Bedside Vigil

by Rakath

Summary

A collection of characters responding to Maya's suicide attempt.

The chapters are not in a sequential Order, each one is just a reaction to the same event.
It was just the three of them, no girlfriends, nobody else. Just the three musketeers. Except… there hadn’t been only three of them since the start of Grade 10.

Zig’s sudden shift in social circles, lack of extra curriculars, and repeated talking back to teachers got him sent to the Rubber Room. Tiny because his brother was a drug dealing psycho Drew Torres punched that one time. And Grace may have been accused of punching someone in the jaw for saying things that were impolite.

But that wasn’t all of them. And her absence hurt, maybe that was why Grace was always picking Zoe over the boys. Or it was only okay when the boys had their girls with them. Or they would hang out in pairs, but never all three. Maybe if they had they would… no, no thinking like that.

And then Zig started kicking the hell out of a trash can.

“Dude!” Tiny admonished, dragging him back over to the benches, “We have to do your stupid yoga thing.”

“I think he’s a bit too wound up for Tai Chi. This is aromatherapy and massage level freaked.”

“…What’s wrong dude?”

“This is the third time I failed her.”

They didn’t need to know which her he was talking about, there was only one her that mattered so much in Ziggy’s little bad boy heart. Except, to Grace, the math was wrong. “Opening Night, sleeping with Zoe, and…”

“Cam.” Tiny offered. “Dude, I thought you got over that.”

“Wait, back up, whose Cam?”

“Maya’s first boyfriend.”

“Maya never brought up anyone but you and Moneybags. Why wou-” Grace stopped, her mind stopped deciding what happened next and her heart took over. She didn’t realize how guilty she felt, or how hard a world without the Princess would hurt her. But she shoved Zig into a wall and started shoving him more. “Why didn’t you tell us? Why didn’t she tell us? What the hell, man?”

Tiny apparently was playing judge today, he wrapped his arms around Grace, a move he was sure on any other day would get him decked, and pulled her back. “He doesn’t like talking about how much that messed him up. Okay? Lay off him.”
“If he told us- if he told me, maybe I wouldn’t have- I would have…” To the boys this was an impossible thing, Grace having tears. Grace was dying, she’d been dying since they met her. That didn’t bother her. She helped the girls sell nudes online, that didn’t bother her. She could have died in that bus crash, that didn’t bother her. But now… now she was crying.

“This isn’t your fault, this is mine. I should have seen it. She was acting so different, she was acting… it wasn’t even like after Cam. It was worse, she just wasn’t—”

“Dude, you’re both not wrong here. You moved on because you cheated on her. And you moved on because she kept ditching you for creepy death photos and saying that out loud kinda makes it a sign.”

Grace’s watery red eyes were on Zig, “How many people has she lost. Or almost lost?” Zig stood silent.

“How. Many!”?

“Katie OD’d when we were freshman. Cam killed himself in the garden later that year. That summer I came back to school to find out our bandmate Adam died in a car accident.”

“Why didn’t she ask any of us for help?” Grace was remembering every time she’d ever yelled at the princess, then realized the awful truth. “Or… she had been all the time. We just didn’t hear her.”

“Maya’s always been more worried about others,” Tiny figured, “That’s why she was, you know, cool. Please don’t tell Shay I said that.”

“She thought… if she didn’t do anything…” Zig started.

Grace quickly got there, “It’d go like it did with Cam. She had to be closest, and felt the most hurt.”

“She got drunk at Drew’s house, made out with a stranger, posted it to facerange, and tossed her cello in the garbage.”

“We suck.”

“I can’t disagree.”

“The both of you stop. She did this, and we missed it. But her mental health isn’t our job! Unless… you want it to be? Now. Now that we know and aren’t going to get surprised.” Tiny’s words sank in as they considered. Zig was clearly still blaming himself from that brooding face he made. Grace… was thinking about it.

“I’ll draw up a schedule, Zoe and Miles might be able to help. Hell, we might be able to get Formerly Pinky to help too. She did wonders for Miles.”

“Wait, Lola and Miles?” Tiny looked a bit nervous as he asked it.

“Yeah, they hooked up, it isn’t that big a thing.”

“I knew it, pay up!” Zig demanded, not quite as forcefully as he would. But they were almost back to normal. For that brief fleeting instant.

“Tiny, I thought you knew better than to take sucker bets.”
“Shut up, I thought Miles was gay.”

“Dorks. Let’s go… we need a plan if we’re going to keep our Princess around until you all get to see me die.”

