Aftermath

by trueamericanwolf

Summary

Weeks after the tapes are made public, Marcus throws a small kick back. No one expects Clay or Jessica to show up, be it as Clay never seems to go out anymore, and Jessica is avoiding that crowd and alcohol. But through a series of events, the two of them end up at Marcus', bringing them all together in a way they never imagined, but also trudging up old skeletons that may have dire consequences.

(Also known as me trying to answer all the cliffhangers from season 1)

Notes

Okay! So, I watched the show and checked this site and only saw 7 fics and was like "why @ God" because this was such a great show and the characters were all so flawed and I just needed to write something! I'm not sure how long it's going to be and it's unedited so if there are mistakes (I'm sure it's riddled with them) I apologize. Each chapter is going to be from a different character's POV and also just a heads up I'm really into fluid sexuality so like I'm not sure who is going to hook up just yet but like just throwing it out there, anyone could get with anyone.
I LOVE TONY SO MUCH YALL! AND CLAY AND TONY! So like for sure that's probably gonna happen.

Ummmmmm that's it for now. I'll update tags and characters as the story progresses. If anyone does read this hope you like it.

(Last thing! I'm aware that the show took place after Halloween because the deposition tapes were in November but like listen tbh I really need Halloween to be an event for this fic specifically for what I have planned so in that aspect I'm veering from the canon timeline. Just had to add that in because I know my timeline is different. So for this story school started in the beginning of August and the events all took place over August and September and it is now October. That is all)
Tony sat at the round table, a coffee in front of him, untouched. It was cold by now and he did not care. He was not even there for the coffee. His leg bounced underneath him as he looked over his shoulder at the glass entrance doors, waiting. With a sigh, he turned his attention back to the table in front of him. His black backpack was resting against the leg of his chair. Closing his eyes for just a second he breathed in, trying his best to not think about the night. Flashes of Hannah’s lifeless pale body still plagued the corners of his mind, infiltrating every thought he had like a virus.

When he opened his eyes he was startled to see Clay standing above him, a quizzical look on his slender face.

“Clay,” he said, gesturing for him to sit down. “I didn’t hear you come in.”

“Were you closing your eyes to focus your hearing?” The boy sat down across from him. He had on a gray pullover and faded blue jeans; his typical look. The scar across his forehead was faint now, and he no longer had any gashes from Bryce beating the shit out him.

*Fucking idiot*, Tony thought, doing his best to not let his lips rise into a grin. Clay may have been an idiot, but he was the only one who was willing to get in harm's way for Hannah. Not even Tony could claim that for himself. Guilt and regret stayed humming through his heart.

“No,” he said, watching Clay take off his backpack and place it on the floor. “So, what’s up?”

“I know we’re all starting to move forward with our lives, what with the trial being over and the tapes being made public.”

Clay looked down, averting his eyes to the side. His lips jerked up in a way that Tony had seen before. He wanted to say something.

“What is it?” Tony asked.

“I just,” Clay said, sighing and locking eyes. “I don’t feel any better? Do you?”

“No, Clay, I don’t.” Now it was Tony looking down. “I don’t think there’s ever going to be a moment where we feel better about what happened.”

“Then how are people just moving on? Didn’t you see that there’s going to be a party at Marcus’ tonight.”

“I did.”

“Alex is still recovering in the hospital and Justin just left town. No one knows where he is. Bryce got a month in juvie for fuck sake.” Clay was starting to get louder and his neck was reddening as he spoke. “How is any of this okay? How are you all okay!?” By that point, he was not talking to Tony but more shouting it to the world, to anyone in the establishment, anyone listening.

“Clay,” Tony said, calmly reaching his hand out in a gesture for him to take it easy. “I’m here, man. Whatever you need.”
“I need a break,” he said in a childlike manner. Tony wanted to tell him it would be okay and he would be all right and they would move past it, but he knew he couldn’t promise any of that.

Not to mention Clay had taken the tapes the hardest. Every other person barreled through them in one night and passed them on without so much as batting an eye. They all seemed much more worried about what it meant for their well-beings instead of reflecting on how they all cumulatively caused the tragedy. Not Clay though. Tony had watched him receive the package and then that very same day he was at Tony’s house.

His first thought was that Clay had listened and was going to tell Tony about it, but instead, he found his Walkman missing and knew the truth. But as he watched Clay listen and begin to devolve, Tony felt pity for him, but he also felt a swelling in his heart. There was no denying that Clay was a good person who cared deeply for people.

Tony just wished Clay was gay, or at least bi.

He wasn’t pining for him or anything of that sort. But the idea of being with someone like Clay was warming. And the thought of maybe being with Clay was enough to make Tony wish he could just ask him if he was for sure one hundred percent straight. The rumors from their freshman year were what originally got him talking to Clay.

But Clay proved to be straight, and dense. How had he just found out Tony was gay? That was old news. Everyone knew.

“What do you want to do?” Tony asked, meeting eyes with Clay. “You said you need a break. Anything in mind?”

“Not really,” Clay said, fiddling with his fingers. His tongue swiped across his bottom lip and Tony forced himself to keep his focus on his eyes. “I just want….do you have any painkillers?”

“Excuse me?” Now it was Tony licking his bottom lip, only in frustration. “We’re not doing that, Clay. We’re not going to try and numb our feelings. It never works and only causes everything to get worse.”

Clay looked down and lightly shook his head. “I know."

“Wanna go back up to the rock climbing and yell? That kind of helped last time.”

“No,” Clay said, biting his lower lip and wiping his eyes quickly. “I’m just gonna go home.”

“No, Clay, come on,” Tony said, standing up to stop him.

“Just let me be alone, Tony.”

And with that Clay grabbed his backpack and trudged out the door, head in chest.

Tony felt a pulling at his heart to go chase after him and make sure he was okay but before he could, another person sat down from across the table. The person reeked of body odor and was wearing an oversized hoodie that was covering half their face.

“Can I help you?” Tony asked.

The person pushed the hood back and Tony saw that it was Justin. Underneath his eyes were bright red, matching the veins that webbed around his eyeballs. His hands were resting on the table and Tony could see that there was dirt under all his nails. There was no color in his face and his cheeks looked hollowed in.
“I fucked up,” he said, meeting Tony’s gaze. “I don’t think there’s any going back.”

“What did you do, Justin?” Tony asked, apprehension clutching at his gut.

Justin’s bottom lip quivered as he stuck his shaking hands up to his mouth and began to gnaw on his fingernails. “I did something.”

“Are you going to tell me or am I just supposed to guess what other fucked up thing you’re capable of?”

“I….” He leaned forward and Tony did his best to not react to the smell. With a quick look around, Justin moved his lower jaw from side to side and let out a groan.

“Just spit it out, man.”

“I killed Bryce.”

Chapter End Notes

I didn’t include major character death because Bryce was a pos who doesn't deserve life so he's out before this fic even starts

(now that im writing ch 30, anyone who is reading this can see that the tag now has major character death but that is not dealing with Bryce just a heads up)
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Jessica is not going to drink anymore. At least that's what she keeps telling herself.

Chapter Notes

Alright so I know it might seem slow right now but I'm just kind of introducing certain characters and where they're at with their mindset. And since I'm doing it from different POV's these chapters are also pretty short tbh but I'm planning on making this fic be an alright length! Also, there will be multiple chapters for each character so it's not just going to be one per person like the show was, if that makes sense?? Hope you guys enjoy!!!

“Are you going to the party?” Alex asked, lying in the hospital bed, half his head bandaged.

“No,” Jessica said, sitting on a padded chair next to him. “I’m not drinking anymore, and I don’t want to be around them.”

“I understand,” he said.

“I just,” she started, feeling a tightening in her throat. She had not told her dad about what actually happened. When he asked her and she broke down she averted his questions and made it about Hannah. Which was not a complete lie. But then the tapes were made public and he found out anyways and she hated the way he looked at her now, as though she was a victim.

Not to mention sleep was almost nonexistent for Jessica at that point. If it was not a nightmare about Hannah it was a nightmare about the night. Those were the worst. She would wake up in a cold sweat, unable to move. It didn’t help that she had to sleep in the bed it happened in.

“I wish there was a way to go back in time,” she said in a quiet tone.

“You and me both,” he said, pointing to his head. “I would have aimed better.”

“That’s not funny,” she deadpanned, crossing her arms and looking away from him. A tear fell from the side of her left eye and rolled down her cheek before she wiped it away.

The room was plain. No art on the walls, no inspirational posters, nothing. White walls with a window that had a view of the parking lot. In a way it was nice. At school, every corner she turned was a suicide prevention poster. And not that she did not think the school needed them because it was apparent they did, but she felt it would be better for the administration to work with the students instead of sticking up posters and acting as though it was all normal.

Nothing about it was normal.

“I know,” he said, groaning and grabbing at his stomach. “I just say stupid shit. And write stupid
shit.” Looking down, he let out a deep sigh. “I’m sorry, Jess.”

“Me, too.”

“Do we even deserve forgiveness?”

“What you did was shitty,” she said, turning her focus back to him. The room was chilly and she shivered, goosebumps multiplying up her arms. “What I did was shitty. We just,” she felt tears forming in her eyes but this time she didn’t look away. Her voice broke as she spoke. “We just have to live with it, I guess.”

“I tried that,” he said, shrugging as he began to cry. “I couldn’t do it.”

“Yeah, well, I’m here now.” She reached out and grabbed his hand. It was cold and she took her other hand and covered it, rubbing her thumb up and down. “And you don’t get to choose that option again, okay?”

He just shook his head up and down as he wept. Jessica kept her hands on his. They cried together, alone in the room.

-xxx-

She decided to walk home. Her dad had dropped her off and she had told him she would call him before she left to pick her up, but after crying and having all her makeup run down her cheeks, she did not want to have to explain that to him. So instead she hugged Alex goodbye, told him she would be back and they would work through it, before exiting out the door and down the long corridor of sick and dying people, to the fresh outside air. It was almost Halloween, which is why Marcus was throwing the stupid party anyway.

How could he throw a fucking party after everything? After what happened at the last party to her, and to Hannah at Bryce’s. There was a twisting in her stomach, an uneasiness that swirled around with no indication of stopping. That was becoming a normalcy that she needed to accept. Her anxiety was on another level ever since the tapes, but it had not been constant until Justin finally admitted what happened, triggering the memories from the night.

Every time Jessica thought about it she felt physically sick. Her body would have a hot flash, her skin felt like pins were stabbing it all over as her heart would start to race and bang in her chest. She just wanted it to all stop.

She craved time to herself, which was mainly only when she showered since her dad decided to hover over her and make sure she was okay at all waking moments. And it’s not that she was unappreciative of it, but she did want to just be alone and not have to talk, listen, think, feel. Alcohol had been her saving grace. It was like a cure for a moment, and then the hangover would happen, the memories would flood back in, and she would need more to stop it.

But she could not go back to drinking. It was not an option.

Her mind continued to race as she walked down the street. A blue car drove by and did a sudden u-turn, the sound of their wheels screeched against the asphalt. She looked up and saw it slowly driving by. A tightening formed in her chest, she could feel her palms were already sweaty, and her legs started to feel weak. All her mind did was play the worst case scenario in her head, and none of them ended well.

“Hey,” a person shouted, leaning out from the window. It was Courtney. Tyler was driving. “You coming to the party tonight.”
Jessica was able to feel a smidge of relief, but that morphed into anger. “No,” she said, crossing her arms and continuing to walk.

The car went into reverse and followed her. “Come on, Jess, we need to get back to normal.”

“I’m sorry,” she said, stopping and pivoting on her feet. “Were you raped?”

“I--”

“No, exactly. You’re just too chicken shit to come out and will do anything to stop people from knowing. I mean really, Tyler? That’s who you’re choosing to be ‘straight’ with?”

“I’m sorry about what happened to you,” Courtney said, reaching over and grabbing Tyler’s hand. “But we’re together and I’m not gay.”

Jessica rolled her eyes and held up her middle finger. “Go have fun being fake and pretending like everyone else.”

“Stay safe out there,” Tyler said, leaning over Courtney to make eye contact with Jessica.

“Fuck off, Tyler.” Jessica huffed and started walking down the street again -- faster than last time.

She walked past a liquor store and stopped in her tracks, looking at the sign, contemplating.

“You can’t,” she said to herself, about to walk away when she looked inside and saw the television above the counter had the news on. A picture of Hannah was in the corner as the anchor spoke, and then a video of tapes showed up.

There was no escaping it.

All the cravings for vodka that she had felt so heavily since the party came back. Her mouth watered at the thought of it and her mind craved the lack of brain function that came with drinking copious amounts.

One more time would not hurt, right?

She still had the fake I.D. that Justin had gotten for her when they first started dating. Maybe she would just get a handle and once she finished it that would be it. For good. Besides, she had read that quitting anything cold turkey was a sure-fire way for it to not work. She nodded, starting to agree with her own logic and convince herself that one more time would not matter. It would be the break she needed before she really started to deal with everything.

It was a necessity.

With a deep breath, she entered the front of the store, the bell alerting the worker of her presence.

“Hi,” she said, walking up and placing her I.D on the counter. “Can I get a handle of your cheapest vodka.”
Clay

Chapter Summary

Clay goes to a park to think, and then someone shows up.

Chapter Notes

If anyone is reading this I have a clear idea for where the fic is headed and it's just starting!! Again just setting up certain characters for the actual plot~*~*~ and next chapter will be a Tony chapter again so that way there's some explanation as to what the hell Justin did and all that drama!! Thanks for reading this if you are tho and I hope you guys like it!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It wasn’t supposed to feel like this. After he got Bryce to confess and after the tapes got turned over and the school lost the lawsuit -- which it deserved -- he had this idea in his mind that somehow the healing would begin. This absurd idea that because the truth came out and he no longer was harboring the secrets that he himself would start feel better. That was not the case.

As the weeks went on after the trial and the school settled down, he felt like he was the only one still reeling from it all. The core group of assholes who caused it all were sticking together: Marcus, Courtney, Zach, and Sheri. Tyler stayed on the outskirts always butting in where he was not wanted. Clay avoided everyone except for Tony and Jessica.

Jessica and he weren't overly friendly or hung out or anything of that sort, but they would nod in the hallways, he would check in on her every once in awhile, make sure she was doing the best she could be. It disgusted him that they all listened to the tapes before him and did nothing. Not one person tried to comfort her or confront Bryce. People really do only care if it directly affects them.

He was sitting on a swing at a park. Not the one where Justin started the domino effect that led to Hannah's life being snuffed out. No one else was there. It was Friday afternoon and Clay expected more people to bring their kids out, but no one seemed to want to. Maybe it was the overcast weather. Even if it rained he did not care. Maybe he could catch pneumonia and get out of school for a while.

A vibrating came from his pocket and he tugged his phone out. His mom’s name lit up on the screen.

“Goddammit,” he mumbled to himself before sliding his finger to answer. “Hey, mom.”

“Where are you, sweetie? I’m making dinner and need to know when you’re going to be home.” She did not sound like she was worried, nor was there any indication that she was mad that he was not home, but knowing her she wanted him home as soon as possible.

“I’m at the park right now just relaxing,” he said, kicking some bark from under his shoes. The
smell of freshly cut grass surrounded him. “What time will dinner be ready?”

“In about an hour.”

“Okay.” Kicking his leg against the ground he started to swing lightly back and forth, closing his eyes. “I’ll be home for dinner.”

“Good.” She paused, and he could hear her kitchen timer going off in the background. “Okay, well the food is cooking now so I will see you when you get home, okay?”

“Okay.”

“I love you.”

“I know,” he said, before hanging up and opening back up his eyes. The breeze felt nice against his skin as he swung, the sound of the bolts creaking with each movement.

There was an urge to call Tony. He didn’t even know why he wanted to, but he did. Maybe it was because Tony was the only one he could trust through it all. Even if he did string Clay along. But truth be told, if he had simply told Clay from the beginning what was on the tapes, he would have never had listened. Sure, he would be much better off because hearing about the tapes is much different than sitting down and listening to them.

Anyone who listened to them now -- or read the transcripts of them that were put online -- has heard them, but they do not have to live knowing they personally caused it. Clay did. All he had to do was say he loved her, say he cared for her, show her a genuine kindness that he lacked due to his uneasiness around her. She was the most beautiful girl he had ever laid eyes on and when he would try to act cool or nonchalant around her, he failed.

Jeff was helping him work through his awkwardness and….an aching nestled into his heart. Jeff Atkins. He was so nice, so good looking, so easy going. He never once had to help Clay with anything but he did because he cared about other people. His death was a tragedy. Clay wished he could get the images out his head, but the memories were seared into his brain like a branding. Jeff in his car. The smell of gasoline and burnt rubber. The sound of broken glass under his feet as he rushed to help.

The image of Jeff slouched lifeless in his car never left Clay’s mind. Powder from the airbag mixed with the blood and stuck to the side of his face. The smell of beer came wafting out from inside the car and Clay remembered feeling a swirling of emotions from anger to anguish. He lost one of the only good guy friends he had -- aside from Tony -- and he was not sure he would ever recover.

“Is this swing taken?” Ryan’s voice cut through Clay’s thoughts.

“What do you want?” Clay asked, his grip tightening on the chains.

“I don’t know,” he said, shrugging and sitting down on the swing next to Clay. His hair was swooped the side and he had on a scarf with a cardigan on. “I want to work on being a better person, I guess.”

“Oh, yeah? How are you going to do that?”

“Well for starters I’m going to start being honest.” He looked over and met Clay’s eyes. “What I did, to Hannah, it wasn’t right.”

“No shit.”
“And I know I should have said something before but I was scared.” Ryan’s eyes were bloodshot and his pupils were enlarged. “It’s no excuse, I know that. I just thought she was timid and needed a push.”

“You stole her fucking work.” Clay was sick of hearing excuses.

“I did something I can never undo. We all did.” Ryan sniffled, rubbing his red nose. His cheeks were equally as blushed. “I feel like shit.”

“Yeah,” Clay said, hearing the sincerity in his voice. There was a part of him that wanted to scream and shout and cuss Ryan out, but another part of him thought about Hannah and how all being mean ever did was cause more and more heartache. “Me, too.”

“And we’re just expected to keep on going, like, as if it isn’t traumatizing what happened.”

“I want something to numb it,” Clay admitted, his knuckles white around the chains. “I just keep having dreams, or rather nightmares, about everything. I feel like I’m losing my mind.”

“I’m taking Xanax and some Vicodin from a surgery I had a year ago,” Ryan said, raising his eyebrows. “Wanna come over and just tune out the world together?”

“I….” Clay was going to say he had to be home for dinner but decided it didn’t matter. None of it really did. Acting like a normal family. His mom knew what happened, knew every detail. Hell, she probably knew more than him since she was the litigator for the school. She of all people should know making food and pretending to be okay was not a cure. It just made Clay feel like she was trying to move past it all and act okay when he was anything but okay. “You know what, yeah actually. I’d love to.”

“Cool,” Ryan said, standing up and running his hands through his hair. “I drove.”

“Perfect. I walked.”
“Start talking right now,” Tony said, hands gripping the steering wheel tightly. Justin was in the passenger seat, his leg bouncing up and down. He looked like shit.

“I made it look like a suicide, it’s fine.” Justin’s voice was shaky, his hands were vibrating and if Tony did not know any better he’d think he was on drugs. “I just didn’t think there’d be that much blood. Fuck! There was so much blood. It just kept pouring out of his wrists and I just stood there and I didn’t leave until I knew and I can’t get it out of my head and I--”

“Okay, slow down,” Tony said, breathing through his nose. His heart was drumming in his chest as his mind ran wild with different scenarios. He protected the tapes for Hannah and that nearly ruined him watching the collateral damage. There was nothing tethering him to helping Justin. “First, let’s start off with where the fuck you’ve been?”

“Jessica didn’t wanna see me, man.”

“So you just left town?” There was no particular destination Tony was driving, he just was not sure what he was going to do. He now knew about a murder and if it ever got out he could go down for being an accomplice. His family would have his back and get him an alibi immediately, plus he would deny anything if Justin ever tried to say shit, but still it was a shitty predicament to be in.

“I took all the cash from my mom’s boyfriend’s stash and dipped. I was staying in this cheap ass motel until I ran out of money and then I had nowhere to go.”

“Hence the look and smell,” Tony said, side eyeing Justin.

“Fuck,” Justin groaned out, dragging his hands through his hair. “I can’t….I don’t know what the fuck to do, Tony. You gotta help me.”

“What I need is for you to tell me what happened. I’m not going to get any more involved until I know the truth.”

“I heard your family can take care of problems.” Justin looked over, gnawing on his lower lip. “I’ve seen your knuckles before, I know you don’t fuck around.”

“Keep my family out of your mouth,” Tony said, making eye contact with him. “Now tell me
“Well Bryce got out a week after being in juvie,” Justin said, his lower jaw moving from side to side. “Did you know that? He did that….he, I let him, and he just, I don’t understand.”

“That’s the justice system for you,” Tony said, not surprised at all that Bryce got out. Cases like that happen all over the country. Wealthy white athlete rapes and gets the sympathy from the community at large, ultimately making their life altering despicable act of violence seem nothing more than a prank. Bryce’s family was loaded and lived on the north side of town where all the city councilpersons lived. Not to mention his family had their influence and money in the pockets of most law enforcement and politicians in town. Tony was surprised he even got reprimanded in the first place.

“It’s fucked up.”

“Life is fucked up.”

“You’re telling me,” Justin said, doing a quick chuckle. Tony was not amused. “Anyways, so I went to Bryce’s after sleeping in alleys and shit and he let me in to stay without even asking questions. He’s always been like that. Good to me, you know? But I couldn’t look at his smug face and act like everything was okay anymore. I can’t act okay anymore. I’m fucking falling apart, man.”

“That seems to be a common occurrence lately.”

“So, I slipped him a sleeping pill when his parents were out of town last night and once he fell asleep I dragged him to the bathroom and put him in the tub and I did to him what Hannah did to herself. Felt poetic or some shit.”

“You did what?” Tony swerved to the side of the road and stopped, signaling his hazards.

“I figured if it looked like he killed himself the same way Hannah did no one would question it. Plus I wiped my fingerprints from the blade and his parents didn’t know I was staying there for the two days so I’m good. I’m good.”

“You’re anything but good,” Tony said, putting the car in park and shifting his body to face Justin. “So what now, big guy? You gonna go back to school like nothing? You gonna go face your mom and her boyfriend like nothing? You gonna pretend like everything’s fine? Because that didn’t work out too well last time.”

“Fuck, I know!” His eyes were full of tears and he looked as if he was on the verge of having a meltdown. He had patchy scruff from not shaving on his chin and cheeks, with a small line of hair above his lip. The dark circles under his eyes were growing by the second and there was an emptiness in his eyes. “How did it all get this bad?”

“Are you seriously…” Tony shook his head in disbelief. “Let’s see. You let Jessica get assaulted by your best friend. That’s how.”

“I’m gonna puke.”

“Nope,” Tony said, shooting his arm across and opening up the passenger door. “Get the fuck out. Not in my car.”

Justin stumbled out onto the side of the road, landing on his hands and knees and began vomiting. His sides would visibly suck in with each heave and Tony could see his entire body was shaking.
Why was he even still with Justin? He could drive off right then and not have it be his problem, not have to think about any of it. But people were looking for Justin. Tony could not have him spilling this cluster fuck of information on anyone else.

“I was going to see Jessica when I saw your car at Monet’s,” Justin said, wiping his mouth and pushing himself up, sitting back onto the passenger side seat with his legs out the door and his elbows resting on his legs, hands under his chin.

“Leave Jessica alone.” Tony knew she had been through enough. The whole school knew now. She was strong but knowing that might break the last bit holding her together. Bryce was now the third kid from school to die -- Alex’s decision to shoot himself didn’t go as planned, otherwise, it’d be the fourth in two months. The town, the kids, the school, and fuck, even Tony, needed a break from the violence.

“I did it for her.” Tears streamed down his face and connected with snot that was hanging from his nose. “I love her.” Justin broke down and was sobbing, his body quaking as he wailed out. “I fucked it all up!”

“Yeah,” Tony said, “you did. And killing Bryce, what you did, doesn’t change any of that.”

“It’s a start, though. Right?” Justin looked up, his eyes were bloodshot and spit was bubbling in the corner of his lips. “It’s a start to making things better.”

“No, it’s not, Justin.” Tony looked up at the sky as if to say ‘why me.’ “If Jessica ever forgives you, which I doubt will happen, it has to be on her terms, her time, and it has to be a decision that will be conducive to her well being. Killing Bryce doesn’t give her any of that.”

“It shows I care.”

“You showed her how much you cared the moment you let Bryce into that room.”

“Fuck you, Tony.” Justin wiped his face on his sleeve and stood up, standing at the side of the car. With a slam of the door, he leaned his head in through the rolled down window. “Thanks for nothing.”

“No problem,” Tony said, shifting his car into drive and slamming on the gas, watching Justin become but a speck in the background. “Fucking idiot.”

That sentiment made him think of Clay. Clay was a fucking idiot in a different way, in an endearing way. Tony reached for his phone in the center console, scrolling through his contacts for Clay. The way they ended their conversation at Monet’s had him worried about Clay. He should check in and make sure that he is okay.

The phone rang twice before Clay’s voice came on the line.

“Tony,” he said, dragging out his name in a cute way. “How are you, my friend?”


“Me? Yeah, man, never been better.” He sounded as though he was drunk and Tony could hear there was someone else in the background. “So, what’s up, Tone Tone?”

“Are you drunk?”

“No, of course not,” Clay laughed, and then there was thudding and scratching on the other end followed by silence.
“Clay? You still there?”

“Sorry, I dropped my phone.”

“Hey, Tony,” a familiar voice rang through. Ryan.

“Are you with Ryan right now?” Tony could feel his muscles tensing up. He and Ryan had a good thing going but the kid would not get off prescription drugs. He said he was an artist and they were tortured souls who numb themselves and write about their pain. Tony thought it was all a load of shit.

“Yeah, we ran into each other and he offered me some….” Clay stopped mid sentence and started giggling. “Anyways, I got to go, Ryan is going to read some poetry to me.”

“Clay, don’t hang up, Clay!” It was too late, the phone call ended and Tony now had a new destination in mind: Ryan’s.
Clay

Chapter Summary

Clay is hanging out at Ryan's and letting go of his worries for a short while.

Chapter Notes

Okay! So we are moving along with this story now! hope you guys are still liking it! ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Clay had called his mom after getting to Ryan’s and explained that he ran into him on his way home and they had not talked in awhile. His mom did not sound the most pleased with the excuse but she ultimately said it was fine that he go over, just not to be too late.

Ryan drove to his house, the radio on low, enough to make the car ride not be silent. Clay had his hands cupped in his lap with his backpack in between his legs. Ryan drove a stick shift and the ride was not the smoothest, but Clay didn’t even know how to drive manually and thought it was cool that Ryan did. At one point they did stall out on a stop sign at the top of the hill and Clay let out a small chuckle as Ryan quickly got the car back going.

“That happens more often than you’d think,” Ryan said, rolling his eyes. “My dad got me this car because he said,” and Ryan deepened his voice to imitate him. “Real men know how to drive stick. Whatever the fuck that means.”

“I guess I’m not a real man,” Clay said, shrugging. “I don’t even drive.”

“Do you have your license at least?” The street Ryan turned down had just been freshly paved and the ride felt so much smoother as they drove along.

“Nope. It’s a small enough town I can bike. Never really felt the need to get it or anything.”

Ryan widened his eyes and mouthed “okay,” before talking. “One word, Clay. Freedom. Sure you have your bike and can get places but if shit ever gets bad or overwhelming and you had your license, you could,” he was nodding his head along as he spoke. “You could go anywhere and just get away for a while.”

Clay did not say anything immediately but mulled it over. He did have a point. The need for a license never really was a pressing matter that Clay felt he needed to address. Assuming he went to college, his plan was to take the test once he was eighteen so he would not need to train with a driver. Then he could get it the summer before and be good for adulthood. But Ryan had a point he never really considered until lately. Escape from the town just for a short while.

“I never thought of that,” Clay finally said, looking down at his hands.

“You’re welcome.”
Ryan lived on a cul de sac and his house was at the very end of the street. It was a wooden two-story blue home with a white wraparound porch that was home to a patio swing. A weeping willow was dancing in the wind on his lawn, shading the front of the house. No cars were in the driveway or the garage as they pulled in. Turned out his parents were still at work.

The front door opened into a living room with a long white couch, and a smaller counterpart along the walls facing a massive television against the opposite wall. The floors were wooden, even the staircase, as they made their way up.

Ryan’s room was a decent size. He had his queen size bed along the wall to the right, shelves were above his bed. A dresser was next to the door on the right, harboring a flat screen on top of it. The floor was also wooden and had a plethora of scattered clothes on there, overflowing from a plastic white tall hamper in the corner of his room, next to the sliding wooden closet doors. There was a window directly across from the door above a computer desk with a leather rolling chair pushed in front.

There were no posters, which Clay was not expecting. Ryan seemed the type to have dramatic sayings or some dark twisted art hanging on his walls. Instead, he had a simple beige painted room with nothing to indicate he was interested in poetry or art at all. Clay also noticed his door did not have a lock on it.

“Let me just clean up,” Ryan said, gathering some of the clothes and shoving them deep into the already full basket.

“Nice room,” he commented, sitting down on the edge of the bed.

Ryan pushed the hamper into the closet and quickly slid the door shut behind it. “Yeah, it’s all right.” He walked over to the dresser and slid out the top drawer, reaching in and pulling out a baggy. “Now, let’s take some pills and just be on cloud nine for a short while, yeah?”

Clay had a pulling in his stomach, that now that he was there and the drugs were a reality, maybe he shouldn’t do it. He ignored that feeling. “Okay, let’s do it.”

“That’s what I’m talking about, Jensen,” Ryan said, hopping over to the bed and sitting down right next to Clay, their shoulders touching. “So,” he said, reaching in and pulling out a yellow rectangular pill. “This one just wipes away your anxiety like a fucking superhero, and this one,” he said, showing Clay an oval shaped white pill. “It’s for pain, but if you take it without physical pain,” he pointed to his temple, “it helps your mental pain.”

Clay’s heart was raving in his chest and his palms were clammy but he nodded and took the yellow pills first. Before thinking too much on it he shoved the pill in his mouth and bit down.

“Oh, my God,” Ryan said, eyes widening. “Clay, no!”

The flavor that erupted into Clay’s mouth made him want to puke. It was the most bitter, awful taste he had ever experienced, and there was not enough spit in his throat to wash down the pasty powder coating his entire mouth. He started to gag, feeling his stomach close and widen as if getting ready for the big finale.

Ryan rushed to a nightstand by his bed and grabbed a coke bottle that was half empty. He undid the lid and shoved it in Clay’s hands. Clay desperately started chugging the flat soda, clogging his nose in an attempt to mute the flavor. He swished the drink around in his mouth and smacked his lips open and close, coughing.

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Ryan started laughing, taking the drink from Clay and taking the last bit to swallow his pill. “I cannot believe you bit a Xanax.”

Clay looked up tears in his eyes from choking it down. “That was the worst thing I’ve ever tasted.”

“Well,” Ryan said, getting down on his knees and reaching under his bed, pulling out a box of coke bottles. “It might not taste good, but it’ll be good to you.”

Once the awfulness of it finally was rid from his palate he swigged down the next pill. The two of them sat on the floor, backs against the bed frame and legs out in front of them. It had been about twenty minutes when Clay felt an easing in his entire being that he had not experienced in, well, ever. His lips rose and his cheeks puffed and before he knew it he was sitting there grinning.

“Told you,” Ryan said, nudging Clay with his left shoulder. “Here,” he said, handing Clay a brownie that was wrapped in foil.

“Where?” Clay asked in disbelief, still smiling. “Where on God’s green earth did you just pull a brownie from?”

“I keep a stash of shit under my bed so I don’t need to leave my room when my parents are home. I’m independent,” he said, attempting a believable laugh.

“Well,” Clay said, nudging him back. “It makes for being a great host.”

Ryan smiled a genuine grin that Clay had never seen on the boy before. His eyes crinkled in the corners and had a certain twinkle to them. It made Clay feel the best he’d felt in a while. Just knowing he could bring someone happiness, even if just for a moment was enough to make his heart warm.

Clay ate the brownie and loved it. After a Xanax dinner, a brownie dessert was a much-welcomed friend. There were even nuts inside it, adding a perfect bit of crunch to every bite. He closed his eyes and he slowly chewed the last bite, savoring every bit of flavor he could. When he opened them Ryan was watching him, grinning.

“I’ve never seen someone eat a brownie as though it was a five-star restaurant dessert.”

“Shut-up,” Clay said, laughing. “It was really good.”

“It was homemade.” Ryan shrugged, a proud look on his face.

“You made that? That piece of heaven came from you.”

“Yours truly,” Ryan pretended to bow. “I like to bake.”

“Well, I like to eat,” Clay joked.

“I could make you something one day,” Ryan said, and the atmosphere changed in the room, a palpable shift. It felt as though all background noises stopped and the two of them were the only ones in the world. Clay was not sure what he was feeling or why, but Ryan had lowered his voice with that last comment and appeared to be closer.

Clay’s phone rang at that moment and he jumped, reaching into his pocket and pulling out his phone. It was Tony. Usually, his stomach would be in knots but he did not have a worry in the world.
“It’s Tony,” Clay said.

“I’m gonna find some poetry to show you,” Ryan said standing up and going to his desk.

Clay answered the call. “Tony, how are you, my friend?”

Tony sounded worried as he answered, and Clay could not help but find it cute. Tony was always checking in on him and making sure he was okay and for the first time he actually felt okay. His mind was not on overdrive, his body did not feel tense and anxious, and he could finally smile care freely and not feel guilty.

Ryan pulled out a wad of papers and held up a picture for Clay to see. It was a giant penis drawn on a paper with words written inside. Clay’s mouth dropped open and he accidentally dropped the phone, giggling.

“What the fuck?” Clay whispered, picking back up the phone and apologizing. Ryan called out Tony’s name in the background and Clay held up his fingers for him to be quiet, but he also was laughing.

“Get off,” Ryan whined quietly. “I’m gonna read you the penis poem.”

Clay laughed in the middle of his sentence and told Tony he had to go listen to some poetry because he needed to know what was going on with the penis shaped poem. Hanging up, he got up and laid on the bed, his legs hanging off.

“Okay, you need to explain to me why there’s a poem and the words are in the shape of a penis,” Clay said, hands behind his head.

“It was when I was dealing with my sexuality,” Ryan said, plopping onto the bed and sitting next to Clay, his legs crossed under him. “I was afraid to admit I might like guys and I decided to write a poem.”

“And it just happened to come out in the shape of a dick?” Clay barked out a laugh. “That’s impressive.”

“Shut-up, Clay.” Ryan kicked his foot against Clay’s side softly. “Art is an expression and I was working through it and wanted a visual expression. Art is supposed to be shocking and vulgar and painful, it’s supposed to evoke something in people. Even if that’s just laughing,” he said, rolling his eyes.

“Sorry,” Clay said, sitting up and leaning on his side, propping his head up with his arm. “I didn’t know.”

“It’s fine.” Ryan paused and made eye contact. “Do you still want to hear it?”

“Yeah,” Clay said, biting his lower lip in anticipation.

“Okay.” He held the paper in front of his face and started reading. “I’m told what I feel is valid, but not that feeling. That aberrant sinful lusting feeling where my life is a lie. I dream of chiseled rugged men, I crave the vulgarity I’m told is fallacious. But I act on nothing, kiss soft skinned delicate women who crave what I covet, what I can’t provide. I am awake but afraid, tired and livid, quiet and on fire. Labeled and judged when in the end we’re just skin and bones and nothing more.”

Clay sat up and clapped, making him think of his own issues freshmen year and since. The reason the gay rumors flew around is because someone had grabbed his phone and he had gay porn on
the last window. A rookie mistake he would never let happen again, but it got out and people labeled him gay. He didn’t know to explain to people he was not sure what he was or what he liked. Girls and boys attracted him, it didn’t matter really. He was attracted to the person themselves and there was no way of wording that without everyone calling him gay.

There was an understanding that resonated with him after hearing the poem and he respected Ryan for being honest and open.

“It was really good,” Clay said.

“It’s shit. I wrote it when I was so much younger and inexperienced.”

“Well, I really liked it,” Clay said, “honestly.”

“Thanks.” The two of them were silent for a short while after until Ryan cleared his throat. “So, I was going to go to the party tonight. It starts in a little. You wanna go?”

Clay thought it over for a second. “I don’t know?”

“Come on,” Ryan said. “You’re basically invincible to anxiety and shit right now, plus, when was the last time you ever just lost control and let loose.”


“That’s not healthy, Clay,” Ryan said, putting his hand on Clay’s shoulder. “People need a release of all their stress and worries. Parties provide that. For one night you just let loose and let yourself enjoy the moments.”

“I don’--”

“How ‘bout this? If you get uncomfortable or anything we can leave.” Ryan wiggled his eyebrows and tilted his head. “Come on,” he whined, “for me.”

“Fine,” Clay said, rolling his eyes. “I’ll go. But if it gets out of control I want to leave.”

“It shouldn’t.” Ryan stood up. “It’s a costume party but I think our costumes are perfect.”

“What are they?” Clay asked, furrowing his brow.

“Normal teenagers who are happy.”

“Yeah, that’s definitely a costume,” Clay said, standing up and feeling his legs for the first time since all the pills. He felt like he was walking on a cloud and loved every minute of it.

“Shall we?” Ryan said, holding out his arm.

“We shall,” Clay said, linking arms as the two of them left the room to go to Marcus’ party.

Chapter End Notes

Also like I don't write poetry so that was the best I could even think of hahahahah and the party is going to be coming in a short while just have to get back to some other
storylines that haven't been caught up aka Jessica! So she will be the next chapter~*~*
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Jessica makes it home inebriated.

Chapter Notes

Hope you guys like this chapter! I'm so pumped for the rest of this fic! Thanks again to the people reading, I hope you're liking it :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jessica was waltzing down the street, her body swaying from side to side with each step. The bottle was hidden under her sleeve as she would lift it up and swig the alcohol, inhaling sharply after each gulp. She could feel that it was lighter, and when she surveyed the glass inside her jacket she saw that she was already more than halfway done with the vodka. That would explain the lack of feeling in her legs as if she was walking on a conveyor belt.

She was two blocks away from her house at that point and needed to make sure her makeup was not smeared and that she did not look at all as though she was crying, and inebriated. Most times when she was drinking she was already home and able to hide the bottle if anyone walked up the stairs and finish it at a pace that did not feel rushed. But with her dad being on high alert as of late, and her mom checking in on her every thirty minutes, she knew that she needed to finish it before she got inside.

Preparing her esophagus and stomach for the burning liquid, she took a deep breath and held the cold rim up to her lips, tilting her head back as the fire water ran down her throat. Her eyes were watering and she wanted to cough but she knew if she did it was all over and she’d probably end up puking some of it up. There was nothing worse than vomiting fresh alcohol just to have it burn the inside of your nose. She knew that from experience.

The bottle was empty and she looked around, seeing no one was on the street. She took it and threw it as far as she could into an empty lot that was for sale.

Time to compose herself.

Holding up her cell phone, she adjusted her hair, checked her eyes, wiped off the bit of mascara that was clumped on the side of them, and blinked a bunch of times, making sure her eyes looked clear. If she could just make it to her room and say she didn’t feel well she would be safe. Sure, her parents would check on her but at least she’d be lying in her bed, covers over herself, and not trying to stand still because that was not working out so well. Her body swayed as she looked into her camera.

“Come on, Jessica,” she told herself. “You literally were drunk at school. You got this.”

She shook her hands as the sound of her fingers hitting against one another filled the autumn air. Each step she took was calculated. She made a left and was on her block. Both her parents' cars
were in the driveway. When she would blink it felt slowed down, everything was starting to feel slowed down as she trekked forward.

The sun was starting to set by that point and she could see the Halloween decorations were already lit up outside of her house. Along the lawn was a blow up caldron that was attached to a smoke machine, an inflatable green witch with a wart cover nose stood beside it. Fake spider webs hung in the trees and weaved across to their roof where a giant furry black spider sat. The brick walkway that led to her front door was bordered with small jack o'lantern outdoor lights.

For such a serious man her father sure did love to decorate.

The door had tethered letters that spelled out “Happy Halloween.” She let out a sigh and reached for the handle, twisting the knob. The door creaked open and she almost said “shit” out loud as she saw her dad sitting on the couch that was to the right of the door, facing the television on the wall.

“Jessica,” he said, pausing whatever he was watching. “I’ve been waiting for you to call me to come get you.”

“Yeah,” she said, focusing on every word and doing her best to sound sober. “I wanted to walk home and get some fresh air.” Her body swayed. She took a step forward to deter from it. “I’m not feeling too well, actually. I’m going to go lie down.”

“You think you’re coming down with something?” He asked, standing up and striding over to her.

*Shit,* she thought. “Yes, sir.”

“Let me take a look at you.”

Jessica did her absolute best to stay still, breath in and out quietly and normally, and not draw attention to herself. Her father looked her up and down and held the back of his hand to her forehead.

“You feel clammy,” he commented, sniffing the air and cocking his head. His eyebrows went from arches to daggers. “Have you been drinking?”

“What, no.” She crossed her arms and swatted his hand away. “Can’t I just not feel well.”

“You reek of vodka,” he said, crossing his arms. “Get up to your room right now.”

“Dad, I--”

“That’s sir to you. Now get out of my sight.”

“Sir, please.”

“I said get out of here, now!” He barked the last part, a vein on the side of his temple was protruding out. As he made his way back the couch she heard him mumble. “The whole fucking town is already talking and you’re drinking, Jesus.”

“Yes, sir,” she said, putting her head down and trudging up the stairs to her room. She held onto the railing as she made her way up. The sound of the show coming back on filled the void.

Why couldn’t anything seem to be going right in her life? The town, the people. It was toxic. She locked the door behind her and flounced onto her bed, falling face first into her pillows.
Squeezing the sides around her face she let out a scream into the fabric as it drowned out the noise. Her throat burned afterward but it made her muscles loosen and she felt better.

Buzzing came from her phone and she looked at her screen. There was a message from Sheri.

**Sheri**: Are you coming to the party or what? I don’t want to be the only girl there!

**Jessica**: No, I don’t want to.

Not even a minute after she sent the message her phone rang.

“What, Sheri,” Jessica said, rolling onto her back and looking up at the popcorn speckled ceiling.

“Jess, come on,” Sheri’s voice came through. “I’ll even pick you up. It’s just a small party, honest to God. It’s more of a kick back than an actual party.”

“Sheri, I’m already drunk,” Jessica stifled out a laugh and rubbed her hand down her face. “My dad’s mad at me. There’s no way he’s gonna let me go.”

“Sneak out. I’ll wait at the end of the street. Please,” she whined out. “You and I can just hang out and have fun. Like we used to.”

“I haven’t had actual fun in a while,” Jessica admitted.

“Me either,” Sheri said, sighing. “I still have community service every weekend, but tomorrow is canceled for some reason so I can finally go out! I want to start feeling better, don’t you?”

“Yeah.” Her voice sounded childlike.

“Well, in order for that to happen you have to make an effort. This is my effort. Going out like normal teenagers and not thinking about the past. I know what happened was fucked up but I don’t think Hannah left us those tapes to make us get into the same mindset as her. I think she wanted us to think about it, and be better.” Sheri sounded so optimistic. “Come on, Jess. We have to start somewhere, right?”

“Fine,” Jessica said, huffing. “Be at the end of my street in--”

“I’m already sort of here,” Sheri said cautiously.

“A bold assumption don’t you think?”

“Oh, come on, I know you. We went to cheer camp together and shared all our secrets, remember.”

“Yeah,” Jessica said, getting up and going into the bathroom that connected to her room. She was blessed enough with clear skin that she did not feel the pressure to put on foundation to go out. “I still haven’t told anyone about you and Courtney.”

“Oh, my God,” Sheri shrieked, laughing. “Why won’t she just come out? Who cares? I’m bi and no one bats an eye at me.”

“Maybe you scarred her,” Jessica joked, putting on deodorant and spraying herself with some body mist. “Okay, I’m going to climb out now.”

“See you in a minute.”
Jessica hung up and shoved her phone in her pocket. Next time she saw Alex she would have stories for him, at least. They needed to not focus solely on the past. He needed to hear some normal stories to make him know there’s still life out there. *Yeah*, she thought. This night out was for Alex in the long run. It would be okay.

Opening up her bedroom window she slowly climbed down the trellis, hating the feeling of vines on her hands. Each step down she took was with determination. She could just see her drunk self slipping and getting her father even more incensed. After what felt like five minutes she made it to the sweet concrete of her driveway. Peeking out to make sure no one was in the front yard, Jessica booked it down the street, running as fast as she could to Sheri’s car.

“Hey,” she said, opening up the passenger door and getting in.

“No costume?” Sheri asked, and Jessica shook her head no.

Sheri had on angel wings with a small halo that sat atop her hair. A white feathery nightgown that stopped above her knees was her only other piece of garment. She looked really pretty.

“You look really good,” Jessica said, strapping in.

“Thank you,” Sheri said, grinning. “Let’s go.”

“I’m going to shut off my phone so my dad doesn’t call.”

“Good idea,” Sheri said, turning out of the block and heading down the street. “You gonna drink anything else tonight?”

“I don’t know? Should I?” Jessica asked.

“Well, if you do I’m cool with it. I can be your D.D.” With a rolling of her eyes, she pointed to what looked like a tube underneath her steering wheel. “They put a breathalyzer in my car because of the stop sign incident. Even if I wanted to drink I can’t. Unless we spend the night?”

“At Marcus’?” Jessica scrunched her face up.

“Yeah, you’re right. No.” Sheri laughed. “We can steal a bottle and leave early, go to my house and hang out?”

“That actually sounds great to me.”

“It’s settled then.” Sheri wiggled in her seat and smiled. “Go have some fun at the party and then leave to have even more fun.”

Jessica turned and smiled at her. “I have a good feeling about tonight.”

“Me, too.”

Chapter End Notes

My plans for the rest of this fic are when all the drama starts to happen :))))))))
Clay

Chapter Summary

The party begins and shots commence.

Chapter Notes

Hope you guys enjoy this chapter!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You’re good to drive, right?” Clay asked, slouching in the passenger seat, leaning his head against his arm and looking out the window.

“Of course,” Ryan said, easing off the brake and backing out of his driveway. “I am always on some sort of pill as of late.” They started their drive. Clay listened to Ryan as he spoke. His eyes felt heavy as the street lights flashed by. “I used to just take one before school to ease my mind because believe it or not….” He turned and gave Clay a facetious look. “We have a bullying problem at our school.”

“No? You don’t say?” Clay said, acting shocked. “I had no idea.”

“I know, it’s very under the table type stuff but it’s happening, and Xanax gives me the strength to deal. Although, lately it’s more of a couple a day to get me through it.”

“Understandable.”

“On to better topics. Tonight.” Ryan came to a red light and turned in his seat to face Clay. “Have you ever had a blowjob shot?”

“Can’t say that I have.”

“We’re definitely getting you one tonight. What’s your drink of choice?”

“Beer?” Clay didn’t know anything about alcohol. Besides the forty that Justin forced him to drink and the beer at Jessica’s party at the end of summer, Clay never really delved into the lifestyle of drinking spirits. That’s what his dad called them.

“Ew.” The light turned green and Ryan averted his eyes back to the road. “Well, the rule is beer before liquor never sicker, liquor before beer in the clear.”

“What does that even mean?” The seat warmers were on and Clay wiggled in his seat, stretching his arms out in front of him. It felt incredibly satisfying and relaxing.

“You’re so innocent,” he replied, smirking. “It means if you drink beer and then start getting hard alcohol you’re guaranteed to puke and have a sloppy fucking night. The best thing to do is stick to one drink the whole night.”
“Oh, okay.” Clay had not known that. “So, just beer.”

“No. Beer is for douchey frat guys and Marcus. I think some rum would treat you well. They always have mixers at these type of things and I make the best drinks. Trust me.”

Clay’s phone started ringing and he could see that it was Tony. “Should I answer?”

“Do you want to answer?” Ryan pursed his lips and shrugged. “He always seems to be checking up on you and probably won’t like you going to a party.”

“Yeah.”

“It’s not like he’s your parent or boyfriend, right?”

“No, not at all.” Clay watched as the phone stopped ringing and the screen went back to being blank. Then it began to ring again. “Maybe I should just answer it.”

“Freedom, Clay, remember? How can you have freedom and a night out carefree if you have mini Danny Zuko chasing you around.”

“I guess.” Clay waited till the phone stopped ringing again before he held his finger down on the power button. Once it was off he felt a twinge of guilt for shutting Tony out, but it did not stay in his gut like usual. It simply passed on as though it was a thought about the weather.

With his phone off and Ryan by his side to show him the ropes of teen drinking, Clay was ready for the night to start.

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Clay and Ryan walked in through the open back gate and around to the sliding glass doors that led into the kitchen. Marcus was tapping the keg in the corner next to the fridge with Zach leaning against the counter watching. Courtney was standing by herself with a red cup in her hand, sipping -- Tyler was nowhere to be seen. Montgomery was lounging on a green love seat in the living room, feet hiked up on the coffee table. They all had costumes on.

Courtney was dressed as Julia Roberts in “Pretty Woman.” She had on a blonde bob cut wig and red lipstick with the famous dress that had the gold ring holding the middle together. The white top was semi see through and Clay saw that she was wearing only pasties underneath. Her black leather heels went up past her knees and she stood with one foot kicked up against the wall. He couldn’t deny that it was a well put together costume.

Marcus was a zombie jock. Clay did his best not to roll his eyes. All he had on was his letterman’s jacket and some patches of red goop on his face to make him look undead. The only nice thing about it was Clay did not feel underdressed anymore. If the person throwing the party could not be bothered to put on an original costume, why should the guests?

Zach had gone all out. He was dressed as Prince Eric. With blue skin tight pants and black boots, Clay did his best not to look at the bulge that was heavily present in the fabric. The white button down had the sash that came down from the right, each shoulder was hidden underneath the gold pads that connected a blue buttoned-up turtle neck. His hair was slicked to the side and done up just like the cartoon and he even was wearing the white gloves. Clay was impressed.

Montgomery had on a camouflage uniform with a matching hat. There was a fake rifle next to the seat where he was. He stood up and stretched and turned around, seeing Clay and Ryan for the first time. The buttons on his shirt were undone just above his chest, making his muscles visible, along with the small amount of stubble on his chest. There was no denying that he looked good,
and in uniform, he knew how good he looked.

A smug grin rose on his face as he waltzed into the kitchen. “Jensen, no way.”

That comment made the others stop and turn their attention to Clay. He did not care that much because he was still floating high, but his eyes did begin to get a lot heavier at that point, and they even started to burn.

“Dude, how high are you?” Marcus asked, stopping what he was doing on the keg and observing Clay. “Your eyes are like slits, man.”

“It’s a party, right?” Clay answered, shrugging.

Ryan’s arm wrapped around his shoulders. “Our youngling is growing up.”

“Well, shit,” Montgomery said, opening up the fridge and pulling out a bottle. “Let’s take some shots then. Everyone?”

“Should we wait for the others?” Courtney asked, looking up from her phone.

“They can catch up,” Montgomery said, placing the bottle on the island. “Body shots?”

“Yeah, right,” Marcus said, going back to the keg. “There’s only one girl here.”

“Your point?”

“I’m not letting anyone take shots off of me,” Courtney said, walking to the counter and leaning against it, her back arched. “I may be dressed as a prostitute for Halloween but that doesn’t mean I am one.”

“Buzzkill,” Montgomery said, before getting a devious look on his face. “What if I am the one who’s getting shots taken from?”

“Again,” Marcus said, “there’s only one girl.”

“Not everyone’s straight,” Ryan interjected, crossing his arms and huffing.

“Dude, you’re the only gay one here.”

“I’ll do it,” Clay said, before overthinking it. “I’ll take a shot off Montgomery. Although, I’ve never done it before so I don’t know what to do.”

“Really?” Zach said, his eyebrows shooting up.

“All right, Jensen,” Montgomery said, clapping his hands. “Now it’s a party.”

“Really?” Ryan leaned in and whispered.

“You said to let loose and do things you normally wouldn’t do,” Clay said, winking at him. “To a night of firsts.”

“To a night of firsts,” Ryan said, patting his shoulders.

“So, how are we doing this?” Clay asked, leaning next to Courtney.

“There are two ways to take a body shot, but I don’t want booze in my belly button so we’re not doing that,” Montgomery said, hopping up on the island, his legs dangling off. As he spoke he
started unbuttoning his shirt until he took it off, slowly, one shoulder at a time. His chest was chiseled, his arms were muscular and the veins in his lower arms added to the overall attractiveness of him. Clay could not help but gawk.

“How are we going to do it then?” Clay asked, gulping as Montgomery lied down on the counter, flexing his body as his back went against the cold tiles.

A thick trail of hairs led from under his belly button down to below his belt line, which was pulled very low down. His hips formed into a v that was almost an arrow pointing directly to his dick. Calvin Klein underwear was visible and his six pack would expand and tighten with each breath he took.

“The other way to do it,” he said, leaning on his side and looking at Clay, “is to lick salt off me, take the shot, and then take the lime from mouth….using your mouth.”

“Montgomery,” Marcus said, finishing the keg and facing everyone. “You lost your mind?”

“Nope. I wanna have some fun and Clay -- you also want to, right?”

“Yup,” Clay said, turning his gaze to Marcus; his vision took a second to catch up to him. He felt slowed down and heavy all at once. “I’m tired of all the sad shit and stuff. Let’s just have a judge free night and do whatever we want?”

“I’m sorry, but who are you and what did you do to Clay?” Zach asked.

“It’s called Xanax, Vicodin, and weed brownies,” Ryan said, chortling.

“Wait,” Clay said, “that was a weed brownie?”

“You’re joking?”

“I didn’t know,” Clay became increasingly more aware of how much his eyelids were drooping and he tried his best to widen them. The group all started laughing and Montgomery got off the island and reached out, wrapping his muscular arms around Clay’s neck and pulling him in close. The guy smelt like cocoa butter and a very clean smelling soap; his skin was warm.

“Just ride the high, Jensen,” he said, leaning in and whispering the next part. “Now come on, I know you want to do this.”

Clay was hoping no one was looking down at his pants because he could not help how his body was reacting. Thank God he was not wearing tight leotard looking pants like Zach otherwise everyone would see his hard on.

“Fuck it,” Marcus said, throwing his hands up in the air and going to the fridge. He pulled out a lime and grabbed a blade to cut it. “Y’all wanna hook up and do some gay shit or whatever, be my guest. Just make sure no one gets raped tonight.”

“Jesus, man,” Zach said, scrunching his face up at the comment. “Really?”

“Oh, what? I’m the bad guy? It seems to be much more common than we all thought. So, house rule, no assaulting people. Deal?”

“Deal,” everyone uncomfortably said.

“Okay,” Montgomery said, getting back up on the counter. “So, let’s put the salt from the middle of my chest down to my belly button, make sure there’s no hair in your way.”
He winked, and Clay could feel his cheeks blush. Why was he reacting so much to everything? He was usually good at hiding any indication that he was attracted to guys, but the way Montgomery was flirting and the complete lack of self-control were coupling together to make Clay feel like none of it really mattered anymore.

Maybe after all was said and done and everyone knew each other’s secrets, maybe then people could start to just have fun together and not judge. Maybe now, that Hannah’s tapes were out, and the town was collectively healing after going through its mourning phase they could be more open and carefree.

Before Clay knew it, the salt was across Montgomery’s abdomen, the lime was in his mouth, and Clay was holding a tall shot glass that was filled to the top with a clear alcohol. The gang all stood around and watched. Ryan did not have a drink; Marcus was holding a half empty beer bottle along with a red cup; Zach also had a shot glass full and was watching; Courtney had finished her cup and was checking her phone every few seconds.

“You ready?” Montgomery asked, taking the lime out of his mouth and looking up at Clay.

“Yeah,” Clay said softly, leaning forward.

“Let’s do this.”

With the wedge back in his mouth, Clay leaned forward and licked the salt, starting from the top and working his way down. When he was done, he tilted his head back and took the shot, doing his best not to cough as the disgusting alcohol drowned his taste buds. As he moved over he went in for the lime right as the sliding glass door opened, revealing Jessica and Sheri. Clay did not have time to react and instead had his mouth over the lime, but Montgomery spat it out and grabbed him by the nape of his neck, pulling him in until their lips were touching. Clay’s eyes shot open as their faces connected, Montgomery’s soft lips bound to Clay’s and they kissed momentarily before he yanked Clay back and grinned, licking his lips.

“Salty,” he commented, sitting up and looking around. “Who’s next?”

Chapter End Notes

I know I’ve left the Justin storyline out hanging, I just needed the party to start before I could get back to him so, not the next chapter, but the one after, will be a Justin chapter. I have not forgotten!
Chapter Summary

Tony's almost out of gas from driving around looking for Clay.

