this is a great song so, c’mere.”

They fell back side by side, walking down the sidewalk together while they listened to whatever the fuck this shitty music was.

“This sounds pretentious as hell.”

“Shut up, wait for the chorus okay.”

“Mmm. If you have to wait for the chorus for it to be good--”

“Shh! You’re missing it.”

“I’m not missing shit what kind of rap imitation fuckery-- Even, if any song starts out with ‘all-american first team bitch’ it’s not gonna be a good song.”

“You’re not even listening.”

“I’m listening! Fuck, okay.”

Isak lasted about fifteen seconds of silence before he was complaining again.

“…this guy is white, isn’t he.”

“Are you always this annoying when people show you music.”

“This is shitty rap!”

“Hoodie is nostalgic as fuck, you can’t appreciate shit.”

“At least I sang to my shitty music.”

“Fuck you, tell me what you really want from me, point blank no discussion. Close mouth, close mouth, ow--”

“Did you pick this song so you could tell me to stop talking?” Isak asked sassily and Even kept singing over the top of him.

“And tell me one time that you want me. I promise that I won’t say nothing. Shi-shut it up, shi-shi-shut it up--”

Even dove over to clap his hand over Isak’s mouth, twinkle in his eye. Isak batted him off and glared, I’ll give it to you, no interruptions but he was blushing like fuck and the glare was way too heated to do anything but prove Even’s point.

Even laughed and kept singing, all confident and dramatic, acting it out now.
“In your home, in your home oh, on the phone, on the phone.” He shook his hand in the phone symbol, “All alone all alone, uh--”

Leaning back, mouth open with one of those shitty not-winks and Isak couldn’t help but laugh, then Even was singing at him more, positively sparkly.

“In your house, in your house oh, on the couch, on the couch. Name the time and the place and the function. I’ll give it to you, no interruption.”

“I thought we were topic changing?”

“Baby…” Even rolled his head, pinning Isak with an obvious look, eyebrows up, tongue in his cheek, eyes on fucking fire. “…there is never a time I’m not thinking about fucking you.”

“Jesus! Even!”

He spun and turned wide eyes on his boyfriend, both their earphones popping free. Even lifted a shoulder, lips parted, their gazes locked and Isak looked away, blush creeping up again as Even huffed a laugh.

“What?” A glance back over at the eyebrows knit and lifted, pure innocence. “You lose your fucking mind, it’s beautiful.”

“Oh my god.” Isak put his face in his hands.

“I mean I thought I was desperate, until I saw you with your legs spread.”

“Hey! Cut it out. Serr!” He reached over and socked Even’s bicep, hard. Not like that was a brilliant idea, he’d been building those, he had muscles now and Isak’s knuckles were gonna lose that particular fight.

He squinched up one side of his face, mouth open in offense as he shook his hand out. Fuck. Even laughed brightly and tugged him in, warm hands on his waist and warm mouth pressing a strong kiss to his temple.

“Switching into parent-appropriate topics now,” Isak suggested and Even rolled his eyes.

“Fuck that.”

“Seriously! Prove to me you can not be dirty for like. 3 seconds.”

“…theee, two--”

“What am I gonna fucking with you,” he sighed and the hand on his waist tightened.

“I’ve got plenty of ideas,” Even suggested, voice dropping low. And sending shivers down Isak’s spine he was pretending weren’t there only Even was definitely close enough he felt it.

“Can you please be serious for once?”

“I’m being serious!”

“Even.”

“Well kill me for trying to lighten the mood, would you rather spend the next two hours psyching
“You're stressed.”

“Vaguely.”

“And you won't let me blow you to destress you.”

“Woah, who said that?”

He was gonna follow it up with an eyebrows-up look of his own, only he didn't get the chance before Even was dragging him into the closest alley so fast Isak nearly tripped over him.

“Oh my god--”

Then Even was shoving him up against the shadowed wall and dropping to his knees, fingers quickly popping the button on his jeans, sliding down the zipper.

“Oh god oh god,” Isak was murmuring, mouth open, heart pounding as he looked down his body at Even, who was tucking the band of his boxers out of the way.

“Don't fuck up my hair,” Even warned, then he was looking straight up into Isak’s eyes, gazes locked, and taking him all the way into his dropped open mouth.

Yeah, Isak fucked up his hair.

They found a public bathroom to clean up a bit before they caught a bus to the restaurant - how it had gotten changed from casual Saturday lunch to dinner on Friday, he had no idea, but it somehow had so. Here they were.

Even complained the entire time he slicked back the sides of his hair all smooth and suave again and Isak leaned against the bathroom wall and defended that it wasn’t his fault, Even was the one who offered then did that fucking thing with his tongue, what was he supposed to do, it wasn’t like *brick walls were easy to find purchase on.*

“Still! It looked so good this morning.”

“Even. You look fucking hot, get over yourself.”

“Mm.” He smoothed back another strand, all feathered back pretty behind his head. “You’re just saying that cause you’re post-orgasm.”

“Nei,” Isak defended and Even shot him a look in the mirror.

“You don’t look any less put together, unfair and ridiculous.” Light blues glared a little. Isak lifted a cocky shoulder, to which Even turned the sink back on and made a face. “Be grateful you have a boyfriend who swallows.”

“Oiii--”

“No mess, it's not only hot, but significantly more convenient.”
“Well yeah, but **oi.**”

Even’s eyebrows shot up in the mirror. “Don’t get too worked up, I don’t think I’ve got time for another one. Although, if I found a way to clap a hand over your mouth at the same time, that’d probably halve the time--”

“Fuck you,” Isak suggested and Even closed his mouth over a wide smile, slicking his hair back one more time, trying not to burst at the edges, *take desperate to a whole new level.*

He was failing.

The smile broke and Even’s tongue slid over his lips with it, eyes locked on Isak’s in the mirror.

Fuck. In case he’d forgotten that he still had the taste of himself on his tongue too.

The moment Even finishing licking him clean - zipping back up jeans while he gasped, taking his time to make sure Isak’s clothes were laying right - he rose to his feet, suddenly tall again and crowding Isak back against the brick to mash a long, wet, heated kiss over Isak’s open mouth, taste bitter strong on his tongue and possessive hands cupping his face. Kissing him filthy and fond all mixed up, noses pressing against flushed cheeks, already boneless and melting more while Isak panted and clung to Even’s mouth, tried to breathe through the taste and the sparks--

“Okay, you ready?”

Isak snapped back into reality, eyes wide and maybe a little caught out, dragging his gaze up Even’s body before he blinked and realized Even was facing him, waiting, looking perpetually amused.

He popped his mouth open in indignation to cover the flush on his cheeks.

“I’m not the one who insisted--”

“Isak. Are you ready?”

That time the look was a lot less heat and a lot more serious, patient, really looking at him and Isak swallowed, finding himself suddenly really wanting the dirty back instead.

“Oh...yeah. Yeah.”

Even placed a little kiss on his lips, then he was taking Isak’s hand and walking them for the bus stop. After grabbing mints on the way out because.

Ja.

The nerves kicked in the fucking moment they saw the sign for the restaurant.

His heart didn’t stop pounding any less when comfortable fingers weaved between his, imprinting into the back of his hand, curling and safe and not changing the fact that he was about to introduce his boyfriend to his parents.

“It’s gonna be fine!”

“Mnhm.” High-pitched, mouth sealed shut.

“It will, babe. Just wait and see.” Eyebrows up and down, smiling wide and Isak was trying.

The hostess asked - table for two? Even squeezed his hand tighter and beamed down at him.
“We’re meeting my boyfriend’s parents, actually, they should already be here? Valtersen?”

Isak rolled in his lips as she turned around, this way, then Even was leaning over to peck his cheek. God, the butterflies in his stomach were fucking poisonous.

Then they were turning the dark-wood corner, surrounded by tables and chatter and modern gold lighting and there were his parents.

This time there wasn’t a giant blue flower cross behind them, but the moment felt just as goddamn dramatic.

Even spotted them instantly, two empty chairs across from two rigid adults, a table set just a little ways apart from the rest.

He had no idea how they crossed the room which was saying a lot because last time he’d seen them he’d felt every drifting step in his soul but suddenly he was letting go of Even’s hand, waving it to indicate instead.

“Mom, Dad this is Even. Even, this is--”

“Hi. Nice to meet you.” His dad held out a hand, formal and stiff. Even beamed, lighting up with crinkles around his eyes, radiating sun as he leaned over and shook Terje’s hand warmly.

Isak’s heart was pounding so loud he almost couldn’t fucking hear them.

“Thank you so much for having us both,” Even told them, taking Marianne’s hand and placing his other on top of the handshake she’d offered. Isak like, wasn’t breathing, his boyfriend had his mom’s hand with this James Dean smile on his face, his boyfriend, who was a boy, had his mom’s hand and he was smiling and his mom was almost smiling, somewhat, she looked surprised but not offended or like she was gonna condemn them to hell or anything so.

There was that, at least.

“Oh, of course, thank you for coming.” Marianne gave Even a nice smile, a complacent smile you gave the neighbors who brought over casserole when they heard the shouting but there were still bruises under skin and--

Then she was turning to him and opening her arms low.

Isak leaned into the hug, absolutely not thinking about the death embrace Liv had pulled him into the first time they met, smiling back as non-awkward as possible as he gave his dad a short hug too.

If he thought he felt outgrown and awkward in front of them at the church - he’d been smaller than his dad the last time he’d seen him before that - that was nothing to the way Even towered, the pair on this side standing so much taller and wider and how was it Isak had never felt so fucking small?

“Sit down?” Terje offered. Isak stepped to their side of the table the abnormal unwelcome too young side of the table and Even pulled out his chair for him.

Fucking Christ.

His cheeks were on fire but he offered a tight smile at Even before sitting down, reaching instantly for the water glass. He had no idea how he was supposed to fucking make it through this dinner.

Even just pulled out his seat, did he have to fucking do that Jesus fucking Christ he was stressed
enough, that wasn’t helping.

“So...how have things been? It’s been awhile,” Terje started and Even’s knee pressed up against his under the table.

Isak surreptitiously moved his leg away, like it was a bump instead.

It wasn’t a bump and Even was looking at him but Isak looked down in his waterglass and answered his dad’s question instead.

“Things have been...good. School’s been busy, but it’s easier than last year, so.”

“That’s great,” his mom said and Isak nodded with his mouth sealed shut. Eyebrow lifted, a glance up for his dad, wondering how fucking obvious it was that he didn’t know how to look at them.

“How’s work been?”

“Work,” his dad smiled and Isak huffed. Trying on another smile, racking his brain for what in fuck they were supposed to be talking about, what the fuck he was supposed to say to these people that were supposed to mean so much that he’d forgotten, how much he really didn’t want to be around for any reason ever--

“And Even, do you go to Nissen as well?” Marianne glanced between Isak and Even, eyes landing on the latter with the most patient of a smile she probably owned.

“Yes, I do. I’m in my last year there, transferred over from Elvebakken.”

“How nice,” Terje said.

“I really like Nissen, I think the teachers are much more engaged with the students.”

“Is that so?”

“Oh most definitely. I plan on studying film, and I’ve had a lot of opportunities to work with the teachers one on one. There’s even a dedicated film lab for aspiring students, the resources are just remarkable. It’s a great school.”

“Isak always quite liked it,” Marianne smiled and Isak did not point out that he literally had been going there less than a semester before either of them stopped giving a single fuck about his schooling but, well.

Then Marianne was leaning over the table and nailing him in the chest with a question maybe maybe not intended to make him bleed.

“Are you still thinking you’d like to study medicine, honey?”

“Um.”

Even glanced over at him, eyebrows knit, confused, he’d never mentioned that, yeah, wonder why and Isak stared at his waterglass for a moment.

“I don’t know, I’m really enjoying my biology class, I might pursue something in that. I’ve still got a while before I need to know, though.”

“Of course,” Terje interjected.
Isak glanced back over at Even but his smile was perfectly impenetrable now.

At least one of them was.

“Speaking of a while, how is Jonas doing?”

You would think he would’ve prepared himself for that question.

But see, he’d forgotten that his parents, like all shitty parents, knew how to make it sound like they fucking cared. Although that was actually the last thing on his mind, because Terje and Marianne were looking at him expectantly, how is Jonas doing.

Maybe a little accusatory on his dad’s part? God, they’d butt heads there at the end.

Maybe a little hopeful on his mom’s? She’d always really taken to him but.

Not like it mattered, how was Jonas doing.

Well fine, Dad, his entire life just got fucked over by yours truly, which wait, maybe you’d be proud of me for, you hate him so much or maybe you’d just throw around more accusations as to why--

It hit him in the gut, twisting hard, one of his parents’ first questions about his life was of course about his best friend his ex best friend who couldn't stand the sight of him was so fucking pissed at him they literally might never be friends again, the only person who’d ever helped him weather through the shit storm that was the two people right there, across this table from him.

The terrified little ache in his chest, just from being here, sitting across from them, Jonas was the only person who’d ever stood in the way of that and Isak had ruined him in return.

By some grace of god, that was exactly when the waiter showed up, so Isak’s sudden freeze was glossed over by the handing of menus.

“He’s fine,” he managed then everything turned to menu decisions.

Isak couldn’t fucking read, but he lifted it high enough he could maybe blink back the shine in his eyes and reign this the fuck in.

He couldn’t let it get to him, he couldn’t, so what that it was years, so what, so what, he was stronger now, he had Even now.

Even was here, and being supportive, and sparing him from the studying analytical looks and honestly, fuck whatever they thought about his boyfriend his boyfriend was here and doing everything he could to--

Okay, or maybe not.

Isak continued to be spared, right up until they were ordering. It wasn’t like his parents didn’t fucking know they were dating, clearly, but it was one thing to know that objectively and it was another fucking thing when Even ordered for him.

The waiter looked surprised, and Isak was too busy unraveling his silverware from his napkin to see his parent’s faces. This was fine, Even was trying to be kind, everything was fine, but his heart was fucking thudding in his chest and he’d never spent a dinner more ready to sink into the floor.

Did he have to, did he really have to, now, of all times, couldn’t he just let Isak have one fucking moment of not being doted on in front of his. Fucking. Parents.
“So how long have you two known each other?” Marianne asked it so simply and Even leaned back in his chair, arm going around the back of Isak’s as he looked at him with this fond brightness that Isak really wish he had an off button for right now.

Yeah he wanted Even here but he didn’t want him looking at Isak like that in front of--

“So how long have you two known each other?” Marianne asked it so simply and Even leaned back in his chair, arm going around the back of Isak’s as he looked at him with this fond brightness that Isak really wish he had an off button for right now.

Yeah he wanted Even here but he didn’t want him looking at Isak like that in front of--

“It’s been...we’ve been together since what, the end of November?”

Terje looked at Even strangely. It’s not a joke, it’s just over. Over, Even was over, his dad was pretending to care, and it didn’t line up the stories didn’t line up and Even was beaming at him, mouth turned up and eyes detached, more show than comfort as he was turning back to his parents.

“Feels like it could’ve been years longer.”

His dad’s confusion deepened a level and Isak opened his mouth before either of them could suddenly rip a tear in the evening.

“We met through a theatre group in school - do either of you remember Eva?” Sitting up straighter, engaging the both of them, burning under the weight of Even’s gaze on the side of his face.

Both of his parents swiveled their attention instantly to him and Even was still just looking at him.

“Jonas’s new girlfriend, right?”

“Yeah, yeah, she was. One of Eva’s friends runs the group, and we met there.”

“Oh, Eva and Jonas aren’t together anymore? What a shame.” Marianne made a sad sound and Even finally took his arm off from around the back of Isak’s chair, quiet word slipped across the table.

“Hardly.”

Isak shot a glance over but Even was smiling at his parents instead.

“Do you know Jonas as well?” Terje angled the question across the waterglasses, hovering over the topic of Please No Let’s Not.

On the bright side, at least they were talking to Even, being civil, so this could be worse. Just had to keep telling himself that.

This could be so much worse. Isak knew worse.

“Oh, Jonas and I get along wonderfully. The five of us do, actually. Mahdi and Magnus are both such loyal friends, Isak’s very lucky.” Bright eyes turned on him again, giving him that secretive, almost suggestive little smile.

Both his parents made blank noises - they had no idea who Magnus or Mahdi were.

Although. There was no way for Even to know that, right?

Plates were arriving before Isak could dwell, then Terje was asking Even what he liked about film, he was in advertising, you see.

“Oh wow! I’m a huge fan of the visual advertising business, there’s such an art to the art of it.”

Terje huffed a laugh, “As is there to film,”
and Even positively lit up, leaning on the table, one hand lifted to wave around as he spoke. Excitedly explaining something about film culture that Terje responded to in kind, then Even was leading them off into questions about advertising and the nuances of the visual business.

Isak zoned out completely, watching body language, taking small bites of whatever Even had ordered him - it was actually really good, didn’t make him any less mortified - and noting every flicker of judgement or curiosity that passed his mom’s face.

She wasn’t sold, he could tell that much. But she was warming up slowly, if not to Even as his boyfriend then maybe just Even was a person.

It was fucking surprising. It shouldn’t’ve been: Even was charming. So wonderfully charming, and great with adults but he’d been expecting.

He didn't know what he’d been expecting.

Whatever it was, Even was handling everything unfairly gracefully. Providing the exact answers parents would want to hear, smooth talking his way through every curveball his parents didn’t realize they were throwing.

Smother and smoother and more elaborate and shining and overly perfect and bright, almost bordering on the edge of too much.

Or, well. Until they were about halfway through eating and smooth lead right into slope.

“So, Even, you’re a third year. Do you have plans yet for next year, where you’ll be when you’re twenty?”

“Actually, I’m already twenty,” he replied easily, to which both of his parents looked up in tandem. Great. Awesome.

The slight smile Isak had been sporting dropped instantly, and then Even dropped his stomach with it.

“I repeated my second year at Bakka, things got kind of…crazy, that year.”

Light blues darted over with a knowing look on the word crazy and Isak shot him back the mildest what the fuck face he could manage without his parents calling him on it. What in this universe made Even think that was a good idea to bring up, he had no fucking clue.

This was his mom. Unless Even was trying to prove some kinda point, which didn’t make sense, that wasn’t like him, he wasn’t like. Upset with Isak or anything, was he?

“Oh?” Marianne said. “Twenty.”

“Eskild, Linn, and Noora threw me an amazing birthday party last weekend,” he gushed and Isak lifted his waterglass to his face. They didn’t know who those people were either. Even dipped his head, eyebrows shooting up. “Isak’s roommates?”

“Oh, of course,” Terje filled in and Isak sat his glass down a little loudly.

“Anyways, Mom, did you hear about the lighthouse renovations they were debating for the pier?”

Even’s hand landed on his thigh somewhere around his dad’s second glass of wine.

“…well my sister’s actually studying medicine, she lives in Køben with her boyfriend. Some people
think they're a little young but I think if it's real--”

He couldn't shove the hand off without drawing attention to it so he shot vague what the fuck glances Even’s way.

He missed every one of them.

“Oh I don't know if I'd say that, people are shaped so much through their youth, Terje.”

The twist in his stomach went from nerves to maybe I’m food poisoned to just plain twisting.

“No, no, no, I think it’s important to discuss the political sphere. As a free country we have a responsibility to keep the world as democratized as possible. Like a parent to a child, we have to take care of those who haven’t had the chance to develop. Wouldn’t you say, Marianne?”

The passive-aggressive shots were building up like floodwater around their ankles and Even just kept pouring.

“No I stay in Oslo?” A bright laugh, too bright, Isak and Marianne both cringed. Even smiled wide, taking a sip of his drink before he lifted his eyebrows, teasing shake of his head. “If you’re both wondering if you’ll be invited to the wedding, I’m sure you will be.”

Isak kicked him under the table.

“He’s kidding,” he quickly overlaid and Even had just popped a bite of pasta in his mouth so he couldn’t contradict or say anything for a brief moment, which meant it was time to take the reins and run with them before Even’s point proving turned into a motherfucking disaster.

“Did I tell either of you what my German teacher said on my marks last semester?”

No, he hadn’t, every person at this table knew that but that was better than whatever the fuck Even was doing right now.

Smiling through every under-handed jab. Honestly, Isak would’ve expected something like this from Jonas, maybe, who knew his parents well enough to know what muttered comments he could get away with. He knew them well enough to know they probably deserved most of them but.

But not even Jonas would take it this far, as much as he joked about hating Isak’s parents he still had fucking respect enough not to say it to their faces, Jesus.

And yeah, he got Even was older but he wasn’t that much older, on what planet did you tell your boyfriends parents they might or might not get fucking invited to your wedding when you were in fucking highschool?

“You seem very enthusiastic about a lot of things, Even,” Marianne managed a smile and they were looking forced enough at this point Isak could barely keep his up and Even was too fucking busy proving a point and being pissed to notice how fucking thin the ice was wearing.

Yeah, every little you don’t know about your son dig was subtle but when you pulled that many?

“I have a lot of wonderful things in my life to be enthusiastic about.” The signature turn his way, that doting distant smile that was making his stomach flip. “Isak happens to be most of them.”

“Anyways,” he interrupted.

It didn't last long.
The conversation was stuck down Highway Drag Isak’s Parents while making Isak Wildly Uncomfortable.

But it wasn't like he could do anything, none of the comments were bad enough to apologize for, interrupting didn't do much because Even wouldn't shut up and his parents wouldn't stop asking questions.

And to be fucking fair, every single thing Even was saying (okay, maybe the marriage and the crazy thing were a little uncalled for) over the past hour? All of it was shit parents should know.

If they, y’know, cared.

The tension when they first sat down wasn't the kind that just dissipated, and maybe Even was painting a bullseye on his chest to spare Isak being pestered and ridiculed, maybe he was trying to trying to talk over how awful this all was so Isak didn’t die of awkwardness, maybe he was taking control of every single fucking question so Isak didn’t get blamed and it was sweet, but it also made him want to crawl under the table and cover his face and ears and just be done with this goddamn dinner already.

“It really is so nice to finally meet you both. My parents just adore Isak, I swear they like him more than me.”

The laugh twinkled and Isak would usually blush scoff defend against the comment but now, with his parents guilty as sin for not liking Isak at all sitting right there in front of them Isak was actually about three seconds away from putting his head in his hands.

“That's very nice you all get along.”

Isak knew his parents weren't stupid, but he had no idea they were this fucking patient. Why couldn’t his dad have been this patient at any other time in his life? Maybe?

“Oh, mhm. Most people think my parents are great. but honestly, my mom’s a bit of a controlling bitch, if you know what I mean.” The laugh that came with that one didn’t cover up either of the surprised sounds on the other side of the table.

However surprised they were, Isak was three times moreso, looking over at Even in pure shock, eyes fucking wide.

Even didn’t so much as glance at him, still smiley as he leaned an elbow on the table, hand pointing lackadaisical.

“Not as much as my last girlfriend though. Thank god Isak got me out of that one.”

“Even,” he said under his breath. Even still didn’t look over, wiping his mouth with a napkin before his eyebrows were up, sympathetic tip of his head, smiling wide enough to break things.

“But hey, better a controlling bitch for a mom than a deadbeat dad, right?”

“Even!” Isak grabbed his arm, turning instantly to his parents. “I'm sorry, he's not being--”

The word himself froze in Isak’s throat.

It froze and he froze and Even kept going, railroad tracks.

“I mean, who does that? You just left. Ran away. Now that's somebody to look up to, no wonder
Isak’s so damn secure in himself.” Napkin tossed down on the table and it shook Isak’s grip on his arm and the entire fucking room but Isak couldn’t actually move, unless you counted the chill racing down his spine.

Or his completely slack jaw.

“But hey, things have been shit lately so, you’d be proud, Isak and I are running too. I’ve got a family cabin up in Geiranger—” Even finally turned to him, eyes twinkling, impossible fire, tipping head, chair tipping back, looking between Isak and his parents triumphantly.

“...bought plane tickets this morning.”

Isak’s entire world ended in five words.

Even leaned forward over the table, unraveling more and.

Every. Single. Sign. They were all lined up over the past week, flashing like a movie reel in front of blank eyes. One thing after another, the questions, the unsteady, the go-go-go, he’d thought it was a show, for him, a distraction, he’d thought Even had been trying to help, he’d thought--

Isak had been so fucking wrapped up--

That wasn’t--

Even was--

...how the fuck hadn’t it hit him until right now?

“We have to go,” Isak said, standing, not hearing a word from his parents’ side of the table, not a word from Even until he was dragging him for coat check and the protests finally sunk in as he shoved Even’s coat on over his broad shoulders.

“Hey, what the fuck?”

Isak grabbed his arm again and dragged him bodily for the door. His stomach was so stuffed with dread he could barely move but they finally burst outside, cold air hitting sharp enough to sting, tight spinning grip barely turning them around the closest corner before Even was yanking his arm back.

“What’s your problem?” Even snapped, pissed.

Isak started, taking a step backwards. Eyebrows shooting up. “What’s my problem? Fucking excuse me?”

Did Even really fucking just--

“You know, I can’t believe you.” Sharp blues glared over the distance between them and if Isak’s stomach hadn’t hit the ground yet.

“Me?” Logic flew out the window and the response was automatic, instinct, snapping back before he could stop himself, his parents were in there and he’d been trying, they’d been trying, “You’re the one who--”

“What, is fucking everything up? Really, Isak? Parade me around in front of your parents so long as I wear a mask, right? So long as I put on a fucking filter and show up with no personality or opinions, the way all those dead eyed girls must’ve been when you brought them home, huh??”
That was just...fucking cruel.

Isak stared, cold burning his cheeks and the distance between them clenching his heart so hard his chest hurt, but it didn’t matter.

It didn’t matter, he had to breathe, he had to breathe, he had to get them out of here, get them somewhere safer than an open alley under glittering public lights.

“What, you suddenly forget how to speak now that someone rips off your filter too?”

“Even, we’re going home. Right now.” He reached over, open palm and Even spun instantly out of reach.

“Fuck you, Isak. Home?” The tone bit, mocking, worse than the freezing wind, another step backwards as Isak stepped forward. “Right now? Which one, the one you got kicked out of, or the one I’m fighting with? Or maybe we can go back inside and ride back with your abandoning fucks of parents.”

“Even--”

“Oh, you gonna order me around some more? Why don’t you, it didn’t sound like you were done, can’t get any control in your own life so you take it out on me and try’n ruin my happiness, make me fake toohmmp--”

Isak shut him up with his mouth.

He was fucking desperate, he had no idea what to do but he needed Even to stop talking before he said something that’d actually ruin them, and at this rate Isak wasn’t sure, honestly there was a chance he already had.

But he needed to keep his head clear, to fucking find a way through this. Wouldn’t it be nice if he could go ask his parents for help, they were physically close enough to help for the first time in a motherfucking year when, oh wait, the whole reason they hadn’t been was because they couldn’t fucking handle this.

And neither could he, he was tearing up, lashes freezing but he didn’t want Even to see it, couldn’t let Even see it, slamming his spine into the closest wall instead.

He didn’t know what to do he didn’t know what to--

Even was kissing him back, at first out of instinct and now earnestly, hands rough in Isak’s hair, nipping and biting at his mouth and Isak was gonna be sick.

When he broke off he took Even’s hand and somehow Even didn’t fight him, eyes on fire as he watched Isak the entire way for the bus stop.

Isak landed up against two more brick walls on the way there, quick hard kisses he dipped Even out of under the ruse of rushing home for more. Dragging him for the corner, heart racing as wild as that night he’d ran out into the cold looking for Even in the empty streets of Oslo, world spinning around him and panic barely staved off for fucking urgency, nå, they had to get on a bus right now--

There was one pulling up, perfect timing because Isak didn’t know what to do, what he was supposed to say or ask or do but he knew that he had to get Even somewhere safe, that was all he knew and that was all that fucking counted.
Even kept watching him, watching him so intently from the bus seat and Isak tried not to freak out as he pulled out his phone to check the time when the coiled dynamite beside him suddenly snapped.

“Are you texting Liv to conspire against me again?”

Isak looked up in alarm. “What?”

“Oh, so you’re gonna play dumb with that too. Jeez, Isak, you sure have managed to surprise everyone tonight. Apparently you’re right back to lying to the world again. Like the past week hasn't been enough? First you spend god knows how long in the closest, then you lie to absolutely all of your best friends and now-- Hey! Ex-fucking cuse you, did you just look at my boyfriend that way?”

They had to get off this bus. Everyone was staring and if they had a fight in the middle of public transportation he had no fucking idea what was gonna happen. He had absolutely no control of Even or any of the other passengers on this bus and he had no fucking clue. What the fuck he was supposed to--

Wide eyed and terrified and heart pounding and Even was still spouting off god knows what but Isak was fucking numb.

A week. It’d been a week and he hadn’t--

They had to get off this bus right now. They had to get off this bus before everything went to hell, he didn’t know what to do but they were still too far to walk to his house from here, they were on the other side of the fucking city and--

Jonas.

Isak unlocked phone and typed the fastest, most terrified urgent message he had ever sent in his goddamned life.

•
I kno ur pissed at me and im so fucking sorry but even is having a manic episode idk what to do we’re by your house i don’t think we’ll make it back to mine in time jonas please
•

Even was escalating, voice getting louder, sharper, gestures wider as Isak typed.

A man in front of them had started to talk sternly at him and Even’s eyebrows were up, snapping right back. Isak pulled the string just in time, the bus pulling to a halt in front of the stop and Even was still having a row with the guy, too distracted to notice that Isak was pulling him off the bus at the wrong street, gripping his phone so tight in his hand it hurt, praying and praying and apologizing and praying.

If God was looking at him now, praying after God Knows how long, odds were he was more likely to laugh than send him an angel, but that didn’t mean Isak stopped fucking praying.

They stepped out onto the curb on some blind faith that had absolutely nothing to do with the person he was praying to and everything to do with his cramping fingers then the bus doors were closing his phone was vibrating and his head snapped down to read the incoming message to ruin or save his life hovering bright on the too colorful phone screen.

•
waiting at the door parents out with sibs anything you need
•
Boots already turned down the sidewalk.

It took a few seconds to blink past the water in his eyes, because if there was one thing in this world he didn’t deserve, it was the love of Jonas Noah Vasquez.

Apparently it was an angel after all.

He knew he needed to get Even back home, to his parents or to anyone who had any idea what the fuck they were doing, because that wasn’t him, but he had to get him somewhere safe first, he couldn’t just call Liv with a random street name, not when Even was pissed at her anyways, might not actually let him and where would that leave them he had to deal with right exactly now, get them inside and contained, deal with just this minute, because no matter how quick his parents could drive here, waiting for them in the middle of the street wasn’t gonna end well, and if he lost Even--

Isak sucked in a breath, squeezing Even’s hand tighter. He was pretty sure the only reason why Even wasn’t bucking that was because it wasn’t registering in his brain, he was so fucking used to holding Isak’s hands now that it didn’t register as odd enough to balk at and Isak was so fucking grateful for that tiny tiny thing right now, their entwined hands.

Just a fucking tether, a tether to pull him down a street Even caught onto pretty damn quick wasn’t the right one.

“Where the fuck are we? What, too ashamed to take me back to your precious roommates now? You had no problem to sik them on me like dogs when I was depressed. Take him when he’s easy to control, that’s when you can dote on him. And if I were brilliant fucking sunshine right now you’d take me then, everyone loves it when he’s way too happy, when his mind is racing and there’s a pretty smile on his face but when the smile drops away it doesn’t stop racing, baby, you never catch the fucking reference but if snow can fall on angels who’s the dead one--”

Jolting voice with every followed step, Isak pounded up stairs and threw open the door and Jonas instantly pushed off where he was leaning waiting on the wall.

Even’s jaw dropped, stuttering in the doorway.

“Jo-nas? Oh really, Isak, this is a new low. Don’t you remember that he hates you?”

Isak kicked the door shut behind them.

“What can I do?” Jonas asked quietly, hair fluffy eyes kind and Isak inhaled for the first time in the past two hours, heart pounding in his palm.

“I have no fucking clue,” he confessed.

The exhale barely left his mouth before Even was shouldering past him, leering, eyes rolling as he shoved a hand at Jonas’s chest, making him backpedal quick and sending them all from the narrow entryway to the kitchen.

“So he one handedly f*cks over your relationship with the love of your life because he’s in LOVE with you and you get PISSED at him, like any fantastic best friend would, obviously, but open your doors right back up the minute he calls, isn’t that fucking sweet--”

“Even,” Isak snapped, and Even spun around on the bright tiles, mouth open in surprise.

“Oh, are we gonna fight now that you’ve got witnesses who count? Are your parents over dinner not enough, baby?”
Jonas made a quiet sound and Isak stared right back at the burning wild gaze, holding his ground, the
ground falling out beneath him ground and Even’s lip twitched up in a sneer.

“If you wanna fight I know all kinds of fun ways to hold you up against a wall, isn’t that right?”

Blue eyes flashed, something dark, animalistic. It hit him in the chest and well, there went that plan,
ground dropping right out from underneath him and.

Isak had to look away, stumbling back a step heart pounding too loud to hear anything, moving
through molasses and winter tears because Even was biting and pushing in Jonas’s kitchen and he
was so wildly fucking unequipped right now and that was if his heart wasn’t seizing in his chest--

Jonas carefully ducked to the side, finger wrapping around Isak’s elbow, voice quiet, private, here.

“I’m guessing a cold glass of water to the face doesn’t work?”

“I haven’t tried, but I think it’d make me feel better at least,” Isak told him shakily, looking over to
meet the steady quiet, the hopeful light eyes. Jonas, here, making soft suggestions and ducking
around Even and grabbing his elbow like he hadn’t been so fucking hurt and--

Fuck. Not now. Jonas was here, and trying to help, although honestly, he hadn’t been sure Jonas
could do anything besides provide a locked house for Even to ride this out in.

Until Jonas shot him a quiet smile, that little knowing private one between the two of them, the one
he hadn’t gotten in what felt like years.

None of the burn, none of the anger, quiet and steady and careful and calm like Isak couldn’t fucking
be right now, not when Even was like this like that and he’d been fucking wrong about how Jonas
could help.

Jonas was helping more than anyone else on the planet could, because Jonas was gonna keep him
sane through this.

Although sane really wasn’t the right word, not when Even was pushing his lips out in a pout and
tipping over a glass of water into the sink, making it crash loudly.

“Jesus fuck, Even!”

“You said you wanted water,” he said innocently and Isak grabbed his hand again, hauling him for
the stairs.

Jonas followed, jogging to get ahead of them and open up his bedroom door.

“You said he slept it off last time, right?” Sure, calm as they passed and Even rolled his eyes
dramatically, hand lax in Isak’s grip.

“I don’t know, I wasn’t there for most of it,” Isak replied quietly, only their side conversation
couldn’t actually be a side conversation when Even was less than two feet away.

“Because you bailed and left me in a police station, remember?” A biting smile and Even opened his
eyes wide, mouth too as he pointed a thumb for the windows. “You could take me there now, I’m
sure they’ll know what to fucking do with me. Or maybe if Jonas is kinky enough, you could pull
out some handcuffs and just cuff me to the fucking bed while you’re at it.”

“We’re not gonna cuff you to the bed,” Isak told him and Even put a hand over his heart, entwined
grip breaking as he took a step backwards, mouth open in shock.

“He’s talking to me, what a miracle. Are you seeing this? Look at him, what a sweet fucking boyfrie-
-

“Does he have medicine he can take?” Jonas asked, kinda desperately.

Isak opened his mouth to reply simply, “Not that I know of,”

To be instantly drowned out, interrupted loud and fucking sharp.

“No.”

They both turned to the bark, twin wide-eyes under wild curls, mouths snapped shut. Even smiled at them, wide and pretty and fucking haunting, sinking to prop on the edge of Jonas’s bed, spine stiff as a board.

“And he would know, we basically live together. Which pisses Jonas off, remember? He doesn’t want us to live together. It’s a bad idea.” Bottom lip pushing out in a little pout, head cocking to the side, “Could you maybe stop asking each other questions about me when I’m sitting right. fucking. here?”

The last three words hit like swings, all the bright flashing dark again for just the briefest moment before Even was opening his mouth, tip of his tongue running over his bottom lip before he was sing-songing,

“The movie’s no fun if the lead gets shot and the director only has arguing side characters--”

“Sleeping pills?” Jonas asked, turning to Even quickly, addressing it to him this time. “Would it be safe for you to take sleeping pills?”

“Huh! So you want to drug me anyways? Fantastic plan, then I’m somebody else’s problem when I wake up, right? Always somebody else's fucking problem. Is that how you deal with everything, Jonas, is that how you dealt with Isak? Always somebody else’s fucking problem? Now I know not to drink anything around you two. What a shame, there goes Tequila Night. You two sure were chummy. Wow, aren’t I just in the best of hands. Hand shaped bruises for the one who loses, screams and truces--”

“I’m thinking that’s a no,” Isak shot back quietly and Jonas puffed out his cheeks, eyes wide on the ground as he blew out air slow.

Yeah, same, but they’d figure something out together, they just had to calm him down enough that Isak could leave and call Liv and get some help. Liv would know what to do. He couldn't give Jonas his phone without making it obvious and Jonas didn't know Even’s parents’ names anyways, they had to get Even to Chill enough first, he only needed two minutes, just had to get him calm enough for two minutes that Isak could slip away and call.

Okay, he had to find a way to slow that beautiful heartbeat.

He could do that. One minute at a time, he could do that.

Isak turned back to the boy on the edge of the bed, who was currently bouncing his fingers boredly on the duvet, and Isak breathed in slow once, exhaling as he uncurled the tension in his fingers and dropped his voice soft. Sincere. Hopefully not too much.
“Even, will you lie down with me?”

“That’s also a no,” he replied, lips pushing out in another pout, bouncing fingers curling into a tight fist. A moment’s pause and Even was looking up at him with those eyes again, the incinerating blue. “I’d no more sleep in this room than I would in my mother’s house. Fuck you guys.”

Even stood up and Jonas and Isak both pushed him bodily back down. The bed didn’t get the chance to compress, Even froze so fast, head angled down, eyes on nothing at all, voice dropping.

“Oh-hoh. You do not want to go down that road. That is not gonna end pretty.”

It was low and warning and yeah, Isak was strong and sure, they’d wrestled, but Even was fucking tall and the few times they’d play-fought it’d been out of love, not--

Not this.

Right now, he...he didn’t honestly know whether or not Even would be able to stop himself from hurting either of them.

And clearly, if the look on his best friend’s face was any indication, Jonas was realizing the exact same fucking thing right now.

Even was perfectly still, low warning still echoing to pool at their feet.

“What the actual fuck are we supposed to do?” Jonas whispered, frozen, flash of fear Isak could feel from here.

Fear of what, for who, he didn’t know, didn’t really wanna know.

Isak stuck his tongue in his cheek. A single moment of debate.

If he didn’t do it things could get nasty fast.

If he did it things were guaranteed to get nasty but at least then help would be on the way.

“I’m calling his mother.”

He spun away, already pulling the phone out of his pocket, and he hadn’t made it a step in the other direction before Even was shouting after him.

“Fucking liar!” It was violent enough, the movement with it quick enough that Jonas didn’t think, year-old instincts kicked in and he instantly threw himself between Even and Isak.

Blocking the heaving chest and scalding gaze, Even was popped up off the bed again and towering, trembling, twisting up visibly. Jonas had two arms up, barely keeping him contained while Isak’s hands shook, not a glance over his shoulder at them, dialing out a number.

Even was crying, pissed angry hot tears bubbling up like steam out of a volcano, ripped into pieces and waterfalling at the seams.

“You fucking promised you’d be there for me, and then you pull shit like this? You abandon me like this?? How fucking COULD you??”

He was shouting across the space between them and Jonas was just standing, watching Even’s every movement, a buffer, a wall that some part of Even’s brain must’ve been registering, because he didn’t cross it, leaks and cracks all bursting from this side of Jonas’s barrier as he bent and lost it.
“What happened to staying by my side, Isak? What happened to everything you fucking promised? Or maybe you’ve been this way all along, just pretending you didn’t mean that fucking locker room talk anymore? Like father like son, ja?? Your life really is better off, huh??”

Isak was swaying back and forth, swiveling on his feet as he muttered something to himself Jonas couldn’t hear and the phone was ringing and Even was just getting more and more upset.

“I bet you really get it now, how much better your life is without sick crazy fucking NUTS people around you, right?? Fuck the storms and the promises and fuck everything you ever FUCKING said to me, right?? What fucking universe are you in now, the one where you throw me away or the one you wish you NEVER FUCKING MET ME??”

“Pick up pick up pick up pick up,” Isak was muttering over the steady stream of tears down his face.

“Isak?”
“Liv? Oh god--”

Something broke somewhere.

The voice over the phone sounded almost as awful as his.

“Is he okay??”

“Nei. I mean physically yeah, we’re at one of my friend’s houses but I don’t know what to do, I don’t fucking know what to do, he’s really upset and--”

He gasped, stuttering in air over a sob only before the dam could break into a flood there was a snap of his name behind him.

“Isak,” Jonas said, in that voice and Isak turned around instantly.

Even was sitting there on the edge of the bed, eyes wide as he stared down at the ground. There was something not natural in the way he was sitting, like he didn’t fit inside his skin.

It took him a second to realize Even was shaking all over, tiny violent vibrations.

His phone was soaked.

“Liv, hold on.” Isak shoved the phone at Jonas. “Text her your address.”

Isak dropped to his knees in front of the boy on the bed, dashed to pieces, carefully wrapping trembling fingers around an exposed ankle.

“Even?”

“He just crumpled, instantly, I don’t--”

“Not your fault, text Liv.”

Even wasn’t looking at him, he was rocking slightly, eyes glazed as chapped lips moved. Isak watched him for a moment before he realized he was muttering something to himself, the same thing, over and over.

He had to lean up close, go up on his knees to hear it.
Alter.

(Alter.)

“Alenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealenealene—”

“Isak, she’s on her way—” Jonas said, turning back around, pausing mid-sentence.

He stood there a moment, just stared wide-eyed at the scene.

Isak was on his knees between Even’s knees, two hands on either side of his face as he held their foreheads together, both of them shaking as Isak cried.


Even had Isak’s biceps in his hands, holding onto him so tight it hurt. Really fucking bad hurt, the kind where Isak couldn’t keep talking because he was trying to breathe through it without crying out but he couldn’t move, wouldn’t move, there was nothing but this shattering world for him.

Isak on his knees, tears streaming down his face, face tipped up against Even’s. Even’s hands branding bruises shaped like stars into his arms.

Liv was calling Isak’s name.

“Isak, c’mon honey, we need you to come over here.”

Isak wasn’t registering.

Jonas took a step forward.

“Isak.”

Isak sniffled and his lashes fluttered.

“Isak, listen, you need to step away from Even right now.”

“Isak.”

“Okay,” he whispered, voice shredded. Another moment passed. Liv only called his name 700 fucking times already. Jonas bit the inside of his cheek. Fuck it. He’d go get the kid himself.

Jonas took another step forward, only to have Liv’s arm suddenly barred across his chest, shoving him backwards instantly.

Jonas’s eyes went wide as he looked over at her but she wasn’t looking at him, she was looking at Isak.

Jonas took one look at Liv’s face, Even’s dad behind her, the silent hover of them both in the doorway, back at his best friend on his knees, and that time when he said it, he didn’t give him a choice.

“Is-ak, nå.”

A soft stuttering inhale and Isak was dipping his head down, tipping backwards and breaking free
with a pained gasp as he spun up and away and Jonas and Liv took his arms and dragged him out of reach.

Even’s hands curled into fists up by his ears, head still down, lashes still fluttering, everything still wrong.

Jonas couldn’t tell if Isak was gasping because he couldn’t breathe or because he was in pain.

He put a hand on Isak’s forehead, brushing off his curls and trying to catch his eyes but Isak wouldn’t look at him, he was only looking at Even.

Bjørn stepped past them, crossing the room with deliberate steps, each one balanced and practiced and slow.

The windows were still flashing neon blue.

The moment Even’s dad put a hand on his shoulder they all startled at the sound, the resounding smack as Even batted him aside roughly.

A hurricane, or a car crash.

No one could tear their eyes away.

Bjørn slowly reached for him again and Even shoved back hard, violent arms blocked with a knock to the side from Bjørn’s open palm. Then Even wasn’t on the bed anymore, raised and tall and pushing, shoving, grabbing, arms flying.

Jonas and Isak both jumped and Even’s mom soccer-momed Isak’s chest, throwing both boys behind her.

The bed shoved a screeching foot to the side as Even stumbled, bouncing back off the mattress in a blur, rough grunts, smacking clammer arms flailing clapping hard muscle on muscle whacking wrestling--

Then Bjørn got one of Even’s arms hooked behind his back and he shouted, voice grating, bending in half with the force, trying to follow the motion to duck and swing around with the other, jumping to the side then Bjørn grabbed that one too, closed hard on a thin wrist and twisted up high behind his shoulders.

Even yelped, loud echoing cringing, thrashing what he could but he barely got the chance before he was stumbling over his own feet and Bjørn was herding him roughly for the door.

And Even went, shoving past them head down, beautiful coiffed blonde broken into pieces over his forehead. Starry light blue entirely spaced out, struggling against the grip, trying to move his shoulders but Bjørn had both his wrists locked behind his back, completely trapped, leading him straight into the hallway, down the stairs.

Isak stared at the empty doorway, mouth open, everything twisted up in pain.

Liv took one look at him and pulled him into her arms, folding him uselessly small.

“Oh baby.” A small gentle hand settled in his hair. “It's gonna be okay.”

Isak fucking broke. He wasn’t pretty crying, he wasn’t even helpless sobbing, he was shaking and his fists were all curled up against his chest and Liv had both arms around him holding him as he
broke broke and broke, shoulders jerking side to side, shattering breaking open-mouthed tears over silent screaming jolting hurt and she just squeezed him tight, rocking and regathering with every violent knock of his shoulders free.

“It’s okay, Isak, it’s okay. Calm down, honey. It’s okay.”

The sound was gone, if the sob wrenched free it’d be despair, screams and angel wings. Sound muted, throat drowning in water, every muscle bone cell twitching twisting broken shattered tight stained glass--

The lurching shoulders, perfectly soundless anguished wail was making Jonas’s stomach lurch and he dove under, grabbed Isak’s elbow, unhooking one of his arms from where it was curled up tight against his chest, dragging it free and entwining their fingers and squeezing.

Isak’s shoulders couldn’t twist when Jonas was holding him that hard and tight in one direction and the silent screams doubled down, spine curling hard instead, open-mouthed and wet against Liv’s small shoulder as the shudders shook violent and sharp.

Earthquakes.

He broke down and broke down more until he couldn’t physically break anymore, until his body gave up until he was quivering down into open, snotty sobs as he just cried against Even’s mom and held Jonas’s hand weakly and let it all sink over him until he hit the bottom.

Their arms in the pool.

You think I care about my hair?

What should I think? It looks like it.

Does it look like I care about my hair??

Not right now, but it usually does.

Isak reached over and shoved and Even spun with it, their arms flying, both of them flailing as they tipped off balance and crashed into the holy water.

Even’s mom held Isak really tight until he didn’t have anything left to cry. Until the only thing he could do was hiccup and whimper over broken noises, face tucked against her soaked shoulder as she petted his curls and offered to call his mom and explain, she knew they had that dinner tonight.

Isak just shook his head numbly, peeling free, head lifting, creased tear-stained skin looking worse than any Yakuza day. Stumbling a few steps backwards and sinking down paralyzed on the edge of Jonas’s bed.

Jonas stared blankly a few more moments as Liv kissed the top of a dipped blonde head, smoothed a hand over Isak’s fallen shoulder, and waited for Jonas at his bedroom door.

Dinner with Isak’s fucking parents.

Fuck.

It was all kind of a blur from there.

It was all kind of a blur since the minute the doorbell lit up.
Even’s mom came in, Even’s dad too, and took Even away with them.

They left in a swirl of neon blue lights. They’d brought the police with them, they didn’t know how bad it was, if they’d have to detain him through force Bjørn couldn't handle, better if Bjørn could but there were times...anyways thank you, they’d told Jonas, thanked him profusely, all the way down the stairs as he numbly led Liv out the door.

“When I asked Isak if he had any siblings, he said yes, one, named Jonas.” Liv Bech Næsheim stood on his front porch and told him and Jonas just blinked at her in the eerie flashing neon blue. “I know what he meant now. Thank you, for being there for Isak when he needed you. Thank you for being there for my son.”

Jonas nodded once. Liv kissed him on the cheek and started down the last set of stairs for the sidewalk, the car waiting on the curb.

And they all left, in a swirl of lights.

Isak was still sitting on his bed when he got back upstairs.

Jonas sat down next to him and he was barely all the way down before Isak was tipping into his side and crying all over again.

Jonas wrapped his arms around him and rocked them, whispering that it was gonna be alright.

It was gonna be alright.

Isak ended up spending the night, falling asleep curled up in the center of Jonas’s bed, Jonas’s forehead on the back of his neck, arm around Isak’s stomach as they both passed out to tear-stained sheets and pure exhaustion.

Everything else they could face in the morning.

Chapter End Notes

please, understand that while I will do everything I can to roll with criticism, this isn't just Even’s story, this is mine. And it has been since the beginning. So if I've ever seemed defensive and taken too many things to heart it's because these words aren't just a picture I'm painting, it’s a self portrait too.

On that note, if you don’t have bipolar disorder and you're dying to correct someone with manic-depression writing their own disorder, please just don’t? As like, a birthday gift to me?

Otherwise, if you wanna come cry scream yell, I’m here.

Much love to you all, and I will hopefully see you all at the update tomorrow. xx
The first time Isak’s dad left, in the middle of their first semester at Nissen, Jonas had practically lived at the Valtersen’s. Making dinner, walking the dog, doing everything he could to keep emotionally numb Isak and entirely collapsed Marianne from exploding.

Eva had shown up once, to see Isak for some reason, something about how they needed to talk and he wasn’t answering his phone. He’d asked if she wanted to come inside, surely Isak wanted to see her, but she said no.

“Nei, eh. I think...he has you, so.”

“Yeah,” Jonas had replied, and the smile that came with it was soft and proud.

He did, he always had.

Marianne had him too, for as long as she wanted the extra help, the smile he could offer when none of the rest of them could. It was just Isak and his mom for a few months, really rocky months at the beginning of the year last year. Isak and his mom and Jonas.

Then sometime, conveniently a couple days after the Yakuza fight, Terje had shown back up. Jonas didn’t trust Isak’s dad as far as he could fucking throw him, but Marianne was elated and Isak was too upset to have any fucking clue what to do.

Those were the worst three fucking weeks of 2016.

Isak wasn’t okay, but worse, he shoved Jonas out of his life as fast as he fucking could.

He’d tried going off on his own. Tried getting in another fight with the Yakuza boys, and the minute Jonas found out he nearly fucking went off. Nearly.

Instead he hunted Isak down and sat him the fuck down and they talked about how the fuck he didn’t get to deal with emotions this way, that fighting didn’t get to be an out for his family shit.

And that’s kinda when he figured it out, saying it out loud, the two of them sitting cross-legged in the bottom bowl of the empty skatepark while Jonas pointed accusing fingers and Isak nodded and
nodded and tried not to cry.

You don’t get to deal with shit this way, Isak, you don’t get to turn to physical violence when you can’t handle shit, that is not okay.

And the moment it was out of his mouth, Jonas realized that was probably half the reason Isak had jumped into the Yakuza wars with all that enthusiasm. A distraction, not revenge. Not like what Jonas was fighting for.

But they talked it out and Isak swore, swore he’d never be that stupid and irresponsible again, at least not without his fucking backup.

Those were the days of sweeping aside curls and Isak struggling to find a way to forgive his dad while simultaneously trying to convince Tarje not to leave again and Jonas couldn’t fucking handle how Isak thought all of it was up to him, their broken family his to fix. It was running him ragged, day in day out.

He stopped reaching out on his own, so Jonas didn’t give him a choice, showing up on his doorstep, already doing his homework at Isak’s dinner table by the time he got home.

Isak pulled back more and more. Said he didn't need someone breathing down his neck. He couldn't handle Jonas being so close.

His dad thought they were too close, Jonas found out later. He thought they were too close and something was up with his son that was stressing out Marianne and Isak didn't text him for three fucking days.

Then Terje left, again. Somehow, in a nastier fight than the first time.

Jonas called Isak about 20,000 times the moment he found out, but Isak’s phone was off. Searched fucking half of Oslo for his reckless ass of a best friend. Only to find out the next day that apparently, he’d gotten wasted off his ass, blacked the fuck out, met some way older guy named Eskild, and ended up getting offered to live in the guy’s basement.

He’d done fucking everything he could to convince Isak to live with him instead, but he wouldn’t. You already have siblings, he said. I can’t put the extra on your mom, he said. I can’t handle anything that’s gonna remind me of my family right now, he didn’t say, but Jonas heard it.

So he moved in with strangers, in a basement on a mattress for a month before Noora moved out and he finally got a room, one that they hadn’t christened with laughter and late night secrets and video game wars. A new room. A new Isak.

And Jonas was doing everything he could to find his place in that life, and honestly, he wasn't sure he still had one.

Not until now. Sitting in his windowsill, watching Isak sleep, curls smushed to the side and falling all over his face, tear-stained and broken in the middle of his bed.

This was his place in Isak's life. Same place it always had been.

To carry him through the cold.
“Is this Irish coffee?” Isak wrapped his sweater hands around the mug Jonas gave him, glancing up hopefully.

Jonas furrowed his eyebrows, giving Isak a weird look that had nothing to do with the fact that he was stretching out Jonas’s softest sweater.

“Nei? It’s 9 on a Saturday morning.”

Isak rolled his lips in and took a sip. Personally he’d be fine with being drunk right now.

“Have you talked to his parents yet this morning?” Jonas sat down at the breakfast table across from him, feeling oddly like childhood as Isak set his special mug down and looked at the reflection in sloshing dark.

“Yeah. Liv texted. She didn’t say much, just that. Just that he was home and safe.” Isak swirled the coffee in his hands.

Her text had been so fucking vague. Isak told her he wanted to come over, he wanted to be there when Even’s brain betrayed him, he wanted to be with him and Liv said he had to eat a solid breakfast first, so. Here he was, eating breakfast.

“It wasn’t that bad, all things considered,” Isak offered, gaze flicking up as Jonas almost spat out his coffee.

“Wasn’t that bad??”

Jonas was looking at him like he was the manic one and Isak lifted a shoulder, kinda drifting numb as he tried to be optimistic.

“Yes. I mean the worst that happened was that he got yelled at by some guy on the bus. My parents are pissed at me, but what’s new. And he almost broke your water glass.”

“My water glass is fine,” Jonas said, stopping and holding his gaze firmer than his coffee. “Are you?”

“Yeah, I mean, I’m totally fine, he didn’t actually fight back, my arms are okay, he let me kinda just lead him around everywhere—”

“Inside, Isak.” Jonas was giving him that look, the you’re letting him play you kinda look, the c’mon, you know I’m right and I know you don’t wanna hear it but you need to look.

“It’s not the water glass I’m worried about breaking. It’s your heart.”

Okay, he could just fucking put it like that. Isak sucked in a breath and looked down at his plate, mouth unable to close.

“Isak--”
“Jonas, don’t.”

“Isak, that was. Really intense, last night.”

“I know,” he said, tearing up, wiping at his face before anything could escape. “I can handle it.”

Jonas was just looking at him and Isak tried to lighten it, cocking his head at his coffee, lifting a shoulder,

“Not that I’m not grateful to you, we totally needed the place to crash for a bit--”

“Isak.”

It was that voice again and Isak stopped talking.

There were no filters to hide behind in this kitchen anymore. Early morning sunlight peeking red-gold through the windows, painting everything transparent across the antiquity between them. Every speck of dust illuminated and Jonas tapped his foot under the table, socked toes knocking against his ankle.

“Don’t shut me out. I deserve more than that.”

He pulled his feet back under his chair, vaguely retreating. It was such a fucking understatement I deserve more than that, but don’t shut me out hurt more and Isak had to attempt a smile - pained - to keep Jonas from seeing his bottom lip quivering.

“You’re right. Last night sucked, but things’ll get better. They always do. I’m sure everything’s going to be completely fine.”

Jonas just looked at him.

“I’ll get better at seeing everything before it’s too late, I’ll get better at handling the too late when I don’t see the signs--”

“I-sak.”

“Jonas,” he replied stubbornly, trying not to cry.

“You can’t do this to yourself.”

The only thing he could offer back to that was silence, twisting his face up and still trying not to cry. He wasn’t gonna, he’d cried so fucking much over the past 12 hours he didn’t wanna cry anymore, he didn’t wanna cry ever again, he might never stop.

“He can’t ask this of you, it’s not fair. You can’t live like this.”

“Don’t--” Isak interrupted, pissed and wavering and his eyes were red and watery as he pointed a finger at Jonas. “Don’t.”

He looked so young, so fucking innocent, unsure and on the edge of heartbroken, the same doe eyes that’d looked up and asked Jonas if he should send a smiley with the text only now it wasn’t hope it was hurt.

If only Jonas could give advice like that now. How to win the boy instead of how to save yourself. You can’t live like this, Isak couldn’t even hear it, couldn’t let him say it out loud because he knew it
was true but Jonas couldn’t do this either, he could not stand idly by and watch the fucking trainwreck happen.

“You can’t,” he repeated quietly and Isak’s mouth twisted nastily, keep the upset tucked inside but Jonas could still see the insides too. “It’s one thing to care about a person but it’s another thing to let them ruin you. I’ve never seen you so fucking terrified as I did last night, Isak, and we’ve been through a lot of shit together.”

The sweater covered hands weren’t wrapped around the mug anymore, fingers curled up in fists pressed to the table, green eyes staring at the space between the threads. That blankness that Jonas finally fucking understood, but he wasn’t letting Isak numb himself like that anymore, he didn’t get to pretend anymore.

“Isak, you can’t keep doing that.” That being more than the numb, that being going through literal hell and back, violent shouts and smacks and bruises and tears—

Jonas shook his head once, slow, voice hollow with reality. “...you can’t do that ever again.”

“Stop,” Isak rasped and Jonas couldn’t, he wouldn’t let his best friend rip himself to pieces. Not like this.

“What happens when one time, you can’t get somewhere fast enough? When he gets so pissed you can’t hold him? When the violence turns on you? What happens then, Isak, huh? Three months from now will I be driving to the hospital to meet you?”

The tears were streaming but Isak wouldn’t looking at him.

“You can’t do this, I don’t care what you promised. This isn’t fair, to either of you, not when you’re shattering into a thousand pieces because of him.”

The little cupid’s bow of Isak’s trembling mouth was pursed, lashes fluttering, completely still as he tried to fight it, sent every fucking begging plea he could Jonas’s way without opening his mouth. The face of a beautiful boy in love with a beautiful boy who was too much for them both.

Jonas tipped his head, wishing with every ounce of his soul he didn’t have to do this, but this was his job, he was the only person in the world who could.

Isak wasn’t gonna save himself. It was up to Jonas now to make him.

He sucked in a slow breath, letting the kitchen be quiet for a precious ten seconds longer. It didn’t matter how long he waited, how long Isak sat there silent and hurt and tense and waiting on the edge, the drop had to come sometime, better now when Jonas could catch burned angel wings.

“Isak…” Heartbroken for him. For all of this. For the boy who’d cried himself to sleep after shaking through silent screams that Jonas was gonna have nightmares about for the rest of his life, and if that’s what he was having nightmares about, he couldn’t imagine the horrors haunting rainy green.

“I’m so sorry, Isak.” Jonas reached over the table, slowly closing his hand over the fight hurt fist. Holding on tight. And unlocking the gates to the flood.

“...you have to end it.”

There came the inhale, sharp and shuddery and fast and pain and the tears splatting over, curls bouncing as his head shook and shook and shook--
“Nei. Nei, I won’t. I won’t, Jonas, I don’t care how fucking terrified I am, I don’t care how much it hurts. I love him. I won’t leave him. I love him.”

Jonas just looked at him, rubbing his thumb over the back of Isak’s trembling hand.

“I know you do.”

“I love him,” Isak broke, hands flattening, teary gasp as they covered his face and Jonas got up from the table, circling around to drop to his knees besides Isak’s chair, wrap his arms around his best friend’s shoulders.

Isak turned into him and buried his precious face and clung to the front of his sweater and shattered into stained glass pieces all over the kitchen floor.


Shaking and shaking.

Jonas held his soft head and stared off at the kitchen sink and didn’t have a single thing he could say.

Hey Eskild, it's Jonas. I know you're pissed at Isak. I was too, I get it. But Even had a manic episode last night and Isak needs us. We're all he's got.

Where is he? Is he okay? Is even okay?

Evens at his parents. Isak's at mine. Can I bring him back to yours?

We'll be waiting
He texted Magnus too. He didn't expect a response, honestly. Magnus got fucked over a lot worse than Eskild.

So it wasn’t all that surprising that by the time he got Isak calmed down and dried off and bundled up in enough coats and scarves to trip back to the flat, Magnus hadn't texted back.

He got another text from Eskild, though.

---

Isak's friend Magnus is here? He just showed up at the door saying something about how he can be dramatic and unpredictable too, something about no bubbles and chilling at home? Then he was like hella disappointed to see you and Isak weren't here yet

---

magnuss mom is bipolar he's our expert. Don't worry about the dramatic entrance just give him a hug for me, yeah?

---

Magnus came through too. Jesus fuck.

Jonas never should've expected any less. And now he got to tell Isak that Magnus and Eskild were both waiting for them. At least there was one fucking bright thing coming out of all of this. God knows they could use some bright things.
The door wouldn’t stop making noises.
It was cracked and there was a draft somewhere, because it wouldn’t leave him alone.
Creak. Tapping, open closed creak.
Maybe the world past the wooden bar was trying to pry between his ribs.
What a shame for the door to find out there was nothing underneath.
Maybe his mother kept checking on him, open creak closed every thirteen thirty seconds.
Shame and shame.
“Even, honey, can I get you anything?”
If he didn’t respond, she’d go away eventually.
She went away eventually.
The fire and the flood.
It was fucking loud in here.
Everything was off. The lights, the windows, the world, it was dark and it was still so fucking loud.
The walls wouldn’t fucking shut up.
You would think, under ten miles of aether like this he’d long to drag himself out of the hole into yesterday, but Yesterday was gonna make him sick again.
The breath of sea to curse.
The waves were hollow before they crashed, everything was hollow before it crashed.
Yesterday was a camera lens wrapped in cellophane. Everything that caught light reflected bright enough to blind. Everything in the distance foggy and further in the distance.
He knew what a bus should sound like, standing next to one. But at the bus stop it didn't sound like a bus it sounded like a bus two miles away and covered in clear plastic gauze.
Yesterday.
It was like driving down the road in a car, slowly approaching a siren somewhere on the road miles ahead of you. You can hear it getting louder and louder but you can't place where it is. It's raining, and the car windshield wipers are going so fucking fast they're hurting more than helping just a bar whip whip whip in front of your sight, all the lights of the road blurring like a nearsighted person who forgot their glasses.
The other passengers in the car don't hear the siren. If your parents are in the back they watch the way you drive close enough that they don't need to hear the siren, they watch you instead and then
they know when you hear it. But if you've got precious cargo as much as you want to save it if you tell the newest passenger about the siren when they don't know what it means or does then what if they reach for the steering wheel, what if they freak out, what if they demand you pull over and let them out only you can't because your foot is glued to the pedal and the car's still accelerating so if they want out they have to jump and god knows if they jump out now that might kill you both.

So you keep your mouth shut when you hear the siren you bottle up the siren what you can as it gets louder and louder and the rain whips faster and faster and the lights blur more and more. Only you can't bottle it all the way, because the car is accelerating fast enough at some point people are gonna fucking notice.

And so there's a built in signal on the car, a loud beep warning when you reach 80mph, and it wakes up all your passengers and they fuss and freak out - slow down slow down slow down. But you found a trick in the system when you were younger - the car beeps that atrocious noise at 80mph. Period. But only if you are directly on 80mph. If you're on 83? It doesn't keep beeping. 91? No beeping.

But you can't skip from 79 to 81 mph, you physically can't, gotta hit 80 sometime. So you hit 80 when the drivers switch, when there's a tornado outside, when music is blasting over speakers and everyone is tipsy. When no one's gonna fucking notice a car alarm.

You hit 80 hard and you fucking go.

Then you stay above 80, you stay above 80 and if you dip back below you'll get caught; it'll ring. People will fuss. So hit 80 as soon as you fucking can and boom. Hold it above. Set for the rest of the ride.

Only now you look up cause the siren is so fucking loud and you realize you're doing 120 and the siren ambulance police car fog horn fire truck tornado warning isn't about to pass you on the freeway, it's colliding into the front of your car and the crash is instantaneous and devastating a speeding unstoppable car stopped inside of a snapping second and the nose doesn't just crumple the entire car is just a tin can everything goes dark, all you've got is chips of glass in your skin and a siren that doesn't turn off at the crash but triples quadruples drowns out the sounds of the crumble the shrieking the highway and everyone's screams.

Buses don't sound distant wrapped in cellophane now, buses cease to exist under the loud. The only time the quadruple pounding inescapable siren shuts off is when your eyes are closed asleep. You don't wanna do fucking anything but sleep. It's the closest you can get to death without the energy to end it all.

The door to the flat opened and Jonas went through first. It was kinda ridiculous how grateful he was.

“Isak. Hey.” Eskild swept right to the door, worrying his hands with those knit eyebrows of concern, the same ones he gave Isak leaning in his bedroom door telling him heartbreak would pass.

Ha.
“How are you?” Eskild pressed gently, a different human being than the last time he’d seen him, kicking Isak out of here.

Isak kicked off his shoes. They landed next to a pair of Even’s winter boots. He paused a moment, staring down at them, mouth pursed.

“I’m great,” he said flatly. Eskild made a pained noise and Isak gave him a dull look, blinking once before looking back down. He knew he looked like hell. He felt like hell.

He didn’t wanna feel anymore.

Isak offered the closest mouth twitch he had to something kind before he was stepping past Eskild and Jonas and there was Noora and Linn, standing at the edge of the living room.

Noora was ringing her hands and Linn was standing silent and wide eyed.

He nodded once and kept walking, turning into the kitchen cause forward momentum was the only thing he had right now and he couldn’t--

Or he froze faster than he’d walked in here, skidding to a stop at the edge of the kitchen, wide eyed as Linn as Magnus sat down the tea kettle and looked at him.

Isak’s eyes cut away and when he looked back to Magnus there were tears in his eyes again. Magnus tipped his head, giving him a little smile of comfort.

“Hey, man, I'm here for you.”

Isak nodded and wiped his face, sniffling once and putting a hand on the counter, trying to ground himself to anything.

He was in love with a boy who he hadn’t been able to save and all of these people who he’d hurt loved him enough to be here for him anyways.

Okay. Yeah. That was enough guilt for him.

Isak straightened up, and started opening cabinets. The quiet footprints padded about the same time he found the cabinet with the alcohol.

“How do you really think that's a good--”

It was Jonas’s voice, the rest of them were all in the kitchen now and there wasn’t enough room for that, there wasn’t enough room for anyone in his life when all he did was let people down.

“Did you move everything out of my room,” Isak interrupted, landing on his feet and spinning around, hand wrapped around the neck of a bottle of rum.

“No, of course not,” Eskild looked hurt at the suggestion. Cool, when was Isak gonna stop doing that.

“Takk,” he managed, tipping on the edge of something sharp. “Everyone. For being here, I don't--”

Deserve it, they all heard in the silence then Isak was rolling his lips in, nodding to himself before he took off, brushing past all of them and disappearing into the hallway.

Magnus was the first one to break the stunned silence.
“Yikes. How fucking bad was it?”

“There was a lot of yelling,” Jonas said distantly, eyes still on the empty hallway his best friend had just disappeared down. “Crying. Arms flying.”

“Fuck,” Magnus said. Jonas looked at the tiles.

“Ja.”

The silence simmered for a few moments before Noora shifted, throwing a thumb over her shoulder.

“I’m gonna go talk to the girls. See if I can bring Vilde around.”

“You will,” Magnus said, offering a little smile. “She’s a good person, don’t worry.”

Noora nodded and then she was disappearing too. Linn watched her go, looked at the rest of them and sighed deeply.

“Tell me if Even shows up. I can pass out in the same room as him if it makes him feel better.”

Eskild tutted, crossing his arms over his chest. “This isn't a joke, Linn.”

“I wasn't joking,” she said, then she treading back to her room.

The rest of them looked at each other a moment before Eskild clapped his hands together weakly.

“Well I think everyone could go for some comfort food right now, do any of you know how to cook?”

All of them drank for parties, that was more than normal. But people who drank to forget, people who drank in the middle of the day on Saturday with no reason but getting numb, that wasn’t normal.

Isak didn’t care. It wasn’t like he was gonna sit and wallow in his room sober when there was alcohol available and absolutely no reason not to stop hurting.

It wasn’t like he was gonna see Even anytime soon.

Maybe ever, actually.

Isak screwed the top off the bottle and stared down at the amber inside. The last time he drank he’d been clinking shots with his boyfriend, their elbows hooked around each other as they tipped back over most likely to be married young.

He was already on the verge of crying when he took the first swig. It was nowhere fucking near full, which was a really good thing, because he would end up drinking all of it.

Four to seven days, that’s how long Even’s hypomanic episodes usually lasted. According to wikipedia, anyways. So since last fucking Friday. Tuesday, at the latest.
He’d had that entire fucking time to realize - once, all it had to be was once - that something was wrong, and he didn’t.

Even didn't tell him, so Even either didn't trust him or didn't love him and clearly if he did he certainly wouldn't now, not when Isak had fucked up this. Fucking. Badly.

On one hand, he knew it wasn’t supposed to be his job, he wasn’t supposed to monitor Even, Even didn’t want that but he had to fucking pay attention. How had he let himself get so fucking caught up in high school drama - stupid fucking high school rumors and drama and hell and that, that was what got in the way of noticing his boyfriend was off the rails?

How the fuck hadn’t--

Every thing. Every single thing Even did that Isak paused at he wrote off fucking instantly. Made it about him instead. Even’s being too energetic - must be because he’s trying to cheer Isak up. Even’s sex drive’s through the roof - must be because he’s trying to distract Isak from his hellish week.

His hellish week where the love of his life was slipping into a manic episode and he never fucking noticed, that week?

Isak fumbled his phone out of his pocket, nearly spilling Captain on himself in the process. Fuck.

There was nothing on the lock screen but the screaming numbers of the time, the hours that had past since he’d seen Even last.

He unlocked it after a few tries, apps all flying in over the wallpaper on his home screen.

It was him and Even.

Isak sniffed and pressed meldinger, no unread messages but he clicked on the most recent thread anyways.

Liv.

He’d texted her so many times today it took at least four refreshes to get to the top of the thread. How was Even doing, when could he see him, what did they need, the first sent a little after 7. The most recent within the hour.

Liv came up with 600 excuses for him not to come over, Isak caught on at about the 599th. She didn’t want him to see Even.

He fucked up, and she didn’t think he was good for Even anymore. She wanted him out of the picture.

He stopped texting her.

What the fuck was he thinking. Liv didn’t want him around. Even probably didn’t want him anymore either. He’d fucked up. He didn’t know what he was doing and that was fucking clear now.

Isak was in love. He was in love, he loved a boy who’d burst out of a pool kissing him like he already owned Isak’s soul and he did he did he did, he took it with his slippery pressing hands to Isak’s jaw.

He loved a boy who offered up his life on a nervous sparkling platter and Isak had taken his hands and promised to take care of him and he hadn’t.
He hadn’t, he’d told Even it was the two of them, that he’d be there, that they were each other’s and he’d broken the only promise that counted, he’d left Even to fumble through hell alone, no wonder he didn’t want to see him. No wonder he didn’t want Isak’s arms around him, Isak’s arms weren’t strong enough to hold him.

Isak’s arms weren’t even strong enough to hold himself, when Even’s arms went tackling, dazed eyes, the yelp when he finally got pinned--

“Fuck.” Isak’s eyes fluttered shut, pressing the heels of his hands into his eyes. It didn’t make the image go away any faster.

God.

Even had been so not okay, Isak was so fucking scared, for him, of him, and that was the worst part, the way that he flinched instinctively, that there was any part of him that his heart was pounding for himself too, that--

He never wanted to feel that again. To flinch away when he was so fucking in love--

See, the thing was. Isak used to be able to admit to himself - hell, to Eva too - that honestly maybe Even wasn’t the man of his dreams, that he wasn’t sure if everything was gonna work out. And if last night had happened in early December, if those episodes had been switched?

Isak wasn’t sure they’d still be together. Because everything had been so raw and new and he’d been so scared and unsure and they’d barely been together a week, the first time Even had called him his boyfriend was that night.

Isak loved Even then, he did, but it wasn’t...it wasn’t everything, then.

Now?

Now?

He couldn’t honestly imagine. Could not imagine leaving Even. Because he loved Even then, but that was fucking. Nothing, shadows, compared to the way he felt about Even now.

There had been so many ways, times Isak had fallen deeper since then. Then he’d still been able to recognize that maybe one day it’d be too much but. That was before.

Before he’d gotten a text in that church that meant everything, before he saved him back. Before a week at Isak’s place in his hoodies and sparkly quiet eyes.

Before they’d lived together, before he woke up to brush his teeth alongside the boy he loved and whined about toothpaste kisses. Before Even had sang to him over marshmallow fires at the cabin, before he gave Isak enough loving bruises to turn his skin into a canvas, before they watched the nightlights of Oslo and talked about the future as it snowed softly.

Before Isak broke into a laughing fit with Even still inside him, before Even held him close and intimate enough that Isak left a piece of his heart in Even’s hands when he pulled out and away. Before Even’s parents, and sitting in Even’s lap to learn guitar, before he shouted a confession in the boys’ bathroom of a church and Even gave him a hoodie to sleep in.

Before he woke up to Even’s white bedroom painted gold and warm hands sketching him over paper he still hadn’t seen. Before every doting bite and teasing comment that came with all forty-two of the hickies Even painted over his skin. Before he woke screaming from a nightmare about him dying
only to have Even hold him tight and rock them back to sleep.

Before they confessed they loved each other and talked, really talked, about Even’s disorder and what that meant for their relationship. Before Even hung laughing upside down off a playground with the stars overhead, before the full fucking day Even had spent inside his body, rocking them closer together, entwining so intimate and real and intense he’d shifted, at his core, into someone who was tied, to that boy.

Before Even turned twenty and laughed into his mouth and held him tight through every day he broke down crying as his life fucking fell apart, before they walked the streets of Oslo together laughing while Isak tried to rap and Even dragged him into an alley to sink to his knees in worship.

Before morning pancakes and kisses in the windowsill at school. Before arms around his waist from behind and homework holding sex ransom until they fell laughing and happy into each other’s mouths.

Before Isak understood what it was like to be in love.

Before Isak understood what it meant to love that boy, what it meant to be in love with Even Bech Næsheim, sunshine, stars, and everything in every universe between.

Only now? Now, they’d done all of those things.

And now, he knew. He knew exactly what it meant to love Even.

It was the only thing that mattered in this god forsaken world, the most important thing he’d ever done, and he’d failed. He’d failed. He’d failed. He’d failed.

No texts, no calls, don’t come over. You aren’t good enough for him. You aren’t good for him.

You were too late, you don’t get to have him when you can’t save him. The one thing he’d promised to do and he hadn’t.

No calls.

Isak was ready to carve out his heart to make sure Even was okay, and Even didn’t want him anymore.

Lørdag, 11:18
18.02.17

Isak’s backpack was on the floor in his room. It was a black hole, trying to suck him into oblivion with it.

He heard the door first, then the tentative footstep. The triple hesitant voice.

“Honey? Are you doing okay?”
He considered saying nothing again. Laying here for the rest of time never uttering another fucking word.

Instead he managed to croak, mostly so she’d go away faster, so it’d all go away faster.

“Where’s my phone?”

His voice sounded like hell. Even wondered distantly how much of it was from puking this morning. That was before he crashed. Four am, hadn't slept since, everything around that was still filtered with shimmering drowning gauze.

“I’m trying to do what’s best for both of you,” she told him, stepping up onto the chair she’d dragged beside his bed.

That was definitely not what he asked.

“Isak’s the best thing for me,” he whispered, eyes shut. He knew this, everything was nothing but there was still that inevitable truth and it felt like the worst lie he’d ever told because he knew exactly what was waiting on the flipside.

Best for both of you, she’d said. He was the. worst thing, for Isak. They both knew that.

“Even,” Liv started sympathetically and he couldn't take that.


At least lie. At least lie, Even couldn't take all of this and the idea of Isak gone too, he physically could not.

“Honey, do you love him?”

“Yes,” he whispered, crushed, to the ceiling. The place beside him where Isak lay in the golden sunlight, sleeping naked while Even drew him in the purest angelic form of shaded pencil on white, that place was a gaping black hole of empty do you love him and he’d never loved anything so fucking much.

“Then you won’t break his heart. I know this hurts, but I promise, he’s hurting right now too. He needs some time.” A small hand stroked through the top of his hair and Even’s eyelashes fluttered. “We’ll get through this together, and once you get a little better you can try to fix things, okay?”

It took dragging through rain soaked sand to peel his eyes back open, staring at the blank ceiling as it stared back at him. He stared and he stared and he waited. His mom waited. And waited.

Quiet, trying to soothe with the palm on his head but there weren't anchors here, not in storms like this.

He stared until he couldn't stare anymore until the waves crashed too high and the splash choked him worse than the drop of water in a beautiful laughing throat and Even finally spilled, a single tear slipping down the side of his face with it.

“How bad did I fuck things up?”

She didn't answer. Didn't scold him for the language. Didn't say anything.
She stroked a hand through his hair and he was too tired to tell her to stop. He just turned away. She let him.

Lørdag, 12:24
18.02.17

The problem with numbing yourself was that you ended up numb.

Isak sat on his bed and stared at the wall he'd taped up pasted photos and posters he didn't mean and wondered when the fuck he stopped noticing something as fucking obvious as the horror of the closeted propaganda pasted on his walls.

He shoved off the mattress, tipping a bit with the force of it, taking a moment to catch his balance before he realized he had to be on the bed to take down the posters over it.

How many other fucking things had he missed.

The poster ripped as he tore it down, making the most liberating crack right through the girl he'd stared at and wished he could feel something for so long.

And now he felt, he felt and he felt and he couldn't take it couldn't shake it all he had was the dull spark of satisfaction tearing that damn poster off the wall.

So he tore down the next one, something from a few years ago, couldn't remember, didn't matter.

What mattered was the slow destruction, the hurting and the blindness exposed through the tear of paper, crinkling in his fist.

He was so much younger yesterday.

Isak stared down at his curled fist and it wasn't enough, paper was flimsy and thin and he'd fucked up lives, real human beings and everything was just.

Fog and evaporated and flimsy and he had to feel, there was nothing inside him but dull remnants of ache lining a drought and he needed something, anything, he couldn't feel his own face he needed to fucking feel something anything anything. Clarity.

Disaster.

He loved a boy and--

Disaster.

He loved a boy and it was too much, he wasn't enough, he'd been smacked in the face with the tip of an iceberg and thought he'd conquered ice when there was nothing but frozen water for as far as he could see he needed to breathe he couldn't breathe.

It was snowing outside, he could see it through the crack at the bottom of his blinds. It was swirling outside and he needed disaster.
Catcher in the Rye snow, he needed motherfucking clarity and it was a good thing there were two doors in this apartment.

It didn't take much to sneak out the back, the boys were arguing in the living room about something and they didn't hear him and he was gone before they could do anything about it.

“I'm gonna go check on him,” Jonas finally interrupted and Eskild and Magnus closed their mouths, letting him go.

You're being fucking unfair, Magnus kept insisting. You don't know shit about what Even’s going through and I get you're scared but you don't get to push Isak like that--

You didn't see it you weren't fucking there Mags, this will literally. Kill. Isak. He's already fucking wasting away--

I think we have to leave it up to him, he's stronger than you know Jonas, and maybe he's not as strong as Magnus thinks but there has to be some kind of solution, they're in love--

I know they're in love Eskild, that doesn't mean it's fucking healthy.

Of course it's not healthy! Magnus snapped, Even’s not well right now! But that doesn't mean they can't find a way to make it work--

I'm gonna go check on him, Jonas interrupted and they both threw up their hands but they fell silent as Jonas shoved off the couch and started for the hallway.

Isak’s bedroom door was closed and he knocked first, once, before opening the door anyways.

“Is? How are you--”

Jonas froze in the doorway.

Isak didn't answer. Because Isak was gone.

Lørdag, 12:24
18.02.17

He still hadn't slept. How could he?

How could he let himself rest when he was fucking sinking.

It was under his skin and it wouldn't let him be. The world was trying to crush him from above and that was the only way he found the energy to crawl down the ladder.

He wasn't gonna be able to sleep until he knew. He just wanted to sleep.
He had to wait on the wall behind his door, staring numbly at the floor while his parents chatted at the kitchen table.

God knows how long he stood there until the phone rang. But the phone rang and the conversation paused, chairs screeching and distant voices over a greeting.

“Is he here? No, honey, he’s not. We’ll go check downstairs, in case he’s outside. Bjørn, can you go get your phone and try him?”

His dad’s footsteps down the hallway, the front door.

His heart was pounding too much, it was making him fucking dizzy but his feet were moving, he didn’t know how.

It was a good thing there were two doors in this apartment.

It didn't take much to sneak out the back, his parents were distracted by something and they didn't hear him and he was gone before they could do anything about it.

Wrapped up in coats, nose red, hands shoved in shaky pockets, but he was moving and he had to keep moving before he crumpled, if he stopped he wasn’t sure he could go again, it was too heavy and he had to know, he had to know.

He was dizzy and the last set of stairs were too much but he went up them anyway. His heart was in his throat, trying to strangle him, like a beautiful angel bursting sputtering out of a pool only the last time he’d seen Isak the water on his face had been tears. Tearing, ripping tears.

Even knocked on the blank white door and he couldn’t breathe, physically, he was drawn and pale and bruised and shaken and the door swung open.

There stood Jonas, Magnus and Eskild over either shoulder.

“Even?”

He swallowed, blinking away at the shine on his lashes. Arms up, flash of terror, neon blue flashing lights.

“Jonas, I’m--”

“Shh. It’s fine, sweetheart.” Eskild pushed past them to put an arm around Even’s shoulders, guide him inside. Heavy outer layer handed to Jonas to hang, the door shut and he was shaking, strung out and unstable and he hadn’t slept but he had to--

Jonas was staring wide-eyed as Eskild lead him for the couch. Magnus instantly took off for the kitchen, the clammer of a tea kettle being taken off a stove. Hollow warmth.

The cushions sank beneath him and Jonas sat down carefully beside, Eskild’s arm still around his shoulders but everything else was terrible and quiet. Too quiet.

“Is he here?” Even managed down at his pale hands, gravel and bloodshot.

“Who?” Eskild asked lightly and Even looked over at him, teary-eyed and hurt, betrayed under the
inescapable wave of empty numb. It hurt, to even make the name in his throat.

“Isak?”

“Um. Well.” Eskild’s fingers were running affectionately through his hair, petting him softly and Even was so tired and cold and Jonas was trying to pry him into discernable pieces, watching drawn, concerned.

Magnus swept back in with two blankets and a steaming mug. Jonas took the mug from him while the first blanket wrapped around Even’s shoulders, the second draped over his legs with a comforting hand on his knee.

“I don’t need--” he started.

“Let me do it for me, then,” Magnus said and he’d said it a thousand times, Even could tell and he just closed his mouth. He didn’t have the energy to argue. Magnus knew that.

Jonas handed the mug over, eyebrows up and expectant and worried.

Even didn’t want anything but he took a sip so Jonas didn’t have to keep holding it up, then he was turning away, trying to breathe. It was pretty fucking clear, if the three of them were here, in this silent apartment.

His voice cracked when he asked this time.

“Where is he?”

“We thought he was with you, until we got ahold of your mom.”

“...you don’t know where he is?” Even asked and his heart dropped out at his feet.

Magnus reached out and put a hand on his shoulder before the couch dropped from beneath him too.

“Have you eaten anything? Even?”

Had he eaten. He hadn’t closed his eyes longer than thirty seconds for the past 32 hours.

This was the last leg past his last burst of energy. Woozy, hurt, that’s all he was now and Isak wasn’t here, that was the only reason why he’d been able to sneak out of the apartment, only reason he got out from under the 24/7 surveillance, because his parents were looking for Isak.

“How about you come lie down?” Magnus asked, calm and not babying but it didn’t matter, he could scream now and it didn’t matter.

“It’s my fault,” Even whispered, letting the words wrap around his temples and squeeze. “If anything happens to him it’s my fault.”

Jonas’s face flashed as he looked away. There were a lot of layers to this floor, his stomach, because it all just dropped again. His throat barely had an audible left, so hushed it almost disappeared with the boy he meant.

“Something’s already happened, hasn’t it.”

“C’mon,” Magnus insisted sharply, signaling Eskild to haul him to his feet. “Off to bed.”

“He said he wouldn’t sleep if he wasn’t home,” Jonas said quietly, drenched in memory.
“Good thing he is home,” Eskild replied, stern and serious then he was pushing open the door to Isak and Even’s bedroom, barreling them all inside.

The sheets were rumpled and it was empty. Isak really wasn’t here.

There were torn posters on the ground and an empty bottle of liquor knocked over beside his mattress, though.

Even closed his eyes.

He couldn’t do this. It was too much.

He couldn’t do this.

Lørdag, 15:07
18.02.17

Magnus was sitting on the edge of Isak’s bed, rubbing his spine and Even was too empty and tired to tell him to fuck off. Eskild was scrounging up something warm in the kitchen and Jonas was sitting numbly on the couch, turning over the empty bottle of Captain and wondering how he could let this happen.

“He’s gonna be fine,” Eskild told him quietly, taking the bottle from his hand. Jonas pushed his open palms on the tops of his thighs, denim rubbing sensation back into his hands.

“I don’t get how he could just. Leave.”

“He’s young, Jonas. He has no idea what to do.”

“He has me, why would he try to face anything on his ow--”

A key turned in the lock, sound shattering the reverie. Jonas jumped to his feet so fast Eskild hadn’t so much as turned for the door before he was halfway there.

It swung open and Isak stumbled inside and froze. Gaze on Jonas, Eskild behind him, and then Magnus coming around the corner.

“Fuck,” he said eloquently, then he instant backpedal retreated right out the door, hand on the edge to swing it shut again with him on the outside of it.

Jonas caught the frame just in time, hand closing over Isak’s to yank it right back open.

That’s when he noticed his knuckles, because now there was blood on his hands and Isak was hissing.

“What the fuck??”

Green eyes went wide and Isak spun to take off down the hallway. He didn’t get an inch before Jonas grabbed him by the scarf, hauling him roughly inside and kicking the door shut, slamming his stupid ass of a best friend up against it hard.
“Did you get in a fucking fight?”

“Jonas—” Isak was actively avoiding his gaze, wouldn't turn his face to look Jonas in the eye, the only thing he was getting was pure profile, shifty green eyes, tucked to hide in the red scarf up in loops around his neck as he protested a weak Jonas that told him everything he needed to know.

Blood on his knuckles.

“You fucking promised!!” Isak flinched and it took everything in Jonas not to fucking shake him, eyebrows knit in hurt, disbelief. “You and me, we blood swore, after last year we were never gonna get in a fight without each other, without our backups, ever. again. Did you fucking forget that??”

Jonas was maybe yelling but Isak wouldn’t meet his eyes, face turned to the side and away. The same kid who had bloody knuckles after Yakuza, the same kid who had bloody knuckles after that time he fell out of a tree in the middle of winter when they were twelve.

It was that kid who wouldn’t look him in the eye, cupids bow pursed and turned away.

“I don’t have to explain myself to you--” he started then Jonas was letting go, disgusted as he took an indignant step backwards.

Isak didn’t have to explain himself. To Jonas. Right.

“Ja, like I haven’t dropped everything to be there for you? You betrayed me, you intentionally threw away our friendship and the second you need something, I come running. Then the next fucking day you’re out doing stupid shit and breaking promises we've made.”

He threw up a hand and Isak didn’t say anything, just kept looking down and to the side, hiding in the shadows. Scarf high enough to hide half his face, beanie pulled down low, no pretty curls in sight, just shadows and long lashes that wouldn’t lift.

“You don’t have to explain yourself? I think an explanation is the fucking least I deserve.”

“I was fucking upset, okay, I didn’t know what to do about it.” Isak shifted his weight, still plastered to the door. Not like Jonas was giving him much else of anywhere to go.

Cause last time he gave Isak a little space he snuck out and came back with bloody knuckles. Because he was fucking upset.

“So you went out looking for a fight??”

“They’re not hard to find,” Isak mumbled and Jonas hoped he heard how fucking incredulous the high pitched scoff he got back was.

“This is fucking low, even for you, Issy.”

“Oh?” Quiet went out the window, sneering up as he shot a quick sideways glance at Jonas, nose crinkling in disgust. “I’m the one with the low shots now? I haven’t been your precious little Issy for years, Jonas, not since you shoved me so fucking deep in the closet.”

It was bitter and deep, a knife laced in poison that sunk between his ribs and Isak still wasn’t looking at Jonas. Which was a shame, because the look on Jonas’s face right now had never been so hurt.

“That is not fucking fair.” It couldn’t be pissed, not when his best friend just pinned that to his chest, he couldn’t be pissed when he was bleeding that deep. “You cannot blame me for your choices,
“You’re right Jonas, I can’t.” Isak grit his teeth, jaw clicking. Bloody knuckles curling into fists, fingertips scraping the door behind him. Head tipping and words cutting through so sharp they’d sever bone. “Doesn’t mean it wasn’t because of you. Doesn’t mean I wouldn’t be better off if I’d never met you.”

The apartment flashed dark at the corners and the burn in Jonas’s chest was worse than the fire that’d seared all the hair off his arm in their last year of primary.

It burned, it was physically making his chest seize, but there was only one thing he knew for sure, and that’s that Isak was more important than his world collapsing.

“What’s happening right now?” Jonas had no fucking clue how his voice was that steady. Desperate and hurt but it was steady as he took a step forward, dropping ten times as serious. “Isak, what the fuck is happening right now?”

He didn’t get a response, just the stubborn set of that mouth, lashes covering any chance he had of understanding.

Because that wasn’t Isak. Isak didn’t say things like that. Isak didn’t mean things like that.

“Look at me.”

Isak didn’t lift his head.

“Look at me, dammit.”

His mouth wavered but Isak wouldn’t lift his eyes, couldn’t deliver that line to his face, and Jonas wasn’t gonna let Isak tear them apart like this too, he wasn’t going to let that happen, he wasn’t going to lose him like this.

Another step forward and that time the snap was sharp, as fucking hurt as he felt, as on the edge of breaking as everything in this apartment was.

“Look at me!”

Isak finally lifted his head and his left eye was dark purple, bruising down his cheekbone, his lip split open, dried blood in flecks under his nose, skin pale as shit.

Everything blurred in the moment between the realization and the rush forward, one moment Isak turned to him and the next he was sinking against Jonas’s hands, one on his chest and the other on his jaw.

Isak didn’t fucking fight it, pure exhaustion, melting into his touch as he yelled for Eskild to get him a damp cloth. It all happened so fast, clarity sharp and green eyes fluttering as Jonas unraveled the scarf and tossed it aside, sliding the beanie off and biting his lip before he made a sound at the cut on Isak’s hairline.

Bruises and gashes, Isak was bleeding and the burn twisted into something else entirely.

Jonas had done this too many times, he’d done this too many times. At least a third of the fights last year, he’d managed to block Isak’s face with his. That pretty face only got bruised a few times, but how many fucking times had he fallen off the swings, the back of Jonas’s bike. A bully on the playground, a skateboard trick he should never have fucking tried.
“Where else are you hurt?”

“I might have a broken rib,” Isak mumbled and Jonas didn’t think, he started undoing zippers. Isak moved with it, let him, eyes closed, jacket dropped to the floor. Sweater next, it had to be at least as bad as it looked, if the hurt sounds and pained hisses were any indication.

“Who the fuck were you fighting?”

“There’s a. Gang of really homophobic guys in Grønnland.”

“The ones I decked and started a school rivalry war?”

“Nei, but I think they’re friends. I had a few run ins with them first year-- ah, ahh!”

He pushed up Isak’s tshirt and fuck, bruises. His hips had literal handprints on them, only. That would make zero sense for getting his ass kicked in the alley so.

Jonas put his thumb in one and Isak started, ah, ahh.

Then Jonas was looking up and meeting watery green eyes. Yeah, he knew the look on that face.

“I’m guessing these…”

“Ja,” Isak swallowed. Falling into a whisper, eyes falling shut with it. “I already had those.”

Jonas stuck his tongue in his cheek. From what he’d read, hypomanic episodes lasted at least four days, and those were dark enough they definitely happened within the last four days, meaning that they’d had…bruisning sex while Even was manic, and how the fuck hadn’t Isak noticed?

How had it been four days of Even acting like…however he acted and--

Oh, fuck, duh. Isak had been so fucking upset over the last week, Jonas had walked in on him crying in the boys bathroom, Jesus, of course he hadn’t fucking noticed.

Fuck.

Jonas grit his teeth and tore his eyes away from Isak’s blue and purple hips, fingertips skirting up to the mottled dark over the side of his ribs.

Isak shied away with a little sound.

“Yeah, nei, those are new, fuuuuck.”

Jonas was trying to be understanding. Isak was hurt enough and scared enough he’d tried to make Jonas leave with that fucking stunt he’d just pulled but it was kinda hard not to freak out when thin skin fucking looked like that, when he was tracing his fingertips over the edge of Isak’s rib to check for fractures.

“Fucking hell, Isak. You what, sauntered up and told them you had a boyfriend now?”

“...something like that.”

“Isak, what the fuck!???” Jonas made a pained noise, high pitched and way too fucking much. “They could’ve fucking killed you!!”

It looked so fucking bad, he couldn’t believe Isak had gone out looking for a fucking fight,
provoking assholes that clearly had no problems kicking his ass to the point of what, they could’ve beat him up bad enough to land in the hospital or worse, so much worse, it wouldn’t be the first time a gay kid in Grønnland got--

It suddenly hit him and Jonas froze, looking up. Isak took a second to stop breathing hard enough to look up at him too, their gazes locking, watery green on Jonas’s frozen blue.

“That wasn’t why…”

“Nei,” Isak said, hand digging into Jonas’s shoulder. “Nei, I promise, I just. Ah-ah--”

His head knocked back against the door, eyebrows knit and curls going everywhere, twisted up in pain as the pout quivered and finally broke over a gasp, rushing floodwater.

“He doesn’t love me, Jonas, not anymore. His mom told me he didn’t want to see me, he probably never wants to see me again, I couldn’t breathe, I couldn’t feel a bone in my body I didn’t know what else to--”

“Isak.”

The hard k hit like a bullet, the way Isak’s head snapped to the side. It sounded like gravel, low and hurt and there was Even, standing in the doorway between the kitchen and the hallway to their bedroom and Isak nearly fainted.

“Even?”

“Oh, baby,” he said, everything breaking in roaring waterfalls. “I--”

Even looked like he was about to crack, earthquake shatter, eyes dark and red and Isak pulled his shirt back down over where Jonas was inspecting his ribs, making Jonas make a frustrated sound but he let Isak slide past him, following right behind in case he fucking passed out or some equally fucking dramatic shit.

“You’re here. You--” Isak looked like he was about to cry, all bruised and broken and skidding to a hesitant stop a few feet away, his eyebrows knit up at Even like he’d never been more hurt more in love and broken in his life.

Even made this terrible small sound.

This terrible small sound and Isak loved a boy, he loved that boy so fucking much.

That terrible sound and Even’s face dropped - the quiet devastation of the day they’d collided over kardemomme-free sandwiches, back when everything was miserable and Even tried to smile at him and had no idea how hurt Isak was, how much he’d broken the soft boy who’d fallen in love hard enough he was swaying on his feet right now.

“I tried,” Even told him, raspy and so fucking sorry he was swallowed up in it. “To see you, they said not to, they said--”

Every word was pained and Isak was crumbling, eyes tearing up to water over his lashes.

“I’m so sorry. I should’ve come anyways, I should’n’t’ve ever needed to call them, I. I had no idea what to do, I still don’t, I know that’s why they don’t want me to be with you anymore--”

“I don’t care what they want,” Even whispered, eyes falling shut, swaying a little and he looked
more likely to collapse than Isak did.

Which was saying a lot.

“Okay,” Isak whispered, ripped apart and held together with flimsy, transparent tape. “Okay.”

“I'm so sorry, Isak, Friday--”

“Baby don't,” Isak said and it was quiet and desperate enough Even didn’t.

He knew he looks like hell, he could tell, Even’s eyes wouldn’t settle on his, they kept darting to his cheekbone, the dark around his eyebrow, his split lip and he was fucking sorry, he was, they both were and who wanted that perfect love story anyway, cliché.

(cliché.)

“Even, is there anything I can make you to eat? You look like you’re gonna collapse any minute, bud,” Magnus offered quietly, behind Isak’s unsteady shoulders.

Even swallowed and looked away, down, miserable.

God, Isak loved that boy.

“Sleep?” he offered and Even’s gaze snapped up, shock mixed in with all the tired hurt.

“You still want…?”

Like he could ever--

“Even,” Isak chided, taking a step forward and taking Even’s hand with it.

The wild heart on his fingertips and Isak held them both, running his own up the rough, guitar-calloused tips to curl against Even’s palm, nails scraping over his skin, real, here.

Even sucked in a breath, eyes caught at their fingers, only Isak couldn’t stop looking away from that beautiful, worn face. Letting his touch feel his way as he watched the flickers in transparent blue. Fingertips expanding slow, a star to brush over the pulse beneath Even’s wrist, thumb skirting, fucking grateful.

Even stared down at their hands. Isak could touch him for the rest of his life, would be perfectly content to never stop touching him again.

There were bruises on Even’s bare arms, from the scuffle with his dad and Isak’s hands were shaking enough he clamped hard fingers down over Even’s pounding skin before it could slip away from him again.

He’d been so scared, he’d been so fucking scared--

Even stared down at their hands. Isak's knuckles were bloody.

“Should you get…don't you need to get fixed up first?”

“Yes he does,” Jonas said and Even nodded, hand slipping free, something breaking in Isak’s chest as the touch disappeared and Even was taking a step backwards and nearly falling with it, eyes shut again.
Eskild’s hand was suddenly between Even’s shoulderblades, and Jonas’s hand was between his.

“I’ll take Even to bed and you clean up Isak and bring him in once he’s not bleeding, ja?”

Jonas nodded and this was the most surreal experience Isak had ever floated through. Their friends moving around them like the hands of a chessboard where he and Even were the only pieces and Isak had no fucking clue how he could do this alone.

The palm between his shoulderblades tried to move his back three spaces but Isak wasn’t going fucking anywhere until Even was all the way out of sight, the quiet sound of his bedroom door opening.

“How long has he been here?” Isak was all hushed, something like awe without the innocence.

“How long has he been here?”

“Couple hours.”

“Jesus,” he whispered and that time when Jonas guided him for the kitchen sink, he came with.

It was almost like he could feel the numbing tingles in Isak’s skin as he took his hands and carefully submerged his fingers in warm water.

Isak blew out little breaths through circle ‘o’ lips, trying to keep the stinging at bay as Jonas cleaned out his bloody knuckles and watched the pink water.

“You said you didn’t know what else to do.” A moment’s pause, Isak watching him in his peripherals, a chirp of pain as Jonas scrubbed a little hard. Steady breath. “Why didn’t you call me?”

“I put so much on you last night,” Isak said quietly and Jonas looked up at him, eyebrows knit, hands pausing so Isak had to look up too.

“So ?? Isak, that’s what I’m here for.”

Only it wasn’t.

Maybe once upon a time, but those times had longsince past. They weren’t this anymore, when was the last time Jonas had done anything like this for him? The first time they’d really talked in months was when Isak came out and yeah, things had gotten better and they’d gotten closer and everything since then but.

But they weren’t this. Not anymore.

Especially fucking not since Isak had ruined his life and then told him about it.

Jonas hated him. Jonas said never talk to me again, and now he was here cleaning Isak up and scolding him for not turning to him? When Isak had already overstepped ten thousand welcomes just showing up at Jonas’s door last night, let alone every-fucking-thing else??

Jonas shouldn’t be doing any of this. Isak had let him down.

That wasn’t what he was here for because Isak hadn’t let him be there.

Isak had shut him out and shut him out and Jonas still - still, after all of the shit Isak pulled, after everything from the beginning of Nissan to running Jonas out of his life when his dad left the second time - as a wonderful, thoughtful thank you for literally keeping him from collapsing the first time - to keeping him in the dark and letting them get distant then trying to mend things without actually mending them because he kept on lying and Jonas thought the only reason he actually fessed up was
because Even told him to and Jonas thought that Isak never cared about him, he genuinely believed that because Isak was a fucking shitty enough friend that was believable and Jonas not only opened his door and saved their lives, he was furrowing his eyebrows at Isak and telling him that’s what I’m here for.

What he was here for.

“I’m really sorry about Eva,” Isak confessed tearily, looking about three years too young and Jonas shook his head, dark curls waving as he reached over to turn off the water. Isak was sniffling, hands dripping, trying to stay perfectly still and Jonas just turned that too-tall boy and wrapped his arms around Isak’s shoulders as he started to shake.

“It wasn’t you who ruined us.” Jonas squeezed and Isak hooked his chin over Jonas’s shoulder, wet hands leaving two angel wings on his spine. “The only thing you did was give her intentionally shitty advice and tell me when Eva cheated. Besides, it was a first year high school relationship, it doesn’t fucking matter.”

A stuttered inhale, exhale, sunshine.

“You matter,” Jonas told him quietly and Isak clutched him tight, burying his cold ass nose in Jonas’s neck and getting his skin all wet. Jonas fisted the back of those motherfucking problematic blonde curls and swayed them slowly.

Isak made it a solid seven seconds of being comforted before he was pulling back, wiping at his eyes with his palms, hands all torn up, face all torn up.

“It’s not about Eva.” Isak whispered, hands sliding back into his hair, a little wince as he brushed his knuckles, pulling his hands back down to stare at them instead.

Jonas put a hand on his shoulder. He knew it wasn’t about Eva. But he let Isak confess again anyways.

“It’s about what I did to you. Making you think I ever stopped— that you weren’t. Why I got so selfish with you I-- I traded my misery in watching you h-happy to. To have you miserable while I had a...a half a shot at hap-py, I--”

Jonas held him steady and Isak lifted his head, long lashes lifting slow and there were those green eyes, the first time he’d seen them in years. Completely unfiltered. So raw and honest Jonas kinda forgot how to breathe too.

“It’s not about Eva,” Isak told him, his Isak, real Isak, and the confession sunk between them in all of the words they’d never said. “...I'm sorry I let it get so bad I was rather you be hurt than me.”

It was never about Eva.

It was about them.

The curly kids on the playground who got lost along the way.

Somewhere between the abandoned gas station sunsets and sunsetting abandoned hearts, Isak went missing. Jonas went missing too.

But that was alright.

Jonas found him now.
Jonas found him and pulled him into his arms and whispered what Isak had been waiting years to hear,

“I forgive you. It’s okay.”

And Isak crumpled against him while Jonas held him up and held him tight.

They held each other, in the middle of the kitchen. It was the first time Jonas had stood in this kitchen and not felt like a stranger.

Isak shook against him, getting Jonas’s sweater wet with tears while Jonas rocked them both.

His best friend in the world, confessing to wanting him enough it got twisted up in all these terrible things too.

Funny, how fucking different this situation is from their first year, and it was still the same. It killed Jonas to see Isak with Even, like this, right now. Because it was killing Isak, slowly ripping him to shreds and Jonas didn't know how many manic episodes Even would have in their time together, but every one of them had taken a chunk out of Isak's soul and after long, he didn't know how much soul would be left to bite.

He could. He could break them up, if he really fucking wanted to. But it'd kill him. He'd hate himself for it. Because that would kill Isak too.

He just wanted to save Isak from being eaten alive but there wasn't a single way he could think to do that.

So Jonas just rocked him and buried a hand in those pretty blonde waves and whispered that everything was going to be okay.

They’d find a way.

The two of them, or else Jonas would die trying.

But god, more than anything else right now, Jonas did not want to deliver this fragile boy into that room with his boyfriend.

He knew, he could feel it, how much Isak needed sleep right now. Real sleep, to recharge and be okay again but that wasn’t gonna happen while Is was worried about Even.

He wanted to just sweep those long legs out from beneath him, blonde curls bouncing as Jonas stole him away into the foggy daylight and took Isak somewhere safe and warm and quiet and away from all of this mess.

But he couldn’t.

He couldn’t, all he could do was lean back when Isak let go.

A shuddery gasp but Isak was straightening up, clapping a hand on his shoulder, wiping the other under his eyes. And hissing as he got saltwater in the cracked skin.

Jonas made a frustrated sound, looking up at the ceiling and Isak laughed tearily, huffing as Jonas took his hands again and popped open the first aid kit Eskild had ran and grabbed earlier.

A little more wincing at the sting of the dressing, then Jonas was wrapping Isak’s hands slowly while Isak sniffled and got his breathing back in order.
“Is anything else hurt?”

“No, I’m okay. Thanks for--”

“I told you, Issy. Of course. Can I check the rest of your torso and make sure?”

“Jonas, I’m fine,” Isak said tiredly, spinning to open up the closest cabinet only the minute his arm was lifting the sleeve of his tshirt was sliding back and Jonas’s eyebrows were sliding up.

Isak grabbed out an empty glass and held it under the faucet, filling it halfway and spinning to Jonas with the water already halfway down his throat when he caught the look on his face.

Green eyes went wide and Isak sat the glass down, smacking his lips with a confused look and lifting an eyebrow.

“What?”

Jonas took a step closer and lifted up the sleeve of his shirt, he could’ve sworn he just saw another bruise and--

“Fuck.” Isak’s head dropped, lips twisted up as he stared at the tiles.

Jonas traced a finger over the third hand-shaped bruise he’d found today, eyebrows furrowing as it suddenly dawned on him.

“Those aren’t from today, are they.”

“Don’t.”

“Those aren’t from sex either.” He glanced over at Isak’s face to confirm and yeah, yeah, that’s what he’d been afraid of. “Those are from yesterday, when--”

Isak sucked in a breath, tugging the sleeve of his shirt back down. Jonas shoved it right back up, to the handprint Even had left when he was gripping Isak that tight in the eye of the hurricane between two violent explosions.

“Isak, you can’t--”

“Jonas, please.” He glanced up, eyes flashing before he was looking back down, mouth pursed and voice quiet. “I could’ve gotten out if I wanted to.”

It was so stubborn and sure that Jonas pulled the sleeve back down roughly. Fine, if Isak wanted to fucking pretend that there weren’t bruises on his shoulders from his boyfriend that had fucking nothing to do with hickies or sex, fine.

Fine.

Jonas would let him.

“Is there anywhere you’re not fucking bruised, what the actual fuck, man.”

“My ankl--” Isak was about to joke and he just trailed off, staring into space. No, those were bruised, a little, Thursday night. “Fuck.”

“Are you fucking kidding me?”
“Uh. I would say I’ve had worse, but.”

“Nei, this beats the 42 hickies. ‘Cause at least those were all consensual and you didn’t have a fucking black eye.”

“These are like...semi consensual? I mean, I was the one who picked a fight, and put myself in that situation, and signed up for rough sex, so.”

“You’re fucking stupid,” Jonas told him.

Isak cracked a bit of a smile. “For the rough sex, the manic boyfriend or the fight?”

“At least two of those,” Jonas shot back. Isak smiled a little wider. “You’re also fucking lucky you have me.”

“I know,” Isak huffed, shaking his head once before catching Jonas’s eye and nodding heartily, tongue between his rolled in lips. “Fucking believe me, I know.”

The hallway walk down to Isak’s room felt eerily like walking Isak down a wedding aisle. (Especially considering one day that probably would be Jonas’s job if Isak wanted someone too, cause fuck knows his dad wasn’t deserving of that. Or maybe Eskild would, so Jonas could be best man. That would be significantly cooler in his opinion, but it wasn’t gonna be his wedding, so.)

A very long hallway wedding aisle. Except minus the celebratory part. Everything dreary and quiet, the dark version instead of the light, giving him away to have his soul crushed instead of lifted. Giving his best friend away to the boy waiting at the end, only how many things were gonna get caged up when Isak tied that knot?

The only reason he’d never really adored Even was because of how hurt Isak was, in the beginning with all the back and forth, and now, with. All of this.

It wasn’t Even’s fault, he knew that, and he didn’t blame him, he didn’t.

Didn’t want to put Isak to bed next to him either.

Magnus was on the floor beside Isak’s mattress when they rounded the corner, arms hooked around his knees as he watched Even, who was completely passed out on his side, facing the door.

Jonas walked Isak around to the other side of the mattress, both of them quiet as he helped him down onto his side, careful of his bruised ribs - he was pretty sure they weren’t broken, but he was gonna call his mom and ask her opinion anyways. She’d probably wanna come see Isak tomorrow, he’d have to ask if that was alright.

The checkered duvet was tucked up around Even’s shoulders and Jonas lifted up the other corner as Isak slid under, laying down with his face twisted up and a hand over his ribs. The minute he was down he was rolling painfully to face Even and Jonas caught his shoulder before he could turn all the way.

“Let him sleep,” Jonas whispered quietly and Isak’s eyes slip closed, but he relaxed into the mattress a little.

Jonas pressed a kiss to blonde curls, lingering a moment too long as his heart broke, then he was pulling back, standing up as Magnus did and they were both leaving the room with one more glance.
behind and an almost-closed door.

The boys were barely a step into the hallway before Isak rolled over, wincing and curling up against Even’s spine, settling into the warmth. The smell of him. The rise and fall of his back, Isak’s nose squished to the side, but Even was here and everything was gonna be alright.

He nearly ripped Isak’s scarf trying to clean the blood out of it.

Magnus left insisting all the way out the door - call if you need anything. Eskild put a hand on Jonas’s shoulder and thanked him, said to come back whenever.

Jonas furrowed his eyebrows and sat down on the couch. Like he was leaving, right.

I can keep an eye on him, Eskild insisted and Jonas responded with is there a problem with me sleeping on the couch? No of course not, then Jonas said good, and looked back down at Isak’s phone.

Eskild nodded to himself, headed back to the kitchen, or his room, wherever.

Jonas shoved a pillow under his head and unlocked Isak’s phone - he’d always known the fucker’s passcodes, since either of them got phones, at least that hadn’t changed - and the first thing he did was find Liv’s number.

He shot her a text that both Isak and Even were at Isak’s place, sleeping. Home safe. They’re gonna be okay, he texted and the simple thank you he got back he could hear the tears in.

Isak’s wallpaper was a photo of him and Even, kissing in front of the river, a smile on both of their mouths and crinkles next to Even’s eyes, Isak’s hand fisted in the front of his coat.

Jonas locked the phone and sat it on his chest for a moment, staring up at the ceiling. Fuck.

There had to be some better way to do this.

But regardless of how the manic episode went, this time was better than the last, because this time, he was here. Isak had a full support system, all of them, the way he deserved.

Last time Isak hadn’t so much as told him why he wasn’t at school until fucking days of being gone, let alone come to Jonas for help.

Jonas sighed to himself, shoving Isak’s phone in his jeans pocket. There had to be a way, to keep Isak from hurting and let him keep Even too. If there was a way, Jonas was gonna find it.

Because if there was anything that boy deserved, it was to be happy. Even made him happy, 9 days out of 10, and well. It was worth figuring out that last day to get the smile Isak had on those nine.

Eskild texted him sometime around nine, saying that really, they had this, they did this last time, Jonas didn’t have to feel obligated to stay, although he was of course welcome to.

He didn’t care that they did this last time, that was nice. They were definitely Isak’s friends, and they knew how to care for Even, he was fucking grateful for both of those things, but he was the only family Isak had left and he wasn’t fucking leaving.

He wasn’t fucking leaving.
Isak had a dream that his foot was on fire.

He woke up just on the verge of a shout, mouth open lip burning, and his foot burning more.

The blankets were not on fire and yeah he just split open his lip again but he was 300% sure he damaged his foot zero in the squabble with those boys.

He sucked in a breath and dared to move it. It slid against coals of hot skin as he pulled it back.

Even.

Well his foot was no longer on fire, but when he reached over to touch Even’s neck under the covers, Even’s skin was.

What the fuck, did he have a fever? A really nasty fever? That did not happen last time. That didn’t happen in like. any Wikipedia article he read.

Isak worried his lip a bit, and regretfully pulled the covers down a tad from around Even’s shoulders. Sacrifice comfort and coziness for not burning to death, maybe.

Even rolled over, restless, listless, twisted up in pain despite the peace of sleep. Beautifully soft and terribly tormented, hair floofing out the top of his hoodie.

Isak looked over him a moment, touching the skin on his neck one more time and yeah, that was definitely too hot. Okay, fuck it.

He swung his legs, rolled out of bed and stood up in one fail swoop.

Ah, fuck, okay he and Jonas were both pretty sure his rib was fine but he was bruised and now he was also stiff and this was Not Fun, why did he make this so much fucking harder on himself?

A fight? What the actual fuck was he thinking? That maybe getting decked across the face would bring some fucking clarity to the situation? Jesus fucking Christ.

Isak padded into the hallway with a quiet creak of the door that had him wincing, but Even didn’t move a muscle so he quietly swung it nearly shut, all but a crack as he dug in his pocket for his phone.

Mmm, cool, or it could be gone. That was fine.

He’d borrow Even’s only he had no idea where his was either. Okay, maybe he left it in his coat pocket? He’d been stripped forcefully at the door, so there was a chance.
He went to turn the corner into the kitchen and skidded socks just in time not to collide bodily with Jonas. They both cursed quietly, narrowly missing each other and throwing up twin hands at the other one.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” Isak hushed, the same time Jonas said in the exact same tone and volume,

“What the fuck are you doing up? It's 2 in the morning.”

They both stared at each other for a moment, Isak’s eye twitching before Jonas whispered again.

“You first.”

“I think Even has a fever. He's like, really hot to the touch. I was gonna call Magnus.”

Jonas nodded quietly and pulled a phone out of his pocket, handing it over.

It was...Isak’s phone.

Isak lifted a crooked eyebrow for a second before he took it silently, unlocking it and scrolling through contacts as he whispered back.

“Now you. Why are you still here?”

“You thought I was gonna leave?” Jonas asked him, a bit of gravel in the quiet tone, just above a whisper.

Isak paused, thumb hovering over the little phone button in Magnus’s contact.

Mm cool. Not the best time to start crying. Wow, he was fucking fragile today. Yesterday. Whatever.

Either Jonas saw the sudden water on his lashes in some stray glint of moonlight or he had magical powers or they were actually telepathically linked, but either way there was suddenly a comforting hand on his shoulder, guiding him through the kitchen doorway.

“Here, come into the living room so you don't wake everyone up.”

With your tears. Isak looked pathetically over his shoulder at the hallway, which at the end of there was a cracked door and a precious sleeping boy.

“What if Even wakes up?”

“He's a lot more likely to wake up if you're on the phone outside the door.”

Isak disagreed, but he didn't have much choice in the matter and fighting would definitely wake him up so now he was on the couch, Jonas’s knee knocking against his the phone beeped out the call until a groggy voice finally picked up.

“Halla?”

“I'm so sorry to call so late,” Isak started and he barely got out that much before Magnus was interrupted.

“Cut the crap, it's fine, that's what I'm here for.”

Okay, people needed to stop saying that or Isak was gonna like never stop crying ever. After Isak
just a fucked over his relationship too and Magnus was so fucking good and pure he did not deserve a single fucking one of his friends.

“Isak, what happened?”

He sounded so concerned and Jonas was making faces at him so Isak put it on speaker, holding it out between them as he ran a hand over his face.

“Uh...I woke up and Even’s skin was on fire. Like...a fever level.”

“What's he wearing?”

“Magnus,” Jonas scolded and Magnus made an indignant sound.

“That's not a joke!! If he's wearing winter layers under a duvet, his body is gonna heat up, anyone's would.”

That was fair, but wouldn’t--

“The only difference is that he doesn't have enough energy to sit up and peel off the layers. Hell, he probably doesn’t have the energy to stick his foot out the side of the bed sheets. There's something strangely comforting in suffocating through excessive heat, I think. I don't know.”

That made...a lot of sense.

“Yeah, uh. I think he's...he’s definitely still got a hoodie on, so.”

“Yeah, exactly. Have you ever tried sleeping in a hoodie? You wake up the next day and it’s like you took a bath with Satan.”

“You got that off a textpost,” Jonas said judgily and Magnus countered with a sighed whatever.

Isak was too busy thinking about how the fuck he hadn’t thought of that.

“I dunno what we’d do without you though man, so. Thanks, Mags.”

“Yeah. Just put an ice cube over his forehead or his feet or something, that’ll cool down the core temperature. And make him take off the layers, tshirt and thin sweats. Boxers if you're both comfortable.”

He nodded, rolling his lips in and wondering once again, how the fuck he hadn’t thought of that.

“Mmkay.”

“Seriously Isak. He's fine. He's just exhausted. Lacking a lot of motivation. And he might be dehydrated, so bring him a glass of water too.”

“You're the best, Mags,” Jonas piped up and Isak breathed in slow, his boys were doing this because they wanted to, he owed them that right, being upset about everyone helping him wasn’t gonna change anything, he needed to start getting on that 2017 vibe and thanking instead of apologizing.

“Nah, I'm just the one with experience. But I'm gonna go back to bed now, so you two chill out and roll with everything, okay?”

“Ja, okay,” Isak said quietly, nodding to himself. “Okay. Thanks again, Magnus.”

He’d made a promise, a few months ago, and he needed to remember that. One minute at a time.
They were going to take this thing completely chill.

“Fuck, I don't wanna wake him.”

“He’ll pass right back out.”


Dark lashes fluttered and he made a pitiful little sound, turning deeper into his hood. Isak shook his shoulder harder.

“Baby, c’mon. I need you to sit up for me, you can go right back to sleep.”

Even blinked, squinted open, pushing a hand on the bed and kind of struggling upright.

“Isak?” He sounded so fucking miserable Isak was mentally kicking himself. Kept his voice as calm as he could, not betraying any of the overwhelming everything right now.

“I need you to take off your hoodie, okay? You're overheating.”

Even blinked and looked down, hands curling slow as he started to slowly lift.

“May I help?” Isak asked softly and Even squinted in the dark and lifted his arms numbly. Isak tugged it off over his head. Beautiful blonde that was usually smooth and suave was some mix between curly and messy right now, tumbling over his forehead as Isak made a quiet sound.

Fuck, he was wearing a long sleeve shirt too. No wonder he was baking.

“Do you have anything on under this?”

Even nodded and Isak lifted the edge of the shirt, separating it from the undershirt beneath and tugging up. Even’s stomach flashed in the pale light as Isak tugged the long sleeved over his head then Even’s arms were falling down by his sides, crumpled tee falling down too.

“Sweats? If you're comfortable.”

Even made a tired sound but he swung his legs out from under the covers, starting to wiggle free. He was wearing one sock, the other disappeared somewhere under the covers but Isak tugged off the one that was left, dragging the bunched sweats off his ankles and handing Even the glass of water.

He tipped it back, drinking about half before he was handing it back with a shiver down his curved spine, head dipped.

“Back under?” Isak asked and Even nodded blearily, laying back down, dragging up the duvet. Isak slid an ice cube from the glass over his hairline and Even shivered some more, but he was back asleep before Isak placed a kiss to his temple.

Then he was pushing back to his feet with a vague groan and Jonas took the water glass from him.

“How are you?”

Quiet, whispered, concerned and Isak sighed.
“A little stiff, but significantly less painful than before I went to sleep. I think it was all pretty superficial.”

Jonas nodded. Clapping a hand quietly on Isak’s shoulder, rocking him with the movement.

“I'll be on the couch if you need anything.”

Isak was too drained to protest or try to convince Jonas to go home so he just nodded and climbed back into bed. It was ungodly early, he wanted to sleep for another thirty hours.

But it was empty and terribly familiar to be laying here on the opposite side of the bed, not touching at all for fear of body heat.

In the morning. They could fix everything in the morning.

Søndag, 09:03
19.02.17

The morning didn’t fix anything.

The sun came up and about ten dozen more things broke.

The bones in Isak’s heart, the softness of the room, and the illusion of everything else they were pretending was still okay.

The dreams were at the door and the darkened guilt on Even’s features the moment his eyes fluttered open was enough to burn him blind.

The room tilted and Even asked, quiet and rough.

“What time is it?”

“About nine,” Isak whispered, wrapped-up fingers curled against Even’s arm. Even’s gaze darted all over his face, getting darker and darker, and his eyes fell shut.

Newborn skies, only there was nothing to soar when everything was low and no one set free.

Time dragged by slow and Isak spread out his fingers to run his palm up Even’s skin only he barely got an inch before Even was tugging free, away.

Isak pulled back his hand, something snapping inside his chest as he did.

“Baby?”

Even wouldn’t look at him. It took Isak a second to figure out why, until he was sliding his wrapped hand back under the pillow and it hit him.

He’d taken one look at Isak’s wrapped hands and bruised up cheekbone and closed his eyes to wallow in the pain.
It wasn’t fair, it wasn’t his fault, but the most terrible feeling was sinking into his bones. The longer Even kept his eyes shut, the harder his mouth turned down, more painfully tight the eyebrows knit, the heavier weighted boots to the bottom sank.

“Even?”

His lips parted, words dropping terrible, so fucking heavy they took down anchors with them.

“I can't do this to you,” Even dusted over gravel.

Isak was teary and broken and already hurt, Even didn't get to do this.

“No you can't. Don't you fucking dare.” There, as broken as the resigned pout of Even’s mouth, the blues that finally opened to flicker at him once before looking back down. Voice more torn than it'd been yesterday, laying there on Isak’s pillow with his perfect hair fucked and their perfect life fucked with words like

I can’t do this floating between them.

“I can’t hurt you anymore,” Even whispered and Isak could fucking shake him but he was afraid to touch him, Even had shuddered the first time he did and his hand drew back faster than the fire of the fever.

“Don’t you dare. Don't you fucking dare try and end this.”

“You hate me,” Even broke and Isak shook his head, had never shaken his head harder.

“I love you. I love you.”

“I got you hurt--”

“I got me hurt. It's my fault. If I'd gone to your door instead of that fight? That's on me. That's on me, you can't take that.”

No response, dull eyes turning away from him and Isak didn’t care, not right now, please, grabbing onto Even’s neck and turning his head back to look at him.

Blue eyes dark with hurt and the loss of their usual shine and Isak’s were wet in return, wet and desperate as he begged and argued at the same time.

“Even, you can't take that.”

“You're bleeding,” he whispered back, gaze flicking all over Isak’s face like every moment he looked at him it sunk the cuts in deeper.

“By my hands, not yours.” It was so vehement but he couldn't help the little break, gravity of the pain between them sweeping him off his feet to carry him out on the tide. “I'm sorry baby, I'm really sorry, I'll get better, I didn't know what to do and I thought I lost you and I know I shouldn't've, I shouldn’t’ve gone out looking for disaster just to get some fucking clari--”

He froze, mouth open around the rest of the word.

“Clarity,” Even finished. His eyes closed and he rolled onto his back, knocking his head back against the pillow as he stared blind up at the ceiling. “So it is my fault then.”

Isak took his face again, cradling his jaw, waiting for the blues to peel back open and rain on him
instead of in that beautiful head.

“Look at me. Even. Look at me. We’re both broken right now, okay?” One on the inside and one on the out but it was good enough to work for this and Even’s bottom lip just trembled when Isak said it. Still wouldn’t look at him. Isak shook him once.

“Is the way you’re hurting my fault?”

“Nei.” Even sounded so fucking tired, tired and done but he still dragged the waves of sincerity. “Nei, you can’t ever--”

“Now ask me,” Isak told him and Even finally blinked open, lined with empty but filled with all of this misery Isak would do fucking anything to seep away.

“Is the way.” His eyes closed again, couldn’t look at Isak longer than a few seconds. Even swallowed, barely more than a whisper. “...is the way you’re hurting my fault.”

“Nei,” Isak shook his head, insisting. “Nei, you can't ever--”

Even grabbed onto his arm and Isak shoved a hand through his hair, tipping their foreheads together. They pressed against each other hard, breathing through open mouths and holding tight.

Long lashes and shuddery breaths, Isak’s hair fluffed up over his head on the pillow and Even’s broken into all messy strands Isak spent a solid ten minutes this morning carefully quietly soothingly pushing away from his beautiful face while he slept.

They could lay here forever but Even was still shaky, still holding onto him tight enough he wasn’t okay, wasn’t settled and Isak needed to calm him back down. Completely chill, right?

“What are we doing in this minute,” Isak whispered quietly, letting him chose, a reminder and a surrender.

But it was too much because Even was shaking his head, tearing up more, hand pulling free of Isak’s arm, retreating back into the hurt and Isak took his face in both hands before he could dare.

The pillow made his fingers sting through the pressure on the wraps but he didn’t care.

“This minute I hold you,” Isak told him, running fingertips gently through dark blonde and Even closed his eyes, looking small. Inhaling, holding his breath. Exhaling too quick.

“Okay?”

“Okay,” he whispered.

Even laid there, shambles and hesitant as he glanced up at Isak, glanced back down. Sucked in a quiet scared little breath. Voice tumbling out small and hoarse.

“Can we kiss first?”

Isak made a soft hurt sound at how unsure Even was, at how scared he was to ask that like Isak wouldn’t want to. He lifted his head, searching the dark lashes, all that hurt then he was pushing their noses together, rubbing them back and forth until Even melted into the pillow.

“We can,” Isak whispered back and this time it was Even who tipped his chin up, desperate and quiet and silently asking for the kiss.
It was precious and soft and the corner of Isak’s mouth curled up just a little, because as much as everything sucked Even was here, with him, asking if they could kiss, and Isak couldn’t ask for anything else.

The pillow caught his shoulder as he lifted up and leaned forward, squishing in time with their noses as Isak tipped his head and pressed his lips to Even’s parted ones. They caved under the touch, parted a touch wider and Isak slipped their mouths together, overlapping as they pursed and pulled back apart slow.

Even took a shaky breath and Isak dipped back in. The quiet little sounds of their lips breaking apart and mushing back together. Mouths sliding, latching back together real and sincere, waves of it tugging deep in his gut.

It tasted like hurt and beauty with a hint of copper as their mouths pushed together and Even clung. Isak kissed him with every drop he’d missed in the drought, pouring all of his love and his promises and his I’m here’s into the overlap of their mouths again, the slow ache on the drag back for air and.

When Even pulled away he was shaking under Isak’s palm. Isak’s eyes fluttered back open, chin dipping back and down to look at Even’s face properly and his eyes were squeezed shut, lips still parted, trembling on the pillow like a dry leaf caught in winter winds, crackling more with every gust.

“Baby?”

Even gasped, drawing in breath fast and halted through his mouth and squeezing Isak’s heart in his chest with it.

“Hey, hey. Slow it down, okay? Just right now.” Isak soothed gently, thumb rubbing up Even’s cheekbone. “We’re both okay, we’re both here.”

Even was trying to nod but it was too frantic, there were tears on his lashes. It was crushing him, Isak could feel it.

“Even, slow it down.”

It was too much, all of it, then the tears started to slip, spilling over dark lashes for the bags under his eyes, slipping down soft skin and he was turning his beautiful face for the pillow.

Isak tried thumbing the salty droplets away and Even turned further, putting his face down all the way into the cushion, nose against cotton and shoulders shaking as he started to cry.

“Oh, baby.” Isak ran a hand through his hair and Even’s shoulders shook a little harder. “It’s gonna be okay. I’m here.”

Even wouldn’t look at him, hiding his face, a few muffled sobbing sounds against the blue as Isak’s heart shattered some more in his chest.

“You’re not alone. I’m here.”

Every word he said brought more devastated tears. Even cried into the pillow and Isak wrapped an arm around his shoulders, burrowing half under him and tucking his temple against Even’s collarbone.

Just holding him. Just here.
Breathing too close and warm and tangled and here.

Even cried himself to sleep.

Isak’s heart was broken but he clung to his boy and the promises they’d made and let the pillows be wet.

It was storming that night, that cold night he’d ran in the rain to the school, deafening silence but the last echoing notes of *O Helga Natt* until it was just the patter of raindrops on an empty, slippery road.

It was storming that night, that cold night that Even stepped out of the school and Isak’s clarity shifted into something he’d never known before, his heart seized between his ribs.

It was storming that night, that cold night their cheeks brushed in the revel of each other’s lives, the disbelief and the relief and the unspeakable, immensely beautiful broken thing between them.

It was storming that night, when Isak took Even in his hands and told him the only truth that mattered, to either of them, the only thing that counted.

Du er ikke alene.

It was storming that night Isak saved Even. As soaked as the night Even saved Isak too.