“Wow Grace. Dark.”

“You have to stick around, otherwise I have to be Maya’s spabuddy again.”

Chapter End Notes

This is not the first reaction fic I wrote for this, but it felt like the best one to start off with as it covers the concept of everyone deciding to stick by Maya.

I technically wrote this second. Neutral Ground was the first thing I wrote on this topic.
Katie and Imogen spend some time at Maya's bedside.

Maya’s meds had her out of it more than she was awake, to Katie this was a blessing. She didn’t know how to deal with her sister like this, it was so far from her skills she couldn’t really compute it. She sat nearby, and felt the weight of her inability to fix it. She’d fixed, or helped, Maya with so many things and now she could only watch her fight against the waves from the shore.

It wasn’t any wonder that Imogen could get so close without her noticing, Katie scanned the room and Imogen was right next to her, leaning in to study her face. Katie fell backward in a way that would be almost comical if it wasn’t for the time and place, “Imogen, what the hell…”

“I was trying to see what you were thinking.” Imogen said as if that made any sense at all.

“I’m thinking you have no idea what personal space is,” Katie sat herself back up and glared at Imogen. For Katie it had been two years since she last dealt with Imogen and her… unique and irritating presence. Imogen was loud, wild, and determined to never make any sense. And the years hadn’t seemed to change that.

“Personal space is why people don’t get enough hugs.”

And she said things like that! Katie rubbed at her temples, “Well I don’t need one right now so you can go back to your homework or whatever you were working on.” She remembered when Whisperhug was a thing, Maya would always ask why Imogen was so… off. Katie never had a solid answer. Imogen and she were never friends, Marisol made sure of that. But you don’t just forget someone like Imogen exists.

“Is it working?”

“…Is what working?”

“You looked like you needed to get your mind off things.” Imogen’s eyes studied Katie, she even dipped her glasses down to be sure, “It was until I ruined it by pointing it out. I’m the worst at this!”

Katie sighed, Imogen was hard to ignore and very distracting. Which was apparently why she was here, “I’ll be fine, Imogen. You don’t need to keep an eye on me.”

Imogen went quiet for a moment, eyes darting over to Maya and back to Katie, “You were making some of the same faces Drew made. After…”

Adam. Katie heard about it, not from Drew. It came from Jake, she didn’t really process it. She knew Adam but they weren’t… close. She wondered how things would have gone if she didn’t
turn Adam down. If she could see past Adam’s parts to date a guy like him. It was stupid, she only thought about it after he died. And it was such an alien and morbid concept she didn’t explore them very far. “How did he cope?”

“He got mad at everyone, had horrible nightmares, got hooked on sleep meds, stripped naked and ran into a wall trying to dive into a pool projected on it.” Imogen smiled a little at the last bit. Katie was trying to place that smile, if it was about the absurdity of Drew trying to do something out of a Loony Toon, or about Drew taking off his clothes. “I should have pressed Drew to talk to me. Make it a little easier on him.”

This was a new side of Imogen, at least for Katie. Katie had seen a lot of Imogen, but this was new. Imogen never seemed to harbor serious regrets. Even when she did something insane and it blew up on her, she never seemed to regret it. “Was this about Drew… or about Adam?”

“Both.” Imogen offered, Katie was starting to assume that everything Imogen said was just to keep Katie’s mind somewhere and somewhen far from now and in this room. “Before I just saw Drew as the jerkiest jerky jerkface, but while he lived with Fiona I got a little crush on him. Not enough for me to do anything. But it was there. And Adam I always had a crush on. He was just so cool, and great. And I wish I could have done more for both of them.”

“Ever have a crush on me?” Katie mostly wanted to follow Imogen into any other place and time from here. Stories past and present about Imogen made it clear she was very affectionate, but also not very picky. Katie had overheard a conversation between Imogen and Maya once that had to do with this.

“I kinda dug the ‘take no shizz from anyone’ look you had? Also last year that lumberjill look you had when you went camping with Jake.” Imogen smirked, just slightly. “You’re okay right now though.”

Katie smiled a little at that, of course Imogen stalked everyone’s facerange feeds. That just felt appropriately inappropriate for the oddest Degrassian. “And… my sister?”

Imogen bit her lip, “Um, twice. After band practice an impromptu dance party happened when Marisol and Fiona came around. Maya started doing that goofy little dance she does on a table.” Mar had never mentioned anything like that, but that might have just been due to Katie’s no boys policy that year, and it drove Marisol not to bring up happy moments. But she could see Maya doing that just because she could.