Chapter Notes

As always I just hope whoever is reading this is enjoying it!!! I'm having so much fun writing it and have much more to come~*~*~*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Tony slammed his phone down onto his leather seats. With a clenched jaw and a worried heart he put his car in drive and started cruising down the street. He had already been to Ryan’s. His car was nowhere to be found and Clay had shut off his phone. Sure, he could just go home and not worry about it, but this was Clay. The same kid who nearly killed himself over the tapes. The boy who put his life at risk for Jessica and Hannah -- or at least Hannah’s soul. The one who does not go out, does not drink excessively, and for some reason always sees the best in people.

He was in trouble. If Ryan was already pumping him with pills, he could be drugged up and doing things he never would do. Ryan could be taking advantage of him.

Tony cared for Ryan when they were together. He was his first official boyfriend and theirs was one of passion. There was no denying that. But once the dust settled from the hook-ups, the late night outings, and the joy rides, they were alone together with nothing but their interests and conversations. It was then that Tony realized they were not a good match.

Tony cared for people, loved helping and getting to know others. Ryan did not. He was much more reserved and melancholy in his views on life. Where Tony saw a couple being sweet on a date, Ryan saw two individuals unaware of the pain they were going to cause each other further on down the road. It seemed to be a foreshadowing for their own relationship because eventually Tony could not take it anymore and left.

Ryan had acted like it did not phase him in the slightest, brushing it off as just a series of hook-ups and nothing more. Tony cared, though. Even though he was the one to end it, he cared for Ryan.

Ryan was his first.

Ryan was good at getting what he wanted, and that terrified Tony.

If Clay was not aware of that and was hopped up on God knows what, there was a good chance something precarious would go down. Tony wracked his brain with different spots where Ryan would have taken him but they were at none of them. He drove to every park with no sign of them. The school was dark and empty with no cars in the parking lot. Ryan’s car was nowhere on the main street, and Tony was almost on empty and could not be out much longer.

“Come on, Clay,” he said to himself, flipping the cassette that was playing music over and putting
it back in. The song that Hannah and Clay danced to started playing and Tony shut it off, slamming his fists against the steering wheel. “Fuck!”

Not wanting to but having no other option, Tony headed back to his home. He kept his eyes peeled as he drove, hoping that he would find them somewhere and could make sure Clay was okay, but he had no such luck. His spot in the driveway was taken by a black Jeep. Unable to hide his frustration he huffed and reversed his car, parking it on the sidewalk outside. Every night he brought his baby inside the garage and whoever was over was not going to deny him that. If his parents had company so be it, but their company was going to need to move their car.

Walking into his house, he found his father sitting at the dining table. They lived in a one-story house where the kitchen was to the back left corner, the dinner table was next to the living room, and the couch was set up to the left of the door. A tile walkway led down a hallway where the rooms were and to the right was a brick chimney against the wall. Sitting at the table with his parents were the Bakers. Tony’s heart erupted in his chest while his stomach free fell.

“Son,” his dad said, waving him over.

That whole idea of making company change spots went out of Tony’s mind quicker than a bullet being shot.

“Mr. and Mrs. Baker,” Tony said, averting his eyes down and doing a half nod semi-bow. “Hi.”

“Hi, Tony,” Mrs. Baker said, her hands were cupped together against the oak wood. Mr. Baker sat next to her, a tall glass of water sat idle in front of him.

“Sit down,” his dad said, pulling out the chair next to him.

He sat down directly across from Hannah’s mom and had no idea what to say or do. His palms were already sticky, his heart showed no indication of easing in his chest, and he could hear his breath shaking as he exhaled. Tony had not seen them since he handed them to flash drive all those weeks ago. Guilt had consumed every fiber of his being and even just being in the same room as them had him feeling like shit.

“I’m sorry,” he said, breaking the silence. “I’m so sorry.”

“Tony,” Mr. Baker said, holding his hand up for Tony to not say anything else. “We know.”

“We came here because we thought it over,” the mom said. Her eyes were still hollow and empty as she spoke. “I can’t even tell you what I felt listening to those tapes, to my baby girl….” She swallowed an audible gulp and closed her eyes, swiping her tongue across her closed lips. “I’m not going to lie, Tony, I was livid at you for keeping those tapes from us.”

“I know and I’m so--”

“I just kept thinking,” she continued, not letting him get a word in. “Did he not care? Watching us desperately trying to piece it all together, watching us go up against the school.”

Tony kept his head down and let the words wash over him like acid. All the guilt and shame he had been feeling since the moment he got the tapes was boiling inside him. Sitting across from the parents, who now knew the truth, made him feel at an all time low.

The smell of coffee began to fill the room and his dad got up to go make himself a mug, leaving the three alone.

“But then I let myself calm down and tried my best to put myself in a sixteen-year-old perspective
and I think I get it.” They made eye contact and Tony could see tears were filling up. The dad held a stoic face as she talked. “Hannah didn’t give you an easy option.” Mrs. Baker put her hands up and pursed her lips as the tears started falling. “She left you with such a difficult thing to do.”

“Mrs. Baker,” Tony said, clearing his throat and doing his best to blink away tears that were forming in his eyes. “Knowing what I know now, and seeing the consequences that my actions had, I would have given you the tapes immediately.”

“I know you would,” she said, gently nodding her head. “I know.”

“The reason we’re here,” Hannah’s dad cut in, putting his arm over his wife and rubbing up and down on her back. “Is because we don’t want to move without letting you know that we understand and we forgive you.”

Tony was at a loss for words. Warm tears rolled down his cheeks and into the corner of his mouth, the taste of the salt hitting his taste buds. His body was shaking, and he could not seem to make it stop. The inside of his body felt like it was going to implode as he did his best to not have a full blown breakdown in front of the Bakers.

“Thank you,” he said in a choked voice. “Thank you.”

Tony’s dad reentered the room with a mug of steaming black coffee. “Everyone okay?”

“Yeah, Pops,” Tony said, wiping his eyes. “We’re okay.”

“All right, I’ll let you guys talk some more,” he said, going back to the kitchen with his mug.

“Tony,” Mr. Baker said. “I know it took you a long time to finally hand them over but thank you for doing it. We needed those tapes. Not just for the lawsuit, but for ourselves.” He blinked quickly and pulled his wife closer to him.

“Mr. and Mrs. Baker,” Tony said, “I thought I was doing right by Hannah but I wasn’t, was I?”

“You were doing what she asked you to do,” Mrs. Baker said. “You were doing what Hannah wanted.”

“Yeah.” He looked down; his hands were wrapped tightly together, white knuckling. “But it wasn’t what she needed, was it?”

“No. It wasn’t.”

“I’m sorry.” Tony began to breakdown. His body shook in his seat as he remembered the night. Hannah coming to his door and him ignoring it until it was too late. The flashing lights of the police cars, the images of her body -- wrapped in a white body bag that was fitted perfectly in the shape of her -- being tossed into the back of the coroner’s truck. The smell of burnt popcorn from the stove where her parents were making it for their movie night.

The knowledge that he could have stopped it but chose to not be bothered.

“We know, Tony,” the dad said, reaching out and patting his knuckles. “That’s why we wanted to tell you this before we moved. We figured you deserved to know that we don’t hate you.”

“You have no idea how much this means to me,” Tony said, wiping his eyes. “Where are you moving?”

“Well,” Mrs. Baker said, standing up along with her husband. “We’ve sold the house, sold the
business, and for now we’re going back to our hometown to be with our parents. The rest, we’ll see how it goes.”

“I hope it’s good for you guys,” Tony said, standing up to walk them out

“I think we just need to get out of this town,” she said.

“I can see that.”

Tony walked them out. They did not hug goodbye but they did give him a curt nod before getting into their car and driving off down the dark road. He would never see the Baker’s again and he was not sure how he felt. A part of him was relieved, as fucked up as that seemed. Hannah would always be remembered through them and having to avoid that section of town was nearly impossible. His fear was that he would run into them one day and they would hate him. It was nice to know that was untrue. That gave him more closure than any other event had previously.

When he closed the door behind him his father was sitting on the couch, coffee in hand. Tony walked over and sat next to him, grabbing a pillow and holding it in his lap as he sat.

“You okay, son?”

“I don’t know, Pops.” Tony shrugged and shook his head. “I should be relieved that they don’t wish I was dead or hold me responsible for Hannah’s death and their suffering, but I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“A boy,” Tony said, rolling his eyes. “It’s always a boy.”

“Did this boy hurt you? Because I can call Johnny up right now and we can--”

“No, no, nothing like that. I’m pretty sure he’s not interested.”

“Have you asked him?”

“No,” Tony admitted. “He didn’t even know I was gay until a few weeks back.”

“How did he take it?” His dad sipped on his coffee and listened; he was a great listener.

“He was shocked. But not in a weirded out way or anything, he just had no idea.”

“Well,” his dad said, putting his arm around Tony. “You don’t seem like the gay kids that are always on television. Most kids learn about life through media, as fucked up as that is.”

“I guess. I’m just worried about him. He’s not like most people. He’s too trusting. I think he’s in trouble.”

“What kind of trouble?”

“Wrong crowd of people type trouble.”

“Same crowd that caused Hannah to…..” His father didn’t finish the sentence.

“Yeah,” Tony said. “Same people.”

“What are you gonna do about it?”

“I don’t know,” Tony admitted. “I don’t even know where he is.”
As he spoke he pulled his phone out of his pocket to check if possibly Clay had called or texted him. Nothing. He clicked on Instagram and stared in awe at the first picture on his feed. Courtney had posted it with the caption, “The party started a minute ago and already this.” It was of Montgomery shirtless lying down on a kitchen island with Clay over him, kissing. The photo was posted an hour ago, which could mean anything on Instagram, seeing as it won't update until the second hour. He hated that.

“Pops,” Tony said, jolting up. “I know where the kid is, I don’t think he’s that straight, and I need to go right now to get him.”

“Okay,” his dad said, looking at the watch on his left wrist. “Don’t be home too late.”

“I won’t. But can I get some gas money?” Tony smiled widely and hoped his dad would say yes.

“Fine, but chores tomorrow.”

“Done.”

Tony got twenty dollars from his dad and rushed out the front door. If he stopped and got gas and went straight to Marcus’ house he could get there in about twenty minutes.

“Please still be there when I get there,” Tony said to himself and he sped down the street and to Clay.

Chapter End Notes

Welp! At least he finally knows where Clay is!! If he's still there when Tony shows up....that'll be explained in the next few chapters hahaha

(Also I work mon-fri so that's why I was trying my best to get a big chunk of this written this weekend. I'm still planning on hopefully updating tomorrow and getting the next few chapters in over the week, it just might not be multiple chapters a day!)

AND next chapter is gonna be Justin,,, figure out where that mess has been
Justin

Chapter Summary

Justin's out of options.

Chapter Notes

Soooo heads up this chapter's a little dark and violent but ya know, it is what it is hahaha hope you guys like how this is progressing so far :) See the end of the chapter for more notes

Fuck, fuck, fuck! Tony really just left him out in the middle of town like that. Justin dragged his hands through his hair and looked down the street half expecting the little guy to come back. He didn’t. Shit. Where was he going to go? Jessica wanted nothing to do with him. Bryce was no longer an option for crashing over.

Justin felt his stomach twist and he started dry heaving at the memory. Bryce was knocked out cold after he crushed up the sleeping pills and put it in his drink. Honestly, he was pretty sure the pills alone did it. But he had to go through with it. For Jessica. The blade sliced into his wrists like butter -- although he was pressing rather hard, which may be why -- and the blood began to pool out of the torn flesh and fill the bathtub.

The tub was filled halfway with water, but when Bryce’s body was placed inside it rose to almost the edge. The crimson warmness combined with the water and diluted to a pink hue that began to spread and fill the open space around him. Justin could not move after he was done. He watched the blood flowing out, first quick and with force until it stopped and his body became a ghost white. Justin wiped the blade where he touched and then dropped it into the water just to make sure it was good.

As he was leaving he took one last look at Bryce’s body. The star athlete, alone and dead. He deserved it. Justin did the right thing. That’s what he told himself, at least. That is what he continued to say over and over and over in his mind until he found Tony. Why hadn’t Tony agreed that it was a good decision? A rapist was gone. That was how he saw it, so why couldn’t Tony?

A car sped by and the breeze left by it shook Justin from his mind. He needed to figure out where he could go. Zach was not returning his calls or texts; Marcus either. There was nowhere left for him to go but back to his apartment to face his consequences. Who knew, maybe his mom’s boyfriend left after losing all the money. Justin doubted it. The asshole wasn’t even helping with rent.

If he was there, Justin was going to fight back. It was his apartment, not that low life's. What the fuck did his mom see in the guy anyways? His dad walked out on them when he was five and he never understood why. At the time his mom did not seem to have a problem with heroin, but at five he wasn’t entirely sure he would have known. At night he would often wonder if his dad left.
because he knew his mom was an awful person. Didn’t that make his dad just as awful? Leaving a child with her.

She found her shitty boyfriend at a bar one night when Justin was ten. For the five years prior it was just the two of them. His mom would work nights and sleep during the day. Justin got used to letting himself in, making himself dinner, and surviving. When the piece of shit turned up there was a moment where he thought his life was going to get better. The man would help out around the house, ease up the stress on his mom so she would not be so worked every day. That wasn’t the case, though.

He was her pimp.

Justin found that out one night when she had strep throat and said she couldn’t work. He beat her in front of Justin and when he tried to stop, well he became the punching bag. An entire week of school was lost to him as he recovered. One of his eyes was swollen shut and purple. Even after the week, his mom made him put concealer around the bruise to keep C.P.S from lurking around. The purple welts on his ribs, thighs, and back did not need covering.

His clothes became a cover. And when they would get worn down and start ripping, Bryce was there to help him out. Bryce always helped him. Justin started crying as he was walking towards his apartment, dragging his feet. With each step, the sound of his shoes scraping the concrete would follow. His hood was pulled over and he kept his head facing the ground. He had put on the local news while hiding up in the motel. A picture of him smiling came on the screen and the anchor mentioned that he was a runaway.

What a fucking joke. No one cared about his well being until he was no longer there.

Now he couldn’t even fucking walk down the street peacefully. When a car would slowly drive by his heart would stop momentarily, wondering if it was someone looking for him. No one came and stopped or said anything. He walked silently, the wind whipping by his face, sending a chill down his spine. His arms were crossed and he tightened them around himself, trying his best to get warm.

Eventually, he made it to his apartment complex. There were little kids playing on the community playground in the middle of the courtyard. Nearly every person’s front porch was decorated in some sort of Halloween inspired way. Fake webs covering doors, jack o’lanterns where you could tell the children made them, and some even had orange and black lights around their windows and doors.

Not his. His door was plain. No porch light, even. It looked like no one lived there.

He wiped his palms on his jeans and psyched himself up, ready to fight if need be. Lightly hopping up and down he took one last deep breath and turned the handle, the sound of the door creaking filled the room.

The television was on but muted. His mom was lying on the couch and when she looked up and saw him her eyes widened and she shook her head.

“No,” she whispered, motioning for him to leave. “He’s asleep.”

“I don’t give a fuck,” Justin said, loudly.

“Justin, please,” his mom pleaded, frantically looking from the bedroom door to him and back. “You can’t stay here.”

“Really?” His voice cracked as he felt his Adam's apple jut in his throat. “You’re gonna choose
“It’s not like that, please.”

“Who the fuck is talking?” The man’s voice rose from behind the bedroom door. The sound of the mattress creaking followed. “Can’t a guy get some fucking peace and goddamn quiet in his own fucking house.” He opened the door at the last part and cocked his head, a toothy grin filling the emptiness on his smug face. “Well, if it isn’t the prodigal son, come back to --”

“Shut the fuck up,” Justin barked out, his fists clenched. “For once just shut the fuck up!”

“What did you say to me, boy?”

“He didn’t mean it,” his mom said, standing up immediately and standing in between the two of them.

“Do you know how many people been knocking on that door,” he said, lurking forward. “Asking questions!” The vein in the side of his neck was pumping and his face was getting red as he yelled. “That ain’t good for business, you hear me? Cops coming by asking where your ass is, saying you have connections to some dead bitch? Nah. That ain’t gonna fly. Fucking C.P.S showed up and nearly hauled your mom away.”

Justin stayed unmoving as he continued to step forward. His heart was jumping out of his chest and his fists were balled up tighter than ever before.

“Just leave, Justin,” his mom hissed out, turning back from her boyfriend to him. Her hands were up to try and block him.

“No,” he said matter-of-factly. “It’s my house, not his.”

“That’s what you think?” The man snickered as he leered. Then his mouth dropped and stayed slack. “That’s not how this works.”

Before Justin or his mom had time to react he was attacking. With one swift shove, he knocked Justin’s mom down, her legs tripping over the wooden coffee table in front of the couch. She fell backward and broke the wood as she collided down with it. Without any time to react, Justin felt a fist connect cleanly with the side of his right temple. His vision spotted, the world spun, and the pain radiated across his face like a spider web.

As he tried to get his bearings, another blow came to the other side of his face, knocking him down to his knees. The inside of his mouth burst with the warm metallic flavor of his own blood as he swayed on the ground.

“I’ve been going easy on you, boy,” the man said, and he rained down another forceful two punches in rapid succession. “If this is your house you gotta fight for it.”

Justin stayed up on his knees and used all his strength to not fall over. His vision was blurry as he tried his best to focus in front of him. To his side he could see his mom cowering and crying, screaming for the both of them to stop.

Hands clamped around Justin’s throat and he felt his esophagus being forced closed. He was sure his windpipe was going to be crushed. The air was not getting into his lungs, his face felt like it was going to explode, as his vision began to tunnel. So much for fighting back. His nose reeked of blood and he was sure he was going to die.

“You’re killing him,” his mom shouted at the top of her lungs. “Do you want the cops coming
here?!”

“He can’t stay here,” the man said, squatting down to be eye level with Justin. “I’ll kill you next time, you hear me?”

Justin spat a wad of blood on the guy’s face and was able to smirk afterward. That wasn’t the best idea, though. Next thing Justin knew he was thrown back onto the wood floor and curled in on himself as he was repeatedly kicked. The floor smelt like old cigarette butts and Lysol. His ribs were taking the majority of the beating. He could hear the wind gliding past the guy’s feet as he would kick him over and over. It felt never ending, but it did eventually cease.

“Come and wake me up again and see what fucking happens.” The door slammed and Justin lied motionless, breathing in raggedly.

“Justin,” his mom said, crawling over the splintered wood to him. “Honey.” Justin could only see through his left eye. “You need to go.” She started weeping. “I’m sorry.”

“No you’re not,” he said through gritted teeth. His voice sounded hoarse and burned as he spoke. Blood was hanging off his bottom lip and he could see it dangling underneath his vision as he pushed himself up.

It was agony to breathe in, to even move. His chest felt as though it was on fire. Wobbling knees carried him a few steps before he had to reach out and hold onto the wall for support.

“Justin,” she said behind him.

“Fuck off,” he coughed out, wiping the tears that were forming in his eyes.

His mom started sobbing and wailing as he made his way out the front door. He could hear her saying she was sorry over and over again but it fell on deaf ears. She was dead to him, or better yet he was dead to her.

Once outside he slid along the wall outside his apartment, bawling as he held his knees up to his chest.

Eventually, he was able to get a hold of his breathing and calm himself down enough to pull out his phone and dial Jessica’s number. It didn’t even ring this time. Straight to voicemail.

“Hey it’s Jessica, you know what to do -- Oh, my God stop,” she chuckled and then his voice came on. “She’s too busy with her devilishly handsome boyfriend.” Her voice came through right before the beep. “You’re so dumb, Justin.” Beep.

He hung up and tried again. Same thing.

A twinge of hope settled in the dust of his heart. She hadn’t changed her voicemail of them. Maybe she still cared.

He needed to figure out where he could go. There was no way he was going to just sit outside of his apartment, bloodied and beaten. If no one would answer him then he would just show up at their houses.

Bryce had told him that Marcus was throwing a party that night and he should come. At the time Justin said no because he knew Bryce was not going to be attending that party either, but now he was out of options. Maybe if they saw him and saw that he was not doing well they’d find some sympathy in their hearts and give him another chance.
He was not holding out hope for Jessica, at least not that soon. She would need more time, definitely. But his bros had to have his back, right? Only one way to find out, and it wasn’t much of an option anyway. It was either that or sleep on the streets.

With a broken body and crushed spirit, Justin forced himself up and started to limp his way to Marcus’ house.

Chapter End Notes

Soooooo that is why I needed the party to start before getting back to Justin because all roads lead to the party~*~*~*~
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Jessica and Sheri make a plan before the party...and other things.

Chapter Notes

Okay! So, this is the longest chapter so far and it's the first part of the party and I really hope you guys like it!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jessica liked being in the passenger seat while intoxicated at night. The street lights somehow lingered and followed in a line as she lazily watched them pass, until they blurred into one solid yellow stream. And as she looked at the traffic passing by, it felt as though her mind had become a camera, and she was back to middle school, capturing the cars in a slowed down shutter speed for photography class.

She turned her attention back to the inside and shifted in her seat, facing Sheri. “Who’s going to this, anyway?”

“Um,” Sheri said, squinting and looking off for a second. “Obviously Marcus, and then me and you. For sure Zach if Marcus is gonna be there, and I’m pretty sure Ryan is going. I’m telling you it’s a kickback more than a party. Oh, and Clay for sure will not be there,” she said, matter-of-factly.

“Well, of course,” Jessica said, smirking. “He never goes to anything since.”

“Or he does and causes a scene.”

“Yeah,” Jessica said, turning back to the road. “Poor guy. He really loved her.”

“He did, trust me. Besides that though, did you hear he found Jeff’s dead body first, like, that’s gotta fuck a person up.”

“Jesus.” She stayed silent for a moment before adding. “He was the only one who asked if I was okay besides you.”

“He’s sensitive.”

“That’s for sure.”

“Oh, shit,” Sheri said, looking semi-worried and also apologetic. “I forgot.” She paused and winced before saying it. “Courtney’s going to be there.”

Courtney. The only one out of all of them who still clings to the blatantly obvious lie that Hannah made it up. Even after Bryce’s confession she still insisted that her tape was not true and that she
would continue to say that even in the depositions. Which gave Bryce’s family’s lawyers enough to give the judge a reasonable doubt about a sweet looking white star athlete who got entangled in a web that he could not control. He got a month. It made Jessica feel sick inside. Her pain, Hannah’s pain, was only worth one month to the justice system.

All thanks to fucking Courtney.

“Oh, fuck, I knew that already,” Jessica said remembering Courtney and her’s run in earlier. “Which reminds me, you know she’s dating Tyler now,” Jessica said, sticking her finger in her mouth and pretending to gag. “She’s fucking delusional.”

“That’s,” Sheri said, looking forward with wide eyes and shaking her head, “disturbing.”

“I kind of want to fuck with her if she really does show up,” Jessica said, popping up into her seat, and speaking before Sheri could get a word in. “I told her earlier I wasn’t going so she probably is going, which means we have an advantage. Obviously, we won’t do anything fucked up, but like, I don’t know. Mess with her somehow.”

“I could tell everyone her and I hooked up freshman year.” Sheri shrugged and pouted her lip. “I mean, it’s not a lie.”

“No, no, see that’s fucked up. I’m thinking more,” Jessica’s drunk mind could not catch up fast enough with her speech and she paused, letting them flow until she had a concise idea. “She is so in denial, right?” Sheri nodded. “Okay, I say me and you walk in like we’re a couple and flirt in front of her the entire night and just get her all heated because there’s no way someone that tightly wound will not snap at some point.”

“Wait,” Sheri said, her face was taken over by a smile. “You’re not down.”

“Yes I am,” Jessica said, looking over. They were at a red light and Sheri was gazing straight into her eyes. “Will you be my girlfriend for the evening?”

“I’d be delighted,” Sheri said. “I feel so bad, like we’re spies about to do some covert mission.”

“Listen, if she reacts, it’s on her. We are just two girls out at a party.”

“Are we gonna kiss or is that too far?” Sheri asked, continuing on immediately. “Like, I don’t want to make you uncomfortable or overstep a boundary. I’d rather know what’s okay beforehand.”

“Oh,” Jessica said, feeling both safe but also pitied. It was an odd combination of emotions she had never experienced before. One part of her was grateful to Sheri for thinking of her well being over a stupid prank, but another part felt like maybe she could not have a normal carefree life anymore, and that part was the loudest because it was true.

She had not been the same since. When people would come up behind her she would be easily startled. Her body would tense up when she would watch episodes of SVU until she eventually stopped completely. Forget sleep, and when she was awake she felt empty. And even with knowing that was what life was now, she was glad people were respectful. Realizing that in that moment made her almost started crying.

Jessica noted that it was because of the alcohol, and she needed to respond because it had been an awkwardly long pause.

“Yeah, sorry, I just blanked.” Jessica snorted out a laugh, trying her best to seem okay. “How about we just play it by ear and I’ll let you know in the moment.”
“Um, okay,” Sheri said, squinting. “I just don’t want to hurt you.”

“You won’t,” Jessica said, holding her palm open in the atop the center console; Sheri interlocked her hands with hers. “To fucking with Courtney.”

“Oh, my God,” Sheri said, giggling. “I need to get myself composed for this and not laugh.”

“You can do it, I totally believe in you.”

“Well, there’s only one way to find out,” she said, and Jessica felt the car slowing down and coming to a stop. “We’re here.”

Jessica’s stomach was in knots as the two of them made their way around the backyard giggling. Before they turned the corner and walked in through the back, they took a moment to compose themselves, get out any last minute jitters and stay committed to their goal, fucking with uptight Courtney.

There was a twinge of guilt in Jessica over it and he felt like maybe she was repeating the cycle that got them all into their mess, but knowing that Courtney sat by and denied it all even after the confession was unforgivable, and Jessica wasn’t going to act like she was some amazing human being. She wanted some fucking revenge to make herself feel something. Anything other than the immense heaviness that was weighing her down daily.

With one final breath, Sheri slid the glass door open and the two of them strutted in, shocked at what they saw.

Jessica blinked to make sure her eyes were working. Clay was on top of Montgomery -- who was shirtless on the kitchen counter with a visible wet mark going down his chest -- and they were kissing? What kind of alternative universe had she stepped into?

Clay looked taken aback as Montgomery finished the kiss and turned to see who else wanted to. Sheri widened her eyes and turned to Jessica with a quizzical look.

“Maybe a girl this time?” Montgomery said, smiling smugly. “Sheri? Jessica?”

“I would but I’m D.D.” Sheri shrugged and made a pouty face. “Jess?”

“Only if it’s off you, baby,” Jessica said, putting her arm over Sheri and kissing her neck.

“Wait, what?” Clay said, his body swaying where he stood.

“I just,” Clay said, looking completely wasted already. “I just get red from time to time, you know?” He started laughing and closed his mouth, unable to keep from smiling. “I’m an awkward fuck.” After that comment he was doubled over laughing, holding his stomach as he sucked in all the air in the room trying to stop himself.

“Is he okay?” Jessica asked, never once seeing Clay like that.

“Lots of drugs,” Ryan said, waltzing over to him and laying his hand on Clay’s back, leaning in to whisper something.

“Jensen is on a roll tonight,” Montgomery said, buttoning up his shirt and hopping off the island. “And his lips aren’t too bad either.”
Clay looked up from laughing, eyes wide, and then started again. “You’re not bad yourself,” he said in between snickers.

“Never a dull moment,” Courtney commented, not making eye contact with Jessica or Sheri. Her arms were crossed tightly over her chest and Jessica could see her lips were pursed. “So, are you two lesbians now or what?”

“I don’t really like labels,” Sheri said, as she hopped up on the counter, doing a little bounce. Jessica looked down to keep from laughing. “We’re just two people who like each other.”

“A lot,” Jessica added, biting her knuckle and doing her best fake cutesy laugh.

“I don’t even know anymore,” Marcus said, bowing out and leaning against the counter next to Zach, chugging his beer.

Sheri took off her baby doll dress to reveal matching white lace panties. Jessica kept her peripheral on Courtney who looked down immediately and starting typing away on her phone. With a smile beaming on her face, Jessica got on top of Sheri and straddled her. Sheri wiggled her eyebrows and snickered as Marcus put the lime in her mouth, Zach laid the salt down on her stomach, and Montgomery gave Jessica an overflowing shot.

Without waiting she flipped her hair and leaned back, downing the shot and doing her best not to cough -- she hated tequila. “To kill ya, it’s in the name,” her mom said. Arching forward she licked the salt and moved up to the lime, welcoming the citrus explosion in her mouth.

She used her arms and lifted her body up, keeping her legs in the air. “Cheerleading teaches you how to do more than just root for you dumbasses,” she said, landing down on the kitchen floor and bowing.

“Damn,” Clay said, covering his mouth and shaking from laughter.

“This motherfucker is so high and I’m too sober for it,” Marcus said, taking shot glasses out of a cabinet next to the fridge. “Who wants to just take some boring ass regular shots?”

“Yes, please,” Courtney huffed, side-eying Sheri as she put her dress back on and jump ran over to Jessica and into her arms.

“Okay, anyways. It takes a special kind of skill to do what I’m about to do.” Marcus said putting each glass one right after the other in a row.

“Waste time?” Zach asked, chuckling.

“No, asshole. Line all the shots up and pour them evenly with one swoop and,” he said, enunciating the word, “not spill a single drop on the counter.”

“My ass,” Clay said, finally getting control of his laughter. “No one could do that.” He was talking much slower than usual and Jessica was curious as to what he had taken already to get him that fucked up. “Not even, um, not even, who’s that guy?”

“What guy?” Montgomery asked, striding over to him and butting Ryan out of the way. Ryan looked annoyed and rolled his eyes, arms crossed.

“That guy, you know,” Clay said, pointing to his forehead. “Oh, my God,” he gasped, rubbing his fingers over his scar. “I’m the guy.”

“He is on one!” Montgomery clapped his hand down on his back, the reverberating sound filled
“So, what?” Marcus asked, tilting his head and holding the bottle out. “You can do better?”

“No, not me, the guy,” Clay said, looking around at everyone. Jessica wanted to laugh but kept her lips pursed. His face was full of hope that someone would come to his rescue and figure out who he was referring to, but based off those hints not a single person even attempted to.

“All right,” Marcus said, taking the top off. “Here. We. Go.”

Right as he started pouring Clay gasped and shouted, “Harry Potter!”

His comment startled Marcus who flinched and missed the glasses altogether, getting tequila all over the counter. At that point, Jessica could not hold it in anymore and she started laughing; most people in the room did except Marcus who looked peeved.

“I swear to fucking God,” he said, his eyes fluttering as he breathed in deeply. “I just want some goddamn alcohol.”

“Give me this,” Zach said, snatching the bottle and filling the glasses quickly. “Let’s all have a shot and take this party the living room where it isn’t so stuffy.”

They all took the shots and Jessica’s stomach was already letting her know it was not happy. She burped quietly after and it burned and filled her nose. It made her eyes water. Clay coughed and Montgomery was right by his side laughing and hanging onto him. It was weird seeing them together. Were they even together?

A few more took another shot. Jessica decided against it but would take one later on once she sobered up a little. She needed to give her body a small break. Among the ones who did were all the guys except Ryan. He didn’t take a shot the first time either. Him and Sheri both laughed and recorded on their phones.

For the most part, it was shaping up to be a good night.

They settled into the living room. It was so spacious and smelt of pine needles. The entire inside was wooden as though they had stepped into a cabin. There was a large window that opened up to a view of the city below. Above the gas lit fireplace was a mantle with all of Marcus’ trophies -- along with pictures of him playing ball. In the center of the room, a long couch circled around a round wooden table that looked like the trunk of a tree. The cushions were so soft as they sat down and got comfortable.

Jessica was leaning her head on Sheri at one end of the couch; Marcus and Zach were sitting next to each other, but with enough room apart to spread their legs as wide as possible; Ryan was next with Clay to his left and Montgomery right on the other side; Courtney was by herself at the other end, which actually made her pretty close to Jessica and Sheri.

Ryan’s face looked irritated as he sat with his arms folded. He must have brought Clay and is not happy that he has to stay sober while Clay blossomed next to him like a shining flower. His cheeks were red, his eyes were a combination of opening wide at moments when he would start to zone out, to barely visible behind his eyelids. Jessica was happy to see him finally letting loose.

“I have an idea,” Zach said, holding a red cup. They must have made mixed drinks before coming into the room too because, again, all the boys had red cups. “Let’s play spin the bottle?”

“Really?” Courtney said, groaning.
To be honest, Jessica agreed, but knowing it would piss Courtney off coaxed out her petty nature and she had to speak up. “I’m down.”

“Me, too,” Clay said, shooting his hand up straight into the air. “Let’s do this!”

“God bless you, Clay,” Montgomery said, laughing. “I’m in.”

“Fine,” Ryan said, trying his best to hide a smirk, but Jessica saw it.

“How fucking cliche, you know I’m fucking down!” Marcus shouted, clapping his hands. “We used to play this shit all the time in middle school.”

“I’ve never even played,” Clay said, making the most dramatic frowning face. “To a night of firsts, right Ryan?” Clay held up his cup and put his arm towards the middle of the table. “Let’s fucking do this.”

Montgomery peeked over Clay’s head and pointed down, his jaw open in disbelief. “Yo, fucked up Clay is awesome,” he said, rubbing his hand side to side on Clay’s head, giving him cute little frizzy hairs.

“Listen,” Clay said, his words slurring into one another. “I’m just like sick of it all, the sad shit, you know? Like, for instance,” he paused and held his hands up in front of him, taking a moment, belching, and then continuing on. “I was so sad earlier today and now I’m not. Like, we were all so sad and now we’re good. I’m just so happy that we can come together, as friends, you know?” He put his arms over Montgomery and Ryan, spilling some of his drink on Ryan’s jeans. “Life is fucking crazy.”

“Yes,” Marcus said, “and on that sentiment.” He placed his empty beer bottle onto the table. “We used to play it by rounds in middle school, though.”

“Marcus,” Zach said, choking out a laugh. “Dude.”

“We did some crazy shit,” Marcus said, laughing, and Zach joined in slapping him on the back.

“Dude, nah,” Zach said.

“Why not?” Marcus asked, and Jessica just wanted to know what the fuck they were talking about.

“What the fuck are you all laughing at?” Sheri stole the words right out of her mouth. Jessica leaned in and whispered that she was going to say that also. “Romantic,” Sheri joked.

“Can I?” Marcus asked, looking at Zach.

“I mean if anyone agrees.”

“Oh, Marcus, if I can stop being interrupted I can finish a fucking thought. Where was I? Rounds! Okay, so after everyone spins once, round one is over.”

“And round one is?” Courtney said, rolling her eyes.

“Kissing. Round two is french kissing. Round three is a hickey, nowhere visible if you don’t want. Round four is—”

“We get it,” Jessica said, “round four is fucking.”

“What? No!” Marcus scrunched up his face. “Round four is seven minutes in heaven.”
Clay reached forward, not saying anything and spun the bottle. “Round one,” he said, snickering.

“Oh, shit,” Marcus said, jumping back in his seat and throwing his hand up to his mouth laughing. “Clay is not fucking around tonight.”

“Is everyone down, though?” Zach asked, stopping the bottle and looking around.

“Not like this night can get any weirder,” Jessica said, looking at Sheri. “You down?”

“If you are?”

“It’s just kissing and seven minutes of nothing,” she said, looking at everyone. “I am not doing that.”

“Totally,” Marcus said, nodding his head vigorously.

“Cool. Because besides that I’m good. I love kissing,” she said, placing her lips on Sheri’s earlobe and sucking. Sheri let out an almost silent moan but Jessica heard it, and she liked it. Sheri’s hand gripped her thigh and that is when she stopped, pulling away and smiling.

“As fascinating as that is, we have to wait for Tyler,” Courtney barked out, her cell phone clutched in hand. “He’s on his way.”

“I never invited him,” Marcus said, “so, that’s settled.”

“I did,” Courtney said, raising her eyebrows and pursing her lips. Jessica wanted to slap her. “He’s my boyfriend now.”

“Ew,” Clay said, reaching for his drink and taking a large gulp. “Courtney, even if you’re not gay, or whatever, honestly,” and he leaned over Montgomery and reached out, patting her shoulder. His eye’s were so sincere as he rubbed his hand up and down. “That doesn’t mean you have to date shitty guys.”

“Fuck you, Clay,” Courtney said, getting up and rushing into the kitchen.

Everyone stayed silent for a moment until Ryan reacted. It was a quick snort as he covered his mouth and before Jessica knew it they were all dissolving into laughter. Not super loud or anything, they weren’t trying to be mean, but more of a hushed silent gut laugh.

“Clay,” Jessica said, giving him a sympathetic look. “Sometimes, just don’t say what you’re thinking.”

“Oh,” he said, long and drawn out. “Okay, okay.” Holding his finger to his mouth he made a shushing noise and pointed to the kitchen, moving his head up and down.

“Jesus,” she laughed.

“You good, Clay?” Sheri asked. “Need some water?”

“Nope,” he said, sitting back in between Ryan and Montgomery. “I am dandy.”

“Okay, how ‘bout I go first, Clay, since you’ve never played,” Marcus said, cautiously.

Clay agreed and Marcus spun the bottle. Jessica prayed and prayed that it would not land on her. She actually was holding out hope that it would land on Zach and the two of them would have to kiss. They would make a cute couple. The thought made her want to laugh, but the bottle stopped
spinning and she saw that it was pointing a Ryan.

“Of course,” Ryan said, closing his eyes. “Let me guess, you don’t want to--”

Marcus lept up and leaned across the table, squeezed both of Ryan’s cheeks, and planted a kiss right on his lips. He pulled away after a second and Ryan looked at a complete loss of words. There was a smudge of fake blood that rubbed off from Marcus’ zombie makeup and was on Ryan’s forehead. Jessica loved it.

“You don’t even want to know what we’ve had to do playing these games in Jr. High,” Zach said, cringing.

“I’ll always remember you,” Marcus said, winking and cracking up, slapping Zach’s arm.

“Shut the fuck up.” Zach’s cheeks got flushed and he took a long slurp from his drink. “My turn.”

He spun the bottle and the sound of the glass spinning against the table filled the silence. Jessica’s heart was racing and she watched the bottle slowing as it was getting close to her, but it ultimately landed on Sheri. She let out a sigh of relief, watching Sheri and Zach both crouch forward and quickly kiss.

As Ryan spun the bottle, Sheri leaned over and whispered in Jessica’s ear, “should we check on Courtney?”

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“Like, go in and get a drink and just see if she’s okay.”

“Yeah, I guess.”

The bottle ceased spinning and landed on Marcus. This time they both went up and did a quick peck; they were used to it. Sheri said she was going to take Jessica into the kitchen to get a drink and for them to pause the game. Clay asked them for a drink for himself and Ryan shook his head no. Jessica winked at Ryan to let him know she wouldn’t.

The two of them headed into the kitchen and found Courtney sitting on the counter, her phone lying next to her, and a red cup in her hand. She let out a groan at the sight of them and chugged whatever was in that.

“Hey,” Sheri said, “are you good?”

“I’m fine,” she said, blinking rapidly as if to stop tears. “Did you guys come in here to make out?”

“No,” Jessica said, rolling her eyes and reaching for the Patron bottle on the counter. “I just wanted some more. That all right with you?”

“Why wouldn’t it be?”

“You tell me.”

“You know,” Courtney said, hopping off the counter and opening the fridge, taking a bottle of vodka out and pouring some straight into her cup. “It’s not some choice that you just decide one day.”

“What isn’t?” Jessica asked. She was standing with her hand leaning on the counter, other on her hip. Sheri was mixing the Patron with fruit punch for her.
“Come on, really? You two?”

“Us two,” Sheri said, handing Jessica the drink. “Why do you have a problem with it so much?”

“You guys are assholes,” she said, rubbing her eyes with the back of her palm. Courtney snatched her phone off the counter and left the kitchen.

“She’s so fucking mad,” Jessica said, her mouth wide open as she started cackling.

“I do feel kind of bad for her,” Sheri said, sitting on the counter as Jessica stood next to her.

“She’s so in denial.”

“I know, like, I’ve always been attracted to people, and not just guys,” Jessica said, shrugging.

“I remember the story about that girl you dated in eighth grade,” Sheri commented.

“Exactly. I can’t imagine being that wild about it.”

“Me either,” Sheri said, leaning back on her arms and shaking her head to move her hair from her neck.

Jessica looked over and saw that one of Sheri’s straps was hanging delicately off her shoulder. When she moved her eyes up she saw that Sheri was gazing at her, her lips were shining in the kitchen light and Jessica stepped to the side until she was standing in between Sheri’s open legs.

“You sure?” Sheri asked, as Jessica leaned forward and swiped her lips softly across her collar bones.

“Yeah,” Jessica said, engulfing herself in the moment.

Their lips connected and they started off slow, testing each other, softly opening and closing together, forming to one another. Jessica’s hands started on Sheri’s lower back and glided up, cupping her shoulders as their tongues began to explore each other’s mouths. Sheri tasted like cherry chapstick and smelt like a cupcake. Jessica nearly melted in her arms as she moved forward to be as physically possible.

“What the fuck?” Marcus’ voice interrupted them before they could continue on.

It was coming from inside the living room. They paused and listened. Jessica was out of breath and wanted nothing more than to go back to what they were doing, but then Courtney shouted, and Zach started talking and it sounded bad.

“No, no, no, Clay don’t!” Courtney shouted.

There was the sound of someone being punched, accompanied by a loud bang, and followed by a collective string of people talking all at once.

Jessica backed away from Sheri and the two of them rushed into the living room to see what happened.

Chapter End Notes

Sooooooooooo next chapter will be Clay’s POV and you will figure out what is
going on with all of that!!!!

I never expected this fic to go on for this long tbqh and there's still much more to come!

(Also drunk hook ups will ensue between certain characters but I'm not updating those as relationships in the tags because I'm only doing that for relationships that are actually going to blossom outside of the context of crossfaded/drunk party shenanigans -- which is why Jessica and Sheri are tagged but not anyone else as of right now)
The room was not spinning, per say, but it was taking his eyesight, or his brain, a long time to catch up. Clay was buzzing inside. He felt equal parts heavy and weightless as he sat, his body absorbing into the couch. Ryan got up next to him and he shifted his gaze to see where he was going. Clay felt his cheeks rising into a cheesy grin as he watched Marcus and Ryan kiss. Again? Hadn’t they already kissed?

“Pause the game?” Jessica said, standing up with Sheri right behind her. “We’re gonna go get some more drinks.”

“Me!” Clay blurted out, pointing to his own head. “I want a,” he burped, and it tasted like the stuff in his cup that Montgomery had made him. “Drink.”

“Sure, Clay,” Sheri said, smiling. She was so beautiful. He dreamily watched her get up -- his eyesight was as if someone had put a fog lens over it, which actually made her look like an honest to God angel floating out the room.

The moment the two of them were gone, Zach shot up in his seat and faced Marcus. “Dude, is Bryce still coming? I thought Jessica said she wasn’t gonna come?”

“I already texted him not to,” Marcus said, letting out a heavy breath. “I hope to God he fucking reads it.”

“Me, too,” Zach said, resting back onto the couch, his cup basically an extension of his mouth at that point.

“Hold on,” Ryan said, sticking out his index finger and tilting his head to the side. “Bryce might show up?”

“I told him not to,” Marcus said defensively.

“Wow.” Ryan dragged the word on as he slowly blinked and shook his head. “This is gonna be a fucking shit show.”

“If he shows.”
“Oh, come on.” Ryan looked around at everyone. “What? The serial rapist isn’t going to show up to a party with alcohol. Please.”

“I’ll kick his ass,” Clay said, slamming his cup down on the table. He was unaware of exactly what was in his cup, all he knew was it tasted like rubbing alcohol mixed with a drop of fruit flavoring. He had already almost finished it.

“Oh, please,” Ryan said, rolling his eyes. “You can’t even stand up.”

“Yes the fuck I can,” Clay said, his eyebrows scrunched up, nose crinkled as he looked at Ryan. Why was Ryan being rude to him? He could fucking stand up. If a baby could stand, Clay Jensen could, too. “Watch me.”

With what he thought was lightning fast reflexes, Clay rose up, suddenly aware or the lack of feeling in his legs. Wobbling in place, he was able to stay balanced. He was aware of how many time he blinked, also. It was like when he would get sick and suddenly realize how often he swallowed when he spoke, except now he noticed how often he blinked. Each time he did his eyelids would slowly and unevenly open back up. Small burps found their way to the surface as he held his closed fist up to his mouth right before a loud one escaped.

“Told you I could stand.” He plopped back onto the couch.

“You showed me,” “Ryan said, getting up and stretching. “Where’s the restroom?”

While Marcus stood up and directed him where to go, Courtney came back into the living room and flounced onto the couch. She pulled her blonde wig off and Clay thought it was her natural hair. He had completely forgotten she was in a costume. His eyes widened and he backed up into the cushions, watching her as she patted it down on her lap.

“What the fuck?” Clay said, pointing to her and then his own head and then back. “Wait?”

“It’s a fucking wig, Clay, Jesus,” Courtney said, placing a cup to her mouth and audibly gulping the contents down.

“Oh,” Clay said, nodding his head. “Got it.” He continued to move his neck up and down, unaware he was even still doing it. “Sorry ‘bout what I said about not dating shitty Tyler.”

“It’s fine.”

Montgomery was biting his lower lip and looking away from Courtney. Marcus and Zach had their cups up to their mouths but their eyes were going back and forth from Clay to Courtney.

“I just meant…” Trailing off, Clay smacked his tongue on the roof of his mouth, dragging his open palm down his face. “You can do better.”

“You done?” Courtney scowled.

“I just don’t get it,” Clay said, dumbfounded, turning to Montgomery. “Do you get it?”

“I’m staying out of this one, brother,” he said, massaging Clay’s shoulders.

“Did he,” Clay asked, moving closer on the couch and whispering -- as best his drunk self could -- “delete the pictures or something?”

“Oh, my God, Clay, shut the fuck up.”
“There’s no need to be rude,” he said, crossing his arms and looking away.

She was going to say something else, Clay could tell by her expression. Courtney’s lips were puckered together, her eyes honing in on him, and he could see that he cheeks were reddening with each passing second.

The front door opened before she could say a comeback and everyone turned to see who it was. Marcus reacted with shouting, “what the fuck,” before Clay’s head even began to turn. His reaction time was significantly slowed down. But he finally did spin in his seat to see what made Marcus react.

Standing at the front of the living room was Tyler, and he had a costume on that made Clay’s blood boil. With what looked like a cardboard cut out, Tyler had made a replica of tape number four. The tape he was featured on. It even had the same blue color that Hannah used to write on her tapes. It covered his shirt and stopped at his waist. A disgustingly vile grin erupted on his face as he watched their reactions.

“Tyler, what the hell?” Courtney said, standing up and gesturing to his costume.

“This is fucked up,” Zach said. “This is beyond fucked up.”

Clay felt his body rise without thinking and saw himself lunging off and over the couch, slipping as he rushed forward, almost falling. It felt like he wasn’t in control of himself, or he finally had let go and his body had taken over his mind. All he knew was that he was livid; all he felt was a rage that was steaming inside of him.

With a drunk stride, Clay made it across the room, not registering Courtney screaming for him to not do it. His closed right fist came into the view of his foggy mind and he watched it connect with Tyler’s jaw. There was a loud pop and Tyler went careening back, colliding with the wall before falling face first onto the tile.

“Oh, shit!” Montgomery’s voice came swimming into Clay’s mind and next thing he knew arms were around him and he was being moved back. “It’s cool, Clay, I got you.”

“Clay, what the fuck!” Courtney shouted.

“Oh, please,” he spat out, hot and angry. “We all know he deserved it!”

“What happened?” Jessica said, rushing into the living room with Sheri by her side.

Tyler was pushing himself up, blood dripping out of his mouth. The costume was bent and the corners were damaged from the fall and all Clay wanted to do was to go and deck him again and again. What kind of sick asshole would dress up as one of Hannah’s tapes for Halloween? What did he think was going to happen?

“Fuck you guys,” Tyler shouted in a shrill tone.

“Dude, get the hell out of here,” Marcus said, standing up and going over to him. “Courtney, you can stay if you want, but he’s not welcome.”

“Babe?” Tyler said, holding out his hand; Courtney slapped it away.

Clay started clapping. “That’s right, Courtney!”

Montgomery whispered in his ear, “not right now, buddy. Let’s go into the kitchen for a second and cool off, okay?”
They were all still dealing with the Tyler fiasco as he and Montgomery headed into the kitchen. Clay had his arm around Montgomery’s neck as they walked together, or better yet Clay attempted to walk and Montgomery helped him.

“Can I call you Monty?” Clay asked as they made it in the room.

“Sure,” Monty said, a half smirk appearing on his face. “Here, sit on the counter, I’m gonna get some ice for your hand.”

“My hand?” Clay said, sticking it directly in front of his eyes. Too close. He moved his neck back and squinted, trying to get his vision to focus. Sure enough his knuckles were red where he punched Tyler. “I didn’t even feel that,” he said, giggling.

“The beauty of drinking is a double-edged sword,” the muscular army man said, scooping ice out of the freezer and placing it inside of a zip lock bag. “You’re numb in the moment.” He stepped to Clay and stood in front of him. “But you feel everything after.”

Clay’s breath hitched in his throat as his gaze met with Monty’s. Goosebumps danced up his forearm at the contact of Monty’s hand on his. He gently put the bag of ice against Clay’s knuckles. Their faces only inches apart. Clay felt Monty’s breath against his neck as he sat there, trying his best to stay still -- his head swayed with total disregard to what his mind wanted.

“How does that feel?” Monty asked, licking his lips.

“Hot,” Clay said, nearly moaning.

“The ice?” Monty looked concerned.

“No, what? Sorry, I’m--”

“It’s all good, Jensen,” he said, genuinely smiling. “I had no idea you were this wild.”

Clay chuckled and looked down, not entirely sure why he was feeling nervous. “I’m usually not.”

“What changed?” He kept the bag of ice pressed on Clay’s knuckles as they spoke.

“Ryan convinced me to not give a fuck.”

“How’s that working for you?”

Their lips slowly moved closer as Clay’s heart was practiced for a drumline solo. Had Montgomery always been this cool or was it the intoxication? His jeans tightened as he met eyes with Monty. The army top was unbuttoned at the top still and Clay put his palm up to his chest without thinking.

“It’s working,” he breathed out.

“Yeah?”

And with that final word, Montgomery dropped the ice on the counter and pulled Clay forward by the collar of his hoodie. Their lips smashed together in a desperate sort of way. Clay’s eyes fluttered shut as he dissolved into Monty’s firm arms. This was the first time he had really ever acted on anything with a guy, and he was happy it was someone he did not have any feelings for, other than a physical attraction. If he was going to get with a guy and date, he’d want it to be someone more like, well, Tony.
Tony would be the perfect boy -- Montgomery’s tongue worked its way into Clay’s mouth and his mind ceased mulling over anything other than his immediate needs, which felt like they were being met as Monty’s hand slid up his thigh and rubbed the outline of his cock. Clay let out an audible moan as the hand wrapped around it in his jeans and started rubbing.

Monty moved his mouth to Clay’s neck and started to suck and bite, lightly. It was complete ecstasy. Clay had never felt that good before in his life. His body was vibrating as his hands explored more of Monty. Moving them down his back, Clay ended up cupping Monty’s ass, pulling the two of them even closer together.

“Guys, Tyler’s gone now and….” Zach’s voice dwindled out and the sound of his sneakers squeaking against tile could be heard. “Nevermind.”

Montgomery pulled his face away and gripped Clay’s throat, his thumb tracing the side of his jaw. “Let’s go outside,” he said, backing up and adjusting his pants.

“Yeah, okay,” Clay said, out of breath, looking like the Chesire cat. “Outside, cool.”

The backyard was dark, which he didn’t mind because the kitchen light shone enough for them to sit on the wooden bench set up on the concrete porch. Monty and Clay sat on the top of it with their legs resting on the seats. In front of his face, Clay could see his breath, informing his mind that it was cold outside even though his body was not shivering at all. That was unusual. His body normally got cold quickly.

“I didn’t know you had a thing for me,” Montgomery said, smirking. He undid one extra button on his camouflage shirt and reached inside, pulling out a small cylinder. “Wanna smoke?”

Clay simply nodded as an answer because his mind could not seem to form words. His face was stuck on permanent dimples and he didn’t even care. He couldn’t even remember the last time he smiled that much or felt that free. There wasn’t a care in the world that was bringing him down into the pit of his brain. No melancholy outlook on the party. No self-hatred that manifested in silence where he constantly beat himself up afterward.

Nothing but a swirling of life that gripped his heart and kept him up.

“You ever smoke a joint?”

“No,” Clay said, focusing on the small white rolled up paper in front of his eyes.

Monty opened his mouth and held the joint with two fingers before closing his lips around it pulling it back out of his mouth. “The little bit of spit keeps it from burning too quickly.” He flicked the lighter on as the sound of the flame sparking against paper filled the night sky, birthing a small cloud of smoke. Skunk surrounded them. “Open your mouth, this will be less harsh.”

Clay followed instructions and felt Monty’s hand grapple on the nape of his neck and pull him to where their lips were barely touching. Exhaling, Monty blew the smoke into Clay’s mouth. It took him a moment to catch on, causing most of the cloud to rise to his eyes and dry them out. Monty chuckled and bit his lower lip.

“You’re something else, Jensen.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Yeah, now breathe in this time you dumbass.”

Clay inhaled the smoke as it came and felt it fill his lungs. Montgomery told him to hold it in as
long as he could, so Clay kept his mouth shut and his lungs locked down. It had been ten seconds, or at least he thought it had, when his eyes began to flutter, and his head started to throb.

“Clay, man, you can breathe out now, Jesus,” Montgomery said, a cloud of vapor coming out of his mouth as he spoke.

Clay gasped and blew out all the smoke at once, filling his lungs immediately back up with fresh air. “I thought,” he said, taking another deep breath, “it had only been a few seconds.”

“Dude, you held that for like half a minute or something, I don’t even know.”

Clay coughed and shook his head, smiling. “Again?”

“You can’t do that again, though,” Monty said, concern was written all over his face. “Clay Jensen can’t die on me.”


“Good,” Monty said, sucking in on the joint, the edge glowing red. “Now open up.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay so this chapter specifically is why I said in the previous notes that drunk hook ups are not counting as relationships because I know we're already almost 25k into this and Tony/Clay have only interacted once but believe me this is eventually gonna become that! It's just has become a monster that I still have so much to do before I can even begin to start wrapping it up! I'm a mess hahaha BUT! A Tony chapter is next!!!

(Also I know some of this seems maybe a little sudden and out of left field?? But come chapter 13 Montgomery's actions are going to make a lot more sense,,, and yeah that's all I can think of for right now)
Tony

Chapter Summary

Tony finally gets to Marcus' house.

Chapter Notes

I need to say this before you guys read this chapter because if you started this fic before chapter 8 was posted I had changed a part in that chapter a few days ago which comes into play in the first part of this one and the change is that I made the Instagram post say "an hour ago" instead of thirty minutes which plays into this chapter.

Hope you guys enjoy!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Tony’s tires screeched as he made a quick right into the gas station. He was practically out of his car before he even shifted it into park. His dad had given him a twenty so he had to go inside and ask the teller. Pump thirteen. Fitting. With a quick step, he entered through the automatic sliding doors, halting immediately behind a line of people. Frustration coursed through his veins, as he stood with his arms crossed while he anxiously bounced his right leg.

How were there this many people at the fucking gas station at ten?

The line moved like molasses. Once he realized most people were in line for the mega million lottery that was being drawn the next morning his annoyance skyrocketed. Letting out an exasperated sigh, he decided to check and see if the Instagram photo was still at an hour. When he slipped his phone out of his pocket and opened the app up, the picture now said it was taken two hours ago.

“Shit,” he hissed, warranting him a dirty look from the older woman standing in front of him.

Two hours. Had he really been driving around for that long? Switching from the app to his call log he looked at when he had first called Clay after Justin. It was a little after seven, and driving from one side of town to the other did waste time, he just did not realize it was that much. If he had known Clay was going to go to Marcus’ he would have been there first thing. Shit, Clay had just told him earlier how upset he was about it. Why the hell was he even there? Not to mention, why the fuck were him and Montgomery kissing? Nothing was making sense to Tony at that moment.

Tony was getting tenser as the lady, who did not seem fond of him, took her sweet time pulling out a list of numbers that she wanted to play.

When it was finally his turn he placed the bill down on the counter, politely asked for the amount on his pump, and zipped out. He placed the hose into his car and watched the meters both start to rack up quickly. But, with only fifty cents left to pump they slowed down for some reason and the
price rose at half the speed. It was always when he was in a rush things seemed uncannily long.

Even the streetlights had it out for him. They were planning their attacks and only turning red the moment they knew he was coming; he was sure of it. When he reached the fifth red light in a row he shouted at the top of his lungs and banged his fists against his steering wheel before looking over and seeing a small child -- the kid had curly hair and was sitting in a car seat behind the driver -- gawking at him with round wide eyes.