So let the pillows be soaked now, let them fall asleep in the salty tears because the rainwater, they could do.

Let the storms roll in.

It didn’t matter how much it rained, how loud the thunder was. How much Even jumped at the cracks of lightning.

Isak would be here for clarity when he woke.

Chapter End Notes

The comments I have gotten on the previous chapter have been absolutely tear-jerking, heartbreakingly beautiful. I promise I will eventually get to all of them, and I really do appreciate every single individual one, more than everything ever okay. I’ve never had so many “happy birthday”s simultaneous with “you ruined my life”s and I’m honored

I love you all, I absolutely love you all

xx
Letters and Blinds

Chapter Notes

There are a lot of texts in this chapter because Isak goes on like a texting spree all at once, so it might take longer to read than other chapters.

**Warnings**: post-manic depression, panic attack/breakdown moment that’s really fucking intense, suicidal ideation, everyone cries in this chapter, including me and you.

If you’re not up for the pain of the next two weeks of Even being depressed, guilty, and hella upset, I get it. If you want to skip to the chapter where things start being okay again, that’s **here**. If you think this is gonna be too much for you, or if you start reading it and it gets to be too much, I completely understand.

This is a lot. Manic-depression is a lot.

On that note, you guys have been fucking saints in your comments, know that I take all of that to heart and I’ve gotten better feedback and more support than I could've ever dreamed.

Here's to the same for Even.

The beautiful moments and the really shitty ones too, right?

xx

See the end of the chapter for more **notes**.
Liv - Even's doing well, and I am too. He's mostly been sleeping, drinking some water. We haven't gotten any food in him yet but we will. My whole flat is here for support, and some of Even's and my close friends too. I've sent you my location so if you ever want to drop by, one of us will be here at all times to let you in.

I am so sorry for Friday. Even told me you'd been trying to contact me, I'm guessing he blocked both of your numbers on my phone. I've also sent the numbers of my friend Jonas, that you met, as well as Eskild, one of my flatmates, and Magnus and Eva, two of our close friends.
All of them have said you’re more than welcome to contact them at anytime, especially regarding Even. So between those we shouldn’t be able to miscommunicate again. Thank you so much for being patient with me. I know how much Even means to you, he means the world to me too.

I know I didn’t handle this the way we were both hoping I would, and I’m so sorry I was too caught up in high school drama to notice he was slipping, I’ll be staying home for a few days to be with him, and I promise I’ll get better. If we could maybe talk sometime, I really want to be able to do this right. I really am sorry.
Liv 3

Mandag, 10:12
20.02.17

Eskild texted him this morning asking if he was going to school. Isak texted back he’d go tomorrow, or Wednesday.

He’d spent all day yesterday at Even’s side, with the exception of the twenty minutes he’d let Jonas’s mom inspect his ribs and repatch up some of the wounds. She was a nurse, and by consequence Jonas knew what he was doing, so it wasn’t really necessary but. He was healing faster than he’d
expected, so that was good.

Even had slept for eighteen hours straight, spent about twenty minutes awake, then he'd gone right back to passing out and that's where they were now, Monday morning and Eskild asking if Isak was going to school.

Not yet.

He just needed a few days with his boy.

He’d cracked open one of the windows this morning. It was raining over the top of the snow, this wet mushy sound making all the white disappear into mush, all the frozen drip free.

It was supposed to get cold again tonight, so all the rain would freeze up and turn the world into shiny ice. It happened about once or twice a year, and those were the most beautiful days.

In honor of the most beautiful boy.

The sound pattered over their quiet bedroom and Isak laid there, watching him sleep from their respective pillows.

Even was quiet, face smooth and peaceful, lashes stuck together from all the tears he’d shed and slept in. Chapped lips parted, all the lines gone from his face, hair smoothed back from his skin by Isak’s hands in the night.

But it was getting close to the time Even usually woke and his breathing was shallower, just the slightest change in the way his chest rise and fell. So he wasn’t touching anymore, a few inches away and resting peacefully, patient. Eyes on the boy he loved.

Isak adjusted his head on his pillow and blinked slow, watching the internal sunrise break slow over that beautiful face.

The wild heart beating. It was quiet enough under the sounds of the rain that he could watch the pulse in Even’s neck and feel the pound of his chest from here.

What an intricate, stunning precious boy. So full of life and beauty and Isak’s whole wide world all wrapped up under those dark fluttering eyelashes. Isak smiled softly, watching as Even slowly rose into daylight, breaking the surface and blinking lethargically awake.

Another blink and blue eyes were on him, some mix between guarded and blank.

“Good morning sweetheart,” Isak whispered. It was warm and pattering and Isak gave him a moment, both of them just looking at each other.

Even didn’t say a word and Isak slid his palm slowly across the bottom sheet, fitting it under Even’s pillow to hold his hand.

As soon as their fingers weaved together Even was closing his eyes and rolling over, hand slipping free of Isak’s to rest on his stomach instead, facing up for the ceiling now.

Isak furrowed his eyebrows, drawing his hand back. Another moment to look at Even before he was sitting up, swinging his legs off the mattress and padding quietly over the sound of pattering rain to get the glass of water he’d brought in and sat on the shelf.

He sat down cross-legged on the floor next to the mattress, holding out the water in offering.
Even turned his head, looking at Isak and the water glass and the hopeful little look on Isak’s face.

The he was rolling over again, far enough this time to land on Isak’s side of the bed, staring at the wall. Isak cocked his head and sat the glass back on the shelf.

“Even?” he asked, sitting down carefully on the edge of the mattress. A moment’s pause and he was reaching for the curved spine, fingertips inches from touching when the grating rough whisper seeped into the soft air.

“I don’t want you here.”

Isak froze, fingers curling up and hand retreating before he took it back entirely, staring confused and furrowed at the beautiful boy who wouldn’t look at him.

Even was just lying there, defensive and on the wrong side of Isak’s bed, staring at the wall. He wasn’t tired, or trying to sleep, Isak knew what that sounded like by now and this was 0% groggy, none of the morning I was just wanna go back to bed.

Fully awake. Just staring at the wall.

“Even, I want to be here for you,” Isak told him quietly. He knew there was a lot of guilt mixed up in the crushed Even was feeling, but maybe he just needed to hear it out loud.

“I don’t want you here,” Even said back, completely monotone. Still not looking at him.

Isak reached over and placed a gentle palm between his cotton shoulderblades.

Even nearly fell off the side of the bed scooting to try to get away from him.

Isak drew back his hand like he’d touched fire, only it wasn’t an overheated boy this time, it was a frozen one.

He just sat there kinda stunned for a moment, registering Even’s knees hanging off over the edge of his bed, the bright yellow of the bedside table. The orange curtains.

The empty walls that used to hold posters.

But Even was here.

Isak got off the bed, mattress moving with the force of it.

It almost knocked him all the way off the end and Even scooted back a half a centimeter, sinking back into the mattress, duvet tangled around his legs and waist.

He didn’t bother lifting it, and thank god neither did Isak.

The door to his bedroom opened, and closed again quietly. The sounds echoed and Even kept staring at the wall.

The window was open, rain splattering against the sill and wetting a spot in the white floating curtain.

Even’s stomach was twisting and his bones wanted sleep. He was sick, of all of it, not sick as in he wanted it to end although god, he wanted it to end, but sick as in it made him fucking ill.

His stomach hurt and his chest hurt and his head hurt and the lining skin of his completely empty
shell hurt. He could feel the muscles cramping in his sides and he couldn’t bring himself to care but it still all hurt.

A gust of chilled wind fluttered the curtain, raining down cold on his skin and sending involuntary goosebumps over his skin. To physically feel and feel nothing at all.

Even stared at the wall. He was being smothered. He didn’t feel guilty for making Isak leave.

He couldn't stand the hopeful eyes. He couldn't stand the soft comforting touch.

He didn’t deserve it. He didn't want it. He didn't want anything.

Who knows how long he stared at the wall before the dark tried to take him again. Started drifting off into sleep and he didn't notice until he was jolting back awake, hard and violent enough the mattress jumped, his entire body slamming back into itself only to slip back out like a ghost.

Isak’s hand landed on his spine and Even jumped again.

Shuddering right back in and out of his body all over and.

Liar. The door hadn’t opened again. Isak never left.

Even shrugged his shoulder to get the hand off him.

“It's not cute,” he told the wall. “Stop fucking glorifying this and get out.”

“I'm not leaving you,” Isak said stubbornly. Young and stupid.

He’d thought it was too good to be true that he’d just taken off without protest like that.

So he’d been what, waiting on the other side of the room, propped against the wall watching Even all this time?

“Get out.”

“Are you trying to get me to prove something--”

“Get out.”

“Even,” so broken and begging, pleading to just let him stay and Even set his jaw, feeling hollow.

“Get out.”

Isak stood, inhaling through a stuffy nose as he took his hand back. Even didn’t lift his head, Even didn’t say a damn word.

That time when the door opened he could hear Isak’s bare feet in the hallway before it creaked nearly shut. Even didn’t lift his head to check if it was real.

The quiet tears splashing on kitchen tiles he could hear from here.

Mandag, 13:13
20.02.17
Isak quietly made himself toast, jumping a little when it popped up ready. He got down a plate, and opened the fridge for cheese. All the cold spiraled out onto his face and he closed his eyes, taking in a deep breath of chilled air.

Just this minute.

Then he was opening the cheese drawer and taking out two slices, wrapping it back closed and closing the fridge.

It wasn’t about him.

He put the cheese on top of the warm toast, quietly taking the plate to the table.

Everything was still really new, he just had to listen to what Even wanted and it’d all be okay.

The toast crackled too much when he took a bite, scraping the roof of his mouth and he sat it back down, leaning back in his chair. Weather the storm, he could do that.

One minute.

He brushed the crumbs off over his plate and stood up. He’d eat later, for now there were some other things he wanted to get done.

Isak drifted into the living room, taking his phone off the side table where Jonas had left it, leaving for school this morning. There was a post it note about calling if he needed anything and Isak stuck it back to the wood, sitting down on the cushions and unlocking his screen.

The wallpaper was still of him and Even and Isak took a deep breath. Letters, he just had to focus on that. Apology letters, might as well write them now, he had nothing else to do, Even didn’t wanna see him.

Which wasn’t his fault.

Okay. He had a mental list of all the people he needed to compose texts to today, but best to start easy. Work his way from there.

He swung his legs up over the side, leaned back into the cushions, and typed.

Magnus, I just wanted to let you know that Even’s doing okay, and I am too. I’m not sure if either of us would be if it weren’t for you, so takk. Serr, takk. I don’t know how I’ll ever be able to pay you back for this.

I also wanted to
Magnus: I also wanted to apologize, for everything w Vilde. I should never have dragged you into the middle of the drama, and I’m so sorry I broke you two up. I feel like I owed you some kind of warning as your bro, but I also really wanted to protect her and it was just a shit situation. Not that that’s an excuse.

Eva didn’t reply. Isak sat there and stared at his phone for a bit.

Don’t worry about it, man. I’m glad you two are doing okay. Vilde and I weren’t fitting the way either of us wanted anyways. You just made us both face that, and that’s okay. I’m still here for you, any way you need me. Stay strong, lemme know if you need anything at all.

Peacenuv

Liv replied within minutes.

Eva didn’t reply. Isak sat there and stared at his phone for a bit.
He was almost about to give up and move to the next one when bubbles suddenly appeared. His heart skipped a beat and a half and he watched, waiting. They rolled and rolled and then gone.

Which meant the text should be coming through any second.

Only it didn't.

Isak stared at his phone for another three minutes before he accepted it. She was going to say something and decided not to.

Okay. That was okay.

They weren't over, he wasn't gonna give up that easy on a friendship he just got back but.

Okay.

He locked his phone and put it on his chest, staring up at the ceiling.

Enough time had passed he could probably go check on Even now. A deep breath and he pushed back to his feet, pocketing the phone and making the quiet trip back.

He could see Even through the crack in the door, still rolled over and facing the wall but the duvet was pulled up under his arms and he was sleeping now.

Isak budged open the door, holding his breath as it creaked once, but Even was too deep to hear.

He closed the door quietly behind him and made his way back over to the bed. Even was curled up so small there was more than enough space for him so Isak carefully sat down, propped against the wall with as much space between them as he could put, then he was pulling his phone out and cramping his thumbs through another thrown glass bottle message to float ashore.
Bjørn - I'm sure Liv told you Even and I are well, but I wanted to thank you personally. I don't know what would've happened Friday night without you, and I don't think I understood before that how involved and important you both are to Even's well-being. My parents are kinda shit, so it makes me that much more grateful Even has both of you.

Anyways, I just wanted to thank you for being there. I know I haven't handled this as well as I should've. That I didn't do the right things, that I let you both down. I know I'm not what you wanted, but I love your son. I'll do everything I can to be deserving of him in the future, I promise. I hope both you and Liv are doing well. -- Isak
Isak -- It's good to hear you and Even are well. We certainly both appreciate the update. Liv and I also both appreciate you. Yes, there are things you don't know yet, and a lot left to learn. But you love Even. In no way have you disappointed us.

You have to remember Isak, you're seventeen. The rest of us have been managing this for years. Your friend Jonas filled us in a bit on the week you'd had, and I'm not sure I would've noticed signs if I'd had a week like that. Take it easy on yourself son.

As for Friday night - both Liv and I are very sorry to hear about your parents. We know you've had a
Liv and I are very sorry to hear about your parents. We know you've had a rocky relationship with them, and all of us were hoping things would go well with your dinner. If there is absolutely anything we can do to help mend things, let us know. Sometimes hearing from another adult can be helpful for us old folks. :)

And lastly, I wanted to apologize too. Even getting violent during an episode doesn't always happen but when it does, he's usually easier to subdue. Must be working on his arm strength to impress you or something. :) But on a more serious note, none
He'd like to say he wasn't crying but that was a lie.

Isak wiped at his tears silently, refusing to sniffle so he didn't wake Even.

He really didn't deserve any of this kindness. These friends and these people in his life who were so forgiving and he just didn't get it, he'd never had anything like this before. He'd never really had anybody to depend on except Jonas and now.

He had so many people who cared, so many people he could let down and he--

His phone buzzed in his pocket and Isak held his breath, hoping for Sana. Nope, Jonas.
Hey I'm at your door let me in

•

??? Okay but you have to help me write letters

•

The fuck are you writing letters for

•

Isak didn’t reply, opening up the front door instead.

Jonas was dripping, giving him a touch of a smile.

“Hey,” Isak said, squinting a little. Jonas stepped past his shoulders inside, already toeing off his shoes as he spoke.

“Halla, what letters?”

“Apology letters.” Isak closed the door and Jonas looked up from taking off his drizzled beanie. It was raining and foggy outside now too, so all the wet in the foyer made sense, although the smile on Jonas’s face didn’t as much.

“Oh shit, fun. Actual letters though?”

“Nei nei, just long ass texts.”

“Okay. Cool.” Coat hung on the furthest hook and Jonas started for the kitchen without him. Isak followed and Jonas was opening up cabinets, up on his tiptoes and making a triumphant sound as he found plates and took one down, shooting a glance over his shoulder. “Who’ve you checked off the list so far?”

“Fuck off,” Isak suggested.

“Dude, with the week you had last week, I know you have a list.” Jonas gave him a duh look and Isak tipped his head, pursing his mouth. He supposed.

“Okay. Fair.” Jonas stepped around him to grab cheese out of the fridge and jeez, if he’d known Jonas was gonna come over he could’ve made him some. Actually wait, hold that thought, he still hadn’t eaten his.

Isak snagged the plate off the table and held the once-bitten cheese toastie out to Jonas.

“That’s cold, I don’t want it.”

“Picky bitch,” Isak shot back and Jonas flicked him off as he put two slices of bread in the toaster.

“List.”

“Right, okay, so I’ve got Magnus, Eva, Liv, Christoffer Schistad-- do I need one for Noora?”

“Why would you write one for Noora?”

“She like...kicked me out.”

“...then she owes you one, what the hell.”

“Well, I mean she was pissed about Vilde. And I just don’t want her to take it out on Even because she helped out a lot last time.”
“I’m sure she’ll come through. And Mahdi will too, he’s been asking a lot about you, he just doesn’t wanna make you feel like overwhelmed or anything, so.”

“Alright, one less on the list to worry about then. So I got those, and Sana and Bjørn, then I’ll get Eskild eventually.”

“Wow you’ve knocked off like. Almost everyone. Is Bjørn Even’s dad?”

“Ja.”

Jonas glanced over his shoulder again, eyebrows up. “Both parents separately. Impressive.”

“Friday was a lot.”

“It was.” Back to slicing off pieces of cheese, because Isak had snagged all the already sliced pieces for the sandwich he hadn’t eaten, too many things left to say.

“Speaking of which. The hell did you tell Even’s parents about last week?”

Jonas made an oh shit sound and Isak confirmed it with a yeah, oh shit sound of his own.

“Well, I have his mom’s number now, and...I knew you weren’t gonna explain to her why you missed the first three to six days of Even’s episode…”

Isak squinted at him. That was a very specific number.

“You researched bipolar disorder.”

Jonas shot him a wild look over his shoulder.

“No, my best friend is dating a boy with a mental disorder and I didn't educate myself on it. Ja, Isak. Of course I looked it up.”

Isak squinted a little more. “Anyways.”

“Anyways, I told her you and I got into a really nasty fight, and all these rumors got spread about you and your friends all turned on you and you were so stressed you ended up having to skip school. I also maybe mentioned that I walked in on you crying in the boys bathroom.”

“Fy faen, Jonas!”

“I didn’t say anything that wasn't true! You can't beat yourself up for something that's not your fault.”

“It is my--”

“See? Shut up. No it's not.”

“Jonas, it is.”

“Is-ak, it's not. Anyways, I also told her we fixed things, obviously, and that the rumors died down so I don't think I totally ruined your rep with them.”

Them being Even’s parents, who Jonas had been texting, the same way he texted Isak’s parents and why did anyone ever teach adults to text okay.

Jonas was acting like this was regular, like his place in Isak’s life was defending his actions to his
boyfriend’s parents and wow, if you’d’ve told him a year ago this was ever going to be a moment in his life, he--

Yeah, honestly this was...but Jonas was here and trying to make sure he didn’t ruin Isak’s rep with Even’s parents.

Jeez.

“Based on what a Bjørn texted me, I think I'm probably fine.”

“Ja?”

“Ja. He called me son.” Isak looked up from his phone, furrowed as Jonas glanced over his shoulder kinda surprised. “That's weird, isn't it.”

“It's a little...I mean. You guys did get voted most likely to get married young?”

“Ja. Liv makes a lot of married jokes.”

“Really?”

“Yeah it's. It's like. It makes me way too happy and it's also kinda really stressful cause like–”

Isak flailed a hand and Jonas nodded.

“Ja. I get it.”

“Yeah…” Isak trailed off. “Anyways. So, letters. Now all I've got left is my parents and Vilde.”

“Best for last.” The sarcasm in that was palpable enough Isak made a yikes face. Jonas put his toast on the plate and shrugged.

“I have no idea what to say to my parents though. I think a group chat with the both of them but like. Where do I fucking start?”

“Well what happened?” Jonas glanced up from scooping cheese onto his bread and Isak blinked.

“Oh yeah. I forgot you weren't there.”

“Nope. Took Even instead.” Sandwich lifted to his mouth and Jonas took a huge bite, nodding to himself as he chewed. Isak stuck his tongue in his cheek.

“Well not. The best idea…”

They sat down on the couch and ate their cheese sandwiches - Isak’s cold because he wasn’t a petty bitch unlike some people - and he filled Jonas in on the story of everything that went down at dinner.

Jonas almost spit out cheese toastie all over Isak and the couch.

“He said what???”

“I know, I know, it was terrible.”

“What do you mean?? I have been waiting to say that to Terje for the past year and a half, I can't believe your fucking boyfriend beat me to it.”

“Haha,” Isak said dryly.
'Serr, though." Another bite and Jonas nodded sincerely, curls bouncing. "I'm glad someone called him on his shit."

"Yeah, well, now I have to figure out a way to fix it."

"Why?"

"What do you mean why?"

"Isak, we both know your parents fucking suck."

"But they're still my parents?"

"Okay." Jonas threw up a hand, before waving it at the phone on Isak’s lap. "Fine. Keep toxic people in your life, whatever. Your choice. So...Marianne and Terje,"

"Can you just compose the whole thing?"

"Like the text that landed you Even? Yeah no, I actually wanted to make things work there. I don't give a fuck what your parents think."

"Jonas!"

"Okay! Fine. Terje and Marianne. Actually fuck it, definitely say mom and dad."

"Yeah I already typed mom and dad."

"Okay...okay so start off. I know you're probably still upset with me, but I really need the chance to explain things..."

And Jonas composed that one for him. Like, the entire thing. Isak’s stress level went from 11 to like a 2 as he pressed send, then he was breathing out all of the pent up worry and Jonas leaned back against the couch with a sigh.

"Fuck your parents."

"You've said that yes thank you." He gave Jonas a look. Jonas shrugged and Isak sighed. "Alright. now...I think I've got what I wanna say for Vilde's but can you read it before I send it?"

"Why else do you think I'm here?"

"Actually, why are you here?"

"To help you write apology letters." Jonas settled into the couch a little further. Isak gave him a dramatic I'm not stupid face.

"There's no way you knew that's what I was doing."

"We’re psychic, remember?" Jonas shook his head duh and Isak snorted. Jonas smiled at him fondly, looking down at the couch. Isak sucked in a breath and started typing.

"Okay. Dear Vilde...I am so sorry. Words can't begin to express--"

"Really?"

"What do you mean, really?"
“That's so. Like. Dramatic.”

“It's me! And Vilde! It's allowed to be dramatic, okay.”

“Okay…”

“Words can't begin to express, how awful I feel for how I've hurt you. No one deserves what I did, but you least of all. I know firsthand how hard…”

Isak trailed off into a mumble and Jonas shoved his knee with his toe.

“I can't hear you.”

“Ugh. I know firsthand how hard it is to face yourself, let alone to be accused before you have. I ha-
-”

That time he just stopped talking, cause it was one thing for Jonas to text his parents and his boyfriend’s parents, but it was another thing for Isak to say this all out loud with Jonas right there.

“Isak, literally it's me, nothing you're saying right now isn't something I don't know.”

“Okay. Okay.” He sucked in a breath and looked back down, thumbs flying (fuck, they were gonna cramp he’d texted way too much today) but if he focused hard enough he didn’t have to look at Jonas at all.

“...I hated myself for who I was for years, I didn't want you to go through that too. I tried to help and it backfired and I am so sorry. I understand every person goes through this differently, and I'm not saying I know everything you're going through be I don't. Just cause I'm gay doesn't mean I automatically get it. But I want to be there for you. I'm new enough to this to know how much it sucks. I just wanted to say that you're not alone. I'm here for you if you ever need someone to talk to, or to ask questions, or to come to terms with anything. It's harder than anyone knows.”

Jonas shifted on the couch and Isak ignored him.

“I really am sorry to be the one putting you through this. I get it if you want nothing to do with me. Whatever you chose to do, even if it's to go back in the closet--”

A strange sound and Isak did not look up and most definitely did not think of that whiplash moment of telling his dad his love for Even was just a joke.

“--I completely understand. I'll be here if you ever need me.” Isak nodded once before finishing it out, the most important part. “I'm sorry, Vilde.”

He pursed his mouth to the side, looking down at his phone for as long as he could get away with. That was a lot of confessions hidden for years to finally come pouring out like that, out loud and.

“I think you should send it just like that,” Jonas said quietly. Isak nodded.

He still didn’t know how he was supposed to lift his head and look Jonas in the eye--

“Maybe add an emoji though, she likes those.”

Isak laughed, surprised, looking up at the little smile on Jonas’s face, tipping his head in apology.

“Too late, already sent.”
Jonas nodded. Isak nodded too.

“If you ever...if you ever wanna talk about it, Isak. I know I don't personally understand, but I understand you, so.”

The little huff made Jonas furrow confused but did he not hear how wild that sounded?

“Yeah, talk to the person you discovered your sexuality over with them,” he scoffed and Jonas threw up a hand.

“I mean, I'm fine with it.”

Isak chewed his lip to the side. It was a sweet gesture. “Thanks for the offer, though.”

“We can get high first, if that's easier?”

It sounded hopeful and Isak glanced up from his phone, eyebrows going up with it.

“You're not just dropping this,” he said slowly.

Jonas shook his head. “Nope. I think it'll help if you tell somebody what you were feeling.”

“...but you?”

“It doesn't have to be me, jeez, but if you want it to be, I'm here, okay?”

“Okay! Okay. Yeah.” Isak smiled to himself and stuck his tongue between his lips. You'd think by now he'd stop being surprised by Jonas Vasquez, but here he was.

His phone vibrated on the couch between them. Isak scooped it up. It was a text message, from Vilde.

•

Dear Isak.
First of all, I want you to know that absolutely none of this is your fault.

•

It was kinda ridiculous actually, how fast Isak teared up.

“I can't read this.” He shoved the phone at Jonas’s fumbling hand. “I'm gonna cry, just tell me what it says.”

“Like summary or read it?”

“Summary. Actually, fuck it. Just read it.”

“Okay. Here's a tissue.” Jonas shrugged off his outer layer shirt, handing it over completely seriously and Isak barely contained the laughter, taking it with a little huff.

“Takk.” He laid back against the armrest, clutching the bundled shirt to his chest and staring dramatically up at the ceiling. Everything was a little easier in Jonas's voice.

“Dear Isak. First of all, I want you to know that absolutely none of this is your fault. Pink double heart emoji. You know, the one where like one is smaller but they're not switching?”

“I know the emoji, thanks.”
“Okay. So after the hearts: In case you forgot I was there too. I know you weren't trying to do anything but help me. I'm sorry I didn't make that clear to the girls. I was so upset I didn't care that everyone lashed out at you. But it doesn't make me feel any better to know you were hurt. Especially when you were trying to be a friend. So actually, it's me who owes you the apology. I'm sorry for letting everyone think you were an asshole, Isak.”

Jonas looked up. “This is really nice, but you are an asshole.”

“Fuck off, keep reading.”

“...In a way I need to thank you too. I'm still not okay with everything, and I have a lot to work through and a lot a lot a lot of questions.” Jonas snorted and Isak kicked his knee. “Ow. I don’t know if you can answer them, but I really would like to chat with you about it. If you don’t mind. I can buy us milkshakes sometime? Or Eva said she knows your coffee order. Whichever you prefer, I’d be happy to set up the date! Or well, a not-date. Because you don’t like girls and I...don’t like boys. That was really weird to text but I think you understand. Anyways, just let me know, and don’t let anybody give you shit for what you did because I think it was really brave that you tried to help me when no one ever tried to help you.”

Jonas looked up again. “I offered to listen--”

“Shut up, this isn’t about you, keep reading.”

“Thank you Isak, and I hope you’re doing okay. I’m really sorry for everything the girls said. Sun emoji, pink flower emoji, only like the light pink one, not the hibiscus hawaiian looking one--”

“Ja, ja, I know the emoji, takk.” Isak lifted his head from the armrest, one eyebrow up. “That wasn’t too bad.”

“You didn’t cry, can I have my tissue back now?”

“I only didn’t cry because you were laughing half the time you asshole.” He threw the bundled shirt at Jonas’s face only it didn’t fly very well and Jonas snatched it out of the air before it could hit him.

“You’re both just really dramatic, okay.”

“I know, I know. Which is good with me. Maybe we’ll be friends.” Isak struggled upright, groaning a little at the fading bruises on his ribs. “Okay, now that Vilde’s done, I’ve only got one more.”

Jonas looked up surprised, shouldering his shirt back on, Isak’s phone on his thigh.

“Who?”

Isak sighed, folding his legs back underneath him before looking up again.

“You.”

“What are you talking about? You already apologized.”

“For Eva and for what I did first year, yeah. But I was gonna text you an apology for...well now you're here, so I have to tell it to your face which is actually significantly harder for me so thanks for that.”

“Sure.”

“Dick. You're making this so much easier.”
“Happy to help.”

“Fuck you, let me say this.”

“I’m not interrupting!”

“You are!”

“No I’m not!”

“Jonas, I’m fucking sorry for never telling you I was gay, for blaming you for shit that wasn’t your fault, for making you ever think I didn’t care about you then waiting for a fucking year to tell you about what I did and being such a shitty friend in the meantime it got to the point you thought some guy made me tell you when actually I’d been dying to say it every fucking time we spoke but I didn’t ever get the courage to until I found out you could find out from somebody else cause apparently Chris Schistad knew and he told Even who told me so that’s what made me finally do it, plus I felt guilty as fuck cause I’m happy and in love and I took that away from you because I was so selfish and—”

“Okay okay.” Jonas held up his hands, but there was a smile on his face and Isak teetered to a stop, their eyes meeting, Isak’s mouth still open. “I can fill in the rest. You're sorry for being a little bitch and you do actually care about me.”

Isak leaned back, waving his hand at all of that. “Yes. Exactly.”

“It's cool. You're forgiven.” Jonas shrugged and Isak lifted a single eyebrow.

“Just like that.”

“Ja, man. Just like that.” A deep, easy nod and Isak pursed his lips. Chill. Then Jonas was leaning over on the couch, shoving his shoulder once, looking at him very seriously. “You owe me kabobs though, ‘cause you fuckin’ ruined my last one.”

The laughter that burst was surprised and bright and loud, hadn’t seen that coming, it was the whip of Magnus’s dream story and the laugh of Jonas’s muttered dry jokes at 2am.

The moment it tapered Jonas was pinning him with an actual serious face, voice dropping back into the deep he knew.

“And I’m sorry I was a dick to you, Issy, you didn't deserve that.”

“I kinda did.”

“Okay, you kinda did.”

Isak socked his shoulder. Jonas rocked with it and smiled, then he was softening all around the edges.

“Serr, though. I should never have shoved you, or told the boys what happened because it blew the whole thing out of proportion. And I shouldn’t’ve yelled like that either, Isak. I was hurt, I thought it was about…” Jonas trailed off, looking somewhere over Isak’s shoulder and Isak pursed his mouth.

“You know you don’t have anything to compete with, right?” Isak said quietly and Jonas’s eyes snapped over to him instantly. Isak held the gaze, looked right back, dipping his chin with one eyebrow lifted. “You don’t. With Even, and you...I can love you both, you know, in different ways.
Doesn’t mean one is second best.”

“I know,” Jonas scoffed, shaking his head once and Isak reached over and took his hand. Actually, it didn't sound like it.

Jonas’s eyebrows shot up before he lifted his head a little and looked at Isak dubiously.

“No homo,” Isak clarified and Jonas laughed, bright and surprised. But he lifted his head the rest of the way, fingers wrapping around Isak’s. Isak squeezed.

“Serr, Jo-jo, you still mean the world to me. Just because I’m in love now doesn’t mean we can’t be everything we were to each other growing up. I want you both in my life.”

Here he was holding the hand of the boy who’d been through every up down and sideways with him, and they were completely different people now but his place in Isak’s life hadn’t changed, not one bit, he could have that spot right back if he wanted it.

“Jonas…I know you're used to me being small.” Isak lifted a shoulder and Jonas made that yeah, you think face.

Arms over shoulders and the top of abandoned gas stations.

Isak smiled to himself. Riding on handlebars and in the back of fast cars.

“...but I've grown enough now I've got room for you both.”

Jonas barked a little laugh and Isak squeezed his hand hard.

I've grown enough now, I've got room for you both. We grew up and maybe grew apart but we can be back together now. Now I know what I’m doing.

Now, I've got room for you both.

Jonas was looking at him like he could barely believe he was real and Isak tipped his head to the side. Fuck, he couldn't believe he'd let them go so long without this. He couldn't believe a lot of things, but.

Still them. Still here.

“Jonas, you fill roles Even never could. And him the same for you, but neither of you is more important than the other, ja? I still need you both. I'm not happy without him and I'm not me without you. So.”

Jonas nodded. Isak rapidly shook his hand back and forth, shaking his arm with it and Jonas snorted a little and nodded harder.

“Ja, ja, okay.”

“I mean, you and I aren't gonna hold hands as often as Even and I do so don't get used to it or anything but.” Jonas laughed and Isak smiled, wide, the double dimples on both side kind. “It’s still Isak and Jonas, right?”

“I think it's Jonas and Isak, the better obviously has to go first--”

Isak threw his hand back at him in offense and Jonas laughed, only Isak didn’t let him retreat more than a few inches before he was leaning across the couch and dragging in his shoulders.
Arms wrapped around him in return and the angle hella sucked from how far apart they were on the couch but it didn’t matter, they were hugging each other under streaks of gold and the sun was finally coming out, pink emoji flowers with it. Isak squeezed tight and closed his eyes, smile tipping up to himself.

It was his best apology letter by far.

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Tirsdag, 10:52
21.02.17

Meldinger Eskild Kontakt

I dag, 14:30

I know you’re in the next room but I’m texting this because I’ve cried enough over the past two days and I don’t need to cry anymore, so. Listen, I’m really sorry. I should never have outing Vilde. I want you to know I //really// truly didn’t mean to. She’s my friend, and I know how important it is not to out people. - Still, I understand why you got upset with me. You’ve taught me so much about the queer community, I get why you responded that way.

I’m really glad you let me move back in tho. I also really wanna thank you for being here, for trading out work shifts (yes i know when u work i live w u) so that you can support me and my bf. It means a lot.
But the next thing he knew he was closing his bedroom door behind him and peeking around the corner into the kitchen, and well. They hadn't cried over Troye together might as well cry over this.

He really had no idea how they went from hanging out on Isak's bed talking about gaydars to this.
It was nice that Mahdi texted him first. Yeah, when his pocket buzzed in the middle of hugging Eskild he'd been hoping it was one of the girls, but.

Mahdi was here for him, and he was grateful for that. And Eskild was here for him too. Wouldn't stop going on and on apologizing for letting Noora try to kick Isak out when he didn't deserve that, he'd let some high school feelings get him all wrapped up when he had the responsibility to be the adult and he was sorry and Isak deserved better and do you need help talking to Vilde your guru hasn't had the perfect history either whatever you need Baby Jesus and Isak just told him it was fine, everything was fine now, he'd jumped right back into embracing Isak and Even and all of his support made it all okay.

It was a lot of apologizing back and forth but in the end Eskild had wiped away a lot of his tears and Isak had gotten himself back together and snuck back into Even’s room.

Still out, so Isak propped back against the wall and watched him sleep.

Silent nightmares and vacant dreams as empty as he was.
Isak was sitting on the bed beside him when he woke.

“Hi,” Isak chirped quietly.

Even rolled over, looking at him. Isak’s beautiful cheekbone he used to smother with kisses was still bruised lavender. So was his pretty green eye. His split lip was almost healed.

It was Even’s fault.

It was too early to fucking speak but he managed to close his eyes and croak anyways.

“Hi.”

“It’s eleven,” Isak offered.

I don't care, he almost said. He stayed quiet instead. No point in opening his mouth. No one could hear him.

“I brought you food.” Silence. “Can you at least have some water?”

The crushing blankness of lifting his head was too much. But not lifting it was too much too. Isak looking at him and waiting on him was too much but refusing to drink was too much and he just wanted to close his eyes and stop existing.

He lifted his head and it ached everything ached he was throbbing and nothing but he drank a sip so Isak would leave him the fuck alone then he rolled over and collapsed back to the bed that was most definitely not comforting and warm anymore.

He got about two and a half minutes of empty silence before Isak broke that too.

“What did I do wrong?”

“Nothing.” Even stared at the yellow bedside table. Yellow curtains. “It's me.”

“Can I touch you?”

Even didn't reply. What the fuck kind of question was that. But it was a question and one he meant because he could feel Isak hovering from all the way over here.

“Even?”

“Sure,” he said dully. Whatever, let Isak have what he wanted.

He didn't know when it stopped being okay to touch him but he didn't want to know either.

The rocking boat tipped him sideways as Isak slid down the sheets and placed a hand carefully on the side of Even’s ribs.

If he pressed a little harder maybe they’d crack and crumble and crush his lungs and heart and stop everything from happening.

“Can I talk to you? Not for anything serious, and I don't need you to respond. I just want you to hear my voice.”

He'd been talking to Magnus or googling shit or something. Even stared at the the orange curtains.
He didn't want this. He knew objectively, could still recognize the fact that if he didn't let Isak do this, Isak might not be here tomorrow.

Even stared at the impossible curtains. He didn’t know which was worse.

“How long?” He croaked, wondering distantly if Isak’s fingers were branding permanent marks in his skin again.

“This minute, if you’ll let me. We’ll take the next one when we get there. Is that okay?”

He’d shrug but that was more energy he didn’t have so he barely mumbled instead.

“Sure.” Empty. Hushed, not reverent but simple.

“I don’t know if I ever told you this, but when I was little we had this dog named Lea.”

Isak’s thumb was rubbing over his ribs absently and every sweep was burning another layer deeper through skin and bone.

“She was big enough I always wanted to use her as a pillow. I know dogs don’t really like that, but. She was a pretty chill dog, and she was like. The softest thing on the planet.”

His voice was all drifty and nostalgic, quieter than most times and Even didn't give a fuck about this dog but it was Isak’s voice so he kept listening anyways.

“Almost every time she lay down I’d lay down too and put my head on top of her stomach. We’d lie like that for hours sometimes. I used to read her books when I first learned how.”

The hand on his ribs was soaking into his pulse, trying to pry him open and melt him away and pull him free all at once and Even was dizzy with it.

“And Lea was golden, same color as my hair, curly too. So every time I laid my head down on her stomach, my mom said that I disappeared. She’d walk by, oh where’s Isak, I only see Lea and some bare toes that he must’ve left behind.”

Voice cantering up higher to mimic his mom. The mom that looked at Even like he was a time bomb sitting beside her son.

Her son that wasn't curled up reading books on a golden dog anymore, bare toes and youthful laughter and sunshine.

“She always said that and I always giggled but I never felt like I disappeared. I always thought of it as the golden all blended together and we were connected, then. Lea and I. I wasn’t gone.”

Strong solid hands petting Even through the comforter while he danced stories around them like a child’s mobile and Even stared dully at the wall.

“I'm not a dog,” he husked, throat dragging him along with it.

“Neither am I,” Isak said simply behind him. Hand stilling on his ribs. “But I love you.”

Even closed his eyes.

Hollow. There was nothing left inside him for Isak to curl up around, it'd all been drained out of him, left it behind in some shouting street where everything was hazy and his world was broken.
“We're not gonna disappear,” Isak whispered, like he could feel the way his hands were fading at the edges.

We already have, Even didn't say.

“You don't know that,” he said instead, all gravel and tired and flat and he was done with this conversation now but Isak wasn't leaving.

“I do. I know that, cause we have each other.”

Even didn't have anyone. He wasn't supposed to have anyone and Isak wasn't fucking leaving him alone.

“The dog died,” Even said, so he would.

“What?” Isak lifted his head behind him and Even didn't glance over his shoulder, kept laying there.

“The dog died. You used to have a dog. It died.”

“We gave her up for adoption.”

“That's so much better,” Even said, monotone.

“You're not Lea,” Isak whispered, fingers digging into his ribs.

Please fucking leave, Even replied silently but he didn't say it and Isak didn't hear it.

“My hair’s darker than yours,” Even finally whispered instead.

“Yeah. Except on the tips where it swoops to the left.”

Even stared at the wall.

It almost hurt, how good Isak was to him, he couldn't handle it and he was still shattering over the idea of accepting what Isak was trying to give him but Isak wouldn't stop giving and he wouldn't stop hurting--

“Can I stay here?” Isak asked.

His boyfriend. His lover. His best friend. His caretaker.

“How long.”

Quiet. Raspy. Already giving up.

“Long as you'll have me.” Forever and go away now please. “But at least this minute if I can.”

“Okay.”

Sixty one seconds later Isak tapped his ribs.

“Still okay?”

“Please don't ask me again,” Even told him. Isak froze behind him icy February winds and Even took a slow inhale, eyes straining on the wall. “Yes, it’s okay.”

Isak wrapped his arms around Even’s empty thudding stomach and put his cold nose on the back of
Even’s twisted neck, squishing against him a little.

Even closed his eyes.

He didn't jolt when he fell asleep that time.

When he woke up Isak was gone and there was a note on his pillow.

He didn't read it.

Onsdag, 08:41
22.02.17

He kept his eyes closed as Isak moved around the room, grabbing his things for school. Kept his eyes closed as the shadow fell over him. Kept his eyes closed as the soft angelic kiss pressed to his cheek.

Isak didn’t know he was awake. He kissed him like he was sleeping, like he was an angel too and Even didn’t move a fucking muscle.

The door closed.

There was too much to sort out in his head he wasn’t physically strong enough to do it.

The tears in his throat wouldn’t go away.

He had no idea how long he laid there.

Eskild brought him a cheese sandwich and tea. Asked him if there was anything he needed.

Even didn't look at him.

He didn't want to sleep but he didn't want to exist either and sleeping was the closest he could come to that so.

Cousin of death.

Onsdag, 12:13
22.02.17

It was a lot harder, going to school on Wednesday than he thought it was gonna be. Last time he’d
gone to school when Even was depressed he’d been okay, more than okay, Even was in his bed and warm and his roommates were all looking out for him and that had been the only thing in the world Isak had wanted, needed.

None of those things weren’t true today, but. But for some reason he couldn’t get his fucking mind off it.

He was late to first hour and didn’t look at anyone as he slipped in and took the empty seat in the back, because three of the girls were in this class and he just.

Couldn’t. Not on top of everything.

He was in school so he didn’t fall too far behind and that was it, the moment it ended he was going right back home to something that fucking mattered.

High school drama felt so fucking...insignificant, now. Yeah, Vilde had texted him back and forgiven him and Jonas had forgiven him, and Magnus too, so. Now that all of that was fixed the rest of the petty from the whole school didn’t mean a fucking thing. Whatever.

And the shit with Eva and Sana and Noora he’d work out eventually. He just had to keep his head down and get through the day, force himself to attempt to eat something, one foot in front of the other.

He had lunch in the windowsill, staring out at the empty courtyard and the empty seat across from him and the empty sandwich in his hand that tasted like sand. He texted Jonas so he didn’t freak out and go searching, he just needed some time to breathe he said. To think.

Or mostly, he knew he wasn’t gonna be able to eat and he didn’t wanna see the look on Jonas’s Mahdi’s Magnus’s faces when he threw out his lunch untouched.

How could he, how could he when his stomach lurched at the idea of everything else in the world right now.

---

**Onsdag, 13:07**

22.02.17

When Even woke up there was someone’s spine pressed to his. It wasn’t the right temperature or curve to be Isak’s.

It took a year of convincing but he lifted his head.

It was Linn. She was asleep.

Even didn’t move, he didn’t want to wake her. He had no idea how long he laid there, sleep so fucking far away, stomach twisting and head pounding. He didn’t want to wake her.

He was fucking sick of living underwater.
He was on his laptop typing away at the two assignments he’d missed when the chair beside his pulled out.

Isak glanced up. Sana sat down.

“Hi biology partner,” she offered. Like the last time they’d seen each other he hadn’t run to the boys bathroom crying.

Isak turned wide-eyed back to his laptop. Fuck. He’d been so focused on all the fucking shit he’d missed he’d forgotten--

Sana set her backpack down and looked at the table for a long long moment. Isak was just going to ignore her, he didn’t know what to say so he wasn’t gonna say anything at all, they were going to get through class and be perfectly cordial--

He jumped a little as Sana put two palms dramatically on the desk and swiveled her head to look over at him.

“I’ve been a shitty friend.”

Isak lifted an eyebrow and glanced her way before he started typing again, staring back at the screen. “Sana, I don’t--”

“No, Isak, listen to me. You didn’t deserve a fucking word of what I said in the-- pay attention to me, asshole, apologizing makes my stomach hurt, and this is the second time I’ve had to apologize to you so the least you can do--”

Isak closed his laptop and swiveled over, meeting her gaze and raising his eyebrows. Sana stuttered a moment before she sucked in a breath and started again.

“I was a shitty friend. And I didn’t reply to that long ass text you sent me because I felt even shittier as a friend and you deserve a face-to-face apology, so.” She made a little clicking sound with her mouth, head tipping and eyes cutting to the side.

“...because you weren’t actually trying to ruin anyone’s lives, I just assumed that you were, and I assumed a lot of things I shouldn’t’ve assumed because apparently I’m an ass when I’m upset and I was upset--”

“I definitely got that part,” Isak offered and Sana snapped a hand shut at him, universal signal for shut up. Isak rolled his lips in and let his heart pound.

“And you didn’t deserve to be shredded in the school courtyard in front of everyone. In case you were worried, I made all of the stupid freshmen delete the videos off their phones after you left. I mean, I actually did that for Vilde’s sake at the time, but.”

“...okay.”

“Anyways, what I’m trying to say is I am sorry, because I was wrong, and I also treasure our
friendship and whatnot or whatever bullshit feelings thing you sent me over those texts that made me like almost cry and--"

“Sana, it’s okay. I forgive you.”

She froze, mouth open a moment longer before her eyes flicked up to meet his again. Isak dipped his head, eyebrows shooting up higher.

“Seriously. I get why you did it, you were justified based on the information you had, and then you found out what actually happened and now you apologized, so it’s fine. We’re good.”

“...yeah?” She said and Isak scoffed, leaning back in his chair.

“Yeah. Besides, if we’re not friends, who do I show my superiority to in all things biology?”

“Fuck off,” she told him and Isak smiled, opening his laptop up again. “ Seriously though, it wasn’t...too bad?”

“You can feel better about almost crying cause I cried in the boys bathroom after you tore me apart, so.”

She made a shocked noise, mouth popping over and Isak glanced over, breaking into a little smile.

“How about next time we rail on people together? I think we’re better as a team than apart.”

Sana narrowed her eyes a little and Isak narrowed his a little in return.

“...fine,” she said and Isak smiled to himself, turning back to the screen.

“Good. Now please tell you’ve been paying attention for the past three days because I have no fucking clue what’s happening in these assignments--”

“What happened to superior in all things biology?”

“Oh fuck off--”
Sana - I kno u kno I haven't apologized to Vilde yet. I'm working on it. I'm so fucking sorry for every ounce of pain I've caused her. I'll find a way to say that, but first I need to find a way to say it to you.

I know we're unlikely friends. I know we never should've made it as close as we did. I don't know if you know how much your friendship means to me. I struggled with a lot about being gay, but the only thing I couldn't get past - no matter how much I kissed Even, no matter how much my friends accepted me for it - was my battle with religion, and my mom. My mom is hella catholic. She's sent me bible quotes almost daily for the past year and a half.
I was so afraid to come out to her. When I told my dad I had a kjaarest who was a boy, he said it would stress my mom out, that she couldn't know. I was mostly fucking terrified she'd tell me I was going to hell.

But you gave me the courage to say what I needed to say to her. I used your exact words, actually. And you know what? She told me she loved me anyways. Bc I found a way to tell her I still had the same worth, that she didn't have to be afraid. Bc u told me that hate didn't come from religion, it came from fear. You gave me the chance to come out to my parents and I don't think you'll ever understand how much that means to me.
On that note, I know I’ve done the exact fucking opposite for Vilde. You were right when you tore me apart in the courtyard. She doesn’t have everything I got to, and coming out was the most terrifying thing I’ve ever done, I can’t imagine what she must be going through.

That being said, I plan on doing everything I can to help her, if she’ll have me. Because that’s what you did.

I really hope we can still be friends, Sana. Your friendship has changed me in more ways than just that, and it’s something I don’t wanna lose. I’m sorry I wrote you like, longer reading than we have to do for bio, but I really felt like I owed it to you to tell you this.

I’m sorry for everything I’ve ruined. I promise I’ll do what I can to fix it. – Isak
Someone (Jonas) cleaned his locker last Friday, so at least it wasn’t pink anymore when he wrestled his books back inside and someone (Jonas) landed their shoulder a few combinations away.

“Do you have any after school plans?” Jonas asked and Isak paused wrestling his books to glance over with an eyebrow up.

“Why, are you asking me on a date,” Isak grit, wiggling his biology notebook into place.

“Just tilt it sideways--”

“I got it.”

“It’s gonna jam…”

“It’s not allowed to do that, I’m out of the closet,” Isak told him and Jonas squinched up his eyebrows.

“What?”

“Nothing. Anyways,” Isak closed his locker door, and there was plenty of room so it was gonna open with no problems tomorrow, it was just. A bit of a mess inside still. “I was planning on heading back home to Even, what’s up?”

“Nothing, I just figured I’d offer to ride back to your place if you weren’t planning on anything.”

“Nope, you’re welcome to come over.”

“Cool.”

Jonas pushed off the lockers and fell into step beside Isak, then a single step ahead to hold open the door to the courtyard.

Isak followed him outside and nearly tripped over his feet at the crowd on the closest picnic table.

Literally...everyone was here, the fuck--

“Hey man, are you okay?” Mahdi was asking and Isak blinked, straightening up and glancing over his shoulder at Jonas.

Who was now herding him forward to the table. Fucking prick, was that whole thing a rouse? To lure Isak into a trap with eight people just sitting here waiting and he could’ve sworn at least half of these people hated him.

Isak opened his mouth, words taking a beat and a half longer to follow.

“Guys, I was so shitty to you all last week, you don’t have to pretend not to be mad at me just because my life got worse--”

“Isak,” Sana interrupted, tipping her head in that signature cutthroat way and he tapered off entirely.
“It’s not like we’re all just Not Mad at you. First of all, there was a lot of miscommunication last week that got cleared up…”

Vilde tucked her hair behind her ear and looked down at the picnic table. Hey, at least she was in school and didn’t look like she was doing too bad, which was good, he’d thought--

“So actually, most of us owe you apologies,” Vilde said quietly.

Isak opened his mouth to protest and Noora interrupted before he could.

“We do. And before you get pissy, it's not like anyone’s offering free passes cause your life sucks. We just...got a lot of perspective. Yeah, you did some shit, we did some shit, you broke some hearts, but.” She pursed her red mouth and Isak blinked way too many times.

“You kinda dragged us all out of the dark, too,” Vilde said and it was quiet and kind and way too forgiving.

Isak blinked a lot more. To keep out the tears this time, maybe.

What the fuck. He didn’t deserve this. Whatever this was.

“So we don’t hate you,” Sana finished. Giving him a little dimpled smile that was so starkly opposite from the knives she’d slid into his skin last week. “I mean...Jonas and I might still kick your ass sometime next week.”

She clicked her tongue and tipped her head with the smile and a corner of Isak’s mouth tipped up on its own.

“But Isak, we’re here for you. We should’ve been there for you more, none of us had any idea how bad things got, not until Jonas saw your locker and people finally got online and well.”

“It was just some spraypaint and rumors, I’ll be fine,” Isak insisted and they all looked dubiously between each other.

Seriously, they didn’t owe him a fucking thing, it wasn’t like any of them were the first years who went off about the idolizing couples they’d only heard Nissen russ stories about.

Every person here who went off on him was protecting one of his friends in doing so. He couldn’t blame them for that, he couldn’t.

“Besides, you all had every right to be pissed, I hurt a lot of you, and I hurt your friends - my friends - which is even worse and--”

“Really though, Isak,” Jonas offered softly from where he’d sat down beside Mahdi. This was hardly fair, Jonas’s soft voice always dug in deeper than anything else he knew. “…you were never trying to hurt anyone. And when shit like manic episodes go down, high school drama seems kinda small, y’know?”

The whole table nodded with him, from Eva to Magnus and Isak was doing everything he fucking could not to cry.

All of them, here, looking at him like that, forgiving him like this, he.

It was so much more than he deserved, it was. It was the kinda shit that happened in the movies Even liked, way overdramatic and surreal and beautiful and heartwrenching and Isak was left standing
there with earthquake shattered pieces rubbing back into place.

They were all looking at him so kind and open and soft and he’d had sincere moments with almost everyone at this table, sure, but all of them, all at once, he--

“I don’t. I don’t really know what to say.” It was shaky and small and Jonas tipped his head, curls bouncing just a little with it, the reverberation of everything he’d always known and thought he’d lost and was now sitting right here with all their friends giving Isak that smile, this comfort.

“Just say you’ll let us be here for you.”

What a thing to request.

“Okay,” Isak whispered. It settled over the table like falling leaves, over his chest like what he’d imagine a mother’s love was supposed to feel like, that comfort, a backboard, steady and strong against his spine then Isak was wiping two hands over his eyes as the tears started to bubble over.

There were a few quiet sounds and he breathed in shakily, digging the heels of his hands against his eyes. It took a second to make sure his mouth wasn’t gonna open over a really embarrassing sound, then he was managing to scoff about as sassy as a touched teary eyed boy in a high school courtyard could.

“Fuck you guys.”

The picnic table lit up in various bursts of laughter and aww’s as Isak lifted his watery eyes and tried to breathe, then Jonas was standing up and shoving people aside.

“Everyone move, let me hug my best friend.”

Then Isak was laugh-crying and turning just in time for Jonas to tackle him in a hug.

Those forever caring arms wrapped around him tight, shoving them close and Isak held him back, squeezing tight as his eyes slipped shut.

Like literally the entire table awed.

Maybe more than the table actually, maybe the whole courtyard, that sounded like a surround-sound aww. Or he’d been spending way too much with his pretentious film loving boyfriend.

Now though, he had two arms wrapped around his loyal film loving best friend, clasping each other tight and the hug of hugs ended up on Everyone’s snap stories by the time they let go, clapping hands on shoulders and twin smiles for the boys with the curls.

It also ended up on Eva’s instagram too. The two of them, sunlight low in the sky, eyes closed, squeezing each other tight. No filter, no emojis, and the simplest caption.

My boys.

It couldn’t be too bad from here.
He'd apologized and apologized but the person who needed to hear it most right now wanted nothing to do with him.
Even didn’t want him there.

Isak slept on the couch.

Their pillows still had matching tearstains in the morning.

Torsdag, 09:14
23.02.17

Isak came into his room and ran warm fingertips over his hairline and left him again.

The lack of a kiss shouldn’t’ve been surprising, and it shouldn’t’ve fucking ruined him, but it did.

It did and he barely made it until the apartment door was closing before he was shaking and burying his face in his pillow.

It was his own fault.

He didn’t get to feel pity for himself like this.

It’d be nice if it took a few minutes to calm himself down but it didn’t. It took him a switch somewhere in his brain that he hated himself for and flicked over fucking instantly.

No emotions, none. This and done.

If he cried he’d cry for years so he didn’t get to cry. He got to be numb instead.

Even shoved himself upright and looked for his phone.

It was on the bedside table, in the center, placed there carefully. Intentionally.

It was off and he already had the headache before he pressed the button to turn it on. But he couldn’t lay here anymore, he couldn’t.

Nothing existed besides this room, that fucking wall for the past four days he’d lose what was left of his mind if he didn’t see something anything fucking else.

There were thirty four notifications in his messages and fourteen in his emails and Even didn’t have the energy to be human but he could at least see who texted.


And Chris.
He scrolled past all of Isak’s friends and the people who had questions about how he was, and opened up the thread from Christoffer. Chris wasn’t gonna be asking how he was because Chris had no fucking clue and Even had never been more distantly grateful for people who didn’t know.

FYI: skipping first period to bang your boyfriend is actually super not cool when my boyfriend’s been dead for years #RIPMendel

Hey my dude, supp w you not being in class again?

Even I look like a desperate hoe this is a triple text. Don’t make me like worry about you or some shit

Man, you can’t miss too much, you don’t wanna get just this class held back like I did.

Even locked his phone and put it back down. He didn’t have anything to say to that.

He locked his head and put it back down too.

Hey, it’s Isak. So Even told me you know about me telling Iben all that shit from last year. I’m sorry I fucked over your relationship man, there was a lot of other shit going on but you didn’t deserve that.

Dude no worries it’s chill. I’m better off now lol. Where is Even tho? Wasn’t in class today

not feeling well. prolly won't be back in school for awhile

Do i need to bring him soup or something
“Hey, Isak?”

“Mm?” Isak glanced up from his sandwich and Magnus sighed, leaning an elbow on the table and propping his head on a hand.

“I’m really fucking sorry for chewing you out in the hallway, man.”

Isak furrowed his eyebrows, finished chewing, and swallowed.

“What? I mean. I kinda deserved it--”

“Nei, you didn’t. I thought you’d hurt Jonas, and never cared about him, and we all know now that’s not true, so I’m sorry.”

“Oh.” Isak looked down at his sandwich and looked back up at Magnus’s face. “Okay. Uh...it’s totally okay.”

“And I’m sorry I ollied out of the drama,” Mahdi input from across the table and Isak turned his head to look over at him. “I didn’t know what to believe, cause I knew you cared about Jonas but I didn’t
want to turn my back on Jonas either when he was really upset and felt like he did have anybody since he lost you so I just. Didn’t say anything and that was really shitty.”

“...actually, that’s like. I would want you to be there for Jonas,” Isak said slowly and Mahdi nodded.

“Still though, man, I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you too.”

“It’s...it’s cool. You guys, seriously, none of you owe me anything.” Isak took another bite of his sandwich and Jonas picked up his fanta, angling the bottom of it in his direction, one eyebrow up.

“Hey Is?”

“Yeah?”

“I’m sorry for--”

Isak threw the rest of his sandwich at him.

He was really fucking sick of this bed.

He was sick of lying here and doing nothing and sick of being left alone with his head and sick of this fucking room and sick of that fucking wall and the fucking orange curtains that weren’t fucking yellow and he was sick of the fucking empty and he was also fucking sick of being alive, but what was new, so.

He got up.

There’d been enough sleep and enough insomnia that when he stood he basically blacked out for a second, but the stupid fucking wall and a flailing arm caught him, so it didn’t end in disaster.

His legs hated him and his stomach hated him and the edge of the bed he had to walk all the way around hated him.

Even put a hand on the door, waiting to hear what voices were outside. He just didn’t wanna fucking deal with people who hated him too.

He couldn’t hear anything and Even cracked open the door.

Fuck. There were voices.

Eskild’s. And...his mom?

The hallway was fucking cold, one step out and he was retreating back into his room. Opened the closet and dragged out one of Isak’s hoodies. It didn’t matter which one, but it ended up being black and he wasn’t sure if that was a subconscious choice or the universe waving symbols in his face but
he didn’t care, he convinced himself to put it on and that’s what counted.

Then he was stepping back into the hallway again, hands stuffed in the pockets and hood pulled up and feet bare and way too cold. The lights were bright and his head was pounding, he hadn’t been properly upright in fucking...days.

So god knows he looked like hell when he shouldered around the corner, squinting and fucking miserable.

His mom was sitting at the kitchen table with Eskild, holding a cup of tea but their chatter cut the moment he appeared wallowed and sunken in the doorway to That Hallway.

His mom turned around when Eskild fell silent and it was fucking weird, seeing her there at the table, in this house, she’d never been here before and worlds were colliding and Even’s head hurt.

Liv melted instantly, softening into the sweetest mom voice she had, the sickeningly coy one that was trying too fucking hard not to be.

“Hey honey. How are you feeling?”

“Fine,” he croaked and his voice betrayed him, everything betrayed him but he didn’t fucking care.

“Why are you here?”

“I came to check on you both,” Liv gave him a docile smile and Even leaned harder into the wall.

“Isak’s not here.”

School let out hours ago and Isak wasn’t here because Isak was sick of him, what was the point in coming home to a boyfriend who didn’t want you there, to a bedroom that you weren’t welcome in, to a house that was too quiet for fear of waking someone who didn’t want to ever wake up again.

Isak wasn’t here, Even’s mom was here and funny how Even’s mom showed up when Isak’s mom never would, if there had ever been a chance of Isak fixing things with his parents Even had thrown it out the window round about the same time he’d thrown out his will to keep existing.

“I know, but Eskild invited me in for tea.” She lifted her mug, waving for the kitchen. “Would you like some?”

It was so fucking nice and he was fucking sick of--

“I’d like for you not to treat me like I’m twelve,” he shot back, rough and gravely, but he pushed off the wall and ignored his head and sat down at the table.

Isak’s mom had never been here. His mom was here before Isak’s. Isak’s crazy mom, that ruined Isak’s life enough he ran away here, Isak’s crazy boyfriend, that ruined Isak’s life enough he didn’t come back here.

Liv’s eyes were on him, light gray and watching, peering into his skull as he stared at his hands and Eskild poured hot water into his favorite mug. He didn’t have to look up to know it was the one with the little dogs on it, that was how Eskild was.

That was how they all were, Liv wouldn’t stop studying him, Eskild slid a mug in front of him and Even wasn’t looking up. His knuckles were weirdly light and in tact, nothing like Isak’s. Purple and bloody and broken.
Liv was still watching him.

She could probably see how much his head was pounding.

This was the first time she hadn’t been there for the first few days of it and she must’ve been so upset when he snuck out of the house like that, she probably thought he was dead somewhere and she was probably still so upset because she probably knew there was a big part of him that wished he were brave enough to be dead somewhere instead of sitting here with tea in front of him he didn’t have the energy to drink and empty fingers and people staring at how not okay he was.

He felt like shit and he’d been treating everyone like shit and there was a pillow and a blanket on the couch cause Isak had been sleeping there and Even was tearing up into his tea.

He didn’t even know where Isak was. Isak was made of sunshine and gold and dimpled giggles and pretty smiles and was afraid to kiss Even’s skin this morning and Even cried about it and would never tell him and Isak didn’t fucking deserve this.

Liv put an arm around his shoulders and smelled like childhood and home and safety and it’s alright and Dad’s cooking and Even tipped into her and lost it.

Eskild had barely sat down before the first sob broke the silence and his head snapped up, one hand around his tea and eyes wide as Liv gathered Even into her chest, thin arms wrapping around his head and shoulders, barely able to reach beyond his shoulderblades.

She was already rocking him and Even was in shambles, crying patchily and clinging to her shirt and shaking hard.

Eskild’s heart seized in his chest.

Even looked so fucking young.

He was usually so tall and suave and sure and beautiful but now he looked like a child, scared of the dark, curled in against his mom and weeping.

Eskild pushed up from the table and went and found a box of tissues. It wasn’t much but it was all he could really offer besides tea and he couldn’t sit there and do nothing, it was Even.

He sat the box of tissues on the table and the crying hadn’t let up the slightest little bit, neither had the steady, comforting hurt on Liv’s face or the rocking motion and Eskild dragged his chair over, scooting up close and putting a solid hand on Even’s knee.

It wasn’t much but Even broke a little more, sobs hitching as he clung weakly to Liv’s shirt and she pushed off the hood to stroke a hand through the back of his messy hair.

Then there was a key in the lock and the sound wasn’t half as loud as the quiet weeping gasps but Eskild somehow heard it, whipping around then he was sweeping for the front door as fast as possible, catching it right before it could open, holding it barely a crack.

“Hey honey, now’s really not a good time--”

“Is Liv still--”

That was Isak’s voice.

The shift of the world was palpable under his feet, knocking him off balance and upright with a split
fragmented gasp and Even lifted his head, everything soaking wet and dizzy and shaking too much to breathe.

“I-s-sak,” he whispered anyways, struggling to sit up and Liv raised her voice over his shredded quiet.

“Eskild, let him in.”

The door swung open and Isak stepped inside, eyebrows already furrowed, lips parted in confusion and concern as he automatically toed off his shoes, then Eskild was stepping to the side and Isak saw Even and faltered.

Stuttering to a stop, furrow disappearing entirely as his eyes went a little wide and Even was shaking and wiping hands over his face.

His chest wasn’t letting him breathe. Even opened his chapped lips to try to speak. He couldn’t.

Isak crossed the distance between them so quickly Even couldn’t register it, then strong hands were hauling him out of his chair, no time to stumble on weak feet before heavy arms circled around his spine and wrapped him up.

Holding onto him fucking tight and Even buried his face in Isak’s neck, feeling the right size for the first time since he’d laid down in Isak’s bed Saturday night and Isak just held him there in the cold dim of the kitchen and swayed.

At one point Liv rubbed a familiar hand over the top of his spine and it was just so much, everything was and he was bone exhausted, he wanted to sleep for the next thirty years.

Liv kissed his cheek after Isak ran a hand over it, coming away wet then Even was turning into Isak’s open palm and the small hand over his let go.

Isak took him to bed, one hand in his hair and the other over his stomach down the hallway. Then he was tucking Even back in under the striped duvet they’d once kissed and smiled and laughed and loved upon.

Fingertips over his hairline, followed by the warm heartbreaking steady of Isak’s pursed lips pressing to the highest part of his forehead.

He stood back up before Even could find the energy to grab him.

He started back for the door - that’s what Even wanted, that’s what Even had told him he wanted - and every step was sinking Even further alone and moveable and miserable and he was trying to breathe through it but he started crying into the pillow before Isak could leave the room.

If Isak left him again he’d freeze.

The tears were instant, not frozen yet and Isak turned right back around. Beautiful golden halo curling around his face absolutely perfect, angelic, barely a shadow over his cheekbone now, lip not even puffy anymore and all the trace of Even’s disaster was almost gone but all the trace of Even was long gone too.

“I don’t. I don’t want to be alone I don’t--” His eyes were squeezed shut and he wasn’t breathing but he could feel the way Isak was looking at him.

“Oh, Even. Oh, baby, baby, you’re not alone.” And Isak was down beside him, sinking to the earth
and into the mattress, back into his skin as his hands slid up over Even’s neck, brushing his hollow jaw, up through his hair as Even closed his mouth and swallowed and swallowed. “I’m right here, I’m always here.”

Even stuttered on air and Isak kissed his forehead, hard, long, slow, sure. Even held onto Isak’s wrist too tight and Isak kissed his cheek, sinking, sweet, beautiful. Even shook and Isak pressed their noses together, breathing over his mouth.

Oxygen. Giving him oxygen. Showering him in oxygen and warmth and love and promises and Even couldn’t stop shaking, there was too much, he couldn't take it.

Isak’s broad hands slid down his shoulderblades rounded over his spine back up over his shoulders the length of his neck to his jaw, bare fingertips tracing and drawing and dragging over his cheekbones, painting down his eyelids, racing up the side of his nose, back down to dip to his mouth, a line right through the center to roll out his trembling bottom lip.

Isak’s parted mouth was centimeters away from his to breathe his sorrow in. To coax the cold right out of him. To carry him when Even couldn’t do it anymore.

Isak wouldn’t stop wrapping him up in love and Even didn't know how to deal, he didn't know how not to let Isak down but he didn't have anything left to give and--

“It's okay.” Isak’s arms tucked over his and the blanket, looped wide around his spine, a knee crossing over the duvet, hand pressing the back of his neck down as he tipped his chin up and whispered into Even’s hair. “It's okay.”

These sheets used to be enough of a reminder that he was warm and loved but now he felt like a filthy thief and Isak wouldn't stop holding him.

Fredag, 12:05
24.02.17

When he woke up he was groggy and everything was blurry and his body felt like shit, physically, but he had a body and he was here things could be worse--

He rolled over. Fuck. Things were worse. He hadn’t eaten anything in days and his body fucking hated him.

Get in line.

Isak went through hell for a week and Even let him, didn’t save him, didn’t help him, how was he supposed to expect Isak to turn to Even when he was in hell and save him?

Isak had school. What the fuck made him think he had the right to be so fucking selfish?

It took a long time but he struggled upright. His head was pounding and his legs were trapped in a thousand folds of duvet and everything was awful.

He was sitting there holding his head when Linn walked in.
“Food?” She asked. Simple. Not judging. Waiting there with a pout almost as deep as his.

Even nodded once.

Linn nodded once and left the room.

Then she came back with a plate, sat down on the bed beside him, and dragged the duvet off his legs, somehow untangling it in the process.

Even reached over for the plate and she scooted it right beside him.

“Showers can help...reset everything. Only thing you have to do is get there. The bathroom isn’t as far away as it sounds.”

Even put a grape in his mouth and it took a fucking ridiculous amount of effort to chew it, which was more frustrating than the actual chewing of it but he did anyways.

She was right about the shower. He knew that.

He took a saltine cracker and lifted his legs off the edge of the bed. Had to go now before he lost the vague grasping motivation to. His head was still kinda spinning.

“Want me to walk you there?”

“I'm not five,” he said, cursing internally when his voice came out that fucking hoarse. Fuck all of this. “I don't need this.”

He shoved the plate a centimeter away.

“It's faster if I walk you there;” Linn responded all flat, taking a grape from the shoved plate and chewing it slowly.

“Fine,” he said, because he didn't have the energy to fight.

She knew that.

He took a shower for the first time in a week and he stood under the spray as hot as it could go until his skin couldn’t feel the droplets anymore.

Then he dressed slowly, boxers, then sweats and it took fucking so much effort he didn’t bother looking for a shirt pulling something over his head might suffocate him on the way he wanted to melt but he drifted into the living room instead, hair wet and flat and miserable as the rest of him.

Eskild looked up from his spot at the kitchen table. He was eating lunch. The sky outside was white.

“Hey angel. Can I get you anything?”

Even shook his head and walked all the way past him, living room and blinds over windows. He sat down on the couch that didn't have a pillow and blanket on it.

He looked at the pillow and blanket for awhile before he got up again and laid down on Isak's new bed.

It smelled like him and Even closed his eyes.
Eskild pulled the blanket up over his bare shoulders. Even closed his eyes.

The cushions were sinking beneath him and Even closed his eyes.

The door opened and there was Isak's bright laughter walking inside, permeating all his dreams and pulling him slowly out of sleep. Fully awake by the time the door closed behind him, multiple shuffling feet and Even kept his eyes closed, his breathing unchanged as the laughter tapered and Isak kicked off his shoes.

More boots to drop, and drop, and wait--

“How's he doing?”

It was quiet and reverent. Eskild’s hushed reply was just as heartbreaking.

“He took a shower and got a little food and now he's out here. I think he misses you.”

Isak made a soft pained sound and put his backpack down.

Even could feel every movement as he came closer, as he leaned gently over the couch, hand stroking lightly through his hair, smoothing the mess of it off his forehead. The dip down, eyes heavy, the softest of angel kisses pressed to his cheekbone.

Even couldn't help it, he broke a little, turning into the pillow over a pitiful sound squeezing shut eyes tight trying not to cry because Isak kissed him so delicate and tender and loving and now Isak knew he was awake but Even was so fucking lonely.

“Oh hey, baby, shh. I'm home now, you're okay.” Isak ran a hand down his spine and brought a rainstorm of shudders down with it.

“I can come back for homework tomorrow?” a voice offered. Even was too tired to know who.

“Actually, Sana. If you wouldn't mind.”

“Takk,” Isak said and he didn’t look up from Even’s profile, words sliding over him like the tide. Affectionately stroking through his hair again, pulling it up off his forehead, away from his face, up and away into a prettier put together boy. Petting him knowing and deep and caring, propped on the tiniest sliver of couch cushion, hip against Even’s back.

This was the couch he sat on dressed up like God while Isak tried not to look at him from the other one, crown of golden leaves over golden curls that made him look more like an angel than any shouldered on wings could.

This was the couch a week ago Isak had curled up on top of him, sated and worn and dusted with the colors of the sunset and the marks of Even’s body on his.

A week ago. Or was it two.

Isak stroked through his hair as fondly as Even had thumbed the little golden curls that day and it was shifting something under his skin, ribs straining to hold him together because Isak was touching him so beautifully, like the ocean touched the sand, and there was this terrible part of him that screamed he had to make Isak go but he was weak and weak and weak.
Even melted, all of the fight whisking out of his cells, tipping into Isak’s palm, the only good thing right now. He was weak and needy and Isak was offering.

“Can I get you anything else to eat?” Isak asked him, so soft and affectionate, rubbing his thumb up Even’s cheekbone while his lashes fluttered. “Tea?”

“Nei,” he whispered.

“Try?” Isak asked.

“Tea,” Even said. The thumb on his cheek rubbed quick and smooth and Isak lifted his gaze away from Even’s face, he could feel it from behind his eyelids.

“I can make it,” Eskild offered.

“Takk,” Isak said, his eyes back on Even and his hand didn’t stop stroking once.

At some point he woke up and Isak was propped on the other couch, features lit up in the dark. Even sat up and instantly regretted it. His head was pounding again. His chest and spine were freezing.

“Hey baby.” Cheekbones sharp in the light of his phone, green eyes translucent and flashing as they flickered over him. “Feeling any better?”

The pounding wasn’t going away and Even put a hand over his eyes, chest crumbling with how fucking weak and vulnerable he felt here on the couch with Isak all the way over there and holding Even’s life and soul in between his teeth.

“You don’t deserve this,” Even told him quietly, eyes fallen shut behind his clammy palm.

“Neither do you,” Isak said back, not missing a beat.

Even sat there. Looking at Isak’s blanket bundled up at the end of the couch.

He placed two bare feet on the floor, opening his eyes again before his head ate him alive. The silence was screaming and everything was screaming and he used to make Isak giggle and smile and burst and now Isak looked so fucking tired and resigned and quietly carefully hiding the sad and Even couldn’t pretend for him and he hated himself for it.

There were demons in his head and Isak was the fucking angel in his heart baring his beautiful teeth and Even wasn’t sure how much longer he could take the war beneath his skin, under his skull, it only grew sharper every moment Isak looked at him and Isak wouldn’t stop looking at him.

Everything was muddled between ups and downs and Isak hadn’t left yet because he had something to prove but it was too much to think about, he couldn’t think about the shrill pounding of the distant weeping sobs as he struggled against the heavy hands shoving him down the stairs of Jonas’s parent’s place, he couldn’t think about that or he was gonna get dragged under the crash of the waves, sea monster wrapped around his foot as he choked and flailed and all his oxygen escaped in bubbles for the surface that was getting further and further away but he couldn’t swim he couldn’t hold his breath underwater this long--
“Do you want me to sleep next to you?” Isak asked and Even inhaled. The faucet was dripping slowly, leaking water into the kitchen sink somewhere behind them. “Even, it’s okay if you do.”

“Okay,” he rasped, hand over his mouth for a moment as he expected the gurgle to pour from his lips, the drowning boy choking up on the shore but his fingers came back dry. “I do.”

“Then let’s go to bed.” Isak put two hands down on the couch and shoved himself upright, holding out a hand for Even.

Even reached up weakly and Isak took his wrist, his whole arm, pulling him up and throwing Even’s arm around his shoulders.

He could walk, he still had working feet, he still had working legs, he just couldn’t swim--

Isak put him down in his bed and crawled in next to him, pulling the striped blue and white up over them both.

It was warm and cozy and it felt like home again and Even wished he could stop and chill out for maybe three seconds but here he was with his heart pounding and his mouth turned down so damn hopeless.

Even was on the blue pillow and Isak was on the gray one.

The gray one sucked.

Isak looked perfectly content, one hand curling up under his cheek as he laid on the gray and watched Even in the dark of his room.

Even lay there looking watery back.

A few minutes passed and Isak’s hand slipped out from under his head, reaching over to tug the blanket a little higher over Even’s rounded bare shoulder, smoothing it down before he was tucking his hand back under his cheek again.

Even lay there looking at Isak forever. Isak played with his hair and looked back.

They spent hours in silence and every second that passed he came that much closer to breaking. To rolling to cry into his pillow again because Isak was keeping his face as neutral as possible but he was still looking at him like that.

Little green rings around dilated, intense black, lashes blinking long and slow. Cupid's bow mouth pursed up in a little pout, cheek squished, perfectly content to lie here looking at Even for the rest of forever. Soft, and fond, Isak was looking at him like he was fragile and loveable and unbroken, like this was the first morning they were laying in this bed together that Isak made up that little game, minute for minute, let's take it slow. I love you.

This minute we’ll kiss.

That's how Isak was looking at him. Even couldn't give him the small grateful smile back but Isak didn't stop looking at him like that for one fucking minute.

If Even died, this moment was the last thing he wanted.

Inhale fluttering lashes retract retreat--

It scared him, the moment that flashed across his mind because if he had this did that mean tomorrow
he’d be ready to die, he didn’t want that, he didn’t, it was too much it was too scary--

His eyes fell shut, squeezing tight. No. No no no.

Isak’s thumb across his cheek stroked again, no longer absentminded and purposeless, this time it dug into his skin, dug into bone. A forcible physical reminder he was here and Even didn’t get to retreat back into his head like that.

It took a shaky inhale through his nose, then another, but he managed to flutter his eyes back open, eyelashes taking a second to unstick through the moisture.

Isak was studying him seriously, analytical and deep. The searching and hurt overlaid in the overwhelming love as he whispered across hotel sheets, *don’t say stuff like that.*

The only way to have something forever is by losing it.

Isak’s thumb swept over his bottom lashes, too close to his eye to be comfortable, making him startle a little. Isak didn’t stop looking at him like that and his thumb came away wet.

When he blinked again his other eye was rolling a tear down his cheek.

The hand on his cheek slid quick through his hair to grip the back of his head and Isak used that to haul himself forward, onto Even’s comfortable blue pillow, then he was nosing his face to the side and puckering his lips to the teartrack from water that’d already soaked into the pillow.

Even’s eyes fluttered closed and Isak’s mouth dragged under his eye, kissing directly beneath his lashes.

A third at the inner corner of his eye, against the side of his nose and Even let himself rock with the force of it, then Isak was leaning back enough they could both fall onto the pillow again.

The hand in his hair shoved up over his head, fist closing loose in a handful of it that’d dried in all the wrong directions, tugging it back just enough he could feel the pressure against his scalp, then Isak was letting go and dragging his fingers through the rest of it.

There was so much love in that pouty teenage boy, waiting there inches from his face with the world on a platter and his hands in Even’s hair.

He couldn’t open his eyes again. He needed not to see Isak right now, he needed to make Isak understand that it was so much more than he knew, it had to be because if Isak was looking at him like that he couldn’t understand, the gravity of what that swing meant, how fucked up he was, how hard the crash dragged him, how terrible his racing thoughts had been to lead him stumbling dry-heaving here and--

Isak’s cold nose squished against his.

Even tilted uselessly into him and Isak nuzzled in close, hand cupping the back of Even’s head content and gentle now.

They breathed over each other’s mouths and Even didn’t need to open his eyes because Isak was here.

He was here and here and here and breathing over his parted lips and here and.

Even didn’t kiss him because sometimes, with the right person, kissing could be healing.
And Even wasn’t ready to heal.

So he fell asleep instead.

Lips slightly pursed, face lax, head readjusting as he slept with Isak’s hand in his hair.

Eventually, Isak did too.

Lørdag, 14:08  
25.02.17

“Isak, can we chat?” The voice was quiet but it rumbled over the rest of the quiet. It was Eskild, in the doorway. Leaning on it in a black tshirt, looking very sorry for them both.

Even dully turned his eyes back up to the ceiling.

He was just laying there. He hadn’t said a word to Isak all morning.

He woke up and Isak was looking at him all grateful and loving like Even being alive was all he ever needed.

Even didn’t feel like breaking it to that fragile heart that he wasn’t alive. That he was dead and empty and his ankles were wrapped up in demons instead of Isak’s warm skin, that it wouldn’t leave him alone, that he should be getting better and he wasn’t, he wasn’t ever gonna be better. Everything in the past felt fucking hollow, he couldn’t imagine curving up his mouth in a smile and meaning it, he had no fucking idea what that felt like, to have energy for things, to want. To smile. It was fucking cellophane and Isak was looking at him like he was still that person.

He wasn’t that person.

Isak was looking at him like he’d looked at him before the sun came up and Even had let himself be so vulnerable and needy and broken last night, let Isak kiss on his skin and hold him to sleep and now he couldn’t crawl back to the cold.

The numb slipping through his fingers like rain plattered coats and sloshing boats that weren’t high enough, it was splashing his skin and the tingling fear was sinking into his bones that way, through the freezing wet contact that wouldn’t fucking numb.

He was feeling and he was feeling so fucking much he couldn’t breathe.

Isak hadn’t left his side, laying there quietly, sometimes looking up at the ceiling, sometimes looking simply over at him, sometimes on his phone.

Even had destroyed Isak’s life.

Eskild got them water twice, brought Even a different glass each time like that would change anything.

Even stared at the ceiling and didn’t let his lips part.
The boiling tears on his lashes were building up with every crushing second of silence, every fucking
inhale of oxygen, exhale into his world Isak kept making piling higher and shoving him deeper
underwater and dragging him higher for shore and Even was about to fucking burst, he was about to
fucking burst he couldn’t let his lips part for a single sip if he opened his mouth he was gonna
scream.

He was gonna break at the fucking seams.

So he kept his mouth shut and Isak kept looking.

“Isak, can we chat?” Eskild in the doorway.

“Ja, sure.” Isak got up and the mattress shifted, another rocking boat as he started for the door, barely
a crack left behind him.

All the water could rush in from just a crack, cracks like that were fucking dangerous.

“I’m really worried,” Eskild said quietly and Even could hear them, he did not want to fucking hear
them.

Not listening was suddenly more important than waterlogged limbs, Isak kept headphones on the
shelf beside his bed and Even sat up, grabbing them and grabbing his phone.

It hurt to move but it hurt to listen more.

Earphones shoved in like corks as he laid back down he wasn’t going to listen to them, he was going
to blast music and shut up his head instead.

Album covers made him want to be sick but he’d take the queasy grumble of his stomach if it meant
not hearing them.

“It’s a lot worse this time,” Eskild said quietly, leaning against the kitchen counter. Isak had his arms
crossed over his chest as he leaned against the counter and shook his head.

(Spread hands, open palms for the ceiling, beat beat beat over words and fingers were curling,
uncurling, curling, pinky snapping twice double-joint once broken, burst open straight sharp enough
joints reverberated.)

“Not necessarily. Last time he had a week at his parents where I didn’t see him once.” Isak glanced
up, curvy mouth shaped down. “He’d already gone through a week of hell before I met him the night
of the concert, and it was another week past that before he was feeling better again. We just haven’t
seen that first week yet.”

“But like. Don’t you think he’s a lot more...hostile and upset this time, in general?”

“I mean...yeah,” Isak tipped his head. Eskild crossed his arms over his chest too.

(Lost at sea, backs of thumbs over brow bones, sliding up skin that couldn’t dig deep enough, heels
dragging on the bed closer and further and the mattress had no traction; two fists sunk into handfuls
of hair, gripping tight but the grip on anything real was slipping and there was a point when holding
onto became dragging down with and twisting heels tried to dig, something anything the impending
sob shook rib bones but the inhale cut it off before--)

(Head shaking once, fast, hands dislodging and his head whipped again, hands pressing harder
snares pounding over pounding mountain ranges and the drums dropped.)
“So it is worse, then.”

Isak twisted up his face, mouth opening with it, a moment of concession.

“Yeah…I mean, nei. Not really. Sure he’s pissy, but last time he made plans to kill himself so. I’m not complaining.”

“Mmm.” Eskild nodded.

(Palms over eyes, legs flat collapsed breathing hard control every exhale had two halves, two halves, still that break, fingernails digging into his scalp as it curled--)

A light head tipped to the side and Eskild smacked his lips once, a moment’s pause. “How are you really doing with everything though?”

Isak shrugged. Eskild melted a little, pinning him with a sympathetic pout.

“Baby.”

It was so caring and sorry and.

(Twisting kaleidoscope and the two halves turned to silent shaking cries and fists were driving up his forehead again, over the top of his head, face caged in on the inside of his elbows and he wasn’t breathing his chest was convulsing so fast he shook and squeezed fists tighter tighter he’d used this song once to snap out of it he’d brought himself out of it once by holding on to-- trying not to let the you become him but every open word of it nailed those fingertips into his skin breathe breathe breathe)

“It sucks,” he confessed, voice too level. “I miss him. I wish he’d let me be there for him more.”

(You know exactly where you’re going and he broke over a silent cry, mouth open wide as he whipped to the side, bed slamming into ribs and shoulder frozen still, windowsill looks really nice right, it probably happens at night, right?)

(He curled hard into a ball, fight it, on his side with arms caged over his head shaking with how deep it was sinking tie the noose this ain’t a noose, this is a leash and I have news for you: you must obey me.)

(You must obey you must obey)

(Obey obey obey Isak’s snapback falling for the ground obey obey obey.)

Isak looked down, scuffing his feet once. Trying not to cry. They were halfway through, he couldn’t lose it now, but Eskild was looking at him like that and.

“…and it kinda tears me apart every time he tells me to leave,” Isak spilled to the kitchen tiles, a single drop falling in slow motion to splash between his bare feet.

A quick hand lifted to his face and Isak wiped the back of his wrist under his eyes. He wasn’t gonna let it take him, no, he wasn’t, he had to stay strong for Even.

He had this fucking eternal headache from not getting any sleep and Even kept looking at him like he never wanted to see him again and Isak knew he didn’t mean it but that didn’t change the fact that it stung, it fucking stung and everyone was expecting him to be okay because it wasn’t him going through it, it wasn’t him but it was Even, it was his Even--
“It’s not about you,” Eskild offered gently.

“I know it’s not. It still sucks.” Isak glanced up once and looked back down. Even wasn’t doing this because he didn’t care, he got that, he got that, he got that--

(You are surrounding all my sounding down the mountainrange of my leftside brain you are surrounding--)

(Torso twisting and the armed cage kept hitting the mattress and it wouldn’t stop building and building and--)

“How often does he have episodes?” Eskild shifted against the counter, looking over his shoulder for the hallway, looking back at Isak. “Cause Issy, if it’s a week manic and two weeks depressed every time give or take, that’s. What, a month every few months? That’s...that’s a lot.”

Isak lifted a shoulder. “I know.”

Eskild’s brows knit up. Looking at him concernedly. Maybe he should’ve seemed more deterred.

Isak shuffled his feet again and tipped his head, tried to cover.

“I don’t know how often they are, though. I’m guessing the gap between the one in December and now was a lot smaller than usual, otherwise I think he would’ve tried to move out again or prepare or something, I think. I think this one was kinda by surprise.”

Eskild nodded.

“Do you think...it got triggered by something?”

(The piano broke and he was left gasping and gasping, curled up and gasping as the notes danced over folds control control it it’s a leash control it control it control it the silent crying staying silent curling up on his side inhaling and inhaling.)

“I don’t...I don’t really know if that’s how it works. I mean. Wikipedia’s actually kinda shit on real information but.” Eskild huffed lightly and Isak lifted his eyebrows, toeing the tiles. Yeah. “From what Even’s told me he’s. I guess...I don’t know, afraid to let himself be as happy as he feels.”

The kitchen cabinets were mocking him and Isak wet his lips, trying not to think about Even’s spilling hurt, ‘cause maybe we got so comfortable I got scared, okay? Maybe everything was so great I forgot there was a world outside our room, a reality where I don’t get to have that, not really, and I could only see the damn expiration date stamped to the next time I run naked into the street and shatter that beautiful little bubble we were living in that couldn't be real. It's never gonna be like that with me Isak, it's never gonna be easy--


Even was already shaking his head, pushing to sit up all the way, away. “You don’t know, you haven’t seen it, not really, not how--”

“I don't care.” Isak followed right after, knees bumping as he propped next to him, hand sliding around his thigh to grip tight. “I don’t care how bad it gets. Even, I love you. Get it through your pretty head, cause I mean it, and I'm not giving up.”

Eskild pushed off the counter and Isak blinked, shaking his head once. Eskild turned to face him all
the way now, one hand and one hip on the counter, forcing Isak to look up at him.

“Do you think he’s afraid to be happy in the chance that it’ll slip over into mania?”

Trying to talk this through with him and Isak blinked once. There was so much concern, so much I want to help, and Eskild had never fucking signed up for this. He’d seen a devastated kid wasted in a gay bar, when he elected to save that kid he never fucking chose all the rest of this and--

He couldn’t think about this like that. He couldn’t think about Even like that. Isak was choosing Even, and his roommates had made it damn clear they were too. If he let himself slip into the same doubts Even had…

He had to be the strong one.

“Isak?” Eskild pressed and Isak shook his head once.

“I don’t know if it can like…work like that but if it did it still doesn’t make much sense. I mean, this week fucking sucked, I don’t know when he would’ve been happy enough to trigger--”

“What about Saturday?” Eskild asked quietly and Isak’s words froze on his tongue.

He stared at the pure white cabinet for a moment before he turned his head to look directly at Eskild.

“What?”

The patience on Eskild’s face, all wrapped up in worry and I’ll catch you if you fall over right now which Isak might, he really might.

“What about the Saturday before his birthday? Do you think that could’ve triggered it?”

The Saturday before Even’s birthday. The day they’d pushed the fucking limits of space time and physics to fuck for three hours and dive into each other so deep Isak had slept for fifteen hours afterwards? While Even took care of him like he hadn’t been the one actually doing all of the work?

That Saturday?

“Saturday was….really intense,” Isak whispered, eyes too wide. “I mean, I know it was for me, and. And of course it was for him too, I.”

He was really not doing a great job of hiding how fucking shook he was right now because what if he--

What if that--

Did that mean they--

(And I turn my fate, inhaling inhaling and I turn my fate. The drums in the background picked up and it was pounding him into the mattress, everything he couldn’t hold onto he was shaking and shaking harder curling tighter gasping faster and I turn my fate pounding pounding I turn my fate)

“Hey, baby, it wouldn’t be your fault even if it was, okay? It was Even’s idea, remember? He knew what he was doing.”

Isak was trying to nod but he was also trying not to cry, his tongue stuck between his lips, nodding too much now so his eyes might not water up and.
“Or maybe it was how much everybody drank Sunday night,” Eskild offered, trying to steer him off the bawling train. “I know alcohol isn’t good for…”

“We drank Friday night too,” Isak interrupted quietly. Gaze darting back and forth between kitchen tiles. “--a lot.”

“But it could also be entirely unrelated to all of those things, right?” Eskild sounded so calm and sure and soothing and Isak was fucking falling apart, he couldn’t handle the idea that somehow he’d been the one to let this happen to--

“Isak.”

“I have no fucking clue, honestly.” He shook his head too fast, trying to dislodge all the pressure. Eskild put a hand on his shoulder and he sucked in a deep, audible breath, chest expanding, exhale rushing, “I haven’t asked Liv, I.”

(Fight it fight it I have news for you you must obey--)

(And I turn my fate he curled tighter he couldn’t curl anymore and I turn my fate the silence couldn’t crush him any louder he couldn’t shake any harder and I turn my fate there was nowhere to go this was as tight and I turn my fate quiet as it got this was the edge this was the edge this was the edge)

(And I turn my fate and I turn my fate and I turn my fate and I turn my fa--) Tongue in his cheek, heartbeat pounding between his ribs.

“Maybe I should.”

“Yeah,” Eskild offered, eyebrows knit again as he shook Isak’s shoulder once. “Maybe you--”

The scream was piercing, ear-shattering, the kind of scream you heard in movies.

Isak skid into the hallway so fast his shoulder slammed into the wall, the wall Even had fucked him up against was giving him bruises again, the really not fun kind but he couldn’t get any traction in his socks and the soundtrack for his next ten years of nightmares was still rolling on record.

Then he was bursting through the door to his room and Even was curled in a ball in the middle of his bed fucking sobbing and shaking, fingers curled fucking tight enough his hands were white, fists clutching his head around his ears and Isak dropped like a rock, grabbing his wrists and pulling him out of the ball, yanking out the headphones and the phone and shoving it all aside as he gathered Even up into his arms.

“Baby, baby, talk to me. You’re okay, you’re okay, talk to me.”

“It hurts it hurts I can’t control it I c-can’t control it I CAN’T CONTROL IT--”

“Even, Even, listen to me, baby, you’re okay, I’m here, you’re safe,”

Even was just weeping, sobbing against him and Isak was crying and holding him tight and rocking them and Eskild was standing in the doorway looking more upset and stricken than he’d ever seen but Isak barely glanced at him, he couldn’t stop looking down at the boy crumbling in his arms, couldn’t stop running his hands through Even’s hair over his neck and his shoulders and his arms and his face but Even was shaking too much and Isak couldn’t calm him down, nothing he was doing was doing anything and.
“I’m here, I’m here, you’re okay, I’m here baby, you’re okay.”

He kept wiping his tears out of Even’s hair before they could mix in with all the ones streaming down his cheeks, his open mouth crushed up against Isak’s chest as he sobbed and Isak held him tight and rocked, and rocked.

“It’s okay. You’re okay. You’re okay.”

Isak gathered him up a little closer in his lap, wrapping his legs out to the side to Even could press closer, his head against Isak’s cheek as his wet chapped lips caught on the skin above the collar of Isak’s shirt and Isak rocked them and rocked them.

“I’m here.” Rock and rock and Even cried into him, filling up his skin and every pore of him with it, fingers curled so tight on Isak’s far collarbone he was leaving bruises he hadn’t left in a week.

“I’m here.”

He eventually exhausted himself enough that he just broke down, sliding down Isak’s chest to curl into a ball again, tears rolling down his cheeks and he wouldn’t open his eyes or uncurl and he wouldn’t stop crying.

(He was drowning in how much he didn’t want to be alive, his heart beating too fast and he was crying from how much he didn’t want to alive, like he could possibly change anything he had no control none but his bones were still screaming out so loud because it hurt, everything inside hurt and he was so fucking dead and empty and hurt, all the red strings were drowning because he was pushing everyone away, his demons were too much, it was too much, Isak was gonna leave him Even was holding onto him so fucking tight and Isak was gonna leave him--)

Isak stayed and held the impenetrable curled boy, stroking through his hair since that was the only piece left but his curved spine, face tucked away inside his arms and knees, crying to the point that Isak had to keep putting a hand on his spine to make sure he was still breathing and.

And Even cried himself to sleep that way, pure exhaustion taking over as his body kicked him out of his head and dragged him unconscious and quiet in Isak’s lap.

Isak stroked down his spine for another god knows how long, until he eventually carefully laid him back down on the mattress, blue pillow under his head. He pried Even’s fingers off his arms, unhooked his knees, unraveling him just a little so he could sleep, really sleep and Isak was still crying.

Isak had to brush over his arms and neck and twisted up tear stained puffy red face too many times because his own tears kept landing on Even’s skin and Isak wasn’t gonna let him be stained like that.

He surprised himself with the strength he had left to stand, barely, turning around as his head spun and Eskild was still in the doorway, hadn’t budged one inch.

Isak just looked at him a moment, he didn’t know what else to do but look.

He wanted to crawl under the covers with Even and curl around his spine and hold him tighter than he’d held anything before, he wanted to stay, but Eskild tipped his head for the kitchen and waved him out.

Isak picked up the headphones and the phone on the way out, shoving both in his pockets.

The moment they were in the hallway, door cracked, Eskild was wrapping an arm around his
shoulders and guiding him drifting into the kitchen.

“What the hell was that?”

“I don’t know, I have no idea, I don’t--”

Eskild tugged his shoulder around pulled him into a hug and Isak clung back and kinda crumbled.

“Go get lunch, okay? You haven’t eaten yet. I’ll keep an eye on him today, you go out. Go see your friends or something. Just don’t be here for a little while.”

“Eskild, I won’t leave him--”

“I know you won’t, that’s why I’m kicking you out.” A caring hand slid up over his head through his curls and Isak sniffled, pulling back.

“Again?” He said weakly and Eskild scoffed, a little bit of a smile as he cuffed Isak’s jaw with his thumb.

“C’mon kid, I love you, I’d never really kick you out.”

Isak looked down and nodded.

“But I am kicking you out now, so go. I’ll take care of tall dark handsome in there, he’ll be perfectly fine.”

Isak opened his mouth to correct Eskild, tell him Even’s hair was blonde, but then he realized that wasn’t what Eskild meant by dark.

“Okay.” He was only going so he could breathe, because he needed to be breathing when Even woke up, he needed to be okay by then. “I’ll be back after dinner.”

“Okay. Good. We’ll both still be here.”

Isak didn’t call anybody, he knew he should probably head to Jonas’s, or Mahdi’s or something, but he didn’t.

He took a bus down to the water, all that water that stretched out as far as the eye could see, Oslofjord that eventually bled into the North Sea, all the way to Køben and beyond.

Isak squinted at the horizon and wondered what Even’s sister was doing right now. If she was happy.

If anybody had told her about him.

Knowing Liv and Bjørn, she probably had half a dozen pictures and his phone number saved in favorites.

Isak landed at the docks. The sun was low in the sky, low enough he decided he’d watch the sunset here.

He stepped out onto an empty, cold boardwalk. There were docked boats swaying in the wind, water sparkling, the rest of Oslo spread out behind him like sprawling limbs.

Isak brushed his boot over the very last wooden board, brushing aside the last bits of snow. White dense powder mush fell into the water and fogged temporarily before it disappeared.
He sat down on the edge of the dock and pulled Even’s phone out of his pocket, unlocking it. There were the two of them on his home screen and Isak tapped his thumb to open up the music app.

The song paused, right towards the end, because that’s when Isak ripped out the headphones. There was this beautiful feature on the iPhone that it paused your music for you, so you didn’t lose your place.

Or so your boyfriend could know what song you were listening to that made you have an actual breakdown, so he could sit on the docks and listen to it and maybe get half a chance at understanding your brain.

Isak dug the headphones out of his other pocket, leaning back and tipping to the side to do it, then he was untangling them, putting in one ear at a time and plugging it back into Even’s phone as he looked at the song title.

Holding Onto You. The artist just said TØP. Isak was pretty sure he didn’t know who that was.

He took note of the time he paused the song at, then he was pressing the back button and starting the song over.

It was windy enough it was ruffling his hair over his forehead and Isak dangled his legs off the edge of the dock, letting his eyes fall closed as the words started up.

It was a lot. One of the verses threatened to bring the tears back. The bridge fucking shook him. It built enough he gasped at one part, looking down. It was a little before the paused numbers. That had to be where Even screamed.

Isak finished the song, wet his lips, shook his head and started it over.

He was gonna start learning how to catch these references.

Music, movies. All of it.

He was in this for the fucking long run.

Lørdag, 18:38  
25.02.17

When he walked on socked feet back down the hallway to his bedroom, Isak wasn’t sure he was the same person that went skidding through it earlier.

Or the same person that got fucked up against that wall, or the same person that spun around right there at the doorway to his room, hand on the doorknob as he looked up at Even and told him jeg elsker deg.

He wasn’t the same person, and Even wasn’t really either, but they had now, and that was such a beautiful thing.

They were gonna be okay, him and Even.

He knew it.
Isak turned the handle on his bedroom door, peeking it open a tad, holding his breath for the inevitable creak. The creak didn’t come and Even was fast asleep, lying there quiet and still under the blue and white stripes of Isak’s duvet.

He pushed the door the rest of the way open and slid inside, carefully shutting it back behind him.

All the blinds were open. It took him a second to place, he’d been so busy looking at Even he hadn’t noticed that there was suddenly Oslo painting his beautiful sleeping features.

All the blinds were all the way up, actually, lifted free from the windows, orange makeshift curtain and drifting white one folded up over itself.

The night lights of Oslo were in the distance, the brick outcropping of the next apartment over blocking a lot of it.

It was a whole different room.

He was pretty sure that was why Even did it.

Isak was quiet as he shed his hoodie, his jeans, tugged off both socks. He was careful as he crawled onto the other side of the starlit bed, under the covers beside the starry boy.

Even was on his back, facing away from him, duvet pulled up to his shoulders. Isak tugged it just a little higher.

It was nice in here with the windows open. It was gonna suck in the morning because the sun was gonna rise in their eyes, but that was alright. For now they had starlight.

Eskild shot him a text earlier, said Even didn't sleep longer than an hour, that he came back out groggy and kinda teary but Eskild talked with him and made him toast then they wrapped up in blankets, watched a movie together, and Even went back to bed.

Isak had gone to Jonas’s and Jonas had invited over the other boys and they all played FIFA and Isak lost a lot and got out of his head and the boys were laughing all the way out the door. Isak stayed and had dinner with Jonas’s family for the first time in years.

And now he was home, ready to come back to bed and pass out too.

But he needed a few minutes first, to lay here and breathe.

Isak watched Even quietly and Even slept.

Gray pillow puffed up as cushioned as it could go and Isak just lay there on the other side of the bed, blinking slow and watching the starlight echo off the fragile cheekbones of his boy.

His beautiful tortured boy with his beautiful tortured mind.

You know what?

Isak was really. really in love.

And everything really was gonna be okay.

Even spent half the day yesterday out of bed, he spent some of today out too, he was drinking water daily and slowly getting back to eating. It wasn’t much, but it was a fucking start.
He was just so fucking grateful Even was letting him have this. Letting him have the darkest pieces of him too. Choosing to be at Isak’s instead of his parents through all of this. Letting him be a part of it. Letting him sleep in here, beside him. This was all he needed, to be here beside him when he slept.

Even could take all the time he needed. There wasn’t a single place Isak would rather be.

The sheet over them shifted, Even’s eyelashes fluttering as he tipped his head a little and rolled, shoulders pulling up to the side, facing all the way away from Isak now, curling up, duvet sliding sideways.

Isak waited until he was still again before he scooted in a little closer, tugging it back up again, over both their shoulders as he rolled over and pressed his spine to Even’s, shoulders all the way down to lumbar.

Here. Solid, strong, sure.

Isak rolled his lips in, tongue darting out as he glanced up, nightlights of Oslo twinkling over his skin and Even’s, night wrapping them up in blankets too. The city whispering warm and Isak blinked once and looked up at the rolled curtains.

They were orange.

He smiled to himself, closed his eyes, and fell asleep.

And fell, and fell, and fell, asleep.

Chapter End Notes

The song Even listens to is here.

Listen, I am here if you want to come cry at me. (on that note I will eventually reply to comments but its midterms and I’m in hell so)

This fucking sucks, yeah. I get that. Believe me, of all people, I get that. I don’t give Even any emotion or moment I haven’t had. I wish this fic could be all sunshine and butterflies and rainbows but it’s not, this is what real bipolar looks like. This is how it hurts. We don’t glorify mental illness here.

On that note, if you’re really hurt right now and want to leave a comment about it, I’d be honored. I’ll talk through it with you, I’ll answer any questions you have. I’m not an expert, obviously, this is different for every person’s brain, but I can answer you what I know.

However, if you’re just pissed I kept this realistic and didn’t give you a pretty love story, please keep your words to yourself.

Much love to you all.
Chapter Notes

This chapter was originally titled “Stars and Skateparks” as a throwback parallel shoutout but I think you’ll understand why I had to change it

This chapter could also probably be titled Clandestine 101 tbh

And it’s long af guys i’m sorry im the worst and the next chapter is even longer

dunno what I’m doing with my life, although to be fair I have literally every single chapter of the rest of this fic already sketched out and the epilogue already written so. There’s that. Surprise.

warnings: discussion of suicidal ideation, internal religious conflict, illegal substance Marijuana, crying and confessions, discussion of medications, lowkey panic attacks

lots of more Siken references cause I have no chill

quotes from Siken’s I Had a Dream About You

but better yet somebody did an edit of these boys with that poem so look at the gifset here

xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Søndag, 01:44
26.02.17

At midnight Even woke up.

At about fifteen seconds after midnight, Even kicked him out.

Isak was lying on the couch trying not to cry at 2 in the morning when he heard the sound. He didn’t lift his head, because he’d seen the horror movies and he wasn’t keen on dying, thank you.

Then there was a figure at the door, picking up a shoe and untying Even’s boots and Isak sat up instantly, reaching over and turning on the lamp.

They both squinted and made uncomfortable noises, then Even was still putting on his shoes and Isak was standing, heart rushing twice his head.

“Even? Are you okay?”

“I’m fine.” He shoved his foot into the other boot, not looking up and the dread was so heavy in
Isak’s stomach he couldn’t breathe.

“Then why are you leaving?”

“I just need out, okay. I’m fucking suffocating.”

Isak somehow ended up on the other side of the room, stepping close enough he could dive and grab but he was just trying to read the shutdown of those fragile cheekbones, downcast eyes, only he couldn’t tell anything and his heart was pounding too loud to hear.

Even glanced up, took one look at his face and scoffed bitterly.

“I’m not gonna kill myself.”

A fraction of the weight lifted off his chest but not enough he could make his lungs work again.

“Can I come with you, then?”

“No.”

“Please? Baby, you haven’t eaten a lot, your strength isn’t up, I don’t want. I don’t want something to happen.”

“I can take care of myself,” he said, shrugging into a coat, bitter and dark.

“I know that,” Isak whispered. He wasn’t trying to suffocate, he wasn’t, he wasn’t. He knew Even didn’t need to be babied, he knew, he knew-- “You haven’t needed me, I get it.”

Even paused, looking up from the zipper. “That’s not.”

“It’s fine.” Isak had no idea he’d been so close to crying until the rapid blinking splattered tears onto his cheeks he couldn’t wipe away fast enough.

Even dropped his head and groaned.

“I just need some fucking space to think, okay, it’s not about you.”

Isak nodded and nodded and tried to swallow. He knew it wasn’t about him, he couldn’t let this be about him, he had to be here and supportive and understanding and.

Isak inhaled once, sharp, only it still came out teary. Even made a quiet frustrated sound.

“Dammit, you can come.”

“Are you sure, I don’t want--”

“You’re not overstepping, I said you can come, just stay quiet?”

“I can do that,” Isak promised, grabbing a jacket and throwing on his shoes before Even changed his mind or left without him. Even didn’t, Even waited.

“It’s not that I don’t need you, Isak.” Quiet and unreadable.

“Why would you?” Isak asked, wiggling his foot the rest of the way into a boot. “You’ve done this without me enough times, I don’t know what made me think I would make it any different--”

The sudden touch was so fucking cold and unexpected it made him startle into nearly twisting his
ankle in his shoe. Even’s hand was closed around his lifted wrist, fingers wrapped and freezing, standing close and the grab wasn’t hard but it was the first time he’d reached for Isak like that in a long time and Isak was staring.

“I need you. I don’t know what I would fucking do without you. But I also can’t do this to you. Do you understand?”

He stood still, searching frozen light blues and finding near nothing, but if he knew one thing, it was that being honest was the only thing that mattered anymore.

“A little,” he confessed. Not much, please just--

“Okay. That’s gonna have to be enough for now.”

Isak just looked at him.

Even let go and opened up the door. Isak followed him outside and didn’t say another word. His wrist rushed warm and pounded all the pulse he hadn’t felt.

They went to the top of a hill in the middle of nowhere significant and Even sat down in the grass and it was fucking freezing, soaking wet, hard as a rock, so of course he laid all the way down in it. Staring up at the stars.

Isak sat a few feet away, drawing his knees up into his chest. His ankles were cold and they were gonna catch pneumonia or some shit, it’d been vaguely raining which made no fucking sense because the weather was either at 0 or barely above and it should’ve been snow but it was nasty and not and.

“I had a dream about you,” Even said into the quiet.

Isak stared at the dark blades of grass. Blue and gray and gray and green.

“What did I do?”

“The boy in the sweatshirt, the boy on the bridge, the sandwich cut in half on the plate.”

Isak looked over at him. Even was looking up at the sky and Isak followed his gaze. That was a lot of stars. A lot of dark.

He leaned back a little, digging his phone out of his pocket and squinting at the brightness, lowering it all the way as he pulled up google and typed in everything Even had just said, with the word Siken afterwards cause he had a feeling.

Now Even was lying there with his eyes closed. Isak looked at him for a moment before he laid down too, soaking in the saturated wet and lifting his voice quietly over the sound of the stars.

“All the cows were falling out of the sky and landing in the mud. You were drinking sangria and I was throwing oranges at you, but it didn't matter.”

Even had stopped breathing beside him and Isak’s voice dropped into a whisper.

“I said my arms are very long and your head’s on fire.”

He turned to the side, studying the profile of Even’s face for a moment before he looked back at his phone.
“I said kiss me here and here and here and you did.”

“Please don’t,” Even said and the stars were screaming so Isak locked his phone screen and shoved it back in his pocket and away.

“Okay,” he whispered.

He sat back up, running a hand through the frozen grass, the wet blades. Everything that shouldn’t be.

Isak folded his legs underneath himself and closed his eyes to shut out the stars. *I'm fucking suffocating.* If he ran through Even’s words enough times, maybe he’d understand a little more.

I need you. I don’t know what I would fucking do without you. But I also can’t do this *to* you. Do you understand?

“You can take first shower,” Isak said under the last streetlight and Even looked at him with his eyebrows knit. “There’s grass in your hair, I don’t mind waiting.”

“Don’t worry, you will eventually,” Even said and Isak shook his head once.

“I don’t mind waiting.”

By the time they got home and went their separate ways, to couch and bed again Isak thought, maybe, just maybe he got it now.

Søndag, 10:07
26.02.17

Isak was doing homework on his stomach on the floor in his bedroom. It was eerily quiet, and Even didn’t know he was in here because Even was sleeping again but Isak didn’t care that Even didn’t want him here, he was here, god fucking dammit.

Although that was big talk considering he kept sneaking in and out so Even couldn’t tell him to leave again. His phone vibrated loudly against the ring of his binder and Isak’s head snapped up, heart skipping a beat cause if Even heard that woke up and kicked him out--

Even’s lashes didn’t even flutter.

Isak breathed out slow and picked up his phone. It was a text from Jonas, telling him to come let him in. He used to have a key to Isak’s parents place - not that Terje knew that, he’d flip shit, Isak just said he lost his and got a new one to give to Jonas - but now that he was coming over all the damn time and Isak had to get off his ass to let him in it was annoying, frankly.

But like, he also couldn’t give Jonas a key when Even didn’t even have a key and it wasn’t like Isak could just ask his roommates if he could give all of the important people in his life keys to a flat they were overcapacity with by two people already and yeah, he could just get off his ass and go let in Jonas instead.

“Hi.”
“Hey, how are things?” Boots toeing off and Isak was already headed for the couch, shoving his pillow and blanket aside and plopping down with a sigh.

“That bad?” Dark curls tipped for the makeshift bedding and Isak raised his eyebrows, tongue caught between rolled in lips.

“Ja, that bad. It’s been...rocky as fuck, honestly.”

“You look like you haven’t slept in days,” Jonas commented cheerily, plopping down on the floor in front of the couch, leaning back against it while Isak stretched out his legs and sighed up at the ceiling.

“We took a two am adventure and it sucked, it was fucking freezing and he wants nothing to do with me, so.”

“I don't get that part, man. Wouldn't he want the comfort?”

“Where are you supposed to put your hands on someone who hurts everywhere,” Isak said quietly and Jonas leaned his head back against the couch, bumping it against Isak’s leg.

“On the bright side you turned into a poet.”

“Shut up it's a quote it’s not mine.”

“Ah hah, that explains it.”

“Fuck off,” Isak suggested, nudging Jonas’s head off his leg. “Serr though...thanks for being here.” Jonas furrowed his eyebrows, curls shaking once axiomatic.

“Ja, always.” Then he was shoving back up, headed across the room for the guitar case propped by the door, plopping back down on the ground with it. He’d left it here after Even’s birthday party two weeks ago, and they didn’t have any plans, so.

Isak slid off the couch, plopping down next to him on the floor and Jonas opened up the case before he suddenly remembered and glanced for the direction of Isak’s bedroom.

“He’s sleeping. He’s like, completely out you’re totally fine.” Jonas nodded and pulled out the guitar, situating it in his lap and Isak scooted a little so he didn’t get whacked with the brunt end of it, putting his shoulder against the couch so he could lean his head on the cushions and watch Jonas play.

He pulled a pick out of his wallet and Isak smiled to himself. Jonas was keeping picks on him again.

“You been working on anything new?”

“I dunno.” He strummed a chord, plucking through a couple beats before shifting into another one. “I’ve considered writing again, or something, haven't really decided.”

“I think you should,” Isak offered and Jonas glanced over, pausing the strings.

“I can’t write without a lyricist, y’know.” Isak scoffed, mouth tipping up in a side smile as he rolled his head on the edge of the couch.
“I’m not a lyricist. Or a poet.”

“Bullshit, have you heard you rap?”

“Have you?” Isak laughed, mouth open and Jonas smiled wide, turning back to the guitar and slipping back into an easy chord pattern, strumming undercurrent as the smile faded out a little, light eyes glancing over at him again.

“I mean, it has been awhile, maybe you actually improved.”

“I didn’t,” Isak told him sincerely and Jonas laughed this time, fingers twinkling brighter over the strings with it.

He settled back against the couch, a quiet soft smile as Jonas played, messing around with a few chords and dabbling melodies. Nothing fancy, nothing even recognizable but it was nice, to just sit here and listen and not think.

His childhood wasn’t all bad, wasn’t all chaos, but all the best parts of it he remembered were still the quiet times he and Jonas didn’t do much of anything at all. Coloring, laughing, playing cars. Sitting in trees, swimming in the river, sending each other songs on Spotify. On a bench somewhere chatting about the constructs of society, smoking weed, guitar string soundtrack while Isak just sat and thought and listened until he got bored and rapped along to make Jonas laugh.

“Hey, Is?”

The guitar stopped and Isak lifted his head, kinda surprised.

“Yeah?”

Jonas furrowed his eyebrows, looking down at the guitar, strumming his bare thumb down the strings once before he looked back over, knit and up as simple as any question he’d ever shot Isak’s way.

“Can we be best friends again?”

Isak looked at him for a moment, studying the expression and the sincerity and the patience, as quiet and serious as he’d been when Isak came out but this question was on the opposite end of the spectrum of silly than the is it me.

Isak huffed, smile crooking up honest on one side, digging one dimple in deep, teeth showing as he kinda beamed.

“Ja.” He nodded, nodded again. “I’d like that.”

“Cool,” Jonas said, then he was looking back down, pick strumming quick as he started playing again.

It was recognizable that time.

“Oiii,” Isak said and Jonas smiled, then Isak was tipping away from the couch, knitting his eyebrows and lifting his voice to sing while Jonas smiled wider than the river.

“Oh, you done done me and you better felt it--”

Jonas’s voice lifted with his, “...I tried to beat you, but you’re so hot that I melted--”
and Isak’s chest was bubbling and tight all at once and the current downstream was finally sparkling clear.

“Fell right through the cracks. Now I’m trying to get ba-a-ack…”

And they were back, they were back, they were back.

Mandag, 09:02
27.02.17

The week Even was manic was the week Isak’s life fell apart.

And Even hadn’t been there for him once.

He didn't feel like screaming today. He didn't feel anything actually.

He spent the day lying there thinking. He drank the water Linn brought him, and the tea two hours later. He ate half of the grapes and crackers she brought him and he didn’t answer any of her questions.

So she left again and Even went back to lying there thinking.

Then Isak got home.

Isak was here and soft.

“Hey baby. How are things?”

Even didn’t say a word.

“Even?”

Their eyes met and Even looked at him and thought about everything he’d thought about.

“Can you give me something? Anything?”

Isak was trying to talk to him and Even was absolutely nothing.

“Can I lie down with you?”

Even just looked at him. It wasn’t a glare but it wasn’t blank either.

Isak threw up his hands (surrender defeat annoyance none of the above) and said okay (understanding hurt some sign of love) and went out to sleep on the couch again.

He was fucking sick of this couch.
He was sick of the twist in his stomach every time he laid down to another night apart.
He was sick of thinking about how sick he was when it wasn’t even him who was sick.
And he was fucking sick of this motherfucking assignment.
Isak made a frustrated noise and scribbled out yet another line of mistranslated adverbs.
He was fucking attempting to do homework only he was pissed and he was pissed at himself for
being pissed but it hurt and he didn’t know what he was doing wrong or why he kept making this
about him, it probably had nothing to do with him but what if it did--
Eskild barely made it a step in the doorway before dad mode kicked in and he was getting grilled.
“Isak, how are you?”
“Fuck this,” Isak replied, scratching out a paragraph of German aggressively enough it snapped off
the end of his pencil.
He fought back the growl and jammed the eraser end of his pencil into lengthening the lead again.
Too patient landed on the couch beside him.
“You need air?” Eskild asked and Isak sucked in a shaky breath and tossed his books and stupid
pencil aside, shoving to his feet.
“Do you mind keeping an eye on him for a little while?”
“Of course not. Go.”
He did.

There was that whole line about how fog was supposed to make your mind seem clear but the dark
clouds didn’t spell disaster the way lightning did.
It was still probably lachesism that led him here, staring at cropped height of buildings that led up to
the edge of brick columns too big to wrap arms around.
A heavy halo of fog pouring over the angled outcrops of the roof.
The light gray of the fog looked so stark white behind the dark gray of the towering roof and Isak
couldn’t believe he was here but he was here.
It was stupid, honestly, and he stopped like seven times walking up the stairs but eventually he
landed at giant doors and he’d come this far, might as fucking well go inside.
Two steps further from land.
And kept going, taking off his coat and brushing his curls aside nervously as he turned the corner out
of the coat room and down the little hallway, then he was stepping into the chapel and his heart was
on his toes, every step he took inside.
It was the seventeenth day of the second month that the world flooded Noah’s ark and the floodwater was still lapping at his ankles all these years later from another seventeenth day of the second month but here he was.

It was too late to turn around so Isak started down the aisle instead, slow enough he could feel the stare of every dark wooden pew as he stepped past.

There was someone in the back row, head down, so Isak kept walking. He didn’t want to be anywhere near them, he didn’t want to be here either, only fuck. God could probably hear that, all of this, if this whole thing was real then how deep were the sins that were making his knees shake--

He finally just slid into a pew near the front, staring at the candles flickering up by the cross for a moment.

Just when they’d been warming up, it’d all turned so cold.

The last time he’d been in a church he’d been with Even, he’d told Even he loved him and he’d cried in the boys bathroom and now here he was, sitting with his hands clasped frozen in his lap and his heart pounding too nervous and unsure to sit here forever and what, dip his head, whisper to the silence of someone he was pretty sure wasn’t there, let alone listening, let alone able to help--

Isak sucked in a breath and pushed right back to his feet, taking two steps out into the aisle, staring at the carpeted rug beneath his shoes.

He’d just been raised to believe it as a kid, was all. There was some part inside him that wondered, that would always wonder if it was real and he knew fucking firsthand that even if it was, praying to God right now wasn’t gonna do a damn thing, it never stopped anything from happening to his mom and it wasn’t gonna help Even but then tell him,

why twenty one seconds later he was on his knees at the altar with his clasped hands to his forehead and a prayer on his lips.

Because he loved a boy and he had no idea what else to do, that was why.

In a strange twist of events and parallels, Even was the one who called Jonas this time.

They set a meeting time, date and place. Tomorrow, 15:00, skatepark, the bench.

Even held Isak’s gray pillow pitifully in his arms and tried to breathe in what he smelled like but it’d been too tainted and he couldn’t place it anymore and he just ended up staining Isak’s limp pillow with salt water instead.
When Isak got home, it was late and there was a note on the pillow on the couch.

It was a drawing - Even had been drawing - of Even in the ocean on one panel, *at the same time in a different universe*. He was being swept away in the water, drowning, a silent scream drifting through bubbles to the surface.

Then there was Isak with him in the other panel, holding his hand and Even’s head was barely above water and turned to face the other way but he was holding onto Isak’s hand tight, and the waves weren’t crashing over his head.

*You’re more than everything*, was all it said.

Isak cried and held the piece of paper to his chest, rocking for a moment or two. Breathing in, breathing back out.

Even was drawing again. Even was drawing for *him* again. There was something Isak was doing, something that was okay, something that somehow helped. He’d thought he was making things worse.

He’d thought he was making things worse but here was Even’s drawing over his heart, pounding with him and he wasn’t making things worse, he hadn’t ruined everything yet.

Isak left the note on his pillow, in case he ended up right back out here again.

But he needed to check on his boy first.

After he collected himself enough and wiped the tears from his face. All of this water.

Isak peeked his head into the bedroom and Even was laying awake, glancing up at him as he stepped inside. Glanced right back away again. That was okay.

Isak crossed the room and dropped to his knees again, the second altar tonight as he dipped to press a kiss to Even’s fragile cheek.

Light blue haunted eyes slipped closed, then Isak was leaning back, feet propped up beneath him, running a hand through Even’s hair once before he pulled his hands back for his lap.

“You want me in here or on the couch?” He asked softly and Even glanced up at him, over at the door. Looked back down.

“Couch,” Even said.

“Okay,” Isak whispered, leaning over to kiss his cheek again. Then he pushed to his feet and headed for the door.

He had a hand on the knob, opening it wide when he heard the quiet whisper, barely barely fucking audible behind him, if the door had creaked the slightest he would’ve missed it.

“Here?” Even whispered. Isak turned around.

Even’s eyes were closed, afraid to look at him, concession so quiet it wasn’t meant for him. Isak slowly pushed the door back closed.

The moment the handle clicked Even’s face squinched up in pain, shoulders lifting up by his ears--

“Here?” Isak repeated aloud and Even’s eyes shot open instantly, staring wide eyed at Isak.
Isak looked back simply, door still closed. Waiting for the quiet confirmation he knew was there.

Another moment and a half and Even nodded, once, which was enough for him. Isak walked back over for the bed, forcing himself to keep the smile in his chest as he laid down right on the edge of the mattress, duvet half a foot away.

“Over here?” He asked the curved spine.

Even straightened and rolled over, looking at him with his eyebrows knit a little in question, what was Isak talking about.

Isak scooted an inch, hopping a bit with it. “Or over here?”

Even’s eyebrows furrowed all the way.

Isak scooted another inch, mouth open, eyebrows up, a dangling pause before he said it again.

“Or maybe here?”

And the icy statue finally broke a little, the corner of his mouth curling up just a twitch, the tiniest of smiles.

Isak couldn’t help it, he couldn’t keep up the pounding in his chest when Even was looking like that, he was beaming now because Even had a tiny tiny smile on his face and Isak was alive, they both were.

He hopped one last time, covering half the mattress and scooting up close with it, smiling at Even with his eyebrows up.

“What about here?” They were inches apart now and Even was looking at him a little fond a little exasperated and Isak had never known happiness before this moment in his entire life.

He tapered down the energy just a little, tipping his head up so their noses bumped. Even was looking down at him beneath slow lashes and Isak smiled boyishly up at him.

“Is here okay?”

“Here’s okay,” Even said quietly, and Isak’s smile crinkled up into dimples too. He shook his head a touch, rubbing their noses just slightly. Even’s eyes fluttered shut over a shaky inhale and Isak flopped back down to the pillow, a few inches between their faces now so they could breathe.

God, Even wanted Isak back beside him, and Isak had caught it in time. So barely barely in time but they’d nearly passed each other by a thousand times, their sails were just parallel enough he’d probably missed a dozen but he didn’t miss this one, the waves were rocky as hell but he didn’t miss this one.

Maybe he should just stay quiet and count his blessings but it was the first fucking time he’d been hopeful since before dinner with his parents and sue him, he couldn’t contain it all.

“Can I hold your hand?” Isak asked and Even opened his eyes again, studying him a moment, looking tired.

“Aren’t we sleeping?” It was raspy and Isak wondered distantly how long it’d be before Even was smooth talking and laughing again.

“I’ll be gentle,” Isak promised.
Even huffed and slid his hand up the covers. Isak took it, heart pounding, and wove their fingers loosely. Laid their barely entwined sideways hands on the covers between them.

“Comfy?”

“Mm.”

“No pressure, but if you roll over in the night you might accidentally launch me off the bed from this tight grip on our hands—”

Even lifted one eyebrow, just a little, and Isak was smiling again.

“Okay, okay, I’ll quit playing, and let you go to sleep. Let us both go to sleep.”

Even blinked at him and Isak rubbed his thumb over the length of Even’s pinky.

“I love you.”

That time when Even blinked his eyes cut down and away. Isak lifted their hands to press a kiss to the back of Even’s, then he plopped them back down to the bedspread and settled into the cushions, fingers warm enough he could feel it in his stomach.

“Good night, angel,” Isak whispered and Even swallowed, lifting a whisper over the dark.

“Good night.”

Tirsdag, 08:41
28.02.17

Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me.

Isak got out of bed, and all the water Even kept storing up and shoving down between his cells instead of over Isak’s bed was freezing in his limbs, making him stiff.

Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me.

Isak got dressed and put on his backpack. Even was so stiff he couldn’t feel anything but the cold, the cold settling into his bones.

Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me.

Isak got his curls tucked away under a snapback. Even had slept so warm and cozy for the first time in a week last night and now Isak was taking it all right back out the door with him, leaving Even here so cold he couldn’t move, completely stiff and staring at the wall.

Don’t leave me.

Isak leaned over the bed and kissed him on the jaw and Even closed his eyes. No, Even’s eyes were already closed. Isak was already gone. Where was the kiss on his jaw, the fading mark, the last thing to keep him from freezing.
God, don’t leave me I’ll--

The door to the apartment closed.

Even tried to curl up in the duvet that just whispered and slid over his skin, perfectly snowy cold.

This time when he whispered stay it was too late and Isak was already gone.

Tirsdag, 12:10
28.02.17

It’d been awhile since she got to do anything this spyish and cool so Sana felt pretty much exactly like a badass as she grabbed the unexpecting arm and hauled the unexpecting boy into an empty classroom.

“What the-- Sana??”

“Yes, it’s me, the only badass in a hijab you know,” she offered brightly and Mahdi knit his eyebrows, looking very confused. She let go of his arm.

“What's…what's this about?”

“I have a very important question I'm fairly sure you have the authority and class to answer honestly without involving the rest of the boys or causing drama.” Sana smiled, tight and dimpled and Mahdi’s eyebrows knit harder.

“...okay?”

“So...just like that, you're gonna answer it,” she said slowly and now his eyebrows were shooting up, head shaking once.

“Depends on what it is.”

“Well first of all, you know I…” she trailed off, eye twitching as she stared painfully at the empty classroom. Fuck.

“I care about Isak very much,” she rushed all at once and Mahdi softened, nodding, which she didn't need anyone to be soft right now this was very clandestine important top secret official business here.

“And I...care about Even too.”

“Yes, you have a heart, a lot of us guessed, we weren't sure but--”

“I will still destroy you if need be,” Sana pointed out and Mahdi rolled his eyes, waving a hand at her.

“Continue, what question are you dying to ask.”
“There’s been a lot of speculation and worry between the girls, so I figured I might as well clear it up once and for all.”

“...and?”

“And the black eye Isak was sporting last week to match the split lip, was that from Even?”

Mahdi’s jaw dropped open.

“Is that what...is that what everyone is thinking?”

“I don’t think anyone really knows about Even besides us girls,” Sana said slowly. “But between the girls there’s been a pretty heated debate about it, yes.”

Mahdi shook his head once, fast.

“Fuck. The bruises weren’t from Even - Isak was completely fine Saturday morning, but Even’s parents were trying to keep them apart so the idiot went out to Grønnland and picked a fight to get his ass beat cause he handles conflict and strife like shit, apparently.”

“Wow,” Sana offered and Mahdi scoffed.

“Yeah, I know.”

“...I’m guessing the week he had leading up to that had a lot to do with him picking the fight too,” she sighed and Mahdi knit his eyebrows again.

“It. It probably did, yeah. Shit, I don’t think any of us thought about that.”

Sana smiled triumphantly, dimples popping again.

“What would you boys do without us.”

“Not get pulled into secret meetings in empty classrooms.”

“Hey, none of us were the ones called for help, or informed on the matter at all, and we have a right to know, okay.”

“You can take that up with Isak.”

“We do!”

“I agree with you! Take it up with Isak.”

“I will,” Sana told him haughtily and Mahdi shook his head at her.

“Okay.”

“Okay. Have a good day.”

“You too. Bye.”

“Bye.”
The dread in his stomach was unreal. He considered not going. Not showing. Texting that he didn't feel well enough. It was a lie. He was Well Enough to go outside. Probably needed the air.

Every hour counting down until when he left was longer and built up the knots in his stomach more. Weighing him down instead of tying him to anything secure.

He texted Isak at 12:15 - lunch - to tell him he was going to go see his mom this afternoon. Don't be alarmed if he wasn't here.

Then he informed his caretaker - Linn today - to tell her he was going to go see his mom this afternoon. Don't be alarmed when he left.

He was alarmed when he left and wasn't there but he left anyways.

The entire bus was staring at the boy stacked in layers. The windows were staring. The world was trying to crush him in its palm and Even leaned dead against the glass and let the bus rattle his brain.

He got to the bench first. Stared blankly at the graffiti. Waited.

Then Jonas was walking out from the tunnel and Even lifted his head and saw him.

All wrapped up against the cold, curls tucked away under a dark beanie. He looked soft. Kind. Worried.

He'd never turned any of those emotions on Even before and Even turned away, ignoring how sick his stomach clenched.

Jonas sat down beside him. It was quiet for a few moments and Even wondered distantly, if they would ever in a million fucking years be able to find a friendship between them.

There was potential. They both loved film. They both got excited about things they loved. Or well, Jonas could at least be the chill to Even’s excited. Or maybe teach Even how to chill out a little more. They could be really good friends potentially.

When Even wasn't a hollow skeleton, that was.

But now, there was a million things between them in the shape of a beautiful boy with golden curls and a smile so bright they were caught in a tug of war over the burn of the halo.

“I know you don’t want me to be with him,” Even started to the colorful walls.

Jonas looked up sharply, mouth opened to protest. Even shook his head, twice as layered up with beanies and hoodies and said it scratchy and simple.

“You don’t have to lie. I get it. If our positions were switched I’d feel the exact same fucking way.”