“And the other?”

“What other?”

“The other time, you said twice.”

“Oh. That. She asked for my help making her a dress for the formal.”

“She bitched about that fuzzy monster you made. For a month.”

“Yeah, well, it was when she wasn’t wearing it that I noticed that she wasn’t just your goofy little prodigy sister.” Imogen actually looked like she knew how shame felt, Katie had rarely seen Imogen show that feeling. After some fights with Fiona and even those Imogen drifted back to… herself. “I feel bad I didn’t keep up with her after you graduated. Maybe.”

Katie didn’t even realize she’d started hugging Imogen until after she wrapped her arms around the girl. She felt Imogen froze under the touch, just for a moment, then return it. “You had a lot on your mind, didn’t you. Repeating Senior Year and Adam…”
“My dad started getting worse too. Plus Maya had a million people around her, I didn’t think…” Imogen sounded like she was going to cry, but she also didn’t. There was this weird subtle chill to her. “Plus if she needed me I thought, I dunno, she’d find me. I’m still in town all the time.”

“Is that why you’re here?”

Imogen shook her head, Katie could feel it through the hug. “I’m here because Adam would be.”

Wasn’t that the truth. Adam was really too good, and he would be around for Maya without question. “Well, I’m glad you’re here now.”

“You needed this hug, I just had to wait for you to think of it.”

Katie wasn’t even going to try and make sense of that, she looked past Imogen to her open sketch pad. “…Did you seriously draw me as a robot?”

Chapter End Notes

I just like writing Imogen. I felt like I needed another Katie response, but one that’s a bit more indirect to everything. Thus we end up with this.

I feel like this chapter needs a new title, I figured Imogen would be a lot darker when I started writing, and it wasn’t where I ended up. If you notice a lack of continuity that has to do with these fics being written independent of each other and me not editing.
Stay

Chapter Summary

Grace has a conversation with a sleeping girl.

Grace came into the hospital room and patted the previous vigil holder on the shoulder. Imogen’s sketch pad was full of different angles of Maya in her hospital bed. They would be a bit morbid if Imogen hadn’t turned Maya into an alien, a princess, an alien princess, and a dragon in half the sketches. It just… what Grace knew about the older girl was that she was weird in that harmless way. That was Imogen’s way to be, in this strange hard world they lived in.

Imogen closed her book and hopped up, giving Grace a hug before leaving. Steps full of energy in spite of how quiet and still she was as Grace entered. Maya was… not out of the woods. She’d live- no, she’d survive, but they knew that for weeks. Since then everyone spent a little time in the room with her. If she wanted to talk, if she wanted to yell, hell… if she wanted a hug. But she barely sat up, only moving to eat and use the bathroom.

She’d spoken some, at first, all lies to get out of here. To try again. They were lucky it was Imogen in here the first time it happened. Katie was all ready to fall into the pattern until Imogen stopped her. Katie and Miles wanted to believe her, Zig would do whatever she asked of him, and Grace… Grace knew she’d have punched Maya for that. Right now, however, Maya was asleep.

“How dare you,” Grace thought, gripping the footboard of the bed a little too tightly. “I’m not suppose to bury any of you.” She had no word on her transplant, but that didn’t matter. She wasn’t going to leave before Maya was okay. She couldn’t do that. She couldn’t leave her on her own again.

“No, I’m suppose to bury all of you.” It wasn’t Maya, not the real Maya talking. It was the Maya Grace knew talking, in her head, Grace’s knowledge of her friend giving her a remarkable facsimile to work with. She could see the girl, wavy blonde hair, little pair of glasses on her nose. Her Maya, the real Maya. “You have it so easy Grace, you don’t get to remember everyone you lose.”

Sadly that Maya was also a damaged little thing, Grace had asked about Maya before… everything. It took tracking down a girl who left the school to get a straight answer. Tristan wasn’t up for answers, Zig refused to be specific, Katie… Katie’s a mess. Tori, that’s the girl who answered. Grace realized she would have hated that Maya, flawlessly talented and so protected from the world. A girl who probably couldn’t handle one friend in a bus crash.

Let alone all of them.

“All that time,” Grace was talking aloud, not sure why. Maybe it was in case Maya could hear them while she slept, maybe it was just to say them, to hear them herself. “You wanted to save everyone. You thought you were saving them from you. You’re an egomaniac, no amount of talent and tragedy gives you the right to think you can do so much.”