“Calm down, Tony,” he said to himself, breathing in through his nose and out through his mouth.

As he pulled up and parked alongside the curb outside of Marcus’ house he was perplexed to see no lights on in the house. There was one room on the second floor that was lit by what looked like a television, but nothing else. He slammed the car door behind him and bounded up the driveway, reaching a dark front porch. Knocking, Tony waited, and then banged his fists against the door when a few seconds had passed.

The bulb above his head buzzed to life right as Marcus cracked his front door open, peeking his head out.

“What do you want?” Marcus did not look like he was having a good time. There was a red tint to his face which Tony was not sure why. He had on a guinea tee and basketball shorts with nothing else.

“I thought there was a party here?” Tony said, taking a step back and looking around. “Where is everyone?”

“I sent them home. It got too fucking wild and I was not about to get the cops called on me.”

“Fuck,” Tony exhaled, tapping his right hand against his thigh. “I saw that picture of Clay on Instagram and thought he was here.”

Marcus sighed and shook his head. “His sloppy ass is still here, knocked the fuck out.”

“Wait, really?” Tony’s heart soared in his chest.

“He seemed better than the rest of us,” Marcus said, pointing to a cracked door at the end of a hallway that connected to the living room. “He’s knocked out in there. If you’re gonna take him with you, get ready for a disaster.”

“That bad?”

“He was so drunk that he made out with Courtney after going outside and doing God knows what with Montgomery.” Marcus smirked. “He was funny, though. I gotta say.”

“Wait, Courtney?” Tony was equal parts shock and also amused.

“I don’t want to get into it,” Marcus said, crossing his arms. “I’m up there smoking in peace and playing 2k17. If you want to know what happened ask him when he sobers up because I’m not
Tony could tell that the night did not go the way Marcus had intended. “Works for me,” he said, pointing to the door to make sure it was the one before making his way down the hallway.

The door creaked as he pushed it open, slowly peeking his head in to see if Clay was okay. Tony did not receive any peace of mind at the sight in front of him. Clay was face first in the carpet, one of his arms was twisted behind his back in what looked like a painful position. His cheek was puffed up against the floor and there was drool hanging out his mouth. There was a large wet spot next to him where a glass of water had fallen over.

Tony rushed to him and placed his hand gently on Clay’s back; he was shaking and his breath was shallow. “Shit,” Tony said, lightly nudging Clay. “Hey, buddy, I need you to wake up, okay?”

Clay stayed motionless, but Tony knew he was still breathing so he was not panicking. After a minute of shaking and calling out Clay’s name, his eye slowly opened a crack and looked around. Tony beamed.

“Hey, Clay,” he said softly. “I’m gonna take you to get some food and water, okay? Get you nice and sobered up.”

“Tony?” Clay breathed out, chuckling. “Hey, man, you missed it.”

“I sure did.” Tony put his arm under Clay’s chest and pushed him up to get him to lean against the bed. At least then his arm would not be twisted and he’d be easier to get up from a sitting position.

“Tony,” Clay mumbled, reaching out his hand and almost slapping Tony’s cheek, but ultimately landing on his shoulder. His eyes were surrounded by red veins and the blue was almost completely taken over by the black of his pupil. He was fucked up.

“Yeah, buddy?”

“I don’t know,” he said, spitting out laughter as his body started to lean forward with no indication of stopping. Tony reached out and steadied him back against the bedpost.

“You think you can stand up?”

“Yes, I can stand up!” Clay’s voice boomed out compared to the soft almost incoherent tone it had been. “Why does nobody think I can stand? First Ryan and I showed him, yes I did, I showed him,” his voice started to lower and his eyes drooped closed.

“What did Ryan say?” Tony was trying to make sense of what Clay was saying but it was like deciphering a toddler talking. Some of it was sound but most of it was drawled out with slurred words and long pauses in between.

“He told me I couldn’t stand up.” And he was awake again, jabbing his index finger into his chest. “I did it,” he said, an accomplished smile rose before he hiccuped. “I stood up.”

“Oh, yeah?” Tony said, pursing his lips to keep from laughing. He had never in his life seen Clay like this. His main goal was to get Clay food that would start to absorb the alcohol and keep him awake. If he was shaking that meant he was in early stages of alcohol poisoning.

Tony had seen it happen to a family member once at a party. His Uncle was so wasted that he couldn’t even stand and his Aunt got worried once he was shaking. She started making him eat and telling everyone at the event to not let him drink anything else. With lots of water and bread,
he eventually sobered up enough to stand. Clay didn’t seem as bad as him but was on the track to getting there if he did not get something in his system other than booze.

“Yeah,” Clay said, huffing, and then gasping. Tony was sure he inhaled all the oxygen in the room. “Tony! I found something out.”

“What did you find out?”

“I found out,” he said, holding his finger up to his mouth to stay quiet. He let his body fall over until it was leaning up on Tony, maneuvering his head to the side to whisper the next part. “I like boys and girls.”

“Really?” Tony covered his mouth with his hand to keep from grinning. “What made you find that out?”

Clay smacked his lips and his breathing got quieter again. When Tony looked his eyes were closed and he was passed out on his shoulder. Tony was realizing that it was going to be a struggle simply to get him into his car, let alone keep him awake and feed him.

He pulled his phone out and dialed his dad. “Hey, Pops, I found my friend. He’s not in too good of shape. Can you heat up some leftovers so I can bring him back to eat because he needs food in his system, badly.”

His dad said he would and Tony thanked him, bringing his attention back to the room, back to his obliterated friend. How the hell was he supposed to get Clay up if he was too drunk to even sit up. Tony took a moment to let his nerves ease and his mind to clear. If he could get Clay to help him by pushing himself up on the bed he could get himself underneath his armpit and keep him up.

It took him ten minutes and many failed attempts before Clay was standing -- better yet slouching on Tony -- and they were able to start their trek to the car. Clay was testing his strength as they reached the front door; his dead weight and noodle legs made it especially difficult to move, let alone hold him up and open a door.

Tony heard Marcus’ footsteps pattering down the stairs and then he was at the door opening it for them. He even helped Tony walk Clay down the driveway and to his car. They got him situated into the passenger seat, with the seatbelt on so he would stay in place.

“Thank you,” Tony said, holding his hand out to shake; Marcus gripped tightly and nodded.

“I thought Clay was some stuck up kid who looked down at us,” Marcus said, eyes faded. “He’s not. He’s just trying to figure it out like all of us.”

Tony bobbed his head up and down, agreeing. “I think he’s finally breaking out of his shell.”

“I hope so. I know he’s all fucked up and shit but he was a lot of fun tonight.”

“How much did he drink, by the way?”

“I don’t even know,” Marcus closed his eyes and started counting with his fingers. Once he got to his second hand Tony knew it was a lot. “We all took shots and shit and Montgomery made him this drink that was legitimately just vodka with like a smidge of fruit punch so I’m saying the equivalent of ten shots, shit, maybe more?”

“Jesus christ,” Tony said, shaking his head. “I’m pretty sure Ryan gave him some pills before, too.”
“Oh, definitely,” Marcus said, eyes wide. “He was high as a kite before he even got to my house.”

“Fuck,” Tony said, pivoting and gazing at Clay who was passed out in his seat, head hanging to the side on his shoulder. “I need to take him and get him some food. Thanks again.”

“Yeah, man,” Marcus said, kicking his foot in the grass. “If I have another kick back you should come. I mean, if you want, of course.”

“Maybe,” Tony said, stepping off the curb and towards the driver’s side. “I’ll see you around.”

“Yeah, see you.”

-xxx-

“Clay, I need you to stay up, okay?” Tony kept his eyes on the road, averting them every few seconds to make sure Clay was not knocked out.

“I’m awake,” Clay said, as he held his hand up in front of his face, chortling. “I punched Tyler.”

“What?” Tony gazed over and saw under the passing streetlights that sure enough his knuckles were puffy and red. “What happened?”

Clay shrugged and pouted his lips. “I don’t know.”

“Clay, you just told me you punched Tyler.”

Clay closed his eyes.

“Wake up.”

“I’m awake, I’m awake,” he kept repeating as he snuggled into the chair. His speech slowed and he started to yawn. “I’m awake,” he said, right before closing his eyes again.

“Goddammit,” Tony exhaled out, a few blocks away from his house. It was as though Clay had narcolepsy. “Fine, you can sleep for the next five minutes but the moment we’re home your ass is staying up and getting some food in you.”

“Okay, Grandpa,” Clay mumbled.

Tony ruffled Clay’s hair and smiled. “Fucking idiot.”

Chapter End Notes

A time jump??? Nah just turns out while the party was starting Tony was still looking! I wanted it to kind of feel like the show because the party isn’t even close to being over. There are still three more chapters to come involving the party and explaining all the answers as the what drama happened, why Clay and Courtney made out, and also just why the fuck Marcus kicked everyone out!!!! Hope that’s cool with you guys I just love to keep some suspense in my stories lol

plus tbqh I couldn’t go another three chapters without Tony and Clay interacting it’s already been 20k of that hahahah
Lastly! I've mapped out what I want for the remainder of the fic and if it all works out we legit just got to the halfway mark. There's probably gonna be 24 chapters
Montgomery

Chapter Summary

What was Monty doing before the party and why he is all over Clay? Let's take a look.

Chapter Notes

I knew I wanted to shift to a different character just to get their mind going into the party and I had this idea of Montgomery being it so I hope you guys like this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

His arms were tense as he white knuckled the steering wheel. The parking lot was located next to the emergency room entrance, and across from the main sliding doors to the hospital. Montgomery’s stomach was twisting inside him and his heart was bruising his chest. He just needed to work up the courage to reach to his side, open the door, and get out. Once he was out he would be able to do it. But the apprehension gripped his muscles, a phantom haunting his every thought.

The day he had heard that Alex had shot himself he felt as though the ground had collapsed underneath him and he was in freefalling. He had just gotten into a fight with the kid the week of, shit, they minced words a day or two before. He couldn’t even remember exactly when, his mind was on overdrive. Acting normal at school was tough that day but he kept up the facade, it didn’t hurt that he was used to putting on a mask around the people at school.

Monty’s dad was an alcoholic and he hated him. When his parents would fight at night and it would spill out into the living room he would have to go out and try and stop it, usually getting punched a time or two again by his father. It happened more often than not, and he still showed up to school, bags under his eyes, but a plastic smile to deflect any questions.

He missed school after hearing about Alex. There was no faking being okay after that.

At least for a few days. Faking a cough and fever, he was able to stay home from classes where he sat, glued to his computer screen, scrolling through Alex’s Facebook and reading the comments people were leaving. He broke down, ugly sobbing when he read that Alex had survived and was in stable condition.

Immediately after Alex, the tapes got made public and he listened to them. Maybe he was maturing or something just clicked in his mind, but after listening to all fourteen tapes he realized how much a small action can make a difference. He told himself that he would make it a point to visit Alex at the hospital and apologize and try to make it right.

But now he was there, in the parking lot, physically present but unable to move his body.

“Come on, don’t be a bitch,” he said to himself, bobbing his head back and forth and talking himself up.
He finally went to reach for the door when he saw Jessica exiting the entrance. With one quick swoop of his arm -- suddenly having cat-like reflexes -- he pulled the lever on the side of his chair and pushed with all his might, flying backward and lying down to keep hidden.

After scrolling through his Twitter feed to waste time he peeked up to see if she was still outside. No Jessica. He moved his chair back to its normal position and put the car in reverse, backing out of the spot. That was a sign. It had to be. He would go and see him on Monday. Yeah, that way he would not show up on Friday and possibly ruin Alex’s weekend if he didn’t want to see him. Monday would be perfect.

When he got to the red light leading out of the lot he did a quick check to make sure he had everything he needed for Marcus’ party. His costume was in a tote bag along with his zip lock bag of drugs for the night. It was going to be his first night out since Alex and, truth be told, he wanted to get laid.

-xxx-

“Why are you here so fucking early, dude?” Marcus asked, letting him into the house. The living room was fucking amazing.

“Can I put my clothes down somewhere?” He asked, holding the bag.

“Yeah, down the hallway to the left is a spare room, last door.”

Montgomery paced down the hallway and smirked at all the kid pictures of Marcus that riddled every inch of the wall. One was him as a baby, all chubby and full of rolls, sitting naked with a baseball covering his privates and a tiny Yankees hat on his head.

“Redsox are better,” he called out, reaching the room and placing the bag by the door.

“I don’t give a fuck about baseball,” Marcus shouted back, “but don’t ever say that in front of my dad. He’s die hard about it.”

Montgomery got back into the living room and nodded. “Noted. So, when do people start showing up?”

“In two fucking hours,” Marcus said, a dumbfounded expression lay idle on his face. “Again I ask, why are you here so early?”

He didn’t answer right away. Instead, he rubbed his hand along the back of his neck and contemplated how to explain himself. With a huff he sat down next to Marcus on the couch and faced him, rubbing his clammy hands down his face.

“Okay,” he started, “you know the tapes.”

“It’s always the fucking tapes,” Marcus said, his hands landing on top of his head as he leaned all the way back on the couch. “They’re gonna haunt me the rest of my life.”

“No, it’s not about them, actually,” Monty said, realizing he could have started it off better. “What I mean is, I wasn’t on them, but--”

“You did something to Hannah too?”

“No, not Hannah,” he said, averting his gaze and fiddling with his fingers. “Alex tried to kill himself and I was such a dick to him. I beat the shit out of him.”
“Yeah, I know.” Marcus shook his head. “I suspended your ass, remember?”

“Yeah,” Montgomery said, laughing. “Makes sense now that I’ve listened to the…. Marcus’ face did not look like he was enjoying the conversation. “My point is I feel like shit and I was going to go talk to him in the hospital and then I wussed out and just came here.”

“Why were you going to talk to him?”

“To apologize and make it right. If you had a chance to make it right with Hannah if she hadn’t succeeded, would you?”

Now it was Marcus avoiding eye contact. “Yeah,” he said, clearing his throat. “I would.”

“I thought so,” he said, leaning back on the couch next to Marcus. They both stayed silent for a few moments before Monty spoke. “Two hours early, huh?”

“Yeah, motherfucker,” Marcus said, coughing out a laugh. “Caught me just in time, too. I am going to get the keg.”

“Cool, I’ll go with.” Monty furrowed his brow and thought about it. “Wait, how many people are coming that we need a keg?”

“I don’t know, maybe ten tops. And besides, it’s gonna be one of those small ass kegs, man, not a fucking huge one like at Jessica’s party.”

“Oh, okay,” Monty said, “that makes sense.”

-xxx-

They went to the liquor store Bryce had informed all of them about. They did not care if you had a fake I.D. so long as you did not look suspicious and nervous. The two of the waltzed up, and Monty was doing his best to ooze confidence. He even felt the difference in his stepping as he stood up straight, puffed out his chest, and kept a pair of sunglasses over his eyes. It was just as though he was bluffing in poker.

The transaction went off without a hitch and they walked out of the store with a small five-liter keg, a bottle of Patron, and a handle of Vodka. Marcus said his parents had some alcohol that they could drink from but most people agreed on those two when he asked. Once they were back at the house, Monty went into the bathroom -- one door before the guest room -- and changed into his costume, making sure to take his baggy inside with him.

He laid the contents out on the table. The joint he slipped inside of his costume, in a pocket that was right under his heart. He had two ecstasy pills and decided to take one now since the party was starting in an hour, that way he’d be feeling it when people arrived. That was by far his favorite drug. Each time he took one at a party he felt every nerve ending in his body, the lights appeared brighter, and everything he touched felt pleasurable in some sort of way. Not to mention the sex on it was out of this fucking world. He never lasted long because it was pure bliss, but it didn’t bother him.

Swallowing one of the pills with sink water he looked at himself in the mirror, doing a douchey smirk to himself. The unbuttoned top was working, his hair was spiked just the way he liked it, and he definitely made the right choice in getting a medium shirt instead of a large because his arms looked jacked in the costume.

“I’d fuck you,” he said to his reflection, grinning one last time before taking the last pill in the bag and placing it in his right pocket.
When he went back out, Marcus was in the living room, a bong set up on the table, and a grin on his face. “Let’s get baked and eat some Totino's before people get here.”

“Oh, bro,” Monty said, purposefully making a sexual moan. “You know how to get a guy wet.”

“Shut the fuck up, man,” Marcus laughed, taking the piece and lighting the bowl, the sound of the bubbles rumbling, until he pulled the stem out and cleared it all. “Here,” he said, smoking coming out of his mouth.

Monty headed over and lit the end, watching the cloud fill in the chamber before he yanked out the glass stem and inhaled, his lungs filling to the brim. Even with his mouth closed, small bits of smoke escaped his pursed lips. He breathed out a large puff in front of his face and already could feel his eyes relaxing, his mouth rising, and his body easing. The smell of weed somehow relaxed him also. Sure, it could smell like skunk, but goddamn did it delightfully mellow him out.

The bong was being handed back to him as Marcus let out another large cloud. This time it was harsher, but he still held it in, letting his lungs fill with fire before releasing it out his nose. His head flopped to the side and he croaked out his breath.

“Dude,” he said, closing his eyes and letting his body rest. “I’ve been so tense lately I feel like I’ve become Jensen.”

“No one could be as wound up as Jensen,” Marcus said, kicking his legs up on the tree-shaped table and resting his hands behind his head. “I think somewhere along his back is a twist that is constantly turning.”

Monty roared out and could not stop himself as his body shook. “Fuck,” he coughed out, “imagine that.”

“That shit would be so funny.”

“He’s not coming tonight is he?” Monty wanted to see him in a party setting after his constant breakdowns at school. The kid legitimately had him worried. It could not be healthy to be that anxious.

“Is the sky blue?” Marcus asked, giving him a dead-eyed stare. “No, he’s not coming. He’s probably judging us for even doing this.”

“You think?”

“Dude think the sun shines out his ass.” Marcus shrugged and stood up. “Totino’s?”

“Fuck yes, please.”

Chapter End Notes

I just felt like I needed to address a few things from the show with Monty's character and also I just had this idea that he was fucked up without people knowing and that is why he and Clay are just two messy people at the party hahahaha next chapter will be back to the actual party!!
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Back to the party, and told from Jessica’s POV as we see what happened while Clay went outside with Monty.

Chapter Notes

Alright so I hope you guys like this chapter!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jessica wished she had stayed in the kitchen with Sheri. Tyler was bleeding from the mouth, her head was swirling as her body processed the recent drinks, and Clay was being taken away for doing the decent thing. How the actual fuck was he going to show up in that costume and expect to be met with anything other than hostility? Jessica was on Clay’s side.

“You guys did so much worse than me!” Tyler screeched, his eyes filled with tears, blood stained spit dripping off his lower lip. “Why do I get the shit end of everything!”

“Because,” Jessica said, feeling emboldened with her loyal sidekick: tequila. “We don’t go around in fucking costumes of Hannah’s tapes as though that’s some fucking joke.” Her voice was spiteful as she spoke, stepping closer to him. “And because what we did was in the moment shit that we fucking regret. All of us,” she said, looking around and pointing at her friends. “You stalked her for nights and took pictures of her without her consent. You leaked it online because she found out. Your’s was calculated and vicious.”

Tyler swiped his wrist across his mouth to wipe the blood. His lip twitched into a deranged smile. “You guys really are something.” Turning his attention to Courtney. “So what? It’s over?”

“Dude,” Jessica said, wanting to both hurt Tyler but also, against her better judgment, ease Courtney’s mind. She could see on the poor girl’s face that she wanted to be anywhere but in that room. “She literally only dated you ‘cause she thought we were mad at her, but we talked tonight,” she said, extending her hand out to Courtney, hoping she would understand. “And we’re good, and she told us that she didn’t even like you.”

Courtney paused for a quick moment before catching on. “Yeah,” she said, crossing her arms. “Get the fuck out of here.”

Tyler looked like he was about to cry. “Fuck you all,” he barked out, wiping his eyes.

“All right, Tyler,” Marcus said, walking to the front door and pointing to the outside. “It’s time to go.”

He didn’t say anything, just had a defeated look on his face. His mouth was half open, his neck shook lightly from side to side, and he trudged out with a hung head.
“See you Monday, Tyler,” Marcus sighed out.

Tyler pivoted on his foot and glared. “This isn’t over.”

“Okay.” Marcus sounded bored with the situation. “Goodbye.” And with that, he closed the door in Tyler’s face and locked the deadbolt.

“Well, that was dramatic,” Sheri said, rubbing the sides of her arms, almost hugging herself. “What do you think he meant?”

“The kids harmless,” Zach said, trying his best to give a reassuring smile, but to Jessica, it seemed fake. He looked worried.

“I don’t know,” Marcus said, putting his hands up in the air and sarcastically saying, “he might shoot us with his camera.”

“Not funny,” Courtney said, looking down. “His pictures can do damage, remember?”

“Okay, so if we see him doing something shifty or creeping around we tell the principal and get his ass suspended.”

“You really think they’re gonna do anything, Marcus?” Jessica said, rolling her eyes.

“They fired Mr. Porter and put in some zero bully policy thing, and if the majority of the student council raise a concern,” he wiggled his eyebrows. “We can get his ass expelled, probably.”

“Can we just get back to playing spin the bottle?” Zach said, huffing and walking to the kitchen. After a few seconds, he came back in and was covering his mouth, grinning. “Y’all, Clay and Monty are getting it on in the kitchen.”

“Oh, my God, I wanna see,” Jessica said, giggling. The thought of seeing Clay in action seemed too good to pass up. She tiptoed to the edge of the divider and peeped in, not seeing anyone in the kitchen. “What the hell?” She stepped out and looked around, seeing the two of them sitting on top of the bench outside.

“Did you see?” Zach asked as she came back in.

“They’re outside now and it looks kinda kinky,” she chuckled. “Monty’s all got him by the neck and they’re making out, I think.”

Ryan stepped out from the hallway and looked around the room, furrowing his brow. “What did I miss?”

“You chose to go the bathroom at the perfect time,” Sheri said, sitting down on the couch and shuddering. “Tyler showed up in a costume of Hannah’s tape and Clay punched him, and then he said it wasn’t over and left.”

Ryan’s eyes became saucers. “What the fuck. Where’s Clay now?”

“Him and Monty are hooking up in the backyard.” Jessica shrugged and sat down with Sheri, snuggling up on her. Sheri wrapped her arms around her, chin nuzzling atop Jessica’s head. “I did not expect this to be how the night went,” she snorted.

“Isn’t the back gate open?” Ryan asked, a concerned look creasing across his brow.

“Yeah, that’s how we got in,” Sheri said.
“Same,” Ryan said, still harboring that look.

“What’s your problem?” Jessica asked, a nervousness rising in the pit of her stomach.

“Tyler’s a fucking creep. Knowing his ass he’s probably gonna come through the back gate.”

“Oh, shit, Clay and Monty,” Jessica said, bounding up from the couch and rushing into the kitchen and to the sliding glass door within seconds.

She cracked it open and stuck half her body out, her eyes adjusting to the light. Clay’s hand was moving around and Monty was letting out a ragged breath. She knew they were probably going to be pissed at her for interrupting, but they could do that later, at the moment they needed to get back in the safety of the house and lock the doors.

“Guys,” she hissed out, “get inside.”

“What?” Clay said, around his lips were red, probably from the five o’clock shadow Monty was sporting.

“Tyler’s being a creep and everyone would feel safer if you guys were inside.”

Music began to play in the living room and Jessica wanted to go back in. It was chilly out.

“I hate that kid,” Montgomery sighed, standing up and brushing his hands down the front of his pants; Jessica covered her mouth.

“Sorry,” Clay said, pushing himself up and hopping off the bench, landing on the floor and sticking his hands out to balance.

“It’s fine,” Monty said, rubbing Clay’s shoulders. “I’m just glad it didn’t burn.”

“Wait, what?” Jessica said, realizing she was not fully aware of the context of what they were discussing.

“Clay dropped the joint on me right before you came out and was hitting it off before it burned through my pants.”

“I fucked up,” Clay slurred out, rotating his neck and groaning as Monty continued to work into his shoulders. “You’re hands are magical.”

“Don’t I know it,” Monty said, as the two of them walked in a chain back into the house.

She closed the sliding glass door and locked it, dragging the white vertical blinds across and shutting them. With a shudder, she made her way back to the living room, having an eery feeling that he was watching them now. Clay distracted her from that immediately.

“I love this song,” he shouted as he stepped into the room, bending his knee and dropping low and then popping back up.

Sleazy by Kesha was playing through the surround sound. Small black speakers were set up in the corners of the room and directly above the couch in a line. The music came out crisp and the bass bounced. Jessica couldn’t help but start to bounce to the song, too.

“Sheri,” she called out, twisting her body downward and pointing for her to come and dance. Sheri looked down and smiled, blushing as he got up and dance-walked over to Jessica. The two of them held their arms out above them and swayed to the music, laughing and jumping along.
Clay was going around and grabbing each person by the arm and yanking them up to come dance. Zach joined in pretty quickly, his eyes twinkled as he held his cup in the air and bopped to the song. Courtney took some convincing from both Clay and Jessica who tag teamed her, each grabbing one arm and begging her to get up, not missing out on doing the obnoxious long winded, “please.”

Eventually, all of them were on the wooden floor dancing away. Jessica was swaying her hips with Sheri behind her, hands on her waist, and mouth against her neck. It felt amazing. Her body leaned back against Sheri, wanting to be as physically close. She turned her neck to the side and then they were kissing, her hand entangling in Sheri’s hair as they stayed plastered together.

Clay was tripping over his own two feet and snorting as he held onto Monty’s shoulders, bouncing up and down. Jessica looked over and saw a grin on Courtney’s face which she had not seen for a while as she danced beside Ryan. Marcus and Zach were shuffling their feet, seemingly joking as they shoved each other back and forth. Besides the bump in the road that was Tyler, the night was back on track.

They stayed dancing around for a few songs until the majority of them -- Clay and Monty being the first -- petered and crashed out. Monty sat on the couch with his legs open and Clay plopped his ass on the floor, legs spread out, his head in between Monty’s legs. Monty started to run his fingers through his hair and they both looked as if they were getting equal amounts of joy from the experience.

The rest sat down, this time Courtney was sitting to Monty and Clay’s left and Ryan was at the end. Jessica was to their immediate right, followed by Sheri and then Zach and Marcus.

“Anyone want more drinks before I stay planted in this comfy ass cushion?” Marcus asked.

“Just bring the bottles in and people can fix their own,” Courtney suggested, adding she would give him a hand. He thanked her and the two of them got up.

“That was cool back there,” Sheri whispered in Jessica’s ear. “What you did for Courtney.”

“At the end of the day,” Jessica said, pulling her into her embrace. “I will always choose to help a girl. Besides, she seemed like she had already blew her gasket, it wouldn’t be fun to fuck with her anymore.”

“So,” Sheri said, looking down, her voice softening. “We’re not pretending to be together anymore?”

“I….” Jessica paused and did not know how to answer. Technically, no they were not pretending anymore, but also, she was enjoying it, a lot. She had always found Sheri attractive and they had on and off flirted from time to time at different cheer outings and simply when the two of them were alone. The issue was, she didn’t know if Sheri felt the same for her. She figured if it went downhill she could blame it on the alcohol. “We don’t have to stop if you don’t want to.”

“I don’t,” Sheri admitted, her eyes crinkling in the corners. “I like you, Jessica.”

“I like you, too,” she said, her cheeks rising and heating up.

Courtney and Marcus came back in with the bottles and drinks were flowing again. Courtney poured more straight vodka into her cup and downed it, filling it back up right after. It seemed that all of them had the idea to get as shit faced as possible. Maybe that was what they collectively needed. They were not fighting, Jessica felt the best she had in weeks, and she had not heard that much laughter in a room for a very long time. Her gut was even sore from cracking up so much.
With the right people, drinking and letting go of any inhibitions made for an enjoyable, but sloppy, night.

Ryan suggested truth or dare instead of spin the bottle, that way it might not be all hooking up. Clay did put up a little bit of a funk, groaning out that he had never played the latter game, but ultimately was too drunk to really keep an argument going. His mind drifted to another topic because within a few seconds he was laughing at his knuckles and slapping his open palm on his forehead.

“How ’bout we spin the bottle to see who they ask?” Marcus suggested, and Jessica watched Clay’s face beam at the idea. “And you can go first, Clay.”

“Fuck yes!” Clay banged his fists on the table for a quick second before reaching forward, his eyes half open, and spun the bottle. The bottle was wobbling and nearly fell off but it did stop and was pointing at Zach.

“Um,” Zach said, rubbing his hands under his chin. “Truth.”

Clay closed his eyes and hummed; Jessica thought he might have fallen asleep until his eyes shot open and he said, “what’s your favorite song of all time?”

“Oh, shit, that’s hard, Jensen.”

“Don’t I know it,” Clay said, cackling. Monty stayed playing with his hair.

“Fuck, I don’t know. Hold on, let me look at what my number one played on iTunes is.” Zach unlocked his screen and took a few moments before looking up and shaking his head, his dimples lifting up. “It’s ‘Formation.’”

“That song is a masterpiece,” Ryan said immediately.

“It really is,” Sheri added.

“My turn,” Zach said, his cheeks visibly getting redder. The glass circled around and slowed down, landing on Courtney.

“Dare,” she said without hesitating.

“I dare you to chug the vodka bottle for ten seconds straight,” he said, cracking his knuckles.

“Fuck, fine,” she said, taking in a deep breath before holding the neck of the drink and lifting to the edge of her mouth. She coughed as she sniffed it, scrunching up her face before sticking it to her lips and tilting her head back. They collectively counted down and Jessica watched as it leaked from the sides of her lips, her cheeks swelled up, and her eyes were shut tightly. The ten seconds ended and she jerked the bottle away, covering her mouth with both her hands to keep from spitting it out. An audible gulp signified she finished and a slow clap arose from Clay.

“Damn,” Zach commented, his mouth wide open. “I didn’t think you could do it.”

Courtney’s eyes were glossy. “I am competitive,” she said, sticking her tongue out and hacking before spinning. The bottle landed on Marcus.

“Dare,” he said, raising his eyebrows.

“I dare you to,” Courtney said, pausing and looking around, “do twenty-five sit-ups.”
“Easy.” Marcus got off the couch and effortlessly succeeded in the challenge. When he spun it landed on Clay, who went for a dare. “I dare you to eenie meenie miney moe around the table and make out with the person it lands on.”

“Goddammit,” Zach said, side eyeing Marcus.

Clay did his best to say the entire jingle but words mixed together in a slur of jumbles and by the end of it, his finger was pointing at Courtney, who did not look as worried as Jessica would have been. Maybe if Clay was soberer she would not mind, but she had a feeling at that point he would not be even remotely okay at kissing. Drunk making out always was sloppy and wet and never as great as it feels while it's happening. But at least Courtney had drunk a lot also, making it semi-even.

Clay turned to his left and pulled himself up so that they were next to each other. Ryan had his phone out and was recording. The two of them advanced forward and Jessica was taken aback and how intensely both of them got into it. Courtney’s arms swung around and latched onto Clay’s back as their mouth magnetized together, followed by the slopping noises that always accompanied intoxicated hooking up. The room was half quiet with occasional laughs and jests as the two of them showed no signs of stopping.

“Okay, Clay, it’s your turn,” Marcus interjected after nearly twenty seconds. “Unsuck your face from each other and let’s move on.”

That did not seem to separate them and before anyone had time to process, Courtney lied back on the couch and Clay climbed on top of her, his arm wobbling as he held himself up, their lips never once parting. Ryan had to get up and get out of their way, and that for some reason triggered a memory from the night at Jessica’s party when she and Justin were making out on the couch and Hannah and Clay had to get up. Her heart started to tighten in her chest as though her ribs were closing in on it. The flashes kept popping up in her mind and her body was reacting as though she was physically back to that horror night.

Marcus was getting up to pull them apart as Jessica turned to Sheri and said she needed to go to the bathroom. The moment she was alone and the door was locked behind her she gripped the granite counter, meeting her own gaze in the mirror and trying to steady her breath and racing heart. Turning on the sink, she splashed some frigid water in her face to snap her out of it. It was working and then someone was banging on the door.

“I’m gonna be sick,” Clay shouted, hitting the door.

“Fuck,” Jessica groaned, unlocking the door and letting him in.

Clay jolted forward, slipping and colliding with his knees against the tile. His hands desperately shot out in front of him for the toilet seat and he almost didn’t make it, his head shoved inside the bowl as he puked. The sound of the -- mainly drinks -- being puked did not do anything to appease Jessica’s twisted stomach, it only made her feel queasy.

She couldn’t leave him, though. It was nice to have someone there to assist when you’re that gone.

Jessica closed the door to give them privacy, squatting down next to him and rubbing her hands down his back. “You’re gonna be good. Throwing up sucks but you always feel better after.”

Clay’s back rose with each heave and his breath was faint as he did small huffs in between the vomiting. Eventually, it turned into just dry heaves, which were arguably the worst in Jessica’s opinion. His face lied sideways across the bowl, spit hanging from the side of his lips, dripping
into the fruit punch colored toilet water.

“It’s all alcohol,” she said, flushing the toilet and grabbing a hand towel, damping it with water. She held it up to his forehead and wiped away the sweat and spit from his face. She had never seen his skin so ghostly white, contrasting so heavily with the darkness under his eyes. If Jessica had just seen him on the side of the street without knowing anything she would have thought he was dying. “When was the last time you ate?”

“Lunch,” he grumbled, coughing.

“Oh, Clay,” she said, pity rising in her chest. “You never drink on an empty stomach.”

“You don’t--” He stopped mid sentence and started to dry heave again, his ribs visibly expanding and shrinking.

“Oh, man,” she sighed. “I’m gonna pray for you tomorrow.”

Clay closed his eyes and started to breathe out through his slack mouth, lightly snoring. Jessica needed to get him up and into a room with some water for him to sleep it off. He did not look like he would be moving anywhere so she took the opportunity to fill a cup with water and get the guest room situated for him. As she made it past the group in the living room, Zach was doing push-ups with Marcus lying underneath him. Ryan was now the one in Montgomery’s arms and they were getting snug on the couch.

Jessica did not have time to get distracted. The sooner she got Clay situated the sooner she could get back to experiencing whatever wackiness was occurring. Filling the glass up to the top she bounded back on her tip toes across the wood floor and down the hallway, hearing a knock at the door. She stopped, pivoting and looking back.

“Anyone else coming?” She called out, feeling something was off about the knock.

“I’ll get it and check,” Marcus said, pushing Zach off of him and zipping on his socks to the door.

Jessica turned back and went into the room, placing the glass on the nightstand at the top of the bed. As she got back into the bathroom, Clay was still passed out lying on the rim of the toilet. Shaking him, she was able to wake him up enough to get him to stand up and maneuver, slowly, to the bed. Once he was lying down on his stomach, she left the door cracked open and went back out, worried about who was at the door. For some reason, she had this gripping fear that it was Tyler.

A collective group of wide eyes met her as she reared the corner of the hallway, not understanding why everyone was staring at her that way. When she got out far enough she realized why, and her face dropped along with her heart.

Justin was standing in the doorway, his neck purple and bruised, his face bloody with welts along his cheekbones. His arms were wrapped around his ribs as though those were injured too and he looked like he had been crying, redness attached to his eyes like glue.

“Jess,” he said, his voice coming out shocked. “I didn’t know you were here.”

“Not for long,” she said, folding her arms. “Sheri, are you about ready to go.”

“Oh, yeah, totally,” Sheri said, standing up and nodding. “Let me get my keys from the kitchen.”

“You don’t have to go, Jess,” Justin said, tears already falling from his eyes.
“Thanks for telling me what the fuck I can and cannot do,” she shouted, storming forward. The alcohol was in full force and her fear and sadness were evolving into a full pitted rage. “You’re not welcome here,” she cried out, reaching him and pushing him back.

Justin winced and stumbled back, yelling, “I’m sorry, okay! I’m so fucking sorry!”

Her mind ignored the anguish in his croaky voice, only focusing on the reason why he was sorry, the reason why she could not feel comfortable in her own skin, home, life. She did not care about his apologies because they meant shit after the fact.

“Shove your apologies up your ass,” she said, sniffling and crossing her arms, storming past him and into the front yard. “And you know what, Justin,” she shouted, turning around and shaking her head. “You don’t get to leave for three fucking weeks and act like a hurt puppy will make everything go away. Just go to Bryce’s like you always do and let your bro fix your problems!”

“Jess, please,” he said, limping towards her with his arm reached out.

“Get the fuck away from me!” She screeched at the top of her lungs, not even remotely caring who woke up. She was in control of her life and he was not going to try to derail it all by sobbing in front of her. It was too little too late.

“Y’all need to keep it the fuck down,” Marcus hissed, sticking his head out. “My neighbors will call the cops.”

“Let them!” Jessica threw her hands up in the air. “I don’t give a fuck!”

Sheri bolted past Marcus, turning and saying something to him before reaching Jessica. “Let’s get out of here,” she said, rolling her eyes and pointing back, putting a half-smile across her face.

The two of them got into Sheri’s car, Jessica stepping unevenly down the driveway due to the alcohol. Once in and driving away, Sheri turned to her and asked if she was okay. Jessica said she was fine but her shoulders would not ease up.

“If this makes up for it,” Sheri said, stopping at a red light and reaching under her chair, pulling out the bottle of Patron. “I took it like we planned, unless you don’t wanna go back to mine?”

“No, please,” Jessica said, feeling tears coating her eyes. “Let’s do that.” She wiped her eyes and wanted to start crying. “Thank you, Sheri.”

“Of course,” she said, holding her open hand out; Jessica grabbed it and smiled, looking forward and not back.

Chapter End Notes

Next is gonna be Clay!!!
Clay

Chapter Summary

Clay's never felt like this before in his life.

Chapter Notes

Okay so before you guys read this chapter just gotta explain something real quick! Clay is super fucked up at this point so the chapter is in his POV, meaning he does black out, and it is choppy. I did it on purpose, so when you're reading if it comes off choppy or jumps around that's why. I made a shit ton of .... to signify it but that's the big difference in this chapter compared to the rest! Hope you like!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sleazy was on and nothing mattered but that fucking song. Clay loved that anthem. It stayed a secret constant on the recently played list on his phone, but he had no shame in it in that moment.…. The group was all dancing and Montgomery was grinding on him, his dick against Clay’s lower back. After that came Cheers (Drink To That) and he turned around bouncing up and down. His arms were in front of him flailing around, his legs were moving, but he felt numb to his limbs, as though he was just a head. It was a feeling he had never experienced before. The world around him blurred in the background, the walls and lights all mixing into a singular color and he continued to jump around….

His head felt like it was being made love to as Monty rubbed his fingers deep into his scalp and massaged the sides. Each time his fingers swirled around in Clay’s hair he felt like he was experiencing pure bliss. Then there was a drink in front of him and he was downing it as though it was water, not really tasting anything. He noticed his view would window out at moments, almost like a movie screen going black and then he would be back into reality, talking and reacting, but not coherent enough to understand how he got there.

With a spin of his hand, the bottle spun and he asked the toughest question he could think, knowing if someone asked him it would be Sleazy…. When his eyes were working again his fingers were out in front of him, pointing at each person at the table until they stopped on Courtney. Unaware of it, his heart beat intensely in his chest…. His lips were wet and he felt amazing as his eyes were closed, a tongue inside his mouth…. Courtney was underneath him and he felt the world around him spinning as if he had been stuck on a tire swing for far too long…. The white rim of the toilet was in view as his body racked and his stomach convulsed…. Jessica was next to him, garnishing an empathetic stare…. The room was dark and he saw the water reflecting off the cup…. His hand reached for the cup and knocked it over right as he heard shouting coming from the other room. Reaching out in front of him, Clay attempted to get out of bed, falling face first on the carpet, his hand noodling underneath and doing nothing to ease the fall…. Tony was in front of him and his heart fluttered in his chest, not sure where they were but aware
he was safe if Tony was with him. Clay was about to say something but noticed the concern that was ingrained in Tony’s face. Unable to understand what was even happening, Clay laughed and felt his body move forward, making his stomach ache from cracking up….There was light and they were on their way outside, Tony’s hair was in his underview…. Marcus’ voice echoed through his mind as he felt the temperature take a dip.…. They were moving now and Tony was telling him to stay awake, which was dumb because he was awake, he just had his eyes closed. His hair got ruffled with again and he smiled….His stomach was retching again and when his eyes opened up they were on the side of the road, Tony by his side, rubbing his back, a water bottle in hand, as Clay vomited more. The only good thing that came from it was that it woke him up. Tony reached out and helped him back into the passenger seat once he was done, moving his hair out of his forehead and helping him take sips of the cool water.

“I don’t feel good,” Clay groaned, pins and needles stabbing into his cheeks, as his vision blurred. “I know, buddy,” he said, staying on the side of the road with him until he no longer felt like his body was in freefall.

Tony gently shut the door and went to the driver seat, taking a long look at Clay before he turned the engine over and they drove off. Clay felt like he was dreaming looking into Tony’s beautiful hazel eyes gazing down on him.

“T’m dumb,” Clay said, pouting out his lip and crossing his arms.

“This definitely wasn’t the best way of handling your emotions,” Tony said, sucking on his teeth, “but you’re not dumb.”

“You hate me,” Clay whined, feeling all of a sudden like he was a total fuck up and Tony was always stuck looking after him. Maybe he was stressing Tony out and causing him to have unnecessary anxiety added to his life. Tears formed in his eyes and he couldn’t even help it he started crying, loud and unfiltered. “I’m sorry,” he choked out.

“Clay, what just happened?” Tony said, putting on his hazards and pulling over. “Why do you think I hate you?”

“Because,” he said, his vision as though he was under water. “I’m always getting into something and you always have to come and help me and I’m just this stupid dramatic dumb asshole who can’t do anything and you waste so much time helping me and Brad…. ” Clay felt his face melt as he threw his hands up and started bawling. “I ruined your relationship with Brad!”

“Whoa,” Tony said, reaching out and placing his hands on Clay’s shoulders. “Clay, you had nothing to do with Brad and I’s break up, I promise you.”

Clay was trying to get a hold of his breathing, his chest was shaking as he inhaled. “But….but I was always getting in the way and being selfish when you were out with him.”

“You were dealing with the tapes.”

“It doesn’t matter,” he said, hating himself for breaking down like this in the first place. “I’m sorry, I don’t know why I’m crying I just am so sorry.”

“Okay,” Tony said, pulling Clay in for a hug. His arms wrapped tightly around Clay as he shook with each breath. “I accept your apology, Clay. And I don’t want to hear anymore of this I hate you bullshit, all right?”
Clay choked out a laugh and bobbed his head against Tony’s shoulder. “Okay. I am dumb, though.” Clay said, pulling away and wiping his eyes, feeling a weight lift off his shoulder. “I didn’t eat since noon and Jessica said that wasn’t good to drink on an empty stomach.”

“She’s not wrong,” Tony said, looking forward, biting his lower lip with a thoughtful gaze. “Okay, change of plans. I’m taking you to the McDonald’s at the corner and we’re getting you food right the fuck now.”

“Oh, my God,” Clay said, leaning against the back of the chair and rubbing his stomach. “A double quarter pounder sounds so good right now.” His gut made a loud swirling noise and he closed his eyes, thinking about the burger, feeling himself starting to snort out laughter. “Isn’t that a half pounder than? Like, why make the name so long and complicated.”

“That’s a good question.”

The car made a quick right and then the golden arches were beaming like beacons of hope and love inviting Clay into their warm embrace. His cheeks were stuck on permanent joy as he listened to Tony order, watched them hand the bag over, and felt the warmth of the french fries through his jeans. Heaven was where you found it.

He had never been so hungry in his life. Without skipping a beat he would take a large chunk out of the burger, shove a handle of salty delicious hot steamy fries in his mouth, and swirl it around with some coke. Rinse down his throat, repeat. His stomach physically expanded as he sat there, unsure if he would be able to even move after. A loud and abrupt belch came soaring from his toes and reverberating out of his mouth like a canon, diminishing the feeling of fullness immediately.

The food and caffeine definitely made him feel more alert, even if his body was still not under the control of his mind. The street lights were blurring and he started to feel dizzy again so he shut his eyes tightly, doing quick small breaths in and out to steady himself. If he threw up all that delicious food he would hate life.

They made it to Tony’s and Clay felt a twinge mortified when his dad came out of the house in a bathrobe and helped carry him into the house. His legs were not working so well in that moment. Tony sat him down at a dining room table and sat next to him, letting him lean on his shoulder. Clay let out a quick giggle and realized he was still awake, sitting back up and trying to act normal in front of Tony’s father.

That failed. Miserably.

His neck bobbed forward and he felt like his world was spinning again so he laid his head sideways on the table and closed his eyes, doing his breathing technique again. Gentle hands massaged his back as his world realigned.

“I hate this,” he croaked out, wishing he had never drunk or taken the pills from Ryan.

“We’ve all been there, son,” Tony’s dad said, setting a plate of food on the table along with a large glass of water. “You need to eat and drink and drink and drink water.”

“We get it, Pops,” Tony said, snorting.

“I don’t think your friend does.” His dad whispered something in Tony’s ear before walking out of the room.

“Your dad hates me,” Clay said, lifting his head up slowly and looking in front of him. A plate full of spaghetti and meatballs was there, steaming and smelling like a beautiful amount of garlicky
tomato sauce was about to be in his mouth.

“Nah,” Tony said, sliding the glass towards him. “He just wants to make sure you’re good.”

“I am now that there’s even more food,” he said, reaching for the fork and shoveling a heaping amount of pasta into his mouth. Warm sauce covered his lips and he used his tongue to try and lick most of it before taking a napkin to wipe it off.

“Don’t forget to chew,” Tony commented, “and drink. Once you’re done we can go to my room and make sure you continue to sober up and stay good.”

“What time is it anyway?” Clay asked, gulping down some water.

“It’s barely eleven.”

“Oh, shit, it’s still early.”

“For a Friday, yes.” Tony stood up and stretched, his jacket pulling his undershirt up with it, revealing a small line of hairs and bare skin. Clay looked away and went back to his food, worried Tony saw.

“I think I’m good,” he said, once more than half the plate was empty.

“Okay, let me put it away and then we can go to my room.”

“Where’s your bathroom?” Clay asked, becoming more aware of how much his bladder was throbbing, calling out for him to relieve it.

“I’ll walk you,” Tony said, holding out his arm and leading Clay down the hallway.

The bathroom was to the left and Tony’s room was right across. Clay closed the door behind him, assuring Tony that he would be fine to pee. Once he was alone and the fluorescent light was shining, he looked at himself in the mirror.

“Jesus Christ,” he groaned out at the sight of himself.

A white he had never seen before was painted on his face, making him look like a ghost. His cheeks had absolutely no color in them, his eyes looked hollowed out and infected with how red they were. Widening his eyes to get a better look he was shocked at how God awful he came off. No wonder Jessica, Tony, and his father were so concerned about him. He looked sickly.

The pain in his bladder prodded again and he remembered why he was there in the first place. He had never pissed for so long. His arm was extended out in front of him, head hanging in his chest as he stood, trying his best not to sway and miss. Finishing up, Clay flushed the toilet and turned on the sink pumping the soap out and completely missing his hand, the scent of lavender filled the room.

Tony was knocking on the door asking if he was okay. Clay really did feel guilty for making him go through all of the trouble. He had to make it up to him somehow.

“Yeah, I’m good,” he said, unlocking the door and opening it up, jaw dropping at Tony, who was standing in front of him, wearing nothing but a tank top and boxer briefs. Clay did everything he could to not make it obvious that he was gawking, but holy shit did Tony look hot.

The light illuminated against him in the darkness of the hallway, his cross tattoos on his forearms beamed. A grin caught Clay’s attention and Tony looked down, gazing his eyes back up and
meeting Clay’s stare.

“You good, Clay?”

“Yeah,” he said, nodding his head vigorously. “Never better.”

“All right, because you look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“Nope, I’m good,” Clay said, doing the a-okay sign with his fingers.

“Cool. Come on.”

Tony turned around and Clay could not help but look at his ass in the tightly fitting gray boxer briefs. His thighs were a little hairier than his calves which for some reason Clay really found attractive. Each step he took his butt bounced just the slightest and Clay could feel his dick waking up.

“Here is my room,” Tony said, opening the door and holding out his arm in case Clay needed to hold onto it.

Clay was still too fucked up to take it all in, but the one thing he honed in on was the three shelves full of model cars. He found that to be so cute. Tony was such a tough guy and the thought of him taking the time to work on something so small caused Clay to grin from ear to ear.

“What?” Tony asked, standing next to Clay.

“Nothing,” he said, shrugging. “I just really like your room.”

Chapter End Notes

The start to their relationship is finally happening at least!!

Also I'm gonna be gone most of tomorrow which is why I wanted to get two chapters out today! I don't know how long I'll be out or if I'll be home like at all so there may not be an update tomorrow!

ALSO! Tony is gonna be the next chapter so you guys get more of their night together and stuff since I've made you wait like literally 30k for Tony to find him hahahaha
Tony

Chapter Summary

Tony takes care of Clay, but what else is new?

Chapter Notes

Sorry I didn't update yesterday!! Family stuff but here you guys go! I really hope you guys like this chapter!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony held onto Clay’s forearm as he stumbled down the hallway towards the bathroom. At least he had food in his stomach, along with water. They made it to the door and Clay, with slurred words and droopy eyes, insisted that he could go to the bathroom fine. Tony told him to call him if he needed any help, waited till the door was closed, and then took a few moments to listen to make sure he did not fall. When he did not hear any noises that indicated something other than peeing was happening, he waltzed back to the dining room and cleared the table.

With a quick rinse of the plate and cup, Tony placed them in the dishwasher and closed the door, turning around to see his father.

“No funny business,” he said, clicking on their Keurig, mug in hand.

“Pops,” Tony said, affronted, “please. He’s drunk out of his mind. Nothing is going to happen.”

“Okay,” his dad said, placing the mug under the spout. “Make sure he’s good.”

“Of course.” Tony patted his dad on the shoulder and headed back down the hallway, hearing the sound of Clay peeing through the wall. He still had some time. With quick reflexes, Tony yanked off his brown leather jacket, pulled up his undershirt, and slipped on his tanktop that he slept in. He also slept in just boxer briefs and figured Clay would be too drunk to notice or care; he was wrong.

When Clay opened the door his eyes immediately fell to Tony’s crotch and because Clay’s reflexes were as slow as a geriatric grandmother on morphine, his eyes lingered for a few moments longer than Tony was expecting. It made him smile, though. A lot of doubt that he had been feeling about liking Clay was diminishing the more he realized Clay, at least under the influence, had a thing for guys, and maybe, Tony specifically. After all, he had learned at a young age that drunk people are their truest selves.

“You good, Clay?” he asked, watching Clay fumble to make a sentence, his eyes now looking everywhere but Tony’s dick. Maybe he would put on some basketball shorts so Clay would not be, well, how he was reacting in that moment.

He pivoted on his heel and walked into his room. His dad had already set up blankets on the floor with some pillows, along with three full water bottles. Tony reminded himself to thank him the
next morning. Clay stopped in the doorway as his head bobbed from side to side and a grin erupted across his face.

“What?” Tony asked, looking over at Clay.

“Nothing,” Clay said, his eyes fixated on the shelves above Tony’s desk, to the corner left of the room. “I just really like your room.”

“I see,” Tony said, going to his bed and sitting on the edge. His room was not big at all. A full sized bed -- with a black comforter and crimson pillowcase covers -- to the left against the corner, a dresser against the wall next to the door -- a television on top, his workspace -- which consisted of a desk, a black leather rolling chair, and his laptop -- and a small black wooden nightstand next to the top of his bed. A single window was in the middle directly across from the door with light out red curtains, that contrasted against his dark gray walls. And just enough room to lay out blankets for someone to sleep on.

Clay sidestepped in and fell against the floor. Luckily it was carpeted, and the comforters were on there, but he still landed hard on his knees. Tony sprang up from his bed and squatted down, making sure he was okay. Clay was lying face first, head smashed sideways in the pillows, and he was chortling.

“You okay, Clay?” Tony had his hand on his upper back, and he gently rubbed up and down, his cheeks rising ever so slightly as he continued.

“Tony,” Clay said, pushing himself up, just to flop down on his back. His eyes were closed, a permanent smile resided, and his hair was fuzzy and sticking up; he looked adorable to Tony.

“Yeah,” Tony said, plopping down and sitting crossed legged.

“Thank you,” Clay said, and Tony could see tears forming in the sides of his eyes before they began to roll down the sides of his temple and disappeared in his hair.

“Why are you crying?” Tony asked, watching Clay smack his open palm to his face to wipe away the tears.

“Because,” he said, and his lips were pouted. “You’re always so nice to me.”

“Well, no shit,” Tony chuckled, shaking his head. “Why wouldn’t I be? You’re kind and funny, and sometimes a pain in the ass…” Clay coughed out a laugh. “But you’re my friend, so, no need for saying thank you or anything. I’m here for you, Clay, always.”

“You’re the best,” Clay said, his words barely escaping his half opened mouth, while his eyes fluttered closed. “I’m always gonna be there for you, too,” he whispered, peering through squinted eyes and moving his hand to land on Tony’s right forearm, his fingers outlining his cross tattoo. “Did it hurt?”

“Nah,” he said, smirking, feeling his dick twitch in his underwear as Clay very gently continued to run his fingers along Tony’s skin, goosebumps sparking up his arm. “The one behind my ear hurt the most,” he admitted.

“What about the other cross?” Clay asked, scooting himself over on the blanket, lifting one of the two pillows he had underneath his head and moving it next to him. “Here, lay down.”

Tony accepted, deciding to go under the blanket as he did, seeing as he could not control all of his lower body from reacting. Quickly, hoping Clay did not see, Tony adjusted to get under the comforter and lie down, face next to Clay’s. Tony’s arms were by his side, and he felt Clay’s hand
start back up along his forearm, this time doing long sweeping motions up until the crease in his elbow and then back down.

“The other cross,” Tony said, pain infiltrating his heart. “I got it after Hannah. Still didn’t hurt, at least not on the skin, you know?”

“I didn’t know you got it after Hannah,” Clay said, taking his other hand and putting it behind his head. Tony could see his shirt rise up as his hip bones became visible. Yeah, it was definitely a good choice to get under the covers.

“Yeah. That’s why the middle is a semi-colon. Reminds me of her, and reminds me to always take a breath and pause.”

The day after Hannah, Tony was in shambles. His cousin was a tattoo artist, did all his work, and the very next day he had driven the two-hour trek to get the cross inked. There was a worry in his heart that two crosses, one on each forearm, would be overkill, but each one meant something to him, each one symbolized life, and all that comes with it.

He got his first cross when he was fifteen after his Aunt nearly died. She had been in the hospital for weeks and the doctors had basically given up on her. The treatments were not working and her tumors were not getting any smaller. The family all got together for a prayer night and Tony had shrugged it off, not even sure if he still believed in God or whatever was out there beyond. But he stayed in the room, bowing his head when others did, listening to the cries being asked by his family, his loved ones.

After about a week her tumors had shrunk to a manageable size and she was still alive to that day. Nothing was easy. She needed constant check-ups at the doctors because they still could not understand how it could be, but Tony did, and he made sure that he always would.

Hannah’s cross was different. It reminded him of the fragility of life, while his other reminded him that they are not alone, and he would always be okay, so long as he carried that cross with him.

“Do you have any other tattoos?” Clay asked, almost completely inaudible as he whispered.

“The two on my upper arms, the stars behind my ears, and I have one,” he paused, wondering if he should even tell Clay about his other tattoo.

When he was drunk for the first time one night with his cousins, they played Texas Hold’em and the person who lost had to get a smiley face tattoo on their ass, hand stabbed in with a shitty needle. He was fourteen and did not know how to keep a straight face at the time, let alone how to correctly do much of anything while intoxicated. So, naturally he lost and his poor left butt cheek was pierced over and over again until a small, lopsided, smiley face was permanently on his skin.

“You have one where?” Clay asked, grinning and rolling on his side, facing Tony.

“Nowhere,” Tony said, exhaling out a silent laugh through his nose.

“Come on, Tony,” Clay whined, his hand moving from Tony’s forearm to his side by his ribs. Before Tony knew what was happening, Clay was wiggling his fingers around, trying to tickle him. “Please.”

“What are you--” Tony couldn’t help it and started giggling. His sides were especially ticklish, which he never let anyone know because he hated when he would laugh without stopping, it always ended with a snort, and sure enough as Clay relentlessly kept it up, Tony snorted and then Clay was the one who was cracking up now.
“Now I’m definitely not telling you.”

“No, please,” Clay coughed out, still shaking next to Tony. “I won’t do it again, I promise,” he whined, poking Tony’s rose tattoo on his upper arm.

“Nope,” Tony said, unable to stop his mouth from dimpling. “It’s embarrassing, anyways.”

“Okay,” Clay nearly shouted, attempting to sit up but falling back onto the pillow. “Now you have to tell me, or show me!”

“How about if you drink all three waters, I tell you.”