Jonas went quiet. Even stared at the murals and wondered which ones Isak had leaned up against and laughed and how long it was gonna fucking be before the boy knew how to laugh again.

The boy beside him had to be wondering too. Even stared down at his hands now. All he was wondering was why Jonas suggested they meet here, of all places.
I know you don’t want me to be with him, but I need to ask you,

Jonas shifted on the bench beside him, a moment’s pause before he lifted his voice, quiet, afraid to shatter things.

“...it’s not because you’re bipolar, Even.”

“Jo-nas--”

“It’s not. It’s because Isak’s in too deep to see anything clearly anymore.”

Even turned his head to look over at him. Jonas looked back. They’d had so many clandestine phone conversations, but they’d never once talked serious face to face like this.

Too deep to see anything clearly anymore.

Storms and clarity--

"Isak would literally run himself into the ground before he left you,” Jonas said and yes, Even was starting to get that, that’s why he’d called the other boy with the curls, "...and that terrifies me. Yeah, now that some time has passed I get it, it wasn’t as bad as it felt. The worst part of the whole thing was how much Isak was freaking out. It really wasn’t that bad."

Jonas’s parent’s house, flashing lights and screeching beds and bruises and broken sobs and it really wasn’t that bad?

Even shook his head once and Jonas pinned him with eyes lighter than his own, silver and white instead of blue, sticking him like a squirming beetle on the wall and lined up, then swung a silver hammer right into his gut.

“But Even. What happens when it is?”

Shell splattered with woozy insides and their gazes were locked, across this skatepark bench with all of the colors swirling around them like a hurricane and here they were, polar opposites on opposite ends of the universe with only one thing spilled out in the dripping fear they both shattered in.

Jonas just kept looking at him, really looking at him. Him. Not as Isak's boyfriend or some fucked up version of competition or a 97’er transfer or hell, even one of the boys in the squad group chat.

Jonas was looking at him like he was all and none of those things, like those things didn't matter, not for the moment. Just looking at Even and seeing him, Even Bech Næshem, not through but all, understanding him in a flash moment in a way Even wasn't sure anyone he'd ever met in his life did, because of that one fundamental truth.

The one thing Jonas understood that no one else would ever come close to beginning to get.

But what happens when it is.

That was the fundamental question at the core of his being, of every moment, every kiss to Isak’s mouth, every time he turned into his arms and spun out of them when the conversation came up. This time Isak was fine. This time Isak wanted him.

This time Even wasn't too much. This time it wasn't too bad. This time it didn't ruin everyone's lives, this time Isak’s bruises weren’t from his hands. This time wasn't the deal breaking time.

But what happens when it is.
Jonas asked it so simply and Even blinked at him from underwater.

Jonas saw the white capped waves and heard the crash on the shore and didn't wait for an answer. He knew it didn't exist.

But what happens when it is.

“He’s not ever going to be in a strong enough position to leave you, Even.” Jonas leaned back against the bench and Even’s eyes followed but he couldn’t give up anything else, he was frozen. “He’s never going to be able to. You have to be the one to do it.”

Even looked away and he was crying when he looked back. This wasn’t what he came to talk about. Well, not really, but it made what he came to ask hurt that much more.

He was crying on a skatepark bench in the territory of his boyfriend’s best friend, to his boyfriend’s best friend, and this wasn’t how the world spun, where the tide was supposed to take him but Jonas was looking at his tears steadily and Even dropped open his mouth, dragged free the only other fundamental truth waiting to tie him down to the bottom of the swimming pool.

“What if he's only with me to prove his dad wrong,” Even whispered.

To the only person on the planet who’d tell him the truth.

The boy Isak loved first. But more importantly, the boy who loved Isak first, before, over everything else in the world. Jonas, Jonas would know, Jonas had to know and this was the only way Even could know and he had to, he had to know now, right now, he--

The moment he said it out loud the past two weeks smacked him in the chest. The wavering moments the hesitant split second decisions where he almost said it. Almost told Isak - babe help I'm spiraling I need you and I need you to go I don't know what to--

But he hadn't because he'd been fucking paralyzed. Isak’s parents looming over them. His dad left his mom cause she was fucking nuts. Isak was pissed enough to stay with Even cause he was fucking nuts.

Jonas was just staring at him. Eyes wide mouth closed staring. Even sealed his lashes back shut, blocking away the salt stinging his eyes but you couldn't keep your eyes open underwater that long. Here he was, the explanation the condemnation burning holes through his tongue before he so much as opened his mouth to whisper it.

“His dad left his mom because she was sick.”

“I know why Terje left Marianne,” Jonas interrupted, voice flat. “I was there.”

“Then you get it,” Even said too desperately, lashes heavy with the water now, throat destroyed. “He told Isak he had to, that he couldn't help her. What if that's the only reason Isak has stayed, to get back at his dad, do what he couldn't? To prove something. What if it's not even about me? What if it...what if it never was?”

Jonas was quiet.

Even was tearing up enough he had to wipe at his eyes, whole streaks of wet on the backs of his hands and it was cold, it was cold his hands were freezing his cheeks and his eyes were freezing and his nose was bright red and Jonas wasn't saying anything because it was true.
It was true, Isak needed to get back at his dad in some fucked up twisted way and Even was the only way to do that and that was why he stayed, that was why he refused to leave, that was why Jonas couldn’t convince him to, because it wasn’t about Even it was about Terje and Marianne Valtersen and how royally they’d fucked up their son and--

“That's not like him,” Jonas said quietly.

Even lifted his head and inhaled shakily enough silver eyes shot to him instantly, suddenly aware of how much Even was crying and pushing away, pushing away as the four words drifted and barely sunk in.

“What?”

“That's not like him. He wouldn't do that.” Jonas sat up, instantly, leaning forward, catching Even’s teary red eyes and quivering bottom lip and saying it so sure and sudden and sharp that it stung. “Even, Isak wouldn't do that. He's a conniving petty bitch and used to be a snake, but he'd never fucking do that.”

It was swirling in like the colors seeping into his shoes from the pavement and the shouting words on the walls and Jonas shook his head, staring at the bench and at the bowl and at the sky and back at him.

“Not even subconsciously.” Jonas said, harder, more sure. “His parents are literally too far removed from his life to make him think that way. This has nothing to do with his dad. Fuck his dad, and his mom, this isn’t about them. You’re not about them. Everything he’s doing? This is all about how much he loves you.”

Laid out like bricks into his skin and Even stared at Jonas, soaked deep in the words and the look on his face.

This is all about how much he loves you. Isak wouldn’t do that.

Isak would never do that.

Even opened his mouth and inhaled oxygen instead of water for the first time in weeks.

This wasn’t his parents. This wasn’t about his parents. This wasn’t about his parents, this wasn’t about--

“You really thought that was it, didn’t you.”

Jonas was staring at him on dry land. Even stared at the orange words on the wall, sucked in another broken breath, and nodded.

Yeah, he’d really thought that was it. All of it. The end of it. He’d thought--

Jonas sat back against the bench again, blinking a few times.

A few snowflakes fell with the silence.

“Well, shit.”

Even snorted softly. Fucking understatement of the year. He’d been so fucking terrified that…

And Jonas was so sure. He trusted Jonas more on Isak than this, because Isak wouldn’t necessarily tell him the truth about that. And on the off chance it was subconscious he’d deny it like hell.
But Jonas was sure. Jonas was fucking sure Isak wouldn’t think like that, not even the back of his mind would think like that and Even had never been more fucking grateful for the depth of their friendship in his life.

Fuck.

Isak loved him. It wasn’t about his parents. Isak stayed because he wanted to, not because his dad hadn’t.

Isak stayed for him.

Even exhaled a thousand pounds of pressure and wiped both hands over his face. Fucking hell.

“How long did you think…?”

“Since I found out why Terje split.”

Jonas puffed out his cheeks and blew out slow, all of that wow on his face and lifted dark eyebrows and Even wiped a crooked finger over the corners of his eyes. Yeah.

“Fuck, that had to suck.”

“Oh it did,” Even assured him and Jonas huffed, smiling a little as Even exhaled again slow, heart still pounding way too fast. Fuck.

The next thing he knew Jonas was digging in his pocket and pulling out something small familiar and white, glancing his way.

“I know you're not supposed to, but.”

“Fuck it,” Even said and they smiled twin and small then the flame was flicking up and Even remembered what it felt like to actually breathe.

Their fingers brushed as Jonas passed it to him and Even nodded a quiet thanks that Jonas nodded back, then he was inhaling smoke into his lungs and burning with fire that wasn’t his own fucking demons for the first time in forever.

Then he was passing it back to Jonas and Jonas blew out a ring, another to chase inside the little circle, both of them scattering at the puff of his breath as his voice lifted again.

“I care so fucking much about him, y’know. Not the way he used to for me, but...I don't know, what would've happened if I'd known.”

Even looked over at him, settling in the feeling of his head starting to lighten.

“I didn't think you felt anything for guys.”

“I don't,” Jonas confirmed, glancing his way, joint to his lips. “Literally zero attraction. But we were really close.”

A lifted shoulder and he inhaled more smoke, looking off blissfully across the park, words drifting out visible on the exhale.

“I was jealous of you. Took me awhile to figure out jealousy could be platonic.”

Even nodded and Jonas let it settle for a moment before he held out the joint again. Even took it,
turning a little on the bench to face Jonas as he spoke.

“I had to be sure, that it wasn't heteronormativity or compulsory heterosexuality or some other nasty shit society and capitalism shoves down people’s throats since childhood. I had to figure it out for myself and wonder, if there was ever anything more on my end.”

Of all people, Jonas Vasquez sure was an interesting one to have as a best friend. Isak may have drawn the shortest sticks in the parents department, but he drew a longer one than Even had ever known when it came to his best friend.

“Spent the past month questioning everything I fucking knew cause I love him so fucking much and, well.” Jonas lifted a shoulder. “It’s Isak.”

“It’s Isak,” Even agreed.

“My best friend…” Jonas trailed off, smiling a little to himself. Looking off over the slopes of the park they’d been coming to for years.

They were okay now. And he knew now, that he could love that kid with his entire fucking heart and just cause for Isak it had been a crush too, at some point, didn’t meant they couldn’t fucking love each other now.

It wasn’t eros. It was the deepest philia, storge he had. Maybe agape, but that was okay. They loved each other the same now, and that was the only thing that counted.

“Fuck, that felt heavy as hell before you confessed yours,” Jonas said and Even laughed, tired but real, smoke billowing from his mouth.

“I mean, for a little while there, when I was wrestling with everything, I thought maybe. I probably overanalyzed…everything we’ve literally ever done. And I think...there could’ve been a chance maybe, once. To being something more than the everything we were to each other.”

Jonas leaned back against the bench again, thinking of summer days with Isak barefoot on his bed, the New Year 2016 Isak kissed his cheek and Jonas drunkenly slung an arm around his shoulders and laughed.

Smoking on Valentine's Day, high as hell as they confessed this was way better than any date with some girl.

The fights.

Isak patching him up, Jonas skirting a careful thumb over the split on Isak's cheek.

There were ten thousand times to run back over. Analyze how he was feeling. Wonder how much all of it meant to Issy.

What would've fucking changed If he'd known that's what that look meant. That look. So many fucking times he saw that look and he never fucking put together what was right in front of him.

And because he never had, he’d slowly rotted away at Isak’s soul. Didn’t matter that Jonas didn’t feel the same, if he hadn't been blind, he could’ve at least done something about it.

Saved Isak from it.

That was the worst of all of it. Not that he didn't feel the same. But that he'd been so blind he hadn't
been able to save Isak from him.

Figured it out half a year too late. Or maybe right at the right time.

“If I’d known how he felt I’d like to think I could’ve. I dunno. Saved him a lot of pain at least. I’ll probably feel guilty about that for the rest of my life. Maybe I even feel guilty I never felt the same. Who knows.”

Even was studying his shoes and Jonas was studying the somber profile for the moment he had the chance. Even looked a hell of a lot younger than Jonas had ever seen him, all red nosed and bundled up with smoke pushing between parted lips. The kid who loved the best friend he loved.

In such different ways, fuck.

“...but we’re not meant for that here. Maybe some other life,” Jonas said quietly and Even nodded too much, took the joint with shaky fingers, inhaled too sharp. Jonas sighed and looked down at his empty hands. “Maybe I did it right in one of his parallel universes.”

The swivel to him was sharp and sudden enough Jonas drew all the way out of nostalgia guilt land, lifting an eyebrow over the smoke as Even asked.

“His parallel universes?”

“Yeah, he's always been into the idea of like, an infinite number of parallel universes, where just like one thing is different in each of them, I guess?”

“I know.” Jonas glanced over at the tone of voice and Even looked down, tapping ash off with his finger. “I just didn't know you did.”

“We've been friends our whole lives,” Jonas said, strained and Even shook his head.

“Yeah, I know. I know that.” Joint lifted back to his cracked lips and the inhale was heavy enough Jonas would have to be stupid not to know he’d stuck a chord.

“I don’t want you to think-- I would never try to take him from you. I can’t be what you are to him. I don’t know how to look at him that way. I’d die for him, but I couldn’t be with him, not the way you are. And even if I could?” Jonas studied the sloped profile, Even’s sharp gaze on the graffiti across the basin. “...he’s happy with you.”

“No, he’s not,” Even replied instantly and Jonas shook his head, taking the joint back and fighting the urge to grab Even’s hand with it, squeeze and shake his shoulders until he got it through his thick skull that he had no fucking clue how miserable Isak had been before him.

“He’s in love with you, Even. At the kind of depth he never came fucking close to feeling for me, or anyone else. Wow, that's a punch to the gut to say, but it's fucking true. Hell, if even I, jealous best friend, can see that?”

It was a joke at the end but Even didn’t laugh, Even crumbled a little. Teary eyed as he turned back weakly to Jonas and the fire he was inhaling down his throat, putting out all the chill with the water back on his long lashes.

“I don’t fucking know what I’d do if he left me.”

“He won’t,” Jonas repeated. “I told you, he won’t.”
“How could...how could I possibly ever leave him, though, Jonas?” Even looked so watery and desperate and torn apart, begging at him like he somehow had the answers to the universe but he didn’t, he was so fucking far from being able to answer that. “Could you?”

“No,” he replied, shaking his head with it. “If he carved a crater in your heart, he’s carved a ditch through my lifetime so far. But I get it. The crater’s deep.”

“Really fucking deep,” Even huffed, hurt and true and so in love with Isak. Jonas watched him in his peripherals, wondered how he’d ever let himself hate a boy who loved his boy like that. “Fuck those angel curls, huh?”

Jonas laughed and the world went foggy in front of him. “Ja.”

There was at least one thing to be glad for, that at least through all of this hell, Isak had found somebody who appreciated his stupid golden curls as much as they deserved to be appreciated.

Little things. They had to be grateful for the little things.

He smiled to himself and glanced back over at Even, but Even wasn’t smiling anymore. Even was staring at his hands and curling and uncurling his fingers, watching the bones click or his skin move or whatever. Hands that held Isak and slid through his hair and bruised his shoulders deep and dark--

“But if I had to,” Even whispered and Jonas wondered if he knew about the bruises. Probably not. Jonas should probably tell him. “If I was somehow ever strong enough, if it ever got that bad that--”

He stopped and Jonas got it. They both just breathed for a moment, air cold enough it kinda puffed up regardless of the smoking joint resting between Jonas’s fingers.

Fuck.

If it ever got that bad.

No more secrets.

Even needed this joint a lot more than he did right now. Jonas passed it over and Even closed his eyes as he inhaled, letting all the poison in his brain and yeah there was definitely some guilt in the smoke around their ankles but it was smoke or crushing waves right now and Jonas would take the hit to let Even take a hit of calm with it.

Then he was breathing out puffs of white, but he was breathing and that was what counted. If it ever got that bad.

“You bruised him,” Jonas said before he could keep his mouth shut.

Even looked up so sudden and so fast Jonas could hear something snap.

“Why.”

It was dead and quiet and absolutely destroyed and not a question at all and so lost it was the only screaming question Even had ever asked, Jonas could feel it.

“When you were holding him still, Friday, on the edge of my bed, trying not to hit him or freak out or whatever, right before your dad showed up. His arms, they were bruised, dark purple handprints.”

The smoke was trying to strangle them both now but Jonas had to tell him and now Even was staring so dead the joint was centimeters away from dropping out of his fingers.
Jonas reached over and took it carefully, they still needed that, thank you. More now than ten seconds ago because Jonas had just said that and fuck.

“I…”

Even looked like he was being strangled to death and Jonas took a quick numbing inhale. Fuck.

“I’ve never seen him so unrepentant,” Jonas said and Even was just staring, water in his eyes burning them red. “I was kinda freaking out about it and Isak told me he wasn’t sorry, he could’ve gotten out if he wanted to.”

Even still couldn’t speak.

“And I think that part’s true, because he did eventually get out. I know you’d never hurt him normally, I know that, we’ve actually had that conversation after a couple of the bruises he’s had in the past, but. But Even, I needed you to know. In case it were to happen again, that Isak really isn’t seeing this clearly. He didn’t care about the bruises, and I don’t know how far he’d let you go when you’re manic and I’m sure that scares you even more than it scares me.”

“What the fuck,” Even managed strangled and Jonas stuck his tongue in his cheek.

“He doesn’t care if you hurt him, because that’s how much he loves you, but that’s not. I can’t get on board with that.”

“Neither can I,” Even whispered, lower and darker and broken into fucking shambles.

“And this time it wasn’t too bad, he’s okay. But if he keeps handling it like this, I. That’s why I said. That it’d have to be you, to be the one to leave when it got bad because Isak doesn’t know how to leave you, he’s never gonna know how to do that.”

“Okay,” Even nodded to himself, tears all over his face now. “I…okay.”

He looked positively devastated and Jonas felt like shit but on the bright side now Even understood, now all of them were on the same page and Jonas was gonna fucking keep it that way.

Even had a hand over his face, was trying to breathe and Jonas gave him a little space, staring down at his shoes and flipping the joint around in his fingers as the silence dug.

He knew if their roles were switched right now, if he’d been the one to hurt Isak, he would literally never forgive himself so he felt it, the way Even was reeling.

He felt that in his core.

But he’d sit here until Even had words again, and past that, because Jonas got it.

He was probably the only person on the planet who really fucking got it. He wasn’t gonna drop something like that and make Even deal with the fallout by himself. Yeah, you hurt him, but it’s about how Isak didn’t care, that was the part that counted.

So he sat and smoked and let Even work through it in the silence of his mind, offering him little glances every few minutes as Isak’s boyfriend wrestled through the idea of hurting him.

Jonas didn’t really know what to expect on the other end of that mental torture session, but by the time the pretty head was lifting again, looking over at patient Jonas, looking back down at his hands, he was streaked up and broken and didn’t contain an ounce of bitter, nothing but quiet, hurt, grateful.
Even wrung his hands and whispered quietly to the immovable bench.

“At least he’s got you.”

Jonas was in the middle of inhaling and coughed dramatically instead. That was not what he’d thought he was gonna hear.

Last person who said that was Eva.

He’d been proud, when she’d said it, that day first semester after Terje left the first time, standing on Isak’s parent’s porch, at least he’s got you.

Jonas had replied honored, ja. Ja, he does. Always.

Today Jonas coughed and there wasn’t a place to pull pride from when he said it.

“Ja.” Jonas shook his head, holding the joint back out without looking over at Even. He wasn’t looking at anything. He’d always been there for Isak, but that didn’t mean he hadn’t let Isak waste away for a fucking year of his youth hating himself, didn’t mean he hadn’t been able to protect him when it came down to it. “Some good that’s done him.”

“You’re the only consistently good thing he’s ever had in his life.”

Jonas’s head snapped to the side and Even looked at him completely seriously, hadn’t reached over to take the joint, he was just looking and real and dead serious and he meant it, he completely meant that statement. That Jonas was the only good thing Isak ever had.

Fuck. And he supposed now they were both thinking about the text. (Not the suicide note text, the one that stopped anything that terrible from happening again.) The text Jonas sent.

Anything, whatever you need. I’m yours.

Yeah, okay. Maybe. Maybe he was the only consistently good thing Isak had ever had in his life.

And here was Even, telling him that, after Jonas just verbally kicked his ass and brought rain down on every corner of his world.

“Jesus fuck, this got sentimental,” Jonas lifted for one more puff before he was blowing out slow and holding it back out again. Even laughed lightly, rolling his head to look over at him and shaking the whole world with the hint of a smile, a real one.

Jonas glanced over out the corner of his eye, shaking his hand for Even to take the weed, smile tipping up on his face in return. That was probably the first time Even had laughed in a long time. Because things were terrible and his world was shattered but Jonas was looking out for him and more importantly, Jonas was looking out for Isak. He always would.

He could feel, the comfort that was giving Even right now. Still, he flicked a piece of ash off his jeans and smiled at the warmth between them, the sentimental, dropped the second half of the joke. “Let’s never do this again, ever.”

“Great plan,” Even agreed, blowing out smoke over the skatepark with a resident smile curled up.

The skatepark. Jonas put his hands in his lap and wondered distantly if he ever thought he’d be here, talking to Isak’s boyfriend the way Isak used to talk to his girlfriend, confessing secrets on the bench while the rest of the world was quiet.
But Even was a little more than Isak’s boyfriend now, wasn’t he.

“I’m glad you...asked to talk, though,” Jonas told him quietly and Even glanced over, eyebrows shooting up a little.

Taking a heavy, shaking drag through all of the ice Jonas had just dumped over his head in a wakeup call. Fuck.

But he was exhaling steady, shaking his head and looking down at his feet with it.

“Yes, me too.”

“Despite if it got way too deep way too heavy way too fast.”

“Blame the marijuana,” Even said and Jonas laughed lightly, tipping over to take it back.

“And I know I just said….but anytime you need to talk--”

“Ja, Jonas, you too.” Even handed it over, lingering a moment before he let go and Jonas knit his eyebrows, studying Even’s profile while the watches ticked.

“Ja?”

“Ja.” Even turned his head, looking completely serious, offering to be his confidant, maybe offering to be his friend and Jonas pursed his lips, nodding to himself. “I mean, I don’t ever have pot, Isak would murder me.”

“Yeah, maybe don’t tell him about this.” Fingers lifted to indicate the white curl of smoke and Even huffed.

“Wasn’t planning on it.”

“I’m a terrible best friend,” Jonas sighed.

“I’m a terrible boyfriend,” Even followed.

“Ehh, debatable.” Jonas waved a hand back and forth and Even reached across the bench and shoved his shoulder.

Jonas smiled and tipped with it, pulling his beanie down a little further over his forehead. This didn’t turn out too bad after all. Whatever he’d been expecting.

They both found out a lot about what the other was and had been thinking, they’d like...comforted each other in their place in Isak’s life and. And they’d both found out that maybe they could talk to each other like this, in more ways than clandestine phone calls over things they didn’t want their boy to hear.

He really hoped Even took him up on that offer, though. That the next time he had no idea what to do - or hell, the next time he couldn’t decide what damn color flowers to bring Isak - that he was comfortable enough with Jonas for him to be the one he’d ask.

But what he hoped a lot more? For them to get to a place where Even was bringing Isak flowers again instead of calling up Isak’s best friend to cry over how he had no idea what to do.

Did fucking any of them, at this point.
Honestly?

Honestly, they were way too fucking young to be going through any of this. But here they all were, a boy loved a boy who loved a boy and some of those hearts were bloody but maybe they could all make it through to the other side.

“I hope you figure this the fuck out,” Jonas offered quietly and Even’s gaze settled over the swirling colors one more time, voice distant and wistful as his own.

“Ja. I fucking hope so too.”

And well? Jonas would be here to fall back on however long it took.

Tirsdag, 19:44
28.02.17

He was 95% sure Isak wouldn’t check up on his story, but Even ended up visiting his parent’s place anyways. Mainly to take a shower and sober up before he went back to Isak’s. And because he hadn’t seen his dad in a week and a half, and his parents would probably both appreciate a few hours.

He owed a lot of people a lot of things, he could do that much. He was exhausted by the end of it, and ready to go home, which was fucking awful because technically he was home, should be less exhausted, his parents did nothing but take care of him but this wasn’t where everything was quiet and right anymore and.

Either way it was past nineteen by the time Isak opened the door to his apartment and Even tried not to faint his way inside.

“Hey you,” Isak offered warmly, warm enough Even’s toes were curling in the boots he was tugging off. “How was seeing your mom?”

“Okay. She’s a little less worried now. Dad too.”

At least Bjørn wasn't bruised anymore. At least it didn't show anymore.

At least his dad went in knowing what to expect. Isak hadn't.

If he'd given Isak bruises instead--

“Good. And how are you?”

Oh wait. He did.

Even straightened up, hanging his outer coat on the hook and turning to Isak, waiting, beautiful, patient Isak, head tipped up to look at him.

“I'm doing okay.”

“I'm glad,” Isak hushed, reverent and pretty as a hand reached for Even’s arm and Even let him
stroke down from elbow to wrist, pulling warmth into his skin, dragging life back into his body as fingertips wrapped around the inside of his palm, over his wrist.

Nightmares, Isak’s mouth pressed to the inside of his wrist over his pulse over the bloody place Isak’s brain had twisted him to believe Even had tried to leave him--

The screaming sob.

Pulse pounding beneath weak fingertips now.

“How about you?” Even dared to ask, hating himself for every word, gaze falling for his socks and the carpet so he didn’t have to see the heartbeat in brilliant, throbbing green. Were there still bruises under his sleeves?

It’d be cruel to lie and crueler not to, so Even filled it in for him first, understatements to sweep under tired feet. “I know the past few weeks have...sucked.”

Isak shrugged, fingers wrapping a little tighter. “Ja. They have. But I’ve still got you, so. I’ll make it through.”

Even tried not to twist his face up pained but Isak saw it anyways, if the palm pressing to his cheek was any indication. His lashes fluttered closed and warm, callused, real pressed against his bare skin, once chilled.

You can coax the cold right out of me.

“What about you?” Isak’s voice drifted over his skin and Even tried not to sway on his feet. The last summer, the winter nightmare and how many times had Isak shot up gasping and terrified on that couch this week, how much did Even not get to see because he couldn’t take it, closed his eyes in sleep.

The black eye hadn’t been from his hands but it might as well have been.

He wavered, one foot stepping backwards. Isak’s hand on his cheek didn’t break free, curling a little hard, desperate, trying, voice lifting, please, don’t let him sleep out here again.

Even had never felt so cruel.

“I can sing you to sleep,” Isak offered, a final straw, something anything just let me be in there with you and Even had never felt like a more despicable human being.

“Please god no,” Even said tiredly, a bit of smile left in his bones from the way dark curls had lifted his heart and now light curls tipped as Isak laughed, a little light and beautiful and all because of him and Even’s soul was fucking reborn in his chest, let his metal legs crumple all they pleased.

The boy he bruised still wanted him, so desperately, he hadn’t ruined him entirely but Even still couldn’t breathe.

“I can play you guitar, then? Jonas left his over here the other day.” The hand on his face kept stroking and Even kept letting his poison heart pound under Isak’s fingertips. Hadn’t been able to find the strength to keep it from pounding yet.

Focus. Jonas left his over here the other day. You have to be the one to do it. He’s not strong enough. Isak wasn’t strong enough.
“I didn't hear you guys playing,” Even tried, so he was saying something and Isak was rocking a little on his feet. This was everything to him, every word Even was offering he was hanging onto like a prayer and Even was fucking sick of being called angel.

“You were pretty deep asleep. We're just that good.” Isak gave him another little smile.

Isak wouldn’t stop fucking giving. How many more pieces of his soul would he let Even destroy.

Even tipped his head and attempted a push up of one of the corners of his mouth and Isak took his hand properly, stepping up beside him and weaving their fingers together.

These were the hands that hurt him, and Isak was clinging to them. Was it his fucked up parents, was it how many times he’d been abandoned that he was just scared now, was it that Even was the only thing he knew about love so he didn’t know love wasn’t supposed to be like this, was it that he just didn’t care, he had enough bruises from Even that they didn’t register as bad anymore but Even couldn’t live like this, he couldn’t live knowing he’d hurt Isak and Isak didn’t hate him for it, he--

Isak squeezed his hand.

It made his heart pound in his chest but Isak just smiled up at him and lead him quietly for the bedroom.

When they got there Even didn't let go of Isak's hand, he couldn't, he’d promised Jonas but he didn’t know how. He didn’t know how. God save them, he didn’t know how.

Isak huffed happily and followed him down to the bed, legs stretching out. Then Isak was pulling Even sideways to lay his head in Isak’s lap, letting go of his fingers to pull up the duvet over Even’s shoulders and put his heavy hands in Even’s hair.

“I love you,” Isak whispered down at him.

Even inhaled and curled in against him, one hand shoving under his thigh, ear pressed against the top of it. Isak swooped down and kissed the side of his nose and pulled the blanket higher over his shoulders, wrapping him in the sky itself, hand smoothing them warmly.

Palm rubbing back and forth over tired tired muscle and broken promises and unfading guilt and Even fell asleep broken in Isak’s lap while Isak sat against the wall and watched the moon outside their curtain-free window.

A tear rolled down his cheek in the moonlight and his hands were too busy holding Even’s beautiful head to wipe it away.

Jonas thought he was prepared for everything that might happen to him in the five minutes it took to walk from his first class to his second but he was wrong.

He was hella unprepared to suddenly get grabbed on the arm and dragged into an empty classroom,
by motherfucking Christoffer Schistad of all people.

“Woah, uh. Hey, Chris--”

“Sorry to be clandestine and weird but I don't want Isak getting the wrong idea and I figured you know so.”

Apparently he was the authority on everything nowadays, when the fuck that happened, he would like to know but. Jonas furrowed his eyebrows, glancing around the classroom and back at the ‘97’er who was chewing his lip.

Looking nervous.

Did Chris Schistad have human emotions in his body that ran in the same strain as nervousness??

“...okay,” Jonas said slowly and Chris ran a hand through his hair, looking wildly distracted.

Upset.

Not the kind of upset from the time he shoved Jonas and got into a physical fight with him in the hallway though.

Or the time he and his friends went to war in physical fights with him to defend his friend either.

Just. Worried. Which was a really weird look on somebody so...confident.

“So I don't wanna pry, and you can tell me to fuck off, but. Is E.Bech - sorry. Even, is he okay?”

Jonas’s jaw actually dropped open a little.

“Hva faen, are you worried about him?!”

Maybe it was a little insensitive but he was in more than a little shock okay.

“He’s my lab partner,” Chris defended. “I just wanna make sure my grade isn’t gonna flop.”

It was so transparent even Jonas could tell it was a lie.

Huh. Even made legit loyal friends. Out of the last people Jonas would've expected. He also made a sunshine boy out of the saddest one on earth and.

He shook his head once, recalibrating. Chris was worried about Even and obviously Even wasn't gonna be responding to any of those worries and god knows how long it was until Even was back in school and.

“Uh. He’s going through a tough time right now,” Jonas said, slower still. Actually he wasn't sure what the excuse was that people had been told, if it was illness or family issues or what so it looked like vague was gonna be the answer.

Chris twisted up his mouth to the side, nodding to himself.

“Is there like...anything I can do?”

Jonas pointedly did not say there was nothing anything any of them could do including Isak which was actually slowly destroying Isak, if lunch yesterday was any indication, so.
“You’d have to ask him.”

Chris nodded, shrugging back into a little rougher demeanor.

“Cool. uh...takk, I guess.”

Jonas was still standing here with ten dozen question marks over the top of his head. This was the last conversation he would’ve seen himself having but here he was.

“Uh...sure?”

“So I guess. Enjoy the rest of your day?”

“...takk?”

“And if you see Even tell him to text me back.”

Onsdag, 11:08
01.03.17

His head wasn't pounding.

Isak kissed his forehead and his cheek goodbye this morning and waited with him until the last possible second before he'd be late.

He took a shower and he kept thinking about Isak’s warm hands in his hair. He’d lifted the edge of Isak’s sleeve this morning and his arms had been clean, bruise free.

This is all about how much he loves you, Jonas had said.

Even was going to talk to Isak about it, he was, about the bruises and how that didn’t get to be an okay thing, no matter whether Even was manic or not. That Isak didn’t get to be nonchalant about pain anymore. They were going to talk about it and talk through it because it was them and everything was going to be okay.

Isak loved him and Even loved him back and Even had done so much to hurt him but Isak was here here and here and that meant Even had the chance to fucking fix it.

Isak smiled at him this morning like Even was the most beautiful thing in the world and Even scrubbed himself down in the shower with light hands and the sparkle of Isak’s warmth under his skin.

That beautiful smile permeating his mind.

Beautiful hands wrapped around his head like there was nothing in this universe that mattered more.

Washing him clean.

He didn't deserve this, dear god he didn't deserve much more than the ditch he'd narrowly dodged last week but Isak was sleeping at his side and whispering him nonsense about love and holding his hand and letting him fall asleep with warm hands in his hair and Even was starting to forget about the ditch.
The shower water was starting to forget it was supposed to be drowning him.

What a fucking terrifying turn of events.

Onsdag, 12:17
01.03.17

I love you. ♥

your parallel universe or mine

all.

Isak
Onsdag, 12:24  
01.03.17

Isak was still looking down at his phone waiting for Even’s red heart to come through - it fucking better, he’d seen the three dots erase and reappear like six times now - when speak of the same three dots, someone unexpected swept down beside him at lunch.

“Hey,” a female voice chirped and Isak glanced over, straightened up in surprise.

“Eva, hey.”

“Sorry to interrupt, boys,” she addressed to Magnus Mahdi and Jonas but they all threw up vague hands. It’d been pretty idle chatter anyways.

“We were just watching Isak get frustrated texting his boyfriend,” Magnus offered and Isak flicked him off.

“Oh no, is Even doing okay?” Eva knit her eyebrows, looking over sudden enough her hair swung.

“He’s fine,” Isak said, glaring at Magnus a little. Magnus lifted an unapologetic shoulder and took a bite of sandwich. Isak turned back to Eva. “What’s up with you?”

“Do you have some time to chat today after school? I can buy coffee,” she offered, a bit of a smile. Isak smiled back, they hadn’t had much of a chance to talk since everything but it was really sweet she was going out of her way to make sure they connected again.

“I would love to, but can we shoot for next week instead? I really do need to get home to Even.”

“Yeah, of course,” she said, nodding reassuringly. “No problem at all.”

“Thanks, Eva.” He gave her a smile and glanced back at his phone - no heart yet. She nodded again, pushing up from the table and Isak suddenly dove over for her hand. “Oh, don’t go yet though, I was gonna propose some summer plans, it’d be great if you stayed. That way it’s less texting for us both later.”

“Yeah, sure,” Eva smiled simply and sat back down, looking between him and the rest of the boys. Isak took his hand back and Eva opened up her lunch bag. “What have you got so far?”

“This is the first we’ve heard of it,” Mahdi informed her and Eva rolled her eyes over at Isak. Isak threw up his hands, bread in his cheek.

“What, I said gonna propose, I hadn’t gotten around to that part yet.”

Jonas shook his head at him and Eva smiled down at the table.

“Isak the romantic.”

“Not that kind of propose!!! Jesus!!!!”

Everybody broke into giggles at the look on his face and Isak sighed, propping his head on a hand.

“Anyways. Mahdi, do your parents still have the key to that swimming pool?”
Heard you're not doing super great. Your boyfriend said he'd get you soup on my behalf but either way, I can bring you some if you want.

Who are you and what did you do with Christoffer

Shut up I'm a loyal hoe

To you

Takk, but I'll be ok.

You sure? It'd seriously be no problem. I can just drop by, I don't even have to see you if you don't want. I know how inflated your ego is and everyone looks like shit when they're sick. I can wear a blindfold, I'm sure you and the boy have got one.

I'm rolling my eyes at you, so you know. Serr, though, I'm fine. Pay attention in class for me if you can.
When he got home from school, he took two steps into the apartment and there was Even, in the living room, on the floor. All wrapped up in Isak’s clothes, strands of haphazard blonde all over and fingers wrapped around a monopoly piece, hopping it around a board spread out between him and Noora.

“You can’t have Parkway, there is absolutely nothing you can sell me to get it,” she was saying and Even was smiling a little, one corner of his mouth tipped up.

“Halla,” Isak said, heart in his throat. Even looked up.

Shit, he was beautiful.

“Hey. How was school?”

“Good. It looks like you two are having fun.”

“Noora’s cheating,” Even informed him, too soft and Noora’s red mouth popped open too dramatic but it was okay.

“I am not. I just happen to be…really good at Monopoly.”

Isak set down his backpack and leaned over Even to give him a kiss on top of his head. He smelled like Isak’s shampoo and something soft.

“You can be on my team if you like,” Even offered. Isak’s heart did leaps and bounds and tried to kick its way out of his chest but he managed not to sound strangled in his reply.

“That sounds nice.” He scooted up behind Even, legs spread out on either side of Even’s hips, hooking his chin over a gray shoulder and wrapping his arms around a quiet, too-thin sternum.

Even seemed a little surprised at the closeness of their bodies, looking over his shoulder at Isak but he was smiling softly again when he turned back to the board.

Isak angled his chin, rolling it on Even’s shoulder to watch the side of his face instead of the game he couldn’t care less about.

“Are we winning?”

“No,” Noora said at the same time Even interjected lightly,
“Of course.”

Isak laughed and squeezed his arms around Even’s stomach a little tighter. Squeezing all of him in with it.

Even smiled.

Onsdag, 19:13
02.03.17

Even was standing at the bathroom mirror brushing his teeth when Isak opened up the bathroom door and hip-checked him for room at the sink.

Eyebrows went up in the mirror. Isak put a toothbrush in his mouth and shot his eyebrows up right back. What.

Even shook his head and spit in the sink. Isak smiled.

A hand trailed over his lower back when Even walked past him, then he was leaning on the bathroom door and waiting for him.

Isak’s spine tingled the entire rest of the time it took him to brush his teeth and wash his mouth out.

They walked back to their room together and the backs of their hands brushed twice.

“Can I beat you at Fifa?” Isak asked as Even closed the door behind them and those pretty eyebrows went up again.

Feeling, expression, things Even hadn’t had in what felt like forever and a half.

“I don’t think you can,” Even said slowly and Isak dipped his head, mouth dropping open.

“Excuse me, that sounds like a challenge.”

Even shrugged lightly, but he was sitting down on the edge of the bed and pulling out controllers, so.

He was right though. Isak didn’t manage to beat him in Fifa.

He did manage to get invited to spend the night in bed again though, so it sure as hell felt like a win.

He’d take falling asleep curled up around Even’s spine over any other victory he knew.

Onsdag, 23:57
01.03.17

Isak’s hand was on his waist. His nose squished sideways on his shoulder, curls tickling the back of his neck.
Even laid on the blue pillow and looked at the wall all the way across the room.

It wasn’t as dark in here as he remembered.

Isak was so very beautiful.

His body possessed by light. Light he’d come so fucking close to snuffing out with fists that swung for the week he’d had, for the things Even said, for the way Even was, coming back bloody and bruised only that part was hidden now, hidden and healed and the hands on his body weren’t broken anymore but Even wasn’t forgetting. He wasn’t sporting bruises from Even’s hands anymore but Even wasn’t forgetting. All of that light, so fucking close.

Even wrapped his fingers over the loose ones on his waist and closed his eyes tight and prayed they’d never get used to it.

Torsdag, 07:55
02.03.17

It wasn’t birds in the morning.

He woke up because Isak stubbed his toe on the shelf and broke off in a string of curses.

“Fucking hell Jesus fucking fuck-- fuck, sorry, baby I didn’t mean to wake you, shit.” Isak was staring down at him as Even peeked open an eye and squinted at the room.

“It’s fine,” he mumbled and Isak dropped to a squat beside the bed, pressing a warm kiss to his cheekbone.

Even rolled over and curled back up in the covers. Isak was beautiful but he was exhausted and not really in the mood to watch Isak leave.

That was the worst part about letting Isak sleep in here again. Even could count on him leaving every morning without him and he was sick of it.

“Have a good day,” Isak whispered, rubbing a hand over his spine. Even kept his eyes closed. He was going to try, because he was supposed to be having a good day.

He’d woke up yesterday and felt okay, he was supposed to keep feeling okay, better actually. Fuck that today he wanted to bury his head under the covers and stare at the dark until his head went quiet.

But that wasn’t an option, they expected more from him now, his allotted two weeks of Feeling Bad time were drawing to a close and he was supposed to be on the up and up he had to keep himself on the up and up there wasn’t supposed to be anything but up and up, control it.

All he had to do was plaster a smile on and do everything they asked and in theory his head would catch on to it all too.

“I love you, sweetheart,” Isak whispered at the door and Even fought the urge to pull his hand out of the covers and flick him off on his way out.
Yes, all he had to keep doing was say yes and that would be enough for them to leave him alone.

He spent as much of the day in his head as they were letting him but it wasn’t dark enough in there to be comfortable, someone had left the blinds cracked and light kept streaming in uncomfortably and Even kept squinting at everything and telling himself things were supposed to be looking up.
Things had been good. Really looking up good.

Even ate both breakfast and lunch. Took a shower, chatted with Eskild for awhile in Eskild’s room before he left for work.

Then Linn took over shift and said things were fine, she asked Even how he was feeling and he got kinda fussy but he seemed to be doing really well other than that.

When Isak got home from school they went out for food.

Even was quiet through a lot of it but not bad, more like he was thinking through a lot of things.
On the walk home Even let him hold his hand but he looked drained as hell by the time they finally got back to the apartment.

Isak asked if he was alright and he was a little curt then he took off for the bedroom while Isak sighed and made them tea. And texted Liv.

Only now he had an answer - ask Even and. Well.

Isak sucked in a breath and sat down next to Even on the bed.

“Baby, can we talk?”

“I hate it when you say that,” he sighed and Isak blinked a little wide.

“Baby?”

“No, can we talk. It freaks me out.”

“Sorry, I…” Isak stumbled a moment, setting down their mugs of tea a few feet away on the carpet. “I don’t know how else to say that.”

“It’s fine,” Even dismissed, locking his phone and looking up at him. “What’s up?”

“It’s a really personal question and you don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to.”

“…okay.”

“I mean it, and I’m not trying to imply anything by asking, or say you should, or anything like that--”

“Isak, remember how I just said I was already freaked out? This isn’t helping.”

“Sorry, sorry, I just.” Isak worried his thumbs over the edges of his sleeves, wondering for the thirtieth time today how the fuck he still couldn’t do this right. Fuck, the longer he sat here the more he fucked up and he sucked in a breath, looking up at Even and exhaling all at once. “Why aren’t you on medication?”

Even blinked at him. “Fuck.”

“I don’t wanna pry--”

“I knew it was gonna fucking come up eventually.” He threw up a hand and collapsed down dramatically on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. Isak hesitated a moment. Even rolled his head to raise pissy eyebrows up at him.

“I’m not gonna fucking bite you, you can lay down next to me.”

Isak laid down, crooking an arm under his head and looking across the duvet at Even’s lifted eyebrows, heart still pounding in his wrists.

“Were you already upset? I wouldn’t’ve brought it up if--”

“I’m not upset at you.” Even readjusted his head, looking up at the ceiling, all light eyes and flickering mouth. “I’m just pissed I can’t get over this.”

“What?” Isak asked quietly and Even looked over at him wildly.
“The whole fucking depression thing? That’s what. It’s just infuriating, that I spend fucking two weeks in bed, that I get behind in all my fucking school work and ruin everyone’s fucking lives around me all because my fucking brain can’t—”

Screeching halt as Even stopped himself, mouth still open a moment while Isak looked at him silently and patient. Even breathed out slow, rolling his head and pushing a hand for the sky, fingers curling and uncurling, falling back to his side with another rushed exhale.

“Sorry. I just...really fucking wish I had control sometimes, I don’t wanna take it out on you, I just get really frustrated and.” He inhaled deep and exhaled deeper, hand waving in Isak’s direction this time. “Which brings us to your question. Why aren’t I on medication.”

“...yeah. We don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want.”

“I don’t ever want to talk about my brain but we have to at some point, so.” Even chewed the inside of his cheek, looking over at Isak again. All deliberating and Isak just looked back as blankly as he could manage.

Maybe he’d really miscalculated how Even was doing, it did not seem like this was a good time for any kind of conversation, but well. It was too late now.

“Do you know what medication does?”

“Um. It balances the monoamines in your brain?” Isak tried.

Even’s eyebrows shot straight up again. “Someone’s done their fucking homework. I wasn’t talking about scientifically.”

“Oh.”

“...how much have you researched me?” It was slow and prying and Isak was fucking trying not to get emotional and tear up but Even was looking at him betrayed and suspicious and he’d barely looked at Isak at all in weeks and it was just a lot and.

“I wasn’t trying to upset you,” Isak whispered, eyes a little too shiny. “I didn’t know what else to do.”

“Fuck. Fuck, Isak, I’m not. None of this is coming out right.” It sounded so frustrated and Even screwed his eyes shut, jaw clicking with it and Isak’s heart was breaking. “Don’t know why I’m being so fucking confrontational, I don’t. I don’t fucking know how to talk about this.”

He threw up both his hands that time, he was upset now too and Isak didn’t know what to do about that beautiful brain but he knew the wild heart and he took the grasping fingers right out of the sky, pulling on the right one to tug Even up on his shoulder as he drew them in.

Isak tucked both of those beautiful shaky hands in against his chest, so Even could feel the beat of his heart, the piece of Isak he so completely owned. Connecting them to each other again and pulling him out of sea he would stop trying to drift on alone.

“We don’t have to talk,” Isak told him quietly and Even glanced up at him, looked back down at his hands on Isak’s chest.

“You want to know why I’m not on medication.”

“But we don’t have to talk now, Even, I really don’t wanna make you upset.”
“I really wanna stop being upset,” Even hushed back, more hurt than anything else.

Isak just looked at him, both of them curled up on their sides now. Even looked back.

Their knees were bumping and walls were thinning and his shaking hands were slowing, curling around Isak’s fingers. Isak just held on and looked at him. And kept looking. He didn’t say a word, watching the flickers across Even’s face and holding his hands over the steady pound of his heartbeat and didn’t say a single thing.

Even’s curled fingers pressed a little harder against his heart. Pushing him away or into him, he couldn’t tell but Isak would forever let him do either, both, holding on tight through all of it as he wondered distantly if Even felt the pound against his fingertips and knew it was only beating for him and just him.

“It makes you numb,” Even’s parted lips shaped. The silence slipped away and the fingers over his squeezed. “They always tell you it won’t and it always does. It sounds fucking cliché, but I can’t live as a drugged up zombie, Isak, I can’t. There are ways to manage it without it, with therapy and other things especially since I’m young and I’ve been trying some of those but I just got really busy and stopped paying attention to myself. And I was scared, of what would happen, of what it would do to us, to you. And it blew up in my face, because I fucking knew avoiding it wasn’t gonna help anything but I did it anyways because I was too fucking scared to do anything else.

“But I can’t be on medication, Isak. I can’t do that to my brain. To live like that, to be fake--

“It doesn’t give you control. It gives doctors and pills control and I have to figure this out on my own, I can’t get addicted to something like that, or end up on lithium or some shit cause what happens when one day I take too much and--”

His head shook, broken strands tumbling, light blue eyes slipping closed and it was so serious, shaking and shaking and already so completely made up.

“I won’t do it. I won’t do it. I won’t.”

“Okay,” Isak said. The depths of these waters he could do. “Okay.”

“There’s a lot of reasons and I. I I’ve tried it once and I know it works for a lot of people but. But I can’t, I’m sorry,” Even tried and Isak shook his head once, cutting off the apology and running his thumbs over Even’s skin.

“I just wanted to know. You don’t have anything to be sorry for. Thank you for telling me.”

It was too jilted, watery, all of this was and they were stumbling like fuck but they were talking and that was the only thing that counted, they’d get better at this with time, they always would.

Even was just staring at him.

Isak blinked. Even tried to pull his hands back retreat and Isak held on tighter, his whole torso rocking with it. Even gave up and let Isak keep his hands, sighing to himself and looking down, lashes blocking Isak from seeing all of that tumultuous emotion.

Oceans and oceans of waves, all that guilt Isak didn’t know how to assuage yet but he’d figure it out, they’d figure it out.

“I don’t deserve you,” Even cursed under his breath and Isak shook the hands on his chest.
“Don’t say shit like that. What makes you think you have anything to apologize for?” Even looked up at him dully - c’mon, really - and Isak looked back just as axiomatic, eyebrows shooting up - hello.

“Even, I'm not gonna change my mind about you when you're depressed. I'll be there when you want me through it and when it's over I'll be waiting to hold you tight again. You don't...genuinely think anything you do when you're depressed is gonna change us, do you?”

“...I don't know why it wouldn't,” Even said flatly and Isak scoffed, a little high and offended but who the fuck did Even think he was?

“Even. I love you. All of you. It's that simple.” Isak shrugged and Even started to roll away. Isak tugged him back again, hard enough his shoulder jerked and Even was narrowing his eyes but Isak stared back defiantly. “I know that's not easy for you to believe when everything sucks but. Doesn't mean I ever stop believing it for a second.”

He tipped his head back and forth with it, duh hello, and Even was tearing up now so Isak flattened the hands over his chest, pushing Even’s palms over him before he was sliding his touch up bare arms and underneath the sleeves of his dark tshirt, fingers skirting warm skin.

Even pressed his hands hard on Isak’s chest and shuddered at the touch of his fingertips and blinked too rapidly at the tears in his eyes, staring down with sweeping dark lashes while Isak looked all over his beautiful face.

“It's really simple. You and me, we’ll take it easy, okay?”

“Okay.” Even rasped, eyes fluttering shut. Isak rubbed his thumbs over silky skin stretched on softening muscle and studied the pain in that pretty face. Even shut himself into the dark like Isak was the blinding sunshine. Like he didn’t know how to deal with someone who didn’t treat him like he was crazy.

But Isak was just waiting and happy to have his boy and eventually, Even would get it. Isak was here, forever, and that better be what was going through that beautiful mind right now because he fucking meant it.

Let Isak be the light he came home to. Let him be the world waiting for Even on the other side of the dark. He was here and fucking here.

“I love you,” Even whispered faintly, words barely forming from parted lips.

The corner of Isak’s mouth tipped up in a crooked smile and he lifted a hand to Even’s cheekbone, sliding it back into his hair.

“I know you do.”

He rubbed his thumb through the soft strands and Even’s lashes fluttered back open, watching him watch.

They both laid there for a moment, Isak’s mouth closed on a pout and Even’s eyes searching his face, back and forth between his eyes, all over his skin, down to his mouth. Flicking back up to meet his gaze and Isak tipped up the corner of his mouth higher, sparkling a little with it.

Even said he loved him, Even was slowly getting better to the point he wasn’t numb anymore and yeah, he was frustrated at some things but Isak wasn’t one of them, he was finally starting to get it through his pretty head that things weren’t over, weren’t anywhere near over, they were just
beginning.

“I love you too, you know,” Isak reminded, in case he hadn’t said it enough times today and Even picked up his head, hand sliding up Isak’s chest to cup his neck. Gaze still flicking between his eyes, down to his mouth again.

Even leaned forward, tongue darting out to wet his lips, then his eyes slipped shut and he was closing the distance between their lips, pressing them quiet slow tentative to Isak’s.

The kiss was light and a bit nervous and Even’s lips were chapped and it sent a whole flood of sparks down Isak’s spine. He tipped his chin up and kissed Even back, pressing a little.

Then their lips were lifting apart and taking his whole soul with it.

Even laid his head back down, heart racing and so did Isak, heart racing.

Lips parted around all of the air he was breathing, disbelieving and elated and.

And okay, maybe he was also kinda torn between smiling wider than that day at the pool or tearing up again because Even kissed him, Even reached for him and kissed him and was now searching his eyes and rubbing his thumb over Isak’s cheek and.

“I really love you,” Isak whispered, Even’s kiss imprinted on his mouth as he searched back and forth between the blue.

Even’s fingers tightened against his neck. Isak looked at him and tried to say it all without opening his mouth again.

You’re not an up or a down. It’s not like I have you in my head as Even’s fine, Even’s high, Even’s low. You aren’t a rollercoaster. There’s just you.

He was here to see past the highs and lows and ups and downs and yes and no’s, Isak just saw Even. Even, underneath it all, that was the boy he was blushing over kissing.

“Can you kiss me again,” Isak whispered because he was weak and breathing too hard and Even was so close and holding him hard and looking at him like that.

Even lifted his eyebrows and scooted a little closer on the pillow. Isak’s pulse picked up and the thumb in his neck pressed over it, soaking in the beat and the heat on Isak’s cheeks and Isak couldn’t tear his eyes away from Even’s face.

Then Even was picking his head up again, nose slotting in next to his and eyes falling shut as he tipped their mouths together, pursed lips pressed and caving and Isak’s chest expanded ten sizes with the warmth. He clung a moment too long, pushing back against the cautious mouth. Reveling in closeness and intention he’d missed so fucking much. Their mouths, connected.

It was still simple and short but it was something, maybe everything, then Isak was pulling away and letting Even go, falling back to the pillow in front of him again and smiling wide, dimples under Even’s skirting fingers.

Even was watching him, tracing him quietly and thinking too hard and Isak kept a hand in Even’s messy hair and scooted forward so their noses fell in the crooks of each other, lining up close enough Even closed his eyes and breathed him in instead.

Isak closed his eyes and decided this was the best Thursday he’d ever known.
When he woke up to the shivering cold, it took him about one and a half seconds to notice Even wasn’t beside him in bed.

Isak went through the entire range of emotions within the mini seven second heart attack before he remembered not only how to breathe, but how to walk across the room and throw open the door and see the light on in the kitchen.

It was just that Even hadn’t had enough energy to try to kill himself last week. It was when you were starting to get better that everything got really fucking dangerous. Because his head could still be low but he was up and walking around and leaving in the middle of the night now and Isak hadn’t slept on the couch since Sunday so there was no one watching the door and.

He turned the corner into the kitchen and rubbed his eyes and tried not to fall over as his knees went weak at the sight of Even at the kitchen table.

With his wrists fully intact, and his fingers wrapped around a pencil.

“Sorry, did I wake you?” Even asked, glancing up and Isak shook his head once, curls bouncing over his forehead.

“The cold did,” he replied kinda gravelly, sliding out the chair across from Even and plopping down. Even glanced up at him again and Isak folded his arms over the table, laying his head back down, temple to forearm as his eyes fell back shut.

The scratch of the pencil paused for a moment, then Even went back to drawing and Isak dozed on the kitchen table.

About forty minutes later Even was tapping Isak’s shoulder, warm mouth against his ear, breath dancing over his skin and words sinking through his dreams.

“Hey baby, don’t make me carry you back to bed.”

“Hm?” Isak lifted his head groggily, the side of his face red with the imprint of his arm as he squinted at the kitchen lights and the hair on the back of his head stuck up in ten different directions.

“Bed?”

“Oh yeah,” he mumbled and Even smiled, leaning in to press a kiss in his curls.

It warmed him down to the toes. Isak mmm’d so Even pressed another kiss, nosing in close to send shivers down his spine. Isak pushed up off the table, reaching sleepily for him.

Even smiled soft in the kitchen light and Isak wrapped his arms around a long pretty neck, clinging close while Even held him with an arm around his waist.

“I’m so happy you’re mine,” Isak murmured into his neck, lips dragging over the heated skin. The arm barred over his spine swayed them side to side as Even’s head tipped against his.

“Yeah?”
“Ja,” Isak whispered, following it with a little sticky kiss.

Even held him there in the kitchen for a few more wonderfully warm comforting moments, then Isak was pulling back and yawning as he wrapped their hands together.

The hallway was cold but he didn’t notice because Even let himself be lead all the way back for bed. There was graphite on the side of his hand and splattered over Isak’s fingers but everything was perfect now.

They curled right back into bed and Isak was asleep inside of minutes, holding on tight.

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It’d been a long time since Even woke up first, but he’d never been gladder for it. Isak’s body was trying to wake him up and he kept sending himself back to sleep before he could break the surface.

Inhale in the back of his throat, head turning over then his body followed and rolled over too, exhaling over a quiet drawn out sound then he was settling right back into the pillows. Curls all over the place, duvet shifting with every rise and fall of his ribs.

He was precious and mesmerizing and the fact that Even was allowed to lay right here and watch him felt like an honest to god miracle.

Then Isak’s phone was going off its sixth warning and Isak’s lashes fluttered open groggily.

He blinked at Even, doing a little double take at the fact that Even was already awake, looking at him from the other pillow.

“Halla,” he whispered in the space between them. Isak squinted at him before flipping over onto his spine, blinking, rolling his head back to look at Even.

“Halla.”

Even scooted over close and pressed a little kiss to his nose.

Isak crinkled it up, all these lines scrunching up his face and it was super fucking cute and the little smack of his mouth was so bitchy and sweet and Even missed him so much.

“Feeling better today?”

“Mmhm. You’re really pretty when you sleep.”

Isak squinted at him again, smile tipping up just a little. “Tusen takk.”

Even kissed him again, on the mouth. It was short, hardly more than a peck but Isak was smiling dimpled on both sides when he pulled back. Even’s heart kicked in his chest, hard enough he leaned back in and kissed Isak again, pressing this time.

He’d been doing nothing but making Isak sad, if he could make Isak smile even a little he was going to do that and keep doing that and do more, until he never stopped smiling again.
Isak kissed back, soft and barely, mouth moving a little under his before he was tipping his chin down, pulling away with a wide, real sunrise on his face and a thumb rubbing over Even’s cheek.

It was strange and surprising and way too short and a little unsure but really nice.

“You’re really pretty all the time.”

“You think so?”

“I do,” Isak told him, then he was smiling even wider, somehow. “You up to me bringing back homework for you?”

“I’m up to going to school,” Even said cheerily back and the smile dropped instantly.

No no no, he needed Isak to be--

“Are you sure?” Isak’s hand stopped, lifting his head to look down at him seriously. “Even, you don’t have to push anything. You can take your time with this.”

“I’m really sure, babe.” Even looked up at him sincerely, stroking slow through the messy golden curls. “I want to get back into doing things, y’know? As much as I love your apartment, I need to get back into like. Life.”

“Yeah, I get that. But school?”

“If I’m getting out of the apartment, I might as well be where I’m supposed to be.” He lifted a shoulder, this was logic and it wasn’t irrational and he was trying to do the right thing here.

“You’re supposed to be home,” Isak corrected quietly. “As long as you need to be.”

“I know,” Even said, and it was balanced and level and what he wanted to hear enough that Isak’s defenses were melting a bit. A bit. The smile was almost coming back. He needed the smile back.

“So then why do you wanna go?”

“It’s only one day, it’s Friday, so. It’s a good day to go.”

Isak was looking disbelievingly at him and Even was fucking desperate to make everything okay again, he needed that pretty face to work with him right now.

“Mhm.”

“And if it turns out to be stressful or some shit, I’ll come back here, okay? Or go to my parent’s house.”

“Do you really think you’re ready?”

“Nothing happens on Fridays. And I need to at least pick up my stuff and show my face in genetics.”

“I’m...not convinced,” Isak told him cutely, head tipping dramatic and yes he was teasing but not about the convinced part. Teasing was a first step but he needed Isak happy, he needed to start fixing that right now, he couldn’t spend another day knowing he was destroying that boy, he couldn’t.

Even propped up on an elbow, tipping his head right back, c’mon.

“Baby, I’ll go home the second it’s too much, okay?”
“...okay,” Isak said dubiously, leaning back a little and squinting suspiciously at him. “Promise?”

“Promise. I think it’s what I need right now, but I’ll leave if I need to.” Even lifted his eyebrows, promise and Isak’s hand found his, fingers weaving and making his mouth tip in a smile that Even’s followed, chased after.

That mouth, healing, coaxing all the cold free and Even was going to feed the sunshine until the clouds disappeared from green forever and ever.

Isak let Even kiss him again, eyes open the whole time as he looked down his nose at the peck just a little suspiciously.

Even shot his eyebrows up. What.

“Just let me know if you do, okay? I don’t wanna be running around Nissen looking for you.”

Isak didn’t know enough of what was happening to call him on it.

“I will.” Even promised, hard. Tipping forward to pull their mouths together again, another quiet simple kiss that left Isak’s lashes fluttering and his hand squeezing Even’s tight.

Had to dip back to teasing before the feelings swept him under. “Where would you look for me first? The film lab?”

“The windowsill,” Isak corrected, prying his eyes open and looking a little emotional, overwhelmed, intoxicated, gaze flashing down to Even’s mouth again. They were supposed to be drying off from the pool now.

“Ooo, good one.” Even smiled to himself and pushed up from his elbow to sit all the way, running a hand through the mess of his hair. “You know me well.”

“I’d like to think so,” Isak sat up too, giving him that pretty little smile.

This time when Even leaned over Isak leaned over too and they met in the middle, kissing kinda giddy and it was still short and new and the most familiar thing he’d ever done and Isak smiled to himself the whole time they got dressed.

Eskild made a lot of suspicious faces at them as they put on their shoes at the door but Even leaned against Isak as he hopped into his boot and promised Eskild he’d be completely fine.

They held hands on the bus and Isak walked him to genetics lab and went up on his tiptoes to kiss his cheek goodbye at the door.

“You need me to talk to any of your teachers?”

“They all know. Thanks though.” Even smiled down at him, stroking his cheek, fingers up through his hair around the circle of his ear and he pulled Isak forward into another kiss, on the mouth this time. Isak leaned up into him needy and trying not to be but the shudder down his spine gave him away. Even let them draw apart slow, reveling in it before he let go of his hand slow enough their fingers dragged and dropped like Michelangelo’s ceiling.

The whole class was staring as Even opened the door and walked for the back of the class, but it was easy to ignore all of their confused faces when Christoffer’s was suddenly lighting up in the back of the room.
“Well look who it is.”

“Hey Chris,” Even offered with a smile and Chris stood up, pushing his chair aside to clap Even’s hand and pull him into a one shoulder hug. Even huffed a light surprised laugh and Chris leaned back, one hand still on his shoulder.

“You don’t look half bad for a guy back from the dead.”

“Am I back? From what it says on the board looks like I’ve stepped right back into hell.”

“You wouldn’t believe the shit we’re doing in this class right now. Man, our plants have like. Grown up without you, they’re gonna have daddy issues.”

Even laughed again and Chris clapped his shoulder, pulling out his chair for him.

“At least they still had you.”

“You’re damn right they did, I haven’t gotten to skip a day thanks to your sorry absent ass.”

“Chris Schistad, perfect attendance? I should drop off the face of the earth more often.”

“Hell no, don’t you dare pull that shit on me again. Teach over there tried to eat me alive.”

“Still got a six though?”

“Oh hell yeah. That asshole can pull my perfect grade from my cold dead hands.”

Even smiled to himself and Chris slid over a notebook. “Here’s two weeks worth of notes, princess.”

“What would I do without you.”

“Fail this class.”

“You’re probably right.”

“I’m definitely right.”

Chris smiled over at him and Even looked down at the notebook. Fuck, there was a lot. He knew there would be.

It was nice to see Chris again but jesus fuck, he’d never been more grateful for a teacher to start talking. Everything was just a lot to take in all at once and he was still trying to process how he was supposed to keep a complacent smile plastered on his face for an entire hour when the prof started going off about chi squared tests and Even just ended up staring wide-eyed at a lot of numbers that came from fuck knows where.

Chris kept glancing over at him a little concerned, offering smiles every now and then as he leaned over and pointed out things.

Even didn’t know what they told him was going on, but they actually did a lot in lab so there wasn’t a lag to find out and honestly he wasn’t sure he really wanted to know but then the bell was ringing and people were packing up.

“Are you back for good, now?” Chris asked and Even nodded, pulling on his bag and waiting for Chris to put the rest of his things in his own.
“I think so.”

“I’m guessing you wanna wait a bit on the gym though,” Chris extrapolated and Even lifted his eyebrows a little. Chris shouldered on his bag and threw up a hand at the look on his face. “What, you look tired, I dunno, sue me for being a friend.”

“I’m not surprised you care,” Even told him and Chris shoved him lightly on their way for the door. Even smiled, looking down at his feet and letting the rock take him out of his head a little. It was just that there was already so much happening and it was just one class, he wasn’t sure what happened to the do nothing on Friday policy.

But he lifted his head when he got to the door Chris was holding open, because those were Isak’s shoes. Even blinked and smiled at the waiting, patient pretty green eyes at the doorway and Isak took his hand.

“Hey sweetheart. And hey, Chris!”

“Hey Isak, what’s up?”

“You know me, ready for the weekend,” he parroted, so Schoolish and fine and Even had kinda forgotten how much work this whole society thing was.

“I feel you,” Chris laughed, clapping a hand carefully on Even’s shoulder. “Uh, I’ve gotta get to work but. Hit me up if you guys go out this weekend okay, I’d love to join.”

“Thanks Chris,” Even smiled, tried not to make it too worn and Chris shot him a little salute, taking off down the hallway with a great to have you back, man thrown dramatically over his shoulder.

Isak took him for his next class, kinda tugging him along through hallways that all looked the same, coming to a stop outside another wooden door. Even turned to him and lifted his eyebrows as Isak reached up on his tiptoes to kiss him on the cheek again.

“Do you want me to walk you to your next one, too?”

“Isn’t yours on the other side of the school? I don’t want you to have to come all the way over here.”

“It’s no problem,” Isak insisted and the whole point of coming to school was to stop being a burden for a little while so Even tried for as genuine of a smile as he could and squeezed Isak’s hand with it.

“I’ll be okay babe, thank you.”

Isak gave him a cute little wave as he stepped into the classroom and headed for his seat and Even returned it, smiling to himself as the curls disappeared again.

It was sweet, Isak was so sweet and school was more than he remembered but Even sat there and tried to take notes and make any of this matter anyways.

When he stepped back out of the classroom after the longest hour ever, Isak wasn’t there, like he’d asked.

But he took three steps into the hallway and there was Magnus, who was almost convincingly just happening to be walking down this hallway right now.

“Even!!!” Magnus said, too surprised to be real and Even laughed a little as jacket-bulky arms
wrapped around him and crushed him into a bright hug. Even smiled over Magnus’s shoulder and hugged him back, mouth still tipped up when Magnus leaned back and held him at arm's’ length.

“Hey, how have you been my friend?”

“Not too bad, takk.” Even gave him a real smile and Magnus returned it twice as wide, popping his gum once.

“Yeah, man.” A solid clap to his shoulder and Magnus was looking off down the hall, eyebrows knit. “Where you off to?”

“I’ve got one more class before lunch.”

“Does it happen to be this direction,” Magnus pointed and Even looked at him a little amused.

“Yeah.”

“Awesome, cause that’s where I’m headed, too.” Shoulder bumping his as they started walking and Even let them go at least around one corner before he asked.

“How many of you did Isak text?” He glanced over and Magnus didn’t miss a beat, looking back and filling him in as honest as if it’d been any other question on the planet.

“Just us boys, but if nobody was in the area he was gonna text the girls too, I think.”

Even smiled a little to himself. If there was anything the kid was, it was smart. Isak and his loopholes.

Magnus was studying his profile.

“Let him take care of you, if only for him now, okay?”

“Yeah,” Even said.

“Really.” Magnus’s voice fell quiet, real, that sudden drop into he knew what the fuck he was talking about and Even’s smile faltered. “Cause as much as it sucks watching you go through what you’re going through...it sucks more that he can’t do anything about it. The helplessness is the worst part.”

Even was nodding and trying not to cry and his emotions were apparently through the fucking roof, he had no idea he was so fucking fragile today but Magnus just said that, was being gentle and simple and maybe it wasn’t the best idea to come today.

“I think he feels like he hasn’t done enough, let him do this.”

“He’s done so much,” Even told him kinda tearily and Magnus nodded.

“I figured. He’s like. Hella in love with you.”

It brought a smile to his face and Magnus bumped his shoulder again, tipping up brightly.

“Can’t blame the guy.”

Even laughed that time and Magnus was smiling and they walked all the way to Even’s next class together.

He hugged Magnus goodbye at the door, and there was a smile on his face as he sat down again.
It lasted even shorter this time.

It was just really boring and it was so hard to focus on everything and he wasn’t really in the mood to go sit in the loud cafeteria and eat but he was here and he was trying because he should be, he felt good this morning and he didn’t wanna keep fucking missing class and letting himself be pampered at Isak’s apartment.

Ugh.

It was so frustrating because it wasn’t even lunch and he was exhausted, he didn’t wanna be here, he should be, here was where he was supposed to be but he wanted to be home and not deal with the questions and the looks and the silence and the loud and.

The teacher didn’t say a word when he grabbed his things and stepped out of the back of the classroom.

Even kept his head down the entire length of the empty hallway.

He’d dramatically spun them around and kissed Isak on the mouth last time he’d been in this hallway. In front of a homophobic teacher apparently.

How much was that affecting his grades right now?

Even shoved into the first swinging door that said boys and went straight for the sink, slamming on the water.

Isak cared so much about his grades. He was so smart, and he was dating a boy who couldn't even make it through a day of school.

Even dipped over the sink and splashed two handfuls of freezing water over his face.

It made him gasp and covered any of the tears in his eyes but he wasn't managing the numb like he should be able to and he didn't know why he couldn't get a fucking grip this time and.

The bathroom door opened.

Even lifted up, shutting off the water and reaching for the paper towel dispenser, face dripping.

The door swung open again and Even stayed angled for the dispenser, refusing to look up at either of the whoever just came in.

He snagged a tissue and unfolded it, splaying the whole thing over his face with open palms to get all the water at once and hide for a moment then he was reaching out to grab another and a quiet hand landed on his right before it could close around a towel.

Even’s eyes shot open and he crinkled the paper down away from his face and there was Jonas, hand on Even’s, silver eyes quiet.

“Hi,” Even managed and the door to a stall banged.

Some random guy came out and started washing his hands and Even dropped the paper towel in the trash can, taking a step backwards to clear space for the random guy.

Jonas followed his step, moving out of the way too or maybe caging Even into the bathroom more.

“You wanna tell me why you're in school?” Jonas said quietly and Even looked sharply between the
guy and Jonas.

The water shut off and rando slid his hands over his jeans then he was headed back out the door and Even didn't have anything else to look at so he had to look back down at Jonas.

“I'm feeling better,” he started and Jonas shook his head once, curls bouncing.

“You're not, so try again.”

“I'm supposed to be here--”

“Next one.”

“I...I don't have to explain myself to you,” Even finally tried and Jonas shook his head again.

“Dude, fate brought us together in the boys bathroom, you can't not like tell me what's going on now.”

It was so simple and chill and Even sucked in a heavy breath, eyes slipping closed as his head dropped. Fuck.

“I'm supposed to be getting better,” Even told the tiles quietly and the sink was leaking in the background.

“No one’s got a timeline written up,” Jonas reminded him quietly.

“I was better by Friday last time.” Even lifted his eyes and Jonas held the gaze, eyebrows knit, eyes kinda wide up at him.

“Last time nobody had bruises. Last time was a whole different thing, okay?”

Even pursed his mouth in an exaggerated pout and Jonas shoved his shoulder lightly.

“You should go home, man.”

“I can handle lunch,” Even insisted. “I just need food and then I've only got a few classes after, I've made it this far.”

“You're hiding out in the bathroom.”

“Are you always this blunt?” Even complained and Jonas tipped up in a hint of a smile.

“With people I care about, ja. I am.”

Even sighed. Jonas lifted a shoulder.

“I don't wanna go home,” Even told him. “I'm fucking sick of that bedroom. Of everyone taking care of me. I want it to be over now I just wanna be me again.”

“Then you have to be patient and give yourself time, Even.” Jonas knit his eyebrows up high, looking at him with this wildly exaggerated duh face. “You're not stupid, don't pretend you don't know that. You know exactly what you're doing and you know you shouldn't've come today.”

“Isak was smiling,” Even confessed and Jonas’s eyebrows shot up.

“...and?”
“I just couldn't keep him sad for another day, surely you can understand that.”

“I think he'd be sadder that you were freaking out in the boys bathroom than if you were safe in his bed another day.”

“I was not freaking out.”

“Okay man, whatever you tell yourself.”

“I wasn't! And Isak can't know about this anyways.” Even crossed his arms over his chest, glaring down a little at Jonas.

Jonas threw up a hand. “I wasn't gonna tell him. But you should go home.”

“I'm not giving up,” Even told him, pushing past Jonas’s shoulder and scooping up his backpack. “I'm gonna go sit through the rest of class and learn something then I'm gonna have a great time at lunch and the rest of this day and you're going to keep your mouth shut all of lunch and not mention or hint at any of our clandestine meetings once.”

“Okay,” Jonas said dubiously behind him and Even threw his backpack on, spinning around at the bathroom door.

“I mean it.”

“Okay,” Jonas repeated even more unconvinced and Even shoved out the door, shouting over his shoulder.

“Just watch!”

Okay, Jonas was right, class was stupid and he wasn't learning shit and he didn't want to be here and he was being stupid and he'd known better than this but he was here anyways and now he was stuck with his head propped in a hand while he stared down uselessly at his desk until the bell rang.

Fuck.

Apparently that's how things were gonna be.

But the bell did finally ring and he couldn't skirt out of there fast enough.

He was gonna glare at Jonas all of lunch. For being right. Fuck him.

Trying to be a good friend and shit. Who did he think he was.

Definitely gonna glare the whole time.

Except Even only actually made it two steps into the cantina before there was an arm snaking around his waist and Isak’s warm pretty smile lead him all the way outside.

They stepped into the courtyard and Isak put two hands on his chest and reached up on his tiptoes to press a soft kiss to his mouth. Even’s lips tugged as he fell back to his feet, his heart under Isak’s hands while he smiled up at him beautiful in the outside sun.

“Are we going somewhere for lunch?” Even asked and Isak’s mouth tipped up again.
“You're going home,” he said, then he was reaching up and pressing a glowy warm kiss to Even’s cheek.


“You promised you would if it got to be too much.” Isak’s eyebrows furrowed, looking up at him, hands still on his chest. “So of course you were planning on telling me soon, right?”

There was this expectant pretty look on Isak’s face, the waiting, completely sure look like Even really was about to tell him any moment.

He did promise. Even sighed heavily and looked down at his shoes. Isak’s feet were between his, crease at the laces from where he kept going up on his tiptoes.

To kiss. To hold him. To smile against his neck.

He’d be sadder that you were freaking out in the boys bathroom than if you were home safe in his bed for one more day.

Fuck Jonas Vasquez for always being right, that’s what.

The hand on his chest drummed fingers lightly over his hoodie.

“Linn’s already making you a sandwich,” Isak said, tapping the same way he’d pointed a finger and said none for you, it's not good for you.

Even looked back up with a little smile, met the green eyes and the pursed mouth and the eyebrow crooked up high. Isak made plans for him to go home before they talked, but they needed to talk. About a lot of things, yes, he was being stupid but Isak couldn’t--

“I really am glad you're taking care of me, baby but.” Even rolled his lips in over his tongue, looking out over Isak’s shoulder for a moment before he popped them back out and looked down, eyebrows lifting a bit, trying to figure out how to say this without breaking things. “I know how I feel, remember?”

“I know,” Isak insisted. Hands on his chest rubbing up to his collarbones, fingers curving over and sweeping up to his neck. Looking at him for a moment, just studying him with those sparkly green eyes under the casual backwards snapback and the mess of curls over his ears.

“I told her to only make one and eat it herself if you didn't show up in 20.” Isak smiled a little, dimple flashing on one side as he lifted a shoulder and looked up at Even in the sunlight. “It's still up to you.”

The smile grew a little wider and Even nodded to himself. Expectations and soft smiles and there wasn’t a timeline, people weren’t expecting anything, no one was forcing or pushing or controlling and he didn’t know what to do about that.

He wasn’t sure what he’d been expecting. It wasn’t that, but it should’ve been that.

Isak.

Constantly surprising, surprisingly constant, beautiful sweet Isak. His beautiful sweet Isak.

Even dipped down, the hands on his neck cupping warm and he kissed Isak, kissed his beautiful sunshine caring boyfriend who’d refused to leave his side for the past two weeks and it was still too
much too soon to pour everything he felt into Isak’s mouth with his own but he kissed him real and sincere enough Isak was beaming when their mouths broke apart, foreheads tipped together over twin smiles and Even’s thumb rubbing Isak’s soft sweet cheek.

Everything was perfect now.

He didn’t have a single reason to stay chained to the bottom of the swimming pool.

“Text her to make two.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone so can we talk about the smug episode 7 eyebrow raise Jonas does when Isak gets back to the lunch table and tells the boys Even went home

anyways here’s the theme song of this chapter: Run and Go by of course, TØP

Yo so next week is Spring Break, and I’m flying to warmth and sunshine so I have no idea when I’ll be posting tbh. All else fails I get back next Sunday and I’ll post then? thx for sticking in there friends

Other reasons why I’m the worst: replying to comments, I'm literally still on Confessions and Bows in replies guys and it's probably gonna take me 30 years to reply to all of the beautiful things you guys have said but I'm so looking forward to those thirty years i've just been writing like crazy lately because these chapters are Long Af and so much is happening and

ANYWAYS all comments and kudos are so fucking appreciated, I love you all, severely, I hope you keep enjoying and I promise I will reply as soon as I can

xx
Breakfast and Photographs

Chapter Notes

hello i know i said i would post sunday but surprise

So there’s a flashback sex scene in the middle of a sex scene so hopefully that’s not too confusing but hey!! Bright side !! sex scenes again guys. Between ***s as always

This chapter is so long! Kill me! But a lot of important things had to happen so here we are

There’s a song in here, that Even’s listening to on repeat and Believe Me, when you get to finish that scene: you should also blast the song on repeat and just like take a moment and lay there and imagine it okay you will thank me

Warnings: discussion of suicidal ideation, shitty parents, boys crying (still, sorry fuck), the sex scene is intense so proceed with caution, illegal substance marijunanana, alcohol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lørdag, 09:06
04.03.17

When he woke up he could barely breathe.

He inhaled deep and blinked open his eyes and there was Isak, nose pressed against his, smiling softly as he slept, clinging weakly to him with dark lashes peacefully shut and it still hit him in the chest, the scream of every curled cell of that beautiful young body and Isak was so fucking in love--

Even inhaled and exhaled and tried to get a grip on himself. Isak was here. Isak wanted him. Isak was here.

The grip on Isak’s ribs was too tight for him to sleep through but Even couldn’t breathe, the guilt rising up in his chest like bile and Isak woke up, already stroking his hand through Even’s hair before he peeled his lashes apart and open.

“I love you,” Isak whispered into the morning light and Even’s eyelashes fluttered, yes, he knew that that was why it was hard to breathe.

These were the newborn skies to lift him up high.

He’d been blind and miserable for weeks and now he could see and the first thing he saw was Isak and it was just so much, it slammed into his chest because he’d never felt anything like this ever and Isak felt it too and through all of that, all of this, he was waking up and Isak was still here.

Isak didn’t leave him Isak didn’t leave him Isak didn’t leave him

Even wanted to say thank you but he couldn't explain the why so he blinked back open and looked at
Isak’s dilated dark beautiful green awake eyes and slid a hand through the precious sunny curls.

“I love you,” he whispered back and Isak smiled that little one, the bright dimpled one, can I stay in here with you forever? You can.

You can.

Even looked all over his face, down to his puckered tipped mouth, his beautiful smiling mouth and he lifted his head off Isak’s blue pillow, reaching over the space between them to kiss him.

It was warm and a little damp when Isak pressed back against him with his lips parted and it lit up positively every cell inside his body. This was what it felt like to be alive, remember?

Isak was smiling wide as the sunrise when he pulled away and Even thought, how perfectly fitting.

“Hungry?” That sweet pretty mouth asked.

“Ja,” Even whispered, and the sunrise went from gold to red and purple, streaks across the sky as the fingers on his jaw sunk in and those green eyes burned bright enough to scald his skin.

“Good.”

It was blinding white streaming in the kitchen, the empty room enclosed in glass. Even was the one with every speck of dust illuminated and Isak had never offered up the bones of his heart faster, glancing up under his lashes as Even gave him the side eye from his spot on the counter.

“It’s one tablespoon, right?”

He was attempting to make eggs, finishing whipping up the mixture in the bowl while the empty skillet steamed and Even nodded from his makeshift seat, legs swinging, even taller than usual up there.

“Ja, babe, one tablespoon. Don’t you dare tell Dad.” He tipped sideways a little, looking very pretty with his hair all swished up after his shower this morning and Isak put up both palms in defense.

“I won’t, I won’t.” He poured the eggs into the pan and reached over for the spatula Even was holding out, their fingers brushing and sending sparks up to his elbow. Isak lifted his eyebrows and kept his gaze locked pointedly down on the eggs to keep Even from seeing how pink his cheeks were from just their fingers brushing, from the kitchen echoing Even calling him babe.

He moved the bubbling eggs around and tried to kick his hopes back down. He didn’t want to expect too much too soon, he didn’t want to push, he didn’t.

“These are probably gonna be sucky anyways, to be honest.”

“I don’t mind things that suck,” Even offered and Isak’s head snapped up in surprise, then he was cracking up a little at the look on Even’s face, leaning back with it and shaking his head at the comment.

Even’s mouth curled up in a smile, surprised too, at the way his chest seized when Isak laughed. At how easy it was to smile at the sound, the brightness seeping out of the barely containable boy trying to make him breakfast.

“Here, try.” Isak held out a spatula and Even opened his mouth dutifully, eyes locked on Isak’s as he
closed his mouth around a bite and let it slide free.

A hand under the spatula as he stepped back and lifted his eyebrows at Even. Even held up a finger, chewing and swallowing while Isak bounced impatiently on his toes.

Even finally opened his mouth, tipping his head in concession.

“Yeah, they suck,” he confirmed sorrowfully and Isak’s mouth popped open.

“Uh!! Rude.”

It was so cute and indignant that Even couldn’t help but smile again, head shaking as he swung his feet and caught Isak’s eye again.

“They’re actually great.”

“Yeah?” Isak turned the spatula around and snagged off the last piece to try himself. Sparkly green went wide, then he was swallowing and waving a hand around at the heat. “Oh! They are.”

Isak clicked his tongue and rearranged the eggs in the skillet with a little smile on his face.

“Nice.”

Even laughed and the sound bounced off the corners of the counters. The laugh had Isak’s mouth turned up bright on both corners and Even tapered off quietly, smiling too as he kicked his dangling bare feet.

The radio was on, playing something cheery in the background. He swiveled, a reach behind to turn it up, quiet bass over the top of a drifting female voice.

“Oh, I like this song,” Isak hummed from where he was pushing eggs around to sizzle and Even’s eyebrows shot up, turning the knob a little higher.

“Really? Aurora?”

“Uh, yeah? She’s actually a good artist, unlike...Gabrielle.” Isak tipped his head with it, all over-dramatic the way he said it last time and Even’s mouth curled up in another smile.

Isak glanced his way and caught the tail end of the look on Even’s face, making his own tip up in a wider one again. A pause where they just looked, stars on sunshine across the streaming light between their bodies.

Then Isak was setting down the spatula and stepping up between Even’s legs to tip his head up, eyes searching, questions and answers as he pushed up with two hands on the counter to kiss him.

Even took Isak’s jaw in his hands and pressed against his mouth and Isak tilted higher, tiptoes over bare kitchen tiles and one hand lifting to press on Even’s chest, give him that extra boost of leverage and stability. Their mouths tipped sideways, lips tugging slow and Isak made a quiet surprised sound, popping free to push their mouths back overlapping again. Sliding together warm as lashes fluttered and Even sunk his fingers into golden curls. They dragged apart, clinging, only for Isak to press back up through the shivering tingles to kiss him again. More, deeper, pushing again, another kiss.

Another kiss, folding noses, quiet exhales, sliding apart and mushing back together looser warmer and

Even held his face and kissed him back.
They kissed, and kissed, they kissed long enough the eggs started smoking over their shoulders.

The smell hit them before the sound then Isak was breaking free, lips popping with a quiet sound as he put a hand on Even’s thigh, fell back flat footed to glance confusedly across the kitchen.

“Fuck!” Then Isak was swooping in, taking the pan instantly off the heat, only there was white cloudy smoke everywhere and the smell of burnt eggs and now Isak was bitching and trying not to drop the pan and Even was laughing, tipping sideways on the counter with Isak’s imprint on his lips.

“And they were so good toooo,” Isak whined, waving the pan around like that was going to cool them down faster. “Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck.”

Each one was at a different pitch and level of loudness and it was fucking precious and Even laughed all the way through their crumbly eggs.

Hey so. I don’t want you to think I’m going behind Isak’s back or anything because I am gonna talk to him about this, but I was hoping to have some kinda idea before I just went right into it.

Do you know if he’s talked to his parents

OH MY GOD I FORGOT TO TELL YOU

You forgot to tell me what ???

FUCKING THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS

????

I have been waiting years to say that shit to Terje I can’t believe you beat me to it honestly I’m so proud
I'm so fucking glad someone did

?? well it ruined shit with Isak and his family

No it didn't his family loves him the exact same as b4. T&M don't get to count as his family after the shit they've done to him sorry

...fair. And tbh i never would've said those things if i weren't y'know.

I know. Anyways, yes, Isak has talked to his parents. He texted - okay, I texted them, from his phone but like I've composed half his texts so that part was pretty regular but

Did you know the chiller hjemme was totally my doing you're welcome for kicking your ass into gear with your boy

Jesus fuck thank you for that. And for his parents too. Did they ever reply?

If they did he didn’t tell me. & yeah man, what else am i here for but to make sure you two get laid

😉
They were sitting on the couch and there was a movie on, but Even’s head was in Isak’s lap and he wasn’t watching it, neither of them were. Technically, his eyes were on the screen, but he was too busy thinking.

Isak wasn’t even pretending to watch, looking down at him instead, his hands in Even’s hair.

And it’d looked semi decent this morning too. He’d started sweeping it high and away from his face again, because it made him feel human and it made Isak smile as he ran his fingers through it, keeping the sides flat against his head and ruffling the top into a little pretty twist.

His fingers were currently playing with the strands right behind Even’s ear, sending the occasional wave of chills down his spine as Isak’s fingertips brushed sensitive skin again.

“Hey Even?” The lovely voice piped up, sounding deeper than usual with his ear against Isak’s stomach.

“Mmhm?”

The fingers in his hair twisted a few strands, tugging lightly and sliding back against his hairline again.

“How come you kick me out when you’re depressed?”

He said it so nonchalantly it took a second to register, then Even was lifting his head, looking up at Isak kinda stunned.

Pretty green blinked at him twice and Isak sighed hard, chest deflating. Even pushed up to look at him properly, hand landing on the couch beside his hip as he shifted to lean sideways between Isak’s legs.

“I really wanna try talking about things. I want us to be able to do this better.” Isak wrapped an arm around his waist and tugged him in, one leg up over Even’s lap and free hand slipping down to his neck as the dark eyes held his. “I know you don’t like talking about it, but you’re not the only one in this relationship and it’s not fair to keep me in the dark.”

“...how many times did you practice that in the mirror?” Even asked, leaning a hand on the armrest, caging Isak in with him.

“A few,” Isak admitted, running a hand through his hair again. Even smiled, but it was kinda hollow and he couldn’t look Isak in the eye. He wanted to talk about this. It wasn’t fair to keep Isak in the dark, he was right, but that meant they had to talk about this. With words.

Even reached behind Isak for the remote, turning off the TV and leaning to set it back down. It landed his chest a few inches from Isak’s, their temples next to each other as he turned and studied
him from this close.

Isak leaned a little to the side and looked right back at him, both of them analyzing the other from the inches between them, how tangled up everything was. Not just their bodies; the silence twisting around their heads.

“You’re right,” Even finally told him, leaning back a bit, putting his shoulder into the couch cushions and readjusting Isak’s leg over his lap. “It’s not fair. But you have to let me say it without interrupting, okay? Cause it’s gonna sound stupid at first.”

“...okay.” Isak reached over, fingertips down Even’s arm, tracing around the inside of his wrist and pulling his hand over to wind their fingers together. Even looked down, watching their hands entwine, the curl of Isak’s knuckles around his hands, the way they slotted together like they’d been doing it for years.

It’d literally been just today that he'd been feeling like himself and it was still strange, he felt like he didn't quite fit into this skin yet.

It was dimmed, everything was and he felt dangerously close to sliding back into numb and nothing, so close he'd spent the day walking on eggshells but.

Isak wanted to talk and Even owed him that. Even owed him so much.

He sucked in a breath and marveled for a second at how his lungs didn't feel like they were drowning then he was looking up at Isak’s waiting patience and finally speaking.

“Well, first of all, literally everything sucks when I’m depressed. Like, it’s like I’m...entirely empty. Like I know objectively that you love me but I can’t feel it, I can’t feel anything, and it’s like...I just wanna stop existing.”

Even sighed, tipping his head to the side and staring down at Isak’s shirt, tongue pressing against the inside of his cheek. Lifting one shoulder cause he had the energy to do it.

“And sleep is the closest you can get to that, so.”

He risked a glance upwards and Isak’s eyes were a little too wide, his heart pounding a little too fast. Hand gripping his a little too tight.

Isak was trying not to freak out, Even could feel it. He didn’t know how he could feel it when Isak was just sitting there a little wide-eyed, how much his mind was racing but he could feel it and he reached over the distance between them and rubbed his hand over Isak’s hip but it was too close too intimate and too much so he took his hand back.

Isak was still looking at him like he’d been hit in the chest with a bus. Even sucked in another breath and told himself he wasn’t gonna get frustrated.

“It’s not a suicidal thing, babe. It’s like...it’s like you don’t wanna die but you don’t wanna keep living either, it’s. It’s really hard to explain, but. I mean that’s part of why I don’t want you there, because I don’t know how to make you understand. That and I’m not really in this keen on cuddling with my boyfriend mode, y’know what I mean?”

Isak swallowed and nodded, looking a little less overwhelmed. Hand creeping over his own to rub warm fingers over Even’s wrist instead. Even watched Isak’s fingers trace over his skin and wondered for the thousandth time what he was thinking.
“I don’t want anyone really around when I’m like that because...I feel like you’re expecting so much of me, even if you’re literally expecting nothing, it’s just like. I feel like I have to put on filters so you don’t get all scared and upset and sad and.” Even stuck his tongue in his cheek again, risking another glance up before he was looking off to the side, studying the window on the other side of the room. “I don’t want you there for that.”

“Have you ever had anyone there for that?” Isak’s voice was so quiet he could barely hear him and Even closed the hand over Isak’s thigh, dragging him two inches closer, making Isak slide down a little on the couch with it. They weren’t close enough and it was already too complicated but it was Isak.

“My mom used to not leave my side when I was younger, but she learned over time that only made me more upset, so.”

“But I’m not your mom,” Isak told him, fingertips tracing hesitantly up his arm, dipping under the sleeve of his t-shirt, pushing up against bare skin until his wrist was trapped beneath cotton. “Could we try, sometime, for me to stay with you when I’m not in school? When it’s really bad? I don’t know what capacity you’d want me in, if it’s lying there or holding you or just. Being in the same room, but I want to be there.”

It was so soft and naïve and Even pushed his lips out, running his thumb over the side of Isak’s hand.

“That’s...the other part of why I don’t want you to be.”

It took a few seconds and Isak was sitting up the rest of the way, knee popping up behind Even’s back and chest pressed against Even’s arm, shoulder, staring at him with his eyebrows knit from this close.

“...what?”

“Ja, the way I’m feeling is only part of it.” Even worried away at the edge of Isak’s sleeve and Isak kept sitting and staring at him. Even didn’t look up, lips parted around the words for a moment before he managed to say them. “Keeping you from it’s the other part. Especially this time, because it was bad, like it usually is, and it was the first time you’d seen all of it and. It was a fucking lot to put on you, Isak, I didn’t want to be a burden the first time you ever went through the whole cycle cause...if it was too much this time.”

His hand curled up, crinkling up the soft material of Isak’s shirt, eyes fluttering shut as the words dropped and he wouldn’t say them if he had the choice but they were already out of his mouth.

“...god knows you weren’t gonna stick around until a next time.”

Isak wasn’t really breathing, Even was watching his chest and he could feel his pulse from everywhere they were pressed together, but his chest wasn’t expanding and contracting under the light gray anymore.

“Even. That’s not fair.”

It was so hurt and offended that Even picked up his head, eyebrows knit as he met Isak’s pinning gaze.

“What do you mean that’s not fair?” He shook his head once, a piece of hair dislodging over his forehead with it. “Yes it is. I know how this works, you don’t.”
“You know how you work,” Isak corrected, stabbing a finger into his chest. Even lifted his eyebrows unimpressed but Isak held his gaze, eyes hard, sloping mouth set open, a touch indignant. “But you can’t assume how I feel, you asshole.”

“Look, Isak—”

“No, you look. Fucking listen to me, okay? Cause I listen to you. Just because you’re not well doesn’t mean you always get the final say. It’s not your way or the highway, Even.”

Even’s head retreated and he blinked about two dozen times, leaning back, taken aback by the words and the seriousness behind them.

The frown lines between those eyes as Isak kept staring him down. Everywhere Even glanced away to Isak was moving back into his line of sight, waiting until Even was looking at him, really looking at him and fine, whatever the fuck Isak had to say, Even could sit here and let him say it.

He huffed and gave Isak a dull look under his lashes, really, and Isak narrowed his eyes a little and held Even’s nearly rolling eyes.

“I get I’m not eighteen yet, I’m not technically an adult and that you’re older and wiser and know more about the world and life and being bipolar by like, a long way, but I don’t give a fuck.” He shook his head once, curls tumbling around his face and Even lifted unimpressed eyebrows. Isak made a little frustrated sound and narrowed his eyes again, serious this time.

“Even, you can know all of that, but you do not. Get to assume how I feel.”

Even opened his mouth to protest and Isak promptly reached over and knocked his chin up with the back of his hand, snapping Even’s mouth right back shut.

“You can’t feel what I feel, okay?” Isak stared seriously at him, unblinking, green eyes dark but crystal clear, none of the shadowed intoxication or young playfulness. Just hard. “Or think, for that matter.”

Even was staring openly, stunned back.

Isak was dead fucking serious and Even had never seen Isak put his foot down like that with him before. Actually, fuck that, he’d never seen Isak that fucking serious, ever.

“Agreed?” Isak said, dipping his head, eyebrow shooting up as he held Even’s gaze and waited for him to get over the shock of it, and actually hear what Isak was saying.

You don’t get to assume how I feel.

You can’t feel what I feel.

Turning his words around on him like that but. But how could Isak mean that, it wasn’t like Even didn’t know what he was doing. He knew how people reacted to shit like mania, he’d—

Isak would.

Wouldn’t he…

It wasn’t. It wasn’t like Even was unjustified in…

In assuming how Isak felt? The one thing he’d asked Isak never to do for him?
Fuck, that was hypocritical. But if he didn’t assume. Did that mean Isak—

“Agreed?” Isak prompted again, dipping lower, pulling Even back out of his head, waiting and serious and looking sincerely for that answer.

“Yeah,” Even whispered. Searching all over the serious expression, taking a moment before he let it sink in. Before he managed to say what had come so easy for Isak to promise in the kitchen that morning. “…only you can...feel what you feel.”

And it was sinking in, it was, how much he’d let himself assume over the past two weeks, or hell, the past two months. About what Isak would think, what he would say, how careful Even should be around him when. When that wasn’t fair, it wasn’t, Isak was fucking constantly surprising him and.

Even’s head tipped up, holding and following the gaze as Isak shifted, using the leg already draped over him to slide into his lap, swiveling close. Knees cradling hips as he crawled under Even’s skin and into his place, over the top of him like this with two hands on Even’s jaw and those green eyes searching back and forth between his.

Even held onto achingly familiar hips, head tipping back to keep his mouth and nose above the water as Isak looked down at him, held tight, shoved their foreheads together, and forced Even back on dry land.

“And I have never.” Lashes slipping closed, breath painting over his lips and lifting him free. “...felt anything like this. Ever.”

There was a part of him that wanted to protest that Isak was only saying that because it was the next line in the quote, in that quiet morning before Isak knew everything was ruined, but the rest of him was crumbling because he could feel it.

He could feel it.

Not what Isak felt, but how much he felt it, how much he meant it. How fucking much he meant it, holding their foreheads together here on the couch and carving the words into his skin like Even hadn’t spent the past three weeks ruining their lives.

Like none of that had changed one bit of the way Isak felt about him.

As if Isak was still overwhelmed, in awe of what he felt for Even. Of how deeply he felt for Even. That was real. That was still real. This thing between them still had Isak in awe and Even was so beyond having a way to process that, let alone find something to say to it.

His eyes slipped shut and he tipped up, nose pressing against the side of Isak’s. Breathing him in and he was ready to cry again, he was way too fucking fragile for this shit.

But god, he loved that boy. He loved him more than he’d loved anything in his entire life, so immensely and powerfully it’d shaken his heart to the core and taken his poison brain with it.

It never stopped being about Isak.

It never would.

“Neither have I,” Even confessed, branding his skin with the broken whisper.

God, he’d never meant anything so much.
Isak’s hands shoved up through his hair, tugging on the way, sinking into the feathered strands by his temples then he was tipping forward and kissing him.

Strong, sinking into his mouth and Even melted upwards, the hands on Isak’s waist sliding up his ribs and curving with his spine, dragging him in until their chests collided and Isak was twisting their mouths, nose flicking against his to tip sideways and kiss him deeper.

Even parted his lips and took Isak’s oxygen into his lungs, mouthing against the warmth and security and heat and dangerous promise as hands tightened in his hair and Isak kissed him harder.

The press and break apart to slide back together and pull back lips tugging was making hurricanes inside his chest and Even was clutching Isak’s shirt and it was desperate and so fucking grateful and Isak puckered a half dozen sticky pecks over his mouth then he was rolling them down onto the couch, spine bouncing and legs still wrapped around Even, everything still wrapped around Even, holding onto him tight as he kissed his mouth and kissed him again.

“Let me try,” Isak murmured, pushing against him, Even’s back against the couch cushions, center of gravity lost somewhere between Isak’s ribs. “Let me try, because that’s what I want. And if it’s awful and I’m too much you can kick me out again, but if you kick me out for my sake, instead of yours, I swear to god I will find a way to tell the difference and I will fucking kick your ass for it, you hear me?”

“I hear you,” Even said quietly. Isak closed his eyes and held their foreheads together, swallowing tight and Even uncurled the fingers making fists in Isak’s clothes to press open palms all along that beautiful strong spine instead.

“Good,” Isak whispered, lips parted dropped open with the word, breathing all over Even’s damp lips. “Stop pulling shit like this. First you move out,”

“Listen, I’m sorry about that--”

“Then you make me move out basically, so I don’t have to see you, but I want to.” Two hands on his cheeks, sliding over his skin, up over his forehead and into his hair and down to his ears.

“I want to. Words painting over his skin as heavy as the touch. “Even. I see right through you anyways. I’ve seen every part of you,”

Isak pulled back, eyebrows up and mouth open, squinting a little, head tilted back over the my uncle’s not-- expression and Even’s eyebrows shot up. I’ve seen every part of you, --literally.”

Even’s eyebrows shot higher and Isak smiled a little, then he was pressing his open mouth against Even’s and Even kissed him back, for the brief moment before Isak was pulling away to murmur against him.

“And I still want you,” Isak breathed over his mouth, nose squished sideways, pressed close and shoving oxygen and Even closed his eyes for the brief moment Isak was holding him like this.

“...so you-- you gotta fucking stop thinking I don’t, Even.” He leaned back, staring him right in the eyes, hands on either side of his face, holding him still so serious and sincere and sure and beautiful.

“Otherwise I’m gonna have to start doing really dramatic things to prove my love and we both know that’s gonna get hella wild hella fast.”

Even couldn’t help the little huff of a laugh and Isak burst into a smile, wide and bright and still as
sincere as the intense gaze, their foreheads dropping together again.

“Yeah? Okay?”

“Yeah, okay,” Even whispered back and Isak kissed him again.

It took everything not to get completely lost in the touch, in the way Isak was holding him and mushing their lips together, tugging apart with waves and waves of dry sparks stringing down his spine. He kept tilting, leaning in for more but Isak wouldn’t make the shift into making out, he kept softening the kisses at the end, nuzzling their noses together when their lips broke.

Even was trying not to gasp, inhaling and inhaling and Isak’s hands kept relocating, finding new places to latch on and hold him tighter, more secure.

Their mouths pressed together again, and again, and Isak loved him and Even was fragile but he was feeling better and they were talking and everything was maybe starting to be okay.

The fingertips across his skin whispered that they just wanted to hold him so Even let him, let Isak have whatever he was asking for, he’d take anything, so long as they were here together and Isak was still here, had just chewed him out for ever thinking otherwise and Even closed his eyes and tipped into Isak’s mouth and let himself maybe believe it.

So it might not last forever and he might forget at some point or start to doubt or just wonder but right now, right now Isak loved him so fucking much Even could feel it in the dance across his mouth and that, he could believe in that.

Two soft loose pecks to his mouth then the hands on his jaw pulled him in and Isak tucked Even’s temple against his collarbone, wrapping both his arms around his head to plant kisses in his hair instead. Warm, soft, falling star promises all over his hair, seeping into his brain and quieting his mind and the shift under his skin as they lay there on the couch and.

Even clutched Isak’s spine and let him.

**Søndag, 09:43**
05.03.17

They woke up Sunday morning and the world was shifted.

It started with their hands. Even woke up first, barely, blinking groggily awake a few minutes before Isak’s lashes were fluttering and he woke up slow beside him.

By the time green eyes flicked open Even was running fingers through blonde curls, thumb tracing over the top of Isak’s eyebrow.

A little curl of a smile against the pillow, his hands tucked up under his bare chest as he looked over at Even and the sun rose.

“How are you feeling?”

“Lucky,” Even whispered back.

One of Isak’s eyebrows lifted and Even’s fingertips traced down the side of his face, pausing at the
corner of Isak’s mouth to quietly gently touch his bottom lip.

Isak’s head readjusted on the pillow and the smile curled a little higher. “Me too.”

Then one of the strong hands was sliding out from under him, reaching over to rest on Even’s cheek, arching across his jaw.

Then he rolled a bit, getting a shoulder under him so he was on his side and Isak reached back to take Even’s hand out of his hair. He lifted them both for the sky, running his fingers over Even’s, watching captivated as they slowly entwined.

Even looked between their hands and Isak, all grateful and unsure and hurt and sorry and Isak squeezed tight, fingers indenting between knuckles. Turning his head on the pillow to look over at him warm and quiet.

“What do you say we take all day in here, just the two of us. Like the first day.”

“The parallel universe day?” Even asked and Isak smiled.

“Ja. But water and peeing first, and we’re bringing food in here. Then yes.”

“Okay,” Even smiled back and Isak leaned over the pillow to kiss him on the mouth.

It lit up beautiful and warm as bare feet slowly drying indoors and safe from walking too far in the rain.

Isak kissed him and Even tipped helplessly closer.

It was the first of thousands for the day.

They had a quiet, simple breakfast of cereal, sitting cross legged across from each other on Isak’s bedroom floor. Then Isak took the empty bowls back for the kitchen and Even opened up the window a crack, pulling the white curtains back down over the view of Oslo.

It was chilly enough he threw on a hoodie, grabbing one for Isak too. When Isak got back, he smiled and let Even pull it over his head, curls popping free then they were falling down to the bed together, limbs tangled up and mouths pressing in soft kisses.

It wasn’t long before they settled down, lying in the middle of the bed, Even on his back and Isak on his stomach, half up on Even’s side with his head on Even’s arm and his eyes locked on Even’s questioning gaze.

It was just the two of them today. They had nothing to do but spend the day in bed together and there was a part of him that couldn’t shake the nerves, couldn’t help but wonder if this time he wouldn’t live up to the expectations, if he was still enough to make Isak feel soft and warm and full of wonder when he’d been broken and things were so different now.

The uncertainty ran deep enough Isak could see it, if the nose tipping up against his meant what the silence was whispering.

It’s still me, Isak told him quietly, a reminder from his core, lashes low as he swept their noses back and forth, slow. It’s still us.

Tipping up against him sure and soft and so damn comfortable, breathing over Even’s mouth as his eyes fluttered closed.
I still love you.

Even closed his eyes too, tipping his nose up to press harder against Isak’s and Isak just smiled softly, warming the room without having to see it as he nuzzled in close, rubbing their noses together rapid up and down.

It stole something out of his throat and Even’s chest filled, the smile pulling up helplessly.

They didn’t say anything for a while. They spent a few hours quietly slipping into each other’s skin, spent the day relearning each other.

The first time this had all been so new and overwhelming and Even had slowly guided his fingertips, mouth, tongue over Isak’s and let him feel, feel so much. Isak had been in complete awe with every kiss, every soft touch.

Now they were both blinking surprised and tingling warm at the world rushing back beneath once deadened fingertips.

Questions in every overlap of their mouths, every slide of Even’s fingers up Isak’s hoodie to brush over his skin, so familiar and the most long lost precious treasure he’d ever guarded.

Isak tipped into his hands and up against his lips, quiet confirmations, we can still feel all of this, wondering, wandering careful touch, can we still do all of this?

Yes, every kiss and touch and stroking fingers through hair and heartbeats pounding over each other’s chests answered gently into the streaming sunlight between their noses. Yes.

And they were careful with each other, careful not to break the bubble, careful to keep everything honest and slow and gentle and there wasn’t any rush, just fond looks and sweet exploration.

Hands relearning mouths and Isak’s nose squishing up from the closeness, little hitches of breath confirming all of the things they knew the other liked. This was something that was okay again, that never stopped being okay. I still heat up when you touch me there, your tongue still makes my toes curl in my socks, kiss me soft and I’m still here.

The more they kissed and watched each other and ran fingers over shoulder blades the more their bodies whispered this hasn’t changed, this hasn’t changed, you might have changed, I might have changed but, I still want this, I want this more than ever.

And Isak kept lifting his chin up and tilting his head with those sweet eyes, parted lips breathing he wanted more, kiss me more, please, kiss me Even.

Oh. Even did.

They didn’t do much of anything but kiss for the first half of the day, a few words here and there to make Isak giggle or Even smile, but it wasn’t until after lunch when they were settling back into each other again that Even lifted his voice for anything real.

Everything real.

“Baby?”

“I missed hearing you call me that,” Isak whispered and Even looked down at him, stroking fingers through the floof of blonde.
“I missed saying it.”

Isak curled and pressed a soft kiss to his chest, lips against hoodie soft, eyes down at nothing.

“What is it?”

“I...I don’t know if it’s stupid but.”

“It’s not,” Isak muffled and Even furrowed his eyebrows.

“Hmm? You don’t know what it is yet.”

“I don’t know, but I don’t care. Whatever it is, it’s not stupid.”

Even raked his fingers through soft curls and Isak kept staring down at the folds in Even’s shirt. He was so fucking young and beautiful.

“I’m sorry I made you leave.”

Isak lifted his head, settling his chin on Even’s chest, blinking at him with dark fanning lashes.

“That’s not stupid.”

“I’m sorry I made you leave, but I couldn’t be the one to do it.”

Isak knit his eyebrows at him, tipping his head and rolling his chin over Even’s chest.

“What do you mean?”

“I tried to make you mad enough that you’d take off when it got bad, because one of us had to, and it couldn’t be me.”

There was a lot in that statement, a lot all wrapped up too simple but every word of it was true and Isak hadn’t let it sink in yet.

“Selfish prick,” Isak smacked open his mouth in offense and shoved Even a little, rocking them both. Even caught his hand, holding Isak’s fingers tight. He was being serious. Isak pouted a little, wiggling his fingers. “I like my bed. Why couldn’t it be you?”

“Because too many people have left you,” Even whispered with tears in his eyes.

Isak went perfectly still, freezing like a statue and staring at him openly.

Even squeezed his hand and tried not to cry. “I couldn’t be one of them.”

Isak was still kinda just staring. Even lifted his free hand to the top of Isak’s head, thumbing back curls and leaving the weight of it on top of his hoodie, daring to part his lips, whisper one more time.

“Say something.”

“Okay,” Isak whispered and Even wrapped his hand under Isak’s chin and pulled him in to kiss him deep and sorry and here and.

Isak kissed him back, a little timid and Even kept wiping loving palms over his cheeks only Isak wasn’t letting himself cry, which was worse.

Their mouths broke back apart and Isak’s eyes were closed. He tugged that beautiful boy in close,
wrapping his arms around Isak tight and Isak pressed a hand over Even’s heart, arm tucked in between their chests and let himself be held.

“I’m so sorry about your parents,” Even whispered to Isak’s ceiling and that pretty head shifted on his chest, sending curls up into his face.

“In the words of Jonas Noah Vasquez,” Isak said dully. “Fuck my parents.”

Even laughed and Isak smiled weak and cuddled in deeper.

They lay there a moment, Isak listening to his heartbeat as Even tapered off and wondered how anyone in any universe could ever bring themselves to abandon the sweetest boy on earth.

Isak’s fucking parents.

Then the soft mouth was parting against cotton, a heavy pause settling specks of dust over the room.

“Just marry me and I can take yours.”

The laugh that burst out of his chest was pure surprise and Isak bounced a little and giggled against him.

“You think I like cuddling, but I’m really just sapping your warmth to fuel my freezing body. You think I like you, but I’m really just snatching up your parents since mine suck.”

Even put a hand on top of his head and Isak lifted up, catching the look and scooting up to press their mouths back together. Even kissed him and kissed him until the beautiful boy was melting against his mouth and started breathing deep again.

“I love you more than everything in the world,” Even whispered over tingling lips.

“I would love you even if your parents sucked,” Isak whispered back and Even’s eyebrows shot straight up on his forehead.

“Oh really, what happened to getting paid 500 kroner and getting married to steal them?”

Isak pecked their lips together once, mushy as he looked down his nose, watching Even through the tug apart before he was mumbling again.

“Nei, really though. Your parents are great, but I don’t want you to ever think that’s why I’m with you.”

“I always figured it was cause I cooked you things.”

“You are a...fantastic cook,” Isak said, nose scrunching up with it and Even laughed, airy, somewhere in the clouds.

“See?”

“But I’d still love you if you burnt everything.”

“It sounds like you’re just naming all the reasons I love you. In spite of your shitty parents, even though you burn everything~”

“Shut up,” Isak said and Even’s mouth curled up, heart fluttering at the beauty on his chest, dark gaze dropped as his voice did.
“...shut me up.”

They kissed and Isak put two hands around his neck and held onto him tight.

There were keys and doors unlocking in his chest with every slide apart, quiet overlap of their mouths again and Even’s lashes fluttered with the puff of oxygen painting damp lips.

Then their foreheads were pressing together and Isak was back on the pillow beside him again, tip of his nose cold on Even’s cheek as Even swung open and poured more confessions onto smooth sweet skin.

“I’m really sorry I wasn’t there for you during your fallout with Jonas.”

“It’s okay,” Isak whispered back, eyes closed and hand landing haphazardly on Even’s jaw. Even tipped into him and kept spilling into silence.

“And I’m so sorry for scaring you during my manic episode.”

“That’s okay too.”

“And I’m sorry for--”

“Even.”

“This one’s important.” Eyes shut against the impending horizon and Isak exhaled slow over his skin, dragging him right back down to their quiet stillness on the pillows. “I’m sorry for holding you so tight I left nasty bruising on your arms that night.”

The bubble shattered after all, pillow rolling him back as Isak lifted his head, prying Even’s eyes open with it. There was enough latent alarm on schooled features Even could see the gears turning, the pains Isak had gone to to make sure Even never saw those.

“Jonas?” he finally asked.

“Jonas,” Even confirmed. Isak’s head dropped.

“Fuck. You two keep ganging up on me.” A hand sliding up Even’s chest and everything wasn’t broken yet, somehow.

Even studied back and forth between the green eyes, only flicking up to him once or twice, mouth closed over a little pout as Isak traced fingers over the strings of his hoodie and Even tipped his head. Jonas.

“You're gonna have to get used to it, I think we might be friends now.”

“Ja?”

“Ja.”

“When did that happen,” Isak murmured to tracing fingertips and Even’s eyebrows shot up. Well.

“Probably when we got high in the skatepark last Tuesday.”

Isak’s head snapped up so quick his jaw barely had time to drop.

“What?!?!” Then he was popping up all the way, pushing up on Even’s chest to look down at him
with his eyes wide as his mouth. “What the fuck !!!!”

It was so shocked and cute, Even couldn’t help it, he started laughing.

Isak’s mouth dropped open wider.

“Oh, sorry, sorry, he’s gonna kill me for telling you but full disclosure, right?”

“The fuck,” Isak managed eloquently and Even closed his mouth over a smile, circling a hand through the soft curls around Isak’s ear.

“I know.”

“You’re not supposed to smoke.”

“I know.”

“And Jonas--”

“I was stressed out, okay, don’t blame him.”

“Oh I’m blaming him,” Isak confirmed incredulously and Even rolled his eyes, to which Isak made a very indignant sound.

“Fine, but he fixed a lot of things with it, so.”

“Like what.”

“Like he told me about the bruises, first of all.” Even pinned him with a look and now Isak was the one rolling his eyes.

“I don’t care about the bruises.”

“You can’t-- do you have any idea how stressed that makes me? Isak, you have to care.”

“Well tough shit, because I don’t.” Isak pinned him right back, folding an arm over Even’s chest and propping his chin defiantly on his wrist.

Naïve, stubborn, infuriating,

“What happens when next time they’re worse?? When they’re not from holding you still? When you can’t ‘get out’ or whatever your fucking excuse was?”

“Then we’ll deal with it next time,” Isak fired back. “You don’t get to worry about that shit now, that’s in our rules, remember?”

“But--”

“No buts.” Curls tumbling as Isak shook his head sharply and Even tried to get his open mouth in protest again but Isak was cutting him off before he could. “We’re taking it a day at a time, and when that day comes we’ll figure it out, okay? So fuck off about the bruises.”

Even glared at him and Isak glared back harder.

When that day comes. I’ve made up a game, it’s called--

Fuck.
“...fine,” he finally shot back and the glare softened into something sweet again.

“Good,” Isak said, hard, then he was flopping back down to Even’s side and squeezing an arm around his ribs. Even sighed and put a hand in Isak’s hair. “What else did you and Jonas talk about? What else did he supposedly...fix.”

It was dubious and judgy, which was fair considering that Even had promised he wasn’t gonna smoke and it was definitely a lame excuse for doing it, but they actually had fixed things so.

He stroked a thumb across Isak’s forehead and looked up at the ceiling.

“Me thinking you were only with me to prove your dad wrong.”

“What ????” And Isak popped right back up again, looking down at him with his mouth open. Again. “What the-- are you fucking-- how fucking much am I missing ??”

“A lot,” Even said honestly. “But I think everything’s okay now, so.”

“Fuck.” Isak collapsed back down, eyes wide and heart pounding quick under the hand Even had on his spine. He only lasted a few seconds of lying there before he was lifting his head again, squinting up at Even. “Did you really think that?”

“Yes, I did.”

“Fuck. I am so sorry.”

“It's not your fault.” Even lifted the shoulder Isak wasn’t lying on, making pretty eyebrows furrow deep. “I found out I was wrong.”

“Yeah. Yeah, really wrong. Why didn't you ask me?”

“I wasn't sure if it was subconscious.”

“And Jonas would know my subconscious??”

“Ja??”

Isak struggled for a second, twisting up his face and wrestling with the obvious yes before he whooshed out an exhale in surrender, deflating onto Even’s side again.

“...okay fine that's fair whatever fuck you guys.”

Even smiled and tugged the soft shoulders in closer. Their hearts beat in sync for a moment or two before Isak was tipping his head up to look at him again.

“You know I would never--”

“I know that now, yes.”

“But you really didn’t.”

“I was questioning a lot of things, okay.”

“Including why I was staying with you?” It was so disbelieving and when he said it like that it sounded so dramatic but it was true, Isak didn’t get that those things weren’t axiomatic to him, they never had been.
So he looked at the long lashes flicked up at him, the tipped up boy wrapped up in his hoodie and waiting with his breath in his throat. *Had you seen me before that first kose meeting?*

You were questioning why I was with you?

“...yes,” Even told him quietly.

Isak’s face didn’t open up in amazement and awe this time, this time there was no woah, only deflated hurt and twisted up protest.

“Fuck, baby. You. You know how much I love you, right?”

“I know.”

Isak shook his head once, pushing up again, holding Even’s eyes like this was the most important conversation they’d ever had.

“No, really, do you?”

“I think so.”

“I would never let my parents affect us, but they have absolutely nothing to do with why I’m with you.”

“Jonas made that really, really clear.”

“Well I’m making it clear right now. I need you to hear it from me. I’m with you because I love you, and I stay because I love you, not because my dad is an abandoning fuck who wouldn’t.”

“Okay,” Even whispered. Isak searched back and forth between his eyes.

“Do you have any idea how much I love you.”

“I really...I really think I might, if it’s anything like the way I feel about you.”

“Fuck.” Isak closed his eyes for a moment, wavering and unsteady before he sucked in a breath, swooped down, and kissed him on the mouth. Then he kissed him again, tip of his nose caught and squishing up and Even closed his eyes and gripped the back of his neck tight, tipping up to press against plush and tug apart inhaling hard.

Spun hearts beating in the lingering space between their breaths, fingers squeezing tight one moment longer.

Here.

And finally they were both settling back down, looking at each other deep as Isak wrestled his lungs.

They were barely lying there for ten seconds before Isak got up and kissed him again.

Even smiled soft against his mouth that time and the long drags apart shifted into repetitive little presses together and aching waves then Isak was breathing over his lips and pressing the sides of their noses together.

Guiding hands moulded the worry right out of those cotton shoulders as Even laid him back down on his side and kissed him one more time.
Isak’s lashes fluttered closed and they both lay there for a little while, breathing close and warm over each other’s skin.

“In full disclosure…” Isak settled into his side a little deeper, eyes down as Even watched his face. “...my parents texted me back that they were expecting more from me but they hoped to see just me again soon and I didn't reply.”

“Okay,” Even said. Isak glanced up at him, licked his lips and looked back down, head tipping against the pillow.

“Also in full disclosure I went to church and prayed about you, that was weird.”

“Yeah?” Even danced his fingertips over Isak’s shoulder. “That is a little surprising.”

“Mmhm.”

“Did it make you feel better?”

“That was the weird part.” Isak lifted his head a little, glancing up at Even from under his lashes and searching. “‘Cause it totally did.”

“Well...I'm glad you went then,” Even offered and Isak crinkled up his nose.

“But what does it mean.”

“I don't fucking know, why would I know?”

“I don't know, but I don't know either.”

“That's okay, you don't have to know.”

“I don't like not knowing.”

“Just...take it chill,” Even suggested and Isak sighed.

“Well…” Then he sighed again and tipped his head back against the side of Even’s chest. “Yeah, okay.”

Floofy blonde was in his face again and Even curled his arm up to brush the soft waves to the side.

“I also listened to that twenty one pilots song like fifty times,” Isak offered into his hoodie.

“Holding On to You.”

“Oh. Oh, wow. I’m sorry about that, that song usually helps, it doesn't usually…”

“I get like….why. That song is fucking intense.” Isak skid his head up on Even’s chest, glancing up at him and dislodging the perfect swoop Even had finally just gotten his hair to behave into.

“Mmhm. I have a lot of intense music.”

“I'm starting to get that.” Then Isak was looking back down and Even was brushing the curls into place again. “No wonder you like listening to Gabrielle sometimes, you need the break.”

Even laughed, rumbling against Isak’s ear and making a little smile curl on his face. “Exactly.”
The way he said Gabrielle, like his taste in music was *that* ridiculous and appalling, it hadn’t changed one bit and it was still the cutest fucking thing Even had ever heard.

_Mannen i mitt liv._

“I think that's all I have to disclose,” Isak finally said and Even smiled up a little at the ceiling.

“Okay. You probably didn’t need to tell me half that.”

“Neither did you but you did, so.”

“Okay. I'm good with that. With this.”

“Telling each other everything?”

“Sure. If it makes it easier.”

“I think it does.” Isak lifted his head again and Even kept the hand on top of his curls, lifting his eyebrows as the green eyes studied him extra long, looking all over while Even waited. “...not like I need easy.”

“Clearly, you've handled all of this like a pro.”

“I went out and got myself beat up, what are you talking about.”

“Okay...maybe not that part,” Even admitted and Isak laughed, lighting up the corners of the room in sunshine, saturating the blue stripes on the duvet beneath them brighter than Even’s eyes were burning now.

“Maybe not that part,” Isak echoed smiling and Even slid a hand down the side of that beautiful golden face.

“But this part,” Even told him, then he was leaning down and kissing the boy on his shoulder. Isak smiled into his mouth and kissed him back.

And kissed him back.

*Here is the part where everyone was happy all the time and we were all forgiven, even though we didn’t deserve it.*

“Hey have you seen that movie--”

“Nei.”

“I haven't even said it yet!”

“I haven't seen like any of your movies, baby.”

“None of them are mine yet.”

“I'll watch every movie you ever make, how's that.”

“That sounds good.”

They kissed soft and lingering until Isak was smiling and then they kissed again.

“Okay, what about Casablanca?”
“...nope.”

“I’m taking up your film education with your friends.”

“They’re worse than me!”

“How is that possible.”

Isak leaned in to kiss him and Even opened his mouth and dipped his head to slide out of reach, smiling with it.

“Oh fuck no, I didn’t get to kiss you for two weeks, I get to motherfucking kiss you now, you pull that shit one more time--”

Even giggled and Isak leaned up to kiss him again, lashes low and lips parted and head tilting beautifully, like gravity.

Even dodged it.

Isak pushed up instantly, compressing his chest with it.

“You fucking--”

Then he was taking Even’s face in both hands and kissing him hard enough they were rolling and Even held him tight and kissed him and kissed him until Isak was keening up against him and panting softly against his mouth and pressing up tight against his body, begging for more.

“I’m here, I’m here, we’ve got all day,” Even murmured over his mouth and Isak kissed him again and flopped back against the pillow, dragging Even with him.

Even rolled them up on their sides and pulled their mouths into soft easy making out over the pillow, easing them both right back down from their pounding wild hearts.

Until Isak was finally tapering off and content, smiling against him and kissing him again soft short and sweet.

The sun sparkled in dark wide pupils, the flash of two dimples then Even was pulling Isak into his heart and rolling onto his back, tucking Isak against his side again.

Isak cuddled into his heartbeat and smiled deeper.

They just lay there in the illuminated specks of dust while Isak listened to his chest for a little bit before he was tipping his beautiful youthful face up again.

Even kissed him and it was clinging and content and sweet and Isak left his lips parted as Even tugged them apart, eyes closed and face close, waiting with his mouth open and every line of worry swept away from long lashes.

Even dipped in and kissed him again, sucking on his lower lip a little and sending palpable shivers down his spine. Isak smiled again, nose caught and squished up again and Even tipped his forehead into him.

Resting.

“Inception.”
“Mm, I haven't seen that one either.”

“So many,” Even sighed, rolling to complain up to the ceiling. “Every time I bring up a classic--”

“I know, I know.” Isak pulled him back down, tipped their noses together and smiled. “Watch them with me.”

A warm short kiss and Even leaned back with his eyebrows up.

“I will.” Just you wait.

“No promises I won't get distracted,” Isak murmured, then he was kissing Even again. Even kissed back for a moment or two before he was speaking over Isak’s lips, muffled and completely sincere.

“Hey, when we watch movies we pay attention.”

“Ugh. You're so much more interesting than any film I've seen.”

“Mmm.” Even tipped his chin up to kiss Isak hard and short, pulling up both of their smiles before they were settling back in warm again.

A month ago they'd been making out upside down on this bed when Isak had told him if he memorized half the shit in school with the intensity he’d memorized Isak, he’d have sixes all around and Even had kissed him and told him he was more beautiful than anything else he’d ever learned.

The boy in the books and the boy on the screen but they loved each other and that was all that counted.

The two of them lay there in the peace and quiet, in the combined warmth of their bodies and the golden visible uncrushable world circled around them.

The pause had Even’s fingertips tracing over the angles of Isak’s skin, his cheekbones to his ears and down to his jaw line, up over his bottom lip as Isak’s fingertips ran back and forth up and down his neck.

Then Even was opening up his mouth again and asking in the quiet light.

“What's your favorite Siken poem?”

“Litany in which certain things are crossed out.”

“You answered that quickly.”

“It speaks to me. Or what fucking pretentious thing did you say about the benches...it resonates with me.”

Isak rolled his eyes and tipped his head back and forth with it and Even laughed bright, chest pounding when Isak’s smile deepened real and beautiful at the sound of it.

“Which one is it again?”

“The one about the dragon and the princess and the city and forgiveness.”

“Sounds like you.”

“Shut up.”
“Do you have it memorized?”

“What? No,” Isak scoffed, lashes fluttering dramatically. “It's like...pages long and I've only read it like once.”

Even made a hm sound and Isak looked up at him.

“Only read it once? Fake fan.”

“Fuck off,” Isak said and Even smiled, shaking his shoulder a little. Isak rubbed his cheek on Even’s chest and glanced up at him under his hood. “How many times have you read Crush?”

“Every time I go into a bookstore that has it.”

“You know it's all online, right?”

“So?”

“Fair.” Isak ran a hand up Even’s chest, tracing a little heart over the center before he was looking up at him again, eyebrow lifted kinda cocky. “I bet you just like the romance of the real copy.”

“You know me,” Even chirped back and Isak wouldn’t stop smiling, wider and brighter as he tipped his head up for the thousandth time.

“Mnhm,” he confirmed happily, chin lifting this time too.

Even closed his eyes and kissed the lips waiting in request.

“And I know you.”

“Mnhm.” They kissed each other again. And again.

Isak slipped him a little tongue and Even’s hand tightened in his hair. A tipped up side smile as Isak waved their lips apart, slow and dramatic before pressing back in and burning his curled up mouth into Even’s.

Eventually their lips pulled slow, popping apart as Isak fell back to the pillow, turning Even’s head with him from their pressing noses.

A quiet inhale and Isak tipped up high enough to place a warm kiss to Even’s forehead, then he was settling lower to press another to his cheek, then their mouths were sliding back together and Even ran his hand up Isak’s pounding ribs.

They cradled each other close, hearts in sync, their peaceful faces overlapping with soft noses and smooth brow bones lined up in perfect curves.

A smile for a boy with a golden heart and both of their curled mouths meant it.

They just fit and nothing was crossed out.

Mandag, 08:27
06.03.17
It was Monday morning over breakfast that Even looked up at him and said it.

“Should go see my parents after school.”

Isak swallowed, setting his glass of juice back down. “Do you want me to come with you?”

“No. I think I’ll stay there for a few days.” Fork twirling as he looked down at his plate. “I know they both get pretty freaked out, I think I owe them that much.”

Isak put his tongue between his lips and nodded to himself.

“We have stayed a little over the three day limit,” he offered and Even’s head shot right back up, a little burst of a surprised laugh, crinkles up by his eyes.

Happy.

Isak smiled and cocked his head.

“Can I come visit you?”

“Yeah, how about you come for dinner on Wednesday? My dad gets off work early enough. And I’m sure they’d like to see you.”

“Okay.”

“And we’ll still see each other in school.”

“Mhm.”

“Are you sure you’re gonna be okay with that?”

“Yeah. It’s a couple days, it’s probably a good idea.” Isak ran a finger around the edge of his glass, glancing up at Even with one corner of his mouth tipped up. “…and like. My whole bed smells like you now instead of just the one pillow, so.”

Even laughed, sweet and small and Isak’s chest was so warm.

“Leave me a hoodie, though, yeah?”

“I will,” Even promised, then he was pushing up from his chair to lean over and kiss him across the breakfast table.

Won’t you carry me out of the darkness. Won’t you carry me out of the cold.

They stopped at the edge of the schoolyard and Isak nearly skid Even halted so fast. Which wasn’t nearly as offensive as suddenly dropping Isak’s hand to shove both quick in his pockets.

Isak lifted an eyebrow and Even took a deep breath, puffing out his chest and steeling himself. Isak squinted at him.

“What.”

“It’s my first official day back from the dead. Can you catwalk?”
“Can I-- what? You’re being a drama queen.”

“Everyone’s gonna be staring anyways, I might as well be cocky about it.” Even lifted a shoulder, tipping his head with it, the gorgeous fancy swooping curl bouncing.

Isak sighed.

“Nei, I don’t think I can catwalk.”

“That’s fine, just pretend to be enamoured.” Even was already scanning the courtyard over his shoulder and Isak lifted his eyebrows at him.

“I don’t have to pretend.”

It caught him a little off guard. A bright sudden smile as his gaze flicked back down. Isak looked up at him, a little smitten. Even dipped down to kiss his cheek, then he was swinging an arm around Isak’s shoulders and rolling his own back, exhaling between pursed lips to take a confident step forward.

The slow-mo soundtrack snapped in like a fucking movie scene, long legs and perfectly timed stride as Even started across the courtyard, walking like he owned the entire fucking world and people’s heads were turning and staring at them, there was this palpable energy that you couldn’t not look, radiating and pulling instincts like a hollywood star and.