“Please come back to me. I’m staying,” Grace hadn’t really said it yet, not out loud. “I’m fighting, I’m fighting for every second I can stay in this world. For me. But I can fight for you, if you’ll fight too. If you’ll stay, if you can keep going. And when I- I want you around so that when I die,
you and Zoe can carry each other through that. I need you both to be okay when I go, but I don’t plan on going until you’re both okay.”

“You were the first person, the first to find out my condition and not get weird. Maybe it’s because you were just blaming yourself, which is weird, but I liked that you stuck around after every horrible thing I said. So please… please stay.”

“I won’t turn my back on you again. I promise.” Grace hung her head a little lower, sighed, and realized the fault in her promise. “Well, only for about ten years. But for that time you have me.”

“Please stay.”
Neutral Ground

Chapter Summary

Clare comes home to someone in need, and a story she can share.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clare felt a bit bad, being one of those kids living at home after high school. But she was only here a few more months before she’d be off in the states at her new job. And Boston wasn’t too far from New York City, where Eli was.

Clare unlocked the door and stopped a few steps into the house. Glen and her mom were out until dinner… so who was in the house? And crying?

“Hello?”

Clare wandered upstairs to find her step-brother and his ex girlfriend in the guest room (which was Jake’s room before he moved out). This felt very much like they were suddenly back in high school. “Jake? Katie? Been a while?” Clare hoped that the evident confusion helped get an answer from one of them.

Probably not Katie, she was actively trying to pull herself together as Clare sat at the foot of the guest bed.

“She asked me come back into the city.” Jake was stroking Katie’s hair and generally being… Jake, he was good at getting girls to come down off of whatever drama was going on.

“She’s had a rough few days but today went really badly.”

“What happened?”

“It’s n-nothing, really. You don’t need to worry about me.” Clare wasn’t a journalist yet, but she was working on that. But even without that talent she could tell that Katie was lying.

“Actually, Clare probably knows better than anyone.” Jake mused aloud and helped Katie sit up. “She’s lived through this, but she was a lot younger when Darcy…” Jake’s eyes held a plea in them, a lot of things clicked together all at once. Memories from her time in Degrassi, news reports from the summer, and the face she’d made herself before she even got to high school.

When Darcy tried to kill herself. So long ago.

Clare pulled Katie into a hug, “Is Maya okay?” Three little words. The right three words could break a heart, or mend it, or in this case break down that dam in Katie and she was crying all over again. Katie was a year ahead of Clare, but right now she felt so small in Clare’s arms.

Jake, somewhere between awkwardness and knowing he couldn’t help with, slipped out of the room but Clare heard him stop a few paces away. Close enough he could come back if he was needed. She figured it was, well, for her benefit more than Katie’s.
“S-she. On the roof.” Clare’s heart races at the word, not sure how much Katie knows about the past. “She’d taken a lot of pills and…” Clare cursed herself for calming down at the word pills, that wasn’t Darcy’s weapon. Clare hugged Katie tighter. “We’ve been trying but she just…”

“She isn’t ready to be better?”

Katie’s sobbing paused, she pushed herself up to look Clare in the eyes. See those blue eyes that were always so emotional, so quick to tears. Seeing some glimmer of past pain in them.

“I have an older sister, Darcy.”

“…Edwards. She was on the Spirit Squad. I remember her when Marisol and I started at the school…” Clare could see Katie putting it together. Katie would have met Darcy, or heard about her. Katie was a Freshman when it all happened. But since the next year Darcy went to Kenya, only Darcy’s friends and enemies really knew who Clare was. “She… tried to kill herself on the roof…”

“And she was a mess, she hated mom, and me… and everyone for a long time after she didn’t die.” Clare was starting to tear up. Somewhere deep inside was the thirteen year old girl who Darcy called a bitch, then screamed at her to get out of her hospital room. “But… she got better. You just have to wait for her.”

“I wanted to go home but, right now mom doesn’t-” Clare silenced Katie by pulling her back into that hug. Which just caused Katie to return to silent sobbing in her lap.

Eventually Clare got the details, Maya woke up. First thing she did was tell everyone to leave. When Katie said she was staying, Maya told her she got the idea to use pills from her ‘screw up drug popping sister.’ Along with several other decisive linguistic attacks on every mistake Katie’s ever made. Katie got so mad she stormed out, called Jake and met here.

“It’ll be okay, you stay here, Jake can take the couch. After he orders some pizza because you need to eat something.” Clare watched out of the corner of her eye as Jake dashed downstairs from where he had been listening for his cue.