Clay looked around, apparently unaware there were three water bottles right behind his pillow, and swung his arm around, knocking them over. One of them rolled sideways and under Tony’s bed, the other two spiraled around in circles. Clay was able to latch onto one as it settled down and twist off the cap, shoving it up to his mouth and chugging.

“Slow down,” Tony said, sitting up and reaching for it, tilting it down slowly. “I don’t want you to get sick again.”

Water was dripping off of Clay’s chin. “I’m determined,” he said.

The two of them were both sitting now. Tony had the covers over his legs, and Clay was still in the same outfit he had been in all day. His shoes were still on and even though he no longer was passing out at any moment, his eyes were still glazed, his words were still slurred -- at times indistinguishable -- and his body swayed slightly from side to side.

“You want a change of clothes?” Tony asked, standing up -- his physical ailment had gone down -- and heading to the dresser to grab some jersey shorts and a shirt.

“Won’t it be small on me?” Clay asked.

Tony had the drawer open and tilted his head, not turning around to look at Clay but biting his lower lip. “You making fun of my heigh--”

A crashing sound came from behind him and Tony spun around, seeing Clay hanging onto the rolling chair. He rushed over and gripped Clay’s arm, unaware of how firm his biceps were. Shit, his dick sprang to action.

“Here,” Tony said, helping Clay to the edge of the bed, sitting down next to him. “You good?”

“Sorry,” Clay said, a heavy sigh exhaling. “I tried to stand up.”

“I thought you said you could stand up.”

“I can.” Pride soared through his voice. “I just tripped over myself.”

“Happen often?” Tony joked, nudging Clay’s side with his shoulder. “Here,” he said, a pair of shorts and an old shirt in his hand. “They’ll fit, asshole.”

Clay bobbed his head up and down and took the clothes, placing them next to himself on the bed. He raised his hands up and started to take off his hoodie, getting it stuck around his neck. Tony chuckled and helped him out of it. Clay’s face was beet red as he panted, not stopping at the jacket and going to unbutton his pants.

“Whoa, Clay,” Tony said, patting his shoulders. “Let’s go to the bathroom to change.”
“I wasn’t going to get naked,” he countered, continuing on, the sound of his zipper ending his sentence. “Besides.” Clay pointed down. “You’re in your boxers.”

Tony swiped his hand down his mouth and shook his head. “Clay.”

“Tony,” Clay kicked his legs out straight in front of him like planks and started pulling on the side of his jeans, wiggling as he laid back on the bed. When his pants were halfway down and almost past his knees, Clay sat up. “I have to pee,” he groaned, suddenly bursting out in laughter. “I look like a fucking idiot.”

Tony pinched the bridge of his nose trying not to laugh. “Pull up your pants, Clay, and let me help you to the bathroom.”

Clay tossed his head back onto the bed, pants still halfway down his pale white legs. “Tony,” he quietly said, sitting back up.

“Uh-huh?”

“I’m never drinking again.”

After that comment, Tony lightly slapped his stomach and told him it was time to get up. Clay listened this time, pulling up his pants, but not buttoning them. With a few missteps, they were able to get out of the room and to the bathroom. Tony handed him the clothes and told him he would wait outside if he heard any crashing he was going to come in. Clay simply agreed, and Tony waited.

The sink turned on, followed by the toilet flushing a minute or so later, and then he finally opened the door, revealing himself in Tony’s clothes. The shorts were just above his knees, not too bad, and the shirt – he made sure to take one of his dad’s old ones that he kept for working on the car - - fit fine. Although it did look funny seeing Clay in a Coor’s Light shirt after just saying he would never drink again.

“I look.” Clay said, not finishing the thought as he steadied himself on the doorframe.

“You look fine,” Tony said, holding out his arm for Clay to grab.

When they were back in the room, Clay was sipping on the water instead of guzzling it down, which made Tony feel better. He was back to sitting, legs dangling off, on the bed, and Clay was against the wall under the window, legs open in front of him and head bobbing from side to side. Without using his hands, Clay pushed his feet together and worked off his shoes, one of them hitting the door and making a thwap.

“Sorry,” he immediately said, both his hands clapping to his face and covering his mouth.

“It’s fine,” Tony said, as a yawn that was gaining size had his mouth basically splitting open.

“You’re tired.” Clay said it as more of a statement than a question, but the tone of his voice came off a bit down. “We can go to bed.”

“What, no,” Tony said, even though he was getting tired. It was almost midnight and he knew that come the next day he was going to be doing chores, which meant mowing the lawn, taking out the garbage, waxing his car….Okay, the last one he was planning on either way, but he still had work to do.

But he was not about to go to sleep with crossfaded Clay in his room who could not even stand up to save his life. Even if he did go to bed, the likely scenario would be that Clay would try and get
up and fall, waking Tony up to help. So, really there was no point in even trying until Clay was fast asleep. Not to mention, he wanted to spend time with Clay, even if only one of them might remember in the morning.

“You wanna watch some television?” Tony suggested.

“Oh, my God, yes!” Clay pushed his hands against the back of the wall and sprang up, wobbling for a second, and then balancing. The blankets underneath his feet were all jumbled up, the pillows were not even remotely set up, but that didn’t matter because he teetered his way over the bed and fell backward on it, landing next to Tony. “Let’s watch Community.”

“Never heard of it.”

If Tony had ever seen a more offended face he would have assumed someone had just kicked a puppy in front of Clay. His jaw was open wide, basically unhinged, disbelieving small coughs sounded out of the gaping hole that was his mouth. Clay’s eyes were as wide as they had been the entire night, and his hand was held out in front of him with his palm out as though he was serving pizza.

“What!” His voice boomed and Tony choked out a laugh. “I’m sorry, but how have you never,” his voice was mumbling at times and he would slow down on some words, just to speed back up on the rest of the sentence. He hiccuped in the middle of the sentence. “I just, how have you never seen the most amazing stupendously greatest comedy of our entire existence?”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Tony said, hitting the side of his head as though he knew. “I didn’t know we were talking about Parks and Rec.”

“We’re not,” Clay said, his look of shock dissolving into confusion. “We’re talking about Community.”

His voice was so innocent and he sounded so genuinely confused and for some reason it made Tony’s heart flutter in his chest. God. Clay was so fucking cute. Tony wished he could just tell him how he felt and they would kiss, but he couldn’t with Clay being like this. And truth be told, as much as Tony was known for being a suave type of dude, when it came to guys he actually liked, well, he was never the one to make the first move or indication. Sure, he might flirt, but he never was one to go up to someone and let them know he was into them. Maybe he could change with Clay, but he wasn’t too confident in himself.

“Okay, let’s watch that,” Tony said, smiling.

As he got the show set up on his television, he also grabbed the waters and placed them on the nightstand by his bed. The two of them sat, side by side, against the wall at the top of his bed, their legs under the blankets. The show itself was really funny, but Tony could not really concentrate. Their legs were touching. He could feel Clay’s bare leg on his and he really regretted only wearing boxer briefs.

As the episodes went on, Clay would get up periodically to go the bathroom, able to actually stand on his own now, which made Tony feel more at ease. It was almost two in the morning and Clay was leaning his head on Tony’s shoulder, giggling every once in awhile at the show, and then he moved his legs and intertwined his feet with Tony’s, who stayed perfectly still, trying his best not to react. But then Clay started rubbing his feet on Tony’s and chuckling a little louder than before.

Tony looked over and Clay’s blue eyes -- the blue finally coming back from war with his pupils -- were gazing at him. “Your feet are warm.”
“Your’s aren’t,” Tony said, nudging Clay. “You tired?”

“Yeah,” Clay said, yawning, and then nuzzling his head into the nook of Tony’s neck.

“You gonna sleep on the floor?”

Clay looked up with puppy dog eyes. “Can I sleep here,” he paused, adding, “with you?”

Tony closed his eyes. “I don’t know.”

“I don’t snore.”

And that comment did him in. Tony grinned and bowed his head. “Fine. But if you snore I’m kicking your ass out.”

“Okay,” Clay said, beaming from ear to ear.

Tony got up to turned off the lights, making sure there was still some water for Clay in case he needed any. Clay was nestled up in his bed and Tony hated how much he liked the image, and how much he wished it was a normal occurrence. It was dark and he slipped into the blankets, rubbing his feet together to get them warm again.

“Tony,” Clay whispered, poking his side.

“Yes, Clay.”

“I finished most of my water.”

“I’m proud of you.”

“What’s the tattoo?”

The question threw Tony for a loop as he had completely forgotten about that. How had drunk Clay still managed to remember?

“I have a smiley face tattooed on my ass,” Tony sighed.

Stifled giggling came next to him in the darkness. “Can I see it?”

“Goodnight, Clay.”

“I’ll take that as a maybe.”

And with that Tony closed his eyes and started to nod off when he felt Clay get closer until their bodies were touching and Clay was resting his head against his shoulder. Tony didn’t move him, he simply lifted his arm and put it around Clay, the two of them cuddling.

“Night, Tony,” Clay whispered, placing his hand lightly on Tony’s chest. “You’re the best.”

Tony fell asleep that night for the first time since it all happened happy and excited for what tomorrow would bring.

Chapter End Notes
I really was never planning on this fic to be this long like icb and we still have much more to go through before the end!
Each step he took was agony, along with every breath. Inhaling hurt worse than exhaling, but coupled with the wind whipping across his face -- his bottom lip split each time he winced and he could taste his metallic blood -- and the burning when he swallowed, he was in constant anguish. He saw the street sign for Marcus’ and felt a minuscule rise of hope soar through his veins.

There were a few cars he recognized, Zach’s being the one that stood out the most. They hadn’t spoken in almost a month. Justin hadn’t talked much at all for the three weeks he was gone, aside from Bryce and Tony -- plus the nice older lady who sat outside her motel room in a beach chair and waved to him whenever he left to get food -- he hadn’t conversed with anyone. It was just him, alone in the room with his thoughts.

The porch light was on and he could hear music playing, so he at least knew the party was still going. That eased his mind slightly. If people were in a good mood and it was not super intimate, maybe he could talk to Marcus and get some help. With one final deep breath -- regretting it as a sharp pain stabbed his side -- he knocked.

After ten seconds he thought maybe no one heard and raised his hand to knock again right as the door creaked open and Marcus peeked his head out.

“Justin?” Swinging the door open, Marcus carried a look of shock on his face. “Dude, where have you --” He looked back at the room and then turned his attention to Justin. “You gotta go, man.”

“Marcus, please,” Justin said, hearing his own voice for the first time and being taken aback by how hoarse it sounded. “I need to talk to you.”

“Justin, man, listen,” Marcus began, continuing to look to his living room with caution. “We can talk, but just not right now.”

“Marcus,” he said, stepping forward and standing in the entrance to the house. Ryan and Monty were making out on the couch, Zach’s eyes looked like saucers with how wide they were, and Courtney was lying on the couch, her head hanging upside down off the side, while Sheri harbored a look of disdain.

Justin watched as the ones who were paying attention, turn their heads towards the hallway as Jessica came striding around the corner. Her hair was wavy and down to her shoulders, swaying
with each step. She had on skinny jeans that were torn at the knee and white tank top on with a blue zip up over it. Her eyes were just as beautiful and almond shaped as he remembered, and the look in them he had seen before, the last time they had spoken. Tears were bordering the edges, and her lips quivered at the sight of him.

He told her he didn’t know she was there but he knew that didn’t matter. She stormed forward and he waited for her to punch him clean in the nose, but winced as she shoved him backwards, hitting his bruised and probably broken ribs. This couldn’t be how their next time seeing each other went, he had to let her know what he did for her, or at the very least try to get her to come back. Justin limped out after her, but she would not allow an edge word in, as the pain she emitted through her vocals sank his heart down further.

Unable to help it, he started crying as he watched Jessica stumble into Sheri’s car and take off down the street. Marcus’ voice was distorted in the background as Justin focused solely on his breathing, attempting to calm himself down. He had not expected to feel any worse that day, and yet there he was, the lowest he had ever felt in his life. Nowhere to go, and no one to help him--

“Justin!” Marcus cut through his thought process, gripping him back to reality. “Dude, you okay?”

“Huh?” Justin said, turning around to see all the attendees standing outside and watching him. The night could not possibly get any worse.

Zach was not making eye contact with him, and he knew why. Every text he had sent before he left was ignored and every call he had made was dismissed. It was apparent Zach had wanted nothing to do with him; he wanted nothing to do with himself. School and friends were his only solace in life, his only constant, and now he was losing them all at once. No home, no friends, no Jessica, no Bryce; he was utterly alone.

Ryan and Monty started trudging by him. Monty pulled him in for a quick hug and told him to stay safe; Ryan simply did a curt nod as he walked past. The two of them got into Ryan’s car and Justin watched as Monty reached over, seemingly grabbing Ryan’s crotch before the car lurched forward and the two of them sped off down the street.

“I can’t drive like this,” Courtney groaned, her leg jutted out with her hand on her hip. She had on high black boots and Justin was not sure what she was dressed as but it was like nothing he had seen her wear before.

“Shit,” Zach said, shaking his head. “Me either. We all drank.”

“I can drive you guys,” Justin mumbled, not looking up as he said it. The response he was expecting was a bunch of incoherent excuses as to why they did not need him to, but that is not what happened at all.

“Are you sure?” Zach asked, and for the first time, they made eye contact. Zach was definitely drunk. He had all the telltale signs that he had partaken in the festivities: his cheeks were bright red and glowing, and he was being nice. Zach was overly nice when he was drunk, compliments galore for anyone in his vicinity.

“Yeah,” Justin said, perking up and nodding. “I haven’t drunk or anything.”

“You sure, because it looks like you got in a bar fight,” Zach commented, gesturing with his arm.

Justin put his hand behind his neck and turned away. “Family stuff.”

“Oh, sorry.”
“Yeah,” he said, not really wanting to talk about it outside in front of them.

“Can you take me home, too?” Courtney asked, batting her eyes. “I live pretty close to Zach.”

“Yeah, of course,” Justin said, smiling and not even caring that his chapped lips were bleeding. He needed to work on mending his relationships, he needed to get some semblance of control over his life.

Zach and Courtney went inside to get their things while Marcus and Justin stood outside, both having their arms crossed and kicking at the floor.

“So,” Marcus said, “what happened?”

“I left,” he said, shrugging. “Jess said she didn’t wanna see me again and I bolted.”

“That was three weeks ago, dude. Where the fuck have you been?”

“Holed up in some shitty motel.” Justin breathed a quick laugh out his nose. “Ran out of money and when I went back home…..” He didn’t finish the sentence, just ran his hand over his body.

“That’s fucked up,” Marcus said, shaking his head. “It’s good to see you, though, man.”

“You, too,” Justin said, opening his arms up and pulling Marcus in for a hug. The two of them embraced and Marcus did not squeeze too hard, but Justin didn’t care about the pain and gripped his friend, patting his back. They pulled away and Justin wiped his eyes. “Sorry I ruined your party.”

“You didn’t,” Zach said from the doorway. “It was over the moment Jensen and Courtney nearly fucked on the couch.”

“Wait, what?” Justin asked, his mouth gaping open. What the fuck had he missed?

“Don’t be an asshole,” Courtney said, shoving him from behind, changed out of her outfit and into sweats. “Marcus dared us.”

“I didn’t say dry hump and stain my couch,” Marcus retorted back, barking out a laugh.

Courtney rolled her eyes. “You guys are stupid.” A small smile rising on her cheeks. “All jokes aside, tonight was fun.”

“It was,” Zach said, stepping forward, the jingling of keys could be heard in his hands. “Drive her carefully.”

Justin put his right hand up to his heart. “Scouts honor.”

The three of them piled into his tiny ass gray Audi. Courtney got the front seat since she was being dropped off first which meant Zach had to squish in the back of the car and finally feel what it was like to be a passenger in that mini speed machine. Justin adjusted the mirrors, got his seat situated and stretched the seatbelt out, making sure it was loose against himself. As long as he drove slowly and did not make any sudden brakes, he was confident he would not be in too much pain.

“So, this is what it’s like back here?” Zach said, his legs spread wide to fit, making the view to turn around awkward as he was just wearing really tight spandex.

“Nice dick,” Justin said, nonchalantly as he put the car in drive, assuming it would make Zach
“Thanks,” he said instead, widening his legs and scooting forward and backward. “These are really comfortable.”

“Jesus, man,” Justin laughed, averting his eyes back to the road in front of him. “Can you believe him, Courtney?”

“I can,” she said, leaning her head against the door. “He was doing push-ups over Marcus’ face with that thing hanging just above his mouth.”

“What the fuck was going on in there?”

“Too much,” Zach commented, burping. “Let’s see,” he held up his fingers and started counting. “Monty and Clay hooked up, Clay and Courtney hooked up, I kissed Sheri, oh, and Jessica and Sheri are --”

“Cool with me now.” Courtney cut him off, abruptly sitting up and glaring at him.

“What just happened?” Justin asked, looking in his rearview mirror at Zach, who was shrugging and no longer making eye contact. “Guys, tell me, please. I can handle it.”

“Fuck,” Zach sighed, “Jessica and Sheri are a thing now.”

Out of all the different outcomes that could have been said, Justin was not prepared for that. Instantly his eyes starting burning as he choked down tears. His heart was racing in his chest and he could hear his knuckles tighten on the leather steering wheel. It felt like his mouth became a desert and he could no longer swallow. Jessica and Sheri. She was really over him.

“Oh,” he was able to muster out.

“Justin, man, none of us even knew until tonight,” Zach said, sitting up and placing his hand on Justin’s shoulder. “I swear to God.”

“Yeah, it was weird,” Courtney said, “like, they just came in out of nowhere saying they were together. I mean, good for them or whatever, but it was pretty out of left field.”

“Oh, shit,” Zach shouted, one his hands was cupped over his mouth. “Justin! How could we forget the craziest thing, though? Dude, Tyler fucking showed up dressed up like one of Hannah’s tapes.”

“His tape,” Courtney corrected, shivering. “It was….”

“Completely fucked up. And then, dude, out of nowhere Clay gets up and just decks him in the face. That motherfucker went down,” Zach clapped and laughed, shaking his head. “That shit was wild. And to top it off, he said it wasn’t over before he left, all ominous.”

“I’m kind of afraid, to be honest.” Courtney shifted in her seat and was facing the two of them. “I made the mistake of dating him.”

“What? When?” Justin said, feeling like he was stepping into an alternate universe. How much had changed in the three weeks he’d been gone?

“I don’t know we started talking like two weeks ago and then just this past week. It was dumb.”

“If he tries anything with you,” Justin said, puffing his chest out. “I’ll kick his ass, okay?”
“Thanks,” she said.

“Why did you date him in the first place?” Zach asked, pulling himself closer to the back of her seat. “I mean, really?”

Courtney was silent for a while, looking down at her fingers that were busy rubbing together in a nervous sort of manner. “I don’t know,” she said, and Justin could see there were tears coming down her face. “After the tapes and everything I went to my dad’s and told them it wasn’t true, about me.”

“Courtney.” Zach moved his hand from Justin’s shoulder and maneuvered it to her’s. “I don’t know your situation and you don’t need to tell me anything and I’m not trying to pry or be a dick but I read an article about sexuality and --”

“Zach.”

“Listen,” he said, his words were just the slightest slurred, as were hers, which meant this could go two ways, and Justin really hoped it went the good one instead of two drunks fighting in that small ass car. “I read this study and our generation, no the millennials, but us, we are the gayest generation, ever, like, period.”

“Really? Come on. How do they know that?” Courtney had a hint of curiosity amidst the “I don’t care” vibe she was attempting to give off: arms crossed with pursed lips, but her voice gave her away.

“Survey,” Zach said, matter-of-factly. “They did a survey on the Kinsey scale and over fifty percent, I think, identified somewhere on that scale that was not completely straight.”

“That means nothing,” Courtney said, rolling her eyes.

“It means everything.” Zach leaned back in his chair and smiled. “Look at the party tonight. That’s the perfect example right there. No one gave a flying fuck.”

“We’re not the majority, though.”

Justin was staying out of it. It was more than he had expected and honestly, he wasn’t hating listening to them. It felt familiar to be around people just shooting the shit and talking about whatever. Not to mention, he had no idea about that study. Didn’t really shock him in the slightest, but it was pretty cool to know there was actual data explaining it.

“Yes, we are.” Zach’s voice boomed with pride. “Courtney, each generation gets bigger, for the most part. Probably not the one after us because millennials seem to fucking hate kids, but we are bigger and we are gayer and we are the fucking future.”

“You keep saying we as if you’re gay,” she said, raising her eyebrows.

“I’m not gay, but I’m not straight.” He shrugged, and Justin nodded.

“Him and Marcus used to love to play spin the bottle,” Justin said, looking back and grinning. “It was totally an excuse for the two of them to hook up.”

“He’s not entirely wrong,” Zach said, laughing. “We played it tonight!”

“That explains so much,” Justin said, grinning.

“But Marcus and I never went anywhere because we weren’t looking for relationships or
anything, plus we both lean more towards girls, anyway.”

“I guess me and you are the last straight ones,” Justin said, nudging his elbow into Courtney’s side, trying to get her to smile.

“Actually, Justin,” she said after a long pause. “I’m not straight, either.”

Justin bobbed his head as he lips curved up slightly. Zach reached over and massaged her shoulders, letting out a shriek of excitement.

“Doesn’t it feel good to say out loud,” he said, beaming.

“It’s a little scary,” she admitted. “My heart is pounding and my hands are shaking.”

“That’s okay. And listen, you come out whenever you’re ready, okay? Just don’t date anyone like Tyler again, like I know denial is strong, but Courtney.”

“I know, I know,” she said, brushing away his wide-eyed stare, shuddering. “I regret so much.”

“Don’t we all,” Justin said, turning down her street. “We’re here.”

They said their goodbyes and Courtney hugged both of them. Justin got a one armed side hug in the car and Zach got a quick one as they switched seats. They stayed idle and made sure she was inside her house before driving away. Zach situated himself so that he was leaning against the door and surveying Justin.

“What?” Justin asked, looking at him and then back to the road.

“I’m so fucking sorry, Justin,” Zach belted out, punching his right fist into his gloved left hand. “I shouldn’t have gone MIA on you like that. It wasn’t cool and I just, I’m sorry.”

Justin wanted to park the car and squeeze Zach so hard. They didn’t hate him. Sure, Jessica did, but he knew that was going to happen. But his main friends, Marcus and Zach, hell, even Monty, were all cool with him. He could feel his eyelashes getting wet with tears and he wiped them away quickly, sniffling.

“Thanks,” Justin said, unable to hold back the floodgates. “I thought you hated me.”

“No,” Zach said, shaking his head. “I don’t know why I thought distance was what we all needed, man. I felt like shit doing it. I wasn’t in the right frame of mind.”

“Is anyone?”

“Right?” Zach sighed, running his hand through his hair. “You can stay with me as long as you need. I got you.”

“I couldn’t do that to your family,” Justin said, already feeling like a burden for showing up and ruining the night.

“Oh, dude, no sweat. We have a guest room and after my mom takes one look at you, trust me, you’re not leaving.” Zach leaned the chair back and looked up to the roof of the car. “She’s a nurturer and will make it her life’s mission to take care of you. I swear to fucking God.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes! Don’t do that modest shit. We’re bro’s. Plus, it’ll be chill. We can just play video games all weekend and get my mom to make us food and relax.”
“That does sound awesome,” Justin said, thinking about how many nights he spent eating dollar
canned Chef Boyardee, alone in the motel room, watching the news on the tapes and on him
missing. Having homemade meals would be like dining at a five-star restaurant and that point.

“One condition, though,” Zach said. “You have to go to school on Monday. Coach is fucking
losing his mind, and I know people are worried. If you show up like that, I think they’ll pity you.”

“What if I see Jessica?”

“You will. It’s not a huge school, but just give her space, you know?”

Justin sighed. “Yeah. She really doesn’t want to see me.”

“I mean, do you blame her?”

“No.” Justin hated himself for what he did. Even as it was happening he hated himself. There was
no explanation he could muster up that would explain what was going through his mind that night,
and there was no way he could ever go back and fix it.

“Then it’s settled,” Zach said, clapping his hand down on Justin’s right shoulder. “Video games
and nothing else until school on Monday. You can borrow my clothes, and we have extra
toothbrushes and shit on stock in case family visits.”

“Thank you, Zach, for real.” Justin held his right hand up and squeezed Zach’s.

“Just remember, leave Jessica alone on Monday.”

“Got it,” he said, looking forward to the road. “Come Monday, if I even see her, I’m turning the
other way and letting her be.”

“Good,” Zach said. “That’ll be best for everyone.”

Justin pulled Zach’s car into the driveway and Zach reached over, pulling down the visor and
clicking a button, opening the garage. They parked and Justin immediately got out and embraced
Zach, not letting go.

“Let’s go home,” Zach said in his ear, and Justin couldn’t help it, he started crying.

Chapter End Notes

Jessica is next!!

Also, there’s only going to be one more Justin chapter and it won’t come for a little
while. I’m just letting you guys know so you don’t think I forgot about him, he’s just
not the main focus of the fic for me. I hope you guys liked this chapter tho!! This was
one of the hardest to write tbh because I saw it going so many directions but
hopefully the way it turned out is cool for you guys!
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Jessica and Sheri's night goes Great!

Chapter Notes

Welp, the fic is now explicit and tagged as underage so I'm sure you guys know what's coming, pun intended~*~*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They decided Taco Bell would be their savior for the night and stopped off before getting back to Sheri’s house. Their order came to over twenty dollars and Jessica could not stop laughing as Sheri paid, because, who gets into double digits when ordering at Taco Bell? She usually got a couple potato tacos and called it a day. Not then, though. They ordered so much food that it got handed to them in two separate plastic bags.

“Look at us go,” Jessica commented, reaching in and pulling out a cinnamon twist, the crunchy sweet goodness coating her taste buds.

“We’re winners,” Sheri said, reaching her hand over and also grabbing one. “These are good, but I cannot wait to devour that twelve pack of Cinnabons. Have you ever had them?”

“Nope.” She licked the sugar off her fingers and tied the bags closed so the food would stay warm. “Is that why you ordered two packs of them?”

“Bitch, I am not sharing any of mine. I did us a favor.” Sheri laughed, turning down her road. “Could you imagine if our first fight as a couple, or whatever we are,” she quickly added, “was about Cinnabon’s.”

“I think it’d be a pretty funny.” Jessica grinned as they pulled into the driveway.

The garage door opened, silently, and they went in through the door, immediately turning to the left and entering Sheri’s room. The room was much bigger than Jessica’s. What looked like a king sized bed was in the middle of the right wall, a daisy spackled comforter fluffed up, along with puffy looking pillows at the end. There was a walk-in closet across from the bed, a cork board that was home to picture of Sheri with friends all the way to photos cut out from magazines. At the foot of the bed was a small chest with a padded top that Jessica sat on. The relaxing scent of lavender flowed freely throughout the bedroom, and Jessica felt at ease there.

Sheri threw herself on her bed and lied on her stomach, legs kicked up, head resting on her hands. “Let’s eat.”

They each made it through their crunchwraps, which tasted like heaven to Jessica’s drunk mind. The food was sprawled out on the bed and they were sitting across from each other, both on crossed legs. Sheri giggled and leaned forward, taking her thumb and wiping some sour cream off
of Jessica’s lips, licking her finger. Moving on, Jessica grabbed her gordita crunch with a spicy Doritos shell, finishing it without even chewing. Sheri avoided eating her other few main foods and went straight for the Cinnabons, letting out a pleasurable moan and she bit into the first one. Cream dripped onto her bottom lip, sending a chill vibrating down Jessica’s body.

“You got a little,” Jessica said, her voice hitching as she leaned forward.

“A little what?” Sheri asked as if she was testing Jessica.

Their mouths met and Jessica could taste the frosting as she swept her tongue across Sheri’s soft lips. “Frosting,” Jessica said, pulling away and biting the side of her lip.

“Thanks,” Sheri said, slowly licking her index finger of the sugar crystals left behind. “Oh, duh!” She jumped off the bed and rushed out of her room, the sound of the door banging closed left Jessica alone with a pile of food in front of her. After a few moments, Sheri was back and the bottle of Patron was in her hands. “How could I forget?”

“I’m pretty drunk already,” Jessica said, trying a Cinnabon for the first time and closing her eyes, savoring the warm gooey goodness as it dissolved in her mouth. “So, you can drink and get caught up.”

“It won’t take me long,” she said, taking off the cork top and swigging, scrunching her face up. “I am such a light weight.”

“I used to be and then I just kept drinking.”

“That’s usually how it goes,” Sheri said, sitting back across from her, taking another, longer, gulp. Her left shoulder spaghetti strap was dangling off and Jessica’s ended up down at her breasts, as she felt her clit tingle against her underwear. She curled her toes and looked back at Sheri’s beautiful eyes, which also was not helping. Luckily, Sheri talked and she could focus on what she was saying. “Tequila is my sworn enemy, but I know how to control it now.”

It took her a moment to get control of her brain. “What crazy thing have you done while drunk on Tequila?” Jessica asked, tilting her head and letting her hair fall onto her left shoulder. “I need to hear some Sheri party stories.”

“Oh, God, you don’t want to hear those.” Sheri buried her face in her blankets. “I used to be a mess.” It was almost inaudible, but then she sat back up and smacked her lips. “Okay, so, I used to go out a lot when I was a Freshman, and one night I basically drank an entire bottle of Patron.”

“Stop!” Jessica shrieked and covered her mouth from any food shooting out. “How are you alive to tell the tale?”

“That’s a good question.” Putting the top back on, she placed the glass next to her leg and went back to reaching for her dessert. “Basically, I got so fucked up I emailed my English teacher, but like, it was total gibberish because I couldn’t even see straight.”

“What? Wait, why did you email your English teacher?”

“I honestly can’t remember to save my life,” she said, popping another cinnamon delight into her mouth. “The worst part is,” she said, covering her face with her hands. “I attached a collage of pictures I had taken throughout the night.”

“Sheri, no.” Jessica choked as she inhaled and sugar flew down her throat, which did not help her laughing to cease but only added to the fit of humor. She coughed and got a hold of herself as Sheri shook her head with a wide smile.
“It’s not funny,” she giggled. “Well, at least not at the time. My teacher came to me the next day and –”

“Hold on, this was a school night?” Jessica’s face dropped and then she covered her mouth and shook in place.

“I told you,” Sheri whined, “I was a mess!”

“This is a whole new side to you I’ve never seen.” Jessica met her eyes. “I like it.”

“Yeah, well, I’m lucky I didn’t get expelled. All the pictures I sent had alcohol in them, and people in compromising positions and it was all bad. My teacher was nice enough to not tell the administration, but she did warn me to be careful next time. I was mortified.”

“You’re a badass. Getting shit faced on a school night, sending raunchy pics to your teacher, and then no consequences! I wanna be you.”

“Shut-up,” Sheri said, reaching for the bottle and taking another drink. “Another time,” she began, apparently unaware she still had alcohol in her mouth because it spilled out and dribbled down her chin.

“Mess.”

“Told you. But, for real, this one time I was, again drunk, and we ended up at this Denny’s at, like, two in the morning and I ended up throwing up on the plate and leaving.”

Jessica held her lips closed and simply let the visual sink into her mind. “Oh,” she finally said, bobbing her head up and down as the sides of her lips rose higher. “That’s nice.”

“Stop,” Sheri said, lightly pushing her. “I shouldn’t drink.”

“No, don’t say that,” Jessica said, moving her food off the bed and lying down on her side. “Drink the rest of the bottle so I can see wild Sheri.”

“Hell no. I am not about to finish this!”

The bottle was more than halfway down, but it was a lot of alcohol for one person to drink, especially if their tolerance was low. Sheri did take another gulp before placing it on the floor. Her eyes were a tiny bit more droopy than before, and Jessica knew that meant she had to be feeling it. It was late enough in the night that Jessica was not sloppy drunk, but her head was floating in the clouds and she did not have a care in the world. She was aware of her limits, though, and if she drank anymore it would teeter her over the edge from a tipsy nice time to obliterated. So instead, she let her mind swirl around because all that mattered was her and Sheri, and the Taco Bell.

“You didn’t even finish your other taco,” Jessica said, pointing at the colorful packaging.

“I didn’t know this was a competition.” Sheri grabbed it and took off the wrapper, biting off a large chunk. Jessica watched as a clump of ground beef fell from the other end and landed on her white dress. “Shit,” she said, covering her mouth that was full of food.

“That sucks,” Jessica commented. “You want me to fill up a cup with water?”

“Nah,” Sheri said, wiping it up with a napkin. The grease had already soaked into the fibers, smudging a red-hued stain in the middle. Unless they bleached it right then, Jessica was sure the costume was a goner. She stood up and held the dress at the hem, crossing her arms and pulling it
off over her head, standing in the middle of the room in nothing but white laced underwear.

Jessica’s mind was losing to her body again as she felt her inside twirl around, the blood rushing out of her face and racing downward. Sheri stood there a second, surveying herself, as though the grease got through the gown. Then, Jessica watched her as she ran her thumbs under her bra straps, snapping them back onto her shoulders, and the sound of the snap had Jessica wet. Sheri got back on the bed and the two of them finally made eye contact.

“What?” Sheri said, her voice soft and low, her lips were glistening.

“Seems a little unmatched.” Jessica said, not breaking eye contact as she slowly took her zip up off, one shoulder at a time.

“Want some help?” Sheri crawled across the bed, her lower back arched the lace lining right above her ass, which was spectacular. Jessica’s breathing got quicker and quieter as Sheri sat with her legs open, right in front of Jessica.

Her hands were delicate as she, seemingly deliberately, lifted the tank, teasing Jessica with her thumbs as they glided upwards until they reached her breast, Jessica’s body trembling to the touch. The top was off and Jessica lied down, arching her back up and unbuttoning her jeans, Sheri taking charge and shimmying them off.

“You good?” Sheri breathed out, on her knees looking down at Jessica, who was lying in the embrace of the comforter, in nothing but her pink demi cut bra, with unmatching black panties.

“Yeah,” Jessica said, lifting her top half up on her arms. “Come here.”

She did not have to say it twice. Sheri glided forward and their bodies were intertwined. Sheri’s baby soft legs against her own sent a quake through her body as she moaned out, just as they started kissing. At first, it was delicate, light sweeps across the lips, nibbles to add to the pleasure. But as they continued, and their hands explored each other, their mouths did not part, tongues dancing together inside.

Sheri had her left hand behind Jessica’s head, holding it up as she entangled her fingers, pulling her hair taught, tightening her neck. Sheri’s other hand was moving Jessica’s bra straps down, exposing her bare shoulder and collarbone. Then the blue eyed girl parted from Jessica’s mouth and swept across her front, nipping as she worked her way down. As Sheri’s mouth made it to her nipples, Jessica’s mind went blank and nothing mattered but getting more.

Her bra was unhooked without her knowledge as Sheri pulled it off, letting the straps lightly brush against her hard nipples. Jessica’s back arched at the feeling and then Sheri’s mouth was sucking, her tongue rolling across her breast, while her hands cupped underneath them, sending Jessica into bliss. Her head was deep in the pillow as she got the chills, quaking underneath Sheri’s touch. The beautiful white laced angel kept up, her thumb placed against Jessica’s clit, slipping it under her panty line and tapping lightly.

Jessica moaned out loud, covering her mouth immediately. “Sorry,” she breathed out.

“Why?” Sheri said, looking up, and Jessica never wanted another view in her life. “It was hot.”

With that comment, Jessica felt Sheri’s fingers slip under and work her panties off, going straight down for her clit, lips closing around it as she sucked. Jessica’s body melted into the bed as Sheri’s tongue flicked across. Sheri eased on her, lips moving down and exploring Jessica’s folds, tongue opening her up.

Jessica’s mouth was in the shape of an O and she could feel herself getting close. There was a
buzzing starting in the pit of her stomach as Sheri dragged the flat side of her tongue up, until she was around Jessica’s clit once more, sending shockwaves through her muscles. Jessica reached out on the bed and Sheri’s hands glided up, holding on as Jessica gripped them, tightening with each buck.

Sheri looked up at her and that was it, the moment their eyes met, as her tongue flicked across the hood, hands intertwined, bodies together, that Jessica came. A vibration that started from all ends up her body erupted out of her and she bit into the pillow, feeling every muscle in her body relax as she came down, twitching with pleasure. Sheri did one last workaround before moving up and kissing her. Jessica could taste herself on Sheri’s lips as she pulled her in.

Jessica’s breath was erratic as they parted, and her body began to come down from the high. “Holy shit.”

“Was that good?” Sheri asked, taking her thumb and lightly flicking her nail against Jessica’s nipple, making her breath hitch.

“That was the best I’ve ever had,” Jessica smirked, licking her lips. “Your turn.”

“Hold on,” Sheri said, crawling to the edge of the bed and hanging her head over, reaching underneath. A small box was in her hand when she came back up and she grinned. “I’ve always wanted someone else to use this on me,” she said, opening the box to reveal a small silver vibrator.

Jessica covered her mouth, not expecting that, but not opposed to the idea. “Kinky.”

Sheri unhooked her bra and let it fall down in front of her. Her nipples were already tight and small as she slipped her panties off, lying on her back. She brought her fingers up and pinched her breasts in her hands, moaning. Jessica twisted the bottom and the little bullet came to live, making an audible vibrating noise.

Jessica lied on her side next to Sheri as she brought it down and started to gently place it against her stomach, making her twitch. It was hot being in control of the situation. Sheri let go of her nipples as Jessica slowly dragged it up -- the tip barely on her skin, just enough to get her writhing -- until she was taking the place of Sheri’s fingers. She held it against each nipple, sucking on the other as she did, switching off as Sheri gripped the back of her head, letting her know it felt good.

She moved up and began kissing Sheri as her hand moved down until she was against Sheri’s clit. The grip in her hair tightened as she danced around it, their mouth never parting, even as Sheri quaked underneath her and came. Jessica pulled away and their mouths were inches apart, the heat from her breath tingled Jessica’s sore lips.

“Fuck,” Sheri said, turning her head to the side and smiling. “That was amazing.”

“I know,” Jessica breathed out, lying down next to her.

The two of them lied naked in bed together, their legs twisted together. Sheri was lying on her back with Jessica pulled close to her, lying on her stomach, face nestled next to Sheri’s, arm splayed across her stomach. It was comfortable and warming and Jessica never wanted it to stop.

“You know,” Sheri said, running her fingers through Jessica’s hair.

“Huh?” Jessica said, her eyes closed as she let her body relax for the first time in a long time.

“We still have Cinnabons.”

“Oh, fuck.” Jessica peeked open and bit her lower lip. “Talk about a round two.”
Sheri was by the edge of the bed and was able to lean without getting up and grabbing the bag with the remaining food. Jessica bit into the sugary little beautiful creation and moaned.

“These really are so fucking good.”

“Told you,” Sheri said, plopping one in her mouth.

“Oh, and about earlier when you said our first fight as girlfriends,” Jessica said, leaning in and giving Sheri a quick peck. “We’re definitely girlfriends.”

Sheri’s face lit up and she put another one in her mouth. “Best night ever.”

Chapter End Notes

okay so listen,,,,, this is new territory for my gay ass so I really tried to make it believable like I had tabs open to help me with it and I still don't know if I did it well at all. I'm sorry if this was not good smut yall like I am sorry!

But besides that, we are now moving onto Saturday in the timeline now that we know how everyone's nights ended. I tried to make them all end on a happyish note tbh hope you guys are still enjoying it! Clay is gonna be the next chapter :)
Clay’s insides felt at war as he attempted to open his eyelids, groaning out in pain as his temples throbbed at the movement. It felt like his stomach was swirling around inside him and his head was being repeatedly hit with a hammer. His mouth felt like a dessert and tasted like shit as he smacked his lips together, licking his tongue to moisten them the slightest. Squinting through one eye, Clay gently turned his head over and saw Tony fast asleep next to him, one hand under his pillow and the other resting on his chest. If Clay did not feel like he was about to simultaneously vomit and cry at the same time he would take the time to appreciate the moment, instead, he was trying his best to maneuver his way out without waking Tony. He needed to get to the bathroom.

As he started to take the edge of the comforter and move it down so he could slide out, his stomach decided to freefall and flip around, puke starting to rise up. Closing his mouth and no longer able to afford Tony a quiet exit, Clay swung his legs off the edge of the bed and rushed out of the room, making it to the bathroom just in time. With a loud bang, he hit the toilet seat against the back as he fell to his knees, arching his back and throwing up. Unchewed french fries and noodles filled the bowl as he coughed, his hands shaking in front of him.

“Clay.” Tony’s voice was groggy as he knocked lightly on the cracked open door before pushing on it and stepping inside. “How you holding up?”

Clay had tears in his eyes from heaving, his face felt like it was drained of all blood, and the pulsating that was occurring in all areas of his head was making him grind his teeth in pain.

“Never better,” he was able to breathe out, his head bowed in the bowl, not wanting to look up and have Tony see his face.

“I’ll get you some water.”

Pushing himself up, Clay flushed the toilet, standing in front of the mirror, arms extended out on the counter, holding himself up. He lifted his gaze forward and looked at himself. He looked like death. His eyes were still beady and bloodshot, his lips were chapped and white, and there was sweat on his brow. Not to mention the complete lack of color in his face. Tony appeared at the doorframe, a cup of water in hand.

His hair made Clay laugh, and then wince as he was reminded his stomach was not in a good frame of being. Bed head usually made Clay’s hair unruly but ultimately a little bit of water swept through would do the trick. Tony’s hair, however, well, it looked like a second head on his own.
The poof at the top was so large and frizzy. The usual slicked to side perfectly groomed and patted down look was nonexistent. Some sections were sticking straight up, while others were flat from the pillow, but it all balled together at the top like a cocoa puff.

“Why are you laughing?” Tony asked, placing the cup down next to his hand.

“I’ve never seen your hair like,” Clay pointed with his hand, burping, “that.”

“All-natural,” Tony said, shaking his head from side to side, his hair flopping around.

“Beautiful.” With his hands still vibrating, Clay reached over and took the glass, sipping the water and letting it cleanse his palate. “What time is it?” Every time he spoke his head would splinter with pain.

“Seven in the morning,” Tony said, raising his hand to his mouth and yawning.

“Wait, really?”

“Yup.”

“Oh, shit,” Clay said, closing his eyes as his stomach began to churn around again. He kept his mouth closed and did quick breaths in and out his nose, trying to ease the queasiness. “I’m sorry.”

“I’m surprised you didn’t wake up earlier to throw up,” Tony said, looking at himself in the mirror and taking his hand to run through his hair and smooth it out.

“Don’t.” Clay reached out and stopped him from continuing. “Your bed head is cute.”

Tony simply rolled his eyes and smirked. “You okay?”

“Yeah. I think I’m good now.”

Clay trudged behind Tony, his head aimed downward and he slowly made his way back to the room. His entire body felt like he had the flu. Aching in his bones with each step until he was snuggling back up in bed next to Tony, who was holding out a piece of gum he must have grabbed when he got the water.

“You need it. Trust me.” Tony handed him the silver wrapped spearmint gum.

“You know how to make someone feel special.”

“That’s my aim in life.”

Clay stuck the piece in his mouth and chewed, loving the change of taste. Tony was back to lying down in the same position he was before, only the covers were kicked down, only above his lower half. Clay was not sure if he should go on the floor now that it was the next day in case Tony’s dad came in, but then Tony scooted closer to him and they were back to cuddling. Clay rested his head on Tony’s chest and felt his heart beating.

“Can you die from a hangover?”

“Probably,” Tony said, his voice sounding out of it, sleepy. “But I won’t let that happen.”

It was quiet after that and Clay let his eyes rest, listening to Tony as he inhaled and let out a very quiet snore that sounded more like a small rumble. With his lips curving up into a smile, Clay’s body fell back to sleep.
The sun was shining into the room through the cracks in the blinds, and one line specifically was directly across Clay’s eyes. Groaning, he covered them with his hand and peered over. Tony was not in the bed, nor the room and Clay had no idea what time it was. His stomach still felt like shit but nothing like it had when he had woken up the first time. The cup was next to the bed and he reached over, gulping it all down at once. It mixed around in his gut and he let out a burp which lit up his insides and burned.

“Holy shit,” he said to himself, his legs off the bed, hands rubbing vigorously against his heavy eyes. His headache diminished slightly but was still in full force as he took his first steps, pausing and shutting his eyes tight, wondering if this is what it would always feel like to drink.

Sure, he had felt like shit after the forty Justin forced him to chug, but he figured that was because he had biked immediately after and his body was not reacting well. But as he stood, fingers to his temples, massaging lightly, he realized that it had nothing to do with the biking and everything to do with consumption aspect.

The bedroom door slowly opened and Tony tiptoed in wearing nothing but a beige towel wrapped around his waist, coming down pretty low in the front. His skin was still wet -- it glistened in the sunlight and Clay was almost positive his hangover was cured -- and his hair flopped down, covering his forehead. He even quietly closed the door, turning around and jumping back at the sight of Clay.

“Oh, my God, Clay,” he said, holding his hand up to his heart. “I didn’t know you were awake.”

“I just got up,” Clay croaked, sitting down on the edge of the bed and grinning. “I like the shaggy hair look on you.”

Tony simply lowered his head and looked up with his eyes. “You gonna make a comment every time my hair looks different?”

“Yes, definitely.” Clay bobbed his head up and down and then winced, remembering that seeing Tony half naked was not an actual cure for a hangover.

“You want to shower?” Tony asked, turning around and rummaging through his dresser.

“What time is it now?” Clay asked, looking around for his pants. Where the fuck was his phone?

“It’s almost two.” Tony pulled out a neon yellow pair of boxer briefs and slipped them on underneath the towel, hiking it up as he got them higher. When the towel was just about to reveal his ass, the underwear was on and he dropped it on the floor, standing there in nothing but those vibrantly colored boxers. They were tight around his legs, and his ass looked plump and round in them.

“Fuck.” Clay ran his hands through his hair. “Have you seen my phone? I can’t believe my parents haven’t called -- oh, shit. Oh, shit, oh, shit, oh, shit.” Clay remembered he shut off his phone when Tony was calling him -- feeling guilt build up on his shoulders. “My phone’s off. Oh, my God, my mom’s gonna have a fit.”

“Um,” Tony said, turning around and Clay had to avert his eyes from looking at the outline of Tony’s dick. “Was your phone in your pants? ‘Cause your clothes are in the corner over there.”

Clay lowered himself to the ground and scooted over, his body lacking any sort of energy. Sure enough, his phone was off in the front pocket of his jeans. He clicked the power button and waited till it powered on, feeling it immediately start vibrating with missed calls, voicemails, and
texts.

“You in trouble?” Tony asked, and now he had on black jeans and was pulling a white tee shirt over his head.

“Probably,” Clay said, shaking his head and sighing. “We made a deal that I would be honest with them and not do this sort of thing again. Fuck.”

“Why did you?” Tony asked, starting to run his hands through his wet hair and move it back. “Do all that last night?”

“I don’t know,” Clay mumbled, not looking up. “I just wanted to feel something other than sadness.”

“Clay, I’m here for you whenever, you know that. I can see you’re hurting.” Tony’s eyes were full of care as his eyebrows arched up. “You barely talk anymore, Clay, I mean, honestly. I feel like it’s been a successful day if I can get you to smile and talk about something other than small talk.”

“There’s not much to talk about,” he said, shrugging, even though that wasn’t true. There was so much to discuss and work through but the truth was he couldn’t. Every single day was a struggle to even get out of bed. When he woke up he was thinking of how every action all of them took caused it, how if he had said one more word than she might still be alive, and even as he knew that and wanted to be a better person, his mind steered him away from people at every turn. If someone asked if he was okay, he wanted to tell them no, and say all that was on his mind: how he felt like there was no point to life, how now his life would never be the same, how he felt guilty for making the situation about him, how they were all dealing with it and he technically didn’t even cause it, how he should suck it up and act fine, and how that cycle continued to repeat in his mind. A feeling of anguish would flip to guilt and he would stay silent, burying it. But the acting fine part simply met distancing himself and saying it aloud, while his actions were not convincing.

“You sure? Because last night was the most we’ve talked since you handed me Bryce’s confession.”

“That’s not true,” Clay denied, knowing out of all the people in his life he didn’t shut Tony out that much. But then he remembered how easy it was for him to, quite literally, block Tony from his life all just to escape. Had he really been that mindless that he thought Tony and him were being normal? “We talk every day at school.”

“Even when you’re there, Clay,” Tony said, stepping forward and placing his hand on his shoulder. “Like, even when we’re talking, you’re not really all there. I can see it in your eyes. It looks blank in there, and you keep telling me you’re fine, making some joke to brush it off, and then you fake that smile so well, but your eyes give it away.”

“Why didn’t you say anything before?” Clay felt like shit in every way possible.

“Look at me.” Tony’s voice was gentle and Clay looked up. “If I had said this before, and be honest, would you have said anything or would you have shut me completely out?”

Clay didn’t answer right away because he knew the answer. “I would have shut you out,” he said quietly.

Tony squatted down in front of him and cupped his hands. “I care about you, Clay. I’m here for you.”

Clay simply nodded as tears streamed down his cheeks. His throat was choked up and he couldn’t
get a word out, he just kept bobbing his head and crying. Tony sat next to him and held him. A weight he had not even known he was hoarding eased off his body as he shed it off with each sob.

“We’re gonna work through this.” Tony rubbed Clay’s shoulder and repeated the sentiment.

They stayed like that for a while, long enough to make Tony’s wet hair begin to dry and poof. He would need to put water through it again before he could hairspray that all down to perfection. Clay let out a soft laugh and ran his hands through it.

“I guess I should call my mom,” he finally said, sniffling.

“What are you gonna say?”

“The truth.”

Tony simply nodded in approval and got up, saying he was going to do his hair and get them breakfast. There was a towel already in the bathroom for him and he had his clothes from the night before to change into. Clay thanked him again and then looked at his phone, apprehension in the tips of his fingers and he clicked his call list, dialing his mom. It only rang half of once before a click sounded and her voice came in loud and clear.

“Clay?!”

“Hey, mom,” he said, pulling the phone away from his sensitive hearing. “I’m so sorry I --”

“Where the hell are you?” She sounded pissed.

“I messed up and drank too much and Tony picked me up and my phone died and I just woke up and I’m so so sorry.”

“You,” she breathed out, and he could hear the phone woosh away from her face and then back. “We’re talking about this when you get home.”

“I know, I’, --”

She hung up and Clay sat there for a moment, debating if he should redial. Ultimately he decided against it and hobbled to the shower, seeing his face in the mirror and now having some pink to his cheeks, but otherwise still not looking well at all. The hot water massaging his body was the best treat he could have at the moment, although the splashing of the water down on the tile did not help the cause. Clay reached for the body wash and looked it over. It was Mahogany Woods by Bath & Body Works, a two in one shampoo and body wash, suddenly aware of why Tony always smelt like the woods. Clay lathered it through his hair and inhaled, the familiar scent somehow comforting him. He washed up and turned off the water, wiping the mirror with his hand and looking much better than any time he had seen himself within the last twelve hours. Taking some toothpaste, he put it on his finger and rubbed it on his teeth, doing a quick “brush.”

He put on his clothes and they smelt like weed. His mom was going to kill him.

When he went out to the dining room, Tony had a plate ready for him with scrambled eggs, breakfast sausages, and grilled potatoes. It smelt like fucking heaven and looked incredible. Clay moved the quickest he could and sat down, licking his lips.

“This looks amazing.” He took the silver fork next to the plate and dug in, shoving cutting the sausage and getting both potato and egg along with it before engulfing it in his mouth. The salty greasy hot food drowned his mouth in joy. “This is so good, thank you.”
“Easy,” he said, grinning and eating from his plate. There was milk and orange juice out and an empty cup in front of him. Clay grabbed the milk and filled his cup, swigging it.

“Well, I’m dead. My mom hung up on me.”

“Yikes.” Tony widened his eyes. “You need to go home.”

“After we eat, if that’s okay?”

“Of course,” Tony said, reaching over and grabbing Clay’s hand, sending a chill up his arm. “I know your mom.”

Clay snorted out a laugh. “Yeah, exactly.”

He devoured the rest of the breakfast and drank two full glasses of milk. The last gulp put him over the edge and he was not sure if he was going to vomit. Luckily, he burped just enough to ease himself some comfort. Tony drove him home and the sun destroyed him. He felt like he was some sort of vampire, shuddering away from the light and groaning out in pain. At one point Tony blasted the music just for a second at a red light and Clay punched him the arm, expelling a howl from Tony.

When they made it to his house Clay’s heart tightened in his chest as his palms clammed up. He was so grounded, and who knew what else. His mom kept bringing up his old counselor but he did not want to go back, he was fine. He was fine. Turning to Tony, Clay let out a sigh and pulled him in for a bear hug, squeezing tightly.

When he pulled away he bobbed his head. “Okay, I can do this.”

“Text me,” Tony said.

“I will if I don’t get my phone taken away.”

“Fuck. Goodluck.”

Clay got out of the car and his knees nearly buckled underneath him as he trudged towards the house. At least he showered so he would not look completely hung over, but his face most likely gave him away. Not to mention his weed smelling clothes.

Clay opened the door and heard his mom’s heels clicking against the floor and she flounced into the living room. “Sit down, right now.” Her finger pointed to the couch and her other hand was pressed to her hip, lips pursed together and a permanent crease across her forehead.

Clay sat down and did not dare say anything.

“I’ve had it.” She stood in front of him, vehemently shaking her head. “The lying, the blatant disrespect for our rules, the drinking, and now,” she paused, sniffing, “marijuana?” Her foot was tapping against the floor. “It’s like I’m watching my son become a stranger overnight and I can’t do anything to stop it.”

“Mom,” he said, reaching out.

“Oh, don’t ‘mom’ me.” Crossing her arms she let out a huff. “You’re grounded for the next month.”

“Okay,” he said, accepting it.
“School and home and school and home. Do you understand me?”

“Yes.”

“I can’t even look at you,” she said, turning and leaving the room with tears in her eyes.

Clay felt like a complete asshole. Why the fuck did he listen to his mind and think last night was okay? Trudging up the stairs he made it to his bed and flopped down face first, pushing himself up by his arm to adjust the pillow. But that one movement triggered a memory from the night before and he closed his eyes in disbelief, falling head first into the pillow.

“I hooked up with Courtney? Jesus fucking Christ.”
Tony

Chapter Summary

Tony has a hard Saturday morning.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is a little different,..., you'll see what I mean as you read by the end but like idk I like to change my writing around and make it different and stuff so it's not always the same thing over and over again

Also sorry this chapter isn't the longest I just like really need to move on with the plot tbh

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony yawned, blinking as his eyes adjusted to the light coming in from the blinds. Clay was fast asleep next to him and his hand was resting lightly on Tony’s stomach, just below his belly button. All of Tony’s blood rushed to his dick and watched the covers pitch, peering over to make sure Clay was for sure asleep. The boy was next to him with his mouth parted as he breathed in and out, a low whistling sound escaping his lips. His eyes were shut and he did not look like he was going to wake up anytime soon.

Tony closed his eyes and attempted to get his body under control by thinking about something that would get his morning wood down. The tips of Clay’s fingers were at the line of his underwear and he needed to get up and do something about it because after a few minutes of focusing on food, dogs, school work, anything, his hard on would not go down.

Gently picking up Clay’s hand, he put it down next to him and then carefully moved the blanket off of his legs, making his dick even more obvious as it pushed against the fabric, trying to let the guy next to him know it was there and ready to be played with.

Tony stood up and ran his fingers against the elastic of his underwear, folding his dick upward to hold it in place as he walked out of his room. Before he learned that trick, when he was just starting to deal with morning boners, he would simply walk around hunched over until his dick decided to let him live. Once he figured out he could fold it up and hide it, life got a lot easier, especially in Freshman P.E.

His towel was hanging on the rack when he made it to the bathroom, immediately turning the two levers evenly to make the water be perfectly warm. Once he was in he would adjust to perfect temperature, but all that mattered in that moment was to disrobe, rapidly, and get his hand around his cock.

When he got his boxer briefs down his dick sprang up, almost slapping against his stomach as he gripped it, not too tightly, and started stroking back and forth, looking at himself in the mirror. Tony flexed his arm and lifted it up, his eyes going up and down his body as his hand continued...
to pull, rubbing the tip with his thumb as he got the head, just to slowly drag his closed fingers down the shaft, chills quaking through his body.

The weather was getting cooler and there were more overcast days, which he could tell when he looked at his tan. It was diminishing. When he did chores, later on, he was going to only wear a tank and get as much sun as he could. Tony liked his tawny brown complexion and especially loved the summer time when he could lie out and soak up the sun.

His hand was still wrapped around himself as he opened the glass door to the shower, stepping in and letting the sound of water splashing from his head down to the tile drown out any distractions as he slicked his hand up with body wash, rubbing it through his pubes before his fingers enclosed around the base of his dick. Tony took his shaft and hit it against his open palm, groaning out in pleasure as the warm water pelted his chest. Taking his free hand, he rubbed up against his stomach, pinching his nipples as he stroked.