And Isak had never been so fucking amused in his life, rolling his lips in over his tongue to keep the bursting smile in as he glanced up at his beautiful, dramatic ass boyfriend but Even was too busy being Cool, catwalking to this captivating tempo, completely stunning and somehow even more James Dean than that first day Isak had seen him across the courtyard only this time, Isak was under his arm, peering up at him and yeah,

He didn’t have to work hard to pretend to be enamoured.

Three boys with arms crossed over chests or grabbing backpack straps were shaking their heads at them as they finally rolled to a slowmo dramatic stop just outside the door.

“Nice entrance losers,” Jonas offered and Even tipped his shoulder up again.

“But it was an entrance.”

Isak was too busy trying to keep in the laugh, which got twice as difficult when he caught the look on Magnus’s face.

He was all squinched up, squinting between them and the courtyard where yes, everyone had absolutely been staring.

“How did you…”

“I’ll teach you sometime,” Even offered, then Magnus was shaking his head and Mahdi was holding out his hand in greeting.

Even smiled at him and took it, clapping together and bumping shoulders hello then Magnus’s hand was shaking Even’s shoulder and Isak finally ducked free, rolling his eyes knowingly at Jonas as they all piled inside.

This was the kind of first day his boy deserved.
They were holding hands walking into the lunchroom and Isak was rambling off something about his German class, free hand waving around dramatically while Even nodded and pretended to listen, mostly smiling at all the dramatics twisting up his precious face.

Which was why he didn’t notice the crowd at the lunch table until they were basically stepping up to it. Isak tapered off, looking at something else and it took him a few seconds to catch on and follow the sparkly gaze, to the dozen people he had somehow not noticed until right now.

“Oh, woah--” he barely started before his hand was being yanked out of Isak’s by the force of someone small crashing into his chest.

“Welcome back!!” Eva smushed into his shirt and Even laughed, surprised as he wrapped an arm around her small shoulders and turned smiles on the rest of them, then Vilde was crashing into his side and he had to lift an arm to accommodate the second hug.

“We missed you!” Shiny bright smiled up at him, squeezing him tight and Even’s eyebrows were practically on his hairline, looking wide eyed between Isak and the boys and the girls and the brightly colored basket sitting in the middle of the lunch table.

“Oh. Oh my, guys, this is...this is so sweet, thank you?”

His gaze caught on Sana’s and she twinkled at him, one dimple up as she dipped her head in a knowing nod.

Noora had replaced Eva on his other side and Even put a hand on top of her hair as she smiled against him and Isak rolled his eyes.

“It’s so good to have you back,” Eva was saying, backed up by a really bright smile from Vilde and vigorous nodding from Chris Berg, who hadn’t bothered to get up but was waving hello at him.

Even waved back and finally wrestled free of the girls, only to turn into a much more crushing tackle from a much taller and just as clingy friend.

Magnus squeezed him tight and Even laughed,

“I’ve seen you like six times Mags--”

“I know, but I missed you, you’re the only one who appreciates my coolness,” Magnus insisted, leaning back and clapping his shoulder while Even crinkled up in another laugh, then Mahdi was clapping his other shoulder and Even was finally able to turn to the table.

“Wow, there’s a gift basket and everything.”

Vilde clapped her hands together cheerily and Eva looked over with this wide smile and Isak leaned over to put his forehead dramatically on Jonas’s shoulder. Jonas patted his curls complacently while he whined under his breath about everyone stealing his boyfriend.

Even totally heard it anyways, although he was a little more focused on the fact that the girls had
gotten a fucking basket for him.

“There’s food in it,” Mahdi pointed out over his shoulder. “Which Vilde wouldn’t let us take.”

He reached over and plucked out the Stroopwafels to toss Mahdi’s way.

“Sweet!” Another clap to his shoulder and Mahdi was circling back around to his seat while Even turned to the bouncing on her toes blonde that had to have orchestrated the whole thing.

“Vilde, this is so sweet.”

“Oh, we all put it together,” she insisted and Sana shook her head, mouthing no behind her. Even rolled his lips in over the smile.

“You’re sure you’re not annoyed though?” Noora tipped her head up to ask from where she’d sat down, legs crossed sassy as she leaned her chin on a hand.

“Annoyed? Why would I be annoyed?”

“Isak said you would be annoyed,” Eva tilted her head knowingly and Even spun on a heel, shooting his eyebrows up at the pouty boyfriend.

“Huh??”

Isak threw up a hand, plopping down dramatically in his chair. “I dunno, you’ve been annoyed at a lot of shit lately, I didn’t know what you’d think of some big dramatic production.”

Even gave him a look and turned back to the girls.

“It’s beautiful, Vilde, thank you.” He leaned over to kiss her cheek and she waved him off with a happy smile, then Eva was tipping her head expectantly and Even laughed, dipping down to peck her cheek too.

“See? With you guys he’s fine, it’s just me he gets all fussy with. I swear, I do fucking everything I can to be sensitive and caring and--”

Even tipped up Isak’s chin and kissed him on the mouth, cutting the little rant off with the delicate press of their lips together.

Isak faded from indignant to soft as he tilted his head, pushing gently back up against him and melting down under Even’s mouth, lashes fluttering and terribly beautiful.

A cheer erupted around the table, lead by Magnus and Vilde and Isak’s nose was crinkling up, trying not to smile as their mouths broke apart but Even could feel the dimples beneath his rubbing thumbs and couldn’t help but smile right back down at him.

“I love you,” he whispered, holding the green eyes sincere. Isak rolled his lips in and nodded and Even kissed his cheek, lingering a moment before pressing another to his forehead, then he was straightening up and turning back to the table.

“Can I open it?” A nod at the basket as he looked over at the girls, thumb rubbing over the back of Isak’s neck and Eva clapped her hands together this time.

“Of course! We have to tell you the best part, though.”

“What?? Like this isn’t enough?”
“Well there’s a gift certificate in there that says it officially, but all of us girls decided...” Vilde looked around at all of them for confirmation and they all nodded, waving her on as she turned back to Even and told him excitedly, “...that we want you to come to our monthly spa night.”

“Really?”

“Yeah! It’s super fun, it’s just us girls and we hang out and eat chocolate and put on face masks and stuff and. We would all love to spend time with you, we haven’t gotten to since the cabin, which was fabulous. And you’ve been stressed lately, so we figured you could use it.”

She shrugged cutely and Even put a hand on his chest, tipping his head at the gesture.

Had anyone ever been so fucking sweet--

“The fuck,” Isak threw up a hand, looking rather betrayed. “I’ve been stressed too!”

“But you can get high with the boys,” Eva pointed out and Isak narrowed his eyes.

“...true.” Then he was swiveling right around in his chair and pointing a very serious finger at Jonas beside him. “Speaking of which, we have things to discuss.”

Jonas’s mouth popped open.

Even spun on his heel right back to the girls.

“I would be so honored,” he told them all, quite urgently and another little cheer went up, smiles all around as Vilde gave him another little hug.

Only then she was scooting to sit on the edge of the table and Even had to risk a glance over at the boys’ half of the table.

Yeah, Jonas’s mouth was still open wide.

“Dude, what the fuck, you told Isak??”

“I’m trying to be more open, okay, I wasn’t trying to throw you under the bus!”

“I’m under the bus,” Jonas informed him incredulously and Even couldn’t help the laugh, reaching over to shove his shoulder. Jonas reached behind Isak to shove him back.

“Wait.” Mahdi furrowed his eyebrows, waving a hand between them. “Since when the fuck are you two close?”

“I don’t know what the fuck you’re talking about, he’s telling our secrets to his boyfriend, I’m pretty sure that doesn’t count as close,” Jonas miffed and Even made a yikes face, finally taking his seat beside Isak.

“Your secrets??” Magnus looked back and forth between them, twice as confused as Mahdi, which was saying a lot.

Then Isak was narrowing his eyes bitchily, raising his voice to that Dramatic Tone™.

“Ja, Jonas and Even went and got high in the skatepark without me.”

“What???” Magnus squeaked and Jonas facepalmed and Even turned to the girls.
“Thank you ladies so much.”

“You don’t have to stay for the boy drama,” Isak said, glaring at Jonas the entire time and Eva lifted her shoulders, settling in with her elbows on the table.

“I think this is the greatest turn of events I’ve seen in awhile.”

Vilde swept down onto the chair next to her and Jonas threw up a hand.

“Welcome to our lunch table, I guess.”

“It’s our lunch table now,” Sana informed him triumphantly, and the girls all swiveled in, scooting around and pulling up more chairs while the boys blinked too many times. “So Jonas and Even did what?”

“Noora, who did you bet on in the Jonas-Even war again? Cause I vote whoever called for truce is the one who wins--”

“That’s fair, so which one of you made the phone call, it better have been Jonas--”

“Are you gonna eat those?” Chris Berg pointed at Mahdi’s waffle cookies. Mahdi scooted them all the way out of reach.

“Yes, I am.”

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Tirsdag, 14:50
07.03.17

Jonas was at his locker when Even’s shoulder landed on the one two combinations down, here for him instead of Isak this time. Jonas lifted his eyebrows and Even lifted a shoulder.

“Can we talk?”

“Ja, sure, what’s up?” He snagged his last textbook out of his locker, wrestling it into his backpack.

“It's about my last episode.”

Jonas glanced up and Even sucked in a breath, looking off to the side.

“Do you wanna talk about it here?”

“I’m fine if you are.”

“Okay, then. Shoot.” Jonas closed his locker, turning to face him and leaning too. Even rolled his lips in and popped them back out, head tipping with it as he looked at Jonas’s shoes instead.

“I was gonna mention it at the park, but there was a lot of other things we discussed then and.”

“Ja, a lot.”

“Thank you, for everything you did. I’m forever indebted,” Even lifted his head and Jonas was just
about to protest that maybe *forever* wasn’t the right word but he could definitely go for temporarily indebted or some shit, but the joke fell flat on his tongue the moment their eyes locked because Even was dead fucking serious right now.

“...but Jonas, you can never do that again.”

“Do...what?”

“Physically put yourself in harm’s way like that. Standing in front of me with your arms spread, I could’ve hurt you, really *really* hurt you.”

He knew Even well enough by now to recognize the tone, see exactly how much he’d been thinking about this and Jonas stuck his tongue in his cheek, looking off down the hallway for a moment.

Then he nodded to himself and pushed off the locker to dig in his pocket, pull out his wallet quietly.

Even was watching him confused through all the serious and Jonas flicked open the leather, reaching in the familiar pocket as he took out the photo, reaching between them to hand it over to Even.

“That’s in my wallet because somebody’s a fuck who gets themselves in trouble and people don’t forget a face like that.”

Even huffed and unfolded the photo, spinning it around to face upright.

It was Isak before he knew him. Small and shining and happy and laughing and beautiful and full of sunlight and ease. It was Jonas’s Isak, the one Even had never gotten to meet.

“You see that kid?” Jonas asked him quietly.

Even really really did.

“I would die for that kid. I will spend the rest of my entire life stepping between everything that can hurt—” a finger tapping on the photo in his hand. “—that smile. I will protect that boy no matter what the fucking cost is. Whether it’s you or the boys from Yakuza or his dad or the fucking fascist empire.

“I will *always*. Stand in the way. It has nothing to do with you. And you don’t get to be pissed at me about it, because he means the fucking world and you know that.”

It was quiet for a moment, the both of their heads dipped as Jonas repeated himself, barely above a whisper.

“You know that.”

Even nodded. He was basically crying now, eyes watering up as he glanced back up, sniffled once and looked back down, parting his lips around a promise.

“I do.”

Jonas nodded and Even lifted his head, handing the photo back. Jonas folded it in half and slipped it back into his wallet, looking at the leather instead of him.

“I’m always gonna be there for him, Even.”

He nodded again and Jonas shoved his wallet back in his pocket, lifting his gaze, tipping his chin up to meet Even’s all the way. Studying him for a moment while Even sniffled again and tried to blink
back the tears.

He’d come over here to scold Jonas into not being reckless, to apologize and find a way to lessen the collateral damage for next time, but.

But instead he had Jonas looking at him like that, trusting him with Isak like this and it was a lot, he’d thought he was ready for this conversation but apparently Jonas kept finding ways to kick his ass verbally and

“...and I’ll be there for you, too, if you’ll let me.”

Even’s eyes went wide, mouth parting in the shock but he didn’t really have anything to say that because fuck, that was a lot of curveballs all at once.

“I think you’ve fucking proved you love him by now,” Jonas rolled his eyes dramatically and Even huffed, wiping at his eyes before they spilled over. Jonas just lifted, making a popping sound as he knit his eyebrows and lifted them high. “And I’m just gonna keep telling you we’re friends until it happens.”

“Yeah?”

“Ja,” Jonas said back, a little high pitched and Even nodded again, wiping two hands over his face, sucking in a breath and blowing it out all at once.

“Then we’re gonna hug now.”

“Okay.”

“Okay.”

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Tirsdag, 19:03
07.03.17

Isak spent like, a week in early February being obsessed with this new song that came out, Alone by Marshmello.

For the past couple of days, it’d been all Even listened to.

Trying to find my way back home to you.

There was that quote, about home being a person? The touch of Isak’s skin, the double dimpled smile on his face, the little curls around his ears, the warmth of his words murmured into Even’s skin.

Trying to find my way back home to you.

Only today, he’d found a new song, a song for him, and he was considering sending it Isak’s way but maybe not yet.

Instead he plugged his phone in his dad’s speakers in the living room and turned them up all the way, blasting it on repeat while he lay on his floor in front of the couch and drew carefully in his sketchbook.
He kinda lost track of time, so he didn’t know that either of them were home until Liv was plopping down next to him, making him startle and look up from shaded pages.

““I like it,” she offered, kinda shouting to be heard over the song. Even blinked a few times and smiled, nodding as he looked back down at his sketchbook.

“The drawing or the song?”

“Both,” she shouted back, tapping a nail on the corner of his paper. “He’s a beautiful boy, sweetheart.”

“I know,” Even smiled to himself, putting his pencil back on the paper.

“You should send him the song.”

“I will I will.”

Onsdag, 14:02
08.03.17

There was about twenty minutes between biology and his next class, during which he usually studied with Sana but they were already four days ahead on classwork, so instead he was leaning against a wall in some random hallway, chatting with his boyfriend.

Okay, so maybe the chatting was mostly flirting, at a distance because there was at least a two feet of space between them but Isak kept getting distracted and looking down at Even’s mouth when he was talking about something.

Honestly Isak had no idea what they were talking about, it was originally something about the girl squad but he’d trailed off on listening sometime after Even’s tongue had ran over his bottom lip and.

The silence sunk in and he tore his gaze back up to Even’s, eyes going wide as he caught the look on Even’s face.

Fuck. Well, in case it hadn’t been clear what was on his mind before.

Even was trying to contain a laugh, shooting his eyebrows up at Isak with this look, really? and Isak threw up a hand.

“It’s not my fault--”

That pretty mouth split into a wide smile and Even was leaning across the distance between them, kissing him right on the lips. Mouth pressing into his warm and soft and slipping closer, angling a touch to slide between his own and Isak’s hand was in Even’s beautiful sculpted hair, his eyes closed as he tipped up against him and kissed back, craning a little as Even pulled away on a little wave.

Fuck. He didn’t pull away far, nose brushing Isak’s and he was somehow a lot closer than two feet now, smiling down at him as Isak stared up at him open-mouthed, lashes low and hooded and chest
still compressing with all of the warmth of Even so fucking close and beautiful and happy.

Even ran a thumb over his cheek, watching as Isak’s lashes fluttered shut for a moment. He couldn’t help it, he had to dip down again, pressing their mouths back together as Isak’s lips parted instantly, smushing close and tightening his grip on the back of Even’s neck.

There weren’t a lot of better things than kissing Isak when he was like this but they were still in school and somebody had to be the responsible one.

Even pulled back again, popping off and Isak was giving him that look, completely drunk and intoxicated and wanting and tipping up with dark dark eyes and Even couldn’t fucking believe he still got to have this, that he didn’t break this, that Isak still wanted him like this.

Fuck. He pressed their noses together and Isak weaved up to try to kiss him again and yeah, okay, they could be responsible when they were older. Even tipped his mouth up and kissed his beautiful boyfriend, hard, close and heated enough Isak’s other hand wrapped around his lower back and dragged him in, their bodies bumping.

It was so needy and precious, Even was smiling into his mouth and Isak melted a little, a soft huff as their lips broke apart to peck twice more than they were melting into each other. Isak slid his hand over Even’s neck, tipping into him soft and smiling and warm and happy and.

Even pressed their foreheads together and closed his eyes. Inhaling slow, one hand on Isak’s waist and the other still holding the strap of his backpack but.

God. God, he just needed a moment of Isak here, and close because honestly, he’d thought he’d lost this.

He’d been so scared he’d lose this and here was Isak, smiling against him and kissing him warm and loving and teasing and hot and melting soft and sweet and.

Even let go, took one step backwards first and Isak noticed but the smile he got was still soft, patient and quiet as Even hooked a thumb over his shoulder and offered something about class but.

Isak still kissed him goodbye after the bus stop with love in his eyes and Even didn’t stop thinking about it once all night.

Onsdag, 16:43  
08.03.17

He was in the kitchen grabbing water when there was a rapid knock in the next room.

Isak muttered something about Eskild and keys then he was throwing open the door and that was not Eskild, that was Jonas.

“Oh, hey.”

“Hey, grab a coat, let’s go.” Jonas hooked a thumb over his shoulder, waiting in the hallway while Isak’s eyebrows shot up and he grabbed the closest warm thing that was either his or Even’s,
hopping into his shoes while Jonas tapped his foot.

“Where are we going?”

“You’ll see,” Jonas said and Isak checked his pocket for his keys, making a hmm sound that silver blues rolled at.

Then they were taking off down the stairs, apartment door shutting loud behind them over the sound of twin pounding feet.

Two hands shoved open the door at the street, fading sunlight low on the horizon as Isak followed Jonas onto the sidewalk and Jonas was grabbing something off the wall beside his door and turning back around to hand Isak a skateboard.

“Ugh, fuck.”

“We’re not jumping any railroad tracks, you’ll be fine.” Jonas threw his own down, pausing with one foot on it while Isak set his down carefully and glared at it a little.

Then Jonas was shaking his head and pushing off, starting down the sidewalk in the opposite direction of his house.

It’d literally been forever since he’d ridden (skateboards anyways), but Jonas was fast so Isak bitched under his breath, put a foot and the board and pushed off.

He miraculously had enough muscle memory left that he not only didn’t fall over, but also managed to catch up to Jonas two pumps to the concrete later.

Yeah, so it’d been awhile, but not that long apparently and actually, it was kinda surprisingly freeing.

Then Jonas was turning down a random street and Isak tipped into the curve, turning after him. Wind rushing by them and he had to pound the ground a few times to catch up, shoe landing sideways on the board behind his guiding one, leaning back and forth to pick up speed as he swung up next to Jonas, glancing over and lifting his voice over the whistling air.

“Where are we going?”

A dip from street back up to sidewalk and Jonas didn’t think twice, feet popping up and hopping the board up. Isak leaned and went around for the ramp, skidding up over the top of that instead and swinging back beside the yellow beanie.

Jonas glanced over and lifted his voice back.

“Do you remember that winter we saw that wolf in the woods?”

“Fuck, yeah, that was fucking freaky,” he shouted back over the wind and Jonas nodded knowingly, eyebrows up.

“Jonas!”

“It’ll be fun! There’s that whole tree fort up there.”

“It’s not a fort, it’s like ten trees that fell down in a cool pattern over each other and got all twisted up in vines, that is not a fort.”

Their boards were making twin skipping sounds over every crack wheels spun over and it was chilly
in the wind like this but Isak didn’t notice, not when Jonas was laughing and leaning into another curve, nearly taking Isak out with it.

“Yo’re just salty cause you could never climb to the top,” he shouted and Isak was already glaring after him, stuck to pedal his foot down a few more times before he was gliding back into place.

“I can probably fucking scale to the top of it now.”

“That’s what I was thinking,” Jonas called back, looking over his shoulder with a twinkle in his eye and Isak squinted for a moment before he threw up his hands, nearly knocked himself off the board, cursed, and straightened it back out, smoothing into a hell of a lot more graceful turn that time.

“Alright,” he finally agreed, sticking his tongue between his lips as he debated. “Race you?”

Jonas laughed into the wind and fucking pounded pavement, taking off down the next road and Isak cursed, following way too quickly after him.

“Nei nei not now, when we get there, I can’t skateboard that fast, Jonas! Come back!!”

Torsdag, 09:19
09.03.17

Chris’s shoulder bumped his and Even bumped him back, not looking up from his lap notebook.

“Gym tomorrow?” The familiar lilting voice beside him and Even smiled, glancing up and flicking pencil eraser onto Chris’s notebook.

“Hell yeah.”

Torsdag, 12:31
09.03.17

“Hey, can we go to my parents for dinner Saturday night?”

“We just saw them Wednesday!”

“I know, but. I think they miss you,” Even glanced at him in his peripherals, curl of a smile with it and Isak cocked up an eyebrow in return.

“Well, I missed you.”

It was still soon enough that Even tipped his head all apologetic and sympathetic, then he was leaning over to kiss him on the mouth.

“Well, none of us missed you guys macking on each other during lunch,” Mahdi offered and Isak pulled back with a loud pop, furrowing deep and squinching his nose up at them.

“Shut up, you’re all just jealous we’ve got it.”
“Got what?” Jonas rolled his eyes and Magnus smiled, reaching over to shove Jonas’s shoulder, send him rocking with it.

“True love.”

It was so cheery and Jonas rolled his eyes harder while Isak glanced a little shyly at the boy over his other shoulder.

“Probably,” Even agreed, and Isak was twinkling or some shit as he leaned back over and they kissed again.

“Okay, so they’re cute,” Mahdi agreed, tipping his head in concession while Magnus made an awe sound. “Still didn’t miss the constant hooking up though.”

Even flicked him off this time, twisting his mouth on Isak’s to peck him loudly one more time and Isak giggled and dipped his head, turning back to the table, holding Even’s hand under the surface, resituating their entwined fingers to squeeze a little tighter.

Torsdag, 20:06
09.03.17

It’d been three days, Thursday night now, of their first week settling back into normal.

It’d been okay apart, but not great. Things just…weren’t quite back to normal yet and they were both aching at the distance. At how things weren’t the way they were before.

It was Thursday night when Isak was listening to Dreams on repeat and finally gave in and texted him.
Now.

Even’s knuckles were cracked from the cold and he rapped on the door anyways. Ringing the doorbell felt so damn impersonal. He couldn’t let them slide back to that, him ringing the doorbell and leaning against the wall and waiting, James Dean to sweep an angel off his feet.

So he knocked, knuckles be damned, skin ready to split against the hard wood of the door.

A lock thrown on the other side and white pulled open to reveal the golden dream behind the threshold he suddenly didn’t know how to cross.

He didn’t bother showing up with a speech planned, he’d run himself into the ground, circles in his head if he tried so he didn’t only now he was frozen staring at Isak Valtersen and really wishing he’d picked the words ahead of time, because he had no idea what to say.
There was a notch in his heart and the tips of his fingers weren’t getting enough blood, tingling like all the world trapped its energy there and that’s when he remembered.

He didn’t need a speech with Isak. He only needed a word.

“Halla,” Even tried.

Isak didn’t even say it back.

He just stepped over the threshold and kissed him.

***

They kissed all the way through the kitchen and down the hallway, twice as fast as the pushing chests and lapping mouths from the first time Even had showed up to talk, all those months ago.

This time when they landed in Isak’s room he kicked the door shut and Isak’s tongue was in his mouth so fast Even had to break off for oxygen before his head spun to start seeing black. Then their mouths were crashing back together again and Isak’s hand wrapped around his waist and tugged him in hard, making him stumble them both for the closest wall.

Isak hit hard enough he made a rough sound against Even’s mouth, only before Even could pull back to apologize or ask if he was alright Isak was shoving up against him deeper, harder.

Rough and fast and grabbing handfuls of hair as they crashed and collided and spilled how fucking much they’d missed each other.

Their mouths full of fireworks and driving tongue and hard tugs and it was so fucking much.

No hesitation, no pauses, Isak up against the wall and Even shoving his shirt off over his shoulders while they kissed and gasped and kissed, Isak furrowing deep as he gripped the back of Even’s head tight and slammed up against him again, tongue in his mouth.

There were no more questions, they knew, this and each other, hands fucking up hair and noses bumping as their mouths tipped again, his fingers flipping open the button on Isak’s jeans.

They were overflowing, nothing contained anymore as Even tugged his shirt off over his head, one hand landing on the wall to cage them in and Isak kissed him so begging and hot Even was gathering up his lower back, pressing their hips tight as he kissed Isak into the hard surface.

Isak’s hands were sliding down the waistband of his pants and Even kissed him harder, twisting deeper against the sounds Isak kept making, shoving each other apart to peel off another layer. Bare chests bumping, drawing and pulling the other in with the force of a thousand universes,

I fucking want you, Even was kissing into Isak’s mouth, cheeks, neck and Isak gasped with his hands in Even’s hair as he toed out of his socks, painted right back against his skin with fingertips on collarbones, let me reconnect with you, baby, now.

Their hands were everywhere, touching every part they could because this wasn’t soft exploration anymore, this was I know you with my eyes closed.

Lust all wrapped up in the shapes Isak’s mouth were making on his bare skin jeg elsker deg as Even slid his palms quick under the band of boxers, wrists catching and taking material down with them.

He dropped low to tug boxers off from ankles, half a dozen kisses up Isak’s naked body back to his
mouth and the rough desperation was crashing their mouths right back together, sending Isak colliding against the wall one more time.

*And the part where I push you*

*flush against the wall and every part of your body rubs against the bricks,*

*shut up*

*I’m getting to it.*

Even stepped out of the last of his clothing and Isak’s hands raked down his bare spine, knee sliding up his outer thigh as Even pressed close, then he was gathering up strong athlete’s thighs, hitching Isak up against the wall to wrap his legs up around Even’s waist.

Two strong arms hooking around his neck and Even picked him up off the wall, spinning them around in the orange curtain bedroom while Isak sucked on his tongue until Even was dropping them both for the mattress.

They bounced and Isak scrambled back up against him, pulling their mouths together with his fingernails scratching over the back of Even’s head and his knees dropping open.

Their mouths only broke long enough for Even to toss a condom on the bed and pop open the cap of the lube, then Isak was pulling him back in to kiss him roughly again.

Even twisted their mouths and pushed him into the mattress and Isak couldn’t breathe but he never wanted to breathe again if it wasn’t this.

Their bedroom was spinning and he was spinning and Even just kept kissing him, soaking up the gasp as he slid a slicked up finger inside Isak. Kept kissing him, licking the sounds out of his mouth as Isak’s fists scrambled in the feathered back of Even’s swooping hair and knuckles brushed up tight against his body.

They never stopped kissing, making out the entire time Even pushed his slicked up fingers inside and opened Isak up. The blue eyes didn’t flutter, didn’t glance down to look once.

He still had Isak’s body memorized, kissing him and kissing him as he worked three fingers and three thousand promises inside him like he’d never stopped.

And Isak was the one losing his mind now.

“You ready,” Even broke off, panting puffs of air over his wet mouth as he pressed their foreheads together and looked down at him with dark dark eyes.

“Yes,” Isak promised, craning up to kiss him again. Their lips still drawing apart when he murmured it again. “Yes, yes.”

Even was breathing hard, taking a moment longer to soak him in before he was pushing up and leaning back on his heels, hand running down Isak’s body with it.

“You sure,” he asked, uneven and Isak nodded on the pillow, mouth open.

“Yes,” Isak said again. “I'm sure.”

Then Even was reaching over for the condom and Isak flicked his hand up, scooting it out of reach.

“Without, please, c’mon.”
Even pushed up to reach further and grabbed it.

“Not ‘til we get tested,” Even responded, then he was tearing open the package with his teeth.

Isak sighed up at the ceiling and Even shook his head.

“You know this.”

“I know, I just want to feel you.”

“You will,” he promised, then he was slicking up over the top of the condom and Isak fluttered his eyes closed, trying to breathe.

The shadow fell back over him and Isak tipped his chin up for the kiss before Even’s lips touched his, then he was dropping his mouth open and sliding his hands up over muscled shoulders, fingers sinking in against bare slopes.

Even knocked their noses together and tugged their lips apart hard, pulling and a pop before he was sliding his tongue back into Isak’s mouth and Isak craned up again, kissing him back eager and positively breathless.

When they broke off Isak was panting and Even was nosing his head to the side, kissing his jaw and his cheekbone and his nose and back to his mouth again.

“We’ll get tested soon okay?”

“Okay. I’m holding you to that.”

“That’s fine. You ready?”

“Oh, yeah. I was born ready.”

Even snorted and kissed him again, deep and pretty enough Isak was squirming under his hands, murmuring c’m on let’s go into his mouth and Even’s mouth tugged and pressed against him hotter and faster, turned on little pecks that were driving him wild enough Isak got two hands between their chests and hoist him off.

“Nå.”

The smile Even gave him was probably the brightest thing on earth, more than fond or enamoured or any other word Isak could think of, then he was planting one more kiss on him and leaning back, lining up with his lips parted and dark blues flicking between Isak’s body and the look on his face.

Isak was gripping the back of his neck so tight he might be leaving fingerprints and Even hovered close and full of heat, naked and stunning and bumping up against him. Isak swallowed tight, mouth agape again as he stared up at that glowing face, the light in those beautiful eyes.

Then Even was pushing his hips forward and shoving inside him deep.

Isak’s jaw dropped open and his legs dropped open further and his fingers tightened in Even’s hair so fast and hard it pulled a choked noise out of him.

Or maybe that was the slide of their bodies locking back together after weeks apart.

Isak didn’t have sound, throat and everything else completely caught. No noise at all, not until Even was looking up at him and pushing the rest of the way inside, knocking flush and drilling up into
Isak’s stomach.

“Ohh-ooh faen,” he gasped, eyes falling shut and hips curling up against Even’s.

Fuck.

Isak’s jaw was open, frozen over the sensation wrapping up his throat and his entire spinal cord. Even had one hand on the bed, the other on his ribs, looking down at where they were connected and slid out slow only to slide right back in straight and smooth.

“Oh baby,” Isak broke and Even’s eyes snapped up to his face, lips parted with it as they locked gazes and Even was slipping deep inside him in way more ways than physically right now.

“Fuck,” he whispered, chest falling and falling as Even pulled his hips back and drove back in, rolling up a little as he pressed back up over Isak, hands skirting up over his chest, forehead tipping down to his.

Isak tipped his head up, breathing open-mouthed as Even rocked in deep, pulling quiet breathy sounds out of them both.

It didn’t matter what position could physically get them deeper, this was the absolute furthest inside his body Even had ever been and Isak was being carved back into something beautiful with the shove of their heated skin again.

He couldn’t slow his breathing down, couldn’t stop panting, there was a boy inside him who loved him and wanted him this much and Isak dropped his jaw open starved enough Even’s mouth crashed into his like gravity.

Isak clung and arched a little as Even drove in deep again then again then again no pauses now as he slid in and in and in to Isak's body and Isak shuddered and took him and took him.

“Fuck baby fuck fuck ah--”

“Yeah?” Even breathed over his mouth and Isak made a high pitched noise he could blush over later.

“Uh, yeah, yeah fuck yeah unhh ah ah--”

Another tight roll against him and Even’s hips picked up speed, slamming inside far and heated and steady enough Isak was rocking up on the bed with every thrust.

“Ah ah ah, oh god god ahh--”

Head turned a touch towards him, nose squishing against Even’s as he tried to breathe, but he wasn’t, he was panting and keening up against Even’s mouth. Please please please. Two heavy rough hands took his face and Even kissed him and kissed him and Isak had never been lifted higher, he was being filled up again and again and he still couldn't breathe and he'd never felt so good in his life.

One of the hands cupping his face took his jaw hard, turning his head to the side while Even’s mouth worked over his neck, sinking his teeth into skin and throwing a wild chill down his spine. Eyes slipping shut it was nothing but sensation and touch and handprints and tongue and the rhythm of their colliding bodies.

It was everything, Even fucking up into his stomach, shoving deep with every thrust, so powerful and beautiful while he kissed and nipped and licked Isak's neck and reshaped the litany with it.
“Ahhh h h ahh ah Even, Even, Even Even--”

The desperate call got answered and Even framed Isak's face with his hands, pulling him back up and resting their foreheads together, that perfect mouth dropped open above him as he rolled their bodies together steady again and again and again.

“I love you,” Even breathed and Isak nodded and nodded and closed his mouth so he could swallow then Even was pushing and pushing inside him and it popped right back open.

“God, Even Even fy faen, faen o-o-ohh--”

Even’s open mouth was breathing hard over Isak's nose and damp lips as he rocked up inside him, twisting his heart inside of his chest with the grip of this fire gone wild.

Expansive, spread hands slid down Isak's collarbones to grab him by the ribs, hold him secure as Even drove up faster inside his body.

“Oh oh oh ohh fuck oh god fuck fuck--”

“Fucking hell,” Even managed, dropping his head to Isak's forehead again and rubbing so deep inside him he was pulling stars out of the sky to shove in between his lungs, muscles branded and fingertips sinking deep under skin.

“I love you,” Isak confessed back, “I love you I love you I I-lo-oh ohha ah ah ah ah--”

“You are s-so beautiful,” Even whispered, holding Isak's curls in his palms as he stared down at him and rocked them together together together fast and deep and hard.

Isak was losing the ability to speak, heels skidding across the mattress as the roll inside dropped his mouth open again, lashes fluttering before he pried them open, flicking upwards. Isak looked helplessly up at Even, their eyes locked and gazes burning.

Even looked right back down at him, the two of them just staring in open wonder at each other while Even moved inside him and the emotion rode up so high he was gaping, couldn’t look away from deep dark blue eyes and the intensity in them.

The things you do to me.

The way Even was looking at him, the way Even was looking at him, he was so fucking overwhelmed he wasn’t breathing, Even wasn’t breathing either.

“Fuck. Isak, I love you. I love you so much, baby I--”

He was rocking up faster and harder and Isak's spine was arching up off the bed and he could barely hold their locked gazes but he did, head tipping back and Even’s nose brushing his.

“Ahh-ahh-h-h ahhh Even, Evi--”

Even’s naked body rolling with every slide inside, only the rocking motion was starting to shift into these fast hard jolts inside that were absolutely destroying him and Isak was already on the edge, already spinning up into a dozen universes as Even’s hands ground him deep into the only one that mattered, would ever matter.

Their eyes were locked and everything was blurry but there was Even looking down at him worshipping him like this and Isak was kneeling at another altar while he laid himself out on his
spine and offered his body soul heart up into the mouth of this beautiful boy.

Grip squeezing with another hard shove up inside his body and the sparks that followed made him tighten up all over,

Isak on his back arching up and scrambling.

“Let me in your lap,” he gasped and it was so much, he was so fucking close.

He had one hand gripping Even’s neck and his head was whipping to the side and he probably wasn’t making any sense might not even be speaking Norwegian, what were languages anyways cause Even kept fucking him deep and hard and--

“Fuck fuck fuck baby, baby--”

It was shaking him, the whole world was shaking.

“Let me up, let me up Even Even I wanna be in your l-lap when I--”

Even scooped him up and rolled to the side, landing down on the bed with Isak sinking over him, spine arching and head thrown as he filled all the way up again, mouth open and Even’s gaze burning his skin.

The moment he was all the way in Isak’s mouth was back on Even’s, kissing him instantly and fiercely and so heated he was shaking with it, gone. They were both breathless, panting against each other’s tongues and Isak was even closer to the edge, working for it now too as he rolled his body down and Even thrust up and mouthed at his lips, clutching the back of Isak's neck with one hand, the other tight around his waist.

In in in--

“God, I fucking love you,” Isak broke and Even moaned softly, leaning into another mouthing kiss and his beautiful boy was completely gone in a way Isak had never seen. He rolled his hips down in a circle, kissing Even deeper with it and Even clung to him, lost and urgent as he fucked up into Isak over and over and it was so good it was just right and everything he ever ever needed.

Their bodies just kept moving, bare and close as they could be, all wrapped up in heat and whispers and pressing damp skin, sliding against each other with their mouths still hooked desperate and clingy and too gone to breathe.

The edge of the cliff peak of the mountain had been twisting in his stomach for the past two dozen smattering kisses and Isak finally broke off, dipping his head down, inhaling the illumination as Even pressed their foreheads together and Isak rocke

“The world went white and it was too much not to close his eyes, squeezed shut tight, spine pulling
taut on the line from Even to the stars and Isak came, choking over the sound, tightening up all over. Even’s hips stuttered, still fucking up into him but he was holding tight and holding back.

Isak shuddered and shook and moaned brokenly and rode out his orgasm with trembling thighs, holding tight to Even and the vehement little circles he kept making up into Isak slow.

It got to be too much soon and Isak was gasping open mouthed against Even’s shoulder, wet lips over damp skin and Even was trembling, holding him tight and hard enough he couldn’t hide the taut wound up.

Isak lifted his head, mouth open and eyes dazed as he took Even’s face, wasted and trembling too as he whispered against that beautiful fighting mouth.

“C’mon baby, I'm here.”

He wasn’t letting himself up over the edge, Isak could feel it.

“C’mon, shh ah- ah. Nothing to be afraid of, I'm here.”

Even was gasping and his eyes were closed and Isak was kinda dying from being rubbed inside like this when everything was still so sensitive and on fire. Jesus.

He took the back of Even’s head in one hand and pushed his chest down with the other, laying him onto his back, lifting up and off with a little gasp then he was kissing down his shaking chest and Even was murmuring something at him, Isak had no idea what.

Then he was closing his mouth over how straining hard Even was and sinking down. He’d never given a blowjob with a condom on before but he wasn’t gonna take it off in case he settled down enough to climb back on.

Although honestly, he had a lot more control taking Even over the edge like this, looking up under his lashes to check the expression on his face and Even had a tight hand in his hair and a twisted look on his face, mouth open and head falling back, eyes screwing shut.

Isak sucked over the head, pressing his tongue hard underneath and Even was shuddering, curling up so Isak sunk down as far as he could, lashes fluttering. He couldn't quite take all of him comfortably yet but he'd been working on it and he could get close.

Bobbing his head, drawing up and out with his tongue and Even was making these frantic gasps and tipping his hips up to fuck back against Isak's mouth which was making Isak's eyes water but it was fine, he could feel how fucking close Even was and he blinked through the tears, sucking hard.

A little jolt against him and Isak ran his hands up and down Even’s stomach, rubbing warmth into him as he coaxed the high out of him and Even’s fingers were suddenly twisted up in his, grabbing hard.

Hips stuttered again and he broke over a little cry as he twisted to the side and popped Isak off like it was too much, hand wrapping around the base of his cock instead.

Isak furrowed up at him and pressed a kiss to the crease of his hip before he was crawling up Even’s body and kissing his panting mouth. Even kissed back, pressing into him for a single torn moment before he was falling back against the pillow, lips parted damp and eyes still shut.

“Baby,” Isak soothed and Even’s lashes fluttered. “It's okay, I'm here. You don't have anything to be scared of.”
He ran a hand up through broken strands of blonde swoops and Even tipped up into his hand, chest heaving.

“It's so much,” he gasped, a confession and heartbreakingly beautiful.

“You don't have to,” Isak said quietly but he wasn’t sure he understood, was it too soon or--

“No no, it's just.”

“I'll catch you,” Isak promised. “If you're afraid of what's gonna happen if you let go I'll catch you, baby.”

Even was still breathing hard, just laying there for a moment trying to gather himself. He finally swallowed, mouth falling back open as he croaked hoarse, “Ja?”

“Ja, of course. I'm here, I've got you. Let me take you through it, yeah?”

Isak was already sliding a hand back down Even’s chest and his hand was all slick in his own come now egh but slick was good.

Even was nodding and trying to breathe. Isak kissed his jaw once before looking down their bodies, peeling the condom off and sliding his hand up Even bare.

Even stuttered and made a soft sound and the angle kind of sucked but Isak twisted his wrist up and tugged the way he did when he did this for himself.

He did this the first night, too.

After Even blew him they'd collapsed to his bed kissing and kissing and as soon as Isak caught his breath he was trying not to freak out as he slid a hand down Even’s chest, starting to slide down his body with it and Even caught his hand and tugged him back up before he could get past his ribs.

“You don't have to, I don't want you to feel obligated,” Even had told him, still kinda breathless, lips shiny. Lips that had just been wrapped around him, sucking him off.

“I have no idea what I'm doing,” Isak confessed, because he literally had no idea, the furthest he’d been with any boy was this one, making out with him and whispering about the world until Even had dropped to his knees and taken him to pieces just now.

“...I want to, but.”

“I can talk you through it if you want?”

Isak had nodded and Even had flipped onto his back on the bed, hand in Isak’s hair as Isak kissed nervously down his body.

Then he got a hand around the base of Even’s cock and he was looking up at him. Even was already breathing hard.

“Okay, don't try to fucking deep throat on the first take, it is not fun.”

Isak kinda huffed a laugh and Even rubbed a thumb over his bottom lip, looking at him like that when Isak had just come in his mouth and fuck, he had no idea what he was doing.

“Go slow, be careful of your teeth and just.”
Isak put his mouth around him and Even’s jaw dropped open.

“Just. Just like that, oh god.”

Isak sunk a little more, bumping up against the back of his throat and making his eyes water.

“Here here,” Even pulled him up a little by his curls and Isak groaned around him, chills going down his spine. Even was trying to keep his head but it was fucking hard cause he was getting head from the most beautiful boy on the planet.

Isak’s mouth popped off, damp and shiny and Even tried not to moan.

“It's not about how deep you can go, try using your tongue like--”

Isak twitched up an eyebrow and licked up his cock and Even’s jaw dropped again, fingers tightening hard in beautiful blonde curls.

“Like that?” Isak said, tongue back in his mouth and Even didn’t really have the capacity to keep talking him through this if he kept doing shit like that, voice too high pitched already.

“Mmhm, yeah like that--”

And Isak was taking him into his mouth again, tongue rubbing flat on the underside as he pulled up again and Even was babbling.

“Oh god yeah, yeah, like that, that's--”

Isak sucked a little experimentally and Even’s head came off the pillow, looking down at him with a sharp sound caught in his throat and Isak’s mouth tipped up in a bit of a crooked smile, then he was sinking deeper and sucking harder, bobbing his head with it this time and Even couldn't really breathe.

Pretty green kept tearing up, exquisite mouth breaking off to gasp and it was simultaneously the sweetest and hottest blowjob he’d ever gotten in his life. Isak took him right to the edge, sucking with little rapid kitten licks until Even was scrambling a hand in his hair.

“Isak, Isak pull off.”

And he popped off instantly, worry knitting up and absolutely precious.

“Did I do something wrong?”

“No, no you're perfect, baby you're perfect. I'm just about to come, fy faen.”

“Isn't that kinda the point?” Isak said and Even sputtered a huff.

“Well yeah, but it doesn't have to be in your mouth the first time.”

“Why not?” Isak asked simply and Even groaned, pulling the beautiful boy up to his mouth so he could kiss him. He kissed him hard and Isak tasted like him and he knew he tasted like Isak and it was a beautiful thing.

“I just don't want you to feel pressure to do something you're not ready for,” Even breathed when they broke apart and Isak sucked his bottom lip into his mouth, so nervous and sweet.

“I wanna make you…” he trailed, shy and yeah, if he couldn't say it he definitely wasn’t quite ready
to take it in his mouth yet.

“You can use your hand? I'm sure you've got plenty of experience there,” Even teased, eyes sparkling and Isak rolled beautiful green at him but he was smiling a little too.

He spit in his palm, draped on Even’s side as he looked down their bodies and slid a careful hand up Even’s erection.

Even’s eyes fell shut, head tipping back with that boy, making him feel like this, and Isak kissed his neck.

Then he was sucking lightly at his skin and Even rolled his head and gasped a little. Isak got a little bolder, nipping and sucking a touch lower, slowly jacking Even off as he did.

Even came barely minutes later and Isak popped off his neck to look down and watch, shuddering and burying his face in Even’s skin after barely a glance.

Even sported the splotchy red hickies on his neck the next morning at breakfast as he danced around the room and sang Gabrielle and kissed Isak the way he’d kissed him the night before in bed, the way they’d kissed all the way to sleep.

It felt like years ago. It'd been three and a half months.

And now they were older and so much more madly in love and Isak gave fantastic blowjobs, thank you.

Although apparently not quite good enough to calm his post-manic, post-depressed boyfriend down enough to actually orgasm from it, so.

Here he was draped across Even’s side again, slowly twisting his fingers in careful long strokes up and down Even’s cock, watching his face and blinking at him slow as he took him for the edge.

Even’s lashes were fluttering and his mouth was open and Isak kissed his cheek, lingering and warm.

“I love you,” he whispered, chills going down his spine with the quiet sound Even made. “I love you so much.”

Even was pushing up against his hand and Isak twisted harder, faster.

“I'm here. I'm right here, let me take you over. It's gonna be okay, baby.” He pressed another kiss to Even’s jaw, eyes slipping closed at how warm and real and beautiful everything was. “I'm right here.”

Even was making these quiet quiet pitiful little sounds and Isak pulled harder.

“Let go, baby. Let go, you're okay.”

“Ahh-ahh.”

“That's it. C’mon, c’mon, let it happen.”

Even was tensing up and Isak ran his free thumb over the back of Even’s neck, watching the flickers across that beautiful expression.

Unable to tear his eyes away from the most stunning thing he’d ever known. His boyfriend, his lover, his angel, his world. All tensed up and trembling under his hands, the heat of his gaze.
“Relax, I've got you. Even, baby, I'm right here. You're not alone. You can let go. I've got you, c’mon. C’mon.”

Isak pressed a warm, gentle kiss to his mouth and Even tipped back against him desperate and glowing and coiled up and hovering just on the edge.

God, he still got to have this, this was still his, Even was still his.

Isak broke off and looked all over his face, gaze flickering as his heart tried to pound out of his chest.

“I love you so, so much.”

Even made a broken sound and Isak pumped his hand fast, arm muscles straining, making heat jerk in his palm.

“C’mon baby. Come for me.”

There was the stutter again and this time when Even tensed up all over he didn't freeze or stop or fight anything, he was curling his hips up and coming all over his stomach.

“Is-ak,” Even gasped, head throwing back as he hit hard. Isak kept pumping his hand and pressing dozens of kisses all over Even’s jaw and cheek and neck and Even gasped softly and shook and shook.

The tense finally let go in a whooshing exhale and Even was collapsing back against the mattress breathing way fast. Isak unwrapped his hand to skirt his touch up that beautiful heaving chest. It was a complete mess but he had a palm over Even’s heart and he could feel every pounding beat through the sticky on his hand.

“I love you,” Isak was telling him. “I love you I love you I love you.”

There were tears shining next to Even’s eyes and Isak reached up and kissed one away, kissing down his cheekbone with it, dragging the salty wet.

“I'm right here.” Thumb rubbing back and forth over Even’s chest. “I'm right here.”

Even laid there with his eyes closed for awhile, until he was breathing normally and then he just fell quiet, not looking at Isak yet.

It took long enough Isak had lain down on his side, looking up at him, watching overwhelmed, the same way he had the first time they’d lain in this bed together. The way they had better be lying here three and half months from now, too.

“So,” he peered up, watching Even’s quiet peaceful face as he asked softly.

“You wanna talk about it?”

“Nei,” Even said and Isak pressed a kiss to the inside of his bare shoulder.

“Too bad. We're talking about it.”

Even laughed, once and airy but he had a touch of a smile on his face now and Isak was nuzzling into his bare skin, letting them settle in for a moment or two before he was rubbing his thumb back and forth and lifting his voice again.

“What are you afraid of, baby?”
“It’s not. It’s not like I’m freaked out or... or not ready for sex or something, it’s just.”

“I’m listening.”

“The surrender part.”

“Mhmm.”

“It’s a lot of emotions and the last time I let go…”

Even trailed off and it suddenly clicked.

“Oh. Oh, Even, baby.” Isak propped up, gazes catching as he put a hand in Even’s hair - the one that wasn’t covered in come because he didn’t have a death wish - then he was running fingers through the strands, tilting his head and softening. “I wish your brain didn’t hate you sometimes.”

“Ja, me too.” A little huff and Isak skirted his fingertips around Even’s ear, settling back down against his neck, watching the light blue watch him.

“But you know you're safe here with me. Nothing's gonna happen. But if it did, I've got you. You don't have to be afraid to feel.”

“I know. I know.”

“Apparently you don't,” Isak corrected, twitching an eyebrow up. Even bowed his lips in over his tongue, popping them back out and rolling his head on the pillow to lift his eyebrows right back at Isak.

“I have a love hate relationship with emotions.”

“Are you trying to make puns.”

“Kind of?”

Isak tipped up in a smile and dipped forward, both of their eyes open as they puckered up in a warm short kiss, noses smushing.

“It's okay that you don't always trust yourself,” Isak whispered, tipping his nose against Even’s, watching him through hooded lids. “You can always trust me.”

Eyebrows shot up again.

“To make me orgasm or…”

“Yes, that too,” Isak huffed, leaning back and looking down, tracing his fingers over Even’s chest as he lifted his voice again, a little quieter. “But in life. With us.”

“Mmm.”

“I'm here.” Isak picked his head back up, gaze flicking back up to the deep heavy one again. He held the gaze until Even’s hand was in his hair, eyes flicking down to his mouth and back up, watching, waiting. Isak just breathed for a moment, waiting until their pounding hearts slowed enough the silence wrapped them like blankets, everything warm and quiet again.

Then he cocked his head, slowly pressing his palm harder over Even’s heart, making him feel, taking the pound for himself. Eyes still locked as Isak dropped his voice, low and real and serious to spill
between them like everything else beautiful tonight.

“...and I'm not going anywhere, Even.”

There were tears in his eyes as he nodded and nodded, then two hands were gathering him up, pulling Isak into his side, palms sliding possessive and warm over his bare shoulders as Isak settled in with an arm draped over Even’s naked ribs.

A hand slid up over his forehead, shoving his curls up and out of the way as Even’s nose pressed against the side of his face, breathing him in for a moment. Isak curled his fingers a little tighter, lashes blinking slow.

Then a warm mouth was on his ear, Even’s nose in his curls and blue eyes shut while he pressed against him warm and sincere, breathing over his skin as he whispered low, lips brushing skin, just for him.

“I love you.”

It sunk over him like the whisper of the duvet Even was pulling up over their worn glowing bodies. I love you. Isak curled up in a smile and turned his head to the side, Even’s eyes on his, a little smile of his own tipping up at Isak’s. Then Isak was tilting his chin up and kissing him.

Their lips pressed together and their hearts entwined with their fingers. They pulled apart in sync, barely an inch away as their noses brushed and Isak squeezed Even’s hand.

Even squeezed back.

And entwined, warm, in love, they fell into sleep as they held each other tight.

Fredag, 06:10
10.03.17

Isak woke up ungodly early for no apparent reason but it wasn’t too bad, cause they were still tangled up.

Even had a hand resting on his bare ass, fingers brushing sensitive places and making Isak’s eyebrows shoot up, only Even was completely unconscious when he glanced up at the peaceful beautiful resting face. So Isak just nestled in closer, closing his eyes against Even’s bare skin and falling right back asleep.

When he woke up the second time it was to a kiss pressing hard to his cheek.

“Good morning beautiful,” Even whispered and Isak grumbled and rolled into the pillow.

“Why are you out of bed.”

“And showered and made breakfast, c’mon, get up, we've gotta leave for school in half an hour.”

“Fuckkk,” Isak groaned.

“Jump in a quick shower and come join us, the whole flat’s already in the kitchen.”
“Fuck,” he repeated and Even kissed his cheek again.

So he maybe made a bit of an extravagant breakfast for all of their flatmates but they appreciated his cooking and he owed them a lot.

“Thanks for putting up with me for two weeks.”

“You have nothing to apologize for, we literally all signed up voluntarily,” Linn reminded him for the second time this morning and Even lifted a shoulder, glancing over from where he was chopping up strawberries.

“Okay, well, I'm still making you all food.”

“No, by all means,” Eskild insisted, waving a hand. Even laughed, spinning back to the counter.

The two arms were wrapping around his stomach, a quick hug from behind that sent his eyebrows shooting up, then Even was setting down the chef’s knife while Noora reached around him to steal a strawberry.

Even pointed an accusing finger at her and she threw up both hands, then he was tugging Eskild into a real hug and the little shocked pleased sound Eskild made over his shoulder had everyone laughing.

“I never get hugs,” Linn sighed down at her tea, then the laughter was echoing again and Even clapped a hand on Eskild’s shoulder, holding his gaze to nod at him once, then he was turning to Linn and waving her in.

Eskild wiped under his eyes dramatically and opened his mouth while Noora leaned over with another stolen strawberry to pop in his mouth.

Even squished Linn tight and swayed her a little while Eskild made awe-ing sounds and Linn let her hair hang in her face.

“You know how great you are? I don't know what I'd do without you,” Even told her and Eskild turned to Noora again,

“I'm going to actually cry.”

“Eat less grapes,” Linn mumbled against his chest and Even laughed brightly, then she was pulling back with a little smile and reaching out for Noora’s third stolen strawberry happily handed over.

Even swatted at their hands but Linn already popped it in her mouth and he sighed heavily, turning back to the counter.

“How many did you take?”

Another round of bright laughter and that’s when Isak finally came stumbling in, yawning and squinting at the light and absolutely angelic.

Even was distracted by all of that sweet showerfresh cute just long enough for Noora to lean around him and snag one more strawberry.

“Why does school start so early?” Isak whined and Noora crossed the kitchen, holding up the strawberry in offering. Isak opened his mouth obediently and Even threw up his hands.
Then Isak was furrowing at him very confused and rumpled as he chewed and Even shook his head fondly, stepping across the kitchen to pucker a quick kiss against his red mouth.

“I think the next round of tea is done, if you can grab Isak’s mug?” Even ran a hand through Isak’s damp curls and Isak finished chewing and swallowed, leaning up on his tiptoes to kiss Even again.

Then he was plopping down at the table, raising his eyebrows at the display already waiting.

The rest of kollektivet all piled in around the table with dragged up chairs and bright chatter over plates of food, then Even was sweeping down behind Isak to set a plate down dramatically in front of him too, slices of strawberry arranged in a little heart on the side slice of toast.

Isak grabbed his hand before he could take off, tugging him right back in close and patting his thigh in offering.

Even laughed and swung a leg over his chair behind him, pulling Isak into his lap instead so he could still eat while Even rested his chin on Isak’s shoulder and wrapped two arms around his stomach.

“It’s so nice to have you two all sweet soft and gay around the house again,” Eskild cooed and Noora’s mouth popped open.

“Mmm, that's us,” Isak said, taking a bite of eggs and Even smiled warm into his shoulder and kissed the side of his neck.

*I want more applesauce. I want more seats reserved for heroes.*

*Dear Forgiveness, I saved a plate for you.*

*Quit milling around the yard and come inside.*


Fredag, 17:34
10.03.17

Bjørn said that Even’s new arm strength was a problem when it came to the damage he could do during manic episodes.

That sucked, but Isak wasn’t ready to give up wall sex, so.

Here he was at the gym.

They were bumping shoulders, laughing and sweaty and probably annoyingly bro-ish when Chris suddenly shoved him, towel swung from around his neck to snap his arm with it.

“Hey, isn’t that Isak?”

Even rubbed his arm in offense and hip-checked Christoffer right back, then he was spinning in the direction Chris was pointing.

Where there was a very familiar pretty blonde bending over to adjust the weight on the bar at the bench press across the room.

“...yes, actually, I’d recognize that ass anywhere.”
Chris rolled his eyes dramatically and Even smiled cockily, then the towel was wrapping back around Chris’s muscle tank shoulders as he turned and they both headed over.

Isak had lain back down and had his headphones in, two hands pushing up on silver, bare arms straining with the effort Even was raising his eyebrows at.

Then they were swinging around to the other side of the bench press and Even caught the bar, dipping over him to place a heavy kiss on his open mouth.

Isak made a muffled sound, hands uncurling a little and Chris popped his gum, reaching over to help catch the bar too so they didn’t accidentally smash Even’s boyfriend.

He pulled off with a little pop, smiling down under his black bandana while Isak furrowed his eyebrows up at him and took out his headphones.

“Hello to you too. You nearly gave me a heart attack.”

“What, you thought some random boy just came over and kissed you?” Even teased and Isak sputtered a little.

“There’s always a chance! I look super hot, like all the time. Hey, Chris.”

“Hey Isak,” Chris greeted back and Even ran his thumb over the beaded sweat on Isak’s hairline before he straightened up, glancing down to the end of the bar as his arms started to complain about the weight.

“Wow.”

“Yeah, the fuck are you training for?” Chris echoed, readjusting his grip on silver, straining a little too.

Isak licked his lips and lifted his arms back up, taking the weight from them.

“Well.”

Chris reached over and socked Even on the shoulder, mouth already open.

“You’re not making him hold you up against a wall too.”

“What?! No.”

Isak choked, freezing with the bar over his chest as he stared wide-eyed up at them. “He knows about that??”

Chris threw up both hands in a little shrug and Even groaned into a hand, splayed fingers against the damp bandana before he threw up a hand too.

“It’s not like you don’t tell your friends all kinds of shit about what we do.”

“That’s...fair,” Isak tipped his head in concession, exhaling hard as he pressed the bar back up, voice a little strained. “Besides Chris, wall sex is fucking...next level.”

Chris laughed, both hands on the towel around his neck as he glanced between them.

“That’s what Even says, I swear that’s the only reason he’s ever in here.”
“It is,” Even confirmed, one hand resting on the bar as Isak pressed it up again, lips pursed around the exhale that time. “But that still doesn't explain why you are.”

“I come to the gym all the time,” Isak scoffed.

Chris popped his gum again and looked down at him knowingly.

“This isn't the weight class of someone who comes to the gym all the time, this is training for something.”

“You're both nosy pricks,” Isak informed them, flicking his head to the side to get sweaty curls out of his eyes. “Can I get back to my workout now or—”

Even dipped down to press a warm kiss to his forehead and Isak made a really face up at him. Chris snickered into his waterbottle.

“How long until you're done, babe? I can wait for you if you wanna head home together.” Even ran his fingers over the ones wrapped around the bar and Isak huffed.

“What, no locker room sex propositions?”

Chris snorted, nearly spitting water everywhere with it.

“Oh you haven't mentioned that part?” Isak pinned Even with a look before he turned to Chris dramatically. “We can't go fucking anywhere without Even being like oh! Let's have sex!

“And I'm like. Even, honey we're in THE SCHOOL STAIRWELL.”

Chris was full on laughing now, tired enough from their workout to be gasping with an arm over his stomach and Even giggled, looking down fondly as he spotted a few more of Isak’s salty presses.

“I mean. If you wanna have locker room sex.”

“I don't,” he replied sassily.

“Well then I can fuck you at home, when are you gonna be done?”

Eyebrows shot up and Isak paused, bar against his chest again as he wet his lips and looked up at Even upside down.

“If that's the offer on the table, I can be done now.”

Even laughed brightly and helped him place the bar back on its hooks while Chris wiped the towel over his hairline and shook his head dramatically.

“You two are ridiculous.”

Isak tipped his head in vague agreement, sitting back up on the bench, wrapping up his headphones around his hand.

“The greatest thing about being a horny teenage boy is that if you date a horny teenage boy, you can just have sex all the time.”

“It's true,” Even agreed. “Although I'm twenty now, so no longer teenage.”

“I know. You're an adult. It's super hot.” Even stepped around the bar to swoop down and tip his
head up in another kiss, then Isak was leaning back and tipping his head for the doors.

“I'll go get my stuff, meet you at the lobby in five?”

“Sure.” Even held out a hand to help him up and Isak rolled his eyes but took it, standing and tipping his chin up for another kiss as their fingers entwined.

It was a placating, soft domestic sweet kiss that sent sparkles or some shit down both of their spines, then Isak was tipping back with his bottom lip between his teeth and all of this fond bottled up in his beautiful eyes.

“See you soon,” Even told him and Isak reached up on his tiptoes to peck him cutely on the mouth one more time, then he was spinning for the locker rooms.

Even slapped his ass when he turned and Isak threw an “oi!” over his shoulder, middle finger with it. Even lifted his eyebrows and Isak spun to walk backwards a few steps and turn the middle finger into a blown little kiss, then he was off, sauntering across the gym for the doors on the far side.

Even was watching after him fondly and Chris stepped up beside him again, head still shaking.

“Man, you are so whipped.”

“Isn't that a bit of an archaic, nasty term?” Even glanced over judgily and Chris rolled his eyes.

“Ok-ay, how’s head over heels? Beyoncé level crazy in love? A complete goner?”

Even nodded, eyes caught on the beautiful boy pushing through the doors and out of sight.

“Yes yes and yes. Race once around the track for cooldown?”

“What are we racing for, who gets to go home with Isak?”

“Hell no.” Even narrowed his eyes suspiciously and Chris widened his.

“Kiddingggg,” he sing-songed and Even huffed, tipping his head for the track.

“I don't gamble on my baby.”

“Okay hoe, how about who has to pay attention in genetics on Monday?”

“You’re fuckin’ on.”

“Alright, on your mark. Get set.”

Even still won either way, wrapping a sweaty arm around Isak’s waist at the door while Chris offered to drive them home so long as they didn't hook up in the back of his car.

Chris had to honk the horn at them twice.
The bass was loud enough Isak could feel it in his stomach, sitting here on the kitchen counter bobbing his head.

They were at the house of some random third year, and he was high off his ass and currently watching his hot ass boyfriend dance with his best friend’s hot ass ex girlfriend in the middle of the dance floor.

Speaking of which, there was Christoffer Schistad, looking as suave and king of the world as ever. Chris slid up to the bar, leaning back and catching Isak’s eye, two drinks in hand and making him slide over a half a foot and lean in close to hear over the music.

“So is Even bi?”

Isak glanced up, following Chris’s gaze to Even, and Even’s hands on Eva’s hips as he swayed with her and laughed. Fuck, his boy was pretty.

“Ja, why, is Eva?”

“I think so,” Chris shouted back and Isak’s eyebrows shot up, mouth turning down dramatically in surprise.

“I could see it. She does make out with Vilde a lot.”

“She does,” Chris agreed, watching the pair on the dance floor. Isak glanced back up, propping his elbow on his knee and his chin in his hand. Chris glanced over his shoulder, up at Isak again. “It doesn’t bother you that…”

“That Even’s dancing with Eva? No? Why, does it bother you?”

“No, but I figured since you two were dating…”

“He’s smiling, and dancing with people who care about him, I couldn’t be a happier boyfriend.”

Chris mirrored his huh face and nodded to himself.

“So are you and Eva dating or what?”

“What? No, I don’t think so. I don’t know.”

“You don’t...fucking make up your mind, man.”

“That’s not really my style,” Chris shot back and Isak rolled his eyes.

“Whatever, drama queen.”

“I’m not--”

Then Vilde was grabbing Chris’s hand and dragging him back out for the dance floor and Chris disappeared, although not without lifting a glass Isak’s way in goodbye first.

Isak waved and scooted back over, bumping into Jonas’s shoulder and leaning around him to shove Mahdi.

“Go dance with somebody, that chick over there keeps looking over here.”

“They’re all looking at you!”
“Nei?? Besides, I’m taken, go.”

Jonas followed up Isak’s next shove with one of his own then Magnus leaned over from the other side and shoved him too, although Isak was pretty sure he had no idea what was going on.

“Fine, fine, I’m going,” Mahdi threw up his hands and they all cheered as he hopped off the counter, flicked them off, and started shouldering his way through people.

Then two arms were wrapping around him from behind and Isak tipped sideways, laughing as Magnus squeezed.

“I’m so happy you’re okay,” Magnus told him sincerely, shaking him a little with it and Isak reached behind him to pat the top of Magnus’s head.

“Where’s the bottle, you’re significantly higher than I am, this is...completely unfair.”

Isak was giggling through another round of smoke when Magnus poked his ribs and shouted something about his boyfriend.

Isak spun around on the counter, feeling kinda like one of those DJ disks as he searched for Even in the crowd and spotted him in .3 seconds from how fucking tall and pretty he was.

Even’s eyes were on him alright, he was dancing tight and close with Noora now but his eyes were on Isak, on fire over the top of her laughing red mouth as he lifted a hand to his own, smooshing his lips in a kiss over his palm before he was tipping his hand Isak’s way and blowing.

Isak nearly fell off the kitchen counter trying to catch the kiss.

Jonas grabbed him around the waist and hauled him back upright and Isak spun around, trying to smash the kiss onto Jonas’s face instead. Jonas ducked, laughing and nearly falling off the counter himself, smoke tumbling out of his open mouth and Isak giggled, reaching backwards and finally smacking his palm on Magnus’s forehead.

Magnus’s eyes crossed and Jonas was giggling, stoned out of his mind as he tipped into Magnus and tapped his forehead and Isak was spinning back around to wave at Even and make a grabby hand across the room for another one.

Even laughed, head tipping back and beautiful sculpted twisting hair flashing in the blacklights.

Isak widened his eyes and made his grabby hand faster.

The blue eyes broke from his for a moment, Even was looking down at Noora and saying something to her, then he was smiling and making his way across the room and Isak wobbled like a very excited bowling pin on the counter.

“Heeyyy, Eveeer--” Magnus was cheering and Even shot his eyebrows up at Magnus, wide smile on his face he tipped Jonas’s way too, then he was shouldering around the last of the crowd at the bar and taking Isak’s face in both of his hands.

Isak tipped forward and Even smashed their mouths together, all of his fingers sinking up in Isak’s curls and knocking his snapback off his head as he dragged Isak close enough to the edge of the counter Isak’s legs were spreading to give him room.

Fuck, Even tasted like party lights and something sweet, his tongue slipping in alongside Isak’s and sending a thousand shivers down his spine.
He pressed back against him, mouths moving and overlapping and sliding apart clinging slow to dive back in deeper and.

Isak would kiss him for the rest of his existence only at some point Even was dipping away and breathing in fast and sharp, their foreheads together as Isak’s rolled and he blinked dazed at the beautiful boy so fucking close.

“I adore you,” Even whispered, way too quiet for Isak to hear over the bass but Isak was telepathic or some shit because he totally caught it, pressing his nose to Even’s and sparkling before he tipped in to lap at his mouth again.

Even tilted his head to the side and kissed Isak hard, hard enough his head was spinning from more than just the pot.

“Ooo, fuck,” he managed when their lips dragged apart again, one hand fisted in Even’s shirt and the other trying to keep himself from falling off the counter. “You trying to get second-hand high?”

“I would never,” Even’s mouth dropped open in exaggerated offense, eyes sparkling and Isak giggled then Even was dancing back in to kiss his mouth again and Isak wrapped an arm around the back of his head, giggling into his mouth instead.

The bass drop of the next song hit, so loud he could still feel it in his bones and it didn’t take long before Even’s head was weaving side to side, knocking Isak’s nose as he smiled and danced to the beat until Isak was pushing at his chest.

“Go, go, dance--”

“Come with me.”

“I have negative coordination right now, baby, I love you, go dance!”

“Jonas,” Even said and Isak furrowed his eyebrows, what did--

Then Jonas was shoving Isak right off the kitchen counter into Even’s arms and Isak made an indignant squawking sound that Even covered up with his mouth and two arms wrapped around his waist.

Isak shot a middle finger over his shoulder that was apparently nowhere near Jonas’s direction but Even was dragging him onto the dancefloor and he was pretty sure Jo-jo got the point.

If the laughter leading them off was any indication, which it was, because now Even was laughing too and Isak was smiling and the room was spinning in the nicest way and Even’s hands were on him and you know what?

Life was good.

Life was really good.

Chapter End Notes

In case you haven’t blasted Dreams yet here’s your chance again okay cool
Direct quotes in italics from Siken’s poem *Litany in Which Certain Things Are Crossed Out*.

Also shoutout to a [tumblr post] that ruined my life.

Okay you guys, your support for this fic has been like. next level incredible. I love each and every one of you, and I thank you all so much for your kudos and comments up to this point and I promise, promise, I will reply asap. hearing your thoughts is so so amazing for me and so much of our conversation really does end up shaping this story, so. Thank you, and I can't wait to do these final five with you all.

xx
“You know what I just can’t stop thinking about sometimes?”

“Hm?”

“The fact that I didn’t get to kiss you the night of that party, in your kitchen. I could’ve spent a whole extra week kissing you. Seven days! I’m missing seven days of kisses.” Even rolled over onto his back, pouting up at Isak from the floor.

“But then our first kiss you wouldn’t’ve gotten to be a dramatic hoe and re-enact a movie kiss,” Isak pointed out, glancing back to his laptop.

“What are you talking about, ours was so much better than Romeo and Juliet.”

“It was.”

“Still though. Seven days of kisses.”

“Tell you what.” Isak finished typing up the paragraph, hit save, closed his laptop, and turned all the way to the beautiful boy on the floor. “Kiss me right now, the way you were gonna kiss me then, and we’ll keep kissing until you’ve made up for all seven days, how’s that?”

The smile that put on Even’s face was so warm Isak could feel it in his stomach from over here.

“C’mon.” He sat up quick, hair bouncing as he pushed all the way to his feet. “To the kitchen we go.”
“We’re using props and everything?”

“Ja! We are. Let’s go.” Even held out his hand and Isak rolled his eyes and took it, letting Even pull him out the bedroom door.

Last week had been the week of reliving the beginning. The parallel universe day, pulling up old quotes to each other in reminder, in promise.

They were retracing how they fell in love, so they could fit back into each other again.

There’d been a lot to recover from, and well. They knew this way worked.

So here Isak stood in the kitchen, amused and sparkly while Even lit up in this precious movie director mode, hands and pointing fingers.

“You were standing right. There. Nei, one step backwards.”

“Even.”

“At least I’m not making you put the cute little pink streaks on.”

Isak laughed, closing his mouth as he looked down at his socks. That beautiful boy.

“...and I was right...here. Wooing you with my peg leg stories.”

Isak scoffed, eyes rolling dramatically.

“I was so wooed.”

Then Even took one slow, calculated step closer and the world shifted.

“You were.” His eyes were that same intense, peering beneath his skin and Isak’s stomach dropped to his feet, lips parting as he blinked helplessly at the way Even snapped right back into that suave, untouchable boy with the bright yellow bandana and that motherfucking taunting white shirt--

“Fuck,” Isak whispered and Even stuck his tongue in his cheek, eyebrows shooting up a little.

“Yeah?”

“I wanted to kiss you so bad, I.” Isak admitted, staring down at the tiles as his heart pounded. “I couldn’t even look at you, I could feel it in every fucking cell I have.”

“Too much?” Even asked, one hand on the counter. Isak wet his lips, glancing up and looking away just as quickly. God, this moment had utterly ruined him, too much was the fucking understatement.

“Ja,” he whispered. “But...it was sweet.”

Even one single step towards him and Isak’s heart was pounding so fucking hard fuck.

“You really couldn’t look at me.”

“I couldn’t, I was gonna give everything away, I was...”

“What’s everything?”

“How. How much you just standing close was making my toes curl in my socks how the way you were looking at me, how--”
The word cut off the same time his air did and he couldn’t breathe, he could feel Even across the foot of space between them and every single fucking neuron was sparking--

“I couldn’t breathe, I.”

Even’s hand was sliding on the counter, over next to his hip as he leaned in closer, hovering, the heat and weight of his gaze making Isak’s ribs flood.

Then he was dipping down, moving so slow and calculating, eyes on Isak the entire time, so fucking close and Isak couldn’t stand it anymore, daring to glance over to the side, Even’s mouth, centimeters from his and

There was a moment, a single moment’s pause twisting in Isak’s chest, everything was and Even was about to kiss him, the world as he knew it was hanging in balance and please, just do it, leaning in and drawing closer, gravity, craving--

Even smacked his hand on the counter and the sound was so loud Isak jumped, head snapping to the side then Even was tipping back, completely crinkled up and gorgeous, hand over his stomach as he laughed, echoing and

“You’re a dick! Oh my god, you’re a total dick, I can’t fucking be-lieve it.”

Even was laughing harder, bending in half with it now, absolutely beautiful and he’d seriously just--

Isak put his head in his hands.

“Oh my god I can’t believe I had to go through that twice I’m gonna kill everyone in this room and then myself.”

“Oh, cut it out. I was nervous too, y’know.”

“Nei! You weren’t, shut up.”

“Ja! I was! There was one moment, I was standing here, watching you, reading everything on your face, and that was the most important moment of my life, because that was the moment I decided I was gonna kiss you. I fucking knew it counted, you think I wasn’t nervous??”

Isak lifted his head from his hands to squint suspiciously and Even pinned him with a look, leaning a hip against the counter.

“I knew you wanted me to do it, I could feel it.”

“You could feel it, huh?”

“Ja. But I had to take it slow, waiting to see if you would object, waiting to see if you were comfortable.” And Even was stepping closer again, towards him and Isak tipped his head with a sigh as the chill went down his spine again. Fuck. Really?

“Every single movement counted, cause I had to make a move right then or I was gonna lose you.” His voice dropped quiet at the end and Isak closed his mouth, trying to be a little more patient as Even gravitated into him again, gaze flicking between his eyes and lips.

“And so I did,” he whispered, moving in closer. “Those last few seconds I knew we both wanted it, so bad but. There was so much I wasn’t sure about, there were so many things you didn’t know yet and I was scared but god--”
Gliding the last foot down, here, voice dropped so low,

“--I wanted you.”

It ghosted over his cheek, warm and tingling and. Isak’s heart pounded and he dared look over to more sparks. Watching Even’s lashes flutter shut.

“I was finally about to do it, and then--”

“Then Noora showed up,” Isak filled in and Even drew back a little, sighing down at the counter.

“And we missed seven days.”

“You still haven’t kissed me,” Isak pointed out, cause somebody was kinda dying, fuck.

“One more time,” Even said, taking a step backwards and leaning against the counter again.

“This is ridiculous,” Isak told him, pinning him with a look.

Even lifted a shoulder, mouth pursing with it.

“I’m having fun.”

“Well yeah, but it’s also kinda driving me crazy--”

“Is that what gave me away?” Even interrupted, pushing off the counter for the fucking third time and Isak squinted.

“Hmm?”

“Aluminum technology,” he clarified, dipping his head, that expectant pretty boy look and Isak finally caught onto what he was doing.

He smiled, to himself, dipping his head again, blush creeping up his cheeks. “Ja.”

“Nå,” Even whispered. “Now, the look on your face, this is where I decide it.”

“I didn’t know until you took the step forward.”

“This one?”

“That one,” Isak breathed.

“I was so scared I was wrong but I didn’t care, I had to try.”

“I was already so in love with you,” Isak confessed. “After that day in your window--”

“Me too. Watching you trying to rap, I couldn’t tear my eyes away I--”

“When the doorbell rang my heart dropped.”

“When Noora showed up.”

“But.” Even was standing there now, close, dipping in next to him and Isak couldn’t breathe.

Even was inches away, the kiss they never got to have and both of their hearts were pounding, confessions and so close and.
“...I got you.”

“I got you,” Isak whispered to the tiles and Even’s lashes fluttered shut, right as Isak glanced over again, corner of his eye.

“I got you,” Even echoed, disbelief this time, falling from parted lips, then he was leaning in and leaning in and.

Isak drew closer, everything slow and sparking and spinning and slow motion rush of the surface, Even finally dove, lips colliding, and kissed him.

It flooded all the way down to Isak’s toes.

Waves crashed over his chest and he stumbled backwards a step, their mouths breaking free and his head tipped up, eyes wide. He barely got a second to attempt breathing before that step closed and Even took his face in both hands, crowding in close, eyes slipping closed, spinning to back Isak into the counter.

He didn’t just kiss him again, Even kissed him hard.

Desperate and heated and warm all at once, fireworks and hurricanes and lightning storms sparking up his chest as he clutched Even’s shoulders helplessly and pushed up into him.

The beautiful boy nosed to the side, shoulders dancing closer, tilting to press against him as his mouth dropped open and he twisted Isak’s mouth enough to send him spiraling dizzy.

Isak kinda whimpered and Even broke off for a moment, eyes shut and gasping.

“Fy faen.”

Sweeping blues flipped open, burning down at him and Isak wasn’t really breathing yet, staring overwhelmed awed elated too much please more, the temporary break apart of their mouths in the pool when Even pulled back and smiled at him like that before they were colliding again, he was going to get more kisses--

Kisses like that.

Something snapped and there were two hands on Isak’s thighs, hopping him up onto the counter and digging into his back pockets, dragging him forward hard, mouths crashing and legs spread wide enough Isak’s too tight pants were rubbing against Even’s stomach.

Then Even was kissing down his neck and Isak was kinda losing it, head tipped to the side, grip tight in Even’s hair.

“Fuck, fuck fuck. If you’d’ve kissed me like this I wouldn’t’ve let you leave my apartment, like, god. Probably ever.”

“Wouldn’t’ve scared you off,” Even murmured, kissing back up his jaw and tugging Isak’s bottom lip into his mouth with his teeth, sucking hard.

Isak kinda stuttered against him and rolled his hips, mouths breaking free over closed eyes, foreheads pressing, tilting to the side and panting.

“I’d’ve been. Fuck, really overwhelmed, probably would’ve come in my pants or some shit.”
“Then how ‘bout...we go strip down, huh?’

“Ja, maybe might’ve been too much, then. You naked is….mm. A lot,” Isak offered kinda shaky and Even weaved their noses together, breathing hard over Isak’s wet parted lips.

“So you’re thinking we needed all that angst first?”

“Oh definitely,” he managed, dipping in for another kiss, another, waves still riding hard down his spine. “Clarity of disaster and all that--ah ahmm fuck.”

Isak was leaning hard against, completely wrapped around Even so it nearly toppled him off the counter when Even pulled back, far enough Isak had to pick himself up and blink dazed and hooded at the beautiful boy studying his face.

“Clarity of disaster.”

“Don’t stop kissing me, c’mom,” Isak breathed and Even shouldered back close, tipping his mouth up against Isak’s waiting one and they slipped together perfectly, wet sounds popping between their squished mouths and

Then two heavy hands were scooping Isak off the counter and carrying him for his room and well.

It definitely wasn’t how that party went but this was loads, loads better.

They were lying there exhausted when a quiet knock on the door interrupted and Even instantly threw the sheets over them both, lifting his voice,

“Come in!”

Isak groaned because he did not want to deal with any of his flatmates right now, he was warm and sated and damn, the door was creaking open slow.

And blonde swinging as Noora peeked trepidatiously inside.

“Sorry to interrupt--”

“Nei, you’re totally fine,” Even said and Isak twitched an eye because yes technically they weren’t doing anything but she was still interrupting.

“I just...I’ve been wanting to apologize, to you both, and I don’t know the next time I’ll see you that everyone won’t be around, so.”

Isak sucked in the annoyance and sat up a little, making sure he didn’t knock the sheets off and well, at least Noora hadn’t walked in on him having sex like she did with Eskild. This fucking flat.

“Ja?”

“I...I’m really sorry I tried to kick you out, Isak.” Noora’s eyebrows were all knit, pure apologetic and kind as her bright red mouth pursed. “I didn’t have the whole story, but you didn’t deserve that at all. And honestly, I’m really glad you live here, both of you, I’d never want you to leave, no matter what I tease, okay?”
“Uh...takk, I guess.”

“Ja. I do mean it.”

“Fett...and like, it’s totally cool, I forgive you and all that, you didn’t know, so.”

“Great. Well, uh. I’ll just. Be going now, sorry again, and thanks for letting me interrupt, and uh. Have a good...night…”

“Thanks Noora,” Even smiled. She gave them a little awkward wave then the door was thank god closing again.

Isak flopped back down to the pillow with a bitchy noise. It was sweet of her to apologize, but he was not wearing clothes.

“Oh get over yourself,” Even said and Isak flipped him off, rolling over to drape himself on Even’s side, warm and bare as he nuzzled against the purpled collarbone.

A hand slid into his curls, scratching at his scalp and Isak curled closer, nose squished to the side against the heat of Even’s skin.

They lay there for a little while, in the quiet soft of each other and the loose sheets. Until eventually Isak was shifting, lifting his head to prop up on an elbow, watch the peaceful pretty face.

“You know what I just realized?”

“Hm,” Even hummed back.

He sounded dazed and content, sparkly blue closed and Isak ran his free hand down Even’s bare chest, over his silky stomach and around to his waist, fingers splaying down over the angle of a beautiful hip.

“You told me you had a bike, that’s why you stayed behind to help clean.”

“...yeah?” Even peeked open an eye at him and Isak moved closer, sliding his knee over Even’s thigh.

“You arrived with Sonja. You didn’t come on a bike, unless you made her ride on the back of it.”

Then both the blue eyes were popping open, going wide and perfectly clear, easier to read than his bio textbook. Oh fuck.

“You totally didn’t have a bike!”

“I also didn’t have any chill, so.”

“You fucker. What was your plan then, to spend the fucking night?”

“Nei.”

Isak’s eyebrows shot up.

“It really wasn’t! To be honest I didn’t actually...have a plan? I just knew I had to get you alone, so.”

“You're ridiculous.”
“I had this massive crush on you, babe.”

“Mmhmm.”

“I still do.”

“Good,” Isak whispered, then he was leaning in and kissing him.

Their mouths didn’t break apart until Isak had drifted off asleep.

Tirsdag, 16:45
14.03.17

They were laid out on his living room floor, a plate of crackers and cheese between them untouched, as he’d been busy trying to decode all of this genome shit.

Wait, wasn’t Even in genetics or something? With Chris Schistad, he was pretty sure. Maybe between the two of them--

“Sanaaa, where is my phooone.”

“Why would I know?” She glanced up and gave him a what the hell face, squinting judgily with it before she was looking back down at her notebook sassily.

He groaned and rolled over onto his back, long curls flopping everywhere to cover the page she was looking at.

Sana raised her eyebrows, glaring down at him dully and extremely unimpressed and Isak pouted.

“Help me find it.”

She threw up a hand, pushing upright, dimple popping as she widened her eyes all faux annoyed and whatnot.

“Fine, but only cause you’re being all--” she waved a hand at him and Isak cocked his head in a pretty smile, then she was waving twice as impatient. “C’mon, get up, help, I’m not gonna look without you.”

“Oioi,” he responded, then he was sitting up and lifting up their notebooks and textbooks and scooting his laptop.

“When did you have it last?”

“I have no idea, how long have we been working?”

“Too long,” she replied, picking up a cushion off the couch. “I’m gonna call it.”

“Pretty sure it’s on vibrate.”

“Well maybe we’ll hear the vibration, dumbass,” she shot back and Isak threw up his hands, eyes going extra wide.
“Ok-ay, apparently I’m not the only one frustrated with the genomes.”

“It’s fucking yeast, who cares about where the Sac1 breaks??”

“Phone?” Isak diverted and Sana sighed, scooping hers up off the ground and thumbing through it aggressively until she was dialing his number.

“I don’t hear anything,” he said and she put a finger on her lips, tilting her head incredulously.

“Maybe if you stopped talking.”

“Okay okay.”

He went quiet and she turned on a heel, squinting a little.

“Do you he--”

“Shh!!”

Isak snapped his mouth shut, eyes wide again and Sana stepped back over to the couch, moving aside one of the big cushions on the back.

“Ah ha, found it.” She scooped it up, waving it around triumphantly and Isak let out a little cheer, pushing to his feet while Sana denied the call, his lock screen popping up at the same time as her eyebrows. “You have like 30 notifications, hva faen.”

“They're probably all group chats,” he dismissed and she squinted closer, scrolling with a thumb.

“No they're all-- oh.” Then she was looking up, eyes kinda wide as she held his phone out towards him. “They all say Mamma.”

“Fuck,” he sighed, taking it a little reluctantly from her and unlocking it. Yeah, okay, twenty four messages, literally all from his mother and half them didn’t even look coherent.

“...are those all Bible verses?”

“Yes,” he responded, locking his phone again and shoving it in his pocket before looking up. Well, kinda.

Sana was looking at him with her eyebrows popped high.

“She's still sending you Bible verses.”

“Ja, app-ar-ent-ly.”

“Uhm...why?”

“Why, is something in my religion bothering you?” Isak teased, plopping back down to the ground and she pulled her head back so fast her hijab swung in a wave.

“Your religion? What happened to. exact sciences?” Sana squinched up her face and swirled her hand at him and the textbooks all in one.

“I dunno,” he said, eyebrows furrowing as he looked down at the phone. Sana sat back down across from him and he rocked his head back and forth, squinting up painfully. “It's not like I'm like Catholic or anything but. But when Even wasn't okay I ended up going to church and praying for
him and. I don’t know, it made me feel better but I don’t know why.”

He risked a glance up, mouth snapped back shut and pursed a little. Sana was just looking at him, seriously now, studying him across the space between them. Then she lifted a shoulder, all casual.

“Faith is powerful.”

She made it sound so simple and easy and Isak scrunched up his face more.

“I don’t know if its faith, though. Cause like...I dunno. Maybe it's more a nostalgia comfort thing?”

“Maybe,” she agreed, picking her notebook back up and flipping it open. Shot another glance up at him before she looked back down, tipping up in a tiny hint of a smile that put a sharp dimple in her cheek. “But it can be whatever you want it to be, okay?”

“Yeah,” he pursed his mouth to the side, nodding once. “Okay.”

“Now anyways,” Sana shoved a textbook across the floor to bump into his knee, shooting him another one of those signature exasperated looks. “Biology.”

Isak smiled to himself, opening the pages back up and pointedly pretending not to notice they’d just had a legit friendship moment there.

“Right, biology.”

Onsdag, 08:22
15.03.17

“Hey, Even, wrestle me.”

Eyebrows up and Isak cocked one of his own, then sweet hands were tugging him down to the mattress and they were rolling, easy.

Isak scrambled to get his legs around Even’s waist, whipping him around and slamming him down against the bed, forearm against his neck.

“You're holding back, c’mon.”

A strong arm across the far side of his ribs and Even was rolling them again, still easy and Isak slipped out almost instantly, barring an arm across the inside of Even’s shoulder, breathing against his ear.

“C’mon, fucking mean it.”

That time when Even whipped around and tried to pin him, Isak at least had to put some effort to knocking the arms back off.

“What, you think I’m fucking fragile, you think I can’t–”

Then he ended up with his face on the mattress and his arms twisted up high behind him, holding him still with tight hands on his wrists and an absolutely unbreakable grip.
Isak wiggled and squirmed and Even shot his eyebrows up and held him. All of that arm strength.

“Fuck,” Isak finally cursed into the duvet, tapping out.

“Ha,” Even shot back then Isak rolled them over and kissed him before he could ask questions.

Torsdag, 17:15
16.03.17

He was making frustrated noises at the rearranged kitchen cabinets when the idea hit him. He pulled his phone out of his pocket, thumbing through his contacts and scrolling down past the I’s to J.

Jonas picked up on the second ring.

“Hey man, what’s up?”

“I’m ready to stab something,” Even greeted, throwing open another kitchen cabinet.

“Oh no, what did Issy do this time?”

Even laughed, pausing in his search for crackers to smile at the phone.

“Why do you assume it’s Isak?”

“Because he’s fucking trouble, we both know that.”

“We do. Actually it’s not though, it’s this fucking film project. It’s driving me crazy, I can’t tell if the frames are too fast or if the coloring’s right or if it’s even lining up the way I want and. I really need a second pair of eyes, would you mind?”

“No dude, I’d be honored! Are you home now?”

“Yeah! I mean...at Isak’s. He’s not here though, he’s out with Eva and Vilde I think?”

“I’ve got time now if you want.”

“That’d be great! Just let yourself in, I’ll leave the door unlocked. Oh, and do you have any snack preferences? I was gonna make something to destress.”

“Oh, have I got snack preferences.”

Their regular table for two wasn’t big enough, and was currently taken, so the three of them were tucked back in a corner booth, matching coffees and straws twirling between fingers, backpacks stacked under the table.

There was a quiet radio in the background, but Isak couldn’t’ve told you a single song that played. They were too busy chatting over their coffees - about nothing in particular, mostly school stuff, but it was nice.

Not really what he’d been picturing, but nice.
The glasses were about halfway empty by the time the conversation paused with Eva pushing to her feet, excusing herself for the restroom.

In theory he should be smooth and wait a solid minute after she left to turn to Vilde but he didn’t, he wasn’t that patient, the fucking second Eva was out of earshot he put down his glass and turned to the girl wrapped up in pink.

“Vilde, you know...you know I’d still hang out with you if Eva’s not there.”

“I...know,” she said slowly, dismissive, glancing at him before she looked down at their glasses, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. “But I’m not sure...I mean, I know we’ve chatted but we’re not like really really friends and I wanted to actually be friends with you first so you don’t think I’m just wanting to hang out with you cause you’re gay, and--”

“I wouldn’t think that,” Isak assured her, lifting his straw back for his mouth. “Besides, there...wouldn’t be anything wrong with us connecting over our sexualities, Vilde, gays kinda group together anyways.”

Blue eyes turned wide to him and Isak took a sip, lifting an eyebrow.

“...they do?”

“Ja.” He lifted a shoulder, shrugging lightly. “We’ve all had struggles and good times and a different story than mainstream, so. We’ve all got things in common. There’s a reason it’s called the LHBT community.”

A moment more of wide eyes before Vilde nodded and took a sip of her drink, staring down at the table instead of him.

“Well. I didn’t...I just didn’t want you to get the wrong idea, and I know you and Eva are really close so I figured she’d be a good buffer for the first time we went out. Not like out-out--”

“Vilde.” She looked up and Isak gave her a little smile, shaking his head with it. “It’s fine. I’m not always a bitch, I promise I do know how to be nice. And I can be nice to you.”

She gave him a look over the top of her glass.

“I don’t think you’re a bitch.”

Which was the perfect time for Eva to reappear and swoop back down into her seat, smooth hair swinging.

“Oh, he is. You’ll learn.”

Isak tipped his head to the side, mouth open as he flicked her off, then he was turning to Vilde and giving her a reassuring smile.

Vilde smiled down into her coffee. Eva smiled at them both and Isak ended up ordering them a second round of glasses.

He heard the laughter from the kitchen, and the voices when he hit the hallway. One of them was definitely Even, loud and beautiful and talking excitedly about something. In their bedroom, with
someone, who wasn’t him.

By the time he finally reached the door to peek around the corner, he was already knit trepidatiously.

On his bed was his boyfriend - in his hoodie - and his best friend. In one of his own hoodies.

Isak took one step further around the corner, crinkling more as the plate of fancy snacks slid into view, the matching drinks on the other side of the laptop.

“…what is this?”

Both of their heads popped up, straightening from where Jonas had been pointing at the screen and Even had been typing something.

“Hey man,” Jonas offered, the same time Even smiled and piped up,

“Hey baby.”

They turned and kinda snorted at each other, amused and teasing and.

Isak stepped cautiously into the room, squinting as he walked all the way around the edge of the bed to give Even’s tipped up lips a complacent hello kiss.

“Are you guys plotting against me?”

“We haven’t actually…talked about you, really,” Even said, glancing over at Jonas. Jonas’s eyebrows lifted and he nodded once, slightly, like that would somehow make Isak not see it from three fucking feet away.

Isak plopped down on the mattress, giving them both judgy looks.

“Not everything’s about you,” Jonas shot back sassily. Even had to curl his lips in to fight the smile and there was definitely something they weren’t saying. But if there were any two people to keep secrets, it was those two he trusted.

So he dropped his mouth open, eyebrows shooting up in offense with it.

“What?? Since when??” He reached over the boy bundled up in his clothes to snag one of the caprese baguettes. “The fuck are you guys doing then?”

“None of your business,” Even told him prettily, the same time Jonas leaned around him to say,

“Working on Even’s film.”

Even turned and narrowed suspiciously at Jonas.

Jonas threw up a hand, dark eyebrows high and hand waving between the three of them.

“Look man, he’s my best friend, you tell him everything, then he tells me everything, might as well just say it.”

“It’s true,” Isak confirmed and the smile on his face was a hell of a lot wider than first year, Jonas him and Eva sitting on the steps outside Nissen as he’d told her exactly that.

It was kinda making his chest tight, the quote and Isak leaned over his boyfriend to shove Jonas for it. Jonas tipped happily and rocked back up, shoulder knocking Even’s and making him smile too.
A beautiful, simple happy smile and well, his mouth was really close to Even right now might as well look down his nose and pucker up, watching sparkly blue eyes as he lifted his chin to kiss him quick.

“I’ll leave you boys to it, then. I think I owe Linn some quality time with the fav. Since apparently I’m neither of yours’ anymore.”

“Get over yourself,” Even suggested and Isak elbowed him on his way back to his feet. Even rubbed his arm, lips parted in offense.

“Love you too,” he accused. Isak blew him a kiss at the door and gave Jonas a little wave, then the two of them were turning to each other and pointing back at the screen.

“So what if you pull the intro in with that one--”

Fredag, 19:32
17.03.17

They were on their way to Roa, to go fuck around and take photos in front of the graffiti. Jonas and Even’s idea (Isak was 98% sure they were looking for cool filming locations but whatever they were all on the train so).

“I’m gonna be graduating soon, holy fuck,” Even broke the easy silence, making them all swivel.

Isak looked over from his train seat with his eyebrows knit high.

“Yeah...holy fuck.”

They’d been so caught up in hell lately Isak had...literally forgotten they were still in high school, and that Even was only gonna be in high school for another couple months.

Fuck.

“It won’t be that bad,” Mahdi offered, glancing between Even and the view out the speeding windows.

“Which school are you going to?” Jonas leaned an elbow on the armrest, cocking his head with it.

Even chewed on his bottom lip, finally sucking in a breath through his teeth.

“...no fucking clue.”

“Fuck dude, you gotta figure that out.” Magnus gave him a yikes look and they all made huffing sound of agreement.

“I haven’t even begun to decide where.”

He barely said it before the train came screeching to a halt, sending them all jolting or tumbling into each other’s shoulders.

Jonas cursed and they all looked out the windows, where they’d arrived at another station on the way to Roa.
“We’re all gonna die before we get there,” Magnus declared,

“At least some of us won’t be dying virgins,” Jonas said all smug and Magnus flipped him off before he was tapping on the window, indicating the station and the tracks and the whole thing. “You know, I completely get why my mom wrote that letter.”

Jonas laughed, looking out the window too.

“What letter?” Mahdi asked, confused and Magnus shot a glance at the rest of them.

“Long story.”

Isak wasn’t looking out the windows.

Isak wasn’t looking anywhere, he was staring wide eyed at the ground. Not because of the letter though.

Because Even just said he didn’t know where he was going to school yet, and Isak had completely forgotten he’d been considering leaving Oslo.

Lørdag, 03:09
18.03.17

He’d been sitting at his computer for so long he was pretty sure his skin might be permanently etched with video software reflections. He’d been fucking _trying_ to edit things, add in the Roa work they’d done but nothing was working, it all just felt so jilted and not what he wanted and.

Even made a frustrated sound and leaned back in his chair, folding his hands behind his head as he glanced over for the window.

Isak wasn’t propped in the windowsill, hadn’t been over in what felt like forever but.

There were white flakes drifting outside, he could see them fluttering in the single beam of light visible from here.

He pushed out of his chair, careful not to hit his head on his bed before he was stepping up to the windowsill, hand on the wall as he looked through the glass.

It was snowing, flakes huge and beautiful and the lights were on down the road, lining everything orange. What the fuck the weather was this year, he had no idea. But hey, it was snowing, so.

He was gonna go out and walk around in the snow in a snapback and get inspired. He stopped in the kitchen to grab an orange and his key to the apartment, double checked that he had his phone, and quietly let himself out the front door.

Down the stairs and stepping into the outdoors.

The snow was instant and somehow took a solid ten seconds to sink in, dusting over his hoodie and his bare hands.

He tilted his face up to the sky, eyes slipping closed, letting the white stick to his lashes.
Little freezing droplets to his skin but the way they landed down to touch him felt like Isak’s kisses.

He smiled softly at the clouds before he looked back out at the road again, shielded beneath the brim as he started walking, pulling the orange out of his pocket.

The snow had been going for long enough now there were a few inches packed onto the road, completely untouched by a single tire mark or footprint.

He didn’t go far, peeling the orange as he walked, headed for the closest trashcan to toss the first piece of peel inside, taking his time.

Wandering around kinda aimlessly, not really thinking about much.

Then he was breaking open the orange, popping a slice in his mouth and shooting his eyebrows up as he realized he’d made a pattern in the fresh snow.

He chewed and tipped his head at the ground, the white interrupted by his feet. It was swerving snakes, it looked like two toddlers on their bikes weaving back and forth and back and forth and he must’ve been dragging his feet because it was in lines instead of separated prints.

Interesting. He popped another slice in his mouth. The shape wasn’t much. Honestly it looked more like a heart than anything else, but there were too many lines crossed inside it.

He peeled off another slice and started walking again, gaze lifting to the horizon, the rest of the road.

There was a streetlight a few feet away, and you could see the snow best underneath it, bright white falling flakes. Even blinked up at it, got snow in his eye and shook his head, turning to look at the next closest one.

That streetlight could be a fucking painting. It was drifting perfect, a bench barely dusted in snow directly underneath the lamp, snow lit up in that little triangle of golden light and he wanted to be next to Isak on that bench more than anything.

It was 3:09 in the morning when Isak woke up to his phone ringing.

“Hello?” Isak’s voice over the line, groggy and disoriented, “Even? Are you okay?”

“Hello to you too,” he smiled back. He wanted to hear Isak’s voice and the fact that he could do that, that he could have that whenever he wanted wasn’t something that was lost on him. He was standing out here in the snow, definitely not dressed for winter and he was completely warm from that voice trickling down his spine.

Excluding the falling cold kisses of flakes dancing on every piece of bare skin.

“What’s up? Why are you calling at...three?”

“I wanted to hear your voice.”

“At 3 in the morning??”

“Ja,” Even smiled at the empty bench, holding his phone a little tighter against his ear.

“Did you have a nightmare or--”

“Nei. I haven’t gotten to sleep yet.”
“...why?”
“I’ve been working on my project.”
“Mmm. Why are your teeth chattering?”
“Are they? Fuck. It’s the snow.”
“Are you OUTSIDE?”
“Yeah, I needed inspiration.”
“...are you okay?”
“Yeah, yeah I’m good.”
“Are you sure?”
“Yes, Isak, I’m not having an episode. I’m still an artist, I experience surges of creativity in weird ways sometimes, okay, so maybe I take walks in the snow and eat oranges and call my boyfriend at 3 in the morning.”
“Okay. That’s fine with me. Are you warm?”
“I am now.”
“I meant like physically.”
“Your voice is physically warming.”
“How many clothes are you wearing.”
“A hoodie sweats and shoes. And a snapback.”
“You’re...fucking weird. Is there anything on under the hoodie?”
“No, but is this phone call taking another direction or something? Cause if we’re gonna have phone sex I’m gonna go back inside.”
“I’m checking on your well being, fuck off.”
He could see Isak’s face scrunching up all bitchily and Even smiled into the phone, swaying a little in the snow. Glancing over at the bench again.
“Hey, do you have any favorite hangout spots from when you were a kid? Like, secret getaways or something?”
“...ja, of course I do.”
“Yeah? Like what? Tell me about it.”
“That could be a phone sex moment,” Isak pointed out.
“No, it couldn’t, we never have phone sex that boring.”
“You’re right. It’s mostly me moaning at you.”
“It is. Childhood memories. Go.”

“Jeez, who turns down phone sex?”

“I’m in the snow.”

“Right right. Okay, childhood memories. There’s this abandoned gas station, it’s on the edge of this neighborhood and it’s fucking cool, everything’s like. Empty and desolate and shit. And it has the best sunsets on the entire fucking planet. Like...the sky goes the most amazing colors and it faces west so you can see everything, all across this empty road that like stretches on forever. And you have to go through the woods to get there too. And there’s a bench we used to sit on, and a giant empty parking lot behind it where i learned how to skateboard. That bench was the first place Jonas did any of his tricks, actually. He broke his nose once jumping off the ledge, that was a fucking mess. Oh, and there was this badger once, I almost stepped on it, I don’t think I’ve ever screamed so loud to this day. And that’s including wall sex, okay.”

Even laughed, bright and happy and he was almost done with his orange and his hands were cold but his chest was so so warm.

“It sounds beautiful.”

“It is, yeah. Like something out of a movie. You’d like it.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, I’ll take you sometime.”

“Really?”

“Mmhm.”

“Jonas wouldn’t mind?”

“We took Mahdi and Magnus a little while ago, I don’t think he would. Or we could all go. Whichever.”

“Fett.”

“What made you ask that? The childhood memories.”

“There’s an empty bench here, underneath a streetlight and it’s snowing really prettily. I was thinking about wanting to sit there with you, to watch the snow, and then I realized there’s a lot of places that you’ve been and sat and watched things that I didn’t know about so. I wanted to ask.”

“Oh. Yeah, that’s probably the biggest one. Besides the docks down on the harbor, in the summer.”

“Yeah?”

“We used to watch the boats come in. I’d go with my mom sometimes, and we’d watch the sunset from there too…”

Isak fell into another story and Even finished his orange. Sat down on the bench and listened until his hands were too cold to hold the phone.
They were in the middle of phenotyping when Chris suddenly looked up from the microscope, paintbrush sweeping a whole pile of flies right onto Even’s notebook.

“Hey!”

“Hey yourself, you’re not paying attention, that one had white eyes.”

“I wrote that down!”

“That is not a W.”

“You’re...not a W,” Even said back lamely and Chris turned back to the microscope with wide eyes and a sassy smack of his mouth.

“I am not.” Adjusting knobs and Chris was back to squinting through the lens, turning up the CO2 to keep the fruit flies still. “Twisted, red eyes, female. So are you ever gonna tell me why you dropped off the face of the earth for two weeks?”

A tally in the right column for the fly and Even sat down his pencil, looking up at the lab partner who was Very Busy pushing around the thin paintbrush and staring down the microscope lenses.

“Uh...do you really like. Wanna know all the gritty details?”

That time when Chris looked up Even was looking back down, making notes at the bottom of their tally chart, pencil scratching away.

“...ja? I mean. We’re friends, Even.”

Even glanced up, caught the heavy gaze his way and looked right back down.

“What happened to E.Bech?”

“C’mon, I’m being serious. I already know something’s up, that much is pretty damn clear. Has been for a while, I just. Figured you’d eventually tell me, only you haven’t, so.”

“It’s not cause I don’t trust you or anything,” Even said quietly.

Chris nodded and looked back down, mumbling off the phenotype for another fly. Even wrote the tally.

“Why is it, then?”

“You don’t...it’s a lot man, I don’t wanna burden you with that.”

“Dude, my last best friend blamed himself for getting his little sister killed and I handled his shit. Whatever it is, I can fucking take it.”

They were both looking at each other now, sculpted jawlines and raised eyebrows, sharp dark beautiful meets soft light beautiful. Understanding, maybe.

“I’m bipolar,” Even told him.
Chris blinked at him twice.

“...that’s it?”

Even pulled his head back.

“What do you mean that’s it?”

“Like. I thought it was something bad, man.” Chris turned back to the flies and Even sat down his pencil, throwing up a hand.

“Uh...do you know what it is? It’s not where you’re emotional all the time or change your mind a lot, it’s like. A mental disorder, where you have manic episodes--”

“And like spend a lot and do wild shit then you get depressed after, yeah, I know what it is. Twisted, white, male.”

“You...what??”

“Twisted, white, male, do you need me to make the tally for you--” Chris reached over for his pencil and Even snatched it up, eyebrows still furrowed at the guy beside him.

“No, no, I got it.” He wrote down the mark, slowly, watching the line draw all the way out before he was glancing over at Chris again.

“Straight, red, female.”

“How do you know what it is?”

“Bipolar disorder? I took psychology last year, man. Twisted, red, male.”

“You...okay?”

“Did you write that one down?”

“Yes.” A pause, another glance over. “Why aren’t you freaked out by this?”

And Chris finally sighed, scooting the microscope back an inch and giving Even a dramatic look.

“Would that change anything?” Paintbrush reaching out to scoop up another stray fly from his notebook, then Chris’s dark eyes were on his again, head tipping with it. “…you didn’t want soup, what else am I supposed to do about it?”

Even huffed a note of surprise and Chris threw up a hand.

“I offered warm food, man, maybe don’t be a dick and let me bring it to you next time.”

“Okay,” Even offered back. Chris shook his head, dragging the microscope back in.

“I can’t believe I had to like yank that out of you. Twisted, red...I think female?”

“It’s not exactly something that comes up between bench presses.”

“Uh, maybe we need to hang out more than going to the gym, then.”

“That’s...fine with me. Did you say twisted red female?”
“Yeah, I can’t tell if it has the comb things or not, can you check?”

The microscope slid over and Even glanced inside.

“I think that’s female.”

“Do you know anything about dancing?”

“Do I...what?”

“I’ve got some friends, from work, we do like. These dance-off things, you wanna come sometime?”

“Uh...sure. Yeah, that sounds cool.”

“It is.” Chris smiled wide, pulling the microscope back and scooting the fly aside. “Might even be a little too cool for you, E.Bech.”

“Whatsoever you tell yourself to sleep at night, Christo.”

“Hey, I sleep fine, I’m not the one who spends two weeks in bed and denies their friends bringing them soup.”

“Fuck off,” Even suggested. Chris smiled and tapped aside the next fly.

“Straight, white, male.”

“How boring.”

“Right? Tell me about it.”


Onsdag, 14:47
22.03.17

So he maybe kept doing it. Sometimes he had to really rile Even up, all heated words against temples and rough touch as he pinned him down and talked smack but he eventually always got him, and then Even would flip around and actually put up a bit of a fight, for just a moment but not long enough, because Isak kept getting him pinned.

“C’mon, get out of it.”

“What?”

“See if you can break free.”

Even wiggled, trying to roll them and Isak held a little tighter and rolled his eyes.

“Nei, I fucking mean it, c’mon!”

Then shoulders were shoving to the side, strong arms twisting to break free and Isak tumbled to the bed, bouncing onto his back to stare up at the ceiling.

“Fuck.”
There was some poppy song playing on the bluetooth speaker and Isak swayed his head to the beat a little, maybe scooting a little close to the edge of the mattress with it. Falling off this one wouldn’t be fun, Eva actually had a legit bed raised up high but he had to lay on the edge of it if he wanted to be able to tip his head upside down and veto shirts she kept turning around and holding up.

Apparently this was a thing they did before parties, Isak had no idea, he always just like. Threw on something clean but for the girls it was a Ritual so.

He was pretending to help because that way they had an excuse to hang and bitch together.

Although right now Isak wasn’t bitching at anything but the ceiling.

“Eva, what the fuck am I supposed to do next year.”

“What about next year?” She spun around, holding up a striped shirt that he was 98% sure belonged to Noora. Isak shook his head no and she sighed and put it on the not for parties hanger.

“Next year we’ll be third years,” he continued and silky hair swung as she shot him a pretty smile over his shoulder.

“We will.” Only the moment she saw him the smile was falling and she squinted at him. “Which is an exciting thing.”

“Not when your boyfriend is graduating,” Isak pointed out and her mouth popped open.

“Ohhh. Oh shit.” She plopped down on the bed beside him and Isak rolled his head to look back up miserably at the ceiling.

“Yeah, oh shit, what am I supposed to do next year??”

“Um...well.” She tucked her hair behind her ear, swinging her legs around to elbow down to her stomach next to him. “Have you guys talked about it?”

“Talked about whether or not we’re gonna try to stay together? Uh, nei, I kinda assumed we would.” His eyes were kinda wide and Eva was looking down at him in just as wide concern. “Why, do you think. Do you think we’ll break up??”

“Nei, nei, not necessarily,” she assured, like not necessarily was an assurance and Isak’s head snapped to the side, mouth open as he tried to cognize what he’d just said out loud.

Break up.

Not necessarily.

“But...but he mentioned-- and if he’s. If he goes off to university literally anywhere besides…”

Okay he was maybe panicking a little now, blinking wider, chest compressing hard enough it was kinda hard to breathe and.
“Eva, I don’t know if I can do long distance.”

“Isak, calm down, I’m sure everything’s gonna be fine—”

“No, listen, Eva, he has dreams, he’s got all of these things that he wants out of life and what if I don’t fit into that outside of high school, he’s about to be moving on in the world to places as beautiful as he is and he’s gonna be making movies and growing up and learning all these new things and if he goes away to do all of that why in fuck would he still keep dating some kid from his hometown, a-- a fucking...unstable high schooler with daddy issues---”

“Isak,” Eva scolded and Isak threw up his hands, shaking his head because that was all true, what was she scolding him for, “Even loves you. Chill out.”

Isak rolled back to stare at the ceiling, lying there blinking.

Fuck.

Fuck.

“You two haven’t talked about it...at all?”

“I mean...he told me he was considering going to London or some big city or something, for the stories. Then the other day he said he hadn’t decided where he was going to school yet, so.”

“Okay...so then. It just depends on where he goes next year, right? And it’s April, so that’s...”

“One more month before he’s out of high school. We only have one more--”

“Not necessarily,” she shook her head at him again and Isak put the heels of his hands over his eyes. Eva made a sound, wrapped thin fingers around his wrist, and shook a little. “You can figure it out, Isak.”

“Ugh, that’s what everyone always says but--”

“Serr. You guys have already faced harder shit together than literally like any other couple our age. You can handle a conversation about where your boyfriend wants to go to school next year.”

He lifted his hands off his eyes, half glaring and mostly thinking while she gave him a little duh look.

“...why do you always make everything so simple,” he complained and Eva’s hair swung cheerily as she shoved his shoulder.

“Cause you overthink everything, that’s why.”

“Maybe,” he grumbled and she leaned over to kiss his cheek loudly.

“Always.”

He rubbed bitchily at the mark she didn’t leave, then he was rocking sideways as she hopped back off the bed, waving a black shirt at him like a matador.

“What about this one?”

Isak sighed and tipped his head backwards, looking upside at Eva and her closet and the shirt she was holding up.
“Fuck, is that mesh?”

“Why, don’t you have any mesh?”

“Uh...nei?”

He shook his head at her, duh, and she clicked her tongue, tipping her head all suggestive as she waved it again.

“I’m sure Even would love it, you should get some.”

“I’m...also nei,”

“Have you asked??”

“Nei.”

“Then how are you supposed to know!!”

“I don’t know!! Jesus!”

“But it’s a good shirt,” she confirmed with a question mark and Isak threw up a hand.

“Ja, Eva, it’s a good shirt.”

“...do you want to borrow it?”

“Nei.”

Fredag, 21:04
24.03.17

They were all walking on their way to a party, fucking around and shoving each other in the empty street when Magnus reached around Isak to shove his thumb in a hickie on Even’s neck.

“Ah! Dick.”

“This feels backwards,” Magnus declared and Jonas went up on his tiptoes, using Madhi’s shoulder for balance to peer in the dim streetlights.

“What?” Even leaned away from them, squinting suspiciously.

“Isak’s always the one with the hickies.”

“Yeah, actually. Isak hasn’t had a hickie in forever,” Mahdi said. “What, did you lose vacuum power suction?”

They all cracked up, Isak included and Even rolled his eyes, a lot, shoving them all away and fluffing his fancy hair up a little higher.

“You’re all just jealous.”

“Actually. Babe.” Isak spun on a heel, shoving Even back and making him bounce off of Magnus’s...
shoulder in the process. “The hell’s been up with you, I’ve missed my bruises.”

And the moment he said it out loud Jonas, Isak, and Even all got it at the same time.

“Oh...oh.”

“Anyways,” Jonas interrupted. “Did you guys hear that apparently there’s two girls at Elvebakken who came out as pansexual or something, how do we surreptitiously introduce them to Vilde?”

Lørdag, 09:35
25.03.17

“It’s a different kind of bruise,” Isak told the ceiling.

Even turned and looked at him across the bedspread.

Isak turned his head and looked back.

“It’s still a bruise,” Even said.

“Does it bother you or did you think it was gonna bother me?”

Even turned away, up to the ceiling, pursing his mouth.

“You fuck.”

“Babe--”

Isak put two frustrated hands over his face, muffled.

“Why didn't you talk to me about it?”

It wasn’t harsh anymore. Even was trying not to hurt him, for Isak’s sake, because he thought Isak wouldn’t want rough sex anymore or something?

It wasn’t harsh anymore, Isak muffled tired and soft but trying, kind.

“How?” Even threw his hands up for the air anyways.

“Literally just. Ask.” He opened his hands to make sure it was clear, every word. “Just say anything. You can’t put me through the shit you did in February and then not talk to me about it after.”

Even looked back at him and Isak turned, reaching across the distance to close his hands around the fingers curled on a pounding chest.

“Isak. I don't want to hurt you again, ever.”

“Tough shit. You're gonna. At some point in our lives, you will eventually hurt me again. Actually, I’m kinda hurt you chose not to talk to me about this.”

Even gave him a face. C’mon.

Isak gave him a face back. I mean it.
"I'm serious. Hickies don't hurt, hickies are great. The bruises on my hips when you hold me so fucking tight, those don't hurt. Not like miscommunication does. Not like the distance you're putting between us does."

A deep inhale and Even rolled over, closing the gaps while Isak closed his mouth, head up to look at the beautiful boy. Draped on top of him, Even put a hand in his hair, their noses brushing.

Then he was tilting to the side, kissing Isak’s cheek hard and deep, lips pressing, pressing, softer now as they worked down to his jaw and Isak closed his eyes, fist tightening in Even’s hair.

“I don’t want to put distance between us,” Even whispered against his skin and Isak’s nails dragged down to the back of his neck.

“Then fucking talk to me.”

Even closed his eyes, swallowing tight. Isak held on tighter and Even pushed back up, resting his forehead down against Isak’s.

Breathing over his mouth.

It wasn’t a big deal, honestly, it was just hickies, it didn’t matter all that much but whatever tiny little things Even kept tucking away would eventually be bigger worse things and they couldn’t do that, they couldn’t.

Isak tipped up to bump their noses together again, breathe him in. Lips parting, a moment’s pause before he whispered it between them.

“I know it's instinctual for you, but you've gotta break out of the habit, okay? You've gotta. I can't live like this.”

“Okay. I’ll try harder, I will.”

“Promise?”

“Promise,” Even whispered, then he was pressing his mouth to Isak’s and Isak opened up and wrapped his arms around Even’s neck and kissed him as real and sure as he knew how.

And he maybe lowkey whined when Even lifted up and broke apart, their eyes meeting for a moment and Even’s eyebrows shot up, asking a silent question with the thumb rubbing over Isak’s neck.

The side of Isak’s mouth twitched up in a crooked smile and he lifted his head, turning to the side slow, exposing his neck.

The crinkles lit up fond next to pretty blue eyes and Isak opened his mouth, shaking his head a little.

“What are you waiting for?”

“Tell me you mean it.”

“You already know I do.”

“Tell me anyways.”

“Please, dear god, mark me up I’ve missed you--”
Even was already laughing as he painted his smile down Isak’s neck in kisses then his teeth were
sinking into Isak’s skin, breath catching in his throat as he sunk his grip deeper into Isak’s heart with
it.

Mandag, 10:54  
27.03.17

Isak was on his way to his next class headed through some random hallway when he just so
happened to turn around a corner and see a certain familiar blonde at her locker.

He smiled to himself, sauntering up to lean a shoulder on the wall right beside her.

“What’s up?”

“Um.” She closed her locker, clutching her books tight to her chest as she shot him a little smile.

He lifted a shoulder, smile tipping up on one side. “Not too bad. But I haven’t seen you around in
awhile, you wanna hang out after school?”

She blinked twice, blue eyes lighting up as she smiled wide and sudden.

“I was thinking...maybe we’d go to some really seedy gay bar, get super fucked up--”

Vilde’s eyes were huge, kinda stuttering a step and Isak threw back his head, curls tumbling as
laughed, tipping into her shoulder gently.

“I haven’t!” Her eyebrows were knit all concerned, ever careful not to step on toes like something
Isak was offering would somehow be an inconvenience to him and wow, he needed to go out of his
way to spend time with her more. “Would you want to?”

“Ja.” He shrugged nonchalantly and she smiled at their shoes. “I mean, if I go with Even he’s gonna
spend the whole time ranting about the cinematography or some shit, so it’d be really nice to just go
see it with a friend instead.”

“I’d like that,” she offered and Isak nodded.

“Good. I’ll even buy the popcorn.”
“I don’t eat--”

“What? Everyone eats popcorn.”

“It’s not healthy--”

“I’ll even buy the popcorn,” he repeated and Vilde lifted her shoulders, sucking in a breath before she dropped them and exhaled all at once.

“Okay. I will eat the popcorn, but only so it doesn’t go to waste.”

She pinned him with a look and Isak smiled knowingly, tipping his head at her and falling into this nice silence that was getting easier and smoother between them every time it fell.

Despite the fact that it lasted about three and a half seconds.

“Oh, but did you hear, apparently last Saturday--”

Isak smiled all the way to his next class.

Tirsdag, 22:53
28.03.17

They fell asleep in Even’s bunk bed again, actual sheets and blankets pulled up over them both and Isak had never been warmer in just boxers, fluffy pillow under his head and Even’s body heated against his.

He shifted a little in his sleep, inhaling shallow and settling in deeper, one leg hitched up with his knee on the bed, keeping him tipped and balanced the way he slept when he was alone. Only he wasn’t, Even was wrapped around him, nose in his curls and arm over his ribs, hand fit around the curve of where Isak’s ass met his upper thigh, cupping him warm and close.

They both slept the night through, ten hours of it until the sunlight was streaming and school alarms were blaring in the morning but for some really strange of course impossible to interpret reason,

When Isak woke up Wednesday morning he...wasn’t still tired?

He woke up and he didn’t feel like stabbing everything or burying his head under the pillow, he glanced over his shoulder with a warm smile on his face and a hand on his thigh and wondered distantly if this is what morning people felt like every day.

If they did?

...maybe he should become a morning person or something.

Torsdag, 16:31
30.03.17
Yo dude so I've been thinking about the quick flipping montage at the two minute mark, what if you found some way to incorporate the hands into that? That would be hella cool

Ja, that sounds like a great idea. Do you think it'll fit the theme tho?

Y do u have ur boyfriend's phone i need to talk to him not you

How did you know it was me??

?? how long have we been friends

Too long apparently

Fuck off go get Even this is an important artistic moment

Tell me what his film's about

No fucking way go get your boyfriend

You're supposed to be my friend first!!

I am! Go get Even! Stop
“You know what I just don’t get?” He lifted a cucumber slice off one eye, peering at the girl on the
pillow beside him. And the girl beside her.

“Hva? Lie back down, you’re gonna make the face mask drip.”

“Okay okay.”

“What don’t you get?”

“Just like...why in hell Isak’s into me.”

“...what?” Three voices all chimed at the same time, at least two girls sitting up with it. Even lifted the cucumbers off his eyes again, giving them all a face.

“I mean he’s like. The prettiest boy I’ve ever seen, what the fuck does he see in me.”

“You’re pretty damn pretty too,” Eva pointed out, reaching over to turn down the shitty chick flick a few volume notches.

“Oh, takk. But like…why.”

“Why does anyone fall in love?” Sana sighed.

“Hormones,” Eva offered.

“Nei,” Vilde scoffed, shaking her head at them and making a face when she had to smooth her hair out of the way of her face mask. “I think maybe it’s the stars.”

A few of them aww’d and everyone lay back down on their pillows on Eva’s living room floor.

The movie was playing in the background, although Chris was the only one paying any attention, she kept elbowing the rest of them and pointing out parts but Even hadn’t caught much of anything but that there was an uptight ballerina and a really angsty violinist with a tragic past.

He was a little busy trying not to think about Isak, which only made him think about Isak even more and well. Here he was.

“I wonder what the stars say about us,” he offered quietly for the ceiling, thinking of constellations and parallel universes and destiny and.

“Well let’s look it up.” Noora plopped down between him and Eva, unsettling both of their pillows and making them both sit up too. “You’re Aquarius and...when’s Isak’s birthday?”

“June 21,” Sana said before Even or Eva could answer. They both swiveled to look at her. Two hands went up in the sky. “What?”

Noora typed something into her phone, then she was pulling up some astrology website and.

“Alright, Gemini and Aquarius...oh my god. Oh my god you guys are so compatible.”

“Wait, really?” Even scooted over closer and Noora waved a hand at his pillow.

“Ja, ja, lay back down, I’ll read it. ‘Gemini and Aquarius...sexual and intimacy compatibility.’”

“Oh my,” Chris offered from her spot on the floor.

“There’s other categories on here too, that’s just the first one.”
“Of course it is.” Even settled back in, putting both the cucumbers over his eyes again. “Everyone wants to hear about our sex life.”

“You’re the only two with a regular sex life,” Vilde’s voice piped up and Even lifted a hand to wave in her direction.


Turned out the stars were...strangely accurate about a lot of things? And that at least the astrology signs wanted them together, which didn’t matter but at the same time.

It was nice to know the lights in the sky matched the lights in those beautiful green eyes.

By the time they finished looking up everyone’s star signs and compatibilities their face masks had dried enough to wash off. They all piled into the bathroom at once, which was super duper not efficient no matter how many washcloths there were. Even may or may not have intentionally splashed Sana with two handfuls of water from the sink but she most definitely wrapped his face up in a towel in revenge.

Once he tapered down laughing enough he was holding it out to the girls, waving a hand at the damp edges of his hair,

“Somebody do the fancy twirl thing with the towel.”

Vilde did it for him, complaining the whole time that there was no point if there wasn’t hair twisted inside it.

“Wait, that’s what it’s for?”

“Ja! That’s what it’s for! The hell do they teach you boys?”

“...nothing?”

Then they were all wrapped up in fluffy robes and arguing over the ice cream pints in the freezer before they settled on two flavors and six spoons, sitting in a circle on the living room floor passing them both around.

They all watched the dance finale of Chris’s movie, which was completely angsty and dramatic but also kinda great enough they were all cheering and gasping and patting each other’s arms at the cool parts.

“I wish I could dance like that.”

“I don’t think I know anybody in real life that can move their body like that.”

“I beg to differ,” Even put a hand over his chest. “I can definitely move my body like that. Just...not for dancing.”

He shot his eyebrows up all suggestive and the girls burst into another round of giggles, tipping sideways over scandalous laughter while Eva shoved his shoulder.

Then Noora was waving her hands around,

“Can we paint nails now?”

Somebody cheered and somebody else popped up to run grab the polish and brushes while Vilde
brushed a stray damp curl off his forehead and patted his arm excitedly,

“Even, Sana’s really good, you should let her paint yours!”

Her hijab swung dramatically as Sana’s head whipped around, eyebrows on the ceiling. One of those, well she mentioned it now I have to do it looks and Even pulled down the side of his mouth in a yikes face.

“You can paint my toes?”

Noora came back in with all of the polish and Sana sighed, scooting closer and waving an arm at him,

“Yes, okay, sure. Pick a color. A good one.” Noora dumped a pile of blues and green at his feet, making him raise his eyebrows.

“It’s your color palette.”

“I have a...I guess I do mostly wear cool colors.”

“It’s the eyes.”

“It probably is the eyes. How’s this one?”

“Bra, but we need a second color too, for accents.”

“...okay.”

“And we can take it off after if you want.”

“Fett...how’s this one?”

And so he painted Chris’s hands, each fingernail a different color while Sana swirled deep blue with shiny silver on his toenails in the patterns of galaxies.

The rest of the girls were doing each other’s too and with all the free time to talk now, the first of the Sleepover Debates began, which Even had been pretty sure would be high school gossip that was basically the same as the boys’, although.

The first debate was a very serious one between sharp or soft cheese was better and it got heated enough they ended up making a cheese tray to compare and complain and bitch about how no, sharp cheese had no depth and what are you talking about, soft cheese has no flavor--

Then Eva shoved pepper jack in Vilde’s open protesting mouth and Vilde shoved her hard enough she dominoed Noora and Even and consequently the cheese plate, which he just managed to catch from falling right before there were squares everywhere and everyone was laughing hard enough nobody was upright anymore, with the exception of the plate which had been rescued and set on a coffee table while the rest of them couldn’t stop laughing cause Noora kept snorting everytime she laughed and Sana ended up choking and it was one of those ridiculous cycles where the laughter just spurred on more laughter until no one could breathe and everyone was grabbing their sides and wheezing.

“This is...not really what I pictured for spa night,” Even gasped, giggling again when Chris’s socked toe jabbed into his side.

“What were you picturing?”
“I don’t know, like.” Waving hands at the ceiling and rolling heads on carpet. “Talking about...boys and blowjob tips or something.”

“Well...if you’ve got blowjob tips you’re the only one with a dick,” Noora offered, mouth turned down in an exaggerated *huh* face.

Even snorted and Chris choked on another bursting laugh while Sana face palmed. They all finally tapered down from patchy giggles into silence for just a moment, which Eva of course decided to fill.

“No, really tho,” she said.

They all started laughing again, Even’s hand over his stomach, Vilde’s rolling eyes as she plopped back down to the floor with another bottle of wine.

“If we’re talking about dicks, I’m having another glass, would anyone else like one?”

“Yes please,” Even piped up, in time with Noora’s “Of course,” Eva’s, “Always,” and Chris’s “Hell yeah.”

Sana made faces at them all.

“I will go grab another glass of juice, cause knowing you, you’ll turn it into a damn drinking game.”

“Oh that sounds like so much fun. Oral sex tips drinking games.”

“To blowjobs,” Chris lifted her glass and Even clinked it, then he was holding it out in Vilde’s direction. “And going down on girls.”

“I am not toasting to that!”

“Okay okay! That’s fine! Just offering! I have tips for both. If...you ever want. I know you and Isak have your whole gay friendship thing, but I am also on the gay spectrum and I actually like girls too, so. Hit me up sometime, whenever, ja?”

Vilde was probably redder than the wine in her glass.

“Ja, okay, anyways.”

“Anyways, right. First of all, everybody knows about the empty fist trick, ja?”

They were at lunch, a full table with the girls all here today and there was some lively debate going on about the best parties of the year so far and Mahdi and Sana kept interrupting with killer one-liners to destroy both sides of the argument.

Even and Eva were arguing on the same side and kept waving their hands at each other and nearly knocking people’s drinks over and Isak spent the first ten minutes making faces at Noora across the table because they both knew their flat threw better parties than anywhere else.

But his attention kept getting taken away by the fucking vibration that wouldn’t leave him alone.
Isak took his phone out for the billionth time, making a frustrated face down at yet another notification and you know what, everyone he’d want to talk to was here right now anyways, time for airplane mode.

He finally shoved the annoying thing back in his pocket and Jonas was nudging his shoulder before he’d so much as lifted his head.

“What's up?” Dropped quiet under his breath and Isak glanced over at the dark knit Eyebrows of Concern™.

“My mom won't stop texting me,” Isak sighed quietly, picking his sandwich up again. One of Jonas’s hands twirled in the air.

“About what?”

“Mostly religious shit.” Speaking the rest around the bite in his mouth. “The part that’s coherent anyways.”

The conversation at the table was too engaged for anyone to be paying attention to them, all wide gestures and talking over each other while Jonas and Isak turned to each other, quiet and private and away.

“...do you want me to talk to her?”

“Huh? Nei. I'm just gonna ignore it like I always do. It's just. It's not usually this fucking often, jeez.”

“Hmm.”

“Ja I...don’t really know what’s up.”

“Do you think there’s something wrong?”

“When is there ever not something wrong?” Isak asked dully and Jonas puffed his cheeks, blowing out slow in agreement.

“Ja...”

“Anyways. Did I tell you Even walked in on Eskild last night? It was fucking hilarious, oh my god, he came like screaming back to my room in mortification—”

Tirsdag, 15:36
04.04.17
Or maybe a rule about knocking before we open doors

Even

I'm sorry!! I didn't think anyone would be in the laundry room at 21.00!!

Linn

Noora probably would

Noora

You're welcome for washing your sheets all of you

Eskild

hook up with boys behind doors that lock maybe

Eskild

You're one to talk!!

Noora

Speaking of which how come you two haven't used even's birthday gift yet

Who says we haven't??

Linn

The headphones i have to fall asleep with

Even

When you got game 😏

Noora

 руками 😆
Okay, so he maybe overdid it.

It wasn’t like he didn’t plan to talk about it eventually, he just. Figured he’d get to that point first, cross the physical bridge before the verbal one and whatnot.

Only it got to the point he was coming home an hour later every day cause he was stopping at the gym, and he’d apparently asked one time too many because tonight when he’d pounced on the beautiful boy on his bed and whispered over his mouth,
“Okay, let’s go.”

Even was leaning back and squinting at him suspiciously.

“Why?”

“It’s fun,” Isak defended and Even squinted a little harder.

“Is this some. Macho identity crisis or something?”

“What? Nei.” Isak scoffed and Even’s eyebrows shot up. “It’s not!”

“Oh, you just know I’m gonna beat you--”

Even shoved him off his lap and Isak let out a triumphant sound, snagging Even’s shoulder and tugging hard.