“You don’t need to do that. I’ll be-” Katie stopped at the look in Clare’s eye.

“You need to recharge a bit. Okay? She needs you to be at your best. She’ll be a lot tougher than some dumb hockey jock, so you’ll need to be ready for her.”

“…Yes Ma’am.”

In a few days, after things had calmed, Clare would recognize how weird it was for her to be ordering Katie around. Katie was terrifying to Clare once upon a time. But here Katie bowed to Clare’s word, because Clare knew what Katie was facing. Clare also knew Katie would be able to deal, once she’d had a little rest. She looked exhausted. “Let’s find you some fresh clothes? Okay. You probably should also get a shower.”

Clare guessed from… everything, Katie hadn’t left the hospital in over a day. Even if she had it hadn’t been long enough to really do much but change a shirt. She would have done the same if she were older when Darcy… anyway, Clare would do what she could, Jake too, to get Katie back to face her sister. Get that kid to realize why she is not allowed to give up on this world.

Chapter End Notes
This was my first reaction to 310 fic I wrote. However as far as tempo with the others and how they function, this couldn't be the first fic posted. It requires a lot more of Maya being awake and involved, which the other fics don't have.
Zoe’s turn to spend some time with Maya, whatever was broken in the girl wasn’t fixing easily. They had moved past Maya trying to pretend she was okay… and the girl had stopped. Just stopped. That numbness of her had spread across all of her and flooded the hospital room she had.

When Zoe was here with someone else, it was the same quiet weight of the library without a reverence. No, not a library, a crypt. A wake. The grave was the only word for this silence. You didn’t spark large conversations in this room. Mo and Imogen tried to bring levity to it and it fell flat.

Zoe hated it. She hated how this room felt. But today, today was different. She was alone with the girl. Laying in bed staring out at nothing. Zoe knew she’d be heard, she knew that it would sink in.

“You selfish bitch,” Zoe stepped into the girl’s line of sight, and the girl looked away. Zoe rolled her eyes. “Unbelievable, you can’t even look at me. But you’d have to leave this room and face the world to get out of listening to me.”

She didn’t leave, she didn’t even get out of the bed. She just closed her eyes.

“You really can’t see how much the world loves you. You have talent, and a family, and friends who I barely remember who are here to watch over you. That you made an impact, you’re remembered and nicely.” Zoe might be mis-aiming some of her anger. But several of Maya’s friends who left had less than fond memories of Zoe. She brought it on herself, but she wasn’t the one giving up on everyone. On herself. Zoe Rivas picked herself up.

And this time she was going to pick up a worthless cellist who gave up.

Maybe she should have left this to someone a little… nicer, but she had, and that had gotten nowhere.

“You have two parents who would give up anything to have you back. As you are, broken and messed up, but here! Grace is worrying herself, you’re costing her years she can’t get back. Tristan came back from death, and you’re stronger than him.” Zoe paused, “Don’t tell him I said that. No matter how true it is.”

Every time this girl held a hand out, Zoe smacked it away, or used it to shove her into the mud and the dirt. And every time, in the end, this girl was back, hand out to her. Someone even accidentally hurt her and Zoe would try to destroy them utterly. That was the difference between Zoe’s mom, and Maya’s parents. Miles may have been raised in a castle, Zoe given an adoring following, but this girl was a princess in every way that counted. Look what it brought her.
“I hate you, I hate everything you have and everyone that loves you. I hate how easily you can just draw people in with your charm and looks. And I want to keep hating you forever. Who else is there for me to envy with all I am, to remind me that there’s good in the world if you fade away?” Zoe touched her face, tears. Real ones. She wasn’t acting, this was her heart letting it all out.

“Grace started calling you sleeping beauty, probably because she still calls you Princess. I wish you had a prince. I wish I hadn’t taken them all from you. Well, not that one, but the others were me.” Zoe went after Miles while he was taken, and then the same mistake with a different boy who didn’t realize what they had. Prince Charming and the Woodsman both lead astray. By her. “I can’t apologize to you when you’re like this.”

Zoe wondered if this girl could see how loved she was, but then she remembered everyone had stepped back. Nobody had stepped in, nobody had pulled her close and held her in this world. Well… nobody accused Zoe Rivas of being cowardly. “I’m going to tell you a secret, I want you to hear it. And I’ll deny it later. I wanted what you had, I tore into you because I wanted your perfect life. I’m glad I can’t have it, and I’ll tell Rasha about this afterwards and hope she understands. Cause… I want to save you, and you need to see you’re loved. Even by me.”