Muscles tightened as he kept his hand working, pumping slowly and then fast, edging himself until he could not contain it anymore and his body tensed, standing on his tiptoes as he jerked forward, head under the water, coming. His body shook as he came, letting his head fall to his chest as his heart banged in his chest. Fuck. That felt amazing.

Letting his dick hang as he let go, Tony ran his hands through his hair, slicking it back. The rest was a normal shower, rinsing, sudsing, and washing off. Once he was out he put on his towel and wrapped it around his waist, making it knot right in the middle. He made his way across to his room, slowly backing in, trying his best to be quiet. Clay was awake and startled him.

In a way it worked out that he was awake because Tony and him had a heart to heart and it eased Tony’s mind. When Clay had asked him to meet at Monet’s the day before he thought that maybe he was going to open up, hell, it even seemed like it at first, but then he asked for drugs and left and Tony knew he wasn’t okay. Maybe after the night out, he would be more prone to opening up, which is what Tony was hoping for when he asked him why he went and got fucked up.

And to his surprise, Clay did open up. It was the first time they had discussed this and Tony was hopeful that it meant Clay could begin to heal, even just a little bit. There was no moving on, no forgetting it, not numbing it, and the sooner Clay realized that the sooner he could start to really deal with what was going on inside him. Tony would be there every step of the way.

Clay went to shower and Tony strutted to the kitchen, whipping up the one breakfast he for sure knew how to make. Pancakes were a disaster for him. There was something he was missing because they always burned and became black, and the one time he thought he did it well, the inside was still just batter. So, he stayed away from those at all costs. IHOP was where he went for pancakes.

Clay was in no shape to do much of anything when he finally did eat. Plus, he had to go home immediately after so Tony couldn’t even have the day to hang out with him. He would have been content with Clay was sitting down watching him do his chores. Tony just really wanted to be with him, be around him. It was a feeling he got only a few times with guys and he hated the vulnerability of it.

Driving Clay home was fun because the boy could barely even open his eyes and Tony figured it would be funny to fuck with him, turning up the music just for a second to watch him flail. The punch to his right arm was not too bad, either. When Clay was leaving, Tony wanted to ask him to go to get coffee tomorrow, as a date, but all that came out was for Clay to text him. As he drove off he cursed himself, regretting the missed opportunity.

Tony made it home and decided to wax his car first, since he was going to do that anyway. Going
inside, he put on a tank and got into some shorts that only went down to his thighs. He really wanted to work on his tan. Right as he was going to go outside, his phone buzzed and he saw that it was a text from Clay.

Clay: im grounded for a month :/

Tony: that really sucks! i wanted to see if you wanted to get coffee tomorrow too. how sad

Clay: i would have loved too :\ my mom was so pissed she said she couldn't even look at me and left. my dad still isn't home so who knows wtf hes gonna say

Tony: i hope hes more cool about it. btw im stuck doing chores to make up for the gas money i had to borrow looking for your ass yesterday. you owe me

Clay: im so sorry! i will make it up to you!

Tony: its all good clay. as long as you dont die from the hangover ill be happy

Clay: :)) i wont. although i did remember something from last night..........i made out with courtney

Tony: hahahahaha marcus told me last night. how much from last night do you even remember because omg clay you were so trashed

Clay: honestly not much?? its little specks here and there but the entire night is not coming back to me. its so embarrassing!! im sorry you saw me like that and me puking and GOD icb what a mess

Tony: you were cute tbh so it wasn't bad :) the puke breath.....that was pretty bad lmao

Clay: pls cute is not how i would describe it! omgggg stop im never leaving the house again

Tony: nooo dont say that! you were cute to me and plus you were also a good cuddler lol

Clay: sorry you will never see me again. my mortification has made me unavailable for life. that was my favorite part of the night :)

Tony: shut up lol it was mine too :)

Tony put his phone down with a smile plastered on his face and went to work, deciding that even if Clay was grounded, he would make it a point to go see him the next day, say they had some project to work on. It was believable seeing as most teachers at that school seemed to assign projects instead of simply homework anyway. Plus, Clay’s mom knew him and knew that he knew how to sweet talk parents.

Tomorrow he would show up at Clay’s and work on a “project.”

Tony: im coming over tomorrow okay? ill tell your mom we have a project to work on

Clay: i mean we kind of do tho

Tony: really? what?

Clay: i have to make up for you doing chores ;)

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Clay: i mean we kind of do tho

Tony: really? what?

Clay: i have to make up for you doing chores ;)
Tony: oh? what did you have in mind?

Clay: i dont wanna ruin the surprise

Tony: but i really wanna know

An image was attached with the next message and it was, what appeared to be Clay, lying down in his bed, pants around his knees, and a very hard dick imprint in his blue boxer briefs. The message read, “maybe thisll give you an idea?”

Tony turned from his car and decided she could get washed another day, rushing inside and to his room, rubbing his dick to life to snap a picture to send back. He had to angle it just right, make sure his dick was visible, his arms were flexed, and he sucked in at the last minute, taking it from the front facing camera with his stomach, dick, and arm in the shot. Clicking send, he typed a message as it went.

Tony: youre so hot

Clay: nah you are! but thats all youre gonna get till tomorrow

Tony: can it be the sabbath already? lord please

Clay: hahahaha shut up. anyways my dads home so im gonna go deal with that. ill see you tomorrow :)

Tony: goodluck. see you tomorrow :)

Chapter End Notes

So, this fic was going to be sexual from the get go i just wasnt sure how much i wanted to show or write but with the jessica chapter i realized im making it explicit and im making it sexual af at points so hope you guys dont mind too much. its not gonna just devolve into porn sans plot but there will be some more sex stuff happening~*~*

also jessica is next and then its sunday in the timeline and that THAT GREAT DAY IS WHEN I CAN FINALLY WRITE THE CHAPTER I HAVE WANTED TO WRITE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS FIC OMG the climax to this fic is so close!!! like i had a few things i wanted to do when i started this fic 1) clay/tony 2) try my best to answer all the cliffhangers from s1 and were moving along splendidly for both. too blessed.
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Jessica goes home in the morning.

Chapter Notes

Hope you guys like this one~*~*~

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

They had stayed up a little while longer on Sheri’s laptop, in their bras and underwear, legs lapped over one another as they scrolled through Twitter, laughing at memes. Already taken off their makeup, they put on charcoal face masks and could not believe how much it hurt when they pulled them off. After the painfulness, they lied down. Jessica had her head rested on Sheri’s shoulder as she started to yawn, reaching for her third glass of water and downing the rest of it, no longer feeling drunk but just slightly buzzed.

They eventually put the laptop away and turned off the lights. Sheri held onto Jessica and she fit in the curves, the feeling of Sheri’s heart beating against her back as the curly haired girl’s breath sent goosebumps down her skin. Jessica was holding Sheri’s hands in hers by her waist as they started drifting off to sleep. Sheri did one light kiss on the nook of Jessica’s neck. They were asleep by one in the morning, spooning.

Jessica had set her alarm for eight in the morning. It would give them a decent amount of sleep, and she needed to get home before her parents realized she was gone. In the past when her father was upset with her, he would tell her to go to her room and then give her the silent treatment for the rest of the day until the next morning. Saturdays were his day to sleep in, which only meant nine in the morning. As long as she got home before that she would be okay. Sure, she’d probably get some form of punishment for day drinking -- although her father was a lot more lenient in light of recent events -- but if he found out she snuck out to a party, she’d be dead.

She put her phone next to her on the bed so she would hear it when it went off, but it ended up getting buried under the comforter and she awoke to a slight vibrating and very distant ringing that was coming from underneath her leg. Jessica wiggled her hand down and grabbed her phone, hitting the power button to make the alarm shut off before pulling it from its shelter. Sheri was fast asleep next to her.

“Sheri,” she whispered. Nothing. “Sheri,” she said again, this time a tiny bit louder and with a soft nudge.

“Huh?” Sheri’s voice was croaky and full of sleepiness, causing a smile to spread on Jessica’s face.

“You said you’d drive me home, remember?”

“Oh, yeah,” she said, rubbing her eyes with her hands, yawning. Pushing herself up against the
bedpost, she did a groggy smirk. “I dreamt of those Cinnabons.”

“I dreamt I worked at Taco Bell,” Jessica said, shuddering. “Dream people are fucking rude.”

“I win.” Sheri stretched her arms out above her head, her elbows popping. “I swear, cheer is gonna be the death of me.”

“My knees are the ones that pop.” Jessica mimicked Sheri and grinned as her arms extended effortlessly and soundless.

“I still win.”

“Shut-up.” Jessica stood up and got off the bed, grabbing her clothes that were strewn on the floor. “You good to drive?” she asked, pulling her tank over her head.

“Yeah,” Sheri said, also getting up. Walking to her closet, she opened up the door and stepped in, the sound of hangers sliding. “I should pass the breathalyzer. I drank what, like ten hours ago, and had like four shots? I’m good.”

She was right. When they got in the car, Sheri breathed out and the car started.

“Thank God,” Jessica said, strapping in.

“What? You didn’t believe me?” Sheri put the car in reverse and backed out.

“I was skeptically optimistic.”

“Mhm.”

“I wish I didn’t have to go home right away so we could have breakfast.” Jessica could really go for some Belgium waffles and bacon.

“How about we get breakfast tomorrow morning? I’ll pick you up?” The smile on Sheri’s face was brighter than the sun rising in front of them.

“That sounds great.”

They held hands as Sheri drove, flipping through radio stations, singing out the songs they loved. Jessica was tone deaf and Sheri did not sing any better but they gave it their all, hands to chest, acting like they were in a music video as they belted out song after song. When they turned down Jessica’s street, Sheri parked at the end of the block and lowered the volume.

Turning to Jessica, Sheri said, “okay. Text me later and we can figure out plans for tomorrow and discuss our outfits for the costume contest on Monday.”

“Oh, my God.” Jessica had completely forgotten it was the costume contest. Justin and her had discussed doing a duo costume before everything went to shit, when they were aiming to be the cutest couple in the Junior class. “I don’t even have a costume, like, at all.”

“Even better. We figure out what to be and go shopping for them after breakfast. Sound good?”

“Yes.” Jessica leaned in and planted a peck on Sheri, not wanting to kiss a lot since she had not brushed her teeth yet. “See you tomorrow.” And with that she was out the car and briskly walking up the sidewalk, turning back once to grin and wave Sheri away.

Jessica made it to her room without any mishaps and did not see any indication that her dad had found out. No missed calls. No texts. No note under the door. No broken down door. She was in
the clear. A wave of relief washed over her and she decided to go back to sleep since there was no reason she needed to be up that early.

Reality had other plans. After being asleep for a half an hour, there was a knocking at her door. “Jessica,” her dad’s voice sounded through the door. “Open up, we need to talk.”

She let out a long sigh and looked up, shaking her head. “Goddammit,” she mumbled, getting up and trudging to the door, unlocking it but not opening it. Making her way back to her bed, she sat down as her dad opened the door and stepped in.

He was in his pajamas, a matching top and bottom blue and white striped outfit, with memory foam slippers on his feet and a white bathrobe hanging loosely over him. Her father stepped over to her and sat down beside her, putting his hands down on his lap and sighing to himself.

“Are you okay?” His voice was tender and sincere and she was liking her odds of not getting in trouble.

“Yesterday was stupid. I don’t know why I did it. It was my first time drinking since the party,” she lied, not making eye contact, purposefully having her voice low and sad. “I’m so sorry, sir.”

“No, none of that sir stuff right now. Dad.”

“Dad,” she said. “It was really dumb and I just wanted to make it go away for just a moment, but I know that’s not the way and I promise,” looking up and meeting his gaze, “I won’t do it again.”

Bobbing his head, he put his arm around her and pulled her into his embrace. “I love you, Jessica.” He planted a kiss on the top of her head. “I’m so proud of you and I trust you to make the right decisions for here on out.”

“I will. I swear.” She hugged him back, closing her eyes and relaxing.

“Okay.” Her father stood up and cleared his throat. “I’m going to go make some coffee, and you can go back to bed or whatever you were doing. You’re not grounded, but Jessica,” he stopped at the doorway. “If you do that shit again, I will ground you.”

“Understood, sir.”

He nodded, closing the door behind him as he left. Jessica sat there for a second, both stunned and overjoyed with how well that went. There was a tiny part that felt guilty for playing on her dad’s emotions, but it wasn’t entirely untrue. She just left out the part where she was trying to end drinking because it was becoming a habit and she had already been numbing herself for over a month straight. There was no reason to stress him. It was the right thing to do for all parties involved, she decided as she lied in bed again and fell right back to sleep.

When Jessica woke up it was noon and she had two texts. One from Alex and one from Sheri. Sheri’s was simply the eye emoji with a bunch of question marks. Alex was asking if she would come see him tomorrow.

Alex: I know I just saw you yesterday and all, but please come tomorrow? I’m so bored in here.

Jessica: I have a breakfast and shopping date but I will come after! I have so much to tell you.

Alex: Good stuff or bad stuff?

Jessica: Mainly good.
Alex: Thank God. I love good stories.

Jessica: Just wait till tomorrow and your mind is gonna be blown.

Swiping back to her messages she typed back to Sheri.

Jessica: It went great! I’m not grounded or anything.

Sheri: Yessssss!!! Breakfast at ten?

Jessica: Sounds good to me.

Sheri: See you tomorrow :)

Jessica: :)

She spent the remainder of the day binge watching “The Killing” on Netflix and snacking on anything she could find in the pantry. Deciding to mix all the snacks, Jessica grabbed a mixing bowl and filled it with Doritos, pretzels, Goldfish, almonds, pistachios, and Hot Cheetos. Life was starting to look up.

Chapter End Notes

These chapters are shorter because I gotta move us along and can't spend another like 40k describing technically like eight hours hahahaha next is Sunday and Tony’s POV!
Tony

Chapter Summary

Fake projects can be fun.

Chapter Notes

I've made yall wait 50k for this so I hope it's worth it~*~*~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony had hardly slept the night before due to the fact that he could not put his phone down, better yet, he could not stop looking at the picture Clay had sent him. He had jerked off to it immediately after sending his own, and then as he lied in bed at night his dick twitched under his covers as he had it open on his screen again. Following his body’s lead, Tony grabbed a tube sock from his drawer and lied back down, busting a quick one before he went to bed.

He woke up early, too. Fuck. Tony needed to relax and not get too anxious about what was in store. Clay sent him the pic and maybe that was it, maybe they were just going to make out? But he could never be too sure. Tony found himself in the bathroom, trimming up his pubes to make them more clean cut as he shaved his balls completely, the feeling of the razor running along always sent chills up his spine. Once he was done with that, he washed up in the shower, making sure every part of his body was thoroughly cleaned before working on his hair, spraying down every stray strand until it was exactly how he wanted it.

A gray undershirt with a sea green and blue flannel was his final decision, with skinny black jeans and black boots to complete the look. He put on a gold chain necklace that was not long, only making it to his collarbones, but added to his appearance. Cologne was sprayed -- putting it on his wrist, neck, and spurting down his pants just in case -- deodorant was swiped, and he made sure to put cocoa butter on to keep from having any dry skin.

With so much focus on how he looked and smelt, Tony almost forgot the most important part. The fake project. Reaching for his folder, he looked through to see if he had any old assignments that could double as new work but did not find any that were unused. So instead, he scoured the internet quickly, printing out the first assignment that looked decent and stuffed it in his binder, bounding out his bedroom door and down the hallway.

“Bye, Pops. Going to Clay’s,” he called out.

“Hold on,” his dad’s voice came from the kitchen.

Tony stopped in his place and pivoted on his foot, turning around. “Yeah?”

“Come here.”

His dad always did that. Why couldn’t he just say what he needed to say, why did Tony need to physically be in the room. With an eye roll, he strode over, leaning at the entrance to the kitchen,
raising his eyebrows.

“What’s up?”

“I don’t know if I like you with that boy,” his dad said, sipping on some coffee.

“Pops, please. He’s honestly really sweet and a good person.”

“First time I met him he was sketchy and stole your Walkman.” The look on his dad’s face was unreadable. The lines on his forehead stayed still, his lips hinted at nothing, and his voice sounded flat. “Friday night you’re driving around looking for him and find him nearly on his way to the hospital with alcohol poisoning.”

“It’s not like that --”

“I’m just looking out for you, son.” His dad stepped over to him and placed his hand on his shoulder. “That Ryan kid had you holed up in your room for days listening to sad music. I just don’t want to see you get hurt again.”

“Pops,” Tony said, breathing out and pulling him in for a hug. “It’s fine. I’m okay.”

“Just be careful, okay?”

“Got protection in my wallet,” Tony said, letting go immediately and dodging away from his dad’s right open palm about to smack the backside of his head. “See you later!” He ran out of the kitchen and through the front door before his dad could stop him, a wide grin on his face as he slid into his driver seat and started the engine.

At least he did not need to get gas.

Driving straight to Clay’s, Tony parked alongside the curb and hopped out, almost skipping up to the front door but deciding to seem more laxed. No one is that happy about a project. He rang the doorbell and stepped back onto the “Welcome” mat, waiting. A few moments later the door opened and Clay’s mom was standing there, a light blue blouse on with matching jeans.

“Clay’s grounded, Tony.” She crossed her arms. “But I’m sure you already know that.”

“Hi, Mrs. Jensen,” Tony started, kindly smiling at her. “Can I talk to you really quick? About Clay.”

“Is something wrong?” Her forehead gained three lines at the comment.

“No, no, nothing like that.” He took another step back and she stepped forward, closing the door behind her.

“What is it, Tony?”

“I’m sure he told you about the other night.”

“Yes, he did.” Her voice was cold as she spoke. “Thank you, for taking care of him.”

“Yeah, of course.” Tony bit his lower lip and looked down. “I know he’s grounded and everything but he told me when he was drunk that he hadn’t done any of the project him and I are supposed to have worked on and it’s due tomorrow. I brought the materials over and if it’s not fine I completely understand, but I was wondering if I could work on it with him. In your house of course.”
Her eyes fluttered closed with a look of frustration, a long breath escaping out of her nostrils. “Okay.” Tilting her head, her tongue quickly swiped across her lower lip. “I am not going to mess up your grades because my son is being unreliable. You can come in but you guys have to work downstairs at the table and once you’re done you have to go.”

“Of course,” Tony said, bobbing his head up and down. “I swear.”

“I know,” she said, finally smiling. “I trust you. It’s my son I don’t.”

“He’s going through it.”

“Yeah, well, that doesn’t mean he can do whatever he wants.” Turning on her heels she opened the front door and led him in, pointing the table and calling Clay’s name out from the bottom of the stairs.

“Yeah, mom?” Tony could hear Clay say from the top of the stairs.

“Your project partner Tony is here since you didn’t do any work.” Instant regret filled his bones that he used that as an excuse. “Get your work and come down, now.”

Tony sat at the table while Mrs. Jensen sat on the couch, flipping through paperwork. Clay waltzed down the stairs, avoiding his mom as he made it to the bottom of the stairs, heading straight to Tony. When he was sitting down beside him, Clay turned and widened his eyes, pointing with them back to his mom.

“Sorry I didn’t do my part of the project,” Clay said, now giving Tony a glare. “I just keep fucking up.” His face turned into a smile at the last moment and Tony eased up, smirking.

“Too busy being a party animal,” Tony whispered, winking.

“Shut the hell up.” Clay opened up a notebook and Tony flipped open his binder as if they were actually doing something.

“I printed out the guidelines for the project.” Tony handed him the papers he printed out and watched Clay flip the paper back and forth, his eyebrows showing confusion.

“Wait,” he said, mumbling under his breath. “Did we actually have an assignment.”

Tony wished there was a camera to stare off into like in Parks & Rec. “Clay,” is all he said, trying his best to make his eyes obvious that it was not real.

“Gotcha,” Clay said, holding out his index finger and nodding.

They stayed quiet for a while, pretending to work on the assignment when in reality they had their phones out and were showing each other stupid shit from Instagram. Clay’s mom had not budged at all and all of Tony’s prep and making sure he was clean and ready for anything looked like it was going to be wasted on a day of nothing. All he wanted to do was kiss Clay, at least.

Mrs. Jensen’s iPhone started ringing, loudly, and she answered it with lightning fast reflexes, talking before the second ring.

“Hello,” she said, and Tony could not help but listen, they were basically in the same room. “Wait, slow down. What?” Her voice came off full of worry and she stood up, the sound of papers falling to the floor accompanied her voice. “Oh, my God. Jesus Christ, what are they….oh, wow, really? Right now? I can’t….okay. I’ll leave now.”
Clay’s mom hung up and stood in the living room for a second not saying anything. Then she was by the table, purse already hanging on her shoulder, keys dangling in her hand. Her phone was attached to her hand as she rapidly typed away and Tony was curious to know what was happening.

“I need to go,” she said, her face looked like she saw a ghost. “Something happened. Work related. I’ll be back when I can. Your dad should be home within the next hour or two. Do not leave the house, I swear to God, Clay.”

“I won’t,” he said, huffing.

“I want to actually see your son again,” Tony chimed in, trying to be the medium. “So, I will not let him leave.”

“Thank you, Tony.” She stepped to Clay and gave him an awkward side hug, kissing him on the to of the head. “I love you.”

“Love you, too, mom,” he said, blushing.

She wasted no time and was out of the house, door slamming behind her. They both stayed quiet and Tony listened for her car to start up before he dared do anything that remotely looked like he was not attempting to do schoolwork. But after a minute and no Mrs. Jensen, he closed his folder and turned to Clay, grinning.

“That was lucky,” he said, biting his lower lip.

Clay looked down and bit the corner of his lip, meeting Tony’s gaze. Tony leaned in and Clay did the same. His heart was banging in his chest as their lips got closer and closer and Tony could feel Clay’s warm breath breeze across his mouth right before they finally kissed. It was a delicate start. Their mouths closed on each other, opening up and coming together, soft and hot. Tony’s eyes fluttered shut, his stomach was somersaulting in his gut, and his heart had grown wings and was flapping around his insides.

Clay’s hands landed on his shoulders and he moved his head to the side and the kiss turned more passionate. Clay’s lips were all Tony needed in that moment. He wrapped his arms around Clay and pulled him close, not departing, not moving their mouths. Their heads rotated from side to side, sloppily opening up and exploring each other with their tongues. Clay nipped Tony’s bottom lip and Tony let out an audible groan, his breath hitching in his throat.

Tony felt like he was melting in his seat as Clay’s hand snaked up around his neck until he was gripping the nape of Tony’s neck, pulling him even closer until he was on the edge of his seat, about to fall forward onto Clay. Tony pulled away for a moment, taking the moment in and surveying Clay’s face, barely inches apart. The boy’s lips were exceptionally pink from all the kissing and his cheeks looked flushed, but it only made Tony’s dick harder in his skinny jeans.

“Here,” Clay said, standing up and Tony followed suit immediately, both out of breath.

Without warning, Clay slammed his mouth to Tony’s and he was floating as Clay gripped his back and held their bodies together. Tony could feel Clay’s hard on against him and he rocked forward on his heels, grinding his dick up and down against Clay. Next thing Tony knew, Clay’s hands were on his thighs and he was in the air, legs wrapped around Clay. The boy had Tony against the wall before he knew what was happening and the impact sent quakes down his body as his hands desperately pawed at Clay’s chest, back, shoulders, anywhere he could reach.

Clay held Tony’s hands up above his head, their bodies grinding together as Clay bit Tony’s lip
one last time before he started to peck downward, swiping his tongue along Tony’s neck, sucking with each small nip as he did. Bliss was the only descriptor that sufficed for how good it felt. Tony leaned his head back against the wall, moaning as Clay continued his relentless kissing. Tony could feel his dick leaking in his pants as he grinded his ass down against Clay’s cock, feeling the pressure through his jeans, and the pleasure that accompanied it.

“Fuck,” Tony gasped out, bucking back and not wanting it to ever stop.

One of Clay’s hands was pressed open palmed against Tony’s throat, his thumb moving up until Tony had the tip in his mouth and he started sucking, letting his tongue work around it, hearing Clay groan out in pleasure. Tony lightly bit on Clay’s thumb and grinned as Clay pushed his body as physically close, slowly rocking his hips back and forth.

With his other free hand, Clay pressed it against Tony’s chest and brought it gliding down until his fingers were at the lining of his jeans, unbuttoning them. Tony’s arms were wrapped around the back of Clay’s neck, working his waist up and down, rotating it as he breathed out and nibbled on Clay’s earlobe just as the taller boy’s hand worked its way underneath his boxer and wrapped around Tony’s cock. His hands were soft and warm and he started to rub, not able to move much due to how tight the jeans were but feeling like pure ecstasy.

“Let’s go to my room,” Clay breathed out, his voice coming out low and hot.

“You sure?” Tony asked, their eyes locked on each other as they kept smacking their lips together and pulling away, not wanting to stop.

“Yeah.”

Tony followed him up the staircase, each step rubbing his dick against his jeans. Once they were in Clay’s room the door was closed and Clay was back against Tony, this time pushing Tony back onto the bed where he fell against the soft mattress, propping himself up and watching Clay drop to his knees.

“Clay,” he said, his chest banging like a drumline and he felt Clay’s hands grope his thighs, open palmed rubbing up and down, getting close to his cock before teasing and pulling back. Tony was twitching in his jeans as Clay licked his lips and moved his fingers to the zipper, rubbing the outline of Tony’s dick as he did. But he did not unzip the jeans, instead, he scooted closer, spreading Tony’s legs apart as he did, reaching up and lifting Tony’s undershirt up to reveal his stomach.

“Fuck,” Clay groaned, his fingers lightly grazing Tony’s sensitive skin, having him writhing on the bed. “Take off your shirt.”

Clay took his hands and lifted his own shirt off, his nipples hard. There was a small, light, patch of hair just in the middle of his chest that Tony thought was sexy, not to mention his stomach looked pretty toned and even had a v shape leading down. Tony sat up and threw off his flannel, desperately yanking his shirt off and lying back down, Clay getting on top. His arms were flexed as he held himself up, looking down at Tony before they started kissing again, rolling around on the bed, skin gliding together.

Tony’s legs were spread open and Clay was in between them, dick against Tony’s ass he rocked back and forth, Tony grinding into it. Clay’s hand was back down his jeans, snaked around the head of the shorter boy’s cock, thumb slowly and deliberately massaging. Their lips were connected and Tony’s felt like they were swollen from all the making out but he did not care, his body craved more, and with each buck, he felt his insides buzzing.
Clay started to kiss down his neck to his chest, sucking and nibbling on his nipples as he did. Tony threw his head back against the mattress and bit his lips to keep from groaning out as he quivered when Clay licked down his belly button to the opening of his jeans. The sound of the zipper being opened was the only other noise besides both of their heavy breathing.

Tony helped kick his jeans down to his ankles as Clay took his hand and put it down his blue boxer briefs, this time wrapping around his cock and working up and down, visible wet spots in the fabric from his precome. Clay took his other hand and pulled the elastic down, letting Tony’s cock breathe, while he took his thumb and oiled up Tony’s dick with his own precome, sending chills through his muscles as Clay slowly, with a tight grip, stroked his hand up and down Tony’s dick.

“Fuck, Clay,” he said, sitting up.

“It feels good?” Clay asked, his other warm hand cupping Tony’s balls as he continued to move his hand up and down, his eyes locked with Tony’s.

“You have no….” His breath hitched as Clay slowed down around the head, twisting his fist. “Oh my, God.”

A smirk landed on Clay’s lips as he leaned forward and licked the tip, the precome stretching from his lip. It was the hottest thing Tony had ever seen. Clay wasted no time after that, enclosing his mouth around Tony’s cock. It was hot and wet and felt incredible and he kept his lips around the tip, tongue swirling around his head as he jerked off Tony’s dick while bobbing up and down, slowly making himself go lower, gagging.

There was sweat on Tony’s brow as he lay there, pinching his nipples and watching Clay continue to suck his dick. Clay reached out and took one of Tony’s hands, placing it on the back of his head, and Tony did not need any instruction. He pushed lightly on the back of Clay’s head, lowering him a little further along his shaft. It didn’t seem like Clay would be able to deepthroat, but that didn’t matter because with one hand gently caressing Tony’s balls while the other jerked him off into Clay’s wet mouth, it felt just as good.

His muscles starting tightening and he could feel his balls getting more and more sensitive as he got closer. Clay showed no indication of stopping, the sloppy noises of spit and slurping were sending Tony into a fit as he shook on the bed, trying his best to keep from coming. Toes curled, his eyes started to roll back as his back arched.

“I’m gonna,” Tony groaned, feeling Clay’s mouth leave as his hand started to pump up and down quicker until Tony was pumping out his load, hot and thick on Clay’s hand and his own thigh. Clay did not stop, though, just simply slowed down as he continued to drag his fists up and down, sending quakes through Tony’s body. “Holy shit.”

Clay licked his lips and stood up, reaching for a tissue box on his desk. “That was so fucking hot,” he finally said, handing Tony a bunch of tissues.

“You’re telling me, Clay,” Tony said, his body still coming down as he wiped the come of himself. Tony pulled up his underwear after and was about to tell Clay to get on the bed when the door opened and Clay’s dad walked in.

Tony’s heart stopped in his chest and he shot up out of the bed, reaching for his shirt, and yanking his jeans up.

“Oh,” his dad said, closing the door behind him as he walked out.
“Oh. My. God.” Clay said, his face redder than Tony had ever seen it before, and Tony was pretty sure he was matching.

“Oh, fuck.”

Chapter End Notes

Alright! Jessica next and then Clay will be after and we can get some closure to that awkward ass encounter and also find out what had his mom so spooked! hahahah and then after the Clay chapter IS THE CHAPTER I HAVE WANTED TO WRITE SINCE THE BEGINNING WOWOWOW I CANNOT WAIT
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Breakfast, shopping, and hospital visiting, typical Sunday.

Chapter Notes

I'm having too much fun with this fic yall

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sheri was outside Jessica’s house right at ten, looking chipper. She had on a very cute sunflower themed dress that came to her knees, matching white shoes, to go along with her vibrant smile and gorgeous flowing hair. Jessica was not entirely sure how she landed someone so beautiful but she was not going to start questioning it. With a white halter top and a short black cotton skirt, Jessica hopped into the passenger side and flashed a smile.

“I’m gonna eat the fucking world,” she said, strapping in.

“Where you thinking?” Sheri started to drive as Jessica thought it over.

There were not that many options for breakfast in the town besides Denny’s, which they ended up at after driving around for a few minutes with no actual destination. Once there, the two of them were seated at a booth and handed the menus. Both of them ordered coffee, but as for what they wanted to eat, well, that took deliberation.

“Okay,” Jessica said, placing the menu down, open, and looking straight across at Sheri. “This is what I propose.”

“Go on,” Sheri said, cupping her hands and placing them under her chin.

“What were you planning on getting? It’s important.”

“Probably pancakes with eggs and sausage. Why?”

“Perfect. Get the unlimited pancakes, it’s like $4 or something, and then I’ll get The Lumberjack Slam because it comes with so much. Then, we save money because I’ll eat some pancakes when you get your unlimited and we can share the other stuff.”

“I’m down for that.” Sheri grinned as the waitress brought them their coffee.

They ordered their food, Sheri putting in double the amount of sugar that Jessica did. The coffee was great and was exactly what Jessica needed to wake her up fully for the day. She had ended up knocking out relatively early the night before and slept solidly through the night, but for some reason that appeared to have made her feel more tired.

The food came and the two of them started digging in, forks scraping against plates, ketchup being
squirted onto scrambled eggs as syrup dripped down the golden brown cakes.

“This is so fucking good,” Jessica said, bacon filling her mouth.

“Like, I know everyone jokes about Denny’s,” Sheri said, wiping her mouth with a napkin. “But it’s actually not bad.”

“This is delicious. Ten out of ten would eat again and again and again,” she said as she put a forkful of Cholula covered hashbrowns to her lips, swallowing the bacon before eating it.

“I can tell,” Sheri giggled, taking a bite of one of the pancakes, the syrup making her lips glisten in the sunlight. “Now, onto more pressing matters.”

“Costumes?” Jessica deadpanned.

“Costumes.” Sheri gleamed. The difference a tone made to one simple word amazed Jessica. “You have any ideas?”

“Not really.” Shrugging, Jessica thought it over. What the hell did she want to be that year? Nothing to do with death, that was for sure. Maybe a sexy costume? Her dad might not be too happy with that, plus the kids at school might talk about her -- they already did. The best option, or at least the most painless option, was to stay home.

“Well, lucky for you, I have.” Sheri put her fork down a devious smile on her face. “Okay, so I had a lot of fun fucking with Courtney on Friday, I’m gonna be honest. I know we’re cool with her now or whatever, but that doesn’t change the fact that it was fun as fuck. And I was thinking, what Tyler did that night was really fucked up, like, it honestly creeped me out.”

“Where are you going with this?” Jessica took a sip of her coffee, squinting.

“What if to get back at him for being such a dick, we dress up like photographers.” Sheri wiggled her eyebrows. “Like, but make it look specifically like him, and if he goes and tells administration we can just say we dressed like photographers and that if anything he should be flattered. What do you think?”

Jessica could feel her lips rising even as she tried to maintain a steady poker face. “Okay, that sounds fucking hysterical.” She burst out laughing, covering her mouth as she did. “Like, I was already planning on cussing him out if I saw him on Monday, but this, this would literally be ten times funnier and so much more satisfying!”

“Right?” Sheri sat forward, excitement in her eyes. “Like, he showed up dressed as his fucking tape. We’re just giving him a taste of his own medicine.”

“Exactly. It’s honestly genius,” Jessica said, leaning back, resting her arms on the top of the booth. “The more I find out about you, Sheri, the more I like you.”

Jessica felt Sheri’s foot glide up in between her legs. “You ain’t seen nothing yet.”

-xxx-

“We’re not going to a Halloween shop?” Jessica asked as Sheri turned into a parking lot.

“It’s Tyler. If we want to look the part….” She parked in front of a Target. “We just need like blue button downs, some fucking khakis, and then a cheap camera case. It’ll end up costing the same amount as a costume from Party City, anyway.”
“God, now that you put it like that, he really does wear that all the time.”

“I know. It’s tragic.”

They collectively laughed and got out the car, sauntering into the store. After not even five minutes they had found the perfect matching blue buttoned shirts, the pants, and even found a carrying case for a camera on sale. The pants were actually more than Jessica had expected, but all together it only came to about eighty dollars, which is basically what every costume would have cost. Shrugging off any feeling of guilt for spending too much, Jessica waltzed out of the store with a sudden excitement she had not previously had for the next day. The two of them for sure would not be winning the dress up contest, but it was going to be a lot of fun.

-xxx-

Jessica had already let Sheri know about seeing Alex, so after Target the two of them went back to Sheri’s for a little while to hang out before she had to go. Hanging out turned into making out, and Jessica loved Sheri’s lips. There was a suppleness to them she had never experienced before, and even as they intensified and their lips slammed together in a desperate sort of way, it still felt like a pillowy soft encasing that never left.

There was a moment of weakness when Sheri’s hand was under her shirt, bra pulled down, that she contemplated canceling her plans with Alex and letting the rest happen. Jessica had to stop herself before she went too far and had no turn off mode because her body was humming inside and she wanted much more than groping to be happening.

“I gotta,” she said, backing up, still leaning forward even as she stood kissing Sheri, “go.”

“Just five more minutes,” Sheri moaned, biting Jessica’s lower lip.

“Five more minutes is gonna turn into an hour and you know it.” Jessica snuck one last peck before she was against the wall, hands behind her back, legs crossed.

“That pose isn’t helping the situation.”

“I know,” Jessica said, gliding one of her open palms across her bare thigh, hiking her skirt up as she did so. With a tilt of her head, Jessica’s hair fell onto one side exposing her shoulder. She stopped her hand right as it got the lining of her panties, pulling it out and letting her skirt drop, laughing. “Come on, for real.”

“Fine,” Sheri said, standing up and adjusting her dress. “Good thing I have my vibrator.”

-xxx-

Alex was sitting up in his bed, a tray in front of him with some red jello and a cup of water. The combination seemed strange to Jessica as she sat down on the padded chair next to him, trying her best not to make it obvious that she had just hooked up. Although, it totally was. Her lips were much redder than normal, and around them matched. Make up was not fully on anymore and there was no way she would be able to keep herself from grinning.

“Why do you look like you got laid?” The first thing that came out of Alex’s mouth. Jessica closed her mouth and didn’t say anything. “Wait? You did?”

She tried her best to not act excited but it just burst out. “Yes!”

“I’m sorry,” he said, pushing the tray away from him, straightening his back against the pillows, and then leaning forward, head perched on hand. “But, who, what, where, when, what the fuck?
“It was Sheri,” she said, looking down and hiding the stupid fucking smile that would not leave her face.

Alex’s eyes widened and he held his hand to his heart. “Well then. Good for you, though, Sheri is so hot.”

“Yeah, well, don’t go making another list,” Jessica said, immediately looking up with wide eyes. “I’m just kidding.”

“I know,” he said, waving the comment away. “So, details? How did you like the taste?”

“The taste?”

Alex furrowed his brow and cocked his head. “Of? Vagina?”

“Jesus,” she coughed out, looking around as though someone else was in the room. “I didn’t eat her out. We were drunk and she went down on me and then,” she stopped and thought maybe she should not say the rest, but it was Alex, and honestly who was he going to tell? “Okay, so I finished and then she pulled out a vibrator and I got her off with that.”

“Kinky.”

“That’s what I said when she pulled it out!” Jessica slammed back in her chair cracking up.

“Yeah, well, great minds.”

“But that’s not even the half of it,” Jessica said, about to fill him in on everything that went down at the party. “I don’t think you’re ready.”

“I am literally in this boring ass, white walled prison all day. If I had known trying to kill myself would end me in here, I wouldn’t have done it.” Alex did a sarcastic smirk. “Tell me.”

“Where do I even start.” Jessica ultimately started from the beginning. “So I go and get some vodka,” and before Alex can give her a look, “I know, I know. But, I did it and it’s the past so we’re moving on. Courtney and Tyler pull up, the fucking creep, do you know -- hold on I’ll get to that.” Letting out a deep breath she started to tell him about how Sheri texted her and she snuck out, deciding to fuck with Courtney by pretending to be girlfriends.

“That explains why this pairing just happened over night,” Alex said, nodding. “If it means anything, you guys make a cute couple.”

“Thanks,” she said, getting back on track. “So, we walk in and Clay is kissing shirtless Monty.”

“I’m sorry, what?”

“You’re gonna be saying that a lot, so just save the questions till the end.”

“Fine,” he said, huffing and crossing his arms. “Continue.”

“Clay was so fucked up, Alex. Like, he hooked up with Monty in the kitchen, outside, and then got back inside and made out with Courtney and Monty ended up going home with Ryan and I hooked up with Sheri and we did body shots and basically everyone got super fucked up. Like, I had to help Clay because he was puking and couldn’t even walk.”

Alex didn’t say anything but his eyes were as wide as they could get.
“So, before Clay got that fucked up, though, Tyler shows up. Tyler shows up in a fucking Hannah tape costume.”

“No, stop, hold on.” Alex waved his hands. “I know you said wait till the end but this is too fucking much. I stood up for that asshole in the hallway when Monty was being a dick to him. Wow, I regret that.”

“You should.” Jessica side eyed him. “So, Clay socked him in the face and had him knocked down and then I went off on him and told him he was a fucking creep.”

“Good for you.”

“And now Sheri and I are going to dress up like him tomorrow at school to piss him off and give him a taste of his own bullshit.”

Alex covered his mouth and shook with laughter. “I love it.”

“To be honest,” Jessica said, “if I see him, I’m going to go off. Like, I hate him.”

“Yeah, out of everything on the tapes, him and Bryce were the worst.”

“Right?” Jessica shuddered. “Bryce deserves to fucking die for what he did. And Tyler deserves to feel like a loner for the rest of high school after he stalked Hannah and took pictures of her, like, while she was sleeping and stuff. I know you’re white, Alex, but, honestly, white men really are the fucking worst.”

He sighed, “I know.”

“Which brings me to the other piece of shit white boy,” Jessica said, rolling her eyes. “Justin showed up.”

“Justin? As in Justin Foley, missing for three weeks, asshole who deserves to get the shit beat out of him? That Justin?”

“Well, he did...get the shit beat out of him. He came looking like death, strangle marks and bloody face and I was so drunk all I did was go off on him.”

She detailed exactly what she said and how loud she expelled it. Alex didn’t say anything right away, making Jessica’s nerves begin to spike.

“You gonna say something?” Jessica asked.

“I wonder who jumped him?” Alex said, looking whimsical.

“I think it was his mom’s boyfriend.”

“Oh, that doesn’t make it funny.” Alex slouched in the bed. “Well, whether he was beaten up or not, he deserved everything you said to him.”

“Yeah,” she said, a feeling of guilt rising in her gut. “I probably could have toned it down.”

“Oh, who cares? From what you told me that party was fucking out of control from the get-go.”

“It really was.” She chuckled, shaking the feeling away. “So, how’s Grey’s Anatomy?”

“I’ve realized the schedule they have on LIFE. Two episodes a day from one to three and I’m midway through season six right now.”
“Oh,” Jessica said, scrunching her face and remembering the finale, the shooter in the hospital.
“The last two episodes are rough.”

“How so?” Alex looked concerned. “I swear to God if they kill any more of my faves!”

“Who is one of your faves?”

“Bailey.”

Jessica decided to fuck with him. “Good luck then.”

“What does that mean?” His voice got higher. “Jessica, don’t shrug at me, what does that mean?”

“You’ll have to wait and see,” she simply said, grinning.

Chapter End Notes

Clay next~*~*~*
Clay

Chapter Summary

Clay and his dad bond, sort of.

Chapter Notes

alright so as always hope you guys enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Clay hadn’t told his mom that Tony was coming over, figuring the element of surprise coupled with Tony explaining and not him would ease her into letting them “work on the project.” He showered beforehand and made sure he was looking his best. Tweezing any stray hairs from his brows, shaving the few and brave hairs that were sprouting on his chin, and threw his clothes in the dryer with a fabric softener sheet in hopes it would make them smell better.

The sound of the doorbell alerted Clay that Tony was there, and his nerves spiked. Sending the picture the day before was the first time he had ever done anything remotely like that. It was exhilarating and scary all at the same time, and the moment he received one back, his hands were down his pants quicker than a bullet being shot. But pictures were one thing, in person was a completely different monster to tackle.

Hannah was the first person he even got further than kissing with -- at least until Friday -- and it was the most nervous he had ever been. He was not lying when he told Tony he was shitting himself at the party that night because his insides felt like someone had slipped him a laxative. His gut was in knots as he had gone up the stairs with Hannah, and it was one of the first times in his life he let his mind lose a battle. Usually, somehow, he would talk himself out of doing something, but that night he forced himself to go with the flow.

Now, as he sat in the room, remembering that he needed to act oblivious to Tony showing up, his insides were doing the same thing. With clammy hands and a steady bounce of his leg, he sat on the edge of his bed waiting for him mom to call him down. He decided he would not let his mind win. If Tony and him were alone he would make a move and not back down or let the moment pass. Too many things could happen and there was no denying he liked Tony, and from the looks of it, vice versa.

After the tapes, he said he would be more open to things, more able to experience life as it came, and if all went well he would do just that.

His mom looked peeved as she called him down, but that seemed to be her new permanent look. Avoiding her like the plague, Clay made his way down and saw the back of Tony sitting at the table, his hair swooped down perfectly with no strays popping up.

Clay sat down next to him, making sure his back was to his mom before they started to pretend to do work. Even though they were not alone, and faking school work, Clay still found himself
smiling, his heart racing every time they would make eye contact. Tony was so fucking good looking. Clay had always thought so but he never let himself really check the boy out. But as they were leaning forward, looking at the paper, the smell of Tony’s woodsy body wash clouded Clay’s mind and his dick twitched in his jeans.

His mom needed to get the fuck out of there. If he wasn’t going to chicken out he needed to act fast before he convinced himself not to.

A guardian angel must have been looking out for him because his mom’s phone rang and she was out the door, trusting Tony more than Clay. Her face had concern and anxiety written all over it. Must have been work.

The moment she was out the door the two of them stayed quiet, and Clay could hear his heart drumming in his ear, a tingling rising up from his toes and through his body. Tony said something but Clay was not really listening because the two of them started moving closer together and then their lips were connected and Clay was soaring.

With a passion he did not know he was capable of, Clay lifted Tony and slammed his back against the wall, wanting more and more of him. Tony’s hands were scratching down the tall boys’ back before Clay had them pinned together above Tony’s head, stretching them up far and feeling their dicks against each other as he rocked forward on his heels, dragging the feeling out longer.

They moved it upstairs and Clay did not know how far they were going to go, but his body was buzzing and his mind was turning to mush with every kiss, every nip, and every grab. Tony was down on his bed and Clay dropped to his knees, spreading Tony’s legs and rubbing his hands up, revealing his stomach. Tony did not have a six pack or anything, but he had a small firm belly that was doing a lot for Clay. He had never even sucked a dick before and he wasn’t sure if he could, but then Tony was shirtless, laying back for Clay and he knew there was no going back.

Tony’s dick was bigger than Clay had expected. The picture of the outline in his underwear did not do it justice. His hand wrapped around it, Clay purposefully thumbing the tip, knowing damn well it felt great when he jerked himself off. Looked like it felt the same for Tony because as he groped his cock, Tony cursed and shook in the bed, throwing his head back. Without a thought in his mind other than pleasing Tony, Clay leaned forward and licked the tip, tasting Tony for the first time, the saltiness of his precome.

Clay had a pretty bad gag reflex so he stayed around the tip, working his tongue along the underside of Tony’s head, his hand stroking the shaft. It must have been doing the trick because when Clay averted his gaze up, Tony was arching his back, fingers pinching his nipples. It was so fucking hot Clay could feel his dick leaking in his pants. He moved Tony’s hand on top of his head and tried his best to go down further, gagging.

Tony was coming and Clay pulled his mouth off, not ready to swallow. He kept his hand working up and down, slowing his pace as the come pumped out onto his fingers and down onto Tony’s thigh. Clay was breathing heavily, reaching for some tissues and still in shock at how fucking hot it all was: Tony, naked lying in front of him, legs open, mouth puffy and red, hair no longer sprayed down to perfection, with flushed cheeks that made his eyes pop even more.

Tony pulled up his underwear once his dick started to relax and Clay was just about to get into the bed when his dad opened the door. Clay felt his dick go soft immediately -- not even knowing that it could change that fast -- and his heart freefall in his chest. Tony was grabbing at his ankles for his jeans, and Clay was standing there in shock, shirtless.

“Oh. My. God.” Clay could feel his face heating up more and more and he knew that meant it was burning red, although Tony’s cheeks were a bright rouge, too.
“Oh, fuck,” he said, slipping his shirt on and standing up, running his fingers through his hair. 
“Clay, I’m so sorry, I can --”

“This is gonna be so awkward,” Clay said, sitting down on his bed with his hands covering his face. “I guess it’s a good thing you had already come.”

Tony closed his eyes and pursed his lips. “Yeah, good thing.”

“Well, I just mean, imagine if he came in right when you were....” Clay made a gesture with his hand.

“Got it, Clay.” Tony looked really worried and it made Clay find him somehow even more attractive.

“It’s fine,” Clay said, standing up and going to the door. “I’ll talk to him.”

“I should go, right?”

“Yeah, probably.” Clay stopped at the door and turned around, pulling Tony in for one last kiss. “To be continued.”

“To be continued.”

Clay and Tony walked down the stairs. Tony would not even look up, he just grabbed the work off of the dining table and left, quickly. Clay had never seen Tony embarrassed before, and as much as it was cute, he felt really bad that it happened on their first time doing anything.

“Bye, Tony,” Clay’s dad called out from the couch, a stupid smile on his face.

“Dad,” Clay said, widening his eyes as Tony shut the door behind himself.

“What? Can’t I say bye to your boyfriend? Friend? Friend who’s a boy?”

“Oh, my God,” Clay huffed, sitting down on the couch next to him. “Please don’t tell mom.”

“I won’t, but she is the reason I’m even home,” he said, sitting with one leg resting on the other. “She said she needed me to get home right away so you would not be home alone.”

“Of course she did.”

“Hey,” his dad said, patting him on the shoulder. “She has every right to be mad. You can’t keep doing whatever you want, bud, okay? I know you’re growing up and going through a lot, but you still live under our roof.”

“I know.” Clay looked down and fiddled with his hands. Even though he was annoyed with his mom and how she did not trust him, he did have to concede that her reactions to him were warranted. He just wished he could explain to them how he felt inside. There was this swirling inside him of confusion and dejection that did not know how to deal with.

“If I hadn’t come home early,” his dad wiggled his eyebrows, chuckling.

“Dad.” Clay stood up and rolled his eyes.

“I knew you and Tony had a thing.” There was a sparkle in his dad’s eyes and he looked amused with the conversation. “That night he came over when you guys were arguing about whatever at dinner, I knew it. I even bet your mom.”
“You did what?” Clay’s jaw dropped open.

“She owes me a homemade steak dinner.”

“I’m going to my room.”

“You guys finished that school work pretty quick. Was it more of a hands on type project?”

“Jesus,” he said, stomping up the stairs.

With a huff, Clay shut the door behind him and flopped backward onto his bed, wishing Tony was lying next to him and they were still messing around. His mind kept replaying Tony on the bed, his groans, the way his legs muscles would tighten when Clay worked his tongue just right, how his body felt underneath him. Clay’s dick was getting harder in his jeans and he was tempted to get up and go to the bathroom but his phone buzzed in his pocket and he slipped it out immediately, expecting it to be Tony, disappointed when he saw it was Ryan.

Ryan: You left your backpack in my car.

Clay: oh shit okay is it cool if i come over to get it?

Ryan: Yes.

Clay let out an exasperated sigh and pushed himself up off his bed, trudging down the stairs, where his dad was still on the couch, a book in hand. Moving his reading glasses down the bridge of his nose, his dad placed a bookmark in the middle and closed the novel.

“I didn’t think I’d be seeing you the rest of the night,” he commented.

“I left my backpack at Ryan’s house on Friday.” Clay did not want to have to go but it was Sunday and he needed all his work. “I would ride my bike but….”

“I’ll drive you.”

They drove in silence for the most part. His dad played his one CD that he never changed from his car, which for some reason had Africa by Toto on there three times. At a red light, his dad lowered the repeated song and turned to Clay, squinting.

“I know you won’t want to talk about this,” he said, “but, I think we should talk about safe sex.”

“Oh, my God,” Clay said, throwing his head back, and acting like he was going to get out of the car. “Please, let’s not.”

“Listen,” his dad said, holding up his hands in a surrender motion. “I get it. You don’t want to talk about this with your old man, but we never discussed how to have safe sex if you’re going to be doing it with a boy.”

“What? Like it’s different.”

“Oh, it is.” His dad’s head bobbed up and down vigorously as the light turned green and he started driving forward.

“Because you would know so well.” Clay turned his gaze and looked out the window, arms crossed in his lap. Why did parents have to be so fucking invasive? The sex talk? He was almost seventeen, he knew about sex, even if he hadn’t done it yet, and even if, maybe, he did not know exactly everything that went into gay sex, but still, that didn’t mean his dad needed to tell him.
Google was a good tool.

“I went to college,” his dad said, and Clay had to take a moment to process the undertones of that comment.

With furrowed brows and a questioning look, Clay turned his attention to his dad. “What does that mean?”

“I’m just saying, your good ol’ dad isn’t as clueless about things as you may think.”

“You’ve been with a guy?” Clay did not believe it.

“Guys. Plural.” His dad shrugged as though he was commenting on the weather. “All I’m saying is if you decide to take things to another level with Tony and you have any questions, I’m here.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.” Clay paused for a second and then just blurted it out. “Wait, so are you bi?”

“I guess,” his dad said, his lower lip pouting out as he seemingly pondered the question. “Yeah, you could say that.”

“Cool.”

The conversation needed to end.

Clay was overjoyed when they pulled in front of Ryan’s house because at least then he would have something to distract him from the mental image of his young dad fucking around with guys before meeting his mom. His mom! Did she know he was bi? Had she been with girls or was she boring and strictly hetero? There was too much to unpack from that conversation that he was happy to see Ryan walking out with his backpack in hand.

Clay hopped out of the car and walked over, smiling. “Thanks.”

“Yeah, of course.” Ryan shook his hair down and then swooped it to the side. “Glad to see you survived Friday.”

“Barely,” Clay said, a breathy chuckle escaping his nose. “Sorry. I don’t remember a lot but if I was super obnoxious or did anything to be annoying, I’m sorry.”

“Oh, please.” Ryan waved his hand. “If anything I should thank you. You got Monty good and horny and he dicked me down so good I barely walked yesterday.”

Clay blinked in shock and then nodded, a smile rising on his cheeks. “Welp, good for you?”

“It was great. It’s been a while.” Ryan put his hand on his hip. “How was the rest of your night?”

“Good, I guess? I threw up like crazy and I’m grounded now, but it was worth it.”

“Freedom always is,” Ryan said, winking. “Anyways, I’ll see you tomorrow. I gotta go back to sewing my costume for the contest tomorrow. What are you dressing up as?”

“I don’t know if I’m going to.” Clay had completely forgotten about the costume contest.

“To each their own.” Ryan turned around and stopped, pivoting on his foot. “I’m glad you’re doing better, or whatever.”

“Me, too.”
He and his father got home before his mom. The car ride home was awkward, but Clay did manage to find a subject that did not involve sex: the costume. His dad told him he thought he could find something for Clay to wear from his closet. They went upstairs and his dad starting mulling through his clothes, talking to himself about what they could put together, until he gasped and shouted, “Eureka!”

“Who says that, dad?”

“Me. I say it.” His dad stepped out with brown slacks, a white long sleeve dress shirt, and a beige argyle vest.

“What am I supposed to be wearing that?” Clay could only think of a professor.

“A reporter! I have old reading glasses you can pop the lenses out of and then we can make a quick little nametag that says reporter on it.” Shrugging his dad threw the clothes on the bed. “I think it’ll be a good costume. I mean, after all, you did literally do investigating and caught a rapist.”

Clay hated that the tapes were public and that his parents knew all he had been through. “Yeah, that’s true,” he said, not entirely thrilled, but not hating the idea.

“I even have an old camera you can wear as though you're a documentarian.”

“Okay,” Clay said, more or less just wanting to go into his room and not talk anymore. “I’ll wear that. Thanks, dad.”

“Anytime, son,” his dad said, pulling him in for a side hug.

Flopping on his bed again, Clay closed his eyes and did his best to focus on anything other than Tony. It failed. Poor Tony looked so uneasy when he had left earlier and they had not talked since. It was churning around in Clay's mind as he grabbed his phone and started typing.

Clay: my dads super chill about what happened! i dont want you to worry or anything :)

Tony: omg good! i was more worried for you especially since youre already grounded

Clay: hes not gonna tell my mom and even helped me pick out a costume for tomorrow! you dressing up?

Tony: OH YES! youre gonna have to wait to see though ;)

Clay: im looking forward to it

Tony: as am i. btw my back has a bruise on it already from slamming me into the wall hahahah

Clay: stop!!! does it really?? im so sorry!

Tony: dont be! it was hot. we gotta do that again

Clay: and this time no interruptions lol

Tony: its like you read my mind

Clay: we vibe too well together, thats why :)
okay so i need to warn yall about the next chapter and going forward with this fic. next chapter specifically is going to be extremely dark, pretty twisted in some ways that i genuinely dont think anyone is prepared for, and will start us on the inevitable path to the end of this fic. i have TRIED my best to foreshadow what is coming throughout the fic with comments, and little moments here and there so that it wont be as shocking, but im just warning you guys, this fic is about to get really dark and really fucked up for the next few chapters. its why ive had graphic depictions of violence as a tag since the beginning~*~*~*~

i tried my best to make the fluff and sex and cute stuff last as long as i could but that has come to an end and Monday will begin and things will go down hill from here tbh im sorry but it was the plan from the beginning (i didnt think anyone would read this and i never planned on it being longer than 10k so that was a hit and miss)
Tyler

Chapter Summary

Tyler has a bone to pick with quite a few people at Liberty High.

Chapter Notes

okay so a few warnings going in!! obviously you can see by the tag change what is coming but like i also want to warn about the dialogue. i hate tyler yall like theres no getting around it and i think he is one of the creepiest characters on the show and my take on him is pretty problematic in that his mindset, and the things he says are really fucked up. so i want to warn you guys. the dialogue in this chapter is reflective of his character and i hope that once you guys read it you understand what i mean

besides that,,,,, um good luck?? its 5k and i was almost done when i thought maybe i went too far with the last few things that happen but i decided to leave it in so i hope its not too much

See the end of the chapter for more notes

3 Weeks Ago.

Life was becoming white noise.

After the deposition, his parents treated him differently, like he was made of porcelain. They wanted to know about the tapes but he would not tell them. It didn’t really matter, though, because they got out and his parents listened and all the looks of worry and pity turned into avoiding eye contact and no longer checking in on him, although the checking in was a new occurrence, anyway. Funny how once a tragedy happens -- although he wasn’t sure Hannah’s death could be considered that -- people act like they care.