A hand caught his wrist and Even spun with it, shoving Isak into the mattress.

Isak hooked up a leg behind him and twisted hard, sending them both tumbling, then he was batting Even’s arms aside, grabbing hands trying to pin him to the floor but Isak managed to duck and grab him instead, pulling them around and shoving Even’s chest to the ground.

“C’mon c’mon, break free, get out.”

Even knocked his shoulders up and Isak gripped the square of his arms tighter, keeping him in place.

“C’mon, again. Mean it, don’t be afraid to hurt me.”

“What the fuck are you talking about.”

“Stop holding back! I want you to try to hurt me--”

He barely got the words out before Even was flipping them and Isak was hitting the ground hard enough it knocked the air out of him, gasping with his wrists locked under one of Even’s hands and a very upset boyfriend looking down at him with his beautiful hair disheveled in a broken movie style curl over his forehead.

“Isak, what the fuck.”

Isak was frowning and yeah his shoulder was lowkey throbbing but he needed to know how much further he needed to go.

“Okay. Okay, so I'm close,” he breathed, gasping a little as Even let go of his wrists and swung off, legs still kinda tangled in Isak’s as he shook his head twice as confused.

“Close to what?” Isak pushed himself upright, wincing a little as he rolled his shoulder and Even’s face twisted up more. “Being able to hold me still? Why in fuck--”

And then it dawned on him.

Even staggered backwards, eyes going wide, then he was shoving Isak’s legs off his, hard.

“You fucking-- you fucking did not. That is not what all this has been about.”
Isak furrowed his eyebrows high, rubbing his arm through the throb.

“What?”

Even was staring at him and Isak cocked his head, repeating the question silently. Even’s mouth opened and it took him a second before the words followed, and then they followed.

“You're trying to train so you can interfere the next time I'm manic.”

It lowkey hit him in the chest and Isak kinda froze, eyes flashing and Even’s jaw dropped open.

“You ARE.”

“There’s eventually gonna be a time when your dad isn't around and--”

“And what, that's your responsibility!??!!? Are you fucking kidding me???”

“I have a right to want to be able to defend myself,” he tried and it was so fucking hollow Even scoffed, high pitched and wound up and scooting incredulously away as Isak reached for him.

“This isn't about self defense, don't fucking lie to me.”

“Okay! I have a right to want to be there for you.”

“How is training to subdue me being there for me??”

“Even, I'm in this for the long haul, I don't get how you don't fucking get that! When you're twenty-five and strong and we're off in Køben or something I'm not gonna be able to just call up your dad, why in fuck shouldn't I be strong enough to handle you on my own?”

“Because that's not your fucking job!!”

“It is!! You are the love of my life, I want to be able to do this for you, I don't wanna be fucking helpless like last time. If I can physically handle you then I can stop all the bad shit from happening to you when you don't have control anymore! Would you rather the police had that control or me; the man who loves you?”

Even was just staring at him. It was a fair argument, he knew that, Isak could fucking see it on him but it didn’t matter how fair it was, Even was fucking pissed.

What he didn’t see coming though, was Even shoving to his feet, getting up and grabbing his backpack and storming for the door.

Isak popped up so fast his head spun a little, catching the doorframe right after it swung open fast and hard, then he was following pissed and beautiful into the hallway.

“Even. Don't do this, c’mon.”

“Don't do this???” He spun right around, in their hallway as warm precious familiar hands shoved Isak’s chest and sent him stumbling back a step and a half. “How about you don't do this, Isak?”

Even’s eyes were on fire, not the good kind as he stood his ground and stared down at him and Isak stood his ground right back, lifting his chin up and dropping his voice as serious as he had it.

“I'm not gonna apologize for caring about you.”
“Caring about me is talking about this shit with me!!!” He threw up a hand and he was already storming off, messenger bag swinging as he rounded the corner into the kitchen, still shouting at Isak over his shoulder. “Not going behind my back so you can fucking control me!! Fuck off!”

“Even, c’mon. Even! You’re being a fucking drama queen.”

“That’s rich, coming from you,” Even shot back, bitter and nasty as he crammed his foot into a boot at the door. Isak blinked twice, jaw clicking as he watched the boy shouldering into his jacket.

“You’re really just gonna leave?”

“Yes, I’m really just gonna leave.”

“What happened to communication and talking about things?” Isak twisted bitter with it, arms crossing over his chest and Even froze, head lifting to snap their gazes together again.

“Are you fucking kidding me???? You’re the one who fucked that up,” paused to point an accusing finger, “--not me.”

The water was boiling and he couldn’t unstick his feet from the floor, then Even was spinning away from him, handle swinging open.

“Have a great rest of your fucking night, Isak.”

The door slammed behind him.

Isak made a pent-up sound of frustration and stepped forward to lock it behind him. The sound clicked loud and he hung his head with it. Fuck.

When he turned around Eskild was standing in the doorway from the kitchen, wide-eyed and kinda in shock.

“Did you two just fight?”

“No, we usually say goodbye like that,” Isak snapped, pure sassy and petty bitch as he shouldered past his nosy-ass flatmate. “Yes, we just fought.”

Eskild spun with the knock to his shoulder, following Isak through the kitchen and into the hallway.

“What in fuck’s name about?”

“Even’s being a little bitch,” he replied over his shoulder and Eskild paused in the hallway, crinkling up confused.

“…okay??”

“That’s the end of it. Goodnight.” Isak’s bedroom door slammed shut.

Eskild just stood there for a moment.

“…what the Fuck.”

Torsdag, 12:09
06.04.17
Isak was on his way to the lunchroom, gearing himself to see his petty ass boyfriend when his pocket vibrated, incoming text with Even’s name. Isak paused in the middle of the hallway, making the first years walk around him as he opened it.

•
Working on my project during lunch. Tell the boys hi for me.
•

What kinda passive aggressive shit--

Isak made a lot of frustrated noises and fucking went to lunch without him.

He maybe lowkey slammed his backpack down and scowled as he threw his sandwich onto the table and three pairs of wide eyes were staring at him hella concerned before he managed a word.

“...what's up with you,” Magnus finally asked. Isak glanced up and Jonas’s hand was in the air, eyebrows furrowed, looking at him all what the fuck man, which Mahdi’s face was also mirroring.

Isak leaned back in his chair and scowled a little more.

“Even.”

“Where is he?”

“We're fighting, he's not coming,” Isak told them, scooping his sandwich up to take a bite of it and chew bitterly.

Jonas shook his head like he was recalibrating, curls waving as dark eyebrows knit.

“Woah, like. Actually fighting?”


“Over what??” Mahdi threw up a hand, mouth open in shock and Isak glared down at the table.

“He's being fucking impossible. I don't wanna talk about it.”

They all exchanged looks, trepidatious and confused as hell, but then Magnus was throwing up his shoulders and a hand.

“Okay…”

And they all dropped it, conversation shifting to some party last weekend while Isak sat there and fumed because it wasn’t fucking control, he had a fucking right to look out for his fucking boyfriend and

They all dropped it until math, anyways, because the second Isak sat down in his chair Jonas was turning to him all the way and putting an elbow on the table.

“Okay, it's spill time, go.”

“Fuck off.” Isak told him, opening up his notes and Jonas furrowed, shaking his head again.

“No, you fuck off.” All incredulous and best friend-y and caring and everything he didn’t really need
right now. “What are you and Even fighting about?”

“I don't have to tell you,” Isak bitched, flipping through pages he wasn’t even seeing.

But Jonas kept going anyways, all signature I Know How To Deal With You that was just pissing him off more.

“Is it a sexual thing, is that why you're being a dick about it?”

“Nei. Nei it's. Ugh.” Isak fluttered his eyelashes in annoyance and rolled his head to the side, looking at Jonas impatiently. “Remember during his manic episode how Bjørn came in and like. Subdued him I guess?”

“Ja, like pinned him physically and hauled his ass out of the room, ja I remember that.”

Isak tipped his head to the side, furrowed and grumpy and annoyed at how fucking stupid this all was.

“So I've been going to the gym and building up dexterity--”

“Oh you fucking didn't,” Jonas interrupted, slow and disbelieving and Isak spun in his chair, throwing up a hand, head shaking with it.

“What???”

“Isak, you have to talk to him about shit like that before you just train yourself into subduing your boyfriend!!”

“Fuck! You too? I have a right--”

“It's his body! It's his rights what the fuck are you talking about you have a right!!!”

Jonas was all wide and open mouthed and Isak breathed in hard through his nose, making himself pause before he just started yelling back in the middle of math class. To be fair they had another four minutes until class started and basically no one was in here but the minute he started yelling, Jonas was gonna win, he always fucking did and Isak was not gonna let that happen because he was right about this.

“I'm the other half of this relationship,” he started, level and rational and

“It's His. Body,” Jonas repeated, shutting him right the fuck down and when he was looking at Isak like that Isak sure as hell felt like an idiot. It wasn’t that fucking simple.

He looked down, pursing his lips, curling his fingers tighter around his pencil.

Jonas shook his head once, hand lifting up dramatically.

“You thought it'd just be a good idea to-- Jesus fuck.”

“Listen, I wasn't thinking about it like that I just wanted to be able to protect him--”

“That's not your job!!” Jonas threw the words at him hard and Isak turned his head all the way, holding the flashing silver blue eyes and fucking nailed the seriousness into the echoing silence.

“It really. really is.”
Jonas just stared at him for a moment, how much Isak fucking meant that sinking in through the wild you’re not thinking he was attacking and the accusation faded at the edges, Isak’s gaze heavy and serious until Jonas was throwing up a hand in vague concession.

“Okay. Okay, so maybe it is.” Fuck, finally, at least Jonas could admit to that part.

Only then he was swiveling harder in his chair, still all aporetic and shaking curls.

“But you still have to get consent for things like this, Isak. How would you feel if someone got themselves physically in shape to be able to control you? Specifically just for that purpose.”

Isak flicked a dull look his way, mouth leering a little with it.

“Now you're making me sound like an asshole.”

“Because you are!!!”

Both hands tossed for the air and Isak stared at his paper, jaw clicking as everything Jonas was saying twisted its way between his ribs and sunk in.

Isak threw down his pen and leaned back in his chair, axis slamming him from the side.

The look on Even’s face.

“Fuck.”

Jonas made a disparaged little huff, confirming right back at him.

“Ja, fuck.”

“Ughhh,” Isak groaned, curling back forward to put his face in his hands. Fuck. Fucking fuck.

Then Jonas was leaning an arm on Isak’s notes and laying the bricks right back down for him.

“Okay Issy, here’s what you're gonna do. As soon as school gets out you're gonna go to the flower shop downtown and you're gonna get him a fucking meaningful ass bouquet…”

Which was how three hours later he was knocking on Even’s parents’ door with flowers in his hand and a fuckton of nerves bundled down his spine.

Then the door was swinging open and surprise, it was Liv. Of course.

Her face lit up instantly, all happy and familiar and sweet.

“Isak, hi!”

“Is Even here?” What was that, fucking...nervous, of all things, shifting his weight on the doorstep.

“Uh. Yeah, he's in his room. Are those--”

“We had a fight,” Isak offering in explanation, kinda cringing in anticipation of. Whatever that was gonna mean for the next thirty seconds and.

Liv covered her mouth with a hand.

He knew that face.
Isak dipped his head, single eyebrow arching up high as the crinkles next to her eyes confirmed it.

“...are you laughing at me???”

She couldn’t contain it anymore, the giggles burst through her fingers then she was folding a little, hand over her stomach as she started busting up.

Isak shouldered inside, right past her and closed the door behind himself, throwing the lock again. Kicked off his shoes a little violently as she laughed and laughed and he held the bouquet tight and glared at Even’s giggly bright mother.

“You're the actual worst,” he informed her.

She was like, wiping at tears.

“I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it's just so you. It's so innocent and cute you got him flowers because you guys fought--”

“Liv, contrary to popular belief, I don't need your input,” Isak told her bluntly and Liv giggled behind her hand again before she was reaching up on tiptoes to press a kiss to his cheek.

“I've missed having you around, honey. You've gotta swing by more often.”

“I will, I will,” Isak grumbled. She patted his arm and he sighed heavily, this fucking family, and kept walking past her.

“Good luck honey!!” A cheery called after him.

“Thanks mom,” he sassed back over his shoulder and she was cackling behind him again.

But he was feeling a hell of lot less nervous as he knocked on Even’s doorframe and peeked his head around the corner.

“Hello? Delivery for Mr. Bech Næsheim?”

Even looked up from his desk, hair swirled, jean jacket on his shoulders, so fucking stunning as he deflated a little and rolled tired, impatient eyes Isak’s way, a heavy sigh to accompany it.

“Isak, what do you want.”

It was so just. done and tired and honestly, he’d never been so sorry before.

Isak stepped carefully around the corner with the flowers behind his back, heart fluttering a little in his chest as he opened his mouth at the beautiful boy giving him unindulgent look.

“So I've been a dick,” he started and Even scoffed, high pitched, eyebrows popping up instantly.

“Yeah, you think?”

“And I'm really sorry,” Isak continued, and the pretty mouth pursed, unconvinced.

“Mhmm.”

“And I really really love you.” He tilted his head sincerely with that one.

Even squinted.
“And I promise I will never try to do something like that again without talking to you about it extensively first.”

“Mmm.”

“And I get why you're mad, you have every right to be mad, I fucked up, I was so into this protecting you thing I didn't think of how that might upset you.”

“Mmhmm.”

“And Jonas schooled my ass on consent issues and how it's your body.”

“Good.” Even said and Isak sighed, tongue between his lips as he squinched up a little and glanced up hopefully.

“And I...brought you flowers?”

Isak took them out from behind his back, bringing his arm around and holding the bouquet out in offering.

Even’s eyebrows shot up to his hairline, jaw dropping a little with it.

“You...you brought me flowers?”

“Please don't laugh at me, your mom already did and I'm not sure I can handle you laughing too,” Isak started and Even pushed out of his chair, cutting off the rest of the plea on his tongue.

“Oh Isak,” Even chided, pretty head tipped, a single step forward. Shoulders all soft and melted as he reached out and took them from him, looking down at the bright colors with dark lashes fanning shadows down his cheeks, lips parting in quiet awe.

“They're beautiful.”

Isak breathed out dramatically, a giant sigh of relief he let take his whole body with it.

“Okay good. Phew. Thank fuck I'm dating a romantic.”

Even huffed in a bit of a smile and lifted them up to his face, eyes closing as he breathed in the gentle sweet.

Isak tapered down a little, mouth closing as he studied the boy a few feet in front of him, his boyfriend, impossibly tall and gorgeous and charming and romantic and soft.

“There’s actually...a lot of things I should probably talk to you about,” Isak said quietly. Even didn’t look up, but he could feel him listening.

Isak tipped his head, shuffling his weight and trying not to scrunch up too much.

“And I know we said we’d talk but it just doesn’t come up ever, and I don’t know what made me think it randomly just would, when it’s not that easy, we have to make an effort, I have to make an effort, and I’m sorry I haven’t, but I want to, I want to try and to do this better and I think we can do that, if you’ll let me.”

Dark lashes fluttered and Isak took one step closer, pressing on.

“I didn’t understand at first and I lashed out at you for getting upset with me because it felt like you
didn’t want me to be part of that part of your life and I want to be part of it, Even, I do. I just want you to let me, that’s all I want.”

A moment’s pause, the room sparkling reflecting sunlight around them and Even lifted his voice, just barely, still quiet, still hushed.

“Ja?”

His cheekbones close enough to the blossoms they were reflecting gentle pinks and purples onto his skin.

“Ja, Even. Ja. Just please...let me have that.”

Eyes closing shut, tight as he breathed in deep, all of those blooms still pressed up against his nose. Tracing the skin that felt like it hadn’t been his to touch for years.

“...okay,” he whispered into the turned up faces of light. “I can give you that.”

And the exhale from Isak’s chest was enough to unsettle all of the building worried dust. Relief flowing in as the rest of it flowed out through his fingertips and his heart found its place back in his chest again.

Fighting, he fucking hated fighting, he didn’t want to ever be pissed at Even like that, he didn’t want to ever be hurt like that, to watch doors slam like that, but look at what they were fixing already, what they were going to be able to talk about now, look what they’d gotten out of it.

Even framed in flowers. It was a beautiful thing. Isak was gonna have to do this more often. For no reason though, cause flowers sans fight sounded like a much better idea.

“Hey baby?” Isak asked softly.

“Mmhm,” Even hummed, still smelling the flowers, eyes closed.

“I really love you.”

It was the sincerest thing he’d said since this damn thing started, prying open his ribs to offer up open palms, I know I don’t know how to do this yet and I’m gonna keep fucking up I know but I promise it’s for all the right reasons because I love you so fucking much I can’t think straight.

Even lifted his head, sparkly blue eyes landing on his over the top of the bouquet between them.

Okay, let’s be real, Isak had never been good at thinking straight.

“I really love you too,” Even promised and something that simple shouldn’t’ve sent chills down his spine and through his arms and down to his toes but it did and Isak was officially swept off the floor.

He lifted up on his tiptoes, tipping his chin up for a kiss. Their mouths met, pressing together, lips overlapped just slightly and it was short and sweet and it fixed everything that was wrong in his world.

Then he was taking the flowers back out of Even’s hands and setting them on the desk to wrap an arm around Even’s neck, lips parting to tilt up and really kiss him only before their mouths were sliding back together heated and real Even was pulling back to mumble,

“Wait, wait, they need to get in water first, I have to find a vase.”
“I can clip them if you like,” Liv offered cheerily as she went walking by the open doorway and Isak whipped around, eyes wide. She was already out of sight, voice lifting from the hallway. “Ev, don’t you have something to show Isak?”

“Mom!!” He shouted and Isak half spun, eyebrows up high, eyes wide, question marks all over as he looked between Even and the open doorway.

Then it kinda sunk in and his eyes went even wider as he turned for the door and lifted his voice.

“Were you listening in??” He just cursed so many times, fuck. “Liv!!”

“Not all of it,” she called back distantly and Isak’s mouth dropped open.

She was laughing from the kitchen and Isak spun back to his also wide-eyed boyfriend and reached around his light blue jean shoulders to scoop up the bouquet again.

“I'm gonna go have words with your mother.”

Isak got as far as the door before the rest of that sunk in and he put a hand on the frame, spinning on a heel to look back at his distracted, pretty boyfriend.

“...although wait, what were you gonna show me?”

“Nothing,” Even said, insisting. “Really.”

Isak narrowed his eyes suspiciously.

“It’s a drawing!” Liv shouted from the next room.

“MOM!!!”

All distress and Isak lifted the bouquet, pointing the flowers at him very seriously.

“I’m seeing it as soon as I go give these to her.”

Even shook his head, swooping swirled hair bouncing as he lifted his hands,

“I have no idea what drawing she’s--”

Conveniently that was exactly when Liv swung around the corner to poke her head in the room, nearly running into Isak in the process.

“The one you made when you were trying to break your father’s speakers listening to that song about Isak on repeat.”

“Mom,” Even said, desperate this time. Isak handed her the flowers.

“You don’t mind clipping them?”

“Not at all.” She kissed Isak’s cheek, tipping him to the side with the force of it, then she was pointing a very serious finger at Even.

“He is the sweetest, show him.”

And she swept right back out of the room, disappearing down the hallway humming something to herself and Isak spun back to sparkly blue eyes, throwing up his hands in surrender.
“I mean, she’s right.”

“You are the sweetest.” Even agreed, taking a single step closer and making Isak put his tongue between his lips to keep himself from bursting into a heart-fluttering smile. “...but I’m showing you over my dead body, so.”

“So kiss me instead?” Isak offered, cocking his head all cute.

Even smiled, growing from fond to wide and beautiful then he was stepping forward across the room and tipping his face up with careful hands on his jaw.

Isak tilted into the touch, glowing and warm and mended as his hands came up to settle on Even’s familiar waist.

Their mouths pushed together and the whole room sang as sweet as the lingering beautiful of nature’s softest colors echoing shadows bright once more.

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“I’m gathering a list of things we need to talk about soon,” Isak said the moment Even stepped inside his bedroom door, making him pause as Isak looked up, closed his textbook and sat it aside.

“...okay? Do you wanna just talk about them now?” He sat his backpack down and Isak shook his head, sliding down his propped up pillow to the mattress.

“Nei. I want to make out now, we can talk about them when you’re not dressed like a sex god.”

Even laughed, surprised and crinkling up. Then he was shouldering out of his jacket and stepping up to Isak’s bed, cocking his head down at him.

Isak tipped his head right back, holding Even’s gaze as he drew up his knees and dropped them open, lips parting with the perk of a cocky eyebrow.

As if the chills up his spine weren’t enough, now Even’s eyes were burning, raking down his body and snapping back up to the mouth Isak was biting now.

“A sex god, hm?”

It was a little breathy, a lot turned on and Isak nodded slow, already kinda dying.

Swoops of blonde hair styled in this fancy swirl like that first day he’d taken Isak back to his place, their eyes burning in the windowsill and Isak’s stomach twisting in his throat.

“Ja,” he breathed, the same green fire as he flicked his gaze up at the blue on above him. “Will you kiss me now?”

Even smiled, this small pretty thing, the smile of say it again and soft mornings in the kitchen fucking Christ he was beautiful. Isak made a very impatient sound and the smile widened, crinkling up by his eyes.

Then he was finally dropping to the bed, swinging a leg over Isak’s lap and taking his face with
heavy palms, kissing him right into the mattress.

Isak wrapped both arms around his neck and pressed up against the warm body, the solid touch, shifting out of homework mode into the boy who got to touch Even Bech Næsheim mode.

Fingertips curling into shoulderblades and Even smiled against his mouth and kissed and kissed him.

His hands slid up through the feathered-back strands, silk slipping through his fingers as he spread them over the back of Even’s head, held him in closer, dove up to shove their mouths together harder.

Even’s tongue slid into his mouth and Isak pushed his hips up, shoving the boy on his lap up an inch and the tongue turned into teeth nipping at his bottom lip, the hands on his jaw sliding up to tug at the long curls instead.

A muffled sound as Isak rolled his hips up again, raking his fingers down Even’s spine to sink into his ass, kissing back more urgently until the mouth on his was pulling away with a little gasp and a huffing smile.

“Mmm, somebody’s eager,” Even teased and Isak threw up his hands, returning them right back to Even’s ass afterwards.

“Sorry, somebody happens to be really hot.”

“I think that somebody’s you,” Even murmured against his mouth, then they were kissing again, all of these beautiful muffled little sounds as his fingers sunk deeper and squeezed.

Hips rolling up against his stomach and Isak groaned, will kinda slipping out the window. Both arms wrapping tight around Even’s waist and dragging him in hard, their chests bumping and hands tight on ribs as Even giggled into his mouth.

“Oh baby,” a teasing whisper that Isak had every right to pull back and make an indignant sound at.

“Like you don’t want me at least that much.”

It had the expected effect of Even’s eyebrows shooting up, then the heavy hands in his hair were around his waist instead, ankle hooking around the back of his thigh to flip them over, land Isak on his lap while two hands pushed up his spine rough enough his shirt came up with them and it was Isak’s turn to smile into the kiss, using the momentum to flip them over again.

Even didn’t seem to mind, kissing him hard into the mattress with one hand hitching Isak’s thigh up over his hip, grinding in close and possessive.

Isak was bursting, kissing back warm and tingling while Even’s thumb ran back and forth over the material of his jeans, kissing him more.

They were both smiling ridiculously when they pulled back for gasps of oxygen, gazes flicking between mouths and shining eyes.

Even dipped in for another clinging peck, making them both a little more breathless. Curls flattening as he collapsed back to the pillow, keeping Even close with a hand on the back of his neck.

Twin gazes burning hot and crinkled sweet, all that happy as he ran a thumb over smooth skin his to touch.
Isak popped open his mouth and blue flicked down to his lips, then he was tipping his head on the pillow to ask up all cute and innocent.

“Hey, what’s your favorite sex position?”

Even’s eyebrows shot up so high so fast Isak was giggling again.


“What do mean you don’t know, don’t you have a favorite?” He tilted his head harder, crinkling up his nose a little and Even smiled wide and beautiful.

“It sounds like you do, what’s yours?”

Isak pushed Even off his side, swinging a leg over to straddle him and pull him upright to sit, taking that beautiful jawline in his hands to kiss him, grinding down in his lap.

The mouth under his smiled wider, two arms wrapping comfortably around Isak’s waist, familiar and close and warm. Arms over Even’s shoulders, wrapped lazy around his neck they kissed and kissed some more until Isak was breaking off into tiny quick ones all over Even’s pretty face, making him crinkle up and pull back, all bursting sunshine and bright sparkling eyes.

“I fucking knew it, you always get so excited.”

Isak was rolling his eyes but Even leaned back into the nuzzle their noses back and forth, tingling enough down his spine to make his toes curl.

So Isak was left diving in for another kiss, their foreheads falling together on the pull away.

Even’s eyes were all over him, watching him intent and warm and Isak parted his lips again, looking down instead of to the captivating blue.

“Mm. I like it cause we're close and...deep.” He could feel his cheeks heat up as he said it, barely above a whisper, lifting to glance up at Even’s amused patient pretty face before he was looking down again, fingers tapping over a collarbone exposed by the tug of Isak’s thumb on the gray tshirt. “--and I can kiss you.”

“And you're super pretty perched in my lap like this,” Even offered and Isak blushed deeper, leaning in to kiss him quick and shut him up. Yeah, okay, that was also another reason why he liked it, fine.

Rough thumbs rubbing up and down his hips while they mouthed at each other, turning the heat in Isak’s cheeks to heat in his chest, stomach, sinking lower in time with the hands on his hips, down down down,

before Even was breaking off, hands curving back up to his waist as he held Isak still and asked low, “Do you like it better when I’ve got control here or you do?”

“Oh you, definitely,” Isak scoffed and Even laughed, bright and surprised as he dipped in to kiss him short and sweet, thumb rubbing over his cheek while Isak rattled off. “I've accepted I'm a needy bitch. Although there was that one time you clapped your hand over my mouth and told me to ride, that was so fucking hot Jesus Christ I thought I was gonna die.”

The thumb on his cheek stilled.

“That’s when I was...” Even tapered off, sparkle fading as he looked at him.
“When you were manic, yeah.”

“Isak I. I'm really sorry, I--”

“Even you don't get to apologize for the sex we have when you're manic. That's not fair to me, I had a wonderful week in bed and there wasn't a thing we did I didn't consent to. That you didn't check consent for like thirty fucking times.”

One eyebrow lifting dully and Isak made a cross face at him.

“Okay at least twice, but you do, even when you're manic you always make sure it's okay and Even, I trust you. I know if I ever wanted you to stop you would.”

“You know that, huh.”

“I do,” Isak repeated, searching the turmoil behind the sharp skies in those eyes. “And maybe you're scared one day you won't but baby, it's. It's never been like that and there's a pretty decent chance it never will, okay? I don't think we'd be having sex close enough to a peak for you to be that out of control anyways.”

He said it as sincere as possible and they’d agreed to talk about things, to work through things and the way Even was looking at him? Even was listening.

“If you're sure,” he said slowly and Isak nodded, rolling his lips in over his tongue and looking at him serious, hovering a moment with his tongue trapped between his lips.

“I am.”

The words sunk in, and he could physically watch the gears turn behind the dark. Even feeling how much he meant it. Hair bouncing as he nodded to himself, wrestled and done.

“Okay.”

Isak ran a hand through the beautiful strands, circling around his ear and down to his neck, resting as he tipped his head dramatically, leaning back with it.

“But anyways. I told you my favorite position, now you have to tell me yours.”

“Anything where your curls bounce.”

Isak laughed, shaking his head a little as two hands shoved up in his hair to prove his point.

“That's like. Any position you fuck me hard enough.”

“Exactly,” Even said and Isak swatted his arm.

“C’mon that's not fair, you have to have one you like more.”

He cocked up an eyebrow and Even scooped him up, balance tipping as careful hands laid him out on the bed, spine against the mattress. Blue eyes searching all over his face, Even slid a hand over his forehead, cupping his curls off his forehead to look down at him fond.

“I really like this one.”

“Missionary?”
“Yeah, as lame as it sounds I like when I get to see your face and I like this cause I can kiss you the whole time.” A thumb over his bottom lip, tracing, pushing. “...and it's still deep enough your mouth keeps dropping open.”

Eyebrows shot up all suggestive and Isak wrapped a hand around the back of his neck, reaching up to kiss him.

Warm hands slid up his body, angling his ribs to the side, tugging him down the bed a little,

“--and I can move you how I like,” Even continued, mumbling over his mouth. Isak kissed him again.

“Mmm.”

“And you look fucking beautiful lying here on the sheets.”

A thumb over his cheekbone and Isak squinted, falling back to the pillow and attempting to look judgy through how much he was twinkling.

“Okay, so you're boring and you like missionary, I see how it is.”

“I like this one too,” Even offered, then he was pulling up Isak's legs and spreading them wide, angling his hips down against him while Isak's mouth dropped open.

They still had on all their clothes but he could feel Even against him through his sweats and Isak was suddenly really really turned on.

“Fuck,” he whispered, eyes wide and chest shaking a little. Even slid a hand up the inside of his thigh.

“Yeah, baby?”

His touch was dangerously close and warm and Isak was nodding kinda wildly, mouth sealed shut so he didn’t moan.

“Mmhm.”

“So I'm guessing you're not bored now,” Even teased, all sparkly with crinkles by his eyes, the most beautiful thing he’d ever seen it wasn’t his fault his mouth just popped open, barely inhaling before the overflow, lips spilling under burning green.

“I wasn't bored before, missionary is fucking beautiful and you. You're fucking beautiful and the way you fuck me makes me feel beautiful--” Isak inhaled sharp, cutting himself off with the tingles up his spine and Even’s eyebrows were sky high, his fingers sunk in hard against Isak’s thigh.

Their gazes locked and heavy, all that intense making his chest compress and Even’s mouth opened, stealing Isak’s eyes with it, another beat of heat--

“I also really like that you turn into a poet when your legs are spread.”

The indignant sound was so high pitched and fussy Even was laughing before his dropped open mouth could protest.

“ Fucking shut up you're impossible I'm just really turned on right now.”

Laughter tapering down into a smile, fingers drawing back to graze up his inner thigh a little higher,
all soft and curious.

“Ja?”

“Uh, ja!”

“You want me to maybe...do something about that?”

“Uh, ja??”

That time the bursting laughter was so starry and pretty that Isak’s mouth was betraying him up in a smile, wide and still indignant dammit while the boy above him beamed down at him and dropped a kiss to the inside of his knee.

“Okay, okay, how do you want it?”

“Something new and crazy,” Isak told him and the eyebrows shot back up again.

“Yeah? Okay. I've maybe got something in mind but. We’ll have to be careful.”

“I can be careful.”

“Mmhm.”

“I can be! Try me.”

“Oh, I'd like to,” Even murmured back, leaning up over him and crawling the sun up his chest with it. The basking rays over every inch of his face, settling on his lips to pry them apart with just those eyes.

Parted, dropped, waiting, please, a thumb rubbing over his bottom lip once. Biceps lowering closer and closer until Isak couldn't stand it anymore.

He grabbed the back of Even’s neck and hauled their mouths together, kissing him hard.

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Even pushed back against his mouth hard enough to slam him into the mattress. Isak keened up against the heat, knees skirting up Even’s ribs, holding his face close to kiss him deeper, warmer.

They didn’t get to make out long before Even was pulling back and pulling him up with it.

“Mmm okay, knees on the bed. I’m gonna show you how it goes first, yeah?”

“Ja,” Isak swallowed, heart still in his throat as he rolled over to push up on his hands and knees.

“No, just knees,” corrected the low voice from behind him. “Kneel.”

“Fuck,” Isak managed, shoving upright, a hand wrapping around his hip with a huff.

“Sorry babe, it’s got nothing to do with blowjobs.”

“Oh Okay then, wha--”

And Even kneeled behind him, knees on either side of his and heat pressed up against his ass, nearly tipping him off balance with it.
The gasp left him stumbling for some kind of hold but Even beat him to it, one hand circling slow around Isak’s throat and the other closing in a fist over his curls.

A moan caught in his throat with the oxygen he couldn’t get into his lungs, hand on his throat sliding up just enough to press his thumb into Isak’s bottom lip again, holding him that dirty desperate way he did when he was sinking deep into Isak’s body and fuck, fuck.

If the shudders going down his spine weren’t enough, Isak was just about to gasp something vaguely coherent along the lines of please fuck me right now when the grip in his curls tugged tight, pulled his head back slow, twisting all of the shivers sharp, bright, gaping.

Fisted curls dragged back far enough Even danced parted lips up his neck, low breathy heat over his ear,

“Yeah?” He whispered, fingers squeezing around Isak’s throat a little and Isak’s eyes were shut tight, mouth dropped open, so hard it hurt.

“Yeah,” he whimpered back and Even’s hand stroked down his neck, possessive. It sent nine thousand more chills down his spine, Even’s chest with it.

Fuck, fuck, fucking Christ--

Then Even was leaning back, all that support lifting away with his hips still pressed up against Isak, hard and hard enough there was a sharp crease in his lower back, ass bunched up. The hand closed in his curls tipping his head back further as he shoved his hips forward once, making Isak jolt with it.

“F-fuck, Even, please,” he begged.

That was all it took before swift hands reached around to undo his jeans button, breathing hard over the sound of the zipper then he was yanking Isak’s jeans down, briefs with them.

Isak was already pulling his shirt off over his head, spinning as Even dumped him onto his side, wrestling clothes off over his ankles before Even was stripping free of his own, hopping off the bed to kick aside jeans boxers socks shirt, grab lube and a condom.

“Fuck, we keep forgetting to get tested.” Isak rolled over pouting and Even gave him a sympathetic look through all the heat.

“One of these days one of us will remember when we’re not actually about to have sex and we’ll go then, okay?”

“Yeah yeah, I know. Just. Get inside me asap okay I’m...fuck.”

Even was nodding and breathing heavy, barely back on the bed again before he was sliding a slicked up finger all the way inside him

“FUCK.”

“Can you take it a little faster than usual,” Even breathed and Isak nodded, mouth open.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m great, let’s go.”

And he was already working a second one in. It only burned for a few seconds before he was rubbing up Isak’s insides and everything was so far from burning. Two, then three, barely time to catch his lungs between his ribs,
He was on his hands and knees with Even’s hand braced on his spine, head spinning as careful fingers triple checked, two times too many for the twist in his stomach and Isak pushed back against Even’s hand, begging please,

“C’mon, c’mon,”

Then the words were gone, shoved right out of his body with Even’s cock shoving inside, the burn so good Isak didn’t even try to breathe.

The moment hips knocked against him Even was pulling Isak’s shoulder, dragging him back upright, spine knocking flush to Even’s chest.

“Ah, fuck,” he managed, eyes rolling back in his head with the heated, sucking kiss right behind his ear. “F-faen--”

A hand on the top of his ass, fingers splayed over his hipbone as Even guided out slow, pushing back inside with enough force it nearly sent Isak face first onto the bed.

“Jesus.” He shot a hand behind him, grabbing Even’s thigh for balance, heart pounding beneath the hand bracing his chest now.

“You good?” Even breathed, mouth warm on his ear.

He would open his mouth to reply but Even was close and husky and deep and breathing on his skin, nothing came out but a moan as the shiver ran down his spine, hard enough it shook Even’s chest with it.

“Isak, baby?”

“Mm mmmh mhm I’m good I’m. Wow, fuck.”

“Don’t fall,” Even murmured against his skin, lifting his bicep to drape Isak’s arm behind him, wrapped around Even’s neck for balance. Isak tipped up, mouth open for a kiss. Even’s lips pressed over his, tongue sliding into his mouth in perfect time with the hips sliding flush with his ass again.

Fuuck. Mouth dropped open wider over another thrust, this slow careful tempo that was driving deep enough inside it was wrecking his body through shudders with every push.

And Even just kept kissing him, warm and smooth and fond. The free hand that wasn’t digging into the top of his ass was skirting light fingertips down Isak’s arm, up the sensitive inner skin and right back down, like that stupid move in that movie about dirty dancing they watched last weekend. Another fond trace, pulling mouth pressing against the little smile because of course, shoving together like this Even found some way to turn wild heat into something sweet.

Slide inside and inside with Isak’s fingers curling against skin, inhales stuttering against Even’s lips and the fingertips tracing his arm only got fonder with every thrust deeper.

“Ah-hah. Isn’t this…” Isak broke off exhaling, eyes closed and mouth still open as he pressed back against the pounding heart between his shoulderblades, the pounding heat against his ass. “Isn’t this supposed to be like. Not all soft?”

Even smiled against his temple, a delicate kiss to his cheekbone, another three tipping his head with the press of his nose.

“It’s you. The softest, sweetest boy I know.”
The hand on his ass slid down his flank, rubbing up and down affectionately as Even fucked inside him slow and gentle, holding carefully, barely strong enough to threaten his balance.

Shifting butterflies into his stomach with the coiled heat. And proving Isak’s point exactly.

It was fucking sweet, it was, Even was, but he wanted, he wanted...

“C’mon,” he tried, fingers tightening as he dug his head back against Even’s collarbone, rolling to tip his nose up against that beautiful jaw, whisper low and dirty as he knew how, “...give it to me rough.”

The hand stroking down his arm paused, heartbeat strong against his spine. Isak panted softly against Even’s jaw and fingernails sunk in against the vulnerable skin under his arm.

“You sure?”

A swallow and tight nod, quiet moan caught in the exhale as Even drove inside him again.

“Ja, ja I trust you.”

“You trust me?” A teasing nip against his ear with another deep slide inside and Isak moaned, rubbing back against him boldly.

“Ja, baby c’mon. Give it to me rough.”

He was already breathing heavy at the touch: shifting from his arm, chest, up over his neck. Then Even’s entire hand was wrapping around his throat, light, questions, asking.

Isak closed his eyes and nodded and nodded, tendons shifting under Even’s touch with an urgent, “God, ja...”

Fingertips dug into his skin and he rolled Isak’s hips forward, curving his spine off Even’s chest, forcefully tipping his head up with the hand high on his throat, eyes locked for a single beat before their bodies rolled deeper and Even’s mouth landed down on his, tongue shoving between his teeth.

He whimpered helplessly into Even’s mouth, making all these pitiful helpless little sounds that got lapped up and pressed into and twisted gorgeous and.

Even was fucking him with these rapid deep jolts inside, Isak’s spine arched, head tipped back while the unrelenting tongue drove in time, every part of his body lighting up and burning bright all at once. One hand cupping the inner crease of Isak’s thigh to hold him steady through the thrusts that were sending stars to settle in his stomach.

The knock of their bodies together was fast and hard enough every one threatened to shove him off balance. Even moaned against his mouth while Isak held on tighter, right on the edge of falling with one hand clasped shakily over Even’s and the other reached back to cup the back of his thigh, right under his ass to keep them together and together and together--

Even’s other hand kept painting and moving Isak’s neck, guiding his head back further, sliding over his adam’s apple, riding up to squeeze over his throat. Making gasps stutter breathlessly, choked over Even’s tongue.

Isak licked up desperately and Even fucked him closer tighter faster, everything shaking with it, holding Isak tight while he crumbled to pieces.
It was so much, Even was everywhere except in front of him, his chest exposed with the rest of him covered and curling deeper, all of the options out but surrender.

Completely gone while Even held his throat and held his heart and held his body hard enough he could taste the danger on his tongue, the danger sprinkled with promises, we have to be careful, I’ll take care of--

The hand around his throat disappeared and he gasped loud enough Even was murmuring again, “You alright?”

And Isak nodded wildly, head spinning and throat too dry to speak, gasping anyways.

“Harder, harder--”

His grip snapped free with the shove, an arm barring over his shoulders, tumbling off Even’s chest for the bed. He barely caught himself in time, splayed fingers on the mattress and a fist in his curls, keeping his head tipped up and his mouth dropped open while Even looked down at their bodies and drove in and in and in and in and

Eyes closed, eyelids too bright to be in the dark, tugging grip in blonde sending waves and waves of shivers down his curved spine. Even was thrusting into him hard enough Isak’s ass bounced with every shove, hovering on the edge of too much with the broken sounds lodged in his throat.

A stuttering cry broke free with the smack of a hand to his ass, reverberating harder than the bounce of the hips pounding into him and Isak gasped patchily, “E-Even—”

“You gonna come for me?” Even asked, low and sweet, making him shudder that much more, tumbling a dozen little cries past his lips. Then the hand on his thigh was sliding down between his legs and wrapping around his cock, sliding up and down fast as the pushes into his body and Isak’s entire body was shaking.

“Fuck fuck fuck—”

“Okay hold on, baby,” a softened voice breathed behind him, arm lifting off his shoulders. Only for a hand to press between his shoulderblades and shove him down. A strong hand catching one of his thighs in the push and swiveling him hard, hips pulled all the way around as his spine crashed into the mattress and Even was over the top of him again, fucking inside him deep, gazes locked.

Isak couldn’t stop gasping, hands wrapping around Even’s neck, more more more please more, I need you, I need more--

Even held him steady with one hand and reached up to slide his thumb over Isak’s dropped open mouth, fingers curling against his jaw hard enough to bruise.

“Right here, baby, right here—”

“Oh Even, Even, faen.” The thumb over his bottom lip rolled it out, coming away wet. Isak moaned low, shoving his hips down against the next thrust.

The touch shifted instantly, rough hand grabbing the back of his neck, pulling him an inch off the bed for Even to crash their mouths together. The kiss was hot and desperate and breathless, both their lips trembling when they broke for oxygen, foreheads pressed together again, slipped right into the
place they belonged.

How was it that this, Even over the top of him was somehow the most heated, intimate, beautiful, comfortable, safe he’d felt all afternoon, and he’d never been closer to the edge or to that boy than he was in this minute, right now, Even right here over him when the world was spinning like this and his head was underwater like this and that beautiful mouth was breathing over his,

“Baby, you’re so fucking gorgeous, fuck, the things you do to me--”

If his mouth wasn’t open before. His jaw was aching from the touch and the way he couldn’t close it and the way Even kept kissing him and all of the things caught in his throat he couldn’t say, couldn’t scream but the layers of night sky wrapped around his chest were keeping all that fire burning so damn bright inside he’d burst into the stars if Even shoved him any higher and that’s exactly what the beautiful boy did.

Teeth dragging off his lower lip, hand around his throat, driving up into his body hard as the blue eyes flashed dark and intense over his, parted words around wasted breath,

“C’mon, sweetheart. Come for me.”

It didn’t take anything else, there was already so much, too much, Isak was overflowing and bursting and shouting loud enough the hand over his throat hopped to his lips, clapping over his mouth hard.

The white clouds streamed bright enough his eyes fell shut against them and Even’s hands hips stuttered caught pounded drew caught caught caught let him fall.

***

There was a deep enough curve in his lower back to brace an arm beneath him. Swept off the sheets, the take over, holding Isak steady while the unsteady took him right down with him.

Even couldn’t tear his eyes away from the knitted gasps, the creeping peace smoothing out fragile skin slow. He didn’t miss a moment, couldn’t miss a moment, breathing just as hard as the flushed chest beneath him while he watched and held and held on.

Vulnerable, the open mouth and clutching fingers. Vulnerable, Isak trusted him with this and that alone was powerful enough Even’s heart kept seizing in his chest.

He was so beautiful, he was so fucking ethereally beautiful it hurt, holding him here like this hurt, that twisting warning of the sublime.

The light of the setting sun reflected off the ocean with nothing but colors on waves and the endless line of the horizon, so beautiful it takes your breath away.

His.

“Are you okay?” Even asked, winded, heart pounding over his tongue, under the sweat of his palm. Reading the waves crashing over the boy in his arms.

“Ja,” Isak breathed back. Eyes closed, awed.

Even opened his mouth to ask are you sure, always are you sure but maybe that wasn’t about Isak, maybe he was starting to get that was about him, because from the way Isak had said that, the way he’d breathed yes, the way his fingers were curled over Even’s hip, now.
He was sure, and Even was sure of that.

Isak...was okay. He meant it, Even could feel it.

All he had to do was quiet the worrying, stop and look at Isak instead. It was pretty simple, actually.

So he settled down at Isak’s side, stroking a hand through the damp, disheveled curls.

Are you okay? Yes.

“Good,” Even whispered, corner of his mouth lifted in a smile he meant too.

Isak opened his eyes.

Those eyes were galaxies, stars and shine and dark and swirling dragging gravity, Even never stood a fucking chance.

God, let him be the fool, he would take whatever heartbreak came from this if he got to look into those beautiful eyes for one day longer.

His thumb rubbing over Isak’s temple, watching the flickers across his face as the left corner of his mouth twitched up a little, one dimple then two, skin crinkling and glowing and eyes dark on his, deep enough he could feel it in his chest, carved down somewhere deeper than what he’d ever thought he’d have.

Isak’s mouth opened, a quiet inhaling pause, one eyebrow lifting and the beautiful expression flashing across his face while Even watched, hovering waiting for whatever would spill from the precious mouth,

“You are so fucking hot, do you know that?”

“Me?” Even teased and Isak nodded, smiling so wide and absolutely stunning.

“Jaaa,” he whispered, purpling throat bobbing once and he didn’t need anything else in the entire world.

Even smiled, easy, warm, content. Studied those green eyes for one moment longer before he caved, giving into gravity to kiss his beautiful boyfriend.

They kissed and Isak tilted his head on the pillow, pursing his lips up against Even’s, parting under pressure to pull theirs mouths together, entwined and holding as solid and sure as the hands in his bare hips.

The kiss fixed things in his bones.

When he pulled away both of their mouths were turned up, eyes soft now over the twin smiles. Even skid his fingers down Isak’s cheek, pressing fingertips into his cheekbone, beneath the sweep of it, over soft skin that led straight to that beautiful mouth.

Isak’s chin tipped up, looking down dark lashes at him, waiting for another kiss, the quiet question. It might be the only question Even would always know the answer to.

That lifted chin, waiting for his kiss and the smile was bright enough his eyes crinkled up with it, diving in slow to pucker his lips to those sweet ones. Isak smiled against his mouth, fingers sliding up into his hair as their mouths slid together, shifted to slide together again, tug apart clinging to press together one more time and.
The kiss fixed things in their souls.

All of this trust and beauty, Even didn’t know where to begin with it.

He pulled away, inhaling over a stutter then a damp kiss landed on his nose and the corners of his mouth spread wider.

Drawing back just enough to flick his eyes up from those lips to those eyes, Isak’s steady, deep gaze.

They just looked at each other, watching the stories and questions and answers play out behind their eyes. Fingers sweeping up to Even’s ribs, sweeping down to Isak’s.

Domesticity, or maybe just peace, something here between them that only blossomed deeper every moment they stayed quiet, connected through unthinking touch and gazes that spilled more than mouths ever could.

One of them opened anyways.

“I am so into you,” Isak told him quietly, serious and a little too deep, helpless, some kind of emotion tipping to the other side of this and Even raked his fingers down Isak’s ribs, waist hips flank, pulling his thigh up over Even’s side with his eyebrows up, teasing light enough to bring the light back in and.

“Mmm. Actually I think it’s me who's into you--”

“Shut up,” Isak threw his head back on a brilliant beaming laugh, temporary desperation forgotten for the shiver of their bodies pressing close again, the amused joy rippling through the gold skin, speckled shoulders.

Even watched him awed and Isak reigned in to giggles, lifting up to kiss him again, nipping at his mouth under the smile. Even kissed him back and kissed him back until they were sinking warm and comfortable into each other’s skin, Isak’s arms wrapping around his neck, secure, happy, rolling right over the top of him with it.

“Hey,” mumbled over his mouth, a quick peck before disheveled curls were bouncing with the quick lift of his head, “--you know what?”

“Mm?”

Another warm kiss and Isak propped up, hand running through his hair in a circle around his ear, all the way down to curl over his collarbone.

“It’s early enough you could sleep at your parents tonight.”

It was a simple enough offer but Even’s eyebrows shot for the ceiling, dipping his head a little at the tipped head.

“You sure? I don't have to go.”

Isak lifted a shoulder. “I don't mind. I've got enough warmth and marks on me I'll sleep just fine.”

“Hm.” Even squinted at him a little suspiciously.

“I mean, you don't have to go,” Isak corrected, rubbing a thumb over the shifting muscles in his chest.
“I don't think I want to,” Even said slowly.

“Okay,” Isak smiled. “That's totally fine with me too.”

“Good. Cause you may be content to sleep alone tonight, but not me.” There were usually a dozen and a half guards in his eyes as he ran his fingers through Isak’s curls but today they were honest, every day they were getting better and. “You're too beautiful, I wanna wake up beside you.”

“Alright,” Isak smiled wider, pushing up on Even’s chest to dip into another kiss. It was sweet enough the rest of him softened all over.

One of Isak’s arms crossed over his chest to take his shoulder, roll him over on his side as their mouths broke apart then strong arms were wrapping around his waist, kisses trailing over the back of his neck. Isak plastered to his spine, smiling into his skin, nose squished to the side as his thighs tucked up underneath Even’s.

“How’s this for not alone,” he mumbled into Even’s damp skin and Even smiled to himself, eyes falling shut as he wrapped a hand over Isak’s.

Another half dozen kisses to his bare shoulders that tingled all the way down to his curled toes and they both lay there in the warmth, letting all of the peace settle sweet.

Lørdag, 21:02
08.04.17

They’d postponed their plans to properly talk until after the party on Saturday night, specifically Sunday morning when everything was quiet and nice and just the two of them. They actually had plans to talk, which was new, and a good thing, so there was that.

But for now, the squads were in Isak’s living room, listening to loud music and chatting at each other with dramatic waving arms and way too many bottles of empty alcohol.

Currently, Even was drunk and leaning back against Magnus, who was sitting on the couch listening intent and dazed to one of Sana’s stories. Isak was drunk and stretched out on the other couch with his head in Sana’s lap, making bitchy faces every time he reached for Even, who was way too far away to reach, on the floor wayyy over there and there were at least four people between them which was very sad for the current empty state of his hands.

Other sad current empty states of hands: Eva, and Vilde, cause they were chatting on the end of the couch Magnus and Noora were sitting on and they kept looking at each other’s mouths and blushing and turning away and it was fucking frustrating, from all the way over here, sideways, so he could only imagine how fucking frustrating it had to be for the two of them.

Isak shifted his head a little, making Sana pat his head complacently as she kept story-telling something about first year that had Mahdi and Magnus both laughing and Noora shaking her head but Eva and Vilde wouldn’t stop blushing and twisting their hair and

“Just kiss already,” Isak shouted over the party and both of their heads whipped his way, blond and brunette silky long swinging in tandem as their painted mouths dropped open.

Exclamation points over their heads and blushes on their cheeks, it was a complete toss up whether
Vilde or Eva looked more shocked surprised scandalized.

Oh shit wait wait that was right, there was a thing.

Isak struggled upright, room spinning a little as he squeezed his eyes shut and waved a hand around.

“Baby, weren’t you gonna ask Eva something?”

“Oh yeah!” Even sat up instantly, the both of them turning to the wide eyed girls on the couch.

Mahdi waved his arms out in between them and Noora squinted at him in confusion, silver hair swinging and why did all the girls have such swingy hair?

“I think there’s strings connecting them, it’s a theory,” Mahdi explained and Magnus nodded solemnly in agreement.

Even rolled his eyes at them, tipping his head dramatically to pipe up in English,

“Whatever, I’m in love.”

Isak’s mouth popped open, one hand landing hard on his own chest.

“Oh my god, me too.”

Sparkly blue eyes turned to him and Even’s mouth was open now too, wide and sing-songy.

“No way!” Even chirped and Isak bounced a little, rocking Sana to the side with it.

“Yeah!”

A disgruntled sound as he hopped off the couch using Sana’s lap, both her hands throwing for the sky while he tumbled right into Even’s lap.

He landed haphazardly and Even kissed him instantly, once, and super fucking cute. Then he picked Isak up with two hands on his waist like a dancer, resituating him properly in his lap to kiss him again. Isak nuzzled in closer, noses squishing as he peppered sticky little kisses to his mouth. Even pulled him in flush with a hand splayed wide over his lower back, fingers arched up with the curve of his ass.

God, he could kiss Even forever and ever and ever and there was honestly probably nothing better in this world than kissing, specifically Even, but kissing--

Oh, shit, they’d been right in the middle of something.

Isak pulled off regretfully, lips popping and lashes fluttering as he tapped Even’s wrist.

“Nei, nei, wait, you have to talk to Eva, put me on the couch.”

The hands slid back up over his hips, then Even was picking him up by the waist again, all those gorgeous arm muscles engaging as he hauled Isak up and set him on the couch instead.

Fuck, his boyfriend was hot. Isak rocked sideways, a little dizzy, mostly from the kisses and probably the alcohol and also probably being picked up like that and oh, okay, he’d landed on somebody.

The shoulder startled and Isak blinked up wide eyes at the face peering down wide eyed at him, the
face belonging to Chris Berg.

“Oh, hello,” she greeted.

“Hello,” he replied from her shoulder. She patted him on the head.

“You have very nice curls.”

“Thank you,” he said happily.

Then Even was turning to Eva, waving a dramatic hand at her, gesturing her away from the couch. They had to go Talk, which meant not in front of everyone.

“Oh shit, it’s important?” She asked, head dipping, surprisingly not yet trashed.

Or well, she was wasted, but not Eva Wasted™. Yet.

“Yes,” Even informed her. Sana offered out a hand and he took it, using it to stand up, then he was reaching across the space to grab Eva’s hand instead, pulling her by it all the way to the kitchen.

His kitchen too. The one he kissed Isak in and made everyone food in and the one he drew sketches in when he couldn’t sleep, he loved this kitchen. He loved this flat. And all of the people in it. Including this one he had to talk to.

“Eva, I don’t want you to feel like there’s pressure or anything or. Oh, hi Jonas.”

“Hello,” Jonas said, reaching up on his tiptoes to put another glass away in the cabinets. Even could’ve sworn that cabinet had tea in it. Goddamn.

Dark curls bounced as he turned around, looking at them with expectant eyebrows up. Even smiled at him. They were friends now, it was so fucking nice, he loved being Jonas’s friend.

“Takk? I like being your friend too,” Jonas told him. Even furrowed his eyebrows. He was gonna have to ask Mahdi a little more about their theory on Jonas reading minds. Or maybe he was pulling a drunk/hangover/tired Isak and speaking out loud without realizing it, there was that theory about people in love mimicking each other or whatever and.

Even blinked twice, looking between Jonas and Eva’s expectant faces. That’s right. He turned back to Jonas again.

“Can I talk to Eva? Like without you here.”

“Uh, ja, sure.” Jonas stepped away from the counter, clapping Even on the shoulder and nodding at Eva. Even reached over and clapped him back, smiling wide again.

“Thanks man, you’re the best.”

“I know,” Jonas said and Even turned back to Eva.

“He really is,” he repeated seriously and Eva nodded, smiling wide.

“I know too.”

“Anyways.” And finally Jonas was gone and the kitchen was empty but for the two of them. Even chewed his lip for a minute. “So, I don’t know how to be gentle about this or whatever, so like.
“you bi?”

“...yeah?” She said slowly and he gasped, putting a hand over his heart.

“Me too!!”

“Oh!” Eva’s eyes lit up a little and she put a hand over her heart too. “Fett!”

“Wait, are you like...out?”

“I...make out with girls and I’ve had boyfriends, I thought everyone knew?” She gave him a confused look and Even gave her a confused one back.

“No, I’m pretty sure everyone thinks the girls are platonic.”

“People think I...how do you platonically make out with girls???”

“I don’t fucking know, girls are great.” Even threw up a hand and Eva’s eyes went wide.

“I fucking know. But also...boys.”

“Yes,” Even said, pointing at her. “Yes!!”

Okay, that was a much shorter talk than he’d expected. He pointed back for the party and Eva shrugged and followed.

“You should tell everyone,” he told her at the edge of the living room. She made a good point face and spun for the couches.

“Guys, guys,” Eva waved her arms around and someone turned down the music a few notches.

Now everyone was looking at them and Even swept out an arm.

“Even and I are hella bi,” she announced, then she bowed low and Even kinda gasped again, waving a hand between them both.

“Even, and Eva!” Their names were even the same.

He reached over and they high fived.

Vilde’s eyes were really wide and Isak was telling Chris Berg all about how he’d known, he’d totally known, like this whole time, and Noora had a very amused look on her pursed red mouth.

Magnus turned to Mahdi, punching his shoulder and making him rock with it.

“Man, they’re gonna outnumber us soon, isn’t it exciting?”

“Shut up Magnus.”

Head lifted from a facepalm, Jonas shot him a Look, plopping down on the couch beside Sana. Magnus threw up his hands.

“What?” A glance around the room. “...serr, what?? Why am I always--”

Mahdi was shaking his head and Jonas lifted his beer, looking around at the girl squad.

“Okay, who’s ready for karaoke time--”
Chapter End Notes

So I was originally going to have the next two chapters posted before Skam updated because then the only thing left would be the final chapter and the epilogue, which are both amazing, but

Life has been way too busy and I'm pretty sure that's not gonna happen, so. I'll post when I can, and it will *fingers crossed* still be weekly or at least as close to it as possible.

Anyways, you guys are the best, and I hope you’ll stick around til the end because I think I’ve got a kickass ending here that you’ll all love.

In the meantime, any words you have to say, I will as always, eventually reply to and you’re all absolute angels. Thank you so much for all of your undying support. Much love,

xx
Drawings and Harbors

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took...forever but I used to have a lot more free time and I also used to be like three weeks ahead and this chapter I didn’t start actually writing until last Sunday so.

The last few will probably be the same, and I super wish I could post on Wednesdays for you guys, know I am at least thinking of you all on that day and wishing I could gift you with all of this writing.

Anyways, thank you all so much for being so understanding, and I hope you enjoy!

This is the LONGEST jesus FUCK

**Warnings**: discussion and hospitalization regarding mental illness, parents, shitty fathers, crying, hopelessness, drudging up of shitty pasts, internal and external Doubt and Turmoil™, alcohol and marijuana, police involvement during illegal activities, lot of crying, did I say crying

Sex between ***’s

xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Søndag, 12:15
09.04.17

Sunday started surprisingly hangover-free. Even dragged him to his parents house for breakfast because Bjørn texted he was making Isak’s favorite. They had a simple lovely morning with the parents before both left for their monthly church thing and Isak and Even had the apartment to themselves.

They had the quietest, sweetest sex in his bunk bed, mouths covering each other to (unnecessarily) keep all the sounds down as Even rocked so easy and steady and warm inside him it took a wildly long time for Isak to tense up enough to orgasm, then Even was following him right after and they kissed softly into a three hour nap.

Now it was early afternoon and he was freshly rested and sated and fluffy and propped up on the counter in Even’s kitchen watching the toaster.

Only Even came over and spread his legs gently to step between them and kiss him on the mouth.

Isak wrapped his arms around Even’s neck and the toast burned.

Smoke started rising from the toaster and the kiss broke. Isak’s head tipped back, laughing like the
sun and asking Even if they had any kardamomme to fix it.

Even paused in waving away smoke and opening windows to step back up between waiting thighs. Isak held his face and smiled. Even kissed him and kissed him and Isak giggled into his mouth rubbed their noses together and kissed him back.

Eventually Even pulled back and looked at him and the early afternoon light was glittering in his eyes and Isak couldn’t stop smiling at him, head tilting softly.

“You’re my best friend,” Even whispered and both the dimples popped, surprise lifting the corners of his mouth. Close enough he could watch the green irises contract while Isak looked at him with those dark dark eyes.

“Ja?”

“Ja,” he whispered back. Isak’s nose squinched up from how much he was smiling.

He tipped up his chin, waiting for another kiss.

Even gave him one.

Isak was gathering his stuff up from Even’s room to go home so he could do homework and get some sleep before school tomorrow.

Even was in the shower so he didn’t have long because he wanted to pack up as quick as possible and run in there and drop to his knees and suck Even off in the shower at his parents’ house because there shouldn’t be a place that Even was naked that often that Isak hadn’t made him orgasm so.

He was kinda running around the room grabbing books from Saturday morning’s study session and that was how he snagged one that wasn’t his, which he didn’t realize until he was trying to wrestle them into his backpack and it fell from his hands, flipping open on the ground.

Isak stooped to pick it back up only shit, that wasn’t his, that was Even’s sketchbook.

He finally zipped his backpack shut, shoving it aside with his foot as he scooped up spiral bound, lifting one cover to flip it closed and that’s when a page fell open and he saw it.

He nearly dropped the book, fumbling with it and snatching it back up before any of the pages had a chance to crinkle.

Eyes wide, snapping it closed and holding it tight to his chest as he breathed for a second.

Then he was opening it back up slowly, thumbing to the back and closing it quickly again yeah, okay, he hadn’t been hallucinating.

With his family history, you never really knew.

But no, Even definitely drew that.

Isak sat down slowly on the ground, setting the sketchbook down a foot in front of him and slowly lifting the cover again.

He scooted back an inch, letting it fall open to the drawing and he was just staring, he didn’t want to hold it cause he was kinda afraid to touch it. More than because he was pretty sure he’d cry on it or
He could barely believe it was real.

Isak thought he was a cartoonist. He’d literally never seen Even draw anything but these sweet funny sad happy little comics, he had such a distinct art style and he almost exclusively drew in pen, scratched pieces of the world and his animated style, dark ink sharp lines over pages.

Except this was in pencil and it wasn’t animated, it was the most realistic drawing Isak had ever seen in real life.

More than realism, it was him.

Isak was still sitting there on Even’s floor when Even came into his room in just a towel, hair fluffed up and curling damp and already talking smack,

“I could’ve sworn that look you gave me before I got in meant you were joining, showering alone is no fu--”

He froze and Isak looked up from where he was sitting on the ground and yeah, okay, fine, there were tears in his eyes.

The lyrics of Dreams playing through his head.

“I didn’t mean to, I accidentally grabbed your sketchbook, then.”

Even sucked in a breath. The room reflected too bright around them for a moment. A glance between the sketch on the ground and Isak sitting there cross-legged in front of it with water on his lashes.

“Can I put on clothes first?”

“Nei,” Isak replied. “I’m gonna take them right back off if you do.”

Then he was pushing to his feet and crossing the room, hand sliding into wet hair at the same time he
slid their mouths together, kissing Even deep enough it crushed their mouths.

Even tipped his head and kissed him back, maybe a touch confused. One hand holding his towel and Isak kicked his bedroom door closed, pulling Even’s hand then the towel was dropping free and Isak was running his hands down Even’s naked body, worshiping palms down and skirting fingertips up bare skin.

Looking up at his beautiful blue eyes, searching back and forth between them.

“Is that how you see me,” Isak whispered against his mouth.

Even’s hands slipped up to cradle Isak’s head, their foreheads tipping together as he looked him in the eyes, deep, serious, still.

“Ja,” he said quietly. “That’s how I’ve always seen you.”

“Make love to me,” Isak whispered and Even reached over, locking his bedroom door, then he was pulling Isak for the ladder of his bed.

It was late afternoon and the sun was burning low and deep gold in the sky by the time they were finally dressed again.

He ended up hanging the drawing on Even’s door, careful rolled tape to the back corners, right above the words Alt Er Love. Even wrapped arms around his stomach, brushing his nose down Isak’s cheekbone, inhaling slow.

“You know you’re not alone,” Isak whispered, rocking them side to side as he looked at the boy over his shoulder and Even tipped their noses together.

“The things you do to me,” he whispered reverently and Isak closed his eyes and let the sunlight bathe them clean.

Tirsdag, 10:34
11.04.17

Okay so I was just at the store and the cash register was the cutest girl ever and she smiled at me but how am I supposed to know if she’s being nice or just happy heh
if she’s gay ???

Dude I have no fucking clue

Isak what else are you here for 😢

Fuck if I know 🥱

Well how did you know
Even was gay?

1) he’s bi 2) he literally talked about sucking dick in our first conversation

Ooooh wow 😶 😶 😶

I know I’m pretty sure people aren’t usually that lucky

Wait, how would a gay girl know I was gay? Do I have to talk about...those things??

Nei nei just. Get to know somebody first, then the sexuality thing eventually comes out, right?

Or I mean. You could always just introduce yourself hi, I’m Vilde, I’m hella gay 🇺🇸

Is that how you introduce yourself if you're?
“Did anyone else get a single answer on that history review,” Eva swept into her designated lunch seat, already complaining before she so much as got her lunch bag open.

“I offered to study with you.” Noora tipped her head knowingly and Eva gave her a look.

“Noora, you have a five minus in that class, I need to ace this test.”

“I’ve got a six,” Mahdi offered and both of them instantly turned to him, mouths open.

“Really? What are you doing after school?”

“Uh...we were gonna go to the skatepark.”

“Oo, I haven’t been to the skatepark in forever.” Eva spun in her chair to Noora, “You wanna go skating?”

“Oh...I don’t know how?”

“I’m a decent teacher,” Magnus offered.

“Bullshit,” Mahdi declared. “You can barely stay upright.”

“Okay, just cause I can’t do tricks as fancy as you and Jonas--”

“I can teach Noora,” Eva interrupted. “Actually. I’ll teach you too, Magnus. And after we all go out for pizza and study?”

“Wait, who’s doing what?” Isak swooped into his chair, looking between the chatters. “Are you guys planning things without me?”
“Just because we’re all friends with you doesn’t mean we can’t be friends with each other too,” Noora replied sassily, curving her fork out of her mouth around red lips.

Isak furrowed his eyebrows, shaking his head back and forth. “Uh...ja, actually?”

“You’re welcome to come,” Eva informed him.

“Where are we going?” Jonas asked, walking up beside Chris Berg.

“Hm, what’s happening?”

“Everyone’s friends without me,” Isak pouted and Even finally swooped in with Sana, a kiss on his cheek, the last few chairs filling up.

Wait, they were missing one--

“You guys would not believe what I just saw in the hallway!”

That was right. Vilde.

Nine heads turned, at least half of the mouths opening with it.

“Which first year was it this time?”

Torsdag, 17:19
13.04.17

Even was graduating soon.

Graduating. As in finishing one chapter of his life and starting the next.

Everything was going to change.

Isak was lying slumped in his bed staring up at the ceiling and telling himself it wasn't gonna be bad change necessarily. They would still have them.

He sucked in a breath and sighed heavily, rolling over to snag his phone from the nightstand, thumbing over to favorites and pressing the button before he could tell himself he was being ridiculous.

“How’s it going?”

A warm voice picked up after two and a half rings and Isak exhaled all of the tension from his body.

“Halla. Are you home, can I come over?”

“Uh...no, I’m at Jonas’s.”

“Goddamnit. Okay. Film stuff?”

“It’s almost done, we’re finishing up the final touches.”
“It’s really good,” Jonas shouted, muffled in the distance then Even’s voice was back in his ear.

“It actually might be.”

“Really? I’m so glad, sweetheart, that’s wonderful.”

“Mnhm. We’re kinda on a roll though, so.”

“Oh nei, get back to it, sorry to interrupt.”

“Oh it’s totally fine. Was there anything in particular you needed?”

“Nei, I was lying here overthinking everything since I have nothing to do.”

“Go hang out with Magnus, I think he misses you.”

“...oh. Okay, yeah, I’ll do that then.”

“And stop overthinking everything.”

“Ugh. I’ll try.”

“I love you, Isak.”

“I love you. Tell Jonas hi for me.”

“I will.” A little kiss sound into the phone which Isak returned, then he was hanging up with a sigh and swinging his legs off the bed.

Well he was gonna go hang out with Magnus he supposed.

Fredag, 14:23
14.04.17

*Hey*! I just realized we still haven’t talked, didn’t you say you had a list to chat about?

Ja, but it’s not a big deal or anything it can wait :)

Are you sure? I don’t want us to fall into a
miscommunication rut again

We won’t, I promise.

Talk Sunday?

I was gonna go to this thing with Eskild and Linn :-(after school Tuesday?

I’ve got a date with Eva

Ugh why do we have so many friends

It’s your fault

Nei it’s your fault you’re the charming one

😭I love you. Wednesday?

It’s literally not that big of a deal I just wanted to ask how your university search was going

Oh, it’s all on hold right now til my video’s done. But that’ll be soon so

Right yeah. Okay fett

That was it?

the only important thing ja
They were pregaming at Mahdi’s place this weekend because his parents were out of town, which meant they were sitting in a circle on the floor listening to loud ass music and bobbing their heads to drinking game dares.

Magnus was in the middle of trying to full-tip a fluitje Dutch style - and failing miserably - when the radio shifted and the living room filled with familiar words.

Isak sat up instantly, waving a hand around and nearly knocking Jonas’s drink over with it.

“Oh fuck, I love this song, turn it up.”

*I should be in bed, but temptations of trouble on my tongue*--.

Even laughed brightly, cocking his head as he sang along under his breath,

“One hit, bad for me. One kiss, bad for me, but I give in so easily.”

“Really?” Magnus popped his gum flatly, giving them unimpressed looks and Even only smiled wider, glowing in Isak’s direction, their eyes locking sparkling as the bass dropped.

“But I’m weak,” they sang at each other, Isak shy and bright while Even lilted sweet, “and what’s wrong with that--”
“Boy oh boy I love it when I fall for that,” Even tipped his head back and forth, leaning closer over the circle and Isak was trying not to beam like an idiot, tongue shoving between his lips as he tilted his head a little to the beat too.

“What’s wrong with that? Boy, oh boy, I love it when I fall for that, I’m weak.”

“I can’t believe you guys are this sappy,” Mahdi gave them a squinched up judgy face and Even scooted closer, lifting his hand to take Isak’s chin and smiling at him wide as the sun.

*But I’m weak,* nuzzling their noses together while Isak scrunched up in a smile he couldn’t contain, dimples bursting while Even sang at him and Isak mouthed along,

“Boy, oh boy, *I love you* when I fall for that.”

Their mouths pressed together in a mushy kiss and at least five hands went up for the air.

“Oh my goddd,”

but Isak was tingling too much to bother flicking them off.

Then they were pulling apart and Isak’s cheeks were on fire but his chest was too warm to care about the burn, or the sighs and rolling eyes around the rest of the circle.

Even leaned back into his spot, eyebrows up with that pretty smile. Goddammit, Isak could not stop glowing, licking his lips to try to get the smile to simmer down but Even was singing at him and the cutest thing he’d ever seen and Isak was a complete goner, complete.

“You two have zero chill,” Jonas commented, pouring another round of drinks and Even lifted a shoulder nonchalantly, gaze still 100% locked on Isak’s. Mouthing the words at him now, how it shouldda gone, I should stay strong.

*But I’m weak.*

His heart was gonna actually seize in his chest, early morning kitchen kisses and Even dancing around him with that beautiful sparkle in those eyes, he couldn’t help but reach over, palm sliding over Even’s knee,

“Boy, oh *boy*, I love you when I fall for that.”

Even bent back in his direction, their mouths landing in three smiling kisses while Isak’s nose crinkled up and his fingers circled through Even’s hair, around his ear down to his neck. Isak kissed him and kissed him, sugar sweet, one of their songs drifting bright around them.

They were both stuttering inhales on the break apart that time, Isak was gonna literally *burst*, hands wrapped tight around his ankles, tipping to the side, smiling like mad at how fucking super cute Even was singing at him from across the circle and.

“God, you two are the *worst,*” Magnus declared, holding out shot glasses to them both while Mahdi waved a hand between them, like that could cut the strings pulling Isak’s heart into Even’s hands.

Isak took the shotglass, eyes locked on Even while he tipped it back, downing it and squinching up his nose - fuck - before he offered the rest of them a shrug. Fucking whatever, Even was looking at him like that, did fucking anything else matter, no.

“Leave them alone, they’re adorable,” Jonas interjected in his exasperated how don’t you go down
on chicks voice.

Their eye contact broke instantly, both of their heads swiveling in surprise while Jonas gave the rest of the boys judgy eyebrows and Isak’s mouth opened wide.

“Ha!”

Even cheered, leaning over for a loud high five, Mahdi complained that Jonas was encouraging them while Magnus threw his hands up again and Isak couldn’t be happier.

Lørdag, 23:42
15.04.17

They didn't always go out both Friday and Saturday. Usually Isak would go one or the other, like twice a month, but well. It was supposed to be a good party and he was in the mood to get fucked up so.

Even stayed home to work on the finishing touches of his project cause he was feeling inspired so Isak kissed his cheek a bunch and took off after the boys with a promise to be safe.

And okay, taking off after Magnus down some side alley, shouting curse words with the cops shouting louder behind them, maybe safe wasn't the best word for it.

His heart was pounding faster than it’d pounded in his life...ever, and that was saying a lot, considering some of the shit he’d gotten up to with his boyfriend but holy fuck, he’d never been so fucking close to watching his life go down the drain and he was still running.

The cops had showed right when Isak had climbed up on a counter, so they’d literally walked through the door as he waved the joint in plain fucking sight, and there were alcohol bottles everywhere and smoke everywhere and there were some older kids doing hard drugs in the bathroom and basically, they were all completely fucked.

He jumped off the counter, crashed into Jonas, and they all took the fuck off for the back door while cops shouted and shoved through the crowd that was a lot of drunk and or screaming girls and boys.

They were fast, but Magnus didn’t catch the fucking memo that there were cops until Jonas was screaming at him to hurry up with the door open and of fucking course they had to wait for everyone, which meant that by the time they were pounding down the sidewalk they’d caught every cop in Oslo or probably Norway on their tails and it was stupid, Isak could not believe how fucking stupid they were but here they were and.

They wouldn’t even be chasing them except that Isak still had the joint between his fingers and they were all underage and running so.

Side streets and jumping fences and running through yards they’d managed to at least put some distance between them after a few blocks, then Jonas was shouting to split up in pairs. Magnus and Jo-jo taking off down one street while Isak and Mahdi took off down another.

It took way too fucking long to lose them but eventually it was just their shoes pounding concrete,
jogging to a stop at the end of an empty street huffing and puffing with their hands on their knees and
their heads spinning and adrenaline pumping so high Isak couldn’t tell if he was high anymore.

“Shit.”

“Ja,” Mahdi gasped, straightening up and Isak took another second trying to breathe. “Fuck. Do we
meet up with the others?”

“Nah, man.” He finally heaved in a gasp, bending back upright with a groan. “I'm like a block away
from home, I'm gonna split.”

“Ja, fett.”

“You good to get back safe?” Isak asked, clapping a hand down on Mahdi’s shoulder.

“Ja, ja man. You?”

“Ja. I'm good.”

“You sure? You were higher than the rest of us.”

“Serr! All that running, pretty sure it's just adrenaline now.”

“Aight. Have a good rest of your night.” Mahdi patted his arm and took a few steps backwards,
throwing him a little salute before he spun and headed for the closest bus.

Isak had his phone out before he even shouldered the apartment door shut.
Yeah, he could already see the text Even was gonna send after that. Isak spared him the thumb trouble and pressed the call button over his number instead.

Even picked up in less than two seconds.

“Babe, are you okay??”

“My heart is fucking pounding,” Isak managed back, still breathing heavy.

“What happened?”
Isak sagged back against the door, taking a second to inhale exhale before he attempted to story-tell without getting lightheaded.

“We were being stupid and the cops showed, just like. Barged in no warning. And I was cross-faded enough to freak out...I was also on a counter at the time, and holding a joint, not my. Phew, best move. Either way though, I couldn't stash the weed. Cause last time I did that Bad Things happened and. Fuck, so we ended up running which was. Ah, not the smartest plan but we all escaped. Somehow. I'm just. Wow.”

“But you're safe now?”

“Ja, ja. I swear I'm never gonna fucking smoke again.”

“Yeah, I'm sure.”

“Nei, really, that was. Fucking terrifying, what if I got thrown in fucking jail Jesus Christ I've never been so close to getting caught by the cops in my life.”

“Fuck, baby.”

“Ja, I know! There’s a reason we usually smoke in the bathroom. Although like. Somebody was doing hard drugs in there, not my shit at all. Jonas was down to smoke in there anyways but I just...nah, I ain’t gonna be anywhere near that. So like. It couldda been worse...Fuck. Is it possible for your heart to pound out of your chest??”

“Uh, nei. It is not.”

“But like. Heart attacks are a thing.”

“They are a thing.”

“I think my heart is seizing. In the not fun way. In the I wish you were here way.”

“Mmm.”

“Ugghhh,” Isak managed, eyes shut as he tipped his head back against the wood.

“...are you leaning against the door?”

“Uh.” His eyes opened again, room swimming a little as he furrowed his eyebrows confused. “Yeah, why?”

“I can hear your voice.”

“Oh. Oh! Hooray!” Isak pushed off the door, spinning to open the door, head spinning further than the door but well, life.

Even was jogging up the last few steps, out of breath too then he was coming inside, closing and locking the door behind him before he was taking Isak’s face in both hands to kiss him.

The kiss was so worried and soothing and exactly everything he’d been needing and Isak clung to Even’s sleeves, pushing up against his mouth.

Until his mouth was gone, nose pressing against his instead.

“Are you okay?” Even hushed, thumbs over the ricocheting curls at his temples.
“Ja, ja, I’m way better now,” Isak breathed, letting the chills down his spine curl him closer to the broad chest, all of that radiating body heat.

Even rolled their foreheads together, hand sliding down Isak’s neck to his collarbone, heel of his hand digging in hard over his pulse.

“My entire life flashed before my eyes,” Isak told him, sliding closer, inhaling safety. “It was significantly better after I met you.”

“Fuck, I forgot how sappy you are when you're high.”

“I'm not that high, I just ran across half the fucking city.”

“You're shaking.”

“Am I?”

“I can literally hear your heartbeat.”

“Fuck.”

“Yeah, water, then bed okay?”

“Okay,” Isak conceded, letting Even’s hands guide his shoulders. “Ja.”

A gentle push and Even went to step around him for the kitchen, water, but Isak grabbed his hand before he could go, pulling him back, apparently a little hard based on the way their ribs collided, his chin lifting all the way up to that shiny blue blue blue.

“I really am good now,” he whispered, all the organs in his chest lining up to Even’s.

“Ja?” A quiet whisper, soft, so soft, making his toes curl with the look on that face.

“Ja,” Isak murmured. Then he was laying his head on Even’s chest and wrapping his arms around his back, cuddling in close. Even put his chin on top of his head, rubbing his spine up and down and up and down.

“You are so young and stupid sometimes,” Even told him under his breath.

“But you love me,” Isak mumbled into clothes.


Mandag, 09:19
17.04.17

“Holy fucking shit. This is the prettiest thing I've ever seen.”

Chris’s elbow landed in his ribs and Even scooted out of the way, letting him look down in the microscope instead.
“I can't believe this is fucking stardust. Real stardust.”

“I can't believe it was discovered by a Norwegian jazz musician.” Another elbow and Even was closing one eye, peering down at the golden blue green purple flowering stone-shaped specks.

“I can't believe we get to look at actual stardust a month after it's discovered on earth for the first time.”

“In Norway.” They traded again.

“It is fucking pretty. Like. Flowers and stone and everything all at once but better it's stars.”

Even elbowed Chris aside again, peering down for the eleventh time or something.

“...I'm gonna touch it.”

“We're not supposed to.”

“Who gives a fuck,” Even announced, leaning around to pull out the slide, scoop up the invisible stardust with a finger.

And reached over to put it on the end of Chris’s nose.

“Now you are stardusted.”

Chris leaned back, going cross eyed to look at the end of his nose.

“There are stars on my skin.” Even scooped up another bit and poked Chris’s sleeve. “And my shirt.”

Then he was reaching behind Even to swipe stardust onto his finger, spinning to dab his finger over Even’s mouth before he could dodge.

“Oi!”

“Now you can kiss your boy and paint him with stardust,” Chris informed him, brushing off his hands with a cocky grin.

“Oh my god, why didn't I think of that?”

“You're rubbing off on me, I'm gay-ifying.”

“That's not a thing.”

“That's totally a thing.”

Even gave Chris as judgy look, eyebrows up and Chris cocked his head back and forth, shooting it right back at him. A conceding huff while Even dug his phone out of his pocket.

•

Meet me after genetics I have something for you
•

????
•

He sent back every star emoji there was.
“This is the best day of any science lab ever.”

“First place on earth to find stardust and it’s Norway.”

Mandag, 15:35
17.04.17

They started kissing on the bus ride home, which turned into kissing up against the wall on the stairs up to Isak’s apartment, which turned into banging open the apartment door loud enough Linn jumped half a foot on the couch.

Isak’s mouth was still smushed against Even’s as he waved her an apologetic hello. She rolled her eyes at them and laid back down, turning up the volume at least ten notches higher.

A soft giggle into his mouth and Isak tapped Even’s thigh impatiently. He got the message loud and clear, scooping Isak up, backpack and all to carry him right for the bedroom.

***

Door closed with a kick and school supplies were shed with shirts and pants and boxers, followed by naked bodies tumbling to the mattress.

Even didn’t waste any time, kissing urgently down his chest, already opening up the lube before he was pulling Isak into his mouth his mouth and sinking all the way down.

“F-fucking hell--”

A slicked finger curling inside, pumping smooth while Even’s tongue slid back and forth lazy, warm.

He opened Isak up like he’d been looking forward to it all day (Isak had, ever since that fucking stardust kiss after class earlier), soaking up every moment with sparkly eyes and peppered smiling kisses.

Isak kept gasping his name, fingers buried in Even’s hair, eyes squeezed shut tight with his head tipped back, mouth open, a hundred silent cries as his hips tilted up against the tongue pressed inside him now.

He was pretty close to coming from just this alone and Even had made him come enough fucking times now he knew it, twisting his fingers back out with a nip to Isak’s hip that had him groaning. Of course.

“I’ve got something fun, you down?” Propped up on his arms to hover over the top of him and Isak managed to blink open, squinting a little at all the daylight pouring in, or wait, maybe that was the literally glowing boy looking at him like that.

“Mmm, mhm.”

“Alright.” A pretty exhale and Even fell off onto the bed beside him, lube in hand as he slicked himself up over a condom. Isak rolled his head on the pillow, watching Even’s face flicker from this close.
God. He had never seen anything so mesmerizing in his life.

“I am so into you,” Isak informed him, kinda breathy and gone and Even huffed, smile wide with it as he peeked open an eye at Isak and tipped his head, patting his thigh with it.

“C’mon, cowgirl up.”

“Ugh,” Isak complained, pushing up and having to pause at the shivers raking down his spine, chin dropping as he tried to catch his breath. “I hate that term.”

Not that he was complaining about the act though, inhaling steady to swing a leg over Even’s lap and line himself up. Heart pounding in his throat, Isak looked up at the sharp blue gaze and lowered slowly, mouth dropping open as he sunk down.

Fucking--

“Fuck,” Even whispered, wide palms up Isak’s thighs, thumbs drilling into his hips right as he settled flush. “So pretty and good for me.”

“Unh-uh uhhh,” Isak kinda broke, cheeks heating up with the words. Even’s touch traced the V across his skin, moan dragged out of his throat by the hand running up and down his cock, making him swivel down involuntarily.

“God, god--” Isak was digging short nails into Even’s chest, head dipped and curls tumbling, grinding down in a circle. Even managed to choke down a groan, hands stroking up to his waist, breathless already.

“Okay, baby, turn it around.”

Easier said than done but Isak lifted a knee, spinning around carefully, Even twisting deep inside him as he grabbed onto Even’s thighs and tried to breathe.

Fucking christ hell jesus fucking fuck--

A hand ran up his spine and Isak arched into it, rocking back against Even, a dozen more sounds tumbling with the slide in and out.

“Not yet, we’re not there yet,” Even managed, tapping his hip but Isak just rocked back smaller, whining in his throat.

It just turned them both on more, fingernails digging into his back, hard enough it burned. Isak ground his palms into the top of Even’s thighs, sliding back against him again, again, making the fingers scratch down to his hip, circling around to grip tight.

“Fuck, fuck. Okay. Fuck, wow. You ready?”

“Mmmm.”

“Baby,” Even breathed and Isak fluttered his eyes back open, trying to still.

“Ja, ja.”

“Kay, Isak...fuck. Lay yourself down on my chest.”

“On-- okay.”
“Just lean backwards from where you are, I'll walk you down.”

He straightened up, taking a moment to swivel one more time, a hand sliding back through his curls and fuck, he did not ride Even like this often enough. A hand between his shoulderblades, over shifting muscle he’d been building up and yeah, with Even touching him like that, he certainly thought so too.

“You know exactly how gorgeous you are, don’t you,” Even murmured behind him and Isak shot him a look over his shoulder, lips parted as he tightened his thighs for balanced and circled down against Even again.

“No idea what you’re talking about,” he managed, to which Even’s eyebrows shot up, really? and Isak lifted one of his own back, really!

“Come here,” Even patted his chest, eyes on fire. Isak lifted a shoulder, cocking his head back and forth, tongue between his lips as he debated the offer. An affection hand swatted his ass in retaliation and Isak threw up a hand, exaggerated offended face thrown over his shoulder again,

“Oi!”

“Baby.”

“Hm? Me?”

He put a hand over his chest, feigning innocence, and that’s as far as he got before Even had two hands on him tight and his hips rolling up to shove in deep and hard.

“Faen!”

He barely got a hand on the hip behind him in time to not get knocked off Even’s lap, then he was grinding back down against the thrusts with throaty groans, dust over gravel and their bodies smacking together hard.

“Ah ah ah ah-ahh--”

“C’mon, c’mon, all the way back,” Even was telling him, voice shot and huffing, hands sliding up Isak’s hips, ribs, carefully dragging him to lay down as the deep shoves inside slowed a little, long and languid now.

Isak wasn’t shuddering any less, world tipping in the fall with Even’s hands holding him steady until his spine was on Even’s chest, hips tipping up with him to keep Even rocking deep inside.

God, he could feel the pounding heartbeat over his shoulderblades, all of that damp heated skin against his, voice echoing deeper with the space between them canceled out,

“Thighs,” Even commanded and Isak lifted his legs with the chills down his spine, the kind so much hotter than cold.

Even’s hands wrapped around the inside of his thighs, holding them up higher, spread, the shift sliding them half apart only for him to rock his hips up hard and shove right back in.

Isak threw his head back against Even’s shoulder, breath catching in his throat and eyes squeezed shut tight, hands over the tops of Even’s, cock sliding in and out.

Air ghosting down his cheekbone and Even kissed the side of his face, breathing hard enough his
chest was heaving, taking them both with it. And god, did Even take, holding him still, wide palms keeping him spread open to push up inside him deeper.

“How’s that, baby,” Even breathed against his jaw, like Isak wasn’t making little swallowed sounds under every too quick inhale.

“Even I. I uhn. God, it feels so good.”

A shaky exhale against his cheek and Isak dug his fingers into Even’s ribs, rocking himself down against the friction, the heat. Even’s feet were on the bed, using the leverage to fit deeper and harder inside him.

It was dizzying, to be stretched out across Even’s body, moving with every breath, moving harder with every roll of Even’s cock inside him. All while he gasped up at the ceiling, Even’s touch and warmth everywhere except where he could see.

There was something obscene about being held open and fucked like this, something so dirty in the way Even’s fingers sunk into his inner thighs, keeping him spread for the consistent slide in in in, making his head dig back harder against Even’s shoulder, top of his head against the contrasting soft of the pillow, mouth dropped open over all the sounds he couldn’t stop making.

A shaken wide-mouthed moan and Even’s puckered lips sunk into his cheek, kissing him hard through the shudders. The moment he broke off, smacking sound he was kissing Isak’s cheek again, and again, over and over with every thrust inside him and wow, what a thing that was.

Even kissed his cheeks all the time, it was one of those affectionate sweet little things he’d done since the beginning. When they hugged, over breakfast, any time he walked beside Isak, when he was lying in bed, anything, all the time, Even kissed his cheeks, tugging a little smile up with it every time.

And now the kisses were just as sweet, like they were giggling over something instead of fucking dirty and the contrast was sparking way too many things in his brain, in his chest, all these fireworks and soft tingles with the riptide heat.

He was trembling hard, shaking both of them with it, the intensity of Even, everywhere, another worshipping kiss to his cheek and Isak couldn’t take it anymore, whipping his head to the side as he broke over a cry.

Even rocked up hard and Isak was scrambling not to slide up his chest, dragging back down against him with the litany spilling helplessly from his mouth,

“Yes yes yes yes yes--”

The mattress was jumping with every shove together, heels digging in. Isak’s legs were in the sky, getting held up by heavy strong hands, balance, gravity, all of it gone, he was still falling backwards onto Even’s chest and entirely wrapped up in his arms, warm and sure and safe.

Immersed, completely immersed, hands sliding up behind his knees to fold him deeper with a rougher thrust up inside and Isak was choking on it, turning helplessly into Even’s neck to gasp and plea and crumble,

“Oh god baby yeah yeah fuck--”

Isak panted open mouthed, eyes screwed shut, nose pressed up against the heated skin, carefully being deconstructed and pieced together by the pieces of his body Even was taking back ownership
As if he’d ever left in the first place which he hadn’t, he hadn’t, fucking Christ, Isak was his to take like this, any way, every way, over and over until their bodies had joined more times than been apart until there was nothing left but their skin pressing and the sound of Even breathing against his curls, the quiet groans he kept trapped in his chest that Isak didn’t even fucking know about, had never lain close enough to hear, feel, ripple against his spine--

“Please please please,” he murmured, tipping into Even’s skin, swaying with every movement of his body breathing, of the tremors and twitches and drive deeper inside, so fucking connected Isak was at least 98% sure their hearts were beating in sync or some shit.

And still, all of this friction, slipping right in place over Even’s heart with the rub between his ribs aching his own pounding heart up with it.

“Baby,” he breathed, fingertips raking up the expanse of the ribs beneath his.

The grip on his thighs tightened, then Even was letting go all at once, leaving Isak to scramble for purchase, feet landing on top of Even’s knees, hand above his head to push off the wall, lurching them back together again.

They both groaned at the shift in angle, the low vibration ricocheting between his shoulderblades and making his jaw drop open with the next shove together. Fucking hell, fucking hell--

Affectionate dragging palms curved up over his shoulders before Even had two hands sliding up the sides of Isak’s face to tighten fists in his curls, hips tipping up tight and quick enough Isak was already losing his grip.

“Ah ah ah ah ah baby fuck fuck, I can’t-- ah ahh-h-hm--”

There was already a sheen of sweat over everything it didn’t take long before his heels slipped, jolting him forward with a hard thrust in the opposite direction and the sound he made was loud enough one of Even’s hands covered his mouth instinctively, other palm slamming solid over his chest to keep him in place with the current taking their bodies.

Isak’s spine arched of its own accord, eyes rolling back in his head with Even’s fingers clamped over his gasps. Only he didn’t get very far, shoulderblades digging into pectorals before the hand over his heart was slamming him back down, solid and stuck and clasped to Even so tight he couldn’t breathe.

Not like he could breathe anyways, when Even was jarring inside him oxygen wasn’t really an option.

Of course that’s when Even decided to take his legs again, hauling them up together this time so Isak was folded up in half and right back to pinned only the palm over his mouth was gone and the sounds he was making now were so far past caring, so far past noticing, every gasp a whine until the tempo suddenly doubled and yeah, he was screaming now, he could really use that hand back.

“Fuck, Isak--”

A toss from two hands to a single barred arm, holding Isak’s legs up in a carry while his free hand shot back over his mouth again, digging in, leaving him scrambling.

He finally managed to get an arm looped behind Even’s head, turned into the sharp jaw as he rocked and the rapid jolts inside had him teetering so close to the edge he couldn’t stop shaking, couldn’t
shut up behind Even’s fingers, carrying on muted and muffled and so fucking turned on the colors were spinning out.

Gravity didn’t exist, time and space didn’t exist, there was only Even wrapped around him like this, blocking out everything and taking him so high the trembles were wracking them both.

“Mm-m-mm-mm.”

The hand on his mouth dragged him back an inch, lifting his head up and Isak fanned his lashes back open, a few of them sticking with the salt, the wet at the corners. But there was Even, those stunning silver blue eyes staring at him so wide and dark, wide mouth open, cheeks flushed, fancy hair destroyed, the prettiest thing Isak had ever seen in his goddamn life.

He stared back helplessly gone, so fucking in love it wrapped around his chest with the weight of a thousand dragging moments of warmth, begging everything, everything to the gaze locked on his.

Fingernails sunk into the side of his knee and Even stuttered, hips crashing up haphazardly as lashes fluttered over blue, beautiful face twisting up and Isak was fucking mesmerized, could not tear his eyes away, pushed right over the edge and giving in all at once, following swift and ruthless into the whitecaps.

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He would like to stay exactly right here forever, Even’s hand in his hair and over his stomach, head thrown back over a broad shoulder, eyes closed and mouth still open, drifting down from the high.

But Even’s chest was heaving, still breathing harsh against Isak’s temple, all that warm rough air and odds were being squashed by a heavy boy resting all of his weight over your lungs wasn’t the most helpful.

It took more energy than he had but he also wanted Even to be able to breathe again so Isak swallowed, shoved to the side, and slid a foot to the left, tipping his weight onto the bed instead.

Even’s arm curled around him, instantly rolling him into his ribs, holding Isak’s shoulder with trembling strength.

“You okay?” Isak mumbled against Even’s skin, peering up at him through the loud pound of the heart under his palm.

“Ja,” Even breathed, rolling his head to look down at Isak, blue still dark. “So okay. Are you?”

“Mmm,” he hummed happily, burrowing in a little closer. Even’s thumb slid up and down his skin, eyes closing again as they soaked in the quiet gold of each other’s bare skin.

It was sticky and comfortable enough in the darkness behind his eyelids he drifted off a few times, light quiet little naps that eventually always had him starting awake, curling the hand over Even’s heart again.

By the time he finally opened his eyes and didn’t feel immediately like closing them, the room was dark and Even’s breathing was settled out right on the edge of sleep, fingers lax on Isak’s skin.

As much as he’d love to fall asleep with this beauty, they hadn’t kissed yet and some things were more important.

He pushed up off Even’s chest, flopping back down hard enough Even’s lashes fluttered open,
blinking drearily at him while Isak hovered. Gaze flicking from those pretty blues down to the pretty mouth, obvious enough it twitched up in a little smile.

Isak pouted a little, he wanted a kiss dammit, there was nothing amusing about that. Even smiled wider, a hand slipping up through the back of his curls, tugging softly. Pulling him in, then Even’s lips were pressing to his pout and Isak’s eyes fell shut, pushing down against him.

Parting each others’ mouths, lips folding with the mush together, slow drag apart that had his eyelashes batting, toes curling.

The hand on the back of his neck slid up to the top of his curls, tilting his head to the side so Even could kiss him deeper, noses flicking with the turn.

Jeez. This, kissing Even like this, he could literally do it for the rest of his entire life. It was such a cliché thing to think, but it wasn’t some phrase, some expression. Every single day that he woke up until now and the day he died, he wanted to kiss Even like this. The rest of his entire life.

An arm slung over his lower back, wrapping him close to tip them sideways, lay Isak down onto the pillow with their mouths still lapping languid warm tingling against each other.

He inhaled deep through his nose, exhale painting Even’s cheek with those hands running down his spine again, leg hooking over the inside of his knee.

Hips tilting down to fit in close and their mouths finally broke apart, holding each other’s necks, jaws, foreheads pressed together on the pillow.

“So that was intense,” Even whispered over a smile and Isak snorted, eyes flying open.

“I’ve got something fun,” he mocked, head tipping back and forth and Even’s smile burst into a little laugh, dragging Isak in closer, their mouths smushing together again.

A dozen little pecks over his lips and Isak couldn’t help but smile too, shiver raking down his spine with the break. A dazed soft smile as he curled back into the pillow, Even’s nose against his cheek.

“I am...so into you,” Isak mumbled against cotton and Even’s puckered lips pressed to the corner of his mouth, whisper fading into the dark with the tired comfort in his bones.

“Me too, baby. Me too.”

Tirsdag, 13:30 18.04.17

They were learning something about sin and tan and cos and Isak couldn’t tell you a single thing about any of them because the only sin he was thinking about was the way Even kissed him goodbye after lunch.

He’d kissed Isak like they were in their bedroom last night, like he was still nine inches inside with Isak squirming over how goddamn deep Even was fucking him, whispering filthy things in his ear while Isak lost it and moaned and moaned--
A shiver went down his spine, shifting in his seat and quite acutely aware of how tight his jeans were. The jeans Even kept sliding his hands in the pockets of, squeezing handfuls of Isak’s ass to leave twin arching red handprints over his skin as Even spread to him apart push in between--

Another round of shivers, from his chest through his arms down to his fingertips that time and Isak covered his eyes with a hand, groaning low in his throat. Trying to get a goddamn fucking grip on anything that wasn't his boyfriend’s dick inside of him--

“What?” Jonas poked his paper with an eraser, sliding it around on his desk to get his attention and Isak took a moment to swallow, keep the next wasted sound at bay.

“I can’t go fucking. Two hours without thinking about it.”

“Thinking about what?” All confused and knit and if only Isak had the goddamn luxury to be that unaware.

“Ev-en,” he groaned instead, putting his forehead on his arms on the desk.

“What did he do??”

Now it was concerned, like Isak was frustrated with his boyfriend and oh boy, was he, currently extremely extremely very sexually frustrated.

What did he do.

“Me,” Isak groaned again and Jonas’s eyes went wide, suddenly realizing that was not a displeasure groan, that was a pleasure one.

“Dude, we’re in fucking class.”

“And all I can think about is getting fucked, so.”

“Chill,” Jonas suggested and Isak threw up a sexually frustrated hand.

“I don’t know how.”

“Here. Numbers. Focus. Mental cold shower, let’s go.”

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Tirsdag, 18:22
18.04.17

The stacked windows were reflecting the last bits of sun, sidewalks already cast in shadow as the sun dipped below the roofs lining the street. The kjøpesenter architecture in sentrum was just gorgeous, glass curved corner buildings and traditional multi-storied apartment-over-shops with decorated roofs, pale stone giving way to brick a block down.

Massive trees dotting the sidewalk, new cobblestone pathways to little shops in alleys, the bustle of traffic over the wide roads splitting the shopping center in half.

Oslo was so fucking gorgeous, and they were only a 12 minute bus ride from Nissen.
They'd chatted the entire bus ride and they hadn't stopped chatting since. Eva had asked him where he got his accent from and he'd asked her the same, then they'd launched into detailed backstories interrupted by the multitude of stores they kept dragging each other into.

They were shopping, or mostly window shopping, Eva wanted new summer clothes but there wasn't any particular urgency so it was a lot of trying things on and laughing at each other's hat choices.

Personally Even thought he looked fantastic in the black caps he kept scooping up but Eva said he looked like a baseball dad, if he was gonna wear a cap it had to have something *iconic* on it, not a boring brand.

“Oh my god, look how dramatic this is. It's totally you!”

Even pursed his mouth, eyebrows up judgily as Eva waved the red green white flowered cloth at him.

“You have the perfect hair for bandanas, and it matches your hoodie too,” she pointed out, waving it again.

Even sighed and tied it around his head. Eva clapped her hands, head tipping as she cooed how much he looked like a model, to which he grabbed a second and tied it around her hair Rosie style, then bought them both so they could match.

It was a really fun, easy afternoon, full of laughing and storytelling and occasionally pointing out really attractive people passing by. And high fiving when Even pointed out,

“That couple over there, damn.”

“Which one’s more attractive?”

“...both.”

“Definitely both.”

The high five had them both smiling as they rounded the corner into an open square, foot traffic only, lined with shops and benches.

“Hey speaking of attractive couples,” Eva bumped into him and Even smiled cockily, readjusting the fingers curled around the rope-handled shopping bag slung over his shoulder. “I mean let's be real, the two of you are both extremely hot,”

“We are, it's true. It’s kinda wild we’ve only got like. A few photos together.”

“Kødder du? You should like...have a photoshoot or something, it’d be *super* cute.”

“That’s actually a really good idea.”

“I do have the best ideas,” she informed him. “But anyways--”

Eva plopped down on one of the benches, legs crossing and Even sat their bag down, throwing an arm up over the back of the bench and an ankle up over his knee.

“...did I tell you about the last time Isak came over? He was like...*freaking* out.”

Even looked over from where he'd been studying the architecture again, eyebrows up.
“What? What about?”

Her head cocked, hair swinging as she gave him a knowing look.

“About you breaking up with him when you graduate.”

“What?”

He sat up so fast he knocked the bag on the ground over, scooping it back up on instinct, eyes so wide Eva’s eyebrows shot up too.

That’d been literally the last thing he’d expected to hear, maybe ever. And it was maybe a little more serious than how’s your college search going.

What the actual fuck.

“I know,” Eva echoed, tucking her hair behind her ear with that same witty look. “I told him he was being stupid.”

“Holy...shit.”

She clicked her tongue with an agreeing sigh but Even’s head was still fucking reeling. Isak thought...

Stupid was like. So far from the right word there but what in hell-- where did Isak even--

“What...what in hell makes him think that??”

“Deep-bedded insecurities that are gonna take more than dick to get over,” she said and Even opened his mouth to reply, and found himself at a complete loss of words.

He kinda just collapsed back into the bench instead, staring at nothing. Eva watched him, letting him process, studying the utter shock on his face and confirming everything she’d hopefully told Isak about how far out of left field that was.

Why in hell would he ever--

Just because he wasn’t gonna be at Nissen anymore, Isak thought Even wouldn’t--

What?

He shoved a hand through his hair, probably fucking it up too high and wild over the top of his bandana but he didn’t notice or care, his beautiful precious boyfriend thought Even was planning to break up with him.

“Fuck.”

“I think he’s doing a little better with the idea now, but.” She lifted a shoulder and Even pursed his lips, breathing out slow in an O. They were gonna communicate, everything was gonna be fine, he was gonna stomp that fear right into the ground because graduation did not have to be tied to breakups, holy fuck.

“That’s probably what he was gonna talk to me about, wasn’t it?”

“Either that or the kinky shit we were talking about,” she offered.
Even sat up again.

“Oooo, that’s what I like to hear, what kinky shit?”

She laughed brightly, tilting into him with that pretty smile before she was cocking her head, giving him that Look™.

“You can find out from him.”

“Ugh,” he groaned, sagging back to the bench again. “Thanks for the help.”

“Anytime,” she said brightly and Even smiled, letting the world tip back on its axis. Whatever all of this was, they could figure it out. It was them. There was nothing they couldn’t handle.

So he looked back over at one of his boyfriend’s closest friends, who was pretty quickly shaping up to be one of his closest friends too.

They all were.

“Swing by Arkaden on the way back?”

“Only if we get froyo.”

“Who goes to Arkaden and doesn't get froyo??”

Onsdag, 08:38
19.04.17

Graduation didn’t have to be tied to break-ups.

Even shoved his foot into his boot, making a frustrated noise when the heel caught and he had to reach down, untying the laces and tugging it off to put it back on properly.

This hallway was significantly emptier without Isak putting on his shoes with him. The first time Even had brought him here, it’d been such a trip, the beautiful boy he'd been crushing on closing the door behind them as they kicked off their shoes and Even called out to see if his parents were home.

He wanted to be stepping into this hallway ten years from now with Isak’s hand still being the one closing the door behind them, with Isak’s shoes still being toed off next to his.

That’s what he wanted, graduation didn’t have to be tied to break-ups.

But if Even went away for school, it wasn’t fucking fair to keep Isak here holding on for no reason. It wasn’t fucking fair, maybe Isak thought that because deep down Isak thought that was what was best, for them to go their separate ways for good. How could Even go off to some fancy university somewhere and ask someone that bright and beautiful and alive to just.

Be alone, and wait for him?

He knew in his bones he’d never find anyone like Isak Valtersen again, ever, that Isak was his last
and only shot at the life he’d dreamed about and thought he’d never get but how could he ask forever of a boy who’d never even gotten the chance to have somebody else?

Somebody who wasn’t so hard to be with?

No fucking wonder, of course Isak didn't think he was a sure thing. Of course Isak went to his friends freaking out about how Even might break up with him, how could he not when Even kept making it clear how the smallest thing could ruin everything, Even kept thinking too much, running in circles and tying his laces too tight for the boots to keep dropping and.

How was he supposed to promise anything now?

Onsdag, 11:18
19.04.17
They were both sitting in the windowsill, Isak on his side with a mug in his hands and Even with a
knee up, sketchbook propped up and pencil eraser silently thudding the blank page every few seconds.

The sun was setting on the other side of the house, leaving the sky on this side in a gradient of gold to blue, everything quiet for a few moments. Isak was probably acutely aware that Even’s pencil hadn’t touched the paper yet, they’d been chilling here for long enough now it had to be obvious.

But Isak didn’t say anything, taking slow sips of his tea, gaze sliding from out the window to down at his mug, swirling it in a little circle, eyelashes fanning long over his cheekbones.

They were always doing going living so bright hard fast, times like this that weren’t directly linked to orgasms were rare and few between.

Only this kind of quiet wasn’t the kind that shut his brain up, it was the kind that let him think, and think, and bury, and think,

“Do you ever wish I were normal?” Even asked the windowpane and Isak’s head snapped up.

Green eyes so intense on him that Even had to glance over, meeting all of that emotion for the brief second he could stand it before he was looking down, closing blinds. Waiting blankly.

“... nei, never.” Isak was serene, sure. “Why? Do you?”

“Ja,” he said quietly, fingertips worrying over the hem of the t-shirt he was wearing. It rode up a little, just barely, so it had to be Isak’s.

“Baby,” Isak said and Even looked out the window because he couldn’t do that tone.

“I just wanna stop having to be strong all the time.”

Isak reached over the space between them, taking Even’s hand and tugging his arm a little as he settled back against the windowsill. Holding on tight. Even curled his fingers around Isak’s hand, guitar calluses brushing over smooth skin.

“I keep telling myself I have the stamina to do this but it’s...there’s not a finish line, ever. I just.” Even forced himself to breathe in, hand squeezing on its own. “I’m stuck like this for the rest of my life. For forever, until I die.”

It barely had time to echo, that’s dark though, before that voice was lifting.

“You’re stuck with me that long too,” Isak said simply and Even’s eyes snapped over instantly. Isak dipped his head slightly, holding his gaze tight his hand. “Do you have the stamina for that?”

There was a crooked little side smile with it, sparkling under the surface of the peaceful sweet.

Even smiled fondly to himself, head ducked as his thumb rubbed over the side of Isak’s hand. Nothing was fixed and for some reason there were stitches in his chest anyways.

“Guess I’ll keep being a gym regular, huh?”

“Guess so,” Isak replied, falling back into silence. Even nodded once and looked back out the window and let Isak watch him with green eyes warm simple undissecting.

He stayed in his head, didn’t pull out of anything but he kept rubbing his thumb over Isak’s hand every few minutes, the occasional slide back whispering Isak was happy to stay here and let him. So he did.
“It’s kinda strange, that we’ve known each other this long and you haven’t seen my house yet.”
Even nudged his boots up against the wall and Jonas made a vague sound of agreement behind him, shoes toeing off too.

“I know Isak practically lives here. Although it’s actually not at all what I pictured.”

“Really? What did you picture?”
They’d walked past the living room, kitchen, turning into the hallway while Jonas looked around.

“Something more pretentious, honestly.” Even laughed, swinging open the french doors to his bedroom. Jonas followed him inside, making a surprised face at the bunk bed. “Although I think it definitely fits you.”

“Takk. You can just set your stuff wherever.”

“Cool.” Jonas shrugged off his backpack, wandering into the room with the same curious head tilt Isak had.

Only he didn’t pause at the closet doors to smile cutely and tell Even he liked his drawings, he turned for the door and did a fucking doubletake.

“Holy shit.”
Even glanced over, looking between Jonas’s wide eyes and the door, where fuck, right, his sketch of Isak was hanging, taped up and bigger than everything else, the beautiful naked boy with Even’s touch against his cheek.

Jeez. No wonder Jonas’s eyes were so wide.

“Uh...yeah, sorry, I know it’s--” Even waved a desperate hand, fumbling for words. What, hella intimate? gotta be strange to see your best friend drawn in post-orgasmic softness like that?

“Nei, it’s really good, it looks exactly like him.” Jonas took a step closer, leaning in to study it and Even blinked a few times.

“Oh. Takk.”

Jonas nodded, curls shifting as he glanced over at Even, sharp silver eyes back on the drawing as he lifted a hand from his pocket,

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen him that chill though, like, ever.”

“I mean, when you’re good,” Even lifted a shoulder a little cockily and Jonas barked a laugh, mouth open in surprise before they were both smiling and Even picked up a guitar to hand over.

It’d been fun getting to know each other, they had a surprising amount in common that had
absolutely nothing to do with Isak or why Isak was friends with either of them. Music, film, social justice issues and heated discussion over the constructs of society, and well.

Noora and Sana pretended to be upset about it, confronting them in the courtyard with a declaration that they now had competition as the social justice warrior team at Nissen.

The two of them standing with their arms crossed looking unimpressed at Jonas and Even, who were both rolling their eyes and crossing their arms right back.

“It’s kinda archaic to suggest that just because we’re different genders we’re on opposite sides,” Even pointed out and Sana’s mouth pursed sharp enough her dimples popped, head cocking sassily, “Equality doesn’t mean there can’t still be conflict.”

“But don’t you think it’s playing into the oppressive agenda to--”

“We’re not having a social justice off,” Mahdi interrupted walking by, to which Jonas threw up a hand.

“The girls started it, they suggested that--”

They’d had plenty of interesting lunch conversations, that was for sure. And honestly he wasn’t sure where in the world he’d be on his project right now without Jonas, so there was that too. But all they ever did was work on things, so Even had invited him over for a jam session, to just hang out. They both played guitar, no reason not to play together.

So now they were chilling on Even’s floor, propped on couch cushions with an acoustic for Jonas and Even’s electric plugged into a little amp while Jonas told him all about how he and this guy used to play rap songs on guitar, to which Even had replied no fucking way and started a debate over which would be the coolest artist to translate to acoustic.

It eventually shifted into showing off the coolest songs they knew to each other, which actually turned out to be in the same key so Even had Jonas play the chorus again while he played a solo over the top of it.

They were joking and laughing and having a hell of a nice time when in between songs the front door suddenly opened with a jingle and a scuffle.

Even muted his strings, eyebrows shooting up.

“What time is it?”

Jonas glanced down at his phone, “16:41.”

“Hmm, it’s a toss up. Little early to be my mom, it’s probably Isak.”

Even cocked his head to listen for boots dropping, only it was covered by Jonas’s scoff, high-pitched surprise.

“He has a key?”

“...yes.”

Dark eyebrows up, giving Even a look with his tongue in his cheek. Even gave him a look right back, head tipping with it.
“It's early, I know, but it just got really inconvenient to let him in all the time.” The judgy look deepened a little. Even threw up a hand. “It wasn’t my idea.”

Jonas shrugged, head tipping back and forth as he debated it over, but Jonas had been in contact with his mother, so clearly.

“Fair.”

“And I apologize in advance for anything he says before he knows you're here.”

“Hey babe!” Isak called from the hallway only there wasn’t a pause so Even didn’t have a chance to interrupt.

He and Jonas turned for the open doorway, where Isak’s voice carried through over a shout,

“When the fuck are we getting tested so we can stop wasting rubber and I can ride you bareback? I still haven’t felt you come insi--”

Jonas choked on his water and Isak turned the corner and Even blinked helplessly up at the ceiling all at once.

The words cut off in his throat with the stutter of his feet,

“Oh my god.” Green eyes going wide as his jaw dropped at the sight of them both,

“I had no idea you were-- Jonas! Hi!” Isak squeaked.

Even put a hand over his eyes. “That was so much worse than I was picturing.”

and Jonas managed to swallow and lift his eyebrows at Isak standing there burning red in the doorway.

“I'm glad you're being responsible and having safe sex,” Jonas told him and Isak’s reply was still up three octaves.

“Takk. You weren't supposed to--”

Even lifted his head, hand waving out with it.

“Babe, we've talked about this, with you're as loud and dramatic as you are--”

“I know, I know, it's my own fault I say shit like that in front of people, I know, I got that bright and clear while you laughed at me about it for an entire hour on Valentine’s.”

Isak took Even’s other acoustic off its stand, swinging his backpack onto the couch and scooping up a pillow too then he was plopping down in a circle with the two of them.

“You had other memorable talks on Valentine’s?” Jonas asked, picking a pick back up while Even turned the volume down on the amp.

“We were chatting and Isak lowkey shouted ‘fine let's go have sex in the boys bathroom’ right as a gang of first year girls came around the corner.”

Isak made a face, mouth pursed to the side. Jonas took one look between them and started laughing.

“Wait, wait. You guys have sex in the boys bathroom??”
“It's where we met, we have an excuse,” Even defended. Isak attempted to wrangle his fingers between C and D chords.

“...you met in the boys bathroom???”

“You don't know this story?” Isak lifted his head, eyebrows knit at Jonas’s dropped jaw. “What the fuck you totally do, I told you guys at lunch. Remember there was that guy who stole all. The fucking. Paper. Towels.”

“That was you???” Jonas spun wide eyes mouth on Even, who made a yikes face in return. Then Jonas was laughing again, doubling over a little with it, “Oh my god, that's how you guys met?”

“Well I saw him on the first day of school and I couldn't grab his attention for fucking like. Forty days or some shit, so I was desperate, okay.”

“And that's-- that's why you told Magnus the, the desperate--”

Jonas was like tearing up he was laughing so hard and Isak sighed heavily, shaking his head while his gaze flicked up to meet Even’s sparkly one.

“I know, we're adorable.”

Jonas was still snickering, amusement bubbling while they smiled at each other softly.

“It worked, so…”

“It did,” Isak confirmed, then Even was leaning over to kiss him on the mouth.

Isak smiled, dimples wide and kissed him back.

Jonas tapered down the giggles, fading into a smile too. They kissed one more time then Isak was sitting up again, adjusting the guitar in his lap.

“Okay, so what are we playing?”

“Something too hard for you,” Even and Jonas replied at the same time, making them both crack up and high five each other while Isak rolled his eyes.

There were way worse things than his best friend and his boyfriend being this close, he couldn’t fake any bite in the comeback.

“Let me be the fucking backtrack then, fuck you guys.”

Someone was at least merciful enough to tell him what key they were playing in, so Isak started playing around with block chords and hitting random notes in the changes to see what sounded good. Both the boys were mostly ignoring him, but he was having fun.

Even was playing his dancing fingerpicking shit over the top of Jonas’s fancy chord strumming patterns. It sounded cool as hell, so he eventually just folded his arms over the top of his guitar to listen.

“Nice backtrack,” Jonas commented, glancing between his hands and Even’s.

“Shut up, that sounds too cool.”

Even smiled, wide and crinkling up by his eyes. Isak’s head cocked of its own accord, chin propped
on his hand, gazing softly at the beautiful boy singing melodies over all those grounded chords.

It was times like these he could hardly believe it, how fucking lucky he was. He had a boyfriend, one that he was so fucking in love with, one that loved him back. A boyfriend he could sit on the floor with and watch play guitar with Jonas.

This was literally better than anything Isak would’ve ever dared to hope for.

It was written all over his face. Dreamy, lovestruck. Homeward bound. The blonde curls were long enough now sometimes they flopped forward and made him look fifteen again, that kid that was so goddamn lonely Jonas turned down a weekend of cabin sex to make sure his best friend didn't wander around by himself and.

And Isak wasn’t alone anymore, Isak didn’t hurt anymore, Isak wasn’t going through all that pain, Isak had this. Even. Someone to love him the way he deserved, someone who loved him enough to want to be Jonas’s friend too and that, that beat everything.

This was everything he’d ever wanted for that kid. So Jonas strummed another chord while Isak mooned over Even, Isak’s damn missing piece, and Jonas watched them both with a quiet smile on his face.

They’d come a long way from jealous Wonderwall.

The moment locked away in both of their chests, Even’s head dipped, hair swirled, too busy playing to pay attention to the settling atmosphere but that was fine, Isak was in love and Jonas had never been happier for him.

A buzzing burst in to shatter the softness and they both glanced over, Isak digging his phone out of his pocket from where it’d vibrated hard against the guitar.

Isak’s tongue between his lips as he unlocked the phone and Jonas offered a quiet, “switch to minor?” to which Even instantly turned over with him, dropping the third half a step and shifting all the chords this side of eerie.

“E minor feels like such a cop out though, A instead?”

Jonas nodded and adjusted into the new chord, glancing over at Isak.

Who was scanning down his screen, face falling with it.

“What’s up?” Jonas asked, strumming into a double rhythm.

Isak’s eyes finally tore away from the screen, not to look at either of them, though. He was staring at nothing, and that’s when Jonas finally noticed his knuckles were white around the grip of his phone.

The melody tapered off as Even’s fingers slowed to a stop, both of them catching the shift that time.

“Isak?” Jonas muted his guitar strings, trying to get any kind of read off of the expression but Isak was just entirely blank, fingers trembling a little.

Otherwise perfectly still and he’d reach over but that could mean a couple of things and he didn’t want to be wrong--

Then Isak’s gaze flickered down to his lap, slowly holding the phone out in Jonas’s direction.

He lit up the screen, unlocking it again and registering the name at the top first. Shit.
Shit.

Shit.

Reading it twice wasn’t enough to process it, it still hadn’t sunk in by the time he lifted his head, eyes wide as he went to numbly hand the phone back.

Isak waved it over, eyes falling shut, gesture clear so Jonas handed it to Even instead.

The relief exhaling from Even’s chest wasn’t gonna last long, Isak wanted him to know but that wasn’t something he’d want to know and.

Yeah, Even only read it once, if the soft gasp and hand covering his mouth were any indication.

The phone practically fell back into Jonas’s palm, their gazes locking for a moment - fucking hell - before they were both turning to the boy sitting there dejected, silent.

“Isak,” Jonas started and that was as far as he got before Isak was swinging the guitar aside and pushing instantly to his feet.

“I’m gonna.” A stuttering pause, not looking at either of them. “I’m gonna go home, I think.”

“Baby,” Even interjected, so hurt, setting his guitar aside but Isak was backpedaling before Even could reach for him, mouth open and bright eyes blank.

“I’ll be fine, I just need a minute alone.”

“Can we walk you home?” Jonas asked carefully, fighting the urge to leap up and grab those tall shoulders.

Isak shook his head no, taking a step for the door.

“Issy,” he tried, as soft as he could be without crushing Isak with it only there were already tears in his eyes as he stopped in the doorway, frozen, hesitating.

The whole room was glazed over, silent words hovering over them and rushing under their feet in the undercurrent. Even’s eyes were as wide as Isak’s, looking half terrified and very out of his depth and that was okay, this was all gonna be okay, Jonas just had to talk Isak away from the walls he shoved up hard and fast the fucking second the word parents twisted into his gut.

But Jonas had done this before, god knows he’d done this enough fucking times, they were gonna get through it just fine--

The front door jingled open.

“Boys!” A woman’s voice, lilting loud and joyous, “I see your shoes, I’m ho-ome!”

A single tear slipped helplessly down his cheek and Jonas and Even both shoved upright, on their feet as Even shot him a quick,

“I’ll go get Liv,” as Jonas got an arm around Isak’s shoulders, “we’re gonna start walking,” guiding the teary boy into the hallway.

Even ran ahead of them, hushed words with his mother then he was dragging her off somewhere, because they didn’t see her on the way out. Isak was shut down, devastatingly numb while he put on his shoes and let Jonas hold out his jacket for him, guide him out the door and down the stairs, into
the biting wind outside.

“She’s gonna be okay,” Jonas promised and Isak nodded.

Another tear splattered involuntarily when he blinked, nothing to do with the wind. Jonas bundled Isak tighter to his side, tugging him along the sidewalk a little faster.

Barely a minute passed before their third caught up; Even came running up to the other side of Isak’s shoulders, arm snaking around his waist, fingers bumping Jonas’s hip as his other hand lifted to wipe over Isak’s cheeks.

Isak startled a little at the touch, breath catching in his throat. Even’s eyebrows were knit up all painfully as he ducked over to kiss the top of his head.

“You sure you want to be alone right now?” He asked, gaze all over the torn up face and Isak nodded, wiping a hand over his eyes, still not looking at either of them.

“Ja.”

“Do you mind if we hang out in your living room?” Jonas offered it as nonchalant as possible, Even and I are just gonna chill at your place, is that cool, that’s fine right,

Isak lifted a shoulder, crinkling up a little, wincing.

“I really just don’t wanna deal with this,” he whispered.

The broken sound Even made kissing the side of Isak’s face made Jonas’s chest tight, fighting off the mental image of the mental institutions while he rubbed Isak’s shoulder hard.

“Let us deal with it, okay? I’ll text back Terje, get the details of what’s happening and Even can explain to your flatmates and make you food, then we can all watch a movie and forget instead of wallow and worry, how’s that?”

“Okay,” Isak whispered, too unstable to fight anymore, the way Jonas fucking knew he’d cave and he hated that he knew that and he hated that he was right, again, another tear slipping. “Okay.”

They were halfway through the movie when Isak broke, turning into Even’s shoulder and starting to cry. Jonas made a miserable sound, heart aching in his chest while Even gathered him in close, taking the shuddering body against his own.

Jonas scooped up Isak’s phone from the bedside table and threw a thumb for the door, mouthing *you got him?* to Even over the top of where he was stroking Isak’s curls.

A solemn nod in return and Jonas headed out of the room, closing it all but a crack behind him.

Then he was pressing dial, holding his breath and preparing for the oncoming slaughter of talking to Isak’s father, who hated his guts, to find out why in hell Marianne was in the hospital’s psych ward emergency care and why the fuck Terje decided now was when Isak needed to come “home,” immediately, no questions asked.

He rounded the corner into the streaming white kitchen, through to the array of living room couches while he waited for Terje to pick up and bitterly thought no, no, this was home. This was home.
It was the first time he’d made breakfast in this kitchen and been this upset.

Cooking usually calmed him down, made life easier to take, put him back in control but this morning he was going through the motions, whipping things together and asking quietly for Jonas to put in toast, start the kettle.

The two of them sat down to the least passionate meal Even had ever made, eating quietly together in the too bright morning light of the kitchen table. They’d already talked over the details so there was nothing left to say, waiting for the tired boy to come stumbling around the corner.

They both turned, heart tugging in time with the back of pale hands rubbing over green eyes. Isak was in one of Even’s shirts and it was big enough on him it hung off his collarbones, paired with long curls wild over his forehead to send him five years younger.

Even took his hand and pulled him down instantly into his lap, sliding two hands up into his curls, cupping the sides of his head while Isak squinted at the lights and at Jonas, a moment of quiet before he reached over to take an orange slice off his plate.

Then the fragile pale white haze broke, Isak’s voice low and raw enough to be gravel beneath the whisper.

“So what’s the update?” Green eyes dull on Jonas, who was tearing off another piece of toast to stack eggs on, a distraction from the shattering corners.

“First of all, physically she’s fine.”

Even slid his hands down to Isak’s stomach, forehead on the back of his neck as he held him tight. Isak didn’t cover his hands or hold him back.

“Okay,” he said. “Then why is she in the hospital?”

“Well.” Jonas swallowed, glancing up to the hurt expression before it was back to his plate. “She wasn’t, physically fine at first but she’s healing fine.”

“From,” Isak said.

“She kinda snapped.”

“From,” he said again and Jonas sighed, putting down his fork and looking up, finally holding the burn in all that broken green.

“How much of this story do you really need, Isak?”

It was so protective and sure, a quiet moment of thanks from the boy holding Isak tight, because he wasn’t sure he could do this alone.

“She’s my mom,” Isak replied and that sigh was a little more exasperated, maybe he wasn’t the only one grateful not to be handling Isak alone right now.

“I know she is.” Jonas sat down his glass, looking right at Isak, hard, words he’d said how many times now. “And you owe her nothing.”
“Just because she’s sick?”

The gravely voice twisted nasty that time and Even lifted his head, looking over Isak’s shoulder at him.

“Hey,” he interjected and Isak glanced over at him, the look on his face, the tightened grip before he was turning dully back to Jonas, correcting himself.

“Sorry, not-well.”

“That’s not what I’m hey-ing,” Even said, squeezing his arms secure over Isak’s stomach. Dark lashes fluttered. “You don’t owe her anything, Isak. Being mentally ill doesn’t give you a free pass. Neither of them took care of you.”

Isak looked away, tugging a bit out of his lap and Even readjusted a tighter grip, dragging him right back in.

“The fuck do you think you owe them? Your dad left you both. And no kid deserves to have any responsibility for someone with a mental illness.”

“I have a responsibility for you,” Isak shot back, eyes on the table. Even kept watching the pained profile, looking at his boyfriend so fucking sadly Jonas had to look away.

“Baby, don’t make this about me.”

Isak was tearing up. Knuckles white where his fingers were curled around the edge of the table.

“I have to do something, she’s in the hospital, Even.”

“You don’t have to do anything. You don’t owe her anything. I know you want to be there for her, but what your dad is asking is unfair to you. You have to think about you too.”

It was so soft and sure and hurt and Isak couldn’t deal with him right now, so he turned to look back at Jonas instead.

“What did Dad text back?” Isak asked him, wishing he didn’t know the bitter expression on his best friend’s face so damn well.

“I called him,” Jonas said and Isak raised his eyebrows dully.

“No shit.”

“Yes shit, and it was shit, he still hates me in case you’re wondering.”

“Yeah, well.”

It’s mutual, Isak didn’t say but Jonas heard it, which was true. However much Terje hated Jonas, Jonas could promise he hated Terje motherfucking double.

“And I think he hates me more now, because I lowkey told him to shove it.”

“You...what??”

“Lowkey,” Jonas insisted and Isak put his forehead down on the heel of his hand, elbow propped on the table, eyes falling shut.
“I told him you weren’t coming back there, that you had a life now that couldn’t handle their stress on top of it. That if he loved you as his son, he’d never ask you to go back there.”

Isak lifted his head, hand still in the air, eyes on the table.

“I never should’ve given you my phone.”

“That’s not fair,” Even interrupted, shaking Isak a little with it. “Everything Jonas said is true. You’re almost eighteen, Isak, it’s not like this is a stretch at all anymore. You’d be moving out soon anyways.”

“In case you’re both forgetting, I still have to pay rent. I can’t just cut them out of my life, like realistically, I physically can not do that.”

“Oh, like you don’t have other options.” Jonas scoffed, leaning back in his chair with a deep line between his eyebrows, “You could live with either one of us with no problems, no burden and you fucking know that.”

Isak stared at Jonas for a moment. Unstoppable force meets immovable object but Jonas had done this enough times, Isak should know by now, he wasn’t fucking budging.

“She’s in the hospital,” Isak said and apparently that was the straw because he was suddenly being lifted with two hands on his waist, turned completely sideways in Even’s lap as the hurt blue eyes forced green to meet them.

“What are you gonna do to fix that, huh?”

“I’m not trying to--”

“Then what are you trying to do?”

Isak blinked owlishly at his boyfriend, again, and by the third time his lashes closed to open they came back wet, watery, fingers starting to tremble where they were curled on the table.

“I can’t do nothing.”

It was so broken and quiet and scared, the underneath of all the numb and Jonas reached across the table, scooting plates aside as he closed his hand over the top of Isak’s shaky one.

“We’ll go see her, if the hospital says we can,” Jonas told him, leaning into the promise. “You and me, Is, we’ll go see her, okay? That’s nothing. That’s the best any child can do for their parent.”

Isak’s bottom lip was trembling now too. A snifflle, eyes downcast, looking away from them both. Barely above a whisper, terrified to say it and unable not to let it spill.

“Why is she there?”

“You know why,” Jonas told him quietly and Isak started to cry.

The tears didn’t make it past falling onto his cheeks before Even pulled Isak’s head down, temple onto his shoulder, nose tucked against his neck to rock him comfortingly in the kitchen chair.

Jonas let go of the hand, watching it curl up in the collar of Even’s shirt instead, clinging. Even had a hand in his curls and his eyes shut, holding back just as tight. Back and forth, back and forth.

Just back for him, leaning against the spine of his chair as he breathed out slow, gaze out the
window. They were gonna be okay, all of them. They’d keep holding and talking and supporting
and between the three of them, there was no way they wouldn’t make it through this.

The silence wasn’t silent, no peace just shattered when Isak’s little hiccuped sobs shook the whole
room, but they eventually settled down into quiet sniffing shudders, soothed all the way quiet by the
stroking thumb over his curls.

“Do you wanna skip school today?” Even asked softly, Jonas’s eyes back on them as Isak shook his
head.

“Nei, we should go. If I skip, one of you two will too.”

“Well at least he’s accepted it,” Jonas offered and Even lifted his head to offer a small smile to Jonas
over the top of the unruly blonde curls, rocking Isak a little tighter.

“You sure?”

“It’ll get his mind off everything too.” Jonas pursed his mouth to the side sympathetically as Even
nodded, understanding.

And Isak sucked in a breath, pushing off Even’s shoulder to sit up and wipe two broad hands over
his face, both of their eyes on him.

The palms popped free eventually, eyes nose red, tear stained cheeks, curls stuck to his forehead and
pouty mouth still trembling, cupid’s bow unstable, lashes downcast.