So Zoe climbed up on the bed, knelt next to the girl. It was cramped but she managed, she lead the girl’s face toward her and leaned down to kiss her. Tears stung at Zoe’s eyes, it was about as romantic as CPR, but she she kept her lips planted. She didn’t move until… Maya pushed forward, she kissed back for the briefest moment. They stayed like that for a long moment, both kissing, and Zoe pulled away.

The girl didn’t say anything, she just looked at Zoe. It wasn’t the girl Zoe knew, the way a mountain looks different after a few eons of time and wind wear it away, but this girl saw Zoe. Which is more than any of them had gotten.

“I don’t want to kiss you again, you have hospital breath. And I have a girlfriend. But you are loved and you will come back,” Zoe turned away, dangling her legs off the side. “I know you won’t be that bitch I hated, but I don’t care how broken and different you are, you have to stay.”

“…Your breath sucks too…”

Zoe twisted to look back at the girl. She didn’t know if that was something she wanted to hear, or something she actually heard. Zoe chose hope, she chose to believe she heard that. It was something, she could take that.

Chapter End Notes

SO! I was listening to the Damn it, Degrassi conversation with Stephen and this idea came to me. Overall the podcast was pretty insightful and some of the stuff I believed came into focus and I felt super justified. This was… I wanted someone who would be a little less careful with Maya and what they said. Which really meant Zoe. Also I ship them and I’m not sorry.

Bonus note: Not using Maya’s name for almost the entire fic was purposeful, I wanted to distance the reader from her and this is what I came up with.
Chapter Summary

Miles isn't comfortable visiting Maya alone, so he brings a friend.

Lola stopped outside of the room, she was very good at knowing where she wasn’t really meant to go. And this was definitely a place she didn’t feel at ease. Maya wasn’t her friend, she wasn’t even her friends’ friend. Miles, and Tiny, both boys that she was not really allowed to be close to knew Maya.

“Why did you bring me with you?” She felt more than justified, she and Miles weren’t allowed to be close. Too many people would talk.

Miles took her hand, a forbidden little thing but one she needed. One he needed, “I don’t think I’m strong enough, to do this all again. Tristan isn’t really up for this sort of thing, and I felt sharing all the hope I can with her… might do her some good.”

Lola studied his face, she screwed up her lip that way that said she was gathering herself. Finding her strength to do the impossible one more time. “Okay. Do you know how she’s doing?”

“Just that she’s awake.”

Lola squeezed his hand, he smiled. She went in a little behind him. It wasn’t that Maya scared her, although Maya could be scary. What Maya did scared her, where Maya must be scared her. With Miles he wasn’t so lost, Lola just had to be there. Lola barely registered she did anything at all.

Maya was sitting at the window. It didn’t feel right, not to Lola. When Lola sat at the window she stared at the trees, the birds, the clouds. Maya was staring at the ground. A fixed point of nothing down there, eyes unwavering.

“Maya, you’re out of bed. That’s good.”

“Whatever…”

Miles pulled his hand from Lola’s as he went over. She watched as he sat next to Maya to try and get her to really connect. Her one word might as well have been a ‘leave a message’ recording. “Talk to me, I’ve been where you are. So depressed I ended up taking a lot of pills and almost dying.”

This got Maya to turn her attention to Miles, “You were just a sad, lonely rich kid trying to burn so brightly it would take your father with you.”

Maya was probably crueler than even Zoe. Well, when she wasn’t limited by herself. Miles flinched at words that cut close to his wounds, holding his hand out behind him. Lola knew what that was, trying to cross the room quietly and take Miles’s hand to support him. She wanted to lash out at Maya but she also knew it wouldn’t do anything.

“If you really knew how much you hurt people, you would have tried to kill yourself. Instead of just waiting for it to happen.”
Lola shifted, ready to move and rip into Maya. The girl was hurt, but who was she to attack Miles just because he dated a skank and did a lot of drugs? He got help, he got better. Miles squeezed Lola’s hand, “I know you don’t mean that.”

“Does Tristan know you brought your mistress on a date to see your ex?”

Lola reached over and put her hand on Miles’s shoulder, now she understood why Miles wanted her here. He knows what it looks like to lash out at any hand offered in friendship. “Why do you want to hurt Miles?”

“These are things he did, I’m not.”