No one cared about him and he knew that. He was alone.

The night his father listened to his tape he barged into his room, face red, a vein already bulging out of his neck.

“So, this,” he said, clicking play on his laptop that he was holding in his hands, Hannah’s voice filling the void. “This is why kids were throwing rocks? This shit!” His dad looked disgusted. “You took pictures of her when she was -- I did not buy you all these cameras so you could go and stalk girls! I wasted all this fucking money so you could do what you loved and hopefully make a goddamn career out of it, not become the fucking neighborhood peeping Tom!”

“Dad,” Tyler said, sitting up from lying on his bed. “It’s not like that --”

“Perception is reality, Tyler, so even if it wasn’t ‘like that,’’” his voice was full of disgust, “anyone who listens will think it was.” The sound of his mother crying from down the hallway added to the overall feeling of shit that was building inside him.
“It’s not like I raped the fucking slut,” Tyler shouted, his blood boiling inside him. Why the fuck was he constantly getting shit for everything? Marcus tried to finger her in the middle of a fucking diner. Bryce literally raped her. Sheri was responsible for Jeff’s death, and that bitch Jessica was always drunk and partying like it was nothing. Not a single thing happened to Clay for sending the nude around. They were the kids who deserved to be punished for Hannah’s stupid fucking bullshit death, not him. All he fucking did was take a few pictures.

“I can’t believe you just said that.” A look of disbelief was idle on his dad’s face. “Who are you?”

“Oh, yeah, because you actually gave a shit before.” Tyler snorted, standing up and puffing out his chest. “You bought me the fucking cameras to keep me out of your hair and don’t act like it was for any other reason. You and mom are never home and treat me like I’m a fucking baby and now that you find out some truth you’re all shocked? Please. I hate you both.”

“Tyler, you need to --”

“Get the fuck out of my room!” Screaming at the top of his lungs, he could feel his face reddening and his voice cracking as he did. “Get out!”

Biting his lower lip, face pink, his dad turned on his heel, slamming the door behind him.

Tyler silently screamed, his body shaking in the middle of the room, his head pulsating. With a rage starting from his toes and twisting its way through his body, he opened up his silver metal chest and lifted the hidden hatch, exposing the weapons he bought: a shotgun with a brown wooden pump, a black automatic machine gun that his fingers loved to rub down, and two pistols. On top of the guns were black and white photos of his classmates, specifically the ones who he felt deserved payback.

He pulled out the pictures one by one, his lips puffed up in anger as he gazed at each one. Clay Jensen, that fucking asshole sent his nude around like it was nothing, yet everyone had empathy for him because Hannah wouldn’t fuck him. Courtney Crimsen, the slut who wouldn’t admit the truth and was dragging him into the pits of hell for it. Jessica Davis, the drunk with no morals who flaunted it around like she was a saint or something. Marcus Cole, the douchebag jock who went out of his way to make Tyler’s life hell. Sheri Holland, the purest little angel who got away with murder because she felt bad. Sexism at its finest. Montgomery De La Cruz, his antagonist at every turn, and the person he fantasized about watching die. Bryce Walker, the rapist who everyone wanted to be, and who Tyler wanted dead.

Truth be told, he wanted them all dead.

Life would be easier if they were out of the picture.

Fluttering his eyes closed, Tyler ran the tips of his fingers along the weapons, the cold metal sending chills through his body. As he kept his eyes closed, his mind filled with thoughts of seeking revenge, taking the guns to school and unleashing justice. His body shook at the thought and a smile eroded across his face. They deserved it. Every last one of them.

The next day he would bring the silver pistol with him, hide it in his camera case, and shoot anyone who fucked with him.

Tyler did not sleep the night before. Sitting up against the head of his bed, he blankly stared at himself in the mirror on the wall directly across from him. He felt numb. His arms were extended out by his side and they were foreign to him, his legs were there but unmoving, as though his body was paralyzed, and all his mind would replay over and over again was Montgomery slamming him into the locker, threatening to break his camera.
The sun began to rise and he moved his lower jaw from side to side, getting out of bed and not showering, not changing, just grabbing the pistol, hiding it away, and walking out of his room, calmly. Each step felt calculated as he strode outside and got into his car, not saying anything to his parents, not even acknowledging them.

As he plodded into school, expecting to be hit, or teased, all he was greeted with were faces that matched his own. Vacant eyes with no smiles were all around him as most kids looked like zombies. Montgomery even walked by him and simply nodded, tears in his eyes.

What the fuck happened?

The excitement of exacting his revenge began to dwindle the more the day went on. An emergency assembly was held, explaining that Alex Standall had shot himself and was in critical condition. The one person who showed an ounce of kindness to Tyler had tried to kill himself. It was almost poetic in a fucked up sort of way, and the atmosphere in school did shift. Instead of being the subject of incessant bullying he found himself back in the shadows, able to take photos without being harassed, able to eat his lunch without someone throwing it on the ground, able to survive campus.

The gun did not move from his bag and he never once let it out of his sight. He just needed to get home and put it away and see if maybe the nightmare was over, if maybe people finally were realizing the school did have a problem, and the kids being subjected to the torture were unable to get a grip.

Alex didn’t die. It gave Tyler, for the first time since his picture got spread around, a feeling of contentment.

Maybe life would finally start to look up.

2 Weeks Ago.

The relationship, or lack of one, with his parents, continued to devolve until they no longer talked. Tyler came home from school and went straight to his room, not once trying to initiate a conversation. His mom seemed nervous around him, and that had his skin crawling with bitterness. Hannah Baker may have died, but she fucked up his life in the process. It was selfish of her. He hated her. As for his father, he did try and talk with Tyler, even asked him if he was okay, but Tyler snapped and said he was fine. They stopped talking after that.

The rage that had subsided after Alex was rising back up. The kids at school were getting back to being normal, and even though no one was going out their way to make fun of him, no one would even look his way. The yearbook editor decided it would be best if he was no longer a part of the staff, which had him snarling as he left school early, storming out and away from the hell that was Liberty High School.

As always he got the shit end. Marcus, Clay, Courtney, and Sheri were all still on the honor board of students -- a fucking joke in and of itself -- who got to decide that kind of shit. Had they voted for him to not be on it? Those motherfuckers were going to pay. With a heavy breath, Tyler started down the road, not sure where he was going, just knowing he needed to not be around the toxic kids.

When he turned the corner he ran into Courtney who had tears in her eyes. She was wearing a gray cardigan atop a black button up blouse and matching slacks.

“You okay?” He asked, not really caring, more wanting to find out if they voted him out of the yearbook.
“No,” she said, and then she broke down, sobbing, tears and snot. Tyler was not expecting it. “I’m sorry.” Courtney wiped her eyes, rapidly blinking away tears.

“It’s fine,” he commented, doing a half smirk. “I understand.”

“Yeah,” she said, wiping her eyes. “Everyone keeps talking about me.”

“Here I thought I was the only one.” That elicited a small chuckle from her.

“I’m still mad about the picture you took.” She crossed her arms.

“Sorry. But, if it makes you feel any better I got kicked off yearbook.”

“Did you really?” She looked genuinely surprised. “You’re the best photographer in this school, though.”

“Doesn’t change anything, I guess.” Shrugging he looked down at the concrete and started to trudge forward.

“Wait,” Courtney said, catching up with him and matching his pace. “Where are you going?”

“I don’t know,” he admitted. “I just can’t be there.”

“Me either. I hate it. Everyone judges me because of those tapes and they don’t even know me.”

“Yeah,” he said, rolling his eyes. “Hannah’s dead and all but she’s a bitch for doing that.”

Courtney giggled, covering her mouth. “I wasn’t going to say it, but since you did, I completely agree. She doesn’t even have to deal with all this now that it’s out in the open.”

“For real! She wanted to die, okay? Why do we have to be tortured for her shit?”

“And she went on and on about how I’m a lesbian and I’m fucking not, at all.”

“I believe you,” Tyler said, realizing that Courtney and him were not that different, she just was always around the shitty bunch of assholes. But now that it was just her, she really was not bad, just upset like him.

“Really?”

“Yeah. I mean, I took the pictures, remember? Hannah totally initiated it.” Tyler had seen her take her bra off first and then the rest happened. It was Hannah.

Courtney stayed silent for a moment but then bobbed her head. “Yeah, she did. She convinced me to get drunk and then it got really weird and yeah…. Her arms were hugging her body as they walked, appearing like she was cold.

“You want my jacket?” Tyler asked.

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah, no problem.” Tyler took it over and placed it on her shoulders, his spirits lifting as she grinned and thanked him.

Maybe life would not be so bad.
Courtney and him had been texting back and forth all week, flirting. They bonded over their mutual dislike for kids in their class, specifically Jessica. Courtney said that the girl would not even acknowledge her way anymore, brushing off anything she said and glaring at her in the hallway. Tyler made a mental note of it.

He had never been with anyone before and when they kissed, it felt electric on his lips. She smelt like strawberries and her lip balm tasted like it too. Everything about her was pleasant, and she was distracting him from his inner self, which still craved some form of revenge, at least on Montgomery.

But the two of them hung out every day after school and when his parents were out, he invited her over. They kissed and ended up on his bed, his heart erratically banging around as he attempted to unhook her bra, failing time and time again until she reached behind and did it with one hand. The cover fell and Tyler’s mind went to mush as he cupped them in hands, not realizing how soft breasts were. Her nipples came to life as he squeezed, thumbing the tips of them. Courtney moaned as he kissed her neck, and then down, replacing his thumb with his mouth, sucking.

“Is this good?” He asked, unaware if he was even getting her off.

“Yeah,” she breathed out, leaning her head back as he continued. When he moved his right hand down and got to her pants, she reached down and lifted it back up. “Not that.”

“Okay.” Going back to kissing, they lied on the bed, both shirtless, Courtney getting on top and straddling his waist. It was so hot he needed to document it. “Want to model?”

“What do you mean?” She got off and lied down next to him, biting her thumb underneath her smile.

“Like, I don’t know, can I photograph you?”

“Naked?” Her eyes widened and she covered her breasts with her hands.

“No,” he lied, because that is what he wanted. “With your bra on. I have this pack of cigarettes. I don’t smoke it, but I think it would be so hot if I took black and white pictures of you with one hanging out of your mouth, slouching against the back of the bed in a bra and your high waisted black jeans.”

“I don’t know,” she said, reaching for her bra and putting it back on. “Last time you took --”

“It’ll be digital and if you don’t like them I’ll delete them in front of you.”

“You swear?”

“I swear.”

Courtney agreed and Tyler went into his sock drawer, pulling out the pack of smokes that he had just in case he ever decided to take up the habit. Aesthetically he enjoyed the look of smoking, as for the taste, that was a different story.

With his camera set up, Courtney sat against the back, a cigarette just hanging off her bottom lip. It looked so erotic and Tyler’s dick had not gone down since they kissed the first time. He started to direct her on what to do, snapping different angles as she shifted. One of them he had her have her hand running through her hair, looking off the side, her profile was magnificent in the sunlight that came in from the blinds, creating lines across her face. Another one she held the cigarette in
between her fingers, staring directly into the lens, directly at Tyler.

It felt like he was seeing her for the first time.

She was starting to get into it, doing her own poses, lifting her arms above her head one moment, then having them extend to both sides as though she was being crucified on his bed. Tyler snapped shot after shot until Courtney finally giggled and got off the bed asking to see them. He showed her, watching her every reaction. Some of them made her eyes sparkle and others made her blush, but overall she did not seem upset. If anything, she enjoyed them.

“Can you email those to me?” She asked, sitting down and grabbing her shirt to put on. “I told my mom I’d be home for dinner so I need to go, but that was a lot of fun.”

“Nude modeling in the future?” A smirk was on his face and he made sure she could tell he was joking.

“Yes.” She winked and started for the door.

“Hey,” he said, awkwardly running his hand through his hair. “Would you want to be, I don’t know, it’s fine if not, but, would you wanna be my girlfriend?”

“Okay.” Walking forward she gave him a quick peck. “See you later, boyfriend.”

Friday.

The last week school was becoming more and more like its old self. Marcus gave him a dirty look as he walked in the hallway and when he accidentally bumped into Montgomery the kid told him to fuck off or he would kick his ass. The temporary settling of the dust was over and the true nature of the pieces of shit were coming back in full force. Marcus even had the audacity to walk up to Courtney -- while they were eating lunch together -- and invite her to his kickback but not Tyler. It was mortifying. Courtney was placed in an awkward position for starters, and it was a sly way of bullying that made Tyler shake with anger.

Why couldn’t they just leave him the fuck alone?

As they were driving out of school, Courtney told him to just come anyway. She said that she wanted him there and that’s all that mattered. They passed by Jessica and Courtney told him to turn around because she needed to know if the girl was going. If Jessica had said yes she told Tyler her and him could stay in, but if she was not going, he needed to go to Marcus’ with her.

The wheels were already turning in his mind on what he could do to make Marcus’ party suck. They wanted to go and enjoy life and act like they were absolved of their sins, well, Tyler was going to force them to experience their demons one last time with a flawless costume. Hannah’s tape. It was perfect.

After dropping Courtney off, he went straight to a store and started grabbing supplies: cardboard, paint, even going as far as to buy the same color nail polish from the Baker’s pharmacy. When he got home he rushed to his room and started working on it. The party was in a couple of hours and he needed to get it perfected in time. Luckily, he was always handsy and good at crafting things so he was able to get the vision finished.

His phone had multiple texts from Courtney, explaining that Jessica was there and she wanted to leave, that Clay was being a dick to her and she was drinking to deal. Tyler had his costume under his arm and started towards the front door.

“Where are you going?” His mom’s voice came from the kitchen.
“Nowhere.” His voice was cold and he unlocked the door, putting the cardboard in his backseat.

“You can’t just leave on a Friday night.” She had followed him out with her hands on her hip.

“Fuck off,” he remarked, slamming the car door behind him and screeching off down the street.

-Fxxx-

“Fuck!” Tyler screamed, slamming his fists into the steering wheel, the metallic taste of blood in his mouth, a sinking in his chest, and an indignation that consumed his entire being. “That fucking bitch wants to be all buddy with Jessica after just fucking texting me, so fucking be it.” Tyler was snarling, swerving down the road, running red lights, flipping anyone off in his way. His eyes were full of tears, making the street lights blur and the cars in front of him almost invisible as he pressed harder down on the gas, his breathing short and quick.

Slamming the front door to his house, Tyler stomped into his room, throwing himself on the bed and screaming into his pillow until his throat was in pain, until his voice was hoarse, until he had no energy left. He stood up and started pacing, his lower jaw moving from side to side as he kept running his hands through his hair, mumbling to himself.

“Okay, they wanna do that -- fine. They’re gonna regret it, yes they are.” His voice was quick and he stopped in front of the mirror looking at himself. Blood was dried at the opening of his nose and stained his skin above his lip. A bruise had already started to swell where Clay’s fists connected. “Fucking piece of shit, Clay. I’m gonna….” His tongue flicked across his bottom lip and he stopped talking, glaring into his reflection, into the hollowed out version of himself.

Tyler felt unrecognizable to himself. His eyes looked like that of a dead person -- he would know since he googled, multiple times, photos of crime scenes from shootings -- and had no spark, no life in them. Slack lips and sucked in cheeks. He brought his thumb up to his teeth and started chewing, thinking it over.

Monday. There was no going back. There was no changing it. Monday would be the day they all fucking paid.

Saturday.

Tyler spent Saturday in his room, not speaking. His laptop was in front of him with multiple tabs opened. Photos of dead bodies, videos of people being killed by active shooters, manifestos left behind by killers. Research. He needed to do research.

He polished the guns as he printed out every picture on his camera. Black and white photos flooded the floor of his room. Courtney half naked, posing. That fucking slut. She played him just like everyone else, and when she no longer needed him, she cast him aside like garbage. Smirking, he started to cut out x’s in the eyes of all the photos, taping them to his wall.

By the end of the day, all his weapons were ready, and his entire room was covered with different shots of all the kids he planned to kill, they even blacked out the sun from his window. Clay. Monty. Jessica. Sheri. Marcus. Courtney.

Sunday.

Tyler did not sleep. A pistol under his pillow the whole night.

His body was physically shaking with adrenaline.
He needed it to be Monday.

When he walked outside to get a snack from the fridge and his parents were sitting at the kitchen table, his mom shaking her head. She looked up and made eye contact with him and before he could turn away she said something.

“Bryce Walker killed himself.” Her voice sounded like she was on the brink of crying. “What is going on at that school? They’re having an emergency P.T.A meeting. Mrs. Jensen, Clay’s mom, called me to tell me.”

“And I care, why?” Tyler grabbed a string cheese and turned around. “The fucking rapist deserved more than that.” Then mumbling. “They all do.”

“What was that?”

“Just leave me the fuck alone, God!”

Tyler was back in his room for one second before the door swung open and his parents stepped inside, looking around at all the pictures with horrified expressions on their faces.

“What?” His mom broke down and started crying.

“Tyler, what the hell?” His dad starting to rip down the pictures. “That’s it.” Turning to the table set up with all his cameras, his father began to grab them. “You’re not allowed to have these anymore.”

“Don’t do that.” Tyler’s voice was level but his insides were screaming and he felt his trigger finger twitch with anger. “Don’t fucking do that.”

“You don’t get to talk to your mother and I that way.”

“I’m warning you.”

“Oh, you’re warning us?” With one swift motion of his arm, his dad slammed a camera onto the floor and Tyler watched it smash, heard the lens break, and felt the final part of himself snap. His dad stepped forward and into his face. “Let me make something perfectly clear. We’re the parents.”

Tyler lifted his chin and glared at his dad, not saying anything.

“That’s what I thought.” With a pivot on his heels, his dad went back to grabbing his cameras. “No more photography, no more going out, no more social life until you can get your shit together, you understand me?”

Tyler sat down on his bed, pretending to stretch until his fingers were wrapped around the coarse handle of the pistol. “Crystal.”

“Good. Now clean this the fuck up.”

His mom continued to cry.

They were a burden to him.

He needed to stop it.

With a calm demeanor, Tyler waited until they were out of his room before he pulled the pistol out, holding it to his temple. He cocked his head as he looked at himself in the mirror, the image
out, holding it to his temple. He cocked his head as he looked at himself in the mirror, the image bringing his body a feeling of pleasure. With each picture of dead bodies he viewed, the more he found himself being gratified by the images, by the blood. Slowly moving the barrel until it was in his mouth, the metal invaded his taste buds, his teeth scraping against the barrel. Closing his eyes he let himself relax, gun in mouth, not sure why but feeling at one.

Pulling the pistol out, a string of spit following from his lip, Tyler put his hands down by his side and unemotionally stepped out of his room, finding his parents together on the couch. Hiding the gun behind his back, he walked up behind the two of them and placed it up to the back of his mother’s head, pulling the trigger.

The bang that accompanied the kickback had his ears ringing, his mom crumpling to the floor as blood and brain matter exploded onto the television. His father turned around and Tyler shot him point blank in the face, watching his jaw get obliterated as he too was blown back onto the carpet. Warm spurts of blood landed across Tyler’s face and in his hair as he stood perfectly still, tilting his head to watch his parents bleed out in front of him.

The image titillating his mind.

His ears were still ringing as he stepped back to his room, gazing at himself in the mirror. Crimson red drops were sprayed across his face and dripping down, connecting like moving art as he stood there. Blood had splattered on his collared white shirt also, making him look like a killer, making him feel whole.

Tyler started to unbutton his shirt and rub down his chest, letting the blood stain his skin, giving it a pink hue. The pictures all around him added to the feeling inside him. The exed out faces, the blood, the kick from the gun, the feeling of power. His dick hardened in his jeans and he started to rub it, rotating his neck around as he did.

He knew that the next day would most likely be his last on Earth, and he needed to do one thing before he left. When he was scouring the internet, he found a manifesto from a boy, similar to his situation, who went into his high school and unloaded on a cafeteria of kids. The kid explained that he had jerked off the night before but made sure it was the best feeling of his life, citing an idea that Tyler had never once thought of.

But as he took control of his life and his arousal grew, he grabbed a belt that he kept in his sock drawer and went to his bed, tying the belt around the bed post. Tyler slipped his neck into the closed off part of the leather and tightened it around his neck, lying in his bed directly across from the mirror.

The image of him, noosed up, head hanging in chest, blood across his face, on his collarbones, dripping down had him extremely turned on. Letting his body relax and slouch, the belt tightened and his airways constricted, letting less in with each breath. Undoing his jeans, Tyler began to stroke, spitting into his palm and not averting his eyes from the mirror. It felt like he was watching one of his subjects and not himself like he was no longer there.

The closer he got, the more he let the belt tighten. His face was getting purple as he continued on, feeling his orgasm rearing up just as his vision was starting to tunnel out. As he came, his body tensed and he nearly blacked out. The boy had not lied. It was the best orgasm of his life there was no denying that. His body shook as he came down, leaning back and letting the strap loosen around his throat, gasping for as much air as he could.

With a wicked smile on his face, Tyler sat in the darkness of his room and waited.

Monday.
Tyler had dressed like Neo from the matrix one year.

Tyler was wearing that to school.

It worked because it was costume day.

All the weapons -- except a pistol in his waistband -- were in a black duffel bag just like in the movie, that way if he got stopped it was simply a prop.

When he had left that morning his parents were in a heap on the floor, starting to smell.

There was no feeling of remorse. He was empty.

As he walked into the hallways, most kids were dressed up as typical costumes. The girls were all slutty some things and the guys all acted like they were macho with their fucking stupid jock and army costumes.

Jessica Davis walked by and stopped when she saw him, b-lining straight for him.

“If it isn’t the biggest slut in the school,” Tyler said, his voice completely flat.

“You’re a piece of shit for dressing like that on Friday, you know?” Jessica was in khakis, had a blue button up and a camera pouch across her chest with a sign that said loser across the shirt.

“What are you supposed to be?” His teeth grinding together.

“A piece of shit,” she said, shrugging. “Let me guess, you’re Neo.”

“No.” Tyler guided his hand to the handle of his pistol. “I’m an active shooter.”

Chapter End Notes

okayyyyyyyyyyy so now i can finally talk about it!!1 this fic was going to end with him shooting up the school right from the beginning and i hope to god you guys don't hate me once im done with it all. im going to update the tags more tomorrow before i post the next chapter so you guys are prepared but like death is going to happen and im sorry in advance!

thats why i had alex watching the greys episode with the shooter, why marcus said "Whats he gonna do shoot us with his camera," why tyler told jessica to be safe in chapter 2, why i made Monday an important day, and so on and so on. i tried my best to make it semi obvious what was going to happen so hopefully i did okay with those clues

there will be cute stuff afterwards still but like its gonna get rough!! like idw you guys to think i strung you along just to kill off characters because after all is said and done with tyler,,,, there's gonna be resolution and fluff i promise!!!!!!!!!!
Justin

Chapter Summary

Justin finally goes to school after three weeks away, just to come back on a not so good day.

Chapter Notes

alright alright alright sooooooooooo like i said earlier in the fic there would only be one more justin chapter and this is it~*~* the tags are updated so you guys can be prepared

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Zach had not lied about the plans for the weekend.

His parents were asleep when the two of them walked in that night, Zach showing Justin the guest room, which was nicer than the motel he stayed at. There was a queen sized bed in the middle with a fluffy looking comforter and feather pillows. A flat screen was sitting atop a brown wooden dresser directly across from the bed with a door to a connected bathroom on the left. An oak nightstand was home to an alarm clock and the remote controller.

“You need to shave and shower,” Zach said. “And then we can go mindlessly play video games until Monday.”

“That bad?” Justin asked, waltzing into the restroom and flicking on the light switch. There was a sink with an unopened toothbrush, a small travel sized tube of toothpaste, and a plain white bar of soap. When he looked at himself in the mirror he understood what Zach meant.

A bruised line was getting darker around his neck with each passing second. His jaw was bruised and his skin was stained with dried blood. Small little black hairs were lining his upper lip and he shuddered at the sight, turning around and seeing a towel already hanging on a rack next to the shower.

Justin lathered his body with soap, scrubbing every inch as if to clean off that douchebag’s fist marks. When he had the bar of soap pass over his ribs he winced out in agony, purplish red blotches were lining his ribcage. The water was scalding and he let it drown out his thoughts as he hung his head underneath the shower head, the droplets massaging his scalp as his shoulders relaxed.

Once he was showered, shaved, and he brushed his teeth, Justin came out into the room to find gray sweatpants and a matching sweatshirt folded on the bed. He slipped them on, letting the shirt fall gently on him, trying his best to not agitate his already broken body.

And from that moment on Zach did not lie. The two of them played Xbox all night Friday, all day Saturday, and throughout Sunday. It let Justin, for the first time, escape reality and not dwell on any of the problems he was facing, or the fact that come Monday he would need to accept the
It felt like they were back in middle school and it was Summer break and nothing mattered except getting to the highest level in Halo 4. It was familiar and homely and exactly what Justin needed.

Zach was what Justin needed.

-xxx-

“Are you going as Prince Eric?” Justin asked Sunday night as the two of them did not look away from the screen, shooting every enemy in their path.

“Nah,” Zach said, the sound of him rapidly tapping the R Trigger in the background. “I’m not dressing up. It’s a pep rally and a costume contest. The team is going to go out and hype everyone up. Gotta wear the uniform. Plus, it’s literally happening during homeroom so it’s right at the start of the day, like, I have to show up in the uniform.”

“Oh,” Justin said, sadness in his voice. He missed the team, he missed the dumb shit they did in the locker room, the stupid jokes they told, the feeling of having a family. Justin missed his old life and wasn’t sure he could ever get it back.

“Maybe they’ll let you come out?” Zach paused the game and turned to him. “Like, a look who’s back type thing.”

“Nah,” Justin said, shaking his head. “It’s a nice thought but I think, if coach even lets me back on, I’m gonna be benched the rest of the season.”

Zach did a half shrug and gnawed on his lower lip. “Just go to class and see what happens. Maybe they will just make you go to after school detention to get caught up.”

“We’ll see,” Justin said, slamming his hand down on Zach’s controller and unpausing the game. “I’m just going to keep my head down and avoid Jessica.”

“Good plan,” Zach said, bobbing his head up and down, tongue sticking slightly out of the corner of his mouth as he started hitting the buttons on the controller like his life depended on it, sitting up and getting closer to the television until he shouted in victory. “New high score!”

“What a man,” Justin joked, grinning through the anxiousness that churning inside him.

-xxx-

Justin’s stomach was in a constant state of freefall as Zach pulled into the school’s parking lot. Wiping his sweaty palms on the jeans Zach let him borrow -- the entire outfit was borrowed all the way to the underwear -- Justin let out a long breath, not sure if he was ready to deal with the ramifications of his choices. It was as though Zach read his mind because as Justin’s over thought everything, the boy next to him placed his hand on Justin’s shoulder and gave him a reassuring nod.

“Come on, let’s go.” Zach got out of the car, basketball uniform on.

“Okay.” Justin exited the car and already felt like all eyes were on him, which most were.

As he made his way into the double doors, Marcus was leaning against the lockers, doing a quick jog over to the two boys and going in between them, arms around each one.

“My boy is back,” Marcus said, patting his hand on Justin’s chest, luckily away from any bruises.
“You still look like shit but not as bad as Friday.”

“Thanks,” Justin deadpanned. “You’re such a sweet talker.”

“Only to my number one boo,” Marcus chuckled, planting a kiss on the top of Justin’s head. “Zach, bro, we gotta go, coach is waiting, the rally starts right after the bell rings.”

“All right,” Zach said, turning to Justin. “You good? You can come back and see if coach will let you come out with us.”

“No, no.” Justin waved his hands and shook his head. “I’m not ready to see coach. You guys go ahead.”

Marcus and Zach disappeared into the crowd of kids aimlessly walking around. Justin stood still, not entirely sure what to do. If he went to his first period class, there was no guarantee his teacher would even be there, and if he went to the pep rally, well, then the entire school would see him. It was a small school compared to others, and he was deemed popular. Someone would point him out, texts would start to send, and before he knew it he would be the entire talk of the rally. No, Justin would just stay in the hallway and wait until it was over, giving him even more time to avoid the inevitable.

Turning the corner, he saw Jessica and Tyler talking. She was in a costume that sort of looked like Tyler’s normal clothes, and Tyler looked like the creepy dude from Grandma’s Boy. She had not seen him yet and by the look in her eyes, she was already annoyed, so he was not going to add to it, pivoting on his feet and turning the other way.

He promised himself and Zach he would leave Jessica alone, and that is exactly what he was going to do.

-xxx-

The rally started because the music blasted through the empty hallways. Justin was slouched against a locker, psyching himself up for the rest of the day when he heard a loud bang, sounding like a gunshot, followed by an even louder pop that had Justin on his feet in a second, waiting to hear if anything else followed. The music continued on in the background as two more loud shots broke through. Justin felt his heart hitting his chest, probably bruising it as she slowly crept towards the noise, each step on wobbly legs.

Bang.

And then he heard it, Jessica shouting out for help.

Justin ran, no longer caring, bolting it as fast as he could. Following her voice, he turned the corner and saw her lying on the floor, hands up, and Tyler standing over her with a pistol in his hands. Sheri was trembling, her hands up, next to Jessica. Blood was seeping from Jessica’s left arm and a splatter was across the locker.

Without another thought, Justin charged forward and dived in front of Jessica just as Tyler pulled the trigger, a searing hot pain exploding through Justin’s abdomen. His body quaked as he landed on his knees, hands automatically gripping at his gut, his vision tunneling in and out as he saw blood begin to pour out through the slits in his fingers as he applied pressure, the hot stickiness of it feeling foreign.

Tyler had blood on his face, his shirt had droplets, and his eyes were cold, lifeless. An evil smirk rose on his cheeks, a drop of crimson red dripped from his chin. He tilted his head to the side and
looked at Justin, the gun still held out in front of him.

Another deafening shot broke the silence and Justin’s body was thrown back, landing on top of Jessica. This time the bullet shredded through his chest and exploded out his back, blood starting to fill the inside of his mouth. Metal consumed his taste buds while his body started to shake, pins and needles stabbing his cheeks as he felt light headed, Jessica’s crying and bloody face over him, screaming out.

There was one more gunshot before his eyes fluttered closed and blood poured out of his slack lips.

Chapter End Notes

okayyyyyy so how many shots did justin hear??????? and who could they have hit??????? and where did the last shot hit before he passed out?????????? thats what the next few chapters are going to answer~*~*~

also idk if anyone was a fan of justin reading this fic but this was my plan from the beginning which is why i did not give him a lot of chapters or flesh out his character other than dealing with stuff from s1. sorry if this wasnt what people wanted for him but its where i was going from the start,,,,

but its friday night and im planning on smoking and focusing the rest of the night on this and hopefully giving you another chapter in a few hours to make up for this short one

also im on twitter soooo much like if yall wanna hit me up about the fic or talk about it like im always down scottmccoolguy ive basically been live tweeting my spiral into this fic
Clay

Chapter Summary

Tony drives Clay to school and other things.

Chapter Notes

were moving along with how things happened~*~*~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**Tony:** im picking you up this morning

**Clay:** i like bossy you

Clay put his phone back down on his bed and adjusted his costume. The camera did add a certain style to it that made him not entirely hate the look. In fact, if he ever was feeling so emboldened on a fateful day, he might indeed wear the outfit as a normal thing. The brown argyle and slacks made him feel like he was smarter or something, and had him thinking of all the pictures he had seen of people at “Dapper Day” at Disneyland.

His dad didn’t have bad taste.

Going to the bathroom, he did a quick one over. Deodorant, check. Facewash, check. Gel, check. Brushed teeth, check. He took a moment to look at himself in the mirror, smirking and bobbing his head.

“Not too shabby,” he said, grinning and going back into his room for his phone before heading down for breakfast.

His mom was still on a breakfast-together-every-weekday-morning-kick still. It was exhausting to have to keep a conversation going because if he was quiet she would immediately bring up his shrink. And yes, the Dr. did help him when he was younger with his anxiety but he was good, he just was dealing with some heavy shit and she could not seem to grasp that concept.

When he made it to the kitchen, both his parents had solemn faces and there was no breakfast.

“What?” Clay started to sweat.

“Sit down,” his mom said, pointing to the open chair. Clay did, a skeptical look on his face. “Something happened, over the weekend that we feel we need to tell you.”

Oh, fuck. What did they find out?

“Bryce Walker committed suicide,” his father said, not looking away from Clay, as though he was studying his every reaction; his mom also.
Out of every thought that raced through his mind in that second, what he had just heard was not a single one of them. Blinking in disbelief, Clay could not really understand what he was feeling. There was a triumphant sense of justice that immediately swelled in his chest, but then he thought about what that meant, what role he played, how maybe they would never truly escape the ramifications of the tapes until they all ended up with the same hopeless mindset.

“Oh,” was all he could muster up.

“How are you feeling?” His mother had a concerned crease across her forehead.

“I don’t know,” he admitted, perplexed himself. “I feel,” he paused, still not entirely sure. “Part of me feels good because I know he can never hurt anyone again, and then part of me feels sick because….what the fuck? Sorry,” he added immediately. His mom closed her eyes at the word but his dad smirked.

“Do you still want to go to school?” His mom placed her hand on top of his. “If not it’ll be okay to skip.”

“I,” he stopped, not entirely sure. Should he stay home? The thought escaped him when his phone buzzed and Tony was outside. “No, it’s fine. Tony’s here. We are actually excited for the pep rally.”

“Sure, sport,” his dad winked, and Clay’s cheeks heated. “Go enjoy your day.”

Clay grabbed his backpack by the door on his way out, waving goodbye to his parents and doing a half-jog down his driveway, the smell of morning dew on the grass was heavily present as he got to Tony’s car. Looking in, Clay’s jaw dropped at what Tony was wearing.

A mesh black see-through crop top was the top, accompanied with black booty shorts that had different colored stars on them, topped off with a rainbow sweatband.

“Whoa,” Clay commented, taken aback. His dick was much more excited. “What are you?” He asked, sliding into the passenger seat and racking his brain on what Tony could be.

“Well,” Tony said with a toothy smile, making Clay’s cheeks rise in unison. “If it was true to the actual character I’d just have the booty shorts, but I figure for school I had to cover up.”

“And this,” Clay said, chuckling and moving his head up and down, eyes surveying Tony, “is covering up?”

“Compared to the character, yes.” Tony shrugged and they pulled off towards school.

“Okay, but you still haven’t answered me. Who are you supposed to be?”

“Wait, you really don’t know?” Tony looked affronted. “I’m Lito from Sense8.” He looked as though he was waiting for Clay to catch on. “In season two, on the pride float? Have you never seen the show, Clay?”

“No,” Clay said, squinting. “I really don’t think I’m the one who should be having a judgy tone.”

“I post about that show constantly on Twitter and Instagram,” he said, scoffing. “You never even bothered to check it out?”

“Tony, please,” Clay said, giggling.

“Lito is my angel, my love.”
“Should I be jealous?” Clay raised his eyebrows, flirting.

“No.” Tony stared into his eyes and there was so much feeling behind that one word.

“Well, if it makes you feel any better, I don’t know what he looks like, but you pull it off better.” Tony rolled his eyes and smirked, reaching out and holding Clay’s hand as they drove.

“What are you?” Tony asked.

“A reporter.”

“I thought you were Tyler.”

Clay burst out laughing. “Stop!”

“I’m just saying,” Tony said, snorting out a small laugh.

“Fucking Tyler,” Clay groaned, making him think of fucked up things and -- “Oh, my fucking God, Tony. Your costume distracted me but my mom told me this morning right before you came. Bryce killed himself.”

“Shut the fuck up,” Tony shouted, eyes wide.

“I know,” Clay said, shaking his head. “Can people chill for one fucking day in this town.”

“Wishful thinking.” Tony was biting his lower lip.

“I think we can all chill for one day.” Clay shrugged. “Maybe it’ll be like after Alex tried and everyone was mopey.”

“This pep rally is gonna be awesome.” A dry sarcastic tone escaped Tony’s mouth.

“No,” Clay groaned, “it’s gonna be another fucking assembly.”

“I’m going to walk into a suicide prevention assembly dressed like this.” Tony stared off and sighed. “God.”

-xxx-

Clay and Tony walked into the school and immediately a girl said she loved his Lito costume. Rolling his eyes, Clay watched as Tony turned to him, a smug grin on his face.

“All right,” Clay said, “let’s see if you cited for dress code Mr. Lito.”

“Nah.” He paused, “you think?”

“Tony.” Clay deadpanned.

Clay heard a bang come from the lockers ahead of him and saw Montgomery with his arms extended out, Jessica standing there with her arms crossed and an upset look on her face, and Tyler on the ground, scrounging up quickly and screaming, “fuck you!” before storming down the hall, a large black carrying case held firmly in his arms.

“Welp,” Clay said, “we couldn’t last two minutes.”

“This school has a problem.” There was no sense of humor in that comment. “It really fucking
Tony strutted forward in the costume and no matter how hard Clay tried, he could not take anything that Tony said seriously. It was hysterical simply because he always wore jackets and flannels, boots and jeans. Never once had Clay seen him in shorts, let alone fucking booty shorts. But Tony’s legs were nice and firm, thick thighs, and a plump ass that had Clay also thanking God that Tony had the balls to wear something like that. It was such a beautiful sight to have in front of him as he walked down the hallway. Monty -- who was in the same army costume as Friday -- and Jessica were waving them over.

“Oh, my God,” Jessica shrieked, “Lito?”

“Goddammit,” Clay mumbled.

“Yup,” Tony said, nodding and grinning. “Are you? Who I think you are?”

“Tyler? Yeah.” Jessica shrugged and rolled her eyes. “He showed up to the party dressed as Hannah’s tape and threatened us. It’s just a little payback.” She turned and looked Clay up and down, her brow furrowing. “Did Sheri tell you the prank, too?”

“What? No,” Clay said, suddenly pissed at his dad for deciding on this fucking combination of clothing. “I’m a reporter.”

“Well, if Tyler sees you he’s probably gonna think you’re in on the prank, so,” she sucked in on her teeth, “have fun with that.”

“All I want is one day with no drama,” he said, throwing his hands up in the air. “Is that so much to ask for?”

“Have you been to our school?” Monty chimed in. “Drama is around every fucking corner.”

“And you don’t add to it?” Tony said, his bottom lip sticking out in a questioning stare.

“It wasn’t like that,” Jessica quickly said. “Tyler was being really fucking creepy and said some fucked up shit so Monty shoved him and told him to move. It wasn’t even that hard but he fucking toppled.” She started giggling.

“It was pretty funny, right?” Monty snorted, leaning against the locker. “We ready for the pep rally?”

“It’s still a rally?” Clay asked, assuming it would have been changed. Maybe not everyone knew yet? His mom was a litigator, maybe she found out before other people.

“Yes?” Jessica said, squinting her eyes. “You still high?”

“Oh, my God!” Monty barked out a laugh. “Friday was crazy, Jensen. You kiss well.”

Clay’s face was burning as Monty spoke with Tony standing right next to him. It was the most uncomfortable he had ever been and he wanted it to stop, immediately. He looked down and rubbed the back of his neck, suggesting they go to the rally and get good seats. Tony was unreadable and that was killing Clay inside. What if he was mad at him?

The group of them walked down the hallway, Clay wishing he had decided to stay home. Music started to get louder the closer they got the gym and by the time they were outside the doors it felt like they were going to enter a school dance.
When they walked in through the double doors and into the rally, Mad House by Rihanna was blasting from giant black speakers in all corners of the basketball court turned Halloween themed wildly decorated rally. They had a black light that made everyone’s white shirts glow and Tony’s stars on his shorts to shine brightly. The room itself was pretty dark and they had the staff in the middle dancing to the music as the kids piled into the bleachers on both sides. The basketball team was tossing beads out to the crowd and throwing their hands up for people to make more noise.

Definitely, no one had heard about Bryce, yet.

The bleachers were pretty full already, fake spider webs lining the railings up. Orange lights were then wrapped around the webs, probably to make it so kids could see where the hell they were going. It was pretty fucking dark in Clay’s opinion.

As they started to walk in, Clay could not take not talking to Tony anymore and he pulled him by his hand backward, shouting over the music he needed to talk to him. The two of them stepping out into the hallway, which was empty.

“Tony,” he said, his heart banging in his chest. The music was blasting from the doors and he had to speak loudly but no longer shouting. “What happened on Friday with Monty meant nothing, okay, I don’t want you to get --”

Tony’s hand wrapped around the nape of his neck and he pulled him in for a kiss, shutting Clay up immediately. “I know,” he breathed out and he pulled away, chuckling. “I had a feeling you were stressing about it. You got all quiet and immediately said we need to go to the rally. It was cute.”

Clay could not help but grin from ear to ear.

The door opened up behind the two of them and Monty came out. “Come on, we got seats saved.”

The two of them followed Monty in and saw Jessica waving from the first row. How fucking lucky could they get? When he had looked earlier it seemed like there were no seats open. Monty leaned in and told them it was the perks of knowing the team personally, adding it sucked he couldn’t be involved in any sports for the rest of the year due to the fight. Monty had always played in the baseball season all the years Clay knew him. He did look pretty bummed out about it, but Clay remembered the fight and figured it was a pretty good punishment.

They all sat down right as Courtney walked out into the middle, a white wedding gown with blood all over it, that glowed in the blacklight. With a wide grin and a pep in her step, she made it to the center and held a microphone up.

“Who’s pumped?” she shouted it, the kids collectively shouting. “I can’t hear you? I said who is pumped!” The students screamed even louder and Courtney giggled into the microphone. “Okay, we’re gonna do something a little different this morning. We want to make this fun for you guys and we had this idea. The bleachers are split into two sections and we want to see who can make the most noise. You guys,” she said, pointing the the bleachers Clay was sitting in, “think you can be louder than them.”

The two sides screamed at the top of their lungs and Clay closed his eyes, really wishing he had stayed home.

“I’m gonna go get Sheri,” Jessica shouted over Courtney on the microphone, ducking and crouching as she quickly exited the room.
The side across from them started screaming at the top of their lungs and Clay could already feel the headache beginning. His side was next and when the kids behind him -- a combination of shrill high pitched shrieks -- let loose, Clay rotated his head around, sighing. Why? Why could it not just be a costume contest like they did every year? Why did the school constantly have to react to situations instead of simply doing their best to avoid it? The entire assembly was transparent. They wanted to lift spirits and all it was doing was bugging Clay to no end.

“I have such a fucking headache,” Clay shouted as the music went back to blasting. Marcus and Zach ran up, tossing beads for them, smiling. It was a weird feeling to have them be nice to him.

“I have ibuprofen in my locker,” Monty yelled back. Clay bobbed his head up and down and told Tony to come.

The three of them ducked and left and the moment he was free of the constant bass and screaming teens, Clay felt his head no longer throbbing.

“Holy shit,” he said, as they walked down the hallway. “My head is killing me.”

“Yeah,” Tony commented, shaking his head. “That was a lot.”

“I don’t know.” Monty shrugged, stopping at a locker -- that was directly across from the bathroom -- and twisting the lock. That must have been nice to be right across from the restroom. They only had eight minutes to get to class and going to the bathroom in between was nearly impossible if you had to also go to your locker. Montgomery was lucky. “I thought it was fun.”

“To each their own,” Tony said, shrugging. “I’m gonna go take a leak.”

Monty had his locker open and reached in, the sound of pills rattling in a bottle added to the faint bass bumping in the background. Monty shook one out from the container and handed it to Clay, who had taught himself how to swallow without water. Monty was impressed and clapped his hands, closing the locker behind him.

“Listen,” he said, “about Friday. It was fun and all but I don’t want you to think it was, like, the start to a relationship or anything. Like, if you want it to happen again, chill, but it wasn’t --”

“Monty,” Clay stopped him, holding up his hand. “I’m sort of seeing someone, so, don’t worry. We literally never even have to speak of it again.”

“Oh,” he said, cocking his head and smirking. “Chill.”

Something being cocked sounded and Clay turned around to see Tyler standing behind them, dressed in all black, the duffel bag on the floor, zipped open. In his right hand, he held a silver pistol and had it aimed at the two of them. They were standing side by side. His left hand was attached to a shotgun, that hung in his grasp, the barrel just above the tile.

“Tyler,” Clay said, holding his hands up. “What are you doing?”

“What needs to be done.” A chill ran down Clay’s spine at the tone in Tyler’s voice. “Eenie,” he said, pointing the pistol at Montgomery. “Meenie.” Moving his aim to Clay.

His knees were wobbling underneath him and he felt like he was going to pass out. It was hard to breathe and with each passing second, he was becoming increasingly accepting of the fact that he was going to die. There was no peace in the knowledge, just warm tears streaming down his face, and a mush mind that could barely process what was going on around him as his body began to shake.
“Miney.”

Clay was going to vomit.

“Moe.”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter is gonna be Jessica~*~*~*~
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Just another manic Monday.

Chapter Notes

welp!!! hope you guys like this one!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jessica tucked the blue shirt into the khakis and chuckled, looking at herself in the mirror. Tyler was going to flip his lid. She stood there, examining it, trying to decide if she wanted to add any last minute adjustments. A thought popped into her head and she grabbed her notebook from off her bed, ripping a page out and writing in sharpie, “loser.” Sure, it was a little fucked up, but ultimately she did not really care.

Tyler deserved it.

Sheri texted her that she was almost to her house and Jessica went into the bathroom, doing minor adjustments to her hair -- which she curled and pinned up to look semi like Tyler’s. It was a strange look on her but she giggled and grabbed her school work, putting the sign she made away until she was outside. There was no logical explanation for putting that word on her costume without having to explain the reasoning behind it.

She hopped down the stairs as he father was getting ready to leave for work. She followed him out the front and he paused, a questioning look on his face.

“What are you supposed to be?”

“A photographer,” she commented, seeing Sheri’s car pull up to the curb. “Sheri and I are going as matching ones.”

“I like it,” her father said, nodding in approval. “It’s unique.”

“Just like me.” Jessica leaned forward and gave her dad a kiss on the cheek, waving as she walked to Sheri, who did not do her hair up like Jessica but looked just as much like Tyler as she did.

“Are you ready?” Sheri asked as Jessica sat down, both of them already grinning.

“I’m so pumped.”

“Your hair!” Sheri shrieked and covered her mouth.

“And,” Jessica said, reaching into her folder and pulling out the sign she made, having it slide into the front pocket. “The final touches.”
“Jess,” Sheri said, covering her mouth.

“What? I’m petty,” she shrugged, strapping in.

“Love it.” Sheri had her phone plugged into the auxiliary port as she scrolled down on her screen, looking up at the road and then back down as she maneuvered down the street. “I have the perfect song to get us ready.”

Sheri clicked play and Bad Girls by M.I.A. started bumping through the speakers. Jessica howled in excitement and the two of them began to sing out every word at the top of their lungs, windows down.

“Live fast, die young, bad girls do it well,” Jessica shouted, her arm hanging out the window.

-xxx-

When they pulled up to the parking lot, Sheri told Jessica that she needed to go to the counselor’s office. Aside from the mandatory community service for the remainder of the semester, she also had to report to the guidance counselor on Monday mornings to check in and make sure she is still doing her court ordered punishment. The counselor would sign off that she went, and even though it was canceled that weekend, she still needed the signature to show that she went and talked.

After Mr. Porter got fired the school hired a woman to replace him. She seemed nice from what Jessica could tell, although she never had an actual conversation. The woman was short and plump, with naturally curly hair, full lips, and a smile that lit up the hallway. In between classes she walked the halls, asking if everyone was doing okay, genuinely seeming to care. It was a drastic shift from Mr. Porter.

Sheri and Jessica parted ways, planting a quick goodbye kiss before Jessica was alone in the hallway, dressed like Tyler. She looked around attempting to find someone she could go and stand with, but the hallways were already pretty scarce due to the assembly. Starting to walk, she turned and saw Tyler standing at the end of the hallway.

As she stomped up to him he called her a slut and any former inclination to not go off on him was thrown out of her mind, already telling him he was a piece of shit. She could see his eyes were going up and down her costume and his mouth clenched. He knew exactly what she was and his reaction was making it worth the money she spent.

“What are you supposed to be?” He asked through gritted teeth.

“A piece of shit,” she slyly commented, shrugging. “Let me guess, you’re Neo.” He wore that costume last year, Jesus, he really was a loser.

“No.” There was a calm demeanor to him that was unsettling. “I’m an active shooter.”

“Jesus,” she said, shaking her head in disgust. “That’s not even a funny thing to joke about you fucking assahole. Do you know how many shooting there have been this year alone? This is why no one fucking likes you because you’re such a goddamn psychotic dick.”

“He bothering you?” Monty asked, shadowing behind Tyler.

A hair-raising smile slightly lifted on Tyler’s cheeks as he turned and looked at Monty. “I’m gonna kill you.”

Jessica was about to say something when Monty shoved him with his open palms. It was not even a rough push, more of a warning, but Tyler lost his balance, the duffle bag going first, and then he
was slamming into the locker, face bright red. His voice cracked as he screamed and then he stormed off, leaving Jessica and Monty standing together.

“What the fuck?” Monty said, shaking his head.

“He told me he was dressed as an active shooter.” Jessica shuddered and crossed her arms. “I fucking hate him.”

“Same.” Monty turned his gaze to the side and started waving. “Look at Tony. Holy shit.”

Jessica spotted Tony and Clay and immediately recognized the costume. Sense8 was one of her favorite shows and Lito was by far her favorite character. Tony took the liberty of adding a shirt and a headband, but the shorts gave it away. When they walked up she complimented him and they started discussing what happened with Tyler. Monty brought up Friday and Jessica could see Clay’s neck getting red as it started to move up his cheeks.

Yeah, he was back to being awkward.

At least he had one night of fun.

They made it to the rally and the music was blasting. Marcus and Zach were jumping around by the bleachers, a section empty. When they saw Monty and her they jogged over, both of them with huge grins on their faces. The two of them saved a section of the bleachers for them. Jessica thanked them and Monty looked around trying to find Clay and Tony. He said he would be right back, leaving her alone. She waltzed over to the seats, plopping down and surveying the decorations.

“Does it look good?” Courtney appeared next to her, a bridal outfit covered in blood. It wasn’t a bad look.

“You did this?” Jessica shouted over the music.

“Yeah. We’ve been working on it for weeks.” She sat down next to Jessica, meeting her gaze. “Are we okay?”

“After Friday,” Jessica said, having to lean in to be able to hear and talk over the speakers. “I don’t care anymore. We’re all fucked up.”

Courtney bobbed her head and stood up. “I gotta go, I am the host, or whatever you call this sort of thing. I’ll see you around, though?”

“Yeah,” Jessica said, genuinely offering her a kind smile. “See you around.”

Monty plowed in next to her with Clay and Tony by his side. Courtney came out into the middle and started to hype the crowd up. Jessica loved it. The last time all the students were gathered together in that room it was because of Alex, it was not an exciting time at all. But seeing all the kids cheer and have actual enthusiasm even had her screaming as Courtney spoke about the little competition they were having.

A buzzing came from her pants and she swiped to see a message from Sheri.

Sheri: I’m by your locker. Come out. There’s no one in the hallway we can have some alone time.

Jessica, as much as she was enjoying the festivities, was not about to miss time to be with Sheri. She told the three boys she would be back and quickly made an exit, trying her best not to get in
anyone’s way or interrupt.

Sheri was not lying. The hallways were empty. It was eerily strange, especially since music could be heard throughout. As she made her way to Sheri, she thought she heard the sound of metal clanking together, pausing and listening. Nothing. She continued on.

Sheri was leaned up against Jessica’s locker, smirking. “How is it in there?”

“Actually kind of fun,” Jessica said, sticking her hands in the pants pockets. Why couldn’t women’s clothing have pockets? It was actually a nice feeling to be able to have your hands just shoved in them as you stood.

“I bet it won’t be as fun as this,” Sheri said, leaning forward and kissing Jessica, who looked around to make sure they were alone before taking her hands out and stepping forward, pinning Sheri to the lockers. They started to kiss more passionately and Jessica grabbed Sheri’s left thigh, hiking her leg up and pushing closer.

“Definitely not,” Jessica breathed out, pulling her lips away just enough that they were grazing each other.

“We should go in,” Sheri said, nipping at Jessica’s bottom lip.

“You think?” Jessica’s hand slid up the side of Sheri’s body, rubbing each curve as she went until her hand was wrapped around the nape of the girl’s neck.

“No.”

_Bang._

Jessica recognized that as a gunshot. Her father had taken her to the gun range multiple times. She would know that sound anywhere. The two of them separated and Sheri’s eyes were wide, a look of fear on her face. An even louder one went off and Jessica covered her mouth.

“That was a shotgun,” she said, feeling her legs starting to buckle. “We need to --” Two more shots cut her off, and the two of them stayed perfectly still until a familiar voice began to shout for help.

Tony.

Jessica started to run right as Tyler turned the corner, blood across his face. Her heart stopped in her chest and the conversation from the morning suddenly clicked. He wasn’t saying he was dressed as an active shooter, he was one. Life slowed down in that moment and as she tried to stop herself, the sound of her sneakers screeching against the tile. She watched in muted horror as he raised the gun and a flash exploded in front of her accompanied by an ear shattering bang.

Fiery hot pain shot through her left arm, almost her shoulder, as she was thrown backward, trying to catch herself but failing, hitting the tile face first. A loud scream escaped her lungs and lit her throat up. Her nose popped as it collided, a blinding whiteness consuming her vision as her arm throbbed in agony.

Turning on her back, she could feel the blood seeping into her shirt, dripping down her arm. With her right arm held up, she watched as Tyler aimed the gun directly at her face, standing over her like the devil himself. A darkness was home in his eyes that shadowed down through his face, making him appear animalistic.

Sheri was trembling next to her, hands up.
“You shouldn’t have dressed like me,” he said, matter-of-factly, a toothy grin completing his sinister look.

Before she had time to process, a person dived in front of her and another shot rang out. Jessica gasped out, grabbing her arm and applying pressure as a second bullet hit the person, tearing through their shirt as blood sprayed onto her face. Jessica coughed and spit and felt the dead weight of the guy fall on top of her, knocking the back of her head against the tile. She sat up and saw that it was Justin and the ground underneath her vanished and she was falling.

Screams were coming from her mouth but she was not in control. Her hands were shaking, her vision blurry, as she attempted to stop the bleeding that was staining Justin’s shirt and starting to make a small pool on the floor. Her fingers slipped in the blood as she pushed down, screaming for him to stay awake.

As she did that, she heard Sheri’s sneakers against the tile and looked up, seeing the girl charge forward at Tyler, who was tilting his head and watching Jessica frantically try and save Justin’s life. He was caught off guard because she managed to tackle him, the pistol getting dislodged from his grip and falling to the floor next to the two of them.

Sheri scrounged to get to her feet, trying to reach for the gun as Tyler grabbed her achilles tendon and yanked her backward, her body smacking down onto the floor, her arms still out in front of her attempting to grab it.

“Sheri,” Jessica screamed, watching her girlfriend fighting off Tyler as Justin spat out blood, wheezing. She looked down, and tears were falling onto his face from her, her voice was hoarse, and her mind was no longer even registering the pain that was consuming her entire body. “Justin, come on, stay awake.” She slapped his cheeks and shook him.

Justin’s face was ghostly white and his eyes were fluttering. Jessica looked back up and saw Sheri and Tyler wrestling on the ground for the gun. He was on top of her and she had it in her hands but he was attempting to turn the barrel to face under her chin. Jessica was screaming for help, screaming out Sheri’s name, screaming even when her voice was leaving her body.

Tyler was completely blocking Jessica’s view from Sheri and he could see him getting closer and closer to her as her legs kicked around underneath him. One more gunshot was released and Jessica saw Sheri’s legs stop squirming, and felt her entire body give out.

Wailing, she held onto Justin and felt her body quaking as spit and snot had her choking.

“Sheri,” she cried out, watching as Tyler’s body moved, and she expected him to rise up, Sheri be dead, and then her next. But he was slumped over and Sheri pushed him off of her, blood coating her face.

Jessica could see there was a bullet hole underneath Tyler’s throat and thick red was pouring out down his neck and pooling around his lifeless body on the ground. Jessica was in shock, unable to move. There was no way she could even start to control her breath and she felt light headed as she leaned against the locker, Justin’s head laying limp in her lap.

Sheri tossed the gun on the floor and kicked herself back away from the body, until she was sitting, back to the lockers, shaking. Her eyes looked hollowed and she stared blankly forward at Tyler’s body, blinking repeatedly.

“Sheri,” Jessica croaked out, her legs numb. She did not answer. “Sheri!”

“Jess,” she said, snapping back and crawling over.
“Get help.” Jessica’s fingers were gloved in blood and she could taste it in her mouth, feel it sliding down her skin.

“I….” Sheri bobbed her head and tried to stand up, her legs giving out. She attempted again and this time was able to, hands jutted out in front of her to keep her balanced.