“I’ll go get dressed.”

“All right.” Even ran a hand over the side of his face and Isak’s lashes fluttered, pained, before he was
pulling away with another inhale. Even kept watching him. “Do you want me to pack you a lunch?”

“Sure,” he said, no inflection at all, then he was climbing off Even’s lap, their hands trailing and
dropping and he didn’t look over his shoulder once as he turned the hallway to head quietly for his
room.

Even knew the house well enough to know the moment he was out of earshot.

“Fuck,” he said eloquently, wide blue eyes on the table, hand curled over the place Isak’s had been
trembling.

Jonas reached over and took his too, making Even’s eyes lift. Jonas shook his hand once, I’m here,
let me carry you too, before he was giving Even his hand back and leaning against his chair again.

The smile on Even’s face was small and tired, mouth open over a steadying inhale, breathing out
slow.

“Hey, man, I think you handled that really well, all things considered.”

“Takk,” he replied, looking over his shoulder for the hallway. “This fucking sucks.”

“Yeah, everything with his parents always sucks.” Two hands planted on the table to shove him up,
then Jonas was grabbing both of their plates and starting for the sink, talking to Even over his
shoulder. “I’ve been trying to like, permanently remove them from his life for years. Or at least from
his head.”

Even stepped up beside him, unwrapping a loaf of bread, glancing over as Jonas took out three
sandwich bags, glanced over too.

“I would fucking adopt him if it made him stop feeling obligated to them.”

Even snorted. Jonas gave him a look.

“I’m not fucking kidding.”

“I know you’re not.” Eyebrows up, white kitchen soft and quiet, a broken boy down the hall they were ready to go into war for. That made them brothers in arms, didn’t it?

They both smiled at each other and started around the kitchen packing lunch for Isak.

Lørdag, 17:58
22.04.17

He was attempting to not deal with anything by half-assedly doing homework in his room but Even kept texting him, Jonas kept calling, Eskild kept popping his head in, even Linn opened his door and asked if he felt like watching a movie with her.

It was fucking frustrating, and he kept telling everyone he was fine, no thank you, leave him alone please now immediately before he started crying or just like got up and left and kept walking until he ended up on a doorstep he hadn’t been to in almost a year now.

Come home immediately, now, his dad had said we need you nå and Isak had locked himself away in the tower never to return home because if he left his room he fucking might and--

Another knock at the door.

“Hva??” He whined, because really, what the fuck was happening now couldn’t they just catch the fucking hint and leave him alone--

The door opened. It was Noora.

“Listen, I’m fine, I don’t need--”

“Kollektivet is going out for coffee, you’re coming with us,” she informed him, red mouth pursing.

Isak gave her and unimpressed look.

“Like I don’t know this is a ploy to get me out of my room.”

“What? Nei. This has been on the flat calendar for weeks.”

“The flat...what? We don’t have a flat calendar.”

Which was how he came into the kitchen to see a white board propped newly against the wall, tucked behind the table, with the words kollektivet coffee scribbled on today’s date.

Isak gave them all an unimpressed look. The words probably weren’t even dry.
But there were two arms looping through his, leaving to complain that wait, they couldn’t go, he didn’t have his keys, a jacket--

“All of the rest of us have keys, it’s like 20 degrees outside, you have your phone, and us, there’s nothing else you need.”

He apparently didn’t have a choice in the matter, because the next thing he knew they were at a table in kb, the four of them with a round of coffees already in front of them and a lively debate already started up over the sanctity of creamers and black coffee and masculinity and tradition, which Isak spent most of the time staring wide-eyed at until Linn mentioned off hand that he drank girly coffee.

“Since when does coffee have a gender???” He shot back, scooting his mug closer with a sour face.

Which dropped instantly at the high fives that went around, cheers and smiles for all three.

“...did you just say that on purpose to get me to-- ugh, fuck you guys.”

“I’m so proud you’ve become a spokesperson for the feminist community,” Noora told him, hands folded under her chin and head tipping dreamily, ponytail whipping hard enough to brush his shoulder.

“I’m not--I’m not a spokesperson for ?? anything,” he sputtered, to which Eskild’s gave him a very unimpressed face from the catty corner seat.

“I heard you gave a very riveting speech on the LHBT community to Vilde.”

“Okay, but that’s--” Isak paused, struggling a moment before giving in, throwing up a hand and picking up his coffee to sip instead of dealing with whatever damn game they were playing.

“Oh Eskild, did I show you the photo I got of Isak and Even the other day?”

“Oo, is it cuter than the one I did?”

“You guys...what?”

“He’s paying attention now,” Linn offered and Noora smiled brightly, opening up her phone. Isak put down his coffee and leaned over.

The phone went right back out of sight, tipping away as the corners of Noora’s mouth dragged down exaggeratedly.

“Oh c’mon, really?”

“I thought you weren’t interested in coming out for coffee with us.”

“You-- oh fuck you guys, I’m here, aren’t I?”

“He is, he is,” Eskild agreed, waving a hand at her. “Picture, c’mon, show everybody.”

Noora turned around her phone, picture up of him and Even on the couch, laying overlapped with some movie distant in the background and Isak scoffed, leaning back in his chair to pull his phone out of his pocket.

“I’ve got a cuter photo from the same day.”

“Oh really?”
“Uh, ja, really!”

Noora put her head in a hand, leaning on the little table in front of her then Isak was flipping through his photos, pulling up the selfie he’d taken during that same movie.

Eskild had his phone out too, although his photograph was aimed on them, added to a snapchat story with the heart emoji meant as serious as he’d ever meant it.

They stayed at the cafe all afternoon. By the time they were walking home the sun was low in the sky and Eskild’s arm was around Isak’s shoulders, jostling the boy into his side with a tiny side smile
They’d all completely avoided talking about it, but things were good and Isak was probably gonna retreat to his room the moment they got back. Now was the time to say it, so Eskild tapped Isak’s shoulder absently, keeping his voice as damn casual as possible.

“Hey, don’t worry about rent for a little while, okay? We can put you to work around the house for a bit to hold your own until we figure things out.”

Isak turned wide eyes on him, looking terribly off guard, but it wasn’t like Eskild hadn’t heard the heartbreaking conversation he’d had with Jonas and Even over breakfast on Friday, rent should be the last fucking thing on the kid’s mind right now.

“Eskild,” he started and Eskild shook his head once, sharp, cutting it off instantly.

“Don’t start with me, I won’t take anything from you right now, okay?”

A heavy exhale, shoulders falling, lashes fluttering. Quiet again, breaking everyone’s heart all over again.

“I don’t deserve this.”

“You deserve the world, sweetheart,” Eskild told him.

Isak tipped into him numbly and let Eskild keep him under his arm all the way home.

Home.

Søndag, 11:11
23.04.17
His mom had texted him that, once. From the first moment I saw you on June 21 at 21:21 I have loved you and I will love you for all eternity.

She'd given him everything. She'd given him everything, her acceptance despite her religion, her love despite her faith, and how had he returned it, he'd left and left and left.

Isak hadn't loved her back enough, had he.

And here was the text sitting on his phone, someone else's mom who loved him and who the fuck
was he, showing Liv Bech Næsheim more affection in the four months he'd known her than his mother in the seventeen years he'd known her?

Who the fuck was he.

He couldn't do this, he could not do this.

A patchy inhale and he was wiping fingers under his eyes, coming away wet to thumb out of her contact, click through to Even’s.
Please make your mom stop texting me.

Um. Okay. I'm not home but I'll text her. Are you okay? Can I come over?

Ja, and nei, I'm doing homework.

I can just come sit with you.

I'm fine please don't.

Okay. Just. Let me know if you need anything, alright?

I don't need anything I need people to stop fucking babying me I need my fucking mom to be okay but you can't do that can you.
He deleted every letter slowly, watching the message erase, and sent back a single letter instead. k

Even sent a heart.

Isak didn’t have it in him to send one back.

Mandag, 09:58
24.04.17

He’d never taken this route to his second class before but he didn’t feel like passing Mahdi and Eva in the hallway, better to walk the long way through the wrong hallways.

He just didn’t wanna deal with anyone, not right now, which was of course why the universe decided now was the time to run into none other than one of the most dramatic people he knew.

“Hey, Isak,” a voice called behind him and Isak spun around with a perfectly adequate fake smile

“Hey Chris.”

“You headed this way?” He asked, pointing, strides carrying him right over. Isak adjusted the backpack on his shoulder and kept one corner of his mouth dutifully up.

“Yeah.”

“Fett, I’ll walk with you.” They fell into step, Chris popping his gum and Isak’s eyebrow lifted.

“...okay,” he said, turning the corner in time with dipping shoulders. “What’s up?”

A gaggle of freshmen girls were making gossipy faces that Isak dully ignored.

“Nothing much...just got outta class with E.Bech.”

“Oh, yeah, genetics, right?”

“Ja. Although tbh we just spend most of class talking. Not like our grades aren’t great.”

“Mnhm, I’m sure,” Isak teased a little and cocky smile tipped his way, chin up with it. Fuck he was taller than Chris Schistad, he always fucking forgot that.

“But last week, we were talking about the gym, and about why you were there—”

“He told you that?”

“I mean. You told your best friend, didn’t you?”

“Ja, sorry, I just. I mean like you and I’ve known each other for like. Years, sometimes it’s just weird to cognize that you’re the same Chris that’s his best friend, y’know?”
“It’s chill man, I feel. It’s been kinda weird to have you go from the first year who started all the fights to my best friend’s boyfriend, so.”

“Ja, right…” Isak nodded to himself, tongue between his lips and Chris gave him a dramatic eyebrow raise. He spent too much time with Even. “I didn’t really think about that.”

“Anyways.”

“Right, yeah, anyways.”

“So I was chatting with E.Bech, and like I get why you’d wanna get in like. Fighting shape and whatnot.”

“Wait, so you know about--”

“He’s bipolar, ja, he told me. And I was gonna text you this, but I’ve got this group of friends that all do this dance gig thing and one of them actually teaches martial arts. If you ever wanted me to hook you up with a class or anything, I think it’d be better than like. Strength training, y’know?”

“Oh. Yeah, actually, I’d have to talk to Even about it--”

“Oh I already have. It took a bit of convincing but he’s chill with it. Just hit me up once you two chat and I’ll set it up, ja?”

“Ja, uh. Takk, Chris.”

“No problem, man. Both of you have a good week, yeah?”

“You too,” he offered, then Chris was holding up a hand to clap, their shoulders bumping before he was turning for the hallway out and Isak was drifting the rest of the way to class.

Martial arts classes. For Even. The man he loved, the man he swore to protect. The man he’d known for less than a year, shaping his life around, giving up whatever, everything, to be with, to save.

No one was ever there to protect his mom.

Isak had spent his entire growing up life with her, had known her before anything else and she’d loved him for so long, loved him despite everything, despite him being an abomination to her belief, loved him anyways, and this is what he did in return?

He’d never even tried to help her, had he? Not in any way that counted. Here he was ready to turn the world upside down to be at Even’s side, his first fucking boyfriend, when the person who’d literally given birth to him he’d left for the wayside.

He’d failed her. He’d abandoned her. He was no fucking better than his father.

Actually, he was worse, because now he knew, he knew exactly how much work, how hard it was, the kind of sacrifices you had to make to love someone with demons like that and he still hadn’t tried to help her.

He still hadn’t gone home.

She was in the hospital and she wasn’t okay and she wasn’t safe and it was his fault, she should mean more than Even, she should, she was his mother, he never should’ve fucking left, he should’ve gone back but he hadn’t, he hadn’t, and he’d never--
He’d never protected her.
He’d never saved her.
He’d never done anything. Nothing, he’d done nothing, how could he do nothing, but here he was, nothing.
Nothing.

Mandag, 15:35
24.04.17

They were walking side by side after school. Jonas usually rode his bike but they’d been planning to go since Friday, he’d come prepared to walk today.

It’d been a damn long while since it’d been just the two of them strolling somewhere, on foot, just walking across their city. Walking across their city in matching shoes with Isak’s hands on the straps of his backpack and Jonas’s shoved in his pockets.

He’d mentioned a few things, you hear what that girl Nina wrote on the board in German. Hey look at that decked out bike, bet we’d get across the city half as fast. Is it just me or does Oslo get more filled with tourists every year.

Isak had nodded and given vague replies. Distracted, and undistractable, so Jonas did what he could but he didn’t push it either.

Chatting the whole time wasn’t gonna help anything. The silence they fell into might, though.

It wasn’t comfortable, nothing about this was comfortable, but they were comfortable, he was here for comfort and Isak could feel that, Jonas knew that much.

Their shoulders brushed when he turned corners tighter than Isak did which was good, intentional, the point, I’m here.

Isak might not be listening to what he was saying, but he heard the silence.

Jonas left it long enough, Isak heard it loud enough he finally found the words to break it.

“Jonas?”

Quiet beside him and Jonas kept his head forward, hands still deep in pockets, like it wasn’t the first time Isak had asked for something since this started.

“Ja?”

Quiet beside him and Isak ducked his head down, asking the pavement beneath their feet instead, asking their shoes for answers.

“Why does Dad want me home?”
They’d reached the end of the footbridge, one step back onto sidewalk and Jonas looked over, eyebrows furrowed.

Isak looked back at him, green eyes dull under unruly curls, under the bridge instead of stepping off it.

“He’s never wanted me before.”

Jonas cursed and stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, dragging Isak’s shoulder hard, pulling him roughly into his arms. The hug was a collision, meant to drive those words right out of that bleeding mouth, knocked free from under the disordered halo.

Isak turned into him numbly, blinking shallow against his shoulder, arms weak at his sides.

“He doesn’t fucking deserve for you to call him dad,” Jonas told the damp pavement and Isak pulled back, straightening up, eyes dry.

“Can we keep walking.”

Jonas studied him a moment, shaking his shoulder once, here support and Isak wasn’t looking at him, he was looking dully over his shoulder so Jonas let him go and they kept walking.

Ten more feet before Jonas stepped on the edge of a puddle and bumped into Isak trying to get out of it. Isak barely budged, perfectly unrattled and Jonas sucked in a heavy breath, kept walking beside him.

“He’s a dick and I’m gonna pretend he doesn't exist.” He’d never said anything so stern and serious. The steps beside his almost faltered.

“I don’t know how to do that,” Isak said. Jonas’s shoelace was damp against his ankle.

“Yes you do. Try harder.”

The hospital was cold.

Isak was shivering a little but he caught himself when Jonas put a hand on his shoulder. Shaking it off and forcing himself to stop trembling, switch on numb.

They went up to the desk together. Jonas was the one who spoke. The nurses all exchanged glances while Jonas leaned a hip on the counter, arms crossed over his chest, waiting.

“Marianne Valtersen? I’m sorry, but visitors aren’t allowed in the psych ward.”

“Well can you bring her somewhere we can see her?” Jonas asked, trying to be patient. The nurses exchanged more glances.

Jonas sucked in a breath and walked Isak to the waiting room, all but shoving him down in a chair. Isak sat waiting and Jonas went to go find a fucking doctor or somebody who knew what the fuck was going on, and could tell him what the fuck was going on.

“She had another attack this morning, it’s really not a good time for him to see her.”

“When will it be a good time?” Jonas demanded. The look he got in return was so patient, so sorry, he already heard it before she said it.
“...there might not ever be a good time,” the nurse said and Jonas took a single step backwards, world shaking with it.

It kept shuddering around him, the childhood and baked cookies and pats in curls and would you boys walk Lea with every step but he kept going, down the too white hallway to step into the waiting room. Isak stood up.

Jonas put an arm around his shoulders and lead him all the way outside.

“Where are we going?” He whispered when they’d made it six and a half streets away. Jonas didn’t answer, not for another two and a half until he was sitting the broad shoulders down on a bench.

“Wait here.”

“Okay.”

Isak didn’t move a muscle, not until Jonas was coming back into sight, two kebabs in hand. Isak lifted his gaze and saw him and saw the white crinkling paper and put his head in his hands.

“Fuck.”

Jonas sat back down on the bench, tipping sideways to adjust, hold out one to the boy beside him. Isak lifted his head again, green eyes red rimmed and so damn tired.

“I like hate kebabs now, so you know.”

“Why?” Jonas took a bite out of his, chewing and speaking around it. “We’ve had a hell of a lot of fantastic experiences with them.”

Overgrown hands rubbed thumbs together, gaze stuck on them now.

“You’re gonna tell me I’m not allowed to see her because she’s not getting better.”

Jonas drew in a breath and set the kebabs down, the bench between them.

“Isak.”

“What?” He sounded so exhausted, Jonas almost couldn’t say it. As kind as he could fucking be.

“You knew this day was coming.”

“But now? Now, Jonas, does it have to happen now?”

Jonas studied the tired turned down profile beside him. “Now’s kinda...the best time for it to happen.”

Isak sat up, throwing his hands to his knees, pressing hard.

“I’m seventeen, how in hell is--”

“You’ve got an entire family that loves you. Us boys, your flatmates, the girls. Even. Even’s family. We’re all here for you.”

“Because my mom’s not gonna be.” Green finally turned on him again, flat, accusatory, waiting for him to deny confirm something anything and why was it him, why was it always him that had to be
the one to break that young heart right in half.

Jonas took a deep breath, looking down, straightening out the edge of his shirt. Steeling himself. Then he looked back up and just said it.

“Because your mom might not leave the psych ward this time, Isak.”

There it was, dropped.

“Like...maybe ever.”

Isak stared at him.

Wide eyes, water-free on the pale pink, wind whipping at the curls over his forehead, pushing them further and further away. Jonas stayed steady and watched, waiting for the break, for the tears, hands poised and ready to catch the fall, brace for the scream--

“Okay,” he said.

Jonas blinked twice and the wind settled down a moment.

“Just okay? That’s it? That’s all you have to say?”

Isak looked out over the hill, profile again.

“You already said it. I knew this day was coming.”

“That’s it??”

“What do you want me to say?” Isak asked, too level, looking back at him, curl dancing over his forehead and Jonas threw up a hand.

“I don’t know, scream, cry, throw something, do something, don’t just lock the pain away.”

“That’s exactly what I’m gonna do,” Isak told him, straightening, swiveling, shifting, “That’s exactly what I’m going to do, I’m gonna shove it all so far deep that it doesn’t exist anymore, I’m gonna throw away every single ounce of it, I’m gonna burn everything I have of them all the songs and happy and memories and text messages so I can’t remember a single bruise or tear or day of pain or night lying awake or tear-stained morning breakfast m’gonna force myself so fucking hard to forget I can’t think about a single fucking bit of it none of it ever existed unless it’s raining outside and I’m sitting waiting on the docks watching the ships come into the h-harbor the way we u-used to and--”

Then he was crumbling and Jonas snagged the kebabs out of the way and waved him over and Isak crashed, just tipping instead, boat in the storm.

He landed in Jonas’s lap, tears and thunderstorms, staining his jeans dark with all the rain he kept crying onto his thigh while Jonas stroked his hair, thumbs over his temples, fingers slipping through and unraveling, springing out the blonde little curls only for them to bounce back into place tighter than before.

Isak cried on him, curled up on the bench while Jonas stroked his hair with one hand and slowly ate his kebab with the other, chewing thoughtfully to himself, looking peacefully out over the view.

Eventually the tears subsided enough that Isak was sniffling and rolling, glancing up at him.

He started laughing, instantly, red mouth open and tear stained cheeks, chest seizing with the tears as
much as the laughter at how ridiculous the world was, Jonas comforting him here on a bench in the middle of Oslo while he cried his eyes out and his best friend ate his kebab.

Jonas smiled down at the broken boy and held it out to offer a bite.

Isak took it, chewing as he tapered down a little, lifting his head to shift more comfortably on Jonas’s thigh, gaze back out over the view.

A few minutes passed in silence, two more bites offered before Isak was swallowing and glancing back up at him again.

“I lied, kebabs are still good,” he said and Jonas huffed, scratching fingernails over the blonde head.

“I know.”

“How am I supposed to keep going on,” Isak asked him and Jonas took another bite, letting the world settle for a moment while he chewed.

“Same way you have been since you were five,” Jonas finally swallowed to say, gravity settled all the water away from their feet. “With me at your side.”

Mandag, 19:17
24.04.17

Isak opened the door at Even’s place and kicked off his shoes, wondering distantly to himself what Jonas thought of him having a key here.

Liv had given it to him, a few weeks ago, slipped it in his hand when she was hugging him goodbye and he’d waved it in the webcam for a screaming Eva less than half an hour later while he smiled so wide his face hurt and he didn’t even feel like the same person, now.

He set down his backpack in the hallway with his shoes and walked for the kitchen. He could hear the sounds of the stove, something popping in a pan, a bowl and a spoon, cooking, the way he did when he needed something to do.

“They locked her in the psych ward permanently,” he told Even as he turned the corner into the white-cabineted room and that was not Even, that was Bjørn.

“Oh,” Isak said and Bjørn quickly reached over to off the heat on the stove.

“Your mom?” He asked, the parental voice of concern and Isak nodded, rolling his lips in.

The words hovered in the kitchen like the way everything else hovered here, soft and long and beautiful and Isak was trying so fucking hard not to cry.

He wasn’t trying hard enough apparently, because he failed.

He failed, he’d failed, he’d let them both down, he’d let everyone down he was never gonna be good enough he hadn’t ever been good enough.
He couldn’t even manage to lift his hands to his face and wipe away the twin rolling tracks, couldn’t even manage that fucking much--

Bjørn stepped across the kitchen, heavy hand on his shoulder, and pulled him into a hug.

Isak collided with the broad shoulders, rough hands over his shoulderblade, spine, holding him steady with his nose against Bjørn’s collarbone and he just started sobbing again.

Fuck.

He hadn’t even seen his dad. His dad was probably going through as much hell as he was, probably more, and Isak hadn’t even seen his dad he hadn’t been able to do it he couldn’t do anything, why couldn’t he be strong enough, why couldn’t he just be strong enough--

Here he was falling apart again - fuck, really - and the sound of it was what broke through Even’s headphones in the next room.

One earbud out, the caught cut off of a sob. He popped up fast enough his head was still reeling when he turned the corner into the kitchen, one hand on the wall as he froze.

Bjørn was hugging Isak and they were pretty similar heights but Bjørn’s shoulders were broad enough Isak looked like a child.

That and he was shaking, and crying, and Even was kinda just standing there frozen.

“She’s not okay,” he said slowly and Isak sniffled, pulling back, sucking in a breath to turn to him.

He looked young, in a baggier shirt than usual, hand on the wall and none of the suave, all unsure and small as he stared wide eyed at Isak.

They were looking at each other across the light of the kitchen and Isak knew Even said not to make this shit with his mom about him but from the look on his face it sounded like one of them didn’t listen to that promise.

“She’s not,” Isak confirmed tearily. “She probably won’t ever be again. They’ve checked her in...permanently.”

Inhaling through tears. Even was looking at him, kinda stunned.

“Baby, I.” The pretty head tipped, messy hair bobbing. Even’s voice was distant, like he was underwater.

“I’m so sorry, are you okay?”

“Are you?” Isak asked, watching the puddles gather because yeah, he’d spent the past few years gearing up to this but Even had only known about his mom in the worst of ways at the worst of times and this was the worst of all of that, some extension of Isak’s past and the horrors of what the reality of mental illness could be and how much this was gonna affect Isak, the way he thought, them.

Isak was gonna be okay eventually, but how many movie-quote parallels dirty symbolism was Even gonna read into this, how deep was he gonna get into his head with this, how much blame--

So Isak held the blurry gaze and asked across all the space and stars between them, are you?


Ice floating over the waves that wouldn’t stop crashing into the rocks. Isak stepped across the kitchen and took the cold face in his hands, pressing up to kiss his mouth.
Their lips slid together, clinging and real and *here*, neither of them were going anywhere.

It tasted like salt, salt water over their tongues then Isak was pulling Even into his arms and Bjørn turned the stove back on, offering that warm food would be ready soon. Isak nodded and didn't look up from where his chin was wrapped over Even’s shoulder. They were the ones holding each other now, always would be.

They were still holding tight that night, in Even’s bunk bed with about four blankets wrapped up around them as they lay nestled together as close as bodies could go.

“I love you,” Isak whispered across the sheets, sinking into bare skin. They were both stripped down but they hadn’t had sex, they just held each other with nothing in between because that was all that mattered.

He could still feel the tingles of where Even’s hands had been rubbing warmth into him earlier, long strokes up his outer thigh over his flank hip waist ribs and back all the way down, smooth and uninterrupted. Up and down and back again, skin over skin.

Again and again and again until Isak was boneless on the mattress and hovering on the edge of something peaceful, maybe even sleep. Until his eyes were closed and his breathing was even and Even’s hands were tingling as much as Isak’s side, until the strokes weren’t close enough.

Now his arms were wrapped around Isak's stomach, mouth on the back of his shoulder and Isak's side was still terribly warm, Even’s knees pressed up against the back of his, Isak’s quiet confession settling between them.

“I love you too,” Even whispered. “I’m so sorry, baby.”

Isak’s eyes fluttered closed again.

“It’s not your fault. It’s not anyone’s fault.”

The fingertips wrapped over his hips dug carefully into bone, words painting over his skin with the heat of Even’s exhales over his shoulders.

“Do you really believe that? Are you sure you’re not blaming yourself? Like...even subconsciously?”

“Jonas wouldn’t let me.” A little gravely, sniffling once; windy benches, kebabs settling in his stomach. “And he speaks to my subconscious, remember?”

Even laughed, a burst of color over his skin and Isak smiled softly to himself, running his hands over the hands on his stomach. He didn’t need to see Even right now, this was perfect. He was working through this with himself, and Even was here for support, wrapped around him tight.

Working through this. It wasn’t like he’d depended on them, it wasn’t like he got anything from his mom’s texts but a vague pain of nostalgia and annoyance.

He’d had hopes, yes. He’d had dreams, of them maybe one day reconciling, of her and Even being friends the way he was with Liv. Maybe some far fetched part of his brain longed for a Christmas with all of them, Even’s family and his all at once, but it was so far fetched and so far gone he’d never let it become anything more than a hope, a dream, a false reality he’d always known he could never have.
The worst part was the past, that was the worst, looking back on everything he shouldn’t’ve done that way, wondering when he could’ve stepped in stepped out done something, researched more, sought help.

But he hadn’t, he’d been so fucking young and uneducated and that, ignorance, wasn’t his fault. His mom having a mental illness wasn’t his fault. He’d never expect another sixteen year old to be able to fix someone, it was fucking unfair to expect that of himself.

So he’d remind himself of that, however fucking often he had to, and he’d do what he could to keep perspective and not to think about childhood, how cheated he was out of having one. It happened to people all the time, people got through worse all the time. He could get through this.

Even’s thumbs were rubbing little circles into his skin and Isak inhaled, letting his back expand against Even’s chest, his stomach expand against the hands.

Exhaling slowly, letting it take them both that much deeper in the cushions, settling in with another drifting whisper.

“...but I really think I’m gonna be okay.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah,” he said quietly to the wall. “She’s been gone for a long time. This is just...me finally not being able to deny it anymore.”

Even nodded against his spine and Isak closed his eyes.

“I’m still glad you met her.”

“Really?”

“Ja. It wasn’t a fantastic experience or anything but. At least you met her once. I don’t think I’d be okay with you never having at least known what they looked like, and them for you.”

Even nodded again, squeezing him tighter.

Isak was tearing up for the two hundredth time today but it was coming from his chest, he didn’t have anything else.

Readjusting his head on the pillow, hand curled up by his cheek now while he confided quietly to the pillows, the moonlight over Even’s room, voice cracking.

“Besides, if she remembers anything about me, maybe she’ll remember you too, and remember that I’m in love and that I’m loved and that’ll. That’ll make her okay for a little while.”

A quiet moment, atmosphere hovering, tension rippling through the arms around him, everything Even was working through.

“I hope so,” Even finally whispered against his spine and the words gave him away right before the wet drip to his shoulder did.

Isak spun around in his arms, one of them disappearing as Even inhaled shakily and tried to wipe over his face but Isak grabbed his wrist before he could, stopping him as he hooked the inside of his knee over the inside of Even’s and put their foreheads together on the pillow.

Letting go of Even’s wrist to rub a thumb under the long lashes, catching all that salt and bundled up
water, trembling bottom lip as he tried to mash it all down inside but that wasn’t gonna fix anything, they were gonna be okay, Even had to believe that, he had to.

Isak tipped his chin up until the watery eyes were on his, until they were looking at each other and inside each other and god, he was breaking, could feel his chest seizing from how twisted terrible was gearing behind those beautiful eyes.

Even’s hair folded against his touch as he slid his palm up over his neck, fingers resting in the swoops of blonde. Shaking him once, solid, close, real, listen to me, this counts, you count, I’m here.

“We cry tonight and tomorrow we remember how to breathe and live again, okay?”

“Okay,” Even whispered. Isak pressed their noses together. A sniffle and Even pressed back, inhaling over patches of slipping ice.

“I love you,” Isak promised sincerely. Closing his eyes to hold on tighter. They still had each other. They still had now.

“I love you.” A shattered reply and Isak exhaled slow, breathing him in and letting their hearts just pound.

“Jeg elsker deg,” he breathed again and Even nodded, nodded again, holding him close, holding him back just as tight.

I love you. I love you, I love you.

Tirsdag, 13:14
25.04.17

Even dropped him off after lunch, the same way he had for history and english and this morning too.

Isak told him tiredly that he didn’t need to be walked to class but Even came anyways, kissed him sincere and warm at the doorway.

Then their hands trailed apart, a longing gaze before Even was adjusting the strap on his shoulder, backing a few steps down the hallway before turning, leaving Isak to drift to his seat and tell himself he could handle this without numbing himself again, he could, he owed his boys that much.

They just cared so much. He’d had to literally jump through hoops to get any time without Jonas or Even at his side last weekend and he had a feeling it was gonna be that way for awhile, especially since now he knew for sure.

His mom wasn’t gonna be okay. And he wasn’t going back to Terje’s house. Not like Jonas or Even would let him if he wanted to.

Which he’d never wanted to. But if his mom wasn’t gonna be there, what was the fucking point anyways?

What was the point of anything, honestly, life fucking sucked but here he was getting out his laptop to pull open biology assignments anyways.
Of course that’s when Sanasol swooped in beside him, plopping down dramatically to spin right to him, giving him absolutely zero time to adjust to More People.

“Hey, how are you doing?”

“Who told you,” Isak asked, not looking up from scrolling down the page. “Although you don’t really talk to Jonas and I know you talk to Even all the time so. I’m guessing Even.”

A little shake and Sana gave him a very confused look in his peripherals.

“Told me what?”

Yeah, okay, not in the mood.

“How about my mom,” Isak said flatly, turning away from the laptop to look back at her, shoulders lifted in defense.

Sana furrowed her eyebrows.

“What about her? Is she pushing the religion thing again or something?”

“She’s…in the psych ward, you didn’t know?” Isak’s turn to furrow his eyebrows as Sana’s eyes went wide.

“Nei…” she said slowly, everything sinking in further as she adjusted, turned deeper, elbow on the table, hijab swinging with a dramatic tip of her head. “Holy fuck. Are you okay?”

“I’m trying,” he replied, glancing back at his laptop before sighing and closing it. There were no more assignments posted he could distract himself with.

Sana was still staring at him.

“…do you want a hug or something?”

“Nei,” he kinda laughed, surprised and she turned the sides of her mouth down in an attempt not to smile.

“Okay, well.” Sana rocked her head back and forth, a sassy sound to follow. “If you do, I’ve been told I give great hugs.”

“Since when do you hug anyone,” Isak scrunched up to give her a judgy look and Sana’s mouth dropped open in offense.

“I’ll have you know I’m a very affectionate and caring person.”

“What?!?”

“On the inside, a few layers down, in a deep dark corner I never touch,” she continued and Isak huffed, a half a laugh as he opened up his notebook.

“That’s what I thought.”

“Hey, if you’re not doing anything after school…” She tipped her head, fingers drumming on the desk hyper casually. “…Vilde and I were gonna go out for ice cream, do you wanna join?”

“Uh…do you think she’d mind?”
“Nei, I know she wouldn’t.” A serious look his way, their gazes locking and the walls crumbled down for just a moment. “You should come.”

“Okay,” he said. “Yeah, okay, I’ll do that.”

The teacher very conveniently chose that moment to start class, talking over them as they both turned into listen, a few sentences on the week’s topic before Isak was glancing over again, under his breath this time.

“Uh, Sana?”

“Jaaa?” Under her breath too.

“...takk,” he whispered and she smiled to herself for the rest of the class period.

Tirsdag, 20:37
25.04.17
It took him a record long amount of time to type out that single word, trying to breathe through it, but here he was sniffling, wiping a hand under his nose, over his eyes, and that’s when his bedroom door opened.

And Eskild peeked his head inside. Isak looked up, hands freezing as they pulled away from his face.

“You’re home?”

A wincing smile and the hands in the air threw up higher.

“You just texted that because you knew it’d make me cry and you could come hug me when I’m weak and vulnerable,” he accused.
Eskild shrugged a little. "Soft and vulnerable."

Isak rolled his eyes and sniffled again, thumbing at the corners of his lashes that were just wet all the goddamn time, always, when was he ever gonna stop crying, Eskild’s shoulder was still in the doorway.

“Can I?”

Asking to come in, for the hug, whatever it was, trying not to overstep boundaries or push too much or baby him but he wasn’t, Isak was weak - soft, whatever - and Eskild was so fucking kind, cared so fucking much, all of them did and he should know that by now, with everything they did for Even but it was different like this, when they were all here for him, so.

“Yes, come here, fine,” he bitched, not sounding very bitchy at all.

Eskild smiled quietly and stepped inside, plopping down on the edge of his bed, where he always sat when he came in to talk. Talk the way parents were supposed to, guardians were supposed to, siblings were supposed to, people who cared were supposed to and here he was.

Isak pushed off the wall then Eskild was wrapping him up in an easy hug, mattress melting under them as he let himself melt a little into the sure embrace. Sniffling with his chin hooked over Eskild’s shoulder while a delicate hand patted his curls.

It was more comforting than it should’ve been, it fixed more things in him than it should’ve, but maybe he had more issues, more fucked up places in his head than he thought.

Maybe he’d never stopped caring about what his parents said once, maybe the nonchalance he pretended towards them was as fucking fake as the straight filters he’d worn for so long, maybe the fact that his dad left - twice - was too much for him to take, maybe the fact that his mom was sick was too much for him to take, maybe the fact that he couldn’t do anything about any of it was too much for him to take but he had to take it all anyways and maybe it’d fucked him up a lot more than he’d thought it had.

“You know what’s completely unfair?” Eskild whispered. Isak hummed slightly, blinking at the open doorway while the sassy voice over his ear complained again. “That it’s you, uncaring wild boy, you who has the nicest hair.”

Isak laughed, surprised, lifting his chin to lean back but Eskild’s hand on his head kept him still, fingers crunching up in his curls.

“Serr! I would kill for this hair. I would take such...fantastic care of it and you wake up in the morning and throw on a snapback, frankly, it’s unbelievable.”

“You have nice hair,” he protested back, sitting up, both of them smiling lightly as he waved a hand over the front of the blonde. “Especially now that you’re growing it out again.”

“Is that a compliment from Isak Valtersen?” Eskild’s jaw dropped open, all fake shocked and Isak rolled his eyes again, huffing with a little shove to Eskild’s shoulder. He rocked with it, dropping a little wider. “I should make you cry more often.”

“You’re the worst.” Isak squinched up his face, nose crinkling in faux offense.

And the atmosphere shifted, the act suddenly dropping for a moment. Eskild’s smile dropping with it, eyes all sorrow now as he reached over and wiped away at one of Isak’s tear stained cheeks.
Isak rubbed two hands over his face and breathed in hard, a thousand pounds compressing his chest now.

“Takk, though. For being here. I don’t know what I’d--”

“I am so glad I was in that bar that night,” Eskild interrupted, so fucking heartfelt Isak paused with his mouth still open. His flatmate held his gaze, melted in sincerity. “Honestly, watching you grow, Isak? It’s been one of the greatest honors of my life.”

A single pause where the words sunk in, the weight of Eskild’s words heavier than any conversation they’d had in this room, including the one on gay pride, which was saying a fucking lot.

“I’m gonna cry again!” Isak accused, watering up again as blue eyes went wide.

“Sorry, sorry.” Eskild pulled him into another crushing hug, collide nearly knocking the breath out of him. Isak inhaled against the tears, exhaling a little shaky, palms resting easy on Eskild’s white tshirt. He had no fucking clue where he’d be if Eskild hadn’t been there. If he’d ever even found the courage to get close enough to Even to kiss him. Who the hell he’d turn to once he had. Eskild was the first person he came out to, the person who’d done so much to make him not only okay with who he was, but pushed him to do more than settle for what he’d convinced himself he was to become what he wanted to be and.

“I’m so glad you were too,” Isak whispered, eyes slipping closed as the thin arms rocked them back and forth, exaggerated movements tipping the room and shaking the horizon, but he’d never been more stable.

Family.

“Alright,” a quick hand rubbing up and down his spine before Eskild was pulling back, holding him at arms length. “...this was almost too soft and gay for me, you wanna go watch sports or something-”

“Shut up,” Isak shoved him, making a face as he pushed to his feet. “I’m gonna go make us tea.”

Eskild laughed, pushing off the bed, clapping his hand on Isak’s arm one more time, a small comforting smile.

“Alrighty, I’ll come help. I think Noora moved the tea cabinet again.”

“Uggghhh.” Isak tipped his head all the way back to groan open mouthed at the ceiling and Eskild clicked his tongue, swinging open Isak’s door the two inches further it could go.

“I know, right? This fucking flat.”

“This fucking flat,” Isak echoed, following him into the hallway. “This fucking flat.”

Onsdag, 08:46
26.04.17
The weather was finally fucking decent, to the point that coats were long since left home. The wind off the coast still kept it chilly enough he was wrapped in a hoodie, the thin white one he hadn’t worn in fucking forever. Hood pulled up to keep the chill off ears, leaving his curls to tumble out the front as he tipped sideways into Magnus and giggled.

They were propped on a picnic bench, the three of them shoving and joking at each other, chatting over Vilde’s proposal they all become a fucking Russ group next year - really - when Mahdi’s elbow jammed in his side and they all lifted their heads at the incomers.

Jonas and Even sauntered up side by side, hands in their pockets and chins tipping up as their eyes met, eyebrows up and cocky smiles while Isak shot Mahdi a look for the dramatics and they both snickered.

“That’s what you were doing on the first day of school,” Even piped up and Isak tapered off the laugh, straightening as he looked up at the pretty boy a few feet away.

“Hm?” He squinted a little, looking between the rest of them before back up at blues. “What was that, babe?”

“The first day of school,” Even repeated, waving a hand at Isak, chilling on the bench with his boys. “You were laughing, at something Jonas said, the first time I saw you. Hood up, propped on a picnic table, sunshine on your face.”

The rest of the greetings and laughter tapered off, all eyes on Even now while one of Isak’s eyebrows twitched up. Even lifted a single shoulder, head cocked and hair bouncing with it, unapologetic curve of his mouth.

“That’s really sweet and gay,” Isak finally said and those beautiful eyes crinkled up, shoulders shaking as Even tipped back in a laugh and Jonas snorted gracefully while the other two made burning ooo sounds.

Isak cocked his head and smiled innocently. “And you fell in love with me just like that.”

“Yes,” Even confirmed.

Magnus looked between them both, running a hand through slick straight blonde.

“Wow, that is really sweet and gay.”

Jonas face palmed. Magnus threw his hands up, mouthing what and Jonas lifted his head again to wave an arm around.

“It’s fine when they say it, it’s not fine when you do.”

“Why isn’t it fine when I do? I mean it just as lovingly!”

“First day of school?” Mahdi interrupted, pointing a finger between Even and Isak. “I thought you guys didn’t know each other until like. Kosegruppa.”

“Even pined for forty days and forty nights,” Jonas informed him seriously.

Even lifted his eyebrows higher, pulling the corners of his mouth down exaggeratedly as he tipped his head back and forth before nodding.

“Yeah, basically.”
“That’s a really long time,” Magnus made a face and Even nodded again, eyes wide.

“I fucking know.”

Isak threw up a hand, meeting those sparkly blue eyes again with all of those underlying words he was whispering Isak’s way with a look. Isak may or may not have thrown a bit of underlying into the next statement too, for the hell of it.

“But you’ve had me for longer than that, now.”

“I have,” Even smiled. Isak crinkled his nose at him cutely as he returned it.

“Why can’t I say they’re sweet and gay, they totally are,” Magnus complained and Jonas sighed heavily, hands shoving deeper in his pockets.

“You need an education.”

“Speaking of which, bell’s ringing soon. Where’s my goodmorning kiss.” Isak tipped his chin up and Even smiled wider, two steps forward to lean over and kiss him once, short sugary domestic, then Isak was hopping off the table, swinging his backpack more secure over his shoulder.

“Alrighty boys, I will see you all at lunch.”

Even waved him goodbye and Isak threw a little salute at them all, then he was off to class and the rest of them offered clapping hands to shoulders and waves of goodbye as they all parted ways too.

Onsdag, 19:01
26.04.17

The world was gray.

Blank clouds layered, stacked so thick there was nothing else stretching from horizon to horizon, complete shaded gray.

It could be a drawing, the sky outside untouched canvas until sweeping pencil came along, darkening strokes here and there, horizontal lines of yet another layer of clouds, deeper upon the next.

They were sitting on the landing at the top of the stairs, window across from their socked feet. Jonas’s sister had strung fairy lights over the top of the window, reflecting glowy soft gold on the glass. Framing all of that gray.

Isak was watching the pencil clouds shift and Jonas was beside him, penciling chords into the notebook they’d dug back out from when they were kids.

“You know that song Hide and Seek?” Isak rolled his head on the wall and Jonas looked up, lifting the cap of the pen away from his teeth.

“Ja, sure. Why?”
“It's such a sad song.” Isak gazed back out the window. Jonas studied him for a moment.

“When did you get so serious,” he scoffed a little, making Isak lift a shoulder, head tilting on the wall.

“I don't know.”

Jonas made a sound and went back to scratching away chords and melodies, eyebrows up with his eyes down on the book.

“I think Even is rubbing his melancholy off on you.”

“Ja, maybe,” Isak trailed, fingers rubbing through the carpet. “Or maybe I’m growing up too fast.”

“Don't spin out on me yet, Is.”

He glanced over and Jonas didn't look up from his book.

Isak turned back to the window again, studying the gold over the gray, and let the side of his mouth draw up, crooked and real as he looked out at the cloudy sky and smiled to himself.

“I won't.”


Torsdag, 12:47
27.04.17

They kissed goodbye at the lunch table then Isak was on his way down the hallway to math with Jonas when the girls pulled him aside, Vilde and Sana falling into step beside Jonas instead.

They managed to exchange a very confused glance before Eva Noora and Chris were bustling him into a side hallway and he was looking at them with wide eyes.

“What are you doing after school?” Noora asked, tipping her head sweetly.

“Going...back to the flat, whyyy?”

“So you don't have any plans?” Chris asked, dipping her head.

Isak gave them all his most weirded out face.

“....neeii?”

“Great! You're coming with us then,” Eva tipped into his shoulder and Isak stumbled a bit.

“Uh, okay. To…”

“You know what always makes me feel better?” Noora asked Eva, quite ironically if the pursed mouth and lit up eyes were any indication.

“What,” Eva parroted right back. Isak was already rolling his eyes.
“A haircut,” Noora declared, both of them looking to Isak.

He lifted a single eyebrow.

“The change, it’s just so good for the soul,” Noora continued, to which Chris was nodding very dramatic agreement.

“It just. Gives you back control again, doesn’t it?” Eva layered on, head tipping his direction three times too obvious while Chris nodded deeper and somehow more dramatically.

Isak threw up his hands.

“Okay, fine, but I'm picking the style—”

A round of cheers and they circled around his arms, someone's phone held up in front of him.

“So we made you a Pinterest board of what we think would look good with your curls and your face shape so just pick one of these…”

His mom loved his curls. Always told him to keep them long because they were so sweet, he looked like an angel, don’t cut your angel curls baby.

It was the first thing he did when he moved out. Into Eskild’s basement and off with the angel curls, because he wasn’t the same person anymore, because fuck his parents, that’s what.

So he cut them all off. Jonas went with him for moral support and cut off his too, so they matched. So Isak didn't have to do it alone.

So Isak didn't ever have to do it alone.

Now, there were five girls pushing him through the glass barbershop doors and Jonas had spent the first half of math laughing at him about it and the second half scrolling through the Pinterest board with him to help pick one.

Isak didn't have to go it alone.

Du er ikke alene. Du er ikke alene.

Torsdag, 17:40
27.04.17

“Honey I’m home,” he shouted the moment he stepped through the door.

Liv was still snickering in the dining room as he strolled past and Isak blew her a kiss in return.

Only he didn’t get two steps further before her mouth dropped open and she pointed at his hair, complete shock.
Isak gave her the shh symbol and she clapped a hand over her mouth, only a moment before it moved to her chest instead, mouth open in a silent awww.

He rolled his eyes and waved a hand at her, then he was off to Even’s room, slowly pushing open one of the cracked French doors.

“Hey baby,” Even greeted absently, then he was lifting his head and his jaw dropped instantly.

“Uh. Wow, wow, holy shit, you…”

He kinda just trailed off, staring wide eyed at Isak’s hair. The slightest turn up of his open mouth.

Isak put his tongue between his lips and cocked up an eyebrow.

“Ja?”

“Uh, ja,” Even shot back, incredulous and so sure Isak was already smiling as he shoved to his feet, striding across the room quick, close, tall enough Isak was tipping his head up to the pretty face.

The momentum didn't stop, strides to hands sliding right into the short, feathered back hair on the sides of Isak’s head, smooth and soft. Soaking him in as the fingers danced up the sides to run through the sculpted wave of curls over the top, still long and golden and all curling in the same damn direction now and.

“God, you look so good,” Even breathed, gaze all over his curls, face, back up to the smooth gold at his temples that didn't leave scraggly curls over his ears anymore. Sculpted and pretty. Kinda like his boyfriend.

“I like it,” Isak smiled, dimples popped and Even’s thumbs kept rubbing over his temples, slipping into the smooth again and again.


Isak smiled wider and pushed up on his tiptoes, chin tipping up. Even curled a hand in the back of his head, grip slipping and adjusting to tug a little harder, making Isak’s mouth kinda drop open then Even’s lips were covering his and the flood down his spine recharged the spent in his core.

The kiss wasn't long, landing him back flat footed as they pulled away and Even’s hands were running through his hair again, over the top of his head and probably fucking up the carefully balanced long but that was alright, when Even was looking at him like that everything was alright.

Isak watched Even watch him and smiled a little deeper, then Even’s mouth was pressing to his again, both hands framing his face, wide possessive hands in his hair. Kissing him and kissing him until Isak was breathless and smiling too wide to kiss back.

Their foreheads pressed together and Even still hadn't managed to remove his hands from Isak’s hair.

“I can't believe how fucking good you look,” he managed and Isak lifted a shoulder, fist curled in the hem of Even’s shirt, eyes closed, chest warm.

“It was time for a change.”

“Well it is a fantastic one,” Even told him and Isak tipped into his hands, letting wide palms lift his face to kiss him once more, so sweet and sincere.

Eventually he convinced Even to let them actually get into doing homework, although he had to spin
and let Even run his fingers through all of it one more time first before they finally pulled apart.

Then they were actually getting work done, Isak settled in the windowsill and Even at his desk.

And every fifteen seconds Even was looking up, couldn't stop glancing over at him and smiling to himself, brightening to crinkle up before he was looking at his laptop again.

Then back up to Isak, who was attempting to actually work here, but.

It was really cute and sweet, so. He didn't mind that much.

Just the two of them again.

Things settling back in.

Even’s focus shifting longer and longer to his project until Isak was the one smiling to himself and the world may be a terrible place but it was a fucking beautiful one too.

“Best place you could be in ten years, go.”

“All I want is to create art and make you orgasm,” Even replied back instantly, not looking up from his laptop and Isak snorted involuntarily, then he was bubbling up in laughter hard enough he fell off Even’s windowsill.

Even came to the rescue and scooped him up with a dozen kisses and well, if the way he traced Isak’s skin afterwards counted as art, he was already living the dream. Isak mumbled this into the couch cushions and Even kissed his nose and whispered.

“I know, baby. I know.”

Fredag, 21:30
28.04.17

They were at another party, the first they’d been to since the Cops Incident, when they’d sworn off weed for the rest of their natural lives because that had been absolutely terrifying and they were never going to be so stupid again.

So tonight, they were not standing on kitchen counters with joints, they were very pointedly being Not Stupid, never again, never again.

Instead they were being very smart in a back room’s bathroom’s bathtub smoking out of a water bottle.

“Where’s your second cup of water?” Jonas poked his side and Isak made a face, screwing up his
mouth eyebrows furrowed as he looked at Caretaker 1.0 with a really face.

They were at a party, getting high, could Jonas turn off That Mode for like thirty minutes maybe.

“Serr, does anyone see what happened to Isak’s water?”

“Leave me alone, mom,” he bitched, poking Jonas back. Then the words hit him and his pursed mouth dropped. “Well. Fuck.”

Jonas kinda snorted, taking the weed bottle from him to inhale a dramatic hit. Mahdi and Magnus were looking at them very confusedly.

“What?”

“What’s happening?”

“My mom got locked up in the nuthouse this week,” Isak informed them a little loudly and Jonas pinched the bridge of his nose, exhaling smoke with the groan

“Ughh, Isak.”

He threw up both hands, waving for the bottle back.

“What, it’s true!”

Jonas handed the bottle to Mahdi instead, turning to give Isak a very pointed look.

“This isn’t how you should be handling things.” It was dropped kinda quiet and Isak leaned into him, maybe misjudging the distance a little and landing way too close, close enough Jonas pushed his shoulder back up and Isak teetered his head back and forth, mouth pursed, whatever.

“I’m okay, and I needed the boys to know, so.”

“I’m really sorry, Isak,” Mahdi offered, reaching around Jonas to clap a hand on his shoulder. Isak waved a hand, nearly hitting Magnus in the process, they were all really close cause they’d managed to fit all four of them in the tub this time so it wasn’t his fault dammit.

“It’s okay, bro. She hasn’t been okay for a long time. At least someone’s trying to help her now.”

Magnus clapped a solid hand on his shoulder, making the world kinda tumble with it.

“Man, I. I didn’t know, if you ever need someone to talk to--”

“Oh fuck, why didn’t I think of that!” Isak blinked wide eyed at Magnus’s rare patient expression before turning to the boy on his other side. “Jonas, why didn’t I think of that, Magnus knows all kinds of shit.”

“You were a little busy thinking of your parents.”

“Fuck my parents,” he declared and Mahdi leaned around Jonas, handing the bottle back with another offer.

“Can Eskild adopt you?”

“Actually that’s not a bad idea,” Magnus agreed, reaching over Isak to take the weed while Isak made pouty faces. “He seems like he would be a hella chill parent.”
After he got over glaring at the boys for denying him of getting higher than the current cloud state, the rest of the words and shit sunk in and he made a face, squinting as he thought back to all of the conversations they’d had in Kollektivet lately.

“I mean...he basically already has,” Isak waved a hand back and forth and Mahdi nodded, smiling that wide bright one that lit up whole wide rooms.

“See, man, done.”

“Yeah...done,” Isak kinda smiled to himself, letting his chest compress warm. “Can I have another hit now?”

“Only because you asked so nicely.” Jonas handed it over and Isak gave him a very cheery middle finger.

“Fuck off.”

But he was smiling and blowing out smoke and his boys had his back and Jonas was practically glued to his hip and Even was downstairs somewhere dancing and having fun and he was gonna turn out alright, he was pretty sure.

“Your hair looks good, man.” Magnus ruffled a hand over the wave of careful curls on top of his head, probably disheveling them everywhere but hey, it would still look good with the sides all short and groomed back, so he just tipped into someone’s shoulder and smiled.

“Takk! It was getting kinda long.”

“It’s all...fancy now.”

“I like it,” Mahdi declared.

“All too,” Isak smiled, a real one, dimples and all.

They eventually found his water cup and Jonas made him drink like six more of them until he had to pee, then they were all wandering downstairs and Isak was definitely crossfaded right now, which was a good thing to be with three hands over his shoulders.

Mahdi and Magnus split off at the bottom of the stairs, seeing the girls and wanting to go join but Jonas was leaving Isak’s side never, he was 100% sure of that, so Isak didn’t think twice about the shoulders bumping his as he scanned the crowd.

He’d left Even dancing with a very plastered Christoffer - that was one hell of a sight - but now he wanted Even back and he didn’t know where he was.

He wasn’t towering over everyone which was really confusing because either he was dancing really low and dirty with someone which if he was Isak was probably gonna be shoving some people because he wanted his boyfriend now.

Either that or he was…

“Sit down?” Jonas offered at his elbow and Isak didn’t look over, scanning up on his tiptoes as he shouted back.

“Am I talking out loud or are you in my head?”

“I dunno,” Jonas said and that was right, he was crossfaded too.
“Okay well. Either way...sitting. Couches?”

“Couches.”

Then they were shouldering through the party, bumping into way too many dancing girls that Isak kept squinching his nose up at.

“Where do people keep couches?”

“Against walls,” Jonas offered and Isak squinted at the party.

“Okay, walls.”

Then a hand was grabbing his arm, the other pointing.

“Couch!”

Isak went up on his tiptoes again, sideways to see around the arms waving in the air. Jonas was holding up his shoulder so he didn’t fall sideways, then he was suddenly grabbing the arm back.

“Fuck, I see him!”

“Wait, is that him talking to that girl?”

There was his beautiful boyfriend, all sparkly and shiny, dance-glowy, talking excitedly about something, hands waving around and this girl was curled up right next to him, arm on the back of the couch, mascara batting eyes watching his mouth and Isak’s eyes went wide so fast he probably took in all the rest of the light in this party.

“Oh hell no.”

Then he was shoving through the crowd, stalking past and shouldering people fast enough Jonas got caught up ten feet behind him and yeah he was stalk walking across this entire party and people were turning their heads but it didn’t matter because Isak was breaking through the crowd and shoving past the last of the people and there was Even, definitely, smiling kindly at this girl and Isak didn’t stop,

Forward momentum power walk he dropped right in Even’s lap, hard, knees on either side of his hips then he was tipping Even’s face up and kissing him hard.

Even made a very surprised sound and Isak kissed him harder, then the two most wonderful hands in the world were on his ass, hauling him up closer on Even’s lap. Kissing him back urgently and heated and Isak was way too focused on the crush of their mouths to think about the girls until their lips were breaking apart gasping.

And the girl was right there, still sitting too close, staring open mouthed at them.

Isak shot his eyebrows up at her.

“Fuck off,” he suggested and the hand on his ass swatted his hip.

“Baby!”

“Are you two--” she started.

“Yes,” Isak snapped, then Even was turning to her too, still holding Isak tight.
“Yes, we are.”

She was still sitting there with her jaw on the floor. Isak glared.

“If you’re ever looking for a threesome—

“Nei,” Isak bit, extremely seriously. “We’re not.”

The moment he got the point across he was looking at Even for backup but Even wasn’t even looking at the girl anymore, smiling all amused and fond up at him, shoving a hand up through the feathered back of his once curls.

“Nei we are not,” he murmured, then he was pressing up to kiss Isak’s mouth again.

Their lips slotting in place, dragging apart with spinning bright colorful shapes to press back together warm and admittedly tasting a lot like weed and then.

Isak’s mouth was somehow not on Even’s anymore, Even was holding his jaw and looking up at him, eyes crinkled, smiling brighter than every sun in the universe.

On the other bright side, the girl was gone.

And Jonas was in her place, laughing his head off.

“You fuck off too,” Isak said but there was no venom in it and Jonas was shaking his head, full curls tumbling, hella amused.

“What,” Isak demanded, shifting on Even’s lap with a broad hand covering his lower back, supporting him close and warm.

“I caught that on snapchat,” Jonas laughed back, breaking into a round of marijuana inspired giggles.

Isak threw him the middle finger but he was kissing Even again so he had everything he wanted and needed.

Let the colored lights flash.

Søndag, 19:26
30.04.17

The sun was already gone.

The sky wasn’t colorful, but it wasn’t pitch black either.

A deep, rich blue. The blue of the water, this stunning royal navy that was completely uniform, not a cloud in sight.

Deep blue stretching overhead, all the way to the horizon, wherever the horizon might be.

The water was blue too, darker where it lapped around the wooden posts of the pier, fading royal as
it stretched out further than the eye could see, fading into the sky. No horizon line.

It was choppy, the waves tumultuous and small around the docks, crashing against the rock shore over and over and over, this lapping sound that didn't stop but didn't soothe the way the ocean did.

Isak walked slowly down the dock, old wooden boards creaking underfoot.

The waves crashed a little louder, a greeting. A warning. Nothing at all. He didn't know.

The ghost was here too.

A flash of white, spinning his way before it called back out to see again. Tall and dark in the distance, its silhouette unmistakable against the dark sky. Rotating, once fire now just bright, there stood the lighthouse, pulling ships into harbor.

Isak reached the edge of the dock, taking a slow moment to sit down, crossing his legs, setting in. Eyes on the lighthouse.

The only thing that could bring the ships home in the storm. Piercing white cutting through fog cloud waves thunder lightning rain.

Here is the harbor. Welcome home.

Isak turned his eyes away from the lighthouse, because that wasn't what they came to see.

When it was a they, when the other ghost was sitting beside him.

Tonight he was alone. Tonight he was alone, sitting on the edge of the dock battling quietly with the lighthouse. They were supposedly going to do renovations on it soon.

Isak had no idea what could possibly be wrong with it. It brought the ships into harbor. What more could the people of Oslo ask.

Whatever it was. The lighthouse was still spinning. Hadn't failed yet.

He tore his eyes away from the silhouette, gaze scanning down to the invisible horizon line instead.

The rocky of the waves smoothed out the further you looked down the harbor, lighting up rotating to glitter for a moment before they shifted dark again, waiting to be split by a wooden hull.

It was the waves that changed first - the steady lap against the dock’s legs missed a beat, slamming a little heavier, something disturbing the water and Isak scanned the horizon, adjusting to the darkness.

It took a few moments to find, occasionally blinded by lighthouse, distracted by the waves, the endless sea, but finally a shape loomed out of the uniform darkness.

There was a ship. Pushing through the water, sails folding in the closer it drew to port.

No, it wasn't pushing. It was gliding, sailing, slipping through the water, untouched, wasn't it?

Isak watched, hands wrapped around his ankles.

The closer it grew the deeper he realized. Not untouched, this beautiful massive graceful ship was rocking in the waves, bobbing.

Bobbing easy, unstable and unminding. Taking every rocky battering and still sailing on. Coming
Isak sat there cross-legged and alone and watched the ships sail home under the steady flash of the lighthouse and cried.

The waves crashed salty on the shore and whispered they'd take the salt on his cheeks too.

The collar of his tshirt was soaked, the wind kept ruffling back his curls, drying his cheeks cold but he didn't lift a hand once. The dock splattered in the empty space of his lap, drips between wooden slats and waves could take his tears he didn't want them anymore.

Isak watched the ships come home and cried.

He cried until he couldn't cry anymore.

And then he pushed to his feet, the dock creaking with the shift of his weight, welcome home welcome home.

Another flash of the lighthouse and Isak inhaled slowly, chest expanding, heart slamming, throat stuttering.

His tongue tasted as salty as the water disappearing into the sky and Isak closed his eyes, wind rippling as he pressed a solid palm to his mouth.

Painting a kiss onto his hand, squeezing his eyes shut tight as he kissed hard, sincere.

So fucking sorry.

Then he was lifting his head, lashes unsticking to flutter apart, take in the harbor one more time as he squeezed his hand shut tight, fingers curled hard around the kiss on his palm.

The lighthouse swept everything white again.

“I'm sorry, Momma,” Isak whispered.

Hand held out over the crashing waves, he uncurled his fingers and let go.

The kiss dropped for the water and his eyes closed, listening for the lap of the waves, the smack that meant it'd hit the surface.

Sinking to the bottom of carried off on the tide for another ship, another harbor, he didn't know.

May they all go home.

Isak turned on a heel, eyes opening up again to the path, gravel and rock over a curving hillside, shoes already crossing goodbye to the creaking dock.

Isak walked back up the path to the street, the bus home to Eskild’s sass and Noora’s lipstick kisses on the edge of the mirror and Linn’s tea boxes left on the counter and Jonas’s text on his phone and Even’s arms around his chest, fingers splayed over his heart, the sweep of the lighthouse painting his shoulder blades white and thought maybe, actually, he was gonna be okay.
So Even’s drawing cred goes to me myself and way too many days on photoshop :) p.s. if you want the big version click the link right under the drawing

Also, inspo photos for Even out shopping with Eva, and Isak’s haircut cause Tarjei and Henrik have both killed me dead

I can’t believe there are only three more chapters it’s crazy. In the next chapter a Ton happens, then chapter 20 is actually the final chapter for this fic. (Holy shit)

Chapter 21 is the epilogue, which is lowkey gonna be okay 50k guys so. At least there’s that :D

All comments and kudos are so appreciated I adore you all. <3 xx
Penetrators and Lithium

Chapter Notes

Warnings: 1) there is a Nasty fight in this between Isak and Even, in specific regards to medication for mental illness and the consequences that can come of both medicating or not and it digs into some nasty things about bipolarity and suicide and it’s between ** double stars instead of triple but man serr skip it if you don’t think you can take it they scream at each other and talk about death and all sorts of intense shit, so.

2) I also happened to write another 8k sex scene! Only this time it’s really intense like really intense the emotions are overflowing and particular angsty boys get dragged down dark thoughts and lowkey freak out so beware x3 that’s between ***

3) there is also a bathroom sex scene because those are just all over the place in this fandom so you know what fine here I wrote one also between ***s

4) **warnings for things not between stars**: really intense conversations, physical violence, physical injury, a lot of fucked up emotions, alcohol, crying, brief discussion of dark themes, dirty dancing, dirty talk, singing along to assholish music,

5) this is so long I’m so sorry I fucking tried I swear

6) the first half of this is really intense I’m so sorry I swear

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tirsdag, 16:38
02.05.17

Isak was chatting with Liv over afternoon snacks when Even stepped around the corner and leaned on the wall.

“Is, can I borrow you for a second?”

He looked up from his mug, glancing down Even’s stance to quickly read him. It’d be more than a second.

“Uh. Can it wait like ten? We’re almost done and I’ve gotta help clean up.”

Even nodded, thumb over his shoulder.

“Mmhm, that’s fine. I’ll be in my room.”

Isak smiled softly at the beautiful eyes and turned back to Liv.
Eight minutes later he was knocking on Even’s door, peeking around the corner.

“Hey, can I come in? Sorry about that.”

“Nei, it’s fine.” Even lifted his head, pushing up from his desk with his mouth curved up but Isak paused, single step inside calculated. Something was off.

“Are you sure? What’s up?”

“Oh, no, it’s.” Even looked to the side, light from the window making his cheekbones glow, lashes reflecting as they cast down against his cheeks. “It’s nothing about that and it’s nothing bad and…”

“Even,” Isak said and it was his you’re scaring me a little voice, which Even knew, eyes going wide. Looking at Isak, back out the window. Chest expanding quick as he sucked in a breath, lashes lifting to rush it out all at once.

“I finished my project, do you want to see it?”

“Do I…” Isak’s mouth dropped open. “Ja???”

“Yeah?” Even asked, small, swallowing and Isak unfroze to cross the room, hand flying up.

“Uh...I’ve been waiting to see it since like. Fucking last year.” Then he was taking Even’s face into his palms, the blue eyes skirting to the side, tongue wetting his lips, nervous as he started rambling,

“Okay, yeah. I just. The only person that’s seen it is Jonas, and I. I think it’s good but we’re both film people so there’s a chance it’s only like academically good and not necessarily applicable to the general population of emotions and--”

“Even, Even. I really wanna see it.” Isak was kinda bouncing, fingers scrunching in the short hair at the base of Even’s neck while the blue took in the expression on his face, please, c’mon, hurry up and Even blinked.

Isak made a what the fuck are you waiting for face and Even shook his head a little, then he was nodding,

“Right, yeah,” taking a step backwards as he half spun, “...yeah okay.”

He grabbed his laptop off the desk, kinda floundering for a moment, lost,

“Couch?” Isak offered, trying to reign in the smile over how nervous and precious that boy was.

“Uh, ja.” Even plopped down, looking relieved at having found a spot to watch the video that wasn’t going to simultaneously attempt to swallow him whole. Isak pursed his mouth against the smile and sat down beside him, moving aside a pillow so he scoot right up close to Even’s side, their shoulders overlapping as he stretched his legs out for the coffee table.

Even breathed out a slow breath through the ‘o’ of his mouth and Isak turned to excitedly kiss his cheek, calm him down all at once. Whatever it was, Isak was gonna love it, but even more importantly.

“I love you,” he smiled into Even’s skin and the hand on his thighb tightened a little.

“Good,” Even said, then he was opening up the laptop. The screen was in some movie editor and before Isak could so much as scan it Even was putting a hand over the bottom of the screen, covering the preview clips.
“Okay so. I haven’t added a title slide or anything but anybody opening the file is gonna know the title, so.”

“Which is…” Isak trailed, glancing between the screen and the tapping fingers and the bouncing thigh and the worried blue eyes.

Even glanced back over at him, catching his gaze for just a moment before he was looking back at the computer, beautiful mouth open for a single moment before it managed to move around the word.

“Forelsket,” Even told the screen and Isak’s eyebrows shot up.

“Oh?”

It was maybe the same surprised sound he made the first time Even said Liv wanted to meet him - Jesus, Isak had totally forgotten there had been a time he hadn’t known Liv Bech Næsheim - and the way Even’s pulse jumped out of his neck was even faster now than it’d been then.

“Don’t...get upset?” Even turned to look at him, eyebrows knit, all of those pent up emotions.

Isak looked back, tongue between his lips, studying. A double beat of silence passing by.

“You think I haven’t noticed you have your phone out way too often for someone who doesn’t have any social media accounts?” Isak said back and the knit between his eyebrows disappeared. Even blinked.

“...what?”

“Were you actually worried that I cared that you film all the time?” He said it so axiomatically Even threw a hand up in defense.

“I mean. I sat Jonas down and asked if I was violating privacy and shit--”

“Oh god, Jonas will give you the social justice speech for anything,”

“--and he said he didn’t think so, so.”

“Oh. Oh well, then you’re totally fine.” Isak waved a hand at him, dismissing whatever the fuck Even was worried about - they lived in the age of snapchat, it wasn’t like everyone wasn’t constantly filming each other - before he was looking back down at the screen again.

Forelsket. And Even worried what he would think.

Isak rolled his lips in, glancing up at those blue eyes again, still on him.

“Although if it’s about me in any way, I’m probably gonna cry.”

Even tipped his head, conceding. “Fair. If you cry you have to watch it again though, ‘cause you’re gonna miss shit.”

“I’d better get a fucking copy.” Isak squinted vaguely suspicious and Even threw up a hand, “okay, okay,” landing back on the mousepad to hover over fullscreen.

Isak looked between the empty black and Even’s profile, staring down at it.

“Can you like. Play it now?”
“Yeah. Yeah, sorry. I.” A heavy exhale and Even’s finger lifted, waiting to tap, and well, if it hadn’t been built up over the past five months of surreptitious laptop closing, “Okay. Here goes.”

It started out of focus.

A black screen, something gold, then a wave and everything sharpened, the dotted lights of the city below. The view from their first not-date to the top of that hill, the night it’d started snowing when he was wearing a snapback and Isak already couldn’t breathe, and that was before it cut.

Gold fading, spreading into sunlight reflecting off a curl, cutting to fingertips sliding bored over the top of a school desk, sunlight dappling and reflecting. The dapple of a shadow shifting, a single empty swing on a playground, back and forth, then cut, the view outside his apartment, lights flicking on in the apartments across the street. A slide and the camera was expanding, widening until it was the window and the curtains draped to the side, orange and bright and stepping further and further away--

And then it swept. Turning down away from the window to feet, bare feet running over carpet, dancing on tiles, shoes on pavement, stepping on the bus platform, the bus taking off in a blur and the streets following after, the skidding sound of a skateboard over dusty pavement, a swooping shadow with Isak’s fingers wrapped over the top of a board, around a pencil scratching down biology notes, flip of a textbook page.

The music was building, instruments that weren’t instruments and sounds that clicked and the crash of an ocean wave, Isak’s hands waving around while he talked, the quiet moment the sun first dipped beneath the edge of Even’s window, the back of a knuckle under wet eyelashes, rainclouds reflected in skyscrapers and the spinning drag of a shirt to reveal a dark bruise under the collar, a purple sky over the sidewalk home, a lighthouse flash between rising sails,

The back of Isak’s shoulder while he slept, the curve replaced with a church’s roof, the boys’ laughter as they walked down the night sidewalk in the city and two of the shadows were holding hands--

Chords suspended and the flashes dropped, a single, steadying shot. Looking down a guitar, fingers on the strings. A quiet grumble, few plucked, one of them entirely not held down and sounding hollow. The hollow sound again and there were flowerpetals dropping into the water, clothes dropping to the floor, sunset painting everything gold and Isak was sitting on a bench at the far end of the famous grafitti water monster mural, Norway screaming its promises in the flicker of another sail catching wind, Oslo’s trains speeding by, the quiet mulling of kids after school, blurred until the camera settled on the back of blonde curls walking away in the crowd, two buses passing by each other to two hands entwining and the crooked tip of a smile, looking down, away,

Swell, the kitchen bursting white, toast popping up, Isak reaching over to pull them free and hissing at the burn, pulling back his fingers and shaking before he reached again, faster, closer to the edge of the toast that time, tossing them on a plate and turning to the camera and

It cut to black, a beat of silence. Then the camera flicked back on, their hands sliding over sheets to entwine. Black. A shaky scene of the stars, black. Then gold sweeping to the side, all the way around, panoramic and Isak was sitting on the ground, knees pulled up, looking down, snapback covering his face.

One shaky step closer.

Black.
The city, from somewhere high, a flashing burst past, driving, daylight.

Black.

The playground again, and this time. Both of the empty swings were rocking back and forth, back and forth, the lightest of rain reflecting gold, fading all the way out to blur, the last sweep of the camera from the swings to the water on the horizon, glittering patchy sunlight over blue, gold over deepening darker blue, royal, navy, black, danced with the final slivers of light.

And the light faded.

Isak didn’t realize he wasn’t breathing and hadn’t been breathing until the movie slipped out of fullscreen and they were sitting there in silence.

Even was looking over at him but Isak was just staring at the laptop.

It was still resonating in his chest. The friction of denim against unmoving fingertips, the lavender sky outside leaving Even’s room shifted.

The flashing images, quiet soundtrack were too delicate to break with words. Not like Isak had anything he could say.

Instead he finally turned back to Even, always back to Even, if he was lucky enough it would always stay back to Even.

Isak couldn’t say it with his mouth so he said it with his eyes instead, as unraveled and affixed as the deconstruction of their city wrapped entwined holding barricading their love--

*Maybe there’s still a story for you here, that you haven’t gotten the chance to see yet.*

Yeah, maybe.

Even took one look at him and put the laptop down on the coffee table. Then he was pulling Isak into his lap and Isak went and went and went, over the edge up to the top under the surface.

It wasn’t hands on a screen, these were Even’s and real, rubbing up his shoulders while Isak curled around him, forearms squashed between the sloping spine and the couch cushions, his forehead on a cotton collarbone.

Isak held onto him and just breathed. Breathed until the frozen oceans behind his lashes he’d been too stunned to let roll were silenced and the stunned slipped into the quiet of Even’s hand on the back of his head, his chest breathing in, out, staring at god knows whatever over the top of Isak’s head while Isak tried to wrestle with the flashes.

It’d physically hit him in the chest, seeing Even’s drawing of him for the first time. To see the way Even saw him.

But that was nothing, that pencil sketch was fucking *nothing* on that, that visceral, fragile, vibrant, focused way that Even saw the world, that Even saw him inside his world. To step behind those blue eyes.

He’d watched Even an uncountable number of times, watched him watch everything, he’d been so in awe of the perspective, the depth, since he first watched Even gaze so longingly and hurt and unsure and caught up and buried, out his window, that very first day--
But now there was this, the fading glow of the impression Isak had made, the footprints and the moments he’d stepped into Even’s, the hands that had been tugged and guided, the way they’d shaped their lives and their bodies around each other, all of that light wrapping them in colors while they reached, for each other, always each other.

Two empty swings.

No longer alone.

The inhale against Even’s collarbone had him lifting his head, chin resting on top of that sloping shoulder, eyes still closed tight to stars and gold as he opened his mouth.

“I love you that much too,” Isak finally managed, words jarring with his chin resting hard on Even’s shoulder. The lavender danced, fabric stretching around time and space as the stars burst through with the twinkle of Even’s laugh.

Huffing against his skin as his nose pressed to the short hair on the side of Isak’s head, breathing him in quietly, lips pressing to leave sticky, clinging kisses to his cheekbone, one and then another, and another, and another.

Until Isak’s heart was strumming enough he pulled back, sitting up and cupping Even’s face in his open hands. This one, this was the one he got to have forever, it was this boy who felt that for him and.

They just searched each other’s eyes for a moment, the depth and the intensity burning fires between them, soothing rivers between them, crashing waves between them. Isak breathed in long, slow, letting all of the emotions just ricochet to settle.

“Forelsket,” he whispered and Even nodded, silent. Isak leaned forward and tipped the quiet mouth up to his own, slipping them into a kiss. It tasted warmer than sunlight, Isak’s nose caught on Even’s skin, their mouths sliding to overlap. In some other universe they kissed forever but here they both broke off to breathe, pausing waiting before lips were smushing back, falling together with Isak’s palms shielding Even’s cheeks.

They pulled apart so slow Isak couldn’t tell the moment their mouths weren’t touching until the reverberation had him inhaling, their foreheads tipped together, wrapped in skies.

The green leaves dappled gold, the color he caught when he passed by a mirror. The color Even caught on film, in the flipping shots of Oslo.

“God. That was so beautiful,” Isak managed, sliding his hands with the fine swoops of light on the sides of Even’s ears. “Honestly though, for me? Forelsket felt more like...getting hit by a train.”

A little bubbly huff and Isak leaned back in time to see Even’s eyes crinkle up in the smile, softening fond with the rub of Isak’s thumb over his cheek, fading to their gazes on each other again, streaks of gold disappearing over the windowpane.

Getting hit by a train.

“Sometimes I can’t breathe when I think about you,” Isak confessed and Even’s fingers slid up rough into his curls, tilting his head with the force of it, words devastatingly quiet in contrast.

“...sometimes thinking about you is the only thing that keeps me breathing.”

It sunk in deep and intense and Isak sucked in a breath, fingers curling as he folded back into Even’s
chest, gathering him up to squeeze as he blinked, hand delicate in Isak’s curls again,

“Sorry, sorry--”

“It’s okay,” Isak whispered, cutting him off before he could spiral because Isak could take the honesty. Even’s fear against all his love.

Isak held on tight enough it was probably uncomfortable but he needed to hold this tight, needed Even to feel how fucking much he meant it. “...it’s okay.”

They breathed together for a moment longer, Even’s nose in his curls while Isak focused on the rise and fall of his chest, shoulders, stomach expanding against Even’s, their bodies stacked nestled in place like this.

Sunlight wrapped around bodies that somehow found each other in all of that rushing cold.

Forelsket.

Finally he lifted his head again, Even’s eyes following him as he looked at him gently, nodding once and Even exhaled, fingers sliding over his shoulder.

Isak twisted the little swirl in Even’s hair up a little higher, a half dozen half conversations bouncing in the corners of everything that had been riding on this project.

“What happens now?” He asked quietly, the video echoing behind his words while Even’s chest lifted over another deep inhale.

“Now, I send it in to all the fancy schools I want to go to and I wait.”

Isak rubbed his thumbs up and down Even’s cheeks and almost didn’t ask it, he was already kinda drowning but on the other hand...he was already kinda drowning how much worse could it get and honestly, Even just shared a piece of his fucking soul like that, Isak could suck it the fuck up, open his mouth, and fucking ask.

“Ev-en?” Slow, eyes on his beautiful neck now as he traced down the side of it, over the circle collar of his t-shirt, distracted not distracting but.

“Mhm?”

“Are--” This time when he tried to breathe he could already feel the answer, the snow falling cold over the golden lights of that first shot, the day Even told him about his dreams and Isak looked into his eyes and saw the lights of ten thousand other cities reflecting there instead of his own reflection and.

It was already seizing in his chest but he opened his mouth and forced himself to rip it out anyways.

“...where are the fancy schools you want to go to?”

Even leaned back away from him, eyebrows down and knit. Leaving Isak blinking at him vulnerable with the tears he was trying to keep away whispering on his lashes.

He quickly wiped a hand over his face, rubbing at an eye like he could possible be tired instead of seconds away from crying, gaze stuck steady on Even’s chest while he waited for him to speak.

“They're in a few different places,” Even started slowly.
Isak nodded and looked down, reigning in, lips pressed together hard enough to morph it into a pout. That's what he thought.

“What. What does that mean for us?”

He dared to risk a glance up and Even was studying him, from the masked terror in his eyes to the pink on his cheeks.

“I don't think there’s a simple answer to that,” he finally said quietly. Isak was trying not to break but he almost cried from that video and Even was in love with him and Isak was in love with Even and there was no simple answer to that.

The whole breathing thing wasn’t really working out and the way Even was looking at him - god, it was the same trying to be strong, unmistakably heartbroken look he gave Isak the first time Isak told him - nei, you don’t know shit about what’s gonna happen--

Only now, now they had no idea what was gonna happen and it was the least comforting thing in the world, it was probably gonna be the thing that destroyed him.

Even, looking at him like that, all of that desperation bottled up behind those beautiful blues and Isak couldn’t really take it, looking down with one eyebrow cocked heartlessly, lips glued together, tilting uselessly to the side with the little shake of Even’s hand on his neck,

“But I love you, and we'll figure it out, okay?”

Isak sniffled, glancing up to Even’s swimming eyes before he was staring at the hands between their stomachs, thumbs working over each other, the space between his fingers that could be empty in weeks--

He took a shaky breath and it was such an insecure, stupid question but he couldn't do it he had to ask.

“Are...are any of them in Oslo?”

The air in the room when tight, pressure over their chests as Even leaned back, knit in what, shock, alarm, disbelief, whatever it was, Isak fucked up, how could he ask that, how could he even suggest that Even should stay here, this was Even’s life and Isak just what, expected them to last forever anyways--

“Isak…”

Even saying his name like that literally put knives in his chest and Isak put fingertips over his eyes, trying to breathe.

“I know, I know, wistful thinking why would you stay here to go to school--”

“Nei. Nei, baby, of course I'm applying to schools in Oslo.”

Isak froze, hands falling as he looked dumbly up at Even’s pure worried face.

“...really?”

“Yes really, of course really. There's a really fancy art academy called like art without walls and they have an Oslo campus and I would love to go there but.” Even lifted a shoulder, head tipping to the side and his eyes were all bright when he talked about that school so he wasn’t stretching, going to
school in Oslo was something he wanted, something he, “--but I don't know if they'd want me.”

“They'd be stupid not to.” Isak’s heart was pounding so fucking hard in his chest, searching back and forth between Even’s beautiful blue eyes, the sorrowful twist of his mouth.

“Baby. I know what you're saying, but that part’s not up to me.” Even’s fingers slipped back into his curls and Isak was nodding, understanding, “And if none of the good academies here want...I don't. I don't wanna settle for a school I don't wanna be at if I get accepted somewhere better.”

“I wouldn't want you to either;” he promised, palm over Even’s heartbeat.

“You are so important to me, and so is my future and my career. I wouldn’t want to hold either of us back, right?”

Isak nodded, kept nodding cause he could do that. Even wanted to stay with him if he could, but he wasn’t gonna irrational either, they were going to be adults about this and yeah, okay, or maybe the tightness in his chest wouldn’t leave, possibilities bouncing around against his ribs leaving bruises until he just opened his damn mouth and.

“Where's the...furthest one?”

One two slip through his fingers and

“...the States,” Even said quietly.

Isak dropped his head and cursed.

The hand on his neck shook him again and Isak tipped into it, trying to breathe.

“But I have no reason to go there if I get into a good enough school that's closer, okay?”

“So it's out of our hands,” Isak translated and Even exhaled quietly.

“That's why. That's why I haven't brought it up yet because I have...no idea. There's not really any point in planning for the next year until I figure out what my options are.” Isak’s mouth was sealed shut, pushing in a pout on its own as he tried to keep his head nodding. Even shook him harder. “Minute by minute, right?”

Isak wiped two hands over his face, sliding back through his curls to overlap with the one Even had on his neck, secure, here, but for how long,

“What are the odds you'll get into one here? One you really want to go to.” Gaze lifted to lock with the too deep blue one. “Honestly?”

“Honestly?” Even asked.

Isak nodded one more time. Even looked off at the window.

“Not...guaranteed,” he whispered, the probably not sitting unspoken between them.

Isak blinked twice.

“Okay,” he whispered. “Okay. Well. We'll figure it out, right?”

“We will,” Even promised, fingers sliding deeper into his curls as Isak caved into gravity, pressed their lips together quiet and simple. Foreheads canting on the pull apart to whisper over Isak’s mouth.
“I’m not letting go of you that easy.”

“All else fails I can always loop Forelsket on repeat every hour of every day until we're together again,” Isak attempted and the pretty huff Even gave him in return tipped up a corner of too.

“You'd get sick of it pretty fast,” Even teased, eyes twinkling as Isak pushed up off his chest, looked right into the ocean waves.

“I haven't gotten sick of it yet.” The whisper made Even’s breath hitch, smile fading for the settling realization while they searched each other’s faces, unstable and needy until gazes were locking again and Isak was peeling confessions from the stutter of his pulse. “I just keep falling in love with you, over and over.”

Even was looking at him like that, like he was seeing Isak through the golden shimmer of that video again and Isak fucking meant it.

“...plus the cinematography is really beautiful,” lips rolling over his tongue as he squinted, making sweet fingers sink into his waist with a smile.

“Yeah?”

“Uh, ja, that was like the prettiest thing I've ever seen.”

“Well, when a camera gets the chance to film something so beautiful…”

Isak rolled his eyes, barely getting halfway through the dramatic huff before Even’s mouth was against his, their lips folding back together gently.

Jesus fucking Christ. He was gonna do whatever the fuck it took to keep this.

He couldn’t breathe when they pulled apart, city lights sliding behind closed eyes.

“God. You are so fucking talented.”

A smile pressed to his cheek and Isak tilted into it, “Let’s hope people who aren't in love with me - or the best friend of someone in love with me - think so too.”

“They fucking better,” he bitched and Even’s lips pressed to his forehead, pushing aside curls. The warmth trickling down his spine and Isak held onto precious collarbones and breathed him in for as long as the universe was going to let them.

Onsdag, 10:07
02.05.17
talked

a fucking month later ???

Listen! That’s not an easy conversation to have!

Did it go well tho?

Eh so so. He wants to stay in Oslo but if he doesn’t get into somewhere prestigious here he’ll go somewhere else.

fuck

I mean, it’s fucking fair, he’s talented af

I bet he is 😊

🤔

Fo real tho he must give the best blowjobs bc the tips he gave us at last girls night have literally changed everyone’s lives

Y’all are worse than we are 😘
They were having a nice, chill, friendly, drama-free lunch when right in the middle of it a certain biology buddy decided to reach over and shove his shoulder, jolting him and Even both from their weaved hands under the table.

The girls snickered. Isak gave Sana the most offended face could muster.

“What,” he demanded.

“Testing a theory,” she said innocently. Isak scrunched his face up more.

“You two are literally always touching,” Eva pointed out, head tipping sassily as she popped a grape in her mouth. Half the table made copiously agreeing sounds, Jonas’s the most dramatic as he scoffed and leaned back in his chair,

“I could’ve told you that.”

“Yeah,” Mahdi input, “Even’s hand and Isak’s hips have magnets in them.”

He smacked two loud hands together to prove it. Isak cocked his head, opened his mouth, and shot them the middle finger.

“Fuck off,” he suggested kindly and Magnus finished chewing, waving a hand in their direction.

“Oh sorry, you’re right, sometimes it’s the back of your neck instead.”

The girls were all laughing, Noora leaning over to whisper something to Mahdi that had him laughing too and Isak furrowed his eyebrows deeper, looking between all of their friends and the still hand-holding boyfriend beside him.

“I...we don’t touch that much,” Isak protested weakly, but he was looking at Even, all sparkly and crinkled up amused, trying not to burst into a smile with the purse of his mouth, fuck, wow, he was really fucking pretty.

Not to mention those sparkly eyes were flicking down to Isak’s mouth, making his lips part involuntarily and wow Isak would really like to kiss him right now, the urge crawling in his chest--

“You’re literally smitten right now,” Eva interrupted and Isak managed through some grace of god to tear his eyes away, turning to her and making a high pitched,

“Hm?”

Then it was time for everyone to laugh, giggles to go around and a few high fives, sighs, told you so’s,

“What,” he demanded, swinging back to look at Even, then Jonas then back to Eva, Sana, Noora,
Mahdi.

“Huh? What did I miss?”

The laughter doubled. Isak couldn’t really mind when Even’s fingers were sinking into his thigh, sparking up to make his stomach flutter, gravity too heated to protest anymore.

Isak leaned over and pecked his boyfriend as quick as he possibly could, lashes low and trying not to tip up into him drunk only Even dipped in to peck him four more times, sticky cute and Isak threw up a hand, okay, fuck, he tried.

Søndag, 19:17
07.02.17

Magnus
Okay new idea: an app called Tender, instead of Tinder, and it’s to match people who are looking for like serr relationships instead of hookups

Jonas
Dude isn’t that basically just like eharmony

Magnus
Well yeah but it’d be for people our age instead of washed up 40 yr olds

Mahdi
Magnus I know it’s hard when one of your bffs is married

We’re not married
Mahdi

But do you really want a serious relationship

Even

yet

Magnus

Ja, don’t you guys? That’s what it’s all about

Jonas

Like kids and a house and the works??

Mahdi

Wait am I the only one who caught the yet

Magnus

Everyone wants that I thought!

Jonas

Dude no like most of our generation is all fuck having kids

Magnus

Well I think I’d be a great dad

No Mahdi I also caught the yet I’m freaking out about the yet
Even
I think you’d be a great dad too, Magnus

Jonas
What yet

Magnus
Takk Even I’d like to think so too

Jonas
OKAY ALSO FREAKING OUT ABOUT THE YET

TAKK

Magnus
Oh whatever like it’s not true

Anyways, who’s helping me with this app

Mahdi
Literally no one mags

We’ll help you with your game tho

Even
❤️
He was in the middle of attempting to very carefully pipet ethanol into their DNA sample when Chris’s hand clapped on his back, nearly making him stab the thing through the thin ass filter.

Even shot a mild glare and Chris smiled cockily,

“So, I’m throwing this rad ass party first weekend of summer, you should totally be there.”

“Okay, fett.” He finally finished pipetting, carefully inverting the tube while he lifted his eyebrows at Christo. “Didn’t think you were the party throwing type, though.”

The smile widened, all mischief and just you wait,

“It’s a reunion for the Penetrators.”

“The penetrators? Who are the penetrators?” He reached over Chris to put the test tube in the centrifuge, only Chris wasn’t budging, he was staring wide eyed and open mouthed at Even.

“Who are the…what did you just say???”

Even furrowed his eyebrows, head shaking once, “What?”

“What crew were you hanging with in Elvebakken you didn’t know about the fucking Penetrators??”

“…it’s a pretentious art school, I had drama of my own to deal with.”

Chris looked positively shocked and Even lifted a shoulder, uncaring. A shake of his head, hand curving through his fancy hair, completely #shook.

“Fuck, you need an education.”

“Not in penetration I don’t,” Even replied, not looking up as he turned the dial on the centrifuge.

Chris laughed so hard he fell off his chair, and Even’s smile couldn’t help but crack with it.

They were walking for the bus stop together, sidewalk stretched with just their shoes perfect in time when Isak suddenly remembered and spun, mouth open wide under his favorite red snapback,

“Huh! You know what we should do right now?”

A fond smile glancing over from his phone,

“Hm?”
“Go get tested.”

Even’s eyebrows shot for the dappled blue and white sky.

“Oh my god, one of us finally remembered. Right now?”

“Ja, right now!”

“Fett, let’s go.”

Fredag, 22:02
12.05.17

They were lying on Isak’s bed, grey sweats and shirtless. Isak’s leg between his, fingers in his hair, contentedly watching the side of Even’s face while he thumbed through his music and found yet another song he had to show his pretty boyfriend.

He was halfway through his *cheer up, you asshole* playlist when the text came through.

“Who is it?” Isak asked sleepily, nosing in warm against Even’s neck, fingers playing lazily over the ones on Even’s bare stomach.

“Mahdi.”

“Tell him to leave us alone, we’re fucking.”

“Ja, okay, baby,” Even replied distractedly. Texting with one hand took way longer than it should have but he wasn’t going to sacrifice the hand draped around Isak, not when he was delicate and warm and mumbling all cute against his skin like that.

“Your heart is beating faster,” Isak muffled, lips dragging slightly over his collarbone and Even hummed, thumb rubbing up and down over the notches of a golden, stardusted spine. “What are the boys up to?”

“They’re at a party with some Bakka kids, wanted to know if I knew some girl.”

“Mm, Jonas probably wanted to take her home or some shit. He’s got a reputation with jen-tene.”

“Mnhm,” Even replied. “Mahdi’s being weirdly clandestine about it, though.”

“Don’t worry,” warm mumbles pressed back into his skin. “There’s always drama at parties. Can we go back to that song?”

Even glanced over, taking in the pout of the pretty mouth, the long swooping lashes, the short nails slowly tracing over Even’s fingerpads, down the swooping side of one, up another. The softest boy in the world.

The most beautiful thing Even had ever seen.

He lifted his head, pressing a solid, lashes-fluttering kiss to Isak’s forehead, holding a moment too
long, trying to soak it all in.

Then he was settling back into the pillow, phone lifted again, Isak tucked just a little closer to his skin.

“Yeah, baby, we sure can.”

Hey do u know anybody by the name of Ida Skavla that goes to Bakka

Uh ja why

How trustworthy would you say she is?

Literally not at all I'm pretty sure she deals heroin

Fy faen

Why?

Thx man

Wait why

I dag, 23:49

no worries got it all sorted out just a misunderstanding thx for the help!

Sure just lemme know if there's anyone I need to beat up
They got the call just before the office closed for the day. Isak held his breath; he wouldn’t be worried except that he’d had more than one sketchy blowjob in bathrooms at parties and considering the school he went to, yeah, no, they weren’t risking that one.

Even kept his face entirely neutral - bastard - right up until the moment he ended the call, polite thank you’s and phone slipping back in his pocket while Isak gave him that face, tugging the hem of his shirt, c’mon, what, *what*--

“Both clean,” Even beamed and Isak took his face in both hands, kissing him loudly before he was hopping off the couch, dragging Even with him.

“Right now?”

“Oh hell yeah, right the fuck now, I’ve been waiting for this way too long.”

***

Isak dragged him straight for their bedroom, door shut and locked, already kissing him eagerly, hands sliding up clothes before Even finally caught the eager wrists, managed to stumble back a step, breaking off with a little gasp,

“Jeez, baby. Slow it down.” He shot his eyebrows up, *c’mon*, to which Isak pushed up on his tiptoes and kissed him again, touch quivering against Even’s neck, shivers going down his spine already and Even swung him in close with an arm against his lower back, mouths popping free with the pull back of his head.

“You’re gonna get yourself so worked up you’re gonna be too high to notice.”
“Not possible,” Isak shot back, gripping Even harder, crashing their mouths back together again.

Even rolled his eyes and scooped Isak up, just enough to tumble them both onto the bed, kiss breaking for Isak to mouth down his neck, fingers sliding up his ribs.

Arms lifted for Isak to wrestle his shirt off, toss it aside, hungry palms up bare skin now while Even kissed him back until he was too breathless to manage anymore, putting a hand in Isak’s hair and tugging hard enough he broke off with a gasp.

“Fuck, Is.”

“I want you so bad.” Isak breathed over his mouth, eyes on fire. Even groaned, closing his eyes against the tightness in his jeans, the rush swooping up his spine. “I want you inside me, nothing between us—”

“Okay well, we're taking this slow.”

“Uugh.”

“For real.”

“Fine,” Isak sighed, pecking his cheek once before he sat up, flipping open the button Even’s jeans, slowly tugging the zipper down.

“Okay, it doesn’t have to be that slow.”

“You said—”

“Strip down, get on your hands and knees, that’s what I said, any questions?”

Isak was bright red, tongue caught between his lips but it didn’t hide the hint of a smile as he all but ripped his clothes off, bouncing back up onto the mattress with a little groan to Even’s fingers running down his ribs.

Stardust’s favorite masterpiece, on his hands and knees for Even to slide two fingers inside him, fucking him slow with a hundred kisses to the back of Isak’s neck and shoulders, all that flushed speckled skin.

“Ahh, uuhhh uuhhh…”

Isak was moaning and carrying on, all these pretty sounds spilling for the bedspread. Even kept kissing his skin, working him open, hips tilted enough to put an indentation in his lower back, ass lifted higher against the friction,

“Baby you're so good for me, you know that?”

“MmmMm Even Ev-v-ven—”

A quiet hum in return, nosing against the base of those tumbling silky curls. Isak dropped his head, rocking back against Even’s hand shamelessly.

“Oooh oh, c’mon more please more,”

Another slick up of lube and he was carefully adding a third, beautiful hips rocking back against him harder, mouth open to pant, whining high and needy.
Even smacked his ass and it reverberated across the beautiful slope, flushed skin and Isak groaned low, deep, pushing into his palms to shove back against Even’s fingers.

“Talk to me,” Isak gasped.

“Ja?” Even’s voice was nearly as shot as Isak’s, hand twisting tight. “Can't feel enough like this?”

“N-Nei.” Hips pushing higher, nails against the bedspread, begging for more, “I c-can't see you, lemme hear…”

“You're so fucking pretty, do you know that? I don't mean just like this either. Although like this...god, Isak. The way you just hand yourself over to me?”

The little sound Isak made was as keen as the hips still rocking back against him and Even had to take a moment to gather himself before he spoke again, words gravelly and low as the clench in his stomach,

“The way you ask for more, fucking back against me, with the tip of your head, just waiting for me to kiss you like there's not a doubt in the world I won't and there isn't a doubt, there's not--

“And the way your lips fold under touch and always dip back in for more, and I can feel the tingle go down your spine just from the way we kiss. The way you kiss me, Isak, fy faen.”

The slide was easy now, bunched fingers twisting in and out, shivers down both their spines,

“And the way your mouth pops open at everything, when I sink inside you, when you're pretending to be offended or you're surprised and being dramatic or you don't wanna laugh to give something away but your eyes end up sparkling like stars and giving it all up anyways,

“And when you laugh you open up like the sun but when you giggle you curl up all cute and precious like you just can't contain it. The whole room gets a little more gold every time you look at it.”

The pace had shifted into something a lot smoother, stroking up heated insides and Isak wasn’t rocking back against him anymore, swaying a little with the movement, head hanging. Even furrowed his eyebrows.

“Baby? You okay?”

“Mhmm.” A little high pitched.

“What’s up?” Even asked carefully, watching the ribs expand, contract. Jump with a little huff before the blonde curls were lifting.

“Flip me,” he managed so Even did, rolling him onto his spine with three fingers sliding warmly in and out of him, eyebrows lifted.

The sharp green eyes were looking up at him with the strangest expression and Even’s fingers slowed.

“Isak?”

“Even,” he smiled back.

“...what?” Even shook his head a little, confused. Isak smiled wider, so fucking fond and bright Even’s stomach was fluttering.
Then the pretty mouth was opening, a dramatic pause, squinting a little with it, head tipped and curls tumbling against the bedspread, all I told you so sass,

“I asked you to dirty talk and you wax poetry about how I'm made of sunlight.”

“You are,” Even shot back in defense, making the pretty boy laugh, bright and light and airy and sweet as the reflecting blonde, the rosy cheekbones, the bitten up red bottom lip,

“What! That's what I'm usually thinking about when I've got my fingers inside you, what are you usually thinking about??”

“Kiss me,” Isak said.

“That's not an answer.”

“It is. That's probably all I ever think about.”

Even rolled his eyes, a lot, but Isak was smiling up at him, nose crinkling, head shaking a little, chin up, c’mon, please,

“Kiss me,” he said again. Even did.

Even kissed him and kissed him deeper until Isak’s tongue slipped into his mouth and they were gripping each other tight, teeth dragging with the pull apart to breathe hard over parted lips,

“Okay, so we did it your way,” Isak swallowed, nosing against Even’s cheek, hooded, drunk, clutching tight. “Now. Can you please fuck me raw?”

“Jesus fuck,” Even managed. “You weren't kidding about the dirty talk.”

“I fucking want you.”

Even pulled back enough to shot his eyebrows up, a hint of a smile as he traced a fingerpad over Isak’s cheekbone, worship in the slightest touch of their skin.

Green studied him, the weight of this thing between them wrapped around their bare bodies tight enough Isak’s lips parted around it, trepidatious, incredulous,

“Do you want me?”

“God,” Even whispered. “More than you'll ever know.”

“Then !!!” A shove to his shoulder, mouth dropped all the way open, “Get inside me maybe!”

Even sucked in a breath and looked down their bodies.

“What are you worried about?”

“I'm not.”

“Ja, you are.”

“I don't know. It just feels. Really real. I've never. I've never done anything like this.”

“Okay like. Everything I've done with you I’d never done before so. You'll be fine.”

“Will you?” Even asked, back to searching.
“What are you talking about?”

“You want me to come inside you.”

“Ja!”

“You. Fuck.” Even groaned, collapsing down to turn his head into Isak’s neck, breathe in against the safest place he knew to mumble honest. “I don't know why I'm freaking out.”

“Because it's not just sex? It's you and me, which means it’s a lot of emotions and you suck at processing those?” Isak offered.

Even barked a laugh and lifted his head, a little dazed at how flushed close and beautiful Isak was.

“...ja, maybe.”

“Okay well. If you need more time we've got literally. The rest of our lives, so.”

It was so simple and sweet and Even sucked in a breath, lying down on Isak’s side, wrapping his arms around his ribs, nose against curls.

The tide was just. A lot, and all of this was a lot, and yeah he was comfortable with and confident in sex but he’d never fucking dreamed of coming inside someone before and he had no clue why that was psyching him out of if that was even it, cause it wasn’t like that was like.

Anything but really really hot except that condoms kept sex safe and like...temporary, in a way, what happened when it was nothing but their bodies entwined, how was it Isak had just put it?

Raw?

God.

He closed his eyes, inhaling deep. Isak’s thumb was running over his cheekbone, jawline, stroking gentle and mindless, tracing while Even breathed deeper, slower, tried to calm his heartbeat down.

Only the thing was, Isak was the most cozy place in the world and Even’s bones wouldn’t stop trembling. With his emotions burning that hot, currents sweeping through him so fucking deep, the moment his body registered safe it kicked his head out and aligned stars dragged him into the dark.

Exhaustion hitting with the stark contrast of oh god we’re finally doing this to Isak’s gonna hold me for the rest of forever. Took him down hard enough he dropped asleep with his nose in Isak’s curls and Isak’s fingers stroking fondly over his hairline.

There was something about skin, about all of the warmth and smooth and angles and closeness of another beating heart, this beating heart, the boy he loved holding him that just. Fixed things. Changed things. Took all the raveled up wire and aligned the chords back simple again, smoothed the worry back out again.

So Even clung weakly to bare ribs, the warm shoulder against his chest, leg up over a warm, bruised up hip while Isak peacefully watched him sleep.

At one point he shifted, shoulders begging to roll but hands unwilling to let go and Isak put a hand over his sternum, turned him softly on his back with two hands over him the entire time - here - until Even was curling up on his side and Isak was draping over his spine, curved around him, hands over his stomach, knees up against knees.
And it was in the golden glow of Isak’s lamp, the quiet hum of a battery recharged the lashes fluttered back open to. The bubble of safety and comfort that Isak had piled around them like a fort, the bubble he was slowly easing foggy now, his lips tracing Even’s skin in the slow rise back to consciousness.

Kisses over his bare shoulders, each press of his mouth thought out, heated, pulling Even out of sleep and straight for the clouds, roused creeping in with arousal until he was blinking open his eyes, a single beat for his heart to pound before he was rolling over, rolling right up on top of Isak with it.

A pretty golden smile lifting under the sparkling eyes, calling silently from underneath him while Even ran his hands over summery skin. Tracing all the way down Isak’s body, watching the tingles jump into his touch, fingertips skirting up his ribs, chest in return.

There’d always been a crack in his chest but somehow it wasn’t a place to tear apart anymore, somehow, it was a place to let the light in.

Isak keened up into his hands, exhaling the promise of ecstasy with the toss of his head, hooking Even into the gravity and dragging him for the edge of the cliff, diving down Dover to take the angel’s face and capture the taste of heaven.

The fingers in his hair clutched harder, kissing him deeper, more desperate with the skirt of knees up his bare sides, arm muscles taut to cage each other in, stars collided.

A sudden twist apart and Isak’s head was flopping back against the pillow, breathing hard, cheeks flushed with Even his mirror, rosy red over bone, mouth open over displaced awe.

“Do you want to…” Even asked, airy, looking down Isak’s body, up to his eyes, the weight of that gaze that could drag him into the darkest corners of the universe and still keep him warm from the stardust.

He couldn’t help the hand up Isak’s jaw, thumb over his lower lip. Isak bobbed his chin free of the touch, forcing Even’s gaze back up to his eyes, look at me. Locked, a bridge in Paris with their hearts carved through the intensity, searching each other’s gazes, drowning in need.

“Make love to me,” Isak breathed, taking Even’s heart into his open mouth, tantalizing on the tip of his tongue, bedspread blurring uselessly underneath tumbling gold.

Even’s lashes fluttered shut, fingers curling in tight against bare shoulders. Swallowing hard, head dropped, lungs frozen solid between his ribs. Him. It was him, he was the one Isak chose.

The rush was still pounding and Isak dipped his head, following Even’s, waiting for him to open his eyes again, blink into the starry green.

The weakest sound caught in his throat, desperation twisting into his bone marrow while Isak lay there beautiful beneath him, all his energy wrapping around Even, still pulling him in with every flicker over his face, waiting, waiting,

Even took Isak’s cheeks in his hands and kissed him.

The purity swooped down his spine, falling closer as Isak rolled up into his body, you and me and kissed and kissed him back.

There weren’t enough places he could touch but his hands couldn’t bear to move fast either, gliding and rubbing down bare skin, the memorization of every angle, curve, hip bone fluttering muscle, the slide of their bare skin together, touch drifting this was worship--
The kiss broke with the cupid’s bow dropping open, foreheads pressing together, little wasted gasps over his mouth as they touched each other with their eyes closed. Even’s hands running up Isak’s flanks, pulling his legs up with it, moving him close and ready next,

“Isak?”

“Mmm...”

“Jeg--” Even propped up, pulling back so their gazes could meet, so Isak could open his eyes and see, feel, peeling his chest open in confession, wooden blinded box.

“...jeg els-ker deg.”

It wasn’t one of the thousand times they’d said it in pass time.

It was the gravity of the first time Isak said it, which left them switched now. Because the way Isak said it back was the way he’d be saying it 6000 times from now. Awed, sure, everything.

“I love you.”

The tip of a crooked fond, pretty, smile, lashes low as he cut back to Even’s mouth and they leaned together again, mouths overlapping.

A quiet sound against his tongue with the hitch of Isak’s leg higher, another as he broke off to reach up on the bedside table, eyes on Isak’s the entire time.

Even laid himself against Isak’s side, watching every flicker across his face, staying close, near him, not even glancing down to slick up his fingers, soaking in the stuttering jaw, fluttering eyelashes with the press of a fingertip inside, jaw a little wider with the deepened slide.

There was barely any resistance. Even must not’ve been out for long, Isak was still pretty decently opened up. Even carefully circled his finger anyways.

A warm kisses to a flushed cheek and Isak rolled his head towards him, one hand holding tight on Even’s arm, breathing through his open mouth as Even curved the finger up inside him, sliding in and out easy.

Isak was trembling, looking at him so deeply, so pleading, chin tipped up delicately,

Even leaned down and kissed him softly, mouths moving gentle sweet while he worked a second finger inside. The softer Even kissed him the harder Isak was holding onto his arm, hard muscle shifting and twitching beneath his fingers. Their lips closed over each other, pull tug to close again and smooth slip apart before Even was nosing sideways to part Isak’s mouth wide, tongue slipping over quivering lips as he dragged their mouths together slow and Isak’s hips jolting up against Even’s hand, sinking his fingers in deeper.

The kisses headed heavier until their mouths didn’t press closed anymore, Isak’s huffing exhalés over Even’s tongue, every few tangled up in a moan as his nose squished against Even’s cheek. He let his eyes close, breathing Isak in, soaking in the sounds and the ripple of his body, the velvet gliding over his parted fingers.

Trying to find my way back ho--

There was a single phrase that was caught in his throat, over his open mouth that kept repeating, the only words running through his mind, over and over, Isak was the most beautiful piece of art he’d
ever seen, Isak was the most beautiful piece of art he’d ever seen--

He had to pull back to watch, chest pounding, everything twisted so tight it was building between
Even’s ribs as Isak’s head whipped on the pillow, eyes squeezed shut, mouth open over all of these
sounds, freckles on his cheek, above his parted upper lip, the way his face twisted up when Even’s
fingers twisted deep.

Hanging on Even’s touch by the thread, caving into him and surrendering, completely weak to
whatever Even did to him, expressions unbarred, bare, please, trusting Even with his body like this.

From the inside out.

Even was staring helplessly at the face of heaven, at Isak Valtersen, the rush crashing over him
hitting rough and fast enough it was sweep his feet out from underneath--

(Don’t let me be gone.)

He was so far, so far gone he was never going to recover this, from loving Isak like this, if this
ended, he wasn’t gonna survive it.

He wasn’t.

He couldn’t breathe, the emotions were rising higher than the tide and he would peel himself apart to
give in pieces to the beautiful angel spinning on his hands overwhelmed he’d known all along,
somewhere deep down that he was done for the moment Isak let him crawl between his ribs to pull
their bodies together under the stars--

Here he was, Even’s life and soul pressed into this body and Isak wouldn’t be able to leave without
taking Even out when he did.

He couldn’t speak, couldn’t say anything, the ocean was trying to swallow him whole so he pressed
his forehead to Isak’s, grasping uselessly at the contact, Isak’s panting, whining over Even’s mouth,
soaking in the prayers. Fingers twisting pumping faster so they couldn’t shake.

“Baby, baby,” Isak was saying. “Ooohh ohh--”

Even had a handful of the curls on top of Isak’s head and Isak was trying to get closer, spine arching
a little as Even rubbed over the spot inside him, higher, higher,

A whooshing exhale and Isak flopped back to the mattress, hips shoving up, eyes shot open wide to
lock on Even’s, shocked and begging all the intensity of the heat the friction so fucking desperate
Isak held his gaze, his arm, shaking, shaking,

Even couldn’t stop looking all over Isak’s face, memorizing every fucking inch, the tension riding
high as rubbing resistance and the moment his gazed locked on Isak’s mouth Isak knew, lips
dropping open further and making Even’s fingers curl inside him, hard then the wet mouth was
stuttering, a single word, pleading,

“Nå. Nå.”

Even used the hand in his curls to cup the side of Isak’s face up, lean in and kiss him sweet as he
pulled lubed fingers out of Isak’s body, sliding up his inner thigh to wipe them clean enough to run
up the rest of that heated, trembling skin.

Isak moved into his hands, moved with them like Isak was the ocean and Even was the one who
pulled the waves onto the shore and he’d never been more sure about anything in his life than that he’d rather drown here tonight than ever breathe fresh air again.

They kissed until they were gasping, until their foreheads were together and he was slicking himself up and Isak keeps accidentally knocking his hand off with the thigh rubbing up Even’s bare hip.

“I want you so much.” Isak was breathing, eyes still closed as he rubbed hands up Even’s arms, over his neck, gripping tight in the back of his hair, “I want you so much.”

Even kissed him, desperately, because he didn’t have the words to tell Isak how much how much was.

How much this was, but he was kissing him and Isak pulled up against his mouth like he could feel it, they could feel it kissing each other this deep and clinging drowning begging deeper.

The center of the universe nestled between the ribs under his as Even rolled up over him, Isak’s face between his hands and their palms on each other’s cheeks, jaws, cheekbones, up into his hair to grab in fists, rushing so far underwater his hands couldn’t stop trembling--

Isak broke their mouths apart, pulling Even down too deep for surgery to save him now, their foreheads pressed together with Even’s slicked up cock rubbing against Isak’s, their legs entwined their lives entwined,

“You okay?” Isak asked him quietly and Even nodded, moving Isak with him, trying to swallow, catch his breath, holding onto his neck like it was Even’s lifeline instead of Isak’s, fingers curled hard into the top of his spine.

Isak listened to his lungs fail, quietly, lifting his head and making Even lift his. They meet eyes again and Isak lifted a single eyebrow, simple, curls splayed on the pillow and absolutely beautiful, waiting to see if Even was okay.

“I am,” he swore. “I’m so in love with you but I’m okay.”

Isak melted, caving, green eyes so soft and understanding as the heel of his hand skirted up Even’s cheekbone, fingers sliding against his temple. Mouth pursed in a little pout, watching. When he finally spoke it was quiet and simple and honest.

“We are so in love, aren’t we?”

Even kinda broke, the shattered remains to leave permanent scars on the inside of his skin he’d never be able to recover from, not from this. It was a miracle there wasn’t blood on his tongue as he leaned in slow, sinking back into the together of their mouths again.

Isak kissed him with his eyes open, watching, only breathing into it for a moment before he was pulling back, studying Even’s eyes, the swirl of so many emotions, too fucking much.

“Now let’s feel it,” Isak whispered, and Even breathed in hard through his mouth, sliding his hands back down the golden body while Isak arched up against the touch and lifted his legs up to spread them open. The next whisper painted over Even’s temple as he lined up. “Show me.”

Bare, the two of them, nothing between them, not even latex now. Even looked back up at Isak’s eyes.

Isak nodded, solid, once, watching him. Even kept watching, they were locked on each other now as he pressed up against Isak’s entrance, his mouth dropping open a little with it, twin burning flashes in
their eyes, fingers clutching deeper.

And Even slowly pushed inside.

The sound Isak made wasn’t something he’d made before, it was broken into pieces and so full and beautiful and something shifted in Even’s chest that was never gonna go back to the way it was before, ever, he already knew.

Isak swallowed him whole and he pushed inside, every inch compressing around him, the smoothest warmest silkiest tightest thing he’d ever felt and Even’s hips were stuttering, it was so fucking much.

And that would be if Isak wasn’t taking it inside him like he’d never had anything inside him before, like this was the first time he’d been touched, taking it with his head lifted off the pillow and his mouth open and his hand so tight on the back of Even’s neck it hurt, the love squeezing his heart, constriction in his chest hurt.

Then he was all the way flush, completely inside Isak, rose colored gold with no other name. Just the two of them stripped bare, flesh on flesh in flesh and it was too much for both of them, they were just one and the same now. Isak wrapped his arms around Even’s neck, breathing heavy and high, looking down their bodies, lashes fluttering, knees pressing against the side of his hips while Even watched his face.

Then Isak looked up at him, their eyes locked and Even shoved a touch deeper, barely a centimeter more before Isak was pulling him down by his neck to kiss and kiss. Even was sliding out and back in and Isak couldn’t kiss him anymore, not when he was making sounds like that.

“O-ooh. Oh, oh god,” breathed. Isak’s hands in his hair, his eyes closed, his mouth open. Even pushed out and pulled back in, gravitating into Isak’s body like that was where he belonged and Isak was rolling his hips up against him like he felt it too.

“Fuck, baby,” he broke, panting quick as he tried to get a grip, fingers slipping and clutching Even’s naked shoulders instead.

Even rocked up into him again, all of them sliding and his breath catching his chest, stealing his oxygen as Isak moaned and fluttered around him achingly real.

He could feel everything, it was hot and pulsing and Isak’s hand was gripped around his heart with the same tension, squeezing so tight Even couldn’t see.

“Please,” Isak breathed, a flashing glint of gold on the water. The hands on his shoulders dragged him down into a kiss and Even was dizzy, he was dizzy with it.

He pulled his hips back and slid in smooth, fast, out and right back in again, a tempo that had Isak making deep throaty intense sounds, help, holding onto Even tight, already bursting with ecstasy in the waves.

The body of his angel jolting on the bedspread with every hook together deeper.

Even was rolling, his spine curving and hips up and out down and in and the friction was so much, so tight, sliding like he’s carving through water, slick and heavy. What a way to be destroyed, dragged down underneath the waves he was drenched and the boy around him, the boy he was drowning in smacked the surface to ripples with every collide of white caps into each other.

Lashes wet and sounds escalating, head tossing in the waves. Even was losing his grip on Isak’s ribs, slipping through his fingertips with the sheen of sweat and this was the most beautiful, pure thing
he’d ever touched, ever gotten to have and it shouldn’t be his, it really shouldn’t, it was too beautiful
and real and raw for him to touch without fucking up it was only fair that Isak’s ribs slip free from his
hands like everything else he had to lose and lose and lose--

The single droplet landed on Isak’s cheek, splattering and shocking his eyes open so fast the moment
cut down to slow motion, a hand that automatically swept Even’s hairline, moving sweaty strands
away only it wasn’t sweat that was rolling over Isak’s skin, it was saltwater.

Isak’s mouth was already open but now his eyes shot wide, moan caught in his throat over a pained
choked little sound and the hand on his forehead flew to his cheekbone, thumb rubbing over Even’s
wet lashes.

Fingertips to the seizing heart in his crushed chest--

Even’s hips stuttered, eyes squeezing shut, the world was tipping and he was peeled open, bleeding
red into all the sunny beautiful blue--

“Right here,” Isak breathed and Even’s eyes opened again. Isak was looking at him so kindled and
emotional and strong. “Stay right here, stay with me.”

Even parted his lips to answer that he was, he was with Isak, he was with Isak forever he was
nothing else was Isak with--

But he couldn’t say anything, his throat was wrapped up and the push and pull of their bodies was
laborious enough it was dragging him through smacking waves and he wasn’t strong enough, he was
being pulled down too far under--

“Out of your head,” Isak begged, and Even’s eyes snapped open again. “Out of your head, stay with
me, stay here with me.”

Pleading so passionately, Isak’s eyes were prayers, the devotion slamming into waterlogged lungs
and Even shook his head, whipping clear enough the words finally sunk in, looking down at the
desperation all over that beautiful face, the heat and pleas falling from that gasping mouth.

Out of your head, into that world inverted, where the shadows were really a body, where the
heavens were shallow as the sea was now deep as you love me.

A stutter in the tempo and the grip finally registered, so tight it wasn’t a grip anymore it was anchor,
holding him still and steady while he rocked into Isak’s body, felt the bruises and the claws and how
hard and vehement Isak was holding him and how deep that was sinking in, how many places it was
registering in his brain, how far underwater the diving boy was following him.

“I love you,” Isak was telling him, “I love you. Even, I love you.”

He inhaled shakily, head dipping against the spin Isak’s legs were wrapping around his waist, hands
in his hair, “I love you, I love you,”

He was burning his touch into Even’s skin and it was so hot and bright he couldn’t focus on
anything else,

Then Isak was pulling him down and they were kissing, mouths overlapping into place with his hips
stuttering again and Isak rocked back against him, devastatingly perfect, overwhelmed, more, please,
please, Even, please.

His arms were trembling enough he might collapse so he lowered onto his elbows, angle shifting.
Isak groaned low, shoving his hands through Even’s hair with Even’s mouth painting rivers with every hard exhale over his neck,

“Talk to me,” Isak gasped, scrambling and Even huffed high pitched into sweat sheened skin. His eyes were still wet, he closed them to try to make it go away,

“Don’t think I can talk dirty right now, babe,” he managed, pulling their bodies together again and Isak’s hands tightened, a stuttered moan.

“Not. Not what I meant,” the tender mouth gasped, another slide in and the hands in Even’s hair pulled his head up, framing his face with palms on his jaw, looking at him, both of their mouths open as Even thrust inside him again and again, joined so fucking real, pure, nothing but their naked bodies. “What’s going on, talk to me.”

Even’s parted lips dropped wider but he didn’t have the words, he didn’t know where to begin, he didn’t know what Isak was expecting him to say, he didn’t know how Isak expected him to speak when their bodies were moving together like this.

Tracing down deeper--

“Even?” Isak asked. Even closed his eyes and tried to steady an inhale. Isak was doing the same, chest expanding against his. Touching him, keeping him here, so tight and burning around him while they slid together again it was making him dizzier, making the world tip more.

It didn’t even have to be a break up, they could live together for the rest of their lives. Even still would never be okay.

If anything happened to Isak, a cold breath of air would kill him.

They weren’t separate people anymore and Even was terrified because he was attached, he was completely attached, Isak had so much of him now and he let himself get so deep into this he was scraping the bottom and it hurt, how fucking much he loved, how intensely their rocking bodies were spelling their end.

“We can stop,” Isak told him, breaking through nine layers of watery fog, hands on Even’s long neck.

“Nei,” Even breathed, locker rooms flashing lashes fluttering. Forcing himself to swallow tight, “Not unless you want to--”

“Nei, baby. Baby I. God, god, I. Mm, Even, I’m fucking weak, I need you so much, Even. I.”

Even’s eyes were closed and it was nothing but the movement for a moment, the movement attached to the motion attached to the ocean in his stomach and the dance of their bodies look at them weaving and bare and true--

There was so much heat inside him, around him, Isak was all of that, Isak was all of the warmth and the world without him was so fucking cold, he’d been so fucking alone,

“God,” Even broke, don’t leave me, I’ll freeze.

A gasp, another gasp,

“T-talk to me, please,” Isak’s hands were rubbing over his skin again, panting and shaking. Begging Even to turn himself inside out when they were already latched on around inside each other.
“After,” he pleaded. “Can we talk after.”

Isak nodded, mouth closing, eyes closing, solemn as his throat bobbed and his chest quivered.

“Forever,” he whispered finally. “Doesn’t matter when, you have my forever.”

“Please,” Even cracked and that time when Isak opened his mouth it wasn’t to dig Even’s grave, it was to breathe. Inhale him in, swallow him whole. Shake harder with another twist of their bodies nestled in place, draw away and sinking deeper than he’d ever been under that golden skin.

It was so fucking much, too fucking much he couldn’t breathe, collapsing into broken little rotations and Isak was clutching.

“C’mon, c’mon,” a quiet plea under his breath, head tipped back, fingernails branding shoulderblades. “If we’re talking after, then love me now.”

Even huffed into his neck, sucking in a breath, hips moving in slow circles. Isak was holding onto him fucking tight and Even couldn’t make his lungs work, gasping uselessly, head spinning, Isak’s skin pressing safety over his eyes,

“Give me a fucking second.”

There was a pang in his chest, the confession in it.

“Can’t see why, it’s not like this is the most intimate intense thing we’ve ever done,” Isak offered back shakily and Even lifted his head, searching green eyes.

Isak gave him back the truth, nothing but the honest to god truth.

It was a dare, in a way. Holding him there, bare, showing him. Whatever he was feeling, whatever intensity was making him shake? It was the same intensity that had Isak’s bones burning under his skin.

The same intensity that engraved a permanent space between his thighs, between his ribs, between his stomach and his spine. He wasn’t a place for Even to come home to anymore, he was the home that Even never had to leave,

From the moment Even pressed inside him, raw, slick, filling him all the way up with nothing between them? It took him near out of his body, and shoved him more solid into his skin that he’d ever been, mind numbingly quiet, the world filling up with colors and muted sound as he arched into the next oblivion where nothing existed outside of their bodies entwining, one.

He’d been shaken so far out of it, tapped so far into their bodies, the pounding rise in his chest, the most beautiful thing he’d ever experienced, the tying of their souls, the highest kind of pleasure that was so beyond that word, the most connected to Even he’d ever felt, he was so swept away in the emotions Even was pressing into his skin he’d missed, at first, the underlying current. Even’s slip down the wrong slope.

Until the tear hit his cheek.

The beauty wasn’t lifting Even for the skies, he was being dragged under and Isak dove right after him, grabbing him by the jaw and kissing air back into his lungs.

And he could taste it on him, the ripple beneath the tears. This was about control, about losing it. Losing everything, to them.
This internal raging storm, the struggle against that instinct Even had to limit the intensity, to be able to handle this thing between them, but. It was too real for that, too wild and flowing and pure, there wasn’t any option but to run or be consumed and god, they were so far past running from each other.

He knew that Even felt things different than he did. When everything was heightened anyways it had to be distressing as fuck to be this fucking far under. Desperate for each other, hearts throbbing, caving into each other’s mouths begging for the entwinement of their souls. But god, the solace they found in each other’s fingertips, this was how their bodies stopped aching.

Isak could show him that, take him through the fucking terrifying slip of their hold on separation, the raw jolting fit of their bodies past the point of no return. So let him dive, pull that body full of light up from the lake.

Breached the surface again and they were going to hold each other and ride this together, in the tumbling waves sparkling skies in the middle of the world.

Together, that was what he promised, when Even lifted his head and looked at him like that. Hips stilling for the moment but Isak couldn’t stop trembling, not when Even was here buried deep inside him, he could feel him, not as someone he was having sex with, not as the lover that knew his insides as incredibly intimate as his outside, but as the fabric of existence that kept two people from being two people, at all.

Isak took Even’s face in his palms again, the most beautiful man he’d ever seen, ever known, ever touched, and kissed the mouth that’d saved him, kissed the man he’d saved.

Their world framed in his hands, Isak kissed Even hard enough he was slowly sliding their bodies together, so insanely beautiful they were full of starfire.

A dithered little moan against him, sinking back into his body, their bodies, Isak broke off, gasping, giving the flashing flushed world a moment before he opened his eyes to the wild, wide blue ones again.

Was it love, was it devastation, was it devotion or too much or the realization that this was the closest they could ever physically get, there was nothing past this, nowhere else to shove the want, he didn’t know, there was only one thing Isak knew, only one want.

“Make love to me,” Isak whispered, the last piece he had.

Drowning eyes lit fire, sparks somehow burning underwater and Even pushed up, over him. Elbows lifting off the bed, a hand running down Isak’s chest while his hips circled up against him slower now, purpose.

Isak took a deep breath, shaky unsteady and Even was looking back up at him, clear, beautiful, mouth opened to the emotions that swept him away but they were together now and that was all that mattered.

Take me home, he almost said, and didn’t. Carry me out of the darkness and I’ll carry you out of the cold.

Even pushed up his body, sliding deeper with it, hard enough Isak’s eyebrows knit, a sealed whimper and shut eyes, fireworks up his spine, oxygen over his skin.

Something warm bumped his nose and Isak managed to squint open long enough to see long lashes, their noses pressed.
Isak’s eyes closed, surrender seeping from down his neck, out the spread of his arms, muscles softening as he shook his head slowly. Eskimo kisses, back and forth. Still.

You and me.

Then the deep boy pulled out and Isak inhaled sharp, Even’s hands in his hair and hips pressed to Isak’s, sliding back inside him smooth and beautiful. An open ‘o’ exhaling the tension with the turn of his head, pillow compressed, lashes fluttering.

A hand on his jaw, Even turned him back upright to kiss his open mouth and rock inside him slow, slow.

The in and out, tempo stabilizing and the steadier it got the softer it got. Softer smoother more careful gentle until Isak was dying with it, crumbling now in the opposite kind of ache.

Diving diving closer, drawing out further, rolling more delicate and sure and sweet. Rubbing up his insides with the smallest press of their lips.

It kept rolling his eyes back open, wide with how much, so much, all of that beauty, the drifting light.

Even’s swooping hair was an absolute mess, silked blonde strands broken over his forehead, over the purest blue eyes so swallowed up in light and dark. Ethereal, with trembling arms and chapped lips unable to close as he kissed Isak again. Again.

Building in his chest, lifting him with every press together, their bodies closer and closer, the friction between them, the gravity of every touch.

Until Isak was gasping too hard to kiss back, then it was the sides of their noses pressed together as they breathed on each other’s skin and Even made slow pure sweet love to him.

A hand sliding up his chest, down his arm, over his skin until Isak was lifting his hand from the sheets to entwine his fingers with Even’s, hands curling together with their eyes on each other, gazes locked and burning.

Even pressed their entwined hands to the sheets and rocked up inside Isak’s body again and Isak’s mouth dropped open a little wider, breath stuttering, lashes low as he looked up at that beautiful boy and Even looked helplessly down at him like he’d never seen anything more beautiful in his twenty years of stunning life.

It just kept building in Isak’s stomach, building and building as Even’s body stripped him down to the core and he’d never been safer, here in Even’s arms.

Even’s breathing was picking up, his hips a little too and Isak stretched into it, lips closed wobbly over the moan in his throat, deep inhales through his nose, immersed in the heat and motion of them rocking together, waves.

His free hand sliding up Even’s back, drawing him in closer.

Fingertips spread over graceful shoulders, the angel wings painted by Isak’s palm.

Everything was velvet and promise because Isak was in the clouds and it was his turn to drag Even with him, to dive into the sunlight, hold each other in the warmth while the water waved them home.

Take all of this heat and me too.
“Jeg,” Isak started,

“Elsker deg,” Even finished, a whisper, torn up, mouth closing as he swallowed hard only to pop back open, rock a little faster.

He was close to the whitecapped peak, and the moment that registered was also the moment the fog somehow shifted enough for Isak to remember that this time, when Even came, he was going to feel it, inside him, raw, painted into the deepest places of him.

Even rolled inside, brushing muscles he could swear were between his lungs and Isak made the most pitiful sound, fingertips sinking into moon printed skin, squeezing their entwined hands so tight he was making galaxies there too.

The sky trapped in dark eyes, studying him, warm and close enough he could feel it, rocking together shakily enough he could feel it.

A kiss to his cheek, infinity, then it was shifting to his mouth and Isak kissed back desperately, lips mushing to overlapping, sucking on the tongue in his mouth, this boy in his body, he’d never wanted something so much.

They were holding hands on the edge and Isak couldn’t stop throbbing, couldn’t close his mouth, couldn’t tear his eyes away from the boy above him.

Inside him, Even was gonna come inside him, Isak was gonna lose his fucking mind.

A heavy hand stroked down his face, fingertips trembling as they fell off the bottom of his jaw, Isak’s eyes searching back and forth, back and forth, all of the swirling dark galaxy blue.

Looking at each other through the quake of their joined bodies. Isak was breathing so hard his chest was barely had time to fall between the rises. Even was searching right back, all over his face, unsure as their first pure white morning in the kitchen, moments before he confessed the words that would dwell in Isak’s chest for the rest of his life,

*I have never felt anything like this. Ever.*

Neither have I, neither of I, please jump with me take this last step and tie us together one knot deeper neither have I, *please--*

“Ja?” Even whispered, and he’d remembered too, he was looking at Isak like that. Like that.

Isak nodded and nodded and shook and nodded.

“Ja, ja, ja, ja.”

It was a prayer and Even was a storm at sea, crashing dangerously high but Isak could be his lighthouse safety, flashing here and home every draw apart could mean one more pull closer together. Even had to close his eyes, trying to calibrate the tangible severity of how fucking much Isak wanted him, wanted all of him, inside him but god he did, he wanted it more than he could remember wanting anything when their bodies were entwined like this.

The desperation, desire all over his face was shoving Even higher, hips stuttering because Isak didn’t hide an ounce of how bad he wanted it, to feel Even warm and sticky splashing his insides, how bad he wanted them to be gone this way too.

He wrapped stardusted fingertips around to take Even’s cheek, gazing up at him just. Gone. Nothing
to hide behind.

The deepest parts of him waving around the boy inside and Even stuttered more,

“I love you,” Isak slotted between the gasps, “I love you, I love you, please--”

The shambles were collapsing all that strength, Even’s forehead pressed to Isak’s while Isak closed his mouth over another low whine, tipping up into him, breathing in, both of them holding tighter tighter harder closer,

A sound escaped the parted mouth, jolting

“Fuck, Isak--”

Fingernails digging into the back of Isak’s neck, disappearing into his curls with the haphazard thrusts of their souls, all he needed was the love breathing over his skin, he could live underwater, holding onto that beautiful boy as he started to slip below--

One two, Isak flooded deep, eyes closed he fell to his knees. He didn’t make it past the first streaming warmth before he was tightening up all over and coming hard.

Even’s lips on his skin, choked sound in his throat while he clutched Isak so hard he couldn’t unfreeze,

“Oh god god god yes.”