“I’m talking about killing yourself. Why do you want to hurt Miles, and Zig, and everyone else?” Lola put a hand on Miles’s arm, he got the message and moved out of the way. Lola moved to take his space and sit right in front of Maya. “Your family, why would you hurt everyone by abandoning them?”

Maya’s eyes drifted to the window again. that spot on the ground. Lola sent a confused look to Miles, however he was collecting himself. Maya managed in a few words what three months of Tristan in the hospital did. Lola decided to do something reckless.

She held Maya’s hand.

Maya tried to pull away, but not with any real effort to it. It was a show without any power. “Don’t you have someone’s boyfriend to steal?”

“No, I’m right where I should be.”

“What about a baby to kill?”

Lola closed her eyes, Miles turned back to them at this point, but he didn’t step forward. Lola smiled, “I’m good.” Lola had a lot of practice, pretending to be okay. Maybe not the healthiest thing, but it helped her through a lot.

Maya looked like she had more to say. However even Lola could see what happened. Maya’s attempts to hurt those, to drive them away, were personal. There wasn’t anything for her to hit Lola with.

“I’m a good listener, if you have anything you want to say?” Lola hadn’t let go of Maya’s hand. Miles watched, wondering if this is what happened between them.

“You don’t care. You don’t even know me.”

“You wonder if it’s you, if you’re the thing that’s wrong. That something about you just doesn’t make sense.”

Miles knew, from knowing Lola, that was not about Maya. That was Lola expressing her own fears, her own concerns. Just… it caused Maya to turn her gaze away from the window. Miles leaned against the wall and smiled, watching this play out.

“Everyone needs someone to talk to. I don’t have anywhere to be.”

Maya shifted, something in her liked none of what was happening. But Lola was a rock, unmoving in front of this storm. Something in Maya’s eyes changed, “The first boy I ever loved killed himself rather than be with me.”
Lola didn’t move, she didn’t shift at all. Except her smile, it went from inviting to sorrow. Miles didn’t know about this, but it put things into perspective, why Maya was so into saving Zig. Miles couldn’t tell where Lola’s mind was, but she was definitely taking this in.

“What happened next?”

“What do you mean, I told you, he died.”

“But you didn’t. Do you want to talk about what happened next?”

Maya didn’t know how to respond, she expected all the niceties that went nowhere. Not… more. “I tried to move on, forget, be someone else… but everyone saw…”

“Him? With you, everywhere?”

Something fractured in that numbness, a feeling Maya forgot the name for. She tried to pull her hand from Lola again, but Lola was a statue, unwilling to release her.

“Go on, I’m listening.” Lola hadn’t moved away once, and when Maya started to open up Miles felt a little… worthless. He could only watch, he didn’t even know if Lola was helping. But Maya was doing more than ignoring everyone or insulting them. That was something.

And the only reason Miles brought Lola along was to have someone to lean on while Maya ripped into him. He didn’t mind, he deserved most of it. But it still hurt, and he could only get through it if he had someone who looked at him like he was good.

How on earth did it work out so well?
Lola leaves Miles alone, but he's ready now.

“I have to get to work, you going to be okay?”

“Yeah, thanks for coming along. I think you did some good.”

Lola leaned in and gave Miles a light peck on the cheek, then wandered off.

Which left Miles alone with Maya. Maya had been staring as they had that exchange, he was with Tristan, but that was just… Lola. He didn’t kiss her back, but he needed her around. Just for this. But now it was his turn.

“So she’s… not what I remembered.” Maya offered from the other side of the room. A huge chasm between them, Miles didn’t know who decided on that space. But only Lola was able to sit close to her since they started coming here. “Still surprised she’s your rebound from Coma Boy.”

“Stop.” Miles stared at her, “You can ask, you can get me to explain. But don’t judge me after what you’ve done.”

“Okay,” Maya shifted to give Miles her full attention, “What is she to you?”

“If you stuck around for my play you’d have seen. But you might have seen it over our past three visits. She’s strength, I needed it.”

“I’m not going to sleep with her, if that’s your plan.”

Over the past two weeks he’d seen enough of that to know this was Maya trying to… make it easy. She wasn’t falling apart like him, he wanted to be caught. He wanted anyone to be there to catch him as he fell, but didn’t know how to ask except to burn. Maya wanted everyone away from her. She wanted to lose alone, which is why he needed all his strength to stand there with her. “She’s not into girls, I asked her since she was cool with…”

“How you’re a manslut who just wants anyone to love you? And you’re not picky.”

“Something like that. Anyone that loves me, and I can love back, I will. Lola is like that, just she only feels like having sex with guys. Which is good, if she slept with Frankie that would be weird.”