“Go!” Jessica felt her eyes rolling back as the world around her tunneled out.

Chapter End Notes

just one more chapter from Tony's POV and then we will know who got shot~*~*~*
Tony

Chapter Summary

Mondays suck.

Chapter Notes

alright the last bit of the puzzle and the shooting is over with!! enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Tony, what the fuck?” His dad choked on his coffee, shaking his head. “Put some clothes on.”

“Pops,” Tony said, matter-of-factly. “I am going as the wonderfully magnificent Lito. We watched the show together. Come on.”

“That show also has literal slow motion music video style orgies, Tony.” The mug knocked against the wooden table as his dad placed his hands to his face and rubbed his temples.

“Okay? And you dressed up as Zeus last year. A God who literally was known for fucking a plethora, if not every woman he came in contact with.”

“That’s not my --” His dad took a deep breath. “Why can’t you wear his costume of being a movie star or something?”

“Pops,” Tony chuckled, walking backward towards the door, his fingers out like guns. “I already dress like a movie star.” With a click of his tongue, he pivoted on his foot and sauntered out of the front, bobbing his head.

Did he know his outfit was super extra? Yes. Did he give a fuck? Nope.

First of all, who was going to fuck with him? Justin knew about his family’s reputation because people talked, but really they didn’t do much of anything. Aside from the cousins joining together from time to time to beat the shit out of some asshole, who always deserved it, they were pretty boring. Tony was usually out cruising, or as of late, driving to find Clay. He worked out, read books, went on dates, and rarely did the other. Clay, of course, had to follow him the one time in over a year he’s had to do anything like that. Just his luck.

And second of all, it was a fucking great costume.

Clay looked flabbergasted when he got into the car. And then he said it. He fucking said it. Clay Jensen had not seen the show. Tony’s favorite show. To say he was offended was an understatement.

Tony forgave him, of course. That only meant he would have to make Clay watch it, giving him a valid excuse to rewatch it. Killing two birds with one stone.
Drama happened the moment they walked in, which was such the norm it honestly didn’t even phase Tony. If the administration actually cared it’d be pretty simple to spot the patterns, but they stayed locked in their classrooms, only caring for the fifty-five minutes that the students were in their periods.

Of course, it was Montgomery. It always was.

The two of them walked over and Montgomery made a comment about Clay kissing well and Tony had to bite his cheeks to keep from laughing. He could already imagine what was going through Clay’s mind and when he stared at him, not moving a muscle to indicate anything, Clay’s neck brightened and then his cheeks. Yup. Tony knew it.

As they walked in Clay grabbed him and Tony knew that he was about to apologize. Sometimes he was so predictable, which made Tony want to be unpredictable, grabbing Clay and kissing him in the middle of his sentence. Letting him know he thought he was cute all stressed out. Clay really cared about Tony, he could tell.

It felt like they had just sat down when they were getting back up. Tony didn’t mind, though. The assembly was brash. The speakers were turned up way too high and the display was desperately cliche. He actually pitied Courtney because she was giving it her all. And from the looks of it, most people enjoyed the fun? Maybe it was just because he was aware of the next bomb that was coming.

Bryce Walker’s “suicide.” When Clay had told him in the car he immediately acted surprised, not once letting on that he already knew. The truth. He had to stay quiet, pretend to not be aware of anything. Hopefully, the news would simply stay as a suicide and nothing nefarious was being looked into.

It all just felt so out of place with what he knew was coming, what he had been dreading. All it meant was that come tomorrow everyone would know, and he wished it would stop. How much more could the school’s reputation take? Tony could not believe how reckless the entire school appeared on the internet -- and the reality was it was true -- and how they were still churning along like all of it was normal. It all just felt too manufactured for Tony’s liking.

He had drunk a cup of coffee before showering that morning and his bladder was tapping out. It probably didn’t help that the shorts were super small and really squeezed on his waist, where he had his cell phone tucked in. His wallet and car keys were being kept in his backpack, which he left to save his spot at the bleachers. No one would steal his shit.

Luckily Montgomery’s locker was across from the restrooms. A miracle.

Tony waltzed in there, not wanting to rush and seem like he was going to piss himself. Naturally, the urinals were out of order. He got into a stall, locking the door behind him. Pulling out his cellphone, Tony held it in his mouth and started to go, leaning his head back and feeling his body ease up, a shiver running through. It felt like one of the longest pisses of his life.

Flushing the toilet, he put his phone back and stepped out, turning on the faucet and washing his hands. As he started towards the door he heard Clay say something. And then Tyler’s voice snaked around Tony’s ear and slithered in. Goddammit. They really couldn’t go a fucking day without drama. Huffing, he flounced forward and flung the door open right as he heard Tyler say, “Mo.”

“Can we not fucking figh --” Tony stopped and looked up, seeing Tyler with two guns, pointed at Clay and Monty, immediately shifting and aiming at Tony now.
Tyler looked frustrated, his eyes fluttering shut, breathing in deep.

Tony needed to act quickly. He took a step forward, his arms raised, going towards Clay. “Tyler, look at me.” Moving forward inch by inch as he continued to talk. “Listen, you don’t want to do this. And truth be told, I don’t want to have to stop you, but I am going to need you to put the gun down right now before this gets any worse for all of us. You understand what I’m saying?”

Tyler simply tilted his head and made an amused face. “You don’t get it. There’s no going back.”

“Nothing’s happened yet,” and now he was in front of Clay, exactly where he wanted to be. Tyler was not going to shoot Clay, Tony would make sure of that. And Tony knew he did nothing to ever provoke him; there was hope on his side.

“I don’t want to hurt you.” Tyler said it as though he was computing a problem. “But if you don’t get the fuck out of my way, I will shoot you.”

Montgomery was deadly quiet, not moving a muscle. Tony would have thought he’d have said something back by now, but his lips were trembling, along with his entire body, and there were tears in his eyes.

“Oh, my God,” Tyler sighed, as though he was being annoyed by a fly. With a quick shift of his aim, he pulled the trigger and Tony’s leg exploded in agony as he dropped to the floor. Then without batting an eye Tyler turned his attention back to the two boys and tucked his pistol away for a moment, using both hands to pump the shotgun, pointing it directly at Monty’s abdomen and firing. The kickback had Tyler jerk back, and the blast had Tony’s ears ringing, thinking he was going to be deaf.

Montgomery’s body flew backward, his insides expelling out as blood sprayed onto the tile and onto Tyler, Clay jumping back. Tony blinked in disbelief and felt his stomach twist as his leg radiated a fire up through bones and to his entire body. Unable to have time to worry about himself, he watched as Tyler dropped the shotgun and reached for his pistol, aiming it at Clay, who looked green, tears and snot down his face, knees shaking.

Tony needed to do something. He pulled himself forward by his arms and yanked at Tyler’s legs right as he fired at Clay, twice. Both hit the scared boy as he shook twice and collapsed, wheezing. Tyler looked down and used the end of his boot to kick Tony in the face, his vision spotted and his world turned. When he was right side up and looked, Tyler was charging down the hallway.

Another gunshot, then two more, silence, one more. Silence. Nothing.

Tony’s nose flared where he was kicked, his eyes on fire, and it hurt to even take in a breath. The inside of his nostrils reeked of iron. Clay coughed and looked like he was in shock. Montgomery’s body was disturbingly close to where Clay fell and the carnage had Tony’s stomach turning.

Footsteps came from around the corner and Sheri was stumbling down the hallway, covered in blood, blinking rapidly and looking as equally shocked. She stopped dead in her tracks at the sight
in front of her and stood there, shaking.

“Sheri,” Tony called out, needing her to snap out of it. “Hey, Sheri.”

“Tyler,” she said, breathing heavily. “He shot, he, he, he,” she couldn’t seem to catch her breath.

“Is Tyler dead?” Tony asked, needing a simple answer.

Sheri started nodding her head in rapid succession, crying.

“Oh, come here and just apply pressure so I can call the cops.” Sheri did not move and Tony was getting agitated. His leg was relentlessly burning, a constant in the background of it all, making him have no patience. The inside of his mouth was drowning in the red stained snot that was working to choke him, coughing. “Sheri, fuck! We don’t have time.”

“Sorry,” she said, her knees knocking together. She tumbled forward and fell down next to Tony. He grabbed her hands and shoved them over the wound, Clay grunting out and gritting his teeth.

Tony slipped his phone out from his shorts and tried to slide the screen open, his sticky stained fingers not working on the touch. Letting out a frustrated snarl, he attempted to wipe his hands on the small amount of fabric he had, giving his thumb just enough to slide for an emergency call.

“9-1-1, what’s your emer --”

“Help,” Tony choked out. “There’s been a shooting at Liberty High. The shooters dead but we need ambulances. Now! I’m shot, my friend is shot --”

“Jessica got shot, too,” Sheri coughed, her arms vibrating as she held them down on Clay. “Justin’s dead.”

Jesus Christ.

“Sir, are you positive the shooter is down?”

“Yes! He’s dead! Now, please, send some fucking help!”

Tony dropped his phone and pulled himself to Clay. A red streak followed his limp leg as he made it over, placing Clay’s head in his lap and looking down, trying not to cry. Sheri was weeping. Clay’s bottom lip was trembling and Tony took his palm and pushed the boy’s hair back, sniffing.

“You’re gonna be okay, Clay.” Tony cleared his throat and bobbed his head, tears starting to drop from his eyes. “We’re gonna get your ass to a hospital and then you’re gonna be stitched right up.”

Clay’s mouth twitched into a half smile. “We couldn’t even go thirty minutes.” His lip dissolved and his face melted as he started to sob. “We couldn’t even….” The agony was palpable in the air as he lie there, wailing.

There was nothing Tony could do or say to make any of it better. All he could do was wait for help to arrive, which was infuriating.

Music could still be heard bumping through the hallways. No one knew what was happening. They were lying there, surrounded by guts -- Montgomery’s stomach was ripped to shreds, a pool of blood surrounded his abdomen and slowly expanded across the tile, filling the cracks. The shotgun felt like it was taunting them as it stayed still, the barrel pointed at the three of them. And
none of the kids in the assembly had a clue.

Music and cheers were a disturbing contrast to the scene in front of Tony.

Sheri sniffled and through a shaky voice said, “I shot Tyler.”

Tony did not say anything, he didn’t have much to say. And it didn’t feel like she was letting him know, rather that she was saying it out loud for herself to comprehend. It all happened so fast that Tony was not entirely sure he was able to understand the entirety of it. After the bullet pierced his calf, the rest felt like it was in the blink of an eye.

Waiting for the paramedics, however, did not.

Clay was still weeping. Tony did not once move, his fingers continuing to comb through Clay’s hair.

Finally, help arrived and Sheri was relieved of her pressure duty. The paramedics loaded Clay up on a stretcher and he was being taken away first, Tony next. He told them he could walk but they still had him put on one. There was no more music and as he was being carried out he could already see news vans beginning to park outside.

Vultures.

Jessica was sitting in the back of an ambulance, a blanket wrapped around her. She was staring off blankly, her face stained red and hair clumped together. Her face looked disturbed to no end.

As Tony was loaded up to go to the hospital, he could not see Clay anywhere. Maybe the boy had already been rushed off? The shots did not look like they were in places that could kill him, but Tony wasn’t a fucking doctor, and Clay looked like he was losing a lot of blood. Tony’s eyes stayed burning as the siren wailed. They sped down the road as he blinked away the tears, unable to stop them from falling down his cheeks.

A paramedic was in the back with him, already placing a patch over the wound. “So, were you in some dance routine when it happened?”

“What?” Tony scrunched his face up. “No? Why would you think that?”

“I just,” the guy said, gesturing to Tony. “Your outfit. Thought maybe you were in some dance competition. There was music when we showed up.”

Tony suddenly became increasingly aware of the fact that all he was wearing was booty shorts. The fact that he took a bullet in Lito’s pride outfit. He would never live this down. Tony had figured if he got shot in his life -- not that he was ever expecting to -- but if he did, that he would be wearing something much cooler. A leather jacket, boots, some shades on.

But that’s life.

And now Tony was being rushed to the hospital in nothing but short shorts, a bullet wound in his leg, and anxiety over how Clay was.

Mondays sucked.
so now were moving into the resolution part of the fic and there will still be more chapters, im not sure how many more, but weve made it through all the storylines i wanted to do before i could wrap it up!

also just like with justin im sorry if anyone liked montgomery in this fic!!
Jessica

Chapter Summary

Is Jessica okay?

Chapter Notes

alright so i know how im ending this fic~*~*~ i changed it around and im excited to write the new ending!! hope you guys enjoy this chapter!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jessica’s body was weak. Her vision was foggy and she felt like she was going to pass out at any moment. She leaned her head against the lockers, trying to catch her breath as Sheri stumbled down the hallway, leaving Jessica alone with Tyler and Justin. There was this thought that kept reoccurring in the back of her mind, that somehow Tyler was still alive and he was going to get up at any moment.

Shaking, she kept her vision on his body, flat against the tile, no rising of his chest, no twitching, nothing to indicate he could still be remotely alive. A red puddle growing around him.

“Justin,” she choked out, her face drowning in tears. Shaking hm, his head flopped in her lap but his eyes did not open. “Justin, please, come on. Just open your eyes. Justin.” Her voice was hoarse and she could not accept that he was dead, that she was gripping his corpse. “Justin,” she said louder, with more force. “Justin, come on! You need to wake up, okay? You just need to stay awake and then we’ll get you to a hospital and you can get all patched up, okay?”

She wiped her nose with her hand -- groaning at the flash of pain from where it hit the floor -- feeling the warmness from her blood coated fingers rub off on it. Her hair felt sticky and when she took her fingers to feel, it was wet with small bits in it. It was disgusting.

“Justin,” she whispered, placing her hands underneath his armpits and pulling him upward to be in a seated position, now able to see the hole in his back and the flesh that hung to his bloodied fabric like morbid decorations. She gasped, and felt her stomach retch, trying her best not to puke.

Weeping, she let his body collapse back down on her, no more strength left. Her arm had a chunk missing from the side of it, but it looked like the bullet shot through and was not lodged inside, which she assumed was a good sign. The blood oozing out, however, was not. There was a tingly sensation in her cheeks and body, an almost light-headedness that she only felt when she had not eaten a lot. It consumed her muscles and made them useless.

There was no way she could stand.

Each breath shook in her chest as she sat, waiting.

Justin was dead. There was an emptiness to the sentiment that echoed through her mind. Gone forever. She would never see him again, never hear him apologize again or try and make up for
his mistakes, never laugh or cry, never exist again. He was physically lying in her lap but he was not there. His skin was frigid against hers, absolutely no color to it. Red stained around his mouth and a trail had flown from the side of his lips down his chin and onto the front of his shirt.

He looked so broken. There were purple welts and bruises on his face from where he was punched, a dark line circling around his throat, and nothing about him looked at rest. Weren’t people supposed to look peaceful? Why didn’t he look like his suffering was over?

An agonizing wail escaped her throat as she clung to him, wishing she could go back in time and change it all, every last fucking thing: from Hannah all the way to Justin. Do it all over differently. Be kind. Be grateful for the people she had.

But there are no do-overs in life and as Jessica sobbed on the blood-soaked tile, her ex-lover dead in her arms, she was not sure she would be able to handle it. Any of it. How was she going to be able to come back to school, walk down the halls, when such a heinous and brutal crime had taken place? How was she supposed to live knowing that Justin died diving in front of a bullet meant for her? She should be dead. Not him.

Her eyes had not ceased their crying.

The paramedics showed and as they lifted Justin’s body from her legs, there was an emptiness to it. Her body was shaking as she stood up, knees buckling underneath her. A woman was examining her, checking her eyes with a flashlight, asking her questions, but Jessica stared forward blankly, nothing computing. The world seemed distant from her. All the sound fogging together in her ear to become one incoherent jumble of humming.

She was walking forward, a blanket wrapped around her shoulders -- they had patched her arm -- and the paramedic was holding onto her, but Jessica did not even know how she was walking. Her legs were not moving, or at least her mind did not connect the dots. All she could do was emptily gaze in front of her, mouth partly open, body numb.

Maybe numb was best.

When they made it outside, the temperature shifted and she hugged herself, shivering. The sound of a helicopter weighed over the school, accompanied with squeaking brakes and tires swerving from the news vans.

As she sat in the back of the ambulance, she saw Clay being rushed into the back of one, multiple people around him. They sped off the moment he was in the back. Then came Tony on a stretcher. Jessica gently shook her head in disbelief. Camera crews were already setting up alongside the front of the campus, shouting that they needed a better angle, better lighting. It was a school shooting not a fucking beauty pageant.

How could they be so insensitive?

A reporter started rushing towards the school with his microphone in hand and Jessica’s eyes followed his path and saw Sheri stepping out of the front, looking discombobulated. The male reporter stepped directly in front of her path and shoved the microphone at her, starting to speak.

Energy she did not know she had filled her bones as she stood up and began to stomp over to the asshole who was harassing her girlfriend. Jessica wasn’t even that close and she could see that Sheri was uncomfortable, and yet, the paid professional, who should be able to discern that, was instead exploiting her pain for his own selfish ratings. Not if Jessica had anything to do about it.

Sheri met her gaze and took off immediately running straight for her. They collided and embraced,
Sheri holding her in her arms and not letting go. Jessica shook as she sobbed on her girlfriend’s shoulder, not ever wanting to part.

Sheri pulled away and moved Jessica’s hair from her forehead, meeting her eyes. “Are you….I’m,” Sheri said, unable to get words out. Instead, she pulled Jessica back to her and they stayed hugging.

“Miss,” an obnoxious man’s voice interrupted. Naturally, the reporter. “Can you tell us what happened in there? Is the gunman still inside?”

Jessica turned, wiping her eyes, and feeling a fit of anger barrel through her insides. “Can’t you just fuck off,” she shouted, grabbing Sheri by the arm and moving away from him and back to where she was sitting.

“Jessica Davis?” The paramedic who had stitched her up said. “We still would like to take you to the hospital to make sure everything is okay.”

“I’m coming with,” Sheri said, her hand intertwining with Jessica’s, as they climbed into the back of the ambulance and away from the horror show that was Liberty High School.

-xxx-

Jessica knew the hospital all too well as of recently. Only now she was sitting at the edge of a bed being examined. The room smelt of disinfectant and the air conditioning gave her skin goosebumps as they cut her sleeve. They began to clean the gunshot, which stung, before wrapping it with gauze and placing a white patch on.

Her parents were on their way from work as she sat in the room with Sheri, who was right next to her, their legs touching.

“Sheri,” Jessica said, a headache throbbing across her temples added to the agony her body was already in. “Are you okay?”

“Me?” A sarcastic laugh escaped her nose. “Are you okay?”

Jessica tried her best to answer that but she didn’t know how and as she thought about it, her lips trembled and she started crying, shaking her head no. Sheri wrapped her arms around Jessica’s side and held her as she wept, not saying anything, simply being there.

Jessica pulled away and wiped her eyes, placing her forehead to Sheri’s, whispering, “you saved me.”

Sheri sniffled. “I thought I was going to die.”

“Me, too.”

They stayed together, lying on the bed. Jessica made sure to lie on the side without her bullet wound, and Sheri lied next to her, facing one another. Tears continually fell as they held each other. Jessica would wipe a tear from Sheri and her girlfriend would move Jessica’s hair out of her face. The aftermath was still on them, clothes still bloody, hair matted and sticky, but they didn’t care, or at least Jessica didn’t.

Sheri was all she wanted, all she needed.

The moment she was left alone with her thoughts it was never ending. The flashing images of Justin’s lifeless pale body, the gaping wound in his back that poured his life onto her, the sound of
the gun being shot, the smell of the blood all around her, the overwhelming feeling of knowing she was meant to die. It all accumulated together to drown her. But looking into Sheri’s beautiful blue eyes somehow eased her of all the trauma, at least momentarily.

Sheri was her saving grace.

-xxx-

Most of the parents got there around the same time. Jessica’s family would not give her an inch to breathe. Her dad was asking the doctor question after question about the gunshot, standing with one arm across his abdomen, the other up to his mouth chewing on his thumbnail, while his foot tapped against the tile. Once he was satisfied he was back by the bed, asking her if she was okay. She could see that he had been crying. His eyes were puffy and red, but he did not let her see, puffing out his chest and sniffling. Her mom, on the other hand, was pacing back and forth, makeup running down her cheeks.

Her two brothers were quiet, letting her know they were happy she didn’t die. She cried and said she was happy too.

Sheri’s parents had taken her into the hallway and were talking with her when Jessica’s phone buzzed in her pocket. She pulled it out while her mom and dad whispered among themselves in the corner of the room, seeing it was from Alex.

Alex: WTF! Were you at school today???????

“Can I go see Alex?” Jessica said, interrupting the silence. “He’s literally on the same floor. He just texted me he doesn’t know anything and I wanna…..” Her voice hitched and she cleared it, blinking rapidly as her body was about to start up with the crying again. “I want to see him.”

“Are you sure you’re okay to walk?” her mom asked, hands placed together as though she was praying.

“It was my arm.” Jessica stood up and winced, keeping her arms slack by her side. “I can walk.”

“We’ll be in this room.” Her father’s voice cracked as he stepped over, pulling her in for a long hug, her entire family joining in. “We love you so much, Jessica.”

“So, so, much,” her mom added, and Jessica’s eyes started to leak again.

It was never going to end.

Once they let go, Jessica blinked repeatedly as she stepped out into the hallway. Tony’s family was standing around him -- he was in a wheelchair -- and Clay’s mom and dad were pacing the hallways, no Clay in sight. Sheri was sitting in a chair with her head in between her legs while her mom rubbed up and down her back. Jessica didn’t want to bug them so she turned and trudged down the hallway, trying her best to not cry.

The moment she entered Alex’s room and their eyes met she broke down.

“Oh, Jess,” Alex said, and then he was crying. “Oh, Jess. Are you okay?”

“No.” She climbed into the bed with him and laid her head on his chest while he held her. “Alex,” she said, unable to recognize her own voice through the aching. “Justin is dead. He dived in front of the gun and died in my arms.” Her body was quaking and Alex didn’t say anything just held her.
Jessica was broken.

Jessica was so fucking broken.

Chapter End Notes

I think there's only gonna be like 5 more chapters tbh but like I said that there would only be 10 more chapters at chapter 14 so don't quote me on it hahahaha
Tony

Chapter Summary

Tony’s really worried about Clay.

Chapter Notes

alright this chapter actually was really hard for me simply because i didnt know how much i wanted to give away and i rewrote entire parts over and over and im still not satisfied BUT i hope you guys like it!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony’s mind could not focus on any one thing. It really couldn’t focus much at all.

Once he was at the hospital, he was brought into a room with a nurse who looked at the hole in his leg, warning him of the pain as she dug forceps in and pulled the bullet out. A small, crumpled up -- gold peeking out from under the blood -- life altering piece of metal was dropped into a pan and Tony kept his focus on that instead of the threaded needle sewing his flesh together. The nurse finished, making sure he was good before putting a small white bandage on the gash in his nose where Tyler kicked. A small aching throbbed on his face as she did, but nothing compared to his leg.

She told him she would go get him a change of clothes, coming back with a gray sweatsuit.

He was still in just booty shorts.

At least when he had been brought in a stretcher and did not have to walk in. He was positive people still saw him, though. Regret sat on his chest and stayed, settling in. Should have listened to his dad.

Even though he explained he just needed crutches, they insisted that he use a wheelchair. Hospital policy. He didn’t complain, though. At least he would be able to sit down and not get winded just from walking.

He underestimated how tired his arms would get from pushing on the wheels.

His father was the first to show. As the owner of his own mechanic shop, he was able to leave immediately. His mom was not so lucky. She worked as a hospice care nurse and had to make a few calls to get covered so that could make it down. Tony’s siblings were all away at college. He was the youngest and the most spoiled, hence the red-wheeled angel.

“Son,” his dad said, running towards him as he sat in the hallway, waiting. Still in his jumpsuit, his dad’s hands were black with oil and his forehead had a small streak where he probably wiped some sweat off. All of that was normal, but he had never seen his dad’s face so frantic as he made his way to Tony. “Are you okay, let me take a look at you?”
Tony sat there while his dad did his own examination, asking him where he was shot and what happened. He was going to have to explain the story so many times and as he started to tell his father, his hands began to sweat and his heart race, remembering the first shot, and how the pain felt never ending, followed by the shotgun blast. Tony shuddered when he got to that part, his voice cracking. He finished the memory and he could see that there were tears in his dad’s eye as he crouched down and hugged Tony, squeezing him hard.

“I love you, son,” he said, not letting go. “I’m so happy you’re alive.” And then he started to do what Tony had expected from the get go. “But if that smarmy fuck hadn’t died I’d find him and kill him for doing that to you.”

“I know, Pops,” Tony said, smirking for the first time. It was wiped away when he saw Clay’s parents -- his mom looked like she was on the verge of having a meltdown as she paced in a circle while the dad tried to comfort her.

Clay was nowhere to be seen. Sheri was with her parents.

“Tony,” his mom’s voice cut through and he turned his chair, seeing her running. She still had on her smock from work, which had small kittens and hearts on it, and matching sky blue pants. His mom was shorter than him with a curly bob cut and a smile that could light up an auditorium. It was nowhere to be seen that day. Her eyes were puffy and he could tell she had been crying on the drive over, most likely trying to get it out before seeing him. But the moment she had him in her arms, the waterworks started -- from him also -- and they held onto one another.

The hallway was cold as they talked. His mom would not leave his side, kissing his cheeks, his forehead, his hands, anything she could. There was no denying his parents loved him, that was for sure. His dad went to talk to the Jensen’s as he explained the story to his mother, who wept from the start to finish. Tony was surprised at how well he was adjusting but thought that maybe it was still the shock and adrenaline. He still had not seen Clay, heard from the boy, or understood why he was the last one out, which was clouding most of his mind.

How could he begin to work through any of the trauma when the boy he liked -- the boy he really liked -- was still with doctors.

His dad waltzed back, sucking his lips against his teeth and looked discouraged.

“What did they say? Tony asked, trying to read the lines of his dad’s face.

“He’s in surgery right now.” Tony’s father squatted down next to him, placing his hand on Tony’s shoulder. “They don’t know how he is, but he lost a lot of blood and the doctors are working to get it under control.”

“Wait,” Tony said, the room starting to spin. “I don’t understand. He was, he was fine? Not fine, obviously, but just his shoulder and arm. I knew he looked like he was losing blood fast but I had his arm tied and I kept….” He trailed off, his mind quickly cutting back between trying to stay in the present, and bombarding him with images of Clay underneath him.

Clay’s lips were turning bluish by the time the paramedics came and his breathing was shallow but all Tony figured was he was in shock, they all were. Why the fuck was he in surgery? Where did the bullet hit?

“Son,” his mom said, her voice coaxing him back to the immediateness of his situation, back to the hospital. “What is it? Your face looks green.”

“I don’t,” Tony said, not even sure what he was feeling. His body had not eased since being shot.
Being taken out of the school and away from the horror didn’t automatically make the tension in his muscles dissipate, nor did it not slow his heart rate or make his insides feel any less in knots. No. All he knew, for sure, was that the boy he cared for and wanted to be with was possibly dying and he could not help but blame himself.

Maybe if he had moved quicker? Not tried to talk Tyler down. Maybe if he had pushed Clay down and lunged? A plethora of different scenarios began to flood his insides as he blinked away tears that were beginning to form. Tony felt responsible for Clay’s situation. Tony felt like shit.

“I just want to know if Clay’s going to be all right,” he finally said, his grip tightening around the wheel.

“He will be.” His mom pulled the rosary that she wore at all times out from under her collar and had her fingers run along each bead. “I have been praying since I found out.”

“Me, too, son,” his dad said, squeezing Tony’s shoulder. “We’re gonna get through this.”

Tony did not even need to blink for tears to start rolling down his cheeks, one right after the other. His parents squatted next to him, each one holding one of his hands, and the three of them closed their eyes and his mother led a prayer, asking for Clay to heal and for the anger and pain that permeated the hallways at Liberty High be vanquished. She ended it by giving thanks that Tony survived and that they were together.

“Amen,” Tony said, clearing his throat and wiping his eyes. “I’m gonna go talk to Clay’s parents. See if I can do anything.”

Wiping his clammy hands on his sweatpants, Tony rolled towards the Jensen’s who were sitting down on chairs along the wall. Clay’s dad was holding onto his mom and rocking with her. They both looked exhausted. Tony’s insides were buzzing as he made his way over, stopping next to them.

“Mr. and Mrs. Jensen,” Tony said, not sure what to say next, not even knowing if he should have interrupted them in the first place.

“Tony,” Mr. Jensen said, garnishing a sympathetic look.

“Is Clay gonna be okay?” Tony did not want to beat around the bush and make small talk, it wasn’t the time or the place. He needed to know for his own well-being.

“We don’t know yet,” Mrs. Jensen said, wiping her eyes and sniffling, her neck muscles tightening. “Were you….I, were you with him? When it happened?”

“Yes, ma’am.” Tony looked down, bobbing his head. “I was standing in front of him, trying to make Tyler put the gun…. His throat hitched and he cleared it, blinking rapidly. “I tried to stop him and then he…. Tony couldn’t say the rest, not to Clay’s parents. “I tied my shirt around Clay’s arm and put pressure on his shoulder and Sheri helped while I called the cops. I don’t understand why he’s in surgery. I thought he would be okay.”

Tears were free falling from the mom’s lashes. “Can you tell us exactly what happened?”

“Are you sure?” Tony felt ill.

“I need to know.”

Tony simply nodded, taking in a deep breath before explaining the story again, this time trying to remember everything he could about Clay. He told them how he went to the restroom and when
he came out Clay and Monty were side by side as Tyler aimed the pistol and shotgun at them. How he stepped in front of Clay and tried his best to stop it. How Tyler shot Montgomery with the shotgun after firing a bullet into Tony’s leg. How he yanked at Tyler to try and stop him from hitting Clay. When he started to describe how Clay was, where his wounds were, how he looked, Clay’s parents had their eyes closed as they listened, not saying a word.

When he was finished, Mr. Jensen bobbed his head and pursed his lips together. “Thank you.”

“I’m so sorry,” Tony said, crying. “I tried to save him, I tried….”

“Oh, Tony,” Mrs. Jensen said, getting up for the first time and reaching out, rubbing his shoulder. “You did everything you could.” With a defeated shrug she said, “I just hope the doctors give him the same attention you did.”

His Adam’s apple jutted in his throat at that sentiment and he did his best to not weep in front of them. With a nod of his head, he said he was going to get back to his parents and asked them to let him know if anything changes, adding he really cares for Clay.

“We know you do.” Mr. Jensen said, an empathetic look on his face.

Tony turned his chair around and pushed himself back towards his parents, seeing Sheri waving him over. His parents saw her and gave him a nod to let him know it was fine, and then he was off down the hallway towards her. Sheri’s parents were standing there talking with the Davis’ about it.

“Hey,” she said, doing a quick half smile that was not convincing at all. “You okay?”

“Once I find out if Clay’s okay, I might be able to answer that question.”

“You care for him?” Sheri had a softness to her that somehow calmed Tony’s nerves.

“Yeah, I do.” Tony shook his head, looking down. “I just need him to be okay.”

“He will be.” They were both quiet for a while before she added, “I don’t know if you’d want to, but Jessica is in Alex’s room and I was going to go. Thought maybe if we’re all together it’d be less,” she paused, “well, you know.”

“Yeah,” Tony said, thinking it over. He had not visited Alex once. They were never close. Not to mention, Tony was dealing with his own set of issues: making sure Clay was okay, dealing with his own demons from knowing he could have stopped Hannah, all the way to breaking up with Brad once he found out what was on the tapes. He told Tony that he couldn’t be with someone who could keep a secret that easily.

It wasn’t fucking easy. It tore him apart inside.

“You don’t have to if you don’t want to,” Sheri added. “I just know I don’t want to be alone right now.”

“I don’t either.”

Following Sheri, the two of them made their way down until they came to an open door. Sheri peeked her head in first, waving for Tony to follow her in. The inside was plain, and very white, and Jessica was lying on the bed in Alex’s arms, the two of them puffy eyed. Alex had a bandage on the side of his head, but it was not as bad as Tony had expected.

“Hey, guys,” Sheri said, doing a small wave as she sat down in the chair by the head of the bed;
Tony parked himself next to her.

“Hey,” Tony said, quietly.

“Jesus,” Alex said, his jaw dropping. “Did you all get shot?”

It was nice to see his lack of filtering comments before speaking had not changed.

“She stopped it from getting worse,” Jessica said, propping herself up against the puffy pillows behind her and Alex, wiping her nose. “She saved my life.”

“She helped me save Clay, too,” Tony added. “If it wasn’t for Sheri….” Tony trailed off and thought about the hallway scene, the death, the blood, the horror.

“We’d all be dead,” Jessica finished the thought, her face melting away as she started to bawl again.

“Where is Clay?” Alex asked, furrowing his brow with a confused look.

“He’s in surgery,” Tony said, bouncing his uninjured leg up and down. Each time he breathed in a sharp pain would settle on the bridge of his nose. His calf burned and ached but it was manageable. The stress of not knowing about Clay was suffocating him, however. “I don’t know if he’s going to be okay or not.”

“Fuck.” Alex let out a heavy breath. “When we started this year did you think we’d all end up here?” He gestured around to the room, scoffing. “This cold and empty place.”

They stayed collectively quiet. It wasn’t awkward, though. Tony somehow felt like they needed to just be around each other, to see that there was life after it all. But it was not a joyful experience, at all. The world around him still felt like it was in shambles, and it was, truthfully. There was not one thing going right in that moment, but knowing that he was not alone in the overwhelming sinking feeling of it, kept him afloat.

Alex eventually suggested they see if it was on the news yet. Tony was not really in the mood for it, but he also was curious to see what was being said. As Alex flipped on the television that sat against the top of the wall across from them, the school was in view and a reporter was talking.

“....yes, Jim,” the man said, facing the camera. “It was just an hour ago that Liberty High School was under attack from a student.” An aerial shot of the campus came into view and an image of paramedics rushing out with Clay was across the screen as the man continued to talk. “A student at this once peaceful high school opened up fire, killing two, and injuring three others before succumbing to a gunshot wound himself. Although we do not know all the facts, what we do know is this came just a few months after the suicide of Hannah Baker, the young student who took her own life, but not before recording tapes detailing why she did it.” The shot continued and Tony saw himself on the screen being wheeled out and the cameraman zoomed in, showing the world him in nothing but the shorts.

Tony was mortified. His face began to heat up.

“And even though we do not know all the facts, our hearts and prayers go out the family and kids affected by this tragedy. The, now, 412th mass shooting of 2017, marking 2017 as the most mass shooting of any year recorded.”

The mute symbol shown on the screen and Tony turned back to see Alex staring at him with raised eyebrows.
“What the fuck were you wearing?”

He really should have listened to his dad.

Chapter End Notes

Clay is next~*~*~*
Clay

Chapter Summary

Why is Clay in surgery?

Chapter Notes

alright so i hope you guys like this one!!! i think itll make sense right after the first part as to why i have kept Clays chapter off the radar for a quick minute~*~*~

May the fourth be with you!! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The pistol was pointed directly at his face when Tyler finished his sentence. Clay’s knees had locked in place as he stared down the barrel of the gun, knowing it was all over. He left his body at that point, watching from an outside perspective. Phantom limbs were holding him up. Clay’s breathing was ragged and his mind was shutting down as he fully accepted that he would not make it out of the hallway alive.

Monty was right next to him, and Clay could hear his breath coming out short and fast through his nose as he did not move a muscle. The sheer look of enjoyment on Tyler’s face haunted him. There was this sick fascination that was prevalent in the shining of his eyes, a sinister grin sending a cold chill down Clay’s spine.

Tony was stepping out of the restroom and Tyler aimed the gun at him. Clay wanted to scream for it to end, stop Tyler, distract him somehow so Tony could get away, but his body was not cooperating. His hands were quaking by his side as he watched, frozen in time, Tony begin to inch towards Clay, hands out in front of him, cautiously.

A shot rang out and Tony collapsed in front of Clay. He blinked in disbelief, still not sure he was comprehending what was happening around him. An even louder blast sounded off, sending Montgomery careening backward. A sharp pain pierced into Clay’s side but he had no time to register what it was. Blood from Monty splattered next to him on the tile, behind him, and landed on the sides of his clothes and face, warm and aberrant.

The aching that was starting to burn his insides was replaced with two more hot leaded wounds that had his body being slammed down against the tile. His head hit the floor hard, spotty vision following, as he felt his hair stick to the carnage that was underneath him. It felt like his lungs were not getting enough air and his body was slowly getting colder as Tony appeared in his view, blocking the ceiling. Something was being tightly wound around his arm and then Tony was pushing down with all his might on Clay’s shoulder, forcing him to groan out in agony.

He felt like he was above his body watching down as Sheri collided with the tile and crawled to him, replacing Tony. Clay’s breathing was shallow and his face was tingling as he wept, tasting blood in his mouth. All he could do was cry. His tongue would not form words to let them know
that his side was also on fire, and he could feel blood seeping out and down his side, sticking to his back.

Clay was going to die.

Paramedics were around him and his vision was starting to tunnel out as his body was shivering, cold. He was on a stretcher and closed his eyes, feeling the rush of fresh air breeze across his face and wake him up, his eyelids cracking open, looking around. All he saw were shirts of people around him, all he felt were hands on his body, examining him.

His eyes closed and he passed out right as he felt a frigid blade against his abdomen as his shirt was being cut open.

-xxx-

Clay felt groggy as he attempted to open his eyes, blinded by the fluorescent lights above his face. Where the fuck was he? His body ached, and as he breathed in, his side cast a reverberating pain across the rest of him. He was lying down -- the bed was not comfortable but the pillow was soft against the back of his bruised head -- and there were machines next to him beeping, home to wires and tubes that connected into his veins.

The hospital.

Letting out a groan, Clay tried to adjust himself, both his arms screaming for him to stop. Sighing, he laid back down and closed his eyes, Tyler’s toothy smirk invading his thoughts. He had no idea who had been shot or what had happened after, all he knew was Montgomery was dead and Tony had been hit.

Montgomery. The boy had been so quiet in those last moments. Clay wondered if maybe he was also accepting his own death. It all happened so quickly there was not really time to react, but as he sat alone in the blank room, with just the humming of the air conditioning to keep him company, Clay felt his throat tightening as the memories started to play on repeat with no indication of stopping.

Something dropped outside the room he was in, causing a loud bang, and Clay immediately tensed up, his heart rate on the monitor skyrocketing as he clenched his fists closed and tried to get his breathing under control. A nurse stepped in as he took a deep breath in through his nose, holding it before exhaling.

“Oh, you’re awake,” she said, a sympathetic smile was home to her face. “How are you feeling?” He watched her step over and pick up charts from the foot of the bed, seemingly looking over his medical records as she waltzed over to the machine that beeped every few seconds.

“Like shit,” he commented, seeing her do a small nod at his reply. “What happened to my friends?”

The nurse did not say anything immediately, simply scribbled something and then placed the chart back. “Your parents are outside.” Avoiding the question, she peeked her head out and told them he was awake.

Clay was bothered that she did not even give him some form of an answer.

But then his parents were crowding him, his mom’s eyes puffy and red, his dad looking like the stress added, even more, gray hairs to his beard. It was a distraction, at least in a way. He had to tell them what happened, and they started to detail what they had to go through. The doctors would not tell them exactly what was going on, only citing that he had lost a lot of blood and
needed to be taken into surgery immediately. They signed the papers and then did not hear anything for hours. Finally, after the surgery was successful, the doctors informed them that pellets from the shotgun blast had hit Clay’s side, which is where the blood loss was coming from.

If it was not for Tony and Sheri, his parents explained that he would have bled out.

For some reason, guilt was the emotion that gripped at his heart as he heard his parents talk. They both looked so broken down and tired as they told him. He asked what happened to his friends, hoping Tony was okay and no one else got shot. When he heard that Justin was dead, Jessica had been shot, and Sheri had fought Tyler off until she ultimately had to shoot him, Clay blinked in disbelief. How had everything gotten so shitty?

The only good thing he could cling to was that Tony was going to be okay, at least physically. Clay wasn’t entirely sure any of them would be emotionally stable ever again. His mind already taunted him tirelessly with small remembrances of things Hannah did, moments where if he had said one different thing, moments where he could have stopped Jeff from leaving the party. No matter what he did, it was always in the background, a storm that showed no signs of stopping.

Guilt was his body’s go to position on trauma.

“We told your friends we would let them know when you woke up,” his mom said, wiping her eyes and rubbing her hands through his hair. “They’ve all been asking about you. They’re all in Alex’s room down the hallway. If you’re not up for it I can let them know, but --”

“No,” Clay said, cutting her off, wanting nothing more than to see his friends, to see Tony. “I want to see them.”

“Okay,” his dad said, bobbing his head. “Tony was really worried about you.” He winked after the statement and Clay rolled his eyes, smiling that he could still have these moments with his parents.

Montgomery never would.

It could have been Clay. If it wasn’t for Tony it would have been him. Tyler had the gun aimed at him before he got distracted. Clay was the original target. His smile began to fade away as his mind worked its knife into his heart and made him, once again, feel guilty for simply surviving.

His parents exited the room and then a few moments later he saw as Sheri waltzed in, doing a small wave. Jessica was behind her, followed by Alex -- who Clay did not know could even get up -- and then last was Tony who was sitting in a wheelchair. Clay wanted to get out of bed and hug them all but he couldn’t move much. The pellets from the shotgun blast had torn into him and he was in no shape to push himself up. Instead, he laid still as the group circled around him, Tony rolling up and stopping by the side of the bed, a heartwarming smile on his face.

“You had us scared,” he said, reaching out and grabbing Clay’s hand, squeezing it.

Clay huffed out an exasperated laugh. “You guys,” he turned his gaze from Tony and met Sheri’s eyes, “saved my life.”

“What happened?” Sheri said, her arms crossed. “Why were you in surgery for so long.”

“The shotgun blast,” he commented, seeing all eyes on him. Alex did not look too bad. His face was pale since he had not been out in the sun for a while and he did look a little underweight, but there was no longer a dead-eyed stare that was idle on his face. Jessica had her arm patched up and he could tell that she had not stopped crying; Sheri also looking the same. Tony kept his hand intertwined with Clay, gently rubbing his thumb up and down as Clay spoke. “I guess I was so
close to Montgomery….” He let out a heavy sigh and shook his head. “When he got, when he, I also…. Talking about it didn’t feel right. It did not feel like something that was a simple story to be told. It was traumatizing and horrific and he really didn’t want to relive it in any capacity. “The pellets hit me, too.”

“I didn’t know,” Tony said, almost whispering as though it was more to himself.

“If you guys hadn’t wrapped my arm and stopped my shoulder from bleeding, I would have died. My mom told me.” Clay felt tears falling from the sides of his eye and absorbing into the pillow case. “Thank you.”

With a wave of his hand, he called Sheri over and held out his arms, hugging. Sheri did not let go and they stayed like that, sniffing in each other’s embrace. Tony was next and Clay did not want to make him get out of his wheelchair so he tried, with all his might, to push himself up enough, wincing and unable to. Tony swatted at him and pushed himself up, leaning forward -- his wounded leg held up above the ground -- as he wrapped his arms around Clay.

When Tony was pulling away, Clay leaned forward and planted a kiss on his lips, not caring that the group saw. He was not going to go one more day without letting the people he cared about know it. Be that through a kiss or a simple comment. Life was too fucking short.

“Oh, my God,” Alex said, turning to Jessica and wiggling his eyebrows. “I fucking knew you guys were a thing or at least gonna be.”

“Oh, yeah?” Tony asked, a smug smirk on his face as he adjusted back into his chair. Alex and Jessica were seated at the foot of the bed, Sheri sat on the side.

“Um, yeah,” Alex said, in a dumbfounded tone. “If I saw Clay anywhere I just had to look in my peripheral to see you.” He pointed at Tony, grinning. “I’m just glad it’s finally happened.”

“I’m glad you’re so invested in our relationship.” Tony shook his head and went back to holding Clay’s hand. It was warm and made Clay feel less alone in it all.

This is what Clay needed: friends, talking, laughing.

“I only ask for the same courtesy when I find someone.” Alex shrugged his shoulders and his dimples rose.

“Of course,” Clay said, winking. “We’ll be on the sidelines cheering you on.”

“Beautiful.” Alex adjusted and sat crossed on his legs. “All jokes aside, I’m glad you guys are all okay. I’ve been doing a lot of thinking,” he snorted and rolled his eyes. “That’s literally all you can really do when you’re bedridden for most of the day. And I thought about all the shit we’ve done and how webbed it all got and how we didn’t even know what we were doing was that detrimental, you know?” They all collectively nodded. “I don’t know, I guess I’m just glad you guys are here and we have each other.”

“Yeah,” Jessica said, patting Alex’s shoulder. “I feel like we’re all bonded.”

“Well, no shit,” Alex said, gesturing around. “Four out of five of us have a gunshot wound.”

“Jesus, Alex,” Jessica hissed, her eyes widening.

“It kind of sounds like a toothpaste ad,” Clay said, joking. “Like, four out of five dentists recommend Colgate, except four out of five Liberty High School students will get shot.”
“Y’all are twisted.” Jessica scrunched her face, but Clay grinned and then they began to chuckle.

“If we can’t make a joke about our own trauma,” Alex said, as though he was defending a very important issue close to his heart. “Then, what’s the point?”

“What a convincing argument,” Sheri said, closing her lips as they rose and her cheeks got bigger. “You should run for office.”

“Oh, please. I’m too honest to be a politician.” Pretending to flip nonexistent hair off his shoulder, Alex tilted his head and smacked his lips. “Only crooks and sociopaths run for office, hence why my dad is losing all his savings just to cover my medical bills.”

“Oh, fuck,” Tony groaned out, slapping his hands to his face. “Shouldn’t Tyler’s parents have to be the ones who pay our bills? It’s not our fault we fucking got shot.”

“In an ideal world,” Jessica commented, “but, we live in America. We’re all gonna go into crippling debt, most likely.”

Clay simply nodded at the sad but true sentiment. He was lucky, though, since his mom made decent money at her firm and had good health insurance. Guilt bit at his ankles again. Not even the aftermath of the shooting was going to affect him as much as others.

“Are you guys planning on going to college?” Sheri interjected, shrugging. “If you go to college you’re already fucked with debt, so it really doesn’t matter.”

“What a great outlook on life,” Alex commented, giggling. “But you’re not wrong. We have a world of bills and debt to collect as soon as we graduate.”

“If we even make it to graduation,” Clay said, quietly, looking down.

“We will,” Tony said, squeezing Clay’s hand under his, giving him a reassuring nod. “We will.”

“Okay, let’s get off the doom and gloom.” Jessica moved around on the bed, adjusting her position, letting her legs fall over the edge. “Let’s talk about the weather, movies, anything.”

Clay appreciated the idea and thought about what would change the topic. “Star Wars is coming out in December,” he said.

“Holy shit,” Sheri said, clapping her hands. “It is! I love those movies so much, guys. They’re amazing.”

“Never seen them,” Alex said, looking at his fingernails as though he couldn’t be bothered. Before Clay could let out an affronted gasp, Sheri beat him to it, followed by Jessica, and even Tony. Good to know he was not the only one who offended by that comment. How had Alex not seen those movies? The Force Awakens was one of the top grossing films of 2015. Was he living under a rock or did he purposefully do it to seem edgy and different?

“That’s not acceptable.” Jessica’s voice was full of offense. “The moment we are all discharged and can hang out is the moment we are all having a Star Wars marathon at my house, and Alex,” she said, holding her index finger out and pointing at him. “This isn’t an option.”

“Yeah,” Sheri said. “You need to get on that, Alex. That way we can all go see the midnight premier when it comes out. Everyone else agree?”

“Yes.” Clay said immediately, nodding his head up and down vigorously; Tony also agreed.
“Wow.” Alex widened his eyes. “Touched a nerve?”

“We’re just trying to culture you,” Sheri said, side-eyeing Alex.

The conversation evolved from Star Wars to their favorite movies. Tony said Moonlight was his all time favorite film and Clay said he had not seen it, to which Tony explained they would be having a movie night soon, just the two of them. Clay couldn’t pick a favorite so instead, he picked The Hobbit films, since technically it was an adaptation of one long story. Jessica’s was The Princess Bride which everyone agreed was a great movie. Sheri said hers was American Psycho, shrugging off the incredulous looks that were harbored on the faces of the kids in the rooms. Alex said his would have to be Anchorman, which Tony barked out an approving laugh for.

Clay could feel the pain in his body slowly subsiding as the conversation continued, realizing that one of the dripping bags that hung by his bed must have been morphine. His side no longer felt like someone who holding a lit flame to it each time he took a deep breath and the throbbing that was home in his arms had vacated for the time being. It also helped that the five of them were staying on positive topics, trying their best to not segway back to reality.

As most conversations go, however, it did eventually lead back to the shooting, but rather the news coverage. Alex clapped his hands together after they finished watching a Vine compilation on his phone, and said he couldn’t believe he forgot to tell Clay the funniest part of the day, explaining how Tony was only in shorts on the news.

“I need to see this,” Clay said, immediately covering his mouth to keep from laughing in Tony’s face. “Please, someone find the coverage.”

“Okay, hold on,” Alex said, typing away at his phone and starting to scroll with his finger, the smile on his face deteriorating into a look of shock. “Holy shit,” he said, covering his mouth and Clay could see his eyes moving from side to side as he read.

“What is it?” Jessica asked, trying to look at his screen, Alex blocking her view.

“Fuck.” Alex let out a long-winded sigh and shook his head. “Can you turn on the television.”

Clay had a sinking feeling in his stomach. Tony grabbed the remote next to the bed and flicked on the screen, breaking news already on.

“As if today was not tragic enough,” a reporter said, as a picture of Bryce came on the screen; Clay knew where this was going and he had completely forgotten about that fact as all the chaos was arising. Bryce killed himself. The bomb had dropped. “Liberty High School has had a troubling start to this school year and it does not seem to be showing any signs of stopping. Hours after the school shooting that took the lives of three students, gunman included, the body of Bryce Walker was found. The star athlete had allegedly committed suicide. This coming just months after the suicide of Hannah Baker and attempted suicide of Alex Standall. Parents are outraged, demanding the school be held responsible for the lives of all the students.”

Clay could see that Jessica’s body had physically tensed up as she watched the screen, her arms crossed tightly around her waist. Tony was gnawing on his lower lip as he watched, while both Sheri and Alex lightly shook their heads, facing the television.

Pictures of Bryce smiling with his family, by himself, with friends, began to pop up on the screen, cutting to a live feed of the Walkers -- both standing in suits and looking upwards as they spoke to the cameras.
“We expect the school to be held to full responsibility for its lack in addressing the blatant bullying that was occurring daily. Our son Bryce was a good hearted, sweet boy, and he was targeted —”

“Shut it off,” Jessica said, shutting her eyes tightly as she ground her teeth together. Tony listened without a second's hesitation and turned it off.

“Jess,” Alex said, his voice childlike.

“Those fucking assholes,” she blurted out, tears falling from her eyes. “Bullying? Are you fucking kidding me! He was a rapist and a piece of shit. The fact that the report never once brought up what he did? I’m glad he’s dead. The bitch couldn’t even last less than a month in juvie. He deserved it and more.”

Jessica stood up and rubbed her hands down her pants and started to pace, shaking her head. She looked like she was on the verge of tears and after that the mood took a dip. Jessica ended up going to be back with her parents, giving Clay a hug and letting him know she was there for him, for all of them. They did a group hug and said their goodbyes, Tony staying behind to be with Clay.

When it was just the two of them, Clay turned and gently smiled at Tony.

“Tony,” he said, wishing he could get up and be with the boy.

“Yeah, Clay?” His voice was soothing as he spoke and his eyes didn’t shift from Clay’s.

“Are you okay?”

“I am now that I know you are.” After the comment, Tony winced as he pushed himself up, climbing into the bed. Clay shifted over slightly enough for him to fit and then they were cuddling, Clay’s head on Tony’s warm chest. Tony’s arm was around Clay, making sure to avoid his injuries, having them pulled close together. The boy planted a gentle peck on Clay’s forehead, and then the two of them kissed, light and soft and everything that Clay needed in the moment. He felt protected and loved in Tony’s arms and he never wanted it to stop.

“I thought I’d never see you again,” Clay commented in the silence, blinking so not to cry on Tony’s clothes.

“It’s gonna take more than a gun to keep me from you.” Tony and him kissed again, and again, and again.

“You’re dumb,” Clay said, cheeks heating up as he nestled back into Tony’s arms.

“Dumb for you.”

“That was so fucking cheesy,” Clay chortled, his eyes crinkling in the corner.

“Yeah, well, I don’t care.”

“I like it.”

“I like you.”

And there was something about the way Tony said it, the way they were gazing into each other’s eyes, the way it made Clay’s heart soar and his palms sweat.

It felt like love.
okay so this was going to be the original ending, like not exactly like this, but with it ending in the hospital and them all getting close yada yada BUT I decided it felt like a cop out to not deal with the aftermath of my own storyline hahahaha so I have decided to write three more chapters, one from each POV and I really hope you guys enjoy them!

Clay is going to be next, even though he was just now, and when you start to read them, it should make sense why hes getting back to back chapters lol
Clay

Chapter Summary

The after effects of the shooting are a thing Clay needs to really work on.

Chapter Notes

okayyyyy!!! so this is the last clay chapter of the fic~*~*~*~*

i know ive said it before in previous notes but i like to switch my writing up so this chapter is a little different. the italic parts are going to be flashbacks and thats the only heads up i can think of!! hope you guys enjoy it!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

2 Months Later

“Clay.” Her voice sounded like it was coming through a fog tunnel, quiet and distant in his mind, but ultimately serving its purpose and coaxing his eyes upwards, meeting her gaze. “Are you going to talk this week.”

Clay shrugged, a pillow in his lap. He was in his therapist’s office. It was set up to be very inviting and light, with open windows that let the sunshine in, and a white couch that was home to soft fur pillows. The smell of vanilla wafted through the room from a plug-in air freshener on the wall. A glass table sat directly in front with a box of tissues in the middle, and his counselor across from him, sitting in a sky blue padded chair, notepad in hand. Her black hair was styled in a pixie cut and she wore a gray blazer atop matching slacks. A pair of small reading glasses were pushed down to the edge of her nose, only using them when she wrote, and she had a vibrant smile that she flashed him every time he walked in.

He had been coming for a month now. Weekly.

“Well, we started these sessions four weeks ago and aside from the initial questionnaire about how you’re feeling, you haven’t opened up.”

“There’s not much to say.” Clay’s jaw was clenched as he sat there, leg tapping up and down.

“Really? I find that hard to believe.” She put the pad down and placed her glasses on it. “Let’s just talk. How do you feel taking the pills?”

Clay stayed quiet. There was a part of him that did not want to admit the antidepressants were working because that would be an admission of acceptance. That would mean that he was in fact depressed and he did need help. But the fact was he did feel better. Not all around amazing or anything of that matter, but he no longer felt like a stranger in his mind. Laughter was something that was finding its way back into Clay’s vocals, and being happy in moments no longer ended with his brain convincing him he shouldn’t be.
It was nice.

It was different.

Clay was getting used to the constant feeling of shit. The overwhelmingness of it all. It was his normal, and now, with the addition of a few fucking pills, it no longer felt like he was staying buoyant in the middle of the ocean, tiring himself out just to stay afloat. How do you describe that to someone? How do you explain that you consciously were aware of your own free fall into melancholiness and watched it happen, even driving yourself further through your own twisted logic? He didn’t have the words to say how he felt.

“They’re fine,” he said, pausing and adjusting himself on the couch, looking down. “I don’t know. I feel different, I guess.”

“Okay, that’s a start.” She picked back up her pad and smiled, placing the glasses on the bridge of her nose as she started to scribble. “Different how?”

“I just feel,” he stopped and closed his eyes, trying his best to think of what to say. “I don’t know. I just don’t feel like I’m drowning. It’s like I’m awake again, if that makes sense.”

“It does.” She stopped writing and made eye contact. “You’re taking both daily, correct?”

“Yeah, I take the Celexa every morning and the Trazodone before bed every night.”

“Good. Both couple together should be alleviating both your depression and anxiety.”

“I guess they are.” Clay shivered as the air conditioning kicked on, the vent right above the couch. “Tony says he can see a difference.”

“Do you see a difference?” Her voice was soft when she spoke and she had a soothing tone that did not make Clay feel like she was prying, but that she genuinely cared.

“Yeah. I woke up the other day and just had this moment.” Clay hugged the pillow to his chest, resting his chin on it. “I just realized that I didn’t feel like shit. It was weird, to be honest. Usually, when I’d wake up I’d stay in my bed for a few minutes, sometimes longer. If it was the weekend it’d be all day. And I’d just lay there and dread the day, the very idea of getting up was this daunting task because I knew it meant I’d have to go out and act fine.”

“Clay, it’s okay to not be okay. You don’t have to act fine all the time if you’re not.”