The port of my call and Even groaned, another wave of warmth seeping into his stomach as Isak’s eyes rolled back in his head, thrown back hard, holding onto Even so tight their hands were bruising.

The shot and leaving him smothered raw Even was collapsing, in waves, down then down while Isak shuddered and came and weak and capping white.

Then all of Even’s weight was on his chest, shoulders rising so fast and resonant with his mouth smushed against Isak’s collarbone.

Isak had one hand on his head, eyes closed, full of soaking wet heat as he tried to breathe with Even still buried under his skin, immersed inside him.

It was too soon that Even lifted up, tried to move but Isak took his face before he could leave an inch, kissing him deep.

They kissed, hearts entwined, bodies one, they kissed until Even would never consider not having had kissed him after that.

Eventually the open wounds, peeled back layers and gaping mouths stopped pounding enough for Isak to drag their lips back apart, sunken fingertips letting go.

Even didn’t go anywhere, breathing as he studied Isak’s eyes, as they whispered silently of absolutely nothing. There was nothing but Isak, Even, and the love they felt.

A quiet recalibration, blinking once then twice before Even was looking down their bodies and pulling out slow.

Isak exhaled with it, then there was wet dribbling down sensitive skin, twitching and he moaned, heels dragging up the mattress with the sparks shooting all the way up his spine.
“Fy faen,” Even managed, looking back at him with those pretty eyebrows knit, another sweeping crash of emotions Isak took his arm and pulled him down to kiss him again.

With your love, I can breathe underwater.

They lay there, in the quiet, Even on his side, nose in his curls again. Isak was completely spent and so was Even. They were both boneless, too boneless to move. Not that he ever needed to move again.

He could feel it inside him, warm, wet, real. Even still inside him, this, inside him.

“You want me to go get a washcloth?” Even asked, muffled and Isak closed his eyes, swallowing.

“Nei.”

Even turned his face further into Isak’s skin with his bare shoulders hitching. Falling perfectly quiet.

The heat was sliding out of him but he didn’t care, Even made love to him raw and came inside him literally nothing else in the world mattered. Besides that Even wasn’t breathing okay.

“This counts as after,” Isak finally lifted over the silence.

“I’m so in love with you I’m drowning,” Even mumbled into the heat. Isak opened his eyes.

“And...”

“And you’re so beautiful, you’re so perfect, this thing between us is so strong, I can’t fight it, I’m just...completely gone.”

“Mmhm.”

“And it’s terrifying,” Even finally broke a little, voice too high with the hitch in his words.

Isak drifted his touch down the bare shoulders, fingerpads tracing over the little halfmoons he found there.

“What are you scared of?” Delicate quiet careful. “Getting lost in each other?”

It was so simple, the words disappearing as quick as they’d come, would that be next for them too?

Even lifted his head, sniffing once and wiping a hand over his face. Fuck, it had to be painted on his skin, the weak destruction waiting in his bones. Isak was watching him and they were so close, inches, exactly the same closeness they were when this started, when Even was opening him back up.

Only he’d opened up both their chests with it too and he didn’t know how he was supposed to stitch himself back together after this one.

Lighthouses flashed and Isak’s words echoed, another spin around.

Getting lost.

“Of getting toxic,” Even corrected quietly and Isak’s eyebrows knit.

“How would we ever get toxic, Even? We talk too much.”
The crook up of a smile with it, the double meaning of rambling but the communication too, the way they always manage to find a way--

“If you ever left me I don’t think I’d survive it,” Even told him. “That’s toxic.”

Isak blinked. Holy shit, that was dark.

It must’ve been written over his face because it’d barely sunk in before Even was taking it back, burying with it.

“I shouldn’t’ve told you that.” A frustrated groan, back into his skin. Then he was up again, floundering and desperate while Isak pressed harder into his skin, grounding, still desperate. “I can’t be the boyfriend that threatens suicide if we break up, Isak. I can’t be that person.”

“Is that what you meant?” Isak asked quietly, dancing his fingers up Even’s naked shoulderblade, swooping back down tried to calm him down in the undercurrent. Even didn’t even feel it.

“Nei,” Even said, sitting up higher. “Nei, it’s not, I don’t ever want you to think that, I don’t ever want you not to chose what you want just because you’re afraid I’d do something stupid.”

“Okay,” Isak agreed slowly. “I believe you. Then what are you saying?”

“That…” A frustrated sound and Even struggled for a moment, battling it out inside of his head. Didn’t know how to say it, so Isak lay beneath him and waited.

“You’re…you’re so. You have so much of me,” Even tried and Isak looked at him, patient. There was nowhere else he’d rather be.

“You are so deep inside my chest it just feels like if I ever lost you, I don’t know what I’d have left.”

Isak ran a hand through his hair. Even was searching his eyes, Isak let him look for whatever he needed to find.

He was perfectly content to lie here, muscles twitching every few minutes to the wetness inside him. Even, inside him, the way Even somehow wasn’t understanding was mutual.

“It’s that way for me too,” Isak said. Even’s eyebrows shot up, but it was weak. Isak wet his lips and tried again. “Even, I don’t think you understand how much you carve inside me when your body is inside mine. It’s not just physical, and it’s not just in my stomach, it’s in my chest, it’s in my head, it’s in my bones, you’re in my bones.”

Blue blinked tearily at him.

“You are…so much more than the man of my dreams, Even.” Isak ran a hand over his face, under his lashes. “If you left, I’d. I think it’d take me an…unfathomably long time to remember how to breathe. I don’t know if I’d ever remember how to live.”

He kept stroking soft, watching the galaxies water up again.

“And I cannot possibly imagine ever remembering how to love. I just can’t-- without you…”

Even was crying now and Isak was weak enough he was tearing up too.

“You’re it for me too, baby. You’re it for me too.”

A single hitched sob and the gravity pulled them together. Even put his lips on Isak’s, salty wet
sweet quiet and they gasped into each other’s mouths, kissing one more time before they were
nestling close, heads on the pillow, noses overlapped, foreheads pressing, breathe me in.

Tears still shaking chests, thumbs rubbing away the leak of ocean water on each other’s cheeks.

Isak was weak. So so weak.

It took them minutes hours a century in time here together, softly crying together until the wells all
dried up, until the rough waves couldn’t shake them anymore, clutching so tight there was nothing
but the smooth ripple of their hands holding each other, their mouths pressing together again, noses
smushing again.

Quiet. Until they could breathe.

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Lips parting, lethargic fingers over his cheekbone. Voice sticky, gravel for a beat.

“Can I go get you water?”

Isak rolled his lips in and nodded quietly. They kissed again. And again. Then Even rolled off the
bed, pushing to his feet. Unsteady as he grabbed a pair of boxers and Isak watched him all the way
for the door.

The kitchen tiles were freezing for no damn reason, his arms wrapped over his chest, tucked under
themselves in the cold as Even stepped into the white room, crossing to walk past the window and
that’s when the color hit him.

He did a double take, back pedaling slow and staring wide eyed out the strip between the curtains.

The sun was coming up over the horizon, bursting through the edges of a stark orange sky. He’d
never seen clouds so vibrant, blood red painted on the underside of clouds, massive streaks that faded
to dark purple at the top, dusted with splashes of blinding gold.

It was gorgeous enough it took his breath away. Even just stood there a moment in his underwear
before he quickly grabbed water, hurried back to the bedroom and threw open the blinds, orange
curtain tossed up over itself.

The other source of golden gorgeous enough to take his breath away had been near asleep, was now
rolling over with a discontented little groan.

“What are you doing?”

“Look,” Even said and Isak squinted open his eyes, instantly bathed in the array of sunrise washing
everything beautiful, beginning new.

Isak was - for once - completely speechless. Kinda just staring at the sky over the rooftops outside.

Mesmerized, the both of them while Even watched the beautiful boy, reflected gold and glowing.

Glowing.

Even was melting.
“I am so so in love with you,” he said and the desperation wasn’t there, not like it was before.

This time, it was simple. Acceptance.

Isak's eyes snapped to him instead, standing there at the side of the window, the shadows of his collarbones picking up the purples and reds, golden streaks in his hair, two children of the sun to entwine.

“Even,” Isak said back and the way he said it was the same confession Even just made.

He came back to the bed, crawling over the space between them to press their noses together and Isak slipped their bodies back in place, rolling them onto their sides, legs hooked together, arms wrapped and heads tipping to slide their mouths together smooth.

Floating into second nature, a waterfall, trickling feeling into delicate skin, kissing smooth enough to slide under. Three-sixty degree submersion until they were breaking the surface to inhale warm oxygen into dry lungs.

They kissed in each other’s arms, they kissed until inhales had their mouths pulling apart in tandem, settling down into each other. Even watching the sun rise over Isak’s golden shoulders.

Isak watching the sun rise in the reflection of Even’s starry eyes.

It faded into daylight so slow they were both asleep by the time the sky was blue.

They slept all the way through Sunday morning.

They slept all the way through Sunday morning.

(And I’m falling.)

_I've got a feeling, I don't want to know_  
_Early dawning Sunday morning_  
_It's all the streets you've crossed_  
_Not so long ago._

Sunday morning.

Tirsdag, 12:32  
16.05.17

“Does everyone know what tomorrow is??”

“Uh...no school, parades, get wasted in fancy clothes day?” Magnus offered.

Jonas facepalmed.

“It’s Norway’s constitution day,” Vilde corrected, giving him an unimpressed look.

“That’s exactly what I just said!”
“--and everyone that’s celebrating together is going to match--”

“That explains the flower crowns,” Mahdi offered and the unimpressed turned into a brilliant smile, box dumping loudly on the lunch room table.

“...so we brought enough for all of you too!”

A few eyebrows went up and Sana tipped her head in her tightest sassiest smile, black and silver flower crown perched atop her hijab.

Noora’s smile was vaguely threatening, Chris wasn’t even disguising the just give in face and the hand Eva had on Vilde’s shoulder was protective enough it was more than clear whose idea the crowns were.

“You just have to pick your flowers,” Eva pointed over Vilde at the box.

“And we’ll weave them in,” Vilde finished, hands clapping excitedly.

Magnus and Mahdi exchanged very skeptical looks.

“This is very sweet.” Mahdi glanced between all of them, back to Magnus with the yikes face on.

“But we can’t wear flowers around school,” Magnus translated, right as Jonas sat up from the relaxed sprawl to drag the box closer.

“The blue and white ones,” Jonas told them, sliding the box back Vilde’s way and turning to the popped open mouths with his arms crossing over his chest. “Why not, Mags, what’s wrong with flowers?”

Mahdi sat up and pointed out the yellow ones instantly.

“Magnus don’t fight him on it, you call it girlie and either him Sana Noora or Even will eat you alive.”

A moment’s pause, all the girls looking between each other, back to the boys.

“I’ll take pink,” Magnus offered.

Vilde cheered and swung into her seat, the rest of the girls filling in and pulling flowers and strands out of boxes, reaching over to measure heads.

“Speaking of, where are Isak and Even?” Chris asked, giving Mahdi a thumbs up for the yellow flowers that matched half of her own.

“Probably banging in the boys bathroom,” Jonas piped up to a bright shocked chorus of laughter. He chewed on his straw and sat his drink back down, eyebrows up, gaze lowkey judgy on the table. “I wish that was a joke.”

“Kødder du??”

To be fair, Jonas wasn’t wrong on that not being a joke. Although he was wrong this particular day, because Isak and Even in fact were not in the boys bathroom. They were in an empty classroom.

Isak’s hips in Even’s hands, sitting between his legs on an empty desk with their backs against the
wall, and Even’s chest while Isak held another strawberry up over his shoulder, plush lips brushing his fingers as a warm mouth closed around a bite.

Barely chewing once before Isak was following it up with a soft kiss, their mouths red, hearts as gooey as the frosting he scooped up with a finger.

That time Even pressed a little kiss to the tip of it after he sucked it off clean and Isak giggled, tilting into him for another strawberry cake kiss, chest so warm it already felt like summer.

Tirsdag, 20:54
16.05.17

< Meldinger  Sanaaa  Kontakt

I dag, 20:54

So I found more on that research you asked me to help you with

Ja? Which research

Not the microbiology research

Oh shit okay ja. So you managed to talk to that therapist?

Ja. I mean it was a fucking hassle and I had to pretend my brother was bipolar but better me than you so

Takk so much for this honestly

Serr, any time. Well maybe not the fake therapist visit that was
“What’s up?” Jonas asked, propping his chin in a hand, leaning over the desk to give Isak that
Isak gave him the signature confused furrowed one right back.

“Uh, nothing? Attempting to do math.”

“Nah, man, something’s different.”

“Nothing’s different.”

“Something’s been different all week.”

“Hm??”

“I dunno, man, you’ve changed. You and Even, there’s like...I mean yesterday at the parade, during the parties, the whole time, there was like. This thing, more than soft smiles and shit it was like. Palpable, I dunno, something happened.”

Fumbling to explain the gravity of galaxies, the warmth of sun on one’s skin when the universe had settled in another person, when they were entwined every moment they were apart now too, a quiet look across the room the heated desperation for touch had shifted, somehow, the warming return of hands never long apart.

Something’s different. Something changed.

Or maybe they just stopped changing. Maybe the devotion finally took them both by the heartstrings and wound them together so tight it was definite. To be set free, lifted for the skies and above.

Written in the stars, the two of them.

“I’m in love,” Isak offered and Jonas’s dark eyebrows lifted.

“...I know.”

“Nei, but like. Really.”

A little bit of confusion crept in and Isak just looked back, let Jonas see whatever he needed to see in Isak’s eyes. Whatever ending was there, whatever swirling storms had finally whispered quiet. This was it.

“...okay,” Jonas finally conceded, nodding once.

The corner of Isak’s mouth tipped up and he nodded in return.

“Ja.” Math notebook opened, pencil drifting over a page, ribs wrapped warm around his heart. “It’s pretty okay.”

Torsdag, 19:33
18.05.17
“Hey guess what I’m bringing up again?” Isak looked up from his phone, glancing over his shoulder to the boy propped against the headboard wall.

Even didn’t look up from his laptop, comfortable and simple.

“What?”

Isak chewed his lip before he pushed off his stomach, crossed his legs to sit, and just said it.

“The fact that you’re not on medication.”

Yeah, that time, Even looked up.

“I-sak.”

“Even,” he replied stubbornly.

A sigh and the laptop closed, up for the bedside table.

“I already told you--”

“I know what you told me, so I went and did more research.”

“Ughhhhh.” Even’s head landed in his hands. “Why am I dating a scientist?”

“Because you love me.”

Even lifted his hands and gave him a dull look. Isak cocked an eyebrow and wrapped his hands around his ankles, continuing right over the exasperation,

“Although you must not love me that much, because when I was doing research I came across something you somehow neglected to tell me.”

The oh fuck that widened in blue eyes told him everything he needed to know. Whether it was this or any of two dozen other things Even hadn’t told him, Even hadn’t told him.

“Which I know you, of course, would never intentionally keep me in the dark because you do love me, so very much,” Isak continued, ‘cause you know what, he had a fucking right.

“...but I just happened to find out. They get worse over time, don’t they? Like a lot worse. Every manic episode you have increases the chance of how intense, how bad the next one is.”

Even just looked at him. Blonde swept up stunning, a single curl dangling over his forehead, sharp cut angle of his jawline, carved silent statue.

Didn’t say a single damn word, just looked at him.

“You fucking knew that.” Still mute, nothing and Isak was trying not to get upset but Even wasn’t giving him anything, sitting there beautiful and he was about to fucking scream.

“Of course you knew that.” Isak slowly uncurled his fingers, marble walls up so fucking high Even was pissed at him for so much as asking and fucking hell, Isak was fucking pissed that Even wasn’t even trying. He kept as level as fucking possible but his voice still quivered when he finally looked up and met the blue crystal clear, straight through to the ocean. “…why didn’t you tell me?”
“Are you fucking kidding me?? Why would I tell you that?? Oh babe, sorry I broke your heart and your hands and ruined your life last time but don’t worry, that might be the mildest one you’ll ever see?” Even shook his head at him, incredulous, swooped hair tumbling, eyebrows knit like Isak was the infuriating one, porcelain hand breaking mould to flick his way. “Yeah. Yeah, cause that’s exactly how you keep your new boyfriend.”

The word new hit him in the chest and Isak shook his head right back, throwing up a light hand of his own, caught uselessly on the breeze.

“We’ve been dating for months.”

“I was with Sonja for years but that doesn’t mean I trusted her.”

“But you trust me,” Isak inserted and the frustration boiled a little higher, a dashing crack over the surface of ice.

“I do trust you, but--”

“But what then?? They get worse, Even, that means you’re eventually gonna go on Lithium, right?”

Maybe throwing out specifics like names of medication was a bad idea, if the way Even was suddenly getting up off the bed was any indication, waves drawing back from the shore.

“I really fucking wish you’d stop researching this.”

“Nei,” Isak shot back, head shaking with it. “I won’t stop and I won’t apologize for researching it either because you don’t tell me shit.”

He popped up too, trapped in the swell and Even spun, arms out wide, bending with how damn serious,

“I’ll lose you if I do.”

“Fuck you,” Isak snapped, arms crossing over his chest, too late to protect the crumble beneath. “How many fucking times do I have to tell you, I’m staying. I am not leaving you.”

The bitter was making Even’s lip curl, completely distrusting and how could he be, this was Isak, how in fucking hell was Even acting like he didn’t get, like he didn’t fucking know, feel--

“Is this because of what happened to your mom?”

“...what?”

“She went untreated so you’re insisting on treating me?” Even was looking at him with his eyebrows up knowingly, blinding light glinting off the water and as soon as it sunk in Isak’s jaw dropped open.

He did not just--

“Nei? Fuck off, this has nothing to do with her. You-- my mom doesn’t get to be. She’s not around anymore, Even, you are. You are, you don’t-- we were gonna have this conversation anyways, eventually, don’t fucking pretend we wouldn’t.”

Even sighed, filtered trickling annoyance as he looked away again. Fingertips sliding down the side of his thumb, curling into quiet loose fists, everything shoved tucked away. Like he hadn’t just accused Isak of, of. Standing there saying all of those things and what, acting like not a word of them counted?
“You'll lose me???” Isak finally managed, barely able to register that was an actual thought Even had, fucking believed?. “What the fuck, Even.”

“I'm not imposing what you'd feel, I'm looking at reality, and that's reality “

“No it’s-- nei, it’s not! I would never fucking leave you.”

“You don’t know that.” Even told him, looking him dead in the eye, sparks fire ice shine and this wasn’t heartbroken tears after Isak’s nightmare, this was their lives.

“I do know that.”

The bitter scoff speared hard between his ribs, jabbing deep enough it was hard to breathe. Weight shifting from one foot to another, hips just barely swiveled.

“We have no idea how bad this could get, you wouldn’t stay if it endangered your life, Isak.”

“Newsflash Even, I already have.” Isak shook his head, curls tumbling as he took a single, solid step closer, laid it all out on the carpet between them. “And yeah, guess what, I always will.”

Blue flashed, a glint between clouds that blinded instead of warmed. Even's arms crossed over his chest, jaw clicking, frustratingly beautiful all raveled up, wound up.

A moment’s hovering tension, the end of the marble wall. Yeah, how the fuck was he gonna counter tha--

“You’re being young and stupid, you don’t know what you’re saying.”

“I'm being young and stupid ??? I'M NOT THE ONE REFUSING TO TAKE PILLS TO CONTROL MY DISORDER, EVEN.”

The shout snapped something somewhere, because walls didn’t crumble, they burst, pieces raining shattered over their heads--

“I WON'T BE NUMB. I won’t fucking do it,” Even snapped back, echoing in the white corners of Isak’s bedroom. “I refuse to live FAKE, Isak my life has to be real, I can’t give up being manic, I can’t.”

Twist of a rusty knife and he was rattling with how deep the plunge was but it didn’t matter, can’t give up, that mattered, the arrow slung into the word manic because that was different than fake, different from numb, that was specific as fuck and Isak had to fucking find the clarity hiding behind the lightning strike,

“Being-- why the fuck wouldn’t you?? How can-- what good has literally ever come out of, of...”

Even took the drop and swept into the water, waterfall flowing so fucking easy you almost missed the heavy push on shoulders to drown,

“Everything beautiful I’ve ever created, has been when I was manic. I don’t think you get it, Isak, yes it’s fucking awful but I have something people don’t, my brain works on this different level, the ideas and the art and the all of it, there’s so much I feel SO MUCH. The way I feel about you? Isak I fucking love you to pieces but the way I feel about you when I’m manic it’s like. It’s the most consuming, intense, beautiful thing, I won’t give that up.”

A single stifled beat, the muffle of the world beneath the surface. Blinking into the blur, bouncing
hollow inside his chest.

Perfect silence for the moment and it half it took Isak to open his mouth again, so stunned he couldn’t find the words for another three.

“You fucking selfish bastard. I’ve never been manic a day in my life and I still love you.”

The groan Even made said Isak wasn’t getting it but oh, he was hearing Even just fine.

The wrapped up bursting blue gold splashing sunlight took a frustrated step closer and Isak didn’t back away but he thought about it.

“I love you when I’m not manic, Isak, but the intensity, the emotions, I have this higher level of functioning that’s more intense--”

“Higher level? Really? Don’t you think that's a little arrogant?”

“Um, excuse me, which one of us has a mental disorder that connects them so deeply to the world they literally go crazy?”

“Your brain works differently, Even, being manic doesn't make you superior--”

“Uh yes, it kinda does actually,”

“You're being a dick,” Isak told him flatly and Even’s mouth popped right open, sparkling crash against rocks splattering dry land.

“I'm being a dick?? You're trying to take away my brain! My beautiful mind, remember that?” It snapped bitter, curl of his mouth up and Isak wondered distantly if Even knew how fucking transparent he was, how easily Isak could see through the thrown up hands, the vicious twist of whatever he had to say to get Isak to back off,

“I won’t give that up to become some zombie for you, I fucking won’t. I don’t care how bad it gets.”

Okay, that wasn’t defensive, that was the irrational spiral Isak wasn’t letting them go down.

“Really? You don’t care how bad it gets?? What happens when one of us lands in the hospital, huh?”

“I’ve landed there before.” Translucent. Isak shoved a finger in his chest, leaning in to twist right back.

“I haven’t. You would rather me get hurt than you stop having sparks of genius,” he spelled out and blue burned palpable holes into his skin.

“That is not fair, that’s not what I’m saying.”

“That’s exactly what you're saying!!”

“You’re the one trying to make me live a fake life! And it’s not like it only makes me numb the one week I’m manic, Isak, lithium is a daily thing and you’re numb DAILY. That’s not living.”

“Nei, killing yourself because the depression also gets worse over time, THAT’S not living.”

Isak lifted his chin, pursed mouth quivering just barely as he stared down the stunned stunning boy.
His turn to sink in deep because that was it, that was the whole fucking point and that one some cocky mask couldn’t front, that, Even wasn’t gonna be able to fucking dodge and

His beautiful boyfriend couldn’t look at him, sucking in a slow breath, hand twitching, trying to keep himself calm, steady,

“I would rather live freely and real for the next ten years than have a lifetime of numb--”

“So you’d take death over pills,” Isak flatlined. A hitch in the puffed chest, blurred at the edges,

“You’re being really dramatic right--”

“I’M BEING DRAMATIC WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK EVEN ARE YOU HEARING YOURSELF. You would rather be DEAD than a little NUMB??”

“WHAT IF I STOP LOVING YOU.”

It echoed and Isak was as still as if Even had struck him.

The both were, one breathing hard and the other not breathing at all, until Even was taking one step closer, head dipped, eyebrows up,

“Huh? What if lithium curves my emotions and my brain enough that I stop loving you. I cannot imagine that Isak, I do not want to live in a universe where I don’t love you anymore.”

The blinds and curtain were still thrown open, the dull gray glow of sun behind clouds seeping into their room, muting everything quiet. One minute, by minute the next.

Isak took a moment. Even wasn’t looking at him, eyes cast aside and down. Not frozen, waiting. Waiting for Isak to cry or beg or something, assuming the silence was breaking but he wasn’t crumbling.

Isak was fuming.

When he finally opened his mouth again, it was probably the most anger he’d ever aimed Even’s way.

“So you’d rather take death.”

“You’d rather me not love you?” Even fired back, looking up at him knowingly but he didn’t know fuck and Isak told him so with his entire body, biting as hard and serious as the steady step forward, pointing damnation,

“YES. If it meant you got to live another day on this earth, YES.”

It shook the room. The next inhale didn’t come. Every muscle in his body perfectly still, the sculpture against the wall and blue eyes were on the clouds outside instead.

“It wouldn’t be living,” Even said quietly.

Isak’s open hands, the silent crystal life carved out of his chest laying in his palms.

“You, breathing, is more important than you loving me.”

Even wouldn’t look at him.
“Take the fucking pills, Even.”

“Nei.”

“DEATH. IT’S DEATH WE ARGUING. You don’t get t-to gam-ble with your life when it’s the only thing. That means the world to me.” Isak’s voice cracked, tears welled up high enough he couldn’t see, nothing but a blur, the shape of the boy who was reckless, beautiful, young enough to die that way and the chills ricocheting through the broken pieces in his chest were anything but okay. “You don’t get to do this to me.”

They were both near crying.

His life offered in his hands and Even didn’t just bat it aside, Even bat his own long enough ago he barely held any left for Isak to fight for and it wasn’t fair, it wasn’t fucking fair.

Isak didn’t have any fucking thing else to grasp at, staring helplessly at the watery blue eyes that were staring out the damn window, bottom lip quivering.

Too fucking upset to know if it was outrage or despair, whatever it was he fucking meant every ounce of the passion as he pointed an unbudging finger at the wild heart, the drowning boy who was kicking and screaming and fighting every ounce of the boat back to shore Isak opened his mouth knees raw from prayer to say it once.

“Take the fucking pills.”

The world was shaking. Even wasn't looking at him. Deep shadow under his cheekbone, the hard line of his jaw, sweep of the soft gold over his forehead, for the sky, this unreal, transcendental light ready to flicker dead by its own graceful hands.

Isak was breaking now, the terror of the future flashing that precious life non-existent he couldn’t watch it happen, he couldn’t, a desperate step closer, ready to fall for his knees and beg--

“...fine,” Even bit and Isak kinda startled, step falling right back. Blue clear, unmoving on clouds.

“Wait. Really?”

“Yeah, fine, if you’d rather I not feel anything, if you want me to be a walking corpse, fine.” Hands thrown up and gaze so fucking stubbornly anywhere but him, staring out with window as a single tear rolled over the edge of his dark dark lashes.

Isak was still too stunned at the agreement to do anything else but whisper.

“...okay.”

Even’s eyes finally cut over, landing on his so instantly and sharp it sliced Isak’s breath in half.

“But not any fucking time soon.”

“Even--”

“No, we said we weren’t gonna play by extremes, remember? I’ll go on the fucking pills, when the time comes, when it gets that bad. But it’s nowhere near that bad yet. Yes, last time sucked, but usually it’s manageable, if I handle it well, and my parents are there, and...”

“So. If you love me enough to try, I’ll love you enough to let you help me through it.”
The concession was the compromise Isak hadn’t realized they hadn’t made, but they hadn’t, neither of them had ever said that, said any of this and his eyes still weren’t dry but Even was looking at him, seeing him, hearing him. Isak had broken through enough walls. Isak had touched him deep enough.

Isak might maybe get to save him.

“Until the day it gets too bad - too bad being something me, my parents, and you, all have a consensus on - and then I’ll...let you drug me.”

A weak hand tossed for the sky, lashes downcast again and it was so fucking forlorn, abandoned lost but he wasn’t, Even wasn’t.

Another foot between them thrown aside, melting closer,

“Okay. Okay, that’s fair. And when the time comes, if we put you on them and you hate it we’ll take you off them and figure something else out. Okay?”

Isak was trying but this was too deep, had been embedded in Even too long for that.

“Don’t fucking act like you’d take me off them if I wanted it.” It was nasty and hurt, under his breath but that’s exactly what slipped to let the crack through, the pure terror underneath that bubbling rage, the mask of stubborn hiding this scared scared boy who grasped so uselessly at control.

“...or that I’ll even have the ability to want anymore.”

“I think you’re wrong,” Isak told him. Softer, trying to ease that rush of terror, “I think it’s not nearly as bad as you’ve hyped it up to be in your head. And I think you know that, deep down, or else you wouldn’t agree to do it.”

“Uh, nei. I’m literally only doing this so you won’t leave me when the going gets rough.”

“I’m not gonna leave you--”

“You don’t feel safe around me,” Even interrupted, completely dead serious and those eyes might as well be Medusa for all Isak could move right now. “I can’t stand the way you look at me sometimes, so when the snap gets too bad I’ll take the fucking pills and I’ll try not to hate you for it.”

Isak was standing still, drowning in everything he had no idea had crossed Even’s mind, but it was his fault wasn’t it, all of it, the first time they’d picked a fight he’d been the one to lie and say he was building up strength in self-defense and he was a bad enough liar Even had seen right through it at the time but the words must’ve sunk in somewhere, must’ve destroyed something, because Even was looking at him and telling him he’d try not to hate him for putting him on medication because he thought Isak didn’t feel safe--

“Even. That isn’t fair.”

“No, you acting like me being drugged up is the only way isn’t fair,” he countered. Isak shook his head once, eyes closed against the pain in that, in all of this, in the way neither of their hearts could beat. “But I’ll fucking do it, when the time comes. End of discussion.”

“Fine,” Isak managed.

“Fine,” Even said back, a fraction too weak.
They both stood there, waves frozen in the crash against the rocks before Even shattered the ice to sit down on Isak’s bed, staring at the stripes of his duvet. A stressed hand dragging through the beautiful swooping hair.

They’d never fought like this. The only times they’d ever yelled at each other one of them had gone storming off, he’d never seen the aftermath.

He’d never seen Even that torn up before, and it was his fault, and Isak was tearing up, melted, stepping too quick to cross the room and sink down beside him.

“Even, it’s because I love you. It’s because I love you so fucking much, I can’t stand the idea of losing you. This is the right thing to do. I love you.”

“I know.” Quiet, to the mattress.

“Do you? Do you really? Do you have any idea how much I mean that?”

“In the last however long I have until I go numb and stop actually feeling anything, yes, Isak, I know how much you mean that.” Even glanced up at him, lips pushed out in a pout before he was looking away. “I feel it. I might not, the day you decide lithium loves me more, but I feel it.”

The sadness seeped into his chest so deeply he couldn’t fucking take it anymore.

Isak threw aside the rest of the world and crawled into Even’s lap, legs hooked over his hips, hand holding under his chin, holding that head up to look at him, feel him. Feel this.

“Baby, I’m just too scared for you.”

“Of me,” Even said, lifting defiantly.

“For you,” Isak corrected, pressing their foreheads together, forcefully softening Even down with him. Here, baby, I’m here. I love you. “...I can’t lose you. Your brain doesn’t get to take you from me.”

“Let the drugs take me from you instead,” Even mumbled and the protest was weak enough Isak wasn’t sure he was even trying anymore.

“Do you really trust your own feelings that little?”

“Yeah. I know I love you in my bones, but what’s the point when I won’t feel my bones.”

“It’s not gonna be that bad.”

“I’m gonna be fake, Isak. You know a little of what that’s like, imagine a pill taking what masks could never come close to covering.”

“I know what you’re saying. But you can still love when you’re numb, baby. We’ll get through it when the time comes, and have this conversation again a few months after that and if I feel like you’re not still you? No more pills.”

Isak stroked broken-hearted fingers down the quiet face, watching the lashes dip closed, lips part with the careful press of Isak’s thumb, the whisper painting as gentle.

“I know you. I love you. And I won’t let lithium take you from me. Ever.”

Even was silent. Isak wrapped his other hand around the long graceful neck, holding closer.
“Do you trust me?”

“My entire life is in your hands,” Even told him. “Baby, I’m only doing this because I trust you.”

The gravity dragging the exact moment their lips touched, second nature, a waterfall, trickling feeling into delicate skin, kissing smooth enough to slide under. The insistent choice, giving into the familiar warmth of 360 degree submersion until they were breaking the surface to inhale warm oxygen into dry lungs.

It was still gonna be the two of them, under those lights forever.

“And in the meantime. We’ll figure it out together, okay?”

“Ja,” Even whispered over his mouth. “Okay.”

They kissed again, mouths mashed together so despairingly close, stroking fingers shifting through blonde, stitching back the wounds bitter words split open.

So they screamed at each other, so they fought, so they accused each other of not caring when they both knew they cared too much and maybe Isak was too stubborn and maybe Even was too, but they loved each other, god they loved each other, neither of them were fucking going to forget that.

The rest of it didn’t matter. Nothing else mattered but that Even could feel how much Isak meant it, and that Isak never had to ask the question in the first place.

They already knew.

“I fucking love you,” Isak whispered.

Even clutched him back and breathed, breathed over his skin apologies and forgiveness and everything else they’d figure out, minute at a time.

“I love you too.”

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Fredag, 09:34
19.05.17

He still had the taste of toothpaste in his mouth. Isak wouldn’t stop kissing him this morning, over and over, enough times Even pulled him back and held high tight and asked him straight up, you’re not apologizing for anything, are you?

Isak had thought about it for a moment before finally answering, nei, I just feel like I wasted so much time yelling when I’m only ever dying to kiss you.

Even had kissed his forehead and whispered into the golden curls that they didn’t waste anything. It wasn’t easy, fighting like that, but they’d lain in Isak’s bed and whispered quiet apologies and talked about how Even couldn’t give up control, that was the scariest part and Isak asked him if he felt any better about Isak being the one he had to give up control to, because at some point it stopped being
up to him whether he liked it or not.

Was it any better, if Isak was the one who stepped in when Even couldn’t do it anymore?

I don’t want you to become Sonja, Even had whispered and Isak nodded and nodded and promised he’d never try to overstep, he was so fucking sorry if Even thought he was trying to control him, he just didn’t know how the fuck to get through to the dark parts, to where Even wasn’t seeing the danger, he didn’t know how else and Even told him it was okay, it was okay, they could yell so long as they always held each other afterwards and talked like this and.

And it really was okay, enough that they’d fallen asleep with small smiles on their faces and kissed each other deep over breakfast, that lead to all those tiny rapid kisses that hadn’t stopped until Isak dropped him off at genetics and, well.

Apparently weren’t stopping now either.

“You have another snapchat,” Chris pointed out, tapping his glove on Even’s screen.

“You’re gonna contaminate the bacteria,” Even complained, finally rolling off one of his own to thumb open his phone, that currently had four snapchat notifications from Isak, little red heart.

The first one was a sideways photo of the desk in front of him, captioned could this class be anymore fucking boring. The next two were also complaining, and kinda suggestive, it’s too bad there’s no one here to make things interesting and i bet i can think of all kinds of things more fun than English.

Those were all from about ten minutes ago, which he’d been ignoring, but the fourth was from nå, and that one didn’t have a caption. It was a snapchat of Isak’s hand, the thumb flipping open the button on his jeans, bathroom tiles in the background.

“Fy faen,” he managed eloquently.

“Hva,” Chris tried to peer over and Even tipped the screen away. Chris leaned harder but it disappeared just in time, Even’s elbow landing in his ribs instead.

“Oi, get your own.”

“Mendel doesn’t send me snapchats.” Chris gave him an exaggerating frowny face that Even ignored, pulling up their text thread instead.
The moment the text appeared on his screen there was a snapchat to follow, notification popping up with a heart like it wasn’t as dirty as what Even knew for a fact he was doing.

He groaned, cursing under his breath as he turned his phone upside down and willed himself not to get a boner in the middle of class. Again.

“What?” Chris demanded, elbow in his ribs this time.

“He’s jacking off without me.” Even complained and Chris choked on his own spit.

“He WHAT?”

“Can you cover for me for like five minutes, that’s all I need.”

“I...sure? Don’t go fucking have sex with your--”

“I’m not, I’m not, I just need five we’re longer than that if it’s sex, I promise I’ll be back.”
He’d never been more thankful for loyal friends in his life, slamming open the door to the boys bathroom closest to Genetics cause he’d be the romantic to go to the bathroom they met in but Isak was the impatient horny one, there was no way he wasn’t as close as possible.

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The moment the door opened sure enough a hushed sound froze, caught up in a beautiful throat but he heard it anyways.

Then he was knocking on the last stall, “It's me,” and it opened instantly.

The door swung shut behind him and this one was thankfully twice the size of the others, enough room for them both and Isak was already up against the partition, breathing hard and smiling wicked, some kind of dream all flushed and crooked smile cocky,

“Fucking knew it.”

“I didn’t even open the snapchat yet,” Even told him, then he was dropping to his knees, pulling Isak’s legs up over his shoulders, which sank him halfway down the stall wall with a little shout. Perfect timing for Even to reach up and cover Isak’s mouth with his hand, open jeans zipper against his throat as he took him all the way into his mouth.

Isak made a strangled sound against his palm and Even smiled triumphantly, bobbing his head quick and pulling just the way he knew would twist deep into Isak’s stomach. Speaking of which.

The moans were completely nonstop, hand already damp but Even needed the other one wet. He sunk Isak deeper and made it a little messy, slicking up a finger before running it down his tailbone to Isak’s entrance.

Except when he went to slip his finger inside, it was already wet and slid all the way in with absolutely no resistance.

Even’s mouth popped off, looking up at Isak with his jaw dropped open wide, lips shiny.

“You fucking did not.”

“Oh I fucking did,” Isak breathed, head knocking back against the wall and Even cursed, a lot, keeping Isak’s thighs on his shoulders as he pulled his phone out of his pocket.

“I have to text Chris I told him I’d be five minutes.”

“Five?” Isak sputtered, all indignant but which one of them had decided prep himself to get fucked? Huh? Wasn’t him! “Five??”

“With my hand on your mouth I think I could do it,” Even replied distractedly and Isak was squinting down at him, eye twitching.

A momentary internal struggle before he conceded,

“Yeah, probably tbh.”

Even pressed send on the text, phone shoved back in his pocket to smiled up at him.

“Ja, I think so. But then you had to go and open yourself up without me and--”

Isak pressed the bottle of lube into his hands. “Just fuck me, please.”
So the next thing he knew he was spinning them so Isak could be pressed to an actual wall, cause they were gonna break that flimsy wooden thing near instantly, then Even unzipped his jeans, slicked up, hauled his boyfriend up, and slid inside him.

“F-fuck,” Isak said and Even was trying to adjust with their pants half off, hoisting Isak up a little higher and shoving in deep so when he clapped a hand over his mouth he wasn’t paying much attention and he missed, pointer finger sliding right between Isak’s lips.

Isak’s eyes went wide, surprise for the single moment before he was sucking it in deeper and it was Even’s turn to drop open his mouth. Isak stared at him with green eyes on fire and Even kinda stuttered the pace but kept going, gently pushing his finger in deeper, curiously.

The shuddered raked down Isak’s spine, vibrations on his cock, around his finger with a pretty whine as he sucked hard, teeth grazing. Now Even was groaning, hips shoving harder while he slid one, two, fingers into Isak’s mouth. The beautiful lips shinier than his were now, tears on his lashes while Even fucked him close and pressed the fingers down against Isak’s tongue.

That time the shivers followed through his bones too, their gazes locked to stare at each other, awe, overwhelmed, both of them heated as fuck. It was strangely vulnerable, Isak looking at him wide eyed and bared to Even’s fingers, the sweep of his eyes.

Fucking christ.

Even slid his hand in and out of Isak’s mouth, in time with his hips, dark lashes fluttering with a pretty groan he could feel, practically taste. Even was so goddamn caught up watching he was gonna fucking come just from Isak sucking so desperately on his fingers like that.

“My faen,” he whispered, then the bathroom door was swinging open.

Even pulled out his fingers and clapped a hand over Isak’s mouth instantly, moving his hips slow and deep, keeping the stimulation burning without the sound of their bodies slapping and then the sink was running and the door was swinging shut again and Even snapped up deep.

Isak moaned into his palm and knocked his head against the wall, curls tumbling. He was in full school clothes, backpack hooked on the door, the flush disappearing under his collar and Even couldn’t see a bit of the flushed skin, all these layers of clothes while he slid inside him by the comfort and familiarity of their bodies alone and jesus fuck, he was holding Isak’s mouth closed hard enough he was gonna leave fingerprint bruises on his jaw.

Jesus. Even pulled the hand off and Isak gasped loud, morphing right into a whine but Even just shoved his fingers back between the pouty lips instead and the whine became a whimper. Lashes fanned closed as he rubbed his tongue on Even’s fingers and Even fucked up inside him.

“Fucking hell, Isak,” Even managed. Isak was still moaning. He started to pump his fingers in and out again in time with his hips now it was a lot more than moaning, Isak was crumbling and shuddering, jolting with how much steady deep sensation he was getting. Pretty mouth pursed to suck like his life depended on it and Even’s head was spinning, he was fucking dizzy with how fucking turned on he was.

“Fuck, fuck, I’m gonna get come on my jeans,” he cursed under his breath, not like that was slowing the pace any. Looking back up at the trembling bottom lip as Isak mumbled something incoherent around him.

Even pulled his fingers out,
“What’s that baby?”

“Jesus fucking Christ fucking fuck--”

“Okay then,” Even put his fingers back in.

Isak stuttered and tensed up, grinding back against him which was not an easy task up against a bathroom wall in this little stall but Even wasn’t thinking about anything but the impossible heat of their bodies, so beautiful and overwhelmingly tight. He had one hand braced on the only exposed part of Isak’s thigh, eyes closed, forehead on the wall beside Isak’s curls while he fucked up into him close and harder.

Heel of his other hand resting on Isak’s throat, keeping his head up while his fingers slid in out, shoving deep then Isak was coming, painting up the inside of his shirt with a broken shout, teeth sinking into Even’s fingers.

“Fuck, fuck--” The pulsing squeeze tipped him right over, Even coming inside him only Isak jolted the moment he did, eyes rolling back in his head at the sensation he still hadn’t gotten used to in the past week. Clutching Even’s arms so tight he’d have bruises for the boys to make fun of but fuck, Isak was fucking gorgeous and completely unable to handle Even coming inside him which was hot enough it left Even stuttering, vision slipping, threatening to white out--

He took throbbing fingers out of Isak’s mouth, instantly flooding the room with the unstable gasps, heaving chest and shoken little moans. Even shook his hand out - Isak bit him, what a dick - and wiped his fingers on the jeans around his hips.

His legs were kinda shaky but he was somehow still holding Isak propped on the wall, panting, out of his mind with his mouth open. Even took his jaw, fingers sinking into his cheeks as he pulled the pretty head forward and replaced the fingers in his mouth with his tongue instead.

Isak melted and shuddered against him, kissing back so fervently Even gave them a few minutes to make out, slow it back down before he pulled out.

Only he had to eventually, and Isak bitched, like always. Bitched more when Even unwrapped his legs to put him back on his feet, zip him back up, shaking his head at Isak’s insistence he didn’t need to get cleaned up. He had gym next anyways, he’d take a shower and change, jeez.

Then general bitching turned into genuine cursing as Even took a step backwards and Isak’s knees gave out, hands latching hard onto the back of Even’s neck to keep his balance.

“This is your own damn fault,” Even insisted right back. “For being so damn hot.”

Isak looked up at him, curls disheveled, a complete wreck with a slightly purpled jaw, wet red mouth curled up hard on one side in a crooked smile, his eyes twinkling like fucking stars. So much more than glowing, all bright and so fucking beautiful Even’s knees were kinda going weak too.

“This was the best day of English by far,” Isak said. “We should do that again sometime.”

“Can you walk,” Even said.

“You might wanna text Chris again? I think I need you to carry me.”

“Fucking Christ.”

“ Nope, just me,” Isak breathed back, that cocky little dimpled smile with it.
Even looked at him with his eyebrows up and didn’t say *same thing* out loud, but his angel smiled at him like he heard it anyways.

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Søndag, 02:19
21.05.17

It started with casual drinking in Jonas’s bedroom and lead to them dragging in the entire video game console to have a tournament on his bed, which included socked feet trying to kick people off the bed for cheating, elbows landing in sides and people leaning sideways to make their virtual carts turn harder.

OC Boy Squad time, they all adored Even but it'd been way too long since just the four of them hung out. It was a different dynamic, a lot simpler one, because Even was so vibrant he amplified everyone and everything but with just the four of them it was like old times, chill and simple and fucking fun.

They were two bags of chips, a bowl of m&m’s and an hour and a half into their tournament when Isak’s phone rang. All their phones were stacked on the bedside table with the rule that whoever reached for their phone first had to be the one to go get the next round of snacks.

So everyone was already ooo-ing when Isak’s phone went off, until he drunkenly waved his hands for the clause.

Jonas scooped up Isak’s phone and held up the screen for the boys to debate over contact importance.

“Oooo, it's Even! Let him pick up,” Magnus tipped into his shoulder and Isak narrowed his eyes suspiciously with a little point.

“My boyfriend, not yours.”

“It’s 2 in the morning!”

“It’s a booty call,” Mahdi declared. Isak rolled his eyes and Jonas glanced between the rest of them before he pressed the green and microphone.

“Hey babe,” Isak started before anyone else could. “You’re on speaker, the boys are here, refrain from the phone sex.”

“...hi, everyone?” Even said and they all shouted back hey’s and what’s up man’s and Magnus’s very distinct, do you really call Isak for phone sex? When you guys could just head over?

But Isak wasn't paying attention to them anymore, the hi everyone was just off enough that he already had the phone off speaker, pressed against his ear as he started for Jonas’s bedroom door.

“Aw, c’mon, really?”

“Don’t have phone sex on my couch,” Jonas broadcasted.
“I won’t, chill out,” Isak shot back, then he was stepping into the hallway and closing the door behind him.

“Sorry, sweetheart, I didn’t realize...what’s up? Are you okay?”

“Mmm,” he said and it was too high pitched, he was holding himself together at the seams. It sunk into his skin and Isak broke a little.

“Hey, baby, I’m here. Just you and me, what’s going on?” Plopping down Jonas’s couch with his feet slung up over the armrest.

“I...I don’t know why you’re with me,” Even whispered. Isak’s heart broke a little more, eyebrows knit with it.

“I do.”

“I know you say you love me but. You’re so fucking beautiful and kind and smart and you shouldn’t ever have to deal with someone who can’t even fucking handle their own head at 2--”

“Listen, I can’t even handle my head at 2 in the morning, okay? Don’t be so hard on yourself.”

A pitifully sad little sound in response and Isak softened into the cushions, mouth curving up a little. Even couldn’t see him, so he could smile. And he did, because he fucking loved Even so goddamn much. And yeah, Even was hurting right now, but Isak was gonna talk him through it. Yeah, Even was hurting right now, but he called.

“I’m...”

“Hey Even?”

“Yeah?”

“It’s that little thing you do, when you’re laughing and you’re surprised. You turn away and look back, like it’s almost too much. It’s the cutest fucking thing I’ve ever seen.”

“You...”

“And it’s the look on your face when you’re drawing. I don’t exist anymore, even if you’re drawing me, you’re just...somewhere else. You get so immersed...I think the way I feel watching you is probably the same way the world feels when you look at me.”

Even sucked in a breath on the other end of the line.

“And it’s that fucking thing you do with your tongue, jesus fuck.”

There it was, the beautiful surprised twinkling laugh.

“And then there’s that,” Isak tacked on. “You laugh and the world’s beautiful again. Do you need me to tell you all the reasons why I love you? Cause I can go all night.”

The quietest whisper in return. “Ja?”

“Mnhm. It’s the way you talk to your parents, like they’re your friends, like you all respect each other and want the best for each other no matter what happens.

“It’s how when you’re sleeping and you roll over your eyelashes flutter until you’re settled back in
“It’s that you didn’t tell me about your fucking sister, I had to find out from your parents months later about this mysterious Lisbeth, who I still haven’t met.

“Literally your entire Birthday weekend...yes, that weekend gets its own category, that weekend invented the word intimacy.

“Mmm. Mhm. It’s that annoyed little sound you make anytime you have to do mental math.

“Or how you never let me come if you can’t see my face.

“And that you intentionally catwalk across the school courtyard cause you know you’re hot shit.

“It’s the way you look at the world, like you’re always trying to soak everything in before it disappears.

“And how you always wear a bandana to the gym and that you never hold anybody’s past against them.

“How literally every time you meet somebody new you put your eyebrows up like you’re already interested.

“Or how when you can’t find the word for something you just say it in english in your posh-ass accent...yes you have a posh accent, doesn’t matter what language you’re speaking, it’s cute as hell and about as pompous and pretentious as you are…”

It was a quarter to three when he eventually stepped back into Jonas’s room. Even was longsince asleep, Isak told him to put the phone on speaker and lie back down, let Isak’s voice carry him under. After he heard the slow breathing shift he’d called Even’s name softly a few times with no reply, peaceful and gone.

So Isak smiled his way all the down the hallway, announcing his arrival back with wide spread arms and a half empty bag of his favorite chips thrown at his chest. Goddammit. Worth it though.

He bounced back into the bed, scooping up the fourth controller and groaning at the game of choice. A couple of devious smiles before they looped his controller in and they got approximately three seconds into the game before they were being interrupted.

“You guys have really weird phone sex,” Mahdi said and Isak looked at him with the weirdest wide eyes he had.

Only for Jonas to tip into him,

“He has a sister and he didn’t tell you??”

“You guys were listening???”

“Dude, we split after you said--” Mahdi froze, mouth open around whatever Isak said which honestly couldn’t been a lot of things and if a teenage boy wasn’t gonna say it out loud, “Well.”

Isak put a hand over his face.

“I had to make sure you weren’t getting it on on my couch!!” Jonas defended. Isak groaned and
apparently that signaled the questions gate.

“What’s the thing he does with his tongue?” Magnus prodded his side. “And what happened on his birthday weekend, wasn’t that the weekend you made Noora clean the walls? And does he really have to see your face before you can co--”

“Oh, who’s ready for me to kick their ass in FIFA.”

“Isak, you’ve literally never won this game.”

“Shut up. If I wanted to get dragged I’d be at Even’s house right now.”

They were all laughing and well.

Isak lost.

---

Mandag, 15:10
22.05.17

There were only a few more weeks of school until summer and everyone was outside, propped on picnic tables and chatting, the girls talking over the boys then the boys right back, making plans for the summer and arguing over which final was going to be hardest.

The only two they were missing were their sweetest blondes, but Vilde finally came bouncing up to the table with a vaguely exasperated Noora in tow.

“Did you all hear?!!?” She swung her backpack down to the seat beside Mahdi, making him scoot over a step, all the conversations cutting for eight heads turned in her direction, that bright bright smile, hands clapping together, “There’s going to be a one year Riot Club Penetrators reunion!!”

Sana exchanged glances with Magnus, and everyone else looked at least somewhat confused, so Isak might as well put the voice to it.

“...okay?” A hand up with it, so what, to which Vilde gave him a face, you’re supposed to be on my side. He returned it with a just cause we’re gay face and she rolled her eyes at him, shoving his shoulder before announcing all triumphantly,

“Well, your boyfriend is going.”

Isak lifted his eyebrows, turning to the boy whose arm was around his waist.

“What?”

“Chris invited me, I’m not gonna not go,” Even defended and Isak gave him the you’re supposed to be on my side face.

Even didn’t play along, raking his eyes down Isak’s body instead, leaning in to drop his voice all low and seductive James Dean on top of the world catwalk across the courtyard sexy,

“You wanna come with?”
Isak squinted at him, all squinched up.

Okay, first of all, everyone was here and Even was looking at him like that, second of all.

“You want me to be your date to a Penetrators party.”

He said it disbelieving enough that Even leaned back a little, eyebrows up.

“...yeah, why?”

Isak just shook his head to himself, looking dramatically off into the distance.

“I did not ever see my life going this way.”

Magnus and Eva snorted. At least they got it. Vilde bounced twice.

“But that means you’re all coming, right?”

“I mean,” Jonas lifted a hand, elbow on the table as he looked over at the rest of them. “I’m down, I like the Riot Club fine, we’re chill.”

“The leader has spoken!” Vilde clapped her hands and Isak looked up with a very offended sound.

“Since when--”

“Since always,” Jonas, Eva, Mahdi and Sana all said at the same time.

Isak sighed because they were right, they were all right.

Chris nudged his shoulder and Isak made an ugh face but threw up a hand with it, whatever.

“We’ll all be there,” she declared.

“Great! Pregame at Isak’s!”

“What, why is it-- Why is it always me ??”

“You don’t have parents,” Mahdi pointed out and Isak tipped his head back and forth, side of his mouth pulled down in the yikes,

“Technically not true--”

“True,” Even and Jonas overruled at the same time, then they reach over Isak and Chris to high five each other loudly.

Isak groaned at the sky and at least people said his hair looked nice. He threw up his hands. Even grabbed them and kissed them and Isak slumped into him and groaned a little more.

Chris rubbed his back.

He had good friends.
Yo when tf are we hanging out just u and me

Dude you're the one who spends the weekends banging your boyfriend

And you're the one who spends the weekends at trashy parties

they're not trashy?

Dude you guys went to Lukas's last weekend u can't get more trashy

Anyways

Anyways when are we hanging out I feel like I haven't done something cool with you in forever

We played guitar literally yesterday

We do that all the time cmon man there's gotta be something cool we can do. How's Thursday?

I've got my little sister's recital thing
“Hey are you guys coming with us to that themed party Saturday?” Magnus said around the half sandwich in his mouth and Jonas made a face at him. Just cause the girls weren’t sitting with them today.

Even opened his mouth to reply but Isak spoke up before he could.

“Nei, we can’t. Even’s taking me on a date.” He took a sip of his coffee, sucking in his cheeks innocently around the straw.

“Oh? I am?” Even leaned back, looking at him with a Look™ that Isak was pretending not to notice.
“Dude you forgot??” Mahdi dropped his jaw and Even shook his head in defense,

“Nei, this is the first I’ve heard of it.”

Jonas snorted, high fiving Isak under the table.

Isak sat down his coffee to give his boyfriend a very dramatic look.

“Even. We’ve been dating for six months and you haven’t taken me on a proper date yet.”

“What? What about--”

“Nei, none of those count.”

“None...why the hell not??”

“Because we didn’t get dressed up and you didn’t pick me up at my door and I deserve to go on a real date, thank you very much.” Isak lifted a single eyebrow, challenging Even to say differently but he didn’t get a single ounce of protest, instead Even kind of melted, reaching over the table to take Isak’s fingers, rub his thumb along the side of his hand.

“...of course you do.” Then he was turning to the boys with pretty blue eyes suddenly very serious. “Looks like we’re busy Saturday, sorry.”

Isak smiled to himself and took another sip of coffee, letting Even rub his hand all affectionate and whatnot.

“I’ve also decided I’m not putting out until then,” Isak mentioned offhandedly, taking another sip right after, completely innocent.

“You--” Even’s eyes went instantly, shockingly wide, hand tightening around Isak’s for a single moment of pause. “How would you like to go on a date with me tonight, baby?”

The boys all started cracking up and it took a lot to keep the triumphant little smile tampered down. Single eyebrow still cocked, looking down at his drink to swirl his straw as nonchalantly as possible.

“Saturday,” he said.

“The theatre will be way less packed on a Wednesday night--”

“You’re not taking me to dinner and a movie;” Isak scoffed, glancing over at his even more confused beautiful boyfriend.

“I-- okay?”

“You’re Even Bech Næsheim, you can do better than that.” He needed to have drinks with straws more often, this was wonderfully convenient for his dramatic timing. “Get creative.”

“...okay,” Even repeated, and that time he sounded determined. Good. Although honestly, Isak was probably going to...perish in four days without sex, especially now that sex was so intense and overwhelming and bonding and so damn good but well.

He didn’t get to have the upperhand often and it was one hell of an ego boost, to see the desperation across Even’s face.

How goddamn bad he wanted to be inside Isak, written all over, clear as day in front of all of their
friends.

“...at least Friday?”

“Saturday,” Isak said stubbornly. Magnus made his surprised amused high pitched sound and Jonas was shaking his head into a hand and Mahdi looked completely utterly amused and honestly, Isak was having a great time.

Even threw up a hand, looking more desperate than ever, fingers tight enough around Isak’s hand his knuckles were going white.

“Okay. This is gonna be the best date of your life.”

Isak smiled into his coffee. There was no fucking way they’d make it til Saturday but it was the thought that counted.

“It better be.”

Torsdag, 20:22
25.05.17

The Vasquez’s took everyone out for celebratory dinner after the recital, two outdoor tables dragged together to circle around in the warmth of late evening and loud chatter across cobblestone over really fucking good food. Jonas’s sister had insisted upon sitting next to their “guest” and was currently waving her arms around to tell him excitedly about this project in school while Isak nodded around his fork, pretending to care just convincingly enough that Jonas was snorting quietly beside him.

He was also spending a strangely long amount of time on his phone, which wasn’t like him. Isak kept glancing over, and thankfully happened to be looking suspiciously out the corner of his eye the moment that Jonas’s face fell completely.

“What's up,” Isak asked under his breath, tipping his shoulder into Jonas’s, pretending not to notice the screen angle away from him.

“Nothing,” Jonas dismissed, thumbing back a text before shoving his phone a little roughly into his pocket. Isak made a yeah okay face down at his drink and they made it about ten seconds before Jonas’s pocket was vibrating.

A curse under his breath, he dug it right back out, incoming call from a number Isak didn’t recognize.

“I have to take this, sorry.” Jonas skid out of his chair and started for the edge of the square, far out of earshot while the rest of the family resumed whatever light debate was bouncing between them.

Isak wasn’t paying attention, he was watching Jonas take the call, pacing around the with that knit between his eyebrows Isak could see from here. It wasn’t a good conversation, whatever it was, but there was something uncomfortably familiar about it. Jonas and clandestine phone calls, the two of them first years all over again.
But they were older now, they didn’t make mistakes like that anymore. Jonas had never kept him in
the dark - well, initially, it was like two days before Isak figured out who Elias was, but the second
he was like hey Jonas, Jonas had fessed up and brought him right in on it.

So when he finally came back to the table, a tight smile and phone tucked away, Isak didn’t mention
it, smiling back at him instead. Cause whatever it was, Jonas would tell him.

He was sure of it.

Lørdag, 19:00
27.05.17

It was Friday night that Isak caved, pulling Even onto his bed with his legs spread. But if there was
anything Even had, it was resilience, so he'd kissed Isak boneless and insisted they could keep this
damn promise.

To be fair, the promise was not putting out, nobody mentioned anything about Even kissing every
square inch of Isak’s body. Which he did. Multiple times. With a dozen promises to rock Isak’s
world Saturday night.

Not before they went on this date though. An official, fancy, he was wearing a tux date.

He's originally planned on just a suit and tie and got a lengthy lecture from his father about how
people went grocery shopping in suits every day, but a tuxedo said, “This moment is special to me.
This is where I want to be. I would look out of place anywhere but here. That’s the point of it, Ev.”

So he'd texted Eskild that he was wearing a tux, in case Isak had planned on a button up because,
well, it wasn't like Isak had a father who was gonna give him the speech and it wasn't very well like
Bjørn could when that'd just be obvious and probably overstepping and.

Wow, okay, apparently he was nervous, if the bouncing toes and hands shoved in pockets were any
indication. Fuck, he had no reason to be acting like this was their fi-- except according to Isak it was,
and Even was the worst boyfriend ever--

The door finally unlocked and Even held his breath, waiting to get knocked out by those beautiful
green eyes only those were not green, those were blue.

Even opened his mouth for hellos but Eskild beat him to it vehemently.

“Oh. My god. Why aren’t you single?”

Even rolled his eyes to hide the smile, nerves easing a little. “We’re so not each other’s type.”

“My type is hot, and that's exactly what you are,” Eskild corrected.

“I’m touched,” Even smiled, stepping inside with a quick kiss to Eskild’s cheek, a glance around this
home he'd found, which was currently missing its greatest feature. “Where’s Isak?”

“I was gonna make you go down to the bottom of the stairs and wait for him--”
“Really?”

“...but Isak wouldn't let me, so.”

“I'm surprised, he's always one for a touch of dramat--” Even spun casually for the hallway entrance and there was Isak, taking a single step into the living room.

Even just. Stopped speaking. He didn't have words anymore, or oxygen, just staring.

Not that the green eyes were any less wide.

“Holy shit,” Isak said.

Even couldn’t do anything but make a quiet pitiful sound.

Eskild sure had no problem speaking,

“I've never seen this much attractive in one room at once this is completely entirely unf--”

Everything else he didn't have the chance to catch, not when he was catching the waist of the boy who'd suddenly stalked across the room to plant his mouth on Even’s and wrap his satin striped arms around Even’s neck.

Even kissed him back desperately, hands slipping beneath the backs of tux jackets. He’d thought nothing on the planet would be as beautiful as the angel with a laurel of golden leaves, thought nothing could ever come close to the boy with the golden curls laid out bare and warm and naked in their bed but jesus fucking christ, Isak Valtersen with his hair carefully styled over a sharp black tux, it was.

They pulled apart to look over each other in awe, eyebrows knit, completely speechless until the moment they opened their mouths at the same time,

“Can we please have sex in these,” Isak said, exactly in time with Even’s,

“Please wear this if I’m ever lucky enough to marry you.”

They both froze, mouths still open and Eskild was laughing from the doorway, hand waving at them fondly.

“Three year age gaps, they’re a beautiful thing.”

Isak’s mouth popped open in offense. “Just because I’m 17--”

“That’s exactly why,” Eskild informed him.

“Whatever,” Isak shot back in English, gaze sweeping up and down Even’s body. “Like you weren’t thinking exactly what I was. And you’re 21.”

Eskild shrugged. “Fair. Anyways. Picture first, then you boys go and do whatever you please in all your beauty.”

“We don’t have to take pictures--”

“You don’t get to take selfies in tuxes.” Eskild gave them a hello face and took Even’s phone right out of his hands. “Not until we get a real picture first.”
“Uggh.” Isak finally tore his eyes away from Even to give his most annoyed scowl. “This feels so American high school movie prom flick, can we not--”

“Then look at each other instead of me.” Eskild waved an impatient hand, camera held up.

Isak turned his irritation skyward, to the pretty blue that was smiling down at him so beautifully that okay, maybe the annoyance slipped a little until he was smiling soft too. God.

Then Even was leaning down, kissing him lightly, just enough to make his toes curl in his shoes, fingertips hooking in Even’s waistline.

Eskild was most definitely sniffling, handing back the phone to Even with three of the most beautiful photos he’d ever taken. The first of Even smiling down at a bitchy, dressy Isak, one with Isak’s chin tipped up, smiling soft too. The third of the kiss, positively beautiful, terribly in love, lost in each other and.

Isak blinked like six times, mumbled something about Even texting them to him.

Even swooped down to kiss his nose, making it crinkle, then their hands were weaving and Eskild was waving them out the door with tears in his eyes.

Even took him for dinner at Brazzeria. It was probably the fanciest place he’d been in his entire life. French and Italian cuisine in a historic old train station, remodeled to look like something out of a film. Which meant the boy toting him in by the arm fit in just perfectly, suave, confident beautiful, smiling over at Isak like he couldn’t picture somebody better to build this fantasy land with.

This time when Even ordered for them both, Isak was a hell of a lot less nervous. Although he ordered in French and most of the shit on the menu looked...wild, honestly, god knows he didn’t know which fork to use, Even probably did--

Actually, turned out, what Even knew? Him.

Half an hour and a dozen snuck sips of Even’s champagne later, Rome-inspired pizza was being delivered to them both, albeit fancy as fuck, but pizza nonetheless, and that he could fucking do.

So maybe he was smiling way too much to himself and they kissed over the table like sixty billion times in the two hours they were there, but.

He was dating the most beautiful boy in the world who somehow thought he was also the most beautiful boy in the world and the way Even lit up under the glow of the chandelier lights was worth every heart pounding not-posh-enough thought to cross his mind.

“So I know you said you didn’t wanna do dinner and a movie, but--”

“Even, this has already surpassed dinner and a movie, okay.”

“Okay, well, either way, I was looking for places close enough we could walk to, and there’s another kind of show just around...the corner?”

They turned and there, lit up gold under the slashing white architecture, was the Oslo Opera House. They’d walked like. Six fucking minutes and apparently, the Bech Næsheim translation for step up from dinner and a movie was three course dining and a show at the opera.
“Fy faen,” Isak managed. “Are we going to see an opera?”

“I...didn’t think you liked opera,” Even said slowly and Isak looked confusedly over at him, waving his free hand at the building they were still walking towards.

“That’s the opera house.”

“It is. I mean, La Bohème is playing in Italian right now, but. I. I mean, I didn’t think that’d be your thing.”

“Wait, so...we’re not going to the opera?”

“We could if you wanted, it’s probably a little late to buy tickets.” Even worried his thumb nervously over Isak’s, sucking in a breath before rushing out all at once, “I was thinking we’d climb up to the roof and take really dramatic photos instead?”

Isak stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, blinking at the glowing golden lights on the water a moment longer before he turned, lifting an eyebrow up at the hesitant, stunning, dressed up, a fucking angel on earth beside him.

“I love you so fucking much.”

An exhale and all the worry dissipated, then the hand in his was tugging, pulling him for the glittering glass windows and sloping white roofs that lead to one of the best overlooks of the harbor, stars already singing down from the sky.

“This is fucking...perfect.” Isak rolled his head on Even’s stomach, back up to the stars as gentle fingers carded through the gel in his curls. “We get to lie down after eating too much, and fucking. Star gaze on top of the opera house, who the fuck are you.”

“The best boyfriend ever,” Even smiled back and Isak hummed, nodding his agreement to Orion.

“Although, uh. Don’t get too excited about lying down, there’s still one more destination on the list?”

“What?”

“It’s only like a half mile walk, and I think it’ll be worth it.”

Isak lifted his head to squint suspiciously at Even.

“What could possibly beat star gazing on the opera house?”

The bathing area at Sørenga Sjøbad, that’s what.

Of course Even ended the most romantic, pretentious date ever with them taking off their tuxes to go swimming, which meant eventually taking a bike taxi back cold and wet in white tshirts and damp slacks.

Their first fancy official night out ending just the same as their first date last Halloween.

Although hopefully, they’d land on his bed to do a little more than makeout, cause Isak was fucking deprived.

But for now they were hand in hand, a soft kiss on the sidewalk, their city laid out under every step of their matching laced up feet.

It barely took ten minutes to get to the end of the pier, wooden docks around the rectangular glassy
water, the ladders down into the harbor, lighting low and dark and beautiful.

See, he’d pictured them slowly stripping at the edge of the water, kissing languid, taking off every part of each other’s suits but as soon as they hit the edge of the docks Even let go of his hand to start undoing his tie, kick off his shoes on his own.

Isak looked at him a little quizzically but started doing the same, watching out of the corner of his eyes.

Even had been kinda. Uncharacteristically muzzled since they left the opera house. Wordlessly turned away from Isak as he folded his jacket inside out, setting it down and flipping the button on his pants. The lapping water filling in the silence, until Even hopped out of one leg and finally interrupted the nighttime quiet just as reticent as the stars.

“Did you mean it?”

Isak looked up. “That you’re cheesy for taking me swimming?”

“Nei, nei. A week ago. Our fight.”

Oh. Yeah, that would explain the stifle. Isak paused in the middle of unbuttoning his shirt.

“...which part,” he said, although he meant all of it.

Even took a moment, folding his pants too, a little pile of satin black, bowtie pulled free to drape over the rest before he was straightening, gaze out over the water as the waves rippled between them again.

Stars twinkling, hearts beating, waiting placidly, a splash.

“That me breathing is more important than me loving you.”

Isak’s entire being suddenly got trapped in his chest, wrenching so tight and impossible that he couldn’t breathe, the deep seated wound split right back open to bleed all over again.

“...yes,” he replied quietly. Even’s eyes cut over to him. There were tears in them.

“How can you…”

“I get that you’re scared. That the...that my love’s not enough to save you and I get it,”

“Wait, what?”

Isak was wrestling out of his shirt, pointedly watching the docks instead because the magic of the night wasn’t gonna save them from reality now.

“You know for being a scientist, I’m not sure I can handle the idea of science overruling this thing between us, I just. I don’t get how you feel that but you’re allowed to feel whatever you--”

“That’s not what I meant at all.” Even was staring at him wide-eyed and Isak looked up, button-up dropping from his fingers for the ground.

“What?”

“I wasn’t...you thought I was, what. Dismissing your feelings as...not enough?”
“Um...did you hear you?” It was so subtle and simple and self-deprecating that it punched all of the air right out of Even’s chest.

“I-- fuck, Isak.”

The water rushed by in a blur, pulling all the soft sadness in by the hem of his shirt, tipping that beautiful face up, searching between the galaxies in green eyes. Fucking hell.

Right now, he had right now, he had this, Isak half undressed, standing on a dock with his face in Even’s hands and the stars in his eyes, and by god, was the present dazzling.

He was so fucking terrified of the future, but he had this, now, and he had to fucking focus on the fact that he was never gonna forget the memory of Isak's fingertips upon his skin. No matter what else the world, the numb, took from them, he’d always have that.

“I thought you. If you didn’t care that I didn’t love you--”

Isak made a shocked hurt little sound and Even shook his head, eyes closed, knocking their foreheads together.

“Fuck, that wasn’t what you meant either, was it?”

“God, Ev-en.”

Everything he hadn’t seen, in the blur of that fight, of Isak screaming at him and the world closing down around him, fingernails digging into his palms millimeters from splitting skin but he couldn’t breathe, Isak had told him he’d rather Even be alive than love him and it’d felt like a strike in the chest, that Even’s love didn’t matter, Isak would be fine without it but that was the exact fucking opposite of what he’d meant, wasn’t it?

Isak hadn’t been throwing Even’s heart away, he’d been offering his own out on a platter. Entirely selfless, begging Even to keep on because he’d rather that than have him for his own another day--

Even couldn’t. He couldn’t even imagine saying that. It would tear the fucking life out of his body to say that.

Maybe, it’d torn the life out of Isak’s.

And suddenly he couldn’t breathe, the idea of Isak carving his heart out and tossing it at Even in the middle of the fight like that when Even had been too wrapped up and terrified to process how much that must’ve killed him to say and

“You’re...you’re everything bright and beautiful in my life and if the. If I lose the vibrancy of the life I love you in, I’ll only be able to see black and white but you--”

“You can’t lose me,” Isak cut, hand over Even’s chest. “I’m not around you, I’m not on your skin like the sun, I’m not the way you see the world, I’m not out there, Even. I’m in here.”

There was water on his lashes, down his skin and Isak wiped the tears away without looking up, eyes still closed, not a moment of silence broken but he still knew, hands on Even’s cheeks, he still knew.

“I’m in here.”

And so they kissed, in their white undershirts and boxers, standing there on the bathing dock with the
stars and all of Oslo behind them.


The water was lapping against the ladder, the horizon was dark and the world had never been more beautiful, wind whipping golden curls, starry green sparkling brighter than the sky. The sun had long since set but Even had never seen anything glow more beautifully in his life.

Now what do you say we jump.

Isak held out his hand.

Even took it.

Søndag, 04:53
28.05.17

Isak had woken him at 5 o’clock, maybe intentionally, maybe not, fingertips tracing up his hips, kisses to his chest, silent simple ones up his throat.

Even had fluttered awake and rolled Isak up over the top of him, closed mouth kisses and bleary falling into each other as touch deepened.

Still open enough Isak kissed his mouth, slicked him up, and slowly slid back over Even with a stifled sound.

Even clutched his ribs and Isak rocked over him in the peaceful stillness of early morning, nothing and no one awake for miles.

The sounds spilling from their mouths never got louder than the collision of their bodies until Isak was tightening up around him, nose on Even’s as he shook and came. Groaning double with the filling sensation of Even doing the same.

Heavy breathing, unspoken promises, kisses falling over him like stars.

The angels who didn't need Heaven.

Isak curled up on his chest, falling sated and softly back into sleep.

Even stayed up and watched the sun rise. Black dark blue light. A strip of yellow just over the distant roofs outside Isak’s open window.

Stacked layered stripes of gray white clouds fading the yellow up into the blue, Even held Isak close and let himself get lost in his own thoughts.

And by the time the sky went lavender gray yellow white bright light blue, he came out of his head with maybe a better understanding of who he was, what he needed.

The settled moments in the middle of the night, in the early morning when he was alone and
completely not. Isak asleep at his side, all he needed because the open eyes open mouth all that bright cluttered his brain so much he didn't have time to think about himself but here,

Safe and peaceful there was no better place to dive into his head, finding ways to cope. Things like this, the little things that were better for him than any therapist could recommend. Things like this, the little things that he'd always keep living for.

He hoped to always keep living for.

Even watched the sun rise over the horizon and held them both, bathed in morning light.

Mandag, 14:53
29.05.17

melding Jonas Kontakt

I dag, 14:53

What's up with you and hanging out with the Skavla's Bakka crowd?

?? why

Because I know that crowd, and that's not your kinda crowd.

Dude like you know shit about my kinda crowd

Uh, excuse me?

We've been friends for like a month, just because we're close now doesn't mean you know anything about my life okay

Sue me for caring about you, jeez

It's not that, it's just. Butt out, okay? I don't need babysitters breathing down my neck
I know you're older and shit but that doesn't mean I need another goddamn caretaker.

Woah woah that's not what I meant at all. M&M are just worried about you, I figured I'd ask.

Since we are close, and we are friends, asshole.

Okay okay sorry. It's just been really stressful lately with finals and family drama and everything I didn't mean to take it out on you man.

No it's totally fine you have a right to be stressed. I wasn't trying to come across that way at all.

I know. Still man sorry for snapping.

It's okay, we're totally cool. Anything with family drama I can help with? Isak hasn't mentioned anything.

No no I don't need Isak to know.

...okay? He knows your family really well tho, can't he help?

He can't. You can keep this between us, right? Cause we are friends?

Ja, I can.

Thx man. Srry again.
It was the last week of school. The last week of second year for him, the last week of Nissen, school, ever for Even and they should be elated, there was a party this weekend it was about to be summer but. Even was graduating soon, a whole new future, he was nervous and Isak was full on actually fucking anxious.

They were in a park, lying there in the grass, supposedly taking a break from finals studying, but Isak was on his stomach with his chin propped in a hand thinking way too much to be a break from anything.

This was real, they had now, they’d jumped, they were together, they couldn’t get any deeper into this but there was still one thing going against them. Not their hearts, not Even’s mind, not Isak’s parents, not the terrifying fear of hurting each other, somehow they’d conquered all of that, all of those impossible obstacles they’d proven they could get past. And of course there would be more setbacks regarding those things in the future but they’d done this, they’d chosen this, all of that hell and they were still together.

So it felt so fucking stupid that something as motherfucking mundane and simple as university was hovering over them now. They had all of this, they found each other through all of this, and it could all be for fucking nothing. They were gonna know inside of like. A week. A week from now, there could be a time stamp deadline on this.

Even could leave for some fancy film school in New York and it’d all be for fucking nothing.

Five years from now they could be lying together in another park somewhere, kissing upside down and super happy and still in love or.

A year from now Even could be lying in the grass with someone else.

A year from now Even could be kissing someone else.

It hit him in the chest like a freight train and he stopped breathing so suddenly his body jerked with it. Even looked over.
“Crown?” Gaze back on the pencil sweeping over paper.

Isak exhaled. “I don’t want you to ever be with anyone else.”

That time the snap up was sharp enough the air palpably changed.

“Neither do I.”

The grass crinkled beneath him as he rolled over onto his back, temple bumping Even’s knee, looking up at the eyes framed against the sky, only twice as blue.

“Don’t ever kiss anybody the way you kiss me.” Isak curled his hand up under Even’s thigh, squeezing tight. “If we ever break up for any god forbid reason, don’t you dare.”

“Stop,” Even said. “We won’t. I won’t. I promise. You just...don’t ever kiss anybody else ever, I-- I can’t even picture you with--”

“Don’t,” Isak told him. “I won’t ever be.”

A heavy hand landed on his jaw, shaking him rough, hard once as they stared at each other, way too fucking honest here in the shadow of incoming summer’s rays. Everything they could stand to lose.

“It wouldn’t matter, even if I ever was. It’d still always be you. It’s always gonna be you.”

“Because I’m first?” Even asked, searching back and forth between his eyes.

“Because we’re it,” Isak corrected. “Because this is what love is supposed to feel like. And you’re not first, you dick, I liked people before you. Hell, I dated people before you.”

“What? Who?”

“I dated Sara last year.”

“Ingrid’s friend Sara??”

“Uh...ja?”

“WHY.”

“Because I didn’t want people to think I was gay?” Isak threw up a hand and the pretty head shook, recalibrating.

“Who else have you dated??”

“A couple girls, none of them serious, none of them lasted longer than a few weeks anyways.”

“I want their names,” Even demanded.

“Why??”

“Because! I had no idea.”

“How did you...okay, but listen, you didn’t tell me you had a sister,” Isak shot back in defense to the betrayed look.

Eyes rolled and Isak shoved his thigh, scooting them both an inch.
“Serr! Don’t even give me that shit.”

“Whatever,” Even said, picking his pencil back up and pointing the eraser at Isak’s nose. “Girlfriends. Names.”

“You too,” Isak said and Even’s eyebrows shot up, a single scratch of graphite in the pause with his mouth open.

“Sonja,” he replied.

Isak cocked his head.

“Wait, really? You never had a girlfriend before that? Or a boyfriend?”

“...nei?”

“I’VE DATED MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU??” Isak sat up, staring wide eyed at the green and blue horizon. “What the FUCK.”

“How many girls have you dated??”

“Three, then there’s you, which means my total is double yours,” Isak shoved a golden shoulder, laughter rippling as it sunk in.

Even shoved him back in defense but Isak was too busy mocking to care,

“Oh, I’m Even Bech Naesheim, I’m so hot and amazing and suave and charming--”

“Shut up,” Even defended. “I’ve never said any of that.”

There were hands on his waist trying to drag him into Even’s lap, but Isak was squirming and kicking too much, laughing through the shout over the hillside,

“And I act and walk and talk like I own the entire world and slept with your entire school and your girlfriend and your boyfriend but I’ve only dated TWO PEOPLE EVER, my seventeen year old boyfriend has dated DOUBLE as many people as me and liked NONE of them--”

Isak was laughing his ass off, too bright and young and beautiful Even couldn’t help it, taking his face in both palms to kiss all over, his cheeks and forehead and nose while Isak squirmed some more and giggled and giggled.

Even rubbed their noses together, burning in the heat of the sunlight bubbling over his skin, dancing across his lips.

“None of them before you,” Isak smiled, bursting dimpled at the seams.

Then he was kissing Even’s nose and Even’s eyes crinkled up, pushing him back into the grass, pencil rolling down the empty page for the hill while they kissed and kissed, and the summer sun lit everything gold enough they could smile a little longer.

Torsdag, 11:12
01.06.17
Eskild

Okay so where’s the summer get together this year

Vilde

It’s a penetrators reunion!

Linn

Rooftop??

Mahdi

Nah like underground trashy I’m p sure

Eva

The best kind of party

Chris

Rooftops are so fun tho can we throw our own rooftop party

Jonas

Last years was bomb
Noora
We don't have access to that roof anymore

Sana
Jonas cmon

Jonas
I didn't even say his name Sanasol

Even
Who's name

Eskild
You are so behind

Magnus
I mean...he is

I wake up to the most nightmarish large group chat ever and I'm dragged before I can say a word

Eva
Wtf were you sleeping in class
Jonas

It's Isak when he is not asleep

Nei, this group chat does not get to become the Trash Isak chat

Group is renamed to Trash Isak Valtersen

Isak Valtersen has left the group chat

Chris Berg has added Isak Valtersen to the group chat

Mahdi

Anyways. Is there a roof above your place, Noora?

Linn

It's more Eskild's place

Eskild

It's all of our place we're a family <3

Sana

Ew

Even

I love you guys
Eva
But is there a ROOF

There is
it's decent sized so we could probably throw a party there

Eskild
Wait when and why did you go to the roof

Even
With me

Noora
Omg you guys had roof sex??

Vilde
They were probably stargazing 🌌❤️

Gayyyyy

Magnus
Wait Jonas why didn't you call him out
Sana

He IS gay Magnus he can say that it's his identity

Gayyyyy

Eskild

Gay

Vilde

gay!

Eva

Bi bi bi

Even

Bi bi!

Magnus

Straight

Shut up

Magnus

What ???
It was the last day of school and they were hanging in the cafeteria, waiting for the rest of the squad to get their end of year reports. Vilde and Sana had brought a fuckton of homemade skolebrød so they were all fighting over custard types, although vanilla was obviously better than the raspberry-jam or the blueberry-topped, otherwise you lost the spice of the cardamom bun.

Speaking of which, where the fuck was Even, this was the first time since those fatal cheese toasties they got to eat legitimate cardamom together and he was missing it.

Isak snagged the last vanilla one for safe-guarding, although he had to swat off both Mahdi and Eva for it.

And there was Jonas, finally, plopping down beside him with a nod but where the fuck was Isak’s graduate--

Conveniently, that was exactly when nearly 2m of gorgeous came skidding around the corner into the lunchroom, hair bouncing, shoes catching to nearly send him into the closest table and okay, Even was always one for the dramatic entrances but Jesus Christ.

“Woah, what the fuck,” Magnus echoed, followed by Chris’s “Fy faen, someone that tall should not move that fast--”

Isak spun all the way around in his seat, eyebrows furrowed in concern,

“Even, what--”

His boyfriend pulled him up by the shoulders and kissed him smack on the mouth. Isak bent backwards a little with the force of it, eyes wide, Even’s hands secure digging in hard to his biceps as he stumbled a step, their mouths breaking off.

The whole lunchtable had fallen into open mouthed silence or wide eyed concern, not that any of that came close to the incredulous on Isak’s face.

“What, baby, what?”

“I got into Kuno,” Even breathed and it took Isak a second to register, head dipping, single eyebrow cocked up,

“The fancy as fuck art school in Oslo?”

“Yeah, Isak, yeah,” he said, all air and rapid nodding and holding Isak’s hands tight and smiling so fucking bright and Isak’s jaw dropped open, double beat pounding over the words he was almost afraid to say out loud this couldn’t be real this couldn’t be actually happening could that did that mean fucking christ god did they--

“You’re staying in Oslo?”

“Yeah, baby, I’m staying in Oslo,” Even told him, smiling so wide the words were almost unintelligible, eyebrows knit and high, shaking his head in disbelief, relief, lit up and beautiful and surreal as he clutched Isak’s hands.

And the look on his face was the same one he’d burst into when he kissed Isak in the pool the first time and Isak was just staring at him, splashing water gathering up on his lashes this time.
Even was staying in Oslo.

This time he didn’t stand there stunned, entire world falling into place with the open awe part of his mouth. This time, there was nothing left to hold back. There was nothing to hold them back.

My way back home to you.

Isak bounced up and wrapped his arms around Even’s neck, strong arms wrapping all the way around to squeeze him tight, all the universes lining up to give them this moment, right here, this nå, the best moment in his life so far, and every moment past this got to be too.

Even leaned back to kiss him and kiss him again, wet as that first time had been because Isak was crying, cupping his face and kissing his mouth with tears streaming down his cheeks, wrapping arms back barely seconds later. Hugging the life out of each other in the middle of the lunchroom, Even’s steady sway rocking them back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, here,

*I’m gonna be here.* Isak was shaking, fist unsteady in the back of Even’s hair while Even kissed his neck over and over again,

“I love you I love you I love you I love you--”

(I’m staying with you I’m staying with you I’m staying with you)

Jonas had safeguarded his precious vanilla skolebrød for him. Isak took it in his palm and handed it carefully to the boy at his side,

“I finally got you that kardemomme.”

Well, at least now Even was crying too.

The kardemomme tasted just as perfect off his lips as Isak knew it would.

Lørdag, 20:00
03.06.17

It just so happened that Mahdi’s parents were out of town the same fuckin’ weekend as The Party of The Year.

Although honestly, it’d been nonstop celebrating since the moment the last bell rang and Even was all but bouncing through the hallways,

“Fuck secondary, fuck school, fuck Nissen, fuck Bakka, goodbye motherfuckers--”

He was excited about graduating, to say the least. Excited enough he’d convinced Mahdi to let him drive the Bimmer to Chris’s - with Isak in shotgun, because he was taller than Magnus now, longest legs got the front, house rules. Car rules.

So they were leaning over to kiss at every stoplight and the boys bitched louder every time PAY
ATTENTION TO THE ROAD DAMMIT, to which they twisted the bass boosted music up to blasting while Isak sucked Even’s lower lip into his mouth, tugging away with teeth because fuck off, he’d pregamed hard enough he was gonna makeout with his hot ass boyfriend driving this hot ass car with speakers pounding through the nightlights of their fucking city.

Even looked hotter than literally anyone Isak had ever seen in his life, black leather jacket, open red mouth, hair twisted in the prettiest, most dramatic fucking swirl, sides of his hair slicked back so tight he could be a fifties star; but the way he looked over at Isak as he whipped the car around another turn said nothing but dirty street boy ready to drag them into some dark alley and shove Isak to his knees--

There were people mulling outside to smoke, walking in packs for the open door pouring out purple light and swirls of fog, a draped sign over the door that once said Penetrators and now was spray-painted over black with go fuck yourself.

“This is gonna be wild as hell,” Mahdi shouted over the music, windows down, rolling by slow as heads turned, wheels sliding into their front row reservation. When you were best friends with the host.

Even swung open his door the same time Isak did, the both of them standing slow-mo for the curb and there were a couple of guys elbowing each other, first years with their jaws on the ground, bass pounding their entrance.

Isak had never felt so fucking cool in his life.

“You still have to teach me how to do that,” Magnus slid out of the car on Even’s side and Even shot him a cocky smile as he swung around the hood of the car.

“It’s all about timing,” Even shot back, then he was lifting Isak’s jaw with the side of a curved finger, mouths crushing together heated and still spinning.

Isak fisted the hem of the leather jacket and kissed back hard, then car doors were slamming shut and Even popped off, already looking the boys’ direction as he slung a possessive arm around Isak’s waist.

“Ready?”

“You’re dating a drama queen,” Jonas informed Isak, stepping up next to Even with his eyebrows up. Even shot his up right back.

“Excuse me, who’s the one causing all the drama lately, don’t think it’s me.”

“Oooo, burrrn,” Magnus bumped Jonas’s shoulder and Mahdi laughed, wide mouthed as he stepped up to Isak’s side.

“Penetrators 2k17, here goes.”

“Technically, it’s the Riot Club.”

“Technically, they’re all fucks who’ve already graduated and are still somehow cooler than anyone who actually attends Nissen.”

Cool enough to throw the highest attended party of the year, no need for fog machines with all the smoke rolling around bright colored feet, already graduated and already with two girls draped on all their arms.
Although currently, Chris’s arm was around Even, leaning over to point out people across the party, wolf smile bursting at another cocky joke from raised eyebrows while Isak waved an *I’ll be right back* and went to search for those free drinks because it was the first fucking party of the summer, *summer*, they had three months to do nothing but each other, they were starting out with a bang if he could help it.

“Aw man, man, remember I told you about that dance thing I do?”

“Like I forget anything you say, Christo,” Even scolded, beaming back at him while they both lifted their heads to the DJ across the room.

“Okay, well guess who just fuckin’ walked through the door, my crew—”

The bass was blasting loud enough you could feel your skin vibrating, lights flashing enough colors nearly everyone was unmistakable in the jumping, dancing, grinding, crowd.

“Even, this is Marius, best photographer you’ll ever see on top of the dancing. Then here’s Tommyboy - just dancer - and my man Yousef. Guys, this is Even, the new MVP—”

Even’s eyebrows were on his hairline but he managed to make it down the line grabbing hands and knocking shoulders until Yousef, who didn’t offer a hand.

Just a single head nod instead, lifted more like a challenge than a greeting.

“Been awhile,” Yousef shouted over the bass and Even nodded, tongue between his lips until he realized he was doing the Isak thing, managed to get himself to use actual words instead.

“Uh...yeah, how’s Mikael?”

“Fine,” Yousef said, and it wasn’t obviously cold but Even still nodded complacently, looking away.

Chris was looking between them confusedly for a second before it clicked and his mouth was popping open, finger waving between the two of them.

“Oh shit, Yousef, you go to Elvebakken, don’t you? You guys know each other?”

“We used to,” Yousef corrected, air fucking palpable with it and Even was most definitely not dealing with this right now, not when Chris was fucking oblivious to all the shit that went down last year but y’know who wasn’t oblivious, Isak, where the fuck was his boyfriend--

He was in the middle of scanning the crowd for a blonde halo when some girl came up to grab Yousef’s arm, whisper something in his ear. He nodded and waved a hand then he was being tugged along to disappear in the crowd and Even’s lungs decided to start working again.

“So you used to go to Bakka,” Some Penetrator guy was saying, bumping his shoulder. Even turned back to Chris’s friends, maybe distracted.

“Ja, I did. Transferred to Nissen for 3STB.”

“You wouldn’t believe the drama this guy brings,” Chris leaned in to shout over the music. “Honestly this would’ve been the most boring year ever without the new fav, hella hot and hella gay.”

“Bi,” he corrected, to which the mini crowd was ooing-ing, Chris’s elbow landing in his ribs with that wide smile,
“He still has a type though. Could land anybody in this damn party, but man is he choosy---”

Even shook his head, laughter echoing over the bass.

“So you think you got game?”

“Man, I know I got game.”

“Oh yeah? Prove it.”

Even spun around, scanning for curls one more time and finally fuck, the hottest person here was strolling up with that crooked triumphant side smile, two drinks in one hand, mouth opening to greet him with some pet name.

Never got the chance, not before Even was snagging him by the waist and dragging Isak into his chest, kissing him hard with one hand hitching a denim thigh up over his hip.

Isak shoved the drinks at Chris’s chest, arms wrapping around Even’s neck, moaning quietly against the tongue Even slipped into his mouth and--

“Ooooooohhhhh shit---”

“Oh my god--

“Oh whatever, that’s his boyfriend, that doesn’t fucking count--”

“Wait, the first year that started all the Yakuza fights?”

“Ja,” Chris tipped his head, lifting up both drinks, “They’re the new power couple.”

“No fucking way!!”

“Fucking way.”

“You think that’s wild, just wait ‘til you hear about this third year Jay…”

The voices got lost in the drown of the crowd and the blasting dance music, not that either of them were paying attention to anything but Isak getting pressed against the closest wall with Even’s tongue in his mouth.

Lights flashing, colors seeped over blonde hair until they were the pulsing rainbow too, let the night be forever, they got to stay together--

Even’s shoulders dancing closer, caging Isak up against the wall all possessive and heated, their mouths breaking apart to drag a trail of nipping kisses down his neck, head tipped with a fist in curls, skin pounding with the palpable shake of the bass hits, beat loud enough to hide the turned on needy little moans.

God, these parties used to be getting high enough to convince himself to make out with a girl but now he was higher from Even’s mouth than he’d ever been from the smoke in his throat.

Speaking of smoke in throats. Up until this point the blasting speakers were thumping distant, the undercurrent you felt more than heard. But there would never be a time in his life that that intro could play without his entire body suddenly extremely aware of everything in existence.

“Wait, wait, fuck,” Isak managed against Even’s mouth, shoving a hand between their chests to
groan up at the sky.

"Hva?"

"This song, fuck. Make them change it."

"I don’t think that’s how it wor--"

"Your Chris’s new William, that’s exactly how it works. He didn’t even get invited."

Even gave him the most confused sparkly multicolored look ever.

"Who’s William?"

"Exactly.” Words he’d never thought he’d hear, but they sounded so surprisingly nice. Especially considering. “You're basically in charge of this party, don't deny it.”

Even’s eyebrows were up, that cocky little smile, he knew exactly what Isak was talking about.

“What’s wrong with the song?”

Okay, Even was always hot, but the way he acted when he knew he was hot only made him hotter and now Isak was hot, all over, but this stupid fucking song was still fucking playing and pretty fucking soon somebody was gonna catch on,

“It’s the Penetrators theme song, they made it sometime last year, I-- god, fuck, just.” Isak put a hand over his face.

Super articulate, smooth as fuck, but he just Needed It Gone,

"Baby please what’s the point in dating the hottest boy in school who befriended the other hottest boy in school if he can't change the song at his best friends party for you?"

“You're really against this song,” Even smiled, slow and spreading, lifting his head to listen and Isak attempted to get his hands over Even’s ears but he, mortally, did not move fast enough, Even’s fingers around his wrists,

“Wait. Wait, is this you rapping?”

Isak froze, his mouth open, and found he had absolutely no way to protest that.

“Huh?? Is it ???” Shaking his wrists a little, making wide eyes go from the bouncing yelling party back to Even’s expectant lit up eyes,

“Save me,” Isak said and Even’s jaw dropped.

“THERE’S A LEGIT SONG OF YOU RAPPING?"

“They needed someone who could rap, and they wanted it to be more comical than serious so they decided to ask some first year Chris knew and...ja, okay, it’s me, don’t listen--”

“You tried to get me to change this???”

“Even Even stop you can't listen to it--”

“What are you saying-- CHRIS!!! START THE SONG OVER!!!
A shout across the bouncing crowd,

“What?? ...okay?”

The bass faded to pull back in the beginning and Isak banged his head back against the wall.

“Are you fucking kidding me.”

The smile Even gave him went all the way to his toes and Isak got a hand on Even’s neck, their mouths pulled together before the words could start.

Only apparently somebody could both positively destroy him with the twist of their mouths while also listening along, a giggle into a half dozen heat pecks over his mouth,

“Okay so far I’ve caught shot glasses, hiding naked in bushes and taking our place between your thighs,”

“I didn’t write them,” Isak insisted and Even was laughing, kissing him again, again, before eyebrows were shooting up, pulling back again to Isak’s groan.

“Did you just say making your lips salty? So you’ll rap this but you won’t dirty talk to me??”

“I can’t fucking think when you’re inside me, Even, how am I supposed to dirty talk, huh?”

That time Even’s mouth landed on him hard, shoving his spine into the wall, thumbs sinking into his hips, tongue between his teeth to make his hips roll forward desperately, just as Even broke off,

“Coming on your face the weather reports flood, it shall rain cum???”

“Stop talking,” Isak told him, as seriously as he could this flushed then Even was laughing into his mouth and Isak bit his stupid pretty mouth to shut him up.

The build was making his toes curl, head spinning with the burn of Even’s fingers sliding up under his shirt, spanning over his skin with heavy palms, skidding bold mouths, higher higher--

He felt the bass drop coming from a mile away but the sudden steady pounding still sent sparks scattering through his veins, colored flares sweeping over them to imprint on closed eyelids.

Clutching fingers tightened wet mouths together harder, flooded with sound color touch light gasps,

The music cut, the dead drop silence for a single low word, command,

“Come.”

Another burst of bass and Even’s lips were popping off his again, making him whine enough to warrant a nip over the disbelieving amused, “oh my god.”

Yeah, yeah, he knew, the song was fucking ridiculous he couldn’t believe he rapped it but he did, here they were, beat heavy enough the crowd was jumping, swelling around them, hands in the air but not Even’s, Even’s were bruising his waist, hips grinding Isak into the wall tight and dirty enough Isak couldn’t fucking breathe,

The music dropped again and he couldn’t breathe, but he could push Even off to lean forward, teasing the word mouthed over Even’s lips,

“Come.”
Isak almost tripped over his own feet he got tugged in fast and hard enough, fingers looped inside his belt to yank him forward. Collision instantly slamming their mouths, hips together with two hands wide and possessive over his ass as Even fucked up against him close and hard. Isak couldn’t even attempt to kiss back, mouth open gasping he was fucking dying, coming apart at the seams he’d danced to this song way too many times and never done anything but laugh at it.

He wasn’t laughing now, he was so hard his head was spinning. Even was just as hard, circling up against him with all that length and heat he could feel, fucking...tantalizing friction, a thousand shivers sent off through every inch of his body, the body pressing closer--

Just when he was pretty sure he couldn’t get any more turned on Even got a handful of his curls, pulled his head back to kiss him harder and yeah his knees kinda gave, collapsing into the hands that only held him firmer and Isak was either about to actually combust or haul Even for the closest bathroom so he could drop to his knees and get Even in him one way or another.

Fucking fuck if Even kissed him like that again Isak might drop to his knees right fucking here, if he was bolder or older, just open his mouth up begging for Even to take his jaw, fill him up please, fuck the crowd, right fucking now--

“G-god, baby, fuck--”

“How bad do you want it,” Even whispered, a dare ghosting over his ear and Isak’s eyes flickered open, taking Even’s face in shaky hands. The only defense he had left was that he knew the words to this fucking song, and he was gonna make Even as damn desperate as he was.

“Ska’kke dømme en jævla sexfantasi,” teeth dragging over his lower lip, a shaky gasp, “--hva er hans alibi?”

He couldn’t do much but whisper the lines, lashes fluttering back closed as he mouthed over Even’s lips in smushing kitchen kisses while he shivered and shivered and rubbed his hips up against his boyfriend, please,

The tension was building so fucking high and smooth, lyrics swallowed up by Even’s mouth tugging him back in to make out again, fingers spread and curled hard against his ass as he broke off to gasp, breathing another line into a shaky kiss,

“Baby her er vår--” It was maybe a little vehement, all the force of the song behind his voice bursting through the strobing speakers.

Even let go of his curls to shove his chest, slam him up against the wall then he’s pinning him in and hauling his thighs up around Even’s waist,

“...klar med åpen søm,” Isak gasped, “Penetrators kommer deg i fjeset...”

Running a finger down the side of Even’s face, blue eyes on fucking fire, plush lips parted, bitten red. Isak’s mouth was open too wide, jaw trembling too much to barely mouth the next line,

“The weather reports flood, it shall rain cu--”

The chorus cut right off, Even’s mouth crashing into his, grinding up hard, fast enough between Isak’s legs he was whimpering high pitched, gasping over teeth the spinning splashy saturated room the bulge between his spread legs, uncurled fists raking desperately through Even’s gorgeous hair.

The wall was shaking with the bass, they could feel it in the rub of their bodies, he had a fucking pulse between his legs and the room was so fucking dark, boiling hotter with the bouncing grinding
crowd and the flash of lights, blue and pink painting the flushed skin under his fingertips, hips tilted to jolt at the tight circle closer everything building so fucking high he could melt right down the fucking wall--

Even broke off to gasp and Isak whipped his head to the side, digging deep enough into Even’s shoulders to make the exhale a groan.

“Bathroom, bathroom now.”

The hands on his ass lifted to swing him off the wall and Isak smacked the arms off, wrestling down to his feet to grab Even’s wrist and shoulder them through the crowd as fast as fucking possible. Even didn’t even know where the bathroom was, he was not going to carry Isak around through a party searching for it, there had to be lines somewhere.

However, whatever lines Isak had about not hooking up in bathrooms at parties had been left in the dust somewhere between Even’s tongue and the bass of that fucking song. The room was still fucking spinning, enough he stumbled a few times but his legs were weak, everything was weak except his fucking erection right now, actually.

And he was just about to turn the corner to go do something about that, aka give his boyfriend head while he jacked off to Even’s hands on his jaw and cock fucking down his throat when he suddenly jumped, both of them stumbling a step to look over at the sudden loud crash, following shout loud enough to hear over the fucking bass.

A single moment’s pause before the party suddenly shifted, instantaneous chaos breaking loose that meant one of two things: cops or a fight had broken out and based on all the shouting, people trying to peer around shoulders instead of sweeping up alcohol bottles or shoving drugs back in pockets, well.

“Hold on, hold on,” Isak called over his shoulder, letting go of Even’s hand to wave an I’ll be back motion and jostle his way through the dancing mob.

Finding Chris was remarkably easy, follow the trail of wooing girls to pull him aside, praise the lord he was wearing a flannel he could wrap around his waist cause jesus fuck, there were other places he wanted to be.

“The fuck is happening??”

A leaning shout over the blast of the DJ, Chris raised his voice over the last thing he wanted to hear right now,

“Yakuza is here!”

“Fucking Yakuza??”

“To crash the Penetrator reunion, ja, apparently the dick bags got bored--”

Another shout to the left, “Oh shit!”

“Fy faen--”

Chris disappeared past him and Isak spun, mouth pushing into a dramatic pout as the room slowed back to wobbly stable around him.
Fuck. Well. There went his plans to go get a facial in Chris’s bathroom.

Isak sucked in a breath, steadied a little, and shouldered through the crowd after Christoffer’s forming gang.

He made it about ten feet before someone was grabbing him, by the hand, a very beautiful someone and Isak stuttered to a stop, blinking up wide as Even pulled him in, swooping down to half-shout next to Isak’s ear, chills raking his whole body with how fucking close--

“What’s happening?”

“Yakuza’s here, babe stay out of it--”

“I will,” Even shouted back, right as the clatter erupted into skirmish.

Jostling shouts suddenly pierced with a scream, some carefree dancer who couldn’t stand the sight of blood. The tightly packed ring of onlookers all backpedaled, chaos and shoving as the two of them finally broke into sight and there was Jonas, stumbling back against the crowd with a hand over his nose and blood between his fingers.

Isak’s jaw and stomach dropped instantly, a Yakuza boy on the ground with two people stooped over the blood gushing between his fingers too, four screaming asshole throwing up hands and shoving the Penetrator returners, everyone shouting, holding each other and their friends at arm’s length.

Two kids from Nissen caught Jonas’s fall, righting him upwards to launch forward, everything in slow motion, painted strobing colorful as Even dropped Isak’s hand to take off, no hesitations, pushing ahead of him and through the morphing ring,

“Fuck, Even, nei! Don’t--”

Another Yakuza started for Jonas, fists raised but before he got another step Even shouldered in and shoved, hard, two hands bouncing off the lapels of a Yakuza jacket. The guy went stumbling far enough he nearly took three more down with him, another round of gasps up at the newcomer to the fight.

“Jonas, you okay?” Even shouted over his shoulder, a protective step backwards and he’d puffed up his chest, towering over everyone as he stood his ground, a solid wall between Jonas and the Yakuza.

“Who the fuck is this kid?” Somebody shouted, just as Chris Schistad finally broke into the circle, striding up to stand next to Even, shoulder to shoulder, a tall, very beautiful, very pissed wall.

“Get the fuck out.” Chris snapped, arms crossing over his chest, riled up fighters jostling and throwing up hands right back,

“William’s sweetheart’s still here!”

“Hey Chris, is this your boyfriend?”

Perfect timing to Isak to step up into the line, taking Even’s hand very pointedly, glaring hard at the assholes who’d gotten absolutely no more clever with their attempted insults.

“Nei, he’s mine.”
Their bristling wall filling in on the sides with the rest of the old crew, blocking the rest of the party from the Yakuza’s hollering jests, shoulders knocking over the nasty laughter,

“The gay kid finally came out of the closet,”

“Couldn’t get it from Curly?”

“How fucking sweet, too bad he turned down sucking Ronnie’s cock—”

Then Even’s hand wasn’t in his anymore, his hand was on the guy’s chest and the other was swinging, knocking his face to the side, shutting the guy up with a fist across his cheekbone.

“EVEN!!”

Then Jonas was breaking through their wall to dive back into the erupted brawl, making him throw up two hands in exasperation,

“JONAS!!”

Barely a step into the yelling wrestling swinging fight before he was skidding, slamming into a wall just as Chris shouted and leapt into the fray with a fist cracking across someone’s face,

“CHRIS!!”

Isak was shouting, absolutely no one was listening, then some Yakuza asshole threw a punch for Even and Isak cursed,

“FUCK,”

drew back a fist, and swung.

Every great party had a fight, a hooking up scandal, and for the elite members: an after party.

Isak couldn’t give a fuck whatever scandals took place, none of them cared, they were too busy in the last stage of great, legendary nights.

This after party consisted of broken boys draped on Chris’s couch and groaning over the cold beers pressed to their bruises.

They’d managed to take the Yakuza fight outside, run them off with the threat of the cops getting involved again.

By the time they made it back inside most of the party had split, and they were getting chewed apart by a team of very pissy girls who cared very much but were honestly exhausting and frankly, Noora’s rant was probably all of the pent up aggression towards those who shall not be named anyways, so.

Eventually everyone piled out but the four of them, Isak and Jonas and Chris and Even, the host, the instigator, and their respective best friends and now they had all this mess to clean but Isak’s knuckles and lip were split and so was his cheek and so was Even’s lip and his jaw was bruised and he popped one of his fingers out of socket and Jonas was still holding paper towel to his nose and Chris’s nose had another gash to match some of the nasty marks from last year, dabbing at the blood
on his lip with a groan.

“Fuck, man. Try to throw one goddamn party.”

They all made grumbles of agreement, before Even was lifting the makeshift cold press off his jaw, complaining up at the ceiling.

“I can’t believe you had Isak rap a song about facials and he still hasn’t let me give him one.”

Isak shoved his foot into Even’s thigh, the high pitched sound of offense covered up by everyone’s bubbling laughter. Not that it lasted long before the giggling morphed into more groans as split lips reopened and bruised ribs jolted.

The pretty blonde head on Chris’s leg tipped back and forth, all dramatic with the lilt of his voice high and mocking,

“I don’t wanna clean come out of my hair—”

“We’re not dating anymore,” Isak informed him as the boys burst into more laughter and Even lifted his head, shoulders digging into the couch,

“You don’t mean that.”

“Nei, I don’t mean that, you fucking asshole.”

“Okay good.” He lay back down, all stretched out and bruised up and beautiful on the other wing of the L couch perpendicular to theirs, way too far away, still devastatingly close.

Isak sighed, waving a dramatic hand,

“And we were on our way to the bathroom when Yakuza showed up, so.”

Even lifted his head again.

“They’re gone now?”

“LITERALLY EVERYONE IS HERE RIGHT NOW. EVERYONE.”

“It’s just my best friend and yours,” Even started in protest.

“EVERYONE.”

“Jeez.” Blonde swoops swiveling to land those shiny blue eyes on the ceiling, voice lifting again.

“...they have washcloths for a reason.”

Isak groaned and put his beer over his eyes. “Why didn’t the punch knock me out, my life would be so much better if I were unconscious.”

Jonas patted his arm comfortingly and Isak pouted, squinting a little at the burn.

“Can’t suck dick with a split lip anyways.”

“Ow,” Even winced, the rest of them making uncomfortable sounds of agreement.

They settled back down into the quiet, surrounded by way too much alcohol, a shocking amount of summer gold glitter, but it was warm and the buzz was just enough that the aches weren’t too bad,
the bruises would heal.

At least they started summer with a bang. Well, not literally, they hadn’t had the chance to actually bang yet but.

“Fuck Yakuza,” Even declared and Isak snorted, a giggle above him, echoed by a few from the other end of the couch.

“Not for the same reasons, but yeah, fuck Yakuza,” Chris agreed.

“Fuck Yakuza,” Jonas mirrored too.

“I’ll pass, my boyfriend’s hotter.” Isak gave a little cocky shrug to the ceiling and everybody rolled their eyes at him, huffing fond.

Physically, yeah, not ideal but. They all settled down into faded content smiles and really, you know what?

They were young. Let them make mistakes and yell and dive too deep and get in fights and make up with wild kisses and loving caress and the bright laughter of true friendship. It was summer, and they had all the time in the world.

‘Cause right now? Nå?

They were young.

Chapter End Notes

And we have completed the penultimate chapter?? Next is the final chapter, then the epilogue, I love you guys and I’m so emotional jesus I can't believe this is almost over

sorry for literally ruining everyone's lives with this chapter but I love you all come yell at me

thank you so much for all of your support my friends. your kind words and kudos have kept me on and on

xx
BACK FROM THE DEAD

so first of all, I've got some thank you’s in order. To every person who commented and said take your time, who patiently patiently waited, I absolutely could not have done this without you.

Thank you.

My life has changed drastically throughout the past year, and I spent so much time stressed about finishing this, but then I would read the encouraging “we’ll wait” and everything would be alright again.

A special recognition to Žaneta, my editor, muse, guide, and fellow artist, this would never have been written without you.

I know that some of you will read this and be unhappy with my choices, but I think after all this time I've earned the right to write.

On that note:

This is half of a chapter. (it's still 30k but)

I will be posting the other half when it's finished, I just really wanted to get content out, in honor of the 1yr anniversary or chapter 1 and so I could feel a little less stress about timing.

There probably won't be a notification for when I add the second half, so I'll be noting it on twitter here.

ALRIGHT long story short, thank you all, ten billion times over. I couldn't have done it without you. I really really hope you enjoy, I'd love to hear what you all think. Thank you for believing in me.

~*~

Dedicated to the other half of my ocean, the Isak to my Even, I don't know where I'd be without you at my side, my love.

~*~

WARNINGS: underage intoxication, marijuana usage, heavier drug usage, slight internal/external homophobia and physical intimacy.

(each of the above will be noted with a ** before and after)

OH and many of the dates have songs linked in them that i would play in the background if you listen to music when you read.

love and a very happy New Years to you all,

xx
"What do you mean ‘where the hell are we?’ Honestly, Magnus, what the actual fuck did you do as a child?”

“I dunno, like. Read books and played in the park?” He brushed long messy hair aside, a dramatic head tilt, “…not everybody started riding the bus alone at 5.”

“We weren’t alone,” Isak pointed out, a step over a tree root bumping his shoulder against the boy beside him.

Tryin’ to find my way back home to you.

Usually, making summer plans required a debate over pizza drinks and a solid week, they had to find the best parties, best beaches, best train tickets, best dates for cabins, best pot, best booze, on and on and

This summer, they beat every record they’d ever set for making plans.

One word from Isak to Jonas and the days of endless freedom were sinking dirt between their sneaker treads

“You’ve really never been back here?” Jonas ducked, narrowly avoiding catch a branch on the bird’s nest he was calling a hairdo lately.

“Nei?”

“Uh, ja, you two are the only ones who’ve been to all these secret places,” Mahdi waved a hand around, nearly knocking the towel off his own shoulder.

“And we’re all honored you’re sharing,” Even input with a look, fingertips on Isak’s lower back as he stepped over another tree root.

Jonas made a vague sound, holding aside a branch as he glanced up, checking the sky. The sun was peeking out of the top of the trees, splotches of gold between the green.

“Do you hear that?”

“The sound of Magnus bitching under his breath?”

“I’m not bitching!”

A tumble of shaking curls as they started forward again, foliage thinning out to the clearing ahead.

“Nei, you can hear the water.”

Isak had to lift a hand to shield his eyes, a sudden burst of sun at the edge of the trees, clearing breaking over a mossy bluff, long since abandoned rope dangling limply from the same overhanging branch reflected brilliantly green in the sparkle of the river (The River) below.
“Holy shit.”

The rope looked more like a death sentence than a lifesaver, too many years of soggy hands and violent tugs, but the sloping green path winding down from cliff to riverbed looked just as warm as he remembered, down to the patchy sunlight and flattened bed of mossy grass, where Isak used to sing on his back, while Jonas played guitar.

“Is that Akerselva?”

“No idea.” Isak hopped up on a green-dotted rock, nearly sliding right back off with a sudden cascade from the crumbling edge. Two quick hands caught him from both directions, Jonas’s fingers crushing his and Even hand balled in the back of his shirt.

“I’m good, I’m good,”

“You guys came here for years and you don’t know if it’s Akerselva?”

“We never really cared.” Jonas lifted a shoulder, a hand clapping down on Isak’s while Isak haughtily dusted imaginary dirt off his shirt.

“Akerselva is so fucking polluted, man. It’s like. Dead now.”

“Well. Whatever river it is, this part’s pretty. Good enough for me.”

“You think everything’s pretty.”

Magnus tossed his balled up shirt for Even’s head, a stumble and resulting push in return. “Woah-oh, careful of the edge--”

“Me?? You’re the one throwing things around while we’re all chilling here on a dangerous cliff.”

“Oi. Dangerous?” Jonas’s face twisted up judgily, a bold step up to the edge, peering down at the flowing crystal below. “Nah, man, you gotta get out more.”

Even attempted to step up next to him and downright slid, eyes wide as he flailed out for Jonas’s sleeve, tipping them both sideways, skidding a clattering pile of rocks to splash below.

“Hoooly fuck.”

“What, you scared of water or something?” Isak called, shirt popping over his curls to a pale bare chest, smile wide enough to reflect in the splash of that day.

How excited he’d been, how fucking scared--

Even could only shake his head and watch helplessly, sunlight instead of pool light, gold instead of sallow blue. The same beautiful boy, toeing off those same laced up shoes, a whole brave new world laid at their feet, a whole brave new chapter to beat.

“Scared of water?” He finally managed to sass back, grabbing the bottom hem of his shirt. “I’ll have you know I’m the…master of swimming.”

“Oh, ja?” Isak challenged, one step backwards into the stream of sunlight, pebbles bouncing free to splash below.

“We’ll see about that,” Jonas filled in, voice suddenly right behind him and that was all the warning Even got before there were three, now four pairs of hands shoving him the last foot to the edge.
His shout echoed over the cliff, drowned out by cheery laughter and the shocked bright scream but he knew those hands, his fingers closed around a warm wrist that was somehow instinctual now, their hands, the consistent reach between them.

Balanced and unbreakable and so goddamn beautiful,

Isak was half an inch from breaking free before the fall, but one quick push from Jonas and there went his footing, falling right into Even’s spiral as they both tumbled over the edge.

If this was even slightly coordinated maybe they could've kissed in mid air but they were both yelling on the way down instead.

The double splash ricocheted high enough every one of the boys felt it, but nobody so much as the two reaching to interlace underwater.

Sun rays filtered through the tumultuous waves to light up floating curls, bare skin so smooth and golden, shoulders unmarred from hickeys or marks, all the settling summer warmth entwining their bodies slow, sweet or giggling. Even had a few marks on his neck he wouldn't trade for anything, even if Magnus did stick his thumb in one earlier, earning him a hearty shove off the path, into a bush.

And there were the marks on jaws and cheekbones from that fight a few days ago but the green of Isak’s beautiful eyes beneath the surface, glittering like fairy lights, only looked more vivid against the purple on his cheekbone and how the fuck Isak could look like a god when his face was swollen, and he was cursing, and flinging his floundering boyfriend further underwater, well Even had no idea, but he’d never felt so fucking lucky in his life.

Their mouths met, waves rushing over them and Even’s entire world slipped right into perfect.

The sky was brightening, blue lit from the bursting center, the sun peeking through the arching trees. Gradual deep water, sloping up to a soft bank, right in the middle of the woods, a sanctuary perfect for two kids, still growing up, and just now trying to escape into the beauty of Norway, the simplest get away of warm summer days.

The moment they finally broke the surface sputtering, two more splashes landed dangerously close, spray smacking Isak’s face while Mahdi laughed his ass off from the top of the cliff.

He was already throwing up double middle fingers by the time he got splash number three, tall and glowing sweeping out of the water, chest puffed up close enough to bump him back a step, then Mahdi was cannon balling beside them both and Isak threw up his hands, shouting defiance that got immediately swallowed muffled by Even’s mouth on his.

He mumbled more bitching against Even’s tongue before the smiling kiss — careful of the still tender, healing split lip — melted him soft enough to wade in close, hands cupping precious, slightly bruised cheeks, the rest of the world fading right out--

Two hands on his shoulders and it took a moment too long to realize they weren’t Even’s, and that he now had water in his mouth, nose, probably brain, it was fine, he was gonna murder Jonas Noah Vasquez but everything was totally fine.

Nothing feels like home.

He came up coughing so much he barely managed the indignant shout,

“What the actual f-fuck--”
Laughter echoed off the cliff sides and Isak sputtered some more, mouth dropped open in offense that turned damn quick into a coughing fit.

Okay, cool, he was just gonna drown now--

Even’s arms wrapped around him warm and secure, pressing him back against his laughing, jerking chest and nei, excuse him, he was not going to be comforted by one of the assholes who was in on these ridiculous pranks, not him, no sir.

“Off, get off, all of you fucking...suck, I can’t believe you dickbag, I came out to have a good time, and ugh honestly I’m feeling so attacked right now--”

The laughter doubled enough that Magnus got water in his mouth and started flailing a little too on top of it, a vicious point that felt a bit childish but,

“Ha! Karma.”

Even was still giggling, which was usually cute, but he’d caught his breath enough to be offended now which meant wiggling to get free, and he was slippery this should be working why wasn’t this--

“UGH!!”

Both hands for the sky and a warm nose nestled against his neck, all that bare skin and open laughing, mouth sliding over his shoulder which was really fucking distracting. Although not enough he didn’t instantly smack a handful water Jonas’s way the moment they were close.

Three hands splashed him back and Isak flailed, finally breaking free with a yell.

“Okay, okay, we promise we won’t--”

The placating sweetness behind him got cut off as Isak finally got solid enough footing on the mushy riverbed to launch up and tackle Jonas right into Magnus’s splashed wave.

They both went under, wrestling between bubbled bursts of shouts, gasps of air and broken laughter, a few thrown elbows and yeah Isak was bigger now but Jonas was a better swimmer, so they were pretty decently matched.

Until Jonas pulled the one move of fuckery, one well placed jab and the yelp was high-pitched enough it would be embarrassing if he hadn’t jolted away like he’d been electrocuted, which basically, he had.

Tryin’ to find my way back--

Jonas was cackling, head thrown back for the sky while Isak shivered and cursed every day of friendship they’d ever had.

“I still don’t know where that is,” Even shook his head, curiosity from that car ride months ago that he’d first found out about Isak’s soft spot cause Jonas liked to just jab him when he didn’t get his way.

It was kinda surprising Even didn’t know about it cause he had touched him everywhere but that was very different than having a finger jammed under your rib.

“Just tell me!”

Jonas opened his mouth and Isak had never gotten a hand angled to the water faster, ready to smack
the next wave over his fluffy head if he so much as dared--

Both of Jonas’s hands shot up, high and apologetic,

“Sorry man, he’s got way too much ammo on me.”

The warning splash got traded for a triumphant fist pump, golden summer air dappled warm over his bright face as long arms swooshed half a foot of water to throw Isak into a back float, laughing cheerily up at the sky, reflecting waves rippling around bare shoulders.

A fond sigh and bodies pushing through the waves, a step close enough to ripple Isak’s smiling peace. A spark of green peeked open, dripping curls lifting out of the water as their gazes caught.

Even’s eyebrows shot up, mouth pursed as he slipped underwater, gracefully closing the space between them to wrap arms around Isak’s waist again, tip them both sideways in the water as he nibbled on the edge of his ear, voice low.

“...let’s see if I can’t find it.”

Isak was too busy getting chills down his spine from the heat of that mouth to register the words or escape in time before he was being rolled over in the water, warm body wrapped all the way around his as long pretty fingers danced over bare skin to dig into his sides.

It wasn’t fair, he was naturally squishy in places and it made him way too fucking ticklish so here he was, screaming and laughing and kicking in the water while Even peppered kisses all over his face and bare shoulders like mad.

--home to you.

All the squirming and kicking was lowkey definitely splashing the boys so Mahdi started splashing them back and hence began the Great Splashing War of Summer 2k17, sunlight reflecting like flying diamonds off wet curls and spun water droplets.

They were still in the middle of shouting sunny shirtless splashing when a rally of new voices came in from above, higher pitched and just as loud,

“Haallaa!! Gutta!!”

The water settled enough for five heads to lift, dripping and surprised. Or, well, a solid 4 out of 5 surprised cause this was the middle of nowhere but iPhones did have a send your location feature that Isak knew how to use very well, actually,

“Halla!! Jentene!!”

Isak waved an arm and crawled over Magnus’s floating legs to start up for shore, smiling wide while the boys exchanged confused glances behind him.

“Who invited the--”

“We brought beer!!” Eva shouted, holding up a cooler from the top of the cliff.

Here we go, living high, feel the thunder.

The confusion morphed instantly into cheers and the rest of the boys climbed out after him, a few knocking shoulders and low splashes while the girls made their way carefully down the side of the cliff, stumbling steps and bright laughs.
They met at the riverbank, Eva in the lead with this brilliant smile, and even brighter bathing suit, as she wrapped her arms around Isak’s bare shoulders. Noora hugged the soaked Even more hesitantly, Mahdi clapping Chris’s shoulder and a few squeals as Vilde ducked away from Magnus’s open dripping arms.

Sana was busy rolling her eyes at them all, a quick hug between Eva and Jonas as she handed over the cooler and they all started passing around beers, searching pockets for keychains with bottle openers, while Isak made his way around the crowd to the girl standing at the back.

“Biology partner,” he greeted, moving to bump their shoulders together, which Sana quite deftly avoided. Basketball reflexes and all.

“Oh, go drip on somebody else,” she sassed and Isak smiled impossibly wider, scooting in close to throw an arm around her shoulders. She squinched up and made this horrified face to which he tugged her in closer, wrapping her up into a real hug.

“Ugghh.”

“It’s so nice to see you too,” Isak told her sincerely, rocking them back and forth a little while he soaked the all blue outfit with river water. She was still rolling her eyes at him when he pulled back, both hands on her shoulders and a smile at all that exasperation. “Your hijab looks cool as fuck today. I don’t think I’ve seen you wrap it like this before. It’s more like. Summer-y, I guess?”

“Funnily enough, that’s exactly what the YouTube video said.” Sana tipped her head in that bright, exaggerated, dimpled smile that Isak returned twice as sincere.

“You learned to tie it all fancy from YouTube?”

“Nei, they have a whole list diagram in the back of the Qur’an. Ja, I learned it from YouTube, is that where you got your lame ass jokes too??” Mouth pursed as sassy as she could and Isak’s eyebrows shot up, nodding to himself as he dropped a hand from her shoulder to wrap the other back around, pull her closer for the riverside.

“Fair, fair. I had that coming. Just like you have this comi--”

“IF YOU PUSH ME IN THAT RIVER SO HELP ME ISAK VALTERSEN--”

“I wasn’t! I wasn’t gonna, I swear, I was just gonna splash you I wasn’t I wa--AHH!!”

The only person worse to offend than Sana Bakkoush was one of the people intent on her well-being, primarily, Even, who shoved Isak hard enough in the water it got everyone on shore wet and excuse him, it was shallow at the bank, he hit his ass on the bottom and now he was dripping water and mud when he emerged yelling.

Mahdi had this theory that Jonas’s hair was partially waterproof or some shit, like duck feathers, because it didn’t submerge like the rest of theirs, it was still fluffy and Even kept jumping to put two hands on top of Jonas’s head and slam him back under just in case, to test it out.
--wanna run wanna fight cause I got the time to waste.

Someone had brought a speaker and Eva spilled enough beer into the river that there was a serious concern of drunk fishes and Isak took to holding all her drinks for her while she jumped around and danced and splashed everyone while they sang and sang.

It was so bright even Sana was grinning and not caring if she got soaked, waving splashed from the shore with a laugh as shiny as the rest of the girls’, swaying and spattering with the music, with the boys, with all of them and Isak smiled wide enough to nearly split his lip open again but honestly, he didn’t care one damn bit.

If stages of their lives had colors, childhood was dark rich green, forest leaves and scuffed dirty knees. Then grey concrete, blue bikes, orange yellow red graffiti at the skatepark. Soft ivory sweaters, pink and blue skies blending over the rival fights. Yellow beanies white puffs of smoke, dull halogen street lights.

This summer though, this summer was soft black, early night with shimmers of brilliant green and flashing purple over dark ripped denim, electric blue lining the buses in the early morning two am’s.

Sway blue blur, a jostled shoulder and blinding green lighting up harsh features of thrown back heads, thrown up arms laughter jumping colliding mouths colliding bodies.

The movement didn't stop, not from the throwback of the bottle in the empty street on the way over to the rattle of the pale yellow windows on the hazy standing bus ride deeper downtown to the roll of a couch in the morning to stumble into a hallway you’d never been in before, where were the boys, sleeping away while he rubbed his eyes against the technicolor neon and squinted into newborn riverside sunlight.

“You guys wanna come to that party with us tonight?”

“Depends on who’s hosting?”

“Some third year.”

“Okay but who,” Isak asked suspiciously, rubbing his towel a little more vigorously over his legs, cursing under his breath as the edge of it dropped in the damp moss.

“Why are you so skeptical?” Even nudged him and Isak lifted an eyebrow, looking between the girls and the rest of them before angling his head for the other half of the boy squad.

“Cause those fuckers all go to fucking terrible parties lately.”

“Jonas always picks,” Mahdi defended.

“Fuck off,” Jonas suggested, clicking the cooler shut. “We don’t want you to come anyways.”

“Oi!”

“Kødder,” Magnus filled in, a playful nudge to his shoulder. Isak glared a little. Sana kicked his foot and he morphed the glare into a vaguely more patient face.

“Okay well. Either way, I’m fucking cold, I need a hot shower like, now.”
“Baby,” Noora offered under her breath. Isak didn’t even bother the energy to turn, he flicked her off over his shoulder and reached for Even with the other hand.

Fingers wove with his, then they were both blowing kisses,

“Thank you so much for coming, girls--”

“Takk Isak, for inviting us! We all need to hang out more often.”

“Ja, this was so fun, it’s just so nice--”

“Ja, ja, we’ve got all summer, everyone can be sappy later, I’m cold,” Isak interrupted and a few more hands waved.

“See you tomorrow!”

“Wait, you guys are hanging out tomorrow too?”

“It’s summer, that’s the whole point…”

“Fuck, you’ve got to invite us, put it in the Trash Isak Valtersen group chat next time--”

“I HEARD THAT!!”

“I’m surprised he hasn’t tried to change it.”

“What are you talking about he’s changed the name like six times, someone just always changes it back.”

“I HEARD THAT TOO!!”

“GOODBYE ISAK!! BYE EVEN!!”

They may have the shittiest friends on the planet, but they were also the greatest friends on the planet and as much as he complained, he didn’t really have a damn thing to complain about.

~

It was summer. Summer. Full of days of freedom and laughter and sunshine and carefree dreaming and wonderful sex.

Their last summer as high schoolers, before their youth got balanced out by adulthood, the last summer they were truly free, and he was spending it with the best people in the world, hand in hand with the most beautiful boy in the world, and maybe a shade or two tanner, all dripping wet curls, as they turned the corner out of the woods onto the sidewalk of their city, theirs.

He was probably smiling like a fool but so be it, let him, this was going to be the most perfect few months of his life, he already knew it.

The sky was seeping dark from brilliant streaks of pink red sunset, fading to black as the stars began to peek out behind far off drifting clouds.
Street lamps flickered on one by one, crackling sidewalks into glow as the arm around his waist swung him under the closest one, stumbling a step and pulling back together to kiss him on the mouth, solid, close, bathed in the sinking white.

Isak kissed back, soaking wet and admittedly still fucking cold, matching towels wrapped around bare shoulders he couldn’t keep his hands from sliding over.

Their lips lifted apart so slow it left him blinking, mouth sticky and parted around an exhale as his lashes lifted, searching. The haze in the sky left just enough light to shine Even’s eyes ocean blue, looking down at him like that.

A moment passed, then another, then Even was pulling them back for the sidewalk, arm around him just long enough to catch his balance, before it was dropping to bump his shoulder, send him stumbling a step in the electric light.

The universe was holding them so close, the sky remarkable enough now he could be sure that at least half the parallel universes were saturated in this moment too.

Another step and a swivel to the boy beside him, blinking past a drip from the curl over his forehead.

“Do you have any Siken memorized?” Isak asked, brushing a hand over his forehead to smooth the curl upright.


Isak lifted a shoulder, heel skidding to absently kick a skipping pebble.

“Recite me some.”

The eyebrows shot higher.

“Why?”

Even’s mouth was pursed all amused and I know you, making fun of him for wanting to be deep or something, jeez, sue him for wanting this romantic ass memory to have a little dramatic poetry.

“...whhyyyy?” Even sing-song pressed and Isak whined, bumping into his shoulder with a pout.

“C’mooonn, because it’ll be romantic or some shit.”

The words drifted, fading softer than the hold on their hands as Even stooped at the edge of the sidewalk, fingers lit yellow with the petals of a hovering flower.

“Siken is melancholy as fuck.” Plucked carefully at the stem, straightening up to hold the dandelion between his fingers. Isak squinted a little, studying the boy trailing thoughtlessly at his side.

“You’re...melancholy as fuck. Besides, he’s gotta have some poem about the summer.”

“Hm,” Even’s mouth crooked up in a little smile, spinning the stem between long fingers, tipping his head like he was trying to think, like he didn’t have like all of them memorized probably with like page numbers and everything.

“Hmm yourself,” Isak grumbled and the bare shoulder knocked into his again, the briefest flash of tangible sun.

“I can recite one about you,” he offered to the flower, a single sideways glance his way.
“Oh yeah?” Isak challenged. Even’s eyebrows lifted a little.

“Ja. And summer.”


Even rolled his lips in over his tongue, popping them with a little smack as he stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, lifting the flower and turning Isak’s shoulder to carefully slide the stem in place behind his ear.

Yellow petals settling in against a golden curl as blue eyes searched his face, mouth opened around a clear, careful recitation.

“He had green eyes, so I wanted to sleep with him.”

“Ugh! Shallow,” he complained, throwing his head back dramatically to groan at the sky.

A quick darting hand to the flower in his hair, making sure it didn’t fly off and he definitely didn’t miss the little fond smile on Even’s face with that one.