Maya scoffed, “So how is that little brat strong?”

“If you bothered to show up to school, you’d know she had an abortion, then made a video about it for the world to know her story. She’s put up with everyone that doesn’t know her judging her for it too,” Miles watched Maya, waited for her to start talking, and beat her to it, “And nothing you say to hurt her right now will be any worse than the shit boys say in the locker rooms. Or
what girls whisper in the halls. So don’t.”

Lola was strong, Miles was petty. He watched Maya stop, think, and go in a different direction. He wasn’t sure if he wanted Maya to go back to being nice, pretending to be okay with jokes and a fake smile. Or if this was better, her anger on display. Sure she was attacking everyone she loved in some sick form of protecting them, but she was expressing something. More than she’s done all year.

“Why are you even here?”

“Because our roles could be reversed.”

Maya looked away, she didn’t believe him.

“You spent your summer holed up in your house, away from everyone. I spent it at Tris’s side, alone, as everyone else went on. If you’d been around, I would have probably turned to you.”

“If I had been around, Tris would be dead.”

Miles didn’t argue, not this time, those words came up a lot. She wasn’t looking for pity, Miles didn’t know what she wanted. But she was sure of this, and he couldn’t find a way to convince her otherwise. From what Katie had said, this wasn’t the first person Maya nearly lost, not the first person Maya has lost. “Lola found me, like you did when I set the school on fire. I was just ripping things up this time, so I have learned my lesson a little.”

“That’s how you pick up girls, you destroy things until one comes and gives you a hug and a screw?”

“We never did that last bit.”

“Maybe we could, bend me over that hospital be-”

“Stop.”

“Hike up my gown and have a-”

“Stop it, Maya! I know you’re trying to get rid of me, but I’m not leaving you here when you need someone. So stop trying,” Miles ended up with more growl than he expected. He could tell Maya wasn’t interested, well... he was getting some very mixed signals. Maya wanted something, she needed something. She could want the sex, really, or she could be poking Miles’s buttons to get him to leave. Either way he couldn’t give her what she wanted. “If we could go back in time, if I had known I could save you, I would have. But I’m here now.”

“Late to the party.”

“I know.”

“You can’t save me.”

“I couldn’t save Tristan either.”

“Then why?”

“I want to see you save yourself. I want to see you find that girl, the one who kicked my ass when I was a mess. The one who sang her hate for Zoe to the world. I want to see you get up and fight back and get up.”
“And if I fail?”

“I don’t see you failing easy, but I can’t save you. Doesn’t mean I can’t help. I’ve tried to burn my life to the ground, literally. Grace is dying and not letting that slow her down. Zoe’s ruthless, lost her home, lost her world, and hasn’t given up on you. And she hates you. Your sister honestly terrifies me, but not half as much as your mom. And you’re so like them.”

“I’m a broken mess?”

“Who isn’t?”

Maya smiled, weakly. He wasn’t sure why that got through to her, but it did. He’d take it. There was someone in there he knew, and he’d help her get out.

“What’s in your head, you feel alone. But you’re really not, and you might not realize how much we’ve all needed you. But we all have, and then you need to find what happiness you can in your life. Right?”

Maya looked away, staring out the window again.

“Stop thinking about jumping and stay here with me? Please?”

Maya whirled to stare at him, studying him.

“Look, you saved all of us. If you can’t let us save you, let us be there when you find your fight.”

Maya was still studying him, looking at him like she didn’t know him. Or maybe that she knew him too well. It was hard to tell the difference. She was so… guarded, so quiet, that playful friendly energy she had last year, and even more the year before was just… muted, gone… like… Like a bass and drums without guitar. Sure, you can do it. But there’s definitely something missing, something fun. “I’m tired of fighting.”

“I know.”

And the conversation died, she didn’t reach out, and he couldn’t reach back. They sat on opposite sides of the room, made to feel larger by the lack of conversation. He couldn’t lose Tristan, it held him back but he couldn’t. Still… he was there, he could do that. He hoped it was enough. He could lose her, if he was honest. He just didn’t want to. Part of that was fear that if you lose enough people, you end up here, like Maya.

Giving up.

Chapter End Notes

This was a requested fic, by anon, but I managed to make it work. I think. It isn't meant to be set directly after Hope, but the two are a pair so I wanted it to show up in the chapter titles.

I was still super hesitant to explore Maya here, because Maya being so... dark, is a complicated thing.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!