“That’s a load of shit.” Clay did not mean for his voice to sound so aggressive, but it did. “You can’t just not act fine because the moment you do people start to pick on you because you’re not acting normal and it’s different and then it just leads to more pain and hurt and eventually a fucking shooting.”

That was the most Clay had said in their sessions. It felt oddly satisfying to get what was bubbling inside of him off his chest.

“Are you referring to Tyler Down and the incident that happened?” The sound of her pen scribbling away filled the background.

“The ‘incident,’” Clay scoffed, shaking his head. “It was a mass shooting. Tyler, he shot his parents and then showed up to school and shot us.”

“Are you still not sleeping because of it?”
“Sleep is getting better.”

The Trazodone had been prescribed due to his lack of sleep. It was a struggle to simply fall asleep, and to stay asleep, that was nearly impossible. Before the pill he would not sleep for days, then finally when his body could not take it anymore he would knock out, but the violence and gore sprayed into the folds of his brain just like Monty’s blood sprayed across the tile floor of the school. No matter what he would wake in the middle of his sleep, sweaty and out of breath, feeling like he was going to die.

Panic attacks were becoming typical for him.

Lying in bed, sitting in his room, watching a show, his body was not picky. A thought would spark a wave of dread that would constrict across his chest and pinch his heart, making him gasp out for air as though he was no longer able to breathe. It would spiral from there: sweaty palms, rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness which was usually accompanied with passing out. Clay was starting to get them under control. Not the initial loss of breath, but he was beginning to be able to get his breathing back down enough to keep himself from blacking out.

“Are you still experiencing night terrors?”

“Yes.” Clay ground his teeth together. “Not as much, but yes.”

“Tell me about them.”

“It’s usually the same. I’m standing there, watching myself. Tyler pulls out the gun and I’m screaming for myself to do something, and I can’t stop it from happening.”

“The shooting?”

“All of it.” Clay could feel his eyelashes getting wet from tears forming. “I can’t stop it all from happening.”

“All of what?” Her eyes were honed in on him as she placed the pen down, an audible click of the tip being retracted back in.

“Everything!” Clay threw his hands up and widened his eyes, trying to get it through her head. “I can’t stop things from happening and it makes me feel like I have no control in my life. Like, I’m just standing around waiting for the next fucked up thing to happen to me or a friend and I can’t do anything about it.”

“It sounds like you’re putting the weight of the world on your shoulders.”

“I am.” He knew he was, he just didn’t know how to stop it.

“That must be exhausting for you.”

“It’s the whole reason I’m even here.” Clay closed his eyes and huffed. “After Thanksgiving I kind of realized I needed to, even though I didn’t want to.”

“What happened at Thanksgiving?”

Thanksgiving

“Clay, honey, can you set the dinner table?” His mom’s voice came from down the staircase.

Clay was lying on his bed, staring blankly at the ceiling. The painkillers he was on made him feel
a little dizzy and lightheaded, but the numbness that accompanied them was worth it. Fast acting morphine was his new best friend. The pill bottle was halfway full, seeing as he had been released from the hospital a week prior and his side still splintered with pain.

The morphine did nothing to numb his mind, however. The shooting was on replay in his mind, like a video on repeat for all of eternity. The dark circles under his eyes were growing by the minute and he was continually losing weight. How could he be expected to eat? He had no fucking appetite. Food had no taste or appeal to him, and even when his stomach grumbled he could not find it in himself to eat.

“Okay,” he groaned back, aware that she probably did not hear him. He didn’t care. Pushing himself up, Clay flounced down the stairs, dead-eyed and slack lipped. That was his only face as of late. Smiling was reserved only for Tony, and even then it was not sunshine and rainbows. Clay was not proud of it, but he had been moody to Tony as of late, and Tony kept coming back, day after day to make sure he was okay, to be with him.

Tony was the only thing keeping him breathing.

The house smelt amazing. He could appreciate that even if his appetite was nonexistent. Turkey in the oven filled every room while his mom whipped the garlic mashed potatoes up, his father next to her checking the yams. As he watched them -- they had not realized he was there yet -- his throat tightened and he felt like he was going to cry.

They looked so happy together. They were happy together.

Clay stepped back and slid down on the wall the opposite side of the kitchen, trying his best not to sob. Life was just this fucked up mess and some people got lucky and found love and lived happy lives like his parents, and others weren’t lucky. His thought process led him to focus on death. Even if his parents were happy in the moment it would never last. Nothing ever did.

His chest started to constrict at the thought of it. Everyone was going to die. There was no point in existing because no matter what, no matter how awful or good your life was, it all led to the one inevitable finite, death. Why should he even have to live through years and years of anguish and heartache just to finally die? His life felt like it was spiraling out of control and the idea of taking control, even if by ending it, was starting to cloud over him like a rainstorm.

What was the point of living?

“Clay,” his mom called out again, and he could hear his dad telling her that if he did not come down in a minute he would set the table, no big deal.

Clay felt culpable for all the stress his parents had.

Wiping his eyes and clearing his throat, Clay stood up and bounced in place, trying to seem lively. Time to put on the act.

“I’m right here,” he said, appearing in the doorway, a closed lipped smile stretching across his face. “Sorry, I was zoning out.”

“That’s okay, sweetie,” his mom said, pointing to the table. “I already put all the plates stacked on the counter, just place them down and the silverware. Grandma and Grandpa should be here any minute.”

“Okay.” Clay grabbed the dishes and went into the dining room, beginning to place them.
A festive tablecloth sat with a smiling turkey in the middle, right where the carcass of the dead bird they were going to eat was going to go. Fitting. As he placed them down, and went back in for the knives and spoons, his dad followed him back out into the dining room, placing his hands on Clay’s shoulders and rubbing.

“You good, bud?” His fingers felt great.

“I’m fine,” Clay lied, looking back and doing a half smirk.

“Okay.” He could hear his dad’s footsteps on the wooden floor, followed by him stopping and coming back, standing next to Clay. “I know you and Tony are a thing now and I’m happy for you, but your Grandpa, for all intensive purposes, is not as progressive as us.”

“Got it,” Clay said through closed lips, rolling his eyes. “Take it they don’t know about you.”

“My dad would have killed me if he found out.” Mr. Jensen shook his head lightly and let out a breathy laugh through his nose. “I hate it and I hate asking you to not say anything.”

-The dinner was awful.-

It started off fine. His grandparents asked him how he was doing since the shooting, showing genuine concern, but that quickly devolved into politics. The topic of gun violence and the second amendment -- his grandparents explaining that what happened to Clay was a tragedy but that did not warrant for their guns to be stripped from them -- and led them down a path where they began to get into their support for Trump.

Clay could feel his blood boiling but he stayed perfectly still, staring forward, not saying a word. Only nodding or grunting in response, shifting his food around on his plate to make it seem like he was eating. Why did his parents invite them if they knew how his grandparents were? Maybe Clay was being selfish, but he wanted it to just be the three of them for Thanksgiving. At least then they would not be bringing up such shitty topics, with their shitty opinions.

It was exhausting to act like none of it was bothering him.

After dinner, they went around and said what they were thankful for. Every person said they were thankful that Clay was alive and with them. Clay said he was thankful for morphine. It elicited a bark from his grandfather who shook with laughter, but his parents showed concern on their face.

Dessert came and went and Clay stayed in a perpetual state of numbness, excusing himself simply to go take another morphine. As he was upstairs, he got a text from Tony asking him if he could sneak out for a minute. Clay said he would be out in five and pulled his dad aside letting him know Tony was outside. His dad said he would cover for him and Clay hugged him, sneaking out the back so not to explain it to his grandparents.

When he made it to the front, Tony was standing outside a black F-150 wearing a brown leather jacket, black jeans, and boots. He looked suave.

“Where’s your car?” Clay asked as he quickly walked down to the sidewalk, looking back to make sure his family was not looking before pulling Tony in for a kiss.

“That’s actually why I’m here,” he said, raising his eyebrows and pointing to the truck. “Here, get in.”
Clay climbed into the vehicle and felt his shoulders relax as he inhaled the new car smell, his favorite scent. The seats were beige and leather and the inside was spacious for a truck. But Clay still was not understanding what happened to the red car.

“So,” Tony said, sitting down and leaning against the door, facing Clay. “I’m going to tell you something but I don’t want you to get worried or anything, okay?”

“What?” Clay’s heart started to pound against his chest.

“Okay, so this is a rental that I have because I got in a car accident yesterday and totaled my car.” Clay blinked in disbelief and felt his eyes already starting to water. “No, no, don’t cry, Clay.” Tony reached across and pulled him close, holding him in his embrace. “I didn’t tell you until I was for sure good with a new car and was not injured or anything. I know you have so much going on and I know you’re really struggling right now and I didn’t want to worry you until I knew it was okay.”

Tony could have died and Clay had no idea. There was no control in life. There was never going to be a moment where something awful was not occurring and Clay felt like he was suffocating with every single mishap that came his way.

As embarrassing as it was, Clay could not stop tears from falling down his cheeks as he tried his best to breath, shaking in Tony’s arms. “I’m sorry,” he coughed out, wiping his eyes. “This isn’t even about me. Are you okay?”

“I’m okay, Clay,” Tony said, rubbing his hands up and down on Clay’s arms, resting his chin on the top of Clay’s head. “I’m okay. I’m right here. I’m not going anywhere. Your devilishly handsome boyfriend ain’t going nowhere.”

Clay did not say anything, he just rested in Tony’s arms until he was able to stop crying. Tony waited to tell him, meaning Tony did not want to worry him, meaning that as Tony was in a car wreck and possibly dying his first thought was to not upset Clay. That felt like shit. Was he that big of a basket case that his boyfriend could not tell him stuff from his life because he was too worried how Clay would take it?

He was a burden to Tony, he fucking knew it, he always did. There was this voice in the back of his mind that never left, never let him accept that maybe Tony cared for him and it was not because he was always trying to save Clay. But that was the confirmation he needed, the confirmation he clung to as he said goodbye to Tony and went upstairs, opening the pill bottle and pouring a handful into his palm, tilting his head as he stared at them against his skin.

The sound around him disappeared and all he could hear was his breath as he turned on the faucet water, all he wanted was to make it stop.

-xxx-

“You didn’t take them, though,” his counselor said, nodding her head as she wrote. “That means something, Clay.”

“It means I was too chicken.” Clay hugged the pillow tighter, feeling strangely satisfied to finally tell someone about that, but also scared of what that meant moving forward with their sessions. Was she going to try and get him into a psych ward? Had he said too much?

“Is that the reason you didn’t? You chickened out? Or was it something else?”

“It was that,” Clay said, fiddling with his fingers, “but it was also Tony. I couldn’t do that to
Tony, not after all he’s done for me. It wouldn’t be right.”

“Because you care for him and know that the decision you were contemplating would have serious consequences for the people who care for you.”

“No, shit,” he said, shaking his head. “I was on the Hannah Baker tapes. I’m well aware of what suicide can lead to.” He pointed to his shoulders and stomach. “It leads to more death.”

“Is that how you feel about it?”

“It’s the truth.” Clay huffed and sat up, putting the pillow down next to him and placing his hands in his lap. “The only reason it got that bad was because of me. I freaked out during the tapes and wouldn’t let it go and it spiraled and it was all because I couldn’t stop obsessing over it because I really cared for Hannah and I know what it feels like to lose someone you love to suicide and I don’t want to do that to Tony because I love hi—” Clay clapped his hands over his mouth as though Tony was in the room with him.

“You love Tony?” His therapist simply kept him on the train of thought he was already discussing which he hated. Love was such a strong word.

“Just forget it.” Clay looked out the window and licked his lower lip, turning back and starting to talk again. “I don’t know if I do because I don’t know if this is some bullshit reaction in my brain to almost dying and I’m just clinging to him and thinking it’s love.”

“Why do you think it’s bullshit?” Hearing her cuss had him taken aback, but also, just for a moment, got him to smile.

“Because, after the shooting people acted differently, they were nicer.”

“And you think you’re feelings are invalid because the shooting changed people?”

“Exactly.” Clay ran his hands through his hair, huffing. “I don’t know if I love him or if I love the idea of him.”

“What do you mean by the idea?”

“Like, he’s always there. He cares so much, even when I don’t deserve it, even when I’m in a mood, he’s always there. If I’m down he has this stupid fucking grin that makes me feel better and he knows exactly what to say. I don’t know, he’s sweet and caring and I don’t…” Clay could feel his throat choking up. “I don’t deserve that kind of person.” Tears started to drop and Clay reached in front of him and took a tissue. “He’s too good for me.”

“Sounds like you really care for him,” she said, garnishing a sympathetic look. “Doesn’t sound like it’s the idea of him, it sounds like you care for him.”

“I do, I really fucking do.”

“Then why do you keep doubting that your feelings are valid?”

Clay took a moment to ponder that. “I don’t know?”

“Well, you said people were acting different, let’s talk about that. How were people acting differently?”

_A week after the shooting_
Clay was getting sick of the hospital already. How Alex had made it a month before getting discharged was beyond him. The same shitty channels, the same shitty food, and the feeling of being nothing but trouble for people. His parents looked exhausted and yet they made it a point to come every day and stay until it was late and then they would come back and do it all over again. Clay had told them they did not need to keep coming but they insisted, saying it was no hassle.

Their eyes told a different story. They looked worked.

Tony was another visitor who came daily. He would limp in on crutches and Clay told him to stop coming, knowing damn well it was not easy for him to get down there every day. Tony would brush off his comments, starting each of his visits with a peck, and then sitting down and talking. Sometimes Clay had nothing to say but Tony would just sit with him and watch the television, and other times they would talk for hours about nothing.

Tony told him that they fired the principal and basically anyone who was aware of the bullying but did nothing. They put in metal detectors, gates around the school, and even had cops on campus daily to deal with anything, said it felt like it was becoming a prison. Each week they had a check up, where the school would gather into the auditorium and their new leaders would discuss different ways of preventing bullying, how to anonymously submit a concern if a person did not feel comfortable coming up, and they had grief counselors on campus at all times now.

Clay scoffed. Leave it to the school to react after the fact. That wouldn’t bring back Justin or Monty, and it wouldn’t absolve any of them of the atrocities that they witnessed. All it was was a display for the public -- mainly the concerned parents -- to show that they were “changing” to make Liberty High a safer and more inclusive environment. It was bullshit.

Jessica would come by a few times a week with Sheri and Alex. Tony would already be there and the five of them would hang out. It was nice when they were all together. They joked and laughed and needed each other, at least Clay did. They were becoming a group, them, and he liked it. He liked them. It was a great distraction. But when they left and Clay was alone in the room, he wept. He cried himself to sleep every night.

Marcus and Zach showed up one day -- before Tony made his daily round -- with solemn faces. They both looked like they had been going through it. When they saw Clay lying in the bed they both had their hands shoved in their pockets and bobbed their head.

“Hey, man,” Zach said, sitting down on one end, Marcus on the other. “How you doing?”

Clay simply glared at him, which made them all chuckle. “I’m okay,” he lied, shrugging. “They keep saying I’m lucky I lived but I don’t know.”

“Hey, don’t say that,” Marcus said, sniffing. “Justin and Monty....” He cleared his throat and blinked rapidly. “We need you, Clay. You’re one of the good guys.”

“For real,” Zach said, shaking his head. “You didn’t deserve what happened to you. No one did.” Zach started crying, and looked away, trying to get ahold of himself.

“How are you guys holding up?” Clay asked, knowing Justin was one of their best friends, hell, Monty was a close friend, too.

“I can’t sleep,” Marcus said, licking his bottom lip. “I feel sick knowing what happened while we were dancing in the auditorium.”

“Same,” Zach said, turning back, eyes red. “I’m so sorry that happened to you, man.”

The two of them didn’t stay long, they had to get back to school for practice and for the daily
lecture from the coach. They said ever since the shooting he was asking them how they were every day and talking to them one on one. Clay hoped it brought them some sort of peace. Maybe talking to someone could be helpful for them. Clay knew that even if he did talk to someone there was no way he could get any peace.

Courtney was last to visit and she simply brought a card and flowers, saying she was glad he was okay. She avoided eye contact and Clay was worried that she herself was not okay. He asked her and she said she was fine -- the same thing he said -- but then she hugged him, tightly, and told him again that she was happy he was alive. Tears were falling from her eyes and she wiped them quickly, letting him know she had to leave.

She didn’t come back. Marcus and Zach did, though. They came back multiple times before he was discharged, nicer than ever before. It felt strange and Clay knew it would stop eventually. They just felt guilty for what happened, just like him. He didn’t blame them, though. If visiting him gave them some semblance of happiness, he welcomed the company.

“So, they visited you and you feel like that was simply because of the shooting?”

“Yes,” Clay said. “It was.”

“The shooting is what made you end up in the hospital. Them coming was their own decision.”

“But,” he countered, “they only came because of the shooting.”

“Clay, I’m going to tell you about humans.” She put the pad down and looked at her watch on her wrist. “We are flawed. Not one person is perfect and I think you need to start accepting people, and yourself, for where you guys are. You are a survivor of a tragedy that should never have happened. Your friends are a part of that, and as sad as it is, tragedy’s wake people up to what’s important. Human life. I know you’re afraid to start to live again and I know in our first visit you told me you felt guilty and anxious all the time, and I think what would be best for you, based on what you just told me, would be to let yourself experience life.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, if Tony wants to come by and say hi and be with you, let him. Maybe that’s what he needs right now. Maybe what Tony is doing for you -- the making you smile and feel happy -- is exactly what you are doing for him. Did you ever think about it that way?”

“No,” he admitted, crossing his arms.

“Okay, see a different perspective.” She smiled at him and clasped her hands together. “We are out of time but I have an assignment for you. This week, enjoy the people around you and let yourself enjoy it. Your mind is a powerful tool and your thoughts are the difference between a good day and a bad day. New Year’s Eve is in three days, are you doing anything?”

“Yeah,” Clay said, standing up and heading towards the door.

“Okay. Let yourself live in the moment and try to counter any negative thoughts with a different perspective. It might be really helpful.”

“I will try that,” he said, doing a quick wave and walking out of the room, doubting that could ever actually work, but deciding to try it.

It was something different.
As he stepped out of the waiting room, Tony was seated on the bench outside. His counselor was located in a medical building. Tony hopped up and swiped his hand threw his hair, a genuine smile plastered on his cute face, dimples rising.

“How did it go today?” he asked as the two of them started towards the truck -- his dad was still working on his red car.

“Honestly,” Clay said, reaching out and holding Tony’s hand. “It wasn’t awful.”

“That’s good.” As they walked, Tony looked up and him and grinned.

“What?” Clay asked, not even sure why but feeling his cheeks rising into a smile.

“Nothing,” Tony said, still looking at him. “You’re just really handsome.”

“You compliment me too much,” Clay said, feeling his cheeks flush.

“And you deserve every fucking last one.” And with that comment Tony stopped and grabbed Clay by the ass, yanking him forward and kissing him. Clay’s eyes fluttered closed and he felt his eyes crinkle as he wrapped his arms around Tony. When they split, Tony bit his lower lip. “Let’s get some food.”

“Thank, God,” Clay commented, feeling his stomach growling and actually having an appetite. “I’m starving.”

Chapter End Notes

jessica is next and then im ending the fic with tony~*~*~
“Are you sure about this?” Sheri asked, standing next to her as Jessica tapped her leg nervously, looking at her reflection in the mirror.

“Yes.” Closing her eyes, Jessica let out a final deep breath and nodded. “Do it.”

2 Months Earlier

Jessica stepped out of the hospital, arms hugging herself, a never ending throbbing coming from her left arm. A white bandage covered the sewn flesh where the bullet tore through, the bullet that was meant to kill her. If his aim was just slightly more to her right it would have hit her heart, there was no denying that. Tyler wanted her dead. It haunted her mind.

Even though the shooting happened in the morning, she was leaving the hospital at night. The group split up for a little while after the news of Bryce. Jessica was glad he was dead, and even happier he killed himself. It felt justifying in a weird sort of way. It had been months since he raped her and she was still alive, still breathing, and he couldn’t even last less than a month. He was weak, he was pathetic, and she was glad that he was gone to this world. No one else would have to go through the nightmare she was living.

After repeating to Sheri over and over again that she was happy he was dead, the group got back together and stayed in Clay’s room, talking. Clay looked like death, harboring a blank stare. They had to wait for the police who had to jot down their recollections of the events, and Jessica felt uneasy having to relive it, standing in front of an officer that had a pistol strapped to his side. The sight of it gave her the chills. A new feeling, seeing as she never was afraid of guns before. It made her feel weak.

It all did, really: the rape, the suicide, the shooting. Each event traumatized her in different ways and each one left her feeling not her own in her skin, left her with an apprehension to the world and people around her that she had never experienced before. Her trust in people was dwindling with each passing moment and she wasn’t sure if it would ever come back. The police officer was making her heart tighten and her face tingling with worry.

She hated feeling that way.

She hated it so fucking much it made her want to scream and damn the world.
But with a tenseness and quiet reserve, Jessica sat in the back of the car, her brothers next to her, staring off out the window as the view of the hospital drifted in the background.

“When we get home I want you boys going to your room and trying to sleep,” Mrs. Davis said, turning around in her seat and nodding to them. “We want to talk with your sister.”

Great. Just what she needed, to talk more. Jessica wanted to go upstairs and just scream into her pillow until her throat was raw and she no longer felt afraid. She did not want to be coddled or talked to about how it would be all right. The thought made her grind her teeth together in annoyance. She knew her parents meant well but there was nothing to say. Life was shit and you live or you don’t. Luck simply seemed to be a friend of hers that day.

Although could she call what happened luck?

Tyler shot them because they were assholes to him, there was no denying that. She knew that. But it didn’t make her feel bad for him. It had the opposite effect. As she sat in the heated car, the window fogged up in front of her, Jessica’s muscles stiffened in anger. She had been raped, her friend had killed herself, and yet still, somehow, Tyler managed to make the situation about him? All he fucking did was creep around and make people uncomfortable. He deserved what he got for doing what he did. Jessica was just mad he was dead so she couldn’t somehow beat the shit out of him.

The feeling of fear that had originally grappled to her heart as she left the hospital was being replaced with a rage that burned from the bottom of her feet and rose to her bullet wound.

She was alive. She lived. She survived.

And there was no way that she was going to let Bryce or Tyler have any more control over her than they already had. Her lower jaw moved from side to side as she glared out the window, never wanting to allow herself to feel scared again. She was in control of her life and how she felt and she was never going to let herself feel helpless again.

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“We were discussing it when you were being questioned by the officer.” Mr. Davis sat down across from her on a chair; Jessica and her mom were on the couch. “Your mom and I want to talk to you about something we think might be helpful.”

Her mom put her arms around her and smiled. Jessica squinted her eyes and said cautiously, “and that would be?”

“We think it would be best if we moved,” her mother said next to her.

“No!” Jessica shouted it without meaning to, cupping her mouth. “Sorry, but no. Please don’t move us.”

There was no denying a lot of horrific shit had gone down in the town, and if Jessica had no one by her side she might have considered it. But that was the thing, she did have people, specifically Sheri. Jessica was not going to leave Sheri behind to pick up the pieces alone, and Jessica herself didn’t want to have to do that by herself either. Her girlfriend saved her life, risked her existence just to make sure Jessica would live. That was not something she could leave and be okay about.

That was love.

Plain and simple. Someone does not jump in front of a bullet -- Justin sprang to the forefront of her
mind and there was a pang in her heart. He died jumping in front of the gun for her and Sheri risked her life to make sure she lived. They both loved her, and Jessica wanted to cry.

“We’re just discussing it,” her father said, holding up his hands and shrugging. “We figured we would want to get your input before we decided.”

“I appreciate it, I do,” Jessica said, bobbing her head up and down. “But I don’t want to move. I have my friends here and we all went through this together and I can’t leave them. I can’t do that.”

“Okay,” Mrs. Davis said, kissing the side of Jessica’s head. “We just wanted to ask.”

“Thank you for asking, but I don’t want to move.” Jessica thought about it for a moment. “But, can I be home schooled?”

1 Week Later

Jessica had given it a lot of thought. The anger she had been feeling was going nowhere and she wanted a release, and a healthy way to start to combat her demons. She was not sure if Sheri would be down to go with her but she decided to ask her in the car as they were on their way to Alex’s.

Sheri and her had been together every day since the shooting. They cried for the first two days and nothing more, but eventually, they were able to talk without crying. Laughter even escaped their mouths as they lied together discussing whatever came to mind. Jessica’s wound was healing up nice. She would put antibacterial ointment on it every day and her stitches had been removed the day before, leaving a small scar along her arm. It no longer throbbed in agony, making it easier to cuddle with Sheri as they talked.

“I’ve been thinking,” Jessica said, lowering the radio. “I want to join a self-defense course.”

“Oh,” Sheri said, looking pensive. “That’d be cool.”

“You think?”

“Totally,” the blue-eyed girl said, flashing a blinding smile at Jessica as she reached out and grabbed her hand. “I think it’d be good for you. I know how angry you are about it all and I think it’d be a good way to,” she paused and bit her lower lip, “I don’t know, express it? If that makes sense.”

“My exact thoughts,” Jessica said, a smile stretching across her face.

They made it Alex’s and he jogged out to the car, a gray beanie atop his head. Ever since he got the bandage off and released, he only wore hats or beanies, saying that the scar was gross and he needed his hair to grow back. He wouldn’t even show Jessica when they were alone. She respected it, though, and sort of understood. She hadn’t worn a tank at all since and didn’t like to really look at the spot where the bullet hit. It was just a constant reminder that she did not want.

“You think Clay is going to be as lively as he was last time?” Alex sarcastically said as he sat down.

“Alex,” Jessica said, turning. “Don’t be a dick.”

“No, I wasn’t meaning it like that,” he said. “I just mean, he looks dead.”

“It’s sad,” Sheri chimed in, looking in the rearview mirror. “He was just starting to get over Hannah.”
“I don’t think any of us are still over Hannah,” Alex said, crossing his arms. “If we were the shooting wouldn’t have happened.”

“Can we not talk about this,” Jessica said, turning and looking out the window.

“Sorry, Jess.” Alex’s voice was low and soft. “I really need to work on filtering.”

Clay was quiet like usual. His eyes looked sunken in and he didn’t seem like he was all there. There was no sparkle in his eye, and if he was not actively contributing to the conversation he would stare forward blankly, his eyes dark and lifeless. It broke Jessica’s heart to see him like that. She would always keep her spirits up when she was in the room with him, but afterward her, Alex, and Sheri would walk away, always discussing how depressed he looked. They hoped he would get better. They were there for him and told him they always would be.

2 Weeks Later

“You look good,” Tony said, as the two of them sat down at Monet’s, the delightful smell of freshly ground coffee beans filling the inside.

“I feel good,” Jessica said, sitting across from him. “I’m training three days a week, have the rest of the semester off before I start homeschooling in the spring. Sheri is my rock. I’m the best I’ve been in a while.”

Tony stayed quiet for a moment, moving the mug around in front of him. He had gotten a coffee and she had gotten hot cocoa. There was something he wanted to tell her, Jessica could see it on his face.

“What is it?” she asked, sipping her drink and gazing up at him.

“It’s nothing,” Tony said, wiping his hands through his hair. “I just, I don’t know, I want to make sure you’re okay with dealing with everything, you know?”

“I mean, sure, I still have nightmares a lot,” she said, shivering. It had already been difficult for her to sleep before but now her mind had multiple traumas for her to relive in the span of one night and she hated waking up in a cold sweat. On the days she was in her self-defense class she slept well, the others were a toss up. “And it’s not like I’m all chipper and happy but I’m working on it, each day.”

“That’s good.” Tony avoided eye contact and shook his head. “I just want to make sure you’re okay with Bryce and Justin.”

“Oh,” she said, cocking her head, not sure what to say. Sure, they had all been getting closer but she didn’t think she and Tony were that close, but maybe it didn’t matter after all? They both went through it together and were now friends. Maybe being open was a good thing for now on instead of harboring secrets? It couldn’t hurt to talk. “I’m happy Bryce is dead, really. Can I tell you something.”

“Of course.” Tony leaned in.

“Justin told me before he left he would kill Bryce for me, and for the three weeks he was gone I was worried he’d actually do it, but knowing Bryce killed himself because he couldn’t live with it makes it feel like some sort of justice. I know that’s dumb, but I’m glad it wasn’t Justin.”

Tony nodded his head up and down, his lips sucked to his teeth. “I completely understand,” he said, an empathetic look in his eyes. “I get it.”
“Yeah,” she said, reaching down and sipping her hot cocoa. “As for Justin.” How could she describe how she felt without sounding cold. She knew he loved her and he showed her in his final moments but she did not love him, not anymore. After he was gone and she was left to pick up the pieces was when she got sober and started to better herself. Not for him or anyone else, but for herself. And him being back in town didn’t change any of that, him diving in front of the bullet didn’t change any of that, it just made his life all the more tragic in Jessica’s eyes. She had loved him at one point, she had, but that Jessica was gone. “I feel bad.”

“Yeah,” Tony said, leaning back in his chair. “It’s fucked up.”

“It is,” Jessica said, huffing out her nose. “Makes you appreciate life more, and the people in your life.”

“Not for everyone.” Tony had a sad tone to his voice.

“Clay?”

He simply nodded. “He wasn’t doing good before, Jessica. Like, at all. The night he got drunk he told me how bad it had been for him and we were just going to start working on being there for each other. He can’t take anymore. I feel like I’m watching him go under and there’s nothing I can fucking do.”

Jessica reached across the table and grabbed his hand. “Trust me, Tony, you being there for him is so much more than you know. I know he’s going through it right now, trust me, but I see you guys together. The only time he ever remotely looks alive is when you’re there. When it’s just Sheri and Alex with me he barely talks. You are helping. Believe me.”

“Thanks,” Tony said, wiping his eyes and sniffling. “I just get in my head sometimes.”

“Don’t we all.” Jessica looked towards the front of the coffee shop and saw Ryan in line. His hair looked disheveled and he looked like he had lost weight. “Is Ryan okay?” She nodded her head. Tony looked over and saw him, rolling his eyes. “He’s on another bender.”

“What?”

“When he gets stressed he takes Xanax and then he uses too much at once and runs out until his prescription. I’ve seen it happen once before. He’ll be fine. He likes to wait it out and try to beat it but his mom has Xanax in her cabinet, trust me, he’ll be popping one tonight.”

“Jesus,” Jessica said, shaking her head. “That was me the first few days without drinking. Not that bad, though.”

“That’s why you don’t fuck with prescription drugs.” Tony sighed, shaking his head.

“Very true. Sheri and I smoke from time to time but that’s it.”

“How are you and Sheri?” Tony was nice to talk to; he actually cared.

“We’re good, like, really good.” Jessica smiled, thinking about her girlfriend. They spent every day together and her feelings for Sheri were so immense she felt like she wanted to burst at any second. She had felt like this once before and she knew it was love, but she was worried it was too early in their relationship to say it. Although, that’s all she wanted to do. “After the shooting, I just realized how short life is and I love her.”

“Have you told her yet?” Tony’s eyes sparkled as he asked.
“No, not yet.” Jessica thought about it. “I kind of want to tell her on New Year’s.”

“I’m really looking forward to that,” Tony said, smiling.

“Me, too.” Sheri’s parents rented them a cabin for the night -- where they would be staying right next door -- and let her invite her closest friends to ring in the new year together, away from the town. It was going to be Clay, Tony, Sheri, Alex, and her. Jessica was so excited for it and was also planning to tell her at midnight.

“What are your plans for Thanksgiving?”

“Oh, my God, I forgot that’s tomorrow.” Jessica sighed, realizing she would have to wake up early to help get all the food ready with her mom. It was a tradition. She was not going to let the year ruin in. “I need to go and help my mom get ready, shit. I completely forgot.”

“Good thing I reminded you,” Tony said, the both of them standing up. “You want a ride?”

“Nah,” Jessica said as they exited, Tony’s red car parked out in front. “I’m gonna walk.”

“All right, see you.” Tony got into his car and drove off down the street while Jessica walked, letting the fresh air in and out, feeling good.

New Year’s Eve

“Yes.” Closing her eyes, Jessica let out a final deep breath and nodded. “Do it.

It was New Year’s Eve and Jessica wanted a change. A mighty drastic one by the look on Sheri’s face. She was holding a pair of clippers and bobbed her head after Jessica said that, turning them on and holding it up the side by Jessica’s head. She wanted the left side of her head buzzed like a side cut, just a little above the ears, then have the rest of her hair cut pretty short, and two braids atop the buzzed section. She wanted something she had never done before and she saw a girl in a magazine with the cut and wanted it.

Sheri asked one last time to make sure before she held the clippers up and started to buzz away Jessica’s unclipped hair. Locks fell to the floor and she felt a buzzing in the pit of her stomach as she watched, wide-eyed and ecstatic. It was exactly what she needed to ring in the new year.

The get together started at seven and it was three. Jessica and Sheri were already at the cabin setting up everything they needed. They got a plethora of snacks and sodas -- no alcohol or drugs were allowed, per Jessica -- and they set up the living room with board games and blankets. It was going to be a great night and it even seemed like Clay was doing much better.

She had seen him the day after his last therapy appointment and he was laughing and smiling and that sparkle was back in his eye. Clay was back. It felt good.

Jessica had a black suit with a high white collar and matching black slacks. They all agreed to dress formally for the occasion and Jessica did not want to wear a dress. Sheri, on the other hand, had a beautiful white dress that connected to a choker around her neck. The fabric had a cut open back and ended just above her knees. She looked fucking gorgeous in it.

When Sheri had first shown her Jessica had to control herself in the store because all she wanted to do was get Sheri out of it. They made sure they got dibs on the master bedroom for the night.
“How do you like it so far,” Sheri asked, looking worried.

“I love it,” Jessica said, seeing herself in the mirror and smiling. “I love it so much.”

“Good,” Sheri said, smiling, and turning the clippers back on.

-Axx-

Alex was the first to show up, releasing a loud gasp at the sight of Jessica. She had done her hair up in an almost faux hawk sort of manner, all the hair pinned together and curling out at the top. Her side was clean cut and the braids running along connected into the rest of her hair for a very nice design. She loved it and Alex told her he loved it also.

Alex was wearing a form fitting black tuxedo with a red bowtie and a beanie to finish off the look. Jessica thought he looked nice. Tony and Clay eventually showed up. Clay had on a white tux and his face was contrasting greatly with it, red-cheeked. His hair was a little disheveled but otherwise, he looked great. Tony was in a black button down that was tucked into slacks with polished dress shoes to finish the look.

The night went splendidly. The five of them laughed and played and rang in the new year with smiles and hope. Jessica felt like maybe the next year would not be so bad, or at least they would have each other to deal with whatever came their way. She hoped it would not be anything awful like the past year had been.

When the clock struck midnight, Jessica gave Sheri a kiss, and shouting, “Happy New Year,” letting off the poppers she had bought. Small little streams of confetti exploded out and onto the wooden floor as they all hugged each other.

“I love you, Sheri,” Jessica said, as they were in each other’s embrace, the clock still said midnight. “I love you.”

Sheri had tears in her eyes and she pulled Jessica in and kissed her again, soft and delicate. “I love you, too, Jessica.”

Jessica found herself ringing in the new year with her hope and love filling her heart, and her beautiful girlfriend by her side. 2018 would be better.

Life was going to get better.

Chapter End Notes

Alright so Tony is next and I’ve set up the main events for his in these past 2 chapters ie: the car crash, and his pov is going to be a lot more of the new year’s party because I didn’t want to retell the same story for the last 3 chapters, like I wanted to just focus on the characters and have the plot be background if that makes sense?? I hope you guys don’t mind it!
Tony

Chapter Summary

Tony just wants everyone to be okay.

Chapter Notes

Okay!!! This is the end!!! I would have had it updated yesterday but ironically whilst writing a chapter a car accident I got in one sooooooo now it's done!!! Hope you guys like this ending and I hope you liked the fic in general!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

His hands gripped the wheel as his engine roared down the highway, driver side window down, air blowing through his hair. It had been three weeks since Tyler exacted his twisted revenge and Tony wanted nothing more for it to all go away. Not just for him, but for all people involved. Clay was not coping well with it and Tony could see him reverting back inward, back to small conversations with an even smaller voice. He hated seeing Clay hurt.

Jessica was doing better than he had thought, but he still needed to talk to her about Bryce. Tony was not one hundred percent sure if he would tell her at all, but he did need to know if she was okay with the fact that he was gone. The minute details of how might change her outlook on it, so before just outwardly blurring it out, Tony had texted her to meet up at Monet’s.

Tony parked and walked in, seeing Jessica at a table already. They went on with their small talk and Tony avoided eye contact, not sure how to start it. Eventually, he simply asked how she was dealing with the deaths of Justin and Bryce, hoping her answer would be able to veer his decision. As she spoke his heart erratically bounced in his chest, anxiety settling over him. But then Jessica said she was happy he was dead, said she was even happier it wasn’t Justin who had done it, and that was all Tony needed to hear.

There was no way he could tell her. He could see it in her eyes, see it on her skin, she was glowing, she was doing better. All the information would serve would be to derail her progress and have her have to relive the wounds that he could tell she was desperately trying to sew closed. She didn’t need to know the full truth, Tony decided, happy in his own way to know that he could help her recovery.

Tony asked Jessica about her plans for Thanksgiving. He watched as her face dropped at the mention. She had completely forgotten and then their meet up was over, but that was okay because Tony got the peace of mind he needed in knowing that he would not tell her the truth. The Hannah secret had nearly eaten him alive because it was a continuous nightmare with each person’s tapes, but this was doable. Tony did not care for Bryce and had no qualms not talking about him ever again.

Tony still limped. Not much, but it was still occurring. It didn’t help the fact that two weeks after he drove to his cousin’s house and got a small heart tattoo over the scar tissue. When he first
showed up his cousin had his living room television open to YouTube and immediately started playing the coverage from the day where Tony was being rushed out, pausing it on Tony in the shorts.

“Primo,” is all he said before busting up laughing.

Tony was never going to hear the end of it.

The tattoo was one of the most painful ones Tony had ever gotten simply due to the fact that his skin was already tender. The buzzing began and Tony gritted his teeth and the needle jabbed the design into his flesh, a little heart being given life. His cousin didn’t charge him of course, but he did get roped into staying for dinner, where his Aunt, Uncle, and cousins all questioned him non-stop about what happened. As much as he didn’t want to relive it over and over again he knew they were just worried and wanted to know the truth.

When he told them about Clay they all agreed they wanted to meet him one day, to which Tony vehemently argued against, citing the various times that they have gone out of their way to embarrass him in front of friends. Tony could not even imagine what they would do when he brought a boyfriend around, the pictures they would show, the stories they would tell. Yeah, Clay did not need to meet them for a while.

As he drove from Monet’s, he passed Jessica on the road as she walked, quickly waving as he drove by. With the windows down, Tony cruised down the street, knowing that his mom had been making tamales all day and he was going to devour the fuck out of them for Thanksgiving, along with the mashed potatoes, green beans, ham, and he was really looking forward to the --

Without a moment to know what happened, Tony heard the sound of metal colliding just as he felt himself careen to the side of the road, his car tail spinning in a circle until he collided with a tree on the side, his body sore from the impact. His seatbelt had locked in place and his chest felt bruised where he had been jerked around, but aside from that he did not see or feel any other injuries on himself. The entire car reeked of burnt rubber and he could smell gasoline, prompting his arms to grab the handle and push the door open, crawling out onto the floor.

A white SUV was in the middle of the intersection, the front of it completely smashed, twisted metal and a destroyed hood. There was broken glass on the road and Tony could hear his feet break it even more as he stepped towards the car. A man was on the driver’s side and his face had blood on it, dust from the airbag peppered his hair, and Tony could see that blood was smeared on the deflated airbag. The man was unconscious.

Tony trudged up to the car, his neck stiff and his legs wobbling. He had the green light there was no doubt about that. The SUV hit him out of nowhere. Looking back, Tony could see the back of his car was smashed, along with the front into the tree. His baby was totaled.

“Sir,” Tony said, getting to the car -- the driver’s window had already been rolled down. The man was not moving, but Tony could see his chest rising and lowering, giving Tony some relief. Pulling out his cellphone, Tony dialed 9-1-1 and let them know what happened. A pedestrian walked up to Tony and said he saw the whole thing and would stay for the police report; Tony thanked him.

After the fact, Tony’s hands were shaking as his knees hit together. He felt like he was cursed, or maybe the town was. How the fuck could shitty things keep happening? His dad would not be mad at him because it was completely not his fault, but it was added stress that none of them needed. Thanksgiving was the next day and then Christmas. There wouldn’t be a shit ton of extra money to pay for the damages, but the guy’s insurance should cover it, at least Tony thought.
The man was not insured. That came to the forefront after paramedics came along with police. They questioned Tony, talked to the bystander, and had the guy off on his way to the hospital. After all was said and done, Tony finally dialed his father and explained what happened. His dad was at the scene within ten minutes, immediately pulling Tony into his embrace, squeezing him. Tony was positive the hug itself would cause more harm to him than the accident.

A tow truck took his car and he watched as his pride and joy was chained down and taken away, damaged and alone. Tony’s heart ached and he wanted the day to be over. His dad took him straight to get a rental car. The only thing available was a black truck. Tony hated it. It was the definition of overcompensation, a vehicle he swore he would never drive. Short guys, or guys with small dicks, always were the ones driving trucks around. He had actively avoided being that but that fucking asshole who hit him was now forcing him to become was he detested.

The seats were comfortable, though, and the ride was smooth. Tony suddenly hated how much he actually enjoyed driving the bulky truck. With shame in his veins, he followed his father home and parked the Ford in the driveway, hopping out and wincing. His side hurt -- the pain wasn’t excruciating, but it did feel like it might be bruised from the car seat.

“Have you told Clay?” The first thing his dad asked as the two of them sat on the couch.

“No.” Tony had contemplated it in the moment but ultimately decided to wait to do it in person. It wasn’t that he didn’t think Clay could handle it as much as he didn’t want to unload the news over a phone call. Not to mention, Clay had found Jeff’s body after the accident and Tony would rather be able to show Clay that he was uninjured and okay. Being in person felt like the better option, but there was no way he was going to go the same day; he needed to relax. “I’m gonna tell him tomorrow. I don’t want to worry him.”

“How’s he doing? When I saw him last in the hospital he didn’t look good.” His dad paused and sighed. “He has sad eyes.”

“I know,” Tony said, pinching the bridge of his nose and closing his eyes. It felt like the world was teetering on his shoulder and he just needed Clay to be okay. It was selfish, really, but Tony needed Clay. Being around him, it was dumb, but it helped.

Tony had gotten used to dealing with stuff on his own, and now he had Clay. Even with the tapes, once Clay had received them there was this glimmer of hope that they could be each other’s rocks moving forward. Tony served that purpose much more than Clay had in that regard, but Clay helped in other ways. He distracted Tony, made him question things, see things differently, and awoken feelings in him that he had never felt before.

There was no denying Tony loved Clay.

“He lost a lot of people this past year,” Tony said, gently shaking his head and sighing. “He’s just trying to deal with it all.”

“He’s not drinking and partying still is he?” His dad’s tone was bordering on an interrogation, but Tony knew he was concerned for his son.

“No. That was literally the only time he had ever done that.” Tony chuckled. “He said the classic, ‘I’ll never drink again’ line same night.”

“He really shouldn’t if he goes about it like that.”

“I know.” Tony smirked, the smell of his mother’s cooking filling the kitchen.

Aside from having to tell Clay, Tony was determined to enjoy every moment of his Thanksgiving
with his family.

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Clay started to cry the moment Tony told him, lip pouting, tears falling. Tony reached out and pulled him in, letting him know it was okay, he was okay, they were okay. But Clay was silent, staring forward. His eyes were red and glassy and looked lifeless. A shiver ran down Tony’s spine and as he calmed Clay down, he started to feel worried that Clay was somehow not going to recover from the months prior. Such immeasurable loss and violence had plagued their immediate past and Tony was unsure if Clay could see through the thickening fog.

Clay apologized again for crying before he left. Tony wanted to kiss him goodbye but Clay simply exited the truck with a vacant stare, saying “bye” before walking into his house, head hung in his chest. Tony hated seeing him like that.

Christmas Day

Tony had hoped with everything he had that come Christmas morning he would wake up to find his baby back in the driveway, her beautiful engine purring, waiting for him to hop in and cruise away. That was not the case. No car, no big surprise after opening the usual gifts -- new clothes, which he loved, and cash. He was a simple man. His list had the same two things written every year, and he had no shame in that. It was easier for everyone involved.

Tony had left and driven to Clay’s house with the gift he had gotten him, smile accompanied with said present. Clay’s parents welcomed him in with smiles and hugs -- Clay had told their parents they were dating almost the very next day after the shooting. The two of them were wearing matching reindeer themed pajamas. Clay was simply wearing his normal pajamas, and he still had bed head which Tony thought was adorable.

“Can we go to my room?” Clay asked, immediately following it with, “we’ll leave the door open.”

“Yes,” his dad said, nodding to Tony and winking. Tony’s cheeks heated up.

Tony followed Clay upstairs, gift in hand. When they got to Clay’s room, his handsome boyfriend turned around and pulled him by his collar, softly kissing him. Tony’s eyes shut and he let himself meld into the moment, opening his mouth and gently pushing forward, Clay’s hand on the nape of his neck. Clay lightly pulled away, doing one last peck before smiling, a genuine grin that made his eyes shine and caused Tony’s heart to soar. It was a shining face that Tony had very much missed.

“Merry Christmas,” Clay said, looking down shyly and going to his bed, placing his hand down on a gift bag sitting next to him.

“You didn’t have to get me anything,” Tony said.

“Says the asshole holding a gift.” Clay chuckled and gestured for Tony to come sit by him.

“Shut-up,” Tony said, grinning and trodding over. “It’s nothing big or anything.” Unaware why, Tony suddenly felt really self-conscious of his pick. What if Clay hated it?

“Mine is nothing, too,” Clay said, shrugging. “We can be nothing together.”

“I’ll be anything so long as we’re together.” Tony did not break eye contact as he said it, hoping that Clay would be able to see that his eyes were silently screaming, “I love you.” Tony just didn’t know how to say it, or if he should.
“I love how cheesy you are,” Clay said, still making eye contact.

“I’m only cheesy with you.” Tony puffed out his chest and tried to make his best tough face, deepening his voice. “Everyone else gets this Tony.”

“Wow,” Clay said, pursing his lips closed into a smile. “That’s a sight.”

“I hate you.” Tony chortled, shaking his head. The two of them made eye contact and Tony’s voice lowered as he leaned forward, “I hate you so much,” he said before their mouths were together again and Clay was biting his lower lip, sending his mind into mush.

“No, you don’t,” Clay said, in between small nips and pecks. “You don’t hate me.”

“I know.” Tony leaned his head back as Clay lightly kissed his neck, sending chills through his body. “Your doors open,” he said, letting his mind take control instead of his dick. “Let’s not have another walk in like last time.”

“Fine,” Clay said, pulling away, cheeks flushed. “To be continued.”

“To be continued.”

They went to open their gifts. Tony opened his first and smiled from ear to ear when he saw it was a model car, an exact replica of his own. Clay told him he figured he could at least work on that while he waited. Tony thanked him and the two of them hugged. Clay opened his next and Tony sat on the edge of his seat, eyes darting from the wrapped gift to the boy and back. When he took the wrapper fully off, Tony could see a shimmer in his eyes and his cheeks rise.

“It’s a make your own comic book,” Tony explained, flipping it open to show Clay. “I know how much you like to draw and I thought this would be cool. It has the boxes already for you to draw in and spots for captions and --” Clay cut him off by smashing their lips together.

“I love it.” Clay said. “It’s great.”

“Good,” Tony said, pride filling his heart. “I’m glad.”

New Year’s Eve

“Hey, Tony,” his dad called from down the hallway. “Come out here!”

Tony rolled onto his side and checked the time. Eight in the fucking morning. Why was his dad being a dick on the last day of 2017? The year had been shit enough and he was looking forward to sleeping in the last day, especially since he was going to be staying up with his group of friends that night. Eight. In. The. Morning.

Tony hadn’t even gone to sleep until three. He and Clay had stayed up talking on the phone. Clay had been doing much better and told him about his last meeting with his therapist and how well it went. It gave Tony so much hope going into the new year that they were going to make it through and be stronger, together.

With a grumble, Tony sighed and flung his comforter off, stomping down the hallway to the front. Ready to roll his eyes, he swung the screen door open and belted out a screech of excitement that he did not even recognize in himself.

His car! The beautiful red angel was back. Tony ran to his dad and hugged him and didn’t let go, that is until he heard the keys jingle. Tony was in the car before his dad could even hand him the
keys, revving the engine and gripping the wheel, feeling whole again.

“I tried to have it done by Christmas,” his dad said, shrugging. “A week late but still a good gift for the new year.”

“Thank you, Pops,” he said, getting out and hugging his dad again. “Thank you so fucking much.”

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“Why is there a Redbull in the car,” Clay asked as they drove to the cabin.

“Don’t ask,” Tony said, yawning and reaching for it, gulping down the disgusting taste.

Clay merely squinted at him, changing the subject. “Do you have a new year’s resolution?”

“I didn’t even think of that,” Tony said, as he crunched the aluminum can in his fist. “Maybe….” He paused and thought it over. There wasn’t much he wanted to change in himself, other than finally tell Clay he loved him. Maybe that would be it. Tell Clay right after midnight so he completed it. Who gets to say they actually followed through with their resolution? Not many from what Tony had seen. “I don’t know.”

“Lame,” Clay said, wiggling his eyebrows. “Want to know mine?”

“What?”

“To lose my virginity.”

Tony was stopped at a red light and simply stared at him, trying his best to keep his face still. “So, that means you would have to do it before December thirty-first next year.” Tony simply nodded and smirked. “Hope you do it by then.”

“I think I will,” Clay said, a devious smile on his stupid face.

“What? With me?” Tony asked, pretending to be shocked.


“Oh,” Tony said, widening his eyes. “Yeah, that might not happen. I’m saving myself for marriage.”

Clay’s head rolled along with his eyes. “Okay!”

“Are you saying I’m easy?”

Clay reached over and grabbed Tony’s dick in his pants, making Tony jump in his seat; his cock woke up. “I’m saying,” Clay said, rubbing his open palm up and down. “That I know you, and I think it’s gonna happen before the end of the year.”

“I’m a determined man,” Tony said, his breath hitching as Clay applied more pressure. It didn’t help that they were dressed in formal wear and the slacks were really thin.

“I think,” Clay said, unzipping them, and then reaching in, stroking up and down. “I can be very persuasive.”

Tony pulled over. They were at the base of the driveway to the cabin and he could see Alex’s car was already parked. They could stand to waste a few minutes. Tony turned the key off in the
ignition and Clay’s hand was still working its magic, dissolving Tony’s mind.

But he owed Clay from last time. Plus, he really wanted to suck his boyfriend’s cock.

With a stiff arm, Tony pushed Clay back into his chair and crawled over, reaching to his side and pulling the lever, watching Clay lie down underneath him as the seat lowered. His car was spacious, which he loved. Wasting no time, Tony straddled his waist and held Clay’s arms above his head, just like the boy had done to him those months ago. Their lips were desperately smashing together as Tony’s tongue danced with Clay’s, his dick leaking in his underwear.

Tony lowered down and unzipped Clay’s white slacks, pulling the boy’s cock out from hiding. It was hard and pink and the tip was wet and Tony went to town, closing his mouth around the head, his tongue working as he lowered. Tony held his left thumb shut in his fist, learning that was a way to not gag, and started to lower, the taste of precome filled his mouth.

Clay let out a groan that drove Tony wild, wanting to hear it again and again. Slowly, Tony dragged his tongue up the shaft as his lips tightly closed around, working his hand up and down as he went. Clay was twitching in his seat and before Tony knew it the boy was coming, hot and thick in his mouth. Tony pushed down like a champ and sucked, swallowing it all. Moving his head from side to side with Clay’s dick down his throat, the boy wiggled underneath him, his legs shaking.

It was fucking hot.

Clay’s face was red when Tony rose up, wiping his mouth. “I owed you from those months ago,” Tony said, smirking. “We’re still waiting till marriage.”

“I hate you,” Clay said, breathing heavy, his dick still hanging out.

“I hate you, too.” Tony smirked and smacked Clay’s dick before turning the engine over and going to the party.

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The group all sat around and played games as they laughed and talked. Jessica looked fucking incredible and Tony made sure to pull her aside and let her know. She seemed to be blossoming and living for herself and Tony was loving and supporting every minute of it. Jessica deserved to be happy, and it was beautiful to see if becoming a reality.

Sparkling apple cider, and a plethora of sodas were on the menu, along with every snack Tony could think of. Plates with pizza rolls, finger sandwiches, tortilla chips, pretzels, salads, vegetable platters, a seven-layer bean dip, popcorn chicken, and even mini corn dogs. They were more or less also prepared for a nuclear attack. Tony happily ate everything that was in front of him while they played Cards Against Humanity.

“I love the new pack,” Alex said, as he won another round. “A pack dedicated to making fun of forty-five is truly incredible.”

“I love that it doesn’t even say his name,” Sheri said, shoving a pizza roll in her mouth.

“Okay, my turn,” Clay said, reaching for a black card. “War! What is it get for?” Clay put the card down and the rest of them rifled through their deck, Tony placing his down immediately.

When all the cards were down, Clay began to read the answers -- which ended up being in between the group laughing.
“First,” he said, flipping a card. “White people. Next, Forty-Five and his group of cronies. Next, Alter Boys. Last, kamikaze pilots.” Clay was red-faced from laughing and Tony was waiting in anticipation, hoping he would pick it. “I’m gonna have to go with ‘kamikaze pilots’.”

“Yes!” Jessica shot up and grabbed the card. “Thank you, Clay.”

“How could you not pick the one about forty-five,” Tony said, his jaw dropping. “It was perfect!”

“You’ll get a card eventually,” Alex said, smirking. “We can’t all be winners.”

Tony jokingly flipped him off and they went back to playing, enjoying the night.

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“Three, two, one, Happy New Year!”

They all shouted it together, and Tony grabbed Clay, the two of them in each other’s embrace, kissing at the stroke of midnight. Jessica pulled the string to a popper and the bang had Clay’s body tense immediately in Tony’s arms. Tony held him and whispered what it was, calming him down. When the excitement died down, the two of them headed outside and sat in Tony’s car, wanting some alone time.

Tony had brought a blanket and had it in his trunk, grabbing it before they went in. The two of them cuddling in the middle of the car, Tony playing his favorite cassette. The song that played was “Like Real People Do” by Hozier and Clay leaned in, commenting that he really liked the song. Tony highered it just the slightest and they stayed in each other’s arms listening to the mellow love song.

“I’m in love with you, Clay,” Tony said, as the lyrics hummed in the background.

“I’m in love with you, Tony.”

They stayed silent, looking at the stars in the sky. It was perfect.

“I fulfilled my resolution,” Tony said, grinning. “It was to tell you how I feel.”

Clay couldn’t stop smiling as the two of them kissed in the night. “Mine still hasn’t been fulfilled.”

“Put a ring on it and I’ll put my dick in it.”

Clay choked out a laugh with wide eyes. “Wow.”

“I have a way with words.”

“I had no idea you were such a romantic.”

Tony pulled him in and kissed him, softly. “But seriously, I want it to be good for us. No backseat of the car. I want it to mean something.”

“Me, too.”

Clay and him stayed there until Tony could no longer fight off the tiredness that was lurking in the background the entire day. The two of them made their way back to the cabin. The smell of burning wood filled the dark house and they found the other three making s’mores in the fireplace.

“Do you want to?” Clay skeptically asked, and Tony nodded his head.
“Sure.” He sat down and even though he was tired as hell, he did not want to miss any moment of happiness with Clay and the group.

As he melted a marshmallow and the five of them sat around the fire, the heat feeling wonderful in the cold night, Tony saw actual joy, actual love, and actual hope in that room. Each one of them had been through so much and they were alive, and they were together.

He thought about what his mom had told him after Hannah’s suicide. “Where there is life, there is hope.”

And in that moment, it clicked what she meant.

They had hope.

Chapter End Notes

Okay!! My main goal was Tony/Clay and answer cliffhangers and also basically get the group of characters i liked to be friends hahahaha. I was originally gonna kill off every character I didn't like but that was too much, so I settled for the ones I really didn't lol Much more happened in the process and I just want to say thanks to the people reading and all the comments!!! You guys were really kind and helpful and gave me constructive critiques on my mess ups and I really appreciate it so much!!!

I hope this was good for you guys and I know it was shittily written because I rushed it in a month and didn't get anyone to beta it but I hope it was okay through all the mistakes!!! The main thing I learned getting my creative writing degree was to write what you want to see and read and this is what I wanted after watching the show and I hope you guys enjoyed my weird version of the events following season 1 hahahaha

Also! If anyone enjoyed it and would want to read an original work of writing I did, my novel is available for purchase here: https://www.amazon.com/dp/1732129304

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