“Green eyes flicked with yellow, dried leaves on the surface of a pool…”

They’d stopped in the middle of the sidewalk by then, Even’s gaze over his skin, the delicate brush of fingertips over the same temple the flower was dancing against.

“…you could drown in those eyes, I said.”

Serious running through the soft curls beneath his ear, thumb grazing up the bruises over his cheekbone, around his green eyes, long lashes.

Isak watched Even watch him, tracing the sky as two pieces studied him, over bruises, flowers, curls, up the side of his face, soaking in until their gazes finally locked.

“Are you drowning?” Isak asked instantly.

“Shut up.” Even shoved him, bouncing off the gentle hands for a single beat before they changed their mind and grabbed his arm, waist, pulled him in so fast they collided, heel of a hand down the shadow of entranced lashes.

“The fact of his pulse, the way he pulled his body in, out of shyness or shame or a desire not to disturb the air around him,” Even told him, fingers curling under his chin to tilt his face up, hold closer, words spilling out of that mouth like a waterfall,

“Everyone could see the way his muscles worked, the way we look like animals, his skin barely keeping him inside. I wanted to take him home a--”

“Mmm, of course you did,” Isak hummed and Even’s fingers closed around his hands, a step backwards to tug him down the sidewalk under the fading sky street lights.

“--and rough him up and get my hands inside him...”

Isak cocked a single eyebrow up, head dipping, really--

And barely got to sass a moment before those hands pulled him in again, spinning in transit to wrap solid arms around Isak’s stomach, tilting his head hard to the side with the force of Even’s mouth against a bruised cheek, smatter of kisses down his jaw to start slow and warm over the side of his
neck, sending chills with every touch.

Isak’s head falling back against a heated shoulder, lashes fluttering with the kisses arched all the way up to the whisper against his ear,

“...drive my body into his, like a crash test car--”

That time the shudder had him rolling his head, lips parted as he looked up over his shoulder at Even. The whole world, reflections of sunsets and the future and the fucking breathtaking love between them, all in those eyes, the fingertips grazing up his bare sternum gentle as the murmur painted over his skin.

“I wanted to be wanted,” Even whispered, knuckles over his heart, their gazes locked as the blue melted, deeper, softer, “...and he was very beautiful.”

Isak lifted his chin, their mouths pressing together, eyes slipping shut in the blur of peripherals, drifting hands hardening bruises into his skin. Inhale shaky enough it rattled Isak’s ribs, confession painted over his lips.

“Kissed with his eyes closed.” Mouths overlapping, still peeking under his lashes while the next line mumbled over his cheek. “And only felt good while moving.”

Isak lifted a hand to slide it in the wet, wild swoops and missed entirely, Even spinning them both side by side and tugging him a stumbling step down the sidewalk, second and a half to catch up to the long stride.

He didn’t take his eyes off that shadowed expression, the words written as clear on transparent skin as they were in the pink dusted air.

“You could drown in those eyes, I said,” Even told the stacked horizon, hands tugging tension between them, ever entwined, I’ll follow you anywhere, recite one more line for me darling.

“...so it’s summer, so it’s suicide, so we’re helpless in sleep and struggling at the bottom of the pool.”

A beat, another, the twist on Isak’s face as Even turned to him, eyebrows lifted, expectant.

Summer suicide, helpless struggling, hovering between them like bullets inches from skin and Isak’s jaw dropped a little, the sky and vibe and dancing toes around ankles dropping with it.

“That’s how it ends ???”

“It’s Siken!” Even defended, mouth opening in offense of his own. Isak crinkled up his nose and squeezed the hand in his.

“Okay. Fair.” He cocked his head, letting the whole of the thing settle over them — one about you — fingertip tracing lightly over the dandelion tucked behind his ear.

Flowers in his curls, bare shoulders and bruised cheekbones while the sky burned quiet dark colors they were reflecting off skin, Even read a poem about drowning in the green eyes of a boy and that, that was him.

“...kiss me.”

Even took him by the waist and kissed him on the mouth, palms sliding up his bare back like they
were starved.

Isak pulled back hard enough it popped, head tipped back to look down his lashes at the beautiful boy.

“When you saw my eyes did you wanna take me home and rough me up--”

“And get my hands inside you and drive my body into yours like a crash test car yes, yes, yes and yes.”

A challenge in blue and Isak lifted a single eyebrow, tongue darting out to wet his lips, a moment's pause.

“Well. I’m waiting.”

The tension pull tug, dragged down the sidewalk was so sudden so fast he was tripping over his own feet, laughing and chasing after the boy double speed, hands entwined, damp shoes pounding for the moment they got to breathe each other in, touch all the skin that'd been warmed all day by the sweet summer sun.

Now sunk down low, leaving them from streaks to sparkle, stars to shine down on the racing boys so ready to start living every moment of their lives.

---

Mandag, 21:57
(05.06.17)

They were still half dripping, Magnus’s hair ruffled one more time with the towel over his shoulders, a slide of river water draining from a curl down to the hem of Jonas’s shirt, one more drop upon another.

It was loud enough to hear from a block down, if the flashing lights out the back of the house reflecting off the summer sound wasn’t enough to give away every clue.

“Haalllaa,” Mahdi called, jogging a step forward to give them that face, turning back with one arm in the air, echoed by a few hands up across the back porch, in the hot tub, a few wavering vaguely sober.

The boys were all but vibrating, mouths open in excitement, toes hopping while Magnus’s wild damp hair whipped around.

“Can you imagine living right on the bay like this, jesus.”

“I mean it’s not right on the water.”

“You can see the entire city from here man.”

Glittering, gold on midnight blue, the prettiest colors under the summer sky slipping low.

“All I see are those girls over there.” Bikinis more colors than the rainbow, straps all over stomachs and shoulder blades, laughing flip of blonde hair, “Aren’t those the dancer chicks??”
“Oh shit, they totally are.” Hip gate swung open, tables with punch and jello shots trembling under every hit of the bass. “Fuck, Jonas, how’d you get an invite to this party?”

“I’ll catch you guys in a few,” he replied instead, hand clapping a shoulder of them both as he pushed through the hanging streamer curtain, door sliding open in a curl of smoke.

Magnus and Mahdi exchanged glances, shrugging with a point across the deck, a free chair for towels that landed them conveniently right where those dancer chicks were holding wine glasses that definitely weren’t filled with wine.

Young dumb and what kind of broke? Not the money kind, here. Not the money kind.

“I have never been this ready for a shower, like, ever.” There definitely wasn’t enough space for the two of them to run up the stairs side by side but that didn’t stop either of them, bumping into walls and each other, having to stop and scoop up falling towels half a dozen times on the way.

“I dunno, I’ve seen you pretty damn dirty…”

“Shut up,” Isak told him, grabbing Even by the hand and pulling them both through the flat’s back door, nearly stumbling right over Linn in the process. “Oh, hey, sorry, we were just heading--”

“This apartment is way too small for five people,” she informed them, squeezing past with her shoulders tucked in. “You’d think we’d all be used to it by now, but.”

“Have a good night Linn!” Even called over his shoulder, hand in Isak’s back pocket as they maneuvered another tight hallway for the bathroom door that was probably occupied too, knowing their luck.

And, yep, closed, Noora had definitely beat them home and was already in the shower by the sound of it which meant they were out here waiting and cold again and.

A moment or two of consideration, mouth pursed to the side before he finally decided, what the hell, it was finally summer, they didn’t have any more excuses.

“Is?”

“Mmhmm?”

“You think maybe it’s...y’know. Time?”

Pretty green eyes went wide, a single hand on the wall as Isak paused, looking down the hallway ahead of them, back to the door that’d just closed behind. Noora’s singing behind the bathroom door, Eskild’s light on in his room, Even’s drawings on the wall in the kitchen, Jonas’s guitar in the living room. The home they’d come to know, the life they’d built, family they’d found.

Yeah he’d been the first one to say it but.

When it was laid out at their feet like this.

“One more day?”

Maybe it came out as forlorn as it felt, maybe Even just knew him well enough by now. A single
hard kiss pressed into his cheekbone, tilting them both sideways with quiet sounds in throats.

“Of course, baby. One more day.”

Every time it came up Even said that.

The little smile of relief was bittersweet, but Even kissed it off him anyways.

Goodbyes always were.

For all the times she'd found wild things in this damn flat's laundry, Noora had never been more confused than by the crushed dandelion petals littering the bedding Tuesday morning.

Eskild nodded along full-heartedly when she complained over breakfast, with plenty of thrown in sassy remarks of his own about their smelly house, full of boys, but neither of them meant it a little.

~

The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the plaster, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon purple a glittery slinging tank top eyes across a party, green and sparkling as an arm looped around her waist lips looped around her taste falling climbing up creaking sheets it didn't matter who owned, curtain flitting open with teeth in skin, glittered violet leaving pieces behind on the pillow, curling smoke coughed over his bare shoulder.

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.

~*~*~

Tirsdag, 13:10
06.06.17
Bro I'm flying out for Bali today remember

Fuck already?

You were the one who didn't wanna come with

You know why

I know I know you don't wanna leave your boy. Hey speaking of the boy and gym I totally get why you do the arm workout thing now

oh shit nice u finally have wall sex?

Neil you, at my party! You literally picked up a dude over 180cm tall and held him against the wall like it was nothing

😊 that's why I do it

it was fucking hot tho

Oh go have your origy in the sun w/o me I'll find someone cooler to go to the gym with

Ask your bf and maybe you can finally get that locker room sex
“Hey, hurry up! Stop texting, it’s summer, who could possibly be more important than the ten people we’re about to meet downtown?”

“Probably nine, Jonas keeps ducking out lately,” Even said distractedly, still typing.

“Don’t remind me,” Isak pouted, pushing out his lower lip. “Y’know, I’ve really gotta do something about that…”

“Leave him be. I’m sure he’s fine.”

“You’re not texting him, are you?”

Even pressed a kiss to Isak’s cheek and pocketed his phone, taking the boots Isak was holding out impatiently at the door.

“Just Christo, he’s flying out today.”

“Already? When’s he getting back?” Isak’s fingers ran through the front of his hair, swooping it up a little higher while Even hopped around trying to get a lace tied.

“Couple weeks, I think. Looks like I’ll just have to hang out with your friends in the meantime.”

“Oh whatever, like they don’t all like you more than me.” Isak lifted an eyebrow, smile crooked as he held the door ajar.

“I’m sure you at least have…Vilde, just might like you more? Oh wait, no, I think it was me she came to for relationship advice—”

“Anyways, hurry up, Eskild and Linn are already waiting at the curb, we have to have the best last
It started out a couple of voiced insecurities, back on all those days when they were so afraid of being co-dependent but they were. So fucking far past that.

It was too late to turn Even out of his heart even the slightest bit. They already lived here, there, in each other's skin, it was just a matter of walls now.

One more day.

It's been a month now, of one more days whispered first in hesitancy, right, so one more day.

Then it was everything here is so good, Eskild making him pancakes the morning of his finals and Noora calling when they didn't show up home right after Chris’s party. It was Linn and Sana chatting in the living room, Eva and Noora on the kitchen counters and Even in a debate with Vilde and Chris all before noon when Isak finally rolled into the kitchen.

It was just that everyone came here, this apartment was It.

This family was. It.
One more day.

Isak attempted to rub his thumb comfortingly but tears were popping up anyways.

One more day.

“It’ll be so empty. Noora? You don’t want them to leave, do you?”

A heavy sigh as a shoulder lifted and blonde hair swung, looking between them with the red mouth twisted up to the side,

“Somebody’s gonna have to learn to cook.”

“See? We’ll starve to death, all of us, you can’t move out.”

“I already got us a flat,” Even offered sheepishly and Eskild’s mouth popped open, indignant words stuck in his throat, flapping silence as he looked between the girls, the boys, the reveal, scrounging up some ridiculous comeback when a quiet voice lifted to beat him to it.

“But...I don’t want you to move out,” Linn said to her plate, fork smearing a pancake in syrup sadly. “I don’t want it to be over.”

One day more.

It was about the most melancholy, torn apart thing he’d ever heard and Isak reached for Linn’s hand so fast it rattled half the dishes on the table.

“It’s not over,” he promised, squeezing the curled fingers, holding on tight while he held the teary-eyed gray-blue gaze. “I promise, you’re all welcome at our place any time, and we can do family dinners once a month--”

“Week,” Eskild corrected, looking halfway to tears himself.

“Okay, week.” Even nodded, reaching across the table to take both Eskild’s and Noora’s hands too.

“At least for the summer.” Eskild wiped a hand under his eyes and Noora rubbed her hand over his shoulder comfortingly. “And I get to help decorate.”

“Mmm. Well--”

“You can at least help us pick out furniture,” Isak amended, lifting out of his chair to press a kiss to Linn’s cheek, thumbing away at a tear. “Both of you can.”

“Uh! What about me?” Noora’s red mouth fell open in offense and Isak pursed his mouth, head rocking back and forth sassily.

“I mean you dated William, I don’t know if I trust your taste--”

The sound Noora made was so high-pitched Linn snorted and Isak started giggling, which only riled the offended blonde up enough to leap over the table in attempt to smack Isak’s arm, except the only thing that got knocked over was Eskild’s orange juice onto Even’s plate. Even’s mouth dropped open, quickly grabbing a strawberry off Isak’s pancake to throw at Noora in revenge, plunking directly in her glass to spray orange juice over Eskild and Noora and well.

So he ended up cleaning eggs out of his hair in the shower an hour later, and the kitchen took a wildly long time to clean, but Isak couldn’t’ve pictured a better last breakfast with Kollektivet.
His family.

No days more.

The flat’s bathroom mirror was fogged up enough it didn’t take anything but a lifted finger to draw the careful heart he left in the corner, this time without any letters inside.

They all knew anyways.

The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the pavement, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon yellow a stumble off the sidewalk into a bush, shoving hands that didn't soothe, a grating laugh just off enough he let his curls be long enough to cover his ears, jokes and looks and secret languages all lost in the wind that wouldn't stop ruffling, sometimes just cold enough to excuse watering eyes. Lies.

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.
It cost 17kr extra to bring a bike on the metro, but the forest trails around Sognsvann were completely worth it.

They lived close enough to take the same train over, and they were also apparently the only two members of the squad who were able to tell time anymore, which meant they got to race around the entire lake while they waited for the others to finally join.

Magnus somehow managed to sing along to that new rap song he was obsessed with the whole time.
they were dodging tree roots and skidding down dirt paths between trees. It was impressive enough that Mahdi couldn’t even get mad at him for it.

Didn’t stop him from kicking over a foot in attempt to knock Magnus over though, but they’d been biking together long enough Loud and Blonde just veered aside, sun smattering through the trees to make Louder even Blonder too.

Speaking of which, there were the other two, loud and blonde, finally hollering into sight, swinging around the corner to pull off right in front of them, like they weren’t a solid half hour late.

“Halloa boyss!”

“Fuckin’ finally.” Mahdi pushed up to stand, pedaling the last few feet double fast to roll right in between the bikes nearly as attached at the hip as their riders were. Isak’s foot on Even’s ride bar, Even’s hand over Isak’s every other pedal stroke. “You get lost on the way from your new apartment?”

“You’re the only one who gets ‘lost,’ Mahds,” Isak shot back, all sass and smiles, peeling himself to detach from the Very Significant other, handlebars angling their way instead, sending them off domino effect swerving. A few curses and a few more good to see you too’s until they were all riding smooth again, sunshine flickering down between golden leaves.

“Hey, speaking of which.” Magnus tapped Even’s flank with his toe, the four of them barely fitting side by side on the trail. “How was Evak’s first night in?”

“You saw on Insta, we both passed out.”

“Uh huh,” Mahdi agreed skeptically, to which Even’s mouth popped open in that faux offense he took right out of Isak’s book.

“No, really!”

“This morning was nice, though,” Isak added, eyebrows wagging with it and yep, there it was.

“Ooiii,” Magnus cooed, tongue between his teeth as he lifted eyebrows of his own. Isak only pulled his mouth into that innocent frown, swinging his tires back and forth enough to hog up half the road.

“What? The radio was the one who played Gabrielle, not me.”

All three — wait, two? — pairs of eyes rolled, leaving the lovebirds to gaze at each other sickeningly fond, wheels spinning perfectly in time while the sunlight echoed halos over their light heads.

“Y’all are such saps,” Magnus shook his head incredulously, nearly catching a tree branch in his tires with it. “Gross.”

“Isak danced and everything—”

Green eyes went wide and bright as the trees, mouth popping open with the foot he stuck out in Even’s direction,

“Did not—”

“Hey, has anybody seen Jonas?” Mahdi interrupted, glancing over their shoulders in case he’d silently slid in behind them. “Wasn’t he with you guys?”

“Nei?” Even glanced over his shoulder too, eyebrows furrowing as he looked between the confused
faces. “I thought he was coming with you two.”

“He texted me he was busy,” Magnus offered, flicking long hair out of his eyes, worry knitting him up too.

“Hmm.” Mahdi pushed his bike a little harder, leaning into the incline.

“Ja, hmm,” Isak muttered under his breath. Mahdi watched the tension in his shoulders bunch up, another day with clouds starting to settle in over the sun.

The chatter faded away in time with the rounding of four bike tires to breach the top of the hill, trees lining the road all the way down, water glinting out in the far distance. Shoulder to shoulder, summer laid out at their feet with shoes tapping metal and pedals rearing to go.

The sweat, the warmth, the workout, the boys on bikes in the early afternoon with no plans for the next two months.

Feeling the sun and missing one.

“Alright. Race to the pier?” Mahdi tried to lift, an offer over the silence.

“Loser buys dinner?” Magnus added.

“You’re on,” Isak kicked the back wheel of his bike a little straighter, gearing down for the slope.

“Mark, get set—”

“Wait, wait!”

“...GO!”

They all took off except Even, who was hopping on one foot trying to put his camera phone back in his pocket while still half straddling his bike but hey, pretty videos had their cost some time.

It wasn't much of a cost though, when long legs still landed him second place and Magnus was the loser that ended up dragging them all out for pizza.

Everyone left an extra two slices in the box without mentioning it, but Isak took them home just in case a certain someone stopped by.

The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the brick, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon pearl, shadows cast over their faces sharp enough to cut the wood planks beneath their denim thighs, feet dangling over ten storied windows below with one mouth wrapped around the glass another around the mirror another story jumping ten too far but with the blinking white wrapped around the edges of the brick you could tip your head back to the sky and pretend it was stars instead of ping pong balls stabbed over christmas lights.

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.
Magnus
My arms still hurt from lifting all that damn furniture and now my legs hurt from biking too

All we have is a mattress??
Like, not even a table yet

Even
Plus we didn’t ride that far

Mahdi
You do have a lot of boxes of stuff tho

which you so graciously offered to help unpack

Even
Vilde and Sana said they’re coming over tho!

Sana
Tru we’ll have a great time
Noora
Aka sana actually unpacks while vilde tries hanging up rainbows everywhere

Vilde
basically 🍷

Eskild
Awww it sounds like so much fun i miss you both already :(((((

Even
We miss you too!

nei we don't we like having loud sex all the time

Isak Valtersen has been removed from Trash Isak Valtersen
Chris Berg added Isak to Trash Isak Valtersen

anywaysss who's down to go shopping for cheap
anywaysss who’s down to go shopping for cheap couches and tables

Chris
+1
Eva
+1
Jonas
-1 busy
with what ??? +1

Mohdi
Maybe he’s got family stuff

Jonas

Eva
+1
The sun kept glaring into his screen so he kept having to sink further and further into the couch, phone screen lifted higher to keep scrolling through the next article on the fluorescent frogs they found in Australia when he finally heard the click of the door unlocking, the jingle of keys dancing across his skin to settle tingling in his stomach.

Even was homeee and it was probably lame as hell, the cooler nonchalant Isak would just chill here on the couch reading his science news until his boyfriend came in and kissed him on the head but they had a house and Even was home.

His feet were on the floor and darting across the living/kitchen room before two boots had hit the floor, head peeking around the corner of the hallway to see a beautiful one lift in response.

Hair all swooped up, the boy holding up a joint in offering the first time Isak had gotten to look at the drawings papering the walls in that beautiful heart. Now his palm was against one, some sketch or another from their gallery wall while Isak peeked around the corner and Even smiled at him from the doorway, keys looping on the hook, heartbeat all but visible from here.

“Hi,” Isak managed, casually coming out from behind the wall to lean against, shoulder missing the edge to stumble back upright, one hand flailing for a grip, whipping his hair out of his eyes right as an arm wrapped around his waist,

A giggling, fond, eye-crinkled kiss pressing lopsided and messy into his cheekbone while Isak rolled his eyes and pretended his stomach wasn’t fluttering thirteen times over.

“How was work?” He tried again, leaning back his head to look up at the shiny silver eyes, nothing but hands on his body, back home again.

“I missed you,” was all he got murmured back before they were kissing, for real this time and Isak really did care about how Even’s day was he just also. Really cared about kissing him.

Both arms wrapping up around that beautiful neck, hands woven in his hair and yes, wow, he couldn’t wait to kiss Even like this every day after work for the rest of their whole lives.

By the time hands settled on his hips, tiptoes rocking back down to flat feet he was all but wiggling with how warm his insides were, blossoming and happy and fulfilled and all of the ridiculously sweet perfect things that swept him right off his feet into the clouds where everything was soft light and Even’s hands on him.

A dazed blink up, fingertips sloping over his jaw, slow and sacred in this moment where they were nothing but close forever, oxygen escaping lips that took the breath right out of his,

“I’m headed to shower.” Voice so simple, innocent, I’m making tea and the chills it sent down his spine were as warm as the water awaiting them.

“Is that an invitation…”

Even’s buttonup hit the ground before he’d taken a step backwards, fingers from Isak’s cheek to the zipper of his jeans and they didn’t end up making it to the shower until at least an hour later than they’d planned.
The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the cement, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon turquoise a hand swerving into temporary focus, fingers curled around an offering, you, higher and younger, draped with one leg out the bathtub a splattering of broken glow stick on the porcelain and a candle flickering on the sink, or maybe a boy with a cigarette lashes lined the colors of the beach under the blonde smooth sand sifting between rattling fingers.

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.

~*~*~

Lørdag, 10:08
10.06.17

Saturday morning he woke up to a blinding streak of light right across his face, burning his coronas through his eyelids and as much as Even liked his eyelashes, they did absolutely shit for keeping him protected from early morning sun.

He rolled over with a groan, ready to curl up and bitch that Ev left the curtains open again when an empty pillow smushed into his face instead.

“Ugghhgh,” Isak whined to the sheets. The sunlight mocked back cheerily bright with no warm bare skin to dance his to wake all slow and sweet. It was summer, there was absolutely no reason for Even to get up and leave him here in bed all morning, they were supposed to have morning sex and take their time in the quiet shadows of the peace of this bedroom together before they had to go out into the harsh blinding world but apparently.

Someone did not get that memo.

Isak rolled back over with another groan, hand smacking around on the side table while he fumbled half upright, elbow propped as he squinted at a phone screen. It was his, good, that meant he could text his dumbass boyfriend’s phone and get him to come the fuck back in here from wherever he was.
Oi where tf r u

Good morning sunshine!

Nel, sunshine is not good, it woke me up and you aren't here

I'm in our new kitchen making breakfast

Come back i don't need food i need you

But we finally have a breakfast table! And we don't have any food

There's pizza in the fridge

For Jonas

Speaking of what's his problem I'm definitely stopping by his place today

We've talked about this maybe he just needs some space it's a big transition and everything
That doesn't feel like that's IT. Anyways you're distracting me come back in here

I'm Making Food in our brand new kitchen you're distracting me

The whole point of having a place of our own is for us to have sex whenever we want as loud as we want come HERE

I can't believe we're texting in the same apartment get over here and convince me

If i get out of bed i'll be awake tho

Oh no

Please baby??

The toast is gonna burn

Let it burn

...omw

❤️️
Even was back in his arms before he had the chance to send one back.

~*~*~

Søndag, 12:30
11.06.17

Yeah, Even said it wasn’t a good idea, blah, blah, Even was great but he didn’t know everything, so here Isak was, ready to figure some shit out.

He was expecting big blue eyes and dark curls when he knocked, which was most definitely not what opened the door.

“Isak!!”

“Oh, uh, Thea, hi-”

The word cut off with the unexpected slam of a sixteen year old barreling into his chest, thin arms wrapping tight enough around him it was kinda hard to breathe.

Isak leaned back, peering down at the sister plastered to his tshirt like she hadn't seen him just a few weeks ago.

“Uh. It's nice to see you too?”

An awkward pat to the styled blonde bangs and she finally pulled away, peeling off him to smile and tip her head cutely instead. He wasn't sure Thea really got the whole I'm gay thing, but, to be fair he did show up at her concert the other week and. Anyways.

Isak lifted an eyebrow, kind of gesturing around the open door.

“Is...Jonas here?”

Dark eyebrows furrowed, a much more delicate version of the expression he knew so well.

“He...said he was staying at your place,” Jonas’s little sister said slowly, her eyes widening in time with Isak’s. “Hasn't he been? For like. The past two weeks?”

“Uh, uh, yeah, of course, I just meant I haven't seen him today and I was gonna ask him something so I figured I'd check here.”

“Could'n't you like. Text him?”

“Yeah, uh, of course, I was just in the area and...anyways….thanks, have a good day, tell your mom we both say hi...”
“Yeah okay! Will do! Can you send him home eventually? I think my mom kinda misses him around.”

“Well you know how summer is, but. We’ll stop by, for breakfast at least sometime this week—”

“Okey dokey! Bye Isak!”

“Ja hadet, hadet.”

**

The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the steel banister, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon orange a metal wall and triple story stairs sitting spread as an album cover, parental guidance in the corner there’s a handful of spilled yesterdays, crumbled paper catching flame, eating up heavy air with the popped off cap, your hand extended to quiet drumbeats falling over each other opaque orange tip tip sideways, spilling This is a WHITE, TRAINGULAR-shaped PILLE imprinted with a you know they all know the alley behind the docks is quiet, the closest thing to safe why anyone’s handling handing you won it’s the here that matters and a hand on the knees you’ve already pulled in.

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.

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~*~*~

Mandag, 09:12
12.06.17

They woke up that morning, and by the time they got out of bed at noon they hadn’t put on clothes yet and. Well, it would be a pretty fantastic day if they didn’t put on clothes at all, so that ended up being the goal of the day and they definitely uh. Hit it.

The goal, that was. Of course.

Even made them snacks that they ate in bed, Isak sitting with a leg draped over Even’s and a tongue that kept licking his fingers as he laughed at Even’s jokes and excitedly went on about something he’d read, another new study on the world while Even just laid there, hands behind his head with the whole world warm sweet naked and gold.

At some point the bed wasn’t as comfy and they set to work on hanging up some of the art from Even’s journal, sketches and doodles and the framed piece of a sleeping beautiful boy.
Isak put together the new stereo they’d found at a garage sale, a little sub with all these box speakers attached featuring makeshift taped together cords but it worked, and it was loud and that was all they needed.

They’d set up a table in the room with their bed specifically for times like this, a cushion on the rickety chair so Even could get distracted by his sketchbook and open to a new page, draw the look of concentration on Isak’s face, tongue over his lips with his fingers mashing away on the controller in those hands.

At some point drawing the slopes of Isak’s bare body just wasn’t enough and Even ended up slipping back onto the bed, sheets tangled and discarded. His fingers weren’t aimed for the video game controller though, and well.

Isak was probably gonna lose the game anyways.

**

Sweaty curls against his palms and gooey kisses over his mouth, abs trembling with all of this, again, a whole day of nothing but this and he’d never been more happily exhausted in his life.

Getting up to pee, he found a bottle of champagne they’d never drank, pouring them both glasses while Isak’s eyes sparkled over the rim of his glass his mouth was complaining against but that didn’t keep him from sipping it down anyways, gazes locked, arms all but.

There was something so fucking glorious in sitting here, their naked skin catching shadows and gold with the setting sun, sparkling pale over their tongues while the glasses in their hands glittered and the sweat on their temples caught in the fading light, legs tangled up, tongues still tingling from when they were too.

And one day, if he was lucky enough, their arms would be hooked around each others’, rings clinking glasses tipping back to smooth champagne over their lips and everyone would cheer, white and black tuxes so stark but he’d only see the image of this moment, how long ago how far ahead, the two of them young and glowing and so full of possibilities so full of each other.

The only world he wanted in was the one where that was their reality, the two of them side by side with rings on their hands and Isak’s nuzzling nose his sunrise, fluttering eyelashes his sunset.

There was a smile on that mouth as it pulled away from the glass, gazes so heavy and sweet, an afternoon in a windowsill falling in love with a layer of smoke between them. Traded for nothing at all between them but the drink Isak was setting down, tip of a one sided curl up,

“’You wanna go another round?’”

The laughter bubbled out of his mouth, eyebrows shooting up in surprise. Of course Even was swallowed in waves of romantic wedded futures while Isak was boiling in heated waters, already reaching over to set Even’s glass aside, a hand on his chest to bounce him back against the mattress instead.

“Always,” he managed, a burst of gold under damp curls before his eyes slipped shut into the kiss holding him against the pillows.

It was oceans and sunshine, now. Sunset over the most beautiful beach every time their bodies pressed. They moved together like water, flowing so familiar and right that the touches didn’t jar, no electric jump. Just them and the fit.
Isak’s arms around his neck, their mouths over lips, cheeks, jaws, necks. Marks that burned and fingertips that squeezed but it wasn’t pieces anymore, it wasn’t Isak’s mouth on his collarbone and Isak’s body riding his, it was the whole of it.

Them, this, love. All of it one thing in all the right places as they kissed and gasped and became, a single entity sliding and pressing and holding until the brightest stars set fairy lights in their eyes, palms pressing away dangling strands of blonde to keep each others gazes, throats pounding as their lips parted over names they breathed.

Names of futures and stars and swimming pools and homes.

The orgasms weren’t train collisions anymore, weren’t spinning irrational unfathomable things. They were harder and more beautiful than they’d ever been but they were the carry through, the middle of the process instead of the panting end. The peak where they shook and kissed and held each other and squeezed their eyes shut mouths open hard bodies tight to tremble into the smatter together.

Their bodies plastered and still moving, just their chests now, their abs contracting every few minutes with someone’s fingers over someone else cheekbones, jaw, curls or wild fluff, flanks and hearts and skin, panting against necks and pillows beside.

Murmurs of you’re everything, quiet hums and nuzzles closer, heartbeats settling down in the shield of each other.

There wasn’t an outside world, here. Their apartment, their bed, the sheets, none of it existed.

There was only the curve in which they were connected, the navy blue space that was the back of eyelids against skin. Every sense filled, smell touch taste sound, each other.

Completely submerged, inhales and exhales contracting as time slipped away, sleep came without the choice to or not.

Hours passed, years maybe, bare seconds of eternity woven inside their veins.

His eyelashes fluttered awake first, limbs stretching against the resettling curl back together, a soft nose smushed against his pec as he rolled enough to blink drearily up at the ceiling.

White, quiet, blank.

Breathing against his ribs.

A glance down, head lifted off the pillow to see. Unreal, divine beauty.

Here. Tucked under his arm, against his chest. Isak, asleep. Nose sideways against his skin, lips loose.

How much time, how many soft mumbles? In the time between his eyes opening now and when they’d closed, how much had he missed? Time, slipping to keep him from watching the pout of Isak’s mouth, the quiet snuffle as he curled closer, fingertips twitching over his skin?

How many gasps and intentions slipped into the whole of sex now, sex that stretched on forever and barely lasted seconds. It was so deep it would be impossible to capture every moment, every slide of friction but the waterfall meshed it all into one long flowing moment and that just.

It was too fast, slipping by and slipping by,
would it ever be possible, to go slow enough to soak in every bit when Isak was a whole being in himself of beauty and muscle and soft places and he couldn’t touch them all at once, couldn’t be everywhere watch everything touch it all,

all it did was wash over him in one giant wave he couldn’t pick apart and sex now, what did that mean, were they losing anything when they gained everything--

Heartbeat shift and the lashes under his chin danced, curls against his cheek as the body with his slowly rose to wake, waning light giving their eyes barely enough to see.

A strong chin lifted, eyes barely open, mouth parting just slightly. They didn’t communicate with words when everything was like this, they didn’t need to what did they need.

The moment the kiss started wasn’t the moment he felt, it was only the pull away. Home, or not. Where he wanted to be, or not. Them, or not.

He gathered up the sharp, moving shoulders closer, mouths smushing. Isak made a content little sound against his lips and Even couldn’t possibly hold him close enough.

It was dire, this, the skin that separated them.

Weight pressing him into the bed as Isak shifted, crawling on top of him, heavy down, between his veins and so far away.

They couldn’t ever be as close as it felt inside.

They couldn’t ever kiss as long as he needed.

Lips falling apart slowly, cheekbones pushing his jaw to the side, cozying in against his neck, arms curled between their chests.

**

Isak faded back to sleep in his arms, warm and snuggled in while Even held onto the length of his spine and tried to memorize the exact shape of the curl behind intricate ears.

Freckles and dots over the map he’d spent months trying to paint.

Would he ever remember every single mark, every which way of which curl, the separation between eyelashes, the slope of his nose, what of the next time they were apart and he couldn’t remember--

The questions were making him dizzy, summer heat sticking to a spinning head.

Even swallowed tight, forcing his eyes shut. Someday it’d be crystal clear again, shimmering cool as those days, a burst from swimming pool waters.

For now he just had to breathe, breathe and let Isak sleep.

When he woke again at 11 whining about being hungry it was easy, to crawl out of bed and put a pot on the stove while Isak mumbled sleepy into his shoulders. Easier, anyways, not to think too hard on how Isak spent half of their late night dinner blinking blearily at his phone, quiet simple smiles Even’s direction when he caught him staring and Even had to turn into the delicate waters of his lukewarm tea instead.

They had each other, they were both here, it should be enough. They had so much. They had so much.
He had so much.

(Too much or never enough.)
Dude u told ur parents ur staying at mine, where u at?

Met a girl. Details later

dude!!!
c’mon ???? details now

Jojoooo

Fineeee but for real come over for dinner in the new apartment soon??

As in like. Soon.

Tuesday night maybe? Jonas?

ja
“Okay but shouldn’t we hang it or something?”

Sana took the red framed mirror from his hands for the third time, setting it very firmly on the ground, propped against the wall, dusting her hands off decisively.

“Believe me, you want the mirror here. This way, you can see your entire outfit when you step back, and. It’s...y’know. A good view.”

“I mean, I guess, but like. It just points to the bed-- oh. OH. Sana Bakkoush, did you just--”

“I suggested nothing,” she scoffed, spinning on a heel to pick up the closest box of Even’s drawings. “Which of these are we taping up?”

“Isak!!” Vilde interrupted from across the room, waving him over and dragging one of the new chairs beside hers. “Come look at what I just found online, they have rainbow silverware!”

The sigh as he plopped down wasn’t half as dramatic as he felt.

“Vilde, I don’t think we need…” His eyebrows shot up, leaning to the side to dig a buzzing phone out of his pocket. “…okay, those are admittedly pretty cool…”
His audible gasp had a dark-lined glare shot his way. Isak quickly turned wide eyes down on his
NO FUCKING WAY
ja fucking way
ME TOO
thank you incredible insight i had no idea
Okay no for real tho. You like somebody??
I mean it’s just a little crush
Little crush my ass you don’t come to your best friend asking for advice about a little crush
Who said i’m asking for advice
SANA
Okay fine fine what’s he like is he a good person?
everyone else always asks first if he’s muslim
oh i mean, is he? does that matter to you more than him being a good person?

I mean. he used to be muslim but he's not anymore. he's a p good guy tho

okay good good he's got my vote. is it important to you he's muslim tho?

I think it is, ja. But like. Ugh. okay so. in high school all this drama happened and it made him believe religions are like. Bad and dangerous for people and everything

Whatever drama he had, I can tell you it didn't stem from religion. Hate doesn't come from religion, it comes from fear.

copy cat

heard that advice once, only changed my life. maybe it could change his.

Or maybe spend some time figuring out what's the most valuable to you in a person, y'know? whatever it is, I'm here for ya.
“Um, guys?? I’m trying to help here, which is a little bit harder when you’re both on your phones. How did I end up being the only one actually working?”

Vilde gave them a little head shake, eyebrows up, hello?

Isak glanced up, catching the little smile on Sana’s face as they both pocketed their devices.

“Sorry, Vilde, what were you thinking for that box?”

**

The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the deck wood, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon red a touch of bloody hands lifted woozy curls nah man not for me you sure mm sharp silver glinting harshly in the backyard against inner forearm veins, a blast of music from the sliding door, a blast of wind laughter stumbling onto the porch, caramel flavored billows a quiet pop of a foil packet, plastic indented in offering and that one, he could take, a bottle with the label smeared away, crumbles of falling paper hitting the surface of his chin with the last trickle down.

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.

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~*~*~

Onsdag, 11:16
It was their second trip to the gym this summer, but the first they set out from the same house, key in the hole click behind them theirs theirs Isak went jogging thoughtlessly down the stairs, theirs theirs. The door to the gym was glass, reflecting their faces for a distorted fraction of a second before Isak was swinging it open wide, bouncing right inside. Even took the handed over barbell, weight shocking enough it was a miracle he didn't drop it. Isak’s eyes on his, hands gentle careful under his straining ones, protecting from the drop. So sure about this. His idea. But what happened when the retreat came, one more day-- It wasn't his fault his eyes slipped shut, it was just the sweat rolling, the cooling bitter sting. “Hey, what if we...lived together.” “Hey….what?” The pillow mattress sheets all of it suddenly jostled, nearly rolling Isak right into collision at the center of the bed. “It's not that crazy,” he defended, taking in the eyebrows skirting the fucking ceiling. “What happened to everything we--” “I know, I know, but picture this: no roommates, just us, a whole summer.” Isak was propped up on an elbow now too, tongue between his lips, a bare shoulder lifted. “Name me one good reason why not.” “You're still in high school…” “I said good reason.” “I...well...okay, just cause I can't think of anything right now--” “Great! I emailed you some links already, whenever you get the chance…” What chance? A hard, happy clap to his shoulder, Even sat down on the bench, beaded sweat as Isak pulled the handlebars to his waiting open fingers. Your turn, think you can beat me-- This was it, the life they got to have, barely-dressed sweaty boy beside him, muscles bulging and pouty mouthed twitched up in a cocky little smile. Matching rep for rep, each one harder, faster, pushing racing towards a finish line of what, bodies that could stop manic boyfriends, bodies that slammed together harder, bodies that held each other up higher, bodies that entwined too close to inhale without breathing the other in. What were the chances that Isak would back out, hesitate and push it off forever, one more day.
He couldn’t keep up, not with the martial arts lessons Isak was getting from Christo’s friend, not with the weight-lifting and the swimming and the hauling boxes of the boy who wanted him. Even was weak, ribs twisting into his lungs, stomach trying to eat itself, legs trembling, couldn’t exhale, weak, a hand clapped on his shoulder again, glowing beautiful beside him.

From convincing as hard as he could to no, I can’t do this anymore what about the day he didn’t want any of it anymore--

“What, baby, tired?” Isak breathed, trickle of sweat rolling from a curl down his temple and Even couldn’t manage anything but a strangled sound, chest tightening harder than any press had taken it yet.

I wanna spend the rest of my life inside your skin, Even just managed not to say, barely, gasping into a groan instead.

“Nice,” Isak reached over to take his weight plate, shirt lifting to reveal surging, tight abs, a damp waistband, that taken, brilliant smile but Even wasn’t this, couldn’t possibly hold up to this, all that beautiful youth peaked at this ethereal existence--

A cold water bottle pressed to the back of his neck, shocking a dozen sparks into his brain, chills down his spine as he flinched away and Isak burst into the prettiest giggle, plopping down beside him, dimples imprinted hard with that beaming smile. Even still wasn’t breathing, gasping into empty lungs, lashes fluttering shut.

“Why are you so tired, don’t you come to the gym like all the time?” A foot nudged his and Even wiped a hand over his forehead, palm clammy enough he had to check for peeling skin.

“Why am I-- you are...way less chill. Than Christo.”

“Chris is chill when he works out?” A curious hum, hands on the mat as he leaned back, collarbones popping above the sleeveless shirt, angles and marble and a palpable pull, glistening skin and warm safe places and.

“Mnhm,” was all Even managed, looking down at his hands again, wiping them hard over the net of his shorts. Somehow, those were the hands allowed to burrow in those floppy angelic curls, sticking with sweat to golden skin and maybe that was it, maybe Isak just wasn’t real after all--

“Hey,” interjection and Even lifted his head, meeting the green, lashes fanning impossibly dark and beautiful over, beneath, mouth quirking up to one side again.

“Race me?”

There was nothing left in his body to race with, but Isak was running and Even would rather stumble trip fall drag crawl after him than be anywhere without him.

How many one more days would there be, something they wanted but were too scared to have, something so unfamiliar and new and probably so right but what about everything that could go wrong--

Jello for legs, crumbling hands, crushed soda-can torso Even somehow wrangled upright, arm swinging out, lead the way, you go first, I can’t be the one to walk away first anymore, go go and go,

“I’m gonna win,” Isak informed him, pushing upright, starting off,
"I’m sure," Even said, those green eyes rolling at the sarcasm the adrenaline soak must’ve filled in, because it wasn’t there, not in the exhaustion spilling out of his mouth.

It was nothing but adrenaline, now. No muscle tone left, just the burn in his chest how fucking stunning, sweet, unreal was the boy taking off down the track and Even would keep up on that alone.

Not alone.

Flying hair, pumping arms, legs, a circle around the track with the basketball court beneath them, in between, second story balcony feet away with every turn nearing close enough Even could scream, dive to catch the tilting shoulders but Isak was barely human, shoulder blades pushing back the invisible wings, it wasn’t him that was going to fall.

This wasn’t the universe where Even caught up, this was the one where Isak ran all the way ahead of him and Even barely caught his breath let alone the boy.

Seconds from tripping to a stop when the angel shouted over his shoulder,

“--all the way to the locker room!”

The last burst of energy he had left, Isak had slowed just enough to give him a chance and Even ran with everything in his body, every cell in his body screaming as he begged don’t give out, don’t let me lose him, no no no--

Isak glanced over his shoulder, a burst of surprised laughter as he took off too, racing for the double doors. A burst loud as a gunshot slamming open, the two of them tumbling through the creak of swinging hinges.

The oxygen instantly shifted, heavy with steam from the showers that had them both gasping water into their lungs, momentum stumbling skidding, squeaking sneakers halfway across the rows of red metal, glaring locks.

Even had a hand over his stomach as he tried to gather the pieces slipping out of his skin and Isak was laughing brighter than the sun, all airy and high and heaving, dripping sweat as he spun on a slipping heel, mouth open to echo some high-pitched sassy remark--

Only he never got the chance, words cut off by the two hands on his chest and shove, slamming him up against the metallic wall.

One hand braced on the locker and the other over a pounding heart as he caged the beautiful boy in, body swaying closer, eyes on fire, corners of the room shaking, thudding.

Isak was glowing and dripping and pure golden, looking up at him under those dark, clumped together lashes, pout dropped over the pumping blood he could feel running right from those veins to his own, own own own

Green eyes flashed and Even covered the open mouth, kissing Isak hard enough his curls bounced against the metal. Two hands cupping his face, holding him as close and tight as he could, sweat still slipping their skin apart. The knit between his eyebrows was hard enough it would be impossible for Isak not to feel how desperately Even was grabbing--

Isak pressed back just as hard, fingers closing in fists in his hair, assurance, I’m here,

Their noses bumping together, nuzzling closer the moment their mouths unstuck, Even’s forehead
falling forward with the force of Isak’s hands, sedation roughed up in all the concern.

“Are you okay?” The beautiful voice whispered over his mouth, their energies wound together so tight Isak could feel the rippling in his chest.

“Mm,” Even replied, little high-pitched, little broken. Isak held him tighter and Even rolled their foreheads together, harder. Isak was right here touching him, this wasn’t a dream, their life wasn’t a dream, this was real and happening and.

Isak, his beautiful boyfriend. Boyfriend, the word was still magic but how many fucking people in the world had boyfriends, if Isak were to die tomorrow and leave him widowed he wouldn't really be widowed, just a boy without a boyfriend anymore and it felt so fucking insignificant, Isak was so much more than a boyfriend, he was everything and everything was changing, and he was going off to uni soon, and he’d just talk about his boyfriend back home but no one would get it, they were everything, Isak was his entire world and savior and boyfriends, boyfriends broke up, boyfriends didn't weather storms, even boyfriends who lived together didn't mean--

He could still lose--

It would rip him to shreds, boyfriend, it wasn't enough it was nowhere near enough and and--

The steam was making him dizzy, so fucking foggy with Isak’s heartbeat pounding so loud he couldn't hear his own, couldn't feel a fucking thing,

Even took a single step backwards and Isak’s hand trailed with him, heart trailed with him, attention flickering up to study his face.

A moment’s pause before Isak pushed up off the locker, suddenly in his space and concerned and so fucking in his head, could tell exactly everything from the look on his face so Even didn’t look at him. He stared vehemently down at their hands, at his thumb trying to rub a hole in Isak’s skin.

Real, real, Isak was right here, there was absolutely no reason that Even would lose him anytime soon but how was that possible, how was this possible, how were they possible, just his fuckin’ boyfriend--

One more day one more month one more year maybe next lifetime instead,

Isak was quiet now, the atmosphere shift taking them both. The difference between mistakes and what Even meant for them, everything he’d ever wanted, the two of them, so fucking thin and terrifying sometimes, a single word just a word keeping them together Even couldn’t do it, he couldn’t, he needed to know, he had to have Isak in his life for real for permanent how else was he supposed to make him real--

The inhale was scattered and broken, fingers clamping down too hard on the slick hand trying to slip out of his touch. Sweat sliding them apart, over, never holding tight enough like their bodies were already falling away from each other and

Even opened his eyes and forced his chin up, a thousand words in his throat as their gazes locked. Those stirred, lifted green eyes, waiting waiting waiting and Even couldn’t keep his mouth shut any longer.

“What do you think….” Eyes cutting away, glancing back, nervousness shoved aside for glittering peril, go go go before the beautiful boy got ripped away, “…the squad would say if…”

The lockers were ripping and screeching metal and silent strong tall walls and Isak’s eyes were
glittering over the top of a champagne glass how many much more could they take, he didn't have any more days,

“...if...we got engaged.”

Isak’s breath hitched, green widening to stare at him, dripping shock. Even searched him right back, holding his hand as steady as he could, swallowing tighter. Definitely not what Isak had been expecting, that gear spinning stumbling internal conflict was as damn clear, watchable, as the first time Even had dragged him into a locker room asking questions to change their lives.

But he knew better now, than to ask what Isak’s parents thought. Because who the fuck cared what Isak’s parents thought. Even had already asked Eskild his opinion anyways.

“I think…” Isak glanced away, tongue running over his lips, curls tumbling with the tip of his head, gears still rotating. “Magnus and Mahdi would probably laugh at us a lot. The girls would be...elated.”

“But not Jonas?” Even asked carefully, slowly, because honestly, there was only one person’s approval he really needed.

Well, besides, Isak, who still hadn’t exactly given up what he thought about it yet, but what he thought Jonas thought about it probably mattered nearly as much, so.

A little shake of blonde, green flickering back to him, so fucking pretty and bright.

“Nei. Nei, Jonas would probably lock you in the apartment and yell at me in the hallway about how I'm not even an adult yet.” There was a flicker of amusement, almost a hint of a smile and the heavy weight on Even’s chest shifted, heart gasping for air with the soothing slide of Isak’s thumb over his.

Not even an adult yet, they’d been dating for how long, and they already moved in together, had an apartment together, now Even was asking questions that no seventeen year old should ever have to hear,

“He would have a point,” Even agreed as steady as he could, lips rolling in to pop out with a little sound, heart still pounding so damn fast with an excuse, something, anything on his tongue because Isak was right, they were way too fucking young for anything of this and--

“He would,” Isak nodded, gaze distant again, smile twitching up a little higher, hands jostling with the shrug of a shoulder, filling in all that space with sweetness and logic and. “Or maybe the other way around, honestly. Lock me in the hall and yell at you about how I'm not an adult yet.”

“What if you...were,” Even said quietly to the shadow of deep collarbones. A single eyebrow arched high with the snap back of Isak’s head towards him, always towards him.

“Hm?”

“What if you were eighteen.”

It was still so fucking young but Even wasn’t sure how much longer he could stand just being Isak’s boyfriend, he didn’t want to go off to university with a boyfriend back home, what if they were fiancés, or husbands, then they couldn’t break, they’d be so strong and so together and so sure and so happy and at least if they got engaged when Isak was eighteen then they could be engaged for a year, maybe two, make Even 23 by the time they finally got married, or 25, hell, whatever, just so long as they were, as long as they got to be more than just.
Even sucked in a breath and risked another glance at the pretty boy holding his hand here in some gym locker room.

Isak was simply studying him. Back and forth between the worried eyes, over the crease between them down to the near quivering bottom lip, the shallow rise and fall of his chest, trying to gage what this was all about.

“I think he'd react the same with slightly altered yelling phrases,” Isak offered and a laugh tumbled out of Even’s chest, exhausted muscles ricocheting all that dire fear irrational and here he was, weak and torn apart in ways he couldn’t even pinpoint but there was Isak, a simple smile and sweet little joke past the parted lips, heavy hands holding him up with every ounce of strength Even couldn’t find.

Sweat rolling down his temple, salty and cold but nowhere near substitute for the tears he couldn’t fucking find a fucking reason for,

He barely made it a second of downfall before Isak’s hand was pressing into his spine, colliding their sticky clothes pounding hearts over each other’s, refuge in the touch, bodies, here, mouth tipping up to pucker so gently against his.

The kiss took his heart out of his mouth, the ache in his chest springing tears to his eyes he had to blink away before they pulled away. His emotions were all over the fucking place, all the fucking time but god, lately, this summer, this was something else. Isak was something else, and he’d known that when the boy was wrapped up in scarves in the snow, that was nothing on the golden curls tipping back with a sunlit laugh.

So fucking beautiful and young and untouchable, that beautiful boy who knew him too well. The softest touch to his cheek, their lips pulling apart to barely whisper over the quiver.

“Why are you in a hurry, baby?”

Even hummed and rolled his lips in, eyes falling shut to keep the fucking emotions away from him and.

“I'm not going anywhere,” Isak breathed, locker room steam sticking those fingers to his skin. “You don’t have to pin me down now, sweetheart. I'll still be here to pin in five years.”

It pounded in his chest, those words, Isak, and Even just barely managed to look away, fingertips trailing over his cheekbone that felt so fucking hollow, hot--

“What happened to not talking about our future?” He swallowed, lashes fluttering, “...minute by minute.”

The hands on his skin slid into his hair, shaking him closer, their foreheads knocking, sticky skin and drowning steam painting over his tongue, here right here. God, it shouldn’t be so hard, he should let it fucking be and live for right now, he should it was just that there was so much that could happen was going to happen he was going off to school soon and where would that leave him,

“I’m here, this minute,” Isak whispered, noses brushing. “Yours. Is that enough?”

“So long as you're mine the next minute too,” Even confessed and it barely had a second past his lips before Isak’s thumbs were on his temples, whisper hushing right over his own.

“I plan to be.”
They kissed and Even didn’t let himself fall into it, fall apart with the touch because he was so fucking tired and he ached everywhere and this boy was the only thing keeping him up, afloat, sliding exhausted himself but here they were, planning for one minute more.

That soft nose squished with the tilt of their heads, the pliable precious boy who loved him. Lips pulling apart slowly, blurry long long mesmerizing lashes over the parted lips. The pliable precious boy who let him say wild things about marriages and the impending future when he was so young and breathtaking and breathing every ounce into his life.

He shouldn’t’ve pushed, he didn’t wanna stress Isak out, make him promise to some future he didn’t necessarily even want--

“Hey baby?”

Isak took a step backwards, all that warmth backpedaling to blink open sticky lashes, soak in the fucking unbelievable sight of him instead.

“Mm?”

He couldn’t manage much when there was that boy, glowing and perfect and looking at him like somehow he held the world in his hands.

A single beat just searching, the two of them still linked from the dangle of their fingers from the quiet awe of this moment right now--

“What do you think your parents would say if we got engaged?”

The surprised huff out of Even’s mouth was completely involuntary, brilliant beautiful smile tugging wide and the huff didn’t sound like I’d marry you right fucking now but if it’d been any louder.

“I think…” he chewed his lip a moment, too enchanted to tear his eyes away from that sparkling sweet pretty green, the green that was holding him steady and letting him dream, the boy who was giving him everything over and over and again and

“...they'd both say I told you so?” Even offered, squinting with it, don’t you think, forgive me--

Isak’s mouth popped open over the bubbling laughter, tumbling as pretty and bright as his curls. The gravity took him before he could think, hands cupping that beautiful face close and Even didn’t know they were kissing until he tasted Isak’s smile over his mouth.

He hadn’t ruined everything, he hadn’t sent Isak off in a panicking spiral about the future, he wasn’t too much, somehow, he hadn’t fucked absolutely everything up.

By the time they broke off Even wasn’t really breathing, eyes closed with a tight swallow and warm fingers in his hair. Forehead together, apart, oxygen puffing over his lips. Fuck, he’d completely psyched himself out over nothing, Isak was so completely understand and he’d been tearing himself to pieces over what, all these stupid ass irrational fears and all he’d done was freaked out them both for no reason.

No reason.

He sucked in a breath, filling up his chest and all the empty straining places inside him, filled them with the smell of sweat and Isak and existence and okayness.

They were okay, they were okay.
Isak’s long eyelashes flicking up to him, tongue slipping over his lips, the same boy same everything right here, twitch of that half smile up on one lightening side,

“How much you wanna bet at least one of our friend groups has a running bet?”

“The girls already have bridesmaid dresses picked out,” Even confessed, cabins and chocolate and laughter and congratulations -

--I know I know, not anytime soon -

Yes soon, yes you two, forever and ever sooner--

Isak’s jaw dropped, unhinging head dipping with the spike up of pretty eyebrows,

“What??”

Even’s lips rolled in, a careful nod to open the shocked mouth wider whiter and,

“...they picked styles and colors without me????”

The bright laugh tumbling out of his mouth nearly slid the indignance right out from Isak’s smile, a crack of sunshine peeking through to blind brighter than any moon covered eclipse,

Toes up arms up to wrap warm tight around his shoulders, tired arms over damp tank tops and noses against sweaty necks, a kiss to a cheek returned right back you me and us, wrapped close fucking here,

“Okay, I think I’m sticking to you. Shower time?”

“Mmmmm.”

There was no room for the laughter with how tightly pressed their chests were but there was enough room for their heads to lift, lips to press together, meeting here where always.

Married, they might get married--

**

The door slammed open so hard and fast, a dozen voices tumbling in with it that they would’ve jumped anyways, regardless if their mouths were pressed or their shoulders were but their shoulders weren’t and Isak startled back so quickly Even nearly didn’t catch his hand.

Voices and skidding shoes, smacking skin and jostling barks the heartbeat against his fingertips was pounding, a tight swallow as the athletes rolled past, a few of them falling quiet.

A few walking by without noticing, a few’s smirks hitting hard without a word their direction he could still feel the wave hit their skin, sweat and steam suddenly cold.

It’d been so beautiful and warm and right a moment ago.

Sweat dripping from sweat to gross, a step back in both directions and they had to get out of the outside world, they didn’t belong here, the touch of their eyes was too intimate for company and locker room talk, they were so much more--

“Let’s go,” Isak said and his voice was barely strained, a quick kiss to Even’s mouth and a turn to turn the combination for a lock, click swing open creaking loud enough Even blinked, a step
backwards.

Right. This wasn’t the safest place for this conversation, they weren't. It was easy to forget in a country like this one, first to pass the law for gay marriage, it’d been a decade now, you’d think you’d think--

“You good?” Even asked, just under the burst of laughter and turning showers and Isak nodded, curved lips smushed together as he shouldered on his pack.

“You good?” A moment to pause, Isak looking up, hand on the locker door as their eyes met.

“Yeah,” he replied, not half as hollow as the drumming out noises echoing around them, just green eyes on his and their reach for each other, everything else blurring out for this, you and me.

“I’m good.”

**
The ground was hollow in the end, street lights reflecting off a wet summer rain surface, a single
drop to shake the pool. If you listened just close enough, you could hear the vibration in the concrete, rattling the glance behind basement windows.

Flash; neon green a glowing lizard on the ceiling reflecting against the banister of the stairs down here, ten colors on the way but underground was the only place the music could rumble and rain too, flooding with the shaking wild curls, shattering images with a fist in his shirt and his shirt squeezing back harder boys leaning on walls girls wrapped in flags walls crumbling to lean back harder edge of this couch that counter underneath the ledge of the kitchen tile cold pale fingers pass it over one more draw shoulder digging into upright painted concrete with the roll to harsh cut cheekbones another pass the graphite lines were smudging the edges of his faces arms fingertips on someone's sides lines lies tries--

All the writhing bodies behind glass all the beating hearts running different directions and no one lived in the hollow ground with you.

~*~*~

Torsdag, 10:43
15.06.17

The absolute best thing about their new apartment was the fact that he could do all of his favorite activities without leaving bed. Even, watching movies with Even, playing X-box with the boys, and skyping Eva in the early mornings.

Or well, it was summer, so maybe strike early and replace it with 11am, but hey, that was early for him, alright.

They were both on their stomachs, feet kicked up in the air while Eva twirled her hair around a finger and went on about the most recent drama of this boy who kissed Noora at this party and how she was maybe thinking about putting blonde highlights in her hair for the summer, only what if they went orange instead and caramel was way too autumn…

“But like. Do you want golden blonde or ashy blonde, cause like. If you shoot for my color it might go gold, but if you shoot for more like Even’s?”

“He does have great hair,” Eva pointed out, chin propped in her hand.

Isak nodded a little vigorously and she rolled her eyes, smile bursting brighter to tease,

“You two, you’ve been dating how long and you’re still so like. Ov-er the moon.”

An unapologetic shrug that lost a bit of its edge with the dumb curl taking over his mouth.

“Speaking of dating…any particular news…maybe a certain boy…recently returned from Bali…”

“Oh!? I’m not dating Christoffer.”

“Officially not?”
“Uh, ja.”

“Okay, okay. Fett...but, y’know. Any particular reason why? He’s hot enough for you…”

Her face twisted right up in disgust, hair swinging as she threw a waving hand out.

“...and a fuckboy…?”

“That,” Isak pointed, nodding his chin deeper into his pillow. “That too.”

A nod right back at him, a brunette strand twirled around her finger as Eva looked down at the camera, sass softening a little into a smile.

Isak cocked his head, mouth curling up too.

This used to be so nice and comfortable and fun, hanging out, the two of them. Or once upon a time the three of them, making instagram videos and rapping on the streets and snorting up drinks from laughing so hard and going out to dinner and being happy and adventurous and having fun and.

The golden days.

A pang of sadness, hard enough they both went quiet. It was over, wasn’t it? No matter what happened now, that part of them, that childhood, wasn’t ever gonna be the same. It was gone.

Them, that, was gone.

How were those days already over, their brilliant days of youth and delinquency and friendship, when did that get divided up into the crude hooking up talk and serious boyfriends and no more time to run around the city. No more time for late night meet-ups and crawling through windows and fuck, he missed that.

The two of them, the three of them. Eva laughing so hard as Isak tried to put her hair in a messy bun while she tried to pull Jonas’s into one.

Loose shirts and tumbling off couches and throwing soft things and drinking way more than they should to all half-carry each other home.

Soon it would be fall, their final year with everyone older, voices deeper, Eva wrapped in soft scarves and arms folded over her chest. Jonas with another beanie, another hoodie over it, both hands in the pocket over his stomach. Quiet settling in as the leaves fell and the cold set in.

How fast, would their summer go. How fast had the past few years already gone, how much wasn’t left for them anymore?

Isak sniffled a little and puffed his pillow up again. Eva glanced away from her phone screen, back up at him, text message send sound echoing through under the sound of him clearing his throat, tongue darting out over his lips,

“Hey…” speaking of which. “…have you seen Jonas around?”

“Nei, not since we were all last together.” An exaggerated pout as her head tipped, thinking back on it. “Why, what’s up?”

“Nothing.” Isak reigned in the sigh, half his face squishing up with the slide up his curled hand from chin up to temple. “He’s just been weirdly...M-I-A this summer. I don’t even know the last time we like. Hung-hung out.”
“When’s the last time anybody hung-hung out,” Eva pointed out, rolling up on one elbow, hair swishing across half the screen. “It’s like… I don’t know, things just aren’t the same as they used to be.”

“They are not,” he agreed, watching the absent minded twirl of brunette around a finger. The three of them, all young and happy and full of life and love and well. “Speaking of… y’know. How things used to be.”

“Mnhmm…”

“And like. How great everything was.”

“…jaa…”

“And since you’re. Not dating Christoffer…”

Eva narrowed her eyes a moment, trying to figure out what he was implying. Isak waved a hand around a little more, eyebrows shooting up in hint.

“Would there maybe be a chance…”

“What??” Shock flying right in as her mouth flew open. “Kødder du?? Just because I’m not dating one boy doesn’t mean I’m gonna go right into dating another--”

“Okay, okay,” both hands up in defense but Eva kept right on going, “…and even if I would consider it we’re both entirely different people now, with different lives and we haven’t talked in forever--”

“Well, isn’t that a good thing?” Isak interrupted and it must’ve been surprising enough for her to stop, faltering a little as her screen face blinked wide eyed. “I mean, you guys didn’t work out before cause you were too codependent and everything, so now that you’re different people and like. Stronger on your own, it might be a good match.”

Eva blinked at the camera. And again.

Then a pillow was smacking into it and Isak jumped back half of a foot.

“Nei, nei--”

“I’m just asking!”

“Well don’t ask,” Eva replied, pulling the pillow back from the screen to hold it threatening over her shoulder.

Isak put up both hands, nearly falling into the bed with it, and she finally lowered the pillow, slowly, eyeing him suspiciously. He held his hands up higher, shaking his head innocently, really, he wasn’t gonna bring it up.

Another moment’s hesitation before she finally conceded, settling back down with the weapon aside, hair right back to being twirled around her finger while Isak’s hands folded under his chin, sweeping warm and happy because yeah, they’d lost nearly all of it, but there was still this.

“Hey, speaking of pillow fights. The girls are having a sleepover at mine tonight…”

“Fett,” Isak offered, rolling onto a propped fist.
“...you should come.”

“Oh ugh, Even’s working late.” Smile pulled sadly to the side with the smush of his cheek in a hand.

“You don’t have to bring the S.O. every time you come over,” Eva pointed out and Isak rolled back upright, letting out a little cheer.

“I’ve got dinner with Even’s parents, but I could come over after?”

“Perfect. Oo, and bring one of Eskild’s risque movies.”

“I don’t live with him anymore.”

“Oh, right. I’ll ask Noora. God knows anything Even watches wouldn’t be sleepover material.”

“You’d be surprised,” Isak’s head tipped harder into his hand, gaze drifting to the blinded windows just past the screen while Eva detailed out the plans for the evening, what he should bring, how fun it would be.

Surprised.

Not with Eskild anymore, but he lived with Even. The two of them, the dream, everything they could ever want and he just.

Felt so old.

Everything he was missing out on, it was happening to the rest of them too, right? Everybody’s lives were changing, everything was going to fast for everybody, wasn’t it?

It wasn’t just him.

Right? It was just. Time.

Time and time and time.

~*~*~

Nobody cut straight from pot to needles but one open medicine cabinet too many put down one more ladder rung of normalcy cause why not, why not,

The rush came first from the run, bunny-ear ties laces on brand new shoes as racing laughter echoed after the boys trampling down path after road after boat back to shore.

Wheels, jumping out of the water to the sky, a kickflip under larger feet with the whoosh of the
perfectly landed back down the halfpipe, heart pounding almost as wide as the smile.

Only wide didn't last long enough and the jumps had to always get bigger, go higher. Clouds, of smoke around giggling ears and young mouths rattling off about society, caught between two fingers on a hand waving on about the changes that need to be made, the impulse running drive through those eternal veins.

Potent, insufferable fire of adolescence: take down one system sprinting free from the confines of a chair, confines of gravity’s tug, running wild and free-er with a pocket a simple drug.

Youth, that driven impulse, all hormones and tumbling wrath, in spray paint cans and run away Vans and another fall from the castle. Gotta keep pushing, keep fighting until the catharsis, the release. More here, more there, spring back on the war for peace--


Deeper down the rabbit hole and somehow his feet found pavement here. Didn't know where here was anymore or why this was the number he chose but he leaned his temple against the door, eyes too bloodshot burning to close,

and waited.

Dear god please, let this not be the end of it,

waited.

I know I fucked up please be home and please don't,

waited.

Pounding steps pounding head heels of his hands against the hood of his eyes and the door burst open skidding shoes half on backs folded down under heel all out of breath so worried so new so part of it now whatever it was here waiting,

“Jonas?”

~*~*~

Fredag, 01:20
16.06.17

It was dark in his room, a half woven neon project stuffed in a drawer that he’d planned to change the vibe, color them purple and blue only the light didn’t go far enough and stabbing cardboard with pens only to find out nine feet wasn’t that long got exhausting after a week.

Not his room, theirs.

Even stared at the ceiling and tapped a thumb on his chest. Twenty.

That’s how many years he’d been waiting to start the rest of his life and now that it had begun. They
were so young. So fucking lucky, to find each other this young, to get to spend so many fucking years together.

How in the world did he get from the chaos he’d been living to here, lying in their shared bed, their shared life, their ups and downs and all over the places and adjusting laughter shouting holding through every bit of it.

How was it that every morning, he awoke to the grumpy cozy noises of a patient, hilarious, grounding boy who made every day a genuine joy to live, every new experience that much better because it got to be spent with him.

Even had absolutely no idea how his life had let him be here, but he wouldn’t trade a minute of the rickety way, if this was where his boots rested forever.

One dropped, then another, another, another.

Two pairs, one pair of bodies to drop to the sheets, pillows and skin.

There were no twisting stomachs at the end of this poem.

His eyes closed, a quiet settle of city lights shifting in lines through the windows, painting a slanted world over their half empty bed. It was his first night in the apartment alone, and it was everything he could ever wa--

A buzz rattled the bedside table and his mouth curled up automatically, popping up onto his side to reach for the red heart by the name to be painted over the screen, Isak,

the phone was still buzzing, not a text message, and he had to blink again to draw out the sleepy fog and realize the name wasn’t what he was expecting, that the three am call belonged to another absentee.

Even sat up all the way, cold rushing over his toes with the slide of the blanket but he didn’t notice, hope overruling bare feet padding absently for a lightswitch, an answer up to his ear,

“Hey man, what’s up?” Just groggy enough not to seem too enthusiastic, but maybe this was the call they’d all been waiting for, an explanation or a confession or something--

“Hey, are…” a tight swallow, glances to either side, “…are you home?”

“Jonas?” Even asked slowly, one hand on the wall above the lightswitch as he turned slowly, squeezing the phone tighter over his ear. “Are you okay?”

“Uhh. Um.” Pinched nose, hand scrambling in the air to fabricate, landing on brick instead, rolling to shoulders, sidewalk wobbly. “…the boys and I got...in a fight?”

Even was already grabbing his keys, feet shoving frantically into shoes, every light in the apartment thrown on, the last trace of sleep completely gone.

“You guys were at a party, right? Are you still there?”

“Nei I. Nei I left.”

“Okay. Where are you?” He was trying to keep his voice as steady as possible, not freaking out, maybe this was way simpler than it sounded, door opened at the speed of light wrong key into the lock twice, phone stuck hard between his ear and shoulder). “Can you send me your location?”
“Is Isak home?”

He paused at the top of the stairs, just a slight hesitation before pounding down because the question stuck out, the intonation was completely not what you’d expect for that question, breath held on the other line.

“Isak? Um. No, he’s at Eva’s, do you want me to call him--”

“Nei, nei. it’s fine. I mean. Don’t, don’t call him.” Exhaustion. “Please.”

“It’s-- okay, where are you?” Pounding down steep stairs doubled over the heartbeat.

“Um…” Another pause and Even nearly cursed into the phone, pleading up to whatever there was to please not make him have to search the entire city of Oslo for their lost (figuratively, literally, who knew anymore) friend who may or may not be having some kind of crisis--

“...I think I’m...at your place?”

The rush of relief nearly made him miss a step, every pound of his heart worth it, a thousand thanks sent up or sideways or wherever he owed to let this be happening this way,

“...I mean I don’t really know. this neighborhood all well and s’not. I mean only been a...few times…”

The bang of the door cracked open loud enough to echo over both their phones, not so much of a jump from the body sagged against the wall, phones shoved away so fast the call wasn’t ended for another twenty four minutes later, quiet dark settling in around the red button pressed with a thumb tired, to tuck under the pillow of the couch, a nagging red heart waving in the quiet background.

Night ruined or not to ruin, summer fun and summer done, all to slip into the dark it couldn’t be him who did it, tonight would fade in soon enough.

~*~*~

Fredag, 02.02
(16.06.17)

It was the soft kind of darkness, the kind filled with pillows and pj’s and girls giggling their way to sleep, curls and silk cushioned double over sleeping bags and bodies curled in various places they fit across the floor.

Everyone had been asleep now for at least an hour, dropping off into mumbled nonsense before they each closed their eyes, one by one until they were all gone.

Isak was dozing in and out, not getting very far under but he was used to warmth over his back, arms over his waist, the comforting inhale over his skin.

This was nice though, all of them dog piled on the floor with blankets pulled up over shoulders, quiet drape of night over the resting dreams.

A mumbly hike of blankets higher, dramatic roll over, snuggling deeper into a pillow, lashes fluttering, when a bright light suddenly flicked into the darkness, a single familiar ping breaking the
air.

The girls all shifted, slight and shuffling, right back into sleep as Isak fumbled for his phone, face smushed, curls smushed, disheveled squinting into the bright screen.
Mahdi
Please tell me Jonas is with one of you

Even
I’ve got him we’re good

Wait what the fuck do you mean

What’s going on

Did something happen at the party? Is Jonas okay? Why is he at our place? Why isn’t he answering his phone

Even
Isak calm down I’ll explain in the morning okay? Enjoy your night. <3

Okay then somebody else wanna tell me what the fuck is going on?

Magnus
I’ll call you
They were the softest kind of trouble, boys in scarves and flannel with smoke billowing out their bruised mouths, stickers on the inside of lockers and spray paint to the buildings no one cared about.

They found trouble, so trouble never had to find them.

Until now, now it had.

Now billows of white smoke had become billows of red, split color pills on tongues and curls reeling dizzy, no more bouncing freely.

What had he let them become.

Drifted, away from each other, what had Isak turned a blind eye on because it was fair, whatever Jonas was feeling was fair, Isak was so far gone now, they both were.

Love and Drugs, stealing them both away from the dark nights into blinding lights, neon or soft gold, bruises from mouths or fists, highs from laughter or slips.

Where are we.


The only reason he didn’t put Jonas on the couch was because he didn’t want him rolling off the side in the middle of the night and face planting on the cold ground.

“What the hell is going on??” Whispered, rushed, hand grabbing his shirt in desperate fists, holding on and pushing past while Even tried to hold him steady, pull him back from barging bursting.

“Everything is fine--”

Isak’s eyes skirt completely past him, unfocused line of forest speeding by the car and it wasn’t often he saw right through Even but this was years of his childhood and love held over the edge of the cliff, it wouldn’t be fair to compare it and Even wasn’t going to.

“Is he in there??”

This couldn’t be happening.

Even’s shirt, sweats were so big on Jonas’s shoulders hips he was drowning, shoved through the decades with his curls covering half the pillow, all his face, Isak’s hands trying to shove around one pair of threads to get to another.

His big toe bare on the cold floor, rubbing against the unlaced sneaker as feet pounded pavement, Magnus’s worried confessions still ringing through the phone he could barely keep against his ear, flying blonde beneath yellowing street lights.

It wasn’t fast enough and Even’s hand on the heaving chest might be the only thing holding all the pieces inside, windswept curls tumbling high and long, more directions than they ever were, mirror to the counterpart shivering beneath the sheets they shared.

“What did he say to you? Why didn’t he call me?”
“Look at you,” Even offered, look at the sharp snap of those eyes to his, stunned and stunning. 

Trains screeching by on parallel tracks, the snipping quiet of the stitches piercing into the ripped seams. 

“You don’t wanna wake him.”

An early morning, the silent hour before sunrise, last few moments of the dark with all of the owls falling asleep while the birds were yet to rise, the quiet moment of in between where the two of them stood facing, hands lifted in the empty streets of their bustling city.

Dark and light with the mirror in between, the other half of a learning smile.

Stars and flickering city lights and two fighters slipping further and further, swallowed up lovers who reached in opposite directions to come back empty-handed, one hand entwined behind while the other left gaps spilling pills, whispered promises and open hearts as the black night started to slip navy, bluer.

Even took him by the arm, skin compressing warm beneath his fingertips to the hard resistance underneath, a numbed wide gaze into the kitchen, around the table to the couch, scattered pillows cushions.

All those years.

“Even, it’s Jonas.” Isak’s head already tipped up as the cushion jolted beneath him.

He’d never felt so damn guilty to open his mouth in his life.

“I know.”

You said you’d follow me anywhere.

“How the fuck did this happen? How didn’t I see it coming?” The light was dim as hell in here, moonlight in strips through the blinds but the tears in his eyes were screaming.

Flashing lights sending heads spinning, a hand clapping on his shoulder, familiar and friendly and jesting, c’mon, aren’t you sick of feeling this way--

Gave and gave never to take, let him take--

Desperate, caught between them as Isak’s worried eyes debated ripping free from the closed fingers, Even’s thumb running so carefully and calmly, it was okay.

Fuck, I’m growing up without you.

“I can’t--”

“He’s fine,” Even promised. “Really. He just got in a little over his head.”

They were here first.

Marks appear on walls.

“A little over his head???: Even, my best friend just showed up at my boyfriend’s house high off god knows what after fighting with all our other friends who were just trying to look out for him--”
Pleasured moments haunt before.

“Isak. He’s fine. Sometimes people...go down certain paths, until they get a wakeup call, okay? So he got in with the wrong crowd, so he decided to branch out from weed, it’s not like he’s the first teen in Norway--”

The lovers that went wrong.

“That’s exactly the point!” A hand flew, near shout with a quick apologetic glance over his shoulder, back to Even with those tears brimming in his eyes, barely hushed over the fear. “Norway has had the worst heroin mortality rate in Western Europe since 2013.”

You won't catch me around here,

He was going to ask if Isak had googled that on the train over but he refrained.

The take over.

“It’s not heroin,” Even hushed, a hand soothing over the flying ones, pulling them down over his knee, touch. “I’ve seen heroin, this isn’t heroin, he’ll be okay.”

“But what if next time it is?”

If you’re still breathing you’re the lucky ones.

“Then we’ll make sure there’s not a next time, okay? We just have to be there for him, help him off of it, whatever it is, help him out of that crowd. It’s probably a one time party drug anyways, something synthetic.”

“What makes you say that? Did he tell you? Does he have it on him?”

Collecting pictures from the flood that ripped our home.

“Enough,” Even said. “Isak.”

“But why--”

Why.

You won’t catch me around here.

“He’s bored, it’s summer, it’s Oslo, there was a pretty girl, he’s 17, he misses you, it could be anything, Isak.”

You only meant well, well of course you did.

“Well he’s not gonna miss me anymore, I’m not leaving,” Isak said stubbornly, tears still in his eyes, arms crossed defiantly over his chest.

How that young teenage body could be so full of love, it amazed them all.

Even sighed softly, rubbing a thumb up Isak’s hard cheekbone. “I figured. We’ll just sleep here on the couch, we don’t wanna wake him.”

It’s all for the best.
“We’ll wake up early and make him breakfast and sit him down and he’s not leaving this house until we’ve talked some sense into him, ja?”

Just what we need, you decided this.

“You are a wonderful friend,” Even whispered, a hand smoothing over the curls sticking up in so many directions. “Now let’s get some sleep and worry in the morning, alright darling?”

Nuts and Bolts came pouring out your mouth.

The exhaustion took them both in minutes, squished together on the couch, holding each other tight to keep the other from falling off.

The flood that wrecked this home.

Fredag, 09:12
(16.06.17)

The sunrise came smack dab through the window, probably the only thing that woke up Isak’s lazy ass in the morning. Jonas squinted painfully at the yellow stripes and debated if Even found an east-facing apartment on purpose.

Apartment. Moved in. What a concept. And man, did it feel real now, waking up in a place that belonged to them, a mattress on the floor in one room, a kitchen and couch in the other, Even’s art all over the walls, Isak’s clothes on the furniture.

It was fuckin’ domestic, that’s what.

A touch different (a fuckton different) than every mattress couch floor he’d been sleeping on this summer.

It was so. Soft.

Jonas attempted a courageous sit up but yeah, his head wasn’t gonna let that happen anytime soon. The bed bounced under the flop back down, something thudding a couple inches over.

“Ughh,” he groaned into the pillow and wow, fuck, this smelled like Isak. Fuckin’ weird.

He lifted his head again, propping up on an elbow, with one hand smashing his curls and the other saving his eyes from the light.

Fucking hell. It wasn’t the worst he’d felt waking up, thank fuck, but Jesus Christ he needed tylenol and water or some shit. Maybe he’d go make one of Even’s fucking terrible hangover cures. He doubted it was his electrolytes that were fucked up but hey, worth a shot.

A pained inhale, eyes squeezing shut tight as he shoved himself up the rest of the way, teetering on the edge of a fall. His head and balance and existence were all screaming but he put both feet on the ground anyways, pushing up to stumble a step and trip over a rolling bottle of something--

Lube, of course it was, literally let him die, all he wanted was a place to crash and now he was tripping over lube falling against poem-clad walls two degrees too far up Isak and Even’s conjoined life of whatever the fuck all. This was.
The pounding hadn’t stopped and Jonas pinched the bridge of his nose, wrinkling up against the headache as he took a much more careful step over a pile of what he really hoped were art supplies.

Not to mention the fucking intervention that was surely waiting for him in the living room. There was no way he was sneaking out of here without the wrath of everyone he ever talked to raining down on his aching head.

Jonas stumbled past the little table with teacup set up and snagged a mug for whatever tea he might be lucky enough to find.

Thank god it was summer. Waking up on a Wednesday during the school year like this would be. Yeah, not a shining moment.

Not like this was, but. Life was short and not everybody gotta move in with the love of their life in high school. Hell, not everybody even got to talk to theirs longer than hey, how’s it been.

Fine, fine, busy, nice, love the weather now don’t you.

Anyways.

Isak and Even didn’t wake up until after 10, although to be fair they’d both had pretty late nights. No thanks to him.

He was propped on the kitchen counter gazing out the window when the first boy sat up, a hand running through blonde hair, completely unaware of Jonas behind him.

Isak was already gonna kick his ass, scaring him first thing in the morning was not the best idea.

“Hey,” Jonas offered over the top of his mug, his voice admittedly a little wrecked.

Green eyes whipped around so fast the kid had to be dizzy.

“You’re alive,” Isak chirped, scrambling off the couch and Jonas’s eyebrows lifted.

“Um. Ja, I’m alive.” The words apparently weren’t that reassuring cause Isak was still standing there staring at him. “I mean...my head doesn’t feel great, but I found peppermint tea, the pot might still be warm, if you wanted…”

Isak looked between him, his mug, the stove. Back again. Jonas waited, kept waiting, and eventually Is unfroze, stepping up to a cabinet to get a mug of his own, keeping an eye on Jonas the. Entire time.

“Hey, I’m here, aren’t I?”

“Only because you knew I’d hunt down your ass and kick it if you weren’t.” Isak shot back, a muffled sound rolling over on the couch. The curls finally dipped, staring at the pot to grumble over the pouring steam. “Still might.”

Jonas tipped his head, fair, taking another sip while he gazed back out the window. He’d gotten the drugs lecture from Isak a few times now, it wasn’t like he didn’t know exactly what was coming.

You need to be careful, if you end up hooked we’re both fucked, be safe, crash at mine if you need, yada ya.
See, he was listening, he’d done exactly what Isak had insisted on so many damn times. At least one of them didn’t forget everything they’d ever discussed.

“Listen, Jonas.” Isak still wasn’t looking at him, curls hanging in his eyes while he stirred honey into the billowing heat. Jonas watched, the broad shoulders wide hands unfamiliar bulk seeming so much harsher against the delicate grip on the spoon. Was that nail polish on his nails? See, there was just so much Jonas didn’t even hear about anymore--

“...I get it.”

He did not mean to scoff out loud. It was a knee jerk reaction that he tried to shove tea in front of but Isak’s head still snapped up, tongue posed between his lips, suspended.

“Just because I have a boyfriend now--”

“God, we’ve been over this. Even has nothing to do with--”

“Nei? Then why weren’t you getting into shit last summer?” Isak’s hip propped against the counter and Jonas’s mouth dropped right open.

“I was! And you didn’t give a damn, cause you were right there, getting in it with me.”

The thrown up hand hardened a line between Isak’s eyes, all defensive and shit but Jonas wasn’t blaming anyone. They were going in different directions, fine. He’d gotten over it, it was Isak who had his nose in the sand.

“There are easier ways to ask someone to hang out,” Isak shot back and the little laugh that bubbled out of Jonas’s mouth was too incredulous to be rude.

“You think that’s what this is? Me asking to hang out with you?”

“That’s what you just said!”

“Nei, actually, I didn’t.” Jonas took another sip and Isak made a frustrated sound, turning off the heat on the pot, shoving a few dishes aside to prop up on the counter beside him.

“Then what are you saying, Jonas? I just want to understand why.”

“Why I’m going out and having a good time?” He shook his head, mouth turned up and confused. “Fy faen?”

“Having a-- okay, do you seriously not see a problem with getting so fucked up on god knows what that you fight with all our friends and end up calling my fucking boyfriend to crash at our place cause you can’t even go home on a fucking Wednesday?”

Jonas blinked, looking between the couch and the boy on the kitchen counter.

“It was Thursday.”

“Not the fucking point!”

“I don’t have to come here, if that’s a problem--”

“Okay, that is not what I’m saying. I’m really glad you came here, you always have a place with us,”

“--then what’s the problem?”
Us.

He was trying not to cringe.

“The synthetic whatever the fuck you took yesterday, that’s the problem, Jonas. For all I know you’ll be addicted to heroin next week. The girls and I’ll have to switch from wedding to fuckin– fucking funeral planning!”

“You’re getting married?”

“Not anytime soon! Fuck! Are you listening to me at all?”

“Yeah, you’re making huge leaps from a good time at a party to heroin overdose.”

“That’s not a huge leap! I’m worried about you, dammit,” Isak finally threw, a hand shoving back in his curls, pure stress coating his face that used to be so damn young and fuck, Jonas really didn’t need to push back so hard.

Yeah, he could see he’d taken it a little far. Yeah, he got where Isak was coming from. Nei, that didn’t mean he was just gonna roll over and parrot back some response about of course I’ll do better, I’ll be so safe and never do anything stupid again--

Fuck that. They were young, it was summer, so maybe he’d gone too far but he wanted to do stupid shit, to get fucked up and to go to the skatepark and to graffiti buildings and run from the cops and feel alive, and young and reckless and wild and free, it was their last summer they ever got to completely fuck off, it wasn’t his fault Isak only want to go on motherfucking picnics.

“Things are just. Things are just different now.” Jonas started and Isak’s hands flew off his head, up in the air now, mouth open right with it.

“This is about Even then!” Swung right back down into accusatory, arm flying out into the few feet of space the kitchen could spare, “What, am I spending too much time with the guy I fell in love with--”

“Nei, that’s not,”

“I thought we already talked about this Jonas, I love you just as much as I always have, there’s room for you both in my life--”

“Nei, Isak, fuck, I know that, okay? Would you let me talk?”

“I-- fine. Ja, whatever, sorry.”

“Jesus,” Jonas huffed, shaking his head down at his mug, all the signals they used to share instead of aim at each other. “First of all, this has nothing to do with some fucked up competition for your attention. Funny enough, this actually isn’t about you at all.”

Isak crossed his arms over his chest, all but glaring across the sink at him.

Okay, maybe it wasn’t true. This was still about Isak, because it used to be The Two of Them. They’d promised, we will always be, then Is just. Wasn’t around anymore, ever, he’d gone from following Jonas anywhere to showing up once in a blue moon with someone else attached at his hip.

Jonas was going through fucking crazy shit in his life, in his head and Isak. wasn’t there. Wouldn’t be for the rest of...forever, actually, it wasn’t like this was some sort of temporary distraction. Isak
had settled down and that meant their relationship was bound to change.

It was simple. He had to learn how to live without Isak.

“We’re just…” Jonas waved a hand in the air, trying to find a way to put it that wasn’t going to offend the fuck out of his already very sensitive best friend.

“We’re in different placed in our lives now, okay?”

At some point he’d seen Even get up and sneak out of the room, which was basically the only way he was gonna be able to say this because he really liked Even, he really did, and he couldn’t be happier that Isak was happy it was just.

He didn’t want Even to blame himself for any of it. Or for Isak to either, really, this was. The way life was, they were in different places, there was nothing either of them could do about it.

Gotta figure it out without you.

“What does...what does that mean?”

Jonas sucked in a breath, turning back to the glass. The streets were mostly empty, some kids riding by on bikes, parents chatting on the sidewalks, a teen couple bashfully holding hands as they strolled under the metro lines.

“Like you, you’ve got an apartment and wedding plans and like. You’re building this life and it’s gonna be a great life and all it’s just.” Jonas wrapped his hands tighter around the mug, risking a glance over to Isak’s waiting, open, what, he already knew.

Both shoulders lifted, the apology he shouldn’t have to give.

“I’m nowhere near any of that, y’know? I’m seventeen, I’m out getting fucked up at parties and doing dangerous shit and complaining about Nissen and trying to fuck the system off its feet. I’ve probably got three, four, five years before I’m anywhere near where you’re at. You’re all...grown up, and that leaves me to do all the youth and living shit for the both of us.”

It was too simple, it wasn’t like Jonas was going this hard to carry Isak’s weight. Maybe a lot of it was cause the weight at his side wasn’t there.

But he was fucking done sitting at home without Is, might as well go tear the city down if he was gonna be halved.

And there was the stranger in his best friend’s body, tongue over his lips, pink lips stammering over the blatant curtain reveal but truth was truth.

“I’m not. all grown up, I still wanna go out, and have fun--”

“We’ve invited you to parties.” Jonas lifted a shoulder, the empty spot between his shoulder and Mahdi’s, four cut down so violently to three.

“Trashy parties,” Isak started to protest, sounding ten years older than he had ten months ago.

“So?” A simple shake of his head, beer bottles smashing against walls in so much younger hands. “You never cared about that before.”

“Well...ja, but Even can’t drink, I don’t want him to feel...”
“Listen, man, I don’t wanna tell you how to live your life.” Both hands up, not his problem, what a problem, “I’m just saying, we’re in two different timelines now, you do you, and I’ll do me.”

“Nei, nei, I want to hang out with you, Jonas, I miss you. And it’s not like you’ve been coming to any of the shit we’ve been planning either!”

“What, wholesome bike rides through a family park? Stargazing on top of the opera? Following the happy couple through wedding venues? Yeah, no thanks.” His tea was cold now but Jonas drank it anyways, anything not to deal with the look on Isak’s face.

Maybe it was harsh, but it was true, better they say it now and just get over it so they could stop drawing out this back and forth you don’t like what I like anymore shit.

“Fine,” Isak admitted, more than a touch bitter. Jonas’s eyebrows shot up, glancing over at the concession. Wasn’t like Isak to let it go that easy,

“Fine, but you still haven’t told me why you’re doing synthetic shit at parties.”

There it was. Jonas sighed, swirling the last centimeter of his tea around.

“I’ve been growing up without you man, what can I say.”

“Really?”

It was so simple and forlorn that his gaze snapped back up, over to the kid beside him, sitting cross legged with one too-long leg jammed up against the faucet and the other squeezed up against the edge of the counter.

“You haven’t been there.” Jonas just lifted a shoulder. “Gotta learn to do it without you.”

Partners in crime made getting high a lot less pathetic but going solo meant you had to get a hell of a lot higher to deal with it.

“Okay,” Isak managed. “So I’ve been busy.”

“It’s not your fault, man.”

“I’ve been busy, and you’ve been through a lot of shit.” Both shoulders up, like that was some fact they both knew when Isak was the damn one saying it. It wasn’t him who’d been through shit, it was Is--

“I mean between Even, the boys, me, on top of all of your shit. I mean, does anybody have anything together in their lives, probably not, and I’ve just been so. Caught up, shoveling everything off on you while all you do is act all...chill, and cool with it when you don’t even have somebody to vent to anymore.”

A sad tip of his head, knowing that it was him, used to be him, voice trailing quietly, to himself now, to the spoon stirring honey into his tea.

“...’course you take the easiest way to lighten it.”

Jonas dumped the last centimeter of cold watery tea down his throat.

“It’s only fair, I’ve been a selfish bitch who hasn’t been there for you when you’ve held everyone else up. But Jonas, I fucking miss you. This is some dumb shit, I need you in my life. Fuck all the places we’re at right now, we gotta get better at staying together, okay?”
“Mmm.” Jonas set his mug down in the sink beneath Isak’s thigh. The fuck did words do nowadays anyways.

“I know I’m doing adult shit, but. Does it ever cross your mind I’d like to. I dunno. Not?”

The window view suddenly seemed a lot less interesting, gaze snapping back into the kitchen and the estranged boy on the counter.

“I mean.” A lifted shoulder, tilted head, a touch of the sass and youth that used to be there under the pretty groomed housewife. “I’d love to go get smashed sometime, be stupid, get into some shit but like. Even’s going away to school soon and he’ll be busy with classes and all that other university shit and I don’t know how much time—”

“Isak, we’re going away to university soon.”

The open mouth paused, stuttering over the next excuse with the wall of reality suddenly sliding into the kitchen, looming and huge.

Quiet settled for a moment, the strange in between kind. Stuck in the middle about to figure it out without you, but here Isak was asking for another chance and.

“This is our last summer before everyone leaves, man. You and Even will stay together, if you’re lucky. The rest of us aren’t gonna be. This time next year, nobody’s gonna be around anymore. You’ve got Even forever, how long are you gonna have Mahdi and Magnus? The girls?”

Ringing in the empty, bouncing off tile and light wooden cabinets.

“Me?” Jonas asked quietly and Isak was blinking, mouth closing as the green shot from the couch, the apartment, the walls, back to him.

Yeah, fucker had been so eager to grow up with his boyfriend he’d forgotten he had forever to do that, and like. Two more months to be young dumb and broke.

“It’s not. You’re not planning to leave Oslo, are you?”

“Aren’t you?”

“Aren’t I...I mean. I don’t. We haven’t…”

“Dude, I’ll be your best friend as long as you’ll have me, but I’m not following you guys to London or Denmark or whatever. I can’t.”

He lifted his shoulders, too young, and Isak looked so pale he might fall off the counter.

“Just...think about it, okay? I’m not saying you’ve gotta shoot up heroin at the nearest underground rave or anything but just. Maybe don’t get so caught up in tomorrow when this is the last today you’ll get, Is.”

Isak’s hands were around his cup now, stiff, green eyes on the cold insides.

Won’t you carry me out of the darkness.

“I’m...gonna go now, but say thanks to Even for me, will you? For the bed and the tea. I’ll. I’ll talk to you later, ja?”

The kitchen was quiet, tile reverberating soundlessly as his socks hit the floor.
“Ja,” Isak echoed, setting his mug down in the sink, overthought movements. “I’ll walk you to the door--”

“I got it,” he said, the unfolding legs slowing to a halt, caught in the thick. “Thanks, though.”

Fuck I’m going out without you.

There wasn’t another sound, just Jonas’s attempt at a smile, hands shoving into hoodie pockets, beanie scooped up from the back off the couch, shoved down over his curls. Hood up, shoes on, door unlocked.

Isak was leaning against the wall in the hallway behind him.

“Take care of yourself,” he lifted over the deafening quiet and Jonas paused, one hand on the door.

“You too, Is.”

The door closed.

Isak stared at the ground. Their apartment. His best friend.

The love of his life in the next room, pulling out an earphone as Isak drifted into the room, sitting up on their bed, in their room.

“Hey, baby, how did it go? Is Jonas gone? Is he okay?”

“I’m...gonna go back to sleep,” Isak said slowly and Even’s expression furrowed down instantly, all that concern and. Adult, he guessed. “It’s fine, I don’t really wanna talk about it, I just wanna sleep, okay? I’ll tell you later.”

“Okay,” Even’s whole being was radiating worry, pulling back the blanket for him and Isak was just so. Not about to deal with any of this right now. “Do you want me to stay? Or I can go, make food for when you wake up--”

“Stay,” Isak whispered into the pillow, curling up onto his side. “Please, just stay.”

Arms wrapped around him in seconds, nose tucking in over his shoulder, squeezing tight over his stomach, draped across his entire spine and Isak knew this better than anything else, the familiar slip back of their bodies together he didn’t have to think about. Default, now.

If default was comfort, safety, warmth, love, happiness, maybe they were just in different places.

Maybe that wasn’t so terrible.

Maybe it was the worst thing that could happen to him at seventeen.
It wasn’t far. Half an hour from Nissen, walking, thirty-six minutes door to door.

Grünerløkka, a part of the city they had some history with. A part of the city they’d be making a lot more in.

Neither of them had been yet, all of That started later. But Even knew everything about where Isak was gonna be day in day out, eventually Isak just asked.

For some reason, they went in the middle of the night. Maybe because things were better at night, the way the city lit up and the summer cooled down to the chill that had Isak in his longest hoodie rubbing soft against the bare chest beneath. Even’s hair making ashy sculptures with the wind.

They had to get off their boards to get up the stairs, a stacking three, four, lots of flights of them. Small and organized out of a movie or something, all that towering brick up above them in the dark. Even couldn’t stop looking around, soaking everything in, and Isak was quietly watching the beautiful gaze dance.

And the beautiful legs dance, up the stairs, one hand on the banister the other on an axel as the wheels spun uselessly and bounced against the leg of his lightwashed jeans. How many times, would Even be walking up these stairs, a hundred thousand ten million Even’s up and up and down rain shine snow sleet sunny happy hurrying books in hand friends in tow laughing squinting sniffling dazed eyebrows raised beautiful Even Bech Næsheim, how much of a life he was going to have here.

It wasn’t bad, not yet, it didn’t feel bad at all, Isak was here at the same stairs Even would be walking up every day and they were so fucking close, what was another set of up up and climb again.

“I think that’s where my classes will be,” the far building, he pointed and Isak raised a hand up over his eyes to look, there was no sun to squint against but there was the building and the stars and the moon.

“Leg day every day,” Isak offered and Even smiled, a brilliant flash of it with a glance his way, too quick for his hair to settle between bobbing back and forth down to the board again, dropped carefully with the angle of his foot to clatter against smooth cement.

“It looks like the cobblestone starts a foot or two lower…”

“More stairs,” he pointed out and Even tipped his head, his shirt draping with him as he stepped up onto the board, so fluid dynamic alive real here,

“More stairs.”

Isak nodded to himself, rolling his tongue over his lips, and dropped his board too. Wheels to the smooth cement and there wasn’t a better way to learn a university than to skateboard its courtyard at midnight with the only person you wanted to be with.

Easy, they took it easy, back and forth swerving motions, little jumps off the concrete curb to rattle over the cobblestone, ride the line between the rocks before hopping another step up, again. Passing around and by each other, weaving intersecting lines with no pattern, no attempt to stray or be nearer. Just there, both of them.
“It’s nice,” Isak told the tall brick towers and his own sturdy strong pulled up beside him slow, careful with his words as his toes.

“It is.”

“I love you,” he finished into the black night sky and Even’s lips were on his cheekbone, both their eyes falling shut with the tip of Isak’s head against the chilly night air.

I love you too, it whispered and the bricks would keep that for them too, every day books rain sleet squinting or not, it’d wrap around Even’s boots and it’d keep him safe every step in and out of that building. Here. Kuno.

The next step, together, wheels back on the ground and they held hands as much of the way home that the sidewalk allowed.

(The sidewalk allowed all of it.)

~*~

It wasn’t guilt. He hadn’t done anything wrong, he’d just.

Tried to help, was all, and it was probably all his fault in the first place but.

Jonas sat him down, saved him once, didn’t he owe him the same?

Only maybe Jonas didn’t hear a word and there was no point of Even speaking anyways.

It was between them.

Them, not him.

Then why had he said anything at all--

~*~

Løndag, 10:57
17.06.17

“Oi, oi, that’s cheating, you can’t--”

Even laughed, bursting bright and beautiful with his eyes crinkling up, all but toppling off Isak’s shoulders with all that wiggling he was doing. But Isak just held on tighter, groaning with the burn as he dropped, thighs about ready to hop off his body and kick his own ass.

Admittedly it was a great workout, doing squats with all that weight on top of him but this early in the morning, dear god,
The kisses he got all over his shoulders and cheeks were worth it, the suggestive lifted eyebrows as Even’s fingertips traced over the backs of his thighs, the curve forming on his upper arms.

They didn’t wrestle anymore, but he’d gotten into the habit of being the one to carry Even around, of building up all that strength and muscle. It was summer, they had time, they were together, everything was alright.

A (brand new) tea kettle whistled in the kitchen and Even was off, disappearing around the corner with his belt half undone and Isak’s chest still heaving a little.

The sun chose that moment to slide through the blinds and attack his coronas, getting a useless swat before he was grumbling and off to finish getting ready.

There was no sunlight to assault while he stared in the bathroom mirror but the just dirty reflection did plenty.

It was the lighting in here, he’d told himself, the fourth time he’d tried scrubbing the mirror clear. It just didn’t shine, and that was fine, the apartment couldn’t be perfect. Their lives couldn’t be perfect.

Isak stared at the toothbrush sticking out his mouth, the foam on the edges, curls lopsided and flattened, marks from Even’s teeth on his neck.

He wasn’t sorry that he was happy.

This was his life now. Real shit too. Not just Norwegian Teen Rebellion shit.

Scrubbing away, eyebrows knit in the mirror, it wasn’t fucking fair he was getting ostracized cause he had a fridge to his name now,

or.

The toothbrush stopped abruptly in his mouth, a couple blinks at the boy in the mirror. It wasn’t like he wasn’t invited to shit, he just. Was always busy, doing things, spending time with his significant other, it wasn’t his fucking fault nobody else had anybody--

A rough spit in the sink, water shoved on to blasting, scooped up dripping from a hand that was completely steady,

“I’ve been growing up without you man, what can I say.”

It echoed loud enough he glanced up, checked behind him. Nothing, no one.

Isak stood up slowly, turned the water off even slower.

The boy staring at him in the mirror looked so goddamn young, eyes wide, skin too pale. Fingers white on the edge of the counter, swallowed up in a shirt too big for him only it wasn’t borrowed from a closet after an early morning tumble in the dirt, it was taken from one he shared where the only thing that tumbled anymore were soft clean sheets--

A vibration in his pocket cut off the thoughts, slicing into the thin bathroom air with a jolt against the counter. He all but dropped his toothbrush in the sink, fingers digging around between denim to wiggle free--

“Hello?”

So maybe he had the phone against his ear before the second ring, yeah, so.
“Oh, uh. Hey.”

“Yeah, hey.” Isak swallowed, pulling the phone away from his face just to double check the name. It was Jonas alright. “Uh. How are you? You doing alright?”

“Yeah, yeah, everything’s great.” A moment’s pause, maybe a gaze out a window or a shift of a leg over an armrest. “…how bout you?”

“Good, good,” he nodded, glancing at the mirror and quickly turning away from it, a hand reaching automatically to close the bathroom door shut. “So, uh. What’s up?”

A quiet inhale on the other end of the line, the sound of rustling sheets.

“Would you go with me…to talk to Magnus and Mahdi?”

It didn’t sound quiet or desperate or unsure. It didn’t sound at all like. Jonas even needed this from him, but he was asking and maybe it was more for Isak’s sake or maybe he was reading too much into it but he was nodding rapidly into the phone either way.

“Uh, ja. I will. You wanna grab pizza at that one spot? I can text them and invite them?”

“Ja, ja. That sounds good. We haven’t been yet this summer.”

A vivid burst of sound and smells, the boys all gathered around the table with Even’s laughter over Magnus’s shoulder, cheese strings severed at three feet above the serving tray--

Isak looking around and noticing, feeling, existing in the absent chair beside him.

They’d gone this summer, already. Twice.

“Ja,” he managed anyway. “I’m sure it’ll be great.”

“Cool,” Jonas said.

“Fett,” Isak agreed, fingers drumming quietly on the hard slick counter. “Does this afternoon work for you?”

“Sure.”

Another piece of dripping silence.

Isak wheeled the faucet shut tighter.

“We’re probably going out tonight, if you wanna come?”

It was so casual, nonchalant, like that we had already been fixed, everything was completely fine, normal, another summer night getting pizza and going out and why don’t you be there--

Maybe we wasn’t even Mahdi and Magnus anymore, how was he supposed to know.

Did it matter, did any of it matter, wasn’t he going to try to live a little too--

“I’ll. Yeah, I’ll see.” Maybe it sounded nervous maybe it sounded fine but he was swallowing tightly and leaning too hard on the counter either way.

“Aight, cool. See you at lunch then?”
“Ja, lunch.” Another nod.

Another.

He shouldn’t but he did.

“You’re not gonna bail?” He couldn’t not, but all he got was a little surprised laugh.

“Nah, man. Are you?”

Was this lunch or this evening, tonight, neon lights or pizza what the fuck was any of it anymore anyways--

“Nope,” Isak insisted, turning on a heel to fluff his curls purposefully in the mirror. “I’ll be there.”

“Great. Me too.”

“Great.”

“Alright.”

“Ja.”

“See you then?”

“Ja, see you then.”

A quiet nod and the phone clicked silent, glow lighting up his cheekbone with all the apps of his home screen.

They lit up the indentations of his chest, the cotton of his shirt as he pulled the screen to his chest, breathing out slowly with a single finger tapping over the plastic case.

How alive was he, really.

He had to figure his shit out.

The time was now.

---

**

The lights were blinking, a quiet metallic sound with them. Buzz, breath. Buzz, breath. Buzz, was it possible to sync up to anything, all of it, could his heartbeat become the pace of the clouds and the ka-dunk of skateboard wheels over cracks in the pavement if they just tried hard enough--

Buzz.

The bottle in his fingers had lost all of its cold, neck slim and slick with condensation. Jonas lifted it
to his mouth anyways, letting the quiet thoughts get quieter.

Every flash of blonde that made its way through the door was sinking his heart further into the couch cushions and soon, he’d be the glitter on the floor.

What a waste, this whole party, this whole lifestyle, all these kids getting smashed to forget the guilt they probably never felt in the first place, the world they lived in, that one of greed and terror and friends leaving friends didn’t exist here under the neon lights this was the post apocalypse, this was the end of it.

The end of all of it.

**

The door swung open one more time and his eyes shut, keys jingling with a quick pull from the door, up on the hook beside the resting pale blue ones.

“Baby?”

He didn’t know why his stupid heart was ten inches above his head threatening to squeeze and rain all over him but here he was, toeing off his shoes and debating whether or not to go, to go.

What if Even got upset with him, or worse, what if he felt abandoned and pretended like everything was fine, what if Isak went and just missed Even the whole time and didn’t have any fun and it was just completely terrible?

He knew Even didn’t mind, he’d told him before that it was fine when Isak went out and got plastered, just to be safe and everything but what if he just wanted to. Forget all of it for a night, let himself be as young and fucked up and free as he used to be.

Not that he wasn’t free now. He loved being in a relationship and coming home to Even and turning the corner to see...lace, covering their table and two tall flickering candles with quiet blues music playing over the speakers and tall colorful stemmed glasses and two plates across from each other with a boy leaning against the wall with a bottle of wine and a smile meant just for him and jesus, fuck, alright.

Isak’s hand clapped over his mouth, eyes wide and not watering as they lifted to those sweet blue ones.

“I love you,” Even offered and Isak was sinking into a pulled out chair cause his legs weren’t gonna hold him much longer.

It was so beautiful, the fire flickering and there were a dozen candles coating every surface, on the windowsills and the floor and the dresser and beside their bed and Even was smiling, waiting for him to say anything back, fingers that held his heart wrapped around the only type of wine he actually kinda liked and.

It was perfect, everything was perfect, this was the first. The first meal Even ever made him, eggs and toast with strawberries and.

Isak wasn’t tearing up, he wasn’t.

“I love you too,” he barely barely managed and Even’s mouth was on his before he could whisper anything more, and fuck, there goes his heart raining anyways.
The rain was falling in bursts of smashed waterbottles, sound of the crumpled lost in the celebratory pitches, high hits over the low bass, a little less lonely together.

Not together.

On his way tonight, maybe Isak wasn’t and maybe he’d never been but Jonas couldn’t change him.

Or Even. The flash of silver eyes in the moonlight, fumbling for a light switch with one hand, the other wrapped around Jonas’s ribs. He could walk, he kept saying.

Shut up, Even kept replying, or maybe that was the inside of Jonas’s head.

The floor was filled with so many fucking boots and he barely clapped a hand to his mouth before Even was rushing him into a room that was apparently the bathroom, he couldn’t remember, he’d barely been in this apartment more than a half an hour combined and.

The yellow wash over his face, over the arm around him that was the inverse of what it was supposed to be, Isak’s boyfriend not Isak and then him: not Isak’s boyfriend, not Isak, not Isak’s best friend either.

That was Even now, wasn’t it?

Wasn’t it.

He puked in the sink but he was definitely blaming it on how fucking distorted and fucked up his reflection looked right now, that was all it could be, a creature on his head made of dark swirls trying to attack his eyes that kept picasso-ing and he was fine, it was all fucking fine.

The sound was too off to tell if the water rushing was before or after the cursing, the second hand over his mouth that didn’t belong to anybody he knew.

It was the taste of mint gum from a kitchen he spent the next morning propped against, derailing those boys lives when all they done was tuck him into silk sheets, trying to speak at him while he just tried to weave himself into the antipound of this pillow that smelled like everybody.

The bass pounding over the walls shifted, a rattle of a picture frame somewhere in the distance he probably couldn’t hear but felt anyways. Photographs falling in troughs, memories of the days and years before that were slipping through his fingers like the rose petals probably slipping through Is’s.

Isak wasn’t coming.

Jonas stared blankly at the thrashing bodies, the splash of alcohol onto a cement floor and wondered, exactly how far apart they’d spend forever.

The blinds were parted, whispers of the city skyline seeping through them. Isak stayed curled on his side, watching from across the room as the lights flickered off and the world went to sleep, everything fading down down down into the underground where they had to flick on instead.

Here he was, staring up at the sky of neon smoke, a hundred steps below as the curl of glitter burst so loud the music faded to utter silence in his mind, here, alone.

Here he was, staring down at the ground of soft sheets with Even’s warm breath on the back of his
neck and the silence screaming so damn loud around him.

Not alone.

~*_~*~

Søndag, 11:12
18.06.17

The clumps of leaves were saturated, carrying the smell of rain from this morning, reflecting double green where it’d pooled on the dips in the sidewalk.

It was warm, and dewey, and fucking beautiful and they were both wearing shorts, a natural phenomenon in itself.

Summer, free, hands swinging between them and sweet cool ice cream on their tongues, a smear of blueberry and cream over someone’s mouth that had to get kissed off, sticky and perfect while the city smiled their bright reflections in shiny store windows.

“Hey baby?”

“Mhmm,” Isak hummed happily, his baby, summer kissed.

“I uh....have some news.”

“Mnhmm,” he drew out a little longer, too happy distracted to dampen in worry. Nothing could drag down the summer sun itself.

“You know how Lisbeth lives in København?”

“Mmhmm.”

“We're gonna go visit her in July.” A side glance his way, maybe worried, but Isak took a mouthful of ice cream instead, speaking a little around it.

“Oh fett.” He swung their hands, hoping to swing the worry right out with it. “A Bech-Næsheim reunion. That should be fun. How long will you be gone?”

Casual, it was cool, it wasn’t like he thought they’d never you know. Go on a family trip or something, or well. He wouldn’t, but that was cause his family sucked, Even’s family didn’t his family was great, it was really only fair.

“Two weeks,” Even said slowly.

Isak sucked in through his teeth, ice cream cone waving around a little.

“I don’t know...fourteen days without sex? I might perish.”

A slight squint not sure how to take that, paused in the sidewalk to look at him all dubiously and Isak tipped hard into the shoulder beside his, smile breaking the quiet.
“Kødder du, we’ll be totally fine!”

“Well that's good news.”

“Of course.” He nodded, tugging them to walk again, tongue out to catch a drip down the side of his cone, Even’s voice smoothing casually right over the sidewalk,

“Although I was gonna ask if you wanted to come with us.”

“You-- huh!” His eyebrows were up with the drifty white clouds, mouth hanging open, a drop of ice cream on his lip.

“Ja, my dad...lowkey bought four plane tickets? Not to like have any pressure or anything they've gotten really good at canceling plane tickets with our credit card company?”

Isak’s eyes were. Saucers.

“If you want to. You really don't have to,” Even rushed, looking even more nervous than before, which was saying something.

“Your parents didn't...ask, they just bought four tickets,” he clarified, a pause against a park bench, one eye kinda twitching as he stared at his boyfriend and the melting ice creams between them.

“...yes,” Even said slowly.

At least four blueberries plopped to the ground with the jolt of their chests colliding, Isak’s face nuzzling into a familiar collarbone, the arms that usually wrapped around him still out in the stumble of surprise.

“I love your family,” he muffled into a tshirt and the caramel was pretty in there for Even’s ice cream so none of that fell when his arms wrapped tight to squeeze him back.

“Does that mean you wanna come?”

“Of course I wanna come!”

“Although uh. Speaking of which. We’ll have an adjourning hotel room with my parents so it's... still probably gonna be fourteen days with no sex.”

“That's fine,” Isak smiled, going up on his tiptoes to peck that beautiful mouth. Even’s hand slid around from his lower back to his side, up ribs to around his shouder and they were off again, strolling down the sidewalk, everything completely perfect with a trip on the horizon and ice cream on their tongues.

He took a particularly large mouthful, intentionally muffled this time,

“I can always blow you in our shower.”

Even spat out caramel.

“When you're in my mouth I don’t have a lot of option to make noises.”

Mouth open a moment, flapping a bit before he managed,

“I beg to differ, you're just as moany.”
“Oh shhh.”

“Serr tho, you sure you wanna come?”

“To Copenhagen with your family to meet your sister? Ja, Even. I would love to come.”

“Good,” Even smiled. “Good.”

~*~*~

Mandag, 21:20
19.06.17

Somehow, it wasn’t him, or his best friend that made the timing and the courage and everything happen. It was of all people, Christoffer Schistad who somehow opened the door between them that’d been shut.

He got back from Bali three shades darker and three times more ready to party, if that was possible at all.

The first thing he did was call up Even and inform him they were having a bonfire on the beach that was completely non optional for his attendance.

Even was gone for a night and Isak?

The cave wasn’t hard. A word, and a pin sent right back.

Address. Come find me.

(Come find you.)

Isak kissed his live-in boyfriend love of his life past future everything goodbye and stepped out onto the street, now.

He’d’ve never found the door if it weren’t for the kids lingering in the alley, paint on skin and halos of glow sticks lighting up the hinges nearly lost against the brick wall.

Out here, it didn’t look so different from any other party he’d been to, but the last party he’d been to was hosted by his boyfriend’s best friend in an apartment he knew in a house he knew and he’d rolled up with an entire squad in tow, surrounded by people he knew.

And even then, he’d spent. What, 95% of the party glued to Even’s hips, he hadn’t even known about the fight brewing until Jonas was stumbling backwards with a bloody nose--

Isak exhaled roughly, hands shoving into his pockets, out of place soles stuttering over the pavement.

A couple pairs of eyes followed him, knowing, feeling the waves of discomfort unfamiliar don’t belong anymore but he didn’t look couldn’t look, swinging open the scratched up knob as fast as the creaking hinges would go.
What happened to squad--

The inside hallway was empty, bathed completely blue with sheets of plastic over the fluorescents in the ceiling. The graffiti on the walls were complete nonsense, squiggles and colors that didn't make sense, harsh against the cracking plaster, paint drips on the sloping concrete floor.

If Even were here he'd already have his camera out, eyebrows up in excitement while he angled Isak against a wall for the shot, look at this vibe--

Isak kept his head down and didn't stop moving, footsteps disappearing with every step down steep stairs, bass vibrations starting to shake the overlapping handprints dusted on the railing until the lights grew so dim you couldn’t tell the fingers apart anymore.

Security, was that it? He played it all safe and easy now? Why take the risk?

Maybe he'd never learned to go it alone. Maybe that was it, the difference between them now. Jonas was growing up on his own and Isak was the vine jumping from one steady tree to the next but where were the webs of his roots, a tree of his own?

The bass was loud enough nothing else was recognizable, overhead light shifting from deep purple to faded red, layers of smoke starting to fog the next length of hallway.

It took him a few seconds to realize the jackets on the walls were on the shoulders of living people, draped against brick and each other, sunglasses over faces, sequined tops and belts catching the light spilling from strips of neon lining the floor, a harsh box up ahead flashing orange green rainbow out a vibrating doorway.

Isak rounded the corner and okay, yeah, this was a little different than the parties he was used to.

**

It wasn't hyper russe pouring over heads of bopping girls or pounding generic bass tipping back casual beers under someone's strobe ball in a downstairs kitchen.

A body bumped his spine and Isak stumbled an extra step and a half into the dance floor, heart beat stuttering in his throat. This was some kind of mix between trap and fucked up, and that's all everyone here seemed to be too.

Glowing shapes painted over eyes and noses, splotches of glowing hair shaking to the unsteady changing beat, dozens of double buns and glowing teeth, neon lipsticks and black light metallic everywhere. There weren't really people you could pick out, just this mesh of color and limbs and lips parting around curls of smoke.

As if that wasn't fucking disorienting enough, a close encounter with the wall proved that most the surfaces around here were mirrors, so it was near fucking impossible to tell if there were thirty or three hundred neon halos in here, smeared mouths on skin and hands turning over hands with bottles of jingling or sloshing or whatever may be inside--

Isak looked down, hands patting his own flannel shirt, regular old jeans and realized he and his backwards hat were basically invisible in the flashing colors.

How for fucks sake was he supposed to find Jonas in here, let alone have a conversation with him to fix anything when he couldn't even fucking think.

The singer’s voice was shifting through pitch raises in this eerie off way and the bass was completely
grounded into stone, echoing low and scattered across the walls and there had to be a bathroom in here somewhere, right, there was always somewhere to pee and wash your face and have a bit of an existential crisis, right?

One of the crowds swayed and that didn't look like mirrors over there, three bright stick figures over a dark space, a bathroom a door an out he didn't really know this was just a lot of party to be taking on on his own.

He was a seventeen year old kid who used to pride himself in being a rebel that could take anything and now he was squinting at the black light glow like it was the hidden winter sun back for the first time in months.

The door creaked as it swung, a sudden change in volume landing his back against it with a heavy exhale as the pounding was sealed behind him. Isak took a moment, letting his heartbeat settle out as he took in the open space.

There wasn't an ounce of smoke in here, porcelain reflecting soft pastels from the bar of two sinks, filled to the brim with water and a handful of glow sticks floating aimlessly on top. There were at least a dozen cushions tossed in around the bathtub, a mottled glass shower, more mirrors and frosted windows over the cold tile.

A sign hung on the wall, in soft pink neon and so it begins…

The music was flooding quietly through the cracks in the door, muted and strangely sweet. Strangers in hot pink tops, lavender tees and white shorts, long blonde hair against windows and walls, but he'd recognize those wild curls anywhere.

“Hey,” Isak ventured and Jonas lifted his head, spinning half around in the tub.

“Hey, man.” A crooked hint of smile and Isak had completely forgotten how light Jonas’s eyes were, silver and bright under the dark eyebrows.

Where was summer but here, in the sky so pale blue it looked white in these lights.

The bathroom was echoing quiet, just the murmurs of a few leaning girls, maybe about him or the universe or the bottle of rosé on the shelf.

Isak lifted his shoulders, fingertips hidden in his jeans pockets and sneakers all but squeaking from how still he stood.

“Room for one more?”

There were no hesitations, just a slide to the side and Isak climbing over the ivory edge.

“Shit, man.” The clank of a metal roll against his toe, a spiral of yellow neon lights waiting to be hung and the vibes of this place, the endless amount of colors and bathed faces. “This is one hell of a party.”

Jonas snorted, leaning to the side to reach in a pocket while Isak slid the hands out of his.

“You don't get dizzy from it all?”

A glance at the string of lights, which someone was unrolling and sticking around the edge of the tub, burning them yellow now in the echo of it--
Jonas nudged his arm and Isak’s gaze snapped away from the adhesive glow, flicking from crystal eyes to the offering in his hand.

“Better to get dizzy with it.”

Isak’s eyes went a little wide, tentatively reaching over to peel back a corner of plastic wrap.

“Where’d you get a weed brownie?”

“They’re practically served on trays here,” Jonas replied, a little hushed a little awed as he held it higher. “You want a piece? No pressure, though.”

“Sure.” His shoulders went up, guards sinking down and someone random’s knee against his. “How much?”

“A sixth.”

Isak carefully took the brownie and folded it inside the wrap, breaking it right in half.

One of Jonas’s eyebrows lifted but he didn’t say anything, taking the missing piece from Isak’s palm and lifting it in salute.

“To youth,” Isak toasted and Jonas smiled, the wide childhood best friend sitting beside you in a bathtub one.

“To you.”

.

To color,
to lights,
to us,
to nights.

To periwinkle twinkling stars as they leaned back against the railing and laughed, echoing billows into the air not cold enough to see.

No permanence here.

Time didn't really exist for him, the higher he got the more everything was at once and already happened and ten years had passed since then but shouldn’t he text Even that he's doing well, he's having fun, just another reminder I Love You in case he forgot.

Maybe every twenty minutes, that’s how long he’d guess in between the I love you texts only turns out next morning it was two.

“Hey, hey, man. You, there, living in the screen…”

“I’m texting...Even,” Isak squinted, looking up from the throbbing red heart on the screen to the unimpressed eyebrow raise and wow, wowowoww those eyebrows were about to jump off Jonas’s damn face. “Does it tickle?”

“Your...text? The vibration?” A cocked head, mouth crooking up higher and no, that wasn’t what
Isak was talking about, was it, no, by god what was that smile--

He didn't realize he was laughing so hard and much until he'd rocked enough to spill two drinks and his abs were hurting but Jonas’s fingers were squeezing his skin and their laughs were two part harmony, a choir and orchestra a whole singing man standing at the front of a church with candles and a cross and his holy goddamn life about to change--

“Earth, to Issss are you alive in there…?”

“Me? Me?” Isak’s head whipped around, all those colors moving so brightly while he tried to focus on the icy white blue silver sparkly winter wonderland shit eyes staring back at him. “Man I'm. Great. How are you what's up how's it goin’ god. Damn, how do you do this every night?”

“Are you bad vibing?” Jonas leaned closer, squinting at his pupils and wow those were some red veins those were demon eyes but like. Nice demon eyes everything was great, he was doing great this was great--

“Nei,” he protested, head shaking and wow, that was an experience, how many planets was that? “I am not.” A finger in Jonas’s chest. “Bad vibing, no, this is a great time, I am great, but you avoided the question, how are you, how is your life, I barely know you hoe, you're like. Stranger in this bathtub.”

“We are. Clearly on a couch.”

“But also….outside…”

“Yes, roof,”

“Right, right, yep, there was a banister railing thing and a door in their somewhere….yes. How are you.”

“I'm. Great, man, I'm living the dream. Look at this, look at everything, the stars, this couch, this. Pot brownie,”

“Just the wrapper,” Isak corrected solemnly, blinking at the balled up plastic wrap. Why did they still have that. Another blink, looking up at Jonas’s eyes, oh shit, his eyes were probably that red too. “I thought I...”

A pause, his finger in his own chest now. Maybe enough pressure to snap or was it barely touching or what the fuck, what was he saying again?

Oh, yes, there were pieces of the dust from the sky on lettuce and lab tables and such. Stuff. That.

“Isn't it me?” He shook his head, a little loudly and Jonas leaned closer, squinting at him again, leaning back ten light years away as the axis of the earth rounded down a bit.

“How are you.”

“What?”

“Living the duh-ream?” He waved his hand around a couple dozen times and felt very, flamboyantly gay.

“Oh, dude, hell no. I mean kinda, but not like.”

“Excuse me, but I am, can't you see?? The rainbows??” He rolled his hand around his wrist a few more times, see, gay, only Jonas’s face was still on the Dream thing.
“You worry all the time. So serious and so like. Wrapped up in living inside your man, man, it's wild.”

“Bottom,” Isak pointed a winding finger at himself and Jonas shook his head, curls bouncing in waves of watery weightless glorious mess around him, a whole organ of sound and pumping minerals--

“In the skin.” Jonas five star finger tipped his arm a few times, You Live Here, and some random girl Natalie or something leaned over the back of the couch, yellow eyeshadow and orange kissed.

“I thought you didn't do cocaine?”


He was giggling again.

The five stars on his arm closed down into circles, all over his skin only atoms never really touched did they sikkkeeee,

“Are you alright, man?”

“Mmmhm yep.”

“You're vibrating,” somebody (Jonas) said and Isak squinted down at his fingers. Exaggeration, yes, or was Jonas just thinking back to that whole irrelevant phone conversation they'd had--

“Tweaking out,” (somebody) not Jonas said and Isak shook his head,

“I'm chill, I'm chill, I'm chill. I'm having a good time. You having a good time?”

“Yeah, man, it's nice you're here.”

“Mhm yep.”

“'S'not so lonely.”

“Are you lonely?”

“Isn't everybody?”

“Mmmm--”

“Who isn't married, anyways.”

“Not yet...” Isak trailed, along the seams of the couch. “Feels like it sure yeah but not yet.”

A quiet wind burst of silence and the door to the rooftop opened up, basses pouring out with screech notes to escape in colorful shapes running for the sky like lost balloons before the hinges laughed the door back shut.

Sealed.

“It's not bad, y'know. It sounds freaky I guess very freaky but it's not it's. Great, having. Us. You’ll find it, you will, I know it.”

His hands and arms were flying a little.
“Okay, man.”

Jonas’s head went back to the porcelain and Isak ran his fingers along the bumpy bottom of the tub, watching thirteen come in and out of focus, spilling off his hand to drip drip drip.

“Divine,” he murmured quietly and there was someone laughing, a clink of glass, the burst of sounds and planets.

“So the timings gone by a summer.”

“S’not bad,” a mumble.

“Do you. You think we're toxic?”

“I dunno anything bout poison.”

“Me neither. Neither Nither ether either. English is fuckin. Weird.”

“Fy faen does your mouth close?”

“I just don't get it. I'm happy.” An arm waving, the lean forward, squinted shake. “Happy, I don't feel...tamed.”

“Who does?”

A quiet bass rumbling through bathtub blues, shimmering the bubbles that were popping slowly over the atmosphere.

“Somebody,” he managed and Jonas squinted at him.

“Hmm.”

A couple hundred moments, a few floaters in and out and Isak managed to spin, hand patting couch cushion edges too hard.

It was fucking loud in here. Out here, that was a breeze and the only thing going was city music, a Bluetooth speaker.

Couch.

Did this drink belong to him?

The fuck was ownership? Belonging.

“Is it cause it's the first time I've felt...loved, like really Really loved this is. Love.”

“So were skateparks, graffiti marks,” a tap on his hand, all the splashes of paint that'd lived there once.

People touched so much.

Where did he live now?

“You keep rhyming…”

“You keep vibrating. And talking. And...all of that.”
A waved arm at Isak’s fingers over the smooth flat.

“Okay okay okay okay. Enough about. Ev I'm. Always talking about Even what do you usually talk
about when I'm not here what's the downlow what's the hopping new language what do y'all...do.”

A shrug, a shoulder lifted with an elbow on the back of the couch and a hand wrist palm thing
squishing the side of Jonas’s face, Picasso.

“We just. Listen to music and chill man. Just vibe, y’know?”

“Mnhm. Yeah, I can do that.” Isak nodded, looking up at the sky, back down at his phone. Another
quick reassurance so Even wasn't worried. He wasn't worried. He was really gay but he loved his
boyfriend and hopefully his high self remembered that all the time not that he couldn't use some duct
tape.

“Close your eyes, if you're that dizzy.”

“I'm not dizzy, the axis is just wonky as fuck--”

“Man, you have been out the scene so. So so so so long just close ose ose your eyes.”

“Hoe Hoe,” Isak tacked onto the end, sinking down a wave or two into the cushion, gear shock
spinning world slowing a notch, a two.

The music sounded so damn different under here.

He could feel the waves. A bay.

His bay. Afloat, and beneath the surface all at once Drifting shuddering a clashing buzzz vibrating a
thousand whirlpools through all that water where were his 

Ribcage spread open far enough to wrap around another and he was split at so many seams now,
hovering on the edge of flood--

**

“What if I fall asleep,” he asked his eyelids and a shoulder soldered to his, fused, yellow bathtub
lining and a beanie to tame the gold brown mesh of curls against their temples.

“I'll carry you,” Jonas told the metal gold bridge between them and it was a pretty heavy pretty shiny
damn bridge.

Metal gold, metal and gold both yellow and old a yellow brick road back there, together.

It looked pretty damn. Strong, to him, he'd say.

“I'm heavy,” his mouth managed, or something close enough for the hand on top of his head.

“Not today.”

Didn't look ready to cry-umble anytime soon.

Soon soon soon so long long long.

Maybe not ever.
That bridge that metal gold yellow cold old yellow brick road skateboard gravel showed to sunsets watching boats and.

It'd stretch forever, wouldn't it, they'd always said forever.

Into the horizons it'd go go go go gooooo.

Sailboat lights fading so small the wind swept them away from every waiting dock and forlorn boy on them.

Woahnchu carry me.

Hoe-oh-oh.

Oh-om.

~*~*~

Tirsdag, 10:56
20.06.17

The next morning he didn’t exactly remember getting home but here he was. Most importantly, their early just woke faded haze conversation had been lifechanging and his best friend was within reach for the first time in years.

**

And for the first time in Way Too Long his boyfriend was too, an open door and open arms and Isak wasn’t cooing, wasn’t practically carried to their bed. Soft and snuggly and climbing all over that beautiful everything, tip of his tongue tasting oh so so faintly of cannabis.

He was still a little high and everything was still a little cloudy but he was home, theirs, and here was Even, his, and he couldn’t remember a time he’d ever seen the soft impossibly high hair with the sweet little free wisps of slight curl over his skin be so beautiful.

Even smiled into his collarbones and held fingers in his hair and looked into his eyes and Isak softened into a thousand sheets of the stories they could be.

Deep. A mirror for his whole body.

Both. He could have both couldn’t he, the wild nights and the soft mornings because god, this was perfect, Jonas’s quick hug goodbye a careful push up the stairs until Isak fell into Even’s arms and this, this was everything.

Here he was, soft and soundless and where was Jonas, he didn’t know, but it wasn’t Isak’s fault he didn’t have this.

Both.
Even’s hands on his skin, a dozen murmured quiet are you sures and Isak nodded whispered clung, a moment of only eyes. Of only lips of sex and skin and lust and love and them.

Moments building and slipping together and falling apart but they always came back to this, this, their two bodies.

An ocean.

Somehow they were clouds and somehow they were flesh, bodies and more he couldn't name this, couldn't possibly explain this. A conglomeration of sighs, of vulnerability, stripped, bare.

Fragile. Strong.

Breathless.

Mouths locked gazes entwined fingers gripped, soft gold light pouring from the window to their shadows dancing over the walls and Even gave his soul a skin. A face a cry a movement inside.

Set his tongue ablaze. Scald his thighs. Burn your nights.

Here they were... precious. Human.

Voiceless in the darkness of their safe place.

And then-- a silence.


He was becoming something in himself, becoming world for himself for another's sake, a great exacting and meticulous almost desperate plea upon him, something that chose him and called him.

The flow of a river pushing sweet to the seaside. No forcing. No holding back. The purest form of a bond, each standing guard over the solitude of the other. The purest form of courage. To let oneself feel everything.

Was he fading? No. Life had not forgotten them.

(we could live our dreams, we'd sail on golden wings)

**

The neon was still painted over his skin but there was only this; Isak holding onto the back of Even’s neck, slipping into nothing.

Together.

Not alone.

*Where to go?*

Nowhere.

(Home)
Credit to Richard Siken for his poetry from Crush.

I'm not sure how long it'll be before I get to post the second half, but with my schedule and Life, probably at least a month or two. Then hopefully I'll crank out the epilogue and we will be Done. I'm so sorry to make you all wait for so long.

The best wishes to you all!!

xx

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